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Employee Empowerment and Motivation in Innovative Companies: A qualitative case study of practices driving successful innovation in three firms

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“No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it.”

H. E. Luccock (johnmurphyinternational, n.d)

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ABSTRACT

In today's global business environment, innovation is a keystone for organisational success. In this thesis, we have researched how organisational commitment practices empower employees for innovation. Our study draws on empowerment and motivation theories as our orienting frameworks, and explores organisational case studies of three different companies. The organisations have different innovation goals and methods that we illustrate as potential long-term commitment practices that empower employees for innovation. Our findings indicate three types of organisational commitment practices that empower employees for innovation in contrasting ways: (1) *empowerment through employee training*, (2) *empowerment through commissioning employees' agency* and (3) *empowerment through ways of communicating*. These organisations practise long-term commitment that empowers employees for innovation through both direct and indirect investments, by providing training, freedom to play and giving space for individuality, and through both consistent and transparent communication. We have discovered that these long-term commitment practices empower employees to be self-driven for innovation, provided they are given the training, the resources and the support. These powerful commitment practices illustrate that employees are a vital resource, and by involving the ideas, energy, knowledge and creativity of all employees, organisations can establish a foundation for more innovation.

1. PART I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Question

Innovative organisations achieve more substantial growth and are more successful than those who do not innovate (Tidd & Bessant, 2018). “Virtually all of the economic growth that has occurred since the eighteenth century is ultimately attributable to innovation” (Baumol, 2002, p. 13). By investigating the top 25 innovative firms on the stock market, the magazine *Business Week* shows that in the period between 1995-2005, innovative corporations had a median profit margin of 3,4%, while other firms in the S&P Global Index only experienced 0,4% (Hauptly, 2008, p. 14). Today’s business environment can be categorised by rapid change, international competition, greater technological development, and knowledge explosions. Therefore, organisations need the ideas, energy, knowledge, and creativity of all employees to be successful (Spreitzer, 2008). Focusing on developing both individual potential and larger organisational ideals, empowerment has become a rising tool that is used in organisations, as it includes an emotional, ideological and practical appeal (Eylon, 1998). We are interested in how empowerment and motivation can contribute to innovation in organisations. In this thesis, we will explore how organisational commitment practices empower employees for innovation.

As part of our MSc in business, majoring in leadership and change, we have learned about innovation in several of our courses. This is a topic that has sparked our interest and was something that we knew we wanted to investigate further. As we researched drivers behind successful innovation, we became curious about how employees affect innovation, and how companies facilitate it. This led us to investigate organisational commitment practices that companies apply to empower employees for innovation. Through discussions with our supervisor, professors and peers, we realised that these practices often take form as employee empowerment that shape intrinsic motivation at work. Intrigued, we started to research the links between employee empowerment and company innovation.

There has not been much research on what types of practices organisations use to empower employees for innovation. We believe that we can contribute to existing theory on empowerment and motivation by exploring what the different types of organisational commitment practices are that empower employees for innovation.

Organisational commitment practices are the long-term investments and the ways that organisations develop ongoing dedication and engagement to their employees. Our curiosity about the topic, and wish to contribute to the theoretical field, have led to our research question. *How do organisational commitment practices empower employees for innovation?*

1.2. Research Context

In this section, we will present the three companies that we will research, and how they are relevant to our research question. Our findings are based upon the three cases “Tony Hsieh at Zappos: Structure, Culture and Change” (Askin & Petriglieri, 2016), “Bayer’s Innovation Agenda: Igniting innovation in a 100,000-person company” (Birkinshaw, De Diego, Lessl, & Trill) and “Pixar - Creating a culture of Candour” (Punithavathi, 2014). All information provided further in the thesis is obtained from these three cases unless other source references are stated.

1.2.1. Zappos

Zappos is an online retailer of footwear and clothing started in 1999 by Nick Swinmurn in San Francisco, US. The owners of the investment company Venture Frog, Tony Hsieh and Alfred Lin, saw the potential and invested in Zappos in 1999. Hsieh is now the CEO of Zappos. Zappos experienced rapid growth in the 2000s, and as a result of the development, the headquarter was moved from San Francisco to a city near Las Vegas. In 2009 the company was sold to Amazon for \$1.2 billion. The agreement included that Hsieh would operate Zappos independently, and Zappos would get access to Amazon's metrics, technology and warehouse operations. This enabled Zappos to expand their product range and include a more extensive assortment. By the end of 2015, Zappos had grown to include around 1,500 employees (Pontefract, 2015).

In 2013, Zappos became the largest and best known of more than 300 organisations worldwide to adopt a new organisational form known as Holacracy. Holacracy is both a result of and a reinforcing effect of Zappos’ culture. In Holacracy, the organisational structure is based on projects instead of tasks. Employees have limited, clear roles, and full authority to get the work done. While one works in teams, each employee gets a greater responsibility and freedom to solve the tasks their own way.

Zappos was awarded “Best Place to Work” by Fortune in 2009 and has made the Fortune’s “100 Best Companies to Work For”-list seven times (Fortune, n.d). A reporter in Forbes commented the situation as “Clearly the company's culture is not only doing wonderful things for its long-standing employees, customers and the community, it has infiltrated the lexicon of everyday people such that 30,000 people a year put their hand up and say, "Can I please please please work at Zappos"” (Glassman, 2013).

Their philosophy is that “you can’t have happy customers without having happy employees, and you can’t have happy employees without having a company where people are inspired by culture” (Case, p.7). Their purpose is to “live and deliver WOW” (Zappos, n.d-a). The WOW is a part of the company’s strategy to deliver outstanding customer service by “constantly seeking to surprise, amuse, and engage customers” (Case, p.5).

1.2.2. Bayer

The history of Bayer AG (Bayer, n.d-a) started in 1863 as the two friends Friedrich Bayer and Johann Friedrich Weskott opened a dye factory in Germany. In 1888 they opened a pharmaceutical department, and this department became the sole focus in the years to come. At the beginning of this century, Bayer reorganised their structure (Bayer, n.d-a). Today, they are an international chemical, biotechnological and pharmaceutical group. Further, they are one of the largest operators within the chemical industry, with 350 subsidiaries all over the world (SNL, n.d), reported sales of €46.7 billion and 120,000 employees in 2016. Their primary focus lays within their three main sub-groups HealthCare, CropScience and MaterialScience (SNL, n.d). Several times, Bayer has been named the world’s most innovative organisation (Bayer, n.d-c). Innovation has always been a fundamental part of the company, and is led by Monika Lessl and Kemal Malik, among others.

In 2015, Lessl and Malik arranged a thorough analytical process within Bayer, through steps such as workshops and surveys, in order to get a clearer picture of how employees felt about and experienced the company’s innovation processes. They found out that the employees perceived Bayer as process-oriented and

reliable, as well as scientific and trustful, but not as good at openness, collaboration and knowledge sharing.

This made Lessl and Malik ask themselves how Bayer could use their strengths in organising and structuring, to facilitate innovation processes better. The innovation managers started to work on improving these areas, through introducing new ideas, as well as following up existing initiatives. The goal has been to become better at facilitating for activities leading to innovation. These actions are meant both as a direct response to what their employees feel are lacking, as well as a method for implementing their long-term innovation strategy. The focus areas directed at their employees have been to inspire and engage, train and teach, and give tools to connect and collaborate.

1.2.3. Pixar

Pixar Animation Studios was started in 1986 in the US. The founder of Apple Computer, Steve Jobs, purchased a computer division and established the independent company named Pixar. Ed Catmull previously ran the computer division Jobs bought. Catmull met John Lassiter, the “brain behind computer animation” (Case, p. 2), and recruited him, as he initially was working for Disney. At this time, Pixar’s mission was to create new computer animation technology, but they were struggling financially. As a result, Jobs was able to make a deal with Disney in 1991 that included to produce and distribute at least one full-length computer-animated movie (Pixar, n.d). Pixar and Disney continued the following years to create several successful movies. Together they created 14 hit movies in a row with higher financial paybacks. Eventually, Disney bought Pixar in 2006 for \$7.4 billion. Today, the company has around 1,500 employees (Owler, n.d), and continues to make original animated movies.

Pixar want to create teams with excellent social dynamics, that are successful at problem-solving. Catmull confirms the approach as follows: “Give a good idea to a mediocre team, and they will screw it up. Give a mediocre idea to a great team, and they will either fix it or come up with something better” (Case, p. 4). Further, the company admit that as individuals, they all have personal strengths and weaknesses, but they are collectively “the greatest animator on earth”. Further, a factor that sets Pixar apart from other studios is that people at all levels support

each other. It is an “all for one and one for all”-mindset where one fails and win together.

In the early days, there had been an ongoing, serious rift between the creative department and the production department. The production managers were temporarily hired and reported that they were treated poorly. For example, one-third of the staff had gotten stress injuries in the making of Toy Story 2. However, the employees did not send in complaints, and had not been speaking their mind as they feared for future work opportunities (Catmull, 2014a). These incidents made Pixar realise that their purpose was not merely to build a studio and produce hit films, but also to “foster a creative culture that would continually ask questions” (Catmull, 2014a). Since then, the managers have continually searched for flaws and challenged assumptions to create a healthy and creative culture (Catmull, 2008).

2. PART II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1. Introduction

“Innovation has nothing to do with how many R&D dollars you have . . . it is not about money. It is about the people you have, how you’re led, and how much you get it.” Steve Jobs, interview with Fortune Magazine (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

When creativity is transformed into practice, innovation is created (Tidd & Bessant, 2018). Joseph Schumpeter, the "godfather" of innovation, describes the process of innovation as "creative destruction". He argues that entrepreneurs will seek innovation to get a strategic advantage. Being the first mover in a market can result in a temporary monopoly. Others will try to copy the ideas, but the first mover will profit until equilibrium is being reached (Schumpeter, 1950). The term innovation comes from the Latin word *innovare*, meaning ‘to make something new’ (Tidd & Bessant, 2018, p. 16). However, Thomas Edison, one of America's most successful innovators, describes the term as the process of growing ideas into practical use. It is not enough to have an idea, but one needs to complete the development and exploitation aspects (Tidd & Bessant, 2018).

