



The diagram illustrates a hybrid work environment. At the bottom, a person with dark hair, wearing an orange shirt and blue pants, is seated at a blue desk, viewed from behind. They are looking at a large white monitor. On the desk to the left of the monitor is a small potted plant with green leaves. To the right of the person is a blue desk drawer unit with three drawers. Four dashed lines originate from the person's head and extend upwards to four circular icons, each containing a black silhouette of a person. The icons are colored: dark blue (top left), light blue (top middle-left), yellow (top middle-right), and pink (top right). The entire scene is set against a teal background.

Future Leadership Dynamics: Cultivating Present Leaders in Hybrid Organizations

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Specialeafhandling

IT, Læring & Organisatorisk Omstilling

Title Page

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Abstract

Denne specialeafhandling undersøger fænomenet 'hybrid ledelse' i en global, organisatorisk kontekst. Formålet med at undersøge den hybride ledelse udspringer af en personlig interesse, idet undertegnede selv har arbejdet i den hybride organisation, som danner grundlag for genstandsfeltet i nærværende speciale. Den hybride organisation som specialet udformes omkring er den danske organisation Trackunit, som i har gennemgået en udvikling til nu at være en global organisation med afdelinger og medarbejdere forskellige steder i hele verden, herunder Nordamerika, Asien og rundt omkring i Europa. Som led i denne udvikling er antallet af medarbejdere i Trackunit ligeledes vokset stødt, hvilket skaber rammerne for geografisk spredte teams og dermed en praksis indenfor hybrid ledelse.

Undersøgelsen bygger på et kvalitativt case studie af den hybride ledelse i Trackunit. Dataindsamlingen bliver foretaget via en række interviews med medarbejdere og ledere i Trackunit, og datasamlingen bliver derefter behandlet ud fra en tematisk analyse metode. Specialet baseres desuden på en abduktiv tilgang til undersøgelsen af spændingsfeltet, hvor den videnskabsteoretiske filosofi fra hermeneutisk fænomenologi danner grundlaget for tilegnelsen af viden. Bevæggrundene for disse valg bygger på et ønske om at undersøge hvordan informanterne fra Trackunit opfatter fænomenet 'hybrid ledelse', hvor den analytiske tilgang og fortolkning af data bygger på den hermeneutiske tradition. Kombinationen af hermeneutik og fænomenologi muliggør en dybdegående undersøgelse af hvordan fænomenet 'hybrid ledelse' tager sig ud for de forskellige informanter, hvor deres individuelle erfaringsverden inddrages i fortolkningen. Desuden udgør forskerens egen for forståelse af fænomenet grundlag for tilgangen til forskningsfeltet, hvor en inddragelse af den hermeneutiske cirkel understøtter en vekselvirkning mellem forståelse af helhed og dele af fænomenet.

Den tematiske analyse udarbejdes ud fra en domænespecifik teoretisk rammesætning, som har til formål at understøtte fortolkningen af data fra interviews og senere danne grundlag for udvikling af et digital værktøj til ledere i Trackunit.

Resultaterne fra undersøgelsen viser at den hybride model afstedkommer en række problematikker relateret til den geografiske distance mellem leder og medarbejder. De to primære faktorer der spiller ind i problematikkerne er vanskeligheder i forbindelse med

opbygning af personlige relationer, som opfattes som udslagsgivende for at den hybride model fungerer. Derudover medfører den naturlige fleksibilitet som er indlejret i den hybride model en form for utydelighed af grænser og forventninger. Medarbejdere som arbejder baseret på den hybride model oplever udfordringer i forbindelse med at definere rammerne om deres arbejdsdag og den konstante eksponering for kommunikation i en global organisation med medarbejdere i forskellige tidszoner, udgør en stressfaktor.

Disse udfordringer skaber et behov for at ledere supporteres i at håndtere den hybride model og praktisere en stærk ledelse der er funderet specifikt på den hybride model og de aspekter der rør sig heri.

Som et løsningsforslag udarbejdes der i nærværende specialeafhandling et digitalt værktøj til nuværende og fremtidige ledere i Trackunit. Det digitale værktøj har til formål at oplyse og træne ledere i at genkende risikofaktorer, basere deres kommunikation på strategier udviklet specifikt til den hybride model, introduktion til nye anvendelsesmetoder af eksisterende værktøjer såsom personlighedstests til aktivt at imødekomme medarbejdernes individuelle behov.

Det konkluderes til slut i specialeafhandlingen, at der er belæg for at videreudvikle værktøjet, for således at inddrage flere aspekter af den hybride ledelse, som gør sig gældende i Trackunit. Prototypen på det digitale værktøj indkapsler resultaterne fra undersøgelsen i nærværende afhandling, understøttet af relateret forskning, men en bredere undersøgelse af hybrid ledelse i praksis i lignende organisationer findes gavnlig for at kvalificere værktøjet yderligere.

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Introduction

Within the past five years, a shift in paradigm has taken place. The shift was accelerated by the global pandemic, which entailed that the traditional in-office working setup to a great extent has changed toward a modern and flexible setup. The natural consequence of the international corona lock down periods, where organizations worldwide were forced to implement new working structures, has become a new normal even after the pandemic is no longer considered a threat. The shift in paradigm was initiated by the increasing global digitization, where the previously essential factors 'time' and 'place' determining which working setups were possible are now close to eliminated. The digitization erases both geographical boundaries and allows people from all over the world to work together in real-time (Selwyn, 2013, p. 1-2). Moreover, the younger generation of employees have become increasingly aware of the work-life balance, demanding workplaces to take action toward implementing a working setup to be able to attract the coveted candidates. In other words, new paradigm also indicates a shift from the employer's market to the employees' market, where the practice of employer branding has become an essential factor for organizations. Particularly, the generation of Millennials is known as the 'job-hopping' generation, who are more likely to consider other job opportunities (Adkins, n.d.), which puts a pressure on organizations to develop both employer branding and retention strategies. Moreover, Gen Z has started entering the labor market, and with their digital upbringing, they are pushing the need for technological adaptability in organizations. Gen Z is highly aware of their personal values, and the ability to create a healthy work-life balance and assume a flexible working setup is at the core of their requirements to potential employers (Pataki-Bittó & Kapusy, 2021, p. 55).

By offering a hybrid model, where employees are free to work from home, organizations are able to cover much larger geographic areas when searching for potential employees (Barbour, 2023, p. 12). As a result, hybrid organizations often consist of geographically dispersed teams, where the practice of leadership in such teams is carried out virtually.

The global organization Trackunit is constituted by dispersed teams. Even before the pandemic forced organizations to assume a somewhat hybrid model, Trackunit had started to offer a flexible working setup to support the rapid growth of the organization (Appendix 13, 14:51-16:16). Trackunit has been operating with the hybrid model for years, however, the organization has not yet taken steps toward defining a set of best practices when it comes to the hybrid leadership, specifically.

The researcher of the present thesis has been working in Trackunit for 1,5 years combined in the People & Talent team (HR), and therefore, possess insights in the structures, practices, and organizational culture prior to conducting the thesis. The role of the researcher has formed the foundation and motivation for researching within the field of hybrid leadership, as it has come to the researcher's attention that there might be a need for addressing the challenges related to the hybrid leadership.

The objective of the thesis is to illuminate the potential challenges that leaders and employees experience when operating within the hybrid model, and to uncover the defined field of research, the following problem formulation and research questions have been formulated.

Problem formulation

How can a digital tool support leaders in Trackunit in the practice of hybrid leadership?

- How is the shift in paradigm from in-office to hybrid organizations characterizing the practice of leadership?
- Which implications are associated with the hybrid leadership?
- How do employees who are working remote or hybrid perceive the role of the leaders in hybrid organizations?

Delimitations

The scope of this project is delimited to examining the practice of remote leadership in situations where leaders and employees are working from different locations. This covers both remote and hybrid working setups for both leaders and employees. The objective is to look into the practice of leadership in a digital context, where the physical distance is assumed to be impacting the practice of leadership that traditionally was conducted in an in-office setting.

In this project, the data collection is conducted within the company Trackunit, and the purpose of the study is to develop a tool for current and future leaders in Trackunit. The intent of developing the tool is to support leaders in the practice of remote leadership, based on the findings from this study. Through the data collection, the advantages of a hybrid organizational setup is going to be uncovered as well as the challenges that are associated with geographical distances within global and modern organizations.

As a part of the delimitation of the project due to both time and volume of the thesis, the main part of the collected data will consist of data derived from interviews with employees and leaders from Trackunit. Additional interviews will be conducted for the sake of clarity within the field of research as well as assuming a contextual framework based on empirical data derived in an interview with an external leader from another Danish founded, global company. This will be presented in more detail in the chapter about methodology.

Definition of terms

The field of research in the present thesis covers organizational structures and models. For the sake of clarity when using domain specific terms throughout the thesis, the list below contains a short explanation of the terms that are found relevant to elaborate.

Hybrid organizations: Organizations that offer a working setup, where employees can work from home or partly from home.

Remote work: Working (close to) 100% from home.

Hybrid Leaders/Hybrid Leadership: Leaders in hybrid organizations. Hybrid leaders are leading geographical dispersed teams, and an extensive amount of their leadership practice is digital.

Employer Branding: The practice of organizations branding the employment experience. Employer branding concerns marketing the organization as a workplace.

Generation Z: The generation of people born between 1997 and 2012.

Millennials: The generation of people born between 1981 and 1996.

Organizational Model: The way the organization is structured in terms of hierarchical levels, organizational culture, decision-making etc.

About Trackunit

In this section, a short introduction to Trackunit as a company will be presented based on information from the company's own websites and articles about Trackunit. The presentation of Trackunit is significant for the reader, for the sake of creating a complete picture of the company that is subject to the thesis. Moreover, this section will include perspectives as to how the organizational culture in Trackunit is presented on both the company website as well as in the aforementioned articles. Since the present thesis is examining the practice of leadership in Trackunit, it is found relevant to unfold the company in terms of self-image and culture, as these might or might not be reflected in the data that is generated in the research. Regardless, the interconnection of what is presented externally by Trackunit and what is actually practiced in the company will be a focal part of the research.

Trackunit was founded in 1998 in Pandrup, Northern Jutland, Denmark (Kildebrogaard, 2024). Trackunit was initially providing the construction industry with hardware that could track equipment, and the first Trackunit product was launched in 2003 (Kildebrogaard, 2024). From being a local business in Northern Jutland, Trackunit has grown into a global SaaS company, and is now the leading operating data platform, connecting the construction industry and managing data and infrastructure on construction sites worldwide (Trackunit A, n.d.).

In 2021, Trackunit acquired the Canadian competitor ZTR, which meant that the 130 employees in ZTR became a part of Trackunit, and at that time increased the number of employees from 220 to 350, and made Canada the second largest segment of Trackunit employees (Pollok, 2021). Today, Trackunit has over 400 employees globally, and the headquarter is placed in Aalborg, Denmark, where 80 of the employees are located. In Denmark, Trackunit also has offices in Aarhus, Kolding, and Copenhagen. Moreover, Trackunit has offices in North America, around Europe, and in Asia Pacific (Trackunit B, n.d.). The products of Trackunit cover over 100 countries worldwide, but the main markets that Trackunit services are North America and Europe (Kildebrogaard, 2024).

The company purpose

On the company website, Trackunit presents the overall purpose of the company:



Figure 1: Trackunit Purpose (Trackunit A, n.d.)

Throughout the *about* page, there are several phrases and text passages, stating how the company intends to appear as a service provider for the customers as well as an employer for potential future employees (Trackunit A, n.d.). The overarching theme for the content on the page is that it sums up to the purpose shown above, and is also stated on the page as: “Our bold purpose is at the heart of everything we do. It echoes in the way we work, collaborate, and overcome challenges together.” (Trackunit A, n.d.). On the career site of Trackunit, they have a page concerning the company’s DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) strategies (Trackunit C, n.d.). Here, Trackunit also states to strive toward a “(...) highly empowered, engaged and inclusive organization inspired by our purpose to eliminate downtime (...)” (Trackunit C, n.d.).

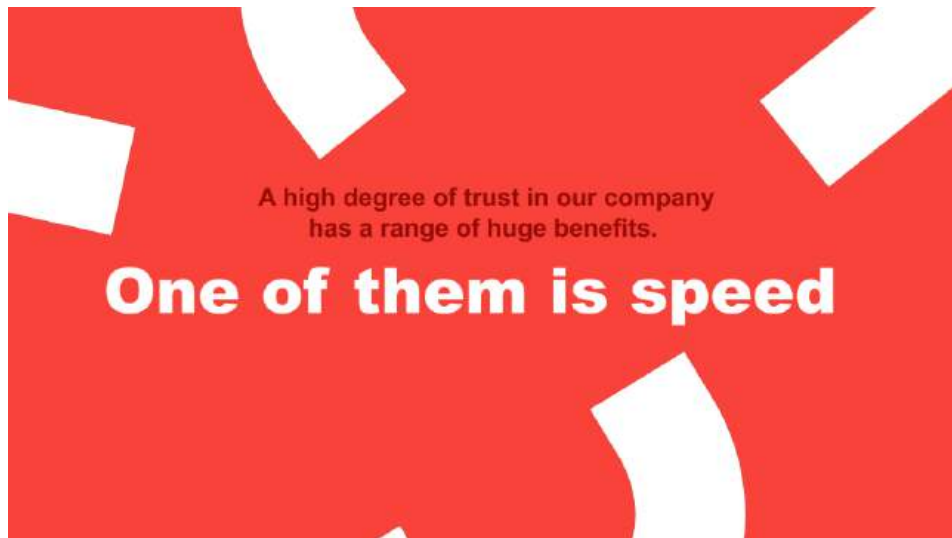


Figure 2: The Trackunit Way (Trackunit D, n.d.)

Your Job Is Not Your Job

One of the great misunderstandings in many companies is a confusion of people's roles with their job.
Your role is not your job.

In too many companies, you don't get paid to do your job; you get paid to do your role, which is a mistake. Your real job is to help the company fulfill its purpose. Full stop.

At times, your job contradicts your role since it requires that you sacrifice your own agenda, change your priorities, or take a hit on your own individual objectives. If we don't do that, too often, each individual, and each part of our company, pursues his or her own interests at the expense of the whole.

This is a tricky dilemma, and there is not a perfect solution for that. It's like a blanket that is too short. If you pull it up to your chest, your feet get cold; if you cover your feet, your chest gets cold. Instead of fighting the choice between individual and collective incentives, there is a potential better way to address the issue – and that is through meaning and purpose.

If everyone has a collective understanding, engagement, and acceptance of our purpose, we have a better chance as individuals and as a company.

The bad news is that the kind of leadership that can engage people in meaningful work is much harder. However, it is much more rewarding for everyone involved.

That's why we take pride in our leadership model that focuses on people and purpose. It's what truly sets us apart.

Figure 3: The Trackunit Way 2 (Trackunit D, n.d.)

In general, the way Trackunit as a workplace is represented on the website encapsulates and emphasizes a wide range of the characteristics of a modern workplace, based on values, purpose, and trust. Trackunit describes how they approach the discipline of actually practicing the purpose and values of the organization, which is seen in the pictures above.

Literature Research

In this chapter, the state of the art will be presented. The state of the art refers to a thorough description of findings from existing research related to the present field of research. As described in the introduction, the present thesis examines the field of leadership in hybrid organizations, and it is this definition that will form the framework for structuring a systematic search on related scientific work. The examination of the field is carried out with a search within relevant publications on the database called “Business Source Premier” (Business Source Premier, n.d.). The search on Business Source Premier includes qualified search words related to the field of the research.

Choosing database

The literature search will be conducted in the database called Business Source Premier through EBSCOhost. Business Source Premier is a database that offers a broad selection of business research journals as well as validated and certified open access journals. Moreover, Business Source Premier offers non-journal content within the business field, such as case studies, market research reports, etc. (Business Source Premier, n.d.).

The choice of database is based on the nature of the field of research in the present thesis. The thesis examines a case study that can be placed within a business field, concerning organizational culture, leadership, and hybrid and remote work. In order to search for related research within the field, it is relevant to use a database that can provide the researcher with research on similar topics, and therefore, the Business Source Premier database is determined to be the database with most related resources.

Qualifying search words

Before conducting the literature search, the researcher has to define the relevant search words for the systematic search. Based on the introduction and the problem formulation, the search words that will be forming the foundation for this literature search will be all related to the defined field of research.

In the table below, the list of search words is presented. The table consists of keywords and a column of related search words. The three keywords are based on the problem formulation of the present thesis, and these summarize the objective of the thesis: to examine the practice of leadership in a hybrid organization, and the impact of organizational culture for the leadership practice. Furthermore, the objective is to create a tool to support the hybrid leadership practice in Trackunit. This thesis is based on a case in a Danish organization, but the aim of the literature search is to explore the state of the art on an international basis, and therefore, the search words are not country specific, but constitutes a broad search within the field of research.

Keywords	Related search words
Leadership	Management Online leadership Leadership style Purpose Values Global companies
Hybrid organizations	Employee well-being Employee retention Onboarding Work-life balance
Organizational culture	Interpersonal connectivity Remote work Hybrid work Relations Virtual workplace Dispersed teams Globalization Digitization Technology

Figure 4: Literature Search

Selection of publications

In Appendix 1, the procedure for conducting the literature study is visualized in the tables. As it appears in the table, the literature study is based on a range of different search strings with varying combinations of the defined search words. Under each search string, the number of hits that the string generated is stated. However, in the literature study, not all of the hits were found relevant for the field of research, despite the relation to the search string and defined search words.

The selection of the publications that will form the foundation of the state of the art is based on relevance for the present thesis. The publications are not necessarily examining cases that are completely similar to the case of this study, in terms of the corporate perspective that is highly present in the thesis. Moreover, the publications cover a large geographic field, which supports an international perspective on the field of research, and furthermore, omits the potential limitation of the study.

Finally, the publications represent approaches to the field of research that expands the researcher's horizon and decreases some of the presumptions that might have had an impact, had the literature study not been conducted. This emphasizes the importance of preparing a chapter presenting the state of the art, especially in a fast developing field covering digitization, leadership practices, and hybrid organizations, in order to be updated on the current state of this practice and everything related to the art.

The State of the Art

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world in 2020, organizations all over the globe were forced to implement new ways of working. Even though the digitization of working structures had started to develop prior to the pandemic, organizations had to accelerate the transition to hybrid and remote working setup during the lockdown periods. After the pandemic, many organizations have maintained the hybrid setup, enabling employees to work remote or hybrid. However, the hybrid organizations are facing after effects of the pandemic and challenges related to the hybrid setup.

The organizational model paradigm has shifted after the pandemic, and has increased focus on mental health in organizations. The focus on mental health has increased along with Generation Z entering the labor market. Generation Z was raised with the internet in their formative years, and information economy as its companion (Pataki-Bittó & Kapusy, 2021, p. 53). Generation Z is highly attentive to their own values, and in their job search, they distinguish potential workplaces based on the organizational culture and values. They value optimal physical working environments, flexible working hours, and hybrid working options, as they prioritize the work-life balance (Pataki-Bittó & Kapusy, 2021, p. 55). To attract the employees of Gen Z, organizations need to implement modern working cultures and provide the employees with flexibility and options of obtaining a healthy work-life balance.

