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Employee Engagement and Knowledge Management

A Nordic Organizational Study

Several perspectives have investigated employee engagement; however, very little to none concerning knowledge management. Knowing the positive relationship of employee engagement to staff members' performance and the disadvantages that employee disengagement can have on employees' physical and mental health, the need to examine employee engagement further cannot be emphasized. This study seeks to investigate the correlation between knowledge management and employee engagement in a Nordic government-run organization. By employing a mixed-method approach, this study aims to gain in-depth insight into employees' engagement in the Nordic House in Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and NAPA in Greenland, which follows a knowledge management style. The results indicated that there is a neutral to the positive correlation between knowledge management and employee engagement.

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1. Introduction

The global and rapidly changing world that we live in today challenges some of the old and conventional aspects of our lives. When considering the traditional workplace (Richmond, 2017), there are different ways that our global world confronts the way we used to work, the way employees were hired, and our work structures. One of the aspects this paper will investigate is employee engagement in a non-traditional workplace. Employee engagement was a hot topic among managers, recruiters, and CEOs from 1999 to 2005, while academics started to explore the term in 2006 (Welch, 2011, as stated in Anitha, 2014). Employee engagement is the level of commitment to an organization and is a direct positive link to organizational and employee performance (Anitha, 2014). Baumruk (2004) has stated that the employees are the most valuable aspect of an organization if they are guided efficiently. Gallup (2002) argues further that disengaged employees can also be harmful to their workplace. Anitha (2014), Baumruk (2004), and Gallup (2002) explain that engaging employees is not an easy task to be achieved, which makes us wonder, how one would deal with employee engagement when an organization applies non-traditional hiring processes?

The world that we live in today has gotten smaller over the past couple of decades. Areas and regions have been defined, and people have started to come together across borders to unify in work. This global world challenges the traditional workplace in both positive and negative ways, when the organization purposely consist of employees with various nationalities from a specific region. An example of this can be found in our study that we will investigate employee engagement in organizations that are placed within the Nordic region, which have a focus on the Nordic region. Pauli et al. (2016) state that “Norden is often defined as five nation state that share historical experience to a degree that makes it possible to distinguish them as a distinct historical region” (p. 3). Some of the common characteristics of the Nordic region are balanced welfare, very low levels of inequality, “mobility and macro regional integration” (Jokinen et al., 2020, p. 11). This provides the Nordic countries with the possibilities to “study, travel, work and start businesses in each other’s countries” (p.11). Andreasson and Lundqvist (2018) conducted research on Nordic leadership, and how it has shown to have strong ties to culture and values. The features of Nordic leadership “include

delegation of power and responsibility to employees, as well as a high degree of consensus seeking, where every employee's voice is important" (p. 8). Furthermore, leadership is described to be based on cooperation, where Nordic leaders tend to downplay their own authority in order to coach their employees, while inspiring employees to be visionary and realistic.

Another aspect that every workplace has to go through is the employment process. One of the most traditional mindsets towards employment has usually been the idea of starting at the bottom and then work one's way up, while having the mentality of trying to always stay in the same workplace. Through our research (see Literature Review, p. 9) we found a management style called 'Knowledge Management'. Within this management style, we discovered an employment process, where workers are hired for a specific purpose with a fixed contract. Since this employment process in itself has not gotten a name, we in this paper, are only referring to the employment process as knowledge management.

When combining all these elements, we have a research gap within employee engagement. Therefore, it was decided to investigate organizations that are implementing knowledge management as their employment process, while focusing on a specific region of the world. The problem formulation for this study will be: How does knowledge management in a Nordic government-run organization influence employee engagement? For this paper, we will be looking into the case studies of the Nordic houses in Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and NAPA in Greenland, which are culture houses under the Nordic Council of Ministers (Nordic Co-operation, 2020). We seek to explore how the implementation of knowledge management in a region-specific organization influence employee engagement. This means that this study will not be studying knowledge management, but rather how it may or may not have an impact on employee engagement. By combining research from the culture houses in Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and Greenland, we aim to understand the implementation of employee engagement in organizational work.

2. Literature Review

This literature review will reflect and show elements of which this study is investigating. With the problem formulation: *How does knowledge management in a Nordic government-run organization influence employee engagement*, this literature review seeks to uncover knowledge and possible research gaps within the chosen field of topic. That is, the relationship between knowledge management and employee engagement in the context of a Nordic organization.

The essential part of this study will focus on employee engagement. Therefore, the first section of this literature review will provide an overview of other scholars' research on employee engagement. If someone were to investigate the research that had been written about employee engagement, they would discover a variety of articles and studies conducted within this topic. The researchers, who conducted these studies, have been doing it with several different viewpoints and contexts. Our research showed that most scientists have investigated employee engagement in three ways. These categories are leadership and employee engagement, different generations and staff engagement, and finally, some authors searched and proposed ways on how to engage employees at the workplace, and why this is important.

2.1 Leadership and Employee Engagement

The first person to ever introduce the term 'Employee Engagement' was Kahn (1990), when he conducted research within two case studies. The first case study was regarding employees, who worked at a summer camp, and the second was regarding employees, who worked in an architecture firm. In his study, he tried to explore the link between supportive leadership and employee's commitment by using theoretical and empirical data. Through his research, he was able to create a definition of employee engagement and found that it can occur when "people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally during role performances" (p.10). His research leads him to answer, 'how one can be engaged at their workplace'. Kahn explained that

this can happen when an employee has been provided with safety, availability and meaning from the organization. According to Kahn (1990), this means that employees have to have freedom to express their true selves, to have the necessary tools and equipment needed for their occupation, and to experience a fulfilment within their occupation accordingly. Finally, Kahn (1990) addressed the importance of employees' commitment, and why managers and leaders should be aware of it. Kahn (1990) argued that committed employees want to keep developing themselves, and thrive at their occupation, while uncommitted staff members are more likely to quit their job 'physically or mentally'.

According to Kahn (1990), Harter et al., (2003), and Saks (2006), employee engagement can positively affect 'multiple work-related outcomes' (Cited in Cervai et al., 2014, p. 153). This relates to employees, who show passion, "happiness, excitement and the sheer joy of providing excellent service to customers" (Menguc et al., 2012, p. 153). A different point of view states that engagement is connected to the employees' perceptions of their roles that are assigned to them by the organization (Rotbard, 2001).

Kahn (1990), along with other scientists, also explored the link between different leadership styles and employee commitment. Xu and Cooper-Thomas (2011) investigated if there is indeed a connection between leadership and engagement. This is a theory that was generally accepted, but never scientifically proven. Therefore, they conducted a survey of employees, who were working in a company located in New Zealand. The researchers did not only find a positive link between leadership and employee commitment, they also found what a leader should do in order to effectively engage staff members. Xu and Cooper-Thomas believe that managers should make an effort to support and build strong relationships with their staff members if they want to keep them engaged to their workplace and within their occupation. Finally, they claimed that leaders show higher percentages of engagement, because their job can be more interesting and due to that, they have more responsibilities, and they are able to grow in the company's hierarchy.

Strom, Sears and Kelly (2014) are three other researchers, who investigated if transformational and transactional leadership styles are associated with engagement. Transformational leadership includes four fundamentals: charisma and/or influence, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In this leadership style, followers identify with the leader's aspirations and want to imitate them (Bass,

1985, as cited in Strom, Sears and Kelly, 2014). On the other hand, transactional leadership includes contingent reinforcement, and in this leadership style, employees are motivated by the way leaders reward, correct and balance feedback (Bass & Avolio, 1999, as cited in Strom, Sears and Kelly, 2014). Employees identify with the charismatic leaders' aspirations and want to emulate the leaders. For that reason, Bass and Avolio (1999) used the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, and their participants were people, who work and live in the United States of America. The scientists discovered that both leadership styles can positively influence employee commitment. Strom, Sears and Kelly (2014) argue that lower levels of transactional leadership lead to higher chances for employees to maintain engagement, compared to people with higher levels of transactional leadership. Furthermore, staff members with low transactional leadership can show uncertainty about themselves and their performance in a workplace.

Finally, Hassan and Ahamed (2011) explored the link that authentic leadership had to employee engagement by choosing a random sample of Malaysian bank staff members to participate in the research. They explained what authentic leadership stands for, by stating that the main keywords in order to understand this kind of leaderships are strong values, purpose, and the significant idea of building trusting relationships among leaders and employees. The results suggested that authentic leadership increases trust towards leaders as a direct result of employee engagement. Finally, the authors defined trust as the feeling of believing in a human's certain and specific characteristics, such as authenticity.

This part of our literature review on employee engagement showcases studies that found positive associations with employee engagement. This is through a mental and physical state (see Definitions under work environment), while creating good ties with the leaders. The current research that have been found so far, is very fundamental research within the topic of employee engagement. It does not showcase any elements of our problem formulation with employee engagement in relation to knowledge management or a Nordic-government run organization. Therefore, there is still a rather large research gap. An interesting aspect found here is that the research does not portray different groups of employees, but rather gather them as one unit. Therefore, the next section of this literature review on employee engagement will dive further into aspects,

such as generations, within a unit of employees that might show the need for different approaches.

2.2 Different Generations and Employee Engagement

Many researchers have investigated employee engagement in relation to different generations. Although generations and engagement are not an aspect that will be used for this specific research, it is crucial to briefly state the studies that have been done. The reason is that firstly, we cannot just overcome such a large amount of literature about this aspect and context of employee engagement. Secondly, another reason, is to address another gap that our project will try to cover. That although many studies have been conducted regarding employee engagement, nothing was found about employee engagement and staff members with a temporary contract/project employment in a Nordic Organization.

Our examination of the different kind of research that has been conducted on the topic of generations and employee engagement, will begin with Ferreira's (2019). The scholar wanted to explore employee engagement within different generations. He explained that “Baby Boomers can be defined as individuals born between 1946 and 1964, Generation X is made of individuals born between 1965 and 1980 and Generation Y represents those born between 1981 and 1999” (p. 112). Park and Gursoy (2012), Hoole and Bonnema (2015), and Chawla et al. (2017) all found that the level of engagement is different between the generations. All the mentioned scholars state that Baby Boomers have the highest level of engagement, while Generation Y has the lowest level of engagement (cited in Ferreira P., 2019, p. 12). Park and Gursoy (2012) further define the older generations as having a tendency “to be more dedicated to, engrossed in, and even vigorous at work” (cited in Ferreira P., 2019, p. 12). Ferreira found that previous scholars, such as Hoole and Bonnema (2015), argued that there are no significant difference between Generation X and Generation Y. Ferreira (2019) concluded that Baby Boomers and Generation X had the most in common among all generations, and that findings from previous studies on the subject can be explained by differences in culture and region (p. 117 - 118).

Recently, it is evident that more research on millennials have been conducted as they are the workforce of the future. As we discovered above, Generation Y, or millennials, have been described as displaying less engagement. Therefore, researchers, such as Pignatelli (2016), Jerome, Scales, Whithem and Quain (2014) and Schullery (2013), have investigated different ways to engage with this specific generation. The results indicated that with leadership and regular coaching, a millennial can become committed to a workplace. Moreover, all researchers agree that meetings and feedback are vital tools that one can utilize to engage a millennial as these can cause the millennial to feel acknowledged by, for instance, congratulating their good performance and results. Furthermore, they found that a pleasant work environment, where the colleagues collaborate well together, can provide positive results to a millennial's commitment. Finally, a very important aspect that only Jerome et al. (2014) addressed, is that every generation possesses different characteristics. Therefore, they should be approached differently. For an approach to obtain the most effective result, they advise that the approach is implemented from the beginning, during the recruitment process. In the above section of the literature review concerning employee engagement within generations, it is evident that there are differences in engagement. Although a clear approach on how to engage the older generations were not found, plenty of advice was presented regarding the Generation Y. The characteristics that a millennial appreciate (from the above-mentioned research) are acknowledgement and appreciation with the possibility of personal development. One might assume that these characteristics would be important to the other generations as well, but to what extent? The next section of our literature review aims to understand the different methods that are employed to determine how to engage employees.

2.3 Engaging Employees

The third large category within employee engagement that was discovered was 'engaging employees' and is the practical approach to employee engagement. A large number of researchers have explored this concept with the aim of providing effective ways and examples to engage employees. Plaskoff (2017) explains in his article that an employee's experience in a job can be significantly influenced by their engagement,

and that will eventually influence the employee's performance. Therefore, Plaskoff believes that there is a link between employee engagement and performance and argues that, this is the reason why managers should focus on their staff members' commitment. The author emphasizes that nowadays there are three generations collaborating and working together (Xer's, Baby Boomers and Millennials), and for that reason, managers should focus on the employees' different needs when trying to engage them. The researcher argues that engagement should start within the recruitment phase, and that a helpful tool would be to create a 'map', where leaders can keep track of their staff members' needs and motivations, and their best and worst moments. As he explains, this will help managers to better understand their employees.

Kompaso and Sridevi (2010) also agree on the positive relationship between employee engagement and employee performance. In their article, they present previous studies that have been done that support this claim, such as, Vance (2006), who states that staff members' engagement is aligned with their results. Kompaso and Sridevi (2010) and Vance (2006) attempt to help future leaders to effectively engage their workforce by giving examples and directions. At first, they state that everyone should share a common goal in the organization, and this can be achieved if the mission, vision and values are being communicated to all employees. In addition, they explain that feedback and regular trainings that will influence the workforce to be more involved professionally can play an important role to an employee's commitment. Finally, Kompaso and Sridevi (2010) emphasize the significance of the employees to have a voice in the decision-making process.

Engaging employees is thus about making the employees feel valued within their workspace. This section of employee engagement is the first part to provide tools for engagement development within a workplace. What is interesting so far is that the type of workplace, whether it is an organization or a company, has not been addressed nor considered. For the last part of employee engagement, we want to implement research regarding the direction of engagement, and if it is directed towards one's job function or workplace/ organization.

2.4 Employee Engagement: The Difference Between Job and Organization Engagement

Saks (2006) research indicates a distinction of two different types of employee engagement, which is 'job and organizational engagement' (Cited in Cervai et al., 2014, p. 154). According to Saks, job engagement is passion for the employee's specific job, whereas organizational engagement is passion for the organization they work in.

2.5 Contract Leadership

Contract leadership is, according to Kumoi and Matsubayashi (2014), a phenomenon that occurs more frequently among many companies, which use it to utilize their brand power (p. 221). This means that companies implement a focus on brand development through managements instead of focusing on each step in a chain, such as producing or retailing. Stanzione (2009) adds that contract leadership is often used in companies, where there is a collaboration between project management and a contract office. For the project management and contract office to be efficient, it is important the contract department to take a "servant-lead [approach] in serving project management/operations" (p. 60) to create a good teamwork. A 'servant-lead' approach is not clearly defined by Stanzione, however, since it uses the word 'servant' it could indicate a subordination of the contract office to the project management.

Kumoi and Matsubayashi (2014) and Stanzione (2009) approach contract leadership as an element to a specific project that needs a specific leader to solve. This literature shows the idea of contract leaders being brought into what seems like ordinary contract-based organizations with staff that are not limited by a project or time. The research gap that is found here indicate that there are no studies conducted on contract leadership as the only type of leadership in an organization. To further investigate this employment structure, we chose to investigate contract workers to see what other scholars had written on this topic.

2.6 Contract Workers

Contract workers are, according to The Hartford (retrieved 2020), associated with various benefits such as cost-efficiency, flexibility and refreshment. The Hartford argues that contract workers, due to their temporary employment, are cost-efficient as a result of low expenses, such as “family leave, maternity leave vacation and sabbaticals” (The Hartford, 2020), as longer employed employees usually only receive such benefits. The flexibility and refreshment are two terms that are associated with temporary workers, as it generates change, and influence long-term employees to work more productively. On the other hand, Hartford (2020) also argues that temporary workers might take longer to adjust to the company procedures. Yet, Hartford does not address the possibility of precarious situations stress such as lack of time and no possibilities of planning for the future.

Lafuente and Berbegal-Mirabent (2019), conducted research on scientists, who were hired through contract employment. In this article, these employees, both due to their occupation but also hiring technique, were introduced as knowledge workers. The workers were chosen, due to their specific knowledge, and hired on contract or project-based terms. Lafuente and Berbegal-Mirabent found that implementing knowledge workers had a great influence on an organization’s productivity level. Lafuente compared fixed-term contracts with contract workers and highlights the issues with fixed-term contracts. For one, fixed-term contracts tend to invoke “academic inbreeding, including lower creativity and productivity levels” (p. 2361). This means that employees entering work within fixed contract frames tend to forget their field of profession. Lafuente and Berbegal-Mirabent (2019) explain that people tend to focus on getting as long a career as possible in one firm by getting a fixed-term contract, that they forget the importance of “employment opportunities and working conditions that are core to their careers” (p. 2362). Essentially a fixed contract would, according to Lafuente and berbegal-Mirabent be a less desirable choice when establishing a career.

Reading former research on contract employment and knowledge workers show that the term and use is associated with a positive start for evolving organizations. The interesting aspect of these sources are the indication of contract employment as a further addition to an already existing long-term staff. This raises the question of, whether the

contract employment process would have just as big of a positive effect for evolving organizations, when the staff only consists of contract employment? Lafuente and Berbegal-Mirabent (2019), in this case, define scientists on contract employment as knowledge workers. Despite the fact that the participants in our embedded case study (See Research Design) are not scientists, they are hired for their specified knowledge for a certain project or vision on fixed-term contracts. Companies usually do not hire people if it is not for their specified knowledge, which makes us wonder if all contract workers could be defined as knowledge employees (Lafuente & Berbegal-Mirabent, 2019).

2.7 Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is, according to Knowledge Management Tools, defined as “the systematic management of an organization’s knowledge assets for the purpose of creating value and meeting tactical & strategic requirements” (accessed February 29th 2020). These requirements are referred to strategies, initiatives, sharing, and creation of knowledge and “systems that sustain and enhance the storage” (accessed February 29th 2020). This means that knowledge management is connected to an organization’s goals and strategies, when “the management of knowledge that is useful for some purpose and which creates value for the organization” (accessed 29th of February 2020). When conducting research on the topic of contract researchers, it uncovered a whole new possible aspect of contract workers, which might be more in line with the employment process that this study is seeking to investigate.

According to Van de Ven and Drazin (1985), as cited in Chen Y. and Huang H (2010, p. 26), knowledge management is connected to organizational performance and “organization environment, strategy, structure, system, style, and culture” (p. 27). Chen and Huang argue that technology, or IT, is a valuable solution to improving knowledge management as knowledge management alone might not be enough to “enhance business performance” (p. 26). This means that choosing the most suitable IT solution can be vital for organizations’ performance, and with the right alignment, will create high performance. Chen and Huang (2012) defined human knowledge management

strategy to draw “upon interpersonal relationships to exchange and share tacit knowledge across the organization” (p. 27). This means that knowledge management according to Chen and Huang is the exchange of knowledge across an organization, through IT systems.

Rubenstein-Montano supports the notion of the importance of the human factor in knowledge management: “people and the culture of the workplace are the driving factors that ultimately determine the success or failure of knowledge management initiatives” (Rubenstein-Montano, 2001, p. 5). When Rubenstein-Montano conducted research on knowledge management, it was a very new discipline in the early 2000s. Rubenstein-Montano argued that, at this time, there had been a range of different approaches to knowledge management by different organizations. What Rubenstein-Montano etc. found, was that knowledge management had to be integrated to an organization's strategic goals in order for it to successfully enhance organization performance (p. 5).

The studies conducted on knowledge management, contract leadership and contract workers, show that these research studies have mostly been focusing on work in relation to a specific project (Chen & Huang, 2010; Hartford, 2020, Kumoi, 2014). This means that when a contract worker is hired for a specific project, their employment only lasts as long as their project is active (Chen & Huang, 2010). Kumoi and Matsubayashi (2014), analyze the importance of a good relationship between project managers and the contract office. In this case, as they explain, the project managers are the knowledge resources.

Chen and Huang (2012), Hartford (2020) and Kumoi (2014), focus on an employment process where the foundation consist of regular hired employees, with an added element of employees with fixed contracts. What these cases do not address are the situations, where the employment processes are not based on a mix between short and long-term hirings, but that they completely rely on short-term employment, when all of the employees, including the management, are employed as knowledge workers. The research gap that we have found so far within employee engagement have grown, as there are no connections to knowledge management. At the same time, knowledge management presents a research gap, as there has not been conducted any research on staff including management that only consist of knowledge management. To present

the last topic of our problem formulation within this literature review, we will be looking into employee engagement and knowledge management within a Nordic organization.

2.8 Conclusion

To remind the reader of the purpose of this research paper, it is to find out *How does knowledge management in a Nordic government-run organization influence employee engagement?* This literature review shows that there has been conducted a lot of research within the different elements of our problem formulation. However, only one section within our literature review contains more than two elements of our problem formulation, whereas the rest mostly only contain one element. This suggests a research gap, especially within the studies on employee engagement and knowledge management as they, despite being heavily researched, still lack further investigation.

3. Definitions

This part of our research paper includes all the definitions and terms that are used in this study. The terms mentioned below, are repeated several times throughout the study. Therefore, it is crucial to explain each concept's meaning, and our perception of them. This way, the reader will not only understand how every term is being used, and what meaning lies behind them, but also, this will lead to a greater understanding of the study and our problem formulation.

3.1 Employee Engagement

A simple search of the term 'employee engagement' would reveal that hundreds of studies have been written on this topic. Scholars have found and agreed upon the fact that employee engagement is aligned with productivity and employees' satisfaction

(Buckingham & Coffman, 1999). Here are a few examples of different definitions that various authors have given to the term 'employee engagement', and they are as follows: Saks (2006) claimed that employee engagement is "a distinct and unique construct consisting of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components . . . associated with individual role performance" (p. 602). On the other hand, Harter, Schmidt, and Keyes (2003) argued that employee engagement refers to the individual's participation and satisfaction, but also enthusiasm for their work, while Wollard and Shucks (2011) define it as "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioral state directed toward desired organizational outcomes" (p. 17). Kahn (1990) argues that employee engagement is an employee's decision and choice. In opposition to Kahn, Czarnowsky (2008), believes that organizations are the ones responsible for making their staff members engaged.

