DS-5001 from theory to practice

A critical examination of DS-5001

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Abstract

This thesis examines the implementation of Dansk Standard 5001 Management System (DS-5001) concerning equality and diversity, where the main focus is the transition from theory to practical implementation. To examine this, our perspective of the world is based on a social constructionist view, where we see the world as socially constructed. To this we combine our theoretical framework that is based on Foucault's theory of power and discourses and Karen Lee Ashcraft's theory of gender, power and communication. We operate as inductive scholars through a qualitative examination, where our methodological framework includes interviews with three relevant participants and a critical discourse analysis. The interviews are conducted through semi-structured interviews, where we could explore the interviewees' narratives as well as follow the interview guide. The critical discourse analysis contributes to identifying the underlying discourses and power structures in DS-5001, whereas how the language shapes and influences social realities. This gave us a deeper understanding of how language in the standard is utilised to maintain or challenge social norms and power relations. The purpose of this thesis is to gain more awareness of DS-5001 including equality and diversity in organisations and demonstrate the importance of this subject. Our analysis consists of a thorough critical discourse analysis of the standard DS-5001, where statements from our interviews are included as well as existing literature and theory which support our analysis of the standard. Through this analysis, we were able to discover the underlying barriers and which initiatives that required improvement in order for organisations to implement the standard as effectively as possible. Therefore, we can conclude that DS-5001 is an essential management tool to increase awareness of equality and diversity in organisations, where it offers utensils to handle these problems in the organisation. However, we conclude that the standard needs more clarity, where multiple times the language underlines interpretation from the managers, which gives them the power to establish the dominant discourses in the organisation. Based on the analysis, we were able to develop five improving initiatives that we found relevant to improving the standard, to decrease misunderstanding and to be more manageable to implement. This study contributes to bringing awareness of the importance of equality and diversity in organisations, as well as awareness of DS-5001 as a guiding management tool for organisations. The results from this thesis can assist Dansk Standard to increase continuous improvements since we were able to identify different strengths and weaknesses in the standard. Furthermore, the results can contribute to a scholarly discussion regarding standards and its organisational influence,

whereas the results in our study can be used to revise and compare the standard to improve it to practical implementation.

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1 Introduction

What really goes wrong for a company, when things go very wrong, is that they get caught in many vicious instances of group thinking. That is, where they say the same things and resemble each other and think the same way and are the same people. And this actually means that they end up making worse decisions than if they had more diversity.

- Helle Thorning-Schmidt (2022)

The purpose of this thesis is to critically examine the discourses that are presented in Dansk Standard 5001 Management System for diversity and equality, we will in this thesis refer to the system as DS-5001 or the standard. Specifically, we wish to focus on the transition of DS-5001 Management System from theory to practical implementation in Danish organisations. DS-5001 is a management system for diversity and equality that is developed by Dansk Standard, where the aim is for Danish organisations to learn how to work determined with diversity and equality (4. Dansk Standard, u.d.).

Diversity and equality are discussed issues worldwide, which is one of the reasons that the world leaders gathered in New York in September 2015 for the UN's summit conference where the UN's Global Goals were enacted with effect from January 2016 until 2030. These ambitious goals are developed to focus towards a more sustainable improvement for both the people and the planet we live on. The Global Goals consist of 17 specific goals and 169 subsidiary goals. These goals require the UN's 193 member states to decrease inequality, improve everyone's health and education, end world hunger and poverty, increase employment, and promote more sustainable economic growth. These eight 2015-Goals serve as the foundation for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). These goals have demonstrated the possibility of achieving goals and results if nations demonstrate political will and prioritise resources thereafter (1. FN's Verdensmål for bæredygtig udvikling, u.d.).
Towards this, Dansk Standard describes DS-5001 Management System as a tool that will, "[...] contribute to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly Objective 5 on gender equality" (appendix 1, p. 6). As the objective of the chosen standard includes, among other things, achieving the goals of the UN's SDGs.

Furthermore, SDG 10 is developed to reduce inequality both globally and locally. This goal's aim is to apportion the wealth of the world to secure society's resources, so everyone globally has access to food, education and medical attention. According to Goal 10 of the UN, discrimination on the basis of gender and skin colour is just one example of the many ways that inequality can be caused. Inequality can also be defined by situations such as hunger in a world where food is plentiful or difficulty finding new work because of the prevalence of robots or artificial intelligence (AI). According to research, nations with high levels of inequality tend to have higher rates of mental illness, children performing poorly in school, and prisoners. Economic inequality has a negative impact on society since it limits economic growth since not all citizens are being fully utilised (2. FN's Verdensmål for bæredygtig udvikling, u.d.).

SDG 5 is focusing on equality between genders, where the purpose of the goal is to achieve equality between genders and strengthen women's and girls' rights and possibilities because females are more exposed. They define equality as everyone claiming equality regardless of gender and who people identify as. Moreover, equality is viewed by the UN as promoting global economic growth and sustainable development. This means that they e.g. focus on women's participation and possibilities in leadership at every level in decision-making within politics and economy needs to be secured (3. FN's Verdensmål for bæredygtig udvikling, u.d.). In the last decade, progress can be seen globally when it comes to achieving gender equality. However, the progress is not on track to meet the goal by 2030. Globally, women continue to earn 23% less than men, despite doing more unpaid work. This indicates that if society continues at its current pace, it will take 140 years for women to achieve equal participation in leadership roles and positions of power in the workplace, and it will take 47 years for women to achieve equal representation in national parliaments (Sustainable Development Goals, u.d.). As a member state of the UN, Denmark has signed the SDGs to be achieved within anno 2030 (Udenrigsministeriet, u.d.). According to numbers from the Global Gender Gap report from World Economic Forum (WEF), the Nordic countries are located at the top when it comes to equality between women and men, except Denmark. Denmark is listed as number 23 on the list, which places countries such as Namibia, Rwanda, Nicaragua, The Philippines, and Moldova ahead of Denmark. Furthermore, Denmark's neighbouring countries Iceland, Norway, Sweden, and Finland are all listed at the top five for great equality. One explanation for Denmark's position can be their self-understanding, that there is already equality, and that Denmark is a pioneering country, which means they think initiatives are not necessary (FN-forbundet, 2023). Specifically, 58 percent of the Danish population is of the belief that equality has been reached, why a discrepancy can be seen between individuals' beliefs and factual reality (The Diversity Council, 2022).

Despite the fact that Denmark is the 6th richest OECD country measured by GDP per inhabitant (Sloth, 2023) there are, as argued above, still great challenges when it comes to inequality in society and in organisations which will be argued in the following section. One way that the issues surrounding inequality in organisations have been brought to light is through the implementation of DE&I/DEI policies. Creating a diverse environment for employees is one of the many issues covered by a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) policy. Subsequently, it can be argued that a policy of this kind could encourage offering employees equal

opportunities, irrespective of their intersectional status. Furthermore, by implementing such a policy, initiatives can be made to ensure that everyone feels respected in the workplace, which will ensure that employees' entire talent pool can be utilised (Mannaz, 2024). A DE&I policy can have a number of positive effects, including enhanced business results (problems can be resolved more efficiently and innovatively), employee retention (companies that prioritise DE&I draw and engage top talent), and improved reputation relative to non-DE&I organisations (more transparency and customer trust) (Mannaz, 2024).

When taking the European Commission's report from 2023 into account, the report reflects higher numbers of unemployment, underemployment, underrepresentation in leadership positions, and lower wages for black and minority ethnic workers (BME) across all EU Member States (European Commission, 2023). Also, ENAR's report published in anno 2022 illustrates structural racism in the European labour market. This report indicates that structural racism in employment settings is caused by a variety of factors, including a lack of social support, language barriers, training deficiencies, and lack of education. This report also emphasises how discrimination against BME women is particularly prevalent in the workforce. ENAR promotes the improvement of policies, such as strengthened anti-discrimination laws and assisting BME initiatives to achieve employment (European Network Against Racism, 2022).

All of the above presents the importance of focussing on diversity and equality in workplaces, to demolish structural and cultural issues that exist in society and organisations. Therefore, we will in our study, critically examine the discourses that appear in DS-5001 in order to improve the transition from theory to practical implementation in organisations. In relation to this, we will address two research questions regarding the implementation of DS-5001 standard in organisations. First, we will investigate whether the standard's discourses serve as obstacles to its implementation in organisations. Furthermore, we will examine which improving initiatives that Dansk Standard should include in DS-5001 to better ensure that diversity and equality is communicated properly in organisations.

Standards can be described as a set of common rules for organisations worldwide (1. Dansk Standard, u.d.). Standards have become a global concept that contributes to creating consensus, in the form of common guidelines to be adhered to, among companies on a global scale. Therefore, 99% of the standards released in Denmark are initially developed as European or international standards (1. Dansk Standard, u.d.).

The organisation, Dansk Standard, operates as a commercial foundation, which is responsible for developing and issuing standards for organisations seeking certification within a specific area in Denmark (2. Dansk Standard, u.d.). Dansk Standard is affiliated with the Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs. Each year, Dansk Standard and the Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs collaborate to create an annual goal and performance plan that lays out the parameters and goals for the foundation's contributions. In relation to this it can be argued that the mentioned Ministry has an influence at Dansk Standard (2. Dansk Standard, u.d.).

The DS-5001 Management System, that we are focussing on in our thesis, has been developed by Dansk Standard along with stakeholders such as Dansk Industri, Deloitte Statsautoriseret Revisionspartnerselskab, Finansforbundet, Rambøll Danmark, and Ørsted Services A/S etc[1] (KVINFO, 2022). The standard is published in 2022 (appendix 1) and the first organisation that has been certified with the standard in Denmark is the organisation AP Pension (3. Dansk Standard, 2023).

This specific standard has been created with the purpose of assisting companies and organisations in, for example, avoiding bias in the recruitment of new employees and ensuring a more inclusive culture in the workplace. The standard also addresses how to deal with offensive behaviour in addition to the physical environment, profiling, and communication within this area inside organisations. Additionally, the standard can help organisations to establish clear policies and goals for equality and diversity. The framework of the standard is similar to the structure of other management standards such as, ISO 9001 Quality Management, ISO 14001 Environmental Management which are some of the recognised international management standards (4. Dansk Standard, u.d.).

We find it necessary to investigate the DS-5001 Management System, as we see this as a potential catalyst for an improving element for diversity and equity in the labour market and organisations. Denmark has a responsibility to obey legislation, both nationally and

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[1] Accenture A/S, Akademikerne, AkademikerPension, Annelise Ryberg: Social Entrepreneur, Bech-Bruun Advokatpartnerselskab, Cohera, Danmarks Nationalbank, Dansk Erhverv, Finanssektorens, Arbejdsgiverforening, HK Danmark, KVINFO, Mannaz A/S, Mercer (Danmark) A/S, Nestlé Danmark A/S, Nordisk Ministerråd, Normværk, On The Agenda ApS, Rambøll Management A/S.

internationally, and has even agreed to achieve the UN's SDG by anno 2030 (Udenrigsministeriet, u.d.). With this analysis, we aim to contribute to innovative and concrete initiatives for a greater propagation of DS-5001 in order to contribute to a more equal labour market and society. This leads us to investigate the following problem formulation and research questions.

Problem formulation

What insights can be gained from a critical examination of the DS-5001 Management Standard System, specifically focusing on the transition from theory to practical implementation?

Research questions

In order to respond to the overall problem formulation, this study will focus on the following guiding questions. These questions support our problem formulation, along with how to implement DS-5001 in organisations. The research questions are presented below:

- *Do the discourses in the standard become a barrier to implementing DS-5001 in organisations?*
- *Which improving initiatives should be prioritised in DS-5001 to guarantee that diversity and equality are properly communicated throughout organisations?*

By examining the problem formulation and research question, we might be able to locate various discourses that shapes the perception of the standard and thereby influence how the requirements in DS-5001 are implemented in organisations. With this knowledge we might discover possible improving initiatives that would benefit the implementation of DS-5001. To be able to get an understanding of the field our study is grounded in existing literature exploring management standards, diversity in organisations and discourses impact on organisational communication, which will be addressed in the next section.

