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An Interactionist Approach to Knowledge Sharing and Organisational Socialisation in the Context of International Graduate Programmes

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Abstract

This Master's thesis intends to examine the organisational socialisation process of graduates in international Graduate Programmes. We find the organisational socialisation process of graduates rather complex because graduates are expected to rotate job function and department, both nationally and internationally, several times during their Graduate Programmes. Due to the changing environments and social relations, graduates constantly need to adapt to new social contexts. Therefore, the purpose of the thesis is to examine how knowledge sharing is used in the organisational socialisation process within international Graduate Programmes. Furthermore, the thesis intends to examine how the HR function in organisations may encourage and facilitate intra-organisational knowledge sharing considering potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge. We believe that knowledge sharing and organisational socialisation are interrelated processes that take place when a new employee starts in an organisation or in a new role within an organisation. This is the reason why we find it relevant to combine the two research fields of organisational socialisation and knowledge sharing. We approach the thesis from a social constructionist point of view as we believe knowledge is constructed in the interaction with others. Furthermore, we believe that knowledge is intrinsically related to meaning and understanding, which makes it difficult to manage. Hence, it is in the interaction with others that we construct knowledge and our perceptions of reality. In the context of international Graduate Programmes, the thesis aims to discover how graduates are able to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours necessary in order to transform from organisational outsiders to integrated and effective insiders. In order to examine how the HR function may encourage and facilitate intra-organisational knowledge sharing among graduates in the organisational socialisation process, the thesis has an interactionist approach. The thesis has an interactionist approach because we perceive an organisation and its graduates as mutually interdependent of one another in the process of organisational socialisation and in the construction of knowledge. For this reason, the thesis consists of an organisational perspective and a graduate perspective. On the basis of the two perspectives, we conduct a thematic analysis to discover and understand how knowledge sharing is used and which factors that may influence knowledge sharing in the organisational socialisation process. The empirical data that constitutes the organisational perspective are two semi-structured interviews with two HR employees from respectively Danish Crown A/S and Arla Foods A/S. The empirical data that constitutes the graduates' perspective is a web survey with responses from 21 international graduates. The research methods help us investigate and understand the participants' subjective behaviours and attitudes as well as understand their social realities. To conclude, we discuss the findings in order to interrelate the two perspectives. The findings reveal that knowledge sharing is a complex phenomenon because socio-psychological factors influence graduates' knowledge-sharing behaviours. Therefore, to be able to share knowledge across teams, departments and business units, an organisation needs to have or establish a shared language and understanding of the knowledge-sharing behaviour within the entire organisation. The findings indicate that the interaction with other organisational members will help create an environment where graduates feel comfortable about sharing knowledge. For this reason, the HR function needs to facilitate and encourage cross-functional collaborations across internal boundaries and organisational members because knowledge sharing is an intra-organisational discipline which involves actions from the entire organisation and its organisational members. In this Master's thesis, we conclude that it is not possible to manage knowledge sharing as such, but the HR function may be able to influence knowledge sharing in international Graduate Programmes by considering socio-psychological factors in the organisational socialisation process.

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1.0 Introduction

Most people have been in the situation of starting in a new job or a new role within an organisation. However, few have chosen to pursue a Graduate Programme (henceforth GP), which is somewhat different from a standard employment. There are several differences between a GP and a standard employment. Among other things, Graduate Programmes (henceforth GPs) only run for a limited period of time, and the programmes often require one or more job rotations both within and across national borders. Furthermore, graduates are not always guaranteed permanent employment after ending the GP (see section 3.0). Because graduates are expected to rotate job function and department both nationally and internationally several times during their graduate period, they constantly need to adapt to new environments, norms and co-workers. The frequent work changes entail that graduates are constantly going back and forth in their organisational socialisation (henceforth OS) process. As we believe knowledge is constructed in social interactions, we find it interesting to examine how knowledge sharing (henceforth KS) is used in international GPs (Burr 2003; Alvesson & Kärreman 2001). Therefore, we want to discover how graduates are able to acquire the knowledge, job skills, attitudes and behaviours necessary in order to transform from organisational outsiders to integrated and effective insiders (Wanberg 2012; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006; Myers 2011; Taormina 1997). In this way, we examine how KS is used in the OS process within international GPs. Furthermore, we want to investigate factors that may influence the willingness for KS between graduates. There may well be a number of different factors that influence the sharing of knowledge. For example, the norms of KS in organisations (could) play an important role. Another example could be whether or not graduates are willing to share knowledge with other graduates. As mentioned above, GPs have an expiry date and do not always guarantee a job position subsequently. Competition between graduates may therefore also prove to be a factor that influences KS.

Considering the above-mentioned, we want to investigate how the HR function in an organisation may help encourage and facilitate intra-organisational KS among graduates. In order to influence graduates' intentions to share knowledge, we assume that an HR function needs to identify factors that may affect individuals' attitudes towards sharing and their perception of norms for sharing (Cabrera and Cabrera 2005). Therefore, the research question of this thesis is:

How is knowledge sharing used in the organisational socialisation process within international Graduate Programmes and how may the HR function encourage and facilitate intra-organisational knowledge sharing considering potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge?

In order to answer the research question, we have divided our research question into two sub-questions. In this way, the reader is able to more clearly follow the structure of our thoughts as we look to answer the research question. The first sub-question is:

- *How is knowledge sharing used in the organisational socialisation process within international Graduate Programmes?*

To answer this sub-question, we will analyse and discuss perspectives of how KS is used in the OS process within international GPs. The different perspectives will be provided by means of semi-structured interviews with two HR employees and a web survey with responses from 21 international graduates. Therefore, we have an interactionist approach where we will examine the research question from both the graduates' perspective and the organisational perspective (see section 2.3.3). We have an interactionist approach because we perceive an organisation and its graduates as mutually interdependent of one another in the process of OS and the construction of knowledge. For this reason, the second sub-question is:

- *How may the HR function encourage and facilitate intra-organisational knowledge sharing considering potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge?*

To answer this sub-question, we will use our obtained knowledge and understanding of the organisations and graduates' use of KS in international GPs to analyse how HR functions may encourage and facilitate intra-organisational KS. We will consider the participants' statements in order to discover which and how potential factors may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge in international GPs.

By answering our research question, we hope to identify potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge on the basis of our understanding of knowledge-sharing behaviours. In this way, we hope to discover how the HR function may encourage and facilitate intra-organisational knowledge sharing in the OS process within international GPs.

2.0 Methodology

In order to provide an overview of the thesis, we will briefly present its contents. In the following sections, we will first present the philosophy of science that underpins this thesis, which is social constructionism (section 2.1). Afterwards, we will present the literature of OS and KS, including an elaboration of our approach to and definition of each concept (sections 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 & 2.5). These definitions will lead us to the theoretical framework of this thesis, where we will combine the theoretical aspects of OS and KS (section 2.6). Due to our focus on how the HR function may encourage and facilitate intra-organisational KS, we find it essential to define the HR function (section 2.7). We will furthermore elaborate on our method of data acquisition followed by our method of analysis (section 2.8 & 2.9). Before conducting the analysis, we believe it is essential to clarify how we define international GPs (section 3.0). After defining GPs, we will first conduct an analysis from the organisational perspective followed by an analysis from the graduates' perspective (section 4.0). The findings of the two analyses will be discussed in section 5.0. In conclusion, we will propose an answer to our research question in section 6.0.

2.1 Philosophy of Science

In this section, we will present the philosophy of science that guides our thesis. First, we want to clarify the difference between the concepts: Social Constructionism and Social Constructivism, and provide our definition of social constructionism. Second, the ontological and epistemological perspectives of the chosen philosophy of science will be clarified.

2.1.1 Social Constructionism and How it Differs from Social Constructivism

According to Burr (1995), the two terms 'social constructionism' and 'social constructivism' are often used interchangeably, which is why there is no single description of the concepts. However, Gergen (1985) recommends the use of 'constructionism' rather than 'constructivism' because constructivism sometimes is "(…) used to refer to Piagetian theory and to a particular kind of perceptual theory, and could cause confusion." (Burr 1995, 2). Young and Collin (2003) note that constructivism arose in developmental and cognitive psychology where Bruner (1990), Kelly (1955), Piaget (1969), von Glaserfeld (1993) and Vygotsky (1978) were among the central researchers who contributed to the perspective (p. 375). They propose that "(…) each individual mentally constructs the world of

experience through cognitive processes." (Young & Collin 2003, p. 275). Therefore, as Martin and Sugarman (1999) argue, social constructivism has a highly individualistic approach without reference to, e.g. social interaction (Young & Collin 2003, 276). Social constructionism contrasts with social constructivism because it has a social focus rather than individual focus. This is for instance expressed in the belief that knowledge is created through social processes, which is the reason why knowledge and social actions go together (Ibid.) To prevent misunderstandings between Piagetian theory and the idea that perceptions and constructions are being created through social interactions, we distinguish between social constructionism and social constructivism.
Burr (2003) deepens the contrasts by stating:

> "The essential difference between such constructivism and social constructionism are twofold: in the extent to which the individual is seen as an agent who is in control of this construction process, and in the extent to which our constructions are the product of social forces, either structural or interactional. However, given the obvious points of agreement between constructivism and social constructionism, some writers have tried to bring them together in a synthesis. (e.g. Botella, 1995; Burr and Butt, 2000)." (p. 20).

Burr (2003) hereby indicates that several researchers have tried to unify the perspectives. However, we believe that the distinction between how the construction of reality is perceived is simply too great to be unified. Therefore, we found a clear definition of the two concepts necessary. We acknowledge that researchers within both social constructivism and social constructionism have their own perception of the concept but may share some characteristics. This is why there is kind of a family resemblance between the different views of social constructionism. Overall, the two concepts of constructionism and constructivism may therefore belong to the same extended family but consist of different family characteristics, i.e. perspectives (Burr 1995, p. 2), and should therefore be distinguished from one another.
Now that we have distinguished social constructionism from social constructivism, a clarification of the social constructionist approach will be elaborated.

2.1.2 Defining Social Constructionism

In this thesis, we adhere to the approach of social constructionism as our philosophy of science. The philosophy of social constructionism concerns the social interactions that construct our perception of reality. As social constructionists, we believe that the individual is not in control of the process of constructions. This means that an individual is not able to construct reality through individual, mental processes where an active decision is being made of what is real. Instead, individuals are continually influenced in the social interactions. We adhere to the perspective of social constructionism and not constructivism. We believe that social interactions are key to the construction of meaning and knowledge and that new interactions allow opinions and perceptions to change into new constructions. In other words, we share Vivien Burr's (1995; 2003) perception of social constructionism which she depicts as:

"It is through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated. Therefore, social interaction of all kinds, and particularly language, is of great interest to social constructionists." (Burr 2003, p. 4).

Sharing the view above, social interactions and their connection to the construction of knowledge will be of particular interest to us in this thesis. Especially given the fact that we wish to examine the concept of KS in the context of OS. Therefore, we shall examine the social, historical and contextual perspectives of KS and OS via the perspective of social constructionism. We include the notion of Burr (2003) that one's perception of what is real "(...) depends upon where and when in the world one lives." (p. 4). Thus, the social context of GPs becomes pivotal in the search of examining potential factors that influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge. We argue this because graduates' social contexts constantly are changing as they are rotating job functions, departments and business units several times during their GPs.

As emphasised in our research question, the social processes of human interaction will be our main focus, as these processes help to develop us as individuals. The social constructionist perspective thus implies that an individual is not able to perceive knowledge and the construction of reality, unless this knowledge is constructed in relation to others. The mental mapping of reality is therefore understood as an ever-changing process influenced by our interactions and social ties. We adhere to the perspective of social constructionism, which is why we emphasise the complexity of social relations in the context of, e.g. OS and intra-organisational KS. Furthermore, there is a scope for differentiation of perspectives and perceptions between, for example, the organisation and the individual graduate.

2.1.3 Ontological and Epistemological Perspectives of Social Constructionism

The ontological perspective of social constructionism concerns the aspect of what is real and what exists. As constructionists, we believe that what an individual perceive as real is a result of social constructions that occur in relation to others which, in turn, creates a representation of social reality. Burr (2003) describes it as:

"The only things we have access to are our various representations of the world, and these therefore cannot be judged against 'reality' for their truthfulness or accuracy." (p. 23).

This representation of reality is referred to as ontological relativism. When adhering to the perspective of social constructionism, we believe that objectivity is not an obtainable stance. Even though individuals may construct the social world, they are not able to control in what way it is constructed (Burr 2003). Burr (2003) argues that:

"(...) social constructionism would regard objectivity as an impossibility, since each of us, of necessity, must encounter the world from some perspective or other (from where we stand) and the questions we come to ask about that world, our theories and hypotheses, must also of necessity arise from the assumptions that are embedded in our perspective." (Burr 2003, p. 152).

Burr (2003) notes that we all perceive things differently and therefore have our own *truth.* This is a subjective truth, however, and should not be conflated with objective truth. In relation to the phenomenon of KS, we must consider that graduates may have different perceptions of what true knowledge is. What one graduate perceive as knowledge may not be relevant nor true for another graduate. Instead, it is in the social interactions between the two that meaning is constructed, and that new knowledge may arise from. Epistemologically speaking, we as researchers do not search for a truth, but instead to examine constructed phenomena in specific contexts. We acknowledge that knowledge is subjective and, "simply refers to the particular construction or version of a phenomenon that has received the stamp of truth in our society." (Burr 2003, p. 68). It is due to such subjective truth claims that research within social constructionism meets criticism of its reliability and validity. However, as mentioned previously, we do not seek the objective truth and as Burr (2003) describes:

"(...) social constructionist research is not about identifying objective facts or making truth claims. There can be no final description of the world, and reality may be inaccessible or inseparable from our discourse about it; all knowledge is provisional and contestable, and accounts are local and historically/culturally specific." (Burr 2003, p. 158).

Therefore, we stress that the reliability and validity of constructionist research lie in examination of that specific context or phenomenon. Furthermore, we need to emphasise that it is not possible for humans to "(…) view the world from no specific position at all, which is what the idea of objectivity suggests (…)" (Burr 2003, p. 152). This claim applies for both researchers and non-researchers. Consequently, it is pivotal for a researcher to acknowledge that his or her perceptions of reality become part of the research itself. Burr (2003) states:

> "The researcher's version of events has greater warrant and is given more 'voice' than that of the subject, whose experience is interpreted and given sometimes quite different meanings by the researcher. The researcher is the holder of knowledge, the one who tests theories and interprets results." (p. 154).

Based on Burr's notion, we need to consider our research as a co-construction between ourselves and the people we are researching. Furthermore, we need to acknowledge the impact our perceptions may have on the interpreted results of our analysis and qualify our results on this notion. As constructionists, we also believe that knowledge is historically and culturally specific. Therefore, knowledge is dependent upon its context and will not provide a truth claim of knowledge. Rather, it will provide us with a subjective understanding and truth of knowledge in that specific historical and/or cultural context. By having a social constructionist approach in this thesis, we acknowledge the subjective truth and understanding of KS and OS in the specific social context examined in this thesis. Furthermore, as social constructionists, we have a critical stance towards research in general given that we regard all research as dependent on specific historical and cultural contexts. Hence, we are critical of our own findings in this thesis as well.

2.2 Literature Review: Organisational Socialisation

The purpose of this section is to outline central perspectives and concepts within the research field of OS. First, an introduction to the research field of OS will be presented followed by central definitions of OS. Afterwards, we will present the difference between onboarding and OS as these two concepts sometimes are used interchangeably within the OS literature. Last, we will elaborate on the development of the OS research, which is often characterised as three waves.

2.2.1 Introduction to the Research Field of Organisational Socialisation

In broad terms, the OS process is about newly hired employees starting in an organisation or existing organisational members starting in a new role within an organisation (Van Maanen & Schein 1979).

According to Ashford & Nurmohamed (2012), OS has become a core area of study in human resource management (henceforth HRM) and organisational behaviour (p. 8). Klein and Heuser (2008) state that OS is an "(...) ubiquitous topic, mentioned in Organizational Behavior, Human Resource Management, Industrial-Organizational Psychology, Staffing, and Training textbooks (...)" (pp. 328-329). The OS literature originates from different theoretical areas, among others, organisational behaviour (Feldman 1981, p. 309), sociology, psychology and social psychology (Hart 1993, p. 89) and can be traced back to the mid-1960s (Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012).

Various scholars have contributed to the research field of OS, e.g. Van Maanen & Schein (1979), Taormina (1997), Feldman (1981), Griffin et al. (2000), Cooper-Thomas & Anderson (2006), Wanberg (2012) and Ashford & Nurmohamed (2012). For this reason, there are different approaches to OS, hence, different definitions of what constitutes OS. In the section below, we will therefore present and discuss the various definitions of OS.

2.2.2 Definitions of Organisational Socialisation

Over time, the definitions of OS have changed from being described more generally to being described more detailed in the theoretical literature. According to Ashford and Nurmohamed (2012), Van Maanen and Schein (1979) were some of the first to formulate tactics that organisations could use to socialise new or existing employees. For this reason, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) took part in shaping the socialisation literature (Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012, p. 9). Ashford and Nurmohamed (2012) state that the most quoted definition of socialisation originates from Van Maanen and Schein (1979), where they describe socialisation as "(...) the process by which an individual acquires the social knowledge and skills necessary to assume an organizational role." (p. 211). This statement is a shorter definition of Schein's own definition from 1968, where he specifies social knowledge more clearly by writing, "(...) the value system, the norms, and the required behavior patterns of an organization, society, or group." (Schein 1968, p. 1). Another well-known and more specific definition of OS by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) is "(...) the process by which one is taught and learns "the ropes" of a particular organizational role." (p. 3). In this definition, Van Maanen and Schein mention that new or existing employees are expected to 'learn the ropes' of the organisation, meaning there is an underlying focus on the organisation and that the employee must adapt to the organisation, i.e. the organisational role.

Griffin et al. (2000) state that there came an increased focus on the individual in the OS process in the late 1980s (p. 454). In that context, Taormina (1997) highlights that even though an organisation can select and deselect an employee in the recruitment and selection process, the employee can also choose not to socialise and adapt to the organisation once they are hired. Taormina (1997) describes his own definition as more comprehensive and specific than earlier definitions because it both contains a socio-psychological perspective and specific content from the OS process (p. 29):

"Organizational socialization is the process by which a person secures relevant job skills, acquires a functional level of organizational understanding, attains supportive social interactions with coworkers, and generally accepts the established ways of a particular organization." (p. 29).

In this citation, there is an increased focus on the individual in the OS process, since it concerns how the individual can secure and achieve, for instance, relevant job skills, in the process. Hence, the focus on the organisation was diminished.

Later, Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006) presented a broad definition of OS that both focuses on the organisation as well as the individual. Their definition is:

"Organizational socialization (OS) is the process through which a new organizational employee adapts from outsider to integrated and effective insider" (p. 492).

Even though the definition is less specified compared to Taormina's definition, it is essential to consider because the definition focuses on integrating new employees from outsiders to effective insiders in an organisation. Hence, both the individual and the organisation have become critical actors in the OS process.

The definitions above clarify some of the approaches that have been to OS over the years. The definitions illustrate how the focus has shifted from focusing on the organisation, where new employees needed to 'learn the ropes' (Van Maanen & Schein 1979), to focusing more on the individual and the integration of both the organisation and the individual in the OS process (Taormina 1997; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006). Even though the definitions and approaches to OS have changed over time, all definitions have in common that OS is a learning process. The OS process will be elaborated further in the following sections.

2.2.3 Onboarding and Organisational Socialisation

After having presented different definitions of OS above, it is relevant to present the difference between onboarding and OS because the two concepts sometimes are used interchangeably within the literature of OS. On that notion, Wanberg (2012) states:

"The emerging view is that the terms onboarding and socialization should be differentiated and that care should be taken that the two terms are not used interchangeably (...)" (p. 17).

Wanberg (2012) furthermore emphasises that onboarding is practice-oriented and a more narrow term compared to socialisation. According to Klein and Polin (2012), onboarding is about:

"(…) formal and informal practices, programs, and policies enacted or engaged in by an organization or its agents to facilitate newcomer adjustment" (p. 268).

Hence, onboarding is used by organisations as specific practices to expedite the socialisation of employees (Klein, Polin & Sutton 2015). Therefore, onboarding can be seen as practices initiated by the organisation when a new employee first joins an organisation. These practices could, for instance consist of providing the new employee with a buddy or mentor, welcoming the new employee the first day with breakfast or introducing the new employee for other organisational members (Klein & Heuser 2008). Specific onboarding practices should take part in reducing new employees' uncertainties in the new job by helping them make sense of their new environment and by providing them with the necessary resources to become effective organisational members (Klein, Polin & Sutton 2015, p. 265).

According to Wanberg (2012), OS may include onboarding but:

"(…) more broadly encompasses the information seeking, learning, and other adaptation processes involved in socialization on the part of the newcomer." (p. 18).

Hence, socialisation occurs within the individual whereas onboarding refers to specific practices initiated by the organisation (Klein, Polin & Sutton 2015, p. 264). This means that socialisation, hypothetically speaking, could exist without any onboarding practices (Wanberg 2012, p. 18). The OS process can entail changes in or development of, e.g. knowledge, relationships, behaviour, values, new skills (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006, 492; Wanberg 2012, p. 17). Therefore, OS includes the broader learning and adjustment processes that individuals go through when they adapt to a new role within an organisation. Furthermore, the research of OS suggests that what organisations and individuals do in the OS process have a great impact on important outcomes, e.g. employee satisfaction, commitment, performance and retention (Wanberg 2012, p. 18) In this relation, Wanberg (2012) stresses that the OS process includes efforts on the part of both the organisation as well as the individual (Wanberg 2012, p. 18).

The previously mentioned practices by Klein and Polin (2012), which are used to facilitate newcomer adjustment, are also to be understood as formal or informal socialisation practices. Formal socialisation happens in formal, structured or controlled practices, programs or activities, e.g. training, workshops, information days and formal webinars. Informal socialisation happens in informal and non-controlled practices and activities, e.g. daily collaboration of tasks, lunch breaks, coffee break-talks and Christmas parties. Both formal and informal practices may be arranged by an organisation to, for instance, provide employees with necessary resources and enhance employees' job skills. However, informal practices may also take place without the organisation's interference because these practices are less controlled by the organisation due to social interactions (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006; Klein & Polin 2012; Taormina 1997).

Beside the fact that organisations can use formal and informal socialisation practices to integrate newcomers, Ashford and Nurmohamed (2012) note that OS also occurs whenever boundaries are crossed. They describe it in the following way:

> "Socialization occurs throughout an individual's career whenever boundaries are crossed, whether it be the boundary between the outside and inside of an organization (e.g., the boundary crossed by newcomers into a company), that defining a particular group within an organization (e.g., the boundary crossed when an employee is transferred into a new group within a company), or that between two levels within an organization (e.g., the boundary crossed when one is promoted) (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979)." (Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012, p. 9).

For this reason, it is important to clarify that the OS process both concerns new employees starting to work at an organisation, i.e. newcomers, as well as individuals moving into a new role within an organisation, i.e. existing employees (Wanberg 2012, p. 17).

In that context, it has been argued in some of the earliest OS literature whether or not socialisation of newcomers follows a sequence of stages that newcomers go through in order to become effective organisational members (Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012, p. 13). Multiple researchers, for example, Porter, Lawler & Hackman (1975), Feldman (1981), Fisher (1986), Wanous (1992), have articulated a sequence of stages, which is why Ashforth et al. (2007) have compared the different stage models and provided a definition of four stages that are relatively agreed upon: anticipation, encounter, adjustment and stabilisation (pp. 9-10).

The first stage newcomers go through is called *Anticipatory* and relates to the period before the newcomer joins the organisation. At this stage, the newcomer may develop expectations and learn about the new job via, e.g. job search, asking questions of family, friends and contacts (Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012, p. 13; Ashforth *et al.* 2007, p. 9). The second stage is referred to as *Encounter* and in this stage, the newcomer starts in the organisation. At this stage, newcomers may begin to notice changes in their attitudes, skills, behaviours etc. because they begin to learn about how the daily life is in the organisation. Furthermore, they learn about the job and what is required to be successful in the new job (Ibid.). The third stage is referred to as *Adjustment* and is related to the period in which the newcomer becomes an ever-increasing insider. This happens because the newcomer adapts to the organisation and the specific job, which produce a mutual sense of commitment (Ibid.). The last stage is referred to as *Stabilisation* and is related to the period where newcomers become fully integrated insiders in the job and the organisation. This finds expression in newcomers' signals and actions (Ibid.).

Ashforth et al. (2007) state that:

> "(…) stage models have not attracted much attention during the last 20 years. This may be attributable to their mixed empirical support, the ascendance of other socialization perspectives (particularly socialization tactics and newcomer proactivity) (…) (p. 9).

Therefore, Ashforth et al. (2007) state that stage models have been criticised for a number of reasons. Among other things, the sequence of stages illustrates newcomers' transition from one stage to another, meaning that the stages focus on the sequence of *what* occurs during socialisation, but without paying attention to *how* newcomers transition through these stages (Ashforth *et al.* 2007, p. 9; Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012, p. 13). Furthermore, it is relevant to note that stage models almost exclusively have been used for new employees starting in an organisation and not for existing organisational members entering, e.g. another team in the organisation (Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012, p. 13).

Furthermore, it is relevant to highlight that among researchers, there are some disagreements regarding when the OS process begins and when it ends (Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012). Early research within the OS field describes the process as beginning as soon as a new employee is in contact with an organisation. On the other hand, some researchers believe in a long-term socialisation where the process starts in the childhood or is a continuing process throughout one's occupation (Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012, p. 9). Furthermore, the endpoint of the OS process differs among researchers from a matter of weeks to never ending because employees constantly are learning about how to contribute to the organisation (Ibid.).

Our approach to OS, including our approach to the start and endpoint of the OS process and to the sequence of stages in the OS process within international GPs, will be elaborated further in section 2.3.

2.2.4 The Three Waves of Organisational Socialisation

According to Ashford and Nurmohamed (2012), there has been a development in the OS research over time because the focus has been on different actors in the OS research. They characterise this development as three waves. The first wave focused on the *organisation* as the actor and what outcomes organisations hoped to achieve in the OS process. The second wave had an increased interest in the *individual.* The third wave is a combination of the two prior waves because scholars believe that both the organisation and the individual influence the socialisation process. Therefore, the third wave is referred to as the *interactionist perspective* (Griffin *et al.* 2000). Each wave will be presented and elaborated further below.

2.2.4.1 The First Wave: The Organisation

Over the years, there has been a radical change in the way individuals have been perceived in organisations (Bratton & Gold 2012). In some of the early work on OS, there was a decidedly focus on how organisations socialised newcomers, i.e. the focus was on what organisations did (Griffin *et al.* 2000, p. 453). Early stage models of OS (e.g., Feldman 1981) describe what organisations could do to affect the outcomes that the organisation wished to see in the individuals they hired (Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012, p. 10). In Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) early work, they highlighted specific tactics, i.e. initiatives, organisations could use in order to 'integrate' new employees or existing employees. The six tactics are: Collective vs. Individual (collective refers to socialising newcomers in a group vs. socialising them individually), Formal vs. Informal (formal refers to the organisation having formal practices segregating the newcomer from other organisational members vs. informal practices where the newcomer is not differentiated from other organisational members), Sequential vs. Random (sequential refers to having specific sequences when providing information vs. providing information randomly), Fixed vs. Variable (the organisation has a fixed timetable for socialisation practices vs. a variable timetable), Serial vs. Disjunctive (serial refers to using existing organisational members who can guide the newcomer vs. not using experienced organisational members) and Investiture vs. Divestiture (investiture encourages and focuses on the newcomer's personal characteristics vs. divestiture which encourage the newcomer to unlearn and fit the attended organisational role) (Van Maanen & Schein 1979, pp. 38-64). These tactics are based on the organisational perspective, where new employees needed to learn the norms and behaviours in order to adapt to the organisation (Van Maanen & Schein 1979).

Ashford and Nurmohamed (2012) describe that:

> "Although the literature on organizational socialization tactics added much to our understanding of newcomer adjustment, it implicitly portrayed newcomers and job transitioners as somewhat passive and reactive in the process, when they actually can be agentic and proactive (Ashford & Saks 1996; Jones 1983)" (Ashford and Nurmohamed 2012, p. 19).

This citation indicates that newcomers are seen as passive and reactive in the OS process. These thoughts on individuals being reactive and perceived as factors that needed to fit into organisations were reflected in the first wave, where the focus was on the organisation itself and how the organisation was able to obtain achievements. However, some researchers believed that individuals had more to offer than just fitting the attended organisational role, which is the reason why individuals came into focus in the second wave, which will be elaborated further below.

