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“Can project managers signature strengths enhance project team resilience, and if so, how?”

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this thesis is to explore the relationship between signature strengths and the development and strengthening of resilience in teams within a project setting. More specifically, this thesis investigates whether project managers can use signature strengths to enhance project team resilience, and if so, how?

Design/methodology/approach: Theories within positive psychology and project management will be used as a framework in this thesis. In particular, Peterson and Seligman's (2004) framework on character strengths and virtues are used as a framework in the data analysis in order to identify the project manager's signature strengths. It has been employed a qualitative approach and used a case study design to explore the research question.

Subject: Positive organizational psychology, with a primary focus on signature strengths and resilience within a project setting.

Originality/value: The study contributes to increased knowledge on whether project managers signature strengths can enhance project team resilience. To our knowledge, there is no comprehensive research done on the impact of signature strengths on resilience. In relation to "how" project managers can use their signature strengths to enhance project team resilience the importance of psychological ownership is identified.

Findings: The signature strengths leadership, open-mindedness, persistence, social intelligence, forgiveness and hope are found to fosterer the project manager's resilience. Further, managers, through their behavior, can affect how the team members behave and react to challenges. Hence, increase project teams resilience. In addition, the signature strengths open-mindedness and leadership could through affecting the team members feeling of psychological ownership, result in increased resilience in project teams.

Keywords: signature strengths, positive psychology, psychological ownership, project management, project teams, resilience.

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1.0 Introduction

In organizations today, project-based work has become a common way of working (Lindgren, Packendorff, & Sergi, 2014). Project teams are, based on their nature, under a great deal of pressure to finish tasks that are characterized as difficult, complex, and uncertain (Lindgren et al., 2014). Additionally, all organizations will experience some difficulties or crises (Sommer, Howell, & Hadle, 2015). Sommer et al. (2015) argue that organizational crises now occur more frequently and they are more complicated than ever. The employees' abilities to remain resilient have therefore become an increasing concern for researchers and practitioners (Sommer et al., 2015). The characteristics of project-based work, such as for instance, their short deadlines, and the need to balance between not sacrificing the cost and quality, at the expense of the projects deadlines (Berg & Karlsen, 2007), and the increase in organizational crises, enhances the importance of having resilient organizational members (Sommer et al., 2015). Resilience refers to "the maintenance of positive adjustment under challenging conditions" (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003, p. 95). The existing research on resilience is mainly focused on the resilience of individuals (Cooper, Flint-Taylor, & Pearn, 2013) and there is according to Sommer et al. (2015) there are few research studies on the development of resilience in teams. This is in line with, Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003), who state that group researchers have not directly examined resilience in a group setting.

Resilience is viewed as a psychological resource, and according to Luthans, Avolio, Avey, and Norman (2007), resilience is part of psychological capital (PsyCap). PsyCap is in turn part of positive organizational scholarship (POS), which is the organizational equivalent to positive psychology (Caza & Cameron, 2008). According to Gable and Haidt (2005 p. 104), "positive psychology is the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions". Caza and Cameron (2008) argue that most of the POS research has been directed towards explaining traditional "non-POS" organizational outcomes, like profit and retention. This thesis investigates project team resilience, and thus it focuses on a specific POS-outcome.

According to Berg and Karlsen (2014) there is little empirical research done on positive psychology in project management. Signature strengths, which

are part of positive psychology, are those character strengths that are the most central to a person's identity (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Linley (2008, p. 9) defines strengths as "a pre-existing capacity for a particular way of behaving, thinking, or feeling that is authentic and energizing to the user, and enables optimal functioning, development, and performance". Using signature strengths has been associated with improved goal progress (Linley, Nielsen, Gillett, & Biswas-Diener, 2010), increased wellbeing (Forest, Mageau, Crevier-Braud, Bergeron, Dubreuil, & Lavigne, 2012; Govindji & Linley, 2007), and positive experience at work (Harzer & Ruch, 2012).

Over the last decades there has been a large amount of research regarding how different leadership styles (e.g. Bass & Avolio, 1994; Men & Stacks, 2013) and leadership behavior (e.g. Einarsen, Aasland, & Skogstad, 2007; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008) affect organizational outcomes. Nevertheless, the relationship between signature strengths and resilience has not been given particular attention in research studies. Seligman (2011) who is referred to as the father of positive psychology recognizes optimism as a key strength in relation to the development of resilience. He argues that studies have found that individuals that do not quit after they have undergone a setback possess the ability to view setbacks as something that that is possible to change, thus they believe that they are in control of their environment. In line with this view, Fredrickson (2003) argues that positive emotions, such as optimism and hope, have the possibility to change individuals for the better, and making them more socially well connected, more optimistic, and more resilient. However, there still need for more empirical investigation into on the impact of signature strengths on resilience. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to examine and gain insights into signature strengths, which all leaders possess regardless of leadership style, in relation to the development of project team members resilience. The aim of this master thesis is to contribute to this field by investigating:

"Can project managers signature strengths enhance project team resilience, and if so, how?"

We will use a qualitative case study design to explore this research question, and Peterson and Seligman's (2004) framework on character strengths and virtues will

be employed in the data analysis as a framework, in order to identify the project manager's signature strengths.

2.0 Theoretical Background

2.1 Project Management

According to Kerzner (2013, p. 4) “project management is the planning, organizing, directing and controlling of company resources for a relatively short-term objective that has been established to complete specific goals and objectives”. In a small way project managers have the same tasks as any other manager. They control, and motivate their team members, make schedules, and are in charge of the project planning. What makes them unique is that their management is short-termed and they manage activities that are non-repetitive. Differing from functional managers who manage pre-existing processes, the project managers put together a project team to handle operations that have not previously existed. Instead of just managing established operations, they have to choose what needs to be done and also how to do it. Additionally, project managers have to face the challenges put forward by the different phases of the project, and also manage the termination of the project (Kernzer, 2013). In addition, it is the project managers who are responsible for the project's performance, and they have make sure that they make the right trade-offs between the project outputs cost, time, and quality (Larson & Gray, 2010). Project-based work is “the organization of work into distinct, complex tasks limited in time and scope” (Lindgren et al., 2014, p. 1385). When certain work task are framed as projects, these tasks are converted into elements that are possible to manage and separate from everyday work routines and consequently they may be subject to rational planning, observation, and control (Lindgren et al., 2014). The reason for projects existence is their ability to produce deliverables. The person who is chosen as the project manager may have been chosen based on the nature, size, and the extent of the deliverables. Deliverables refer to outputs or the finished result of the completion of the project (Kernzer, 2013).

Project teams are under a great deal of pressure to finish tasks that are characterized as difficult, complex, and uncertain. In addition, these tasks often have short deadlines and the project teams are under a great deal of pressure to

not sacrifice the cost and quality, at the expense of the projects deadlines (Berg & Karlsen, 2007). According to Lindgren et al. (2014) projects are not viewed as bold enough if they run smoothly without crises and disturbances. Managing projects is a complex task, and the project manager has to handle a number of different issues, concerning both the technical aspect, and also the human aspect of the project. Thus, the project manager has to deal with matters such as planning, strategy, finance, teamwork, communication, and culture etc. (Berg & Karlsen, 2007). There is little empirical research done on positive psychology in project management (Berg & Karlsen, 2014) and based on the increased use of projects in today's organizations (Lindgren et al, 2014), this is an important area of research.

2.2 Positive Psychology

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi published in 2000 an article about positive psychology, which resulted in what Gable and Haidt (2005) refer to as a positive psychology movement. By that they mean that since then numerous of articles have been published, many conferences have been held, and so on regarding the area of positive psychology. However, as Gable and Haidt (2005) points out, it is important to be aware that positive psychology can be traced back to long before Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's article, for example as early as 1902 where Williams James wrote about "healthy mindedness". In addition, Maslow (1954) is known for being the first to use the term "positive psychology". However, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) argue that traditional psychology have since WWII mainly been focusing on human pathology and what is wrong with people (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi; Cameron & Dutton, 2003). Seligman, Steen, Park, and Peterson (2005) states that positive psychology is used as an umbrella term for the study of positive character traits, positive emotions and enabling institutions, where the focus is on building positive qualities (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) like resilience, thriving, strengths, and flourishing (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman et al., 2005; Donaldson & Ko, 2010). According to Peterson (2006) positive psychology is comprised of three pillars. *Positive subjective experience* is the first, and some examples of the concepts included in this pillar are flow, happiness, positive emotions, hope, and optimism. *Positive traits* are

the second pillar, and this includes creativity, interests, character strengths, purpose, and meaning. The third pillar, *positive institutions*, is comprised of positive families, communities, and organizations. Peterson (2006) argues that it is the third pillar, positive institutions, that enable the first and second pillar, positive subjective experience and positive traits, to foster human flourishing. As positive psychology is an umbrella term for the whole field of positive psychology we find it useful to narrow it down. Since we will explore how project managers can use their signature strengths to enhance project teams resilience, the context is narrowed down to the organizational. Therefore, it is natural to focus on positive organizational psychology (POP), which is positive psychology with a focus on work and organizational related issues (Donaldson & Ko, 2010).

2.3 Positive Organizational Psychology

There is not a clear definition for POP, and as a result several definitions and labels are used (Donaldson & Ko, 2010; Luthans, 2002). Donaldson and Ko (2010, p. 178) define POP as “the scientific study of positive subjective experiences and traits in the workplace and positive organizations, and its application to improve the effectiveness and quality of life in organizations”. The concept of positive organizational psychology has been researched under labels such as positive psychology at work, and the positive organization (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). For instance, the purpose of Froman’s (2010) article was to find connections between the workplace and ideas from positive psychology. Furthermore, the important role that positive emotions, and the associated psychological processes play in helping individuals to cope with stress and uncertainty are examined.

Positive organizational psychology is used as an umbrella term that covers both positive organizational scholarship (POS) and positive organizational behavior (POB) (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). According to Donaldson and Ko (2010) POS and POB both share a common root in positive psychology. However, they differ in their main topics of interest, their level of analysis, and how much the emphasis is on improvement of performance (Donaldson & Ko, 2010).

2.4 Positive Organizational Scholarship & Positive Organizational Behavior

The main belief behind positive organizational scholarship (POS) is to understand the mechanisms of positive behavior at work that will contribute to achieving better organizational outcomes (Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, & Quinn, 2005; Berg & Karlsen, 2014). Key ingredients of POS include: positive meaning, positive emotions, and positive relations. Positive emotions have for instance been suggested, since the 1980's, by among others Lazarus and Folkman (1984), to provide a critical psychological time-out and to be an important coping mechanism, for individuals that are in a stressful situation (Ong, Bergman, Bisconi, & Wallace, 2006).

Positive organizational behavior (POB) is defined as “the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace” (Luthans, 2002, p. 59). The focus of POB is on state-like psychological resources and capabilities. Hence, these are considered to be possible to develop and change (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). Resilience, optimism and efficacy are some examples of POB capacities (Donaldson & Ko, 2010).

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is a concept that describes the core POB resources that influence people's behavior (Avolio, Griffith, Wernsing, & Walumwa, 2010). Psychological capital is by Luthans et al. (2007, p. 542) defined as “an individual's positive psychological state of development”. According to Luthans et al. (2007) PsyCap is characterized by that a person has confidence (self-efficacy) in dealing with a task, and put in the needed effort to succeed with a difficult task. Further, it is concerned with that the person both in the present and the future makes positive attributions (optimism) about succeeding. The person also needs to be persevering towards goals, and when it is necessary needs to be able to redirect paths (hope) to achieve success. Lastly, when it occurs problems and difficulties, the person needs to be able to bounce both back and beyond (resilience) to attain success (Luthans et al., 2007).

Avey, Avolio, Crossley and Luthans (2009) argue that, while psychological ownership has not previously been viewed as related to positive organizational behavior, they propose that it may be conceptualized a positive psychological resource. Psychological ownership is a concept defined by Pierce,

Kostova and Dirks (2003, p. 86) “as the state in which individuals feel as though the target of ownership or a piece of that target is “their” [...] and it reflects an individual’s awareness, thoughts, and beliefs regarding the target of ownership”. While ownership in general is felt towards objects, it may also be experienced towards non-physical things like inventions, ideas, and thoughts (Pierce, Kostova, & Dirks, 2001). Psychological ownership has been acknowledged as potentially being a very important organizational phenomenon (Pierce et al., 2001). For instance, Vandewalle, Van Dye, and Kostova (1995) found that psychological ownership was significantly associated with commitment, job satisfaction, and extra role behavior. Additionally, Pierce et al. (2001) propose that a sense of psychological ownership will be followed by a sense of responsibility. Included in this feeling of responsibility is an obligation to devote time and energy, and to be protective, caring, and nurturing. The researchers argue that organizations might profit from psychological ownership, since it results in experienced responsibility, protectiveness, and stewardship (Pierce et al., 2001). Another example is Peters (1988, cited in O’driscoll, Pierce & Coghlan, 2006, p. 389) who proposed that an increased feeling of psychological ownership “contributed to Harley-Davidson’s rising from the near ashes of bankruptcy”.