2

Literature Review
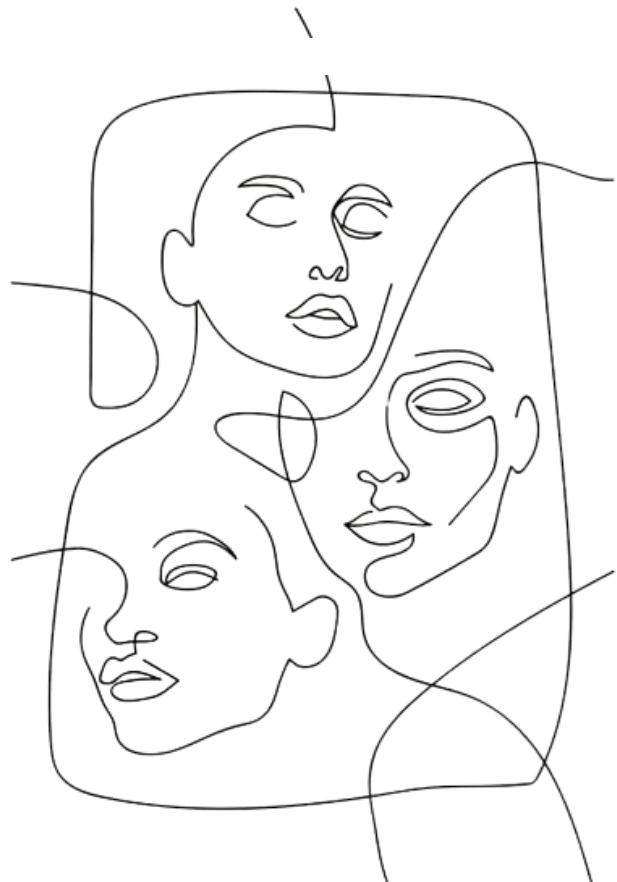
The thesis is grounded in a variety of existing studies, where we seek, to shed light on the possible benefits that management standards offer to organisations while addressing implementation strategies in global organisations. Additionally, academic research concerning the effects of diversity in organisations will be discussed. Lastly, it will in this section be addressed how the discourses of global organisations can influence societal norms, and vice versa how the discourses circulating within today's society affect global organisations' communication. We are reviewing this literature to gain knowledge of the field we are studying in our thesis, which can contribute to a new conversation that can develop our research study in new areas. Through exploring existing literature, we might be able to discover a knowledge gap within the field of our research.

Exploring Management Standards

The need for standards

Dansk Standard defines a management standard as an internationally recognised standard that establishes best practices and recommendations for management in organisations within a certain field. Dansk Standard (DS) is the Danish member organisation of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) (5. Dansk Standard, u.d.). These standards provide the values, conditions, and rules that organisations can adhere to in order to create and preserve efficient management systems in their particular fields. Obtaining certification in accordance with these standards can serve as a signal to partners and consumers both that the organisation follows established best practices in the field of management. A management standard tool is known as a systematic framework that helps businesses enhance management practices and produce better outcomes (6. Dansk Standard, u.d.). It provides a structured approach for outlining, carrying out, and assessing management procedures within the organisation. Standard management tools can be beneficial to organisations to assist them succeed. They can guarantee continuity, lower risks, improve customer loyalty, increase efficiency, improve employee satisfaction, and improve management procedures (6. Dansk Standard, u.d.).

Implementation barriers

Researchers studying the topic of management standards and their relevance in organisations describe various methods of implementation and outcomes in their studies. Researchers both acknowledge the need for implementing management standards in the organisation but also address the possible implementation barriers that can occur within organisations.

The motivation for the implementation of ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 in organisations is being discussed by Heras-Saizarbitoria & Boiral (2013) who argue that focus on internal stakeholders, such as middle managers or employees who do not handle management responsibilities is important. External stakeholders such as clients, suppliers, consultants, and auditors, should also be included in the studies that attempt to analyse the reasons behind the adoption of management system standards. When focussing on these elements, Heras-Saizarbitoria & Boiral (2013) explain that a deeper and more thorough understanding of a process this complicated might be achieved. Related to the former study, the researchers Zutshi & Sohal (2004) outline in their research how, regardless of an organisation's size, industry, or type of business, the importance of implementing different management systems and standards has increased. However, whether the standard systems are in the quality, environmental, or any other area, managers experience resistance and difficulties when implementing systems and standards in the organisations. As a result, Zutshi & Sohal (2004) highlight the need to prioritise employee education and training in order to improve the chances of a management system having an effective adoption by the employees in the organisation.

State power in Standard Institutionalisation

Furthermore, Delmas & Montes-Sancho (2011) focus in their research on the impact of national institutional elements on the implementation of ISO 14001. The findings that they discover in their research, suggest that normative and regulatory forces in the institutional setting might cooperate negatively with one another in the early stages of a standard's adoption in organisations and have an effect on the willingness to implement new practices. According to Delmas and Montes-Sanchos (2011), it would be relevant to explore how institutional forces can be utilised to implement standards in organisations based on the three aspects of regulation, normative, and cognitive. The state can affect the adoption of standards by creating formal and informal regulatory pressures that influence organisations to either adopt or reject standards. In relation to this, they argue that because of the state's authority and power to create rewards or sanctions towards the organisation that either adapts or denies implementing standards in the organisation.

In continuation Tolbert & Zucker (1996) propose that, for a norm to become institutionalised, organisational decision-makers need to come to a social consensus regarding the importance of maintaining it. Three types of institutionalisations are presented by Tolbert & Zucker (1996), pre-, semi-, and full institutionalisation. The pre-institutionalisation phase is characterised by

limited awareness of the standard and few organisations having implemented it. In the semi-institutionalisation phase, the standard is relatively widespread but not yet adopted by the majority of organisations. The third phase, full institutionalisation, is characterised by the standard transitioning to being taken for granted and thus assumed to be normal practice. In continuation to Tolbert & Zucker (1996) research on institutional impact on organisations, Abeygunasekera, Bandara, Wynn, & Yigitbasioglu (2022) focus on the challenge of making process changes permanent and institutionalising improving initiatives within Business Process Management (BPM). Traditionally, BPM tools and methods are centred around implementing proposed changes, but the researchers highlight in their research that it is rarely discussed how to ensure that the changes remain enduring within the organisation. This is particularly important as process improvement initiatives often face resistance and adoption issues in the organisation. Abeygunasekera, Bandara, Wynn, & Yigitbasioglu (2022), establish in their research the notion of institutionalisation of process improvements and provide a new institutionalisation approach based on Tolbert & Zucker's (1996) institutionalisation framework in order to overcome this challenge. According to Habermas (1999), the state is a crucial entity for using democratic processes to institutionalise and legitimise norms. Because of this, it is necessary to discuss how the state is responsible for the construction of the discourses included in the DS-5001 Management System, where issues of diversity and inclusion should be addressed with a great deal of importance.

Advantages of implementing standards

Gotzamani (2005) presents the general advantages that standards can provide for organisations, such as simplifying and enhancing internal processes in her research. On the other hand, she also argues that managers in several organisations are somewhat negative towards the result of a new standard in the organisation, mostly concerning employee motivation and satisfaction. More specifically, managers are concerned that the increased focus on procedures will prevail to a certain degree, which might create new bureaucracies around processes in organisations. The actual benefit and competitive advantage come from an organisation's successful efforts to develop unique internal strengths and efficiencies that are difficult for competitors to replicate (Gotzamani, 2005). This can be related to Zutshi & Sohal (2004) argument about employee education, which can help the process of implementing a management standard in the organisation. De Boer, Müller, & ten Caten (2015) also argue that in order to set priorities for process improvement initiatives, guidelines and criteria must be established in the organisation, which is how process management is supposed to be strategically implemented.

The organisation may identify whether it is accomplishing its strategic goals by tracking process performance. In order to create this long-term strategy for process development, goals and indicators must be defined. It is also essential to assign process-related responsibilities to ensure enterprise-wide engagement with ongoing improvement projects. It is important to appoint someone in the organisation to supervise the procedures and make sure they function properly. Therefore, it is essential to promote a process management culture in the organisation rather than restricting it. Therefore, the goal is for individuals to understand the importance of their work, crossing departmental silo barriers, and to acknowledge the advantages that the BPM technique can offer to the organisation (de Boer, Müller, & ten Caten, 2015).

Summary of Exploring Management Standards

The literature explains how standards provide the values, circumstances, and norms organisations can use to establish and maintain efficient management systems in their specific fields. Furthermore, it has been discovered that managers face resistance and difficulties when implementing systems and standards in organisations; this means there is a need to prioritise employee education and training in order to improve the chances of a management system being effectively adopted by employees in the organisation.

Furthermore, the state has the authority to influence the adoption of standards by establishing legal and informal regulatory pressures on organisations to accept or reject standards. The state is an important entity for institutionalising and legitimating norms through democratic processes. As a result, it is essential to explore how the state is accountable for the development of the discourses included in the DS-5001 Management System.

According to the research, in order to set priorities for process improvement initiatives, guidelines and criteria must be established in the organisation, which is how process management is supposed to be strategically implemented. Furthermore, it is important to promote a process management culture rather than restrict it. It became evident from the studies in the field concerning the implementation and effect of management standards in organisations that there is still an absence of relevant research in this area. Specifically in relation to the management standard that we are investigating, which is the DS 5001 Management System for diversity and equality. This can indicate a significant knowledge gap that deserves more research.

Diversity in Organisations

In this section we will explore existing literature from a variety of scholars that review diversity in organisations. This part will be grounded in literature on the topics of the benefits of diversity in organisations, disadvantages of diversity in organisation and strategies for implementing diversity in organisations. This knowledge will shape our understanding of diversity in organisation and thereby contribute to our understanding of the importance of implementing DS-5001 management standard to better ensure diversity and equality in organisations.

Benefits of diversity in organisations

The topic of diversity has been increasingly popular among scholars of organisational studies and one of the elements that has been discussed is how diversity enhances innovation. Scholars such as Østergaard (2022), Lucas & Baxter (2012) and Roberge & Dick (2010) argue that diversity increases innovation in workplaces and has a positive effect. Østergaard (2022) states that organisations with a more diverse workforce in terms of gender, nationality, and education tend to be more inventive than those with less diversity. To which he indicates that diversity has numerous benefits, but it can also have drawbacks. He argues that there are two directions in how diversity can influence a company's ability to be innovative. By the first direction, it can be understood that diversity is a source of knowledge and innovation because it enables new combinations of knowledge and learning, and the possibility to be better at external cooperation and innovation. The other approach is more concerned with group dynamics and identity. This relates to the classification of workers and how they form views about one another according to personal traits. This may lead to a decrease in communication and knowledge exchange at work. This approach can also be applied to other leaders who disregard alternative opinions and sources of information.

To this Østergaard (2022) argues that diversity in the management team frequently results in better decision-making and information-seeking. Additionally, Lucas and Baxter (2012) argue that workforce diversity makes an important contribution to organisations, where research indicates that greater diversity along a variety of dimensions, including gender and race, is associated with innovation, creativity, and performance in organisations. Furthermore, Roberge and Dick (2010) contend that data supports the idea that diversity can have a greater positive impact on performance by promoting innovation and creativity due to the wider range of viewpoints that employees bring to the table. Scholars also discover other benefits of having more diversity in organisations, where Özbilgin, Tatli, Ipek, & Sameer (2016) argues that

diversity fosters a positive work environment and increased productivity in an organisation where employees come from a wide range of cultural and racial backgrounds. The researchers also pay attention to gender diversity since they find that it improves women's satisfaction with their jobs. However, there are still some organisational variables that have an impact on women's careers, for example, laws governing diversity and equality in society, when combined with the personal challenges women face, can have a significant impact on women's careers, and their job satisfaction (Özbilgin, Tatli, Ipek, & Sameer, 2016).