We support the common belief that employee engagement plays an essential and decisive role in employee satisfaction and performance. Moreover, in this study, we have chosen to use Kahn's (1990) theory as a tool to better understand what employee engagement is, and how it can be achieved. (See the theory section, p. 23). Our opinion is also that organizations, through their policies and leadership, have a significant impact on employee engagement.

3.2 Knowledge management

Knowledge management is a type of employment process that is implemented when an organization chooses its employees based on their skills and knowledge for a specific amount of time. The purpose of this hiring process is to implement knowledge from employees in specific projects (Knowledge Management Tools, 2018).

We understand that there are different opinions and ideas of what knowledge management means and what it is. Through the research that we have conducted, which is illustrated within our literature review, we found that knowledge management is an employment tool that can be used to bring in specific working skills for a certain amount of time (Chen & Huang, 2010). Although this employment process might be close to that of politicians hiring processes or other governmental bodies, we have chosen not

to compare the found employment hiring process in our embedded case study. The employment style at the Nordic Houses in the West Nordic countries, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and Greenland all suggests that the employees are brought in for a specific purpose to these organizations. Therefore, we have concluded that knowledge management is the employment process that fits our embedded case study best.

3.3 Leadership

Leadership is a term that many researchers have explored. When looking at the definitions that have been given to leadership, one will notice that all scholars agree what leadership is. Armstrong (2012) defined leadership as a concept that evolves when a team has to cooperate when pursuing a common goal. In this situation, a team has to be lead by someone, who inspires them and influences them. For Armstrong, a leader does not aim for their team's submission, but the group's success. Cole (2009) states that leadership is someone's influence towards a team with the aim of achieving a common purpose, and Carroll and Levy (2008) argue that leadership aims to find ways for employees to achieve their work. The scholars cited above have the common perspective that leadership is front person, who supports the rest of the team. Scientists seem to agree with the above definition that leadership is about influencing people's work, and creating a strong team that is pursuing the same common goals. This is precisely how we define leadership in our research paper, and it is also this definition that will help us determine the positive or negative outcomes of our case study.

3.4 Nordic Organization

Nordic Organizations and the Nordic mentality, in general, have been characterized to be implementing freedom and learning within a work sphere (Gustavsen, 2011). When we refer to the Nordic countries, we mean Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland, Finland, The Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland. The 'Nordic Model' is a concept that has been highly discussed among politicians and researchers when referring to similarities in society and potentially within workplaces. Gustavsen (2011) characterized the model through its unique organizational style. By having labor market

parties on one hand, and the public on the other, the model still generates cooperation between them. Generally, the 'Nordic Model' is based on cooperation and trust to decrease conflict on a national level, which as a result, has generated various ways for the Nordic countries to strengthen the bond between them (Gustavsen, 2011). Even though the majority of this project is based on research conducted in one of the Nordic countries, we will still address the Nordic countries as a whole, due to our embedded case study. The Nordic House is dedicated to Nordic culture, and the staff is from some of the Nordic countries, and at work, they speak Scandinavian together.

3.5 Nordic government-run organization

Within our problem formulation, we mention the description 'Nordic government-run organization'. The Nordic Council of Ministers is constituted by the significant Nordic governments, and it was these governments that agreed upon the fact that the Nordic countries needed a focal point for Nordic cultures, such as in Iceland. Therefore, since The Nordic House in Iceland, Greenland and The Faroe Islands are created by the Nordic Council of Ministers and functioning through governmental donations, we have chosen to define the organization as a Nordic government-run organization.

3.6 Workplace environment

This section is not an element in our problem formulation, but the notion of a workplace environment will be an ongoing term in our paper. Therefore, we saw it necessary to give our definition of the term. A workplace environment is not only the physical, but also the psychological variables, in how an employee feels about their work (Valenzuela, 2012). For instance, a physical environment is a physical space, where one conducts their work. It can be an office or a factory, or their own house. Psychological aspects are considered to be, among others, the relationship that employees and managers create together. Wollard and Shuck (2011), and Chandrasekar (2011) have shown that an employee's workplace environment can affect their

performance and engagement. Therefore, scholars claim that in order for leaders in maintaining their employees' engagement, they should create a workplace environment that generates happiness and satisfaction (Wright & Davis, 2003). Wright and Davis (2003) argue that it is the leaders, who are responsible for creating a pleasant environment that will encourage employee engagement. On the other hand, Kahn argue that it is up to the individual employee to determine when they feel engaged. We argue that while Kahn's theory is excellent to determine if employees feel engaged, the source of the engagement lies both with the leaders and the employees.

Also, workplace environments can be healthy and unhealthy (Wollard and Shucks, 2011). An unhealthy and unsafe workplace can be defined as containing inappropriate speech and behavior, a lack of personal protective equipment, and bad relationships among employees and managers (Chandrasekar, 2011). A healthy workplace environment positively influences employees to bring great results which leads to the company's profit. An unhealthy workplace could harm the environment, which consequently could result in an employee's bad mental health and performance (Kahn 1990). Finally, many scholars have proposed ways of how a workplace environment can be improved. An example is Chandrasekar (2011), who claimed that performance feedback, supervision support, and coaching, among others, can have a positive impact on a workplace environment.

4. Theory

4.1 Kahn's theory of employee engagement

William Kahn is considered to be one of the founding fathers of employee engagement, as he introduced the idea in *Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work*, (Kahn, 1990). Kahn attempted to shed light on the conditions, which could result in staff members' engagement or disengagement. In order to find and understand these conditions, he conducted two investigations at two different workplaces; a summer camp and an architecture firm (p. 695). Kahn's research was conducted qualitatively through field research and interviews. However, his role was

not conducted the same way in the two workplaces. At the summer camp, Kahn was a participant and observer, while in the architect firm, he only observed his participants. Kahn chose both of these approaches to be able to generate a theory with substance (p.695).

The problem formulation for this paper is *How does knowledge management in a Nordic government-run organization influence employee engagement?* In this theory section, we will provide an overview of Kahn's theory, and all the dimensions to it, as this theory will provide us with tools to analyze the employee engagement within our embedded case study. Kahn begins his theory by defining personal engagement and personal disengagement, which are two concepts that emerged from his research (Kahn, 1990, pp. 699-700). Kahn defines personal engagement and disengagement as two separate elements: "people's behaviors may show mixture of personal engagement and disengagement; for the purposes of clarity, I do not discuss those mixtures" (p. 700). These two concepts are essential when diving into Kahn's theory, as they set the foundation. Kahn employs a model on 'psychological conditions' as a tool to understand, whether an employee is personally engaged or disengaged. The model (see Theory section p. 27), which provides an overview of psychological conditions, contains three dimensions that are meaningfulness, safety, and availability. These three dimensions each have several categories within them, which help to determine an employee's engagement or disengagement in each dimension. After defining personal engagement and disengagement, we will present an introduction to the psychological conditions and, after that, dive into each dimension and their categories.

4.2 Personal Engagement

Kahn defines personal engagement as: the expression and implementation of an employee's favored 'self' in work tasks behaviors, which generates a connection to one's work and co-workers. This favored self can be expressed through "(physical, cognitive, and emotional), and active, full role performances" (Kahn, 1990, p. 700). Kahn found that people tend to have dimensions of themselves, which shift according to their 'self' conditions. In order to make use of such dimensions, one would have to

“drive personal energies into physical, cognitive and emotional labors” (p. 700), which previous scholars have defined as effort. Kahn (1990) describes these dimensions as a way of displaying one’s real identity, feelings, and thoughts. Employing and expressing a preferred self, promotes behaviors that transfer one’s self to one’s work role. Kahn (1990) asserts: “People who are personally engaged keep themselves within a role, without sacrificing one for the other” (p. 700). Through personal engagement, employees develop physical involvement in work tasks creates a connection to the service of work they are providing, which displays “what they think and feel, their creativity, their beliefs and values, and their personal connections to others” (p. 700). Personal engagement is a positive result of employee engagement.

4.3 Personal disengagement

Personal disengagement is the removal of an employee’s “preferred self in behaviors that promote a lack of connections, physical, cognitive, and emotional absence, and passive, incomplete role performances” (Kahn, 1990, p. 701). While personal engagement added internal energies to the work, disengagement removes those personal energies and disconnects one emotionally. Therefore, Personal disengagement can result in automatic and robotic-like behavior. When staff members employ this robotic-like behavior, it means that they are defending themselves by hiding “their true identity, thoughts, and feelings during role performances” (Kahn, 1990, p. 701) from the rest of their co-workers.

The employees, who are personally disengaged, are uninvolved, both physically and emotionally. This non-involvement disconnects them from the rest of their co-workers in ways that disguise their thoughts, feelings, “their creativity, their beliefs, and values” (p. 702). Kahn provides an example of a designer, who became disengaged in his work, and how that did not only affect the architect, but also his colleagues, as he stopped “investing ideas, encouraging the creativity of other team members” (p. 702). Hence, personal disengagement is the negative result that occurs because of the lack of employee engagement.

The next section of this theory will describe Kahn's model 'dimensions of psychological conditions. This section will first explain psychological conditions and, after that, dive into the different dimensions within psychological conditions.

4.4 Psychological Conditions

Kahn (1990) addresses the notion of personal engagement and disengagement by looking into psychological conditions. He assumes that people generally tend to "employ and express or withdraw and defend their preferred selves on the basis of their psychological experiences of self-in role" (p. 702). Kahn's (1990) assumption is similar to the one of Hackman and Oldham's (1980) that momentary circumstances of people's experiences will shape and affect their behaviors. The momentary circumstances are described to be conditions in brief contracts that "if certain conditions are met to some acceptable degree, people can personally engage in moments of task behaviors" (Kahn, 1990, p. 703). The interesting aspect of Kahn's (1990) notion of 'brief contracts' falls in relation to our problem formulation, as we are looking into a specific employment process, which is based on fixed or 'brief' contracts. As stated, Kahn (1990) argues that if brief contracts are met properly, it will have a good chance of generating personal engagement. Kahn (1990) also approached his analysis of each moment with the idea that there were established contracts or commitments among person and role.

Kahn (1990) explains that there is a total of three psychological conditions: meaningfulness, safety, and availability. These three conditions together shape how people occupy their roles. Kahn (1990) found that employees unconsciously question themselves in each of the three situations to either engage or disengage depending on the outcome. The questions that the employees unconsciously ask themselves are "(1) How meaningful is it for me to bring myself into this performance? (2) How safe is it to do so? and (3) How available am I to do so? The three conditions reflect the logic of actual contracts." (p. 703). These questions show elements that are contained in actual contracts, which indicates the "desired benefits and protective guarantees" (p. 703) when an employee has the necessary skills and resources to accomplish the job's obligations. These contracts are what encourage people to invest themselves into their work, as their personal engagements vary, according to their perception and

understanding “of the benefits, or the meaningfulness, and the guarantees, or the safety, they perceive in situations” (p. 703). Kahn (1990) discovered the conditions by exploring into the characteristics of specific situations that forged the participants' personal experiences of themselves.

Within a workplace, these experiences could be management tools such as benefits, resources, or guarantees to enhance psychological meaningfulness, safety, and availability. Kahn (1990) explains that psychological meaningfulness is associated with aspects that would develop “incentives or disincentives to personally engage” (p. 703). Psychological safety is connected to “elements of social systems that created more or less nonthreatening, predictable, and consistent social situations in which to engage” (p. 703). Lastly, psychological availability is connected to individual distractions, which absorbs people’s minds to various degrees “and left them more or fewer resources with which to engage in role performances” (p. 703). We will present in-depth explanations of each of the dimensions of psychological conditions below the chart.

TABLE 1
Dimensions of Psychological Conditions

Dimensions	Meaningfulness	Safety	Availability
Definition	Sense of return on investments of self in role performances.	Sense of being able to show and employ self without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career.	Sense of possessing the physical, emotional, and psychological resources necessary for investing self in role performances.
Experiential components	Feel worthwhile, valued, valuable; feel able to give to and receive from work and others in course of work.	Feel situations are trustworthy, secure, predictable, and clear in terms of behavioral consequences.	Feel capable of driving physical, intellectual, and emotional energies into role performance.
Types of influence	Work elements that create incentives or disincentives for investments of self.	Elements of social systems that create situations that are more or less predictable, consistent, and nonthreatening.	Individual distractions that are more or less preoccupying in role performance situations.
Influences	<p>Tasks: Jobs involving more or less challenge, variety, creativity, autonomy, and clear delineation of procedures and goals.</p> <p>Roles: Formal positions that offer more or less attractive identities, through fit with a preferred self-image, and status and influence.</p> <p>Work interactions: Interpersonal interactions with more or less promotion of dignity, self-appreciation, sense of value, and the inclusion of personal as well as professional elements.</p>	<p>Interpersonal relationships: Ongoing relationships that offer more or less support, trust, openness, flexibility, and lack of threat.</p> <p>Group and intergroup dynamics: Informal, often unconscious roles that leave more or less room to safely express various parts of self; shaped by dynamics within and between groups in organizations.</p> <p>Management style and process: Leader behaviors that show more or less support, resilience, consistency, trust, and competence.</p> <p>Organizational norms: Shared system expectations about member behaviors and emotions that leave more or less room for investments of self during role performances.</p>	<p>Physical energies: Existing levels of physical resources available for investment into role performances.</p> <p>Emotional energies: Existing levels of emotional resources available for investment into role performances.</p> <p>Insecurity: Levels of confidence in own abilities and status, self-consciousness, and ambivalence about fit with social systems that leave more or less room for investments of self in role performances.</p> <p>Outside life: Issues in people's outside lives that leave them more or less available for investments of self during role performances.</p>

1990

Kahn

705

Kahn’s Table 1 displays the dimensions ‘of the three focal conditions’ within psychological conditions. (Kahn, 1990, p. 703).

4.5 Meaningfulness

The first section of Kahn's Table 1 is psychological meaningfulness, which is described as a received currency of emotional, physical, and cognitive energy after investing one's self into their work. This currency makes the employees feel that they are 'worthwhile, useful, and valuable' (p. 704), and that they can make a difference without being neglected. It is interesting that Kahn is using expressions that show resemblance to the economic world to describe human behavior. This makes us wonder if Kahn is measuring human beings according to how much money workplaces can make of their employees. Kahn's table also shows that the lack of meaningfulness, however, is connected to employees' feelings of having little value, such as not being expected much from, or not being given the needed room to perform their work roles. Meaningfulness reflects concepts of "how people invest themselves in tasks" (p. 704). Kahn's research showed that generally there are three factors that influence psychological meaningfulness: "task characteristics, role characteristics, and work interactions" (p. 704). Kahn's concept of investing one's self into one's work to achieve meaningfulness is interesting, as it does not indicate the time it takes for an employee to be fully invested. This makes us wonder, if being hired on a short-term contract can affect the employees' meaningfulness to a company, or if it generates an intensity of meaningfulness as the employees have a limited time to perform.

Task characteristics are when organization members conduct work that is considered 'challenging, clearly delineated, varied, creative, and somewhat autonomous' (p. 704). Kahn conducted his research at an architectural firm and at a summer camp, which are two very different work scenarios. This indicates that Kahn's considerations regarding task characteristics are not limited to a specific field of work. These aspects within a workplace would have a higher chance of generating psychological meaningfulness. An optimal situation to achieve psychological meaningfulness could be working in a complex and fulfilling project. Meaningful tasks permit autonomy, and a feeling of ownership of the work that is being done. The work tasks are, therefore, not controlled by other colleagues, which means that one would not need constant direction.

Role characteristics: Kahn's research showed that there are two elements of work roles that influence psychological meaningfulness. The first component is that

“roles carried identities that organization members were implicitly required to assume” (Kahn, 1990, p. 706). The imposed organizational identities could either be liked or disliked depending on, whether or not the organizational identities with their own selves. The second element is value and influence. Role characteristic is a tool in meaningfulness that indicate the importance for people to feel unique and valued in their given work identity: “role status was important partly as an indicator to people about how central to and needed in their organization they were” (Kahn, 1990, p. 707). Kahn describes how role characteristics do not indicate the importance of a job, but whether or not one's work identity is treated with meaningfulness or meaninglessness.

Work interactions: The third way that employees encountered psychological meaningfulness is when their work included “rewarding interpersonal interactions with coworkers and clients” (p. 707). Work interactions promote the feelings of self-appreciation and worthwhileness that generates relationships where people felt encouraged to give and receive from their coworkers. Without that connection, the work process can get more difficult as it allows the employees to feel appreciated by sharing their experiences with others. These meaningful interactions both include personal and professional components, which provide people space to evolve “mutual appreciation, respect, and positive feedback” (Kahn, 1990, p. 708).

4.6 Psychological safety

Psychological safety is the experience of being able to show and apply one's self without having to fear negative consequences to one's “self-image, status, or career” (Kahn, 1990, p. 708). It generates safety when people trust that they will not be hurt because of their personal engagement. Kahn's study shows that the situations, which promoted trust, were “predictable, consistent, clear and nonthreatening” (Kahn, 1990, p. 708). That means that the employees could understand the borderline between what was considered allowed or disallowed, and how employees' behaviors could lead to potential consequences. Kahn's notion of trust does make us wonder, if today's constantly changing and unpredictable world equals an untrusting environment, or if people learn to adapt to their situation. In opposition to when situations were perceived to be “unclear, inconsistent, unpredictable, or threatening, personal engagement was

deemed too risky or unsafe” would not generate engagement (Kahn, 1990, p. 708). Kahn found that there are four factors mostly influence psychological safety: “interpersonal relationships, group and intergroup dynamics, management style, and process, and organizational norms” (p. 708). Below we will provide a fuller description of each of the four factors.

Interpersonal relationships promote psychological safety when the relationships among colleagues are trusting and showing support. These kinds of relationships permit flexibility that allows employees to try out new things and, in the process, maybe fail without having to worry about the consequences. In organizational climates that are characterized by openness, people tend to feel safer, and in situations, where employees feel disconnected from their other coworkers, this feeling of safety disappears. One of the ways employees can feel disconnected from one another is if a hierarchical system represents their organization. It can be harder to connect with those above than with one’s peers (Kahn, 1990, p. 708).

Group and intergroup dynamics are when various unheard-of roles or unconscious characters, which individuals simulate, can also influence psychological safety. Group and intergroup dynamics mean that the dynamics within a group were characterized by unconscious role plays, which would affect the conscious workings of an organization. This indicated strength in social systems that they “have a mentality beyond the mentalities of individual members,” (Kahn, 1990, p. 709) which would connect them through unconscious alliance. When applying this knowledge into a workgroup, members come together to act out performances, which allay anxieties both consciously and unconsciously. This kind of role plays tends to revolve around “plots dealing with authority, competition, or sexuality and depend on organization members to play informal, unconscious roles” (pp. 709 - 710).

These roles within a workplace can evolve to be either desired or undesired. The psychological mentality and one’s self can risk being limited and isolated, depending on the role a person’s work or group may assign one. Kahn’s definition of psychological mentality within a group seems to indicate that one simply has to take what comes to you, and that one’s self is a victim of others. Despite the intense focus Kahn places on the individual and one’s self, his definition of the self within groups seems to strip the individual of all power, and that it is the rest of the group members, who decide what

one's self is. Kahn further explains that the group members, who are representing the lower and less powerful groups, are more often thrown into vulnerable or unattractive roles. It is often done by those members, who are representing the more powerful groups "the lack of psychological safety in such situations and the resulting suppression of individuals' voices" (p. 711). This reflect how authority and power are distributed among groups within organizations.

Management style and process. Psychological safety can be heightened through "supportive, resilient, and clarifying management" (Kahn, 1990, p. 711). Leaders convert system requirements and, through supportiveness and openness, can bolster member's behaviors in different degrees. This Management style and process section has much in common with supportive interpersonal relationships as "supportive managerial environments allowed people to try and fail without fear of the consequences" (p. 711). When management shows hesitation in loosening their control, it sends their employees a message that they cannot be trusted. This fear is created when managers are "unpredictable, inconsistent, or hypocritical" (p. 711). The tone that managements are setting determines, whether the employee feels comfort or not with their management.

Organizational norms. Lastly, psychological safety correlates to character performance that is within the lines of organizational norms "Norms are shared expectations about the general behaviors of system members" (Kahn, 1990, p. 712). The members that stayed within the organization's perception of appropriate ways to work and behave felt a lot safer than the ones, who found themselves outside those safe boundaries. In this sense, "safety meant not calling into question habitual patterns of thought and behavior that ensured predictability; questioning such patterns meant being treated as a deviant" (p. 712). In this study, we will be investigating Nordic organizations (See embedded case study p. 41), which through their employment process is knowledge management, and with a focus on project workers or 'knowledge sharing'. Due to the ongoing flow of staff, it is difficult to picture that there would exist organizational norms simply due to the constant change. However, if these norms were to exist in a learning organization, the aspect of having specific patterns would hinder the purpose of a learning organization. Kahn further argues that deviating from an organization's norms can result in anxiety and frustrations, especially for those employees, who have a lower status in a firm: "norms regulate emotional as well as

physical labor” (p. 713). When there is a lack of protective barriers, employees choose to protect themselves by standing back if they feel unsafe.

4.7 Psychological Availability

The final section of Kahn’s theory is psychological availability, which is the notion of having “the physical, emotional, or psychological resources to personally engage at a particular moment” (Kahn, 1990, p. 714). Psychological availability measures people’s readiness in engagement, “given the distractions they experience as members of social systems” (p. 714). Kahn found in his study that people to some degree were available to put themselves completely into role performance. This depended on how they dealt with different demands “of both work and non work aspects of their lives” (p. 714). Kahn’s investigation showed close links between personal engagement, and a high level of psychological availability. Opposite that personal disengagement could be found when people felt less available.