Workplaces that offer a hybrid working model are more likely to be evaluated as a good place to work (Garg, 2022, p. 65). However, it takes more than a hybrid model to create a good workplace. The hybrid model entails a high level of digital communication and co-working, and this is a field that is still being developed in order to develop the best practices (Wood, 2023). Several publications state that trust and organizational culture are some of the most important components to form the foundation for a well-functioning organization. In the meantime, the hybrid model does somewhat counteract with the values of trust and organizational culture, as research also implies that it is challenging to create personal relations and thereby trust. Moreover, a strong organizational culture is valued in the new paradigm, but this is also a challenging component to frame well in the hybrid setup (Wood, 2023). Adjustments that can be made in order to support the culture and create personal relations are virtual team building and regular check-ins. The leaders are responsible for taking the steps toward the new procedures and support employees in building the relations digitally (Nelson, 2022, p. 54).

The new paradigm implies new standards for leadership in the hybrid organizations. With teams distributed all over the world, connectivity is becoming a highly relevant topic to be mindful about. Fortunately for the leaders in hybrid organization, technology and digital tools are being developed at a similar pace as the organizational models are changing, and

therefore, a wide range of digital tools for supporting the practice of remote leadership is on the market today.

Hybrid organizations rely on digital communication platforms for daily communication as well as knowledge- and task management, and examples of these tools are Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Asana. Another tool that is created to support the leader in the practice of remote leadership is Fatigue Risk Management Systems (FRMS), which is a tool that monitors the employees' risk of fatigue and burnout, which are risks that especially remote employees are facing due to their working setup (Sprajcer et al., 2022). This type of system can be used by leaders to evaluate their employees and pay attention to work-life balance when employees start indicating risk factors.

Personality tests are widely used in recruitment processes to ensure that organizations employ the most suiting candidate for the position. However, the use of personality types should not be limited to the recruitment process, as the personality types can be used to retain and engage employees according to their individual personality type. This does especially concern the remote and hybrid employees, as personality type tests would reveal the attitude toward specific working setups. Moreover, Hackston suggests that the use of personality types actively in retaining remote and hybrid employees could support the development of new practices of leadership that are adjusted to the personality types of the employees (Hackston, 2022, p. 193).

In general, the new hybrid organizational paradigm entails a broad range of benefits that employees value. However, the hybrid model does not come without challenges, and it is the challenges that senior management and leaders should pay their attention to, in order to actually achieve the benefits that the model entails. This put a pressure on the leaders, as the transition toward hybrid models have already been made, but the best practices are still lacking. Therefore, it is highly relevant to look into specific actions that can support the practice of remote and hybrid leadership.

Philosophy of Science

When conducting scientific work, it is important to be conscious about the perspective on science in the specific context. The philosophy of science facilitates and supports the researcher in consciously maintaining the perception of science when approaching the field of research (Egholm, 2014, p. 25). The philosophical approach is pervasive throughout the thesis, and this chapter will present the various key concepts within philosophy of science, and provide the reader with a thorough description as to how the researcher of this thesis is positioned in the various perspectives of science (Egholm, 2014, p. 25).

Ontology

The term 'Ontology' stems from the Greek 'ontos' and 'logos', which individually means 'being' and 'study of'. This concept within philosophy of science is described as: 'The question of which ontology underpins a specific perspective is one that addresses the basic assumptions about the nature of the (social) world upon which the individual perspective is based.' (Egholm, 2014, p. 25). Furthermore, in the ontological concept, there are a range of distinctions in perspectives of science, that all together define the ontological approach to science that a researcher accepts when studying social phenomena in scientific work (Egholm, 2014, p. 25-26).

When conducting scientific work, consciousness about how the field of research is understood is essential, and to clarify the positioning, the distinctions are to be determined prior to the design of the research. The characteristics of the ontological perspectives will be explained in the next sections, followed by a description of how the researcher of this thesis is positioned in regard to the field of research in the present thesis.

Realism entails the assumption that the field of research exists independently of the researcher's understanding of the subject, which correlates to a positivistic, scientific theoretical approach, where finding the "truth" about the present phenomenon is the object. The realistic ontology implies that a social phenomenon is to be perceived as an individual entity independently of our understanding, which does not allow for interpretation of the

phenomenon (Egholm, 2014, p. 26). On the contrary, the constructivist ontology implies that the field of research can solely be interpreted based on the meaning that the researcher adds to the attributes of the field. One can say that the realistic ontology aims to explain the phenomenon, whereas the constructivist ontology aims to understand (Egholm, 2014, p. 26). In the present thesis, the constructivist ontology is applied. This is based on the nature of the field of research, where the phenomenon of remote and hybrid leadership is to be examined, based on experiences and perspectives from informants in a range of interviews. This approach will especially be emphasized in the interview guide, where the interview questions are formulated in a way that leaves room for interpretations of the phenomenon from the interview subjects.

In scientific research, where the objective is to understand a phenomenon, which in this thesis is defined as 'Leadership', it is important to consider the circumstances surrounding the phenomenon. Is the phenomenon universal, contextual, or processual? (Egholm, 2014, p. 27). In this thesis, the practice of leadership is assumed to be affected by the surrounding conditions, and also that these surrounding conditions are ever changing. This is based on the fact that reinventions and new approaches to leadership continually occur as well as the available digital and theoretical tools are constantly developing. Therefore, the phenomenon 'Leadership' is considered processual. The object of the present thesis is to understand the practice in order to generate knowledge about how leaders should approach the practice based on the current state, where remote and hybrid work is the new status quo, and so should the practice of leadership follow the development.

Epistemology

The epistemological concept within Philosophy of Science can be translated as 'the study of knowledge'. Epistemology examines the ability of knowledge and how to produce knowledge (Egholm, 2014, p. 28). When researching phenomena in scientific work, the epistemological approach aims to determine whether the researcher is able to retain an objective approach to the phenomena, or if the scientific work will be conducted with a subjective or intersubjective approach. Some scholars argue that knowledge cannot be produced without the interpreting researcher, whereas other scholars reject this approach as unscientific (Egholm, 2014, p. 29). When conducting scientific work, it is crucial for the

researcher to be mindful about their own role in the production of knowledge, and consider how to prepare the most applicable and scientific results, even when undertaking a subjective approach to the field of research.

The epistemic approach in the present thesis will be characterized by methodological subjectivity. The researcher acknowledges that one cannot be separated from the subject of research, as the interpretative work in the analysis will be somewhat based on the prerequisites of the researcher. Moreover, researchers argue that in addition to the researcher being connected to the field of research, the relation is also considered useful in the practice of researching, as valuable aspects of the field of research can be revealed based on the methodological subjectivity (Egholm, 2014, p. 29).

In scientific work, the type of data or material that is suitable for the purpose of the research is a question that is generated and answered within the epistemic approach. Does scientific knowledge related to the field of research constitute the most reliable results based on description, explanation, or understanding the phenomenon at hand? (Egholm, 2014, p. 31) The present thesis is based on a qualitative single case study, and, as earlier mentioned, the objective of the research in the present thesis is to understand the practice of hybrid or remote leadership compared to the traditional in-office leadership. Moreover, the ultimate objective is to be able to create a tool for the leaders in Trackunit. The tool should support their leadership practice in regard to fully remote employees and employees who are attached to another office than their leader and/or team. The motivation for conducting the present research erupts from the presumption that leaders of hybrid and remote employees need to attain different strategies to compensate for the geographical distance the hybrid model entails. Therefore, the tool should provide such leaders with strategies, recommendations and even training in how to approach the hybrid leadership.

Theory of Science

As the ontological and epistemic approaches of the present thesis have been specified, the positioning within the two concepts lead to the theory of science. As the previous sections clarified, the philosophical approach to science is based on a constructivist, processual positioning, combined with methodological subjectivity. The nature of this approach eliminates theories of science such as the positivistic theory of science, which implies a more realistic ontological approach. In accordance with the philosophical approach, the present thesis undertakes a hermeneutic phenomenological theory of science. In the following sections, the two theories of science will be described individually. Subsequently, a presentation of how the combination of the two theories will constitute the foundation for the research design and data processing will be provided.

Hermeneutics

The hermeneutic theory of science in this thesis is based on the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) and his exposition of the philosophical approach. Gadamer was one of the central philosophers who worked with philosophy of science throughout his life and profession (Nixon, 2017, p. 1).

Hermeneutics primarily concerns the philosophical question about how the human world is understood and the relation between this understanding and the natural world. In hermeneutics, this question is solely possible to answer with an element of interpretation (Nixon, 2017, p. 15). Therefore, hermeneutics has become an interpretive methodology that does not concern the static reception or revelation of the human world, but the process of interpreting what we receive or what is being revealed for us, which is conceptualized as 'phenomena' (Nixon, 2017, p. 15). In other words, the hermeneutic approach of interpreting phenomena rather than explaining them differentiates this philosophical approach from the positivistic definition of science. The hermeneutic tradition constitutes a reaction against the positivistic desire to explain phenomena and challenges the way phenomena are studied (Egholm, 2014, p. 88).

In hermeneutics, the initial objective of the method was interpretation of written text and context in as an interconnected duality. The hermeneutic circle, that is shown in the figure below, visualizes how interpretation takes place. The concept of interpreting text and context can be translated into other domains well, and the typical subjects of research with the hermeneutic tradition are culture and knowledge. The concept of the hermeneutic circle is that the interpretation of a subject is a continuous process, alternating between the unity (context) and the components (text). The presumption in the hermeneutic tradition is that one will always understand the unity of a subject based on previous experiences with similar subjects. Based on the initial understanding of the context, one will meet the components of the subject of interpretation with this presumption in mind. However, examining the components and what they are constituted of, will lead to a new understanding of the context, and this alternating process continues, as the new understanding of the context will impact the next examination of the components (Wahlgren, 2018, s. 189).

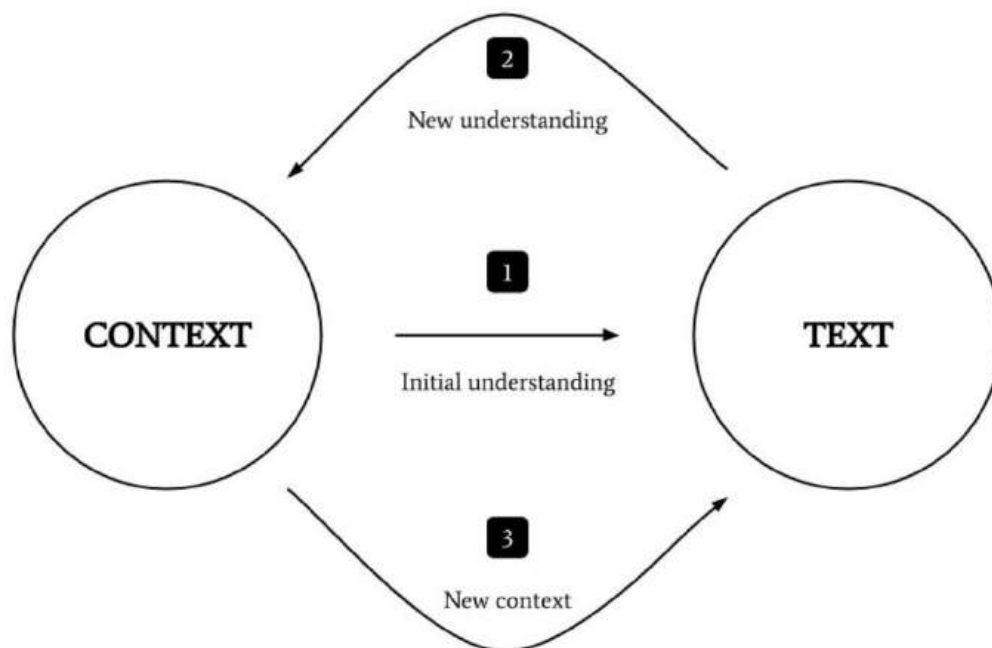


Figure 5: The Hermeneutic Circle (Cunff, n.d.)

The hermeneutic tradition challenges the objective existence of the world, and instead, finds value in examining how people interpret the subjects they meet, depending on their

individual understanding and what influences this understanding (Egholm, 2014, p. 89). Epistemologically, a hermeneutic approach to science entails that the researcher's preconceptions of the field of research forms the starting point of the research study. In accordance with the previously defined ontological approach to this thesis, the inevitable connection between the researcher and the field of research constitutes a deep and thorough interpretation, based on the methodological subjectivity (Egholm, 2014, p. 89).

When conducting scientific research based on a hermeneutic theoretical approach, the objective is to study how individuals understand and interpret the world. The ways in which the present thesis is structured in terms of formulating research questions, data collection, assessing the collected data, and discussing findings, are directly linked to the hermeneutic approach. The hermeneutic approach entitles the researcher to base the design of the research on considerations about how to unfold individual interpretations of the phenomenon 'leadership' in a hybrid setting, based on the researcher's prior experiences with similar phenomena. In accordance with the hermeneutic tradition, the encounter with the phenomenon 'leadership' through data collection will be somewhat characterized by hypothetical presumptions, that through the alternating process in the hermeneutic circle continuously will be either proved or disproved, leading to new understandings and wonders of the phenomena that consequently will lead to new processes of proving or disproving the interpretation of the phenomena (Wahlgren, 2018, s. 190).

Phenomenology

The phenomenological theory of science was founded by Edmund Husserl in the early 1900's. The fundamental philosophy in phenomenology is revolving around the definition of science as the doctrine of what comes to sight or appears for the consciousness (Jacobsen, Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 217). The initial school of phenomenology has been developed to now being the source of various research methodologies and empirical work within psychology and anthropology. However, the core of the philosophy is static throughout the different scientific areas it is used (Jacobsen, Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 217).

According to Husserl, phenomena are pervasive throughout the lived world of individuals. Thus, it is not possible for individuals not to perceive, as intentionality is fixed in human consciousness. When attaining the phenomenological philosophy, the objective is to examine how a given phenomenon is perceived, as the perception is inevitably based on the consciousness of the individual. In the phenomenological tradition, the belief is that the same phenomenon will appear differently to people, in accordance with their consciousness (Jacobsen, Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 219).

Hermeneutic Phenomenological approach in the thesis

The German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, further developed the phenomenological tradition, and pushed the philosophy toward a more hermeneutic approach to examining how phenomena appear for individuals. The hermeneutic phenomenological philosophy interconnects the philosophies to constitute a methodological framework for scientific research of how the world of experiences of individuals impacts the perception of phenomena (Jacobsen, Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2015, p. 222-223). By recognizing the impact that the world of experience has on the interpretation of a phenomenon, it is possible to include the hermeneutic tradition and components of the hermeneutic circle to the interpretation of a phenomenon.

In regard to the present thesis, the hermeneutic phenomenological theory of science will constitute the pillars in which the research is conducted. This means that the hermeneutic phenomenology will form the foundation for the decisions made in the research design, the formulation of interview guides, choice of relevant theory, data assessing and interpretation, and also, the design phase of the project.

The phenomenological approach supports the research of how the individual participants perceive the phenomena, and the hermeneutic approach forms an interpretive practice for the researcher. The combination of hermeneutics and phenomenology is coherent with the epistemic and ontological positioning that was previously described. The philosophy of science and the chosen theories of science serve as the general outlines when forming the research design.

Methodology

This chapter covers an in-depth description of the chosen approach to data collection and analytical methodology. In addition, the presented material from the state of the art and the 'About Trackunit' chapter serve as empirical material that will support both the researcher and the readers of the present thesis with a contextual understanding of the field of research.

Interview

The research design is based on a single case study, and the data collection is structured with a qualitative approach. In accordance with the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, the data collection will be conducted with a range of interviews with informants from Trackunit. Moreover, the approach entails a specific framework for how the interviews are going to be structured and impacts the formulation of interview questions, as the objective of the interviews is to examine the individual informant's perception of the phenomena with a hermeneutical interpretation. In the following sections, the considerations behind selection of informants, structuring the interviews, and the elaboration of how the interview questions are formulated will be presented.

Selection of informants

The object of the data collection in this project is to conduct research on the field of remote and hybrid leadership in Trackunit. The development from the traditional in-office working setup to the modern, hybrid working setup demands leaders and employees to attain new ways of working and communicating. The selection of informants for the interviews in this project is defined by two specific criteria, for the informants to be relevant for the research.

This project is developed in collaboration with the global organization Trackunit, and the findings from the project will be forming the foundation for recommendations and ideally a tool for leaders in the organization. Hence, the first criterion to the selection of informants for the interviews is that the informants are to be found within Trackunit. The field of research implies clarification of the current practice of remote and hybrid leadership, in order to define

advantages and challenges of the practice within Trackunit. The definition of advantages and challenges will form the foundation for the continued design work of the potential tool. Ideally, the data from the interviews should clarify best practices of hybrid leadership, from both a leader and an employee perspective.

To cover the perspectives from both leaders and employees, it is necessary to include both leaders and employees in the group of informants. The two perspectives are interdependent, as leaders may have one perception of the practice, and the employees may have a different experience of the practice, which also reasons with the phenomenological approach to the research.

The second criterion for the informants to fulfill is based on the research question for the thesis. In the thesis, the examination of remote and hybrid leadership fosters the criterion that the informants should fulfill at least one of the following descriptions: 'The leader or employee is working fully remote or hybrid', or 'The employee and their leader (or vice versa) are attached to different offices'.

Moreover, an interview with an external informant, who is a leader in another Danish founded, global organization is conducted. The choice of conducting an interview with a leader from an external organization is made to validate some of the data that is derived from the interviews with leaders and employees from Trackunit. The external leader has experience with working hybrid, leading employees in a remote setting, and is also exposed to advantages and challenges that are related to working in different time-zones, cultural differences, communication, etc. Based on the similarities the external leader and his organization has with Trackunit, it is interesting to compare strategies and processes, to explore how other organizations approach the hybrid model, with geographically dispersed teams and hybrid leadership.

Informants Table

In this section, the informants from Trackunit that are participating in the interviews will be presented. As mentioned, the entire data collection consists of interviews with employees and leaders from Trackunit. Additionally, one interview with a People Business Partner (HR)

from Trackunit, and finally, one interview with an external informant from another Danish organization, that has experience with working and leading in a hybrid organization.

This section will be presenting details about the informants in order to clarify the diversity in the group of informants. However, the informants are being anonymized in the thesis, which means that information that might reveal the identity of the informants will be left out or synonymized. Moreover, details such as seniority will be described by a range instead of a specific number of years or months. The anonymizing does not concern the People Business Partner from Trackunit, as the interview with this informant solely holds information about processes and objective information about topics related to the field of research within the present thesis. The external informant will be anonymized as well, and in cases where it is needed, information will be synonymized.

Below, a table containing relevant information about the informants from Trackunit is shown. The table can also be seen in Appendix 2 for later reference. In the table, employees and leaders are divided in two groups, which is seen in the left column. Since the identity of the informants is anonymized, the table shows the aliases of the informants, which will be how the individual informants are referred throughout the thesis. Moreover, the table contains details about the seniority in Trackunit, previous experience with hybrid setup, and current working setup. Moreover, the table contains notes about each of the informants that have been assessed as relevant to highlight in the overview of the informants. The notes refer to potential fluctuations in the group of informants, as the name of the two types of informants, employees and leaders, do not necessarily cover the differences that apply to each of the groups.

Role	Alias	Seniority in Trackunit	Previous experience with hybrid setup	Current working setup	Notes
Employee	Olivia	>4 years	No	Remote	Was working hybrid but changed to remote
	Sophia	<4 years	Yes	Hybrid	Is also a leader
	Michael	>4 years	No	Hybrid	Is also a People Business Partner
	Oliver	<2 years	Yes	Remote	Entire team + leader are remote
Leader	Daniel	>5 years	Yes	Hybrid	Leads small team <5 reports
	Lucas	>5 years	No	Hybrid	Leader for three leaders, who have >15 reports in total
	Emily	<1 year	Yes	Remote	New leader in Trackunit but with extensive experience with hybrid/remote setup

Figure 6: Informants Table

Ethical considerations

Anonymization

In the process of gathering the relevant informants for the research, potential informants were contacted per email. Due to the role that the researcher has in Trackunit, working as a student worker in the People & Talent team (HR), the contact information as well as information about roles and seniority was accessible. A short introduction to the object of the Master Thesis was formulated, where the specific intention with the range of interviews was described as well (Appendix 3).