In this thesis, we are curious about how organisations empower employees for innovation at work. Our research question is “*how do organisational commitment practices empower employees for innovation*”? To orient the exploration, we draw on theories of empowerment and motivation at work and thus use these as rational frameworks.

2.2. Theorising on Empowering Employees for Innovation

O’Toole and Lawler (2006) found that the best organisations accomplished a higher level of ideas, energy, knowledge and creativity from all employees through empowering them. These organisations enabled their employees to take initiative on their own, act by the collective interest of the company without the need of being micro-managed, and act like owners of the business. There are different organisational practices to empower employees that involve sharing power, information, resources, and rewards (Fernandez & Moldogaziev, 2012).

2.2.1. Classic Empowerment Approaches

There exist several definitions of empowerment, yet B. L. Simon (1990, p. 27) describes it as “a term that confuses even as it inspires”. In the literature, two perspectives of empowerment have evolved during the last two decades: social-structural empowerment and psychological empowerment (Liden & Arad, 1996). The first one focuses on the social-structural conditions, whereas the second focuses on the psychological experience of empowerment at work. For a complete implementation of empowerment at work, both of the perspectives are integrated (Spreitzer, 2008).

2.2.2. Social-Structural Empowerment

Social-structural empowerment was presented by Kanter (1977) as he discovered how women in his study lacked access to “power tools” - defined as information, opportunity, support and resources (Spreitzer, 2008). His research is a part of the theories within social power and social exchange, where the social-structural perception of empowerment has its roots. The perception evolved from the idea of democracy, where all individuals at all levels in the system ideally have power (A. Prasad, 2001; P. Prasad & Eylon, 2001).

Most organisations may not act like a democracy (Eylon, 1998), yet employees can have a say in the system through access to power tools (Spreitzer, 2008). By sharing power through a delegation of responsibility, employees get authority or control over resources (Conger & Kanungo, 1988) and the ability to make relevant decisions regarding the individuals' role (Spreitzer, 2008). It enables the lower levels of the organisational hierarchy to increase their level of relevant decision-making power (Liden & Arad, 1996). It also opens up for upper management to have more free time to operate innovatively and strategically regarding the organisation's future (Spreitzer, 2008).

2.2.3. Psychological Empowerment

A psychological perspective on empowerment separates from the social-structural perspective as it emphasises the individuals at a micro-level of the organisation. It focuses on how employees experience their work and the feeling of control (Spreitzer, 2008). Conger and Kanungo (1988) published a paper that argued that the social-structural perspective was incomplete. They found that the implementation of the social-structural aspect would have little effect if the employees lacked a sense of self-efficacy.

Researchers (Spreitzer, Kizilos, & Nason, 1997; K. W. Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) have later established four dimensions of empowerment. Together, these dimensions reflect an active positioning of one's work role and will together foster psychological empowerment. At the same time, if one of them is missing, the experience of empowerment will be limited (Spreitzer, 1995). The four dimensions involve in short terms 1) meaning in terms of a fit between personal and professional beliefs, values and behaviour, 2) competence in terms of self-efficacy and the belief to perform work activities 3) self-determination and 4) impact to influence outcomes at work (Spreitzer, 2008).

Studies by Menon (2001, p. 158) explains that it is vital that the employees actually feel the psychological part of the empowering process. This is also supported by Zhang and Bartol (2010), and in this context, they have introduced what they refer to as an empowerment role identity moderating variable. It was found that empowering leadership has a more significant effect on psychological empowerment based on the degree that the employee identifies empowerment as

part of their identity at work (Zhang & Bartol, 2010). The psychological empowerment correlates with intrinsic motivation and is also related to the commitment to creative processes among the employees. This commitment is essential for understanding the degree of creativity in the organisation, as it directly affects the creativity in the organisation (Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

2.3. Motivation at Work

Empowerment is linked to motivation, through indirect and direct effects on creativity and innovation (Grant & Berry, 2011; Tidd & Bessant, 2018; Zhang & Bartol, 2010). The Cambridge English Dictionary defines motivation as “enthusiasm for doing something” (“MOTIVATION | meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary,” n.d). Research support this definition as it describes a motivated person as someone who is activated or energised toward an end (Ryan & Deci, 2000), a process that sustains action (Latham & Pinder, 2005) or “an inner desire to make an effort” (Dowling & Sayles, 1978, p. 16). The term is an essential foundation of psychology and organisational studies, as it describes the drive behind an action and is central in explaining both individual and organisational behaviour (Grant, 2008).

2.3.1. Self-Determination Theory

Motivation is in most theories viewed as a unitary phenomenon, as it can vary from a lower degree to a broader level of motivation to act. Nevertheless, motivation can also vary on the degree of types or orientation. The latter describes the underlying attitudes and the “why” of the action (Ryan & Deci, 2000). During the 1970s and 1980s, Edward Deci and Richard M. Ryan studied motivation. They presented the self-determination theory (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985) that describes different types of human motivation.

2.3.2. Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

At a basic level, the self-determination theory distinguishes between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is when the motivation is based on curiosity, interest and a desire to learn (Grant & Berry, 2011). Thus, motivation is based on the satisfaction of the activity itself. In contrast, extrinsic motivation focus on the separate outcome of the act (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Ryan and Deci (2000) describe extrinsic motivation as temporary, as one continually need new

incentives to maintain the behaviour. A study by Benware and Deci (1984) found that students with intrinsic motivation had higher learning scores and were more engaged than the students motivated by extrinsic factors. Further, other studies have discovered that those with intrinsic motivation showed a higher level of effort and persistence. Intrinsic motivation has also been found to be a moderate to a strong predictor of performance (Cerasoli, Nicklin, & Ford, 2014).

2.3.3. Three Basic Psychological Needs

The self-determination theory is a macro theory that says our behaviour is guided by a desire to meet unmet needs. The theory focuses on the motivation behind the choices we make without external influence and interference. Ryan and Deci (2000) discovered three basic psychological needs: the need for competence, autonomy and relatedness. Together, these are the three most critical needs to accomplish high-quality intrinsic motivation (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985). These needs are not only the basics for motivation, but also essential for personal growth and integration, social development and personal well-being.

The first human basic need Ryan and Deci (2000) describes, is the need for competence. This need is based on the employees need to feel they have the required skills and belief that they can do their job. This is important as it can contribute to giving the employee a feeling of mastery. Further, mastery can contribute to increasing the employee's intrinsic motivation. Studies (Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2009; Lee & Bruvold, 2003; MacDuffie, 1995; Prensushi, Shaw, & Ichniowski, 1997; Snell & Dean Jr, 1992) show that employees get motivated when they are encouraged to use the time to develop their competence and skills at work.

The second basic need Ryan and Deci (2000) describes is relatedness. This need is based on the need for having relationships with others at work. By being part of a community, employees can get the feeling of belonging and safeness at work (Gagné & Deci, 2005). To feel heard, trusted and respected are essential factors that contribute to belonging. The theory also states that people will work more responsible when these criteria are met. The combination of relatedness and support of autonomy will further lead to more creative employees. On the other side, if there is a lack of the combination, employees will feel less creative and

motivated. Baumeister and Leary (1995) found two criteria for relatedness. First, repeated and satisfying interactions with few people. Second, these interactions must find place in a setting where the involved parties have an affective concern for the others' welfare. If these two criteria are not met, the relatedness will be less satisfactory.

The last of the three basic needs is autonomy. Autonomy can be described as the need to control the course of our lives. At work, this can be the possibility to get involved and experience decision-making power. By having the power to take decisions, one is in control over the situation, and the action is based on the feeling of free-will. The theory further describes that people will feel more obligated to contribute and work harder as one gets more involved.

Newer studies by Deci, Olafsen and Ryan (2017) could also confirm additional positive characteristics of autonomy. Autonomy in the workplace will lead to more employee satisfaction, the employees will perform better, learn better, and it also benefits organisational effectiveness. Further, employees with autonomy will often find themselves ways to get the needs of relatedness and competence fulfilled. Meaning, if employee autonomy is supported in an organisation, all the basic needs in the self-determination theory are often covered.

3. PART III: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Explaining our methodological approach

Amongst the first decisions that are made when choosing a research approach is whether to follow mainly inductive or deductive reasoning, and whether a quantitative or qualitative data gathering will be the most beneficial. While an inductive approach starts with the findings, and is a process where theory is generated, the deductive approach begins with a hypothesis that tests a theory, where the result of this concludes the findings (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2018).

Although the two main directions of reasoning are inductive or deductive, a third way of reasoning has increased in use in the past years, called abductive reasoning (Bell et al., 2018). In a Perceian understanding, abductive reasoning entails that instead of starting the research with findings to a research topic or testing a hypothesis, the study begins with the researcher's doubt or wonder about a

situation (Peirce, 1992[1903]). Thus, this involves the researcher's thoughts to a higher degree than the two other approaches. Moreover, abductive reasoning provides a conclusion to the data that is not verified, like deductive reasoning offers. Instead, the goal is to find the most compelling explanation of a phenomenon, and facilitate for using cognitive reasoning for future hypothesis testing and theories (Bell et al., 2018).

When deciding whether an inductive, deductive, or abductive reasoning fit our research best, we thought about what our research question is trying to answer. As we will not begin with a hypothesis that we test out, a deductive approach does not fit our study. We are neither in a situation that demands a most likely explanation, thus an abductive study is not the best fit either. Instead, our findings will contribute to the theory within empowerment and motivation, which means that an inductive approach fits best in our case.

The data gathering method of inductive and deductive theory reasoning is usually separated. An inductive approach usually applies a quantitative method, while a qualitative method is usually applied in a deductive setting (Bell et al., 2018). The quantitative and qualitative methods represent two different strategies on how to conduct research, where the qualitative method collects numerical data through structured observation, for example through statistics, while the qualitative method is focused on collecting rich data and stories, for example through case studies (Bell et al., 2018). We found case studies to be the most intriguing way to answer our research question, thus applying a qualitative inductive research method.