Kahn’s research found that there are ‘four types of distractions’, which influence psychological availability: “depletion of physical energy, depletion of emotional energy, individual insecurity, and outside lives.” (Kahn, 1990, p. 174).

Physical energy. Kahn found that “personal engagement demanded levels of physical energy, strength, and readiness that personal disengagement did not” (Kahn, 1990, p. 174). Kahn also suggest that when employees showed personal disengagement within the field of physical energy, it basically meant that the employees were worn out and not available to engage.

Emotional energy. Kahn defined emotional energy as the “ability to personally engage” (Kahn, 1990, p. 715). Employing the self within tasks that require emotional labor creates a specific level of emotional energy, which personal disengagement does not. This shows that emotional resources are vital, and that people needed it in order to meet the demands and requirements of personal engagement.

Insecurity is a crucial component in psychological availability, as it corresponds with how secure people feel in their work status. In order for individuals to convey their selves within a social system, they have to feel secure about themselves

first. Insecurity can prevent employees from employing themselves in the work they do: “it generated anxiety that occupied energies that would have otherwise been translated into personal engagements” (Kahn, 1990, p. 715). Insecurity can result in a lack of confidence, especially among new organization members, who were afraid of stepping out of place. Another type of insecurity is the constant notion of other organization members' judgment of themselves “whether or not such judgement actually occurred - they were too distracted to personally engage” (p. 716). The last type of insecurity is when employees showed mixed feelings on whether or not they fit into the organization, with its purposes and goals. This ambivalence can harm people as it preoccupies them, “leaving them little space, energy, or desire to employ or express themselves in moments of task performances” (Kahn, 1990, p. 716). It is challenging for people to fully engage personally in completing a job when organizational goals do not fit their own values.

Outside life can affect people in a way that removes their psychological focus away from work-related tasks and role performances. However, Kahn's research also showed that people's non work lives could also increase their workability and recharge organization members. In such situations, the outside life provides a means of drawing energies from the outside into the employees' formal role (Kahn, 1990, p. 717).

4.8 Conclusion

From Kahn's theory, we see that the more people implement themselves into their work role within these conditions, the more content they will be (p. 692). Kahn's theory was created to understand “self-in-role” processes and to aid future research. He was guided by his own assumption of, how people tend to continually bring in and leave out various layers of themselves during a workday (p. 692). We learn from the theory that there is a circular movement of influence between employee, leader, and organization, as demonstrated in figure 1.2. This circular movement demonstrates, how each aspect has a more significant influence on one another, which means that employee engagement influences organizational performance and its leaders. It also shows that the organization and leaders affect the employees, and therefore is considered crucial to consider when implementing employee engagement.

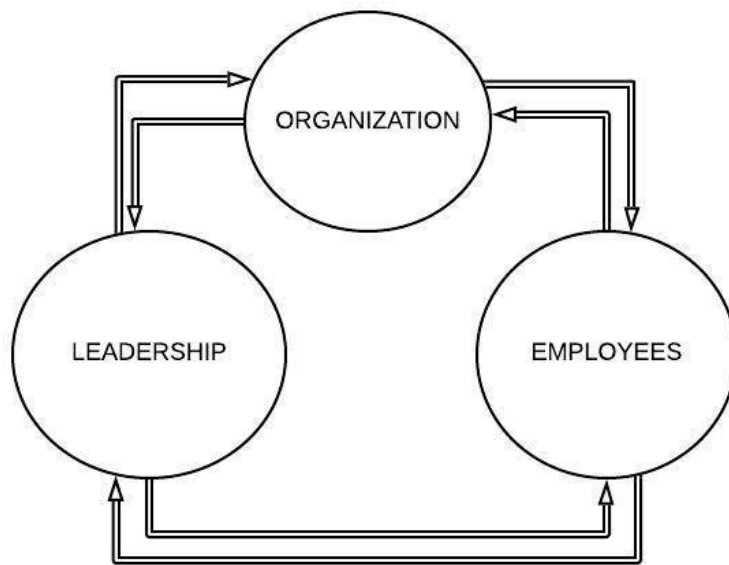


Figure 1.2.

Our visualization of Kahn's Theory.

Kahn's research indicates that people gently experience multiple dimensions of influence; alone, in groups, interpersonally or on an organizational level "by examining them, at varying degrees of awareness, for what they imply about the meaningfulness, safety, and availability that characterize role performance situations" (Kahn, 1990, p. 718). Kahn finishes his research by asking a final question "How do the three conditions combine in particular situations to promote personal engagement or disengagement?" (p. 718) Kahn's final question is what we in this paper aspire to examine further. While we went through his theory, we found that the theory is very elaborative and presents an excellent insight into employee engagement.

4.9 Previous scholars' use of Kahn's Theory

Kahn wrote his theory in 1990, which today is 30 years ago. Since then our society has changed, technology has improved etc., which makes one wonder how valid Kahn's theory is today. A quick google search indicates that Kahn's theory has been cited by more than 9.399 articles over the years. Although, a majority of the scholars found used

Kahn's theory in the early 2000s, we are still able to find scholars, who have used Kahn's theory within the past five years, such as Lee and Huang (2019), and Stowe and Cooney (2015). The papers that we read used Kahn's theory for different things. Some used Kahn's definition of employee engagement in their study with the aim to understand the term, while others used Kahn's theory in specific situations to solve a problem. This indicates that Kahn is commonly one of the first persons that is being referred to in literature review and is still highly employed today.

4.10 Our extended version of Kahn's theory

Kahn developed this theory in 1990, and it is supported by previous research. However, we found that the employment process or hiring style is not represented in the theory. While Kahn does address workplaces, firms, and organizations, he does not address employment processes. We evaluate Kahn's notion of a workplace to be traditional as his theory supports the possibilities of being able to develop one's self and develop professionally. Since our paper will be looking into knowledge management as an employment process, where the employees in an organization have fixed contracts when they are hired, we found the need to add that extra element to our evaluated model of Kahn's theory, which is Figure 1.2. In the new figure 1.3, we take the previous figure, 1.2 and add it into the focus of employment process to explain what we will investigate in this paper, that is how the employment process influences the employees' engagement. Figure 1.3 does not exclude the possibilities of further developing the model, but it provides this research paper a valuable examination tool for the analysis. The extra element does not interrupt the circular movement from figure 1.2, but rather includes Kahn's circular movement of the theory into a focused field of study.

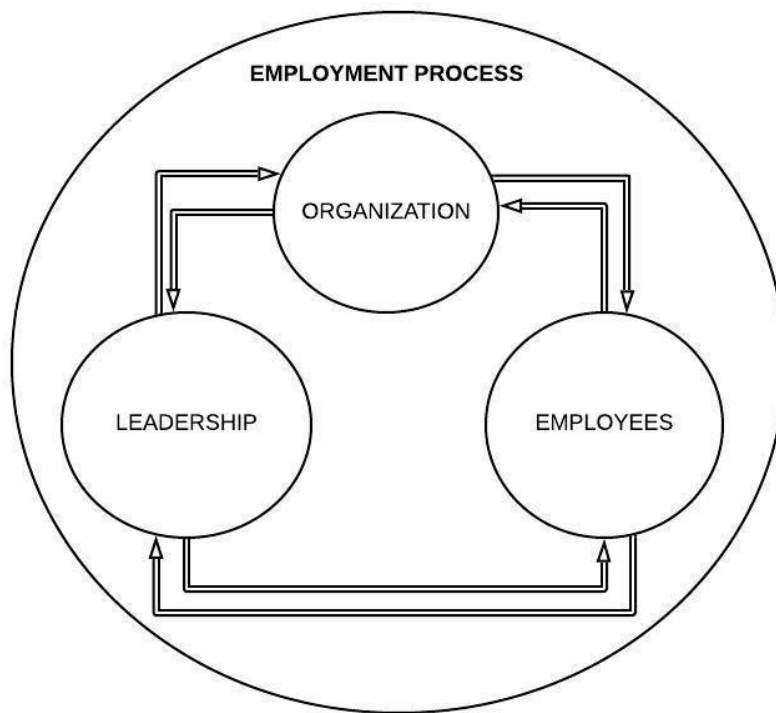


Figure 1.3.

Further development of Kahn's Theory.

4.11 Operationalization of Theory

As it has been explained, this study uses Kahn's theory to help us understand the concept of employee engagement. Although the scientist's theory is the oldest one and very analytical and descriptive, we found that it misses a significant aspect, that is, the hiring process that a company follows. Therefore, besides the three main aspects that Kahn states in his theory, we also added and took into consideration another factor, the company's hiring style. The employee process that the Nordic government-run organization follows, is called 'knowledge management'.

The information stated above are important for a better understanding of the semi-structured interview questions that follow. More specifically, the interview is divided into two parts. The first part's questions are based on Kahn's theory and are

divided into three smallest categories (meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability), while the questions of the interview's second part are related to the organizations' employee process. But how exactly did we decide to do the specific questions and why those? In the next paragraphs, we provide a brief overview of the process that we followed in order to create the questions for the interview.

At first, we looked at the three main categories that Kahn claims that contribute to an individual's engagement at their workplace. Those main categories are meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability (every category has its subcategories as well). Meaningfulness is used with the following sense, that is, if employees find their occupation to have a meaning to the organization and/or society. People tend to experience meaningfulness when they feel valued and useful. Therefore, they want to help their workplace, but also their colleagues, to grow. Psychological safety examines the extent to that employees feel safe enough to be themselves in front of their colleagues, but most importantly their managers. It also means that staff members do not feel afraid of the negative consequences that might occur if they express their true selves. Lastly, by psychological availability, it is meant the sense of having the physical, emotional, or psychological resources that will help one engage at their workplace. The strategy that was followed to create the questions for the interview was the following, after carefully reading and understanding what every category means and is used to examine, we created different questions for every category. The questions had to completely come in line with the categories and had to help us gain knowledge regarding what the category examines.

The second part of the interview is related to the hiring management, the hiring process that the Nordic Houses follow that, as we explained, is called knowledge management, but also can be found in the specific study as project - based employment, fixed contract and short-term employment. In other words, what is called as 'knowledge management' is also called project based employment etc. With our questions, we aimed to understand what the staff members believe and how they feel about the specific model that the organization follows, and if and how it influences their engagement with the organization. Overall with our questions, we wanted to examine if the employees of the Nordic House feel engaged in their work, taking into consideration that they will stay in that organization for the fixed period of four years

using as a ‘ tool’ and guide to do so Kahn’s three main psychological conditions of employee engagement.

5. Methodology

This research paper is exploring employee engagement within a Nordic government-run organization that implements knowledge management as its employment style. We found this topic interesting as many political organizational bodies, such as embassies and NGOs employ contract workers or knowledge management as their employment process. Nevertheless, not much research has been performed on this topic regarding employee engagement. Our literature review shows that a great deal of research has been conducted on topics of knowledge management and employee engagement separately. However, there is very little evidence of the connection between the two. Through Kahn’s theory with an added focus on employment process, we will be exploring the relationship between knowledge management and employee engagement through an embedded case study.

5.1 Philosophy of Science

5.2 Pragmatism

For this study, we will be employing mixed methods, which is a methodological pluralism. Therefore, this paper will be using pragmatism as our research paradigm. Pragmatism was originally studied by “Charles Sanders Pierce, William James, John Dewey and George Herbert Mead, where Pierce coined the term, but James popularized the philosophical approach” (Kelemen & Rumens, 2013; Egholm, 2014, cited in Salomonsen, p. 26). Pragmatism denies the notion of a specific and set truth. Instead, the truth is discovered through “its prediction of future experience, which is grounded in the daily experience” (Kelemen & Rumens, 2013, cited in Salomonsen p. 27). Since

pragmatism is a process of discovering truth, it means that pragmatism also “supports the use of different research methods and that a continuous cycle of inductive, deductive and when appropriate, abductive reasoning” (Mitchell, 2018, p. 103) is implemented. This means that pragmatism is an ongoing process of learning.

The abductive approach to pragmatism confronts the weaknesses, which are identified with deductive and inductive approaches. Instead of settling on one way, abduction uses incomplete or chaotic observations “from experience and reality that may then lead to a best prediction of the truth, and perhaps even to a new theory” (Mitchell, 2018, p. 105). Abduction has also been described to be known as “a qualified guess”, where the combination of former knowledge, along with experience and the circumstances that we seek to understand, is all combined (Egholm, 2014, cited in Salomonsen, 2018, p. 27) The abductive approach begins with a surprise or a puzzle that needs solving, which is often obtained through theory. However, some might find that existing theories might not be enough or useless, when solving the puzzle.

In this study, our problem formulation *How does knowledge management in a Nordic government-run organization influence employee engagement?* is the puzzle. In order to solve it, we decided to use Kahn’s theory. Yet, the theory does not cover all the needed aspects of our problem. Therefore, we chose to implement the theory into the specific situation of knowledge management or employment processes to be able to modify the theory according to our research’s needs. This aspect of a puzzle shows that even though abduction does not take a deductive nor inductive approach, it is still employing inductive and deductive aspects as pragmatism: “is applied to make logical inferences and construct theories” (Mitchell, 2018, p. 105).

Abduction explains how the decision making moves forth and back between an inductive and deductive approach, while the notion of inquiry is connected to a specific type of experience (Salomonsen, 2018, p. 30). To be more specific, inquiry describes “a process of self-conscious decision making” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1046, cited in Salomonsen, 2018, p. 30). This means that inquiry is a process of decision making when asking and answering “those questions [that] concern the likely outcomes of applying current beliefs to future action” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1047, cited in Salomonsen, 2018, p. 30). Certainty is, according to Kelemen and Rumens (2013), impossible to obtain through a pragmatic point of view. However, it does allow one to resolve mini-truths, which clarify particular situations.

5.3 Pragmatism as a paradigm

Within the philosophy of science, there are two essential elements that are connected to the understanding of truth, which are the epistemological and ontological assumptions. Ontology is assumptions and understandings of the nature of reality (Salomonsen, 2018, p. 27), which in many research paradigms is what determines the kind of knowledge that is desirable or in other words, the epistemological assumptions. However, through a pragmatist view, there is instead an “emphasis on experience as the continual interaction of beliefs and action” (Morgan, 2014, p. 1049, cited in Salomonsen p. 27).

The difficulty of using pragmatism is the choice of paradigm, as it creates consequences for a research, since it establishes shared beliefs within a group of researchers that decides which questions are the most important and meaningful to examine (Morgan, 2007, p. 53, cited in Salomonsen, 2018, p. 31). Pragmatism claim that “one should perceive research as a human experience that is based on the beliefs and actions of researchers” (Salomonsen, 2018, p. 32), which differs and challenges the traditional focus within social research on ‘ontology, epistemology and methodology’ (p. 32). Instead, pragmatism within a paradigm dedicates itself to ask questions as “How do researchers make choices about the way they do research? Why do they make the choices they do? And, what is the impact of making one set of choices rather than another?” (Morgan, 2014, cited in Salomonsen, 2018, p. 32).

When using pragmatism in this research, we acknowledge the human aspect and decision making, which determines where to go next. Yet, because pragmatism also supports mixed methods, and methods in traditional research paradigms consist of the notion of ontology and epistemology, we will include that as well in our research. The human aspect of decision making will come into play as to how what and when we will use the different assumptions, depending on where in the analysis we are and how it makes sense to continue.

5.4 Ontology

Ontology, that is the nature of knowledge, leads us to epistemology that is “*the quality of this knowledge*” (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012, p 2). Ontology refers to claims about the significance of social reality regarding “what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other” (Blakie, 2000, p.116). This indicates that ontological notions seek to understand what we estimate social reality to be. For this paper, the ontological assumption is relativism, which means that “the idea that there is [a] single social [reality that] is rejected in favor of the idea that there may be multiple and changing social realities” (Blakie, 2000, p. 116). This ontological assumption can work well with pragmatism, as relativism does not have a neutral or independent method of establishing truth.

5.5 Epistemology

For Crotty (1998), epistemology is a way of understanding the world, and for Richard (2003), it is the type and/or nature of knowledge. Finally, for Bryman (2008), this assumption explains how we know about the things that we know. Since we are using pragmatism as a philosophy of science, the epistemological assumption is not just set on one assumption but multiple, as “pragmatism invokes a methodological pluralism and disciplinary tolerance [and] encourages a multi-perspectival style of inquiry” (Frankel Pratt, 2016, pp. 509-510).

One of the epistemological assumptions we will use in this research is interpretivism. Interpretivism investigates the patterns of people’s actions, by looking at the meaning that people themselves give to their actions (Blakie, 2000). This epistemological assumption is closely connected to qualitative research, where “the world can be studied through the eyes of the people who are studied” (Bryman, 2015, p. 617), which will then produce meaning. Interpretivism will, in this paper, be used as an approach to our qualitative semi-structured interviews (See Method section on Interviews p. 49) to understand the participants’ own perception of their work engagement.

The second epistemological assumption this study will be employing is positivism, the idea that the researcher is completely disconnected as an influencer, and

only provide objective observations. Positivism will, in our research, be an approach to our quantitative questionnaire to observe statistics (See Method section on Quantitative Survey, p. 50).

After using each epistemological assumption for each research method, the results from our qualitative and quantitative methods will be joined together. From this point, the assumptions used, will vary according to what truth are discovered, and what is needed for answering our problem formulation.

5.6 Research Design

Research design is a framework “for the generation of evidence that is chosen to answer the research question(s) in which the investigator is interested. A research design also relates to the criteria that are employed when evaluating social research” (Bryman, 2015, p 39). This project’s problem formulation is *How does knowledge management in a Nordic government-run organization influence employee engagement?* The research design that this study is using to answer our problem formulation, will be an embedded case study.

5.7 Embedded Case Study

Case studies are research strategies that explore a phenomenon in their real-life context (Brearley, 1993), using diverse data collection methods within a fixed period of time (Stake, 1995). There are a variety of different case studies some examples are single, multiple and embedded case studies, among others.. For this specific study, we chose to do an embedded case study. Embedded case studies analyze more than one unit, and is usually not limited by a single method, such as qualitative analysis (Scholz & Tietje, 2002). This is perfect for our research, as we will be using the Nordic Houses in the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and NAPA in Greenland as our units, with the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

For this embedded case study, we will be investigating The Nordic House in Iceland, the Nordic House in the Faroe Islands, and NAPA Greenland. When we

approached this study, we began from a case study. Katharina had been an intern at the Nordic House in Iceland since August 2019. She entered a collaboration with her internship place and agreed that she could prolong her internship period and use the internship as basis for her thesis. Along with Maria, we came up with the idea of investigating employee engagement at the Nordic House, and what we found really interesting, was the way people were hired. Through research, we concluded that the hiring style of the employees was called knowledge management. Knowledge management is a combination of hiring people on time set contracts while pursuing employees for a specific goal or vision. A couple of months later, The Nordic House in the Faroe Islands and NAPA in Greenland became collaborators as well.

These Nordic organizations are all placed under The Nordic Council of Ministers, which makes the organizations in Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and Greenland sub-organizations in a bigger web. The Nordic Council of Ministers announce common guidelines and visions to the sub-organizations, that are up to each director of the different organizations to decide how these will be realized. This means that all of the sub-organizations more or less follow the same organizational structure including hiring processes, which makes all three organizations perfect for gathering a larger data collection.

6. Methods

6.1 Mixed Methods Approach

Qualitative and quantitative research are perceived to be two completely different paradigms (Brannen, 2005). Therefore, the concept and idea of employing those two very different approaches have been questioned by various scholars (Greene, Benjamin & Goodyear, 2001; Neal, Hammer & Morgan, 2006; Mason 1996 etc). Although combining the two research methods is not new, it has been called ‘mixed methods’ only in recent years (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003 cited in Sosulski and Lawrence, 2008). Moreover, in the literature, there is an ongoing discussion regarding mixing qualitative and quantitative approaches (Gorard, 2002, Tashakkori and Creswell, 2007 cited in Sosulski and Lawrence, 2008). In this section, the two opposing views of

whether to employ mixed method approach in the same study or not, will be cited and discussed.

6.2 Advantages of employing mixed-methods approach

The main argument that one will find from the supporters of mixed methods approach is that it ensures the validity of the study's results (Brannen, 2005; Greene, Benjamin & Goodyear, 2001, Mason, 2006). The reason is that qualitative and quantitative research methods are two different approaches. Therefore, if those opposite methods conclude to the same results and findings, this means that one can be certain about their findings. As Greene, Benjamin and Goodyear (2001) have stated, mixed methods decrease uncertainty. Scholars Neal, Hammer and Morgan (2006) have argued that mixed methods is the most suitable approach to use in complex topics, because the two different research methods (qualitative and quantitative) can provide better insight and understandings about different aspects within the same study. Every method has its strengths, and it is more suitable to provide different aspects and pose different questions in a research. Different kinds of methods are preferred in order to learn about different kinds of phenomena (Greene and Caracelli, 1997 cited in Greene, Benjamin and Goodyear, 2001). Researchers, who have used mixed methods, have indeed chosen different approaches to address and explain various aspects of the research design and different research questions (Brannen, 2005).

Moreover, by combining the two research methods, a scholar can collect a variety of data (Greene, Benjamin, and Goodyear, 2001). Qualitative scholars use methods like interviews, observations, case, and texts to gain information about their study, while for quantitative researchers, the main data collection methods are different types of surveys (eg. online surveys, mobile surveys etc). In other words, different data collection methods will provide a variety of data for the researcher, and this can contribute to the advantage and opportunity to "take a different picture from the same phenomenon" (Erickson and Stull, 1998 cited in Patrick O' Byrne, 2007, p.39). For instance, an interview allows the interviewee to elaborate and present narratives of their

experience, and this would, as a result, provide knowledge about people's understandings. On the other hand, a survey would provide the researcher knowledge about the meanings that the participants give to their actions by creating a questionnaire that will aim to do this.