Furthermore, Gomez & Bernet (2019), describe how studies in the medical field show positive associations between diversity, quality of patient care and economic performance. According to the scholars, patients often receive better care when provided by more diverse teams. Overall, the results exhibit that the economic results were improved with increased diversity. They argue that a diverse work environment can result in fewer conflicts which can occur when implementing change at workforces (Gomez & Bernet, 2019). Similarly, Bernile, Bhagwat, & Yonker (2018) argue that there are advantages and disadvantages to having diverse boards in US companies. The impact of board diversity on performance, policy, and risk is explored in this study. The results show that diverse boards decrease the volatility of stock returns and are a sign of good governance and moderation of decisions. Although they might respond more slowly, diverse boards often embrace corporate practices that are steady and consistent. Diverse boards invest more in Research and Development despite posing less financial risk, which improves and elevates the production of innovation. Although there may be context-specific costs, Bernile, Bhagwat, & Yonker (2018) argue that increasing board diversity is generally associated with increased profitability and firm valuations, which supports the promotion of diversity in corporate boards.

Disadvantages of diversity in organisations

On the other hand, the disadvantages of diversity in organisations are addressed by Özbilgin, Tatli, Ipek, & Sameer (2016), Mazur (2010) and Roberge & Dick (2010).

Özbilgin, Tatli, Ipek, & Sameer (2016), also look at diversity in organisations from a different viewpoint, where they argue for the negative elements of diversity and the positive elements of ethnic homogeneity. They argue that diversity can benefit a company since employees with similar cultural origins may form closer relations and show higher levels of job embeddedness than those in a workplace with a diversity of cultural backgrounds. Regarding their arguments, Mazur (2010) views diversity at workplaces from a social identity theory perspective. She argues that groups with similar cultures tend to communicate with one another more frequently

and in a variety of ways, perhaps as a result of shared worldviews. Cultural homogeneity in management groups can have a variety of good effects, including a rise in happiness, cooperation, and a fall in the intensity of emotional confrontations, according to social identity theory. Mazur (2010) also argues that there are fewer obstacles to social interaction because the homogeneous group has similar cultural backgrounds. Roberge & Dick (2010), also share this view, where they argue that diversity in organisations does not just bring positive consequences. To this, they state that heterogeneity in teams is known to have a lower level of intragroup cohesion, more conflicts and misunderstandings, more severe employee satisfaction, and less cooperative behaviours.

The previous studies have shown the conflicting aspects of diversity in organisations, and that homogeneity and heterogeneity both have their advantages. According to Cornell & Welch (1996), there are different aspects of the reason why homogeneity occurs in organisations.

They present, from a psychological and sociological perspective, a model that combines two well- known ideas, within economics and social science. The first idea centres around the difficulty individuals encounter while attempting to separate the successful from the unsuccessful among others in a variety of life circumstances. The second idea frames the importance of cultures and its role regarding interpersonal evaluation and communication. With the two ideas considered, the model presents that individuals are drawn to accompany similar individuals, due to their internalised and unconscious bias. A discriminating equilibrium may arise if there is no compensating benefit to offset the challenge of evaluating people from an unfamiliar cultural background. Importantly, this type of discrimination emerges from the actual difficulty of assessing individuals whose backgrounds are unknown, not from ethnic preference, notions about cultural superiority, or a lack of acceptance of other cultures (Cornell & Welch, 1996).

Strategies for implementing diversity in organisations

The previous mentioned scholars argued for the favourable and negative elements of having diversity in organisations, leading us to unfold how it can be implemented in organisations and who is responsible for implementing diversity, which has been discussed by several organisational scholars. Østergaard (2022) argues that it is important to understand what diversity is and how it is measurable, before implementing it in organisations. He states that diversity needs to be seen in the context of something else. Typically, it is argued that diversity can be comprehended as differences between individuals in a group that is defined based on individual characteristics (Østergaard, 2022).

According to Page (2017) the best teams, in an organisational context, consist of diverse thinkers. In addition, it is claimed that in order to prosper with variation, we must develop our ability to recognise the kinds of diversity that enhance results and comprehend the underlying circumstances. In addition to this, Bebbington & Özbilgin (2013), state that the way diversity and equality are regulated in workplaces is influenced by political, social, and economic trends. This implies that diversity needs to be viewed from a wider perspective in order to be introduced into organisations, where they add that to reframe the paradox around diversity in leadership, the historical patterns that account for these tendencies must be investigated. Additionally, Lucas & Baxter (2012) demonstrate in their study that diversity promotion initiatives are necessary for the successful management of companies. They state that the management of a diverse workplace is complicated by the influence of power. Furthermore, their research on group status processes reveals that they are a key determinant of access to positions of power. The same research also demonstrates how status traits influence people's expectations in different social groups, albeit frequently unconsciously, which can indicate that power positions and mechanisms are important to look at in order to implement diversity in organisations (Lucas & Baxter, 2012). Likewise, the study from Roberge & Dick (2010) present that findings illustrate how empathy, for example, will moderate the link between group performance and diversity. It shows from research created by HR.com that 37 per cent of those surveyed answered that the HR department is responsible for ensuring diversity and inclusion in workplaces where 14 per cent answered that CEOs are responsible. This indicates that among the surveyed, they expect that the HR department will intervene, regarding diversity and inclusion in the organisation (HR-Chefen 2, 2022). Moreover, Cai, Grennan, & Qiu (2022) explore the relationship between a diverse management and more diverse recruiting practices, equitable pay, and an inclusive workplace culture. The year following the selection of a diverse manager, the scholars reveal a rise in diversity among management and employees. Additionally, they discover that the workforce views enhanced work culture, more robust community-building norms, and higher levels of approval for top management. They do, however, observe little actual impact on racial and gender pay disparities. This indicates that diverse management can both influence and serve as a mechanism for increasing diversity when implementing it in the organisation (Cai, Grennan, & Qiu, 2022).

Summary of diversity in organisations

According to the literature, organisations that have a workforce that is more diverse when it comes of gender, nationality, and educational background typically have more inventive

workforce than those that are less diverse. Research suggests that more diversity in the workforce including in terms of gender and race is linked to improved performance, creativity, and innovation inside organisations. Diversity in the workforce also makes a significant contribution to these organisations. However, researchers also noted that maybe as a result of having similar worldviews, groups with similar cultures tend to communicate with one another more frequently and in different ways. It is also found that because the homogeneous group has comparable cultural backgrounds, there are fewer barriers to social interaction. In contrast, heterogeneity in teams has been linked to less employee satisfaction, less cooperative behaviours, higher levels of intragroup conflict and misunderstanding, and lower intragroup cohesion. Furthermore, even though it's usually unconscious, people's expectations within various social groups are influenced by their status attributes. This suggests that power dynamics and positions are crucial to consider when implementing diversity in organisations. When implementing diversity in organisations, diverse management can have a positive effect on diversity and act as a tool to increase it.

Discourse's Impact on Organisational Communication

In this section we will explore existing literature from a variety of scholars that review how discourses, society and power influence on organisational communication. Through the literature we seek to get insight into how people construct meaning, knowledge, and understanding through for example communication. In an organisational communicative context, we will look deeper into how people construct meaning, knowledge, and understanding through for example communication. In an organisational communicative context, we will look deeper into how discourses affect organisations and influence their communication.

Discourse and society's influence on organisational communication

It is debated in from number of scholars how discourses play a role for both society and even organisational communication and vice versa such as Johnsen (2002), Marynissen (2011), Habermas (1999), Jaynes (2015), Leclercq-Vandelannoitte (2011), Besio & Pronzini (2014).

Johnsen (2002) conducted a study in Norway that illuminates the connection between organisational development and a communicative change programme. The study highlights the ways in which discourses impact communication within organisations. In this context,

communication is viewed as a normative concept, and change is influenced by legitimacy. Discourses have been identified as key components in this process, where they serve roles like resolving conflicts and creating knowledge to establish credibility. Based on a single case from Steel Plant Corp (SPC), the study's analysis demonstrates the complexity of competing discourses and communicative occurrences. It is determined that action and a shift in meaning construction over time are necessary for communicative organisational change. Both the case and the management, in the example case, shifted from viewing their relationship as one of conflict to one of cooperation. Most significantly, the SPC case shows that a legal and transparent change process can result in significant organisational growth without conflict but rather through peaceful disagreement. This finding highlights the importance of paying attention to the complexity of simultaneously communicative events as opposed to just the efficiency of individual communication modalities (Johnsen, 2002). Overall, the study advances knowledge about the integration of discourses and communication in organisational change processes and emphasises the significance of identifying and navigating this complexity for effective organisational development (Johnsen, 2002).

Additionally, Marynissen (2011), reveals similar components in her study, where she addresses that in order to identify key issues and the necessity of changing communication strategies, the aim is to clarify the reciprocal influence that societal discourses and organisational communication have on one another. Discovering how organisational communication shapes social discourses while also having an impact on them is one of the study's goals. Marynissen (2011) highlights how traditional communication strategies encounter obstacles such as fragmented information, dualistic thought processes, and limitations of existing organisational patterns by examining the complexity of the receivers' perception. The findings suggest that comprehension of the current organisational cognitive framework and adaptation of communication strategies to the context in which they operate are essential for effectively influencing the perception. Simultaneously, Marynissen (2011) highlights the necessity for additional investigation and the creation of customised communication strategies that consider the interplay between societal discourses and organisational communication. These measures will fortify organisations' capacity to develop a favourable perception and encourage desired behaviour among their stakeholders.

Furthermore, Habermas (1999) addresses the importance of discourses in society in "Between Facts and Norms: An Author's Reflections". One can read how he sums up the significance of discourses for society, particularly in an organisational setting, and the relationship with the state in the aforementioned text. Habermas (1999) explains how laws serve as a framework for regulations that establish standards, guarantee legitimacy, and uphold justice. He explains how legislation induces discourses that necessitate rational arguments and how the state functions as a venue for legitimation and demands that organisations be justified democratically. Since decisions must be made based on valid arguments in order for an organisation to be legitimate and accepted, one way to interpret the legislation in this context is as a tool to support open discourses. Legislation also supports public communication and transparency in the context of mass democracy. It can also be read how laws can support citizen participation (or employee participation, in a more organisational context), as well as how laws can regulate the private rights of citizens and the policies of organisations. In summary, it is thus important to highlight how, from Habermas perspective, laws are crucial in forming and controlling discourses in organisational communication and in the relationships that exist between organisations and society (Habermas, 1999).

Discourses and Power in an Organisational Context

How discourses are not only a means of shaping organisational culture but also a central power factor, is emphasised in a study by Jaynes (2015). This article explains how organisational leaders take advantage of discourses by using prominent discourses, like those in business and science, to support and carry out strategic changes. By creating and presenting particular discourses as realities and requirements, power is performed. This shapes reality and influences how individuals and the organisation perceive themselves and their roles (Jaynes , 2015). Towards this Barker (2011) states:

Power is not simply the glue that holds the social together, or the coercive force which subordinates one set of people to another, though it certainly is this. It is also understood in terms of the process that generate and enable any form of social action, relationship, or order. (Barker, 2011, p. 10)

Thus, the power aspect shows that some individuals, usually management, have the ability to define and impose certain discourses as legitimate and dominant. This means that discourses alone do not shape organisational culture. As a result, there is a hierarchy of knowledge and meaning created, with some discourses having a greater impact than others. Through these discourses, management can influence how its employees perceive themselves and act (Jaynes , 2015). The power element also applies to society, as organisations' strategic shifts may have their origins in social discourses. Organisations that are most adept at mastering and putting these discourses into practice will be able to determine how they fit into society and what roles they play. This leads to a complex power dynamic in which discourses serve as both tools and agents of power, influencing how society and organisations understand and react to change. Overall, Jaynes (2015) demonstrates how power, and discourses are intertwined in organisational transformation. It emphasises that comprehending how organisational culture and society at large change through strategic change requires an analysis of the people who have the ability to create and carry out particular discourses. Discussing which interests are served, which voices are given priority, and how this use of power impacts organisations and society as a whole is made possible by the discourse on power (Jaynes , 2015).