2.2.4.2 The Second Wave: The Individual

After focusing on the organisation and the organisation's actions in the first wave, the individual came into focus in the second wave of OS because an increased focus on what individuals were doing and experiencing in the socialisation process arose (Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012, p. 10). In the late 1980s and 90s, researchers began to focus on individual differences and characteristics and furthermore, how it could influence the OS process. Hence, researchers began to recognise that individuals also play a role in the OS process (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006, p. 495). For this reason, research on how newcomers proactively behave to facilitate their own socialisation process increased (Griffin *et al.* 2000, p. 454). Some of the most studied proactive socialisation behaviours are, among others, information seeking, feedback seeking and relationship building (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006). Focusing more on the newcomers' proactive behaviour, Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006) argue that:

> "Concurrent with the shift in perspective to look at newcomer individual differences and their influence, research in the last 20 years has acknowledged the role of the newcomer as an active agent in the socialization process (...)" (p. 496).

In that context, Ashford and Nurmohamed (2012) state that it is not only the organisation that holds goals in the OS process. Newcomers can be proactive employees, i.e. active agents, in the OS process, who hope to get on board in the organisation successfully (p. 10). This leads us to the third wave in the OS research.

2.2.4.3 The Third Wave: The Interactionist Perspective

Over the years, the approach to HRM has developed from focusing solely on the organisation and its achievements to focusing more on the individual. Therefore, the focus on integration has grown because an organisation's performance depends on human knowledge and skills (Bratton & Gold 2012, p. 7). Therefore, the focus of the third wave is to highlight the importance of both the organisation and the individual in the OS process (Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012, p. 10). The organisation's broader practices, i.e. tactics, (the first wave) and the individual's proactive behaviour and personal characteristics (the second wave) are both crucial factors in obtaining a successful socialisation because these factors affect each other in the OS process (Ibid.). Prior research on OS has been examined from either the organisation or the individual's perspective. However, the interactionist perspective seeks to integrate both the organisation and the individual in the OS process in order to examine:

> "(...) how newcomer's attempts at self-socialization work in tandem with the organization's attempts at socialization to influence socialization outcomes." (Griffin *et al.* 2000, p. 454).

In that context, Griffin et al. (2000) and Taormina (1997) state that it is important to highlight that the actions the organisation and the individual take to bring about OS are mutually interdependent. Therefore, both parties' actions influence the socialisation and the outcomes of the process (Griffin *et al.* 2000, p. 453). Hence, OS is a two-way process because the organisation and the individual influence one another in the process (Taormina 1997, p. 29).

Having presented the research field of OS, we will present our approach to OS in the following section.

2.3 Our Approach to and Definition of Organisational Socialisation

In the following section, we first want to clarify our perception of the start and end point of the OS process followed by a presentation of the sequence of stages that newcomers go through to become effective organisational insiders. Second, we want to present our definition of OS followed by a clarification of how we understand knowledge in the context of OS.

2.3.1 The Start and End Point of the Organisational Socialisation Process

First, we believe it is essential to clarify how we consider the start and end point of the OS process because there are some disagreements among researchers regarding when the OS process begins and when it ends. We believe the beginning of the OS process can be seen from two perspectives. Seeing it from the organisational perspective, we believe the OS process begins when the organisation realises the need for a new employee and initiates the recruitment process. Seeing it from the individual's perspective, we believe the OS process begins when the individual applies for a job position and is considered a potential candidate by the organisation. Furthermore, we believe that the OS process is a continual socialisation process throughout the individual's career in the concerned company. We argue this because the individual's OS process constantly is affected by social contexts. Therefore, if an individual, for example, starts in a job position in another organisation, a new OS process will begin. In order to clarify the OS process within international GPs, we believe it is essential to elaborate on the different stages that graduates go through in the OS process.

2.3.2 A Sequence of Stages in the Organisational Socialisation Process

As mentioned in section 2.2.2, some researchers argue that there are specific stages that newcomers go through to become an integrated organisational insider. We acknowledge that dividing the OS process into stages is a rather functionalistic approach to OS. However, we believe the stages provide an understanding of the different phases which graduates are in and go through in the OS process within international GPs when they transition from outsiders to insiders.

Because we believe the OS process is a continual socialisation process throughout the individual's career in the concerned organisation, we focus on a combination of the second stage *Encounter* and the third stage *Adjustment* in our thesis. Due to our focus on KS in the context of international GPs, we focus on graduates that are already part of a GP. Therefore, the *Anticipatory* stage is not relevant for us to focus on because this stage occurs before the graduate joins the organisation. Furthermore, the *Stabilisation* stage is not relevant for us to focus on either, because graduates rotate between, for instance, job functions and departments throughout their GP. Hence, it is first after ending the GP that graduates may be offered a standard employment in the organisation. In this context, it is relevant to highlight that since we perceive OS as a continual socialisation process throughout an individuals' career in the concerned organisation, we do not believe the stabilisation stage can be achieved in a GP because the OS process constantly is affected by social contexts (see section 2.2.3). However, we do believe that graduates may feel stabilised in their job role over time. The stabilisation stage may therefore feel achieved, even though we believe that graduates are in a constant learning process throughout the graduates' careers in the concerned organisation.

The second and third stages are relevant for us to focus on in this thesis because the stages illustrate the phases graduates go through in order to become integrated organisational members. Furthermore, in international GPs, graduates often start in one department, but rotate department and job tasks several times in their GPs (see section 3.0). Consequently, we believe that graduates are shifting between the second stage *Encounter* and the third stage *Adjustment* throughout their GP because they constantly need to adapt to new environments and job tasks. Hence, they are constantly going back and forth in their OS process.

Above, we have clarified when we believe that the OS process begins and ends and furthermore, we have clarified how we perceive the stages that graduates go through in their OS process within GPs. Based on these considerations, we will present our definition of OS in the following section.

2.3.3 Our Definition of Organisational Socialisation

In this thesis, we have an interactionist approach to OS. We believe the OS process is a two-way process and that the actions the organisation and the individual take to bring about OS are mutually interdependent, i.e. both parties' actions influence the socialisation process and the outcomes of it (Griffin *et al.* 2000, p. 453). Furthermore, we approach OS as a social construction because we believe our realities are constructed in social interactions and that it is in these interactions that our versions of knowledge become fabricated (Burr 2003, p. 4). In our thesis, we therefore perceive OS as a dynamic process that is created in the interaction between an organisation and its organisational members. OS is therefore a process that is constantly affected by social contexts.

Because we examine OS in the context of international GPs, we focus on Cooper-Thomas and Anderson's (2006) definition of OS which is:

"(…) the process through which a new organizational employee adapts from outsider to integrated and effective insider." (p. 492).

The reason for this is that graduates need to transform from outsiders to insiders during their GPs. However, we do not believe that an employee is able to *adapt* to an organisational insider because we perceive the word 'adapt' as a term that is used when an individual, for example, needs to adapt to the surroundings. Hence, we do not believe that an individual is able to adapt into a person, i.e. insider. Instead, we believe that OS is the process through which an employee adapts to the specific organisation, i.e. the organisational culture, and in this process, *transforms* into an integrated and effective insider. Considering the above-mentioned, we concur with Cooper-Thomas and Anderson' (2006) definition of OS because it does not focus on newcomers learning a specific role within an organisation, which earlier definitions of OS focused on (e.g. Van Maanen & Schein (1979)). Instead, we concur with the definition that emphasises the process of transforming from an organisational outsider to an integrated and effective insider. Hence, the focus on becoming a part of an organisation, department, team etc. (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006).

In addition to this, Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006) define OS as:

> "It [OS] takes place whenever an employee crosses an organizational boundary, whether this is external (i.e. between organizations) or internal (e.g. functional, hierarchical) (Van Maanen and Schein, 1979)." (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006, p. 492).

The citation indicates that Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006) believe that the OS process is a continual socialisation process throughout an individual's career, regardless of what organisation the individual is an organisational member of. In that context, it is relevant to highlight that we only consider external boundaries in the sense of transforming from outsider (external) to an insider (internal), due to the fact that we perceive OS as a continual process within in the same organisation (as mentioned in section 2.3.1). Therefore, we concur with Cooper-Thomas and Anderson's (2006) perspective of employees crossing internal boundaries within an organisation, i.e. rotation in job positions, departments etc. We argue this because graduates each time need to transform from outsiders to insiders, hence, graduates are constantly going back and forth in their OS process.

Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006) refer to organisational members as learning sources and emphasise the importance of having learning sources that help newcomers adjust by providing information, feedback, role models, social relationships and support, as well as access to broader networks and other work-relevant resources (p. 495). Such learning sources may be referred to as formal and informal socialisation practices or onboarding practices, as elaborated in section 2.2.3. Even though we perceive OS and onboarding as two different concepts, we do not distinguish between socialisation and onboarding practices that may occur in the process of transforming graduates from outsiders to insiders in an organisation. We argue this because the practices within both concepts take part in making an employee, i.e. graduate, an integrated organisational insider. Hence, we will refer to onboarding and socialisation practices as *formal and informal socialisation practices* because the practices both can take place when a graduate first joins an organisation, i.e. onboarding, and during the OS process which extends throughout the individuals' career in the concerned organisation. In our case, formal and informal socialisation practices occur throughout the GP. Furthermore, Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006) highlight that previous research shows that co-workers are the most important resources during the OS process. In that context, they note that:

> "It is important that organizations provide newcomers with opportunities to work and socialize with colleagues in order to gain the benefits of friendship and resource networks (Jones, 1986)" (p. 507).

In the citation, Cooper-Thomas and Anderson (2006) indicate that co-workers are an essential part of the OS process. Besides providing information and functioning as learning sources, the interaction with co-workers also creates ties in the OS process that help newcomers adjust (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006). Other learning sources may, for instance, be mentors, supervisors, buddies, line-managers, the HR function etc. In our thesis, we divide the learning sources into formal and informal learning sources. We will characterise supervisors, mentors, line-managers and the HR function as formal learning sources, as they are experienced co-workers with the purpose of developing the graduates and their skills. We will characterise co-workers as informal learning sources and a buddy as both a formal and informal learning source. We argue this because the buddy's role is assigned by the organisation, i.e. a formal learning source, and simultaneously the buddy is often a co-worker who will help the new employee make sense of the new environment, i.e. an informal learning source. We acknowledge that the formal and informal learning sources will have different purposes depending on the specific organisation. However, we make this distinction because we believe that a buddy functions as a rather informal role compared to, for example, mentors and supervisors, who we believe function as formal roles.

As mentioned in section 2.2.2, Cooper-Thomas and Anderson's (2006) definition of OS, which we have altered to the process of transforming from an organisational outsider to an integrated and effective insider, is broadly formulated. Therefore, we believe it is essential to combine it with Taormina's (1997) more specified definition of OS which is:

> "(...) the process by which a person secures relevant job skills, acquires a functional level of organizational understanding, attains supportive social interactions with coworkers, and generally accepts the established ways of a particular organization." (p. 29).

We believe Taormina's (1997) definition of OS is relevant to include in our definition of OS because it emphasises the individual in the OS process by stressing the importance of a socio-psychological perspective (p. 29). By combining Cooper-Thomas & Anderson's (2006) and Taormina's (1997) definitions of OS, we obtain a definition where OS is a process of employees transforming from organisational outsiders to integrated and effective insiders, when crossing boundaries within an organisation, in which they secure relevant job skills and acquire organisational understanding via social integration (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006; Taormina 1997).

2.3.4 Knowledge and Organisational Socialisation

A part of our research question concerns how KS is used in the OS process within international GPs, which is why we believe it is essential to clarify organisational knowledge in relation to OS. OS is a learning process in which a newcomer transforms from being an organisational outsider to insider, while adjusting to the new job role and environment. However, Myers (2011) describes that the process of becoming an organisational insider:

"(...) involves acquiring organizational knowledge: becoming acquainted with others and learning about individuals associated with the work, the organization, and the local unit (Ashforth, Saks, & Lee, 1988; Gibson & Papa, 2000; Gundry & Rousseau, 1994; Klein, Bigley, & Roberts, 1995; Louis, 1980)." (p. 286).

The citation indicates that an individual obtains organisational knowledge through social relations, hence, social relations take part in making the individual an organisational insider. Myers (2011) describes that it is surprising how little research that has focused on how organisational knowledge is best provided in the OS process (p. 297). Myers (2011) mentions *organisational knowledge socialisation* (p. 295) and states that:

"Previous research has examined how organizational knowledge is distributed (Choo, 1998; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995), but research has not related these findings to the socialization of newcomers." (p. 286).

In this context, Myers (2011) emphasises the importance of team-based interaction and states that:

"As team members interact with one another, they begin to make assumptions about one another's behaviors and become more interdependent. They learn to perform in ways that support one another's competencies and possible lack thereof." (p. 292).

The citation indicates that informal socialisation provided through team-based interactions is the foundation for organisational knowledge distribution because organisational members are motivated to develop each other's competencies for the entire group's success (pp. 297-298).

These considerations correlate with Cooper-Thomas and Anderson's (2006) definition of OS describing the importance of organisations providing newcomers with opportunities to work and socialise with colleagues (p. 507) and Taormina's (1997) definition describing that newcomers need to attain supportive social interactions with co-workers (p. 29). Therefore, we believe it is essential to consider the aspect of interactions with other organisational members in the OS process. We argue this because these interactions can lead to certain behaviours of being willing to share knowledge. However, it is relevant to highlight that we as researchers believe that both formal and informal socialisation practices and learning sources help transform employees to integrated and effective insiders. In section 2.6, we will present our theoretical framework where we will combine the concepts of OS and KS.

2.4 Literature Review: Knowledge Sharing

The purpose of this section is to outline central perspectives and concepts within the research field of KS. First, an introduction to the research field of organisational knowledge and knowledge management (henceforth KM) will be presented. Second, a presentation of the three generations of KM will be presented in order to elaborate on the different definitions of knowledge and provide an overview of the differentiation between tacit and explicit knowledge. Third, the definitions of KS will be presented followed by an elaboration of KS in an organisational context. Last, factors that influence KS will be emphasised.

2.4.1 Introduction to the Research Field of Organisational Knowledge

Aristotle once said that "(…) all men by nature desire to know (…)" (Aristotle 2006, p. 3) and this statement has shown to be true. The age-old subject, which not only occupied Plato and Aristotle and philosophers that followed, has ever since occupied mankind and researchers especially (Davenport & Prusak 1998). In the past decades, the conceptualisation of knowledge has changed tremendously. Tsoukas (2011) describes the drastic change as:

> "(…) knowledge was primarily self-knowledge and the search for the virtuous life; it did not so much imply the exercise of the individual cognitive faculty as the ability to participate effectively in a larger collective; it was context-dependent and infused with values. By contrast, with the mechanization and secularization of the world in the modern age, knowledge acquired a strongly utilitarian meaning. It gradually became identified with abstraction, general principles, and the ability to obtain results; it no longer incorporated ultimate values but acquired descriptive neutrality." (p. 454).

The citation above illustrates how the construct of knowledge drastically changed from one end of a continuum to another. Drucker (1993) emphasised that the changed meaning of knowledge was, among other factors, a result of the publication of *Encyclopédie* in France in 1751. Drucker (1993) believed that the *Encyclopédie* converted practices of doing into applied knowledge. The modern age's decontextualization of knowledge acquired that theoretical, or as Tsoukas (2011) puts it, codified knowledge took a central place in the society. Bell (1999) defines the change of knowledge meaning as:

> "Knowledge has of course been necessary in the functioning of any society. What is distinctive about the post-industrial society is the change in the character of knowledge itself. What has become decisive for the organization of decisions and the direction of change is the centrality of theoretical

knowledge —the primacy of theory over empiricism and the codification of knowledge into abstract systems of symbols that, as in any axiomatic system, can be used to illustrate many different and varied areas of experience." (p. 20).

Bell's definition of the change in knowledge meaning emphasises that knowledge became a decisive factor in organisational contexts and the codification of knowledge arose. The new conceptualisation of knowledge was also a result of "(…) a renewed emphasis among strategists and economists on ideas associated with a competency-based or resource-based theory of the firm." (p. ix), as Davenport and Prusak (1998) puts it. They also describe it as:

"(…) one reason that thinking clearly about knowledge has become so important so quickly. The perception and the reality of a new global competitiveness is one driving force." (Davenport & Prusak 1998, pp. ix-x).

As Davenport and Prusak (1998) stress, the conceptualisation of knowledge had become a competitive advantage and stakeholders devoted much attention to the concept. The new conceptualisation of knowledge has led to what we today know as organisational knowledge which increasingly has become more popular within the literature (Alvesson & Kärreman 2001). Knowledge has always been a crucial factor for organisations, but concurrently with the increasingly popularity, knowledge has been recognised as the most primary source of competitive advantage. Hence, knowledge has become the utmost important resource of an organisation (Stewart 1997; Nahapiet & Ghoshal 1998; Spender & Grant 1996; Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995). It is the recognition of knowledge's important role for organisations that has led to the demand for knowledge management (KM). Ipe (2003) describes the demand for KM as:

"More and more organizations are attempting to set up knowledge management systems and practices to more effectively use the knowledge they have, and numerous publications have discussed the importance of knowledge in organizations." (p. 337).

Ipe's (2003) statement emphasises that the demand for KM systems increased. Therefore, Davenport and Prusak (1998) have provided a classification of the different knowledge processes within KM which illustrates the complexity of knowledge in the contexts and understandings of businesses. The classification covers four processes: knowledge generation, knowledge codification, knowledge transfer, i.e. knowledge sharing (KS), and knowledge application (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). In that context, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) argue that KS enhances knowledge creation, i.e. knowledge generation, given that it is a social process that surrounds sharing (tacit) knowledge. On that notion, Kim (2007) states:

> "(...) the purpose of knowledge sharing is knowledge generation that helps sustain organizations in a competitive market. Therefore, it is obvious that all four processes in knowledge management are highly related and knowledge sharing is the core part. Knowledge sharing is the process where individuals mutually exchange their (implicit and explicit) knowledge and jointly create new knowledge." (p. 3).

Hence, KS is an essential process in KM. According to Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) and Ipe (2003), it is a corporate asset to manage organisational knowledge and a key organisational capability to harness KS. However, in contrast to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), Alvesson and Kärreman (2001) argue that knowledge is something that is not easily managed and describe that the concept of KM has an oxymoronic character (p. 996). On this notion, we find it necessary to provide an overview of various definitions of knowledge within the literature of KM, which will be presented in the following section.

2.4.2 Definitions of Knowledge

Today, a distinguished definition of knowledge in organisations is yet to be clearly defined and agreed upon. However, several scholars within knowledge research have provided the literature with different perspectives to the definition of knowledge.

Kastberg (2014) notes that the field of KM has "(...) matured remarkably fast as a discipline." (p. 89). Drawing on the trends of KM provided by Guretzky (2010), Kastberg (2014) presents and argues for three generations within KM; 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 (p. 89). The first generation, KM 1.0, concerns "making implicit knowledge explicit", KM 2.0 "emphasise communication as essential in knowledge work in organisations" and KM 3.0 is a still emerging research field that "empower the employee to adapt to complex situations" (p. 89). Thus, the employee becomes a more critical actor in the creation of knowledge (Kastberg 2018). Kastberg (2014) describes the evolution in the tendencies as follows:

> "In terms of evolutionary development the legacy of the early cognitivist idea, i.e. that knowledge is an entity which we can make explicit, easily isolate, somehow package and then send to whomever is in

need of that particular parcel of knowledge, seems to be vanishing. And, at least ideologically, KM seems today to adhere to some form of constructivism (...)." (p. 89).

The description provided by Kastberg (2014) illustrates that the evolution in KM tendencies seems to demonstrate an understanding of knowledge's social nature, which we as social constructionists appreciate.

Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) work within knowledge creation is considered the seminal work within the first generation of KM. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) describe knowledge as "(...) a dynamic human process of justifying personal belief toward truth." (p. 58). As mentioned earlier, Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) believe that knowledge is a crucial organisational resource which needs to be managed. Davenport and Prusak (1998) add to Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) definition by defining organisational knowledge as:

"(...) a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms." (Davenport and Prusak 1998, p. 5).

The definition expresses that knowledge is not a simple nor an easily handled phenomenon. It is important to notice that knowledge is applied in the minds of knowers, hence, knowledge is personal and individual. Davenport and Prusak (1998) emphasise that it is the communication within knowledge work that is essential in order to manage knowledge. With this notion, Davenport and Prusak (1998) move their definition from the first generation to the second generation of KM. However, Tsoukas and Vladimirou (2005) argue:

"While this definition correctly highlights the dynamic character of knowledge (i.e. knowledge is both an outcome - 'a framework' - and a process for 'incorporating new experiences and information'), it is not clear in what sense knowledge is different from information, nor how it is possible for values and contextual information to originate and apply in the minds of individuals alone. (...) Also, while it is acknowledged that knowledge becomes embedded in organizations, it is not mentioned in what form, nor how individuals draw on it." (p. 118).

We share Tsoukas and Vladimirou's (2005) criticism of Davenport and Prusak's (1998) definition because it does not recognise the social nature of knowledge and the importance of social interactions in the creation of knowledge (Alvesson and Kärreman 2001). Furthermore, it is essential to clarify the distinction between knowledge and information because Nonaka (1994) recognises that scholars often use the terms 'information' and 'knowledge' interchangeably. Nonaka believes that there is a clear distinction between the terms and describes information as "(…) a flow of messages, while knowledge is created and organized by the very flow of information, anchored on the commitment and beliefs of its holder." (p. 15). Hence, knowledge is created, when a flow of messages interacts with an individual's justified belief of the truth. Focusing on the third generation of KM, Alvesson and Kärreman (2001) challenge the former conceptualisations, provided by Nonaka & Takeuchi (1995) and Davenport & Prusak (1998), of knowledge being a phenomenon that can be managed and distributed. Furthermore, Alvesson and Kärreman (2001) describe the concepts of knowledge and management as contradictory and puts it:

"It is argued that knowledge is an ambiguous, unspecific and dynamic phenomenon, intrinsically related to meaning, understanding and process, and therefore difficult to manage." (p. 995).

Alvesson and Kärreman (2001) criticise prior scholars' functional orientation towards knowledge and emphasise the socially constructed character of the concept by noting:

"A common take on knowledge seems to be to accept or side-step the inherent problems of defining the concept, but go on and use it anyway. Authors emphasize the social nature of knowledge creation but they regularly stop short of acknowledging the socially constructed nature of knowledge itself. Instead a highly functionalistic understanding of knowledge prevails. The logic seems to be as follows: 'we don't know what knowledge is but it seems to solve problems in a functional way, so let's use it anyway'." (p. 999).

More recent scholars as Alvesson & Kärreman (2001) and Schultze & Stabell (2004) recognise the constructionist and constructivist orientation to knowledge and management. Schultze and Stabell (2004) note the connection between a constructivist perspective and the understanding of knowledge, i.e. tacit knowledge, and state:

"The constructivists' dialectic perspective on tacit knowledge is much more in line with Polanyi's (1966) original work, which was on tacit *knowing*, i.e., the notion that 'we can know more than we can tell' (p. 4)" (p. 563).

Based on Schultze and Stabell's (2004) notion, we find it relevant to clarify the distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge. Therefore, we will provide an overview of the definitions provided within the literature of tacit and explicit knowledge.

2.4.2.1 Definitions of Tacit and Explicit Knowledge

Michael Polanyi (1966) was the first to describe and divide knowledge into two categories. He classified personal knowledge into two categories: explicit (or codified) knowledge and tacit knowledge. Knowledge that is transferable, easy to codify and able to be stored is referred to as explicit knowledge (Polanyi 1966). On the one hand, Ipe (2003) describes that explicit knowledge:

"(...) is easier to disseminate and communicate (Schulz, 2001). Explicit knowledge therefore has a natural advantage over tacit knowledge in terms of its ability to be shared relatively easily among individuals." (p. 344).

On the other hand, Ipe (2003) describes that tacit knowledge is "(...) acquired through personal experiences (...)" (p. 344). Hence, tacit knowledge is personal and hard to communicate and transfer. Furthermore, tacit knowledge is dependent on actions and specific contexts. Nonaka (1994) states:

"While Polanyi [1966] articulates the contents of tacit knowledge in a philosophical context, it is also possible to expand his idea in a more practical direction." (p. 16).

Given that explicit knowledge is referred to as knowledge which one can document or describe in a manual, it is easily codified or transferred. Hence, explicit knowledge is (more) easy to manage in organisational contexts. Due to the complexity and intangibility of tacit knowledge, much attention has been given to this phenomenon in organisational contexts (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995). Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) work emphasises that tacit knowledge can and, according to them, must be managed in order to obtain a competitive advantage for organisations. They believe that it is possible to convert and codify tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge that can be shared in organisational contexts. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) have provided a model illustrating how to convert tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, and vice versa, by means of four different processes. The model is known as the SECI-model and includes the processes; Socialisation, Externalisation, Combination and Internalisation (see p. 62). However, there are some disagreements in the literature of whether or not it is possible to convert tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge at all. Furthermore, there are disagreements about the classification of knowledge being either tacit or explicit (Tsoukas 2011; Tsoukas & Vladimirou 2005; Polanyi 1962; Alvesson & Kärreman 2011). Nonaka and Von Krogh (2009) have later altered the conversion of tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge, and vice versa, by saying that "Tacit knowledge can be accessible through consciousness if it leans towards the explicit side of the continuum." (p. 636). This means that they believe knowledge should be understood as a continuum with two end points where knowledge can be either tacit or explicit depending on which side it is leaning towards. However, Polanyi (1966) noted that knowledge always has a tacit dimension. On behalf of Polanyi's (1966) notion, Tsoukas (2011) argues:

"(...) that tacit and explicit knowledge are not the two ends of a continuum but two sides of the same coin: even the most explicit kind of knowledge is underlain by tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge consists of a set of particulars of which we are subsidiarily aware as we focus on something else." (p. 472).

Tsoukas' argumentation is in agreement with Polanyi's (1962) notion that "There are things that we know but cannot tell." (p. 601). Tacit knowledge can therefore be understood as knowledge that we are not conscious about and that it is knowledge which we do not perceive as important.

When defining tacit knowledge, Schultze and Stabell (2004) provide a framework of four different discourses in KM which is relevant to consider. They state:

"Our objective (...) is to explore the contradictory, double-edged nature of knowledge by developing a theory-informed framework that highlights different assumptions about knowledge and its management." (p. 550).

The four discourses cover; "(...) the neo-functionalist, the constructivist, the critical and the dialogic." (p. 551). According to Schultze and Stabell (2004), it is essential to present and understand all four discourses within KM in order to manage knowledge in practice. Schultze and Stabell (2004) describe the four discourses' view of tacit knowledge in the following way:

”In the neo-functionalist discourse it [tacit knowledge] is viewed as a unique asset that promises a firm competitive advantage whereas in the constructivist discourse it provides the necessary formative context that supports coordination and the use of the communication of explicit knowledge. In the critical discourse, tacit knowledge is regarded as a source of power and a coveted prize that adversarial parties – such as management and workers – seek to own, while in the dialogic discourse tacit knowledge is the most insidious forms of disciplinary power that is inevitably part of knowledge.” (p. 561).

Schultze and Stabell’s (2004) framework illustrates that tacit knowledge is perceived differently depending on the respective discourse. It is therefore important to understand each discourse in order to be able to manage a concept of such complexity. Therefore, we will provide an overview of different definitions of KS within the literature below.

2.4.3 Definitions of Knowledge Sharing

Before providing definitions of the concept of KS, we will note the utilisation of different terms by scholars within the research field of KS. When working with KS, terms as; information sharing, knowledge transfer and knowledge exchange, are often mentioned interchangeably. According to Wang and Noe (2010), information sharing refers “(…) to sharing with others that occurs in experimental studies in which participants are given lists of information, manuals, or programs.” (p. 117). Knowledge transfer differs from KS in the way that “‘Knowledge transfer’ typically has been used to describe the movement of knowledge between different units, divisions, or organizations rather than individuals (…)” (Ibid.). However, “(…) ’knowledge exchange’ has been used interchangeably with ‘knowledge sharing’ (e.g., Cabrera, Collins, & Salgado, 2006), knowledge exchange includes both knowledge sharing (or employees providing knowledge to others) and knowledge seeking (or employees searching for knowledge from others).” (Ibid.).

Wang and Noe (2010) define KS as:

“Knowledge sharing refers to the provision of task information and know-how to help others and to collaborate with others to solve problems, develop new ideas, or implement policies or procedures (…). Knowledge sharing can occur via written correspondence or face-to-face communications through networking with other experts, or documenting, organizing and capturing knowledge for others (…).” (p. 117).

The definition provided by Wang and Noe (2010) illustrates a somewhat functionalistic understanding of KS as they believe knowledge easily can be codified and transferred, which correlates to Nonaka and Takeuchi 's (1995) functionalistic approach to knowledge. According to Christensen (2007):

"The goal of knowledge sharing can either be to create new knowledge by differently combining existing knowledge or to become better at exploiting existing knowledge." (p. 37).