Regarding the question of whether it is possible to facilitate for the development of psychological ownership, Pierce et al. (2001) suggests that there are three “roots” whereby psychological ownership develops within the organizational setting. The first root of psychological ownership is controlling the target. The second is coming to know the target of ownership intimately, while the third is investing the self into the target. Further, Pierce et al. (2001) believe that though it is not possible for managers to manipulate the roots of psychological ownership, they can create the qualities of the targets of ownership, by making the attractive, accessible, and visible, which ought to increase the possibility for ownership. In addition managers can also target the three routes that lead to psychological ownership. They can for instance structure the work in a way that there is an increased opportunity for the employees to practice control over the various targets, they can produce intimate knowledge of the different targets, facilitate for close and frequent involvement with the targets, and make it possible for the employees to invest themselves in the targets (Pierce et al., 2001).

2.5 Resilience

As seen, resilience is an important concept within psychological capital. The increased frequency of organizational crisis, and the increased use of project-based work in organizations (Sommer et al., 2015; Lindgren et al., 2014) have led to the importance of organizational members' resilience (Sommer et al., 2015). Resilience is according to Luthans et al. (2006) a part of psychological capital (PsyCap), along side with optimism, hope, and self-efficacy. According to Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003, p. 95) "resilience refers to the maintenance of positive adjustment under challenging conditions". Moreover, West, Patera, and Carsten (2009, p. 253) define resilience as "an adaptive system which enables an individual to rebound or "bounce back" from a setback or failure". It is argued by Coutu (2002) that it is individuals' level of resilience that determines who fails and who are successful, and that this level of resilience is a more robust predictor in comparison to training, education, and experience. This will be the case in all situations for all people, thus it ranges from the cancer patient, the Olympics performer, and the leader in a boardroom (Coutu, 2002). When replicating previous research, Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh, and Larkin (2003) found that the trait resilience, which in itself may be viewed as a psychological resource, was related to a wide range of various psychological benefits in both everyday life and when handling crisis. People that are high on trait resilience have a set of traits in common, that are related to human affects. They are high in extraversion and openness and these are combined with low scores in neuroticism. This in turn makes them predisposed toward positive affectivity. Resilience is also related to a large number of other psychological resources, such as optimism, life satisfaction, and serenity. These are lasting psychological resources than can be used over and over again when people react to their changing environments (Fredrickson et al., 2003).

There have been identified three concrete strategies for organizations to strengthen the resilience of their employees (Froman, 2010). As a starting point, organizations should invest in a supportive work environment, so that the employees feel that they have support from their supervisor and coworkers. This again affects the employee's organizational commitment and job satisfaction in a positive way. Secondly, organizations should nurture a culture characterized by trust and ethical consideration. If the organization succeeds in this, then their

culture will be in support of including the employees in the organization's decision-making process. Thirdly, organizations should invest in their social- and human capital, such as training and development programs. They should also invest resources in a team-based organizational design that supports the relationship between the employees and that promote cooperative learning (Froman, 2010).

At the team level, resilience helps teams with their ability to recover when they have setbacks, failures, or experience conflicts. This capacity to recover also applies to any other threats to the team's welfare (West et al., 2009). Resilience is not absolute, but rather something that is relative. This ability emerges and changes in transactions with particular situations and challenges. Resilience that has been shown under specific conditions might therefore not withstand or be transferred to other situations (Staudinger, Marsiske, & Baltes, 1993). The existing research on resilience is, as mentioned, mainly focused on the resilience of individuals (Cooper et al., 2013) and according to Sommer et al. (2015) there is little knowledge on the development of resilience in teams. Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003) state that there are similarities between the dynamics behind the development of resilience at the individual level and at the group level of analysis (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). They argue for practices that foster competences, increase material, social, and human resources, and reduces different stressors and risks. These are practices that will increase the probability of positive adjustments, since they improve the group's skills to identify and deal with the complexity they are experiencing and also to increase motivation and perseverance in challenging situations (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). Additionally, it have been found that in order for project team members to be resilient during challenging conditions, they have to draw on the resources that are available to them. These resources include instrumental, cognitive, social, and emotional resources (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). As previously noted, Seligman (2011) have identified optimism as a key strength in relation to bouncing back after a failure. He argue that it has been found that individuals who do not give up after experiencing a setback or a failure, have the habit of interpreting a setback as something that is not permanent, but rather changeable. Hence, these individuals have an optimistic thought pattern (Seligman, 2011).

Recent studies have shown that especially positive emotions may be a key resource in developing resilience (Sommer et al., 2015). According to the

broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1988) “positive emotions broaden an individual’s thought-action repertoire, which in turn helps to build that individual’s personal resources” (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004, p. 330). This may result in growing self-confidence in the capacity to resolve the crisis and it may allow the individual to develop new solutions to the problems that a crisis results in (Fredrickson, 2001; Sommer et al., 2015). One important contribution in the area of team resilience is Sommer et al.’s (2015) study, where they found that different leadership styles during a crisis can have an impact on team member’s resilience, and that this is mediated through affective mechanisms. They found that in the stressful situation of a crisis, positive and negative affect co-exists. This entail that people may experience both positive and negative affect, which again demonstrates the emotional complexity in this type of situation. By transforming these emotional inputs into the central output of the team members’ resilience, they show that positive affect foster resilience, while negative affect weakens resilience. In addition, they demonstrate the important role that team leaders play in team member’s emotional state and consequently their resilience (Sommer et al., 2015). Some researches, like for instance Tugade, Fredrickson, and Barret (2004), believe resilience should be considered a trait, however there have been provided substantial evidence that it is more state-like. Hence, it is therefore something that is possible to train and develop (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009).

2.6 Signature Strengths

Within the field of positive psychology a great deal of emphasis is put on individual’s signature strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Those character strengths that are the most central to a person’s identity are referred to as *signature strengths* (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). These are in research studies often operationalized as an individual’s top three-seven character strengths (e.g. Seligman et al., 2005; Linley et al., 2010). When a person uses his or her signature strengths the person will typically experience motivation, energy, happiness and joy (Linley, 2008).

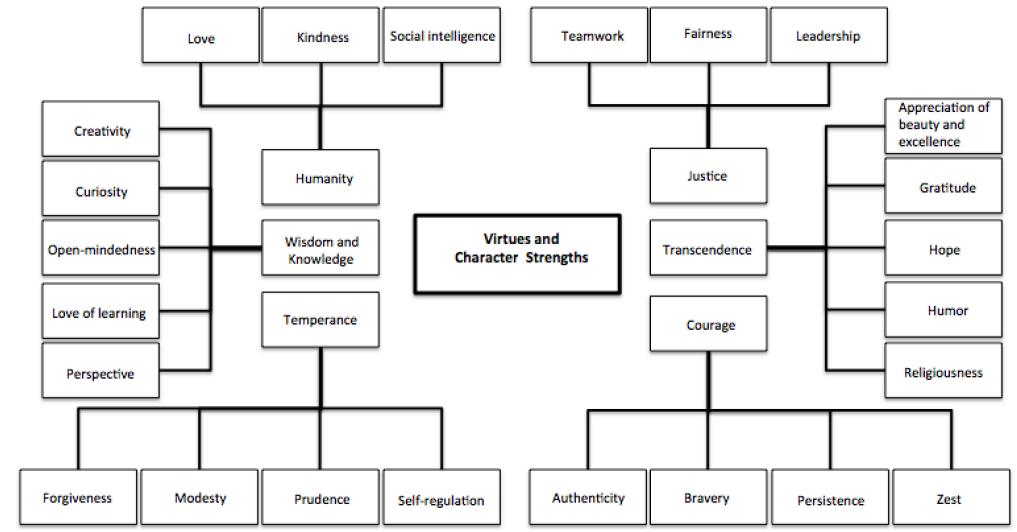


Figure 1: Classification of 6 Virtues and 24 Character Strengths (after Peterson and Seligman, 2004).

Authors within the field of positive psychology have developed a classification of character strengths and virtues (Seligman et al., 2005). The most recognized classification in this relation is according to Elston and Boniwell (2011) the *Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS)*, proposed by Peterson and Seligman (2004). In their classification virtues are regarded as “the core characteristics valued by moral philosophers and religious thinkers”, while character strengths are defined as “the psychological ingredients- processes or mechanisms- that define the virtues” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 13).

The classification of character strengths and virtues consists of 6 virtues and 24 strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), where these 24 strengths originate from 1 of the 6 virtues (Forest et al., 2012), see figure 1. The first virtue in Seligman et al.’s (2005) classification is *wisdom and knowledge*, which consists of five cognitive strengths that involve acquisition and use of knowledge. The first strength regarding this virtue is creativity and this strength focuses on novel and productive thinking. The second, curiosity, is when people take interest in ongoing experiences. The third, open-mindedness is when people think things through and examine situations from all sides. The fourth, love of learning is when people master new skills, topics and knowledge. The last, perspective, is concerned with the ability to provide meaningful counseling to others (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

The second virtue is *courage*, which consists of four strengths. This virtue entails emotional strengths that include use of will in order to achieve

goals when faced with both internal and external challenges. The first strength, authenticity, is about telling the truth, and present ourselves in a genuine way. The second, bravery, is when people do not avoid threats, challenges, or difficulties.

The third, persistence, is that people finish what they have started. The last, zest is about approaching situations with energy and excitement. The third virtue is *humanity*, which involves interpersonal strengths. The first strength regarding this virtue is kindness. This is when people do good things for others. The second, love, is when people appreciate and value having close relationships with other people. The third, social intelligence is when people are aware of their own and others motives and feelings (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

The fourth virtue is *justice*, which consists of three strengths and is concerned with civic strengths that inspire a strong and healthy society. The first, fairness, is when someone treats all people in the same way according to notions of both fairness and justice. The second, leadership, is about establishing activities for a group and make sure that they happen. The last is teamwork, and this is when people work well in a team.

The fifth virtue is *temperance* and this virtue involves strengths that work as protection against excess. The first strength is forgiveness, which is forgiving people that have done something wrong. The second, modesty, is allowing peoples accomplishment to speak for themselves. Prudence, who is the third strength in this virtue, is about being careful about choice, which means not to say or do things that could be regretted later. The fourth, self-regulation, is about regulating feeling and behavior.

The last virtue is *transcendence*, which includes strengths that results in links to the greater universe and which offers a sense of meaning. The first strength is appreciation for both beauty and excellence. The second is gratitude, which is about being grateful about the good thing that happens. The third, hope, which entails anticipating the best and also working towards achieving the best. The fourth, humor, is concerned with making people smile, and enjoying laughter and teasing. The last is religiousness, which is about having beliefs about a higher purpose and meaning of life (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

As noted, it has been stipulated that individuals usually have between three and seven signature strengths among these 24 (Harzer & Ruch, 2012). Signature strengths are those strengths a person owns, celebrates, and in addition

frequently uses (Harzer & Ruch, 2012). Seligman et al. (2005) argue that it lays in the definition of strengths, that they generally are related to and contribute to life fulfillment. However, character strengths that are related to the “hearth” or are “of the heart” as the authors put it, such as hope, love, gratitude and zest, are more strongly related to life satisfaction in comparison to the more intellectual strengths such as the love of learning, creativity, and judgment (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). According to Harzer and Ruch (2012) the application of character strengths depends on two conditions. The first is that for an individual to be able to show certain strength-relevant behavior the person needs to have that strength to a certain degree. The second is that the environment needs to allow for the expression of strength-relevant behavior (Harzer & Ruch, 2012). It is suggested that different types of strengths can be beneficial to different types of jobs (Forest et al., 2012). On the one hand, strengths that have been characterized as other-oriented strengths, like love and kindness, could be useful for occupations like social workers and nurses. On the other hand, self-oriented strengths and mind-oriented strengths have been suggested be useful for occupations like lawyers and directors (Forest et al., 2012). Several researches have found positive relations between the use of strengths and increased wellbeing (Govindji & Linley, 2007; Brdar & Kashdan, 2010; Littman-Ovadiaa & Michael Steger, 2010; Forest et al., 2012). In addition, as mentioned earlier, the use of strengths has been associated with better goal progress (Linley et al., 2010). Park, Peterson and Seligman (2004) found that the strengths hope, zest, gratitude, love and curiosity are highly related to life satisfaction.

3.0 Research Methodology

The purpose of this study is to increase the understanding of how project managers can use signature strengths to enhance project teams resilience. In this section we will discuss our choice of research method, argue for the reason why we have decided to choose a qualitative case study, and why we found this to be the most suitable method to examine our research question.