Another study by Leclercq-Vandelannoitte (2011) addresses the subject of power in an organisational setting. This study refines the presented argument and introduces a process model based on Foucault to investigate the role of communication in the formation of organisations. The study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of communication for organisations by redefining technology as both discursive and non-discursive practice. Issues with the standard Constitutive Communication (CCO) theory are discussed, such as the imbalance between symbolic and material elements and the absence of power theories. The study highlights the importance of making constitutional processes clear and suggests a different CCO framework that is based on Foucault's ideas (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2011). The alternative Foucauldian-based CCO framework incorporates Foucault's ideas about subjectivity, power, discourse, and technology. It illustrates how these components give rise to dynamic political processes that blend material and symbolic elements, thereby influencing the formation of organisations (Leclercq-Vandelannoitte, 2011) Last,

Besio & Pronzini (2014) clarifies how corporations should be held accountable for addressing climate change in light of societal expectations. They find how moral claims in the media discourse generate pressure for responsible action by examining how organisations respond to these expectations. Organisations use a variety of strategies to convert these moral principles into internally consistent frameworks, such as the creation of formal ethical frameworks and unofficial moral standards. The outcome demonstrates the complexity of how organisations handle discourses about social responsibility: morality becomes both a facade and a significant criterion for decision-making (Besio & Pronzini, 2014).

Summary of Discourse's Impact on Organisational Communication

This section states that communication within organisations plays a critical role in shaping societal discourses by mediating and influencing perceptions of the goals and impacts of organisations. Scholars demonstrate that discourses are essential elements for developing reliability, as well as the discourses significance for society, especially the relationship between the state and the organisation. Simultaneously, as organisations navigate a broader context, their communication strategies and goals are shaped by societal discourses. Power is a major catalyst since it both shapes and is shaped by organisational communication, resulting in dynamics that impact relationships both inside and outside the organisation. Thus, comprehension of this intricate interaction is essential for both social impact and organisational effectiveness. After reviewing different perspectives and approaches in the literature in this field, we will in the next section introduce the theoretical framework that will guide our analysis and understanding of the subject. The theory section will build on the studies from the literature review and contribute to a deeper understanding of the above perspectives. Firstly, Foucault's theory of discourses and state power will be presented, whereas the theory of gender, power and communication by Karen Lee Ashcraft will be expanded.

3

Theory

Discourse and state power per Foucault

Foucault's approach to the theory of science is deeply influenced by his studies of power, knowledge, and discourse in society (Mangion, 2011). His knowledge of power and discourses contributes to understanding society and the discourses that influence it.

A central idea in Foucault's work is that power is not a static or external force, but rather a dynamic relation integrated into all social institutions and practices. He explores in his work how power unfolds through disciplinary mechanisms, normalising forces, and surveillance techniques that shape individual behaviour and identity. Foucault's scientific theoretical approach is often characterised by his critical examination of knowledge and truth as historically conditioned and power-related constructions (Mangion, 2011).

He argues that knowledge is not neutral but rather shaped by power relations and social contexts. This led to his concept of 'power/knowledge,' where power and knowledge are inseparable and mutually constitutive. Moreover, his ontological and epistemological stances can be interpreted through a constructionist lens, as his theoretical concepts are posited as socially constructed and as influential elements in shaping individual cognition (Mangion, 2011).

Furthermore, we want to delve into four central ideas to understand Foucault's theory on power and discourse, and to gain a deeper understanding of how power influences organisations.

The first idea concerns his approach to power and knowledge, where Foucault argues that power is not simply a tool to promote or maintain certain forms of knowledge, but that power and knowledge are mutually dependent and inseparable. Foucault states in his book on *Discipline and Punish* (McHoul & Grace , 2015, p. 59)*, that:

> *(…) We should admit … that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.* (McHoul & Grace , 2015, p. 59)

The quote presents Foucault's view on power, which does not only influence, but actively produces knowledge. This happens not simply by encouraging certain types of knowledge

because they serve power or by applying knowledge because it is useful for power. Rather, power and knowledge are directly intertwined as they imply each other mutually and constitute each other. Foucault also argues that there can be no power relations without a corresponding field of knowledge, and simultaneously, every form of knowledge presupposes and shapes power relations. This highlights Foucault's view that knowledge and power are closely interwoven within societal structures and practices.

The second idea that is relevant to the thesis is Foucault's concept of 'governmentality' in organisations which refers to how power operates within systems of governance and administration. It extends beyond traditional notions of government to include various forms of authority and control within organisational settings (McKinlay & Taylor, 2014)

In the context of organisations, 'governmentality' involves the techniques, strategies, and rationalities employed to manage and regulate individuals and groups in the organisation. This does not only include formal structures of authority such as hierarchical management, but also more nuanced mechanisms of influence and control embedded within organisational practices, norms, and ideologies. Foucault's idea of 'governmentality' challenges the notion of how power operates through diverse mechanisms of governance, shaping the behaviour, identities, and subjectivities of individuals within organisations (McKinlay & Taylor, 2014).

It emphasises the role of knowledge, technologies, and discourses in governing conduct in organisations. By understanding 'governmentality' in organisations, one can analyse how power relations are structured and negotiated, uncovering how authority is exercised and resisted within complex organisational contexts. This perspective encourages a critical examination of the dynamics of power, control, and resistance within today's organisational work environments (McKinlay & Taylor, 2014). The idea of an autonomous subject - that is, a subject with a mind of its own, who is capable to think, develop beliefs, have meaningful experiences, and act outside of a particular social context - was strongly denied by Foucault. According to Foucault, the subject is always dependent on the outcome of certain combinations of self-technologies and governmental techniques. Therefore, Foucault genealogies examine how new forms of subjectivity emerged as a result of disciplinary power (Bevir, 1999).

The concept of 'code of conduct' is introduced by Foucault as a concept that refers to the subtle, hidden methods by which people are pushed and guided towards particular actions but are rarely being forced or instructed (McKinlay & Taylor, 2014).

Foucault discovered that the code of conduct necessarily involves an unstable approach to governance. Still, depending on self-governing individuals to make decisions is neither simple nor based on mistaken idealism. Rather, the risk created by code of conduct systems is a necessary consequence of these kinds of regulatory frameworks (McKinlay & Taylor, 2014). Therefore, any governmental system can only ever achieve a fragile balance - a temporary balance in which costs, benefits, and risks are weighed and rated beneficial or acceptable but never completely fulfilling, where no governmental system can achieve long-term stability. Foucault argues that risk assessment becomes a critical component of all strategies, defining how the government measures its effectiveness in improving how an organisation evaluates its market share or productivity (McKinlay & Taylor, 2014).

This relates to the third concept we aim to incorporate, which is the concept of disciplinary power that is being addressed by Foucault. Disciplinary power is based on the idea of an autonomous self, which involves separation, confinement, and total pursuit of broad control. When comparing 'code of conduct' and 'disciplinary power,' the 'code of conduct' aims to incorporate the individual or group, but "disciplinary power" indicates separation and isolation (McKinlay & Taylor, 2014). The code of conduct is not simply a set of rules that acknowledges freedom, the system is based on the accomplishment of self-regulation by individuals. Opposite, understanding that there will always be a chance that one is being observed is one of the requirements for implementing disciplinary power in organisations (McKinlay & Taylor, 2014).

The fourth idea that we consider relevant is Foucault's understanding of Power and Discourse which is affected by his theoretical approach. He considers power as a relational and diffused force inherent inside social structures and practices and has a significant influence on his understanding of power and discourses in organisations (McHoul & Grace , 2015). Foucault explores how power is exercised and managed through various mechanisms and techniques that shape individuals and their behaviour and control social norms and discourses. According to Foucault, power is a complex and dynamic process distributed among several societal levels and domains rather than being a static resource possessed by particular actors or institutions.

His research focuses on the ways that surveillance techniques, disciplinary measures, and normalising practices that influence people's behaviour and identities inside organisations function as tools of power (McHoul & Grace , 2015).

He contends that discourses actively replicate and legitimise power relations in addition to reflecting them. Power relations in organisations are viewed by Foucault as being embedded in management techniques, institutional norms, and administrative structures. He highlights how power is used through a variety of monitoring, assessment, and control strategies that not only shape individual behaviour but also control social interactions and hierarchies inside organisations (McHoul & Grace, 1993).

Foucault's understanding of discourse is reflected in the historical relation between disciplines and disciplinary practices. By disciplines Foucault refers to *'defined as bodies of knowledge'* (McHoul & Grace , 2015, p. 26), while disciplinary practices refer to *'forms of social control and social possibility'* (McHoul & Grace , 2015, p. 26).

Foucault's approach to discourse is viewed as critical, since it is centred around historical and social conditions and presents a way of embracing social critique with a focus on revivalism. Foucault emphasises the significance of discourses, as an element that can shape individuals' perception of reality and create social hierarchies and power structures. Foucault uses the term discourse to define an area of social knowledge made up of a set of regulated statements. This explains why it is possible to think and speak about certain areas of knowledge in a particular way during a given historical time (Mangion, 2011), (McHoul & Grace , 2015). Language is a relevant component in Foucault's theoretical framework, where individuals inevitably become involved in prevailing power dynamics inherent within language itself (Jensen & Hansen, 2006). Foucault contends that certain topics are not always discussable, nor can anyone present a certain perspective at any given moment (Jensen & Hansen, 2006), (Krause-Jensen, 1978). Foucault argues that certain discourse and way of speaking and thinking has a historical limit, which underscores the situational emergence of all discourses, which is shaped by historical contexts (McHoul & Grace , 2015).

Within Foucault's work he addresses the importance of understanding how scientific discourses are integrated into society's institutions and practices. Foucault states the following:

 (…) There exists today a problem which is not without importance for political practice: the problem of the status, of the conditions of existence, of functioning, of the institutionalising of

scientific discourses. That's what I have undertaken to analyse historically - by choosing the discourses which have, not the strongest epistemological structure, but the densest and most complex field of positivity. (McHoul & Grace , 2015, p. 53)

In this passage, Foucault argues that to fully understand power and society, one must pay attention to the scientific discourses that are embedded in society and shape its function in addition to political and economic systems. As Foucault points out, scientific discourses are not isolated from society or politics. Instead, he argues that they play a crucial role in how power is exercised and how society operates. This means that one cannot understand political practice without examining how scientific discourses are integrated into it by society. It is therefore important to analyse how these discourses affect society. By the stated quote above, Foucault presents his interest in understanding how discourses evolve and become institutionalised in society. He is not only interested in the discourses with the strongest theoretical structure but more so those that have the most complexity and close influence on society (McHoul & Grace , 2015).