This definition also illustrates the notion of knowledge as being something that is easy to exploit, which he elaborates further by defining KS as:

"(...) the process intended at exploiting existing knowledge, and knowledge sharing is, hence, defined as being about identifying existing and accessible knowledge, in order to transfer and apply this knowledge to solve specific tasks better, faster and cheaper than they would otherwise have been solved." (p. Ibid.).

However, Christensen's (2007) definition does not consider the complexity and social aspect of KS, which organisations must take into consideration if they wish to understand the process of KS. On that note, we will provide an overview of how KS is understood in an organisational context.

2.4.4 Knowledge Sharing in Organisations

In this thesis, we examine the use of KS within the specific organisational context of international GPs. Therefore, we find it essential to emphasise how individual knowledge and organisational knowledge are interrelated. Tsoukas and Vladimiriou (2005) describe the interrelation between individual knowledge and organisational knowledge as follows:

"(...) knowledge is the individual capability to draw distinctions, within a domain of action, based on an appreciation of context or theory, or both. Organizations are three things at once: concrete settings within which individual action takes place; sets of abstract rules in the form of propositional statements; and historical communities. Organizational knowledge is the capability members of an organization have developed to draw distinctions in the process of carrying out their work, in particular concrete contexts, by enacting sets of generalizations (propositional statements) whose application depends on historically evolved collective understandings and experiences." (p. 128).

Due to the interrelation between individual (or personal) knowledge and organisational knowledge, an understanding of KS is crucial in the managing of knowledge. Alvesson and Kärreman (2001) note that:

> "(...) what knowledge management managers see as the biggest dilemma with knowledge management – the sharing of knowledge – is what consultants appreciate the most." (p. 1010).

Alvesson and Kärreman (2001) hereby express how important KS is in an organisational context. Christensen (2010) describes two forms of organisational KS: intra-organisational knowledge sharing and inter-organisational knowledge sharing. Intra-organisational KS concerns knowledge shared within or across departments, teams, groups or social relations, while inter-organisational KS concerns knowledge shared within collaborations between the organisation and strategic alliances or partnerships (Christensen 2010, pp. 16-17). Due to our focus on international GPs, this thesis focuses on intra-organisational KS. When focusing on intra-organisational KS, Christensen (2007) emphasises the need for KS to be:

> "(...) viewed as an ongoing process intended to bridge situations of interdependencies, rather than a process bridging performance variations between two organizational subunits. Knowledge sharing could be perceived as a process bridging situations of interdependencies, and involving different forms of knowledge." (p. 42).

Christensen (2007) hereby indicates that KS is not just about exploiting knowledge, but that KS can be done in many ways and with different purposes. Furthermore, Christensen (2007) notes that there are difficulties with KS which can be related to organisational theory and states:

> "(...) the knowledge sharing process is nevertheless troublesome. One of the reasons is that knowledge as a resource is embedded in the individual – therefore directing or controlling the behaviour of knowledge is very much a challenge related to directing and controlling the behaviour of the possessor of knowledge. Hence, the problems addressed in both organization theory, and the theory of knowledge sharing focuses to some extent on the same level of analysis, and there is reason to believe that organization theory can enlighten the theory of sharing knowledge." (p. 39).

In this way, Christensen (2007) emphasises that other theoretical disciplines, such as organisational theory, are relevant to relate to KS in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) agree with Christensen's (2007) notion. Therefore, they have included socio-psychological aspects as well as people management practices into their work of KS in order to understand what fosters KS.

2.4.5 Factors that Influence Knowledge Sharing

Both Cabrera & Cabrera (2002) and Christensen (2007) mention social dilemmas as crucial factors within KS. Social dilemmas include, for instance, the absence of a willingness to share knowledge with others (Cabrera & Cabrera 2002), which can be hard to manage. Absence of a willingness to share knowledge is among the reasons why Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) identified a need for fostering KS. Therefore, they include aspects of key people management practices that they believe will foster KS. Furthermore, they include socio-psychological factors to understand how individuals' willingness to share knowledge may be influenced (Ibid.). Ipe (2003) also argues that several factors influence KS and describes some of the processes related to KS as "complex dynamics" (p. 343). Ipe (2003) emphasises that the major factors influencing KS between and across individuals in organisations are "(...) the nature of knowledge, motivation to share, opportunities to share, and the culture of the work environment." (Ipe 2003, p. 343). Both Alvesson & Kärreman (2001), Christensen (2007), Cabrera & Cabrera (2005) and Ipe (2003) argue that KS is influenced by several factors. KS can therefore be understood as a complex phenomenon with the need for management practices. Based on the above-mentioned aspects of KS, we will present our definition of and approach to knowledge sharing below.

2.5 Our Definition of and Approach to Knowledge Sharing

In the following section, we will present our conceptualisation of KS including a definition of knowledge along with our perception of the KS process. Furthermore, we will discuss different theoretical perspectives in order to define KS.

2.5.1 Our Definition of Knowledge Sharing

As mentioned in section 2.4.2, there are three generations within the field of KM. The first generation concerns the transfer of knowledge because it is understood as an organisational asset. The second generation focuses on the communicative aspect of knowledge. The third aspect adds to the prior generations by the idea of "self-governance in the knowledge work" (Kastberg 2014, p. 89). Hence, the third generation increases the focus "on the knowledge worker as a critical actor" (Kastberg 2018, p. 4), meaning that 3rd generation scholars within KM understand "knowledge sharing as a matter of establishing fora in which employees (and other relevant stakeholders) can co-create knowledge." (Ibid.). This understanding of knowledge (sharing) may be understood as a constructionist understanding due to the social nature of knowledge creation and sharing. Therefore, we as social constructionists adhere to the 3rd generation of KM as we find the co-creation and sharing of knowledge between and across employees interesting and relevant for the context of GPs.

Based on Tsoukas (2011), we acknowledge that tacit and explicit knowledge are two sides of the same coin. We believe a clarification of the two terms is necessary to understand. Explicit knowledge concerns knowledge that is easily stored and accessed, whereas tacit knowledge is the knowledge that we do not know we know or perceive as important, however, it often has great value to others. We argue that knowledge has a social nature that is controlled unconsciously, and it is therefore important to understand how social contexts may influence the process of sharing knowledge. In this context, Alvesson and Kärreman (2001) criticise prior definitions of KM for not acknowledging the socially constructed nature of knowledge itself and state:

> "A common take on knowledge seems to be to accept or side-step the inherent problems of defining the concept, but go on and use it anyway. Authors emphasize the social nature of knowledge creation but they regularly stop short of acknowledging the socially constructed nature of knowledge itself. Instead a highly functionalistic understanding of knowledge prevails. The logic seems to be as follows: 'we don't know what knowledge is but it seems to solve problems in a functional way, so let's use it anyway'." (p. 999).

In order to emphasise the social nature of knowledge, i.e. KS, we concur with the definition of knowledge provided by Alvesson and Kärreman (2001), which is that:

> "(...) knowledge is an ambiguous, unspecific and dynamic phenomenon, intrinsically related to meaning, understanding and process, and therefore difficult to manage." (p. 995).

This definition allows us to bring other relevant theoretical dimensions into account when examining the processes of KS, which we will elaborate further in the following section.

2.5.2 Our Approach to Knowledge Sharing

As briefly mentioned in section 2.4.4, this thesis emphasises the context of international GPs. Therefore, our thesis concerns KS in an intra-organisational context. Hence, we focus on intra-organisational KS, which is described as knowledge being shared within or across departments, teams, groups or social relations by Christensen (2010). For this reason, we find it essential to investigate internal organisational factors that influence the KS process. Our approach will include an organisational as well as individual orientation, i.e. an interactionist approach, in this thesis. Furthermore, we want to highlight that the term 'knowledge sharing' will be used interchangeably with 'intra-organisational KS' throughout this thesis.

In the section above, we discovered that there are multiple factors that influence KS. In relation to this, Ipe (2003) states:

> "Although there is much written about *why* managing knowledge is important to organizations, there is considerably less on the *how*—the processes that are used to identify, capture, share, and use knowledge within organizations." (p. 339).

Therefore, she proposed a conceptual framework of factors influencing KS between individuals in organisations, as mentioned in the literature above (section 2.4.5). Ipe (2003) stresses that the factors:

> "(...) are significant by themselves but do not exert their influence on knowledge sharing in isolation. The nature of knowledge, the motivation to share, the opportunities to share, and the culture of the work environment are all interconnected, with each factor influencing the other in a nonlinear fashion." (p. 351).

The factors presented in Ipe's (2003) framework include aspects of theories within "management theory, strategic management, information and decision sciences, organizational communication, and organizational behavior." (p. 338). We believe these aspects are relevant to consider in order to understand the complexity and comprehensiveness of KS. However, Ipe's (2003) framework and the processes within it include a somewhat functionalistic view of KS which is illustrated in the following notion:

> "An organization's ability to effectively leverage its knowledge is highly dependent on its people, who actually create, share, and use the knowledge. Leveraging knowledge is only possible when people can share the knowledge they have and build on the knowledge of others. Knowledge sharing is basically the act of making knowledge available to others within the organization. Knowledge sharing between

individuals is the process by which knowledge held by an individual is converted into a form that can be understood, absorbed, and used by other individuals." (p. 341).

The citation by Ipe (2003) depicts the understanding of knowledge as being easily shared. Furthermore, the notion of Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) conversion of knowledge is emphasised in Ipe's (2003) citation. We do not concur with Ipe's (2003) definition of KS being a process that converts individual knowledge "(...) into economic and competitive value for the organization." (p. 342). Therefore, we will not include the perspectives of Ipe's (2003) framework in our approach to KS because Ipe's (2003) approach towards KS is inconsistent with our scientific position (social constructionism) and our attitude towards KS. Instead, we focus our attention on other researchers' work. Christensen (2007) emphasises the need for including organisational theory when researching the field of KS in order to understand the processes of KS. Christensen (2007) describes that:

"(...) the problems of knowledge sharing most often stem from social dilemmas, knowledge dilemmas and a combination of the two (Cabrera and Cabrera, 2002; Osterloh and Frey, 2000), causing behaviour of knowledge that is counterproductive – or irrational – to the common good of the organization." (p. 37).

Christensen (2007) hereby stresses socio-psychological perspectives as decisive in the understanding and managing of KS. Due to our social constructionist orientation, as elaborated in section 2.1, we agree with Christensen's (2007) notion of a need to include other theoretical dimensions when investigating processes of KS. However, we recognise that Christensen's (2007) focus on including organisational theory in the process of KS derives from a somewhat functionalistic understanding of KS. Christensen's (2007) arguments originate from the field of organisational economics, which we believe result in a rather static perception of KS processes. We therefore choose to focus on the authors of the seminal work of social dilemmas, Cabrera and Cabrera (2002). Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) believe that "(...) effective management of knowledge flows is necessary for increasing the knowledge stocks that will sustain organizational success." (Cabrera and Cabrera 2005, p. 1). However, Cabrera and Cabrera believe that KS is voluntary and cannot be forced. Thereby, they acknowledge that knowledge is not just something that is easily transferred, but instead they emphasise that KS can and should be encouraged by the organisation. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) devote attention to people management practices that foster KS in organisations. They argue that several factors must be taken into consideration, when trying to create a work environment that fosters KS. Based on The Reasoned

Action Theory by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) have analysed the socio-psychological nature of knowledge-sharing behaviour, i.e. individuals' motivation and willingness to share knowledge. By analysing the factors that influence knowledge-sharing behaviour, Cabrera and Cabrera were able to propose several people management practices that may foster KS. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) describe the KS process as:

> "Based on a thorough review of the literature on knowledge sharing and related behaviours, and a theoretical analysis of the socio-psychological aspects of knowledge-sharing behaviour, we identify people management practices that should be effective in facilitating and encouraging knowledge sharing." (pp. 1-2).

Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) included three additional theories from the sociological perspective in their analysis of socio-psychological factors that influence individuals' willingness to share knowledge. The theories are: Social Capital Theory, Social Dilemma Theory and Social Exchange Theory. By including these theoretical aspects into the understanding of reasoned action theory, which are proposed by Cabrera and Cabrera (2005), we are able to understand the behaviours of graduates when examining the interrelation between people management practices and KS in the context of international GPs. In our approach towards KS, we share Cabrera and Cabrera's (2005) definition of KS as being a voluntary act which organisations may encourage and facilitate by means of people management practices. In the following section, we will elaborate on the people management practices proposed by Cabrera and Cabrera (2005).

2.5.3 Fostering Knowledge Sharing Through People Management Practices and Socio-Psychological Factors

In Cabrera and Cabrera's (2005) research concerning how to foster KS, they propose several "(...) people management practices that should be effective in facilitating and encouraging knowledge sharing" (p. 2). Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) analysed the socio-psychological nature of knowledge-sharing behaviour by drawing on aspects from the psychological reasoned action theory along with aspects of *social capital theory* which "(...) refers to close interpersonal relationships that exist among individuals." (p. 3), *social dilemma theory,* which basically describes the situations where the relational behaviour of individuals leads to outcomes that can be described as suboptimal and *social exchange theory* that argues that "(...) individuals regulate their interactions with other individuals based on a self-interested analysis of costs and benefits." (p. 4). The included aspects are within the sociological research field which provide us with an understanding of the complexity of KS and its social dynamics. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) describe the 'classic' reasoned action theory as:

"(…) the intention to engage in a specific behaviour is determined by attitudes towards that behaviour as well as by perceptions of social norms. Attitudes are determined by beliefs regarding the outcomes of the behaviour and an evaluation of these outcomes. Subjective norms refer to beliefs as to the existence of social expectations regarding behaviour." (p. 2).

When applying this definition of behaviour in relation to KS, Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) note that "(…) this theory predicts a link between attitudes and subjective norms about knowledge sharing, intentions to share knowledge and actual sharing of knowledge." (Ibid.). Furthermore, they discovered that "(…) in order to influence intentions to share knowledge, one must first identify the factors that affect people's attitudes towards sharing and their perception of norms for sharing." (Ibid.) Therefore, Cabrera and Cabrera chose to include the above-mentioned sociological theories to identify factors that influence attitudes towards KS. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) sum up the different factors that may encourage and facilitate KS, which are:

"(…) social ties or patterns and frequency of interactions with other employees, a shared language, trust, norms for sharing, group identification, perceived cost, perceived rewards, self-efficacy and expectations of reciprocity." (p. 5).

Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) have thus identified the above-mentioned socio-psychological factors as relevant when considering individual's willingness to share knowledge. Based on these factors, Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) propose key people management factors which they believe "(…) will foster knowledge sharing among organizational employees." (p. 5). In the following section, we will present and describe the people management practices in the context of international GPs.

2.5.3.1 People Management Practices for Knowledge Sharing

Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) believe that management practices that will foster KS go beyond traditional HRM practices and include phenomena, e.g. culture and motivation. Therefore, Cabrera and Cabrera believe a more encompassing term is suited for the management practices which is the reason why they describe them as *people management practices*. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) present people management practices within different areas which are: work design, staffing, training and development, performance appraisal, compensation and rewards, culture and information technology. In the following section, the specific practices within each area will be presented and elaborated.

The first practice Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) describe concerns **work design**. Cabrera and Cabrera argue that work designs are an important factor when it comes to fostering knowledge "flows" (p. 5), given that it is through work designs that an organisation is able to leverage existing as well as new social networks within the organisation. By designing work as projects that involve employees working together with other employees or around teams, KS will be encouraged due to employees' opportunity to work closely together. KS is especially fostered when rewards are based on team-results because it makes everyone in the team accountable for the result. Hence, every member seeks information as well as shares knowledge across the team. Especially in knowledge-intensive firms, a design of cross-functional teams can be "(…) useful for encouraging the creation of ties with employees from different groups." (p. 6) and simultaneously, develop close relationships that will enhance the willingness to share. Furthermore, an integration of highly interdependent tasks (p. 6) may also enhance KS among employees given that personal reciprocal interdependence of, e.g. work tasks, increases the incentive of working together to achieve a common goal. Another way organisations may design work and increase the flows of knowledge is by implementing communities of practice which Cabrera and Cabrera describe as:

> "(…) self- forming groups that cut across business units, geographical dispersion and functional boundaries to connect individuals sharing common disciplinary interests or tasks." (p. 6).

The flows of knowledge are created via, for instance, discussion-groups that exchange ideas and information. We find the practice of work design highly essential when focusing on KS in the context of international GPs. We believe there are many ways to design work processes and when taking the behavioural aspect of KS into account, we believe it is important for organisations to design the work processes, so they are consistent with the purpose of the GP.

The second practice mentioned by Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) is **staffing,** which concerns practices of recruitment and selection of employees. The practice of staffing is, of course, important to consider when examining an organisation that wishes to hire new employees. However, in the context of international GPs, we focus on graduates that are already hired and have started their graduate period in a specific organisation. Therefore, we will not include the practice of staffing within our analysis.

The third practice Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) include is **training and development**. Cabrera and Cabrera argue that training and development are crucial factors because they can be used to enhance employees' self-efficacy. To ensure that employees feel assured of their abilities, they emphasise the use of extensive training. To enhance the dimensions of structural, cognitive and relational social capital, they furthermore mention team-based training as an effective practice that will help stimulate knowledge-sharing behaviours. Last, Cabrera and Cabrera highlight formal orientation and socialisation programmes as crucial for the employees to acquire the shared norms and understand organisational values.

Given that a GP is a talent programme designed to shape and create graduates who are invested in the organisation (see section 3.0), we believe that the development and training of graduates are important factors for organisations to consider. Furthermore, we believe that it is via, e.g. KS, that an organisational member develops and learns new things. Therefore, the practice of training and development is relevant for our analysis.

The fourth practice concerns **performance appraisal and compensation**. Given the impact of the estimated benefits that KS may entail, Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) argue that:

> "(...) performance appraisal and compensation systems must be designed to encourage knowledge-sharing behaviours. Rewarding and recognizing these behaviours sends a strong signal to the employees that the organization values knowledge sharing." (p. 8).

Cabrera and Cabrera furthermore emphasise the rewarding of knowledge sharing. However, the rewarding of KS should be done with great care because it easily can fail if done wrong. Cabrera and Cabrera elaborate on this by stating:

> "Financial rewards may be perceived as controlling and, in some cases, have been shown to diminish creativity. It is well known that offering extrinsic rewards for a certain behaviour tends to decrease the perceived intrinsic value of the behaviour (Deci, 1975)." (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005, p. 9).

Therefore, Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) suggest the use of intrinsic rewards as recognition and feedback. However, evaluations must have a developmental focus to ensure a safe and non-judgemental environment. They stress that developmental evaluations foster creative ideas and willingness to share

ideas. Furthermore, an organisation also risks encouraging competition between employees by rewarding KS. Therefore, Cabrera and Cabrera argue that even though knowledge-sharing behaviours should be rewarded, they should be based on group or firm performance and not on individual performance.
Practices regarding performance appraisal and compensation are important to consider in the context of rewarding graduates as individuals or as teams. Developmental evaluations and team-based rewards may have a positive outcome on graduates' willingness to share knowledge. Therefore, we believe it is essential to include these considerations in our analysis.

The fifth practice included by Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) concern **culture**. According to Cabrera and Cabrera, organisational culture may influence KS in two ways. The first way is via knowledge-sharing norms which concern creating an environment where the norms of sharing knowledge with others is of high importance. This can be done by social processes, i.e. socialisation processes or rituals. Cabrera and Cabrera argue that organisations that incorporate knowledge-sharing behaviours into the socialisation process or in specific rituals are able to demonstrate the importance of KS toward their employees, thus, fostering shared norms of KS. The second way is via creating a caring environment with great focus on trust. A caring culture may encourage the sharing of knowledge among employees because the employees feel a high level of trust and low competition. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) note the question: "How can an organization ensure that it has an open and trusting culture?" (p. 10). They answer this question with four other practices, which are believed to create an open and trusting culture. The practices involve: "(...) open communication, egalitarianism, fairness in decision-making processes and perceived support from the organization" (p. 10). Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) state that: "High band-width communication, that is two-way, face-to-face discussion, provides a rich medium for information exchange." (p. 10). Such communication is believed to not only enhance the encounters where information flows, i.e. knowledge, can be shared, but also strengthen the familiarity between employees. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) note:

> "Any socialization effort that brings employees together in an informal setting, such as playing together on athletic teams, eating lunch with colleagues or providing a lounge where employees can take coffee breaks, will provide opportunities for increasing social capital through high band-width communication." (p. 10).

This means that ties between employees will be enhanced by high band-width communication. Cabrera and Cabrera furthermore stress that knowledge is more likely to be shared in an environment that embraces egalitarianism and where status barriers are eliminated. Furthermore, fairness in decision making is an important factor for employees and their willingness to share knowledge. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) state:

> "Fairness of rewards is included among the supportive HR practices because it signals that the organization cares about the well-being of its employees and is willing to invest in them." (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005, p. 11).

The argument illustrates that a fair relationship between employer and employee is important, which is consistent with the practice of egalitarianism. Last, perceived support is also a decisive factor in creating a caring culture. The perceived support includes support from the organisation, peers, mentors and supervisors. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) note:

> "Feelings of support contribute to the creation of an organizational culture characterized by trust, respect and caring, all of which contribute to building relational social capital." (p. 12).

Individuals working in an environment where the organisation supports and recognises the employee, are likely more willing to share their knowledge with other employees.

Practices concerning culture are, in our opinion, inevitable to include when examining KS. As social constructionists, we believe that organisational culture is a social phenomenon that is socially constructed by its organisational members. It is therefore the organisation itself that influences the perception of the organisation's culture and the organisation itself that is able to influence the perception of the organisational culture.

The sixth and last practice presented by Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) concerns **information technology**. If the perceived cost of KS is considered high, an employee may choose not to share his or her knowledge. One way to reduce the perceived cost is to utilise user-friendly technology that reduces time and simplifies the task, thus, reduces the time for KS with others. In this way, the perceived cost for the employee will be at a minimum and he or she will be more willing to share knowledge. However, Cabrera and Cabrera mention that the introduction of new technology may fail if adequate attention is not paid to the design and user-friendliness of the system. In such case, the technology will fail to be an effective tool and will increase the perceived cost of KS. Thus, reducing the willingness to share knowledge. Furthermore, Cabrera and Cabrera emphasise the importance of implementing information technologies that fit together with already existing knowledge-sharing networks that are created within the organisation. Cabrera and Cabrera stress that HR managers should play an active role in the decision making of information technologies. However, we need to emphasise that when using information technology to facilitate KS, one must be aware that it is only codified knowledge, i.e. explicit knowledge, which we are able to store (see section 2.4.2.1). Therefore, when using information technology, an important factor to consider is to utilise the technology in a way that it encourages tacit knowledge to be shared, for instance, via an online community platform.

We have now elaborated on each practice argued by Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) to foster KS. Cabrera and Cabrera believe that these practices foster KS by creating positive attitudes toward KS along with an environment conducive to sharing knowledge among the employees. Simultaneously, the practices may affect the socio-psychological factors that help encourage or facilitate KS, which were identified by Cabrera and Cabrera (2005). As mentioned above, we will not focus on the practice of staffing because we do not consider it relevant in the context of international GPs. Instead, we find the practices of work design, training and development, performance appraisal and compensation, culture and information technology relevant to consider because these practices take place during a GP.

Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) have illustrated how the different practices influence employees' knowledge-sharing behaviour as depicted in Figure 1 *Knowledge-sharing dynamics* (Figure 1, Appendix 9). The figure illustrates how the identified people management practices facilitate KS:

> "(...) by creating an environment conducive to sharing, to encourage knowledge sharing by creating positive attitudes toward sharing, as well as to contribute to perceptions of norms for sharing." (pp. 13-14).

This means that we want to examine how specific people management practices may influence different socio-psychological factors that may affect the graduates' willingness to share knowledge. By influencing graduates' willingness to share knowledge, the organisation may achieve an environment that is more conducive to KS. The figure (Appendix 9) is constructed on the theoretical pillars of reasoned action theory and therefore, focuses on the knowledge-sharing behaviours within an organisation. We believe it is essential to mention that the figure illustrates a somewhat static connection between the practices and the socio-psychological aspects where it is only the people management practices that affect all other aspects in the figure. We believe, that as well as the practices may influence the socio-psychological factors and thus the environment, the socio-psychological factors may also affect the perceived norms of KS because it is in social interactions that individual co-construct knowledge. Hence, the dynamics of KS is constantly changing and affecting one another. Therefore, we argue that the figure and the theoretical perspective provided by Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) do not reflect 'the perfect way' of managing knowledge. In fact, we believe there is no such thing because KS is a process that constantly modifies and alters in social contexts. The knowledge-sharing behaviour may therefore alter over time, even though the practices are not changed. For this reason, the figure is used as an indicator of what we are examining and furthermore, why and how the dynamics of KS *may* influence one another.

2.6 Our Theoretical Framework

In the following section, we will present how we combine the theoretical areas of OS and KS in the context of international GPs. As a result of these considerations, we will clarify our conceptualisation of this thesis' theoretical framework.

2.6.1 Combining Organisational Socialisation and Knowledge Sharing

As mentioned in section 2.3.3, we have an interactionist approach to OS because the thesis concerns the interaction between an organisation and its graduates. Therefore, we believe both parties' actions influence the graduates' OS process and thereby the outcome of KS in the GP. Our interactionist approach does not only take our understanding of the OS process (the third wave) into account, it also involves the perspective of social constructionism in the sense that we believe that individuals construct reality in the interaction with one another. We therefore perceive an organisation and its graduates as mutually interdependent of one another in the process of OS and the construction of knowledge. The interactionist approach therefore correlates to our definition of KS (see section 2.5.1), which is: "(…) knowledge is an ambiguous, unspecific and dynamic phenomenon, intrinsically related to meaning, understanding and process, and therefore difficult to manage." provided by Alvesson and Kärreman (2001). This definition has its origin in the third generation of KM where the knowledge worker is considered a critical actor who co-constructs knowledge in the interaction with others (Kastberg 2014; Kastberg 2018). In our thesis, we therefore perceive OS and KS as continual and dynamic processes that are interrelated within international GPs. In our view, these processes are created in the interaction between an organisation and its organisational members, i.e. graduates. The OS and KS processes constantly influence each other and are influenced by social contexts and relations (Burr 1995). We therefore perceive the creation of knowledge as an ongoing process between individuals. In this context, it is in the relation to others that we co-create new knowledge. Knowledge creation can thus be understood as an emergence of collective behaviour. For this reason, we focus on intra-organisational KS, i.e. knowledge being shared within or across departments, teams, social relations etc. within an organisation (Christensen 2010). The definition provided by Christensen (2010) correlates with our interpretation of Cooper-Thomas & Anderson's (2006) definition of OS, stating that OS takes place whenever an employee crosses an internal organisational boundary (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006). The sharing of knowledge when crossing internal organisational boundaries is an essential consideration due to our focus on the complexity of international GPs.

As mentioned in section 2.3.2, we believe graduates go through different stages in the OS process during a GP in order to become effective organisational members, i.e. insiders. We focus on the two stages: *Encounter* and *Adjustment*, since our research question concerns KS in the OS process within international GPs. In these two stages, the graduates have started in the organisation and as part of their GP they need to rotate between departments and job functions. Because of these rotations, the graduates are constantly going back and forth in their individual OS process. The situation of rotating between departments and job functions is rather unusual because the graduates shift between multiple job functions to learn about the organisation's entire business, instead of being socialised into one specific job role. We therefore found the specific context of OS and KS within international GPs interesting to examine as the graduates constantly need to adapt to new roles, environments in order to learn and acquire new organisational knowledge. It is during the two stages that graduates secure most of their relevant job skills, organisational understanding and organisational knowledge (Taormina, 1997; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006). In the process of transforming graduates from outsiders to organisational insiders, organisations are able to teach the graduates how KS is used in the organisation, i.e. KS norms, by use of people management practices (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). If people management practices are available, an organisation may use formal and informal socialisation practices, e.g. workshops and teamwork, to influence graduates' socio-psychological factors such as trust and group identification. These factors may contribute to creating an organisational environment more conducive to KS. Therefore, we perceive the people management practices as an organisation's possibility to facilitate KS, using formal and informal socialisation practices to influence socio-psychological factors that affect willingness to share knowledge (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson, 2006; Taormina, 1997).

Cooper-Thomas & Anderson (2006) and Taormina (1997) stress the importance of organisations providing newcomers with opportunities to socialise and attain social interactions with co-workers when adapting to a new role and environment. In that context, Myers (2011) emphasises that informal socialisation has greater influence than formal socialisation in terms of achieving organisational knowledge and becoming an integrated insider. She states:

> "As team members interact with one another, they begin to make assumptions about one another's behaviors and become more interdependent. They learn to perform in ways that support one another's competencies and possible lack thereof." (p. 292).