6.3 Disadvantages of employing mixed-methods approach

Contrarily, there are scholars that disagree with using a mixed method approach, and they support the concept of using separate paradigms. Their main argument is that qualitative and quantitative research methods have different assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge and how to generate it (Barbour, 1998). Furthermore, they investigate things and aspects of a problem and/or phenomenon differently. Qualitative research indeed focuses on the core of the problem, the nature of the problem (Goertz and Mahoney, 2012). Mason (1996) states that qualitative research explores how the world is "*understood, experimented, or produced*" (p. 6). Moreover, the qualitative method examines things not as they exist in reality, but through the meaning individuals give to them (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Contrariwise, quantitative research does not focus so much on analyzing the problem and its nature, but rather on finding solutions (Slevitch, 2011).

Although the two research approaches indeed explore different things, we should not dismiss the fact that our realities are multidimensional and cannot be studied only in one dimension (Mason, 2006). As Mason (2006) argued, to fully understand a phenomenon, what it means, why and how it is occurring, we need a method or methods that "open our perspective to the multidimensionality of lived experience" (p. 10). By only using one method, we only gain knowledge about one aspect of a phenomenon, we only 'see' one side of the problem. As a consequence of this, we might not truly understand the phenomenon or how to solve it. Instead, as Mason (2006) states "by using mixed-method and multidimensional approaches, we can frame questions whose aim is precise to focus on how different dimensions and scales of social existence intersect or relate" (p, 12). In addition to the first argument, it can also be stated that mixed methods investigate not only what is happening, but also how and why it is happening this way (Sosulski and Lawrence, 2008). As it has been explained above,

qualitative research methods investigate the ‘what’, while quantitative methods the ‘why’ -as many researchers have argued- (Neal, Hammer and Morgan, 2006, Mason, 1996, Brannen, 2005, Greene, Benjamin, Goodyear, 2001, Patrick O’ Byrne, 2007, Barbour, 1998, Slevitch, 2011, Mahoney, 2012). But, when a researcher wants to explore both what is occurring and why it is occurring like this (as our research does), and also find solutions to the problem, the best way to do so is by employing mixed – methods (Neal, Hammer, Morgan 2006, Mason, 1996, Brannen, 2005).

It has been argued that qualitative and quantitative researchers hold different epistemological assumptions, and belong to different research cultures (Brannen, 1992 cited in Brannen, 2005, Mason, 2006). Although other researchers tend to believe qualitative research method as being inductive, and quantitative research method as being deductive, as “different ends of the same continuum” (Newman and Benz, 1998 cited in Sosulski and Lawrence, 2008, p.122). However, both approaches can examine an individual’s viewpoints, opinions, and actions (Brannen, 2005).

The common claim that qualitative research uses words (mostly in the form of interviews) to gain information about their research, while quantitative method uses numbers (mostly surveys) is “overly simplistic” (Brannen, 2005, p. 4). Using a survey, for instance, does not automatically mean that a quantitative approach is being used. Finally, another claim of the supporters of separate paradigms is that one cannot generalize, when using a qualitative approach in contrast to quantitative research methods that have the power of generalizability (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003 cited in Brannen, 2005). The researcher although explains that this is only partly true. As Brannen states, this is valid only when the results of a study’s sample are generalized to the ‘parent population’ (p. 4). Furthermore, she adds that qualitative findings can be generalized as well in another ways. For example, to be generalized in other contexts or to maybe “involve theoretical generalization, where findings are extrapolated concerning their theoretical application” (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003 cited in Brannen, 2005, p. 4). To this argument, other scholars also added that even if we were to accept the belief that qualitative methods do not have the power to generalize the findings, by combining the two methods in a mixed method approach, we ensure that the weakness of one method will be balanced out by the strength of the other. This way, the researcher has the opportunity to acquire the strength, which every method has, and decrease the disadvantages that each method might have (Neal et al., 2006, Jick, 1979,

O' Byrne, 2007).

6.4 Why it was chosen to employ mixed-methods approach

By stating the above, it is crucial to now explain why this project will use a mixed method approach, by explaining the reasons why we find that this specific approach is the most relevant. Moreover, it will be explained how this will be achieved. Caracelli and Greene (1997, cited in Greene et al., 2001) have stated that mixed method approaches can be designed separately from one another or interactively, and the names of those designs are 'coordinated' and 'integrated' accordingly. In the coordinated design, mixed method is used at the end of the study, in the conclusion part. It is, therefore, a design that helps the findings of the quantitative method to explain the set of findings extracted of the qualitative method. On the other hand, in an integrated design, mixed methods are used throughout the study, making the combination of method ongoing (Mark, Irwin & Scott, 1997).

In our thesis, the integrated design will be used, as the two methods mentioned will be used in the whole study and combined in a coherent whole. Let us again remember our problem formulation *"how does knowledge management in a Nordic government - run organization influence employee engagement"*. As it is easily perceived, what is being investigated is if the staff members, who work in the organizations that we used as our case studies, firstly, feel engaged in their workplace, and how their contract based work and specified organization influence their engagement, and secondly, how this occurs. In order to gain information about the employee engagement in these organizations, we decided to conduct interviews with the employees in the Nordic House in Iceland. In interviews, participants can elaborate more and be more analytical (Bryman, 2008). Also, interviews are a great tool for a researcher to use, when they want to gain insight about how an individual perceives, understands, and reacts to a situation. Our reason for using this specific tool with the employees in Iceland is to mostly gain a better understanding of if they feel engaged - and also why- in their workplace. The aim is to let them talk and explain, with their own words, their thoughts and feelings regarding their engagement and disengagement in the Nordic house in Iceland. Moreover, the fact that one of us is already working

there allows us to conduct interviews. Participants have known one of us for more than a semester, which means that the necessary trust has been build in order for them to directly accept, as they did, our invitation for an interview, and feel safe to share their opinion with us. One could indeed state that this could mean that interviewees will not be honest about their opinions, exactly for that reason, because they know us. This can be argued by using Sturgis's and Smith's (2010) research regarding trust. The results of their study indicated that participants showed higher levels of trust with people that were known to them.

As we have stated previously, this study will use more than one case study, as we needed the opinion and perspectives of the employees in the Faroe Islands and Greenland as well to support our research in Iceland. Due to the many similarities, and since all cases are located under the Nordic Council of Ministers, we are able to ensure a validity of our findings, while being able to generalize our results. If the findings of our three case studies present the same results, we can be more certain of them and state more confidently that "if it is valid for this case, it is valid for all (or many) cases" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p.12). In addition, we would like to compare the results and conclusions that every Nordic House will provide us. This way, we can analyze the similarities and differences to gain a general overview of the same problem, but in all three culture houses.

When thinking about, how this could be done in practice, we understood that interviews with the staff members in the Faroe Islands and Greenland would not be the best option for collecting our data. In order to explain why interviews would not be a good option for these two cases, we would have to look again at our problem formulation. One of the main components we are looking into, is employee engagement, and through the literature review, it was found that employee engagement is closely linked to employee satisfaction and performance within a workplace. This means that employee engagement is a hot topic and in order to address such a topic, we would first have to have created trust between us and the interviewees. Putnam referred to this as "thick" trust, and occurs between people, who are personally familiar with each other (cited in Sturgis & Smith, 2010). However, since neither one of us have that established trust, the employees of the two cultural houses in the Faroe Islands and Greenland could most likely not feel comfortable participating in an interview. It could be a high possibility that they feel that way. However, we have been granted permission

to conduct interviews with the employees at the two culture houses, but it still creates an uncertainty regarding the credibility of the outcome.

Therefore, we have chosen to conduct an online survey with the employees at the Nordic House in the Faroe Islands and NAPA Greenland, including Iceland. A survey will give the participants the ability to answer anonymously, while at the same time being a fast and efficient way to gain information and collect the necessary data. In other words, unlike interviews, surveys are not that personal and time-consuming. Finally, it is easily perceived that every research method (qualitative and quantitative) has its strengths and will benefit us in various ways. With the interviews, we will gain a better understanding of the "what" in terms of what is happening in the Nordic house in Iceland regarding the employee's engagement, and what they feel, understand and perceive, while surveys will provide insights regarding the "how and why" they feel as they feel. For that reason, the questions are formulated accordingly. Both qualitative and quantitative methods use the same theory (Kahn's) which is the theory that the interview's and survey's questions were based in order to be created. Although, the questions are slightly different, they have been slightly changed, so they can answer different aspects of the research question. This does not mean that the qualitative method will shed light only on what is happening, while the quantitative only on why and how. One does not exclude the other. From both methods, we will understand both 'what' and 'why'. The difference is that in one method, the weight is dropped in if the employees feel engaged (qualitative) and in the other method, the weight is dropped in why and how they feel engaged or disengaged (quantitative). As Brannen (2005) has stated, interviews let interviewees present narratives of experiences, and as a consequence, this has a more holistic picture of people's understandings. On the other hand, a survey would provide the meanings that research participants attribute to their practices and actions.

The purpose of conducting interviews was to gain a better and deeper understanding of the very personal and subjective issue of the participant's engagement in a Nordic government-run organization, which follows a knowledge management hiring model. For Bryman (2008), the purpose of the qualitative investigation is to gain a better understanding of the phenomena from the point of view of the people investigated. This is exactly why we used interviews, and more specifically semi-structured interviews, to collect the qualitative part of our data. The semi-structured

interview will provide the possibility for interviewees to talk freely and express their thoughts about what is being asked. An open discussion is preferred rather than a question and answer type of interview. Semi-structured interviews indeed follow a structure, but it is not that strict (Bryman, 2008). This means that a list of questions have been prepared but might not be asked if the discussion leads the researcher in another direction, which require different questions. All the questions in the semi-structured interviews were based on Kahn's theory regarding employee engagement. Therefore, the questions answered seek to measure engagement among the employees.

At first, we examined the three main categories that Kahn argue can contribute to an individual's engagement at their workplace. Those main categories are meaningfulness, psychological safety and psychological availability (every category has its subcategories as well). Meaningfulness is used with the following sense, that is, if employees find their occupation to have a meaning to the organization and/or society. People tend to experience meaningfulness when they feel valued and useful. Therefore, they want to give and help their workplace but also their colleagues to grow. Psychological safety examines the extent that employees feel safe enough to be themselves in front of their colleagues, but most importantly, their managers. It also means that staff members do not feel afraid of the negative consequences that might occur if they express their true selves. Lastly, by psychological availability, it is meant the sense of having the physical, emotional, or psychological resources that will help one engage at their workplace. The strategy that was followed to create the questions for the interview was the following, after carefully reading and understanding what every category means and wants to examine, we created different questions for every category. Every category's questions had to completely come in line with it (the category) and had to help us gain knowledge regarding what the category examines.

6.5 Interviews

The purpose of conducting interviews is to gain a deeper understanding of the very personal and subjective issue that is the participants' engagement in a Nordic government-run organization, which follows a knowledge management hiring style. To Bryman (2008), the purpose of a qualitative investigation is to gain more knowledge of

the phenomena by investigating the peoples' point of view. This is exactly the purpose of using interviews in the form of a semi-structured interview, which is used to collect our data. With the semi-structured interview, the interviewees have the possibility to speak freely and express their thoughts on what is being asked. An open discussion is preferred, rather than a question and answer type of interview. Semi-structured interviews indeed follow a structure, but allows for more flexibility than a structured interview (Bryman, 2008). This means that various questions have been prepared, but might not be asked, if the discussion provides new aspects that require different questions to be posed. The questions that the interviewees were asked, which had the purpose of “measuring their engagement”, and how this is influenced by the fact that they are under a project-based employment. Our qualitative interview is divided into two sections. The questions of the first section are based on Kahn’s theory on employee engagement and are divided into three categories. The questions within the first section focuses on what Kahn named “meaningfulness at work” which entails someone feeling respected and valued at their workplace. The questions within the second section focuses on what Kahn called “safety at work”, which occurs when an individual feels safe to express their true selves at work. The questions within the last category addresses what the researcher stated as “availability”, which is the feeling of having the physical, emotional, or psychological resources that will help an individual engage in the workplace.

Once again, it has to be emphasized that Kahn, in his theory, considers three factors for employee engagement to occur; organization, leadership, and employees, while we also included the hiring style. As we have explained previously, when the scholar wrote his theory, those three factors were responsible for the employee’s engagement to be able to occur. Nowadays, though, that there are different kinds of hiring styles and types of employment it is significant this aspect to be taken into consideration. Therefore, the second section of the interview will include questions that are relevant to the organization's hiring style, and how employees’ perceive it.

Each interview lasted approximately one hour. Lastly, all the interviews were recorded with the permission of our participants who agreed to this beforehand.

6.6 Quantitative Survey

For our study, we chose to include The Nordic House in the Faroe Islands and NAPA in Greenland to our research population. In order to investigate employee engagement within these organizations, we chose to conduct a quantitative survey that was sent to The Nordic Houses in the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Iceland.

Kerlinger (1973) claims that surveys study large and small populations by selecting a sample population, and what is being explored is the relative incidence and interrelationship of sociological and psychological variables. The survey that we use is an email survey. This means that it was sent to the participants' work emails. By this, it is meant that the "questionnaire arrived as an attachment to an email that introduced it" (Bryman, 2008, p. 229). Quantitative questionnaire surveys (See Appendix pp 142 - 143) are believed to be easier to complete, more organized, and better in appearance (Dommeyer and Moriarty, 2000 cited in Bryman, 2008). Furthermore, the quantitative survey was close-ended. This means that the participants were asked to respond by choosing from pre-defined responses (Bryman, 2008). Best and Kahn (1989) have stated that the advantages of close-ended questionnaires are that they are easy to fill out, they are less time-consuming, they are relatively subjective, and easy to tabulate.

The survey questionnaire is again based on Kahn's theory, and for that reason, we included questions that are related to colleagues' relationships, manager's feedback, etc. to understand not only if they are engaged, but also why. Also due to the fact that we are using Kahn's theory to establish our survey means that we are conducting a Confirmatory factor analysis which are "used to determine the factor and factor loading of measured variables, and to confirm what is expected on the basic or pre-established theory" (Statistic Solution, 2020) and most commonly make use of a component analysis.

The questionnaire is inspired by May, Gilson, and Harters (2004) study 'The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability and the engagement of the human spirit at work' where they through Kahn's theory developed twelve questionnaire categories which are all linked to meaningfulness, safety, and availability. These twelve categories are: Cognitive Engagement, Emotional Engagement, Physical Engagement, Meaningfulness, Psychological Safety, Psychological Availability, Job Enrichment, Work Role Fit, Rewarding Coworker

Relations, Supportive Management Relations, Resources, and Self Consciousness. These twelve categories were all included in our survey and consisted of 45 questions in total. This section is what we through our analysis define as part 1 or section 1 of our survey. These questions were to help us understand the level of engagement that the employees at The Nordic Houses in the West Nordic countries experienced.

It has to be clarified that we were very inspired by May, Gilson, and Harter's questionnaire that we used the same questionnaire categories as them which are listed above. However, we used their questions as a guide to create our own version of each individual question (see the scientists' questionnaire in May, Gilson, and Harter, 2004 p. 36). We did not only choose May, Gilson, and Harter's (2004) questionnaire as inspiration for our questionnaire due to the fact that they are implementing Kahn's theory. When we went over their study we found that almost every questionnaire category had a high Cronbach's *alpha* value which indicates that their questionnaire has a high level of internal consistency. This means that May, Gilson, and Harter's (2004) questionnaire scale had an adequate internal reliability and could, therefore, be a foundation for our questionnaire.

The second part of the survey and our own created element of the survey is a section called Employment Process. This section consisted of eight questions in total and was added to the survey in order to understand the employees opinions and feelings about the employment process that is occurring in their organization. In the survey we chose deliberately to call the second part Employment Process and not Knowledge Management, to ensure that the employees would understand what we were asking them about.

The survey follows a Likert five-point scale, which allows respondents to express their feelings and opinions between the range of 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree to a specific statement (Jamieson, 2004). Likert scales "believe" that the strength of a behavior is linear, and a strong advantage is that they do not expect a simple yes or no answer (Jamieson, 2004). Moreover, they allow anonymity, thus, deficiency is reduced. Besides, some important aspects that were taken into consideration were to keep the questionnaire from becoming too long, to ensure that the participants will answer it and avoid withdrawals. Finally, it was significant to make clear and short questions to prevent respondents'

misunderstandings of what is being asked, and to avoid questions that are not “salient” to participants (Bryman, 2008).

We used the SurveyXact program to create the survey and to get our statistics from. The total population of participants for our quantitative survey was a total of 24 participants when combining the employees from The Nordic House in Iceland, the Faroe Islands and NAPA in Greenland. Out of these 24 participants we received a total of 17 responses, yet two participants did skip the ending of the survey which means that we had 15 participants who completed the survey and are therefore our sample. After having collected responses from our survey we used an IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor to code our questionnaire categories and questions and indicate their variables. Through the scores of each question in section 1 of the survey that focuses on Kahn’s (1990) theory, using SPSS we produced a factor analysis, the results of which indicated there were three components with the highest common variance (See Analysis p. 68). We extracted those components and grouped the questions that had the highest correlation coefficient for the variable meaning the question and factor within each component and found general themes for each of the three components. These components became Inspirational Management, Immediate Environment, and Affect in Workplace and represent our grouped variables forming individual measurements scale of said construct. These components indicate what the employees at The Nordic Houses felt they engaged within. After having found these component scales we calculated their Cronbach’s *alpha* value to figure out internal reliability. As table 2.1 shows Inspirational Management, Immediate Environment and Affect in Workplace had excellent internal reliability, Employment Process had an adequate internal reliability.

Table 2.1.

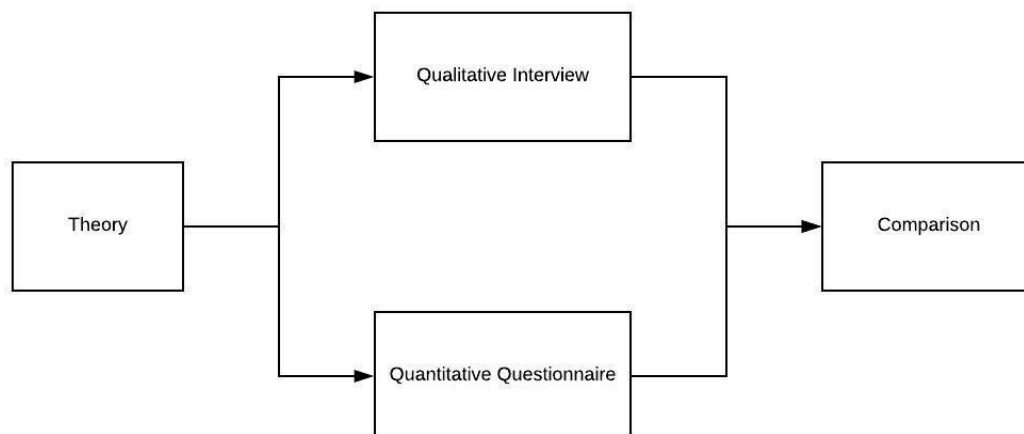
The constructs measurements alpha value.

Measurements	α
Inspirational Management	0,95
Immediate Environment	0,92
Affect In Workplace	0,82
Employment Process	0,76

Where α = alpha value of reliability

6.7 Methodological Operationalization

In the next section, we will outline how we decided to use mixed-methods, and how precisely have used it step by step. We decided to base both our qualitative semi-structured interviews and quantitative survey on Kahn's theory. We developed the questions for each method at the same time and sent out the questionnaire whilst conducting interviews. Therefore, the beginning of our methodological operationalization. In other words, the two methods are moving parallel with one another.



6.8 Data collection

With the selection of participants for the interview at The Nordic House in Iceland, we decided to interview four people in total. The selection was performed randomly, as we selected the participants that had the time in their work schedule to do an interview. At the same time, the participants were also, to some degree, purposely selected, as we tried to collect a participant from each department in the organization. The interviews were conducted in person in the culture house, and before the interview, the interviewees were all asked to agree to the interview being audio recorded, which they all did. The interviews will not be transcribed, but the audio will be available to the supervisor and censor of this study. We are keeping the interviews confidential. Therefore, the participants will be referred to as Participant 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Regarding the employees, who work in the Nordic Houses in Iceland, the Faroe Islands and NAPA Greenland, the approach occurred with an email that we sent to all employees. The email explained who we are and why we needed their help. Moreover, it included the survey that we asked them to fill out with the purpose of gaining knowledge related to their engagement. Lastly, since the survey's answers are confidential as well, the participants will be referred to as anonymous 5, 6, 7 and so on.

6.9 Data Coding

Codes provide meaning to the data that have been gathered, and help the researcher analyze them (Bryman, 2008). This study collects data from two different methods, interviews and surveys. At first, it will be explained how data coding occurred in the data collected from the interviews. After conducting the interviews, everything that was related to what is being investigated in this research 'was labeled with a code' (Bryman, 2008, p. 574). Next to every code, one can find the exact words that the interviewees used. It is their words that were coded. Codes, in their turn, belong to different categories. Since this study's interview questions are already divided into categories, the data coding will follow these which are meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability (including their subcategories). Finally, the categories that

one can find in our data coding per interview are approximately thirteen, while the codes vary from interview to interview (for a visual example on the described process see Appendix p. 98)

6.10 Ethical Considerations

What this research aims to examine is the relationship between employee engagement and knowledge management in the context of a Nordic government-run organization but also, how, and why it is like this. To help us with that, various employees of the Nordic House in Iceland, the Faeroe Islands and Greenland participated in the study. With their help, we wanted to gain more knowledge regarding the studied topic. Something that we did not want is to harm the participants. Employee engagement is a very sensitive topic; thus, every necessary measurement was taken (e.g. anonymity) to ensure that the interviewees will not face any problem now or in the future, due to their opinion, beliefs, and answers. For that reason, everything that the participants shared with us is, and will remain confidential, and the interviewees anonymous.