3.1 Research Design

Since it is preferable to choose a research approach based on the nature of the research problem (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), and our research is concerned

with how project managers can use signature strengths to increase resilience in teams, a qualitative research design is the most appropriate for investigating our research question. Qualitative research refers to methods that make the use of the human language instead of numbers, and this approach is often characterized by being naturalistic and interpretative. Qualitative research emphasizes the notion of inter-subjectivity, which often refers to how individuals, in order for them to understand the social world that they are a part of, construct meaning or a shared understanding, perception, or feeling of a specific situation (Biggerstaff, 2012). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) researchers within the qualitative approach often work in a natural setting or the real world instead of a laboratory setting. In addition, qualitative research can be regarded as a reflexive approach, where the researcher's increase their in-depth knowledge during the investigation, and this characteristic is viewed as a basic component of qualitative research (Biggerstaff, 2012).

3.2 Case Study

Increasing the knowledge of how project manager's signature strengths can enhance group members' resilience require an extensive and in-depth description regarding a social phenomenon. Therefore we chose to have a case study to investigate our research question. The reason for this, is because a case study is a detailed oriented and an intensive analysis of one or several specific cases (Bryman & Bell, 2011), which focuses on understanding dynamics in one or several social settings (Yin, 1994) to get a deep understanding of the phenomenon that are investigated (Mason, 2004). A case study is by Yin (1994, p. 13) defined as "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' and it 'relies on multiple sources of evidence". According to Benbasat, Goldstein, and Mead (1987) case studies are well-suited for gaining knowledge from practitioners when investigating phenomena where the theoretical framework and understandings is not well understood. As seen from the theoretical background, the impact of signature strengths on resilience is an area of research that has not been given particular attention.

3.3 Case Selection

In this case study, we selected the case by using purposeful sampling. Purposeful selection is by Maxwell (2005, p.88) defined as “ a selection strategy in which particular settings, persons or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can’t be gotten as well from other choices”. Purposeful sampling is a commonly used sampling method in qualitative research for identifying and selecting cases that are rich in information related to the phenomenon which one is interested in (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2015). As stated by Patton (2002, p. 230) “information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term *purposeful* sampling”. In our case, the team has experienced difficulties, which has been a criterion for us when finding a case. We also consider it an advantage that these difficulties have happened in the near past, since it increases the likelihood of the informants still having “fresh” memories about it. Additionally, Patton (2002) argues that researching information rich cases produces in-depth understandings of a phenomenon rather than empirical generalizations (Patton, 2002).

3.4 Project and Informants Description

Our case in this thesis is a project team in a large public organization in Norway. This project team is part of a bigger project, which consists of several project teams. The main project has a time frame from 2015-2020. The project team has been part of this process from the early phases, and is still working in this team today. The team consists of ten team members, including the project manager. Four of these team members have been the informants for this thesis. To keep the informants anonymous we have presented them as A, B, C and D. Informant A is the project manager. He is in his mid-forties, and has a lot of experience with project based work and project management. Since the late 80’s he has participated in numerous project where he has taken various roles, both as team member but most often he have had the role of project manager. Informant B, C, and D are team members. All of them had, previous to this project, experience in working in project teams. One of the informants has the role as a solution architect in this project. Another has the technical responsibility, while

the last is a discipline supervisor. The informants' time involvement in this project team has varied from approximately 6 months to the projects beginning. In addition, their involvement in the project have also varied depending on which phase the project is in. Hence, while some of the informants have been more involved in some phases, others have been more involved in other. This is mainly because the different informants have had different roles in the project.

3.5 Data Collection

To investigate our research question we conducted semi-structured interviews. This type of interview allowed us to follow an interview guide, while at the same time have some freedom, including the possibility to ask follow-up questions to the informants and change the sequences of the questions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). We interviewed four members of the project team, including the project manager. All the interviews were conducted face-to-face. The interviews lasted approximately 1-2 hours. After conducting the first interview we adjusted and added some questions to improve further interviews. All the informants allowed us to record the interviews. Recording the interviews allowed us to focus more on the answers provided by the informants and plan follow up questions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Thereafter, we transcribed the interviews. Transcribing the interviews can be an advantage since it keeps the informants words intact (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In addition to conduct interviews, we used organizational documents from our project team as a source of data. This is because organizational documents can be an important source to valuable background information (Bryman & Bell, 2011). By using organizational documents we got information about the organization and the project group. Gaining insights about what the organization, and especially information about the project team, like for example their goals and deadlines, was important for preparing the interviews.

3.6 Research Quality

Within qualitative research, the trustworthiness is in general frequently questioned. The reason for this could be that it is not possible to address the notion of reliability and validity in the same way as within positivistic work. Several researchers within the naturalistic tradition have chosen to make use of

alternative labels when assessing the quality of qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). For instance Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed four criteria to evaluate qualitative research.

Credibility is suggested as an alternative term to internal validity, and is concerned with how believable the results are (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In order to improve credibility, we had an introductory visit to the organization and performed a document analysis before any data collection in terms of interviews was carried out. This is according to Shenton (2004) a way to ensure familiarity with the organization participating in the study. It is also argued that using tactics to help guarantee the honesty of the informants improves the credibility of the research study (Shenton, 2004). To ensure the honesty of our informants, we gave them several times the opportunity to choose to not be part of our study, which some of the members of the project did. This will, according to Shenton (2004) ensure that the collection of the data only include informants who sincerely want to participate and give away the information or data they had. Researchers should also highlight their role as neutral, so that the informants can talk and offer data without being afraid that this will come back to haunt them (Shenton, 2004) We believe that this is especially important in our study, since the focus is on gaining insights and information about the behavior of the informant's manager.

Transferability is suggested as an alternative term to external validity (Bryman & Bell, 2011). External validity is established through collecting the data in a way that secures that the sample is representative of the population that one wishes to generalize from (Guba & Lincoln, 1982). In this relation, Guba and Lincoln (1982) believe that it is crucial to give heavy descriptions and an adequate amount of contextual information, so that the reader can make the transfer from the research situation to their own situation. In previous sections we have provided this type of information. Like for instance that we used a qualitative case study design and that the data we collected is from four informants in one organization.

Dependability is suggested as an alternative term to reliability (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Reliability is concerned with replicability (Guba & Lincoln, 1982) and this entails that if the research study is repeated with the same techniques and method in the same environment, and with the same contributors then one will obtain the same findings (Shenton, 2004). A way to attend to reliability is to describe the methodological processes in an in-depth and detailed way. This

makes it possible for future researchers to replicate the research study (Shenton, 2004). In the previous sections we have given an in-depth methodical description.

Confirmability is suggested as an alternative term to objectivity (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A way to ensure conformability is that the researcher identifies the shortcomings in the research method and thereby to highlight the potential effects of these shortcomings (Shenton, 2004). The shortcomings of this case study will be highlighted and discussed later under the heading of limitations and future research.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

According to Diener and Crandall (1978) there are four main ethical considerations that should be evaluated when conducting research. The first is to consider whether a study can cause any harm to the participants, this includes physical- and psychological harm to the participants, and harm to their career prospects and future employment. This study has not contained any elements that could put the informants of our research in risk for experience physical harm. Further, we believe it is unlikely that any of the participants will suffer from any kind of psychological harm or harm to their future employment as a consequence of participating in this study. The reason for this is we made sure to inform the participants about the research so they could decide whether they felt comfortable to participate. In addition, the informants were kept anonymous so what they said would not be connected to them personally.

The second is regarding whether there is a lack of informed consent from the informants (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The principle of informed consent is that the participants of a research project are provided with information about the research project and the possible risks of participating so they can make a decision regarding whether they want to take part in the research (Crow, Wiles, Heath & Charles, 2006). The informants were provided with a detailed explanation about the research project before they were asked to participate. In addition, the informants had to read and sign a consent form, which included description about the project, their rights to withdraw, anonymity and how the data material would be stored and used. Therefore, we believe it is possible to say that there is not a lack of informed consent from the participants.

Thirdly, Diener and Crandall (1978) believe it is important to evaluate whether the research have involved an invasion of the privacy of the participants. This is closely linked to informed consent (Bryn & Bell, 2011). There is no reason to believe there have been invasions to any of the participants' privacy.

The last is concerned with whether any deception has been involved. Deception is when researchers claim their research is concerning something other than what is actually is (Bryn & Bell, 2011). Since we have provided the participants with the research question, not claim we have done anything we have not and not hold back any information for the participants this research does not involve any deception.

4.0 Data Analysis and Results

4.1 The Nature of Project Based Work

When asking the interviewees what it is like to work in project, they all argue that it is exciting but challenging. Some of the challenges they highlight are that in projects the clock is always ticking, and there are deadlines, frameworks, and guidelines that they have to follow. C says that the entire process could be rather demanding, since there are several people involved. He also state that they have brought in new people during the project who does not have any knowledge on where the project is at or what is going on. He argues that this can result in tedious meetings where they have to discuss the same things over and over again. Whereas D states that:

This project is quite demanding I would say. Sometimes you have to come up with a solution that runs across of several teams and applications. It's not easy that all of the teams have the same responsibilities, and when it comes to ownership, it can be some gray areas.

B supports the fact that working in project is demanding. However, he also argue that there are supposed to be some challenges, and that the challenges is what makes working in projects interesting. While describing what he likes about working in projects, informant A, the project manager refers to Tuckman's (1965)

theory on the developmental stages of small groups and in this relation he states that:

What I like about projects is when you get to know the different psychological stages and these stages repeat themselves. [In various projects] everything is different, but the psychological stages, forming, storming, norming, performing, are the same.

According to Tuckman (1965), the sequence of group development starts with the *forming* stage, which is concerned with the group members' orientation, which is achieved through testing. The aim of this type of testing is to identify boundaries of task and- interpersonal behaviors. Another key point in this initial stage is the creation of dependence relationship with the manager, other members of the group, and established standards. Several of the informants have previously work with the project manager. Hence, they have already, at least to some degree, established a relationship and are familiar with his way of working. However, the group composition is new. They therefore had to experience and test where and what the boundaries in this team were. One of the informant said:

In the beginning I had to figure out how this team was [...], and from my experience each team is different.

The second stage, *storming*, is characterized by polarization and conflicts related to interpersonal matters, with the accompanying emotional responses in the task domain. This behavior functions as resistance to influences from the group and task requirements. In relation to these to first stages, forming and storming, A argues that they are especially important. He states that they constitute the foundation for developing a productive and successful project team. Further, he argues that in his opinion the team members were a bit confused and that they were experiencing different levels of uncertainty, which lead to various conflicts in these initial stages. Informant C believed there was a period where the team members had a feeling of "us" and "them" in relation to the different beliefs regarding future plans for the project. This is in line with informant D, which said that the team at one point was quite split.

In the third stage, *norming*, the group members overcome some of the resistance they experience in the storming stage, and they develop a sense of in-group emotions and a feeling of cohesiveness. In addition, new standards are developed, and the members embrace their new roles and in the task domain, the members express their personal viewpoints. While the team members did not directly use the term *norming stage*, several of them pointed out that after some time, and after the “dust had settled” they felt more unified and they felt that they could express their opinions freely.

In the fourth stage, *performing*, the interpersonal structure serves as a tool for task activities. The job roles are more functional and flexible, and energy is now directed towards the tasks. Problems related to structure are solved, and the structure is now supporting task performance (Tuckman, 1965). Tuckman and Jensen (1977) later added a fifth stage, which they labeled *adjourning*. This stage involves the termination of the group and separation of the group members (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). The project team is still working together and has therefore not reached this stage at the current time.

During the interview A refers several times to these stages of group development. For instance, he tells us about a situation where he took part in a play experiment, in which the participants were supposed to function as a cake factory. They were divided into two groups, with 80 members on each team, and everyone played a role in the factory. Their goal was to make as many cakes as they could in one day. In this experiment A was the CEO of the factory and decided that they should just go ahead and start making the cakes right away, without any planning or discussion in the group. He argues that this in the beginning resulted in his team taking a huge lead in production. The reason for this was that the other team had taken the time to discuss and plan the road ahead. However, in the final stage of the play experiment, the other group passed them, and in the end they won by producing the most cakes. A believes that the reason why the other team won was that they allowed for and used time on the forming stage, and his team did not. He argues that especially in the initial phases it is important to have disagreements and conflicts between the members in the project group, and that in order to come up with good solutions it necessary to have high levels of disagreement:

Sometimes I think that it is valuable with discussion and conflict, and I allow it to escalate because it results in a good process, and I don't always do anything about it.

This statement also signifies another part of A's leadership philosophy, which to a large degree involves not meddling in every situation and rather have a more laid back style when disagreements and conflicts occur, between the project team members. His team member C supports this:

I have not experienced that he has directly gone into a conflict and said, "here we have a conflict, and what should we do about it?" This might have happened, but not as far I know at least. On the other hand, he is not afraid to face conflicts. In the beginning there was a lot of disagreement, and he is not afraid of it. He does not lose his head, and he does not get stressed out. I get much more stressed than him.