Based on the statements by Cooper-Thomas & Anderson (2006), Taormina (1997) and Myers (2011), we believe it is essential to consider the aspect of social relations and workgroup interactions when examining graduates' willingness to share knowledge. In this context, it is essential to highlight that we perceive workgroup interactions as occurring both between departments, teams and individuals within an organisation, i.e. across internal boundaries (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006). Furthermore, we believe that both formal and informal socialisation practices take part in transforming graduates into integrated insiders, as both formal and informal practices provide opportunities for graduates to obtain and share organisational knowledge. In addition to this, we believe that socialisation practices are not only used in relation to new employees but may be implemented throughout an employee's career in the specific organisation.

We concur with Cooper-Thomas, Taormina and Myers' notion given that we believe people construct their knowledge and understanding of social reality through social interactions. Thus, we are able to examine a rather new approach to KS and thereby contribute to the research field of OS and KS by identifying yet undiscovered remarks and implications within the theoretical fields. In order to discover how KS is used in the OS process within international GPs, we include theoretical contributions from Cabrera and Cabrera (2005). Specifically, Cabrera and Cabrera may help us understand how the HR function may encourage and facilitate intra-organisational KS and how potential factors may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge. In this way, we are able to understand how specific people management practices may influence the socio-psychological factors of a graduate's behaviour towards KS. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) present several people management practices they believe encourage and facilitate KS and describe how the specific practices influence the desired behaviour. Cabrera and Cabrera's approach to KS is depicted in figure 1 (Appendix 9) and is presented in section 2.5.3.1. We want to stress that the model is highly functionalistic in its construction as it emphasises that such people management practices only will foster positive attitudes towards KS. Furthermore, the model illustrates a one-way approach (as depicted by the arrows only pointing one way in the model) to people management practices that will result in the desire of increased knowledge-sharing behaviour. As a result, the model does not consider individuals' perceptions of social contexts and how they are influenced by socio-psychological factors which may affect the process of KS differently. We argue this because we perceive KS as a dynamic process that continually changes depending on social contexts and social relations within a GP. For this reason, we do not follow Cabrera and Cabrera's model step by step. However, we will include the considerations proposed by Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) in terms of fostering KS via people management practices and examine how KS is influenced and may be encouraged and facilitated. In order to examine and discuss potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge, we will relate the people management practices and socio-psychological factors to the process of OS. Therefore, our definition of OS provided in section 2.3.3 will constitute the analytical frame in which the above-mentioned aspects of KS will be examined.

To sum up, we base our definition of OS on Cooper-Thomas & Anderson's (2006), Taormina's (1997) and Myers' (2011) theories of the OS process. We perceive the OS process as a continual and rather complex learning process in GPs, which is why we find it necessary to understand the social nature of knowledge and KS processes between graduates. Therefore, we find people management practices and socio-psychological factors essential to consider in the process of sharing knowledge (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). By combining the theoretical area of OS with the theoretical area of KS, we are able to identify how intra-organisational KS is used in the OS process within international GPs and discover which factors may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge and understand how the HR function may encourage and facilitate KS.

2.7 Clarification of the HR Function

Because the research question of this thesis involves perspectives of the HR function, we find it relevant to clarify how we understand a HR function.

According to Bratton and Gold (2012), "HRM is a body of knowledge and an assortment of practices to do with the organization of work and the management of employment relations." (p. 13). The HRM function covers three subdomains which are referred to as: micro, strategic and international HRM. Micro HRM is considered the largest subdomain and covers aspects of managing employees both individually and in the constellation of small or larger workgroups. Job-functions within this area covers HR-planning, recruitment and selection, job design, rewards, training and development and performance management. Strategic HRM concerns measuring the effects on organisational performance and linking business strategies with HRM strategies to obtain organisational goals. International HRM concerns job-functions of managing employees in organisations that operate in more than one country. Considering the three subdomains, elaborated above, the scope and functions of HR are therefore rather comprehensive, thus, requiring that HR employees possess both technical, cognitive, communicative, legal, interpersonal and instructional competencies. The competencies required by HR are continually evolving due to global and political aspects and Jeff Schwartz, Global Human Capital Leader at Deloitte Consulting describes the change of requirements within HR as:

> "The requirements and perception of HR are changing dramatically as this function's leadership is now expected to play a central role in building and shaping – not just staffing – the enterprise strategy. The role of the Chief Human Resource Officer as an enterprise business leader is still evolving – but this transformation has never been more timely or relevant. This is an environment that HR leaders have longed for – where their executive peers would view HR as a business partner, rather than as a back-office administrator." (Bratton & Gold 2012, p. 17).

The citation by Jeff Schwartz indicates that the business area of HR is evolving to be perceived as a more critical and important element in strategic organisational considerations and organisational performance. Therefore, we perceive the HR function as a function that focuses on both the personal, strategic and broader international perspectives of HRM.

2.8 Method of Data Acquisition

In the following section, we will present our method of data acquisition. First, we will elaborate on the social research methods, qualitative and quantitative research. Second, we will present the selection of interviewees and respondents in this thesis followed by an elaboration of how we have gathered our empirical data. Last, we will clarify how we combine qualitative and quantitative research in order to be able to answer our research question.

2.8.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Research

When doing social research, we often distinguish between two research methods: qualitative and quantitative research. These research methods form two different types of research (Bryman 2012, p.

35). Considering the qualitative research method, the researcher usually emphasises words rather than quantification both in the collection and analysis of data (p. 36). In qualitative research, it is the perspectives of the participants, i.e. what they see as important and significant, that are being studied. Hence, these perspectives guide the direction of the research. Because the researcher is close to the participants, the researcher is able to (or should seek to) understand the participants' worldview, i.e. core values, beliefs, behaviours etc., in the context of which the research is conducted. Hence, the data can be seen as rich and deep because this research method is concerned with understanding the participants' social reality (Bryman 2012, p. 408). The qualitative research method has often been criticised by quantitative researchers for being too subjective because they believe the method relies too much on the researcher's views of what is important. Another point of criticism aimed at the qualitative method is that it is difficult to replicate. Quantitative researchers argue that it is difficult to generalise the findings of a qualitative study because the research is based on participants' worldviews and because the researcher is too close to the participants (Bryman 2012, pp. 405 – 406). Furthermore, the quantitative research method emphasises quantification, i.e. numbers in both the collection and analysis of data (p. 35). "In quantitative research, the investigator is in the driving seat" (p. 408), meaning that the researcher structures the investigation in a way that ultimately reflects the researchers' own interests. The researcher is distant and uninvolved in quantitative research because the research methods often involve no contact with the participants, e.g. when using questionnaires. Quantitative researchers often value the lack of relationship and contact with the participants, as the researchers are worried about their objectivity being compromised in the process. The data is therefore often being depicted as hard "(…) in the sense of being robust and unambiguous, owing to the precision offered by measurement." (Bryman 2012, p. 408). Therefore, quantitative research also often depicts a static image of social reality with its emphasis on relationships between variables, as the researchers want their findings to be generalizable to the relevant population (Bryman 2012). The quantitative research method has often been criticised by qualitative researchers as they believe that "(…) a natural science model is inappropriate for studying the social world." (Bryman 2012, p. 181). Qualitative researchers believe quantitative researchers are turning a blind eye to the differences between the social and the natural world. The quantitative method has therefore been criticised for ignoring the fact that individuals interpret the world around them and for believing there is an answer to every phenomenon. This criticism has also been used to question whether quantitative researchers try to reify the social world (Bryman 2012 pp. 178-79).

However, it is worth noticing that the two research methods are also similar in some ways (Bryman 2012). Among other things, both qualitative and quantitative researchers are trying to collect an amount of data and afterwards reduce the amount of data in order to try to make sense of it. Furthermore, both research methods are concerned with answering the research question(s) about the nature of social reality, although the questions are often asked more specific in quantitative research and more openly in qualitative research (Bryman 2012, p. 409). Therefore, when researchers formulate the research question(s) of a study, researchers within both qualitative and quantitative research seek to ensure that "(...) they select research methods and approaches to the analysis of data that are appropriate to those questions." (Bryman 2012, p. 410).

When doing social research, there are a variety of aspects to consider in the process. According to Bryman (2012), it is essential to consider the relationship between theory and research, and especially, whether "(...) theory guides research (known as a deductive approach) or whether theory is an outcome of research (known as an inductive approach)." (p. 19). By having a deductive stance, the researcher has chosen a theory and deduces a hypothesis on the basis of it. In this way, the hypothesis drives the process of gathering data in order to try to confirm or deny the hypothesis (Bryman 2012, p. 24). With an inductive stance, theory is the outcome of research, "In other words, the process of induction involves drawing generalizable inferences out of observations." (Bryman 2012, p. 26), meaning that observations or findings lead to theory. According to Bryman (2012), it is useful to think of the relationship between theory and research in terms of deductive or inductive strategies (p. 27). Depending on the researcher's desired outcome, "Theory can be depicted as something that precedes research (as in quantitative research) or as something that emerges out of it (as in qualitative research)." (Bryman 2012, p. 42).

Even though it is useful to contrast the two research methods as seen above, it is essential to highlight that social research is a complex process. Bryman (2012) stresses that even though these research methods differ in the way that each method "(...) carries with it striking differences in terms of the role of theory, epistemological issues, and ontological concerns." (p. 37), the distinction between the methods is not permanent. Therefore, Bryman (2012) highlights that "(...) studies that have the broad characteristics of one research strategy may have a characteristic of the other." (p. 37), meaning that the two methods can be used within the same study. In that context, Grix (2002) emphasises that it is important to consider that:

"(...) it is the researcher who employs a particular method in a particular way, thereby associating it with a specific set of ontological assumptions. It is not the method that approaches scholarship with pre-existing baggage, but rather the researcher." (pp. 180-181).

The citation by Grix (2002) indicates that there is not only one way to conduct social research. Hence, our epistemological and ontological assumptions guide us when conducting research.

Our conceptualisation of qualitative and quantitative research will be elaborated further in section 2.8.4. However, before we do that, we will present our empirical data in the following sections.

2.8.2 Selection of Interviewees and Survey Respondents

In the following, we will present the empirical data. First, we will provide an overview of the selected interviewees of our semi-structured interviews, which will be elaborated in detail in section 2.8.3.1. Next, we will elaborate on our interview guide in section 2.8.3.1.1 and present how we have transcribed the semi-structured interviews in section 2.8.3.1.2. Last, we will provide an overview of the respondents to our web survey including an elaboration of the survey questions in section 2.8.3.2.

As briefly mentioned in the introduction, we use semi-structured interviews with relevant HR employees and survey responses from multiple graduates in international GPs to answer our research question. In order to examine how KS is used within the process of OS in international GPs, we will identify both the graduates' and the HR employees' perceptions of KS and discover which specific KS practices the organisations use in relation to the OS process of graduates. Furthermore, we will examine how the HR function may encourage and facilitate intra-organisational KS while considering potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge. In order to do so, we will identify potential factors that influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge and discover how graduates may be encouraged to share knowledge.

At first, we wished to conduct a single-case study in order to deepen ourselves in one particular organisation where we could identify the specific approach used to KS and discover factors that influence the graduates' knowledge-sharing behaviour. However, due to the situation with Covid-19, many organisations focused their efforts towards restructuring and changing processes, leaving little time to third party collaborations such as external interviews. We were therefore not able to sign any

agreements with an organisation having an international GP. Furthermore, we experienced some sort of resistance in the organisations' willingness to let us interview their graduates who currently are in their graduate periods. The reason for this is yet unknown, but we imagine that it might be to 'protect' the graduates from answering questions. The organisations might think that the graduates will find it transgressive to know that their employer is aware of them participating in the interview. Another explanation might be that the organisations were protecting themselves from potential criticism emanating from the interviews.
Consequently, it was necessary to gather our empirical data by other means than a single-case study. For this reason, we decided to conduct semi-structured interviews with individuals from two different organisations. Both hold HR-positions where they are (co-)responsible for the GPs. To be specific, we have conducted semi-structured interviews with Gitte Dalgaard Hansen, Graduate Programme Lead & Senior Consultant at Danish Crown A/S, who has been in this position the last four years, and Alexandra Fjelstrup, Senior Manager – Head of Talent Development at Arla Foods A/S, who has been in the position for two years. Due to their positions within HR in international organisations, we perceive them as experts within the area of international GPs. By conducting semi-structured interviews, we were able to obtain relevant knowledge of the organisations' approaches to KS and OS. This thesis will therefore include aspects from more than one particular organisation and instead focus on more general tendencies identified within the interviews. The answers from the semi-structured interviews will construct the empirical data used to highlight the aspects of KS from an organisational perspective. Danish Crown and Arla Foods will represent the organisational perspective. Both companies are large international organisations in Denmark, and the two interviewees hold similar job positions.

In order to include the aspect of KS from the graduates' perspective, it was necessary to collect empirical data by other means than first intended. Therefore, we chose to construct a web survey that allowed graduates from international GPs to answer the questions anonymously. In this way, we ensured that the graduates were comfortable answering the survey. Furthermore, we ensured that they did not need to ask for permission. Below, we will clarify why we have chosen Gitte and Alexandra as our interviewees in the semi-structured interviews and provide an overview of the respondents who have answered our web survey.

The reason why we chose to conduct an interview with Gitte from Danish Crown is that she has been responsible for developing Danish Crown's GP. Gitte therefore possesses the relevant knowledge regarding Danish Crown's GP in terms of the programme's purpose and structure. The reason why we chose to conduct an interview with Alexandra Fjelstrup from Arla Foods is that she is co-responsible for Arla Foods' GP and the graduates' development within the programme. She is therefore well-informed of the GP's purpose and structure. Furthermore, Gitte and Alexandra are both responsible for the recruitment process and selection of graduates in their respective organisations. For this reason, they both have close dialogues with their graduates. By interviewing Gitte and Alexandra, we were able to obtain insights of the structure of Danish Crown's and Arla Foods' GPs, identify Danish Crown's and Arla Foods' interpretations of KS and attitudes towards the concept. Furthermore, we were able to identify specific practices Danish Crown and Arla Foods utilise in the process of OS and examine whether or not the organisations encourage KS in their daily work. In this way, we hope to gain insight into how two large, Danish organisations use KS in the OS process within their international GPs.

Our web survey was distributed via LinkedIn – a social network site mainly used by professionals to expand and manage their network (LinkedIn 2021). We chose to distribute our survey via LinkedIn because many professionals use LinkedIn for the purpose of expanding their professional network (Ibid.). By using LinkedIn, we were able to connect with different graduates from multiple international organisations ensuring answers from a wide span of different organisations with international GPs. Our survey received 21 answers from different graduates who are currently within international GPs. The graduates represent the organisations; Novo Nordisk A/S, Grundfos A/S, Tetra Pak Danmark A/S, Arla Foods A/S, Wrist Ship Supply A/S, Vestas Wind Systems A/S, Danish Crown A/S, Lidl Danmark K/S and Danfoss A/S. With this group of companies, we believe that the answers constitute a representative segment of international GPs in Denmark.

By conducting semi-structured interviews with two different HR employees from two different organisations, and by acquiring survey responses from 21 graduates representing nine international organisations, we obtain empirical data that represents both an organisational perspective and the graduates' perspective.

2.8.3 Constructing the Empirical Data

In the following sections, we will provide an overview of the empirical data of this thesis and elaborate on the construction of this data along with our considerations in regard to ethics and confidentiality.

2.8.3.1 Semi-structured Interviews

As our research question illustrates, we wish to investigate how KS is used in the OS process within international GPs and how the HR function may facilitate and encourage KS. In order to examine this, we have chosen to conduct two semi-structured interviews. By utilising the method of a semi-structured interview, we are able to ensure that the questions we ask cover specific subject areas which we need to examine. Furthermore, the method provides the opportunity to ask elaborating questions during the interview if we find it necessary to know more about a certain subject. Bryman (2012) states that "(...) in semi-structured interviews the interviewer does follow a script to a certain extent." (p. 471), meaning that we will follow an interview guide, which will be elaborated in the following section, we have the possibility to ask new and elaborating questions. Given that we have a qualitative approach, we could have chosen to conduct either an unstructured interview or the semi-structured interview. We believe that the semi-structured interview is the most favourable in our case because we need to cover specific areas in order to answer our research question. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview provides the opportunity for the interviewee to answer more freely than he or she would have been able to if we had chosen a quantitative approach with a structured interview (Bryman, 2012). In our opinion, the semi-structured interview allows for a more equal and neutral relationship between interviewer and interviewee than a structured interview does. At the same time, the semi-structured approach ensures that we cover all relevant topics.

2.8.3.1.1 Interview Guide

In order to achieve what we perceive as a successful interview, we had some guidelines to follow before, during and after conducting the interviews. We made these guidelines to make sure that the interviewees felt comfortable and safe, thus, were willing to share experiences and thoughts with us. The guidelines concern, e.g. aspects of ethics, information and confidentiality. Therefore, we chose to construct our interview guide with both a briefing and debriefing session to make sure that the interviewees were aware of the purpose with the interviews. Before presenting the interview subjects constructing our interview guide, we will elaborate on which aspects we included in our briefing and debriefing.

To provide the interviewees with an overview of the purpose with the interviews, we began the interviews by presenting ourselves and made sure that the interviewees were informed that the interviews were conducted in relation to our Master's thesis. Next, we informed about the interviews' specific purpose and how the interviewees' answers would be utilised. Furthermore, we informed about the expected time frame and presented more ethical considerations, e.g. anonymity and confidentiality. However, the interviewees responded that an anonymisation was not needed. Even though the interviewees did not want to be anonymous, we decided to keep the interviewees anonymous in the analysis to emphasise the organisational perspective rather than their personal perspectives. For that reason, we decided only to use the name of the workplace within our analysis. Therefore, we will refer to them as 'interviewee 1' from Danish Crown and 'interviewee 2' from Arla Food. We furthermore informed the interviewees that the interviews only were recorded in order to be transcribed. The recordings were therefore deleted as soon as the interviews were transcribed. Moreover, we informed the interviewees that their statements would be treated confidentially. We emphasised that the interviewees should ask elaborating questions if they were in doubt about the meaning of the questions. Furthermore, the interviewees had the right to refuse to answer questions if they found the questions irrelevant or inappropriate. Before we started the interviews, we asked the interviewees to present themselves by name, job title and job function. The interviews were ended with a debriefing where the interviewees were asked if they had anything they wished to add or considered relevant for us to know. However, no further remarks were added by the interviewees. Hereafter, we officially ended the interviews by thanking the interviewees for their participation.

In order to have a guideline for our semi-structured interviews, we conducted an interview guide. An interview guide in semi-structured interviews is not as structured as an interview schedule in a structured interview. The semi-structured interview guide is to be understood as a "(...) list of issues to be addressed or questions to be asked (...)" (Bryman 2012, p. 473), that guides the interview. Hence, the term of an interview being semi-structured. As mentioned in section, 2.8.3.1, we wished to ask questions within different subjects to obtain adequate answers that would be useful to answer our research question. Therefore, our interview guide included six interview subjects that illustrated the subject areas which we wanted to examine in the analysis. The interview subjects and related questions are illustrated in Appendix 1. Below, we will provide an elaboration of each interview subject and the interview questions that relate to it.

The first interview subject concerned *Graduate Programmes and the Organisational Socialisation Process*. The purpose of this subject was to become familiar with the concept of GPs and to understand its context in relation to the OS process. Therefore, we asked the following questions:

How will you define a Graduate Programme?

The purpose of this question was to obtain knowledge of how the interviewees define a GP in order to understand their perceptions of the concept.

What is the purpose of a Graduate Programme?

The purpose of this question was to identify what value the GP brings the organisations and indirectly, the graduates themselves. We wished to understand the reasons of having a GP and why organisations invest their time and money in such a learning and socialisation process of new employees.

According to you, how is a Graduate Programme most often constructed?

The purpose of this question was to identify how the specific GP at respectively Danish Crown and Arla Foods are constructed in terms of, e.g. job rotations, both nationally and internationally. By asking this question, we were able to understand the specific situation in the organisations.

Why do graduates have to rotate departments in Graduate Programmes?

The purpose of this question was to make the organisations elaborate on why they construct their GPs as they do and to determine what outcomes the rotations might have.

Do you believe it is important to work and live abroad as part of the Graduate Programme? Why, why not?

The purpose of this question was to identify why the organisations find it relevant that graduates go abroad as part of their GPs. We wished to identify why the organisations either offer or require a rotation abroad.

The second interview subject concerned *Knowledge Sharing in Graduate Programmes*. The purpose of this subject was to identify how the organisations define KS and how they incorporate and use it in the organisations. Therefore, we asked the following four questions:

How will you define the concept 'knowledge sharing'?

The purpose of this question was to identify how the organisations understand the concept of 'knowledge sharing'.

Do you use knowledge sharing in your daily work with Graduate Programmes - how and why?

The purpose of this question was to discover whether or not the interviewees use KS and most importantly, how and why they use it.

Have you experienced any positive outcomes in relation to knowledge sharing within Graduate Programmes? - please exemplify.

The purpose of this question was to identify how the interviewees have experienced the use of KS in the organisations by making them elaborate on and exemplify positive outcomes of KS.

> *Have you experienced any challenges in relation to knowledge sharing within Graduate Programmes? - please exemplify.*

The purpose of this question was to identify how the interviewees have experienced the use of KS in the organisations by making them elaborate and exemplify potential challenges of KS.

> *Have you experienced competition-related challenges in relation to the willingness to share knowledge between departments, employees etc.?*

The purpose of this question was to identify if the organisations have experienced challenges in the graduates' willingness to share knowledge in terms of competition among the graduates.

The third interview subject concerned *Organisational Culture.* The purpose of this subject was to examine how the cultural aspect was perceived from an organisational perspective. Therefore, we asked the following two questions:

> *Have you experienced that an organisation establishes specific knowledge-sharing norms?*

The purpose of this question was to discover if the organisations utilise any practices to encourage KS. By asking this question, we were able to identify if the organisational environment were encouraging KS.

> *Do you think that a caring organisational culture (that reflects support, trust and fairness) is important in regard to knowledge sharing within Graduate Programmes? Why, why not?*

The purpose of this question was to identify what value the organisations assign the organisational culture in relation to knowledge sharing. In this way, we were able to discuss the aspect of values in relation to factors influencing KS in the OS process.

The fourth interview subject concerned *Team-based Collaboration.* The purpose of this subject was to examine the potential importance of specific work designs in relation to KS in GPs. Therefore, we asked the following two questions:

Do you consider social networks (between departments, among employees etc.) in the organisation important for knowledge sharing in Graduate Programmes?

The purpose of this question was to identify the interviewees' opinion of social networks and their experiences.

Can you mention specific work designs (e.g. cross-functional teams, team-based projects) you believe encourage knowledge sharing?

The purpose of this question was to identify specific work designs that the interviewees have found relevant in relation to KS.

The fifth interview subject concerned *Intrinsic Rewards in Graduate Programmes*. The purpose of this subject was to know about how intrinsic rewards might be used in the organisations and what affect they might have. Therefore, we asked the following questions:

What is your opinion about psychological rewards in Graduate Programmes? (e.g. praise, acknowledgement of achievement, public acknowledgement)

The purpose of this question was to discover the interviewees' attitudes towards the use of rewards and specifically, intrinsic rewards in the context of GPs. By asking this question, we might be able to discover how and when they use rewards.

Can you mention positive outcomes or challenges in relation to using rewards in Graduate Programmes? (Both individually and group-based)

The purpose of this question was to identify the outcomes that might arise from using rewards and furthermore, how rewards might affect the collaboration between graduates.

The sixth and last interview subject concerned *Training and Development in Graduate Programmes*. The purpose of examining this subject was to identify how graduates are trained in their graduate periods. Furthermore, we wished to discover which training and developmental practices the organisations use in the GPs. Therefore, we asked the following two questions:

In order to inform graduates about organisational norms and values, do you use formal orientation or specific socialisation programmes?

The purpose of this question was to become aware of whether or not the organisations make use of specific socialisation practices within the GPs in order to inform or teach the graduates about the organisational norms and values.

Which individual and/or group-based activities do you use in relation to training and development of graduates?

The purpose of the question was to make the interviewees elaborate on and exemplify which activities they use to train and develop the graduates.

Do you believe team-based training increases graduates' willingness to share knowledge?

The purpose of the question was to discover the interviewees' attitudes towards team-based activities in relation to graduates' willingness to share knowledge.

During the interviews, we found it necessary to ask two elaborating questions which were not part of the pre-structured interview guide. We will therefore present the elaborating questions and why we found it necessary to ask these questions.

The first question we asked was in relation to the subject of intrinsic rewards in GPs. Therefore, we asked both interviewees: *And do you give feedback on an individual level or group-based level?*

We found the question interesting to ask because we wanted to know whether or not the feedback, that they provide the graduates with, was on an individual or group-based level.

The second question was only asked interviewee 1 from Danish Crown. During the interview with interviewee 1, she mentioned specific leadership principles that the graduates are taught to act on. We therefore found it important to investigate these principles further and asked: *How are you training the graduates these principles?* By asking this question, we were able to discover how Danish Crown teaches the graduates these leadership principles.

Because the interviews were recorded, we were able to make transcriptions of the interviews afterwards. The process of transcribing our semi-structured interviews will be elaborated further in the following section.

2.8.3.1.2 Transcription of Semi-Structured Interviews

The following section will include a clarification of the methods used to transcribe our semi-structured interviews.

As mentioned above, we recorded the interviews with interviewees 1 and 2 in order to ensure that we were able to transcribe the interviews. We decided to do computer-assisted transcriptions of the recordings. In this way, we obtained two rough drafts of the transcriptions. We were aware of the fact that computer-assisted transcription-software might not distinguish different voices from one another, and the possibility of incorrect transcriptions was present. Therefore, we chose to manually review the drafts and the recordings afterwards to ensure that the interviews were transcribed correctly. In the process of transcribing the interviews, we found several text passages difficult to understand because the interviewees used specific names, titles or abbreviations that are commonly used and understood in the organisations. In order to understand the text passages and transcribe them correctly, we examined the organisations' websites and identified specific terms and names used by the interviewees. In this way, we were able to transcribe the text passages correctly, which is why we inserted a bracket that illustrated what the abbreviation stands for.

Furthermore, we want to emphasise that the interviews were not conducted in the interviewees' native languages, Danish. It might have been easier for the interviewees to express themselves, if the interviews had been conducted in Danish. However, if the interviews had not been conducted in English, we would have been obliged to translate the interviews into English. Therefore, there might had been a risk of meaning getting lost in the process of translating, which is why we decided to conduct the interviews in English.

2.8.3.2 Web Survey

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, we also constructed a self-completion questionnaire designed as a web survey. We decided to make a self-completion questionnaire because we wanted the respondents to answer the survey themselves and because we wanted to avoid that the respondents became influenced by an interviewee asking the questions. However, "(...) because there is no interviewer in the administration of the self-completion questionnaire, the research instrument has to be especially easy to follow and its questions have to be particularly easy to answer." (Bryman 2012, p. 233). Therefore, we chose to design the questionnaire as a web survey. The web survey comes with different advantages, such as a wide "variety of embellishments in terms of appearance" (Bryman 2012, p. 671), which provides the opportunity to design the survey with specific formats or response styles. Furthermore, the respondents' answers are automatically stored in a database which means that we can retrieve a full dataset directly from the web survey's database, leaving only the manual post-coding of open questions to be processed. We will elaborate further on the post-coding of open questions at the end of this section. By designing the web survey online, we were able to create a layout that was easy on the eye and, there had an appearance that may be perceived as attractive to the respondents. In order to ensure a clear presentation throughout the web survey, we chose to design the survey so that a presentation of the subject areas was presented before moving on to the specific questions. In this way, we were able to inform the respondents of why we asked the questions and what their answers would contribute to. The survey presentation hopefully ensured that the respondents were comfortable in answering the survey and felt like they were prepared for answering the questions. Furthermore, we made sure to make clear instructions of how to answer the questions. By doing so, we ensured that the questions were answered correctly, thus avoiding missing important data from respondents. We need to stress that we made it possible for the respondents to choose more than one answer when multiple alternatives were presented to the respondent. In this way, we ensured that the respondents had the opportunity to answer the questions sufficiently.

Constructing a web survey involves much more than just designing the layout and providing a clear presentation and instruction. The most important factor to consider is how the questions are asked and why they are asked. A survey may include open or closed questions or a combination of the two. Open questions invite the respondents to answer freely whereas closed questions present "a set of fixed alternatives from which they have to choose an appropriate answer." (Bryman 2012, p. 246). There are different advantages and disadvantages of utilising open and closed questions. An example of the advantages of asking open questions can be that respondents are able to answer in their own words. Furthermore, asking open questions allows for answers that go beyond areas known to the researcher. An example of the disadvantages of asking open questions may be that open questions are more time-consuming than closed questions in terms of administration. Another example of the disadvantages is that the answers must be coded before they can be utilised within an analysis. Furthermore, open questions require a greater effort from respondents while closed questions are easier to quickly tick off.