Throughout our research, it has been essential to ensure that we have appropriately understood our objective with the research, and customised our research and methodological tools in accordance with this objective, so that we have been able to find the most fitting approach to our qualitative approach (Gehman et al., 2017). The main pitfalls with our approach to avoid are to process our data as quantitative data, or give our own opinion of the data without showing it, however not end up only showing the data without giving an explanation or interpretation either (Pratt, 2009).

Another issue that arises is whether a qualitative inductive study holds the same credible and plausible conclusions, and can persuade the reader as properly, as a quantitative deductive study can (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012). A more scientific approach can help reduce the pitfalls of a qualitative inductive study, such as different understandings or misinterpretation of human behaviour or phrases, while still maintaining the flexibility and understanding of processes that a quantitative deductive study lacks. This can be done through grounded theory where collected data and interpretations are coded (Gioia et al., 2012).

While it has been a previous stance to avoid using codes for established theory, a newer point of view suggests that coding can stem both directly from the data, as well as from the existing theory in the field (Elsbach & Kramer, 2015). It should be noted that the qualitative inductive approach can also include some deductive or abductive reasoning in the research process, such as through analysing statistical datasets based on a theory or assumption that is relevant for our understanding of our findings (Bell et al., 2018 ; Elsbach & Kramer, 2015). We have chosen to use coding while gathering our data, which will be further elaborated on in paragraph 3.2.

Another part of our methodological approach is figuring out which epistemology and ontology approach we have about our research. Depending on how our qualitative research method is approached, our viewpoint of epistemology and ontology will be understood in different lights (Morse et al., 2009 ; Sandberg & Alvesson, 2011). The epistemology, meaning the validity and understanding of knowledge, of a study with inductive reasoning and qualitative data gathering is usually interpretivism (Bell et al., 2018). Interpretivism is concerned with understanding human nature and behaviour (Bell et al., 2018). It is built upon the foundation that the data collection in social sciences, such as empowerment and motivation theory, cannot be understood the same way as a collection of data in natural sciences. In contrast to the other epistemology understandings, users of interpretivism are concerned with the actions of humans in their findings, and not an external truth, such as the laws of nature (Bell et al., 2018).

As we also are most concerned with understanding, rather than observing, empowerment and motivation findings in our research, interpretivism is our choice of determining what is valid knowledge. Usually, the ontology, referring to

our assumptions and understanding of reality, of the inductive reasoning and qualitative data gathering, is constructivism (Bell et al., 2018). Similarly, when considering epistemology, we think of our research in a social science setting rather than natural science, and thus approach with a constructivist view. This means that our assumptions about reality are a social reality, consisting of individuals' decision making and continuously changing.

To summarise, our methodological approach is qualitatively collecting data with an inductive understanding, considering knowledge to be valid through interpretivism, and with assumptions about reality with the constructivism viewpoint.

3.2. Describing our Analysis of Data

We have laid the foundation for why we chose our methodological approach. Now, we want to describe how we collected our data and analysed it.

Our thesis explores *“How do organisational commitment practices empower employees for innovation?”*. Our analysis should be directed at answering this question. As part of conducting qualitative research, it was necessary to find a way to understand our data, and transform it in a way that made it possible for us to compare it and connect it with relevant theory. All our data is secondary, as it consists of observations and experiences that are described by employees and leaders in Bayer, Pixar and Zappos. We have not taken part in collecting the data, which means that analyses such as grounded theory or thematic analysis are not the best fit for our analysis, as the interaction between collecting and coding data is fundamental in these analyses. This would imply that we should conduct a secondary analysis of qualitative data (Bell et al., 2018).

Collecting secondary data is often used in quantitative research in a more straightforward process, as quantitative data is easier to code and categorise (Bell et al., 2018). However, we have used the same principles in our research, although with some adjustments. Our data describe different practices in the three companies that are relevant for answering our research question. These documents have not set out to answer our research question directly, but it is up to us to extract the relevant data and interpret it. This means that instead of analysing data

from the documents, we will synthesise the findings given in our data into findings that are relevant for our research question. This approach is called a meta-ethnographic method (Bell et al., 2018).

It means that previous qualitative studies and other secondary sources can be used again to answer a new research question. They should not create broad generalisations (Noblit & Hare, 1988), and our findings must be based on the interpretations and explanations of data – and not the data that the interpretations and explanations are based upon itself (Bell et al., 2018). This is because otherwise, we risk losing the understanding of the findings, as secondary researchers do not have access to the context that the qualitative data was based upon (Hammersley, 1997).

Our complete analysis process can be described through seven phases that take place simultaneously (Bell et al., 2018, p. 535). This means that even though there is some natural sequence to this process, they do overlap and demand some flexibility. During this process, we applied coding in some of the phases. Coding is a sequential process that we did not overlap or repeat. However, it helped us move between the other phases, and move forward in our analysis by presenting updated estimates of what parts of our data we needed to refine or learn more about, as we could not properly code or understand it.

It should be noted that the sequence we conducted for coding, is the same way as grounded theory typically applies coding. Grounded theory is, as meta-ethnography, a method for conducting qualitative data analysis (Bell et al., 2018). However, it would not be suitable for us to follow grounded theory, as it requires that the researchers have collected the data directly, and not used secondary data as we have chosen to do. We were also careful only to use coding as a tool to help us get a better understanding and overview of our data, and not fragment it up too much, to avoid losing context or meaning.

3.2.1.1. Getting started

First, we had to decide our topic selection and formulate our research question. Our main concepts are empowerment, motivation and innovation, and we have based our data collection on these. We conducted a formulated search through

relevant keywords. Our keywords were “employee”, “empowerment”, “motivation” and “innovation”. We chose these keywords because they were the best fit for our thesis’ concepts.

3.2.1.2. Deciding what is relevant to the initial interest

We sourced our case studies from The Case Centre and Harvard Business Review. We searched in Norwegian and English, as these are the languages we understand. Our data is mainly directed at the business sector due to the subject of our research question. Although geographical borders do not define our research question, we chose to focus on case studies from Europe and the USA, as we have a better cultural understanding of the keywords in a Western setting. We have also made some limitations for the time period the data have been published in, as we are mostly concerned with newer case studies in this field. Thus, we mainly focused on case studies published after 2010.

We based the case studies’ currency on how recent they had been published. Relevancy was considered based on search keywords and content. The quality and impact of the case studies were based on the channel that the case study was published through, the ranking and reputation of the publisher and the author’s institution, and whether the case had won any prizes. Additionally, we only used studies and articles that were based on a qualitative research method, addressed our main concepts, and where the perspective was from employees and leaders in the companies (Bell et al., 2018).

As a continuous practice, we have critically reviewed and evaluated our data before going back to our topic selection, and re-formulated our search to find more valuable data.

This led us to find three cases to help answer our research question: “Bayer’s Innovation Agenda: Igniting innovation in a 100,000-person company” (Birkinshaw, De Diego, Lessl, & Trill), “Tony Hsieh at Zappos: Structure, Culture and Change” (Askin & Petriglieri, 2016) and “Pixar - Creating a culture of Candour” (Punithavathi, 2014). These all highlight and discuss different effects that the empowerment of employees has on organisations' innovation processes. We will supplement these cases with articles and interviews that we find relevant

for strengthening our understanding and analyses of the cases. These are also found on the same topic and relevancy conditions as the case studies.

3.2.1.3. Reading the studies

After we found the relevant data sources, we spent several days reading them thoroughly, before looking for patterns or findings.

3.2.1.4. Determining how the studies are related

After we were sure we understood our data sources correctly, we started finding out what they had in common. Finding these common features was necessary so that we could go from having several separate qualitative studies, to combine them into a new study (Noblit & Hare, 1988). After reading through the cases several times, we started to find some patterns in how commitment practices are conducted. These were categorised through open coding (Bell et al., 2018). We did not immediately link the data to theory but focused on labelling those that we believed could be relevant for our research question. These labels were tentative and flexible, and the critical part was that we organised and understood the meaning of them. For example, one open code that we used was “social events”. We categorised quotes and descriptions from the employees and leaders in Zappos, Bayer and Pixar about balancing work and life under this code. To get a more accessible overview, we put the open coding in Microsoft Excel.

3.2.1.5. Translating the studies into one another

During this process, we needed to interpret the meaning of the studies to establish the correct understanding of our data, so that we could compare and combine them. Again, this was made more comprehensible through coding. We used the open coding from earlier in the process to translate our data through axial coding (Bell et al., 2018). By conducting axial coding, we could link connections between our open coding results. This is done by finding similarities between the categories we constructed through open coding, and putting them back together. For example, the code “social events” was put in a new context, in this case, “funding employee initiatives”. By creating these new categories through coding by using sub-codes from earlier, we managed to get a better overview of our data, and could compare and combine them.

3.2.1.6. *Synthesising relations*

In this phase, we focused on comparing the axial codes to find out how they could be put together based on what they have in common. This process is similar to what we did in the last phase, but is at a further higher level. Now, we wanted to group our translations, such as “funding employee initiatives” into new groups. The criteria for this grouping was based on and done through selective coding (Bell et al., 2018). This entails finding the core categories, which are the main issues found in the data. We found these through relating our axial coding to each other, to find out how different categories were connected. We also got a clearer picture of where we needed to delve deeper into the data, or what data were not relevant for our research question. We ended up finding three core categories, and have directly applied them in our findings. These are the leading organisational commitment practices that empower employees for innovation. Using our example, the axial code “funding employee initiatives” were amongst other categories put into the core category and finding “empowerment through employee training”.

3.2.1.7. *Expressing the synthesis*

Lastly, we had to find out how we wanted to express our study in the most beneficial way for our audience. By advice from our supervisor, we have chosen a form where findings and discussion are combined, as this will make comparing, contextualising and comprehending our results more organised and easier to understand.