In the email for the potential informants, it is clarified that the identity of the informants will be anonymized in the project. The informants are also informed that they will be provided with a Declaration of Consent, where information about how their personal information is handled as well. The clarification about both anonymizing the informants and handling personal information was included in the initial inquiry. The reason for this was to ensure that the informants would be participating in the interview based on informed consent to the entire participation in the interviews and thesis.

In the process of anonymizing the informants, the names of the informants are replaced with randomly chosen names. When referring to specific informants in the thesis, each of the informants will have another name than their actual name assigned. Moreover, in the interview transcriptions, any details in the interviews, such as names of team members that are mentioned, leaders, departments, etc. will be blurred out, so that the identity of the informant is being protected.

The role of the researcher

The considerations that have led to the decision of anonymizing the informants in the project are based on two main factors. The first factor that has led to the decision is the professional relation between the researcher and the informants. As previously described, the researcher of this project is an employee in the company that is object of the thesis. Therefore, the informants participating in the interviews are colleagues of the researcher. Moreover, the

researcher is working in the People & Talent team (HR), which, among other tasks, handles employee- and leader-related cases. A broad range of the tasks handled within the People & Talent team is handled with high confidentiality, but sharing details of the cases within the team is a common practice when collaborating on specific cases.

The fact that the People & Talent team handles confidential information within the team might have an impact on the inputs from the informants, as it is common knowledge in the organization that the team works closely together and spares with one another. The anonymization of the informants is an approach to creating a safe space for the informants to verbalize critical reflections on the hybrid leadership practice. In other words, the anonymization of the informants creates the best possible conditions of achieving a varied and clear picture of how the informants perceive the phenomena of 'hybrid leadership', and decreases the risk of reticence from the informants.

The philosophic role of the researcher is essential to be considerate about, when conducting interviews as well as interpreting the generated data in the following analysis. As it was presented in the previous chapter about Philosophy of Science, the present thesis assumes a hermeneutic phenomenological approach to science. Thus, the elaboration on science in the thesis is based on preconceptions from the researcher when examining the experienced life world of the informants. The ontological and epistemic positioning entails that it is not possible to objectively separate the researcher and the field of research, and therefore, the methodological subjectivity is practiced with potential biases of the researcher in mind.

Interview Study

This section contains a thorough description of the considerations behind the design of the interview study in the present thesis, as well as a presentation of how the data set will be processed and reported.

In Kvale and Brinkmann's "Doing Interviews" (2018), the authors describe seven stages that form the framework for an interview study. The seven stages cover the entire process of the interview study:

- Thematizing: Defining "why" and "what" in the research
- Designing: "how" to cover the chosen themes
- Conduct interviews
- Transcription of interviews
- Analysis
- Verify
- Report

(Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 40).

Thematizing the interview study

In the introduction to this thesis, the problem formulation was presented accompanied by three research questions. As mentioned in the introduction, the specific problem formulation was deduced by observations that the researcher had made within the field, due to the role as a student worker in Trackunit. Moreover, the motivation of conducting the research stems from a personal interest in the fields of 'hybrid leadership' and the relation to employee retention and employer branding. Not least, the researcher found the field of research of great relevance, as the fast developing digital society that surrounds organizations today requires a rethinking of the traditional practices, that do not necessarily apply to a hybrid organizational model.

The problem formulation and research questions serve as the first stage of the interview study, as these define the theme for the study:

How can a digital tool support leaders in hybrid organizations in the practice of hybrid leadership?

- How is the shift in paradigm from in-office to hybrid organizations characterizing the practice of leadership?
- Which implications are associated with the hybrid leadership?
- How do employees who are working remote or hybrid perceive the role of the leaders in hybrid organizations?

This list of questions defines the “why” and the “what”, that Brinkmann and Kvale emphasizes as a necessity to define prior to defining the “how”, which is the design of the interview study (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 40).

Designing the interview study

The intention with the design of the study is to determine how to obtain the necessary knowledge in order to cover the questions presented above (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 41). The data collection will be carried out based on a range of individual interviews with the informants from Trackunit. As previously described, one interview with a People Business Partner, and one interview with a leader from an external organization will be carried out as well, and these interviews serve as empirical material about the context of the field of the research.

Semi-structured interviews

The range of interviews with the informants from Trackunit are conducted as semi-structured interviews, and the interview guides for these interviews are seen in Appendix 4 and Appendix 5. Moreover, the Interview Guides for the interviews with the PBP and the external leader are also seen in Appendix 6 and Appendix 7. The questions in the interview guides are defined by topic areas, accompanied by research questions, which mostly support

maintaining the structure in the interview and ensures that the desired topics are included in the interview. Finally, the interview questions are presented in the right column, which are the formulations that will be used for the informants in the interviews. The content of the interview guides is characterized by the phenomenological scientific approach, as the intention behind the interviews is to understand the phenomenon of 'hybrid leadership' through the lived world of the informants (Egholm, 2014, p. 103).

The interview questions for both leaders and employees span over a broad field of clarifying the roles of the two types of informants, and their individual approach to hybrid leading and working in a hybrid organization, respectively. In accordance with the qualitative research design, the structure of the interviews is not necessary to keep strict, but allows for the informants to talk openly about their perspectives. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview allows the researcher to ask follow-up questions. The objective of conducting a range of qualitative research interviews is to cover a factual as well as a meaning level of the field of research. Therefore, it is crucial for the researcher to ask clarifying follow-up questions as well, to confirm the meaning of what the informant says, and to get the informant to elaborate even more on the subjects that are found relevant to explore further (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 15). In general, the interview questions are characterized by phrases, such as: "What do you think about", "Which considerations have led to your approach of ...", "What would you say is important to ...". These phrases are encouraging the informants to elaborate on their own reflections and experiences with the phenomenon of 'hybrid leadership' in Trackunit.

As earlier mentioned, the researcher in this project has a role as employee in Trackunit, and therefore, the design of the study should take this fact into account when formulating the questions for the interview study:

"The interviewer and the subject act in relation to each other and reciprocally influence each other. The knowledge produced in a research interview is constituted by the interaction itself, in the specific situation created between an interviewer and an interviewee. With another interviewer, a different interaction may be created and a different knowledge produced" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 17).

In this extract from “Doing Interviews”, the role of the interviewer and the impact of a potential relation between interviewer and subjects is described. In the formulation of interview questions, the researcher needs to pay attention to potential biases, and ensure that the questions for the interview are formulated in a way that minimizes the impact on the statements from the informants. However, the hermeneutic approach that is assumed in the present thesis acknowledges that the researcher interprets the statements from the informants based on previous experiences, and this circumstance is inevitable in the hermeneutic tradition. Therefore, the follow-up questions might be affected by the prior experiences that the researcher has with the phenomenon, and additionally, it is presumable that the data that is derived through the study design of the present thesis would have a different outcome if the interviews were conducted by another researcher.

Additional Interviews

Two additional interviews are carried out with an employee from the People & Talent team, a People Business Partner (Hereafter PBP) in Trackunit, and one interview with a leader from an external organization. As previously described, the interview with the PBP is conducted to clarify the role of the PBP in relation to the leaders in Trackunit, and also to exploit the knowledge that this role in Trackunit entails, as the People & Talent team handles employee issues, leader training, stress cases, and the like (Appendix 8). Therefore, the interview with the PBP serves as an informative, clarifying conversation about the field of research, and supports the thesis with factual elements to the empirical material regarding the field of research.

The interview with the leader from an external organization serves as an examination of how other organizations with experience within the practice of remote leadership, approaches the practice. The organization in which the informant works as a leader is called MFT energy, which is a global energy trading company that operates in 38+ countries and has offices in Denmark, USA, Singapore, Australia, and Turkey (MFT Energy A, n.d.). MFT Energy as a company has a range of similarities with Trackunit, which makes it interesting to dive into the practices in this company as well. As an example, MFT deals with time zone differences, digital onboarding because of the geographically dispersed employees . Moreover, on their

website, MFT Energy presents the organizational vision, values, culture and structure. Similar to the Trackunit website, which was presented earlier, MFT Energy presents their flat organizational structure, empowerment of employees, shared vision, and people-first culture (MFT Energy B, n.d.)

The object of this interview is to gain knowledge about the challenges that are occurring in other hybrid organizations as well as how they handle the practice of remote and hybrid leadership. Moreover, the interview is conducted for the sake of expanding the researcher's perspectives on the field of research, as a research conducted solely within Trackunit might not lead to an adequate coverage of the field. By including knowledge and perspectives from another, similar organization, the findings in the interviews with the informants from Trackunit are put in context. By adding context to the findings, the defined advantages and challenges can be assessed in terms of whether they are directly related to the phenomenon of 'hybrid leadership' or if they are specifically related to the practice in Trackunit. However, qualifying this hypothetical approach and potential transferability of the findings in the present thesis would benefit from a broader research, including examining the practice of 'hybrid leadership' in other organizations as well.

Transcription of interviews

Once the interviews have been conducted, they are transcribed by use of the automated transcribing tool "Good Tape", developed by the Danish media company Zetland (Journalistforbundet, n.d.). The automated transcriptions are read and corrected, as the tool does make mistakes in the transcriptions. In terms of data security, the tool is subject to European regulations in regard to GDPR, and the files that are uploaded to the platform are deleted immediately after the transcription has been completed (Journalistforbundet, n.d.).

Critical reflections

The role of the researcher and the potential pitfalls that are related to conducting the interview study among colleagues were described in the previous sections. However, there

are more general reflections that are essential to elaborate on, when conducting an interview study.

The situational circumstances surrounding the interview study are at risk of implicating the outcome of the interviews. The social interaction that is a natural consequence of participating in an interview can have an impact on the outcome. The factors that might have an impact is the level of the personal relation between the interviewer and the subject of the interview. In the present thesis, the personal relation that is based on the collegiate connection between the researcher and the informants, varies within the group. The interviews with informants that the researcher knows well might differ from the ones with informants that the researcher does not know well or have never spoken to before. Therefore, there might occur a differentiation in the style of communication, and in some of the interviews, there might be discussed topics that are implicit to employees in Trackunit, but may not make sense for someone outside of the organization. In order to avoid implicit information, the researcher formulates follow-up questions to make the points comprehensible.

Another reflection that relates to the abovementioned personal relation, the individual informants communicate differently, and as a consequence of the interviews being conducted via the digital meeting application 'Zoom', the researcher and the informants did not have the opportunity of talking prior to the interviews. Therefore, as it appears in the interview guides, the introductory questions in the interviews are both clarifying details about the informants as well as loosening any tensions that may occur when participating in an individual interview.

Data Processing

The next step in the interview study is analysing the data derived from the interviews (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 40). In this section, the analytical methodology of 'Thematic Analysis', which is the method that has been chosen for processing the data, will be described.

The present thesis assumes an abductive approach to the data processing, which means the objective is not to discover an absolute result and answer to the problem formulation. The abductive approach entails an exploratory interpretation of the data, where an alternating process between the inductive and deductive approaches enables the researcher to create and test hypotheses throughout the data processing. Eventually, the abductive approach forms a foundation for the researcher to define a well-founded answer to the problem formulation. The generic and exploratory approach to research also resonates with the hermeneutic phenomenological theory of science that is assumed in the present thesis.

Thematic analysis

The methodology of thematic analysis was founded by Braun and Clarke, and the objective of the method is to enable researchers to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within a data set (Flick, 2023, p. 440). The method goes beyond just the specific research objective, as the exploratory approach to interpreting data unfolds various themes data that are not strictly defined prior to the analysis (Flick, 2023, p. 440).

The method for processing data is founded on analyzing subjective viewpoints, which corresponds to the objective of the interview study, and is in accordance with the philosophy of the hermeneutic phenomenological approach. When examining the statements from the informants with a thematic analysis methodology, the researcher is enabled to identify, analyze, and report patterns within the data set. Braun and Clarke (2006) have created a step-by-step guide in how to structure the analysis. The six steps will define the structure for the analytical phase of the thesis. The steps of the guide in thematic analysis are as follows:

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data
2. Generating initial codes
3. Searching for themes
4. Reviewing themes
5. Defining and naming themes
6. Producing the report

(Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp. 87-93)

The methodology of thematic analysis is a method that is rather limited in terms of applicability on different data sets. The choice of thematic analysis as method for data processing, where the objective is to analyze subjective viewpoints makes the method highly applicable for research that is based on data derived from interviews (Flick, 2023, p. 440). Even though the applicability of thematic analysis is rather limited, the method is arguably representing a strong and qualified method for processing the data set in the present thesis, since the method is developed specifically for this type of data.

The delimitations of the thesis support the choice of analytical method, and the qualitative research design entails an in-depth examination of a rather limited amount of data. Other methods for analyzing, such as 'Qualitative Content Analysis', aims to reduce data and systematize the collected data (Flick, 2023, p. 444). In this thesis, the collected data is not supposed to be reduced. On the contrary, which was also emphasized in the previous section about the interview study, the informants that are subject to the interviews, have been specifically selected in order to represent a diverse group that covers different departments of Trackunit. Therefore, the aim is not to reduce data, but to unfold different perspectives and thematize the perspectives based on overlaps and predominant topics. The data collected from a diverse group of informants supports the objective of developing a tool that addresses the various types of leaders in the organization, both in the light of their different functions as well as individual leadership styles.

The hermeneutic approach that is assumed in the present thesis entails that the researcher encounter the phenomenon of 'hybrid leadership' with a preconception of what the phenomenon is. During the process of conducting the interviews, the researcher will be

exposed to new knowledge about the phenomenon, which might impact the understanding of statements from informants in later interviews in the process, and therefore, also the follow-up questions. The interview guides are static throughout the data collection process, but the researcher starts the alternating between the perception of unity and components of the phenomenon of 'hybrid leadership' from the very beginning of the thesis, and the presumption is that the alternating is accelerated in the phase of data collection and the following thematic analysis.

Theory

In this chapter, the theoretical framework will be presented. The theoretical framework consists of three theories that will constitute the framework that the analysis will be based on. Here, it is essential to note that the abductive reasoning of the research work seeks to prove or disprove the hypotheses that are continuously evoked throughout the data processing and analysis. Therefore, the theories serve as a framework for interpreting the data based on a domain specific theoretical foundation, which enables the researcher to draw well-founded conclusions from the analysis.

Frederic Laloux: Reinventing Organizations

In the book "Reinventing Organizations" (2014), Frederic Laloux presents his research on organizational models and how these have evolved through time. Laloux has conducted an examination of organizational models and their relation to human consciousness, and in the book, he proposes the future organizational model based on a research study of twelve organizations that are already operating with the 'future' organizational model (Laloux, 2014, pp. 4-5).

According to Laloux, the organizational models that have existed and, alternately, have been dominating organizations ever since the origin of organizations as a concept, are directly linked to the human consciousness and changing paradigms. Laloux defines the paradigms of organizational models through time by adjectives describing the stage of human consciousness and a color (Laloux, 2014, p. 15).

In the following sections, the most recent paradigms will be described along with a perspective as to what the paradigm would look like in an organizational context. As Laloux argues, all organizational model paradigms have their sweet spot, a specific context, in which each model is the most appropriate, so even though more models have emerged since the first organizational models, the most recent models do not necessarily apply to any given organization (Laloux, 2014, p. 17).

The Achievement-Orange Paradigm is characterized by the development of cognitive capacity that entails a critical sense: the ability of questioning authority, norms and inherited status quo (Laloux, 2014, p. 24). In the Orange paradigm, individuals are free to pursue their own goals in life, and the inherited status quo is not seen as a defining state, but something that can be challenged with the right actions and work. Moreover, this paradigm entails a natural skepticism toward the perception of authority always having the right answer, which was dominating in the previous paradigms. Instead, the right answer is constructed by expert advice and insights (Laloux, 2014, p. 25). The innovative breakthrough in this paradigm entails the ability of challenging the status quo and views change as an opportunity of improvement, where the previous paradigms perceived change as a threat to the existing processes (Laloux, 2014, p. 26). In the Orange paradigm, the accountability breakthrough led to a new type of leadership dominating the organizational model. In Orange organizations, leaders are expected to predict and control the movement of the organization (Laloux, 2014, p. 26-27).

The Achievement-Orange paradigm is followed by the Pluralistic-Green paradigm. The main characteristics of the Green paradigm are that this paradigm seeks equality, harmony, community, and consensus in the organization. In Green organizations, the top-bottom decision making is replaced by bottom-up inputs from everyone in the organization. Moreover, the leadership style is described as the leader being at the service of those they lead (Laloux, 2014, p. 31). The Green paradigm brought three essential breakthroughs into the picture: Empowerment, values-driven culture and inspirational purpose, and multiple stakeholder perspective (Laloux, 2014, pp. 32-33). In his projection of the breakthroughs, Laloux describes the value of company culture: "A strong, shared culture is the glue that

keeps empowered organizations from falling apart. Frontline employees are trusted to make the right decision, guided by a number of shared values, rather than by a thick book of rules and policies.” (Laloux, 2014, p. 33). The shared values is not a new thing invented by the Green paradigm, but the practice of them is what has changed from the previous paradigms. In the Green paradigm, leaders are genuinely practicing their leadership based on the defined values in the organization (Laloux, 2014, p. 33).

In the description of the Green paradigm, Laloux describes how Green organizations put the purpose at the core of everything they do throughout the entire organization. The company culture outshines the actual organizational strategies, which is based on a perception of the company culture to be paramount, because employees in Green organizations often feel empowered and appreciated. In general, the Green organizations have implemented an employee-centric approach which eventually results in great achievements (Laloux, 2014, p. 33). The third breakthrough of this paradigm entails a multiple stakeholder perspective. Where the previous paradigms had a strong shareholder perspective, where the overall objective was to generate profit for the shareholders, Green organizations have shifted to this multiple stakeholder perspective. This perspective entails a flat hierarchy of the value of stakeholders, which means that no stakeholder is more important than the other, and organizations need to make sure that all stakeholders thrive (Laloux, 2014, pp. 33-34). This perspective echoes the other breakthroughs that was previously described, as the green organizations perceive all stakeholders as crucial to the organizations to be able to achieve their shared purpose (Laloux, 2014, p. 34).

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, in the book “Reinventing Organizations”, Laloux examines the existing organizational models and the emerging stage of the human consciousness and the organizational model that is included in that next stage. Laloux has named the emerging paradigm the ‘Evolutionary-Teal paradigm’, and his exposition of the presumptions about what will characterize this paradigm are: Self-management, Wholeness, and Evolutionary purpose (Laloux, 2014, p. 56).

The description of the Teal paradigm is based on Laloux’ own research of the field, where Laloux has conducted scientific research for two years in twelve pioneering organizations

that are already operating based on characteristics of the Teal organizational model. The breakthroughs of Teal organizations imply self-management, where hierarchies are flattened completely. Employees and leaders are encouraged to “bring all of who they are to work” in the journey toward wholeness. The Teal paradigm is inviting employees to understand and participate in practicing the evolutionary purpose that the organization wants to serve in the world (Laloux, 2014, p. 56).

The research of organizational models through time will serve as a context of how the field of research for the present thesis is viewed by the researcher. The different paradigms and attached organizational models form an understanding of how organizations are structured and how leadership has evolved accordingly. In the thematic analysis of the data, the statements from the informants will be examined with the paradigms and attached organizational models in mind. The reason for choosing this research as a part of the theoretical framework for the present thesis is to secure a broad organizational understanding of the complex structures that are directly linked to how the practice of leadership can be approached.