Through an analysis of the various discourses presented in DS-5001, it may be possible to consider, through Foucault's approach to the theory of science, how these discourses shape views on organisational management and thereby identify any dominant discourses that could potentially impact the implementation process. To understand how power functions in the actual implementation of management standards in organisations, we can use Foucault's concept of power. Additionally, it is possible that certain individuals and groups within organisations may be either empowered or constrained by the power dynamics presented in DS-5001. Furthermore, with a focus on Foucault's approach to the theory of science, it would be relevant to investigate how the standard allocates power, authority, and responsibilities. We also find it relevant to investigate whether the discourses embedded in DS-5001 act as barriers to its practical implementation. Foucault's understanding of power can contribute to analyse if certain language constructions or power dynamics presented in DS-5001 decrease the acceptance and effective adaption of the standard within diverse organisational contexts.

Gender, power, and communication per Ashcraft

In this section, we will address some of Karen Lee Ashcraft's knowledge and understanding as a postmodern feminist researcher, regarding gendered organisation, communication, discourses, and power. We have chosen to use parts of the theory that we find relevant to our analytical framework for this project.

Ashcraft's main research area focuses on power, gender, and identity in organisations. Equally, she is known for her work on how communication and discourses shape and maintain power structures, hierarchies, and gender norms in workplaces. Rather than searching for universal truths in gender studies, postmodern feminist scholars aim to demonstrate the various ways in which gender is produced, often with results that reflect partial truths. Likewise, postmodern feminists attempt to comprehend how gender is formed through language, power, and organisation because they do not believe that gender has any inherent qualities. Furthermore, they believe that established identities are undermined by the discursive process related to gender constructions, which is connected to complexity and contrast (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004). Therefore, when postmodern feminists discuss their ideas in relation to organisational realities and identities, they concentrate on the processes which are involved in the discourse, resistance, and power. Furthermore, the analytical objective is to destabilise gender as a construction, or to make it unstable, in order to better comprehend gender's place in disciplinary systems that are influenced by power and difference (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004). Furthermore, she examines how gender and identity are constructed and how it is discussed through communication in organisational contexts. Ashcraft has a critical approach towards organisational studies and communication research, where this approach involves research of power structure, ideology, and discursive practice in organisations, alongside the awareness of the social and political surroundings that affect organisational communication. Furthermore, gender studies are frequently incorporated into Ashcraft's study, as she approaches organisations from a gender-critical standpoint and investigates how gender affects identity, power, and communication in the workplace. Since Ashcraft aims to expose the social and political forces that influence organisational practice and culture, her approach can be broadly described as critical and gender critical. She also challenges the established norms and power structures seen in organisational communications (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004).

Additionally, Ashcraft discusses the various ways that gender is embedded in organisational practices, structures, and culture. One of the main concepts in her research on gendered

organisations is the construction of gender in organisations. According to Ashcraft, gender is a social construction that is established and discussed in organisational contexts rather than a defined biological category. Organisations are dynamic environments where gender can be established, maintained, and reproduced through everyday actions and interactions. This indicates that language and discursive practices, such as the use of gender-specific terminology, stereotypes, and expectations in professional communication, have an essential effect on the construction of gender in organisations. These practices can also have an impact on the precepting of gender identity and roles (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004). In continuation, Ashcraft argues that gender is connected to power structures and hierarchies in organisations. Both women and men can experience different kinds of power and authority based on gender, and these differences can affect women's and men's opportunities in the workplace. Ashcraft notes that although gendered institutions frequently perpetuate inequity and sex roles, there are possibilities for opportunity and resistance. She explores strategies that challenge the norms of gender and uses activism, awareness-raising, and structural change to establish ethical and inclusive organisations. Ashcraft requests that organisations have more awareness of their gender dynamics and perform reflective research about how these dynamics affect the work culture. She argues that when organisations understand and acknowledge inequalities and the norms of gender, they can start addressing them more effectively at the workplace (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004).

Furthermore, communication is central to Ashcraft's approach to challenging gendered norms and creating equity in organisations. Open dialogue, sharing of narratives and a constructive debate about gender-related questions are communicative practices, Ashcraft encourages, to establish greater understanding and support for a possible organisational change. Additionally, Ashcraft also argues that structural changes in organisations are essential in order to address gender inequalities more fundamentally. These changes can be included in politics, practices, and procedures in the organisation, to encourage equality and diversity at workplaces. Building upon this, Ashcraft underlines the importance of education and training in gender and inclusive practices for employees and managers in organisations. When the organisation focuses on this, it contributes to more awareness about gender-related questions and strengthens the employees' capabilities to manage them more effectively (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004).

Ashcraft's research also consists of the power that communication has in organisations, where she explores the central process communication has to shape and maintain power structures, identities, and organisational cultures. She argues that communication is a powerful process

because it is used when power is performed and negotiated. She indicates that power in communication is not always obvious or explicit, because it frequently occurs through language, discursive practices, symbolic actions, or social norms. Therefore, recognising and challenging the organisational power structures can be difficult. Ashcraft views communication as a tool that can maintain the execution of power at workplaces. Through communicative actions, groups and individuals can sustain and challenge the existing power structures and hierarchies in organisations. According to Ashcraft, it is important to critically reflect on the power of communication and the consequences it has on individuals' well-being, organisational culture and societal justice. Therefore, she argues that it is important to be aware of the implicit power in communication and challenge the existing power structures and hierarchies (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004).

Additionally, Ashcraft focuses on gender and identity construction in organisational contexts, where her research studies show stereotypes and expectations about masculinity and femininity influence both individual and collective identity at a workplace. Ashcraft studies gender construction where from her analysis gender is a social construction that is framed from cultural, historical, and organisational contexts. Furthermore, from her viewpoint, gender identity is dynamic, which indicates that it can change over time in different contexts. Ashcraft studies the complexities power has connected to gender in workplaces. She recognises that there are complete power structures at workplaces that are connected to gender, where power relations can create unequal gender norms, which can influence opportunities and acknowledgement at the workplace, and contribute to more power structures and hierarchies (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004). Additionally, Ashcraft emphasises that people actively engage in a discussion regarding their gender identification and how it is expressed at work. According to this perspective, people navigate between many expectations and stereotypes connected to masculinity and femininity and at the same time search for opportunities for self-fulfilment and authenticity. Ashcraft argues that it is important to have a radical and critical understanding of the complexity of gender and identity dynamics at workplaces, to create a more inclusive and effective organisation (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004).

Ashcraft challenges the traditional comprehension of power, where she encourages to get a more varied understanding that includes gender, race, class, and other social factors. She argues that a deeper understanding of power relations is crucial for creating an equitable and equal workplace. These perspectives derive from an analysis she has participated in, about how

power relations are gender dynamic, which means how understanding and execution of power can vary based on gender. Through generations, men have had more visible power positions at workplaces, where women have been underrepresented in management roles. This is often caused by gender stereotypes and expectations of gender, that are embedded in organisational structures and culture (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004). Additionally, power through communication is also a part of the study, which includes both verbal and non-verbal actions, such as tone of voice, body language, decision processes, and discursive practices. Regarding this, the study explores how communicative actions can have a powerful influence and can be used to sustain or challenge the existing power structure and hierarchies at workplaces. This emphasises the importance of acknowledging communication's power in organisational contexts, which means that working with communication as a tool can create more diverse and inclusive workplaces. Furthermore, she examines that power relations are complex, and how it can change over time. Power can be manifested in different ways, which indicates that it is important to be attentive to these dynamics to understand how organisations work and how they influence behaviour and identity. (Ashcraft & Mumby, 2004)

Summary of literature review and theory

Existing literature from scholars presented how managers experience resistance and difficulties when implementing standards in the organisations, which could be considered a barrier of the implementation process. Scholars highlighted the importance in prioritising employee education and training in order to improve the chances of a management system having an effective adoption by the employees in the organisation. By exploring various literature in this field, we discovered that for a norm to become institutionalised in organisations, the management need to come to a social consensus regarding the importance of maintaining it. In relation to this, scholars have found that the power aspect shows that some individuals, mostly the management, have the ability to define and impose certain discourses as legitimate and dominant. Furthermore, scholars also found that the power element also applies to society, as organisations' strategic shifts may have foundation in social discourses.

Multiple scholars present in their studies how diversity in organisations in terms of gender, nationality and education, increase innovation, creativity and performance in organisations. Diversity can have the benefit of enabling new combinations of knowledge and learning, because of the heterogeneity and different worldviews. Furthermore, the literature also shows the disadvantages regarding diversity in organisations, which can result in more conflict and misunderstandings and less cooperative behaviours. In order to implement diversity in

organisations, scholars present in studies that with a diverse management, more diverse recruiting practices and inclusive workplace will occur.

According to our theory, Foucault's concept of 'governmentality' challenges the idea of how power appears through various governance mechanisms, altering the behaviour, identities, and subjectivities of individuals within organisations.

He claims that discourses reproduce and legitimise power relations in addition to reflecting them. Foucault argues that power relations in organisations is embedded in management techniques and institutional norms. Power is thereby used through a variety of monitoring and control strategies that shape individual behaviour and control social interactions and hierarchies inside organisations. According to Foucault, language is a relevant component, where individuals become involved in prevailing power dynamics inherent within language itself. Furthermore, did theory from Ashcraft present the various ways that gender is embedded in organisational practices and culture. The formation of gender in organisations is a central idea in her research on gendered organisations. According to Ashcraft, gender is a social construct that is established and argued in organisational contexts. She argues that organisations are dynamic environments in which gender can be established and reproduced through everyday behaviour and interactions.

Based on our knowledge from existing literature and theory, both scholars and Ashcraft highlights the importance of education and training of the employees and managers when implementing changes in organisations. We therefore find it relevant to examine whether education of employees and managers is presented in DS-5001.

Additionally, we find it relevant to study how the discourses are presented in DS-5001, since discourses according to Foucault reproduce power relations in organisations. Scholars also argues that the management have the ability to define certain discourses as legitimate and dominant, which highlights the importance of the discourses presented in DS-5001 to ensure a better transition from theory to practical implementation in organisations.

4

Methodological framework

In this section, our methodological framework will be presented, and how we have collected and analysed our data for this thesis. The two central methods we have used is interviews and discourse analysis. Interviews are accomplished in preparation to get a deeper knowledge of the interviewees' perspectives and experiences with DS-5001. Through semi-structured interviews, we have gathered detailed and personal narratives which make the foundation for a nuanced understanding of DS-5001 and the transitioning from theory to practice in organisations. The discourse analysis examines the language, structures and discourses that are embedded in DS-5001 where the focus is to establish the discourses to be able to reflect on the social and cultural reality. The combination of these methods has enabled us to produce a comprehensive analysis, that both influences individual experiences and wider societal discourses.

Methodology

Philosophy of science

Social constructionism and its epistemology and Ontology

In the section below, we will describe our chosen philosophy of science within our critical discourse analysis, which will focus on the social constructionist direction. We are social constructionist scholars where our worldview is based on our overall problem formulation to gain a deeper insight into DS-5001 concerning how the discourses are presented and the transitioning from theory to practical implementation. It is essential to differentiate between our ontology and epistemology within the framework of the social constructionist worldview (Burr, 2015) (Burr, 1995). Our understanding of how language between individuals shapes reality and our recognition of the various backgrounds we all come from demonstrate our epistemological viewpoint. We therefore consider ourselves as interpretive and critical scholars, where our goal is to investigate how discourses concerning equality and diversity are addressed in DS-5001. Our ontological viewpoint involves our understanding of the discourses defined in DS-5001 concerning the implementation of equality and diversity methods in organisational settings. As researchers, we take a critical approach in terms of power relations and will therefore either support or challenge the highlighted discourses by examining the

dominant discourses presented in DS-5001 and thereby we will inevitably, through our critical discourse analysis, contribute to the construction of social reality (Burr, 2015) (Burr, 1995).