6.11 Validity

By validity, it is meant how accurately a measurement is measuring what it is supposed to (Parker, 1990). There are many ways to ensuring validity, and some of those are collecting the right samples and data, using the appropriate research method, and analyzing your findings (Polkinghorne, 2007). Regarding our research, the samples had to match some very specific criteria in order to ensure the credibility of our findings, and that they will be representative of the group being studied. Those criteria were to work in a Nordic government-run organization, this organization to follow a knowledge management hiring process. Moreover, the samples were chosen randomly. This means, there is a strong possibility that the information gathered will apply to the entire population who has the same characteristics. Furthermore, while in the beginning it was decided to use a qualitative research method, then it was discovered that a mixed -

method approach would ensure the credibility of the findings therefore, we changed to that. Regarding the questions that were made in the interview and questionnaire, they both followed Kahn's theory of employee engagement, and were very carefully phrased to ensure participants' objective answers. In other words, we did not want the questions to lead in certain answers. Instead, we wanted the interviewees' own thoughts and opinions on what they have been asked about. Therefore, the questions were phrased as clear as possible.

Moreover, scholars divide validity into two categories; internal and external. Internal validity "refers specifically to whether an experimental treatment/condition makes a difference to the outcome or not, and whether there is sufficient evidence to substantiate the claim" (Robert and Priest, 2006 p. 43). On the other hand, external validity examines the generalizability of the findings in different settings (Robert and Priest, 2006, Campbell and Stanley, 1963). Regarding internal validity, as it has been explained above, we tried to use as strong research methods as possible and take every decision carefully into account about the participants that will be used at the interview and questionnaire and about the data collection methods. Respecting external validity, it can be stated that the specific research can generalize their findings. The reason is that this study took three different case studies that were very carefully chosen to completely match the problem formulation to make sure that the outcome would be as certain as possible. Flyvbjerg (2006) has stated that one can generalize even from one single case study, provided that the researcher has chosen this case study carefully to be representative, and to come in line with what is being studied. Thus, this research that paid much attention when choosing the samples, research methods and case studies can "claim" that it can generalize its findings. It can be argued that every research that would examine the same problem as this one, will end up the same conclusion. Lastly, Campbell and Stanley (1963) tried to answer the controversial discourse of whether internal or external validity is the most important. They concluded that although both types of validity are indeed very important in a study to have, internal validity is necessary, while external validity is never completely certain.

6.12 Limitations

The limitations that we are experiencing in this study are connected to our data collection. The number of participants is limited to the staff of the Nordic houses in Iceland, the Faroe Islands and Greenland which makes the general focus group small. Another limitation is the lack of sample control when doing a survey. The survey was initially chosen to create a comfortable environment for the participants when answering the questions. However, it also creates the risk of not receiving many answers.

6.13 Methodological Discussion

In our mixed method section, we provide an explanation as to why we have chosen to work with mixed methods in this study. The philosophy of science section with pragmatism as our research paradigm, however, was chosen due to its close connections with mixed methods. Potentially, we could have chosen another paradigm for this research, which are either more positivism-oriented or interpretivism-oriented. Though with these kinds of paradigms, only one methodological approach would be represented, and since we chose to include both qualitative and quantitative approaches, we needed a research paradigm, which represented both.

7. Analysis

7.1 Qualitative Analysis

7.2 Meaningfulness

The first set of questions that the interviewees of the culture house in Reykjavik had to answer was about “meaningfulness”. This is the first psychological condition that Kahn states in his theory. At first, participants were asked about their work tasks. We wanted to know about their daily tasks, what a typical day at work looks like, if they are performing the tasks they agreed on before getting hired, and if they like their work tasks. All participants expressed that they like their job and duties. *“There are a lot of things in my work I find a lot of boring and a waste of time”* (Interview 2)* an opinion, which participant 3 does not share, as this person claimed that *“I do so many type of things. It’s hard to get bored”*. We further asked them if they had ownership of their work, and all the interviewees agreed that they do have ownership. More precisely, participant 2 said *“I do it my way. I made a job how it is now. The individual has a huge role to play in defining how can I eeemmm make my function into what I want it to be”*, while participant 4 stated that *“I don’t feel like the director is sitting on my shoulder (...) I feel and I am allowed to do my job”*.

Later on, we asked the participants regarding role characteristics, and if they could relate to being given certain role characteristics. All the participants agreed that they do not think that anyone of their colleagues have been given role characteristics. When we asked our participants if they had ever been given role characteristics, everyone, except for participant 2, replied that they had not experienced receiving role characteristics. Participant 2 shared an experience with us from when this person were newly hired *“Yes, the job was defined in a special way because I inherited the job from another person and mostly I inherited a boss that had clear expectation on what should I do. Like I had to open her mail and I thought that is strange why should I open your envelopes? They were small issues like this I didn’t feel comfortable with. Because I inherited the way they saw my role”*.

The last subcategory of the first psychological condition ‘meaningfulness’ is about work interactions. In our questions regarding participants’ opinions about their colleagues, everyone had only good things to say about their co-workers. Different things that were stated were *“I am lucky I have very good coworkers”* and *“I like everybody that is here. Everybody here is amazing”*. Moreover, all the participants seemed to agree that they had excellent relationships, and a good cooperation with their colleagues at The Nordic House in Iceland; *“I feel very positive about my relationship with my colleagues”*, *“we have a good cooperation in the house”*, *“the relationship with*

my colleges is pretty good I would say”, “yeah, I think I have a really good relationship with all of them”. Furthermore, they explained that gathering outside the organization does not happen very often, but that they would meet daily at the coffee machine, and share small coffee breaks together. Lastly, Participant 2 explained that they did not have many work interactions with colleagues due to a language barrier, as they explained *“In the beginning I found it difficult to get into the employees group as a member. At that time they were many employees speaking Icelandic and I felt myself as a strange because I couldn’t participate in you know everyday small talk. During the lunch it would be Icelandic that would be the dominant language. The language was a barrier”*.

7.3 Psychological safety

The second set of questions that were asked the participants, were based on Kahn’s dimension on psychological safety. At first, we asked the employees about their interpersonal relationships that involve the trust among them, and how safe they feel pursuing new projects, even if they fail. For instance, regarding trust, *“(…) and I have complete trust in them. Complete! We have really good people here”* (Interview 1) When it comes to trust, it seems that all the participants not only trust their co-workers, but also their supervisors. Moreover, all of them feel safe when expressing their ideas and taking on new projects and responsibilities, even though they are aware of the fact that success is not ensured. Some of their comments were *“It’s... most of time I would just say yes ‘let’s go for it’ (...) I mean failure is part of the program its... You can’t expect things to go smoothly all the time when you start a new project”* (Interview 4), *“the atmosphere it’s pretty open. I feel good discussing what precisions are... can be made etc”* (Interview 3). Overall, the participants described The Nordic House as having a safe and supportive environment. However, Participant 2 made a distinction by saying *“in my sector I feel very secure in taking responsibility and new projects but I am a little bit more hesitant in the house to come up with ideas because I don’t really feel is my place”* and *“there is a cultural background that mix again and again and sometimes we misunderstand each other”*. This shows that this participant feels that it is safe to express ideas and taking on new projects within their own field of work.

Participant 2 is expressing hesitance due to cultural differences, but an interesting phrase that this person uses is “that mix again and again”, which indicates that interviewee 2 is referring to their hiring process. This means that because The Nordic House is using knowledge management, the employees are experiencing being mixed again and again.

The participants were then asked about the group dynamics in the organization. If they enjoyed working with others, what their role in a team were, and who gave them this role. They all agreed that working with others and collaborating is something pleasant and fun for them: *“it’s been going fun. I haven’t been doing that much group work but well in a way we are always in a group working in my field”* (Interview 4). Participant 1 views collaborating with others as a way to socialize and do something different, compared to every other day *“(…) also it is nice to be taken out of your daily scenario and to think a little bit out of your box and with others”, “my job can get a bit lonely to that matters so it is nice to do something within my job but with others”*. These participants also explained that if they were to take on a role in a team, they could choose so themselves. Participant 1, for instance, said that the role they take changes, depending on the team. Participant 2 pointed out that it would be desirable to receive more guidance from the managers concerning work tasks when working with others, and that they have experienced some tensions when they had to collaborate, due to difference of opinions.

The sixth element within Psychological safety is about management style. Therefore, we asked the interviewees to describe The Nordic House’s management style. They described it as positive, open-minded, relaxed, stress-free, and a management style that promotes equality. Some examples are *“I work in a working environment where equality”* (Interview 1), *“the atmosphere it’s pretty open”* (Interview 3). Moreover, some of them emphasized the fact that managers reward the employees, and listen to their needs and wishes. Participant 3, on the other hand, characterized the management style as *“strict but positive”*. Furthermore, all of them claimed that they feel trusted by the managers, but also that they trust their management: *“the director trusts the employees”* (Interview 1), *“the management trust us”* (Interview 2), *“managers trust us and we experience a lot of freedom here”* (Interview 4). Participant 1 was the one to thoroughly elaborate on the management style, but also the director. Participant 1 explained that the Nordic House in Reykjavik

follows a flat hierarchy *“things are very flat here there are not divisions so we just work together”*, and that the director’s management style is based on empathy and compassion. Furthermore, the director’s visions are clear and communicated efficiently *“our leader has family values very high so yes, this is very important. She is very compassionate. She has a vision and knows what she wants from the house”*.

The last sub-category of psychological safety is called ‘organizational norms’, and refers to expectations that others have regarding employees’ behavior. All the interviewees agreed that nothing has been stated clearly considering the norms in the organization, but there is more of an “unwritten rule”, as many of them called it: *“there is nothing that has been said or written down (...) there are some unwritten rules in that perspective”*. The unwritten rule, in this situation, was that employees were expected to be kind, respectful, welcoming and nice to each other *“ I would say the norm here is, I think both people expect that they are treated with respect that’s what we do here we treat people with respect and kindness”*, *“in Nordic house it’s those things to be nice in the morning say ‘good morning’, show a little interest in your colleagues if you know someone has sick kids or something ... take care of your friends, be sure nobody is feeling bad and if someone is feeling bad think if I can do something about it”*. In addition, participant 4 expressed that the organization’s norms are easy to follow, as the norms are values that this person already has.

Finally, participant 1 believes that *“norms are difficult to establish because you have a group of people and then you get a new group of people”*. This notion that norms are hard to establish, due to the circulation of staff, is interesting and relates to the implementation of knowledge management in The Nordic House. This could indicate that by using knowledge management, you avoid establishing too deep of organizational norms, but instead establish common appropriate norms, such as being kind and respectful.

7.4 Psychological Availability

Kahn’s third psychological dimension is called psychological availability, which includes different sub-categories. At first, interviewees were asked about their levels of

energy, both physical and emotional, when it comes to work. The participants shared the same opinions regarding their physical and emotional energy at work. The participants expressed that they would usually feel motivated to go to work, but once in a while, it did occur that they were feeling demotivated. For instance, it was stated *“I look forward to go to work I like my job, I don’t feel exhausted doing my job”* and *“I do feel an emotional connection with my job but I have felt demotivated a few times”* (Interview 2). Moreover, all the employees stated that they feel an emotional connection to their job. Participant 1 claimed *“I definitely have an emotional connection with my job”*, while Participant 2 stated *“I look forward to go to work. I like my job, I don’t feel exhausted doing my job”*. On the other hand, Participant 3 said *“I am for sure emotional connected to my job”*, but they also admitted that *“in times of stress I feel disconnected from my job”*.

Moving on to our next section of questions regarding how secure or insecure interviewees feel about being themselves at work. In this case, we received the same answer from all the employees at The Nordic House in Iceland, namely that they feel secure in expressing their true selves at work. Participant 3 said, *“I don’t think I have to change who I am. I feel secure about showing myself at work”*, and participant 4 claimed that *“I feel secure showing who I am at work”*. Lastly, participant 1 admitted that they overall feel secure at work, but also have experienced times of uncertainty and insecurity. To cite this person’s words, *“of course I have been nervous about things that I don’t know if they like it or am I doing this correctly or should it be done in another way”*.

The last question, we asked our participants with Kahn’s model of psychological availability, was about the participants’ outside life, and if things occurring in their personal lives affect their performance at work. Again, we received a somewhat unanimous answer from all the participants, as they have experienced outside life having a negative influence on their work performance *“my outside life affects a lot my work”* (Interview 3).

We asked about the general availability that employees experience in the organization. We asked them how they feel about asking for things, such as tools or equipment to do their work, and how available the managers are when they want to talk to them. In these two questions, we again received positive reactions. The employees,

who participated in our research, told us that *“asking for things is perfectly fine here”* (interviewee 3), and that they feel their managers are willing to listen to them when they want to talk to them. As interviewee 1 stated, *“I can talk a lot with others when I need to. There is always someone for me to reach out if I need to do that. “It is comfortable to know that you can address everything no matter what it is it can always be spoken, at least this is how I feel”*. Interviewee 4, on the other hand, confirmed that they can talk to management about things that concern them, but the person would not talk about personal issues *“I can talk to management about things that bother me but I don’t bring personal things only work-related. It’s personal but I am not the best to ask for help”*.

Besides the questions that were influenced by Kahn’s theory, we also included our own questions. Firstly, we asked the interviewees’ who they think is responsible for their engagement. Participants 1, 3 and 4 agreed that they are the ones, who are responsible for their own engagement. In other words, they are the ones responsible for their commitment to their work. Participant 2 partly agrees with the other participants’ opinion, as this person also added that themselves as well the management are responsible for creating engagement. Participant 2 perceives engagement as something that is occurring when both parties (employees and organization / companies) are collaborating. As they mentioned *“me and management, it’s more about the connection, is a co-working”*. Finally, participant 2 added that they feel a bit disengaged regarding the organization’s visions, because they do not understand them. By using their words, *“I don’t always understand the visions. Somehow they are really good but I can’t make them match in what we are doing in the Nordic House in Reykjavik. The visions are so much up in the skies sometimes. I am a bit disengaged about the visions”*. The second and last part of the interview is about the Nordic House hiring style.

The last questions of the interview aimed to understand the participant’s opinion about the organization’s hiring style. Participant 1 expressed no concern about being hired on a fixed contract, neither before being hired, nor now. Participant 1 does, however, believe that the fixed contract is something that they will start thinking more about towards the end of their contract *“in my sub consciousness I do know that I would start looking within the frame of those 4 years”*. They have completed the first 4 years

of their contract and they asked for an extension of their employment for another 4 years, which they got. So now, they are in the next 4 and final years of their employment. However, even though they are not concerned about their future career yet, they admitted that they have caught themselves looking for different opportunities *“I have caught myself looking other offers like, oh this is interesting, which I wouldn’t have done a year ago”*. Moreover, they believe that if an interesting opportunity presented itself, they would feel bad if they missed out on it *“so now if something would come up I wouldn’t like to miss the opportunity”*. Participant 1 would, in that case, pursue the new career, and leave The Nordic House in Iceland. Furthermore, they believe that their colleagues search for other opportunities as well, and participant 1 can recall many instances, where employees did not finish their contracts *“It has happened a lot here that people don’t finish their contract because they don’t want to expire and have nothing in their hands”*.

Instead of expressing concern for interviewee 1’s own engagement, the person was more concerned about the fact that the specific employment process, which the organization follows, presents negative consequences to the organization itself, rather than to the employees. This is due to the fact that the organization cannot take full advantage of its staff members, as it constantly has to recruit new employees *“ (...) so for the organization I think is worst because you don’t get what you could out of people”*, *“ (...)it concerns me more in respect like the organization as a whole because it means that you need to be constantly recruiting”*. Interviewee 1 also addressed another aspect of the specific hiring style, the so-called ‘knowledge management’ is *“the fact that a culture cannot be established can be both a positive and a negative thing because it can be very intimidating to come in a new place that has a strong culture and people have struggles get into that. It can be a scar to the group when the first person leaves and then the next and then the next”*.

The last question we asked the participants, was whether they felt like they could be a part of completing and realizing the Nordic Council’s visions and goals, because of their fixed contracts. All of them reacted positively, as they stated that they believe so *“I do think I am very much part of the new visions and I want to see them”* (Interview 3)

The participants' overall impression of their hiring style showed that they believe it provides work stability for the employees. To be precise, Participant 1 said that *"Although here you have more stability than in the private sector because it's four years but you know no one is going to fire you in those 4 years unless you do something criminal. But you enter a place of security between those 4 years. I am speculating that are people who look for security that apply for jobs with a time range included myself"*. Participant 2's viewpoint on The Nordic House in Iceland's employment process is that it is chosen by the employees, who do not see themselves working at the same place for multiple years. Participant 2 follows this mindset and does, therefore, not mind the fixed contract *"people that come from the outside come with the intention to leave they know the whole set up and are completely fine with it"* and *"I think that the people that are attracted from this kind of jobs are persons that thriving with having projects because they need to leave again they would die for suffocation if this was the rest of their lives"*.

Participant 2 believes that their coworkers do search for other jobs, because their opinion is that the workforce nowadays has different needs. As they express: *"People think about leaving this job quite often. I see a workforce today that is much more interested in how can I develop what role can I play in whatever job I have for a specific amount of time and specific in Iceland I don't see that people pursuing a one line professional work track because you have to jump between possibilities in Iceland"*.

Participant 3 remembered that before even getting hired, this person was happy with the recruitment process. The reason is that the recruiters seemed to care and respect the people that they were interviewing *"in other companies I applied I was going to the interview coming back, Nordic House was very good at that, following up, other companies don't care"*. Moreover, interviewee 3 explained that the main reason why this person applied for a job with a fixed contract, was to acquire a stable job, and that was something that The Nordic House in Iceland could provide. Participant 3 expressed the successfulness of this choice. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this person felt quite safe knowing that their job was secure, while a lot of interviewee 3's friends were losing their jobs *"now I still feel brilliant I keep my job while many have lost there's through this situation"*. When it comes to the colleagues, Participant 3 does not think that the majority of them are searching for new opportunities, or are concerned about procuring a new job. Finally, they do believe that this is part of the organization's visions, and

have already decided to prolong their contract for 4 more years. One important reason behind that decision is that they want to experience those visions they work for come to life.

Interviewee 4's opinion on the hiring style that the organization follows, is that it has some advantages and disadvantages. They stated that *"I think it's... That's a good idea because the workplace in general it doesn't stop; this allows things to flow all the time again, again, again. But at the same time, I don't think that this constant flow of people, it is not always good. Because it takes time for a new person to settle in, get into the project, getting to know the other employees in the house. It has its pros and cons"*. Moreover, they claimed that neither before getting hired nor now are they thinking too much about their fixed contract employment. They share the same opinion as the other participants, although, if a new opportunity presents itself, they will not let it go. Despite this, they do not believe that someone's engagement is negatively influenced due to knowledge management *"(...) but I don't think it affects people's engagement at work"*. Lastly, they expressed their concern about the company's function and future, because like they said *"I am a bit concerned cause there are so many in the house, we were all hired in the same time that's what I am bit concerned. What happens if we all leave at the same time. It affects the house and the mechanism of the house of course if everybody leaves at the same time"*.

*All the quotes can be founded in Appendix p. 98.

7.5 Quantitative survey on employee engagement

For the quantitative part of our analysis, we sent out a survey to The Nordic House in the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and NAPA in Greenland. The problem formulation for this study is *How does knowledge management in a Nordic government-run organization influence employee engagement?* To answer our problem formulation, we constructed the survey to consist of 54 questions in total. These questions were divided into three categories, where 1 question was a simple gender background question, 45 questions

were connected to Kahn's theory, and 8 questions were our own added background element on Employment Process Affect. With a maximum population of 24 responses, and a total of 15 - 17 responses, we were able to configure our statistics, and found that our quantitative questionnaire had an *alpha* value of 8,2 (See Method p. 50), which indicates a high reliability. Table 4.1 which can be seen below, shows the sample's descriptive statistics which includes the total mean score of each measurement on the 5 point Likert scale. We can identify that on average the participants answered between 3 = neutral to 4 = agree on the Likert scale, except for Affect in Workplace, where participants answered between 2 = disagree and 3 =neutral on average.

Table 4.1

Descriptive Statistics for participant scores on the measurements.

Measurements	<i>n</i>	Mean	Std. Deviation
Inspiration Management	17	3,87	0,80
Immediate Environment	17	3,83	0,93
Affect In Workplace	17	2,50	0,90
Employment Process Affect	15	3,48	0,62

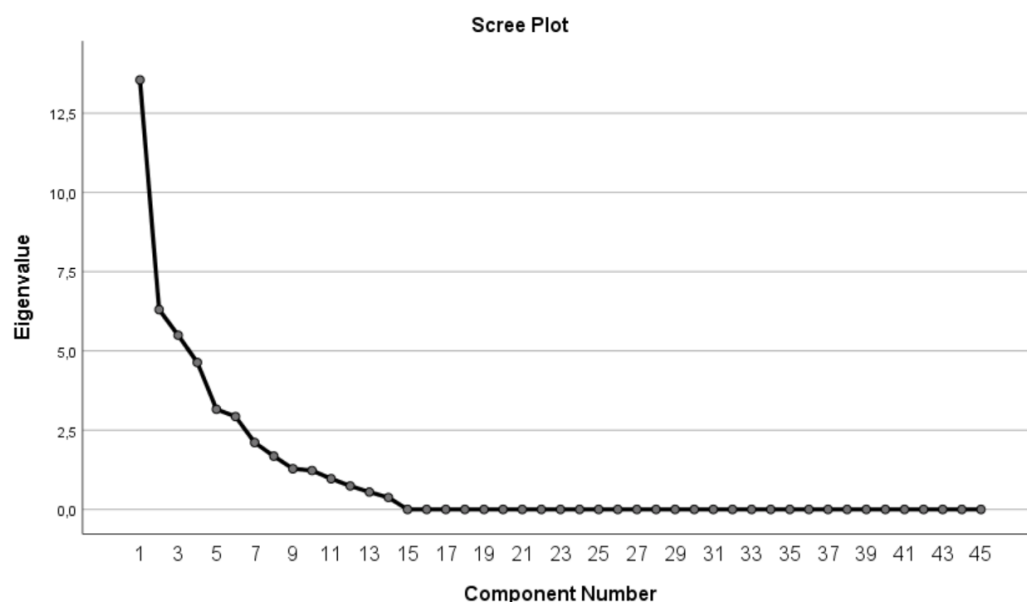
In this analysis, we will identify the key components of our survey, and examine their *alpha* value. Hereafter, we will proceed with our Employment Process section of the survey, and find it's *alpha* value and internal correlation among its own questions. After identifying our components and our employment process, we will examine the correlation between our variables to explore if any of them show a connection.