Ella Hafermalz & Kai Riemer: Interpersonal Connectivity

Ella Hafermalz and Kai Riemer (2020) have conducted an extensive research on how interpersonal connectivity can be achieved despite geographic distance. In the article “Interpersonal Connectivity Work: Being there with and for geographically distant others”, Hafermalz and Riemer examine the process toward achieving interpersonal connectivity, where existing research within the field mainly focuses on the actual state of interpersonal connectivity and the implications hereof (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1627).

Interpersonal connectivity refers to the state of connectivity where a person is able to be there with and for a geographic distant other. According to Hafermalz and Riemer, the process toward achieving this state requires a certain skill set to be able to utilize available technology tools to support the interpersonal connectivity and not least, the process that leads to the state (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1627). In the research, Hafermalz and Riemer define a range of challenges that are related to the remote working setup which

many organizations were forced to implement during the COVID-19 pandemic, and afterwards, many organizations have retained (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, pp. 1627-1628). One perspective that is emphasized is that leaders are experiencing challenges with leading and staying connected with employees that are in different geographic locations than the leaders. To actually achieve the benefits that are embedded in remote work, leaders need to be able to work up the state of interpersonal connectivity that remote work requires. According to Hafermalz and Riemer, there are specific skills that leaders need to master to obtain interpersonal connectivity and the remote and hybrid employees in the best possible way (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1628).

The term 'Connectivity' refers to several types of connectivity, but in general, the term stems from a technical perspective, where the invention of the internet formed the foundation of a technical connectivity, where communication across the globe was made possible (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1629). Moreover, the evolution of technology has created the options for social connectivity, where people, groups, and organizations can connect through digital platforms. However, as a subcategory of social connectivity, interpersonal connectivity requires more than the media for communication. Interpersonal connectivity, especially in a work context, requires a great skill set to be able to be there with and for distant others despite the geographic distance (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1629). In the next sections, the practice of interpersonal connectivity work will be presented, based on Hafermalz and Riemer's (2020) exposition of the concept.

The definition of 'Presence'

When diving into the concept of interpersonal connectivity, the phenomenon 'Presence' is an essential part, as the experience of presence is not necessarily based on physical presence: "(...) one can feel close to someone who is geographically distant, and in turn far away from someone who is physically proximate." (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1633). In fact, the definition of achieving interpersonal connectivity can be described as simple as, when one feels close to another despite geographical distance. On the contrary, if one does not feel understood in the setting of a geographical distance, the achievement of interpersonal connectivity fails, which can have an impact on the self-understanding of the person who is feeling misunderstood. Therefore, the complexity and potential pitfalls of the

concept are crucial to understand in a work context, where leaders and employees are geographically dispersed (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1635).

In the description of interpersonal connectivity, Hafermalz and Riemer reflect on the fact that scholars and professionals perceive the concept of 'presence' as an embodied skill that cannot be taught, as setting up procedures and guidelines for being present would compromise the uniqueness and authenticity that is associated with 'being present' (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1635). However, the research by Hafermalz and Riemer draws on Dreyfus and Dreyfus' model of non-representational skill acquisition, where they present the concepts of 'the intentional arc' and 'maximal grip' as essential concepts for skill acquisition. The concepts imply that practical skills are acquired based on embodied experience, which means that individuals are able to attain non-representational skills that are embedded or desired in the practice of the practical skill through experience (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1635). The five-stage model of adult skill acquisition model by Dreyfus and Dreyfus will be presented in the next chapter, as this will also be a part of the theoretical framework for the analysis in the present thesis.

Hafermalz and Riemer have developed a conceptual model of interpersonal connectivity work, which can be seen in the figure below. The visual model is connected to a table that illustrates the components of the model, which is also seen below (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, pp. 1639-1640).

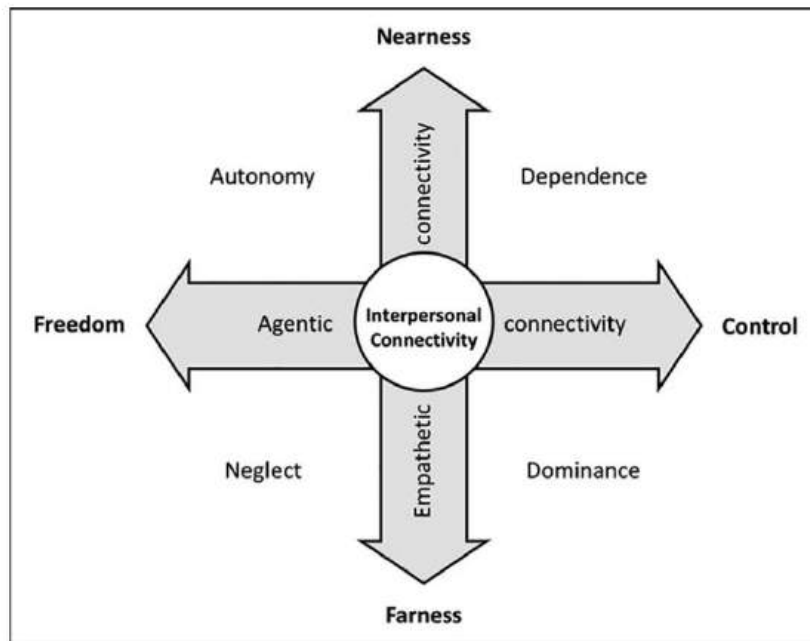


Figure 7: Interpersonal Connectivity Work (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1640)

Table 1. Examples of activities corresponding to dimensions balanced in interpersonal connectivity work.

		Hospital	Telenursing	Remote work
1	<i>Nearness: bringing closer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touching arm • Asking about family • Attending to patient when called 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity with settings • Questioning with reference to everyday objects; translating DSS prompts • Listening for cues in environment and responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking about local context • Referring to personal details shared previously • Quick helpful responses to instant messages
2	<i>Farness: creating separation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wearing uniform • Using formal titles • Shift changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assertive phone voice; wearing headset • Concealing personal information • Random allocation to caller 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formality/brevity in communications • Status set to 'away' • Delayed responses
3	<i>Freedom: offering choice</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of treatment • Independent eating • Talking is optional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option to hang up • Option of other services • Option to withhold personal information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering choice of tasks • Flexible schedule • Communication is ad hoc
4	<i>Control: taking responsibility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine monitoring • Mandatory exercise • Handling body in emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interrupting to ask questions • Directing behaviour • Calling an ambulance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strict deadlines • Meetings put in calendar • Directing action: 'Here's what you need to do. ...'

Figure 8: Interpersonal Connctivity Activities Table (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1640)

In the center of the model, the balance between the two dualities: 'Nearness/Farness' and 'Freedom/Control' is stated as the point of where interpersonal connectivity is achieved. However, even though the center is described as the ideal state, the authors argue that connectivity can be achieved in different forms within the model, which is visualized in the arrows of the model. Moreover, the model visualizes four surrounding quadrants representing the relational experience when the balance of interpersonal connectivity is not present: autonomy, dependence, domination and neglect. The quadrants represent the relational experience that inevitably will appear at times, as interpersonal connectivity requires ongoing adjustments and maintenance (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1641).

In the table, there are a range of activities exemplified in the contexts: hospital setting, telenursing, and remote work. In relation to the present thesis, it is relevant to look at the remote work setting and the specific actions included in this column. Each section of activities corresponds to different dimensions of the model, and can be initiated in order to create the balance between the components with the objective of achieving interpersonal connectivity.

Additionally, in the exposition of interpersonal connectivity work, Hafermalz and Riemer conceptualize the balance that is divided in two dimensions of connectivity: "empathetic" and "agentic". The leader of remote or hybrid employees needs to enact the appropriate balance in the interpersonal connectivity that corresponds to the needs of the employee. The balance is defined by a need for the empathetic dimension, that is characterized by being 'with' someone at a geographic distance, and is the first dimension that needs to be established. This dimension requires the ability to: "(...) assume a shared situation with the other" (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1639). Subsequently, the second "agentic" dimension entails being there 'for' the person, and take action that the leader considers the right one in the situation, in order to take control and help the other person (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1639). Hafermalz and Riemer (2020) describes the interpersonal connectivity work that goes into achieving the two dimensions require a high level of skills in the practice of connectivity from the individual leader (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1639).

The model of interpersonal connectivity work can be used by drawing on experience and balancing and even decrease the distance that is associated with remote and hybrid work. In relation to the practice of interpersonal connectivity work, it is relevant to isolate the technological aspect as solely being the medium through which the interpersonal connectivity work is conducted. The act of interpersonal connectivity work relies on the individual practitioner and their individual embodied experience, that forms the basis of the skill set that is required to be able to be present and practice interpersonal connectivity work.

Stuart E. Dreyfus: The Five-Stage Model of Adult Skill Acquisition

The skill acquisition model is developed by the philosopher Hubert. L. Dreyfus and his brother, the scientist and teacher, Stuart E. Dreyfus. The skill acquisition model is a 5-stage model that frames the process of how individuals acquire skills and the different stages toward becoming an expert within a specific domain. The expert stage entails an intuitional judgment, where the expert is able to take immediate actions based on their extensive experience within the domain. Dreyfus and Dreyfus have developed the five stages of skill acquisition, and they range from: novice, advanced beginner, competence, proficiency, and expert (Dreyfus, 2004, p.177).

The very first stage of the skill acquisition model is the novice. In this stage, the individual is taught the basic rules or procedures within the domain of which they are to acquire skills. The characteristics of this stage is that the rules and processes are isolated at this point, which means that the individual is not able to reflect on the actions but solely following the rule set. When following strict rules without context or reflection, the results will be rather poor, because rules often require specific context to actually work. An example of this could be learning to drive a car. As a novice in this domain, learners are taught to shift gear when the speedometer points to a specific number. However, if the car is driving uphill, the car will need to drive faster than the basic rules say. Otherwise, the car will stall (Dreyfus, 2004, p. 177). The individual that is learning to drive a car will eventually learn to adapt the basic rules to real life situations, like shifting gear when driving uphill, and thus, enter the next stage of skill acquisition: advanced beginner.

The advanced beginner stage is entered, when the novice starts learning from experience and failure, and understands the context surrounding the basic rules and procedures that were taught to them in the previous stage. In this stage, the increasing experience enables the individual to start recognizing non situational features within the domain as well, because the fundamental features of the domain start to connect in the consciousness of the individual. Continuing the example with learning to drive, the individual is at this stage able to read off sounds from the engine and translating these into taking actions that are appropriate according to the recognized sound (Dreyfus, 2004, p. 177). Learning at the advanced beginner stage can still be detached from real life situations, as the learning can still be theorized and exemplified, and still be applicable to the skill acquisition stage that the individual is placed on at this point (Dreyfus, 2004, p. 177).

The advanced beginner moves toward the 'competence' stage, when the individual starts to distinguish between the increasing amount of features, elements, and elements associated with the domain. The ability to distinguish between important and less important elements is crucial to acquire the skill as a competence. More specifically, the competent individual is able to reflect over the rules and procedures, and based on experience with previous real life situations, they are able to choose which perspective to adopt in a specific situation. In addition to this, the teacher of the domain is not able to provide the learner with a fixed, adequate rule set, as situations may differ in an infinite number of ways, which makes it impossible to foresee any given situation. Therefore, the competent individual should be taught how to independently distinct within the existing rule set and draw on experience, to decide the action they find appropriate (Dreyfus, 2004, p. 178).

At this stage, the individual learner is for the first time in their skill acquisition process responsible for actually relying on their own capabilities, and if they fail, it is because they made the wrong decision, whereas, in the previous stages, any failure would be because they were not provided with an adequate set of rules to follow. This puts a somewhat pressure on the individual, and winnings and failures are potentially having an effect on the individual's perception and trust in their own choice of perspective. Dreyfus argues that emotional involvement is a necessary component for the process to continue to further stages of skill acquisition. Without some degree of emotional involvement, the individual will

stagnate at this stage, because they will then solely be following the specific rules and not explore the domain outside of the specified rule set. The investment made in the competence stage makes the individual able to reflect over their own wins and losses, take all of them into account, and work up experience from the learnings (Dreyfus, 2004, p. 179).

The next stage is 'proficiency'. Proficiency entails accepting the risks, and taking the experiences from the previous stages and actually learning from them and taking them into account in future situations and decision-making. Dreyfus describes this as: "Proficiency seems to develop if, and only if, experience is assimilated in this embodied, atheoretical way." This extract breaks down the definition of this stage, where the proficient individual can identify goals and prominent aspects, but at this stage, the individual is not yet able to intuitively make the decision as to how to reach the goal. The proficient individual still needs to step back and consider what is the most appropriate way, based on the previous experiences and rule sets that have been learned. Additionally, the proficient individual can put a given situation in context with the previous experiences, and thereby, make well-founded decisions. The expert stage of the skill acquisition model is entered when the individual is able to identify the goal and immediately realize what it takes to achieve it. The expert is separated by the proficient individual by being able to make refined decisions based on fully embodied experience. The expert can divide situations into sub-situations with each of their own appropriate set of actions, and the complexity of the expert's experience makes intuitive situational responses possible to any given situation that is situated in the domain of which the individual has become an expert. The expert responds immediately without any considerations or conforming to a set of rules (Dreyfus, 2004, p. 180).

Skill Level	Components	Perspective	Decision	Commitment
1. Novice	Context free	None	Analytic	Detached
2. Advanced beginner	Context free and situational	None	Analytic	Detached
3. Competent	Context free and situational	Chosen	Analytic	Detached understanding and deciding; involved outcome
4. Proficient	Context free and situational	Experienced	Analytic	Involved understanding; detached deciding
5. Expert	Context free and situational	Experienced	Intuitive	Involved

Figure 9: Five-Stage Model of Adult Skill Acquisition (Dreyfus, 2004, 181)

Thematic Analysis

In this chapter, the data that has been derived from the conducted interviews will be examined based on a thematic analysis methodology. In Appendix 9, the complete table that has been used to systemize the process of coding and thematizing the data can be seen.

Based on the two types of informants that have participated in the interviews, the definition of the themes have been divided into two sections. Initially, this means that the researcher has defined themes that were dominating the interviews with the employees, and then repeated this process with the interviews with leaders. Subsequently, the findings from the two preliminary analyses of the data set have been turned into a Venn-diagram in order to clarify and visualize similarities, differences, and relations from the two perspectives that the range of interviews are intended to uncover. Furthermore, the diagram will serve as a guideline for the researcher in the design process of the tool, to ensure the most prominent themes are represented and addressed in the design process, both in terms of challenges and best practices.

In the thematic analysis, the theory from Laloux (2014) regarding different paradigms and the organizational models and leadership styles that are attached to each paradigm, will contribute with a theoretical framework as to how different paradigms and the organizational models are practiced. This theory supports the researcher in determining which paradigm Trackunit is representing. The paradigm is relevant to determine to recognize the leadership style that is assumed in Trackunit, and create the leadership tool based on the characteristics of the paradigm.

The theory of 'Interpersonal Connectivity Work' by Hafermalz and Riemer (2020) supports with theoretical context. When the researcher examines the components of the current leadership practice in Trackunit, the objective is to assess if the practice includes the interpersonal connectivity work that is described in Hafermalz & Riemers model. Moreover, the model constitutes a framework that the design process of the tool for the leaders in Trackunit will draw inspiration from.

Finally, the Five-Stage Model of Adult Skill Acquisition (Dreyfus, 2004) provides the researcher with theoretically founded knowledge and the model, that will support the interpretation of statements from the interviews with informants from Trackunit. Incorporating the concepts from the Skill Acquisition model to assess how individuals practice their skill stage in the domain of 'hybrid leadership', enables the researcher to conduct the analysis in the light of the stage of the individual informant. Moreover, the Skill Acquisition Model will contribute to a nuanced approach to designing the leadership tool, and make sure that the tool addresses individuals from various stages of the model.

Themes in the data set

As it was described in the methodology chapter, there are six steps in conducting a thematic analysis. In the first two steps, the researcher familiarizes with the data and generates initial codes, which subsequently lead to discovering the themes in the data set. According to the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, it is not possible to separate the researcher from the field of research and, consequently, the role of the researcher as an employee in Trackunit does form a somewhat factor of a biased approach to the data. However, the intention is to approach the data with the role of the researcher put in brackets. Besides the role of the researcher, the previous experiences, that potentially also have impacted the interpretation of the data, include the insights from working out the state of the art, the chosen theories, and empirical data from the additional interviews with the PBP from Trackunit and leader from MFT Energy.

In Appendix 9 (9.1), the initial codes that were defined in the beginning of the process are visualized without adjustments. In Appendix 9 (9.2), the initial codes have been adjusted and connected in clusters.

The clustered codes have been arranged with broader ranging codes that cover the general theme of the codes, and afterwards, the broader codes have been turned into themes. In the figure below, the themes are visualized in a Venn-diagram, of which the objective is to show the similarities and differences in the topics that were dominating in the statements

from leaders and employees, respectively. In the following analysis, each of the defined themes will be unfolded, accompanied by subheadings that are related to the themes, of which the intention is to create nuances in the analysis and cover each theme sufficiently.

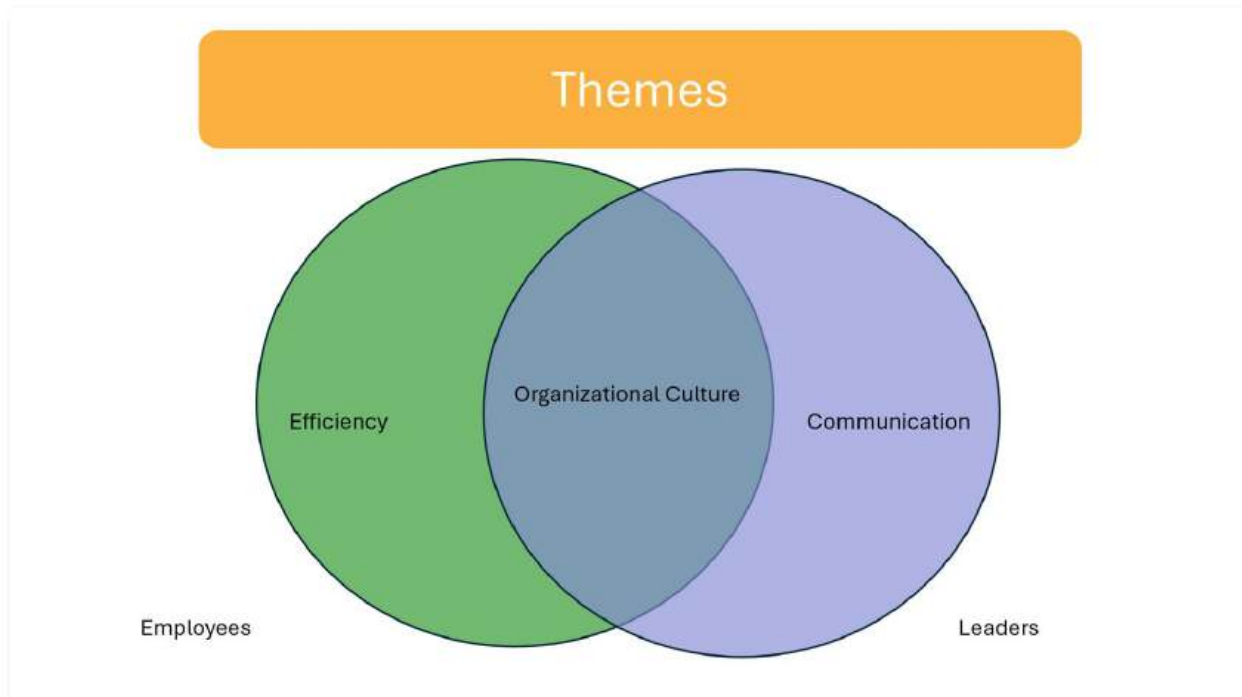


Figure 11: Themes

Communication

In the data set, the theme 'Communication' has been defined, although, this is a theme that was mostly dominating the interviews with leaders in Trackunit, which is visualized in the Venn-diagram above. In the interview guides for both types of informants (Appendix 4+5) all informants are asked the same introductory questions, where one of them is: "How often do you connect 1:1 with your leader/direct reports". The objective of this questions is to define the average level of how often the leaders and employees connect, and additionally, examine the considerations behind the cadences. All the informants reported fixed 1:1 check-ins with a weekly or bi-weekly cadence, and the majority of the informants also said that they had fixed check-ins with their entire team, also at a weekly or bi-weekly cadence.