4. PART IV: FINDINGS

Our findings demonstrate three contrasting organisational commitment practices that we define as regular ways of establishing and maintaining ongoing dedication and engagement to employees, and this can empower employees for innovation (*see Table 1*). We were able to discover three leading organisational commitment practices that empower employees for innovation in all three cases. These practices have potentially contributed to some of the successful innovative discoveries in these organisations. Our three main findings include *1. Empowerment through employee training*, *2. Empowerment through commissioning employees’ agency* and *3. Empowerment through ways of communicating*. In the table below, we have listed the overall examples from the three cases and categorised them by our findings.

Table 1. Organisational Commitment Practices that can Empower Employees for Innovation			
	Empowerment through employee training	Empowerment through commissioning employees' agency	Empowerment through ways of communicating
What?	Employee training are different practices where the organisations invest in employees through active training. This includes building employee knowledge, values and competence that emphasises the firms' objectives, values and cultures.	Commissioning employees' agency are indirectly investing in employees through encouraging employees' freedom, providing room to play, independent decision-making, and giving employees space for self-expression and individuality.	Ways of communicating are practices for building an open and transparent culture of giving and receiving honest feedback through easily accessible communication platforms and tools for all employees at every level in the organisation.
Why?	The goal is to give employees more knowledge, foster innovation, promote development and involve the employees in the company's culture and community.	The goal is to provide self-management systems, engage employees with innovation and find the individuals that will work the most effectively together.	The goal is to create open communication, use employees' ideas, share success stories and work together to find the best solutions.
Case Examples			
Zappos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal training - Journey tools - Investment in a Zappos-community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-management and self-organisation - Cultural individualism - Courting as a way of recruiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparency with customers - Communication tools
Bayer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The agile network - Innovation training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The catalyst box 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WeSolve - Network channels - Innovation days and storytelling

Pixar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pixar university - Pixarpalooza 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasis on teams - Individualism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Freedom to communicate - Architecture that promotes collaboration - Feedback systems
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4.1. FINDING 1: Empowerment through employee training

4.1.1. Introduction

Our first category of findings is “empowerment through employee training”. When we started to analyse our data, we quickly discovered that the companies used different practices as ways of committing to their employees in terms of both direct and indirect investments. We have therefore divided employee training into two sub-findings: a) commitment through investing in training and b) commitment through indirect investments.

4.1.2. Finding 1a: Commitment through Investing in Training

In all three companies, we discovered direct investments in training of employees. In Zappos, they use training to gain knowledge and shape their employees. In Bayer, they use training to foster innovation. Pixar use training to promote development of their employees. In all the firms, training is used as a power tool, as described by Spreitzer (2008), to empower the employees with knowledge and information. Further, building employee competence contributes to achieving high-quality intrinsic motivation, as the self-determination theory suggests (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985).

4.1.2.1. Finding 1a: Zappos

Formal training of employees is an essential practice in Zappos. As a new employee, one can expect to spend the first three to four weeks at the organisation’s core, the call centre. Independent of their title and work roles, all employees are trained to be able to work there. The call centre is the heart and soul of the company, and by starting the formal training there, one gets to experience and learn the core values through practice. During busy periods, like holidays, it also ensures that Zappos have enough staff members.

All employees are trained in each of Zappos’ core values (Heathfield, 2019).

There is a specialised training team with the responsibility of making sure that all

employees know the company's values and the expected behaviour. Further, values are knowingly supported and reinforced into all systems, projects and initiatives in the organisation. Human Resources are also placed locally to get closer to the employees, and an employee handbook is provided to all members of Zappos (Heathfield, 2019). By giving training in the core values, Zappos emphasise the importance of them, and ensure that there are no values gaps.

Journey tools are also an essential part of the training. Zappos have different journey tools with personal dashboards. The tools provide information and data to the employees. Further, the tools make it easier if one wants to make changes in terms of position and work roles. The tools are digital systems where employees at all times can track their progress, accomplishments, tasks and roles.

4.1.2.2. *Discussion 1a: Zappos*

As the examples above show, the goal of the training in Zappos is to teach the employees the core values and operations at the call centre. The formal training of the core values may be considered as a method to shape the employees to adjust and integrate the values, and to make the values personal. As the core values are reinforced into all systems, projects and initiatives in the organisation, one may ask whether the learning has been sufficient, or if the organisation do not trust the employees to build on these values unconsciously. If the employees truly believed in the values and made them personal, there would not be a need to reinforce them.

Further, training at the call centre is mandatory for all employees. By making it mandatory, regardless of position, no one is "too good" or "too important" to work there. Not everyone would accept to work at the "bottom" of the company, and this can also be considered as a technique to ensure that the employees have humility and respect. By challenging the employees to work at the call centre, Zappos is testing their motivation. They are a fit for the organisation only if they are motivated to work there. Compared to the theory, we witness parallels from both empowerment and self-determination theory. By providing the opportunity to learn and develop, empowerment is given in terms of knowledge and information (Spreitzer, 2008). Further, the building of competence is contributing to intrinsic motivation as described by Deci and Ryan (1985).

Journey tools are used as an instrument to monitor employees' progress in Zappos. The application is a power tool used to empower the employees (Spreitzer, 2008), but they are also a method of assuring agency. As in support of Deci and Ryan (1985), the agency is provided as employees get the chance to make changes in terms of their work roles, and the belief that they can choose their own further path in the organisation. The tools can also create motivation for the employees, as they can track their personal development and reach for future goals. This way, the tools operate as digital reinforcers.

4.1.2.3. *Finding 1a: Bayer*

Also, in Bayer, we witnessed training of employees. Here, the focus is placed on an innovation programme using an agile network, where all employees are encouraged to engage. The idea behind the programme is to have a separate innovation network in addition to the usual hierarchy, to foster innovation in the firm. Further, the network was introduced to make sure that innovation leadership was made more accessible for all employees on all levels.

An Innovation Committee consisting of 14 Senior Business Leaders meet at least twice a year. They supervise Bayer's Innovation Agenda in practice. The Board of Directors oversees this committee. The goal is that 1 out of 200 employees in the whole company is an Innovation Coach and that all the different business units have a coach available. The Innovation Coaches are often line managers or individual contributors, and the goal is that they volunteer for the position. It is not paid, but is meant to be morally rewarding. The Innovation Coaches' tasks consist of supporting and guiding other Bayer employees about working with innovation, and take up to two days every month in addition to their usual job. In 2016, there were 600 Innovation Coaches, and they were trained in a three-day workshop by an external partner.

To ensure that the Innovation Coaches are as successful as possible in aligning their coaching with the overall innovation strategy in Bayer, they are followed up by other employees with more seniority, called Innovation Ambassadors. The country group heads nominate these ambassadors, and the critical element is that

they must have a great understanding of Bayer's long-term global innovation strategy.

To make a more significant innovation impact, Bayer also implemented the teaching of Design Thinking, Systematic Inventive Thinking, and Lean Startup to its employees from 2016. The different innovation systems are taught so that the employees learn to handle typical challenges in their everyday jobs, through the tools that the methodologies offer. Further, the innovation managers found that they needed to spread learning and knowledge to all employees, and not only the Innovation Coaches. In the beginning, the training was only given through an application process to members in the Innovation Network, but is now offered to all employees. During the first year, more than 5,000 employees were trained.

Another shaping practice consists of both online courses and bi-monthly sessions and lectures, which are given by for example leading innovation institutions. In 2018, the innovation programme had an engagement level higher than 80%, and as many as 70 countries engaged.

4.1.2.4. *Discussion 1a: Bayer*

In Bayer, the innovation programme is used to increase innovation. The programme shows that the employees are essential resources, and by facilitating, they can be used to disclose innovation potentials. Employees are not paid to contribute as Innovation Coaches, but rather encouraged to volunteer. This method relies on the employees to have intrinsic motivation to sign up. At the same time, the method is a way of giving autonomy to employees, as they have the choice to join the programme. Autonomy is given as the programme enables employees to make changes inside the organisation and in this way, contribute to the firm's future path. This finding is in support of Ryan and Deci (1985).

Training is provided through workshops, and knowledge and learnings are shared amongst the participants. This is Bayer's method of building innovation competence. However, as employees with more seniority supervise the programme, the authority is higher in the innovation hierarchy. This is not in alliance with social-structural empowerment, where the goal is to give the lower levels of the organisation relevant decision-making power (Conger & Kanungo,

1988). By giving more authority to the lower levels, Bayer could have increased social-structural empowerment and given upper management more free time (Spreitzer, 2008).

In Bayer, different innovation systems are used. These systems are a way of empowering employees with power tools, as described by Spreitzer (2008). By spreading learning and knowledge, through access to online coursing and training, the employees can build competence. This finding is in support of Deci and Ryan (1985), as building competence contributes to higher levels of intrinsic motivation. These techniques are also a method of shaping the employees to work in parallel with the company strategy. The training provides knowledge and learning to employees at all levels in the organisation. The initiative emphasises the importance of including all employees in the training so the organisation can move toward a common, future goal. This is in support of the self-determination theory (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985).

4.1.2.5. Finding 1a: Pixar

In Pixar too, we discovered training to be an essential part of the company strategy. Training is organised through the so-called Pixar University. Pixar University is Pixar's development programme that aims to create more efficient and creative employees. The goal of the programme is also to bring the employees closer together as a team, and that the employees get to move outside the restrictions their normal job positions usually limit them to. The activities are also used to shape employees to become more comfortable with taking risks, and "being weird". The idea is that this will lead to new creative solutions in the future. Further, the total programme is according to Pixar equivalent to a B.A in fine arts (Hempel, 2003). Additionally, Pixar want to allow the employees to develop and foster their individualism through the university.

The class sizes can be for example 12 people, and include all types of employees, regardless of where they are in Pixar's hierarchy. The employees are allowed to prioritise Pixar University above their jobs in the period where they attend the courses, which there are about 14 of every week. The classes are given both at daytime and in the evening, and take place in the Pixar headquarters. They focus on both educating and training the attending employees. There are around 110

courses to choose from, which include creative topics such as filmmaking, drawing and improv. The employees get to try out their ideas together, and also solve untraditional tasks, such as balloon fights with the CEO of the company (Hempel, 2003).