Moreover, A argues that he is not the one that should come up with all the answers in the project. The members should themselves find the answers, while his job is to give them room to do so. In this relation, C states that this was a root to the uncertainty they had in the beginning of the project, and that this resulted in some of the problems and conflicts they have experienced. On the other hand, he also point out that it might be because the project manager himself is confused about the answers and solutions. A states that when he was less experienced than he is now, he believed that he should have all the answers in the start-up phases of the project, while he now believes that it is ok to not have all the answers and solutions, since they will be developed by themselves during the project. However, he argues that when his team members do not find the solutions quickly enough, he steps inn and guides them. He sees it as beneficial to stay in the background, and only step in and take action when he believes that the team members are not able to reach a solution. The reason why he believes that it is best to take a laid back approach rather than a more instructing one, is that he stresses the importance of the team members coming up with the solutions themselves. He argues that this is the best way for them to develop ownership in the project.

[...] by letting people experience uncertainty and find the way themselves, I believe this unconsciously creates ownership to the problem, since they find the solutions themselves.

A refers here to psychological ownership, which we have seen from the theoretical background, is a concept within positive organizational behavior (Avey et al., 2009), that entails that the individual feel a sense of responsibility and an obligation to devote time and energy, and to be protective, caring, and nurturing towards the target of ownership (Pierce et al., 2001).

4.1.1 The Need for Resilience in Project Teams

Based on the type of work they do, which have been characterized as stressful, demanding and in its nature challenging, A argues that resilience is of great importance and he point out that:

I believe it extremely or tremendously important. We are packed with methodology, routines, and procedures, which are useless if the team members do not stand on their own feet, have goals, and get back on the horse when they have experienced a setback.

Informant C concur with this, and argues that it is essential to have some levels of resilience in a project process, since the people working with projects always are faced with challenges. When asking informant B if he have worked in projects where there was low levels of resilience, he answers that he have experienced that kind of tendencies, and that in this situation he felt that if one of the team members had kind of given up after a major setback, this was contagious to the other members. He argues that the spirit in the whole group was lowered. Related to the same question, if he ever had experienced working in projects with low levels of resilience, A states that in this type of situation, he as a project manager have to be more instructing, and tell his team members what tasks they need to do, and when they need to do them. However, he argues that this is not a viable solution, and that it will not produce good solutions to push unmotivated team members to do their job.

4.2 Virtues and Character Strengths

4.2.1 The Virtue of Justice

As previously described, the virtue justice consists of three strengths and is concerned with civic strengths that inspire a strong and healthy society (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Through data analysis the strength of leadership was identified as one of the manager's signature strengths, while the remaining strengths fairness and teamwork, was to a lesser degree observed.

Leadership

Peterson and Seligman (2004) define leadership “as a personal quality refers to an integrated constellation of cognitive and temperament attributes that foster an orientation toward influencing and helping others, directing and motivating their actions towards collective success [...]” (p. 414). Related to this strength C states that:

A is extremely skilled in coordinating a lot of different people and teams. He is accurate and thorough, which makes it possible to carry out deliveries consisting of many changes. This affects me in the way that I trust that we will finish the project. This is something that A is skilled at, and it is perhaps his greatest strength.

According to Carr (2011) research findings suggest that different kinds of leadership are suitable for different settings and situations. Further, successful leaders alter their behavior and way of doing thing to better fit the group's stage of development, the group characteristics, the abilities and strengths of the group, the goals that are set, and the surrounding environment. A has also identified leadership as one of his own signature strengths. As described above, A places great importance on the different stages of the group development, and that it is key that he for instance do not go in and meddle in the conflicts that occur in the initial stages. Additionally, we have seen that A has a leadership philosophy that involves giving his team members room so that they on their own can come up with solutions to the problems they are experiencing. This is in line with informant D who states:

One thing I appreciate with the project manager is that he challenges everyone in a way that makes him or her feel that they can contribute to the solution.

The main reason why A emphasizes that the team members themselves have to come up with their own answers is, as we have mentioned earlier, that he believes that it is crucial that they develop psychological ownership in the project. However, it is important to point out that if things do not work out as they should, or the members do not find the solutions quickly enough, A takes a more instructing role, so that they achieve their goals within the set timeframes and deadlines. With this in mind, one could argue that A alter his style to better fit the situation the group are faced with, and therefore he could be considered as what Carr (2011) refer to as a successful leader.

4.2.2 The Virtue of Wisdom and Knowledge

The virtue wisdom and knowledge consists of five cognitive strengths that involve acquisition and use of knowledge (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Within this virtue, open-mindedness was identified as one of the project manager's signature strengths. However, none of the remaining character strengths, creativity, curiosity, love of learning, or perspective were found to characterize A's signature strengths.

Open-mindedness

Open-mindedness is defined as “the willingness to search actively for evidence against one's favored beliefs, plans, or goals, and to weigh such evidence fairly when it is available” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 144). Open-mindedness is about thinking things through and examining situations from all sides, and it has to do with judgment and critical thinking (Seligman et al., 2005). B states that:

He (the project manager) is a reasonable person who mostly is a good listener and is capable of taking inn information, and my impression is that he makes good judgments.

A's judgment to not meddle in conflicts between the team members, since he believes that conflicts is part of a good project process, and that it is necessary in order for the group to come up with high quality solutions, could be considered as an example of him exercising the strength of open-mindedness or judgment. A argues that one example of him exercising good judgment is that he has a holistic view on the budgeting in the project, and that he knows that the percentages that he and his project receive will reduce the budget of other projects in the organization. Further, he states that there are people in the public sector who views money in the public sector only as a number, and that it is not something that you have to work for, and therefore you can use a lot of it. Another example of A's judgement is to not have take an instructing role in relation to his team members. He believes that by giving the team members the responsibility to solve their own problems, and coming up with their own solutions is the best way for them to develop psychological ownership. This is further supported by D, who states:

The project manager allows us to be quite free [...] I feel invested and responsibility for making the project succeed.

We have previously seen that psychological ownership is followed by a sense of responsibility (Pierce et al., 2001).

4.2.3 The Virtue of Courage

As we have seen, this virtue consists of the four strengths authenticity, bravery, persistence, and zest, which are emotional strengths that include use of will, in order to achieve goals when one is faced with both internal and external challenges. Through analysis of the data, persistence was the only strength within the virtue of courage that was identified as one of the project manager A's signature strengths.

Persistence

There has been fairly little research done with the main goal of obtaining insights into persistence. Frequently, knowledge on persistence must be gathered from research that measures persistence as an outcome of the variable that the

researchers are interested in. Consequently, research in this area is dispersed through many different areas, and there is no single tradition of empirical investigation within this field of research (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). However, the positive paybacks of persistence are widely acknowledged. Most importantly, this strength increases the probabilities of achieving difficult goals (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Persistence may be defined “as a voluntary continuation of a goal-directed action in spite of obstacles, difficulties, or discouragement” (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 229). Furthermore, persistence entails that people finish what they have started (Seligman et al., 2005). D argues that persistence is A’s greatest strength, and says:

When summing up A’s strongest sides in one word: he makes things happen. For me this is very important. He is a “doer”. It is not only theoretical [...], he makes things happen, and to me this is probably his strongest side.

Peterson and Seligman (2004) argue that research findings suggest that it is fairly difficult for people to maintain persistence when they are faced with failure, and that they are often inclined to give up and direct their focus elsewhere. Failure is something that feels unpleasant and discouraging, therefore in order to have persistence one have to overcome the natural inclination to quit (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Based on what the interviewees describe, they give the impression that A overcomes this natural tendency to quit when he is faced with difficulties. For instance C states:

A has the ability to stay focused and continue working, even though he is confronted with challenges. He keeps a friendly and open attitude even if he has to take another round and take a step back. In the project’s first deliverance it was a lot of confusion and several [people] was involved after the deadline had passed; yet A kept his cool and continued his work. It provides assurance that the project manager sets an example and is willing to push the process forward.

Further B stated that:

During the most difficult time in the project, when there was a lot of disagreement and challenges, I was impressed by how calm the project manager was. It did not seem to affect him that much and he still managed to get things done.

As a follow up question, we asked B how this affected him and he responded that:

I believe this calmed me down as well.

4.2.4 The Virtue of Humanity

The virtue humanity encompasses the three interpersonal strengths kindness, love, and social intelligence (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). While kindness, and love were not observed as being part of the project manager's signature strengths, social intelligence was identified.

Social Intelligence

Social intelligence was identified as another one of the project manager's signature strengths. Social intelligence is related to a person's awareness of his own and others motives and feelings (Seligman et al., 2005). According to Marlowe (1986, p. 52) social intelligence is the "ability to understand the feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of persons, including oneself, in interpersonal situations and to act appropriately upon that understanding". It is argued that social intelligence is interpersonal competencies which inspires other people to be effective (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008) A argues that he tries to understand other people, and he believes that if his team members see him as a decent guy, then they will want to work for him. This is something that is supported by D, who possesses the feeling of wanting to help A, and thereby contribute in the project. That he has strong social skills seems to be in line with the team members' perception of him. For instance B states that:

He is good at socializing with people and he is a good listener.

Moreover, A argue that if they see him as a "douche" rather than a "good guy", then they will not be bothered to work for him and not to do their job in the

project. In relation to social intelligence B state that those leader who are the exact opposite of A, who just cuts through and do not have any regard for other people's ideas, thoughts, and opinions, will probably lose respect from their team members in the long run.

4.2.5 The Virtue of Temperance

The virtue *temperance* involves strengths that work as protection against excess (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Included in this virtue are the strengths forgiveness, modesty, prudence, and self-regulation. Data analysis suggests that only one of these strengths, forgiveness, is observed as being part of the project manager's repertoire of signature strengths.

Forgiveness

When people possess the strength of forgiveness they are able to forgive people that have done something wrong (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). The informants have classified forgiveness as one of the manager's signature strengths. Informant C believes the manager easily puts disagreements and discussions behind him and do not dwell on them. He further states that since the manager has this strength, this has made him feel secure in the project. In line with this, B argues:

I am able to express my thoughts and feelings without being afraid that he (the manager) holds a grudge against me. I also believe the project manager is equality fair to all the team members in relation to this.

4.2.6 The Virtue of Transcendence

The last virtue is *transcendence*, which includes strengths that results in links to the greater universe and which offers people a sense of meaning (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Within this virtue hope was through data analysis identified as one of the project manager's signature strengths, while the remaining strengths appreciation, gratitude, humor, and religiousness were to a lesser degree observed. Especially, religiousness was pointed out to be one of the least important in

relation to project management in this team and in relation to the project team developing resilience.

Hope

Related to the development of resilience in teams, hope is in addition to leadership, open-mindedness, persistence, social intelligence, and forgiveness also identified as a very important strength for a project manager to possess. “Optimism and hope refer to a belief- perhaps *wish* would be a better term or even *motive*- that in the future good events and associated positive feelings will outweigh or be more likely than bad events and associated negative feelings” (Peterson and Seligman, 2004, p. 572). In relation to hope C says that:

A appears optimistic on behalf of the project's solutions and progress when the other team members are experiencing difficulties and worry. In this situation A appear to not be worried. This affects me in that way that I experienced a good spirit and progress in the group despite of the project running into problems. There was a bit whining, but A counteracted this. It would have developed further if he to had become pessimistic.

C also states that he and other members of the project team have had times where they have to some degree withdrawn from the project because they only experience challenges and resistance. In this situation he argues that A handles this by being optimistic, and C argues that this in a way helps the team members put their problems behind them and that this optimism serves as a way forward. Within cognitive psychology it is suggested that individuals that have an optimistic explanatory style are more prone to have persistence in a task in comparison to individuals that have a more pessimistic explanatory style. The reason for this is that those with an optimistic style attribute success to their own effort, while the individuals with a pessimistic approach develop what is termed learned helplessness (Carr, 2011). As previously discussed, persistence have also been identified as one of A's signature strengths.

5.0 Discussion

As seen from the data analysis leadership, open-mindedness, persistence, social intelligence, forgiveness, and hope were identified as the project manager's signature strengths. In the following these strengths will be discussed in relation to resilience, both at the individual- and group level of analysis.

5.1 Leadership

The first identified strength in the data analysis was leadership. Leadership entails encouraging the group, which one is part of to get things done, arranging for activities in the group and making sure they happen. Leadership also includes upholding a good relationship within the group (Park, Peterson, and Seligman, 2004). Leadership has been identified as one of, if not the greatest strength A possess. He has been described as extremely skilled at coordinating different people and different teams. In addition, based on the data analysis, one could also argue that depending on the situation at hand, he alters his leadership style to better fit the conditions that the group is under. This is something that is in line what Carr (2011) refer to as a successful leader. Larson and Gray (2010) argue that one of the most important elements to being a successful project manager is creating cooperative relationships between various people in order to finish projects. The success of the project is not only relying on the performance of the project team. Rather, failure or success is often dependent upon the inputs from suppliers, top management, and customers, among others.