The informant Lucas describes how they approach the check-ins in his team: “So we have a set of rules in my team for how we do one on one. So each team member gets offered to have a check-in each week. And we generally try to do that. I think only one or two people have said, no, that's too much. We let them decide if they prefer every two weeks, that's fine. But we offer to do it once a week. (Appendix 10, 06:54-07:15). The approach that Lucas presents encapsulates the individuality of employees and their needs. According to Hafermalz and Riemer (2020), the right amount of connectivity in a hybrid working setting is vital to support the employee in performing effectively, and, as there is no one-size-fits-all solution to achieving this state, it is up to each leader to figure out how to approach the employees as individuals (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1628). Moreover, in Laloux' exposition of the most recent organizational paradigm, the Green paradigm, the leadership style is characterized by empowerment of the employees, and leaders should be ‘servant leaders’, who listen to the employees and motivates and develops them according to their individual needs and preferences (Laloux, 2014, p. 38).

As it appears in the informants table, Lucas has been working as a leader in Trackunit for more than 5 years, and it is therefore reasonable to assume that the informant has built up quite some experience with different types of employees and approaches hereto. In the Skill Acquisition Model, the criteria of becoming an expert within a domain requires that the individual is able to provide immediate responds or take actions in situations based on intuition (Dreyfus, 2004, p. 180). The expert is detached from the rule-following of the novice, and bases the skill on past, embodied experience. When the informant is being asked about specific topics in relation to his leadership style, he reflects over the considerations behind his initiatives, which are, according to the informant, widely based on experiences, both from his previous job as a leader, and from more than 5 years as a leader in Trackunit: “(...) And then we also learned that you have to actively ask questions. So again, because you lose out on the body language. Which would normally cue you maybe to ask, hey, are you okay? It's pretty easy to come on to a camera, just smile, make the time pass. And then, you know, not get into it.” (Appendix 10, 10:40-10:53).

In the interview, Lucas informs that he has almost 10 years of experience as a leader. The informant has experienced leading in both the traditional in-office model, where all of the team he was leading would be located in the same office (Appendix 10, 13:52 - 14:04), and the transition to the hybrid model that is now dominating in Trackunit. The informant emphasizes the challenges related to not being able to read people according to their body language, when meetings are facilitated on the digital meeting platform, Zoom (Zoom.com): “When you're in a room with someone, you can more easily detect their body language because you can see the whole body. You can see how they're sitting and shifting. So if something seems uncomfortable or if someone seems, you know, on edge, you can easily see them.” (Appendix 10, 10:07-10:19).

The informant Emily does also have 10 years of experience as a leader (Appendix 11, 01:17 - 01:18). Emily has implemented specific actions in her leading style that she use to compensate for the missing factor of body language, to read the mood of the employees: “So I think one of the biggest things like I did right away is always trying to build a connection quickly, (...) Like there's some form of common connection and like, what is that? What does it mean? Like, do you like a specific, you know, food? Do you, you know, love cars? Do you like, what is the connection that you can always bring back to? Cause you can start to tell when people talk about something that they like, if they're not as excited about it. (...)” (Appendix 11, 25:40-26:24). When the informant practices this strategy, she seeks to compensate for the missing body language that the digital communication entails. Moreover, in accordance with Hafermalz & Riemer's model of interpersonal connectivity work (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1640), the informant actually works on the ‘Nearness’ component of the model, which supports delimiting the feeling of distance, even though the informant might be located geographically far away from the employee she is talking to (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1641). By getting to know which topics are of the employees' interest, she can refer to these topics in future meetings, and thereby both get to build a relation to the employee over a shared interest, as well as being able to read the mood of the employee based on their level of excitement talking about the topic. In this example, communication is used as a strategy of implicitly monitoring the mood of the employees. This strategy builds on a personal relation that needs to be established in the hybrid model. However, according to Hafermalz & Riemer, building a personal relation requires

interpersonal connectivity work to obtain the sense of 'Nearness' despite a geographic distance (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1641). Therefore, the transferability of the strategy requires that the leader is placed at least at the 'Competence' stage of the skill acquisition model within the domain of 'hybrid leadership', where the leader is able to distinct between situations where the strategy would be appropriate to practice.

In terms of direct communication as a strategy, Daniel shares his perception of how to compensate for the geographic distance. Daniel emphasizes that he is leading a rather small team, and it is therefore easier for him to sense the mood of the employees based on their behavior. However, the informant states that he encourages the employees to speak up, if there is something they are struggling with at work or in their private life: "(...)if you don't tell me directly I'm gonna lose out on half at least so that's, and I iterate it over and over during the first six months I guess where people are here just to get them, and get it under their skin that this is how we work, so feedback, feedback, feedback, (...) and I really encourage people to be honest also if there's something troubling them in their private lives not that they have to share but if it feels like it or something they feel impacts their work let me know because then I can act on it. If not, I'm going to keep working as I did yesterday so it really is a lot about communication." (Appendix 12, 20:57-21:39). Daniel recognizes his own limitations that are directly related to the hybrid model. He emphasizes the challenges of realizing if team members are struggling, if they are not directly communicating how they feel.

Daniel has, presumably based on his extensive experience as a leader in the hybrid model, implemented a strategy he uses to sense the state of the employees if they are not directly communicating that they are struggling with something. The strategy consists of paying attention to what he calls "left-handed work". By left-handed work, he refers to "easy, small tasks", and if an employee starts to perform poorly in these tasks, Daniel takes immediate actions to figure out what is causing the employee to perform poorly in tasks, he or she would normally excel in (Appendix 12, 20:14-20:57). This approach is a rather simple way of monitoring how the employee is doing, and could potentially be translated into a recommendation of a 'best practice' of monitoring employees in the hybrid leadership (Dreyfus, 2004, p. 181). However, in regard to the Skill Acquisition model, the stage of the

leader within the domain of hybrid leadership could impact how the individual leader interprets a situation where an employee starts to perform poorly in the “left-handed” tasks. Therefore, the strategy ‘best practice’ should emphasize the mental health risks related to the hybrid model, so that they are supported in distinguishing between whether it is solely poor performance or if there is something deeper behind the change in performance.

The perspective from Daniel on the challenges related to hybrid leadership is in accordance with the experience that Lucas described, where an approach of direct communication is giving the leaders the best prerequisites to take action, if an employee expresses lack of motivation, struggling with work load or mental health issues. However, direct and honest communication requires a degree of trust in the relationship between leader and employee, for the employee to feel safe about being honest and to show vulnerability (Appendix 10, 31:34 - 31:42).

Trust

It can be challenging to build trust in relationships that are solely based on digital communication, written and spoken, and this challenge is pointed out by all the leader informants. Lucas elaborates on the importance of personal relations, and the challenges related hereto: “(...) The trust that you want to build in any working relationship between a manager and an employee. And that's why I think it's really crucial to make sure that you build safety and all the other things. And it's the most difficult thing to build remotely.” (Appendix 10, 31:34 - 31:42). As it was emphasized in the previous section, the lack of body language in a Zoom call eliminates a range of the signs that leaders of in-office teams would usually look for, when monitoring the mood of the employees. The geographic distance between leaders and employees can also entail challenges in building personal relations, which, according to all the informants in the present thesis, is crucial to have in order to gain trust. However, there is a slight difference in the perception of trust between the leader informants and the employee informants. which will be examined in more detail in this section.

Even though both leaders and employees share the opinion that trust is crucial for the hybrid model to work, the desired outcome of building trust is differentiated in the two groups. The leaders emphasize the importance of trust to support a safe environment, where the employees feel comfortable with sharing their struggles, both in a work context but also in their personal life. In Laloux' exposition of the emerging Teal organizations, the new paradigm entails a strive for wholeness. This means that organizations that are based on the Teal paradigm encourage the employees and leaders to bring everything they are made of into their work life (Laloux, 2014, p. 56). When the leaders from Trackunit express that they want the employees to be honest and let their leaders know if they struggle with something at home, it resembles a Teal organizational model that breaks the traditional 'professional' mask that employees were expected to put on when going to work. In the Teal paradigm, Laloux describes that the strive for wholeness is applicable throughout the organization, which means that leaders are also expected to bring themselves in positions where they show a degree of vulnerability (Laloux, 2014, p. 56).

In the interview with Daniel, he talks about his appearance as a leader, and stresses the fact that he wants his direct reports to be aware that he, as a leader, does also make mistakes, and acknowledges that everyone does. The informant refers to a shared attitude in Trackunit, that mistakes are allowed, as long as you learn from them (Appendix 12, 23:25 - 23:33). The employee informant Olivia illuminates the aspect from an employee point of view, and states that: "I think there's something around talking about mistakes. (...) And if you then work for someone who has a healthy relationship to fail, and you're going to make a failure. And also communicates that in like, yeah, we wanted to do this and that, but actually, we completely missed that. (...) Because you will make some mistakes. And when you work remote, it's way easier to get into your head. And then you're like, oh no, I really, I really fucked that up. Yeah. And if you then have a leader who you can trust, that they're not going to lose their minds about something like that, then I think that is.. yeah, super important piece of the puzzle." (Appendix 13, 42:00-42:52). This extract summarizes the importance of building trust and cultivating the attitude toward making mistakes in the organization. As it was previously described, the informants share the opinion that building personal relations and thereby trust, is challenging in the hybrid model, where communication is mainly digital. The leader informants have incorporated different approaches to build trust in their relationship

with employees, which all involve characteristics from the Teal organizational model from Laloux (2014).

As it appears in the informant table (Appendix 2), the two leaders Lucas and Daniel have both been working as leaders in Trackunit for over 5 years. Based on their seniority, it is likely that the two leaders have worked up an extensive amount of experience with leading in Trackunit based on the organizational culture. Therefore, it is presumably that the approaches that they have attained in their leadership styles are representative for the general leadership style in Trackunit and are based on substantial experience within the organization. However, it is relevant to keep in mind that different teams and departments and their affiliated tasks might entail different needs in terms of leadership style. This leads back to the fact that there is not a one-size-fits-all, and the present thesis should therefore, in the design process of the leadership tool, be covering varying types of needs in this regard. In addition, the informant Emily, who is a rather new leader in Trackunit, but with 10 years of experience as a leader in hybrid work places (Appendix 11, 00:39-01:44), it is rewarding for the nuances of the findings to compare the leaders who have been in Trackunit for over 5 years with a rather new leader in Trackunit, to examine the similarities and differences in leadership style.

Lucas explains how he strives to be genuinely interested in the lives of the employees. In accordance with the 'Nearness' activities that Hafermalz and Riemer presents in their model of interpersonal connectivity work, referring to personal details that the employee has previously shared creates a sense of nearness despite a geographical distance (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1640). Lucas states that: "(...) Because part of being a leader is actually being there for them when they need it. And that means that if someone has a sick kid, you should know the name of that child. You should be able to empathize with them. And you can't do that if you're not interested." (Appendix 10, 08:23-08:55). Additionally, in this extract, it is quite explicit that the informant strives to "be there for them when they need it", which is one of the key concepts of interpersonal connectivity, and he pays attention to the employees' personal life in order to work toward creating the connectivity that is needed. He addresses the challenges related to leading a big team, where it can be difficult for leaders to remember personal details about everyone: "And if you can't remember it, if you have a

big team, write some of it down.” (Appendix 10, 31:55 - 32:08), which constitutes a specific strategy to show genuine interest in the employees. In Hafermalz & Riemer’s exposition of the components of interpersonal connectivity, they present two dimensions of interpersonal connectivity: ‘empathetic’ and ‘agentic’ interpersonal connectivity. The empathetic dimension covers the work to become present and be ‘with’ someone at a geographic distance, where the agentic dimension covers the work to actively take control of a situation and be there ‘for’ the other person (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1639). The strategy described by Lucas reasons with the interpersonal connectivity work to be ‘with’ someone and assume an empathetic approach to the employee with a sick child, creating nearness by referring to previous shared details in terms of the name of the child.

The informant Daniel is asked whether he considers personal relations to be important. To this he answers: “For me personally, yes. I think it is, I build a lot of the way I work on trust. And that means if I don’t know the person personally, it’s very hard to have trust.” (Appendix 12, 06:32 - 06:43). Trust requires a personal relation, and according to Daniel, it is easier for leaders in smaller teams like himself, because it is possible to engage in each of the employees and build the personal relation. However, he acknowledges that larger teams might need to settle at a lower level of personal relations between leaders and employees, as building personal relations in a hybrid model requires that people dedicate time to get to know each other.

One of the main benefits of being able to build personal relations to the team members, Daniel emphasizes, is that personal relations and trust supports having honest discussions between leaders and employees (Appendix 12, 06:37 - 07:17). In the Green and Teal organizations, the organizational structure is more flat than the models of previous paradigms, which entails that everyone’s voice matters, and organizations that operate within the Green and Teal paradigms are focused on relationships over economic achievement, and strives for a bottom-up process. The bottom-up process entails that employees are allowed to have an opinion, and employees are trusted and valued resources in the organizations non regard of their individual role (Laloux, 2014, p. 31). To be able to have honest conversations, where employees share their opinions and potentially even contradicts the leader’s opinion, it is necessary to have trust in the relationship, and the

employee informant Olivia states that: “You can discuss more personal stuff. But I also always think it's good to keep some kind of distance, but kind of keep it more professional, like, in that sense. Because at some point, you will have, like, stuff to discuss that's not so nice (...)” (Appendix 13, 18:49 - 19:05). In this extract, the informant shares a perspective on the personal relation between the leader and employee. According to the informant, there is a balance that needs to be taken into account in the relation between the leader and the employee. As it was also described earlier by Lucas, the need for connectivity is individual as well as how much the employees are comfortable to invest in the relation, as there will always be a professional aspect in the relation. The informant Michael is an employee, but due to his position as a People Business Partner in Trackunit, he is also a sparring partner for the leaders. Michael suggests a straight-forward approach to finding this balance: “So it's about finding that balance and having that open conversation with the individual saying, hey, what do you need from me as a leader?” (Appendix 14, 25:10 - 25:23). In this extract, Michael addresses a situation where a new employee has joined Trackunit. He suggests that leaders should ask employees directly about their preferences. This approach reasons with the Green paradigm, where the leadership style is characterized by the ‘servant leader’, whose role is to support and develop the employee according to their individual needs and preferences (Laloux, 2014, p. 32). In the hybrid model, to be able to support the employee based on their needs and preferences, the leader should also work toward achieving interpersonal connectivity. The balance in interpersonal connectivity requires ongoing work, and leaders need to adjust their work accordingly, and continually ask the employee: “what do you need from me as a leader?” (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. .

Based on the comprehensive experience that the three leader informants have, it is justifiable to place them in the range of ‘Proficient’ or ‘Expert’ stages of skill acquisition within the domain of remote and hybrid leadership. However, practicing the ‘Proficient’ or ‘Expert’ skills of hybrid leadership differentiates according to the context. Since Lucas and Daniel have been working as leaders in Trackunit for more than five years, their leadership style is likely to represent the organizational culture and shared values. However, the rather new Trackunit leader, Emily, might not be completely adjusted to the organizational culture that also impacts the leadership style that is compatible with this type of organization. As she states in the interview: “I came from a very C level company, you know, (...) I could, but an

individual contributor wouldn't be talking to them on the same level as we do, and I feel like our company is more everyone's voice matters. And it was truly people first. And I, I really, you know, my previous company bled off we're people first, they weren't." (Appendix 11, 11:39-12:22). The informant refers to her previous work place, where they, according to the informant, claimed to be a people first company, and based on her description, attempted to attain some of the values that correspond to a Green organization (Laloux, 2014, p. 33). However, if the organization does not succeed in realizing the strategies and, as she describes, it was in fact a rather hierarchical structured organization, they might be more dominated by the Orange paradigm, where success is based on the growth and the numbers at the bottom line. The informant expresses frustration in this relation, as the previous company did not live up to their defined values. She compares her experience from the previous company, and states that her experience is that Trackunit does actually live by the defined values and purpose (Appendix 11, 11:39-12:22). Emily expresses that she prefers an organizational model and culture like the one in Trackunit. However, research exposed by Laloux entails that leadership practices are impacted by the dominating paradigm that the organization operates within and that the management level believes is the most beneficial (Laloux, 2014, 41). It can be challenging to practice a Green oriented leadership style in an Orange organization, and therefore, a leader coming from an Orange organization might need a period for adjusting the leadership to the structures and culture in a Green organization.

Emily describes a range of values and strategies that she implements in her practice of leadership that resembles the values of a Green or Teal organizational model. Her personal values might also have had an impact on her frustration with her previous company, as the Orange organizational model does not correspond to her personal values as a leader. As an example, Emily describes a recent case with one of the employees in her team:: "He had to get off early on Friday. Because there was a storm coming. I was like, just go, like, don't stress about it. Just go like family first, go do this stuff, go like, it's okay." (Appendix 11, 31:01-31:27). Here, the informant states that she tries to be vocal about her flexibility, and that she encourages the employees to prioritize their families. In contrast to the Orange paradigm, where focus is on achievement and the numbers on the bottom-line, the value Emily describes encapsulates characteristics from the Green paradigm, where employees

are trusted people and acknowledges that employees have to also prioritize their personal life.

The flexible hours do, according to Hafermalz & Riemer (2020, p. 1640), create a sense of freedom with the remote employees. As Emily also stated earlier in the interview: “I would say like for me personally, one of the reasons why I even took this job was because of the remote and the flexibility, like I, I'm a mom first, I coach (competitive sport). I do a lot. And like, I would say that our culture really supports things because I can work at nine o'clock at night or 3am sometimes (...).” (Appendix 11, 18:22-18:37). As earlier described, Emily has attained a strategy of building personal relations by referring to mutual topics of interests with the employees. Moreover, she tries to lead by example by prioritizing her family and is showing vulnerability as a leader by being honest about mental health issues. She refers to a situation in her previous company, where she elaborated on the importance for her as a leader about being honest with the employees that she was leading, that she would take a day off because she was not feeling well mentally: “Like I needed that to be like a, you know, just so that they understood that they can do that too.” (Appendix 11, 28:14 - 28:18). By communicating vulnerability, Emily shows a striving for wholeness, by sending a signal to the employees that leaders do also struggle at times. This characteristic in the leadership style is part of the Teal organizational model (Laloux, 2014, p. 56). According to the informant, the employees need to feel comfortable and get to a point where they trust their leader enough to be honest about the struggles they have, that might impact their work performance, and the informant tries to build up the trust by leading by example.

The leaders have a shared perspective on trust in the relationship to the employees, that mutual trust is a crucial aspect of the remote and hybrid leadership, because the geographical distance makes it challenging to sense how the employees are doing. Trust requires a personal relation, that requires skillful work from the leader to build based on digital communication, and the leader informants in the present thesis have incorporated a range of initiatives in their leadership styles that correspond to a Green or Teal organizational paradigm. Moreover, they base a large amount of their initiatives on extensive experience within the domain, and maintain actions that are supporting their work in achieving interpersonal connectivity.