An advantage of asking closed questions is that the questions are easy for the respondents to process. Another example of an advantage of closed questions is that the answers are easier to compare for the researcher. Furthermore, the provided set of fixed alternatives to choose from may make the process of answering less difficult for respondents. An example of a disadvantage of asking closed questions may be that you risk a loss of spontaneity in the respondents' answers. Furthermore, it is difficult to ensure that the set of fixed alternatives are exhaustive. When considering the different advantages and disadvantages of open and closed questions, we have chosen to use a combination of the two in our web survey. The purpose of including open questions in the survey is to ensure that the respondents are able to answer the question the way they find most accurate in terms of their individual perceptions.

Due to our social constructionist approach, we acknowledge that we are not able to predict the answers provided by the respondents and, therefore, we found it necessary to ensure that the respondents were able to express their attitudes and meanings in their own words. However, the utilisation of open questions is a rather extensive method given that all answers need to be post-coded in order to become tangible data. In this relation, Bryman (2012) states that "One of the advantages of using closed questions is that they can be pre-coded, thus turning the processing of data for computer analysis into a fairly simple task." (p. 239). Therefore, we found it necessary to include closed questions in our survey as well. In order to process the closed questions qualitatively, we chose to pre-code all the closed questions. The pre-codes are illustrated in different ways depending on what the questions concern. In questions that concern attitudes, the pre-codes are illustrated as an attitude scale which expresses the respondent's opinion of a certain subject. The questions about attitudes are designed as 'Likert Scales' where the respondent is offered five alternatives graded from 1 to 5. However, our purpose is not to measure the respondents' attitudes, instead we wish to acquire knowledge about their attitudes and behaviours. Therefore, we chose to provide each ranking with a pre-coded meaning. An example of the pre-coded meaning is illustrated in appendix 4 (Question 5), where the alternatives provided are ranked and pre-coded from 1 (meaning never) to 5 (meaning all the time). In our survey, we chose to combine personal factual questions, questions about attitudes and questions about normative standards and values (Bryman 2012). The personal factual questions concern personal information as to which organisation the respondent is being a graduate and why the respondent has chosen to become a graduate. The questions about normative standards and values concern the respondent being asked about principles and/or behaviours that are held dear to the respondent or that may influence the respondent. The personal factual questions and the questions concerning normative standards and values are pre-coded by the fixed set of alternatives the respondents may choose between in order to answer the question. An example of the pre-coded fixed alternatives is illustrated in appendix 4 (Question 10), where the alternatives concern specific areas as *new in job*, *not trusting co-workers* etc. The pre-codes of the closed questions are therefore either depicted as attitude scales or fixed alternatives (Appendix 4).

In the following, we will elaborate on the specific survey subjects and survey questions we chose to include in our web survey.

The first survey subject we chose to ask the respondents about concerned questions of *Being a Graduate*. The purpose was to define why the respondent chose to become a graduate. Therefore, we asked the following questions:

In which organisation are you a Graduate?

The question was asked to obtain personal facts about the respondent. The respondent was able to answer this question with a short text.

In which country are you taking (or have taken) your international job rotation?

The purpose of this question was to identify which countries the respondents visit during their international job rotations. This question was also open, and the respondents therefore had the opportunity to answer with a short text.

Why did you choose to become a Graduate?

The purpose of this question was to discover potential reasons for becoming a graduate. We chose to make this question closed and provided six alternatives for the respondents to choose from. The alternatives were the following:

- Due to the international aspect (opportunity to live and work abroad)
- Due to the job rotations (explore different job functions)
- Due to the specialisation in a specific organisation
- Due to the responsibility for national and international projects
- To be part of a programme with other graduates
- To learn from a mentor/buddy

However, we acknowledge that the respondents may have other reasons to become a graduate. Therefore, we chose to include the possibility of answering 'Other'. This answer also gave them the option to write the reason(s) in their own words. The questions asked within the subject area 'Being a graduate' primarily concern aspects of personal facts, but the last question reflects aspects of the respondents' values and normative standards.

The second survey subject concerned *Knowledge Sharing in Graduate Programmes*. The purpose of these questions was to identify the respondents' attitudes of and experiences with KS. Therefore, we asked the following questions:

How will you define the concept 'knowledge sharing'?

This question was asked to define the respondents' different perceptions of the concept. Therefore, we provided the opportunity to answer the question with more than one of the pre-fixed alternatives or via 'Other' where it was possible to provide an answer in the respondents' own words. The pre-coded answers we provided to this question included:

- Sharing of knowledge, know-how etc. between/among departments, teams and employees
- Sharing of your own experiences and know-how with others
- An organisation sharing strategic knowledge in the organisation.

To what extent do you experience knowledge sharing being used in your Graduate Programme?

The purpose of this question was to get an idea of the extent to which the respondents experienced the use of KS. Therefore, we asked the question by the Likert Scales-technique where the answers were ranked from 1 to 5 and pre-coded, as previously mentioned. The ranked and pre-coded answers included:

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Rarely
- 3 = Sometimes
- 4 = Often
- 5 = All the time.

In which contexts have you experienced knowledge sharing?

This question was asked to obtain specific examples of contexts where the respondents have experienced KS. The question was asked as a closed question with a set of fixed alternatives. The alternatives included:

- Graduate to graduate
- Mentor to Graduate (or vice versa)
- Graduate to buddy
- Graduate to co-worker (or vice versa)
- Co-worker to co-worker, Department to department
- Team to team (in the same department)

In order to ensure that we were not missing a potential context, we provided the opportunity to answer 'Other', so the respondents were able to answer the question in the respondent's own words.
The questions asked within this subject area concern the respondents' attitudes, personal understanding and experiences.

The third survey subject concerned *Organisational Culture*. The purpose of this subject area was to identify the respondents' attitudes to the organisations' knowledge-sharing culture. Therefore, we asked the following questions:

To what extent do you feel your workplace is encouraging knowledge sharing?

The purpose of this question was to get an idea of the extent to which the respondents perceive the organisational culture as encouraging KS. Therefore, we asked the question by the Likert Scales-technique where the answers were pre-coded and ranked from 1 to 5. The ranked and pre-coded answers included:

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = Little
- 3 = To some extent
- 4 = Much
- 5 = Very much.

In what way do you feel your workplace is (or is not) encouraging knowledge sharing?

The purpose of this question was to make the respondents elaborate on their experiences of the encouragement for KS. We wished to obtain concrete examples of how the workplace is (or is not) encouraging KS. Therefore, we asked the question as an open question where the respondents were able to describe their perception of the workplace in their own words. The questions asked within this subject area concern the respondents' values and attitudes towards the organisational culture in their respective workplaces.

The fourth and last survey subject concerned *Knowledge Sharing Behaviour*. The purpose of these questions was to examine the different patterns of the respondents' knowledge-sharing behaviours. Therefore, we asked the following questions:

To what extent are you comfortable with sharing knowledge with your co-workers?

The purpose of this question was to discover whether or not the respondents were comfortable sharing knowledge. Therefore, we asked the question as an attitude question by the Likert Scales- technique. The ranked and pre-coded answers included:

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = Little
- 3 = To some extent
- 4 = Much
- 5 = Very much.

If you are not comfortable about sharing knowledge, what is the reason?

The purpose of this question was to identify the potential reasons behind the discomfort of sharing knowledge. Therefore, we provided five alternatives the respondents could choose from along with the possibility to answer 'Other' and provide another answer in their own words. The fixed alternatives included:

- I am new in the job
- I am not trusting my co-workers
- I am not trusting my own abilities
- The work culture is not encouraging KS
- I do not think KS is beneficial.

Have you experienced competition-related challenges related to knowledge sharing?

This question was asked in order to determine if graduates have experienced challenges related to competition which have complicated KS. We therefore asked the question as a closed question with the possibility to answer either:

- Yes
- No
- Not sure.

If yes, please exemplify in what way you experienced the competition-related challenges.

If a respondent answered yes to the question above, we wished to obtain a clarification of how the competition-related challenges had been experienced. Therefore, we asked the question as an open question with the possibility to write an answer in their own words.

To what extent do you feel motivated for sharing knowledge with co-workers?

The purpose of this question was to examine the respondents' behaviours and attitudes to KS. Therefore, we asked the respondents of their attitudes by the Likert Scales- technique. The ranked and pre-coded answers included:

- 1 = Not at all
- 2 = Little
- 3 = To some extent
- 4 = Much
- 5 = Very much.

Which factors may enhance your motivation for sharing knowledge with co-workers?

The last question was about the respondents' normative values. The purpose was to identify how the respondents might be influenced in terms of knowledge-sharing behaviours. We provided six fixed alternatives for the respondents to choose from along with the possibility to choose 'Other', so they were able to provide another answer in their own words. The fixed alternatives included:

- Collaboration with others
- Extrinsic rewards (higher pay, bonuses etc.)
- Intrinsic rewards (acknowledgement, feedback etc.)
- Encouragement and support from the organisation to share knowledge
- Social activities with co-workers
- Trust among co-workers.

The questions asked within this subject area primarily concern the respondents' attitudes and meanings along with the respondents' normative standards and values.

As elaborated above, the web survey contained questions regarding attitudes, personal facts and normative values and the questions were asked with a combination of open and closed questions. All the closed questions are pre-coded into specific meanings, which provide us with a rather qualitative driven dataset from our web survey. However, the answers to the open questions must be post-coded, so we are able to use them in our analysis. Post-coding is the opposite of pre-coding, since pre-coding takes place before sending out the survey, meaning that we as researchers have designed a coding frame before sending it out. Contrary to pre-coded questions, open questions are open to interpretation and will therefore be coded after having received all the answers (Bryman 2012, pp. 246-249). Below, we will present our conceptualisation of qualitative and quantitative research.

2.8.4 Our Conceptualisation of Qualitative and Quantitative Research

In our thesis, we use both qualitative and quantitative elements because our empirical data consists of two semi-structured interviews and a quantitative web survey with both open questions (qualitative) and closed questions (quantitative). As mentioned in section 2.8.3.2, the purpose of our quantitative empirical data is not to measure the respondents' attitudes in either the acquisition or the analysis of the data. Instead, we use the quantitative data to obtain knowledge about their attitudes and behaviour in terms of norms, values, culture etc. regarding the subjects in question. Hence, we are interested in both what the respondents think and do. For this reason, we focus on the words they are ranking in the quantitative closed questions and do not pay attention to the specific number. Therefore, we have a qualitative research approach to both the semi-structured interviews and the web survey, as we want to discover and understand the participants' subjective behaviours, attitudes etc., regarding the subject that is being studied.

Since we combine qualitative and quantitative research methods, we considered using mixed methods. However, Bryman (2012) emphasises that "(...) the quantitative and the qualitative data deriving from mixed methods research should be mutually illuminating" (p. 628). Therefore, the researcher needs to use both research methods equally. Because the purpose of this thesis is to study attitudes and behaviours – and because we focus on words rather than measurements – we find it appropriate to analyse our data by using a qualitative research method. From the empirical data, we want to understand the social world of the participants and the subject in question. Due to our social constructionist approach, we will interpret the participants' subjective meanings in the empirical data. This may help us to gain an understanding of their social worlds. Therefore, we have an inductive research approach in this thesis because we are guided the meanings in the data. Due to our position as social constructionists, we therefore want to discover patterns of meaning in the empirical data by means of our qualitative analysis method. Below, an elaboration of our method of analysis will be presented.

2.9 Method of Analysis

In the following section, we will clarify how we will be using thematic analysis (henceforth TA) to analyse our empirical data by coding the empirical data into themes. Moreover, we will present the structure of our analysis.

2.9.1 Coding and Thematization

According to Saldaña (2013), a code is most often about attaching keywords to statements. Saldaña (2013) states the following:

> "(...) a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes." (p. 4).

Coding is the process of generating ideas and concepts from raw textual data, e.g. journals, interview transcripts, documents etc., and is a process where the researcher tries to identify, arrange and systemise the uncovered ideas and concepts in the data (Benaquisto 2008, p. 2). "Coding consists of identifying potentially interesting events, features, phrases, behaviors, or stages of a process and distinguishing them with labels" (Benaquisto 2008, p. 2), meaning that a researcher will use its intuitive and tacit senses to determine which textual data that 'feels alike' and 'looks alike' when coding text passages (Saldaña 2013, p. 9).

According to Saldaña (2013), coding differs from a theme because coding is about attaching keywords to statements whereas a theme consists of a sentence or phrase indicating what the theme is about. Saldaña (2013) describes a theme as an outcome of coding, categorisation and analytic reflections. Hence, a theme is not something that is coded in itself (p. 175). Saldaña (2013) defines a theme as "(...) an *extended phrase* or *sentence* that identifies what a unit of data is *about* and/or what it *means*." (Saldaña 2013, p. 175). Therefore, a theme is a way of categorising a set of codes consisting of keywords into overall themes, i.e. consisting of an extended phrase or sentence clarifying what the theme is about. Coding is therefore a method that enables us to organise and cluster similarly coded data into themes because they share certain characteristics (Saldaña 2013, p. 9).

In order to analyse our empirical data, we will conduct a TA based on Braun & Clarke's approach to thematization (2012), which will be elaborated further below.

2.9.2 Thematic Analysis

According to Braun & Clarke (2012), TA has been a widely used method of qualitative data analysis, but it has been poorly defined because qualitative researchers often have used the method without any guiding reference or by using a mix of other approaches, e.g. discourse analysis and grounded theory (p. 57). Braun and Clarke (2012) therefore developed a TA framework in order to make a systematic, accessible and flexible method of data analysis (Ibid.). Braun and Clarke's (2012) definition of TA is as follows:

> "TA is a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insights into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set." (p. 57).

By focusing on the meanings in our empirical data, the TA method makes it possible for us as researchers to see and make sense of collective or shared meanings and experiences in our texts (Ibid.). Therefore, multiple patterns could be identified in our empirical data. However, the purpose of the TA is to identify the meanings that are relevant for us in order to answer our research question. It is important to clarify that the TA only is a method of data analysis and not an approach to conducting qualitative research (Braun & Clarke 2012, p. 58). TA does not link itself to a specific epistemological position and, therefore, we can draw on social constructionist principles in the TA (Braun & Clarke 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) are not suggesting that TA can be applied without theory or an epistemological stance, but that it can be applied across different theories and epistemological stances. Therefore, we share a social constructionist approach in the TA. As social constructionists, it would be natural to conduct a discourse analysis, as Burr (2003) refers to as a common analysis method within social constructionism. However, we do not wish to examine the distinct discourses related to the phenomena of respectively OS and KS. As an example, our purpose is not to analyse the textual meaning of our empirical data to discover different discourses and how these have different effects on our constructed realities. Instead, we wish to examine different factors that influence the phenomena of KS in the OS process within international GPs. Thereby, we can identify how the phenomena may be influenced and how they may influence each other. We are able to examine this by means of a TA where different themes or patterns within the dataset are identified and analysed in order to answer our research question. Braun and Clarke (2006) also emphasise that the TA is favourable in exploratory research where a new area of research is examined. This is the case for this thesis as we interlink the theoretical fields of OS and KS.

By using TA, we are able to code and analyse our empirical data systematically, helping us to identify and make sense of meanings in our data. (Ibid.). In order to make a TA, Braun and Clarke (2012) have made a research approach consisting of six phases which are the following:

- **Phase 1: Familiarise Yourself with the Data**
- **Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes**
- **Phase 3: Searching for Themes**
- **Phase 4: Reviewing Potential Themes**
- **Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes**
- **Phase 6: Producing the Report.**

Below, an elaboration of Braun & Clarke's research approach will be presented including our approach to analysing the empirical data of this thesis.

2.9.3 Our Method of Analysis

In our thesis, we will be using the qualitative analysis method of TA, as elaborated in the section above, to analyse our qualitative data (interviews) and quantitative data (web survey) (see section 2.8). In the following section, we will present our approach to analysing the empirical data. This will include an elaboration of how we generate specific codes from the data and how we cluster similarly coded data into relevant themes. Moreover, we will provide definitions of the generated themes and define the analysis subjects which will be examined in the analysis.

We believe there are three overall stages to go through when conducting a TA. Therefore, we have combined some of the phases provided by Braun and Clarke (2012). The first stage we go through concerns coding the data and this stage includes Braun and Clarke's phase 1 and 2. The second stage concerns clustering the codes and generating themes. This stage includes Braun and Clarke's phase 3, 4 and 5. Lastly, we go through Braun and Clarke's phase 6 where we conduct the TA itself by examining the identified themes in order to answer our research question.

Phase 1 & 2: Coding the Data

The first phase of TA, Familiarise Yourself With the Data, stresses the importance of knowing your data well. In this thesis, our data consists of the transcripts from our semi-structured interviews and the responses to the open questions in our web survey (Braun & Clarke 2012, p. 60). To familiarise ourselves with this data, we have been reading and rereading these texts. This phase also involves taking notes and highlighting relevant text passages. As we reviewed each dataset, taking notes helped us read the data in the sense that we not only read the words in the data, but sought to understand the meanings in the data (Braun & Clarke 2012, pp. 60-61). In this phase, we are not coding the data yet, but observing the data and its meanings. The purpose of this phase is therefore to become familiar with the data and its content in order to notice which meanings may be relevant for our research question (p. 61).

After becoming familiar with the data and having identified relevant text passages, we entered the second phase, Generating Initial Codes. This is where we begin a systematic analysis of the data through coding (Braun & Clarke 2012, p. 61). Braun & Clarke (2012) describe the analysis as "If your analysis is a brick-built house with a tile roof, your themes are the walls and roof and your codes are the individual bricks and tiles." (p. 61), meaning it is the codes that constitute our analysis. As mentioned in section 2.9.1, codes identify and provide the relevant text passages in the text with a mark, i.e. keyword, to highlight what the text passage is about. It is important to note that it is possible to code a text passage with more than one code. Furthermore, it is possible to code in small or large portions of textual data and some portions will not be coded at all if not relevant (p. 62). Therefore, each time we identify relevant text passages, i.e. meanings, we code it by marking the text passages in the data with a code. Braun and Clarke (2012) note that as the coding progresses, we as researchers can revisit the prior coded text passages in order to identify whether or not the codes have developed or been expanded during the coding process. It is therefore possible to modify existing codes by re-coding or making new codes that will help answer the research question.
In order to differentiate between relevant text passages and non-relevant text passages, we insert the coded text passages into our coding schemes (Appendix 5, 6 & 7) of respectively the semi-structured interviews and the web survey. We consider the second phase as completed, when all relevant text passages have been marked with a keyword, i.e. have been coded (p. 62 & 63).

Phase 3, 4 & 5: Clustering Codes, Generating & Defining Themes

The third phase, Searching for Themes, is where the analysis starts to take shape and we shift focus from codes to themes. Braun and Clarke (2012) note that a theme "(...) captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning within the data set." (p. 63). Searching for themes is thus an active process where we (as researchers) construct rather than discover themes in the data (Ibid.). Therefore, this phase concerns reviewing the coded data in order to identify similarly coded data, gathering the codes that seem to share some meanings and divide them into the overall constructed themes. In order to generate themes from our dataset, we made an overview of all the codes and their frequency by listing them in an Excel document. After that, we clustered the codes into distinctive areas and generated themes that covered the relevant information and meanings from our dataset. Braun & Clarke (2012) highlight that a theme needs to be distinctive and, in some way, stand alone, but that it is also important to explore the relationship between the themes and consider how these themes work together to be able to answer the research question (p. 65). This phase ends when text passages of codes that are relevant to the specific theme are collated and the themes are constructed (Ibid.).

The fourth phase, Reviewing Potential Themes, is generally about quality checking the developed themes, meaning that we need to review the developed themes considering the coded data and the entire dataset (Braun & Clarke 2012, p. 65). First, we need to check the themes by looking at the collated portions of data, i.e. codes, and explore whether the codes and the specific theme fit together. If not, we need to relocate the codes and place them under another theme or delete some codes. Alternatively, we can redraw the boundaries of a theme, meaning that we can reformulate the text describing the specific theme so it can contain the relevant meanings (Ibid.). Braun & Clarke (2012) have formulated some question to quality check the themes:

- "Is this a theme (it could be just a code)?
- If it is a theme, what is the quality of this theme (does it tell me something useful about the data set and my research question)?
- What are the boundaries of this theme (what does it include and exclude)?
- Are there enough (meaningful) data to support this theme (is the theme *thin* or *thick*)?
- Are the data too diverse and wide ranging (does the theme lack coherence)?" (p. 65).

While reviewing the themes generated from our coded dataset, we identified codes that needed to be relocated and placed under another theme that was more relevant for the meaning of the codes. Furthermore, we quality checked the themes on behalf of Braun and Clarke's (2012) questions, which are listed above, to ensure that the themes were relevant for our research and that the themes were not too wide-ranging. As an example, we asked ourselves whether or not the specific theme would help us answer our research question. Furthermore, we established specific boundaries of the respective themes to ensure that the themes did not overlap each other. We conclude this phase by reviewing the themes to make sure that if the themes capture the most important and relevant meanings in the dataset in order to be able to answer our research question (pp. 65 & 66).

In the fifth phase, Defining and Naming Themes, we first needed to *define* the themes by stating what was special about each theme, i.e. trying to sum up the essence of each theme in a few sentences (Braun & Clarke 2012, p. 66). Braun & Clarke (2012) define a thorough TA in the following way:

> "A good thematic analysis will have themes that (a) do not try to do too much, as themes should ideally have a singular focus; (b) are related but do not overlap, so they are not repetitive, although they may build on previous themes; and (c) directly address your research question." (p. 66).

The themes therefore need to have a clear focus and purpose, since these themes need to work together and provide an overall 'story' of the data. Each theme "(...) needs to be developed not only in its own rights but also in relation to your research question and in relation to the other themes." (p. 67). The second aspect of this phase is to work out what to name each theme. Braun & Clarke (2012) mention that a good name for a theme is both informative, concise and catchy. Therefore, we need to make names that clearly signal the focus and content of the specific themes (p. 69). After generating the themes and reviewing the specific codes that construct the themes, we have identified four themes which we have named as follows: *Organisational Culture*, *The Purpose of International Graduate Programmes*, *Structure and Practices within International Graduate Programmes* and *Social Relations*. Below, we will define each theme and present the codes that construct the specific themes. We have furthermore provided each theme with a number. It is essential to highlight that we do not attach a specific meaning to the numbers of the themes, but we provide the themes with numbers to create a better overview. Furthermore, we have decided not to include the participants' definitions of and attitudes towards KS as a specific code in the themes below. The reason for this is that this thesis has a strong focus on KS and the participants' definitions of the concept are therefore relevant to consider in all four themes. Therefore, the participants' definitions of and attitudes towards KS will not be assigned a specific theme in our coding schemes, however, we will include the participants' definitions and attitudes in our analyses.

<u>Theme 1: Organisational Culture</u>

The theme *Organisational Culture* is constructed on behalf of the codes relating to meanings or experiences of the organisational culture within a GP. It therefore concerns aspects such as values, principles, mentality, norms of feedback and support. This theme concerns specific examples of aspects related to organisational culture – for example, opinions about how organisational culture affects OS and KS. Furthermore, the theme includes aspects of which challenges that may arise from the organisational culture. We have chosen to construct this theme in order to examine how KS may be encouraged and facilitated and to examine what impact organisational culture may have on graduates' willingness to share knowledge in the OS process.

Theme 2: The Purpose of International Graduate Programmes

The theme *The Purpose of International Graduate Programmes* is constructed on behalf of codes that concern GPs and international aspects, e.g. cultural understanding and global insight, the purpose with GPs, types of GPs and career aspects. The codes reflect the different reasons for investing in international GPs. Furthermore, the theme covers aspects of what purpose different GPs may have and how it influences OS and KS. We have chosen to construct this theme in order to understand the context of international GPs and relate this understanding to potential benefits and challenges of KS in the OS process.

Theme 3: Structure and Practices within International Graduate Programmes

The theme *Structure and Practices within International Graduate Programmes* is constructed on behalf of codes that illustrate specific practices and structures used within GPs, e.g. training, job rotations, onboarding, coaching, going abroad and workshops. We have chosen to construct this theme in order to identify how KS is used within the OS process, i.e. which practices and structures that are used, and to identify potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge.

Theme 4: Social Relations

The theme *Social Relations* is constructed on behalf of codes relating to graduates' social relations to one another and other co-workers within the GPs. Codes in this theme concern, e.g. social ties, network, competition, collaboration, motivation, self-efficacy and different backgrounds. The theme includes aspects of graduates' social interactions and illustrates how social relations influence the graduates' behaviour of KS in the OS process. We have chosen to construct this theme in order to understand how social relations influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge, and furthermore, to learn about the importance of the OS process.

Having generated and defined our constructed themes, we can now proceed to the last phase in the TA.

Phase 6: Producing the Report

The last phase is the Production of the report, or in our case, our analysis. It is important to present the developed themes in an order that is both logical and meaningful, so we are able to make a coherent

TA that can help answer our research question (Braun & Clarke 2012, p. 69). The six phases elaborated above function as guidelines when producing a thorough TA. As mentioned earlier, the TA is a flexible method of data analysis. This means it can be conducted in several ways (p. 58). The structure of our analysis will be elaborated below.

2.9.4 Structure of Analysis

In the following section, we will clarify the structure of our analysis and elaborate on the coherence between the two analyses and the discussion.

In order to conduct a thorough TA, we will divide the analysis section into two parts: *the organisational perspective* and *the graduates' perspective*. We divide the analysis into two parts as we have an interactionist approach, meaning that we perceive the organisation and graduates as interdependent in the process of sharing knowledge in the OS process within international GPs.

The analyses will include statements from the two interviews, which will represent the organisational perspective, and answers from the web survey, which will represent the graduates' perspective. All statements and answers have been coded into specific themes. In both analyses, we will be using the same four themes which are: *Theme 1: Organisational Culture, Theme 2: The Purpose of International Graduate Programmes, Theme 3: Structure and Practices within international Graduate Programmes and Theme 4: Social Relations* (see section 2.9.3). In line with our philosophy of science, social constructionism, we perceive the themes as interrelated. Therefore, the themes will be analysed in relation to one another because we believe it is not possible to analyse one theme without involving perspectives from other themes as well. The main purpose of the analyses is to propose an answer to our research question, which is divided into two sub-questions, as elaborated in section 1.0. In the analysis of the organisational perspective, the two sub-questions will be analysed simultaneously, whereas in the graduates' perspective, the two sub-questions will be analysed separately.

The first analysis will be conducted based on the interviews with Danish Crown and Arla Foods, which will constitute the organisational perspective. First, we will clarify how the two interviewees define the concept of KS in order to create a common understanding of the concept seen from the organisational perspective. In the analysis, we will use the two interviewees' perspectives and experiences to uncover ways of understanding and using KS in the OS process within international GPs. Based on the two interviewees' statements, we will furthermore try to discover how the HR function may encourage and facilitate intra-organisational KS within international GPs considering potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge.

The second analysis will be conducted on behalf of the web survey, where the 21 respondents' answers will constitute the graduates' perspective. First, we will present how the graduates define the concept of KS in order to create a common understanding of the concept seen from the graduates' perspective. In the analysis, we will include different aspects from the respondents' answers to uncover the graduates' way of understanding and using KS in the OS process within international GPs. Based on the graduates' answers, we will furthermore try to discover how the graduates believe the HR function may encourage and facilitate intra-organisational KS within international GPs considering potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge. We will end both analyses by making a sub-conclusion to summarise the findings.

Having examined both the organisational and the graduates' perspectives, we will discuss the findings of the two analyses in section 5.0. By including and discussing the two perspectives, we will be able to propose an answer to our research question in section 6.0.

3.0 Defining Graduate Programmes

In HRM, the term 'Graduate Programme' is rather difficult to define because there is no specific definition provided within the HRM literature. A reason for this may be that GPs, among other things, are referred to as graduate schemes, apprenticeships or training programmes. The construction of GPs is therefore a somewhat new term embraced by larger organisations. The concept of a GP, i.e. graduate scheme, apprenticeship or training programme, emerged from the subdomain of HRM which is Human Resource Development (henceforth HRD) (Bratton & Gold 2012). Bratton and Gold (2012) state that "Most attempts to define HRD suggest that it has two purposes: first, to improve people's performance, and second, to help people learn, develop and/or grow." (p. 282), meaning that the idea of HRD is to train and develop employees' performance and competencies. Bratton and Gold emphasise that the term HRD is rarely used in practice by professionals. Instead, professionals refer to HRD when talking about training, learning and development, which can be applied in many different contexts within an organisation. However, when focusing on the emergence of GPs, Bratton and Gold (2012) note that:

> "HRD is organized learning experiences provided by employers, within a specified period of time, to bring about the possibility of performance improvement and/or personal growth." (p. 283).