Within the field of humanities, social constructionism is a theoretical framework that considers how language, cultural context, and social processes shape individuals' overall perception of reality. As a social constructionist, the study agenda focuses on the implications of how language constructs narratives and representations of individuals. According to social constructionists, language, communication, and interpersonal interactions shape our reality and our understanding of it. The world therefore appears as a social construct, where understanding of a given phenomenon arises from ongoing social processes and interactions between individuals (Burr, 2015). Language is considered an essential tool for creating meaning and is fundamental to the way humans perceive the world. People collaboratively create and validate social meanings through repeated exchanges, conversations, and practices. This construction takes place within distinct social and cultural frameworks, impacting individuals' understanding of the world. Words and symbols contain cultural and contextual meanings that affect how individuals understand and communicate about their experiences. Furthermore, because social constructions are dynamic, the symbols and discourses we apply with greater meaning are subject to constant change (Burr, 2015). As a result, discourses and language play a crucial role in social constructionism because they influence the reality in which we live and because language determines how individuals perceive and comprehend the world. As a result of this, individuals are born into a world with predefined conceptual frameworks and underlined norms that are particular to their culture. Individuals' interpretations of a given phenomenon are, however, socially created and subject to variation depending on the social and cultural context (Burr, 2015) (Burr, 1995).

The way that language and discourses shape power relations is another area of interest for social constructionists. The positions that people hold in society, where some are granted more authority and power than others, are referred to as power relations. Although power dynamics are never static and unchanging, those in positions of authority can establish the standards and norms that individuals are expected to abide by. The dominant discourses and how they shape the prevailing notions of society are determined by power relations (Burr, 2015). The language people use, the discourses they engage in, and the ways they communicate will all play a part

in the establishment of power structures in our society. In a given society, those in positions of power might have more influence on how particular narratives are constructed, which could strengthen already-existing injustices in society. Whether identities in society can be considered privileged or marginalised depends largely on the dynamics of power in our society. As a result, the prevailing discourses linked to influential organisations can create social categories and impact how individuals perceive themselves. Therefore, power dynamics can exist both among individuals and within society (Burr, 2015) (Burr, 1995).

Qualitative Methodology

In our thesis, we consider ourselves as critical qualitative scholars in order to address our overall problem formulation, aiming to gain a deeper insight into DS-5001 with the purpose of enhancing the implementation process for organisations seeking certification with this standard. The purpose of using the qualitative method is to better understand human interactions and experiences. We find it interesting to gain knowledge about people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours within certain environments and to get insight into the social processes that are developing in society (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2015).

By labelling individuals as 'subjects', this methodological approach emphasises a departure from traditional objectification, recognising them as active agents in the construction of their own realities. Rather than being passive recipients of external influences, they are acknowledged as active participants in the ongoing process of meaning-making. Through these interviews, we actively engage with individuals, aiming to unravel the complicated ways in which they articulate their experiences and motivations. However, it is essential to acknowledge that individuals are not operating in a void but are constantly shaped and influenced by a broader societal context, such as discourses, prevailing ideologies, and power dynamics. It is important to acknowledge these external factors that play a significant role in shaping the topics they choose to discuss and the way they express themselves, further enriching our understanding of their lived experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

As our qualitative method for the thesis, we will be conducting interviews from relevant interviewees in relation to DS-5001. The research interview is a professional conversation that is based on daily conversations and interactions, where knowledge is created during the

interview between the interviewer and the interviewee. An interview can be described as an exchange of viewpoints between two individuals discussing a topic of mutual interest to gain new and broader insights into the subject matter. However, because the researcher establishes and manages the conditions of the interview, the research interview is not a dialogue among equals (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In research interviews today, the interviewee is usually regarded as an informant or partner rather than an opponent. The interviewer asks some questions to gather empirical data about the interviewee's perceived world and rarely intervenes in what is said. Furthermore, the scope of the research interview does not include the interviewer arguing for the strength of their own perception of the illuminated subject or trying to change the statements made by the interviewee. Therefore, it can be noted that the interviewer is generally perceived as receptive - rather than assertive (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Research interviews are a relevant element for our thesis for several reasons. Firstly, it allows us to delve deeper into the purpose behind the development of DS-5001. By directly interacting and interviewing relevant stakeholders, such as those involved in the creation of DS-5001 and those with expertise in implementing the standard, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of the goals and intentions that supported the establishment of the standard. This would be relevant for analysing the standard in a meaningful way.

Additionally, research interviews enable us to gather concrete knowledge about how the implementation of DS-5001 has been in actual organisations. By speaking directly with those involved in the implementation process, we can gain insight into the challenges, successes, and barriers experienced by organisations. This first-hand knowledge can complement our analysis of DS-5001 by providing a more comprehensive picture of how the standard functions in practice. Research interviews will therefore allow us to gain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of both the purpose of DS-5001 and its practical implementation in organisations. This will strengthen our analysis and enable us to draw more precise conclusions and recommendations for improving initiatives in our thesis.

Furthermore, we will be using our knowledge of a critical discourse analysis to get a deeper insight into the prominent discourses appearing in the standard. A reason why we have chosen to use qualitative methods is because it can raise awareness of social life and human

experiences. The qualitative method is particularly relevant in our study of DS-5001 for several reasons. DS-5001 encompasses organisational practices and cultural aspects related to sustainability management. Qualitative research allows us to explore these facets in-depth, capturing the nuances and complexities presented in DS-5001. Additionally, the implementation of DS-5001 involves human behaviour, decision-making processes, and organisational dynamics. Qualitative methodology enables us to delve into motivations, attitudes, and challenges faced by individuals and groups in the implementation process. Through interviews, we can gather rich data that illuminate the social and organisational factors influencing the adoption and integration of DS-5001.

Furthermore, qualitative research is suitable for exploring stakeholders' subjective experiences and perceptions of DS-5001. By interviewing participants, we can gain insight into how the standard is interpreted, applied, and experienced in organisational contexts. This understanding is crucial for identifying implementation barriers and opportunities for improvement and innovation of the standard. Moreover, qualitative methodology supports an investigative approach to the study, allowing us to adapt our research process based on emerging findings and evolving research questions. The use of qualitative methodology in our study of DS-5001 enables us to understand the human aspects of implementation, capture stakeholders' perspectives, and adapt to the complexity of the research context. By leveraging qualitative methods, we can generate comprehensive insights that enhance the effectiveness of the implementation process of DS-5001 for organisations seeking sustainability certification (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2015).

Research design

Case design

In our thesis, we use case design in collaboration with Dansk Standard, where we have chosen to interview an organisation that have implemented DS-5001. By focusing on a specific case, we can examine the complexity and nuances of sustainability management within the framework of the standard.

Through our collaboration with Dansk Standard, we gain access to valuable insights, resources and expertise related to DS-5001 and its implementation. This collaboration allows us to gather

first-hand data and perspectives from stakeholders involved in the development and use of the standard (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2015).

In addition to the case design, we adopt an inductive approach in our thesis. This means that instead of starting with predefined hypotheses or theories, we begin with observations and data collection from the case study. We then analyse this data to identify patterns, themes and insights that emerge organically. This approach enables us to generate new understanding based on the specifications from the case study. As part of our research approach, we conduct a critical discourse analysis in addition to the case study. We are able to investigate language, rhetoric, and power dynamics in DS-5001 discourses by using this analytical framework. It is possible to identify the fundamental assumptions, beliefs, and implications that could influence the standard's implementation and adoption by critically evaluating the discourses involving it. By combining the case design and critical discourse analysis with an inductive approach, we can conduct a thorough and rich study of the implementation of the DS-5001. This enables us to uncover valuable insights, identify challenges and opportunities and contribute to a wider understanding of sustainability management practices within organisations (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2015).

Triangulation

For this thesis method triangulation will be used, where our interpretation of triangulation is that there will be more than one method in the research. Originally this approach was developed along with measurements of concepts, where more than one method would help the development of research, which can result in greater confidence in the findings. Triangulation can both occur in quantitative and qualitative research strategies. It is seen, for example, in the work of ethnographers, who frequently use interviews and fieldwork in their studies to ensure they have not misinterpreted something (Bryman, 2012). We have chosen to use both interviews and critical discourse analysis as our two research methods, where both methods have different strengths that can contribute to the research. Interviews make it possible to collect more profound data directly from the interviewees, which can give knowledge about their experiences, perspectives, and opinions on the subject (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2020). Whereas, on the other side critical discourse analysis can contribute with a more systematic study of the underneath discursive and power structures that can influence the research

(Fairclough, 2008). This triangulation can result in a deeper and more nuanced picture of the subject (Bryman, 2012).

Introduction to DS-5001

As written in our introduction, numbers from the Global Gender Gap Report 2023 from WEF, shows that Denmark is number 23 on the list of equality in countries worldwide. This means that we are far behind our neighbouring countries such as Sweden and Norway, who have used political implements to regulate gender inequality in countries. One of the reasons that Denmark falls behind the other Nordic nations may be the self-perception of equality, leading society to believe that there is no need to prioritise equality as much (FN-forbundet, 2023). Based on this issue, we find this field relevant and have therefore chosen to study DS-5001 as our main data. DS-5001 is a management system for equality and diversity that is developed by Dansk Standard in collaboration with 23 companies, as well as equality experts KVINFO and Denmark's knowledge centre for gender and equality. DS-5001 consist of 28 pages and functions as a direction to ensure an inclusive culture, create goals for equality and diversity and avoid bias in recruiting new employees (KVINFO, 2022). Therefore, we seek to investigate this management system, where we specifically want to focus on the transition from theory to practical information. We find this standard interesting because of the discovered knowledge gap, since there is not much research within this area and this specific management system. Since there is only one organisation in Denmark that has chosen to get a certificate within this standard, we find it interesting to examine the standard critically and get a deeper knowledge of the discourses that appear in DS-5001. Additionally, the topic of diversity and equality is relevant to focus on, because it is a significant issue in Denmark and globally, meaning that individuals and organisations should be aware of the issue as well as how to handle it (FN-forbundet, 2023).

Introduction of interviewees

The selection of interviewees for this thesis is based on their relevance and different knowledge about the standard DS-5001, which we wish to explore. We have chosen interviewees who possess specific knowledge, experience, or perspectives that can contribute to illuminating our overall problem formulation and research questions. Additionally, we have also sought to achieve a degree of diversity among the interviewees' backgrounds to obtain a broader and more nuanced understanding of the topic. This means that the selected interviewees each have

their own backgrounds and purposes for participating in an interview, hopefully providing different experiences, and attitudes towards the topic. Even though the interviewees have different backgrounds towards DS-5001, both interviews consist of women who have a leadership role within their workplace. We as researchers are aware that we only get insights from women, which may affect our results.

Another significant factor we have considered in our selection of interviewees is accessibility. The interviewees have also been chosen because they are available and willing to participate in the interviews. Furthermore, the interviewees have been selected with a research purpose in mind. Each interviewee contributes valuable insights to the development of the thesis results, as their perspectives and experiences are essential and relevant for us to achieve the desired outcomes (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Both interviews are conducted in Danish, since it is the native language of all the participants, which entails the interviewees to express themselves more clearly.

Presentation of Lena

Lena works at Dansk Standard as a Senior Consultant and has been head of the development of DS-5001. The representative from the organisation Dansk Standard has been selected for this interview, to gain a deeper understanding of the significance of different standards, specifically DS-5001 and why it is important to implement DS-5001 in organisations. We aim to comprehend the overall importance of standards for organisations and how they contribute to improvements, specifically gaining insight into the main purpose of issuing a certificate from Dansk Standard to organisations, as well as the concrete benefits and outcomes that organisations achieve by implementing standards.

With this interview, we also aim to investigate how organisations are involved in the implementation process, how the distribution of responsibilities is determined, and how Dansk Standard ensures that organisations understand and recognise the value of DS-5001. Furthermore, through this interview, we will explore which methods they use to ensure that the implementation of standards is a sustainable solution and how Dansk Standard collaborates with organisations to integrate standards as a natural part of their business practices.