In the interviews with the employee informants, they all agree that they prefer the hybrid model and values that Trackunit offers this flexibility. They express that the hybrid model allows them to monitor their work-life balance better than they would in a full in-office working setup. However, the hybrid setup also entails a range of challenges related to the work-life balance, as boundaries are often unclear when working from home. The informant Olivia expresses that: "I've just at some point reached I had some issues with like dealing with stress and then I just had to have boundaries yeah where I said if I get like I'll mute my phone for any work related apps after like five or something." (Appendix 13, 31:33-31:43). Moreover, because Trackunit is a global company, employees are spread all over the world, and therefore, the employees in Trackunit are exposed to work related activity close to 24 hours a day.

The constant exposure to information and instant communication can cause some degree of pressure to be connected at all times. The hybrid and remote employees express that it can be difficult to define their work day, because of the flexible hours: "Very much. So, and that's, in my case, it's good and bad because I would often have, tend to have hard time finding enough time to do a full day's work within the regular office hours. Meaning then I do like work a little bit before the kids get up, then get the kids and then start a little later and then work during the day and then do dinner, get them to bed and everything. And then maybe just take like half an hour in the evening and stuff I got to catch up. So that's how I make it work easier. But then again, it's also hard to kind of count like then how many hours did you actually work during the day? It's also harder to put work aside because you're kind of, you know, you're not doing it. You're kind of always in this limbo between private life and work." (Appendix 15, 19:15-20:09). Even though Trackunit operates with flexible working schedules, which corresponds to an activity that is defined in Hafermalz & Riemers model to be enhancing freedom for the remote employees, the employees experience that flexible hours combined with the time zones makes it difficult to define their work day. On the contrary, the informants express that they value the possibilities that the flexible hours entails, so it is a balance that they need to find individually, and if they start to struggle with

the work-life balance, they need to have a relation with their leader that builds on trust, so that they are comfortable with showing vulnerability.

As it was earlier mentioned, the employees' perspective on trust is slightly different than what the leaders express. Where the employees do also mention the benefits of gaining trust that dominates the statements from the leaders, the employees are focusing more on the fact that they are working remote or hybrid, which means that their leaders are not able to control their work in the same way as they would with a full in-office setup. The informants express that the hybrid model requires that the leaders trust that the employees actually get their things done. However, it is described by two of the leaders, that they do not count hours, but instead, they count the tasks and the quality of the work that the employees are providing. This will be elaborated more on in a theme later on concerning the organizational culture.

Efficiency

As it appears in the figure with the themes, the theme 'Efficiency' is a theme that is mainly occurring in the interviews with the employees from Trackunit. In relation to efficiency, the employees, who are all working either remote or hybrid, emphasize the increased efficiency that the hybrid model entails. One of the informants states that the hybrid model allows her to focus better on the tasks and improves her performance (Appendix 16, 02:31-03:25). The majority of the employee informants share the opinion that a full in-office working model entails a lot of distractions, and these distractions make it difficult to focus on tasks and perform. Olivia supports this with stating that with the hybrid model, she can choose her own distractions, as the communication media Slack, that is used in Trackunit, is the only place where her colleagues can interrupt her (Slack.com) (Appendix 13, 24:54 - 25:16).

In terms of efficiency, however, the Informant Michael illuminates a different perspective on the efficiency, stating that: "I think there is definitely pluses of being in office because you have those just over the table conversations which you don't have when you're remote so I the days that I'm in Copenhagen office when (Leader's name) is also there we got we get so much stuff done like just within eight hours of working day we got so many things ticked off because I could just check in with him over the table" (Appendix 14, 19:19-19:50). The extract from the interview with Michael shows that the nature of the role of the employee is

an essential aspect to be aware of when deciding on the most efficient working model. Where the three other employee informants are handling tasks that often demand them to have full focus and work individually on their tasks, the nature of the role of Michael puts him in a position where he has the experience that his most efficient days are when he is in-office with colleagues. Based on the different experiences from the informants, it can be determined that the hybrid or remote working setup and whether it impacts their efficiency is rather individual both in terms of preferences and the nature of their tasks. The flexibility, however, does appeal to the informants, who all agree that they prefer in-person communication for building relations with their leaders and colleagues, which will be elaborated more in the theme regarding the organizational culture in Trackunit.

The informant Daniel states that: “I do tend to be a little bit controlling. That's maybe my job and then some of the things I do. And that's hard to do on a remote. So I'd actually say that's a benefit. I get to learn to trust more and be more explicit in my expectations when it's a remote one. Again, the control disappears.” (Appendix 12, 16:22 - 16:35). The leader informant emphasizes the fact that he is forced to trust the employees in another way when they work remote or hybrid, because he loses some of the control that is embedded in the in-office working model. One of the employee informants express that the trust and potential issues that leaders experience related to the hybrid model might be rooted in their leadership style, where she mentions that her previous leader had an entirely different approach to the working model: “So I wouldn't say that the (previous) leader, he's not trustee, but he is the, I think he's the classic person who's been working from the office most of his life and he still does. And then the other side, my current, like my direct manager, she's been working remotely for like five or six years, even before Corona status.” (Appendix 16, 25:10 - 25:32). The extract from the informant unfolds how different leadership styles correspond to organizational paradigms, and as she describes her previous leader, he is likely to attain a leadership style that is more located in the Orange paradigm. In the Orange paradigm, organizations claim to empower employees to decide how they want to meet objectives. However, Laloux describes that: “(...) leaders' fear to give up control trumps their ability to trust (...)”, and, as it was previously determined, trust is essential for the hybrid model to work (Laloux, 2014, p. 27).

As it was described in the theoretical framework chapter, Laloux states that determining which stage an organization operates from is defined by the leaders and their stage of development. Laloux states in the development of leadership that leaders are creating structures, practices, and culture that forms a foundation of implicit guidelines that employees eventually will adopt (Laloux, 2014, p. 41). Therefore, leaders who turn to aspects of the practices from the Orange paradigm, working as leaders in Green organizations, need to be pushed to develop toward the Green paradigm, and the pushing should come from senior leadership management, who also set the values and purpose of the organization, that should live throughout leaders and thereby employees (Laloux, 2014, p. 41-42). Even though employees report that they feel like they are much more efficient when working remotely, because they can better focus on their tasks and are not interrupted by colleagues, the implementation of the hybrid model forces leaders to overcome some fear of losing control with the team and their tasks. This is a topic that will unfold more in the theme of organizational culture.

Miscommunication

Although the 'Efficiency' theme is mostly dominating the interviews with the employees, the informant Daniel presents a specific, recent case where efficiency related to the hybrid model is exemplified. The informant, who is a leader, presented a task for two of his direct reports. Even though the informant presented the task in exactly the same way, the outcomes were mildly different. The informant assumes that the different outcomes were due to the fact that one employee was working remote and the other employee was sitting in the office with the informant, and he could therefore do small pivots during the day with the in-office employee (Appendix 12, 13:22-14:19). This also relates to the theme of communication, where some parts of the communication can be lost due to digital communication. The informant Oliver describes that the physical distance entails a barrier in relation to reaching out to leaders or colleagues, because it feels more interrupting in the hybrid model than in an in-office setup, where you can just ask a question in the office, get a quick answer, and move on with the task: "Back to what we were talking about previously with lowering the barrier of when you contact someone. The more you get to know them personally, the easier it is also to then work together remotely afterwards." (Appendix 15, 39:34 - 39:46). The informant Olivia supports this statement when saying: "(...) But if you

don't feel confident reaching out to someone saying, like, oh, I think I made a mistake, then being able to meet online and talk about it, then it's tough. Because then you sit with it a long time.” (Appendix 13, 43:31 - 43:53). The extracts from the two employee informants do somewhat encapsulate what the leader informant Daniel experienced with the two employees working on a similar task. The in-office employee had the opportunity to check in with Daniel during the day while completing the task, whereas the remote employee might either just have understood the task differently, or potentially struggled with the barrier of reaching out and asking questions if the person was in doubt about the expectations. In the interview extract above, Oliver states that having a personal relation makes it easier to lower the barrier and ask questions or reach out for help when needed. The personal relations does thereby, based on the experience from the informants, have a direct impact on the performance of the employees. The barrier, which is illustrated in the physical distance, can be delimited by the leaders by providing the employees with quick and helpful responses, which is one of the activities in the model of interpersonal connectivity work that creates a sense of nearness with the remote employees (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1640). As Olivia describes, in cases where remote employees struggle or make mistakes, they are in a position where they might feel disconnected because there is not a colleague or a leader nearby to support them, unless they reach out themselves (Appendix 13, 43:31 - 43:53).

Daniel tries, based on his previous experience, to be particularly explicit about his expectations when explaining tasks to someone remote (Appendix 12, 16:35 - 16:47). Moreover, Daniel adds that he has experienced that the misunderstandings that are caused due to the digital communication can impact the motivation of the employees, which he is aware of, and therefore, is attentive to explicitly communicating his expectations. The leader informant Lucas has another approach to ensuring that miscommunications are limited in the hybrid working model: “And that's something I've learned over the years. I used to just ask, do you understand the task? And people being humans, they say, yeah, even if they don't. So having them describe it back to you in their own words typically allows you to hear right away. No, we didn't connect. Oh, yeah. He understands. Good. We can move on. So being very clear on expectations and both in how you describe it and also taking time to allow them to explain to you if they understand the task is crucial.” (Appendix 10, 18:33 - 18:42). The strategies that the leaders have attained are based on previous experiences,

and now, they practice the strategies intuitively. An efficient strategy in communicating tasks to remote and hybrid employees supports the leaders in maintaining trust in their leadership skills, as well as decreases the risk of lack of motivation for the employees.

Organizational Culture

In the previous two themes regarding 'Communication' and 'Efficiency', and a range of characteristics of the way the informants perceive the phenomenon of 'hybrid leadership' have been unfold in terms of the leadership style that is assumed and how employees experience the remote and hybrid leadership in the organization. In the following theme of 'Organizational Culture', the statements from the informants that address the organizational culture in Trackunit will be examined.

According to Laloux, the Evolutionary-Teal paradigm and the pioneering organizations that operate within this paradigm are constituted by values-driven culture, with empowerment throughout the organization and adopts the 'Family' metaphor about the workers in the organization. On the career site of Trackunit, the visitor is instantly met with the statement: "Come join us with everything you are" (Trackunit B, n.d.). Trackunit encourages their employees and potential candidates to "join with everything they are", meaning not only to provide the organization with workforce, but to participate in the organization as who they are as a person, with their workforce as a part of it. In the interview with Michael, he states that it is important that people are confident in being themselves at work, and says that "(...) So I am a big advocate for knowing what's going on in each other's life. You spend most of your time with your colleagues compared to your family sometimes." (Appendix 14, 02:30-03:14). According to Laloux, the next organizational model, the Teal organizations, practice wholeness and invite their employees to "bring all of who we are to work.", which resembles how Trackunit is branding the organization as a workplace (Laloux, 2014, p. 56).

The evolution of the organizational paradigms has impacted the perception of employees. As an example, in the paradigm prior to the Achievement-Orange, the The Amber paradigm, workers were perceived as lazy and dishonest, and in need of being directed and supervised (Laloux, 2014, p. 21). However, the development of the human consciousness and the corresponding paradigms have changed this perception. In the Green and Teal

organizations, of which Trackunit predominantly contains characteristics from, the employees are seen as trusted, honest parts of the 'family'. Employees in Trackunit are being highly empowered, and everyone's opinion matters. Throughout the interviews with informants from Trackunit and in the web site of Trackunit, there is a sense of the organizational culture in the majority of the aspects that are examined. The rather new leader in Trackunit, Emily, describes in her interview, that she mainly joined Trackunit because of the strong culture. She states that the culture is not limited to a formulation of a purpose and set of values, but is lived throughout the organization (Appendix 11, 08:43 - 08:53). Both the Orange and the Green paradigm entail that organizations formulate a set of shared values that should align with the culture throughout the organization. However, the achievement-oriented Orange organizations will refrain from following the set values in any situation is more convenient for the bottom line. In contrast, the shared values that the Green organizations are operating with are being lived through the leadership practice and are at the heart of every move in the organization.

The informant Daniel states that it is challenging for remote employees to be fully exposed to the organizational culture: "(...) Over time, I think you can. But that's living it. Every single interaction you have, every Zoom call, every Slack, every email, has to show the culture that you want. So if you want people to become more polite, then everything you do should be more polite. If you want them to be more agile and quick and you want to let them make decisions themselves, you should back that up." (Appendix 12, 19:00-19:21).

Learning from experience and mistakes

Both Laloux (2014) and Hafermalz & Riemer (2020) talk about control. According to Laloux, leaders letting go of some of the control is a natural transition when attaining the Teal organizational model: "The heart of the matter is that workers and employees are seen as reasonable people that can be trusted to do the right thing. With that premise, very few rules and control mechanisms are needed." (Laloux, 2014, p. 80). However, in the interpersonal connectivity work, obtaining the balance between control and freedom or empowerment entails that the leader takes responsibility for setting up the frames that the employees can practice their empowerment within, which covers setting deadlines and communicating expectations (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 41). In a fast-paced, global company like

Trackunit, where teams are geographically dispersed in different time zones, the organizational model requires that employees are empowered and perceived through the characteristics from the Teal paradigm. Based on the experience of the employees, leaders can adjust the level of empowerment. The external leader that was interviewed describes how he, as a leader, approaches the time zone differences in his organization: "I think I will always think that people should do what they think is right. And I will always try to empower them to say, hey. Go with your own decision. It could be that you're going along the wrong road. But at least you're not just sitting in the cross and waiting for direction." (Appendix 17, 33:58 - 34:11). This statement also entails a culture similar to the one in Trackunit, where employees are empowered, and mistakes are allowed to be made, because that is a natural consequence of the hybrid and remote model and in fast-paced working environments.

In accordance with the empowerment of employees, one of the characteristics of the organizational culture in Trackunit was unfold in the thematic analysis. Several of the informants, both leaders and employees, emphasized that it is common in the organization that they do not strictly track working hours. Instead, they track tasks and assess the performance of the employees based on the quality and amount of tasks they complete. This part of the organizational culture builds on the high level of trust in the employees, which reasons with the Teal paradigm (Laloux, 2014, p. 80). Abolishing the strict tracking of work hours, according to Laloux, encourages employees to take responsibility for their own performance. According to the traditional mindset, losing the clocks would decrease the output. However, organizations that have abolished the tracking of hours, experience increased outputs and the employees start to even stay longer and express engagement in their tasks, as their self-image changes from working solely for the paycheck to actually taking pride in the work they get done (Laloux, 2014, p. 80-81).

Working culture

In Trackunit, hours are not strictly tracked. However, the practice of the work culture is not always outspoken, and the informant Olivia says: "(...) if you come from a background (...) where it was expected to show up at eight and then do eight hours then yeah I think it takes some time getting used to that it's also okay to have a life yeah yeah it's not I don't think it's that clearly communicated also if you look at contracts they are way more rigid than the stuff

that's actually lived, which makes sense since I'm not a contractor but when you're a person like okay, that's what's written down that's how it is then, like you know, how would you know that you can also be more flexible unless you ask (Appendix 13, 36:48-37:47). According to Olivia, the work culture with flexible hours needs to be communicated more explicitly. Specifically remote and hybrid employees, who do not go to the office with their team and see how everyone else is scheduling their hours, it can be difficult to obtain the work culture, unless it is being communicated to them by their leader or colleagues. The flexibility and empowerment are some of the core characteristics of the organizational culture in Trackunit, which particularly appeal to potential employees. Therefore, leaders should be explicitly communicating the working culture to remote and hybrid employees, as this also serves as a way of retaining employees.

The informant Emily states: "And I think it's more of a, um, the output of your work speaks more than the hours that are clocked during the day." (Appendix 11, 23:49 - 24:01). In addition to the flexible working hours, Olivia adds: "(...) that is the thing that you need to learn, that you're not being interrupted so you're taking less breaks. Then you kind of need to go up, yeah and make sure that those breaks are not: okay I'm gonna clean out the dishwasher, I'm gonna hang the laundry or something like that, but like actual breaks" (Appendix 13, 26:42- 27:20). In this extract, the informant describes how the remote working setup entails less interruptions, which in terms of efficiency is considered a major benefit of the model. However, the decreased amount of interruptions also means that employees working from home are missing some of the natural breaks that are part of the in-office setup. Therefore, employees working fully remote or hybrid need to be attentive to have their breaks, and this is also an aspect that leaders should be attentive of communicating.

It is important that leaders of geographically dispersed teams with remote and hybrid employees are mindful about the working schedules, as there is a risk related to this flexibility. All of the informants expressed that they value the flexibility of the remote and hybrid model, and the fact that the work culture in Trackunit allows them to a large extent to schedule their work as they find fit in their life. Nonetheless, when the working hours are not fixed or counted, it can be challenging to find the balance. The informant Olivia states: "(...) in a company like Trackunit, is, you're always behind like always like it's never stopping, there

will always be another task and a way to improve things even when you think you're done you're never really done.” (Appendix 13, 27:24-27:45). The statement from the informant represents the fast pace that Trackunit is moving in, which the informant elaborates on: “(..) we're growing so crazy fast, I think you can't do that when you don't have remote work or you don't have the tools or you don't offer that as an option.” (Appendix 13, 16:28 - 16:48). This statement from the informant is in accordance with the previous description of the state of the art, stating that organizations that want to grow and work fast-paced, and also attract potential Gen Z employees, need to implement a hybrid model and offer a flexible working setup. However, as the requirements for workplaces develop, the leadership practice in the hybrid model needs to develop accordingly and be reflected in the organizational culture.

The leader informant Lucas has incorporated a strategy where he is very clear about his expectations to the remote employees taking their breaks: “I expect you to take two breaks and you have to take the breaks because it's not only about taking a break and getting away from the PC. It's about the quality of the work and your mental health.” (Appendix 10, 19:57 - 20:09). A note to the team that Lucas is leading is that there are actually fixed working hours for the employees in his team, as it is a customer facing team, where they need to be available at specific hours. However, the approach of being clear about break expectations is related to ensuring that the employees are not overloaded and manage to disconnect during their workday.

A network based organization

In Trackunit, there are not a lot of fixed processes, and often, employees need to reach out to other colleagues to collaborate on different tasks. Therefore, an extensive amount of the working processes in Trackunit entails involving different stakeholders. Another way to put it is that Trackunit has a network based way of working, which requires that the employees, especially new employees, build up a network and get to know who is relevant to reach out to for different matters. In the interviews with the informants from Trackunit, both leaders and employees describe the onboarding processes, where new employees often are introduced to key people that their leader perceives as relevant for them to meet during their first weeks in the organization. The leader informant Emily, who herself is rather new in Trackunit, explains how she, because of her role as a leader, was able to travel to several

of the locations of Trackunit during her onboarding period and met people in-person, which she describes as crucial in order to get to know people (Appendix 11, 03:13 - 03:26). It is a common perception within the group of informants, that new employees should join one or more hubs during their onboarding, to get to meet people and experience the organizational culture that is predominantly lived and cultivated in the offices (Appendix 12, 17:23 - 17:35). However, it is not always economically or logistically possible to have new employees traveling to the offices when they start, and therefore, it is necessary to expose them to the organizational culture in other ways. As the leader informant Daniel stated: "Every single interaction you have, every Zoom call, every Slack, every email, has to show the culture that you want." (Appendix 12, 19:00 - 19:10).