When we received the responses to our questionnaire, we used a SPSS program to analyze the data and understand the numbers that we have received. First we used principal component factor analysis to extract the components that explained most of the data's variation in responses, using an orthogonal rotation also known as a Varimax rotation, where we are assuming that the components are not correlated. The factor analysis produced a Scree Plot, which is displayed below in figure 2.1. and a rotated

factor component matrix (see in appendix 142). The components with the highest scores, that range from a score of above 12,5 to just above 5 in Eigenvalue, will be the three components that we will examine, as they are showing the most significant numbers. The Rotated component matrix (see Appendix p. 142) results contain estimates of the correlations between each of the variables (questions) and the estimated components. Those results were used to group together those variables that had a high correlation with each of the three components and therefore can be assumed to be measuring the said component construct with generating this Scree Plot, a Rotated Component Matrix (see Appendix p. 142), which provides us with an understanding of the questions that influence the three highest-ranking components. Each component was then a representative measurement of that construct making a measurement scale of the correlating variables within. By using the Rotated Component Matrix results, we will examine each component separately and how the resulting measurement scale came to be.

Figure 4.2

Scree Plot of statistics



From this Scree Plot, we can identify that the curve of components start out steep with the first three components, for then to flatten out. The steep drop in the beginning of the graph, which the first three components create, indicates that these were the most significant components to our participants. The Eigenvalue's total variance was calculated as well, which reported that together the three components explained 56% of the total variance in the samples responses, where the first component explained 30% of the total variance, the second 14% of the total variance, and the third explained 12% of the total variance. We therefore felt confident in assuming a three component solution. Below, we will provide an analysis of each component, and show the resulting correlation between them as given by the Rotated component analysis.

7.6 Component 1

This first component is the highest-ranking of the three components, which means that the questions within this component were the most important to our participants. When examining the resulting correlations from the Rotated Component Matrix (See Appendix p. 142) within the first component, it also becomes evident that variables/questions about management, and organizational work are two topics that correlate the most with the component. Questions regarding the management had some of the highest scores, where the participants ranked questions such as: 'My management inspire employees to engage in important decisions' with a score of $r = 0,926$, 'My management motivates me to gain new skills' with a score of $r = 0,870$, 'I trust my management' with a score of $r = 0,857$, and 'My management acknowledge good work' with a score of $r = 0,823$. These high scores indicate satisfaction with the management at the three Nordic houses.

The second topic regarding organizational work was formed through the scores of these questions: 'I feel that the work I do in this organization is significant to me' with a score of $r = 0,852$, 'The work I do in this organization is rewarding' with a score of $r = 0,848$, 'I find my work tasks to be personally meaningful to me' with a score of $r = 0,809$, 'I receive constructive feedback in my work' with a score of $r = 0,799$, 'My job aligns with how I see myself in the future' with a score of $r = 0,621$, 'Creating good results in my job makes me happy' with a score of $r = 0,609$, 'I receive a variety of

skills through my work' with a score of $r = 0,598$, and 'I feel satisfied with the variety of skills I gain through my work' with a score of $r = 0,634$. From these scores, we can deduce that, while they are all ranked high, management is the most consistent in its high scores.

Theoretically, management and organizational work are two very closely connected topics and can, therefore, be argued to be one topic. Since management had the constant highest scores, component number 1 will be defined as Inspirational Management. Kahn (1990) defined management as "Leader behaviors that show more or less support, resilience, consistency, trust, and competence" (Kahn, 1990, p. 703). Due to the fact that the answers within this component are positive, and because of the high score that they have, it can be observed that the employees at The Nordic House in Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and NAPA in Greenland, according to Kahn's theory, have a positive personal engagement in psychological safety (p. 703).

When combining the resulting correlations within Inspirational Management, we discovered that our Chronbach's *alpha* value was $\alpha = 0,9$ (see Methods, p. 50), which indicates that the questions forming this *alpha* value were similar, but different enough to score below 1,0. With an *alpha* value of $\alpha = 0,9$, it indicates a high reliability of the component Inspirational Management. If the component had an *alpha* value below 7, the reliability would have been too low to have a significance.

7.7 Component 2

The second component on our Scree Plot, which makes this component the second highest on our Scree Plot. When examining the resulting correlations from the Rotated Component Matrix (See Appendix p. 142) within the second component, it also becomes evident that variables/questions about the immediate environment: 'My colleagues and I respect each other' with a score of $r = 0,957$, 'My colleagues are trustworthy' with a score of $r = 0,936$, 'I feel that there is an honest relationship with my colleagues' with a score of $r = 0,843$, 'I rarely feel emotionally disconnected from my job' with a score of $r = 0,757$, 'I feel that there is a pleasant environment at work' with a score of $r = 0,749$, and 'I feel comfortable expressing my opinions at work' with a score of $r = 0,554$. These questions address topics, such as colleagues and pleasant environment. Therefore, the theme in this component, which is Immediate Environment.

This theme is categorized under the section on Kahn's theory, which is interpersonal relationships: "ongoing relationships that offer more or less support, trust, openness, flexibility, and lack of threat" (Kahn, 1990, p. 703). This means that this component, which we have named Immediate Environment, like component 1, is placed under Psychological safety in Kahn's theory, and because of the positive result, it indicates that the employees are positively engaged in their immediate environment.

When combining the resulting correlations within Immediate Environment, we found that our *alpha* value scored a $\alpha = 0,921$ (See Methods p. 50), which indicates that the reliability of the component Immediate Environment is high.

7.8 Component 3

The third and last component of our Scree Plot has an Eigenvalue that is just below 5. Some researchers choose to only investigate 2 components in total, but our third component had some interesting questions scores, which could provide an interesting outcome or discussion for this study. Component number 3 is located below component nr 2 on our Scree Plot, which shows that it reacts to fewer questions. The questions, which define this component, are: 'I am concerned about what others think of me' with a score of $r = 0,848$, 'I feel mentally tired at the end of a workday' with a score of $r = 0,607$, 'I often work too hard' with a score of $r = 0,604$, and 'The things that are occurring at work influence me negatively' with a score of $r = 0,549$. What is interesting about these questions' correlation scores, is that compared to the questions in the other components, they are all negatively worded. The theme of these questions address how work and colleagues can influence a person. Therefore, this last component is called Affect In Workplace. According to Kahn's theory, what we have analyzed in the Affect In Workplace component, is mostly a disengagement within psychological availability, and a bit of psychological meaningfulness (Kahn, 1990, p. 703). When combining the resulting correlations within Affect In Workplace, since we grouped together the variables (questions) to make a measurement scale the *alpha* value becomes an indication of the internal reliability of the scale $\alpha = 0,817$ (See Affect In Workplace Figure), which indicates that the internal reliability of the component Immediate Environment measurement scale is high.

Now that we have identified the three highest-ranking components in our Scree Plot, which are Inspirational Management, Immediate Environment, and Affect In Workplace, we can proceed to the second part of our survey.

7.9 Employment Process Affect

The first three components that we examined in this analysis were based on questions, which, with the help from May, Gilson, and Harter (2004), were constructed from Kahn's theory. The last element of our survey is called Employment Process Affect, and is a section that we added as a way of examining background information of the knowledge management at The Nordic Houses in the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Greenland. We asked our participants eight questions in total, and when combining the resulting correlations between the scores, we received an *alpha* value of 0,755 (See Employment Process Figure). This *alpha* score is not as high as the components of Inspirational Management, Immediate Environment, or Affect In Workplace. However, the score is high enough to present a good reliability, and can, therefore, be further implemented in our study.

When examining the correlation chart (See Appendix p. 143), we can analyze there is a correlation between the scores of the two questions 'I find myself looking for other jobs halfway through my contract', and 'I believe that some of my colleagues worry about being employed on a fixed contract'. The score, which this resulting correlation received, was $r = 0,697$, $p = 0,004$. This in itself is not a high score to get. However, the two stars after the score indicate that people, who ranked either one of the questions high, also had a tendency to rank the other question high, which creates a correlation between the two. This means that the participants, who found themselves looking for other jobs halfway through their contract, also believe that their colleagues worry about being employed on a fixed contract.

Another correlation that appears is between the scores of the two questions 'Being hired on a fixed contract affects my engagement', and 'On a daily basis, I don't think about being hired on a fixed contract'. The score this resulting correlation received was $r = 0,746$, $p = 0,001$, which is a good high score. The two stars, as the

example above showed, indicates that the participants, who ranked high on one of the questions, had a tendency to rank the other question high as well. This means that the participants, who answered that being hired on a fixed contract affects their engagement were also more likely to answer that they on a daily basis are more likely to not think about being hired on a fixed contract.

7.10 Correlation between variables

After analyzing the *alpha* value of each of our components and of Employment Process Affect, we decided to test our components against each other to examine if there were any correlation between them. In the Correlation between variables figure below, we can identify that there is a high positive correlation between Inspirational Management and Employment Process Affect. These measurements present that the employment process, in this case knowledge management, at the Nordic Houses in the Faroe Islands, Iceland and NAPA in Greenland, does influence the employee engagement when it comes to the inspirational management. Furthermore, the score $r = 0,831$, $p < 0,001$ proves that this fact is not only significant, but also highly positive. Therefore, returning to our problem formulation *How does knowledge management in a Nordic government-run organization influence employee engagement?*, we can deduce that knowledge management does influence the employment engagement at the Nordic Houses positively through an inspirational management.

Figure 4.3

Correlation between variables

Measurements	Inspiration Management	Immediate Environment	Affect In Workplace
Inspirational Management			
Immediate Environment	0,478		
Affect In Workplace	0,183	0,246	
Employment Process Affect	0,831**	0,421	0,047

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

7.11 Qualitative and quantitative analysis comparison

After presenting the analysis of both the qualitative and quantitative research methods, it is important to compare them. This section will discuss the similarities and differences within the findings of the two research methods.

Starting with the similarities that were found in the findings of the two approaches, firstly it should be mentioned that all the participants reacted positively towards the management style that the Nordic Houses follow. This was the first component that the quantitative method identified, but also the most discussed topic among all the participants in the qualitative interview. This is supported by the following statements: *'I trust my management'*, *'My management motivates me to gain new skills'* had the highest score in the survey which was conducted with employees from the Faroe Islands, NAPA Greenland, and Iceland. Similarly, the qualitative interview statements, such as "the management trust us" (Interview 1), "*managers trust us and we experience a lot of freedom here*" (Interview 4) were repeated the most from the interviewees in the Nordic House in Reykjavik. It is easily perceived that the management style, which all three culture houses are following, is based on trust and freedom towards employees. Moreover, it is a workplace environment that motivates employees to take on responsibilities, and grow professionally. This seems to have a very positive impact on employees of all culture houses, as they only have good things to say about it, and it is the first finding in the two methods.

Besides the management style, another pattern which was easily found from the data, is the relationship among employees. When employees in Reykjavik were describing the relationship among them, words like "respect", "trust" "honest" and "understanding" were repeated: "I am lucky I have very good coworkers and in my opinion we all have a very good understanding between each other" (Interview 1). The same applies to the quantitative research methods findings, where sentences containing a positive stance when talking about co-workers were the second very important component. Some examples are "my colleagues and I respect each other" and "my colleagues are trustworthy". However, when it came to the things, which occurred in the staff members' private lives, the qualitative and quantitative data showed two

different results. All the interviewed employees in Iceland agreed on this fact, but the employees that answered the survey in the Faroe Islands, NAPA in Greenland and Iceland shared opposite thoughts on the matter since the statement ‘the things that are occurring at work influence me negatively’ had a very low score of $r = 0,549$.

When analyzing the component “the hiring style”, a rather interesting correlation was observed. The correlation means that the survey participants who answered *that they “found themselves looking for other jobs halfway through their contract”* also had a tendency to answer that they *“believe that their colleagues worry about being employed on a fixed contract”* (Quantitative Analysis p. 66). The qualitative analysis revealed that this also occurred there since the participants, who admitted that they are searching for other jobs, expressed that they believe their colleagues are doing the same. More precisely, Participants 1, 2 and 4 from the Nordic House in Iceland, who are searching for other opportunities, believe that the other employees are doing the same, while Participant 3, who is not searching for another job, believes that other employees do not do that either.

Finally, both research methods indicated the same oxymoron findings. The staff members, who completed the survey we sent to the Faroe Islands. Greenland and Iceland, and who admitted that “being hired on a fixed contract affects my engagement”, also responded that “on a daily basis, I don’t think about being hired on a fixed contract” with the score of the resulting correlation to be $r = 0,746^{**}$, $p = 0,001$ (Quantitative Analysis p 66). A similar oxymoron was found among the employees at the Nordic House in Iceland, but in a different way. More specifically, most of the staff members, who participated in the interview which was conducted in the Nordic House in Iceland, on one hand claimed that knowledge management does not affect their engagement, and that they do not think about it in their everyday life. On the other hand, employees, who claimed the above-mentioned, also admitted that they are looking for other opportunities, and that they could potentially leave their job in the culture house for another one. For instance, Participant 1 stated that *“the hiring style doesn’t concern me regarding myself”*, but also *“so now if something would come up I wouldn’t like to miss the opportunity”* (See Qualitative Analysis p. 66).

Some of the most significant differences are, firstly that the employees in Iceland expressed that they have ownership and freedom within their job, while the survey

findings did not show any component related to that. Some relevant statements were “*I have the luxury to decide a lot how I spend my time during the day. So therefore, I do have ownership in what I do. I can decide what to do and when*” (Interview 1), “*I do it my way. I made a job how it is now*” (Interview 2). In other words, the interviewed employees in Iceland put an emphasis on their work tasks, as we have collected many quotes about it from our data. They explained how much freedom they have to perform their job their own way and how much ownership they feel they have. However, it seems that this is not the case for the survey participants in Faroe Island, Greenland, and Iceland, at least not to that extent, as we can see from the results of the analysis. Moreover, while questions concerning employees’ energy at work were the third significant component in the quantitative study (“*I feel mentally tired at the end of a workday*” with a score of $r = 0,607$ and “*I often work too hard*” with a score of $r = 0,604$, p. 66), this does not apply at the qualitative study, as employees in Iceland did not feel the same way. Not only was the employees' energy not a topic that was discussed in great detail in the qualitative study, but the results also revealed that there is a positive correlation between the employees and their physical and emotional energy : “*when I go out of the home I am ready for work. When I show up at work, I am ready*” (Interview 3) and “*I look forward to go to work I like my job I don't feel exhausted doing my job*” (Interview 2).

In conclusion from the findings of the analysis we can identify that both qualitative and quantitative analysis indicated a strong engagement in what Kahn (1990) calls “psychological safety”. This is evident when looking at the positive results that employees have regarding management style and co-workers’ relationship, which are elements that belong to the category of psychological safety. Furthermore, when considering the emphasis that employees in Iceland put on their tasks, and the fact that they can express their voice within the organization and feel ownership in what they do, which are elements that belong in the category ‘meaningfulness’ it can be argued that the interviewed employees in Iceland, according to Kahn’s theory, have a positive personal engagement in meaningfulness. Contrariwise, when looking at the third component of the quantitative analysis, and the high scores that negative sentences gained as: “*I am concerned about what others think of me*” with a score of $r = 0,848$, “*I feel mentally tired at the end of a workday*” with a score of $r = 0,607$, “*I often work too hard*” with a score of $r = 0,604$, and “*The things that are occurring at work*

influence me negatively”, it can be argued that the survey participants in the Faroe Islands, NAPA Greenland, and Iceland have a disengagement within psychological availability, and psychological meaningfulness according to Kahn’s theory. Finally, concerning the hiring style, the main finding is that the quantitative analysis identified that employees in the Faroe Islands and Greenland are concerned about the hiring style, and believe the same to be the case for their co-workers. On the other hand, the qualitative analysis identified that employees in Iceland are not concerned about the knowledge management hiring style, but despite this, searching for new opportunities outside their current place of employment.

8. Discussion

Kahn’s theory has been implemented throughout this paper to examine the correlation between employee engagement and knowledge management as an employment process. What made Kahn’s theory really interesting was his definition of employee engagement. One of Kahn’s claims is that committed employees have a desire to continuously develop themselves, and thrive within their occupation, while uncommitted employees are more likely to quit their job ‘physically or mentally’ (Kahn, 1990, p. 10).

Kahn’s definition of what determines engagement and disengagement has been challenging to our investigation throughout our entire study, as Kahn presents the example of employees quitting their jobs as a measurement for disengagement. The scholar states that when an organization is utilizing knowledge management as its employment style, it cannot be avoided that employees will leave their job before the end of their contract, if they are presented with new opportunities. This definition of knowledge management could, through Kahn’s theory, have determined from the beginning that knowledge management as a hiring process disengages employees. We argue that knowledge management, as a hiring process, also challenges Kahn’s theory regarding when an employee is engaged or disengaged. The framework of knowledge management is connected to a fixed contract, and being hired as a project worker. What

we have found within The Nordic houses in Iceland, The Faroe Islands and Greenland is that quitting a job might not be equivalent to employees being disengaged, but rather a way to gain security, or the need to explore new challenges. The findings indeed indicate that employees do search for other opportunities, but that this only occurs within the last year of their contract. This can be argued to have more to do with the employees' need to obtain another financial income, before the end of their contract, rather than their level of engagement. Otherwise, they would search for other opportunities earlier instead of at the end of their employment contract. Moreover, all the employees have either prolonged their contract for four more years, or plan to do it when they have completed the first four years of their contract. Therefore, it can be argued that when an individual is searching for other job opportunities and/or quitting their job before the end of their contract, it is not always equivalent to employees being disengaged, as Kahn claims. It can namely also be for financial purposes.

On the other hand, through our interviews, we have discovered that the people, who are hired within the kind of employment process that exists at The Nordic Houses in Iceland, The Faroe Islands, and Greenland, do not mind these structures. In addition, they pursue these time defined work structures so as to not be stuck in the same place over a longer period of time, and thereby have the chance to keep developing themselves. Moreover, our qualitative analysis argues that the participants perceive this kind of employment as being safe and stable. The participants namely explained that people, who look for stability, are the ones, who choose to work within an organization that utilizes the knowledge management hiring style. This finding surprised us, because we did not perceive companies and organizations, which hire with a fixed-contract, to provide stability. This perception was the reason why we chose to investigate knowledge management and employee engagement in the first place.

From our perspective, this way of employing provides uncertainty. The results of our findings do, although, indicate that the employees, who applied for a job within the Nordic culture houses, were more focused on the fact that if they are hired, then they have four years of employment (as you cannot be fired within those years). Furthermore, they did not focus as much on the fact that after those four years, they will become unemployed, as their contracts expire. In addition, the results from the interviews with the staff members from the Faeroe Islands and Greenland indicate that knowledge management has a highly positive influence on employees' engagement. From the above-mentioned, we can argue that knowledge management certainly does

not influence employee engagement negatively, as the employees have chosen this specific kind of employment structure, because they prefer to work within this hiring style. Moreover, other aspects, such as the management style and/or employees' relationship with their coworkers, seem to affect employees' engagement to a great extent.

8.1 Employment and expression of themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally during role performance

Kahn's theory is interesting, as he was able to create a definition of employee engagement, and found that it can occur when people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances (See literature review p. 9). Role performance is an essential part of Kahn's theory on how to successfully engage employees within an organization. Kahn focuses on the roles that a workplace, or an organization, assigns to its employees. If the employees agree with the roles that they have been given, then they are engaged, and if they do not agree with these roles, then they are disengaged.

What we found in our qualitative and quantitative analysis on knowledge management as an employment process is that organizational roles are little to nonexistent in The Nordic Houses in Iceland, The Faroe Islands, and Greenland. Through our qualitative interviews, we found a single case, where interviewee 2 had inherited a work role from this person's manager, but then further explained how they were able to remove themselves from this role, when the manager was no longer employed at The Nordic House in Iceland (along with the freedom to perform their job their own way that the organization provides them and with the ownership of their tasks). In this resolve of the role issues, it can be argued that knowledge management was a key element in removing organizational given role characteristics. What we found through our study, is that employees are shaping their own roles according to how they themselves see fit, instead of following the roles that the organization is trying to impose on them. Focusing only on Kahn's theory, we can argue that knowledge management, as an

employment process, removes organizational roles, and the employees are, therefore, able to utilize their own 'selves' at work. This means that by using knowledge management as an employment process, it is equivalent to engaging employees.