We therefore argue that a GP can be perceived as a training programme that has a start and an end point. Within this time period, the purpose is to improve performance and/or personal growth of the graduate.

The HRM literature does not account for how long a graduate period may be and how the programme is constructed. Therefore, we have searched elsewhere to provide a definition of the programme's scope and structure. Graduateland.com states that a GP:

> "(...) is a fixed-term entry-level position offered by companies to university or college graduates (typically those who have graduated in the last few years)." (Graduateland, 2021).

Graduateland (2021), which is Europe's largest career portal for students and graduates, emphasises that the major difference between a GP and a standard graduate job "(...) is that the programmes are structured, and involve a core element of training, often so the employee progresses up through the ranks in a given timeframe." (Ibid.). To ensure such an employee progression, GPs most often involve national and international rotations depending on whether or not the specific organisation is international or not. Furthermore, GPs are often structured to have a duration of 12 to 24 months and the recruitment process is known to be rigorous because GPs are used by organisations "(...) to attract highly competent graduates with great promise, investing in a long-term vision of these individuals as future leaders and specialists within the organisation." (Ibid.). As Graduateland.com (2021) defines, there are two different tracks within GPs; a broad leadership programme and a specialist programme. The difference between the two programmes is that the graduate either participates in a GP to learn broadly about leadership during a brief period or the graduate deepens him- or herself in one area to become a specialist within this field. Either way, most GPs are structured to include a minimum of two rotations in different departments or business units to become familiar with different areas of the organisation and learn different organisational aspects (Ibid.). Thus, a graduate has the opportunity to join a GP and be trained into becoming either a future leader or a specialist within a particular field. Hence, graduates learn about business processes, develop a strong CV and kick-start their careers. In conclusion, we would like to add that it is different from GP to GP whether or not the graduates are guaranteed a job position in the specific organisation after ending the graduate period. Some organisations offer this and may even expect the graduate to stay in the organisation after the graduate period due to the organisation's investments in the graduates, e.g. financial aspects and hours of training. Some organisations may use the graduate period to evaluate the graduate and later on decide whether or not to offer the graduate a full-time job.

4.0 Analysis

As defined in section 2.9.4, we will first conduct a TA from the organisational perspective followed by a sub-conclusion consisting of the findings from the analysis. Afterwards, we will conduct a TA from the graduates' perspective followed by a sub-conclusion consisting of the findings from the analysis.

4.1 The Organisational Perspective

In the following analysis, we will analyse how KS is used within international GPs and examine how the HR function may encourage and facilitate intra-organisational KS considering potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge. As mentioned earlier, the analysis of the organisational perspective will be based on statements from HR employees working at Danish Crown and Arla Foods.

4.1.1 Knowledge Sharing Within International Graduate Programmes and the HR Function's Role in the Knowledge Sharing Process

We will begin this analysis by clarifying how the two interviewees define the concept of KS in order to become acquainted with their perception and use of KS. In that context, interviewee 1 from Danish Crown describe KS as:

"I guess it's something about sharing your insights of knowledge across maybe business units, departments, people, functions and so on. To share your knowledge and your experiences, and perspectives." (Appendix 2, p. 3, ll. 69-70).

The citation indicates that interviewee 1 believes KS is shared between different functions within an organisation, where employees share knowledge, experiences and perspectives with each other. Interviewee 2 from Arla Foods describes KS as:

"I would say that it's the principle of companies or individuals or groups it could be any form of a subject sharing their knowledge with somebody else on a specific topic to actually gain a broader understanding, better insight into a, into a topic, and it can be done across all fields. So, from your like, you know, thesis that you're writing into knowledge sharing throughout cars for example it can be done in anything on any subject by everyone." (Appendix 3, p. 4, ll. 87-91)

The definition provided by interviewee 2 indicates that the interviewee believes that KS takes place both between organisations and different functions within an organisation with the purpose of gaining a broader understanding. Interviewee 2 furthermore emphasises that it can be done in any situation on any subject by anyone, meaning that KS happens all the time in any contexts. Both definitions of KS described by the interviewees are consistent with our understanding of KS because we believe "(…) knowledge is an ambiguous, unspecific and dynamic phenomenon, intrinsically related to meaning, understanding and process (…)" (Alvesson and Kärreman 2001, p. 995) and that knowledge is shared between and across departments, teams, groups or individuals (Christensen 2010). Furthermore, due to the focus of international GPs within this thesis, we focus on intra-organisational KS (Ibid.). Therefore, we do not focus on knowledge being shared between organisations, i.e. inter-organisational KS, in this thesis, as interviewee 2 states in the citation above (Ibid.). In general, both our and the interviewees' perceptions of KS are consistent because we all believe KS is shared in any context within an organisation both across departments, teams and individuals, and that it can be done in many ways and with different purposes (Christensen 2007).

Having clarified how KS is understood, we find it essential to clarify what type of GP Danish Crown and Arla Foods have, as there are different purposes of a GP (as elaborated in section 3.0). An organisation can choose to structure the programme as a broad or specialised GP. Interviewee 1 from Danish Crown states that they have a broad GP:

"For us, our programme is a broad leadership programme. And that means it's not specialised." (Appendix 5, Theme 2 & 3, p. 1, ll. 34-35).

Interviewee 1 continues by stating:

"I think in general you can distinguish between a specialised programme and a broad programme. So, if you are in a specialist programme, you have studied finance, for example, it makes a lot of sense to go into three different finance departments in a big company. But that is not what we do. That's not what we, what we need in the future." (Appendix 5, Theme 2 & 3, pp. 1 & 2, ll. 35-38).

In the citations, it is clear that Danish Crown's purpose is not to specialise graduates in one area of work but wants graduates to obtain a broad understanding of the business. According to Danish Crown, graduates with a broad understanding of business is what they need in the future. Interviewee 1 elaborates on the purpose of their broad structure of the GP by stating:

"We need broad leadership skills, meaning that we need, for example, a finance guy sitting in finance, you know, in 10 years ahead, who have been in different departments. And that means that they know the entire value chain. That is why we rotate (…)" (Appendix 5, Theme 2 & 3, p. 1, ll. 38-40).

By this citation, we interpret that Danish Crown uses their GP to provide their graduates with broad job skills and a broad understanding of the organisation, which the graduates are able to obtain due to the rotations between departments. Furthermore, interviewee 1 states in the citations that their GP is a leadership programme, where the graduates need a broad understanding of the business, which interviewee 1 implicitly states is not possible to achieve in a specialised programme.

In that connection, interviewee 2 from Arla Foods expresses that it is possible to choose a specialised GP to become skilled within one specific area of work, e.g. within marketing or finance (Appendix 6, Theme 2 & 3, p. 1, ll. 7-10). However, Arla Foods' approach to the structure and purpose of a GP is similar to Danish Crown's, which interviewee 2 expresses by saying:

"Or you can do what Arla is doing which is general leadership programme where we believe that to be a well-rounded leader at the end of the day, and if that's what you want, and if you don't know the specific function that you want to be in yet, then let's take you on a journey where we can accelerate the speed, where you might have been, you know, normally a leader, right? You could be at a quicker pace." (Appendix 6, Theme 2 & 3, p. 1, ll. 10-14).

In this citation, interviewee 2 states that a graduate can choose a specialised programme, but that is not what Arla Foods is offering. They believe that in order to become a well-rounded leader at Arla Foods in the future, a broad GP will help accelerate the graduates' learning curve and interest, so the graduates are able to discover which specific function they want to be in. Both Danish Crown and Arla Foods have therefore structured their GPs as broad leadership programmes, which is a people management practice of work design. They want their graduates to become familiar with the entire business, obtain broad job skills and organisational knowledge, which they believe are needed in order to become future leaders. Both Danish Crown and Arla Foods expect to find and develop future leaders in their GPs. Interviewee 1 from Danish Crown describes their GP as a fast career track (Appendix 5, Theme 2, p. 1, l. 6), and elaborates by stating:

"We define it by a leadership program, where we want to build up a pipeline of international candidates going through the program and becoming, you know, head of or strong leaders in the future. If you can say that. So, we're building up a pipeline of future leaders." (Appendix 5, Theme 2, p. 1, ll. 6-9).

This means that their purpose with the programme is to find graduates and use the GP to make them organisational insiders that become acquainted with the entire business, hence, create international future leaders. Interviewee 2 from Arla Foods describes that:

> "We want to find future leaders. So, it's finding people with a great amount of raw potential and putting them through a two-year program that can accelerate them into unlocking their potential and being leaders for Arla that can kind of like shape and create our business moving forward to create business results." (Appendix 6, Theme 2 & 3, p. 1, ll. 25-29).

Hereby indicating that Arla Foods uses the GP to accelerate and discover the graduates' potential during the programme, hence, discover and develop graduates who possess the personal qualifications to become future leaders and take part in shaping their business. Therefore, both organisations attach great value to the individuals they decide to make a part of their GPs because they believe in these graduates.

International Rotations

In order to provide the graduates with broad job skills and broad organisational knowledge, both Danish Crown and Arla Foods have structured broad GPs, as elaborated above. Furthermore, they use international job rotations as part of their programmes. Interviewee 1 from Danish Crown elaborates on the programme's structure by stating:

> "So, for us at our company it is the two-year program with three rotations of eight months, with two tracks, a business track and a production track. And if you're on a production track, you have to go on one rotation in production. And if you are business track, it would be one rotation in business. And then you on both tracks have to go abroad for at least one rotation." (Appendix 5, Theme 3, p. 1, ll. 20-23).

The citation illustrates that a graduate can choose between two career tracks and within the chosen track, the graduate needs to rotate department and job function three times during the GP, where at least one of the rotations must be abroad. Interviewee 2 from Arla Foods describe their structure by stating:

> "So that means that we believe that giving you the exposure to three different rotations around the world and the three different functional areas (...) can kind of like accelerate your career and you're, you're that step closer to becoming a manager." (Appendix 6, Theme 2 & 3, p. 1, ll. 14-20).

This means that Arla Foods believes international job rotations can take part in accelerating the graduates' careers and in that way, be one step closer to becoming a manager in future. Both Danish Crown and Arla Foods therefore have two-year GPs with three rotations of eight months around the world, which they believe take part in providing the graduates with broad job skills and organisational knowledge. The job rotation is a people management practice regarding work design and culture, which can take part in fostering knowledge flows across internal organisational boundaries because it is through work designs an organisation is able to leverage existing and create new organisational knowledge (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). The rotations between departments and job functions in the GPs may therefore develop the graduates. However, starting in a new organisation is not easy for anyone given that a new employee needs to adapt to the new job and environment, which may involve some uncertainties in the process of adapting to the organisation and transform from organisational outsider to insider (Klein, Polin & Sutton 2015; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006). The graduates are crossing internal organisational boundaries within the organisations, as they are expected to rotate department and job function several times during their GPs. This means that graduates need to adapt to new job tasks, environments and social contexts (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006). When crossing internal organisational boundaries, it may therefore feel like starting in a completely new organisation, since a rotation both can be in a different country with another culture, new department, job function and with new colleagues. Hence, graduates may feel like outsiders every time a new rotation starts and therefore, it will take time to obtain new organisational knowledge and transform into organisational insiders. The graduates will therefore move back and forth between the different socialisation stages and will throughout their graduate period have difficulty with obtaining a feeling of stabilisation (Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012; Ashforth *et al.* 2007).

Interviewee 1 states that:

> "So, to make sure that the business gets enough out of these graduates, we have decided to make it eight months. That's why we have eight months, and we want to have them in three different rotations and three different business units." (Appendix 5, Theme 2 & 3, pp. 1-2, ll. 41-43).

Additionally, interviewee 2 states that:

> "So, for you to be a great manager that can like track throughout your career and go further, further up the career ladder, it is so valuable to understand other parts of the business and how they all interrelate" (Appendix 6, Theme 2, p. 1 & 2, ll. 38-40).

By the statements, we interpret that in order to make the most of the graduates and in order to be considered a potential manager in the future, the rotations in the GPs are highly important as the rotations enable the graduates to discover and understand different aspects of the organisations and furthermore, how different business units and organisational areas interrelate.

In that context, both Danish Crown and Arla Foods emphasise that a broad understanding of an organisation also involves an international aspect. Interviewee 1 states:

"So, it's important to know the whole business and understand what's not Danish. How does it work in Poland? How does it work in Germany or the Netherlands, Spain, the US or something like that." (Appendix 5, Theme 2 & 3, p. 2, ll. 58-60).

This means that it is important that graduates live abroad to meet different people and experience other cultures in order to achieve a cultural understanding and obtain a broader perspective of the world (Appendix 5, Theme 2, p. 2, ll. 61-64). Likewise, interviewee 2 states that because Arla Foods is an international organisation that has businesses, customers and functions all over the world, it does not make sense only to sit at the head office in Denmark. She refers to this as a silo mentality (Appendix 6, Theme 1 & 2, p. 2, ll. 52-54). Instead, Arla Foods believes that:

"You have to get out and understand how do they do things in Dubai? How did they know things in Kuala Lumpur? Because when you sit at the head office, making initiatives, making ideas, deciding on actions, and if you only have a perspective of Denmark, then you, you, you might not make the best decisions for all of the company. So, getting that exposure, even if it's just one different country, really broadens your horizon and make you a lot more kind of inclusive in your way of thinking." (Appendix 6, Theme 2 & 3, p. 2, ll. 54-60).

Interviewee 2 states that the international perspective will broaden graduates' horizons and make them more inclusive in their way of thinking, meaning that graduates will be able to consider and include all aspects about a subject before making a decision for the organisation. Thereby, Interviewee 2 states that they are able to reduce silo-mentality of thinking due to a broader understanding of the organisation.

The international rotations in the broad GPs can be characterised as a formal socialisation practice because both Danish Crown and Arla Foods use the rotations to socialise the graduates into their businesses around the world. In this way, the graduates become acquainted with different business units and cultures. Furthermore, the organisations use the rotations to provide the graduates with a broader organisational understanding, so they are able to use that knowledge in other respects within the organisation. The formal socialisation practice, i.e. rotation, therefore both has a socialisation effect because graduates have the opportunity to meet new organisational members and the effect that graduates achieve broad organisational knowledge as the new environment and norms may be different due to diverse cultural backgrounds. Even though we perceive knowledge as ambiguous, unspecific and dynamic, both Danish Crown and Arla Foods are to some extent able to share knowledge across organisational boundaries because graduates constantly construct and share knowledge in the interaction with others, when rotating department, job function etc. (Alvesson & Kärreman 2001; Christensen 2010; Burr 1995; Burr 2003).

In order to obtain broad job skills and broad organisational knowledge, both Danish Crown and Arla Foods use different people management and socialisation practices in order to encourage and facilitate KS. Both Danish Crown and Arla Foods use the people management practice work design, which find expression in their use of job rotations, both nationally and internationally, which is a requirement in the GPs. The job rotations, both within and outside national borders, take part in providing the graduates with broad organisational knowledge, cultural understanding and broad skills. By requiring a minimum of one job rotation abroad, Danish Crown and Arla Foods want to encourage development and organisational understanding. Both Danish Crown and Arla Foods believe job rotations abroad are necessary in order to become future leaders of the organisations. Even though it may be exiting for the graduates to rotate department both nationally and internationally and to develop both personal and professional skills, it might be a challenge that each time the graduates rotate department, they cross internal organisational boundaries. By doing so, graduates may feel like outsiders as they start in a completely different job and environment, where it will take time to transform into an organisational insider (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006). It can furthermore be argued, whether or not the graduates are able to become effective and integrated insiders after eight months in a new department or job function, as they enter a new department, i.e. the encounter stage, learn new job skills and adapt to the new environment, i.e. the adjustment stage, and then after eight months, they start all over again. This means that the graduates may not feel that they have achieved stabilisation in their job role (Ashford & Nurmohamed 2012; Ashforth *et al.* 2007). In Danish Crown and Arla Foods' international GPs, the graduates are therefore constantly going back and forth in their OS process within the GPs. However, both Danish Crown and Arla Foods believe that these changing circumstances take part in developing the graduates and enhance their future potential. This might be the reason why the organisations use several formal and informal socialisation practices to make sure that the graduates keep pace with the development.

Support Systems and Socialisation Roles

As both Danish Crown and Arla Foods believe it is important to provide graduates with broad job skills, organisational understanding etc., it is essential to discover which practices the organisations use to "(...) foster knowledge sharing among organizational employees." (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005, p. 5) within their GPs.

Interviewee 1 from Danish Crown states that:

> "What I also think is important about the programme in general, is that you have some kind of support system, which we see in programs compared to non-programs, so to speak. So, we have a mentor role, we have buddy roles, we have the HR supporting them, line managers and so on." (Appendix 5, Theme 3, p. 1, ll. 23-26).

In the citation, interviewee 1 emphasises the importance of a support system, which consists of diverse supportive roles as, e.g. mentor, buddy, supervisors, line mangers, the HR function. We believe that these supportive roles can function as both formal and informal socialisation practices depending on the specific context. Mentors, supervisors, line managers and the HR function might often be associated with a rather formal role in the socialisation process because these roles' purpose is to develop the graduates' professional competencies. A buddy, however, will often function as a rather informal role because the buddy's purpose is to support the graduates on a more personal level and to help them make sense of their job role and environment (Klein, Polin & Sutton 2015). These support systems also function as the people management practices work design and culture, as it is through such work designs that an organisation is able to leverage existing as well as new knowledge through these social networks or social relations (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). Likewise, interviewee 2 expresses that Arla Foods has a buddy system:

> "Because you have, you have a buddy system, so that's, I would say one of the first knowledge sharing you can have because every graduate gets a buddy from the batch above them, where they get help of, like, you know, how was your rotation? Where should you go? What's recommended and so on. So, there's a lot of, a lot of knowledge sharing there." (Appendix 6, Theme 3 & 4, p. 3, ll. 110-113).

The graduate is provided with a buddy, which is a graduate that has been in the GP for a year. The buddy therefore functions as an informal socialisation role because the buddy can teach and provide the new graduate with knowledge and experiences. The buddy can contribute to help the graduate transform into an organisational insider. Interviewee 2 also expresses that Arla Foods has a mentor setup, i.e. work design, to encourage KS where:

> "(...) you have experienced business leaders, sharing their thoughts, ideas with them, with the graduates." (Appendix 6, Theme 3, p. 3, ll. 114-115).

This means that knowledge is shared between employees at different levels, where knowledge is created in the interaction between an experienced employee and a graduate that wants to learn (Burr 2003). In the context of mentor setups, the mentors, who are experienced business leaders, functions as formal socialisation roles, as their purpose is to teach and develop the graduates' skills and provide them with organisational knowledge. Because KS cannot be forced (Cabrera and Cabrera 2005), Arla Foods wants to encourage KS by creating a work design with a mentor setup, so Arla Foods is able to leverage existing knowledge from experienced co-workers to graduates.

These kinds of support systems therefore both function as a formal socialisation practice, e.g. the mentor setup, which is an activity initiated by the organisations, and as an informal socialisation practice, since the organisations are not able to control what knowledge is being shared in the social interactions between graduates and buddies. By establishing these support systems of formal and informal socialisation practices, Danish Crown and Arla Foods want to influence socio-psychological factors, e.g. group identification, by providing graduates with the opportunity to interact with other employees and create social relations. In this way, the graduates experience an environment conducive to KS, both in the context of learning from mentors and in the context of buddies helping graduates transforms into organisational insiders. These practices are therefore essential to include when socialising graduates because these interactions and relations may lead to certain behaviours of graduates being confident in social relations. Hence, graduates are being willing to share knowledge (Myers 2011).

To sum up, both Danish Crown and Arla Foods use support systems consisting of diverse supportive roles, e.g. buddy, mentor, line manager, which also is the people management practice work design. Both organisations use formal socialisation roles, e.g. mentors, that teach, develop and leverage existing knowledge to graduates. Furthermore, they also use the informal socialisation role, buddy, as a supportive role in order to facilitate graduates' adjustment. It is through these formal and informal social relations and interactions that Danish Crown and Arla Foods are able to ensure that existing and new knowledge are being shared and co-created.

Training and Development

In the context of workgroup interactions, interviewee 1 also mentions that Danish Crown has an onboarding week when graduates start in the organisation.

> "So, when they start in the programme, we have an onboarding week, so it will be in Denmark in Randers at our headquarters, where we have, you know, teamwork, we have presentations from our group CEO, from the head of our Leadership & Talent development etc. So, a lot of activities, where we need to bond them. So, the purpose of that week is not only to make an introduction about the company, but also make sure they are bonded very good." (Appendix 5, Theme 3 & 4, p. 3, ll. 145-149).

In Danish Crown's onboarding week, they introduce the graduates to the organisation by doing formal orientations in form of presentations. The presentations function as formal socialisation practices as they are structured and controlled activities with the purpose of informing about the organisation, the organisational culture and training the graduates in the organisational principles, which interviewee 1 depicts as:

> "You have the head of Leadership & Talent Development coming in and training the graduates in these principles to know them. So, it's a part of, you know, the values, the principles are part of the everyday life for every employee." (Appendix 5, Theme 1 & 3, pp. 5-6, ll. 221-226).

Interviewee 1 elaborates on the citation by stating:

> "So, in the programme we train them with a workshop where our head of Leadership & Talent Development comes, he has some post-its and he hangs it up at the wall and then he goes through it and then we have a workshop about it." (Appendix 5, Theme 1 & 3, p. 6, ll. 230-232).

The citations indicate that besides providing the graduates with information via the presentations, i.e. creating a shared language and understanding of the organisation, Danish Crown also arranges workshops in the onboarding week. Danish Crown arranges this to encourage teamwork among the graduates, which is a formal socialisation practices because it is a controlled activity initiated by Danish Crown. The purpose of these practices is to teach the graduates about the organisational culture. The socialisation practices regarding informing about and training the principles both functions as people management practices of training and culture (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). Furthermore, Danish Crown makes the graduates work together in order to develop bonds, i.e. social ties, so they are confident with each other and thereby willing to share knowledge with one another. Myers (2011) describes the importance of workgroup interaction as:

"As team members interact with one another, they begin to make assumptions about one another's behaviors and become more interdependent. They learn to perform in ways that support one another's competencies and possible lack thereof." (p. 292).

The practices of workgroup interaction may therefore encourage and develop group identification and trust among the graduates. Danish Crown uses the presentations, workshops and teamwork to share knowledge and thereby provide the graduates with the opportunity to share knowledge among each other, i.e. creating an environment conducive to KS.

Interviewee 2 mentions that Arla Foods has certain systems and processes when onboarding graduates in order to provide them with organisational knowledge but mentions that:

"If you really want something to stick and always happen, you got to have that culture that you just described as well. It's important it just happens naturally all the time.". (Appendix 6, Theme 3, p. 5, ll. 202-204; Appendix 6, Theme 1, p. 5, ll. 209-2011).

In this citation, interviewee 2 indicates that an organisation can prepare any number of socialisation practices that encourage KS but the thing that really matters is the importance of having a caring and trusting culture that is conducive to KS. Therefore, the citation implicitly indicates that knowledge sharing cannot be forced, but that it has to happen naturally. This interpretation agrees with Cabrera and Cabrera's (2005) notion that KS cannot be forced.

Even though Danish Crown and Arla Foods cannot control all knowledge being shared, interviewee 1 believes that team-based training is very important among graduates:

"(...) Because then they are together, and they know each other and all that stuff. So, I think the more the graduates are together, the more they know each other, the more it enhances this trust I was talking about." (Appendix 5, Theme 1, 3 & 4, pp. 6-7, ll. 243-245).

Furthermore, interviewee 2 states that:

"(...) Because they know each other, you learn to trust each other, you learn to care about each other. You learn, you learn all of these things and your willingness to help each other is also there." (Appendix 6, Theme 1 & 4, p. 6, ll. 254-255).

These citations indicate that both Danish Crown and Arla Foods believe team-based training practices will create social relations and enhanced trust among graduates, so they are confident and willing to share knowledge. In this way, graduates are able to learn job skills, obtain organisational knowledge and co-create knowledge in the interaction with other organisational members, which also take part in making graduates effective organisational insiders.

Besides focusing on workgroup interactions, both Danish Crown and Arla Foods mention that the GPs are learning processes for the graduates. For this reason, both organisations have coaching sessions with their graduates. Interviewee 2 from Arla Foods states that:

"I do coaching with them. And the coaching is, it's not as so knowledge sharing, but there are themes within the coaching where we touch upon, how can you approach this interview or how can you approach this rotation? What do you need to think of because I am also a former graduate, I can also help them with some of the knowledge that I've had on them." (Appendix 6, Theme 3 & 4, p. 3, ll. 118-122).

Interviewee 2 has been a graduate herself, therefore, she shares her knowledge and experiences with the graduates during coaching sessions in order to develop them. Hence, interviewee 2 functions as both a formal and informal socialisation role. Another aspect of coaching is that interviewee 1 from Danish Crown mentions that there are many different profiles in their GP because the graduates have diverse cultural backgrounds, which is why they act in different ways (Appendix 5, Theme 3 & 4, p. 3, ll. 98-100). In that context, interviewee 1 states that:

"So, it's very much about learnings with the graduates. So how, you know. In Danish Crown, we are not focusing on failure, but more on how we can learn from our mistakes we're doing. So, we talk about a lot." (Appendix 5, Theme 1 & 3, p. 3, ll. 101-102).

The citation indicates that Danish Crown is able to get to know their graduates via coaching sessions. In these coaching sessions, Danish Crown is furthermore able to teach the graduates in organisational norms, where interviewee 1 functions as a formal learning source.

To sum up, both interviewees 1 and 2 facilitate team-based training, as they believe workgroup interaction is important because these practices take part in creating social relations and trust among graduates. In the onboarding week of graduates, Danish Crown, e.g. uses the people management practice training and development to teach the graduates about the organisational culture and principles. They teach the graduates about it by use of the formal socialisation practices presentations and workshops in order to encourage teamwork and thereby develop relations so they feel confident with each other. However, both interviewees 1 and 2 state that trust is the buzzword when talking about sharing knowledge and believe that the willingness to help each other also will increase when trusting and understanding each other (Appendix 5, Theme 1, p. 4, ll. 164-166) & (Appendix 6, Theme 1 & 4, p. 5, ll. 254-255). By establishing these training practices and support systems, i.e. work designs, Danish Crown and Arla Foods are able to facilitate social relations and influence socio-psychological factors such as group identification and trust among the graduates, which may lead to behaviours of graduates being confident and willing to share knowledge. Therefore, interviewee 2 states that in order to be sure that KS always happens, it is important to have a caring environment with great focus on trust, since KS has to happen naturally because it cannot be forced and managed (Cabrera and Cabrera 2005; Alvesson and Kärreman 2001).

Information Technologies

As Danish Crown and Arla Foods have international GPs, the graduates will sometimes be located abroad during their graduate period. Therefore, besides doing practices where the graduates are physical present, interviewee 1 from Danish Crown states that:

> "The graduates need to do a Teams meeting at least once a month with their own batch, with their own cohort, where they call each other for maybe one or two hours to just discuss, okay, what I was sitting with, what product do I want to do." (Appendix 5, Theme 3, p. 2, ll. 77-79).

The citation indicates that graduates need to have a meeting with the other graduates in order to share knowledge in terms of best-practices and experiences. In order to do so, Danish Crown uses the people management practice information technology, which is a user-friendly technical solution that reduces time to share knowledge, and the practice work design, which aims at "(...) self- forming groups that cut across business units, geographical dispersion and functional boundaries to connect individuals sharing common disciplinary interests or tasks." (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005 p. 6). The Microsoft Teams meetings function as a formal socialisation practice, as the graduates need to participate in the Microsoft Teams meetings at least each month. However, the Microsoft Teams meetings also function as an informal socialisation practice because interviewee 1 does not mention that other organisational members than the graduates participate in the Microsoft Teams meetings. By using the people management practices information technology and work design, Danish Crown is able to enhance existing social networks among graduates which potentially are located different places in the world. Hence, Danish Crown is able to create a space, i.e. a forum, in which graduates can share and co-create knowledge in the interaction with one another (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005; Kastberg 2018). Interviewee 1 stresses that:

> "(...) it's very important that the first week they have a strong bond, so they are ready to share, you know, already from the second week actually, to share and reach out to each other. So that's a big prioritize for us." (Appendix 5, Theme 1, 3 & 4, pp. 3-4, ll. 149-152).

The citation illustrates that Danish Crown wants their graduates to create bonds and social relations as early as possible. The information technology, Microsoft Teams, can therefore be a facilitating work design with the purpose of encouraging the graduates to open up for tacit knowledge, which they may not share with the supportive socialisation roles, e.g. buddy, mentor, supervisor etc. The Teams meetings for graduates may therefore consist of rather informal conversations, where they are able to share knowledge in a closed and trusting environment.