We will also examine the role, resources, and support that Dansk Standard offers to organisations, as well as how the requirement for sustainable solutions is managed and

evaluated. Additionally, through this interview we seek to gain insight into possible challenges, success criteria, and examples of best practices when implementing the standard, as well as how the standard is created.

Presentation of Mia

Mia was a supporting part of the scheduled interview with Lena at Dansk Standard. She works as a full-time intern at Dansk Standard and studies a master's at a university in Denmark. The purpose of her attending the interview was also to share and assist her knowledge about DS-5001, because she was assigned the task of developing an implementation guide that elaborates on each step in DS-5001 for organisations. She contributed with valuable insight to DS-5001 and presented ideas on how to renew and evolve the standard.

Presentation of Rikke

Rikke is head of sustainability at AP Pension, where she was responsible for implementing DS-5001 in their organisation. The purpose of the interview with Rikke from AP Pension is to gain insight into AP Pension's experiences, challenges, and successes regarding the implementation of DS-5001, since they are the first organisation in Denmark to implement it. Our aim is to gain insight into the standard's implementation process, including the particular measures used to guarantee its successful implementation, and to comprehend the reasons behind the decision to implement it.

Additionally, we will explore the positive experiences, challenges, and barriers encountered during the implementation and how they were addressed. We will also examine how both the employees and management reacted to the implementation of DS-5001 and if any changes in the work culture or practices was necessary. Furthermore, we seek to understand the specific measures taken during the implementation process and how they contributed to achieving the standard's goals. We also wish to investigate, how the standard is maintained post implementation and gather information if they have any suggestions for improvements or changes to the standard. Furthermore, we aim to investigate how the effectiveness of the implementation is measured and the impact of obtaining DS-5001 certification in terms of the well-being, financial gains, and relationships with suppliers and customers. Finally, we wish to get knowledge on the most significant results achieved through the implementation of DS-

5001 at AP Pension and how it has influenced their commitment to responsible business practices and corporate social responsibility (ESG goals).

Ethical considerations

Our ethical considerations for both our critical discourse analysis and the collected interviews will be addressed in this section.

Concerning our critical discourse analysis, we have had various ethical considerations that we find relevant to present. In compliance with our analysis of DS-5001, we have gained a collaboration with Dansk Standard, which also allowed us to interview them. During our discussion with them regarding our thesis, they expressed strong approval of the chosen topic. They also expressed an interest in acquiring the insights gathered from our analysis and findings related to the standard. The standard is accessible to the public, which means that the text freely can be used without consent.

In addition, we are considerate towards how we quote from the standard, quotes must be presented accurately from the standard to the written thesis in order to prevent the standard from being misrepresented. To guarantee the previous, we attend to quote correctly and contextually, where we will be transparent about the quotes, and avoid extracting the quotes without the coherence from the standard.

We also find it relevant to address our ethical considerations in relation to our research interview in our thesis. Research ethics is crucial in order to secure and respect the interviewees' rights and confidence, and that the research is accomplished responsibly and ethically. One of the first ethical considerations was informed consent. All the participants got a consent form they needed to sign before the interview, where it explained the aim of the research and the interviews, their rights and confidence. Through the consent form, it was emphasised that the participation was voluntary and they at all times could withdraw their consent without consequences. These considerations are made to respect the participant's ability to make their own decisions and avoid any harm towards them (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Furthermore, our following ethical considerations were confidence and anonymity towards the interviewees. We are aware that the anonymity is limited since the interviewees job description and organisations is presented in our thesis. To ensure a degree of their anonymity we have chosen to change the names of the interviewees.

In addition, we are aware that accurate quotations and statements from the interviewees are essential to prevent misrepresentation. All the data will be stored confidently and separated

from any personal information. All the recorded data and information will be managed according to AAU's GDPR regulations [2].

Another consideration is about reflexivity and our positioning within the thesis. We as researchers are aware of our position, bias, and preunderstanding, which we continuously reflect on, because it can influence our analysis. Therefore, throughout the thesis, we will be transparent about the methodology and approach we are using, so that other researchers can follow the methodology for comparable research. Additionally, we are aware that we as researchers individually have different ontologies and epistemologies, because of our prior knowledge, which may influence the results of our study. This means that the findings from this analysis eventually will be reflected in our own understanding. In order to minimise the influence of the discourses, we will be as transparent as possible. This also implies that even though other researchers follow our research methodology, they can end up with different solutions and answers, because they have their own preunderstanding as well as ontology and epistemology, which can influence the answers (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2020).

Method of data collection

In this section, we will present how we have collected and analysed DS-5001 and the interviews. First, we will explain step by step our approach of analysing DS-5001 and the interviews. Next, our use of elite interviews and semi-structured interviews is expounded. Lastly, we will explain how the interview guide is created and the considerations behind the interview guide.

Methodical approach

We have chosen to analyse DS-5001, according to Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis. In the initial phase of the analysis, we ensured that everyone had downloaded the standard onto their computers. We agreed not to print it out, as the tasks could be performed using the standard online. Afterwards, all group members viewed the standard, to get a first impression and knowledge of what it involves. Subsequently, all group members went through DS-5001 again individually and underlined pertinent discourses. Because we both have different epistemologies and ontologies, we view the standard differently, which gives more views on the standard and different perspectives. The next step was going through the standard together in the group, where we went through and analysed every written and unwritten line

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[2] AAU's GDPR regulations - https://www.intern.aau.dk/gdpr/

and highlighted the most significant points related to the critical discourse analysis. By doing this we can be critical of Dansk Standard's choice of discourses. We have followed these steps, to establish an overview of the embedded discourses in DS-5001 and to uncover which discourses are exhibited in the unwritten lines, which allow us to analyse the standard in more depth. In the end we will discuss our findings against the scholars research from the literature review as well as our interviews and theories. As a result of these processes for the analysis and discussion, we will be able to carry out answers for our problem formulation.

Before doing an interview, it is important to have profound knowledge of the studied topic and make sure that it is a relevant topic that contribute to research in the field. This is important because it teaches the surroundings with knowledge about the humans worldview and impacts the development of theory and ways of thinking and acting within the subject (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2020). For the present research, we have gained knowledge about the topic and the interviewees beforehand, to present a relevant topic that can contribute to research within the field. We started reading a lot of studies about diversity, equality and standards, which grounded our understanding in the field and discovering a knowledge gap within DS-5001. By gaining knowledge about the field, we were able to make a relevant interview guide and ask appropriate follow-up questions in the interview, where we could challenge the interviewees to reflect on the topic. This was an effective way of understanding our interviewees because we had a deep knowledge about them and the field they are working in as well as the studied field in our thesis.

Furthermore, it is essential to exhibit flexibility concerning the interview date and place to maintain contact with the interviewees. The interviewer must consider how to sustain the contact whether it is through e-mail, phone calls or text messages to prevent discontinuation. Furthermore, it needs to be considered if the interviewees receive interview questions beforehand. On one hand, the interviewee can prepare answers and pave the way for reflecting upon them, where on the other hand, their answers are not necessarily immediate consideration of the question (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2020). For this research we got in contact with the interviewees through e-mail, LinkedIn and phone calls, to set the timeframe for the interview. We gave them the flexibility to set the interview date, in order to be convenient to their schedule. Furthermore, we made sure that we had their contact information to maintain contact. Additionally, we have chosen to send the interview questions beforehand, given that they had

time to prepare and reflect on the questions because we are interested in detailed answers and reflections on the topic, and it allowed us to ask additional questions.

Furthermore, we have chosen to conduct the interviews online. Online interviews are similar to face-to-face interviews, where the participants talk through an online service, in this research it would be through Teams. Online interviews make it possible to interview people who are detained in another country or city, because one can observe the conversation, during the interview throughout a webcam which is comparable to conducting it in person. The limitation, despite its similarity, can be that our position is unable to read the interviewee's body language (Janghorban, Roudsari, & Taghipour, 2014). Despite that, we were challenged by geographical issues and resources, so we chose to do the interview online. The interviews have been recorded with the interviewees consent in order to get documented interview data to cite in the analysis. The recorded interviews have been deleted after we transcribed the interviews.

It is important to keep in mind that interviews cannot be considered a natural technique because it is an active interaction between one or more people whose aim is to derive contextualised answers. This requires awareness of the questions because they are a part of the answer construction which can take advantage of the interview. Therefore, the function of the researcher is essential, in order to decrease the misuse of the interview and be transparent about the research aim as well as the interviewees' position in the research to reduce harm (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2020). We as researchers are aware that we can influence the interview because we interact in a social setting with the interviewees. To ensure that we understand our position in the interviews, we unfold our interview intentions and the aim of the research to the interviewees, to verify their consent towards the interview and research. In addition, we will transmit the completed product to the interviewees so they can view the final output.

Elite interviews

In this thesis, we have chosen to utilise elite interviews as a supplement to our primary data, namely the critical discourse analysis of DS-5001.

According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2015), an elite interview refers to interviewing a person considered to be a leader or expert in a particular subject. The purpose of this type of interview is to gather in-depth and specialised knowledge about a given topic through dialogue with the expert in a relevant field. The elite interviews in this project will be used to gain a comprehensive insight into, among other things, the initiatives that have so far formed the basis

for the implementation of DS-5001. With this type of empirical material, we aim to access information and perspectives that would otherwise not be possible to obtain. We believe this can contribute to the project's credibility for the findings in the thesis. In the use of elite interviews, we will be mindful that our informants may provide us with a limited insight into the topic, as they also need to remain loyal to the organisations they work for. We will also be aware that these elite individuals or experts are only a selective sample of possible information that can shape the outcome of the study. If we had interviewed a range of experts who, for example, had introduced other standards, it might have been possible to obtain information about what is generally required to integrate a standard effectively.

The semi-structured interview

One of the types within qualitative research interviews is the semi-structured interview format. Brinkmann & Tanggaard (2015), states that it can be advantageous to start a semi-structured interview project by asking the 'what' question, that is, investigating what one aims to gain insight into. As we seek to gain insight into the experience of the implementation of DS-5001 from the experts' perspective, we want to be open to new insights rather than viewing them from a deductive approach, where the questions are operationalised based on a theoretical understanding (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

In the project, we want to be open to new findings and let the interviewees define and explore the subject and their own perspectives regarding the implementation of DS-5001. We find it meaningful to approach the semi-structured interviews from an inductive approach. In this way, we enable new knowledge, rather than pre-defined theoretically based interview questions. This also allows the interviewees to produce answers more freely as we do not have to follow the theory, but merely the questions operationalised from the Literature Review, enabling us to conduct elite interviews. We believe that the inductive approach to the semi-structured interviews will contribute to an understanding of any implementation challenges for DS-5001 and provide us with an understanding of the specific and complex contexts in this regard. This can subsequently be supported by relevant theory rather than theory dictating the outcome of the respective answers provided by informants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