As we have seen, an important aspect of A's leadership philosophy, is that the team members themselves come up with the solution to the problems they are experiencing in the project. The reason for this is that he stresses the importance of them developing psychological ownership. As mentioned, studies have shown that psychological ownership is significantly related to commitment in the workplace, job satisfaction, and extra role behavior (Vandewalle et al., 1995). Pierce et al. (2001) have also proposed that a sense of psychological ownership are followed by a feeling of responsibility to devote time and energy, and to be protective, nurturing, and caring. It is reasonable to argue that these are beneficial behaviors for project team members to have, when faced with the various stressors and challenges proposed by the project. Additionally, one can argue that these could be behaviors that might aid the team members to rebound or "bounce

back” from a setback or failure. Hence, they could be viewed as important behaviors for the team to hold, in order for them to develop resilience.

Previously we have described the tree “roots”, proposed by Pierce et al. (2001) whereby psychological ownership develops within the organizational setting. It is reasonable to argue that A’s leadership philosophy, including giving his team members the responsibility of creating solutions to the problems they are faced with during the project process, increases their opportunity to practice control in the project, which again could result in them being more frequently involved in the project. One can also assume that giving the team members the responsibility to create solutions in the project, will result in them producing intimate knowledge of their solution and consequently the project as a whole, and subsequently they are more likely to invest themselves in the project, and thereby develop psychological ownership.

5.2 Open-mindedness

It is believed that the most essential task that any leader has is to make good judgments (Tichy & Bennis, 2007; DeRose & Tichy, 2008). A good judgment involves making a well-informed and smart decision that results in wanted outcomes. Although it is not possible to make the right decision every time, successful leaders, make a high proportion of successful judgment calls, at the time when it matters the most (Tichy & Bennis, 2007). Despite of the importance of the judgment of leaders, the concept of judgment is rather murky. Literature within the field of leadership has been noticeably silent on this subject (Tichy & Bennis, 2007), and according to Tichy and Bennis (2007) the reason for this is that the notion of judgment is difficult to pin down. In relation to open-mindedness we have observed that A is a person that is a good listener, he thinks things through, and he makes good judgments’. An important example of A exercising this strength is his judgment to not meddle in the conflicts between his team members in the initial phases of the project, since he believes that this leads to a good project process. However, the most salient judgment we observed was his judgment to mainly stay in the background and in a way force the team members to resolve and come up with their own solution to the problems they are facing. Our analysis showed this resulted in the team members feeling invested and that they felt responsibility for the project success. These feelings are

indicators of psychological ownership (Pierce et al., 2001).

From the theoretical background, we have seen that a strategy to strengthen the resilience of organizational members is to nurture a culture characterized by trust, and that this again will be in support of including the members in the decision-making process (Froman, 2010). One can argue that not giving the team members the solutions on “a silver platter”, and in a way forcing them to come up with their own solutions, could be regarded as a way for A to show that he has trust in his team members and that they in this respect are included in the project decision-making process.

5.3 Persistence

When it comes to the strength persistence, we have seen that the informants state that A is a person who does not give up when he is faced with challenges. Peterson and Seligman (2004) argue that there are few major undertakings that solely consist of continuous advances and positive feedback. Further, they argue that usually one is confronted with obstacles and setbacks that can be discouraging. It is reasonable to argue that this is particularly the case for project-based work, which in its nature is characterized as uncertain, complex, and difficult (Lindgren et al., 2014). If a person quits and gives up, then he will not achieve the goals he have set and therefore in order to achieve success one often has to be persistent (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). As previously mentioned, Seligman (2011) argue that individuals that do not give up after experiencing a setback or failure, possess a habit which lead them to interpret a setback as something that is changeable rather than permanent. From the data analysis we have seen that the informants argue for A’s persistence and when A continues his work despite of the difficulties and challenges he experiences, this makes them feel reassured about the future of the project. Further, they argue that that they become reassured when A sets an example and pushes the project forward, and that this attitude rubs off on them as well. The way we see it, providing the team members with a role model for how to react in challenging situations, that is to not give up and continue working, is of great importance in relation to maintaining and strengthening the resilience in the project team.

5.4 Social Intelligence

Social intelligence was identified as another one of A's signature strengths. In this relation, he believes that if his team members do not like him as a person, then they will not want to work for him, and consequently not do their job in the project. Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) argue that social intelligence have been found to be particularly important in crisis situations. They refer to a Canadian provincial health care system that had been forced to have extreme reorganization of the organization as well as major cutbacks. Internal surveys exposed that the workers had become so upset, that they could not give the patients the same level of care. Particularly employees with leaders who had low scores in social intelligence reported that the patient-care was not met. This was reported three times the rate and emotional exhaustion was reported at four times the rate, in comparison to employees who scored high on social intelligence and hence were more supportive of their employees situation (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008).

As previously discussed in relation to the signature strength leadership, creating cooperative relationships between various people in order to finish the project, is viewed as one of the most important elements to being a successful project manager (Larson & Gray, 2010). It is reasonable to assume that social intelligence is a beneficial strength to possess in relation to creating cooperative relationships between the various people involved in the project. Although the informants did not provide a great deal of direct comments about the project manager having the strength of social intelligence, we observed, based on the way they talked about him in general, that he is a well liked person with great social skills and that he has high levels of social intelligence. It seems that he is good at reading other people and that he responds to the people he interact with in different ways, depending on the person and the situation at hand. Several of the informants points out that they, based on the type of person their manager is, believe that he will get them out of difficult situations in the project. During a difficult situation in the team, several team members distanced themselves from the project. However, based on the project manager's social intelligence and his ability to understand and treat the team members differently, based on their differences, he was able to turn the situation around. By using this strength, the project manager made the team members feel that they were seen, valued and

supported. Making employees feel supported, have been identified as an important strategy to strengthen the resilience of organizational members (Froman, 2010).

5.5 Forgiveness

Based on the data analysis, forgiveness was also identified as one of the project manager's signature strengths. Forgiveness is according to McCullough (2001) a set of prosocial motivational changes that happen after an individual have experienced a transgression from another individual. As seen, this project team has experienced several episodes where the members have disagreed and conflicts have occurred. According to Luskin (2002), people that manage to forgive will be able to stay peaceful in the present moment and have the possibility to put their attention and energy towards the current situation instead of the past (Luskin, 2002; Phelan, 2012). It is reasonable to argue that the ability to move forward and focus on the situation at hand can be very important in a project based on its dynamic characteristics. The informants argue that one of the project manager's signature strengths is his ability to forgive and put disagreements behind him. In this relation B stated that he believed the manager treated tall the team members equally, in respect to letting things go. Therefore, A's ability to forgive can have had a beneficial effect regarding the team's ability to focus on the situations at hand. Individuals who are motivated to forgive the people who have done something wrong towards them are inclined, in comparison to those who are not motivated to forgive, to be more emotionally stable and high in agreeableness (McCullough, 2001). Informant C states that since he is aware that the project manager do not hold the team members options against them, this have made him feel confident regarding sharing his opinions. This is in line with informant D that said, "I like that we (the informant and the project manager) can talk about everything".

Agreeableness includes such traits as care, empathy, and generosity. Individuals high in agreeableness experience to a lesser degree conflicts in their relationships and they are also highly successful in the interpersonal setting (McCullough, 2001). Additionally, they are have been found to be more prone to share their resources with others who have been insensitive and inconsiderate towards them (Ashton, Paunonen, Helmes, & Jackson, 1998). Researchers have found that in order for project teams to have resilience during difficulties and

challenging situations, the team members have to draw on the different resources that are available to them, such as emotional, instrumental, cognitive and social resources (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). Informant D refers to several times to situations where the project manager, have shared his knowledge, and that he is always open to share the resources that he have at his disposal. This is supported by informant B who argues that he can always go to A for support and help when he is faced with difficulties and when he have questions related to the project.

5.6 Hope

As previously described, A has an optimistic outlook on behalf of the projects solutions and progress, when he is faced with difficulties and challenges. In the data analysis the informants identify hope as an important strength for the project manager to possess, in regards to the development of resilience in the project team. Hope and optimism have been found, by for instance Aspinwall and Brunhart (1996) and Scheier, Weintraub, and Carver (1986), to be associated with active problem solving and consideration for problem-relevant information. Hope and optimism is thus correlated with a problem focused-coping style, which “is action that has the goal of removing or circumventing the source of the stress” (Scheier et al., 1986, p. 1258). Additionally, Scheier et al. (1986) found a positive correlation between optimism and emphasis on the positive features of a stressful situation. The outcomes associated with hope and optimism could be viewed as beneficial outcomes in a project setting where one are experiencing major challenges and difficulties, and where it is important to be resilient. This understanding is supported by previous research findings that highlight the relationship between optimism and resilience (Seligman, 2011). In line with this view, Fredrickson (2003) who emphasizes the importance of positive emotions, such as hope and optimism, argues that “feeling good” does a lot more than serve as an indication of the lack of threats. Positive emotions have the possibility to change individuals for the better, and making them more socially well connected, more optimistic, and more resilient. Based on Fredrickson (1998, 2001) broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, Fredrickson et al. (2003) propose that positive emotions are effective ingredients in resilience. The broaden-and-build theory hypothesizes that the experience of positive emotions broadens individual’s fleeting thought-action repertoires, which again aids in building their long-term personal resources, varying from psychological and intellectual

resources to physical and social resources (Fredrickson, 2001). This theory propose that recurring experiences of positive emotions may not only reflect psychological resilience, but over time aid people in building resilience (Fredrickson et al., 2003, Fredrickson, 2001). Fredrickson (2003) maintain that while the effective ingredient in the development of resilience might be positive emotions, the leverage point for getting access to the benefits of positive emotions is discovering positive meaning.

As seen from the data analysis, one of the informants state that during the project they faced a crisis where some of the members to some degree withdrew from the project process, and that this withdrawal was based on them experiencing continuous challenges. We interpret this statement as a sign of low levels of resilience, and the way the project manager handles this is by being optimistic and hopeful in relation to future project process. In this setting, the informant sees it as helpful that the manager keeps an optimistic outlook, and that it helps him to put the problems in the past, and that the focus rather is on the future. Our understanding is that by using the strength of hope, the project manger helps the team members to also have an optimistic outlook, and that it thereby enhances their resilience.

5.7 The Impact of Signature Strengths on Team Resilience

We have seen from the data analysis and the previous discussion that the signature strengths that are identified as the project manager's signature strengths are: leadership, open-mindedness, persistence, social intelligence, forgiveness, and hope. In relation to this, we have seen that these strengths are associated with resilience at the individual level. Further, we have seen that the behavior and attitudes of the project manager influences the team members as a group. Hence, resilience is transferred from not only being located at the individual level (the project manager) but also the group level (the team). Several of the informants in our study have pointed to how the manager behaved has affected them. For instance, regarding hope one of the informants stated that the manager's optimistic viewpoint, when they experienced difficulties in the project, also made him feel more optimistic. This is in line with Goleman and Boyatzis (2008), who argue that the recent most striking finding within the field of behavioral

neuroscience is the discovery of mirror neurons in the brain. They state that these mirror neurons are especially important in organizations, since employees mirror their leaders' actions and feelings. Further, Larson and Gray (2010) argue that being highly visible and interactive gives the project manager the opportunity to use their most influential leadership tool, which is their own behavior. Frequently, when people are confronted with ambiguity, they look to other people for signs on how to react and they also have a tendency to mimic their leaders behavior. Through their behavior managers may affect how their team members behave and react to different challenges related to the project (Larson & Gray, 2010). Moreover, according to Bertone (2006) data from numerous studies on cadets training to become military officers support the idea that leaders that have high levels of hardiness or resilience may influence their employees to think and behave in a more resilient way. He argues "the prototypical hardy leader leads by example, providing subordinates with a role model of the hardy approach to life, work, and reactions to stressful experiences" (Bertone, 2006, p. 145). The leader demonstrates through both his acts and words a strong sense of control, commitment, and a way of handling stressful situations that shows that stress can be of value, and that these trials can be an opportunity to learn and develop (Bertone, 2006). As seen, the informants in our study have stated that the project manager continued working and did not give up despite of problems and difficulties and that this attitude rubbed off on them. The project manager leads by example and provides the team members with a role model for how to handle challenging situations.

Additionally, the project manager gives the team members, through his leadership and judgment, the responsibility and opportunity to come up with their own solutions to the problems they are experiencing. According to the project manager he does this based on his belief that it is important that the members feels ownership in the project. In our discussion above we see that it is a connection between the strengths open-mindedness and leadership, and the development of the team member's psychological ownership in the project. For instance, the informants have said the project managers gives them a lot of leeway in the project, and that this contributes to their feeling of responsibility and investment in the project. This is line with previous research, which has shown that psychological ownership is followed by a sense of responsibility, which again has been found to result in the devotion of time and energy, and to be protective, caring, and

nurturing (Pierce, 2001). These behaviors are advantageous for the members of a project team to have, when they experience situations that are characterized as stressful and challenging. Further, one may argue that these behaviors aid the team members to “bounce back” from a failure or setback, and thereby strengthen their resilience. Therefore, we propose that the relationship between project manager’s signature strengths and project teams’ resilience is mediated through the team members’ psychological ownership in the project.