4.1.2.6. *Discussion 1a: Pixar*

Pixar invest directly in each employee by providing education and the opportunity to develop. Through Pixar University, employees can build competence that can make them more confident. Education is also a tool for Pixar to shape the employees to match the organisation's culture, and ensure highly competent workers. Training is optional, and employees can freely choose which types of courses to attend. This provides agency as they can make personal decisions for their own path and future. This is in support of the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). By providing education, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be enabled. Intrinsic motivation is enabled as employees can follow their desires and wishes (Grant & Berry, 2011). The opportunity to educate oneself is another type of reward, based on extrinsic motivation, given by Pixar (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

The university is also used to bring the employees closer together as a team. By attending classes, one can build relationships in the company and create a feeling of belonging in a community. This is in accordance with the self-determination theory (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985). In the movie-making industry, a higher turnover is average, and by providing the opportunity to build relations and follow a personal interest, Pixar motivate employees to follow their passions in-house. It also demonstrates loyalty from the organisation, as they give employees the agency to think outside of the company. Together with the training, the university is attributing to build high-quality intrinsic motivation, as described by Deci and Ryan (1985).

4.1.3. Finding 1b: Commitment through Indirect Investments

As we analysed the cases, we also discovered examples of indirect investments. These investments are not direct investments in the employees, but rather an indirect investment that provides positive effects, such as wellbeing and network building. These investments are used to empower the employees by building

further on the culture and involve them in a community. The indirect investments show devotion and commitment from the organisations' side, and contribute to achieving the primary need relatedness (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985).

4.1.3.1. Finding 1b: Zappos

In Zappos, an initiative was to create an exclusive community implemented with the happy Zappos values. This community got the name The Downtown Project. In 2013, Zappos moved their headquarter to downtown Las Vegas. It was a need for more space and more professional customer advisers as the company grew. Hsieh and some friends invested and purchased 60 acres of land. The goal was to fill the area with entrepreneurs and businesses, and to build a community where people could be innovative and successful (DTP, n.d). The objective was that the project could benefit Zappos, and vice versa.

Entrepreneurs had to work and live in the area to receive funding, and the goal was to draw 10,000 professionals to downtown Las Vegas by 2017. Soon after the opening, the downtown was filled with over 300 businesses, and 800 direct jobs were created. However, in 2014, the project got negative media attention. Media reported that Hsieh had stepped down from being the CEO of the project, and in addition, 10% of the corporate staff positions had been eliminated. Further, three entrepreneurs in the project had committed suicide. The media questioned how this could happen as the community was built according to the happy Zappos values.

4.1.3.2. Discussion 1b: Zappos

In this finding, we see how indirect investments can provide both positive and negative features. It was a significant investment for Zappos to create the community, and it shows how much they desired to expand and share their culture outside of the organisation walls. The building of the community contributed to creating a feeling of belonging and loyalty. It also opened for autonomy as entrepreneurs got funding to follow their goals. Creating such features are, in theory, viewed as positive contributors to both empowerment (Spreitzer, 2008) and self-determination (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985).

In this example, we also witness how extreme loyalty and agency can have adverse effects. The pressure to perform without distinction between work and spare time, resulted in the terrible outcome of suicide. Ryan and Deci (2000) describe how a higher level of autonomy results in the feeling of obligation and pressure to perform, and here, the level of autonomy was perhaps too high.

Even though the project met some challenges, it started with a positive vision, and they were able to build a community where innovation was in focus. Many entrepreneurs got the opportunity to get funding and easy access to potential colleagues and partners. This finding corresponds to the research of Ryan and Deci (1985).

4.1.3.3. Finding 1b: Pixar

Pixar have their own music festival called Pixarpalooza. Pixarpalooza is a rock and roll competition, where teams from different parts of Pixar compete about having the best rock band. The goal is that the event will inspire and encourage more self-driven initiatives among the employees, and create a fun environment at work. Socialisation also helps to build trust between the employees, and allow them to get to know each other in a setting outside of work.

It started in 2008, as the animation and the story-telling teams arranged a friendly music battle. It has now become a yearly event that is driven by and set up by Pixar's employees, where the employees can bring their families as well. During their spare time, the employees practice instruments, plan the event, and design merch and posters for the day. The competition started indoors in the Pixar office but has since grown to such a degree that it now takes place outside. There are other activities as well, such as face painting and DJs, and food and drinks are served. The spirit is the most essential part of the day, and humour is the main ingredient. For example, the names of the bands are silly wordplays based on their daily lives in Pixar (Anderton, 2019). Examples include the editors' band name being "Schnittmeister", meaning film editor in German, or the technical directors calling their band "Clown Car" (Rizvi, 2011). Pixarpalooza is known for being taken very seriously by the employees, and around 25 bands are participating every year.

4.1.3.4. *Discussion 1b: Pixar*

Pixarpalooza is an investment in terms of joy and happiness. The event facilitates social interactions and creation of trust between employees. This way, employees get shaped by social interactions. Work relationships are an essential factor for work satisfaction and contribute to self-determination (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985) and empowerment (Spreitzer, 2008).

It is also notable that employees from different departments invest their spare time to arrange the festival. This shows their enthusiasm and how much the event means for them. It also highlights how Pixar is more than just work for the employees, and that they have intrinsic motivation to carry out the festival (Grant & Berry, 2011). By facilitating for such activities, Pixar shows loyalty to their employees as they give them the freedom to create a festival based on interests outside of work. This finding supports the claim of O'Toole and Lawler (2006).

4.2. FINDING 2: Empowerment through commissioning employees' agency

4.2.1. Introduction

Our next category of findings is that the employees have the opportunity to make their own decisions in the workplace and act as independent individuals. The companies can enable this through commissioning agency. By this, we mean that the employees experience freedom in the workplace enabled through organisational structures. Even though all three of the companies we looked at have focused on this area, they have found different ways, from re-structuring their entire companies to organising activities. We have divided this finding into two sub-findings: a) creating room to play and b) making it personal.

4.2.2. Finding 2a: Creating room to play

Giving employees the freedom and room to play have been visible in all three companies in different forms. In Zappos, empowerment is provided through self-management systems, given that the employees have the skills and guts to act on it. In Bayer, a particular programme enables the employees to engage with innovation. In Pixar, each project starts with the goal of finding the individuals

that will work the most effectively together, and each team is further empowered to get their work done.

4.2.2.1. Finding 2a: Zappos

Zappos follow the practice of hiring slow and letting employees go quickly. Recruitment has shown to be an essential part of Zappos' unique culture. The company follow this strategy to ensure that the Zappos culture is safeguarded and brought on to the future. The goal is to find employees who want to be a part of the long-term vision, and not those who are only there for the paycheck. The call-centre employees should get a high enough intrinsic reward from helping their customers, so that leaving the salaries at the call centre to be below the industry standard is justified. This is a part of the Zappos strategy to sort out the committed employees. Finding the right people is a fundamental part of keeping the happy culture, and Hsieh believes that "the most productive employees worked for the rewards intrinsic in helping others" (Case, p. 7). The spirit of Zappos is to only hire happy people, and then keep them happy.

To make this happen, Zappos only hire 1% of their applicants, and look for specific personality traits and attitudes in the recruitment process. However, it is not only through particular standards that this is ensured. The recruitment process in Zappos is stated to be "more like a courtship than traditional recruitment" (Heathfield, 2019). Applicants are typically invited to several social events where they get to meet different teams to see if there is a cultural match. This allows employees to meet the potential employee in a less formal setting than in an interview. It can take months between the first meeting and an offer. Applicants are scored based on a cultural fit interview, and only if they pass these requirements, they will meet with a hiring manager. As an example, one applicant was invited to a bar and a variety of social events before she got the job after four months of screening (Heathfield, 2019).

After the training period, the whole department is invited to the newly required employees' graduation. Here, family and friends can witness the receiving of a diploma while music is being played. After the formal training, new employees also get an additional offer. If they quit, they will get paid for their time spent at the company and additionally \$3,000. This practice is called The Offer.

After the employees are hired, they will soon experience the unique organisational structures that are used. Zappos has implemented the self-management structure Holacracy. In addition to Holacracy, they have also implemented Teal, Market-Based Dynamics and The Triangle of Accountability. All these are different self-organisation and self-management tools. Tony Hsieh stated that “When cities double in size, they become 15% more productive, but when companies double in size, productivity declines” (Case, p. 9). Thus, Hsieh wanted the company to function more like a city and less like a top-down bureaucratic organisation. The idea was to “empower everyone to be entrepreneurial” (Case, p. 9), so that the employees could fully use their skills and work more effectively without bottlenecks created by bureaucracy.

The implementation of Holacracy was officially rolled out in the whole organisation in January 2014. Hsieh thought the implementation was too slow, and wanted to speed the process up. This resulted in an email to all the employees with an offer. The offer consisted of a choice to either continue to work for Zappos and embrace Holacracy, or quit and receive at least three months’ severance. The reason why the implementation rate escalated, was to ensure that the employees understood the importance of integrating Holacracy as not just a reorganisation tool, but as part of their intrinsic motivation and culture. This is again showing Zappos’ investments in quickly removing the employees that are not intrinsically motivated and culturally connected to the company.

The offer resulted in 14% of the workforce taking the proposal to quit the company. Frédéric Laloux, a former McKinsey consultant, commented on the implementation: “For people experiencing Self-Management for the first time, the ride can be bittersweet at first. With freedom comes responsibility. “...” Everybody needs to grow up and take full responsibility for their thoughts and actions—a steep learning curve for some people.” (Case, p. 10). As a part of the new self-management system, employees must also research their salary. In most companies, tasks regarding salary are the responsibility of the human resources department, while at Zappos, each employee must research to figure out how much they are worth. One reporter stated that “freedom came at a price” (Case, p. 10).

4.2.2.2. *Discussion 2a: Zappos*

Getting hired in Zappos demands that the potential employee fit well into the culture. After this extensive process, employees are trusted to be integrated into a system where freedom and self-management are of core importance. Through different self-management practices, Zappos demonstrate how vital empowerment is in their organisation.