Summary of findings

In summary, the data derived from the interviews with the informants, accompanied by empirical data from the PBP in Trackunit and the external leader, led to the three themes: 'Communication', 'Trust', and 'Organizational Culture'. The thematic analysis has illuminated a range of challenges and benefits that are related to the hybrid model and addresses the concepts of the three themes. In general, the thematic analysis unfolded that the hybrid model is highly valued by both employees and leaders in Trackunit. The hybrid model combined with a flexible working culture, where hours are not often tracked and employees can structure their working hours according to their personal life. The hybrid model enables global organizations like Trackunit to have geographically dispersed teams. However, the hybrid model also entails a range of challenges that are addressed in the interviews.

Employees and leaders value personal relations in their workplace. The need for personal relations is not limited to a need for social interaction, but forms the foundation for achieving trust between leaders and employees. Trust is determined to be paramount for the hybrid model to work, as trust creates an environment where leaders are comfortable with losing some of the control, and where employees feel safe to express vulnerability and reach out if they struggle. Moreover, personal relations supports in lowering a barrier and sense of disconnection that the geographic distance entails.

The communication is impacted by the geographic distance, as body language and the mood of the employees is difficult to monitor for leaders in the hybrid model. Leaders need to assess how to obtain interpersonal connectivity with the individual employee, and continue the ongoing work of maintaining the connectivity. Moreover, leaders need to acknowledge the limitations that are attached to the hybrid model, and when communicating tasks and expectations in the hybrid setup, further steps need to be taken for the sake of clarity compared to the in-office setup.

The organizational culture in Trackunit is resembling characteristics from the Green and Teal paradigms. Organizational culture represents a set of shared values and a purpose of the organization that reaches beyond the organizational objectives. The organizational culture should be prevalent in everything in the organization. Even though offering a hybrid working model and flexibility is at the core of the organizational culture, the geographic distance the model entails limits the propagation of the culture to remote and hybrid employees. The informants from Trackunit express that the organizational culture is predominantly lived in the offices, and it is difficult to pass it on digitally.

In the following chapter, the findings from the thematic analysis will form the foundation for developing a leadership tool for the current and future leaders in Trackunit. The components of the tool will be based on best practices that were discovered through the interviews, as well as defining suggestions of how to manage the challenges that are related to the hybrid model. Moreover, the empirical material that was included in the state of the art will serve as inspiration to the design process.

Prototype Design

In this chapter, the design process leading to the prototype of the tool for current and future leaders will be presented. In coherence with the hermeneutic phenomenological approach, the thematic analysis illuminated how the informants perceive the phenomenon of 'hybrid leadership'. In the design process, the perceptions from the informants will be turned into a general framework for the design process. The theoretical framework that was utilized in the thematic analysis will continually be supporting the decisions in regard to the design of the tool.

Design approach

The design of the tool is based on a user-centered, goal-directed design approach. The users are represented in the informant group and the goal is to address and ideally, solve the identified problems in relation to leadership in hybrid organizations. In order to encapsulate a diverse group of leaders and the employees in the user-centered design, the components of the tool will be drawing on the descriptions of different skill stages by Dreyfus (2004), the characteristic behavior of each of the stages serves as background information of the types of leaders that potentially are placed on each stage. The overall goal of the tool is to cultivate present leaders, whose leadership practice minimizes the impact of the geographic, physical distances in the hybrid workplace of Trackunit.

Based on the five stages of Dreyfus and Dreyfus' skill acquisition model (Dreyfus, 2004, p. 181), the tool should compensate and address each of the skill levels that current and future leaders in Trackunit might be placed at. When considering the broad span that the tool will be designed to cover, it is essential to take into account that both leaders and employees are individuals, and therefore, it is challenging to develop a one-size-fits all tool. However, the objective of the tool will be to address the leaders and trigger a somewhat self-examination in relation to their own capabilities as a leader in a hybrid working setup. The approach of developing a tool for reflection for the leaders, to support them to become a present leader or to become even more present and servant, is in accordance with the Green

paradigm (Laloux, 2014, p. 32), which is also the paradigm that, based on the thematic analysis, Trackunit is predominantly operating within.

Throughout the process of conducting the thematic analysis, the hermeneutic phenomenological approach has been defining the structure of the interpretive work. The researcher has developed an understanding of how the participating informants perceive the phenomenon of 'hybrid leadership'. The process has been an alternation between understanding the phenomenon as a unity and examining the components that constitutes the unity. The thematic analysis has supported with illuminating different perceptions of the phenomenon based on the diverse group of informants, and the researcher has obtained perspectives of the phenomenon from both leaders and employees, which is essential to include in the following design process. This is based on the fact that the tool is developed for the leaders, but the employees are the subject of the tool.

Prototyping the tool

In this section, the process of developing a prototype of the tool is presented. The design of the tool will conceptualize the essential aspects of the remote and hybrid leadership practice that were identified in the thematic analysis. The tool is intended to be applicable to current leaders as well as future leaders, supporting their practice of hybrid and remote leadership. Moreover, the tool will be applicable to incorporate practices with existing employees in Trackunit, but also revolve around new employees in Trackunit, who might not necessarily have experience with the hybrid model and a strong organizational culture from prior workplaces.

The two pictures below show the initial sketch and a refined version of an interactive tool for the leaders in Trackunit. The tool is divided into three main categories: Mental Health in the Hybrid Model, Utilizing Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI) in the Leadership Practice, and Communication Strategies in the Digital Environment. The three sections cover a range of sub sections that are embedded in the categories.

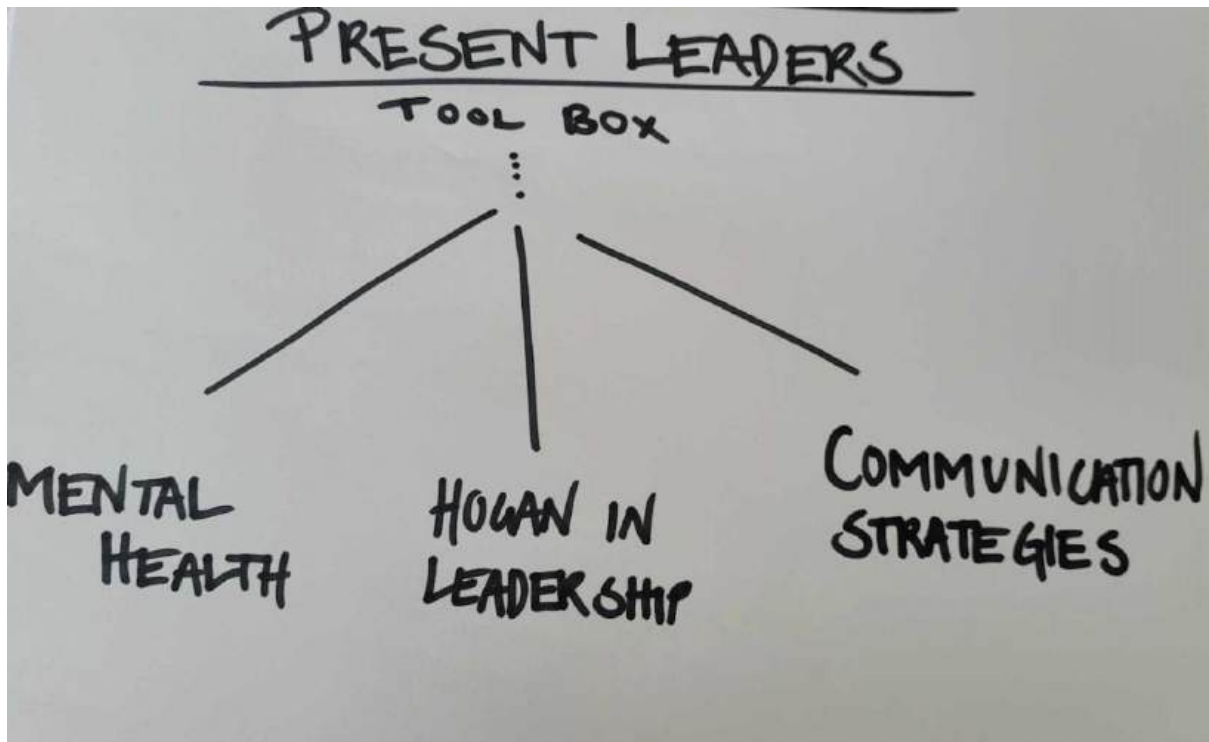


Figure 12: Sketch

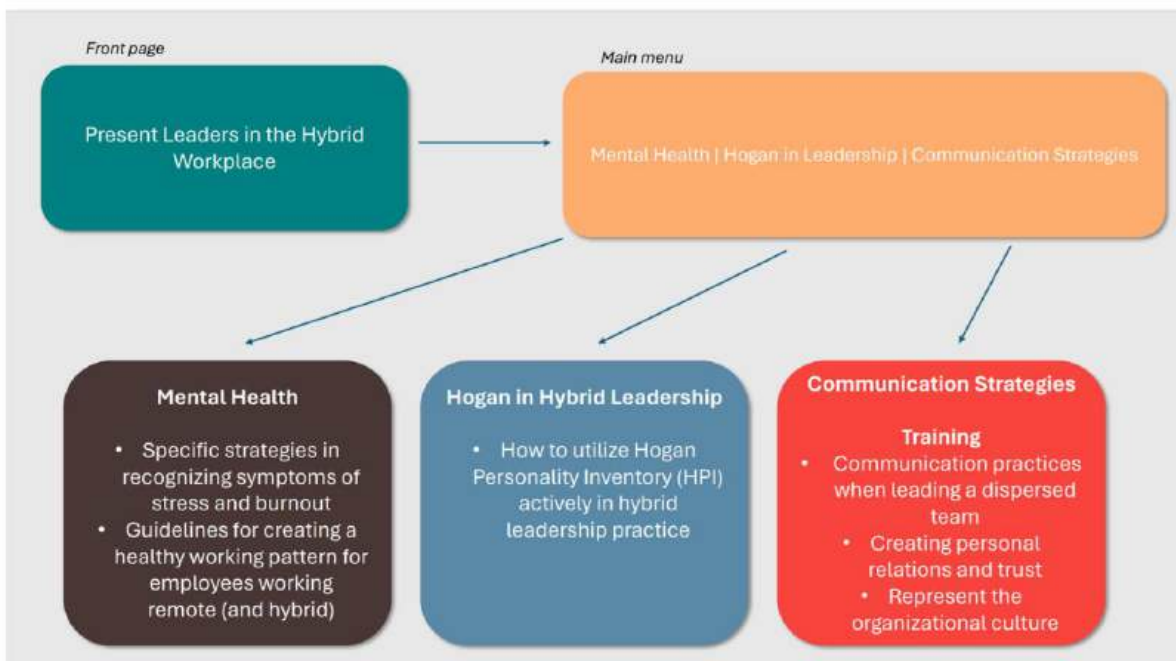


Figure 13: Refined sketch

The tool serves as an extension of the existing material that Trackunit currently has implemented, and as it was described in the very beginning of the present thesis, the tool

fills a gap in this existing material. The existing material does, among other, consist of a leadership tool box with guidelines for different matters, and Trackunit also has rolled out a current course called “Mindful Leader Program”, where leaders in Trackunit are going through training in becoming a mindful leader. The Mindful Leader Program includes training in self-insights for the leaders, to be attentive to their own flaws and actively work with them.

The intention of creating the tool

As previously mentioned, this leadership tool will serve as an extension of the existing material and program in Trackunit, with a specific focus on the hybrid working setup. As it was determined in the thematic analysis, the hybrid model does entail a wide range of benefits in relation to flexibility, work-life balance, and efficiency. However, the model also entails some challenges that are crucial for the leaders of such dispersed teams to take into account and adjust their leadership style when leading people at a geographic distance. As seen in the figure above (Figure 13: Refined Sketch), the three sections cover two of the focus points that were identified in the thematic analysis, and an additional category that is inspired by material from the state of the art. Based on the findings in the analysis, supported by theoretical framework and additional empirical data from the external interview with a leader from another global organization, the “Present Leaders” tool box will encapsulate the main challenges related to the hybrid model, and provide leaders in Trackunit with material, best practices, recommendations, and training within the three categories.

In the more detailed figure below, a design suggestion for the hybrid leadership tool box is presented. It is designed as an interactive learning platform, where the leaders can access the three categories and explore the material herein. In the following section, initial ideas and suggestions for the content in the different categories will be presented.



Figure 14: Design Mockup
(Appendix 18)

Mental Health

As mentioned in the introduction to the design process, the hybrid leadership tool serves as an extension of the existing leadership support material in Trackunit, which includes a leadership tool box. In the current leadership tool box, there is a guide in “How to Recognize and Deal with Burnout” which can be seen in Appendix 19. The guide provides the leaders with knowledge about what to do if they recognize signs of burnout or stress cases in their team. However, the guide does not provide the leaders with specific strategies to recognize the signs. The tool will provide guidelines of recognizing signs of stress and burnout for the hybrid leaders of geographically dispersed team, where the leaders do not see the team members in-person.

As it was revealed in the thematic analysis, the employees that are either working remote or from another location than their leader, are more difficult for the leaders to monitor in terms of mental health state. The leaders of such employees need to be even more attentive to the small signs from these employees. In the thematic analysis, the leader informants presented individual strategies that they had incorporated in their hybrid leadership practice. In addition to the statements from the leaders from Trackunit, the strategies from the external leader from another global company will constitute a range of guidelines as to how leaders can be attentive to the mental health of remote and hybrid employees.

In the “Mental Health”-section of the leadership tool box, the stages of the skill acquisition model (Dreyfus, 2004, p. 181) will be forming the foundation for the different approaches to recognizing signs of mental health struggles in the geographically dispersed teams. Rigidly following a set of guidelines corresponds to the ‘Novice’ stage of the domain, being ‘Hybrid Leadership’. However, distinguishing between the guidelines and attaining the appropriate one depending on the specific situation corresponds to the ‘Advanced Beginner’-stage, which will presumably be the lowest stage most leaders start at in Trackunit, except for situations with internal promotions. The stage of the individual leader is determined by their experience in: leadership, hybrid leadership particularly, and their seniority in Trackunit. Also, the previous leadership style of the leaders has an impact on which stage the leader would be placed on. If a leader with extensive leading experience joins Trackunit and has a predominantly history of leading based on an Achievement-Orange paradigm, the leader would, despite their amount of experience, have to be pushed a bit toward the Green or Teal paradigms, as this is what has been defined as the dominating paradigm in Trackunit (Laloux, 2014, p. 41-42).

The guidelines will be accompanied by a range of examples of where they would be most appropriate to attain. These examples are mainly developed for the leaders at the ‘Advanced Beginner’-stage, as leader on the upper stages would base the decision of their own previous experiences. Based on the statements from the leader informants and the external leader, supported by the conceptualizing of interpersonal connectivity work from Hafermalz and Riemer (2020), the guidelines for the Mental Health category are as follows:

- If you are experiencing a decreasing quality of the work that the employee delivers, specifically in smaller tasks that the employee normally excels in, it could be a sign of work overload, stress, burnout. Pay attention to these tasks, and monitor the employee’s well-being based on this. In case of decreasing quality, take further steps to investigate the employee’s mental health, as you find suitable (Suggestions can be seen in the “Communication Strategies” section).

- Dedicate time to create a personal connection by discovering what the employee finds exciting in their private life. In future conversations, bring up the topics to monitor the well-being of the employee. If the employee no longer shows excitement about the topic, you should pay attention to whether this could be a sign of the employee struggling with mental health issues.
- Implementation of a rating system in your check ins, either on a team basis or your individual check ins, where the employees can rate how they currently feel, fx. 1-10. Always make sure to invite the employee to elaborate on their score in such a way they feel comfortable with. It is important that you, as a leader, set an example and be vocal about your own, honest score in the rating system. This will encourage the employees to do so too, and also puts out a statement, that leaders are human too, and can also have a bad day.

In the Mental Health guidelines, it is essential to emphasize that leaders should act in these situations based on what they believe is the appropriate approach. However, the guidelines provide leaders with limited experience in hybrid leadership with strategies of recognizing signs of mental health issues in the hybrid model where they are not able to read off body language and see how the employee acts throughout the day. Also, in situations with either a new employee or a new leader, before they have the chance of building the personal relation that forms the foundation for trust and creates the environment where the employee feel safe to speak up about personal struggles, these strategies can be attained to compensate for the physical distance as well as support building the personal relation and lead by example.

Hogan in Leadership

Based on information from one of the People Business Partners in Trackunit, it has been clarified that Trackunit utilizes the recruitment tool “Hogan Personality Inventory” (HPI) in recruitment processes (Appendix 20). The HPI tool measures the personality type based on seven scales, which can be seen in more detail in Appendix 21.

The HPI is used in most recruitments in Trackunit, and the objective of the HPI is to gain in depth knowledge about the potential candidates, to ensure that they fit in the role work wise,

and to assess whether the candidate is compatible with the team and leader they would join in the role (Appendix 20). In the email correspondence, the People Business Partner is asked about the usage of HPI in general in Trackunit. Here, it is determined that the leaders do not have access to the report with results from the HPI. The reason for this is that interpreting the results requires a certificate in Hogan Assessments, which, in Trackunit, is solely provided to the People Business Partners who are cooperating with the hiring managers in the recruitment processes. However, the People Business Partners are facilitating a Hogan Handover for the leaders, where they are informed about the relevant details from the test, that are specifically related to the role, the team, and the leader, which, as it is described in the email from Amalie, is used for building hypothetical assumptions about the candidate's fit before the last step in the recruitment process, where this hypothesis can be confirmed or disproved, based on a case presentation (Appendix 20).

As it was described in one of the initial chapters regarding State of the Art, it is not yet common to utilize the information that is gained from the personality inventories in the everyday leader practice (Hackston, 2022). However, the HPI has much more potential to be used actively, and as Hackston (2022) describes, the character traits that are revealed through the personality inventory could support leaders in engaging employees that are geographically distant, as well as retain hybrid and remote employees. Besides being a useful tool in the recruitment process, HPI can be used after the candidate has been hired.

Basing feedback on HPI

In this category of the "Present Leaders" tool box, a set of guidelines as to how to connect the characteristic traits from the HPI to specific actions in their leadership style is presented. As an example, one of the scales that is part of the HPI is 'Adjustment', where the self-confidence of the employee is assessed. In cases, where the employee has scored low in this scale and works remote or in a different location than their leader, the leader could be encouraged to be particularly attentive to giving the employee feedback and acknowledgement. In the interview with Daniel, he stated about giving regular feedback to employees: "So minor recognitions is something that you see more than before where you got a pat on the back saying, well done. The last six months you really did a good job. Now it's almost every day that you need some sort of validation. So having that and remembering

to validate your team members either on an email, on Slack, or on these individual meetings is something that's definitely you have to be mindful of. And remotely even more.” (Appendix 12, 15:05 - 15:41). In this extract, Daniel emphasizes the fact that the hybrid model entails an increasing need for recognition, which can be rooted in the disconnection that remote and hybrid employees might feel. The external leader supports this statement, and describes how physically gathered teams, in his organization, often go out and celebrate when projects are completed or go to team events. It is challenging to provide this type of acknowledgement to employees who are geographically distant. The way the external leader approaches this challenge is to reach out to another leader who is located in the same place as the employee and set up fx. a dinner or the like, to make sure the employee also feels acknowledged for their work (Appendix 17, 12:28 - 12:41).

While it would be an extensive task to make sure to provide all team members with regular acknowledgements, almost on a daily basis, as Daniel states, the score from the HPI can be used to detect which of the team members has a particular need for recognition in their daily work. It is relevant to note on this suggestion, that recognition should be provided to all of the team members, however, employees that has a low score in self-esteem, and are working remote or in a different location than their leader, has a tendency of dwelling with their own self-critique, and are more vulnerable and exposed to stress and burnout (Appendix 20). If leaders use this knowledge actively, and provide these employees with the needed recognition, it could support decreasing the risk of stress and burnout.