6.0 Implications and Contributions

The main finding in our study is that the project manager’s use of signature strengths could directly- and indirectly, through psychological ownership, impacts the resilience of the project team. Regarding the direct relationship between signature strengths and resilience, all of the six strengths that was identified as the project manager's’ signature strengths have been shown to have a direct association with resilience. Further, analysis and discussion has shown that the resilience the project manager possesses (individual level) influence the other team members. This occurs through the team members “mirroring” and following the manager's example. Hence, the project manager’s resilience is transferred to the other team members (group level). We also found that the signature strengths open-mindedness and persistence affected the team members’ psychological ownership, which again strengthen their resilience. Hence, these strengths, in addition to having a direct impact, also have a mediating effect on project team resilience. See figure 2.

Some of our findings are in support of previous research. First, in line with Seligman (2011) we found that optimism is key in relation to building resilience. Secondly, from the data analysis we identified both persistence and optimism (hope) as being part of the project manager’s repertoire of signature strengths. This supports research within cognitive psychology, which have found that individuals who have an optimistic explanatory are more likely to also have persistence, compared to those who have a more pessimistic explanatory style (Carr, 2011).

The findings in our study have especially implications for project teams. This is related to the fact that project-based work is increasingly used in

organizations today, and has become a common way of working. Further, based on the characteristics of project-based work, which often includes high levels of complexity, uncertainty, and difficulties (Lindgren et al., 2014), the necessity of having resilient project teams is crucial. Therefore, our findings regarding how project teams develop and strengthen the resilience of their members is of value for project teams. Our findings may also have implications, not only for project teams, but also for organizations in general. Since organizational crisis are more complicated and occur more frequently than before (Sommer et al., 2015), there is increased need for resilient organizational members.

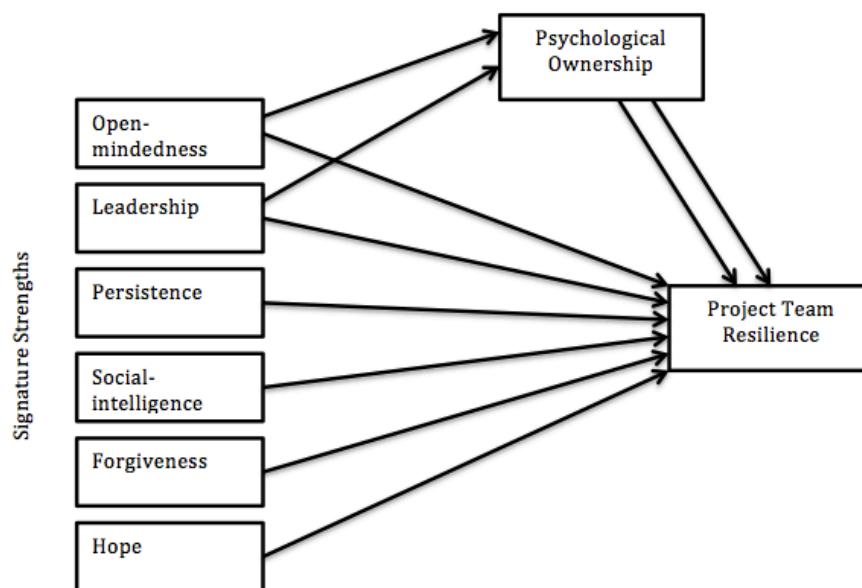


Figure 2: Illustrating the relationship between the project manager's signature strengths and project team's resilience.

7.0 Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First of all, the findings in this study are based on a small number of interviews from one large public organization. In addition, the informants' in this thesis still works in the team. While this have its advantages, including the informants having fresh memories of incidents, reaction and feelings, we recognize that this can have affected how the informants have answered and what they have felt comfortable sharing. In regards to future

research, it could be used a more comprehensive research design, to test whether these findings can be generalized. This could be done by for example conducting a survey with a larger sample. In addition, it should be conducted further research regarding the direct relationship between signature strengths, other than the ones we have explored, and project team resilience. Hence, there is still a need for more comprehensive research on the impact of signature strengths on resilience. Further research should also examine the more indirect relationship that signature strengths have through the mediating effect of psychological ownership. Additionally, there is still a need for a more comprehensive overview of the various factors found to impact resilience, such as the role of positive emotions and signature strengths.

8.0 Conclusion

By using a qualitative case study, we examined if project managers can use their signature strengths to enhance project team resilience. To identify the project manager's signature strengths we employed the framework of Peterson and Seligman (2004) on character strengths and virtues. The identified strengths of the project manager were leadership, open-mindedness, persistence, social intelligence, forgiveness and hope. All of these were shown to have an impact on resilience at the individual level (the project manager). Further, our findings indicate that project managers can strengthen project team resilience, both directly and indirectly. Regarding the direct relationship, the project manager was found, through his own behavior, to influence the behavior and reactions of team members in difficult and challenging situations, and thereby strengthen their resilience. In this relation, all of the identified six signature strengths were found to be directly associated with increased team resilience. Further, the signature strengths, open-mindedness and leadership, was also shown to have an indirect effect through psychological ownership.

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10.0 Appendix

10.1 Appendix 1: Interview Guide Team Members

Teammedarbeider
Generell informasjon: Alder, kjønn, stillingstittel.
<p>1. Kan du beskrive litt generelt om det å jobbe med prosjekter som arbeidsmåte?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Har du arbeidet i mange prosjektgrupper?- Hva er viktig for deg for at du syns en prosjektgruppe skal fungere?- Har du fra tidligere prosjekter opplevd kriser som har gjort det svært utfordrende å være en del av prosjektet?- Hva syns du er de største utfordringene med å jobbe i prosjekter?
<p>2. Hva har vært din rolle i dette prosjektet?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Fortell om hvordan det har vært å jobbe i dette prosjektet?- Hvordan vil du beskrive teamet?- Hvordan vil du beskrive dynamikken i teamet?
<p>3. Hva syns du har fungert bra i denne prosjektprosessen?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hva tenker du er hovedgrunnen til at dette har fungert bra?- Hva har prosjektleder gjort for at dette skulle fungere bra?
<p>4. Hva har ikke fungert bra i prosjektprosessen?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hva tenker du er hovedgrunnen til at det ikke har fungert så bra?- Hvordan syns du dette har påvirket teamet og teamarbeidet?- Hva har prosjektleder gjort når det ikke fungerte bra?- Er det noe du mener prosjektleder ikke har gjort, eller gjort for lite av når prosjektet har vært i en utfordrede situasjon eller fase?
<p>5. Hva tenker du har vært de største utfordringene?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Kan du beskrive noen situasjoner eller hendelser hvor disse utfordringene kom tydelig frem- Hva tenker du har vært noen av hovedgrunnene til at dere har opplevd store vanskeligheter i dette prosjektet?- Har dere vært i noen utfordringer som du føler ble løst raskt og på en god måte. Hvis ja, fortell om utføringen. <p>Hva mener du en grunnen til at dette ble løst raskt og på en god måte.</p>
<p>6. Hva mener du har blitt gjort fra prosjektleder sin side for å overkomme de utfordringene dere har erfart?</p>
<p>7. Har du gjort noe for å overkomme disse utfordringene?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hvis ja, hva har du gjort. Kan du komme med noen eksempler
<p>8. Er det noe som utpeker seg som en mer vellykket strategi enn andre i denne sammenhengen?</p>
<p>9. Ut ifra listen du fikk tilsendt med signaturstyrker, hvilke vil du si prosjektlederen har?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hva mener du er fordelene ved å ha denne styrken?- I hvilke situasjoner tror du denne styrken kan være spesielt viktig?- Har du noen konkrete eksempler på situasjoner hvor prosjektleder har benyttet seg av denne styrken?- Hvordan har det påvirket deg?- Hvordan har det påvirket teamet? <p>Konkrete spørsmål til styrkene:</p> <p>Leadership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hvorfor har du valgt ledelse som en av prosjektlederens signaturstyrker?- Hvordan vil du beskrive prosjektlederens lederegenskaper?- Anser du prosjektlederen som god til å organisere? Hvis ja, hvorfor.- Anser du at prosjektlederen gjør det som skal til for at det som skal gjennomføres blir gjennomført som planlagt? Hvis ja, hvorfor.- Hvilke lederegenskaper har lederen hatt som har påvirket deg positivt? Og hvordan?- Hvordan vil du si at lederegenskapene til prosjektlederen kommer til uttrykk i utfordrende situasjoner?- Er disse egenskapene avgjørende for at dere klarer å hente dere inn igjen etter å ha støtt på problemer?- Er det lederegenskaper du savner hos prosjektlederen? Hvordan tenker du dette har påvirket deg og team dynamikken i tøffe situasjoner? <p>Hope:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hvorfor har du valgt håp som en av prosjektlederens signaturstyrker?- Når det har oppstått en vanskelig situasjon, vil du si at prosjektleder uttrykker optimisme for fremtiden og videre arbeid? Hvis ja, hvorfor.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hvordan har det påvirket deg at prosjektleder har uttrykt håpt når dere har vært i en vanskelig situasjon? Hvorfor har dette evt. vært viktig? - Har du noen konkrete eksempler på når prosjektleder har uttrykket håp og optimisme i en utfordrerne situasjon. <p>Forgiveness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hvorfor har du valgt tilgivelse som en av prosjektlederen signaturstyrker? - Har du noen konkrete eksempler? - Vil du si teamlederen gir alle nye sjanser? Hvis ja, hvorfor tenker du det? - Hvordan påvirker deg at teamlederen har tilgivelse som en av sine signaturstyrker? - Hvordan vil du si det har påvirker teamet? <p>Open-mindedness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hvorfor har du valgt dømmekraft som en av prosjektlederen signaturstyrker? - Har du noen konkrete eksempler på at han bruker dømmekraften sin? - Hva vil du si er konsekvensene av hans dømmekraft? - Hvordan vil du si at lederens dømmekraft har påvirket prosjekt prosessen? - Hvordan vil du si det har påvirker teamet? - Hvordan vil du si dømmekraften hans er når prosjektet er i en utfordrende og stressende situasjon? - Har du erfart utfordrende situasjoner hvor dømmekraften hans har vært nyttig? I så fall, kan du beskrive det? <p>Persistence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hvorfor har du valgt innsatsvilje som en av prosjektlederen signaturstyrker? - Har du noen konkrete eksempler på at han bruker denne styrken? - Hva tenker du er fordeler med å inneha denne styrken? - Hvordan påvirker innsatsviljen hans deg? - Hvordan vil du si det har påvirker teamet? <p>Social intelligence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hvorfor har du valgt sosial intelligens som en av prosjektlederen signaturstyrker? - Har du noen konkrete eksempler på at prosjektlederen har bruker denne styrken? - Hva tenker du er fordeler med å inneha denne styrken? - I hvilke situasjoner har du observert at prosjektlederen bruker denne styrken?
<p>9. I hvilke situasjoner har du sett prosjektlederen gjøre bruk av styrkene sine?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kan du komme på noen eksempler hvor prosjektlederen tydelig har brukt styrkene sine? - Har du eksempler på hva det har gjort med deg når prosjektleder har brukt styrkene sine? - Syns du det har påvirker gruppedynamikken?
<p>10. Er det noen av disse styrkene du syns har vært viktigere for å øke motstandsdyktigheten til prosjektgruppen?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hvorfor - Hvordan
<p>11. Er det noe du mener prosjektleder kunne gjort annerledes de gangene dere har støtt på problemer eller vært i en krise?</p>
<p>12. Bruker han ulike styrker i ulike situasjoner? (eks: bruker han enkelte styrker når ting går på skinner, og andre når dere støter på problemer?)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hvis ja: Har du eksempler på når han har brukt noen styrker i en sitasjons og andre i en annen
<p>13. Har du lagt merke til ulike reaksjoner hos forskjellige teammedarbeidere når prosjektleder har brukt styrkene sine?</p>
<p>14. I hvilken grad vil du si at måten prosjektleder bruker styrkene sine har vært utslagsgivende for hvordan dere har taklet utfordringene dere har støtt på?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - På hvilken måte vil du si at de har vært utslagsgivende? - Kan du komme med noen eksempler på dette?
<p>15. I hvilken grad vil du si at team lederen er ansvarlig for prosjektprosessen? I hvilken grad vil du si at du selv føler ansvar for prosjektprosessen? I hvilken grad vil du si du har hatt innflytelse i prosjektet?</p>
<p>16. Ut i fra måten dere jobber (prosjektbasert), hvor viktig tenker du det er at prosjektteamet utvikler motstandsdyktighet (resilience)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hvorfor - Hvordan tenkt du et team kan utvikle motstandsdyktighet
<p>17. Hvilke andre styrker, enn de du har utpekt som prosjektleder har, tenker kunne vært fordelaktig for en prosjektleder å besitte for å øke en prosjektgruppes motstandsdyktighet når de støter på problemer?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Hvorfor</i> tenker du akkurat disse styrkene er viktige? - Har du noen tanker om i hvilke sitasjoner eller kriser disse signaturestyrkene er nødvendige, og hvorfor.
<p>18. Hvordan tror du best et team kan utvikle motstandsdyktighet?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hvorfor tror du dette? Er dette noe du har opplevd i dette teamet eller tidligere?
<p>19 Hvis du skulle vurdert selv hvilke signaturstyrker vil du si du har?</p>
<p>20. Er det noe du ønsker å legge til eller utdype?</p>