Clearly, self-management is not for everyone, and by offering money to those who do not embrace it, Zappos can easily remove unmotivated people. We can witness a pattern, where they use external motivation, money, to remove the people who do not fit their model.

Further, self-management has enabled the organisation to give top-rated customer service. This shows how Zappos is very selective in their hiring process before trusting their employees deeply and giving them room to play. It should also be noted that Zappos shape their employees to fully understand and partake in their culture, as described in Finding 1a. We believe that Zappos use all these practices so that they first ensure that their employees will act within their cultural limits, and then allow them to act freely within these limits without any micro-managing.

This presents an interesting dynamic, where the employees are encouraged, and even forced, to take initiative and act as owners of Zappos while acting by the collective interest of the company. This fits very well with the best empowerment practice described by O'Toole and Lawler (2006). However, many of the employees quit their jobs during the transition period into Holacracy. Does this mean that they were not empowered, but rather the opposite and pressured out of the company?

Firstly, O'Toole and Lawler (2006) state that all employees should be empowered to achieve success. Thus, having 14% of employees leave the company does not seem like successful empowerment. However, implementing Holacracy was a transition period, and the rate of people quitting slowed down. The high number at the beginning of the process was likely to be triggered by the given time limit. Thus, we should instead see this process as part of their strategic practice of hiring slow and letting go quickly. The general idea is that only those who fit within

Zappos' culture should stay – and the prize is autonomy, through being able to make independent decisions.

This result is in accordance with the research by Ryan and Deci (2000), as this will lead to high-quality intrinsic motivation. The employees who choose to stay do so despite the externally motivated incentives to quit, such as easy money offered to leave both during the hiring process and during the implementation of Holacracy. They stay because they want to partake in Zappos' culture.

4.2.2.3. *Finding 2a: Bayer*

In Bayer, we discovered empowerment through employee-driven activities. To further involve the employees and facilitate for employee innovation, a package called the Catalyst Box is provided. The Catalyst Box is a programme that sets out to increase the chances of succeeding with launching an innovative idea. Up to 400 teams are in this programme at the time, and the goal is to come up with new products that can be launched. If they are successful, the teams will bring their ideas to the Catalyst fund.

The Catalyst Box is a physical box that consists of a pre-paid master card that the new employees can use related to innovation activities, welcome letters from other employees, and material for learning, through reading and writing material, as well as an online course provided via the box. It also consists of creative and perhaps even surprising content, such as a “bullshit buzzer”, a “bad ideas book”, a timer, and even snacks. The employees have the option to be followed up by mentors in Bayer if they need help (AFCE, n.d). Around 10% of the Catalyst Box projects end up being submitted to and approved by a jury, consisting of Innovation Ambassadors and Bayer leaders, that meets bi-annually (AFCE, n.d).

The goal of the Catalyst Box programme is that the employees will move through six levels, which is described as 1. Motivation., 2. Ideate, 3. Improve, 4. Experiment, 5. Iterate, and lastly, 6. Infiltrate. These levels are meant to give the employees an understanding of where in the process they are, from thinking of an idea to launching a product. The employees move from one level to another through assignments and experiments. They are free to do these tasks at their own pace, but most usually finish within three months. The teams can use up to four

months and get more funding if they have a more extensive idea. This idea needs to be approved by the jury. If it is approved, it is expected that the employees use around 10 hours every week on the project and that the project will end with a pitch to the relevant Bayer unit (AFCE, n.d).

4.2.2.4. *Discussion 2a: Bayer*

The Catalyst Box in Bayer is an example of how they give their employees freedom to experiment and launch their own ideas into self-driven projects, and that they trust their employees' decision-making even from when they are newly hired. Here we can see how trust in employees can result in innovative outcomes.

Through using the Catalyst Box, the employees quickly get involved with innovation. It is up to them how they want to apply the contents of it, and to what degree they want to get involved. Self-determination theory thus plays a role in this programme, as the need for autonomy is met (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Further, relatedness also plays an important role, as there is a whole network connected to the programme, through solving the tasks in teams and having access to both mentors and the jury (Gagné & Deci, 2005). It is noteworthy that motivation is described as the first of the six levels. This shows that Bayer views it as the fundament of this innovation programme.

The Catalyst Box programme can be described as a power tool. As in support of Spreitzer (2008), the content of the box and the network provided through the programme offers information, opportunities, support and resources. Information is provided through the material for learning and tasks related to the six levels. Opportunities are presented as everyone who participates can come up with and present their ideas to the jury, as long as they put in the work and effort. Support is given by the team members, other employees and mentors. Resources can be found physically within the box, such as the pre-paid master card. However, as stated by Eylon (1998), these power tools do not imply that all projects get launched, as the jury ultimately decides this. Nevertheless, the programme as a power tool helps the employees get more authority in the innovation process and access to launch their ideas, in support to Spreitzer (2008).

4.2.2.5. *Finding 2a: Pixar*

In Pixar, we discovered a culture where the emphasis is placed more on the team than on individuals. This strategy has resulted in the lowest employee turnover in the industry, as they have managed to build a higher level of trust, where lasting relationships matter. The main reason why Pixar use teams are to find good ideas. It takes many ideas to create successful movies, and by having an emphasis on teams, Pixar is allowing more ideas into each project. Further, the production of a movie is complex, and by letting people with different backgrounds and knowledge work together, teams are more robust to solve problems.

Each project starts with the goal of finding the individuals that will work effectively together. A team can consist of a writer, artists, storyboard people and a director where the goal is to find the combination of people that will function the best (Catmull, 2008). Each group is given a concrete mission and defined parameters, with the goal of finding creative solutions. Further, Pixar allow their teams to be driven by their creative passion. They also believe the best practice is to share all information with the teams and not tell people how to do their work. This way, all individuals feel ownership of even the smallest matters, and they keep the information in-house.

4.2.2.6. *Discussion 2a: Pixar*

This finding from Pixar shows how they encourage individual ownership while and through having the main focus on creating self-driven teams that act as autonomous problem solvers. By letting employees follow their inner drive, they can come up with great ideas to movies. In all the three firms, we can see how positive effects arise when a company trust their employees and facilitate self-drive and freedom.

We have found that each team is delegated shared responsibility and resources, and each individual plays an independent role in these teams, which supports the research by Conger & Kanungo (1988) and Spreitzer (2008). We also see that self-determination theory plays a part, as the core purpose of the teams is to create mutual trust where every employee is heard, and information is shared. This connects to the need for relatedness, as described by Gagne and Deci (2005). Further, Fernandez & Moldogaziev's (2012) theory is also supported through our

finding. When having the main focus on collaboration where power, information and resources are shared, the employees experience empowerment. This has some similarities to the organisational structure Holacracy. As in that finding, we have found that through putting the main focus on teams, the individuals in these groups are actually given more space and freedom.

4.2.3. Finding 2b: Making it personal

Another factor we noticed was how personalisation was encouraged in the organisations. This can be seen through cultural aspects such as decoration of offices and norms of dress codes. We have not found evidence that this is practised in Bayer, but will present our findings from Zappos and Pixar, and discuss them together.

4.2.3.1. Finding 2b: Zappos

Zappos encourage all their employees to show their individuality and personality at work, and contribute to creating a unique culture. Zappos want to “create fun and little weirdness” (Case, p. 11) at work. To make this happen, they need people to be less formal and share their weirdness.

The Zappos office is decorated to foster a less formal culture: a popcorn stand in the lobby, a bowling alley and bikes hanging from the ceiling. Further, leaders do not suit up, but instead they wear bunny ears to meetings and break out in dance. All members of Zappos are also encouraged to decorate their desks with personal items to make the workplace feel like home and a more fun place to be. To demonstrate the culture, all employees were asked to contribute in creating the core values of Zappos in 2006. As a result, the values have evolved to be the “way of life” for the Zappos family (Zappos, n.d-b).

4.2.3.2. Finding 2b: Pixar

In Pixar, employees are encouraged to foster their personal interests both by decorating their offices and by allowing their interests to develop. As for personal offices, employees can decorate their place freely. This is all to promote an atmosphere that fosters creativity (OfficeSnapshots, 2012). One office is decorated as a Western town, one has a Hawaii-theme, and the co-founder Lasseter’s office is filled up with toys (OfficeSnapshots, 2012). Lasseter stated

“...I’ve never seen a building that promoted collaboration and creativity as well as this one” (Miller, 2017). Further, by allowing individuality, the employees are encouraged to join different classes both inside and outside the company, so that they can learn more, chase their interests and grow as individuals. This is an action to keep the employees within the company (Sterling, 2018).

4.2.3.3. *Discussion: Zappos and Pixar*

Zappos and Pixar both create individuality amongst their employees by encouraging them to display their personal styles and decorations. Through these physical and visible statements, personal freedom and individuality become part of the cultural environment. By facilitating individuality, diversity and creativity can unfold. It should also be noted that once again, Zappos use the strategy of ensuring that their employees fit properly into their culture by being selective in their hiring process, and then shaping their employees, before allowing them to make their workplace personal.

This finding is in accordance with O’Toole and Lawler’s research (2006). The companies allow and encourage their employees to take initiatives on their own, and find their own ways to do things in the workplace. This empowerment will lead to more creativity according to O’Toole and Lawler (2006), which means that an empowerment-creativity loop is created. The employees are encouraged to be creative, which leads to them feeling empowered. Additionally, by being given the physical and mental space of being themselves, the employees also feel meaning about their work, as there is a closer fit between their personality at work and outside of it, which further empowers the employees as described by Spreitzer (2008). This will further lead them to become even more creative. We consider the high level of engagement and enthusiasm from the employees in both Zappos and Pixar as proof that such a loop is created.

4.3. FINDING 3: Empowerment through ways of communicating

4.3.1. Introduction

Our third, and last finding, include empowerment as ways of communicating. During our analysis, we discovered that communication was an essential part of

the companies' innovation strategies. As a part of facilitating communication, we found that different communication tools and platforms are made available for the employees in the firms. The employees are critical resources, and by facilitating for open communication, the companies have managed to use their ideas, share success stories and work together to find the best solutions.