Rotbard (2001) shares the same opinion about engagement as Kahn, as he believes that engagement is closely connected to how employees perceive the roles that have been given to them by their organization. Rotbard argued that employees are engaged if they feel like they align with the role that is given to them by their organization. What if the organization does not assign them specific roles? Does this mean that the employees are not engaged, because they do not have an organizational assigned role? Instead of focusing on the organizational given roles, we will focus on Rotbard's idea of employees aligning with the role they have been given in an organization. Since our participants have not been given roles by their organization, and thereby have been able to determine their role themselves, it can be argued that they have created a desirable role within the organization, and are, therefore, engaged. Rotbard's definition of forced role performance in an organization seems to imply that the employees can either be satisfied or dissatisfied with their forced roles, giving forced role performance from an organization a fifty-fifty chance of success. However, based on our research, we can conclude that a fixed contract within knowledge management creates a good flow of staff members. This means that if any role performance is being created, it will not last very long, as it disappears when there is a change in staff. In other words, role characteristics are difficult to establish. The reason behind, is the knowledge management itself, and the fact that staff members change regularly. Therefore, it can be argued that knowledge management successfully prevents the whole situation of forced role performance, guaranteeing positive engagement when it comes to the role performance, as the employees can choose their own role.

8.2 Kahn's theory on meaning, safety, and availability

In connection to Kahn's focus on role performance, he explains that if an organization provides its employees with meaning, safety and availability, then the employees will

feel more safe in expressing and employing their selves at work. According to the answers we received from our interviews, we can deduce that the employees had very positive answers regarding meaning, safety, and availability. They expressed how they had ownership of the work they performed, they had good relations with their colleagues, and they agreed with the organizational values. Through our quantitative analysis, we were able to gain insight into what engages employees at The Nordic Houses throughout the West Nordic countries, and we found that Inspirational Management is the key motivation behind the engagement at The Nordic Houses in Iceland, The Faroe Islands, and Greenland. Additionally, when we tested our theory with our section on Employment Process, we found that there is a direct positive link between Inspirational Management, and Employment Process. Since we know that the component on Inspirational Management is an indication of positive employee engagement, and since there is a direct positive link between Inspirational Management and Employment Process, it can be argued that employees, through an Inspirational Management, are engaged when it comes to the employment process at The Nordic Houses in the West Nordic countries. If the Inspirational Management component, or any other component that we found through our Scree Plot, had not been positive, then we could have determined that the employees at The Nordic Houses in the West Nordic countries would be disengaged. This means that if we had conducted any further testing, then our results would have been negative, as we would have had to begin with negative components.

8.3 Connection between employee engagement and leadership

Through our quantitative analysis, it was discovered that Inspirational Management was the highest positive scoring component within our Plot Scree. This means that the employees at The Nordic houses in the west Nordic countries regarded their management as being an engagement influencer. This result is supported by Xu and Cooper-Thomas (2011), who through their research, found that there is a close link between leadership and employee engagement. Xu and Cooper-Thomas also state that

leaders tend to engage effectively, due to their own possibilities of being able to grow within a workplace and, therefore, be able to climb in the hierarchical ladder. This is an interesting statement, as this study's results do correlate with Xu and Cooper-Thomas' claims about leadership being a major influencer regarding employee engagement. However, our embedded case study does not follow Xu and Cooper-Thomas's (2011) argument when they state that good leadership is an equivalence to the leader being able to grow. At The Nordic house in the west Nordic countries, all the directors are hired through the same employment process as all the other employees. This means that the director has signed a four-year contract with the possibility of being able to prolong it for four more years. This removes the possibility of growing, and staying in the top management in that specific culture house, as it removes any chance of a permanent high-level position. However, being employed at one of the Nordic houses does also mean that you are employed within the Nordic Council of Ministers. Therefore, through your occupation, it is possible to create a large network across countries, and through that network you might be able to search for new challenges in other places, but that is not guaranteed.

8.4 Organizational norms

When we asked our interviewed participants about organizational norms, we experienced that they had a difficulty answering this question, as they did not quite understand what organizational norms entailed. When the participants were given an explanation of organizational norms, they connected it to good behavioral norms, in terms of polite etiquette such as to respect one another, to show kindness, and to show interest in one another. Interviewee 1 stated that norms within The Nordic House in Iceland are difficult to establish, because of the constant change in staff. This notion that norms are hard to establish, due to the circulation of staff, is interesting, and relates to the implementation of knowledge management in The Nordic House. One could, therefore, argue that by using knowledge management, you avoid establishing too deep of organizational norms, but instead establish common appropriate norms, such as being kind and respectful.

8.5 2019 interviews

When examining our results from the interviews and the questionnaire, we found that the results regarding employee engagement were very positive. This made us wonder if our current world pandemic, COVID-19, has had any effect on this positivity of the implementation of knowledge management, as the fixed contracts prevented firings.

Last year in December 2019, Katharina conducted interviews with the employees at the Nordic House in Iceland about the internal communication. A section of the interview that she conducted, was about the employment process, which at that time, was called ‘Employment Structure’. The employees were asked “In your own opinion does this employment structure affect the internal communication positively or negatively? If so please elaborate”. Participant 1 indicated that the employment process had a negative influence, as it decreased openness, people had a tendency to leave early, it was temporarily good for the budget, and due to the constant turnover of staff a lot of knowledge would get lost (View Appendix p. 145, Participant 1). Participant 2, however, indicated that there are some positive aspects of the employment process, such as having new energy and fresh eyes on projects. However, Participant 2 also believes that the employment process mostly has a negative effect on the internal communication, as the constant change of staff could prove challenging in providing good customer service. Participant 2 further explained that it takes two to three years to learn how to perform a job perfectly, and at that time, one’s contract is almost ending. Participant 3 though believes that the employment structure is both positive and negative. The positive aspect about the employment process is that due to the short employment time, it forces employees to be efficient with their time, and make the most of it, if they want to learn something. The negative aspect of the employment process is that to become efficient, one will have to work for at least two years, and then there are only two years left of the contract. Participant 3 further expressed that if people at that time did not procure a new job, they might end up unemployed by the end of the last two years. Participant 4 stated that after a certain point, employees start searching for other opportunities, which results in the employment process being in constant flow. Participant 5 was the only one out of the five participants, who thought that the positive

aspects of the employment process preceded the negative. Here, participant 5 stated that the flow of employees, which knowledge management creates, means that there is a constant new variety of skills that the organization can benefit greatly from.

It is extraordinary to explore the different opinions regarding the employment process, at least among the staff within The Nordic House in Iceland. The results of this project indicated that six months ago, the thought of fixed contracts created doubt, uncertainty, and difficulties for the organization and its employees. Due to the spread of Coronavirus today, many companies within our society have experienced massive firing rounds among their employees, or not been able to pay their salaries. This is not the case with employees at The Nordic Houses and in the West Nordic countries as they maintain their jobs, due to the employment process. In this regard, it can be argued that the employment process of knowledge management creates an extra layer of security, and, therefore, provides an extra foundation for positive employee engagement.

9. Conclusion

This thesis examined the correlation between employee engagement and knowledge management within the three Nordic government-run organizations in Iceland, the Faroe Islands, and Greenland. The project's problem formulation is *"How does knowledge management influence employee engagement in a Nordic government-run organization"*.

To answer the problem formulation, this study implemented a mixed-method approach to gain insight from both the employees at The Nordic House in Iceland, but also from the Faroe Islands and Greenland. With a mixture of qualitative and quantitative analysis approaches, this study was able to explore employees' opinions and feelings regarding their own engagement, and connect the engagement to specific aspects of the organization.

Kahn's theory emphasizes a lot on employees employing their own 'self' into a job and how the organizational forced role has to align with one's self to ensure engagement. The qualitative analytical findings illustrate that due to the implemented

employment process 'knowledge management', organizational roles do not permanently exist within the Nordic Houses in Iceland, due to the constant flow of employees. Based on the results of the interviews, we can conclude that a forced organizational role can be assigned to new employees when they enter the organization. However, because of the constant flow of employees, this forced organizational will go away. This can be seen by the fact that all the interviewed participants at The Nordic House in Iceland experienced that they had the freedom to fully be themselves. Knowledge management, therefore, has a tendency to promote the implementation of one's self, and, according to Kahn, this is an indication of positive engagement. Hence, knowledge management, as an employment process, can be argued to be used as a tool for engaging employees.

Besides the prevention of forced organizational roles, knowledge management also seems to have an influence on the organizational norms within the Nordic houses, as participants in the interview did not recognize organizational norms, but instead common good behavior, such as showing each other respect and kindness.

The examination of knowledge management, as an employment process within the Nordic houses, indicated that different people perceive knowledge management differently. All the employees at the Nordic culture houses, who participated in the study, connected the specific employment process with stability and security. This indicates that the people, who choose to work within the Nordic houses with knowledge management as their employment process, also prefer being hired on these fixed contracts.

The quantitative analysis illustrated that there is a positive correlation between employee engagement, and the component of Inspirational Management. The Inspirational Management is, therefore, the most significant element within the Nordic houses, which creates positive employee engagement. When testing our component of the Employment Process Affect against our engagement components, we found that there is a significant link between Inspirational Management and Employment Process Affect. The Inspirational Management, being the major contributor to positive employee engagement, is, therefore, also the direct connection between positive employee engagement and Employment Process. This means that the management at the Nordic Houses in the West Nordic countries positively contribute to the fact that knowledge management is successfully engaging employees.

The qualitative analysis concludes a mix of neutral to positive feelings and opinions about the employment process, while the quantitative analysis provides components that conclude direct positive aspects. Therefore, we concluded on the fact that knowledge management does influence employees' engagement in different ways from neutrally to positively regarding employment. The effect knowledge management has on the use and implementation of one's self at work successfully engage employees, as no forced organizational roles have a chance to manifest themselves. Likewise, we can conclude that knowledge management influences the behavior within a workplace, as knowledge management also prevents any negative organizational norms to establish themselves. Finally, throughout quantitative analysis we conclude that knowledge management has a positive influence on employee engagement due to an inspirational management.

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11. Appendix

INTERVIEWEE 1	CATEGORY	CODE	QUOTE
	Meaningfulness / Tasks	Clear tasks from day one	Yes, my tasks are what I was hired to do for the most part. It was very clear for the beginning what my tasks would be
		Both repetitive and new tasks	For the most parts there are like basics that I do every day and I know that I have to do it every day, those basics don't cover up the whole day but from the other hand there are surprising things that happen during the day and I think this is a pleasant way of working that you don't always completely foresee

			how your day is gonna be. In my opinion I really like that
		Having ownership in what they do	I have the luxury to decide a lot how I spend my time during the day. So therefore, I do have ownership in what I do. I can decide what to do and when.
	Meaningfulness / Role Characteristics	Doesn't have role characteristics	I never felt as I was given role characteristics and I think that's what I like in smaller places
		Everyone has their role	We do have different responsibilities and that's very clear
		Neither colleagues have given role characteristics	I just, I don't think I have ever given that thought, in that way about if my colleagues have been given role characteristics

	Meaningfulness / Work interactions	Good and understanding colleagues	I am lucky I have very good coworkers and in my opinion we all have a very good understanding between each other
		Good leadership and clear vision	I feel very lucky on that part we have a very good director here and it was a good vision as well the Nordic house ministers we work for and we follow their guidelines so yes I think I mean that gives a good clarity to how things should be done
		Nice relationship with co-workers	I feel very positive about my relationship with my colleagues
	Psychological safety / Interpersonal relationships	Positive opinion regarding the colleagues' work	I think my colleagues are always figuring out new things and I like this. I think

			they are doing amazing.
		Trust in the supervisors	But again I trust other people's instincts on me. Because for some reason I was chosen to do something. Maybe because I do a good job
		Trust in colleagues	and I have complete trust in them. Complete! We have really good people here
	Psychological safety / Group Dynamics	Positive in working with other people	I like it very much when I do group work
		Working with people takes you out of your routine	Also it is nice to be taken out of your daily scenario and to think a little bit out of your box and with others. I really like being part of a team
		Working with people as a part of socializing	My job can get a bit lonely to that matters so it is nice to do something

			within my job but with others, I feel this is amazing and this is a big part why I like working here
		New ideas when working with people	I love the interruptions with people and the diversity that gives to my work. So that's why I am happy to be back to the office
		Different role characteristics in different groups	The role I get it depends completely to the group, the task and the group. I can take different roles depending what the task is
	Psychological safety / Management style	Having ownership in their work	I didn't feel as like I have to do things in a certain way I just felt I was given a lot of freedom to you know, try to fit the position and make it my own

		Flat hierarchy	Things are very flat here there are not divisions so we just work together
		Equality is a very important value	I work in a working environment where equality is one of the things that we work for so I have never considered myself or anyone else more important or less important
		Positive working environment	I just really like working here. I just think the working environment is a positive one, for me at least
		Colleagues receiving freedom	I would say that my colleagues have a lot of freedom
		Different directors bring different management styles	The management style has been changed from the previous director to that one, the atmosphere is different

		The management style suits the organization	I think that the management style that it is here now fits the Nordic house very well
		Empathetic management style and clear vision	<p>The style is very, is very I think it has a compassionate style of how things are run in my opinion I like to work with the director because of the way she runs the office</p> <p>Our leader has family values very high so yes, this is very important. She is very compassionate. She has a vision and knows what she wants from the house</p>
		The director is a good listener and trust their employees	The director trusts the employees and she is always ready for a dialogue. She is ready for a discussion

		Uplifting working environment	For me its uplifting that I am in an environment that I can hear good things
		Trust in the vision	The vision we have in the Nordic house is important and I believe in it
		Helping employees find new jobs	So that's why we offer people counseling when they have worked here 6,5 years
	Psychological Safety / Organizational norms	The norms are kindness, respect and feeling welcome	I would say the norm here is, I think both people expect that they are treated with respect that's what we do here we treat people with respect and kindness it's a big part of being here and I would say that when you step in the house that's what you feel that you are welcome

		Changing teams makes it difficult for norms to be established	Norms are difficult to establish because you have a group of people and then you get a new group of people
		Expressing personal opinion but also respecting others	I feel confident into saying my opinion but I think always that I don't want to get into someone's workplace
	Psychological availability / Physical Energy	Luck of motivation in going at work has occurred	I have experienced that I don't want to go at work etc that has happened many times I think this is normal I would think this is something wrong with me if I would be totally happy going to work every day
		Most of the time having the motivation to go at work	In general I like to come at work

	Psychological availability / Emotional Energy	Has an emotional connection with job	I definitely have an emotional connection with my job
		Times of disconnection have occurred	I have felt disconnected from my job, yes it has happened sometimes that I think “should I be doing this?”
	Psychological Availability	Having someone that would listen to them	I can talk a lot with other when I need to. There is always someone for me to reach out if I need to do that. It is comfortable to know that you can address everything no matter what it is it can always be spoken, at least this is how I feel
		Feeling confident asking for things	I feel good in asking things as tools equipment etc

	Personal availability/ Insecurity	Stressful moments at work have occurred	Of course I have been nervous about things that I don't know if they like it or am I doing this correctly or should it be done in another way
	Psychological availability / Outside life	Family matters affect their productivity	Yes it has happened that if situations in my family are problematic or my kids... I get it very much into my soul it affects how I perform at work most certainly I have a hard time leave those kinds of feelings aside. I do what I have to do but I know I am not performing in my best way
	Personal Engagement	The responsibility for one's engagement is in their hands	I am responsible for my engagement

	Organizational hiring style	They believed before getting hired that 4 years are a good amount of time	I didn't really think that much about it because I thought that the amount of time was actually good I thought "lets go for those 4 years and then we see what happens after that"
		Don't think about the hiring style	It doesn't concern me regarding myself
		Endless recruiting process	but it concerns me more in respect like the organization as a whole because it means that you need to be constantly recruiting
		People after the 2 years start to search for new opportunities	People thing 'ok I will do 4 years here and 2 years before the contract expires they start to think about "yeah now I need to get like going and see what's out there" and all of a sudden

			they get another job
		People don't usually finish their contract	It has happened a lot here that people don't finish their contract because they don't want to expire and have nothing in their hands
		Not thinking about getting another job due to the new contract	I don't feel really that way no because I have just renewed my new 4 years contract so now I know I am going on my last 4 years
		Believes that in the end of the contract they might start thinking about it	in my sub consciousness I do know that I would start looking within the frame of those 4 years
		They have started looking about other offers	I have caught myself looking other offers like "oh this is interesting" which I wouldn't have done a year ago

		Believes that would take a new opportunity if occurred	So now if something would come up I wouldn't like to miss the opportunity
		The organization does not take advantage of its employees	So for the organization I think is worst because you don't get what you could out of people
		Feels part of the organization	I see myself as part of the goals in that sense but I do think that this kind of work environment has given a new mindset is a new way of doing and learning and I find it interesting
		The organization provides stability	Although here you have more stability than in the private sector because it's four years but you know no one is going to fire you in those 4 years unless you do something

			criminal. But you enter a place of security between those 4 years
		Mostly apply people who look for stability	I am speculating that are people who look for security that apply for jobs with a time range included myself

		Organizational culture cannot be established easily	The fact that a culture cannot be established can be both a positive and a negative thing because it can be very intimidating to come in a new place that has a strong culture and people have struggles get into that
		Disadvantages of knowledge management	It can be a scar to the group when the first person leaves and then the next and then the next...

INTERVIEWEE 2	CATEGORY	CODE	QUOTE
	Meaningfulness / Tasks	Does what was hired to do	The work I do is what I was hired to do
		Ownership	I didn't change the job but I changed how it is today because I include some elements. I do

			<p>it my way. I made a job how it is now.</p> <p>The individual has a huge role to play in defining how can I eeemmm make my function into what I want it to be</p>
		Not every tasks are meaningful	There are a lot of things in my work I find a lot of boring and a waste of time
	Meaningfulness / Role Characteristics	Has been given the role characteristics that the previous employee had	<p>Yes, the job was defined in a special way because I inherited the job from another person and mostly I inherited a boss that had clear expectation on what should I do. Like I had to open her mail and I thought that is strange why should I open your envelopes? They were small issues like this I didn't feel comfortable with. Because I inherited the way they saw</p>

			my role but slowly I changed it
		New manager opportunity of re - defining who they were	When the new boss came... that gave me a bigger space because then you can start from new, from scratch defining what is your role, what is my role what is the other employees role... and I am only taking the library
	Meaningfulness / Work interactions	Management promotes interactions	My management promotes interactions with colleagues to a certain extent
		Frequency of interactions and working environment	We don't have that much interaction but we have a good cooperation in the house
		At the beginning not included due to language barrier	In the beginning I found it difficult to get into the employees group as a member. At that time they were

			<p>many employees speaking Icelandic and I felt myself as a strange because I couldn't participate in you know everyday small talk etc. During the lunch it would be Icelandic that would be the dominant language. The language was a barrier. In the beginning I really didn't need the social bla bla..But I am sure that if language wouldn't be an issue I would have taken more lunches with co – workers in the kitchen area</p>
	<p>Psychological safety / Interpersonal relationships</p>	<p>Respect, pleasant atmosphere and diverse team</p>	<p>We are a few people in the sector I work and I believe we are a good team. We are very different but we respect each other difference. We have a good</p>

			respect and a good atmosphere
		Competition among employees	You can say that there has been over the years some competition and some not drama but of course there are because we are sooo different in our functions
		Respectful environment but also tensions can happen	We treat each other with respect but also see sometimes people with admissions can get into ... the understandings are not the same so there are some tensions in the corners
		Misunderstandings due to multicultural environment	There is a cultural background that mix again and again and sometimes we misunderstand each other
		Secure in taking new projects at her field only	In my sector I feel very secure in taking

			responsibility and new projects but I am a little bit more hesitant in the house to come up with ideas because I don't really feel is my place. But again I can have small ideas that I feel secure about putting in the table
	Psychological safety / Group Dynamics	Freedom of speech and open mindness	People can say pretty much whatever they feel like saying. I have never seen anyone booing people out or shaming them for having a vision that is a bit different . It has been a huge open mindness of how things can be perceived
		More guidance and clear visions when working together	When we recently collaborated with others we had a hard time understanding what we were asked,

			<p>what our tasks were, we lost a lot of time. Because the tasks weren't defined. We needed some guidance. When we have to collaborate it's very important because we are different units, different teams I think it's very important the management to have clear instructions and guidelines and what it is expected</p>
		Choose their role in a team	<p>Given my age and experience I choose who I wanna play in a team</p>
		Employees have different ideas and opinions when collaborating	<p>There is again a controversy in how you plan and deliver projects because one group has some wish and needs and the other group you have to work with have a</p>

			little bit of a different
	Psychological safety / Management style	Management takes into consideration employees' needs	I've seen it many times that when someone new is hired there has a huge freedom in what this person wants. The director will have a good look in who did I hire and what does this person wants and how can we accommodate this person to thrive in her or his role. If you want to do this, ok we can do that
		Open mindness from managers when separating responsibilities	I see that directors are open – minded in how can we change, how can we move responsibilities between us. I see from management a huge open - mindness
		Not so much rewards to him/her	Maybe is because who I am but I don't get much rewards,

			attention and I think it's because they see me as self-going, as autonomous. I do get some attention and rewards sometimes but it's not often
		Trust from managers to employees	The management trust us when it comes to the one director
		Positive working environment and successful management during the pandemic	The management provides positive tones and have handled this very very strange year so well.
	Psychological Safety / Organizational norms	Respect in the workplace	But I do believe that our behavioral norm is shared and respected by we don't have any sexual harassment and those things to my knowledge
	Psychological Availability	Managers ready to listen to their employees	I can talk to management about things that bother me but I don't bring

			personal things only work related. It's personal but I am not the best to ask for help.
	Psychological availability / Physical Energy	High energy levels and desire to go at work	I look forward to go to work I like my job I don't feel exhausted doing my job
		Emotional connected with her job	I do feel an emotional connection with my job
		Demotivation has occurred	But I have felt demotivated a few times
	Psychological availability / Insecurity	Security in expressing their true selves	I feel secure showing who I am at work
	Psychological availability / Outside Life	Outside life affects their performance	Outside life has influenced my performance
	Personal Engagement	Themselves and management responsible for engagement	Me and management. It's more about the connection, is a co - working

		Disengaged with organization's visions	<p>I don't always understand the visions. Somehow they are really good but I can't make them match in what we are doing in the Nordic House in Reykjavik.</p> <p>The vision are so much up in the skies sometimes.</p> <p>I am a bit disengaged about the visions</p>
	Organizational hiring style	Other employees think about leaving the organization because the new workforce has different needs	<p>People think about leaving this job quite often. I see a workforce today that is much more interested in how can I develop what role can I play in whatever job I have for a specific amount of time and specific in Iceland I don't see that people pursuing an</p>

			one line professional work track because you have to jump between possibilities in Iceland
		People join the organization knowing and agreeing with the hiring process	People that come from the outside come with the intention to leave they know the whole set up and are completely fine with it. Most people don't want to stay more
		Opinion about people who match the specific hiring style	I think that the people that are attracted from this kind of jobs are persons that thriving with having projects because they need to leave again they would die for suffocation if this was the rest of their lives
		Doesn't concern about the hiring	I personally don't want to the same

		style because suits their wants	place for many many years . I don't see myself working in the same place for 30 years.
		Will start to think about it in the final year of the contract	Maybe in the final year of my contract I will start thinking about it

INTERVIEWEE 3	CATEGORY	CODE	QUOTE
	Meaningfulness / Tasks	Doing what was hired to do	Yes I am doing what I was hired to do
		Busy and different tasks	I enjoy what I do. I do so many type of things. It's hard to get bored
		Has ownership in their tasks	I find ownership in what I do
	Meaningfulness / Role Characteristics	Freedom in being themselves	There is a lot of personal freedom in the workplace I would say. I can be like this to work and nobody says anything to you. It's fine

		Colleagues don't have given role characteristics either	Neither my colleagues have given role characteristics
	Meaningfulness / Work Interactions	Gatherings among employees when having the time	Yes. We often meet a few people in the coffee machine when we have the time
		Like their employees	I like everybody that is here. Everybody here is amazing
		Good relationships among employees	The relationship with my colleges is pretty good I would say
	Psychological safety / Interpersonal relationships	Supportive environment that influences opinion exchange	To some extent there is support. The atmosphere it's pretty open. I feel good discussing what precisions are... can be made etc
	Psychological safety / Group Dynamics	Not every time their opinions have been put into practise	I am trying to add a nice input in what I am doing here but if this is not appreciated then it's not my job. I mean it sucks for a moment but then as I said it's not my

			decision so... I have experience it here couple of times. But again it's normal your ideas not be accomplished all the time . I don't feel less of a person it is what it is
		More of a follower in a group	For me it's nice to have people decide what to do and then I will do it according my abilities
	Psychological safety / Management style	Likes the management	Our management is great! I like it a lot
		Trust from colleagues to managers	I have a lot of trust in our management and I respect their decisions
		Doesn't know if managers trust employees	I like to think that they trust us as well. I don't know
		Strict yet positive working environment	The general tone is strict but positive
	Psychological Safety /	Respect and honesty	For me it's important to be professional at work.