10.2 Appendix 2: Interview Guide Project Manager

Project Manager	
Generell informasjon: Alder, kjønn, tid som leder	
1.	Kan du beskrive litt generelt om det å jobbe med prosjekter som arbeidsmåte? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Har du arbeidet i mange prosjektgrupper? - Hvor ofte har du vært prosjektleder? - Kan du beskrive litt generelt om det å jobbe med prosjekter som arbeidsmåte? - Hva er viktig for deg for at du syns en prosjektgruppe skal fungere? - Hva tenker du er forskjellen på å være leder og teamarbeider? - Hva er de største utfordringene med å jobbe i prosjekter? - Har du fra tidligere prosjekter opplevd kriser som har gjort det svært utfordrende å være en del av prosjektet?
2.	Forklar litt om hvordan din rolle har vært i dette prosjektet? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fortell om hvordan det har vært å jobbe i dette prosjektet - Hvordan vil du beskrive teamet? - Hvordan vil du beskrive dynamikken i teamet?
3.	Hva syns du har fungert bra i denne prosjektprosessen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hva tenker du er hovedgrunnen til at dette har fungert bra? - Hva du gjort for at dette skulle fungere bra?
4.	Hva har ikke fungert bra i prosjektprosessen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hva tenker du er hovedgrunnen til at det ikke har fungert så bra? - Hvordan syns du dette har påvirket teamet og teamarbeidet? - Hva har du gjort å overkomme de utfordringene dere har erfart? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Har du noen konkrete eksempler? - Bruker du bevisst noen strategier rettet mot teamet når dere har støtt på problemer? - Er det noe som utpeker seg som en mer vellykket strategi enn andre i denne sammenhengen? - Er det noe du tenker du burde gjort, eller gjort mer av når prosjektet har vært i en utfordrede situasjon eller fase?
5.	Hva tenker du har vært de største utfordringene i dette prosjektet? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kan du beskrive noen situasjoner eller hendelser hvor disse utfordringene kom tydelig frem - Hva tenker du har vært noen av hovedgrunnene til at dere har opplevd store vanskeligheter i dette prosjektet? - Har dere vært i noen utfordringer som du føler ble løst raskt og på en god måte. Hvis ja, fortell om utføringen. - Hva mener du en grunnen til at dette ble løst raskt og på en god måte.
6.	Hvordan går du frem for å opprettholde motivasjon i teamet?
7.	Hvis det er uenighet i teamet hvordan prøver du å løse det?
8.	Ut ifra listen du fikk tilsendt med signaturstyrker, hvilke styrker mener du selv at du har? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hva mener du er fordelene ved å ha denne styrken? - I hvilke situasjoner tror du denne styrken kan være spesielt viktig? - Har du noen konkrete eksempler på situasjoner hvor du har benyttet deg av denne styrken? Generelt om styrke bruk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bruker du ulike styrker i ulike situasjoner? - Vil du si at du velger å bruke styrkene dine på en bevisst/systematisk måte? - Hvordan mener du det å bruke denne styrken påvirket deg? - Hvordan mener du det å bruke denne styrken påvirket teamet? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syns du det har påvirket gruppedynamikken? - Har du lagt merke til ulike reaksjoner hos forskjellige teammedarbeidere når du har brukt styrkene dine?
* Se spørsmål til spesifikke spørsmål til styrker	
9.	Ut i fra måten dere jobber (prosjektbasert), hvor viktig tenker du det er at prosjektteamet utvikler motstandsdyktighet (resilience)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hva tenker du er viktig for å øke motstandsdyktighet i et prosjektteam? - Hva tenker du kan motvirke motstandsdyktighet i et prosjektteam? - Vil du si at prosjektteamet ditt har motstandsdyktighet? - Kan du si noe om sammenhengen mellom din leder rolle i prosjektet og utviklingen av motstandsdyktighet i teamet?
10.	Er det noen av disse styrkene du syns har vært viktigere for å øke motstandsdyktigheten til prosjektgruppen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hvorfor - Hvordan
11.	Hvis du skulle plukket ut andre styrker enn de du har, hvilke andre ville du sagt er viktig for å utvikle resilience i

prosjekt team? Hvorfor?
12. Er det andre ting som kan påvirke motstandsdyktigheten i et team? Hvor viktig er for eksempel tonen mellom teammedarbeiderne?
13. I hvilken grad vil du si at måten du har bruker styrkene din har vært utslagsgivende for hvordan dere har taklet utfordringene dere har støtt på? - På hvilken måte vil du si at de har vært utslagsgivende? - Kan du komme med noen eksempler på dette?
14. I hvilken grad vil du si at du som team lederen er ansvarlig for prosjektprosessen? I hvilken grad vil du si at medarbeiderne selv føler ansvar for prosjektprosessen?
15. Har du noen erfaring fra prosjekter der det har vært lite motstandsdyktighet?- Hva har vært konsekvensene av det? - Hvis du ikke har erfart dette, hva tenker du kunne vært potensielle konsekvenser?
16. Er det noe du tenker du kunne gjort annerledes i løpet prosjektprosessen?
17. Hvordan tror du best et team kan utvikle motstandsdyktighet? - Hvorfor tror du dette? Er dette noe du har opplevd i dette teamet eller tidligere?
18. Er det noe du ønsker å legge til eller utdype?

10.3 Appendix 3: Preliminary Thesis Report

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Preliminary Thesis Report
BI Norwegian Business School

How can project managers use signature strengths to enhance project teams
resilience?

Examination Code and Name:
GRA 19003 – Master Thesis

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Name of Supervisor:
Jan Terje Karlsen

Campus:
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Introduction

In organizations today, project-based work has become a common way of working (Lindgren, Packendorff, & Sergi, 2014). In their nature, project teams are under a great deal of pressure to finish tasks that are characterized as difficult, complex, and uncertain (Lindgren et al. 2014). In addition, as argued by Sommer, Howell, and Hadle (2015) organizational crises occur more frequently and are more complicated. Therefore, the employees' abilities to remain resilient have become an increasing concern for researchers and practitioners (Sommer et al., 2015). Based on the characteristics of project-based work, such as for instance short deadlines (Berg & Karlsen, 2007), and the increase of organizational crises, enhances the resilience of organizational members (Sommer et al., 2015). Resilience refers to "the maintenance of positive adjustment under challenging conditions" (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003, p. 95). According to Sommer et al. (2015) there is a gap regarding the development of resilience in teams (Sommer et al., 2015). One important contribution regarding resilience in teams are Sommer et al.'s (2015) findings, they found that different leadership styles during a crisis can have an impact on team member's resilience, and that this is mediated through affective mechanisms. However, there is little knowledge on whether other factors than leadership styles can affect team members' resilience. According to Gable and Haidt (2005 p. 104) "positive psychology is the study of the conditions and processes that contribute to the flourishing or optimal functioning of people, groups, and institutions". Using signature strengths, which is part of positive psychology, has been associated with improved goal progress (Linley, Nielsen, Gillett, & Biswas-Diener, 2010), increased wellbeing (Forest, Mageau, Crevier-Braud, Bergeron, Dubreuil, & Lavigne, 2012), and positive experience at work (Harzer & Ruch, 2012). The purpose of this thesis is to examine signature strengths, which all leaders possess regardless of leadership style, in relation to team members resilience. This master thesis aim is to contribute to this field by investigating:

"How can project managers use signature strengths to enhance project teams resilience?"

This preliminary thesis report consists of four main parts. The first is the introduction, in this part we have argued for the need for more research regarding the topic. In addition the research question is presented. The second part is the

theoretical background that is related to our topic. In the third part we will briefly explain our choice in method and research design. The last part is an overview of our planned thesis process from January and until the thesis is handed-in in September.

Theoretical Background

Project management

There is little empirical research done on positive psychology in project management (Berg & Karlsen, 2014). Since project-based work has become a common way of working (Lindgren, Packendorff, & Sergi, 2014), this is an important research area. Project-based work is “the organization of work into distinct, complex tasks limited in time and scope” (Lindgren et al., 2014, p. 1385). When certain work task are framed as projects, these tasks are converted into elements that are possible to manage and separate from everyday work routines and consequently they may be subject to rational planning, observation, and control (Lindgren et al., 2014). Project teams are under a great deal of pressure to finish tasks that are characterized as difficult, complex, and uncertain. In addition, these tasks often have short deadlines and the project teams are under a great deal of pressure to not sacrifice the cost and quality, at the expense of the projects deadlines (Berg & Karlsen, 2007). According to Lindgren et al. (2014) projects are not viewed as bold enough if they run smoothly without crises and disturbances. Managing projects is a complex task, and the project manager has to handle a number of different issues, concerning both the technical aspect, and also the human aspect of the project. Thus, the project manager has to deal with matters such as planning, strategy, finance, teamwork, communication, and culture etc. (Berg & Karlsen, 2007).

Positive Psychology

In 2000 Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi published an article about positive psychology, which resulted in what Gable and Haidt (2005) refer to as a positive psychology movement. By that they mean that since then numerous of articles have been published, many conferences have been held, and so on regarding the area of positive psychology. However, as Gable and Haidt (2005) points out, it is important to be aware that positive psychology can be traced back to long before

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's article, for example as early as 1902 where Williams James wrote about "healthy mindedness". Seligman have argued that traditional psychology have since WWII mainly been focusing on human pathology and what is wrong with people (Cameron & Dutton, 2003). Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson (2005) states that positive psychology is used as an umbrella term for the study of positive character traits, positive emotions and enabling institutions, where the focus is on building positive qualities (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) like resilience, thriving, strengths, and flourishing (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Seligman et al., 2005; Donaldson & Ko, 2010). According to Peterson (2006) positive psychology is comprised of three pillars. *Positive subjective experience* is the first, and some examples of the concepts included in this pillar are flow, happiness, positive emotions, hope, and optimism. *Positive traits*, is the second pillar, and this includes creativity, interests, character strengths, purpose, and meaning. The third pillar, *positive institutions*, is comprised of positive families, communities, and organizations. Peterson (2006) argues that it is the third pillar, positive institutions, that enable the first and second pillar, positive subjective experience and positive traits, to foster human flourishing. As positive psychology is an umbrella term for the whole field of positive psychology we find it useful to narrow it down. Since we will investigate how can project managers use their signature strengths to enhance project teams resilience, the context is narrowed down to the organizational. Therefore, it is natural to focus on positive organizational psychology (POP), which is positive psychology with a focus on work and organizational related issues (Donaldson & Ko, 2010).

Positive Organizational Psychology

According to Donaldson and Ko (2010) there is not a clear definition for positive organizational psychology (POP), and as a result several definitions and labels are used (Luthans, 2002). Donaldson and Ko (2010) define POP as "the scientific study of positive subjective experiences and traits in the workplace and positive organizations, and its application to improve the effectiveness and quality of life in organizations" (Donaldson & Ko, 2010, p 178). The concept of positive organizational psychology has been researched under labels such as positive psychology at work, and positive organization (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). For instance, the purpose of Froman's article (2010) was to find connections between

the workplace and ideas from positive psychology. It is argued that in today's stressful and uncertain economic times, the importance of organizations developing cultures characterized by trust, integrity, and respect is given a great deal of emphasis and importance. Furthermore, the important role that positive emotions, and the associated psychological processes play in helping individuals to cope with stress and uncertainty are examined. The authors argue that although such individuals' experience of such positive emotions like inspiration, hope, gratitude, joy, and interest is to a large degree an individualized process that is highly dependent upon such predispositions as personality, reasoning, and character, these positive emotions may also be initiated and maintained by a supportive organizational environment (Froman, 2010).

Positive Organizational Scholarship

The organizational equivalent of positive psychology is positive organizational scholarship (POS) (Caza & Cameron, 2008). The main belief behind positive organizational scholarship is that to understand the mechanisms of positive behavior at work will contribute to achieving better organizational outcomes (Roberts et al., 2005; Berg & Karlsen, 2014). Key ingredients of POS include: positive meaning, positive emotions, and positive relations. According to Caza and Cameron (2008) most of the POS research has been directed towards explaining traditional "non-POS" organizational outcomes, like profit and retention. Out of the twenty-four studies they examined, only six were concerned with POS outcomes. Our investigation is concerned with seeing how project managers can use signature strengths to enhance project teams' resilience, thus focusing on a specific POS outcome. Positive emotions have since the 1980's been suggested, by among others Lazarus and Folkman, to could provide for critical psychological time-outs and important support coping effects for individuals that are in a stressful situation (Ong, Bergman, Bisconi, & Wallace, 2006).

Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1998) distinguish between positive affect (PA) and negative affect (NA). PA is a component of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), which includes feelings like for example enthusiasm. According to Watson et al. (1998) will people that are high in PA be in a state where they have a high energy level, they will be completely concentrated and they will be very engaged in the task they are doing. NA, on the other hand, are

negative feeling. This could for example be anger or disgust. People that are in the low NA state will be calm and serene (Watson et al., 1998). It is important to mention that emotions like anger or anxiety do not necessarily need to be negative. It has been found that these emotions can be useful in terms of coping in a difficult situation (Glasø & Vie, 2009).

Positive organizational behavior (POB) is defined as “the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace” (Luthans 2002, p. 59). The focus in POB is on state-like psychological resources and capabilities. Hence, these are considered to be possible to develop and change (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). Resilience, optimism and efficacy are some examples of POB capacities (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). POB differ from other positive oriented concepts because there is a criterion that POB should contribute to improvement in performance, in addition it needs to be measureable (Luthans, 2002).

Psychological capital (PsyCap) is the concept that describes the core POB resources that influence behavior (Avolio, Griffith, Wernsing, & Walumwa, 2010). Psychological capital is by Luthans et al. (2007, p. 542) defined as “an individual's positive psychological state of development”. According to Luthans et al. (2007) are PsyCap characterized by that a person has confidence (self-efficacy) in dealing with a task, and put in the needed effort to succeed with a difficult task. Further, it is concerned with that the person both in the present and the future make positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding. The person also needs to be persevering towards goals, and when it is necessary needs to be able to redirect paths (hope) to achieve success. Lastly, when it occurs problems and difficulties, the person needs to be able to bounce both back and beyond (resilience) to attain success (Luthans et al., 2007).

According to Donaldson and Ko (2010) POB and POS both share a common root in positive psychology, however they differ in their main topics of interest, their level of analysis and how much the emphasis is on improvement of performance (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Based on their common root is positive psychology, Donaldson and Ko (2010) used POP as an umbrella term that covers both POB and POS, which we also will do in this thesis.

Signature Strengths

Authors within the field of positive psychology have developed a classification of human strengths and virtues (Seligman et al., 2005). The most recognized classification in this relation is according to Elston and Boniwell (2011) the *Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS)*, proposed by Peterson and Seligman (2004). In their classification virtues are regarded as “the core characteristics valued by moral philosophers and religious thinkers”, while character strengths are defined as “the psychological ingredients- processes or mechanisms- that define the virtues (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p.13). Linley (2008, p. 9) define strengths as “a pre-existing capacity for a particular way of behaving, thinking, or feeling that is authentic and energizing to the user, and enables optimal functioning, development, and performance”. When a person uses his or hers signature strengths the person will typically experience motivation, energy, happiness and joy.

The classification of human strengths and virtues consists of 6 virtues and 24 strengths (Seligman et al., 2005), where these 24 strengths originate from 1 of the 6 virtues (Forest et al., 2012). The first virtue in Seligman et al.’s (2005) classification is *wisdom and knowledge* this consists of five strengths. The first strength regarding this virtue is creativity this strengths focuses on novel and productive thinking. The second, curiosity, is when people take interest in ongoing experiences. The third, open-mindedness is when people think things through and examine situations from all sides. The fourth, love of learning is when people master new skills, topics and knowledge. The last, perspective, regards the ability to provide meaningful counseling to others. The second virtue is *courage*, which consists of four strengths. The first, authenticity, is about telling the truth, and present ourselves in a genuine way. The second, bravery, is when people do not avoid threats, challenges, or difficulties. The third, persistence, is that people finish what they have started. Zest is about approaching situations with energy and excitement. The third virtue is *humanity*. The first strengths regarding this virtue are kindness. This is when people do good things for others. The second, love, is when people appreciate and value having close relationships with other people. The third, social intelligence is when people are aware of their own and others motives and feelings. The fourth virtue is *justice*, which consists of three strengths. The first, fairness, is when someone treats all people in the same way according to

notions of both fairness and justice. The second, leadership, is about establishing activities for a group and make sure that they happen. The last is teamwork, and this is when people work well in a team. The fifth virtue is *temperance*. The first strength is forgiveness, which is forgiving people that have done something wrong. The second, modesty, is allowing people's accomplishment to speak for themselves. Prudence, which is the third strength in this virtue, is about being careful about choice, which means not to say or do things that could be regretted later. The fourth, self-regulation, is about regulating feeling and behavior. The last virtue is *transcendence*. The first strength is appreciation for both beauty and excellence. The second is gratitude, which is about being grateful about the good thing that happens. The third, hope, which entails anticipating the best and also working towards achieving the best. The fourth, humor, is concerned with making people smile, and enjoying laughter and teasing. The last is religiousness, which is about having beliefs about a higher purpose and meaning of life (Seligman et al. 2005). It has been stipulated that individuals usually have between three and seven signature strengths among these 24 (Harzer & Ruch, 2012). Signature strengths are those strengths a person owns, celebrates, and in addition frequently uses (Harzer & Ruch, 2012). Seligman et al. (2005) argue that even though it lays in the definition of strengths that these generally are related to and contribute to life fulfillment, character strengths that are related to the "heart" or are "of the heart" as the authors put it, such as hope, love, gratitude and zest, are more strongly related to life satisfaction in comparison to the more intellectual strengths such as the love of learning, creativity, and judgment (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). It is suggested that different types of strengths can be beneficial to different types of jobs (Forest et al. 2012). On the one hand, other oriented strengths could be useful for social workers and nurses. On the other hand, self-oriented strengths and mind-oriented strengths can be useful for lawyers (Forest et al. 2012).

Resilience

As we have seen introductory, the increased frequency of organizational crisis, and the increased use of project-based work in organizations (Sommer et al., 2015; Lindgren et al., 2014) have led to the emphasis on organizational members' resilience (Sommer et al., 2015). Resilience is according to Luthans et al. (2006) a part of psychological capital, along side with optimism, hope, and self-efficacy. According to Sutcliffe and Vogus (2003, p. 95) "resilience refers to the

maintenance of positive adjustment under challenging conditions”. Moreover, West, Patera, and Carsten (2009, p. 253) define resilience as “an adaptive system which enables an individual to rebound or “bounce back” from a setback or failure”. It is argued that it is individuals’ level of resilience that determines who fails and who are successful, and that this level of resilience is a more robust predictor in comparison to training, education, and experience. This will be the case in all situations for all people, thus it ranges from the cancer patient, the Olympics performer, and the leader in a boardroom (Coutu, 2002).

There have been identified three concrete strategies for organizations to strengthen the resilience of their employees (Froman, 2010). As a starting point, organizations should invest in a supportive work environment, so that the employees feel that they have support from their supervisor and coworkers. This again affects the employees’ organizational commitment and job satisfaction in a positive way. Secondly, organizations should nurture a culture characterized by trust and ethical consideration. If the organization succeeds in this, then their culture will be in support of an including the employees in the organizations decision-making process. Thirdly, organizations should invest in their social- and human capital, such as training and development programs, and they should also invest resources in a team-based organizational design, that supports the relationship between the employees and that promote cooperative learning (Froman, 2010)

At the team level, resilience helps teams with their ability to recover when they have setbacks, failures, or experience conflicts. This capacity to recover also applies to any other threat to the team’s welfare (West et al., 2009). Resilience is not absolute, but it is rather something that is relative. This ability emerges and changes in transactions with particular situations and challenges. Resilience that has been shown under specific conditions might therefore not withstand or be transferred to other situations (Staudinger, Marsiske, & Baltes, 1993). According to Sommer, Howell and Hadley (2015) there is little knowledge on the development of resilience in teams. However, it is found that in order for project team members to be resilient during challenging conditions, they have to draw on the resources that are available to them. These resources include instrumental, cognitive, social, and emotional resources (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). Seligman (2011) have identified optimism as a key strength in relation to bouncing back after a failure. He argue that it has been found that individuals who do not give up

after experiencing a setback or a failure, have the habit of interpreting a setback as something that is not permanent, but rather changeable. Hence, these individuals have an optimist thought pattern (Seligman, 2011).

Recent studies have shown that especially positive emotions may be a key resource in developing resilience (Sommer et al., 2015). According to the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 1988) “positive emotions broaden an individual’s thought-action repertoire, which in turn helps to build that individual’s personal resources” (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004, p. 330). This may result in growing self-confidence in the capacity to resolve the crisis and it may allow the individual to develop new solutions to the problems that a crisis results in (Fredrickson, 2001; Sommer et al., 2015).

In their study, Sommer et al. (2015) examine how the behavior of team leaders during a crisis can make an impact on the team member’s resilience through affective mechanisms. They find that in the stressful situation of a crisis, positive and negative affect co-exists. This entail that people may experience both positive and negative affect, which again demonstrates the emotional complexity in this type of situation. By transforming these emotional inputs into the central output of the team members’ resilience, they show that positive affect foster resilience, while negative affect weakens resilience. In addition, they demonstrate the important role that team leaders play in team member’s emotional state and consequently their resilience (Sommer et al. 2015). Some researches, like Tugade et al. (2004), believe resilience should be considered a trait, however there have been provided substantial evidence that it is more state-like. Hence, it is therefore something that is possible to train and develop (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009).

Methodology and Research Design

In this section of the preliminary thesis report we will briefly describe our choice of research method, argue for the reason why we have decided to choose a qualitative case study, and why we believe that this it the most suitable method to examine our research question.

Qualitative Research

Since it is preferable to choose a research approach based on the nature of the research problem (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), we believe that a qualitative approach is the most appropriate for investigating our research question. Qualitative research refer to methods that make the use of the human language instead of numbers, and this approach is often characterized by being naturalistic and interpretative. Qualitative research emphasizes the notion of intersubjectivity, which often referrers to how individuals, in order for them to understand the social world that they are a part of, construct meaning or a shared understanding, perception, or feeling of a specific situation (Biggerstaff, 2012). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) researchers within the qualitative approach often work in a natural settings or the real world instead of a laboratory setting. In addition, qualitative research can be regarded as a reflexive approach, where the researcher's increase their in-depth knowledge during the investigation, and this characteristic is viewed as a basic component of qualitative research (Biggerstaff, 2012).

Case Study

A case study is a detailed oriented and an intensive analysis of one or several specific cases (Bryman & Bell, 2011), which focuses on understanding dynamics in one or several social settings (Yin, 1994) to get a deep understanding of the phenomenon that are investigated (Mason, 2004). A case study approach seems appropriate for investigating whether project leader's signature strengths can enhance group members' resilience, since it require an extensive and in-depth description regarding a social phenomenon.

To investigate our research question we will conduct semi-structured interviews. This type of interview allows us to follow an interview guide, while at the same time have some freedom, including the possibility to ask follow-up questions to the informants and change the sequences of the questions (Bryman & Bell, 2011). If the informants allow us, we want to record the interviews, and thereafter transcribe them. Transcribing the interviews can be an advantage since it keeps the informants words intact (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In addition to conduct interviews, we will use organizational documents from our project team

as a source of data. This is because organizational documents can be an important source to valuable background information (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Choice of Case

Our case in this thesis is a project team in a large public organization. This project team is part of a bigger project, which consists of several project teams. The main project has a time frame from 2015-2020. The project team that will be our informants has been part of this process from the early phases, and is today still working in this team. We have been informed that this team has experienced difficulties, which has been a criterion for us when finding a case. We also consider it an advantage that these difficulties have happened in the near past, which increase the likelihood of the informants still having “fresh” memories about it. However, we also realize that it could be a challenge that the project team still are working together, which can make the informants reluctant to share information if they are afraid this information will come back to them. Therefore, it is important to make sure that the informants and team stays anonymous.

Overview of planned Master Thesis Process

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Preliminary Thesis Report	X								
Literature Search	X	X							
Develop interview guide	X	X							
First Draft	X	X	X						
Data Collection		X	X						
Transcription of interviews		X	X	X					
Data Analysis				X	X				
Follow-up interviews				X	X				
Second Draft				X	X	X	X		

Final Draft								X	X
Hand in Thesis									X

This is an overview of our planned master thesis process from January to September. In January the focus is on the preliminary thesis report, literature search, develop interview guide, and the first draft. February will mainly consist of developing an interview guide, and test this. In addition, we will in this period continuing working on the first draft. We want to conduct the interviews in February and/or Mars. Since we realize it will be a lot of data to analysis after the interviews it will be preferable to conduct them in February. However, we have not scheduled the dates regarding the interview with the informants. Therefore, we have chosen to include this in both February and Mars. April and May will be used to transcribe the data, the analyses, conduct follow-up interviews if it is necessary and work on the second draft. The remaining months will consist of second- and final draft before the hand-in in September.

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