Interviewee 2 from Arla Foods expresses that they use information technology to keep track of and store knowledge, which would have been a challenge to do without information technologies. Interviewee 2 states that:

> "We use Teams and all the folder setup that we have in Teams. And then we use MS Forms to collect a lot of the data and then we use Excel as an input as our way of keeping track of hold of it, and then basically have it you know, set up for the different badges, for the different years, for the different areas that we have." (Appendix 6, Theme 3, pp. 4-5, ll. 160-163).

In the citation, interviewee 2 mentions diverse information technologies which Arla Foods uses in order to keep track of and store knowledge. These information technologies may ensure easy access to explicit knowledge, which is knowledge that is transferable, easy to codify and able to be stored and managed (Polanyi 1966; Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995). Arla Foods uses the technology to keep track of the different badges of the different years and within different areas. However, in these technical systems, Arla Foods cannot store or keep track of tacit knowledge, due to the complexity and intangibility of tacit knowledge, as it is acquired through personal experiences and social relations and therefore, difficult to communicate and transfer. Hence, tacit knowledge is the knowing of things without knowing how you know it (Schulz 2001; Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995; Polanyi 1966; Polanyi 1962). Therefore, these technical systems may be relevant to use for knowledge that it easy to transfer and store, i.e. explicit knowledge, which is the knowing of things that you are able to explain. However, it is essential to highlight that some knowledge is not that easy to transfer or store because, “There are things that we know but cannot tell.” (Tsoukas 2011, p. 601).

Instead of using technical systems, Danish Crown believes it makes sense, also cost-wise, to obtain and share knowledge by having a centre of excellence:

“So, we were very much aware of it, we call it a centre of excellence where we gather some of this knowledge sharing across and then we can broaden it out to all business units, to all departments” (Appendix 5, Theme 3 & 4, p. 4, ll. 174-175).

This citation indicates that they prioritise sharing knowledge across teams and also across boundaries, e.g. some of their IT’s are working closely with their Global Business Services in Poland (Appendix 5, Theme 1, 3 & 4, pp. 4-5, ll. 180-181). By having a centre of excellence, Danish Crown creates a forum in which employees can co-create and share knowledge (Kastberg 2018). Hence, Danish Crown creates an environment of trust and group identification where organisational members feel confident about sharing knowledge. Therefore, the people management practice work design may create an environment conducive to KS by establishing the centre of excellence, which may influence the norms for KS. In this way, the knowledge-sharing behaviour among the organisational members may be affected when socio-psychological factors are influenced (Cabrera and Cabrera 2005).

Reward Systems

When examining what may affect knowledge-sharing behaviour, we asked interviewee 1 and 2 if they used performance appraisals and compensation, i.e. rewards, for sharing knowledge in their GPs in order to encourage knowledge-sharing behaviours (Cabrera and Cabrera 2005).
Interviewee 1 from Danish Crown states that:

“I would define it as a feedback culture.” (Appendix 5, Theme 1, p. 5, l. 190).

Interviewee 1 elaborates further:

“The graduates don’t get bonuses. (...) So, we don't say like 'okay, you have done a great job in this rotation, you get an extra salary' or something like that. We don't do that. And we don't do that in general.” (Appendix 5, Theme 1, p. 5, ll. 203-205).

Based on the citations, we interpret that Danish Crown only uses intrinsic rewards in form of giving feedback. Interviewee 1 expresses that as part of their feedback-culture, they acknowledge graduates’ behaviour and performance, hence, the graduates are recognised through feedback. Interviewee 1 states that the employees:

> "(…) ask for knowledge and receive knowledge." (Appendix 5, Theme 1, p. 5, ll. 193-197).

Interviewee 1 does this, as she believes it is important to all employees, whether you are a graduate or not, to feel acknowledged because it may result in a positive outcome in relation to wanting to share knowledge. Furthermore, interviewee 1 states that the graduates function as cultural bearers, since they cross internal organisational boundaries when rotating department during the GP.

> "(…) the Group CEO, also wants the graduates to be these cultural bearers to go across the business to take, you know, for example, feedback-culture in, since it's so new in Danish Crown and we are working on that. So, they're, you know, ambassadors for this and they therefore go and share this knowledge, to their departments, to the business units where they are (…)" (Appendix 5, Theme 1, p. 2, ll. 84-87).

The citation indicates that when graduates rotate department, they act as cultural ambassadors for sharing knowledge about, e.g. Danish Crown's feedback culture. In this way, Danish Crown has taught the graduates about the feedback-culture and the graduates have experienced it, so they are able to share these norms and knowledge of the feedback culture with other business units around the world. In that context, interviewee 2 from Arla Foods also states that they do not reward employees financially, i.e. use extrinsic rewards, but states:

> "We do extensive amount of feedback, which is again, not knowledge sharing, but it could also be under that umbrella because after every training camp, after every rotation, after every kind of insightful for these guys, they are asked to do feedback. And we use that for every training we do, for every potential new rotation, we send people on to ensure best practice and best results all the time." (Appendix 6, Theme 1 & 3, p. 4, ll. 128-131).

In the citation, interviewee 2 expresses that Arla Foods also uses feedback as an intrinsic reward, but states that feedback cannot directly be defined as KS. However, as she describes herself, KS is part of giving and receiving feedback. Arla Foods evaluates and gives the graduates feedback, which function as a formal socialisation practice initiated by the organisation. Interviewee 2 states:

"That's why we have buddy, coach and the mentor in that you will get constant reinforcement in there. You will get acknowledgement, but it's not for the purpose of giving. Just acknowledgement is for the purpose of develop you." (Appendix 6, Theme 1 & 2, pp. 5-6, ll. 223-225).

This means that Arla Foods uses both formal and informal socialisation roles, e.g. buddy, mentor or coach, to support and acknowledge the graduates and make them believe in themselves, i.e. increase the graduates' self-efficacy. As Arla Foods uses feedback and evaluation to ensure best practice, the intrinsic rewards have a developmental focus. According to Cabrera and Cabrera (2005), a developmental focus in evaluations will foster and encourage the willingness to share knowledge because it creates a safe and non-judgemental environment.

Therefore, both Danish Crown and Arla Foods may use intrinsic rewards in order to make all graduates feel equal, since an organisation also risks encouraging competition between employees by rewarding KS (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). In order to avoid competition, both organisations use feedback and evaluation as a reward, where graduates must perceive the evaluation and feedback sessions as opportunities to learn and develop knowledge. However, both Danish Crown and Arla Foods state that their graduates are not guaranteed a standard employment after an ended GP (Appendix 2, p. 4, l. 119; Appendix 3, p. 3, l. 65). Interviewee 2 from Arla Foods states that:

"(...) It's a big drive Arla has to kind of ensure that they get roles at Arla, but it's not something that's guaranteed because we still believe that these people are, they have a lot of potential when we recruit them and we think that they can unleash it, but we still need to see them actually go ahead and do that over the two years." (Appendix 6, Theme 2, p. 3, ll. 70-73).

In the citation, interviewee 2 states that Arla Foods wants to ensure that the graduates get a job at Arla Foods after ending the graduate period because they believe in them and their potential. However, they need the graduates to prove themselves and show that they have developed their potentials over the two years before offering them a job position after the GP. Likewise, interviewee 1 from Danish Crown states that:

"And to be honest this year, no, next year, it's the first time we are hiring graduates who are not guaranteed a job. So, the ones who will finish next year. So here we will see, you know, will this make a more competitive environment than it has done the three last years, because they were guaranteed jobs. So, they knew that they have to, you know, that we would help them find a job and I would definitely be able to help those guys as well." (Appendix 5, Theme 1, 3 & 4, p. 3, ll. 118-122).

Interviewee 1 mentions that previously, graduates were guaranteed a job after ending the GP. However, she mentions that next year, Danish Crown will, for the first time, recruit graduates who are not guaranteed a job after ending their graduate periods. As interviewee 1 mentions herself, this change in the GP structure may create an uncertain environment for the graduates because they are aware of the fact that they are not guaranteed a job. The lack of job security may cause a competitive environment, hence, influence the organisational culture at Danish Crown. Having a competitive environment may lead to graduates not being willing to share knowledge between each other because their actions may affect their own future prospects (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). However, interviewee 1 from Danish Crown mentions that:

"(...) I see them competing. I see that. Because it is natural because they are profiles who do that. So that's just a strong thing and they have to be it, I think, because they have to, you have to think about, you know, they have to strive for a high position, maybe 10-20 years ahead. So, they have to have that mentality to be competitive." (Appendix 5, Theme 2 & 4, p. 3, ll. 123-126).

By this citation, we interpret that interviewee 1 believes that graduates are profiles who compete. Hence, she does not believe it will be a problem that the graduates are not guaranteed a job after ending the two years. Interviewee 1 expresses that they go into the GP with a purpose of striving for a high position, i.e. become a future leader. For this very reason, we will emphasise that the graduates' striving for high positions may enhance a competitive environment because, logically, not all graduates can become a CEO. Considering these circumstances, interviewee 1 expresses:

"But I think actually I think they're handling it very mature and very strong, because they know after two years they have to apply for the same job and that's just their reality." (Appendix 5, Theme 3 & 4, p. 3, ll. 116-118).

This means that interviewee 1 believes the graduates are aware of their reality after ending the programme. However, we do not believe that it is an objective fact that all graduates have competitive profiles because all individuals have diverse cultural and historical backgrounds (Burr 2003). Therefore, if one graduate perceives the environment as competitive, it may not be the reality of another graduate (Ibid.).

To sum up, both Danish Crown and Arla Foods state that neither of them use extrinsic rewards, e.g. bonusses, financial payment etc., to encourage KS. Instead, both of the organisations use feedback to acknowledge graduates, which is an intrinsic reward system. By rewarding and recognising knowledge-sharing behaviours intrinsically, the organisations are able to send a strong signal to the graduates of them appreciating KS (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). However, extrinsic rewards risk encouraging competition, which may be the reason why both Danish Crown and Arla Foods use feedback to acknowledge the graduates. Interviewee 1 states that it is important to feel acknowledged in order to being willing and confident about sharing knowledge, whereas interviewee 2 states that Arla Foods does not use feedback for the purpose of giving, but for the purpose of developing their graduates. Therefore, Danish Crown and Arla Foods' feedback systems may be designed to prevent competition by creating an equal environment, where graduates do not think of each other as competitors. However, neither Danish Crown nor Arla Foods are able to prevent the risk of graduates competing with one another because none of the graduates are guaranteed a job position after ending the GPs.

4.1.2 Sub-conclusion

In the analysis above, we have examined how KS is used in the OS process within international GPs and what role the HR function has in the process of KS. We discovered that both Danish Crown and Arla Foods have established diverse people management practices consisting of formal and informal socialisation practices in order to facilitate and encourage KS. The practices consist of, e.g. different support systems, team-based training, formal orientations in form of presentations, information technologies, international job rotations etc. In that context, we discovered that both Danish Crown and Arla Foods are putting in an effort to challenge and develop the graduates in order to discover their potential of becoming future leaders of the organisations. This process entails a steep learning curve, where graduates acquire organisational knowledge and skills by rotating departments and job functions both nationally and internationally. The regular rotations mean that graduates constantly need to adapt to new contexts. Therefore, both organisations emphasised the importance of graduates interacting with one another as well as other formal and informal organisational members. These interactions help graduates become acquainted with other organisational members, who can teach and provide the graduates with knowledge and experiences. The interactions also play an important role in developing social relations and building trust, further facilitating the transition from organisational outsider to insider as well as encouraging KS. In that context, both organisations mention that trust is the buzzword and the most important socio-psychological factor to encourage in the GP, as trust will result in the graduates being willing to share knowledge and help each other. Furthermore, both organisations state that the graduates are not guaranteed a job position in the organisation after ending the graduate period and are aware of the fact that it can create a competitive environment, which is why we perceive this as the main challenge for graduates' willingness to share knowledge. However, the organisations state that graduates are competitive by nature and know the terms of being a graduate. Therefore, both organisations seek to use formal and informal socialisation practices of establishing social relations and trust to create a caring and trusting environment.

In the KS process, the role of the HR function (to which interviewees 1 and 2 belong) can be described as twofold: to facilitate formal socialisation and learning. In this way, it is the HR function's purpose to develop, motivate and support the graduates as they adapt to the organisation during their OS process, helping them transform from outsiders to effective organisational insiders (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2015). Based on the organisational perspective, the HR function therefore facilitates people management practices such as work design, training and development, culture etc. in which they initiate formal and informal socialisation practices in order to encourage KS among graduates. Seeing it from the organisational perspective, it is in these interactions that the HR function is able to influence socio-psychological factors such as group identification, trust, self-efficacy, social ties etc. Hence, they are trying to create a non-competitive environment where graduates feel confident and are willing to share knowledge. However, the socio-psychological factors will also be influenced without the HR function's interference, as they are constantly affected by social contexts and interactions between individuals. Therefore, the HR function can only indirectly affect the graduates' willingness to share knowledge. As mentioned above, however, the HR function is able to implement practices that facilitate and encourage KS, thus creating an environment conducive to KS.

We need to emphasise that these findings are only based on the organisational perspective. Therefore, in order to examine how the HR function may influence graduates' intentions to share knowledge, we need to identify the factors that affect the graduates' attitudes towards sharing knowledge. Furthermore, we need to examine the graduates' perception of the organisational norms for sharing knowledge, which we are only able to discover by analysing the graduates' perspective (Cabrera and Cabrera 2005). In the following section, we will therefore analyse the graduates' perspective of how KS is used in the OS process within international GPs, and how the graduates believe the HR function may encourage and facilitate KS.

4.2 The Graduates' Perspective

In the following section, we will analyse how KS is used within international GPs and examine how the HR function may encourage and facilitate intra-organisational KS considering potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge. Therefore, the purpose of this analysis is to discover how graduates perceive and have experienced KS in their international GPs. Furthermore, we wish to identify if there are practices that the HR function may benefit from facilitating when considering the survey responses from the graduates.

4.2.1 Knowledge Sharing Within International Graduate Programmes

Before analysing how KS may be used within international GPs, we must understand the specific context of GPs. Therefore, we asked the respondents to answer what organisation they have chosen to be a graduate at and why they have chosen to become a graduate. 21 graduates responded on our web survey. The respondents are currently graduates at Grundfos, Vestas Wind Systems, Lidl, Wrist Ship Supply, Danfoss, Arla Foods, Tetra Pak Denmark, Danish Crown and Novo Nordisk (Appendix 7, Question 1, Theme 3). The represented organisations tell us that it is not Danish SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) who are having international GPs. Instead, it is larger organisations in Denmark that are part of a group who have chosen to have international GPs. We therefore need to emphasise that the responses in our web survey are received from graduates who work at organisations that all are a member of a group. Therefore, we interpret that all programmes have allocated somewhat the same amount of resources and the different GPs may therefore be somewhat similar in structure. In order to learn more about the respondents, including their motivations and purposes of becoming graduates, we asked them why they chose to become a graduate. 20 respondents answered that they had chosen to become a graduate due to the job rotations which allow them to explore multiple job functions (Appendix 7, Question 3, Theme 2). By this answer, we interpret that the respondents are eager to learn new things and to learn as much as possible in a given timeframe. We therefore believe that the respondents are taking responsibility of their own learning. This tells us that the graduates can be seen as critical actors in the construction and sharing of knowledge because they want to know and learn as much as possible (Kastberg 2014). 13 of the respondents also answered that it was due to the responsibility for national and international projects that they chose to become graduates (Appendix 7, Question 3, Theme 2). Furthermore, 16 of the respondents answered that it was due to the international aspect because they have the opportunity to live and work abroad during their graduate periods (Ibid.). This tells us that the structure, i.e. work design, of the international GP is important to the respondents both in terms of job rotations and rotations abroad. We argue this because the rotations in job functions and the opportunity for international business insight provide the graduates with motivation for the job. Considering the fact that only four respondents answered that they chose to become a graduate due to the specialisation in a specific organisation (Ibid.), we interpret that it is not so much the organisation itself the graduates desire to become specialised in. Instead, it is the opportunity to learn many different things and obtain global insights from their rotations abroad to, e.g. Malaysia, Finland, USA, Germany, Philippines, China, Switzerland, Austria and Poland (Ibid.). One of the respondents also made use of the opportunity to answer something else than the pre-fixed alternatives, and answered "Leadership responsibility" (Appendix 7, Question 3, Respondent 19, Theme 2) together with the pre-fixed alternatives "Due to international aspects" and "Due to the job rotations" (Ibid.). These answers tell us that it is the practical experiences with management practices within an international business that some of the graduates are seeking in an international GP. It is, however, not every graduate who have chosen a GP with the purpose of learning from others. Only seven respondents answered that they chose to become a graduate in order to learn from a mentor or a buddy (Appendix 7, Question 3, Theme 2). Eight graduates answered that they chose a GP in order to be a part of a programme with other graduates (Ibid.). These answers may indicate that it is not the socialisation with co-workers that is of high importance to some of the graduates. What we find particular interesting in this is that we believe it is in the relation to others that we develop and create our understandings of reality and knowledge. Therefore, we find social interactions a crucial factor in the context of learning and developing competencies and technical skills, which is the case for the graduates. Looking at the answers from the respondents in general, the graduates seem eager to learn and develop their competencies throughout the graduate periods, which may be the reason for them becoming graduates. However, we wonder why the respondents choose a GP instead of any other graduate position, if the intention is not to learn from others and share experiences. The answer to this may be that the respondents are not aware of how they learn and what happens in their socialisation process and therefore, the graduates simply focus on the end goal of obtaining broad skills within business management. Due to this perception of how knowledge is obtained among the respondents, we want to identify how the respondents define the concept of KS. The respondents had the opportunity to choose from three pre-fixed alternatives. Several respondents used more than one pre-fixed answer to define KS. The specific division of the answers is that 20 respondents answered "Sharing of knowledge, know-how etc. between/among departments, teams and employees" (Appendix 7, Question 4) and 16 respondents answered "Sharing of your own experiences and know-how with others" (Ibid.), whereas only six respondents answered "An organisation sharing strategic knowledge in the organisation" (Ibid.). The division between the definitions of KS illustrates that the concept can be perceived in different ways, which emphasises the great complexity that the concept possesses. As we have mentioned earlier, this thesis examines aspects of intra-organisational KS, however, it is relevant to emphasise that the graduates' chosen definitions of KS also contain the aspect of inter-organisational KS, where KS goes beyond internal aspects of an organisation (Christensen 2010). However, we only focus on aspects related to intra-organisational KS. Relatively few respondents have chosen to define KS as "An organisation sharing strategic knowledge in the organisation", which we interpret as an expression of the graduates not sharing the perception of knowledge being an organisational asset that is easy to transfer (Nonaka & Takeuchi 1995). Instead, the answers are consistent with the fact that KS happens among and between individuals, i.e. in social relations. KS must therefore be considered hard to manage and therefore, the answers correlate with the definition provided by Alvesson and Kärreman (2001) which is that "knowledge is an ambiguous, unspecific and dynamic phenomenon, intrinsically related to meaning, understanding and process, and therefore difficult to manage." (p. 995). So even though the respondents may express that it is not the social relations to others they value highly as a reason for becoming a graduate, they do express that KS is a process among and between individuals in teams or different departments in an organisation. Thereby, the graduates indirectly express an understanding for KS and indicate that it happens within a GP even though they do not put much value in the relations to either mentors, buddies or co-graduates. For this reason, it is interesting to examine whether or not the respondents experience that KS is used in their GP and furthermore, how these experiences with KS are described and perceived.

When asked to what extent the respondents experience KS being used in the GP, none of them answered "Rarely" or "Never" (Appendix 7, Question 5) whereas six respondents answered "Sometimes", 10 respondents answered "Often" and five respondents answered "All the time" (Ibid.). From these answers, it is clear that all of the respondents have experienced KS being used within their graduate period to some extent. However, the frequency of KS being used varies between sometimes, often and all the time. The reason for this may be that graduates are not aware of when to distinguish between if it is KS or just two or more people sharing ideas and thoughts about a project or a job task. From our perspective, we are not able to distinguish between the two examples because we believe that any social interaction will create new understandings of reality as we co-create knowledge in these interactions. Hence, we learn from the flows of information we share with others (Burr 2003; Cabrera & Cabrera 2005; Kastberg 2018). For this very reason, we understand that none of the respondents have answered rarely or never because KS happens all the time, which is why we are not always able to comprehend that it is a natural outcome of our actions.

On that note, it is interesting to discover which attitudes the respondents have in relation to how they perceive the organisations' encouragement for KS. Therefore, we asked to what extent they feel their workplace is encouraging KS. None of the respondents answered "Not at all", two of the respondents answered "Little", eight of the respondents answered "To some extent", six respondents answered "Much" and five respondents answered "Very much" (Appendix 7, Question 7, Theme 1). The answers illustrate that a majority of the respondents feel that the organisational encouragement is little or present to some extent, whereas the other respondents feel that the organisational encouragement is much or very much present. The different answers indicate that the respective organisations, which the respondents represent, have different approaches to KS. The different approaches may be due to the organisations having diverse organisational values that support KS activities by various means, meaning that some organisations may incorporate KS as a natural process in their work and others may not. Another aspect could be that an organisation has a great focus on the graduates' OS process which results in a graduate badge with close ties, who are interested in helping each other and learning from each other. They may do so by talking about their different experiences, best practices and furthermore, provide each other with valuable information. There may be many reasons to why some of the respondents feel much or very much encouragement for KS whereas others only feel it a little or to some extent. First of all, we believe that we all perceive things subjectively. Therefore, what may be reality for one respondent may not be reality for another respondent. We need to emphasise that graduates within the same badge may interpret the use of KS differently, even though they are in the same organisation and in the same team. The graduates' diverse understandings are due to their individual historical and cultural backgrounds, which provide each graduate with different worldviews (Burr 2003). It is therefore difficult to examine the coherence of the answers, without knowing the specific contexts of when KS may have been used. By examining the specific contexts, we may learn more about the respondents' perception of reality within the organisations. In order to examine this, we therefore first asked the respondents in which contexts they have experienced KS. 20 of the respondents answered "Graduate to graduate" (Appendix 7, Question 6, Theme 3), which indicates that almost all the respondents feel they share knowledge between and among their fellow graduates. This might be an indication of the graduates working closely together or spending time together off work, where they get to know one another more closely. However, it is not only between graduates that knowledge is shared. 20 respondents have also answered "Graduate to co-worker (or vice versa)" (Ibid.). This indicates that the graduates are working together with other employees within the organisations and share experiences and knowledge of certain areas to complete tasks. Furthermore, 16 respondents have answered "Graduate to mentor (or vice versa)" (Ibid.) and 10 respondents have answered "Graduate to buddy" (Ibid.). These answers illustrate that the graduates are having dialogues with their mentors and buddies. In these situations, the mentors and buddies both function as formal and informal socialisation roles, which contribute to the graduates' transformation from an organisational outsider to an effective insider (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006). The graduates may, for instance, learn from their buddy's prior mistakes when having a dialogue with the buddy. In this constellation, KS occurs in a more natural way given that a buddy can provide a new graduate with real life experiences and relevant

information from their own graduate time, which might benefit the graduate. However, to ensure that the buddy or mentor is willing to share their experiences with the graduate, it is essential that the chemistry between them is good and that both parties feel comfortable. The mentor's responsibility for the graduate may be in a more formal sense than the buddy's responsibility. Therefore, it may be easier for the graduate and buddy to obtain an informal relation because the buddy has been a graduate him or herself, whereas the mentor often functions as a more formal socialisation role. But again, this scenario will depend on the context and the two individuals' interactions. It is, however, not only among the graduates themselves and with their mentors and buddies the respondents experience KS. 15 respondents have answered "Co-worker to co-worker" (Appendix 7, Question 6, Theme 3), 11 respondents have answered "Team to team (in the same department)" (Ibid.) and 10 respondents have answered "Department to department" (Ibid.). This division tells us that roughly half of the respondents experience that KS happens across the whole organisation and the different departments and teams. However, the other half of the respondents do not experience knowledge being shared across the whole organisation. This is an interesting aspect because the graduates are in the situation of rotating between an organisation's different departments, i.e. crossing internal organisational boundaries. Therefore, the graduates experience various structures where the intention to share knowledge across departments may be non-existent. In order to go into further details with such specific contexts, we will include examples of how the respondents feel or do not feel encouragement to KS from their organisation.
One of the respondents have answered:

"It's not intentional, but the governance around the company is lacking."
(Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 20, Theme 1 & 3).

The citation emphasises that an organisation can have the best intentions to foster KS, but organisational structures may hinder the actual execution of it. Another respondent answered:

"All the way from management and down to individual level, everyone encourages knowledge sharing. There's of course a difference between encouraging and actually executing it, and here we often experience silo thinking where employees from one department don't talk with employees from other departments, and therefore knowledge is lost, and things become misaligned." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 9, Theme 1, 3 & 4).

The citation indicates that the respondent experiences KS at different levels within the organisation and that the attitude towards KS is positive. However, a silo-mentality exists which hinder the respective departments working closely together towards a shared goal. The same respondent elaborates further on this matter when asked if he or she have experienced competition-related challenges and answered:

"When it becomes political, and one person/team/department has an agenda that is different than another person/team/department. In that case people sometimes hold back information that could feed into the agenda of the other side." (Appendix 7, Question 12, Respondent 9, Theme 1 & 4).

This citation depicts a challenge of different agendas among the departments. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) emphasise that political agendas can hinder the willingness to share knowledge between different departments or teams in an organisation. Another respondent adds to this dilemma by answering:

"I have experienced that it sometimes requires, that you hold back information, due to guidelines or information required unofficially." (Appendix 7, Question 12, Respondent 19, Theme 1).

A situation as depicted in this citation may entail consequences for the graduate's OS in the way that the graduate will not be able to socialise and interact freely among every employee, i.e. share knowledge freely. By being required to hold back information, the graduate will limit his or hers interactions with co-workers from other departments. The outcome of OS and KS will thereby be reduced, which, in time, will enhance further silo-mentality. Another respondent states:

"I don't think there are any clear ways of sharing knowledge. Not really any knowledge-sharing systems in place. In the Graduate Programme, I've been in three different departments, and people use different systems and ways of working, not always knowing what is going on elsewhere in the organisation." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 14, Theme 1 & 3).

It is highlighted that the graduate has experienced that the structure was different from one department to another. Hence, there was no clear structure in the departments' way of doing things and communicating. This entails that the different departments do not communicate clearly between one another. Another respondent puts it:

"There's a lot of silos which complicates interdepartmental collaboration and knowledge sharing." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 20, Theme 1 & 3).

Furthermore, another respondent adds:

"Some degree of silo thinking that inhibits knowledge sharing." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 21, Theme 1).

A consequence of the silo-mentality and the diverse structures may be that a graduate over and over again will find oneself in the encounter stage of the socialisation process, instead of being able to adjust to simple one new structure in terms of a new job tasks. Thereby, the graduate is starting all over again, instead of just adapting to the organisational structures. For this reason, the graduate may experience difficulties in obtaining a sort of commitment to the organisation, which usually is obtained in the adjustment stage of the socialisation process. It is, however, not all respondents that highlight the lack of structures when it comes to KS. A respondent states the following:

"Managers are frequently encouraging employees to share projects, lessons learned, results, etc with the team. Also, feedback is an essential part of the company culture - So a lot of knowledge is shared both upwards, lateral, and downwards." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 8, Theme 1).

This indicates that some of the graduates experience that KS is an integrated part of the organisation's values and principles. For instance, the respondent mentions feedback as being an integrated part of the organisational culture. By implementing a feedback-culture, every graduate become more comfortable with sharing their experiences. The includes both the good and bad experiences. Hence, the graduates experience that the organisations create shared norms of sharing successes and failures in a safe environment. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) also emphasise that it is important to incorporate values that create an organisational culture that embraces a safe and trustful environment. Furthermore, a respondent states:

"Management encouragement – top-down approach." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 4, Theme 1 & 2),

The citation indicates that the graduate experiences encouragement for KS in the way that the management walk the talk and actually shares knowledge from top management-level to graduate-level. Another graduate states:

"I see it in all the way from where the coffee station is being located (to enhance informal chats among peers, potentially working in different departments), to how the global communication teams communicate." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 10, Theme 3 & 4).