4.3.1.1. *Finding 3: Zappos*

In Zappos, they have different software for communication, tracking of results and coaching. This allows everyone to follow other departments to work continuously (R. J. Thomas & Silverstone, 2015). The software is available for all employees where they can store and share documents and information. Further, the systems are built so everyone can give and get feedback from others in the company. In one of their platforms, Glass Frog, everyone is encouraged to store documents public, so it is available for everyone in-house (R. J. Thomas & Silverstone, 2015).

Furthermore, communication is an integral part of Zappos' culture. Hsieh had in the earlier days been one of the first CEOs to use the micro-blogging platform Twitter. Here, he witnessed how customers enjoyed transparency. Hsieh wanted to bring the same openness as Twitter offers into the call centre, so that people could feel a more personal connection. To do so, they rely heavily on their call centre customer service, the "principal point of contact for all customers". Even though Zappos have access to larger IT systems, they do not want to replace their human touch and personal interactions. At their websites, a phone number is listed on top of each page. Each person at the customer centre has the authority to stretch as far as needed to help the customer, for example by staying on the telephone line for many hours with a customer who wants to talk.

4.3.1.2. *Discussion: Zappos*

In Zappos, employees are empowered through the use of power tools as described by Conger and Kanungo (1988) and Spreitzer (2008). Access to tools where employees can communicate and get coaching also supports the self-determination theory by Ryan and Deci (1985). Further, the software tools are used to get feedback and keep transparency in the organisation. As a feedback system, the tools provide easy access to learning and communication, and build on

the need for competence and relatedness in the self-determination theory (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Notably, employees are encouraged to have public documents. This is meant to offer transparency and democracy; however, this could be an obstacle for the employees as privacy is lower. Here, transparency could also be a method of control from the organisation's side. We do not have enough data to state the fact, but if this is the case, it would not be in correlation with the self-determination theory (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Transparency is also used in customer contact, and employees are empowered "to stretch as far as needed" to help the customer. This supports the claims of O'Toole and Lawler (2006) as empowerment contributes to outstanding customer service. Furthermore, it creates a type of relationship between the employees at customer service and the customer, and thus meets the need for relatedness (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985).

4.3.1.3. *Finding 3: Bayer*

In Bayer, they have created several different communication tools. WeSolve was launched in 2014 and is the innovation initiative that most employees in Bayer are participating in. Bayer created the platform WeSolve to engage their large workforce, by allowing their employees to engage and share ideas. WeSolve was launched as a solution from the management in Bayer to cover the gap between internal problems and solutions, and to use knowledge and competency resources in the company more efficiently.

WeSolve functions as an online portal and can be described as a mixture of an internal website and a social media platform. WeSolve was an improved version of Bayer's previous digital idea portal. This platform did not succeed, as the employees in Bayer felt like it lacked direction, and that no one was following up their contributions (Birkinshaw, De Diego, Lessl, Trill, & Hitzbleck, 2019 Trill, & Hitzbleck, 2019).

WeSolve-Quickfire was launched as an addition to WeSolve and part of the general WeSolve strategy. WeSolve-Quickfire functions like WeSolve, but for

posts that are meant to be answered and solved during one workday. Employees can share problems and challenges in their jobs, and get helpful feedback from other employees from all over the world. The employee with the problem can then try some of the solutions, and also have the opportunity to choose and follow up any other solutions which they also find helpful in some way. The employees report which solutions they benefitted from, and Bayer reward the employees that suggested these solutions. Thus, being active and getting noticed on WeSolve can lead to external rewards.

Further, there are employees assigned as WeSolve Coaches, that encourage employees to post questions and responses, and ensure that the employees actively use WeSolve. Keeping up the WeSolve activity level is important for Bayer. For example, to motivate activity on the platform, a competitive challenge to post as much as possible was arranged. This low-threshold competition resulted in more than 50 pictures in two days. Overall, WeSolve has 36,000 registered users, who have posted more than 5,000 ideas and 250 challenges.

WeSolve is not the only communication tool that Bayer offer. Networking within and outside Bayer is something that the innovation management team has had a high focus on for the past years. Communication between internal and external parties are actively facilitated and funded by Bayer. Similar to the reasoning behind launching WeSolve, these networks set out to bridge the gap between internal problems with internal solutions, but also add external solutions. However, there are also examples of what seems like external issues, such as LEAP. Nevertheless, these fall under Bayer's business model, as they mainly manufacture agriculture and health products.

The network channel type, purpose and practice vary to some degree, but what they all have in common is that these initiatives bridge networks among and between both internal and external resources.

<i>Table 2. Overview of Communication Platforms in Bayer</i>			
Initiative	Network type	Connection purpose	Connection practice
Fast session	Internal	Create new ideas and solutions to real business issues	Quick and informal workshops consisting of approximately five employees, discussing a specific problem raised by one of the group members, followed up by a support session between the problem owner and an Innovation Coach
YOUiverse	Internal	Give a coherent and holistic overview of innovation in Bayer to the employees	Digital platform available for all Bayer employees where all innovation initiatives are made accessible, through their innovation framework. 35,000 employees are using the platform
Street teams	Internal	Inform and engage Bayer employees to partake in innovation activities	Up to 20 Bayer employees in the US learn about and communicate the innovation initiatives to other employees
Catalyst fund	Internal	Find new business opportunities, and encourage an innovative mindset among employees	Offering support and funding pilot projects, using Lean start-up principles. Launched through the Innovation Ambassador network
LEAP	External	Solve the global issues related to health and agriculture, through finding undiscovered solutions	Offering support and funding science in promising health and agriculture companies, using venture capital principles
Ventures team	External	Establish products and networks	Create companies that are either implemented in Bayer or LEAP

Intelligence team	External	Establish and contribute to global health innovation networks	Find and connect with innovative individuals and institutions in Silicon Valley, Tel Aviv, Singapore, Shanghai, and Berlin
LifeHubs	External	Explore creative ideas, brainstorming, discuss innovation, and test prototypes	Bi-monthly meetings between Bayer employees, and individuals and institutions, arranged by Bayer
G4A	External	Establish digital health products and networks	Start-ups send in their solutions to a digital problem posted on the G4A website, followed by funding and mentoring from Bayer employees, with the potential of going into partnership. The start-ups can be both pre-launch and mature
Dealmaker	External	Establish health products and networks	Mature start-ups send in their solutions to a complicated problem posted on the G4A website, followed by a brainstorming session between Bayer employees and the start-up, with the potential of going into partnership
Accelerator	External	Accelerate health products and networks	This is part of the G4A programme. For 100 days, a few start-ups are handpicked to get funding and advice from Bayer employees

Collected from: (Birkinshaw et al., 2019), (Bump, 2018), (verdier, n.d), (G4A, n.d), (Bayer, n.d-d), (Bayer, n.d-b) and (Bayer, 2018).

Innovation Days are events arranged by local teams around the world and take place several times every year in Bayer. More than 5,000 people have attended the Innovation Days, and it has been arranged in twenty countries (Innovation.at.Bayer, 2018). The activation of employees during the Innovation Days are meant to activate them to come up with innovative solutions in their

usual business everyday life. It is also essential that employees' awareness and understanding of innovation is increased to enable them to succeed in this field.

Storytelling is also a feature that is used on Innovation Days, but also as an independent activity. Both the Innovation Days and the storytelling practice are also shared with external participants and stakeholders, as part of Bayer's innovation eco-system philosophy (Bayer.Sverige, 2019). The activities follow a generic structure, that includes that the employees are activated, through innovation and talk contests, feedback sessions, and play and fun, such as gymnastics (Innovation.at.Bayer, 2018). The end of the Innovation Day includes that the employees are registered in the innovation portal. The Storytelling stories are shared by and to fellow employees, and include the innovative practices that have been both successful and unsuccessful. These stories encourage the employees to be open about and embrace both their own successes and failures, as well as their employee experiences (Bayer, n.d-e) (Bayer, n.d-d).

4.3.1.4. Discussion: Bayer

Bayer's forms of both digital and face-to-face platforms are examples of how they are making communication between different parties possible. People working in Bayer or relevant areas are connected from all over the world through Bayer's initiatives. Bayer have a significant focus on allowing employees to meet in a more creative and open setting, and encouraging them to share honest stories and thoughts.

Their communication tools can be directly translated as power tools, which is in accordance with Spreitzer (2008). Information, opportunity, support and resources are made accessible through the sharing platforms, both at an internal and external level. Examples include that YOUNiverse and Street teams offer information about innovation to employees. Innovation opportunities are provided through the Ventures team, Intelligence team and Dealmaker. Employees experience support from each other, seniors, and their network by participating in initiatives such as Fast session and LifeHubs. Resources, mainly financial, are accessible through G4A, Accelerator, Catalyst fund and LEAP. It should be noted that these power tools have overlaps.

WeSolve offers all four power tools through its function, and can thus be argued to be the communication platform that has the most significant effect on most employees. It is the communication tool that most employees participate in using, and it is also a contributor to filling the need for relatedness, as described by Deci and Ryan (1985). WeSolve enables an easily accessible community, with the goal of enabling innovation as the core centre of this community, which corresponds with Gagne and Deci (2005).

However, we see some contradictions to self-determination theory in our finding. WeSolve's reward system is based on external incentives. Participating is not only based on the satisfaction of participating. The WeSolve programme is dependent on coaches that encourage and monitor employees' activity level, indicating that the satisfaction of participating is only temporary. This corresponds well with Ryan and Deci's (2000) research that new incentives are necessary to keep the motivation high when it is based on extrinsic rewards. Still, WeSolve is also driven by volunteering, curiosity and enthusiasm, which demonstrates intrinsic motivation (Grant & Berry, 2011). Thus, we cannot conclude that WeSolve is solely or strictly connected to either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation alone.