The need for social interaction

Another aspect of the HPI, where leaders can utilize the results from the HPI is the ‘Sociability’, where the employee’s need for social interaction is assessed (Appendix 21). In the email from the PBP Amalie, she states that they are attentive to the score of this category in positions where the employee would be working fully remote. A candidate that has a high score in the need for social interaction would presumably not be a fit for such a position (Appendix 20). However, in situations where the employee is working in a hybrid setup: going to an office some days of the week, but is attached to a different location than their leader, the leader could utilize their knowledge from the HPI to particularly support the social interaction of the employee, especially if it is a new employee joining Trackunit. Daniel

described a recent case, where a new employee joined his team, and he set up a range of meetings with the new employee and key people that the employee should meet (Appendix 12, 05:11 - 05:17). Also, the informant Emily explained how she introduced her new team member to a range of people in Trackunit, that she thought would be relevant for the employee to meet in the first few weeks in her position (Appendix 11, 15:37 - 15:46).

In order to translate this approach to using the HPI actively, the leaders could base their approach to the onboarding of new employees on their need for social interaction. If the employee has a high score in this category, it would be beneficial to introduce them to a list of their new colleagues. The list could consist of people who are highly relevant to know for work related tasks, but also if there are some overlaps of personal interest, it could be a way of supporting the new employee in creating some relations that can compensate their need for social interaction, when not being located in the same place as their leader or even team members. On the contrary, if an employee has a low score in the need for social interaction, this is an aspect that also needs to be taken into account. As Hafermalz & Riemer describe in their research on interpersonal connectivity work, it is all revolving around a balance that needs to be obtained (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020, p. 1641). Due to the fact that the working culture in Trackunit is highly network based, an employee with a low score in need for social interaction still needs to engage in regular interactions with colleagues, but this is a case where the leader could limit the list of relevant people to meet to the ones that are work related, and then let the employee decide whether they want to engage further in social interactions, regardless of they are working remote or in a hybrid setup.

Paying attention to stress tolerance

The last category from the HPI that leaders could implement in their approach to leading remote or hybrid employees is the 'Stress Tolerance' (Appendix 21). This category assesses the stress tolerance of the candidate, and leaders with employees in their team who has a low score in this category should be even more attentive to the signs of stress with these employees. Leading back to the previous category of the leadership tool, 'Mental Health', the leaders can incorporate these strategies with employees with a low score in the 'Stress Tolerance'. However, it is necessary to actively utilize their knowledge from the HPI to be conscious of which of their team members are specifically exposed to stress. Moreover,

leaders can adjust their approach of leading these employees in accordance with their score in the HPI. Even though it might be a challenging task to keep track, the benefits in the long run are not to be doubted, if it minimizes the risk of employees getting sick with stress and having to leave their role for an amount of time.

In the leadership tool, the content of the 'Hogan in Leadership' will be a thorough description of the benefits of actively using the HPI scores in the leadership in Trackunit. Some leaders might even already do it, consciously or unconsciously, but it is a tool that can support leaders with an approach to different personality types, that can support in engaging and retaining employees that are working remote or hybrid. The tool serves as a guideline for rather new leaders in general and in Trackunit, and encourages experienced leaders in being attentive to the personality types when attaining their leadership style.

Communication

The communication category of the 'Present Leaders' tool box is a threefold collection of training material in: 'Communication strategies in a dispersed team', 'Creating personal relations and trust in the hybrid setup', and 'Representing the organizational culture'.

Communication strategies

In the first section, 'Communication strategies in a dispersed team', the material includes guidelines for clear communication when leading at a geographical distance. The hybrid model entails a large amount of online communication, where there is a risk of misunderstandings and missing points because of the lack of body language as well as the barrier, that was mentioned in the thematic analysis, is something that can cause challenges for leaders and employees that are physically distant. Based on the statements from the informants from Trackunit, the external leader, and the theoretical framework for the present thesis, the following guidelines have been formulated:

Tasks

- Be explicit about your expectations in terms of deadlines, scope, and details when giving a task to an employee. Employees in the remote or hybrid setup have a lower tendency to ask follow up questions if in doubt.
- When giving instructions about a task, make the employee repeat the information to make sure you are aligned about the expectations of the task.
- Ensure that employees that are working in a different time zone than you have several tasks or projects to turn to, when in need of your opinion or approval, so that they do not stall with one task.

Working schedule

- Be specific when aligning expectations about working schedule. Do you expect the employee to be available within a specific time frame or are they allowed to schedule their own hours.
- If you expect the employees to be offline outside of office hours, fx. no checking and replying to emails, be vocal about it. Also, if you as a leader work outside of office hours, be clear in communicating that it is not what you expect from the employees.
- The hybrid or remote employees do not “see” how their team members or you as a leader schedule your working hours, which limits their possibility to adjust accordingly. Be specific about “the way we do things around here”. Do you, as a leader, prefer tracking hours or tasks? Be explicit with the employees.
- Be vocal about the priority of work-life balance, so that the employees know that Trackunit acknowledges that the employees have a private life. Ideally, lead by example as a leader, and clarify how you approach the work-life balance yourself.

The objective of the guidelines to ‘Tasks’ and ‘Working Schedule’ is to support the leaders in creating an efficient environment, lowering miscommunication, and specifying how employees are expected to work in Trackunit, in accordance with the work culture. Moreover, following the framework should form a foundation of a healthy work environment, which leads back to the ‘Mental Health’ category of the tool box. The communication guidelines seek to create an environment for the remote and hybrid employees, where risks of stress

and burnout are decreased based on the leadership style that is represented in the communication.

Creating personal relations and trust in the hybrid setup

As it was determined by the thematic analysis, trust is paramount for the hybrid model to work in an organization. However, trust is created from building somewhat personal relations between leaders and employees, and the common perception of the informants is that building relations online is a highly challenging discipline. The thematic analysis revealed some approaches that the informants, both leaders and employees, attain to compensate for the missing in-person interactions.

It was determined in the interviews with the informants from Trackunit, that the common practice of check-ins is based on a weekly or bi-weekly cadence. The content of the check-ins varies, but the majority of the informants described that often, the first 10 minutes of the check-ins are dedicated to checking in on personal topics and talk about what is going on in their private life. However, it was also revealed in the interviews with Emily and Lucas, that due to the fast-paced environment that is characterizing Trackunit, the check-ins are often used to catch up on work related tasks and alignment between the leader and employee. Therefore, some of the leaders prefer to spend the limited time of the booked meetings on subjects related to work.

The employee informants express that they value the personal relation, and the thematic analysis unfolded the fact that the personal relation has a direct impact on the performance of the employee. Therefore, despite the fast-paced environment and leaders being under pressure, they should dedicate time to engage in the personal relation with the employee during the meetings and check-ins, as this can be seen in an investment in the performance of the employees. The external leader that was interviewed, described that the leaders in MFT energy are encouraged to arrange virtual coffee breaks, where the objective of the meeting is to engage in a personal relation (Appendix 17, 07:00 – 07:17).

In the work toward building a personal relation, the thematic analysis illuminated strategies of the leaders being authentic and showing vulnerability. When the leaders are leading by

example and are vocal about their own derailers and mistakes, the personal relation is easier to facilitate, as the barrier between the employee and the leader is lowered. Moreover, it creates an environment where employees are encouraged to follow the example of the leader.

Specific strategies within communication that can support leaders of hybrid and remote employees are as follows:

- Ask the employee directly about their preferences about connectivity and collaborate on creating the best conditions for the employee to work in the hybrid model.
- Trust is paramount for the hybrid model to work. Trust is fostered by personal relations. Therefore, dedicate time during the check-ins to engage in your team members, also if the meeting agenda is urgent. Alternatively, schedule virtual coffee breaks where you dedicate time to have a casual conversation with the employees.
- Share the personal information and stories that you are comfortable with. Showing authenticity makes you more relatable and encourages the employees to follow your example. A genuine and honest conversation is much more beneficial when building personal relations.
- The motivation and trust between leaders and employees in the hybrid model is fragile. Employees working remote or hybrid are exposed to the feeling of disconnection, so make sure the employee is not let completely to themselves and reach out at a cadence that fits the needs of the employee.
- Be clear in communicating that Trackunit encourages empowerment. If the employee feel comfortable that you trust their decision-making, the efficiency is increased even further.

Represent the organizational culture

As it was determined in the thematic analysis, the organizational culture in Trackunit resembles characteristics from the Green and Teal paradigms. The organizational culture in such organizations is at the core of everything that is said and done. Leaders in Green organizations approach the leadership style based on the shared values of the organization, and the leadership style will support employees in adopting the values and culture (Laloux, 2014, p. 41).

It is the responsibility of the leaders to implement processes and practices that expose employees to the values in the organization. In Trackunit, the organizational culture is predominantly living in the physical offices, and the informants describes that it is challenging for employees to experience the actual culture in a remote setup. Therefore, this section presents suggestions to how leaders can expose the employees working in a remote or hybrid model to the organizational culture and support them in adopting the structures and processes that are embedded herein:

- Be explicit in translating the working culture to the hybrid model. Often, we do not track hours, we track tasks – communicate this to the employees as you find fit. This practice is based on trust and the perception of employees as reasonable people.
- Be consistent with incorporating the organizational culture in every aspect. This covers style of communication in email and Slack, express your own personality during meetings, ask for the employee's opinion and make them feel that everyone's voice matters.
- Make sure to take steps to make employees that are attached to different offices than the majority of the team feel included in the team. These employees do not experience the coffee machine talks, and therefore, more considerate actions need to be taken to include them in the everyday conversations. Encourage communication in the team Slack-channels, and lead by example by sharing information regularly.
- If the employee is attached to a different office than you, reach out to other leaders on the location to collaborate on maintaining the employee to feel included in the organizational culture, by inviting the employee to events with other teams

- Support the employee in creating a network outside of the team. Introduce the employee to colleagues you reckon they might have common interests with.

If it is possible, let the employee travel to a physical office during the onboarding period, to experience the organizational culture and meet colleagues in-person.

The leadership tool presented in this chapter consists of a prototype of the main components that are assessed as relevant to include in developing a tool for the current and future leaders in Trackunit. In a further development of the tool, the content in each of the category would have to be further elaborated and designed in a way that resonates with a theoretical approach to organizational learning. Moreover, the types of material that the tool should consist of would be based on a varying range of text, videos, courses, etc. In accordance with the existing material that Trackunit already has incorporated, the general design of the tool would be adjusted to fit into the existing universe of learning material in the organization.

Discussion

The findings from the research did validate some of the presumptions about the field of research, that the researcher had prior to conducting the research. Moreover, these presumptions originated the motivation of carrying out the thesis within this specific problem area. The findings that reaffirmed the presumptions about the field was that the hybrid model give rise to challenges in the leadership practice, not only in Trackunit, but in global organizations in general, which was supported by the findings in the data processing accompanied by literature that was included in the state of the art. However, the nature of a range of the challenges were rather unexpected.

In the thematic analysis, it was revealed that the hybrid model is perceived as the working model that includes the most flexible working setup, which is something that the informants from Trackunit finds great value within. They expressed that the hybrid model allowed them to maintain a healthy work-life balance because of the flexible setup. However, findings from the analysis entailed that the hybrid model somewhat contradicts this perception when implemented in practice. Informants expressed that they find it challenging to define their work day, and the fact that most teams in Trackunit do not track hours, it can be difficult for the employees who work in the flexible setup to disconnect from work. One informant described that the fast-paced environment in Trackunit entailed that there are always more tasks to complete, so that you are never really done. In the hybrid model, where employees work from home partly or fully, do not have the in-office structure to their workday to indicate when it is time to disconnect, and on the other hand, they are not necessarily able to find this indication in the completion of tasks, as there will just be another task waiting.

Another significant finding from the study was the importance of personal relations. In the analysis of the organizational culture, which includes both what Trackunit is branding on their own website and the statements from the informants, it was determined that the culture in Trackunit resembles a Green paradigm with some characteristics from the Teal paradigm as well. These paradigms facilitate a people-first mentality, and the leadership style is characterized by the 'servant leader'. In a hybrid model, it was found that it is challenging to build personal relations. In a fast growing organization like Trackunit, new employees and new leaders are constantly joining the organization, and this emphasizes the need for

awareness of the difficulties the geographic distance has for building relations. In the study, the benefits from personal relations did not solely concern sociality, but actually has a major impact on the performance of employees working in the hybrid model. Personal relations are fostering trust, which, according to the informants, is paramount for the hybrid model to work.

The fact that the hybrid model entails these essential challenges in organizations, puts pressure on the management and leaders to implement new structures and practices that compensate for the geographic distance. The findings in the study led to a broader ranging prototype of the leadership tool, and in fact, the tool could be including even more categories and content within the existing categories, to address the work that the hybrid model requires from leader of such geographic dispersed teams. Moreover, developing and refining strategies specifically for the hybrid model could enable organizations like Trackunit to benefit even more from the flexible setup, than it is already the case.

In the interview with the external leader, he describes how MFT energy has developed a specific structure of the onboarding of remote and hybrid employees. Moreover, they practice an overlapping work structure, to benefit from the various time zones that employees are located in. By collaborating on projects across time zones, they complete tasks faster. However, this practice requires a high level of communicative and handover skills, and also relies on a certain level of team work (Appendix 17, 22:29-22:43; 32:54-33:18). These aspects of the hybrid model could be interesting to look more into in terms of implementing similar strategies in Trackunit, however, the delimitation of the present thesis concerns the leadership practice particularly, and these strategies are assessed to be addressing more of an HR perspective of creating onboarding strategies and facilitate team buildings.

The findings from the study emphasizes the need for developing tools for leaders that are practicing the hybrid leadership. In accordance with the research behind the model of Interpersonal Connectivity, the balance of leading employee at a geographic distance and building the interpersonal connectivity requires ongoing work and adjustments, and the traditional in-office strategies are simply not efficient when the factors embedded in in-person interactions are drawn from the practice of leadership.

Conclusion

In the present thesis, the phenomenon of hybrid leadership has been examined based on a qualitative, single case study. The data collection was structured as an interview study. The study was conducted with an abductive approach, and with the combination of the hermeneutic and phenomenological theories of science, the data collected from the interview study was processed with a thematic analytical methodology, and interpreted on the basis of the hermeneutic circle. The framework of the abductive approach and the hermeneutic circle entailed an alternating process of interpreting the unity of the field of research, the hybrid leadership in the context of Trackunit, and the components herein, based on the informants' perception of the phenomenon. The philosophic framework entailed that the researcher's presumptions about the phenomenon and methodological subjective interpretation was acknowledged and taken into account to decrease the level of bias in the research work. The continuous alternating between unity and components of the phenomenon entailed developing new understandings of the phenomenon throughout the study. Eventually, developing a well-founded prototype of a digital tool that, based on further development, is a qualified solution to the problem formulation of the present thesis.

How can a digital tool support leaders in hybrid organizations in the practice of hybrid leadership?

- How is the shift in paradigm from in-office to hybrid organizations characterizing the practice of leadership?
- Which implications are associated with the hybrid leadership?
- How do employees who are working remote or hybrid perceive the role of the leaders in hybrid organizations?

The digital tool that has been developed as a prototype in the present thesis works as the framework for supporting leaders in Trackunit, who are practicing hybrid leadership. The research in the thesis showed that the hybrid model entails a broad range of benefits for both organizations and employees, where the ability of driving global organizations with

dispersed teams is one of the main characteristics of the shift in paradigm from the traditional in-office model. Moreover, the hybrid organizations and their flexible setup resembles the newest paradigms in organizational models, which also entails a strong organizational culture and employee empowerment. The organizational culture and the ability to structure the work life individually appeal particularly to Millennials and Gen Z employees, who highly value freedom and flexibility.

The implications of the hybrid model that are illuminated in the thesis are the decreased in-person interactions and risks of mental health issues. Remote employees are more exposed to risks of stress and burnout, and the hybrid model with flexibility can cause difficulties for employees to define their workday and, that appear as a major benefit, can turn out to be a great risk to employee retention and engagement.

The leaders in hybrid organizations operating within the Green paradigm are responsible for representing the organizational culture. When leading hybrid employees, the leaders should pass on the organizational culture by incorporating the culture in their leadership practice. This will support hybrid employees in adopting the culture and work accordingly. Moreover, the informants from Trackunit express that the leader has a major impact on their well-being and performance. When operating with the hybrid model, the leadership practice should be adjusted to the implications that the geographic distance entails. Strong communication skills are required to monitor the well-being of the employees and build personal relations and trust. Moreover, the leaders should be able to approach individual employees based on their specific needs, which can be supported by said communication skills, personal relations, or even personality types (HPI).

A digital tool for supporting the practice of hybrid leadership should encapsulate the range of implications that are directly linked to the hybrid model and geographic distances. The tool that has been developed in the present thesis seeks to cover the best practices that were unfolded in the data processing as well as proposing solutions for solving challenges that were emphasized by leaders and employees in Trackunit. The tool includes theoretically founded suggestions to building interpersonal connectivity in the hybrid model, and describes specific strategies and tools that can be incorporated in the work toward achieving the balance of interpersonal connectivity (Hafermalz & Riemer, 2020). The considerations behind the tool are based on the characteristics of the Green and Teal organizations

exposed by Laloux (2014), which are the paradigms that are determined to be the ones the organizational model in Trackunit resembles. Lastly, the interpretation of statements from the informants is based on the Five-Stage Skill Acquisition Model (Dreyfus, 2004), and the potential further development of the tool will be taking the different stages into account as an approach to create a user-centered tool that takes the different skill stages into account.

The transferability of the findings in the present thesis can be translated into a broader description of the implications of mid-sized, global organizations that are fast-growing. The hybrid model is being adopted in organizations, but the leadership practice does not always follow the development, and therefore, in general, the best practices to actually achieve the benefits from the model and overcome the challenges are still to be refined. The prototype that has been developed in the thesis specifically concerns the single case of Trackunit and the embedded structures of the organization, and therefore, the tool cannot be directly transferred to other organizations.

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Figures

Figure 1: Trackunit Purpose

Figure 2: The Trackunit Way

Figure 3: The Trackunit Way 2

Figure 4: Literature Search

Figure 5: The Hermeneutic Circle

Figure 6: Informants Table

Figure 7: Interpersonal Connectivity Work

Figure 8: Interpersonal Connectivity Actions Table

Figure 9: Five-Stage Model of Adult Skill Acquisition

Figure 10: Table of Initial Codes

Figure 11: Themes

Figure 12: Sketch

Figure 13: Refined Sketch

Figure 14: Design Mockup

Appendix overview

Appendix 1: Literature Search

Appendix 2: Informant Table

Appendix 3: Email for Informants

Appendix 4: Interview Guide - Employees

Appendix 5: Interview Guide – Leaders

Appendix 6: Interview Guide – People Business Partner

Appendix 7: Interview Guide – External Leader

Appendix 8: Interview with People Business Partner

Appendix 9: Coding Table

Appendix 10: Interview with Lucas

Appendix 11: Interview with Emily

Appendix 12: Interview with Daniel

Appendix 13: Interview with Olivia

Appendix 14: Interview with Michael

Appendix 15: Interview with Oliver

Appendix 16: Interview with Sophia

Appendix 17: Interview with External Leader

Appendix 18: Design Mockup

Appendix 19: Trackunit – Mental Health

Appendix 20: Q&A – People Business Partner (Email)

Appendix 21: Hogan Personality Inventory