The citation illustrates another example of how KS is implemented in the daily work from coffee breaks and sparring across global teams. The two examples are respectively informal and formal socialisation. The graduate experiences informal socialisation when he or she participates in informal chats at the coffee machine with co-workers or fellow graduates. It is often in informal situations, such as a coffee break, that people share their thoughts of a specific problem they are trying to figure out how to solve or that people share good news about a project that may be relevant for other employees in the organisation. Furthermore, the way that the global communication team communicates, is a way to formally socialises the graduates. By making sure that the communication team shares knowledge across all business units, departments and teams, they formally make sure that every employee is informed about the same topics. In this way, the graduates are able to know just as much as every other employee. This will benefit the graduates' socialisation process and increase the graduates' commitment to the organisation. To ensure that the graduates will become integrated effective insiders, they need to be socialised and feel committed to the organisation (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006). A part of this socialisation involves sharing one's experiences with others because it is in social interactions, we learn new things and where new understandings will emerge from the knowledge created between two or more individuals. It is therefore important that the graduates achieve group identification by being part of one or multiple networks, where the purpose is to help and develop one another (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). In this relation, it is interesting that a respondent answers the following:

> "We constantly share knowledge between individuals, teams, departments and have set up central functions for best practice sharing etc." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 3, Theme 3 & 4).

The citation emphasises the importance of having management practices that involve sharing knowledge between different units. This indicates that the graduate experiences team-based activities with the purpose of inspiring, informing, sharing and learning. An individual's co-workers, fellow graduates etc. may therefore be considered learning resources that the graduate is able to consult with. This is according to Myers (2011) the purpose of the social relations in a professional network. Another way the graduates express a focus on network in terms of KS is when the organisations are:

> "Encouraging international networking." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 19, Theme 2 & 3).

Furthermore, the organisations are:

> "Encouraging knowledge sharing for Graduates by setting up meetings with relevant people, assigning mentor, writing projects, etc." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 13, Theme 3 & 4).

The respondents do hereby experience KS in a more international sense in terms of international networks, which most likely will be an advantage for graduates when they go abroad. By establishing an international network before going abroad, the graduate may be more prepared to adapt to new cultural behaviours and organisational structures. Hence, it may be easier to transform from an outsider into an integrated and effective insider. Furthermore, international networks will inspire the graduates to consider how business is done outside the borders of Denmark. A respondent also highlights examples of networks in a more informal sense which is described as:

> "By encouraging regular meetings with mentor, buddy and other graduates. By organising graduate events" (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 12, Theme 3 & 4).

The citation illustrates that social networks also happen in terms of informal activities such as graduate events. In such case, the graduates are exposed to informal socialisation and according to Myers (2011), it is in these constellations that graduates become more interdependent of one another. Furthermore, it is in informal settings where the graduates are relaxed and comfortable that graduates create social ties. Lastly, another respondent states:

> "We have a community platform on Yammer (Microsoft), where people share knowledge with each other and discuss things across departments and teams." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 9, Theme 1, 3 & 4).

The citation indicates that information technologies, such as an online platform, can be useful in the creation of collaboration and network among graduates. By using information technology like Yammer, the graduates are closely interlinked because they can connect and ask each other questions regardless of their individual team, department or business unit. Considering the recent year with Covid-19 where many employees have been working from home and social and physical events have been at a minimum, the need for virtual networks have proved to be more important than ever. However, what is interesting with online platforms and online databases is that it is only explicit knowledge that we are able to store and distribute. It is only in social interactions we are able to share tacit knowledge because it is often the knowledge we do not perceive as important and therefore, we do not feel it is necessary to share. For this reason, it is important to enhance virtual communication when nothing else is possible to ensure knowledge flows of both explicit and tacit knowledge (Cabrera and Cabrera 2005).

Another aspect the respondents emphasise is KS in the context of training and learning. A respondent states that:

> "Learning sessions are organised by the People and Culture department but it is lacking the communication to go out to the whole organisation." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 15, Theme 3).

The citation indicates that the graduates are offered much learning and training as a formal practice. However, the knowledge the graduates achieve during the learning sessions are not shared across the organisation, meaning that some of the information gets lost in the process. Again, organisational structures may be a hindrance in the KS process when silo-communication is used. If we take the following citation into consideration, the training and learning sessions seem to be structured as cross-functional or team-based:

"And having a Graduate Programme where people gain understanding and experiences from different departments." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 4, Theme 1 & 2).

Here the respondent states that during the graduate period, they gain understandings and learn from other departments. This indicates that the learning sessions sometimes are designed to be cross-functional or team-based. By designing the learning sessions in that way, the graduates achieve a shared language with other employees in the organisation and their social ties will enhance. When social ties are created, the graduates are more likely to share knowledge with each other. Furthermore, the graduates, and other employees, are more likely to share knowledge with each other when they have come to know one another in a context of learning and training. Other respondents also depict that the training and learning sessions are constructed in both formal and informal settings and with a cross-functional focus. Two respondents put it in the following way:

"By organising graduate events & training modules." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 12, Theme 3 & 4).

And furthermore note:

"Many internal webinars across areas." (Appendix 7, Question 8, Respondent 11, Theme 3 & 4).

Hereby, we can interpret that the graduates are exposed to different learning practices and sources both informally, in terms of graduate events and training modules, and in more formal terms via internal webinars. The combination of both informal and formal learning practices with employees from different departments in the organisation will enhance the individual graduate's OS and accelerate the speed of the graduate becoming an integrated insider (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006; Klein, Polin & Sutton 2015).

Based on the answers we have received in our web survey, we can interpret that the aspect of competition is present to some degree. We asked the respondents if they have experienced competition related challenges when it comes to KS. In that context, 13 respondents answered "no", five answered "yes" and three answered "not sure" (Appendix 7, Question 11, Theme 4). These answers tell us that competition is not a widespread challenge in the context of international GPs. However, eight respondents answered either: "yes" or "not sure" (Ibid.) which indicates that competition is somewhat present in some of the GPs. As we have covered earlier in this analysis, some of the competition related issues are due to different agendas that may or may not be political. But there are also other aspects which are important to consider. One respondent answered:

"Many graduates competing for same positions after the program." (Appendix 7, Question 12, Respondent 1, Theme 4).

This citation indicates that if the organisations are not guaranteeing a job position after an ended graduate period, the graduates are basically competing for the same jobs. For this reason, it may be clear for the graduates that the graduate period basically can be understood as one long trial period. These circumstances can take part in making the graduates aware of the situation, which may cause disruption in the relation of trust among the graduates. Furthermore, competing for the same jobs may also hinder the graduates' willingness to share knowledge because they see no benefit in sharing their knowledge with others, which may result in them reducing their interactions with their fellow graduates (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). A reduction in the graduates' interaction with others may affect the socialisation of the individual graduate negatively and, thereby, hinder the OS process because co-workers are an important resource to consider in the socialisation process (Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006). Another respondent states:

"Conflict with incentives (bonus targets) and objectives." (Appendix 7, Question 12, Respondent 21, Theme 1).

The citation specifies that different reward systems can hinder the socialisation of graduates and their willingness to share information. Because the respondent does not clarify what types of rewards there are being referred to, we are not able to say if it concerns intrinsic or extrinsic rewards. However, because the respondent mentions bonus targets, we argue that the rewards involve extrinsic rewards, e.g. a financial bonus or material goods. Furthermore, we interpret that the rewards are assigned on an individual basis, which may be a factor that influences the relationship between the graduates (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). In relation to the aspect of competition, we asked the respondents to what extent they were comfortable with sharing knowledge with their co-workers. 16 respondents answered "very much", four respondents answered "much" and one respondent answered "neither nor" (Appendix 7, Question 9, Theme 4). This tells us that not many graduates perceive the aspect of competition as a great challenge, when it comes to sharing knowledge. Instead, we discovered that the respondent who answered “neither nor” elaborated further on the answer by stating:

> “I am not trusting my own abilities.” (Appendix 7, Question 10, Respondent 17, Theme 4).

This statement indicates that it is not so much the environment or the surrounding people the respondent do not trust. Instead, the lack of being comfortable with sharing knowledge lies in the respondent’s trust in own abilities. For this reason, another challenge, besides competition, with KS may be a matter of graduates’ self-efficacy. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) emphasise that if an individual believes that a contribution of their knowledge can make a difference for another individual, their self-efficacy will increase and thereby, their willingness to share will increase as well. It is therefore an important factor to consider in KS when focusing on the graduates’ perspective.

4.2.2 The HR Function’s Role in the Knowledge Sharing Process

Now that we know how the graduates experience and perceive KS and furthermore, have discussed how the specific contexts of KS may influence the OS process of the graduates and vice versa, we are able to identify the HR function’s role is in the KS process, seen from the perspective of the graduates. In order to be able to encourage and facilitate KS, the HR function needs to know what motivates the graduates to share knowledge. Therefore, we asked the respondents to what extent they feel motivated for sharing knowledge with their co-workers. 10 respondents answered “very much”, 10 respondents answered “much” and a single respondent answered “neither nor” (Appendix 7, Question 13, Theme 4). Overall, the answers depict a positive attitude towards KS. However, we believe that KS is a very complex phenomenon that is difficult to manage, meaning that even though we wish to share knowledge, there are a lot of factors that influence our actions. One of these factors is an individual’s motivation. Motivation is influenced by factors such as how we feel about and perceive a situation. What motivated a person is therefore individually due to our social realities (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005; Burr 2003). For that reason, encouraging and facilitating KS is a complex task and it requires that the HR function understands the graduates’ perspective in order to understand what drives and motivates the graduates, i.e. which factors that influence their willingness to share knowledge.

In our survey, we asked the respondents which factors that may enhance their motivation for sharing knowledge with co-workers. In that context, we had provided them with a number of pre-defined alternatives. On the basis of the respondents’ answers, we find it relevant to include Cabrera and Cabrera’s (2005) people management practices as examples of how the HR function may encourage and facilitate KS. The result was that 19 respondents answered "Collaborations with others." (Appendix 7, Question 14, Theme 4). Since 19 out of 21 respondents have chosen "Collaboration with others." as one of the factors that motivates them, we interpret that collaboration between and among co-workers is one of the main factors that influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge. The result indicates that different work designs within an organisation are important factors to consider when examining the HR function's role in the KS process. On the basis of the respondents' answers, we interpret that the HR function may consider enhancing the use of team-based work or cross-functional projects because such work designs may help enhance the collaboration between employees in the organisations. Enhancing the collaboration among co-workers will leverage on the existing social networks among the employees and foster the flows of knowledge as Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) stress. The fostering of knowledge flows can also be achieved via cross-functional and team-based training sessions where the graduates learn from other organisational members' existing knowledge. In this case, the HR will function as a formal socialisation source because the HR function facilitates KS via specific people management practices (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006). In this way, the graduates will be influenced by formal and informal socialisation practices in terms of social networks and formal collaboration which encourages KS. Another 17 respondents answered "Encouragement and support from the organisation to share knowledge." (Appendix 7, Question 14, Theme 4) as a factor that motivates them. This indicates that the graduates are influenced by the support and encouragement they experience from the organisations. It is therefore important that the HR function implement specific people management practices that enhance the support and encouragement for the graduates. Such practices may be to provide the graduates with supportive roles and learning sources, i.e. formal and informal socialisation, by means of a support system with buddies, mentors, supervisors and evaluation sessions with managers. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) note that evaluations must have a developmental focus. Therefore, graduates may most likely achieve an enhanced self-efficacy and become more willing to share knowledge and experiences with others, if organisations are able to have evaluation sessions with a developmental focus. This relates to the next answer which is "Trust among co-workers." (Appendix 7, Question 14, Theme 4). 16 respondents chose this answer as a factor that will motivate them to share knowledge with their co-workers. If organisations encourage a feedback-culture where it is common to give and receive feedback, both on an individual and team-based level, the graduates may become more comfortable in sharing knowledge with one another. A feedback-culture where graduates share good and bad experiences will influence socio-psychological factors in terms of increased trust. Hence, provide the graduates with an understanding of one another's behaviours, competencies and possible lack hereof (Myers 2011; Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). The graduates will therefore achieve a shared language and the social ties between the graduates will be enhanced. Another aspect the respondents perceive as an important factor is "Social activities with co-workers." (Appendix 7, Question 14, Theme 4) because 12 respondents chose this answer as a motivational factor. On the basis of the respondents' answers, we interpret that organisations could benefit from focusing on informal socialisation practices in order to encourage KS. Social activities with fellow graduates or other organisational members will not only enhance the social ties in organisations, but will also influence the graduates socio-psychologically so they become willing to create social networks in which information flows will create potential valuable knowledge. The creation of social networks among graduates or other organisational members will also increase and ease the collaboration in cross-functional projects, which will not only benefit the graduates' learning process, but also the organisation in the long run. Furthermore, 14 respondents answered "Intrinsic rewards (acknowledgement, feedback)." (Appendix 7, Question 14, Theme 4) as one of the factors that motivates them. By choosing this answer, the graduates once again indicate that encouragement and acknowledgement are important for them when considering KS practices. Cabrera and Cabrera (2005) state "Fairness of rewards is included among the supportive HR practices because it signals that the organization cares about the well-being of its employees and is willing to invest in them." (p. 11). The statement emphasises that graduates may be motivated by intrinsic rewards that are rewarded on the basis of team efforts and not on individual efforts. By focusing on team-based rewards, the HR function will be able to diminish the aspect of competition. Furthermore, the social ties between the graduates will most likely increase along with their willingness to share knowledge, when the aspect of competition is diminished. Lastly, only five respondents chose "Extrinsic rewards (higher pay, bonuses etc.)" (Appendix 7, Question 14, Theme 4) as a motivational factor to share knowledge. The respondents' answers indicate that organisations do not need to focus on extrinsic rewards because the graduates do not perceive extrinsic rewards as a motivational factor.

To sum up, the division of the answers illustrates that the graduates value close relations to their fellow graduates and other organisational members. Furthermore, the organisational support and the aspect of trust are important factors for the graduates' willingness to share knowledge. The main areas that the HR function may benefit from focusing on in order to encourage and facilitate KS are enhanced collaboration, support systems and increased trust among all organisational members.

4.2.3 Sub-conclusion

When looking at the graduates' perspective on KS within the OS process, we have discovered that the graduates experience a wide use of KS in different contexts. However, it is clear that the graduates experience structural limitations because the graduates perceive lack of communication and lack of unified structures as a major challenge in the process of KS. These challenges may influence the use and effects of intra-organisational KS. Furthermore, the graduates express that the purpose of becoming an international graduate is to learn as much as possible and to obtain an understanding of international business. The graduates' answers illustrated that the socialisation with co-workers was not an important factor in their decision of becoming a graduate. However, other questions revealed that the graduates' willingness to share knowledge depends on their social relations with co-workers. The social relations influence socio-psychological factors such as motivation, competition, self-efficacy and trust. It is therefore important for the HR function to understand which factors that encourage KS among graduates. In this context, we have discovered that the process of KS is complex to manage and difficult to control. The HR function is therefore not able to control KS as such, but they are able to form the basis for KS. The HR function can therefore be understood as having a formal socialisation role or as being a formal learning source that can facilitate KS by implementing specific people management practices. Seeking to encourage KS among graduates, both formal and informal OS practices can be used to influence socio-psychological factors such as trust, group identification, social relations etc., which will result in that the graduates experience encouragement for KS. It is, however, important to stress that these findings are solely based on the graduates' perspectives and do not take the organisational perspective into consideration. It is therefore necessary that we discuss the findings of both the organisational perspective and the graduates' perspective in order to propose an answer to the research question of this thesis. Therefore, the following section will provide a discussion of the findings from both perspectives.

5.0 Discussion

In the following section, we will discuss the findings from the analyses above. By including the different findings from the two analyses, we are able to discuss how KS is used within international GPs and how the HR function may encourage and facilitate intra-organisational KS considering potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge.

Having analysed our empirical data from the organisational and the graduates' perspectives, we discovered that the aspect of competition in regard to job guarantee is not perceived as a major challenge in graduates' willingness to share knowledge. However, we found it interesting that the organisations pointed out that individuals who choose to become graduates are often competitive by nature. In this way, the organisations argue that graduates will be willing to compete for a job position after ending the graduate period. This may be accurate according to the majority of the graduates because they do not perceive competition as a major challenge in relation to KS. However, one graduate states that low self-efficacy is the reason why the respondent is not completely comfortable sharing knowledge with others. It may thus seem that not all graduates are competitive by nature. Hence, even though a graduate has decided to join a GP, it is not certain that the graduate will find the high-paced environment appealing. Therefore, we argue that it is crucial that organisations acknowledge that a competitive nature may not be a prerequisite for the desire to become a future leader. For this reason, a GP must make allowance for graduates with various cultural backgrounds and values, meaning that organisations need to acknowledge that graduates are not alike and have different reasons for becoming a graduate. Not every individual is motivated by a competitive environment, even though they might have the potential of becoming a great leader in future. In such cases, it is important that organisations know their graduates, both professionally and personally, so they are able to provide them with supportive resources, i.e. supportive and learning sources, hence creating a caring culture. If organisations make allowance for individuals with various cultural backgrounds and values, it may make the graduate feel more comfortable in the environment and increase the graduate's socio-psychological factor of group identification. Thus, graduates may become more confident and furthermore, engage actively in their own integration. Hence, graduates become a critical actor in the creation and sharing of knowledge, which will enhance the graduates' self-efficacy (Kastberg 2018; Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). By doing this, organisations can ensure that they facilitate practices and establish a culture that will develop the graduates and provide them with opportunities to unleash their full and diverse potential within the two-year GP.

In this relation, we argue that the HR function should focus on facilitating a shared language, i.e. a mutual understanding between the organisational members, among the graduates in order to enhance social ties between the graduates (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). As we discovered in the analyses above, the graduates already communicate with one another in different contexts, e.g. training sessions, feedback sessions, via online communities etc. These different people management practices of training and development, work design and performance appraisal are primarily considered formal socialisation practices. These practices will assist in the purpose of creating a shared language among the graduates and help the graduates become acquainted with one another in a professional context. However, it is in the more personal and informal contexts that graduates will be able to get to know one another and establish more personal relations. It is in the informal, personal relations that graduates tend to share their experiences and know-how. These relations also play a role in the sense that tacit knowledge often is shared without knowing (Polanyi 1962; Polanyi 1966). We argue this because in formal settings, aspects of competition, feedback and evaluation will inevitable be present due to the organisations' purpose of developing the graduates. However, in an informal setting, an organisation may be able to diminish the potential aspects of competition, feedback and evaluation. By diminishing these aspects, the graduates may feel more relaxed and comfortable in relation to fellow graduates (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005). It is therefore in these informal settings that the graduates will begin to make assumptions about one another's behaviours and how they can support one another regarding, e.g. competencies and possible lack hereof. These aspects can help create a trusting environment where graduates feel comfortable about sharing knowledge (Myers 2011).

Likewise, we discovered that the informal socialisation practices that currently are present, e.g. graduate events and community platforms, are most often initiated by the organisations. The practices often include the participation of a mentor, supervisor, buddy or other organisational members, which also make it formal socialisation practices. The participation of these formal and informal socialisation roles may influence the graduates' perception of the practice, hence, making the practice feel more formal than informal. Organisations may benefit from minimising the inclusion of formal socialisation roles in the graduates' informal socialisation activities because graduates may feel more comfortable about sharing and co-creating knowledge in an informal forum (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2005; Kastberg 2018). By providing the graduates with more control of their informal socialisation, the graduates will actively contribute to their own development and integration which may help to create a trusting environment for KS among the graduates (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005).

Another aspect we wish to discuss is the involvement of other organisational members in the socialisation process of international graduates. The graduates express that they are motivated to share knowledge by collaborating with other organisational members. As mentioned in the analyses, whenever graduates engage in collaborative work, it is mostly with other graduates. They are rarely offered the chance to take part in collaborations that involve other organisational members across the organisation. The organisations primarily focus on team-based workgroup interaction among graduates via the people management practices, work design and training and development. Furthermore, some graduates express the presence of a silo-mentality within the organisations in terms of different agendas between the different departments and business units. The graduates express a reduced willingness to share knowledge between departments and business units which might be reasoned in different political agendas creating sort of internal competition. This might result in knowledge being kept within specific departments or business units. Such silo-mentality may inhibit cross-functional knowledge sharing.

Therefore, organisations may consider implementing more cross-functional collaboration across different teams, departments or business units to increase social interactions across the entire organisation. In this way, organisations may be able to encourage intra-organisational KS and diminish the silo-mentality of different agendas (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005; Christensen 2010).

We argue that it is important to diminish silo-mentality due to Cooper-Thomas and Anderson's (2006) statement that "It is important that organizations provide newcomers with opportunities to work and socialize with colleagues in order to gain the benefits of friendship and resource networks (Jones, 1986)" (p. 507). We need to stress that it is not the aspect of establishing friendship that we perceive as important in this citation, but rather the possibility to leverage and co-create knowledge in these social networks across internal organisational boundaries. An increased focus on collaboration across internal organisational boundaries, e.g. between individuals, teams, departments and business units, may help to reduce silo-mentality within organisations and help foster intra-organisational knowledge flows (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005; Christensen 2010).

We agree with Taormina (1997), Cooper-Thomas & Anderson (2006) and Myers' (2011) notion that it is through interactions with co-workers that employees achieve knowledge, learn specific job skills and become integrated in social networks. Hence, it is in these interactions that graduates transform from outsiders to integrated and effective insiders. It is therefore likely that an inclusion of other departments in the graduates' OS process will result in a culture where KS is a more natural outcome of the employees' daily interactions, i.e. where knowledge flows across internal organisational boundaries are an organisational norm. Different departments, business units etc. will thereby learn from each other and will be able to help each other perform in the most considerate and lucrative way (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005).

Alvesson and Kärreman (2001) argue that "knowledge is an ambiguous, unspecific and dynamic phenomenon, intrinsically related to meaning, understanding and process, and therefore hard to manage" (p. 995) which indicates that it may be difficult for a HR function to encourage and facilitate KS given the complexity of the phenomenon's socially constructed nature. However, based on the findings discussed above, we argue that if an organisation is able to acknowledge that KS is an intra-organisational discipline that has its footing in the organisational norms, organisations will be more likely to influence the knowledge-sharing behaviour. This can be done by means of socio-psychological factors, which we have discovered influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge. It is therefore in the OS process of graduates that the HR function can facilitate people management practices and use formal and informal socialisation practices to influence socio-psychological factors such as trust, group-identification, shared language and social ties (Cabrera & Cabrera 2005; Cooper-Thomas & Anderson 2006).

6.0 Conclusion

In this thesis, we wanted to examine how KS is used in the OS process within international GPs because a GP is different from a standard employment. The process of becoming an integrated and effective insider involves acquiring organisational knowledge, e.g. becoming acquainted with other organisational members, securing relevant job skills, gaining an organisational understanding etc. For a graduate, however, this process may not be straightforward. As graduates regularly rotate between departments, they constantly need to adapt to new co-workers, environments, norms etc. As a result, graduates are constantly going back and forth in their OS process. This led us to our research question:

How is knowledge sharing used in the organisational socialisation process within international Graduate Programmes and how may the HR function encourage and facilitate intra-organisational knowledge sharing considering potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge?

In order to answer our research question, we conducted semi-structured interviews with the Graduate Programme Lead & Senior Consultant at Danish Crown A/S and the Senior Manager – Head of Talent Development at Arla Foods A/S. Furthermore, we conducted a web survey which received answers from 21 respondents, i.e. international graduates. On the basis of our empirical data, we conducted a TA with an interactionist approach. Believing that both parties' actions influence the outcome of KS in the OS process, we included an organisational perspective as well as a graduate perspective. Having analysed our empirical data and discussed our findings, we were able to propose an answer to our research question, which we divided into two sub-questions.

- *How is knowledge sharing used in the organisational socialisation process within international Graduate Programmes?*

In the analysis, we discovered that the organisations, Danish Crown and Arla Foods, use KS in multiple ways. During graduates' OS process, KS was encouraged by using people management practices consisting of formal and informal socialisation practices. The practices we identified the organisations use are, e.g. team-based training sessions, technical solutions and work designs that establish online communities, formal orientations in form of presentations, job rotations and different support systems. We discovered that the reason why the organisations are implementing these practices is that they wish to develop the graduates and unleash their full potential of becoming future leaders in their organisations. However, from the graduates' perspective, we discovered that several graduates state that they experience challenges in the organisations' use of KS. They experience these challenges despite the fact that they also experience a wide use of KS via both formal and informal socialisation practices. The graduates express the presence of a silo-mentality within the organisations, meaning that knowledge is not always shared across departments and business units. Instead, knowledge is kept within the specific department or business unit due to different political agendas. The silo-mentality entails challenges in terms of structural limitations, i.e. unified structures and systems, which inhibit cross-functional knowledge sharing due to lack of communication between individuals, teams, departments and business units. We can therefore conclude that there is a widespread use of KS within international GPs. Even though this is the case, graduates express a wish for a clear knowledge-sharing structure, indicating that a cross-functional knowledge-sharing behaviour can be improved.

Having discovered how KS is used in the OS process within international GPs, we wanted to discover how the HR function is able to influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge. Therefore, the second sub-question is:

- *How may the HR function encourage and facilitate intra-organisational knowledge sharing considering potential factors that may influence graduates' willingness to share knowledge?*

On the basis of the findings in our analyses of the organisational perspective and the graduates' perspective, we have discussed how the HR function may encourage and facilitate intra-organisational knowledge sharing when considering the graduates' willingness to share knowledge. We identified that not all graduates are motivated by similar factors and wish to become graduates for different reasons. We can therefore conclude that it is important that an organisation knows its individual graduates both personally and professionally in order to ensure that the graduates, who for instance are non-competitive by nature, are provided with a support system, i.e. a mentor or a buddy, that can help the graduates unleash their full potential. In this way, an organisation will be able to influence socio-psychological factors which affect the graduate's willingness to share knowledge by facilitating people management and socialisation practices that encourage KS. Implementing practices that make allowance for graduates' various cultural backgrounds and values could influence graduates socio-psychologically. For this reason, more culturally attuned practices may inspire the confidence needed for graduates to share knowledge and know-how with others. In that context, we discovered that the current people management and socialisation practices are rather formal practices, as the practices are initiated and managed by the organisations. However, we identified that factors such as collaboration, trust among co-workers, social activities, encouragement and support from the organisation all positively contribute to graduates' willingness to share knowledge. These factors can be characterised as rather informal socialisation practices where the graduates themselves function as critical actors because they actively take part in the creation and sharing of knowledge. Such involvement of graduates will most likely entail a shared language and increase the social ties between the graduates and in this way fostering an environment conducive to knowledge sharing.

However, as emphasised by the graduates, in order to share knowledge across individuals, teams, departments and business units, both nationally and internationally, all organisational members need to have a shared language and understanding of the knowledge-sharing behaviour within the specific organisation. We can therefore conclude that in order to achieve an environment conducive to intra-organisational knowledge sharing across the entire organisation, an organisation must understand that knowledge sharing is an intra-organisational discipline that goes beyond international GPs. Hence, in order to reduce silo-mentality and increase a shared language, the HR function needs to facilitate more cross-functional collaborations across internal boundaries in terms of, e.g. training sessions, feedback sessions and execution of cross-functional projects. By doing so, the graduates will be able to transform from organisational outsiders to integrated insiders more effectively. We argue this because the graduates will obtain a more widespread organisational knowledge, which will enhance the outcome of the graduates' OS process. Especially now that the graduates go back and forth in the OS process due to the rotations. Thereby, both graduates, different departments, business units etc. will learn from each other and will be able to help each other perform in the most considerate and lucrative way helping to improve the overall organisational performance.

In conclusion, we argue that it is not possible to distinguish between KS within a GP and KS within an organisation in general. Instead, we would emphasise that KS is an intra-organisational discipline which involves actions from the entire organisation and its organisational members. We stress that organisations need to acknowledge that knowledge is a social construct itself as it is "(...) intrinsically related to meaning, understanding and process, and therefore (...) (Alvesson & Kärreman 2001, p. 995) difficult to manage and share simply by using best practices (Ibid.). Due to the social nature of knowledge creation, it is crucial to understand social relations' impact on the KS process. This conclusion seems to be consistent with Burr's (2003) notion that "It is through the daily interactions between individuals in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated." (Burr 2003, p. 4). Considering the above-mentioned, we argue that knowledge (as a phenomenon) and KS (as a process) are complex and difficult to manage because they depend on social interactions. Therefore, we do not believe that it is possible to manage KS as such, but the HR function may be able to influence the process by considering socio-psychological factors in the OS process. Therefore, we need to emphasise that KS and OS are dynamic processes that are interrelated and dependent on organisational members' social interactions.

7.0 References

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8.0 List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Interview Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews

Appendix 2 – Transcription of Semi-structured Interview with Interviewee 1 from Danish Crown A/S

Appendix 3 – Transcription of Semi-structured Interview with Interviewee 2 from Arla Foods A/S

Appendix 4 – Web Survey

Appendix 5 – Coding Scheme of Semi-Structured Interview with Danish Crown A/S

Appendix 6 – Coding Scheme of Semi-Structured Interview with Arla Foods A/S

Appendix 7 – Coding Scheme of Web Survey

Appendix 8 – List of Abbreviations

Appendix 9 – List of Figures