4.3.1.5. *Finding 3: Pixar*

Pixar also have tools for facilitating communication. Here, Braintrust is an internal think-tank, where open-minded discussions can take place. Braintrust consists of meetings concerning a new movie's storytelling (Catmull, 2014b). The goal is that the meetings lead to the director finding better solutions for upcoming movies (Catmull, 2014b).

The meetings take place several times during the year (Catmull, 2014b). They consist of the director, the writers and heads of story, and other relevant participants for the movie production. A large meeting consists of 35 people (Catmull, 2014b). The brainstorming sessions are called into by the director and producer of the movie when they feel like they need help in their creative processes. The meeting starts with some food and mingling (Catmull, 2014b). Then, during the meeting, the director and producer will show their work, for example a clip from the movie-in-progress. This is followed by a two-hour brainstorming session,

where all participants of the meeting share their thoughts about what improvements can be made.

A manager of the meeting has the job of securing that everyone attending the meeting gets to speak their opinion. The director is the only decision-maker of the meeting, and can decide what to do with the advice he or she is given. Pixar believes this liberates and gives more trust to the employees participating, and makes it easier for them to be honest and active in the meetings (Catmull, 2008). Even though the top leaders of Pixar usually attend these meetings, they do not lead the meeting or get to say more than the other employees, and the goal is that everyone who attends the meeting is equally listened to by the director (Prokesch, 2008).

There are several smaller Braintrust-like groups, made specifically for each movie. These have the same goal as Braintrust, but consist of different people, and is tailored for each director and movie. The participants in these meetings can be from anywhere on the corporate ladder. However, it is required that they can provide useful feedback and inspiring thoughts on-demand (Catmull, 2014b). To secure open-minded discussions and successful brainstorming, all authority is removed from the group sessions (FRR, n.d).

Additionally, when designing the headquarter of Pixar, Steve Jobs hired the famous designer Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, who had designed Bill Gates Washington's residential compound. Jobs wanted the office to "promote encounter and unplanned collaboration" (OfficeSnapshots, 2012). This was done by placing the restrooms and cafes in the centre of the building. An employee stated that "the environment was designed that encouraged these chance collisions where people could bump into each other and exchange different ideas" (Sterling, 2018). Further, the company tried to avoid rectangular tables in the meeting rooms to eliminate the hierarchy. The headquarter includes different rooms for workshops, storyboards, a massive render farm and an orchestra. The employees are also welcome to enjoy the company's swimming pool, jogging trail, basketball and volleyball court. Outside of the headquarter, one can witness the many characters from the movies in all sizes.

4.3.1.6. *Discussion: Pixar*

In Pixar, open communication is vital. Here, Braintrust is used as a power tool, as described by Spreitzer (2008), to facilitate resources in terms of creating an open space for discussions and feedback. As the directors or producers call into these meetings, it shows humility and humbleness as they ask the lower levels of the organisation for help. By starting the sessions with food and mingling, Pixar facilitates for relaxed discussions where it is easier to share one's thoughts. Further, they are ensuring that everyone gets to say their opinion by having a manager of the meeting. This is an extra effort to empower everyone in the meetings and show how everyone's ideas are equally important, regardless of their title and position in the company. In the smaller Braintrust meeting, all authority is removed, to again, secure equivalence. These ideas support the findings of Spreitzer (2008).

Braintrust meetings must have an interactive face-to-face form. By creating physical meeting places where the employees get to know each other and meet more often, communication between employees from different departments and positions is made accessible and encouraged. As Pixar facilitate communication, they contribute to fulfilling the basic needs of both competence and relatedness in the self-determination theory (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985) through the meetings.

Additionally, the architecture of Pixar is designed to create innovation through collaboration. The "collisions where people could bump into each other" support the need for relatedness (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985). Architecture to eliminate hierarchy also supports the claims of Spreitzer (2008), as they function as a power tool because they give the lower levels in the organisation more authority. The additional facilities, such as swimming pools and jogging trails, are further operating as extrinsic motivation for the employees (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This show how Pixar facilitate a community for their employees and thus support the self-determination theory (Edward L. Deci & Ryan, 1985) in terms of relatedness.

4.4. Implications

Our findings do, to a high degree, agree with existing theories. Rather than challenging them, we are adding new aspects and reflections to them. In all our findings, we see examples of different types of long-term organisational commitment practices that are potentially empowering employees for innovation. However, we have not shown directly what kinds of innovations these have led to. These organisations are innovative, and they are all described in these cases as successful innovators. Our findings indicate that these types of long-term organisational commitment practice can be important for empowering employees. All three companies have examples of how empowerment gives more room or space to be creative, and thus establish a foundation for more innovation. We point to this relation, which is in accordance with Grant and Berry (2011)'s study on creativity, where employees who are both intrinsically and pro-socially motivated are more creative as they are able to take the perspective of others. This also supports Tidd and Bessant (2018)'s research on innovation processes in organisations, and Zhang and Bartol (2010)'s research that link empowerment to creative processes among employees.

When it comes to similarities and differences between the three cases, we noticed that Finding 1, 2 and 3 are especially closely related to the need for competence, autonomy and relatedness, respectively. This held true, regardless of which company we focused on. However, within each finding, we saw that the companies had weighted the importance of the self-determination theory needs differently. Zappos and Pixar have prioritised quite similarly, with their main focus on building competence and autonomy. However, Pixar also have more initiatives that are directed at relatedness, while Zappos have a deeper focus on autonomy. Bayer's main focus is on covering the need for relatedness.

The reason why we see the difference between Zappos and Pixar compared to Bayer, could be that Zappos and Pixar are more similar in size. Both companies are also American, while Bayer is a European and much older company. Thus, culture could play a part. Still, we believe that the main reason for the patterns we see, is due to the reasons for why innovation is shaped. Zappos and Pixar want independent employees that use creativity. Zappos want to use creativity to establish new business models, while Pixar want to use creativity to make exciting

stories. Thus, innovation is perhaps rather a consequence of creativity. Bayer, on the other hand, use innovation to find new technological and more efficient solutions.

We discovered that these types of long-term organisational commitment practices are potentially empowering employees for innovation and enabling different types of motivations to take initiative and engage, with the main focus on intrinsic motivation. Also, this seems more possible when employees are given the resources needed, such as autonomy, competence, and relationships with other people to act out this motivation. Altogether, this potentially gives the employees the opportunity to act with more self-efficacy. The three companies we have looked at do this with the goal of increasing innovation. However, we see no indication that these types of organisational commitment practices will not work in regards to achieving other objectives as well, such as increasing profits. Still, we believe that innovation as an objective and an outcome of empowerment is shown to be a powerful and effective dynamic through our research. We believe that this also strengthens the existing theory in the field.

These findings support the existing theory, as mentioned above. What our research offers is a clearer picture of how organisations actually commit to their employees as long-term practices, and these practices can also be facilitating employee empowerment for innovation-oriented processes. Among other things, we discovered their practice of hiring, training and developing employees with high intrinsic motivation, where the goal is to create self-driven employees. Our main contributions to the existing theory are these rich descriptions of organisational practices that function as sources of long-term commitment that we illustrate as practices that can facilitate employee empowerment. We believe that these findings are especially impactful for researchers within motivation theory.

4.5. Limitations and Further Research

The findings in this thesis contribute to the theories within empowerment and motivation. However, there is a need to address the limitations in this qualitative study and the need for further research.

Firstly, our collection of data is collected from cases generated by others and secondary data. We have, to the best of our ability, evaluated and verified our data, but it should be noted that this is a factor that could influence the trustworthiness of the study. Our data are also based on the observations of different observers, which can impact reliability.

Secondly, we have not been able to interview the employees to collect data associated with psychological effects. This lack of data is a significant implication, as our study is not able to investigate the theories to the fullest. This means we were not able, as an example, to investigate the employees' perception of self-efficacy or whether they identified empowerment as a part of their identity at work.

Thirdly, our data is not selected randomly. We searched for cases that could contribute to answering our research question. Thus, the data is conducted through a non-probability sampling, and this influence the generalisation of the study.

Finally, it should be noted that we used selective coding as a method to generate our findings. This method may affect the outcomes and trustworthiness of the study.

Further studies should take psychological effects, such as employees' feelings and thoughts into account, to get a richer understanding of employee empowerment. Additionally, it would be interesting to investigate whether the empowerment practices we have looked at will work in regards to achieve other objectives as well. The companies' cultures would also be an interesting aspect to look deeper into. It would also be interesting to apply a quantitative method in future studies.

5. PART V: CONCLUSION

In this thesis, we have investigated how organisational commitment practices potentially empower employees for innovation. We started our thesis by describing the context of the research question and the companies we have studied: Zappos, Bayer and Pixar. Next, we looked into theories of empowerment and motivation. Here, we explored several studies, but with a focus on Spreitzer's research on empowerment, and the self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan.

In our methodology, we presented our inductive approach and qualitative research method. Further, our complete analysis process was described through seven phases that took place simultaneously.

In part four, we presented our findings and answered to our research question: *How do organisational commitment practices empower employees for innovation?* Our findings included (1) *empowerment through employee training*, (2) *empowerment through commissioning employees' agency* and (3) *empowerment through ways of communicating*. These findings are different examples of long-term commitment practices that empower employees for innovation. Our study revealed that the organisations motivate their employees to be self-driven for innovation, with their main focus on encouraging intrinsic motivation, and through giving training, resources and support to act out this motivation.

The constraint of the data connected to psychological effects has limited our ability to investigate the theories thoroughly. Nevertheless, our results support the theories of the field and do also add new aspects and reflections. The practice of hiring and developing employees with high intrinsic motivation, where the goal is to create self-driven employees, is an exciting contribution to the theory of motivation. Further, our research offers a richer understanding of how organisations commit to their employees as long-term practices that also facilitate for employee empowerment and innovation-oriented processes.

We would like to finish this thesis with a recommendation to organisations and leaders. Employees with intrinsic motivation, combined with the tools to act it out, can be a powerful resource. Each employee can make a difference, even in larger companies as Bayer. We thus encourage not to undermine, but rather include employees from all organisational levels in the innovation process, as they can be a vital resource to establish a foundation for more innovation.

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