	Organizational norms		That means to respect the people at work, that includes first being open and honest to your colleagues There are some unwritten rules in that perspective
		More of unwritten rules	There is nothing that has been said or written down but of course I will not act as I do when I am with my friends
	Psychological availability / Physical Energy	High levels of physical energy	When I go out of the home I am ready for work. When I show up at work, I am ready
		In the end of the day tired	Then I am usually tired at work
	Psychological availability / Emotional Energy	Emotional connection with their occupation	I am for sure emotional connected to my job
		Stressful times make them feel disconnected	In times of stress I feel disconnected from my job
	Psychological availability / Insecurity	Secure in expressing	I don't think I have to change who I am..I feel

		their true selves	secure about showing myself at work
	Psychological availability / Outside Life	Affected a lot about the outside life	My outside life affects a lot my work
	Psychological availability	Confident in asking for things	Asking for things is perfectly fine here
		Managers listen to their employees	I can absolutely talk about personal issues with the managers
	Personal Engagement	They are the one responsible for their engagement	I feel the one responsible for my engagement
	Organizational hiring style	Nice recruitment process	In other companies I applied I was going to the interview coming back, Nordic House was very good at that, following up, other companies don't care
		Finds the specific hiring style as a secure one	I was in a point of my life that I was something stable so I thought it was really good
		Safe to know they will continue having a	Now I still feel brilliant I keep my job while

		job during the pandemic	many have lost there's through this situation
		Prolonging for other 4 years	I will definitely prolong my contract
		People don't think about leaving	To my knowledge I know only one person that left before the ending of the contract and again it was because he got one in a life time offer. All the others are staying. Other employees don't feel concerned about the ending of the contract
		Feels part of the visions	I do think I am very much part of the new visions and I want to see them. I am concerning extending my contract for that reason as well

INTERVIEWEE 4	CATEGORY	CODE	QUOTE
	Meaningfulness/ Tasks	Doing what they were hired to do	Yes. When I was hired my main job was doing what I do (...) And there are these other small things but yeah...

		Like their occupation	Yeah. I usually feel good about it. I am really enjoying my job.
		Not enjoying all the tasks. Example working on weekends	But some days you get a little bit frustrated because you have some things you really really want to finish but you don't have the time cause there all the more important things to do. That's just... But usually I am happy about the days. except ... except the weekends. I don't really like them
		Having ownership at their job	No. I am trusted completely. I don't feel like the director is sitting on my shoulder. Neither, neither. That's the good thing about it. I feel and I am allowed to do my job. Yeah. I never experienced anything else
	Meaningfulness / Role characteristics	Does not have role characteristics	No. I just knew what I was hired to do and that's my role. I don't think so. I just walked in

			and felt like home. No labels at all.
		Neither the colleagues have given role characteristics	No...I don't think so. I don't know what they are thinking but it just goes so smoothly most of the time so I don't think so. Without knowing you never know
	Meaningfulness / Work interactions	Meeting people and interact with colleagues while working	What I bring in there it rewards me. You know, you almost make friends yeah... Yeah, I get so much both from my colleagues and from the customers. It's just the beauty of doing my job. I am a people's person so it's easy
		Good relationship with colleagues and liking meeting people	Yeah, I think I have a really good relationship with all of them. Like I told you I am a people's person and I want to get to know people. I don't have to know everything about them.. I think I have a pretty good relationship with them.

		Pleasant working environment	Most of the time is a nice work atmosphere.
		Enjoying the time spending with colleagues	Yea, I think so with most of them. It's so nice just having those coffee meetings. I know it doesn't suit everybody but I really like them. To come there and see the faces and talk to people. I am an extrovert. I like everything, you know, but I know it doesn't suit everyone
	Psychological safety / Interpersonal Relationships	Trust the colleagues and be trusted	I trust most of my colleagues. Yea I think I am being trusted most of the time.
		Feeling nice in taking new projects and understands that failure can occur	Would I go for it? Yes absolutely. I like trying new things. It's... most of time I would just say yes 'let's go for it' but it could be something that you might have to stop and think about It, make a research but usually I am open to new things.

			<p>Yes. I mean failure is part of the program its... You can't expect things to go smoothly all the time when you start a new project is logical, I think to think that it might go wrong. So, you always have to be prepared for failure or some kind of failure or partly failure. You know what I mean</p>
	Psychological safety / Group dynamics	Enjoys group work	<p>It's been going fun. I haven't been doing that much group work but well in a way we are always in a group working in my field</p>
		No role characteristics given, everyone decides for their own what they will do	<p>No, we just... I think it was just yes ... shared goals. Actually, I did some of them and the you know someone said "I can do some of that" and the somebody else said " I can do some of that" you know I was not forced to do anything</p>
		Pleasant experience	<p>Yea. Desirable I would say. Of course, we had a</p>

		working with others	group leader but yes it went pretty good. I felt comfortable
	Psychological safety / Management style	Positive tone and energy in the workplace.	The management always provides a positive tone. The Nordic house is so one of kind. I am very happy and excited to go to work. There is something about this house that is so full of energy is just yea
		Trust and freedom from managers to employees	Managers trust us and we experience a lot of freedom here
		Value and care about the employees	In the Nordic House I am valued and being cared of
	Psychological safety / Organizational norms	Kindness and being nice to colleagues the organizational norms	Yes of course you know those unwritten rules ...yeah ...I mean, you want some examples? In society there are always unwritten rules you go by and in Nordic house it's those things to be nice in the morning say "good morning", show a

			<p>little interested in your colleague you know someone has sick kids or something ... take care of your friends, be sure nobody is feeling bad and if someone is feeling bad think if I can do something about it</p>
		<p>Organization's norms part of his/her personality either way</p>	<p>Good. You know those are rules that I practice every day. I am a people's person I just want everybody... I am concerned about my friends and my colleagues. I would be surprised if someone disappeared for days without letting us know. I would get a little worried</p>
	<p>Psychological availability / Physical Energy</p>	<p>Physical ready for work as a personal decision</p>	<p>Yes, most of the time. For many many years I had some problems with sleep and my body complains lot of the time. So many years ago, I decided that when I get out in the morning it's going to be a good</p>

			day. And things are a lot of easier
	Psychological availability / Emotional energy	Feels emotional connection due to the nice environment	Yes, I mean if it is place where you feel good and you are trusted and you are allowed to do your work and things and bring in new ideas it has to be emotional
		Never felt disengaged	No, nothing really relevant, I think. I am just really dedicated
		Upset about working on weekends	Actually, things that being going on this year these new things about us working on the weekend. That's the only thing I found a bit negative and I get a little upset. I just don't want to work weekends. And when I was hired that wasn't part of the plan. And I have been a little bit upset about that.
	Psychological availability / Insecurity	Feels secure in showing their true selves	Absolutely, I mean, of course I can't do it any other way that's how I am, that's how I do things I can't do it any

			other way and I am sure, if I decided to change my behaviour and do things other way people will say ‘what's wrong with her ‘.
		Has experienced insecurity at work	Of course, I think everybody experience that but it's nothing that's been holding me back. And if there are problems you have to work them up
	Psychological Availability / Outside life	Management shows understanding in our personal life and difficulties	No, I have had situation on those 4 years in the family staff like that, that is not problem you are allowed to have a personal life. I only have my husband we don't even have a dog anymore. It's been easy and if there are situations, since I started, I had two big surgeries, it is not problem. I think we are taken a good care of as employees
	Personal Engagement	They are the one responsible	I am responsible for my engagement. Of course is my job I am the one

		for their engagement	who is supposed to finish it and head it in perfectly
	Psychological Availability	Feeling secure asking for things	It's not a problem asking for things. The director is a really easy going person
		The directors are available to employees	Yes, talking to the directors is much better and much easier than I was used at my former place
	Organizational hiring style	The hiring process has its advantages and disadvantages	I think it's... That's a good idea because the workplace in general it doesn't stop; this allows things to flow all the time again again again. But at the same time , I don't think that this constant flow of people, it is not always good. Because it takes time for a new person to settle in, get into the project, getting to know the other employees in the house. It has its pros and cons

		In the beginning didn't mind about the hiring process	I didn't really think about it that seriously at the beginning
		Has started to think about it but doesn't affect their engagement	No not really but of course I think about it, what I'm going to do in 4 years. But I try not to think too much of it. Not let it get under my skin
		If an opportunity occurs they will leave the organization	Of course, yeah if somebody wants me somewhere else maybe in a year I might stop. I think about it. I am half way there is just...
		Concerns about organization's future if a general withdrawal occurs	No, not really I am a bit concerned cause there are so many in the house, we were all hired in the same time that's what i am bit concerned. What happens if we all leave at the same time. It affects the house and the mechanism of the house of course if everybody leaves at the same time

		Knowledge management doesn't affect the engagement of the employees	But I don't think it affects people's engagement at work
		Not sure if they are part of the visions but likes to work in the organization	Not sure if I can answer it. The only thing it's for sure is that I I just love the Nordic house, the atmosphere there, the story, I really love the story of the house. I like telling people, you know guests about the story of the house. Sometimes you are like a guide especially when tourists are coming. It's nice.

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component			
	1	2	3	
When doing my job I am very focused				
When doing my job I often get distracted				
Time flies by when I do my job				
I am very invested in my job	0,405	0,400		
Creating good results in my job makes me happy	0,609	0,317	-0,301	
I rarely feel emotionally disconnected from my job		0,757	0,339	
The performance of my job influences the way I feel		-0,379		
I put a lot of energy into my job				
I don't mind working overtime				
I often find myself working in my spare time		0,429		
I often work too hard			0,604	
I feel that the work I do in this organization is significant to me	0,852			
I find my work tasks to be personally meaningful to me	0,809			
The work I do in this organization is rewarding	0,848			
I feel that the work I do in this organization is valuable				
I feel comfortable to be myself at work				
I feel comfortable expressing my opinions at work		0,554	0,314	
I feel that there is a pleasant environment at work	0,420	0,749		
I believe in my ability to solve problems that occur at work	-0,445			
I believe in my ability to think clearly at work	-0,349	0,390		
I believe in my ability to show appropriate emotions in my job	-0,327	0,313		
I believe in my ability to accomplish the physical requirements at work			-0,816	
I receive a variety of skills through my work	0,598	0,454		
I feel satisfied with the variety of skills I gain through my work	0,634			
I have ownership of the work I do		-0,311		
I receive constructive feedback in my work	0,799			
My job suits how I perceive myself	0,350		-0,486	
I get a feeling of satisfaction through my work				
My job aligns with how I see myself in the future	0,621			
My co-workers pay attention to what I say	0,423	0,745		
I feel that there is an honest relationship with my colleagues	0,319	0,843		
My colleagues and I respect each other		0,957		
My colleagues are trustworthy		0,936		
My management motivates me to gain new skills	0,870			
My management is aware of the employee's opinions and feelings	0,382	0,439		
My management inspire employees to engage in important decisions	0,926			
My management acknowledge good work	0,823	0,450		
I trust my management	0,857		0,332	
I feel mentally tired at the end of a workday	0,320		0,607	
I can not concentrate at the end of a workday	0,355		0,441	
The things that are occurring at work influence me negatively	0,340	0,493	0,549	
I feel physically tired at the end of the workday			0,341	
I am concerned about what others think of me			0,848	
I am concerned I will be emotionally exposed at work		0,688	0,422	
I do not fear others judgment of me at work	-0,553		0,353	
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
a. Rotation converged in 19 iterations.				

Rotated Component Matrix

Employment Process Affect: *Correlations*

Correlations									
		Before getting employed, I was satisfied with being hired on a fixed contract	Now, I worry about being hired on a fixed contract	I find myself looking for other jobs halfway through my contract	On a daily basis, I don't think about being hired on a fixed contract	Being hired on a fixed contract affects my engagement	Being hired on a fixed contract affects my work performance positively	I believe that some of my colleagues worry about being employed on a fixed contract	I feel as if I am not a part of the Nordic Council of Minister's visions because of my fixed contract
Before getting employed, I was satisfied with being hired on a fixed contract	Pearson Correlation	1	0,074	-0,106	0,255	0,235	0,326	0,233	-0,284
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0,792	0,706	0,359	0,398	0,236	0,404	0,304
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Now, I worry about being hired on a fixed contract	Pearson Correlation	0,074	1	0,275	0,417	0,444	0,164	,540*	0,497
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,792		0,322	0,122	0,097	0,560	0,038	0,060
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
I find myself looking for other jobs halfway through my contract	Pearson Correlation	-0,106	0,275	1	0,255	0,246	0,121	,697**	,536*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,706	0,322		0,360	0,376	0,667	0,004	0,039
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
On a daily basis, I don't think about being hired on a fixed contract	Pearson Correlation	0,255	0,417	0,255	1	,746**	-0,053	0,274	0,345
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,359	0,122	0,360		0,001	0,850	0,323	0,208
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Being hired on a fixed contract affects my engagement	Pearson Correlation	0,235	0,444	0,246	,746**	1	0,063	0,365	0,399
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,398	0,097	0,376	0,001		0,825	0,181	0,141
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Being hired on a fixed contract affects my work performance positively	Pearson Correlation	0,326	0,164	0,121	-0,053	0,063	1	0,146	-0,310
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,236	0,560	0,667	0,850	0,825		0,604	0,261
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
I believe that some of my colleagues worry about being employed on a fixed contract	Pearson Correlation	0,233	,540*	,697**	0,274	0,365	0,146	1	,607*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,404	0,038	0,004	0,323	0,181	0,604		0,016
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
I feel as if I am not a part of the Nordic Council of Minister's visions because of my fixed contract	Pearson Correlation	-0,284	0,497	,536*	0,345	0,399	-0,310	,607*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,304	0,060	0,039	0,208	0,141	0,261	0,016	
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).									
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).									

Interviews 2019

Participant 1

Employment Structure

Here at the Nordic House, you are employed for 4 years with a possible opportunity to get your contract prolonged 4 more years.

In your own opinion does this employment structure affect the internal communication positively or negatively? If so elaborate

- Negatively

how so?

- definitely negatively, it decreases openness, i find it completely unnecessary for all employees to have a management contract. I find it unusual. People tend to leave early so we have a higher turnover rate which is temporarily good for the budget but it is not good. You lose a lot of knowledge, every job takes about 2 years to get into and then you only have 2 years where you work functionally and then you are gone. Then you get the next and then you need to start all over.

I don't have any more questions; do you have any final remarks? Anything I left out or something you would add?

- I would say that then it's openness and trust which we should have long term not short term

Participant 2

Employment Structure

Here at the Nordic House, you are employed for 4 years with a possible opportunity to get your contract prolonged 4 more years.

In your own opinion does this employment structure affect the internal communication positively or negatively? If so elaborate

- Okay, this actually I think. My experience is that it is more negative. I know that the positive angle is that you always have fresh eyes and have people who are like fresh in the job and they want to do well and are really up for it.

New energy?

- Yes, that's the positive aspect. But the negative aspect is that we have so many people going through and I think that the work in the house can be, because we have this multicultural and because we have these customers it can be an obstacle. You just got in the job and there's a learning curve and with the job we do it takes at least 2 to 3 years to learn about it or get perfectly into it and then your contract runs out the next year

So when you started working here, you of course have the knowledge of the work you do, but were you ever introduced to the organizational structure? What everybody works with and what everybody does

- In a way yes, but not in detail, because I communicate with everybody so I had to learn it fast.

Do you think it's important for you to know what every department does?

- yes very

How is that important?

- Because my job in the bookkeeping is divided in all the events. So instead of everything is in one bucket, we have all these different buckets. So when we get a bill it doesn't just go to the house. Okay who ordered this, what is it for, who did this? So it has to go into the right bucket.

Okay, so it is important for you to know why this is important for the different departments and therefore you also need to know the internal structure of their departments?

- Exactly

Participant 3

Employment Structure

Here at the Nordic House, you are employed for 4 years with a possible opportunity to get your contract prolonged 4 more years.

In your own opinion does this employment structure affect the internal communication positively or negatively? If so elaborate

- I think both. the positive thing about it is if you have the right mindset you utilize the time you have to make the most of it and learn something. It is also a minus because when you only have 2 years left of a contract, then people put their minds somewhere else because they know that they will be leaving soon

and then they want to do something about it, otherwise they will end up without a job,

Have you ever seen that the knowledge might get lost between the person leaving and the person coming?

- Oh yes, it can always be lost. That's why we implemented the Office 365 system but people are not using it so they are not saving the knowledge where they should. But I think that it's now better. But again there are still information that goes through email and contacts that gets lost.

If we stay in the thought of somebody leaving and somebody is coming in. You have an organization with a lot of different departments everybody are working on something different. When a new employee comes in, do they ever get an introduction to the organizational culture that exist in the house?

- I don't think we have an existing culture in the house. So no, not that way. You get introduced how to do things with time management. That's what you get with a nordic contract, you get a short course in how things are working. But I don't want people to feel that they are walking into something that is a certain way and should be a certain way. I don't think it is necessary. Because when you introduce the culture, you take away something away from the new person to input.

Participant 4

Employment Structure

Here at the Nordic House, you are employed for 4 years with a possible opportunity to get your contract prolonged 4 more years.

In your own opinion does this employment structure affect the internal communication positively or negatively?

- Of course it gets harder when you have people coming in and going out and necessarily not staying for four years because that is the situation because most people want to have the four plus years but people also tend to start looking for other things when you come to a certain point. So even though this employment structure should have been stable, it hasn't been since we have had to have a lot of recruitment and changes already and of course this affects as I mentioned before new people don't know who to contact. So we really need to focus on giving new people good information when they start. So I think that, that is a starting point for the internal communication, that new people, new staff members get the right information this way

Also this right information, something that could pop into mind when thinking about this employment structure is the risk of knowledge being lost. Do you think that there are way of securing this when new employees so frequently.

- Yes of course, documentation becomes important at this point. And I think that might have been lacking over the years here. So it will be very important to work on the structure for saving the right documents. Not every document but final documents on a digital platform for the next generation as memory tend to forget especially when you have been working here for a long time. It's problematic.

When you talked about an introduction to the house. Do you think it would be sufficient to think about an introduction to every department in the house or would that be a minor thing in a introduction if you should describe the perfect introduction?

- I'm starting to think about what it should contain. yes that is very relevant to think about how the house works and what the departments are working with.

Participant 5

Employment Structure

Here at the Nordic House, you are employed for 4 years with a possible opportunity to get your contract prolonged 4 more years.

In your own opinion does this employment structure affect the internal communication positively or negatively? If so elaborate

- both, the internal communication can be difficult because you are always having new coworkers and the positive way is that it is always bringing new life into the organization that is vibrant

Have you ever experienced knowledge might get lost in this process?

- Yes it does, we have different strengths and then we get a coworker with a new strength. So it's positive and negative
- On the positive note, i feel that it's good. i don't think about multicultural and so on. I think It's good that no one can stay for longer. But I think that the positive proceeds the negative.

And if it doesn't have an effect why?