As mentioned, in this thesis, we will develop our interview guide, formed by the problem formulation and research questions, for the execution of our semi-structured interviews based on the Literature Review section. These research questions are outlined in the Interview Guide section and based on a thematic division of previous studies, interview questions will be formulated to create dynamic interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In formulating the

questions, we have tried to make them as understandable as possible while also considering the experts' prior knowledge of the subject. Furthermore, we have sought to support that the questions should elicit descriptive narratives, which is what qualitative interviews seek (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Despite having an established interview guide, the semi-structured interview has the advantage that it is possible to move back and forth in the interview guide if found advantageous in the interview situation, for example if the interviewer wishes to obtain an elaborate description of the interviewees narratives. By using an inductive approach, we can also open up unknown areas that may not be covered in our Literature Review, as it enables diving deeper into given questions, allowing for flexibility and adjustment of questions in favour of exploring new emerging topics that may arise from the statements (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Furthermore, there are various types of questions that will be used in our interview guide, namely introductory, follow-up, specified, interpretive, as well as direct and indirect questions, according to Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) approach to structuring an interview guide. The introductory questions aim to open up the themes that we want to explore and to support the interviewees in feeling comfortable in the interview situation. This type of question will be more open to the interviewees descriptions or experiences related to the phenomenon we are investigating (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2015). Specifically, this type of question can be performed, for example, through non-verbal communication such as a pause, which encourages the interviewees to provide further narration (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Regarding follow-up questions, Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) argue that the interviewer should focus on listening and understanding what exactly should be followed up on - so that the particular topic is continuously sufficiently uncovered and is the central focus of the interview. These questions may also occur as a result of a natural development in the conversation when interviewees, for example, talk about something unexpected, which is then followed up on. A nod or a "hm" can also serve as follow-up questions, as these gestures encourage interviewees to elaborate on their statements (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Exploratory questions complement the follow-up questions. Here, as interviewers, we will ask openly about the answers the interviewees provide, in order to obtain descriptive details (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2015). Specified questions will also be used if the interviewees provide more general statements than their own personal experience (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

During the interviews, if necessary, specified questions will also be used in case the interviewees answer a question more generally than personally. Interpretive questions can also be used if the interviewer is unsure about the interpretation of the given answer. Finally, it can

also be described how direct and indirect questions can be used in the interviews. Direct questions can be used, for example, if an interviewees stalls in the interview or if the answers are too weak and not comprehensive enough to answer the problem formulation. Indirect questions can also be asked, where the interviewer uses projected questions to indirectly obtain the interviewees own opinion (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

According to Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) it also plays a role in the outcome of the interview whether leading questions are asked, as leading questions can have an effect on the quality and validity of the thesis. It is pointed out here that the leading element can occur both verbally and non-verbally through the reaction to what is said by the interviewees. A positive or negative response to something given can shape the subsequent answers that the interviewee may express and can thus affect the quality of the interview. However, leading questions can also be advantageous for the interviews, which is done by ensuring that the interviewer has understood the interviewees answers correctly. In this way, the reliability of the interviews in question can also be increased (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

Due to our desire to let the experts share their experiences, we find the semi-structured interview relevant as a support to uncovering our problem formulation in this thesis. Through this, the experts will have the opportunity to express themselves, while the interview is guided by our problem formulation.

Interview Guide: Operationalisation of Literature Review

In this thesis, the aim is to investigate the insights that can be gained from a critical examination of DS 5001, particularly with regard to its practical implementation, which we aim to gain insight into through elite interviews. To provide direction for the semi-structured interviews, an interview guide is conducted, which is thematically divided according to the topics to be covered in order to answer the problem formulation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) recommend that as researchers, in addition to covering these themes in the interview guide, also write down questions that can be asked to the interviewees, while remaining open to their narratives.

In the thesis, thematic research questions will be formulated, created in a theoretical language, ensuring that the project's topics are uncovered during the interviews. Based on these thematic research questions, everyday language interview questions are then operationalised, adapted to the expert level to enable interviewees to understand the questions without difficulty and provide meaningful answers (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

As mentioned earlier, our interview questions are created based on existing research, where we have identified a knowledge gap within this standard, since there is no research on how the implementation can be improved. Due to the identification of this knowledge gap, we seek to uncover specific interview questions related to our research field. Six examples of interview questions from each interview will be presented below:

Interview questions for Lena and Mia from Dansk Standard

1. How is the text in DS-5001 developed? Is there, for example, a working group consisting of stakeholders? Or who formulates the text itself? And is it influenced by legislation (DK/EU)?

2. How would you describe the overall significance of standards/DS-5001 for companies, and why is it important to implement them?

3. Can you provide examples of specific benefits or results that companies achieve by implementing standards?

4. How does Dansk Standard ensure that companies understand and recognise the value of standards as an important part of their operations?

5. What role does Dansk Standard play in guiding companies through the implementation process of standards?

6. How do you adapt standards to different types of companies and industries to ensure relevance and practicability?

The full interview guide with Dansk Standard can be found in appendix 4.

Interview questions for Rikke from AP Pension

1. What were your considerations when choosing to implement DS-5001 at AP Pension?

2. Could you describe the process of implementing DS-5001? What specific steps were taken to ensure successful implementation?

3. What positive experiences have you had in relation to the implementation?

4. What challenges or barriers have you encountered during the implementation of DS-5001, and how were any challenges addressed?

5. How have your employees and management reacted to the implementation of DS-5001? And has it necessitated any changes in workplace culture or other practices?

6. Do you think there is anything about the standard that should be written or done differently?

The full interview guide with AP Pension can be found in appendix 5.

Methods of analysis

Critical discourse analysis

Within discourse analysis there are various approaches to the discourse concept, where all of the approaches look at discourses as the fundamental force of the construction of reality. The way we speak is organised within discourses that create representations of reality, which means that representations are a part of creating reality, as well as our knowledge and identities. Discourses are a part of establishing people the way they are, and the objects individuals have knowledge about, including oneself (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2020). Discourse analytical approaches all share the above assumptions that have a common theoretical and empirical premise that the social world is constituted by discourses. This focus divides discourse analysis from other research methods within communication as well as society and culture. Concurrently the different approaches within discourse analysis diverge from one another, where the different approaches individually compose distinct research programs (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2020).

For this thesis, we have chosen to use critical discourse analysis (CDA), based on Norman Fairclough's understanding of the theory. His essential understanding of CDA, is that he focuses on the relation between language, power and society. He defines critical discourse analysis as an approach that examines how language through textual practices reproduces and shapes social structures and power relations. According to him, language is a social practice that simultaneously constructs and reflects political and social reality. In Fairclough's CDA methodology a three-dimensional model is used to evaluate texts at three different levels, which are textual practices (what is being said), discursive practices (how it is being said) and social practices (why it is being said). This model makes it possible to analyse language in textual activities within an organised framework and to understand how it relates to social and political reality (Wodak & Meyer , 2016).

The first step in the three-dimensional model is textual practices. This level focuses on the actual text, or the statements presented. It involves an analysis of the chosen text, and the semantic, syntactic and stylistic features that exist within the text. This includes the expressive content of the text, which means what is being said, and the structure of the text, thus how it is being said (Fairclough, 2008).

The second step in the model is about discursive practices. This dimension is concerned with the production, distribution, and reception of the text as well as the discursive activities that are present in it. It involves analysing the ways in which institutional and political power structures, as well as social and cultural environments, influence language. The language context, including who is writing, to whom, and for what purpose, makes up the analysis (Fairclough, 2008).

The last dimension is about social practices. This dimension deals with the wider political and sociocultural settings that both shape and are influenced by the discourses. It involves examining the social structures, power relations, ideologies, and values that are embedded in the language, and how these influence society. This level seeks to understand how different discourses occur, and how they contribute to sustain or challenge the society's conditions (Fairclough, 2008).

This approach allows a profound analysis of how language is embedded in larger social and political conditions, and how it contributes to maintaining or challenging existing power relations and ideologies (Fairclough, 2008). During our analysis we will use Fairclough's three-dimensional model, to analyse DS-5001 in depth. While using Fairclough's idea of a critical discourses analysis, we as researchers are still grounded in Foucault's view on power, but since we find the language in DS-5001 important for answering our problem formulation, we have chosen to use Fairclough's three-dimensional model because it combines the analysis of text with analysis of the social practices.

Transcription

We have chosen to transcribe the interviews in order to use quotations from the interviews in our analysis. The written and the spoken language distinguish from each other, where the spoken language has more repeated words, breaks, echoic words, and more unfulfilled sentences. Therefore, we have chosen to develop a transcription method, with inspiration from Tanggaard & Brinkmann (2020) handbook. This is performed to create criterion in the transcriptions that will improve the readability of the spoken language, such as the following:

- Omit interjection.
- Affirmative echoic words, such as "mmhm," are not used.
- Laugh and other reactions in the transcription will be omitted because it is not relevant.
- A pause of thoughts will be shown with three periods.
- Improved language will be employed wherever possible, for grammatical correctness.

These categories are chosen for the transcription, to decrease the spoken language's interruptions in the written language. In connection, what the interviewees' said in the interview is the most important and meaningful for the analysis. Therefore, the used quotation needs to be readable and at the same time the reliability of the spoken language must be maintained. Furthermore, all the interviews are conducted in Danish, which means that in order to translate the quotations correctly, the written language must be translatable (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2020).

Coding

Following the transcription, we decided to categorise each interview in themes by colour. This helps create an overview of the content from the interview, which makes it easier to work with the data. The coding aimed to organise the longer transcriptional information into more manageable and relevant text parts. Codes can be seen as keywords that are applied among text segments, for the purpose of identifying them and possibly comparing, demonstrating, or counting how eminent the different code segments are. The coding was established through different colours. Below it can be seen how the coding is allocated in different colours (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2020).

- Yellow: Disadvantages in DS-5001
- ORANGE: Improvements or changes towards DS-5001
- Light pink: DS-5001 strengths
- Blue: Implementation strategy
- Red: What does it entail to have this standard?

- **Purple**: What is the significance of the standard for organisations? (e.g., changes in practices/culture/ costumer/ mindset?)
- **Grey**: The maintenance and compliance with the standard?
- **Pink**: The social responsibility and sustainability goals of the standard?
- **Green**: Other important statements

Codes can both be concepts- and data-driven. Data-driven codes occur inductive, which means that the codes are not defined beforehand and that it is the data that conceptualises the given codes. The concept-driven codes are defined beforehand, for instance through a chosen theory, literature, or hypotheses. For this research, we have made use of data driven coding where the data from the interviews identified relevant connections and patterns, which resulted in the above topics (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2020).

Research criteria

In our thesis, we will focus on quality criteria such as validity and reliability while analysing DS-5001 through our critical discourse analysis and our interpretations of the interviews. In qualitative research, it is important to discuss the validity and the reliability of the research. Validity in qualitative research concerns authenticity, and the ability to ensure that the documented statements sympathise with the data. Reliability concerns a transparent procedure throughout the research to prove that the chosen methods are reasonable for collecting and analysing data (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2020).

When we evaluate the validity of our critical discourse analysis, we will examine whether our interpretations and conclusions are credible and correct in relation to the data we have collected in our thesis. We also ensure that our analysis methods and interpretations align with the theoretical basis and the applied research criteria in our thesis. By ensuring a high validity of our analysis, we contribute to ensuring that our findings and conclusions reflect the reality of the discourses about DS-5001 (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2015). To maintain the validity of the research we are aware of our bias as researchers, where we are as objective as possible. During our analysis, we considered the premise for validity that we have to investigate the subject of our goal, which is why we kept returning to our problem formulation.

When looking at the reliability of our research, we ensure that our analysis methods are reliable. The reliability of our thesis deals with whether our research can be repeated and produce the

same results or conclusions under similar conditions. To gain reliability in this research we have documented the research process regarding our interviews as well as the critical discourse analysis and how the data is collected. With the documentation of the process, other researchers can verify and reproduce the data. The research will probably differ with different researchers even though we are transparent throughout the process. This is because the research is qualitative, which is focused on social interaction, and we as researchers can reflect different biases during the research.

We will focus on securing a thesis where the research methods and analyses are consistent and reliable, and where the results can be considered credible and valid. By maintaining the reliability of our analysis, we will strengthen the confidence in our findings and conclusions (Brinkmann & Tanggaard, 2015).

Summary of methodological framework

In this thesis we consider ourselves as scholars with a social constructionist worldview, since we believe that language is essential for the construction of individuals perception of reality. The thesis will be conducted with qualitative methods, such as a critical discourse analysis and interviews. When using triangulation in our thesis, this will contribute to a deeper and more nuanced outcome of the issue. The thesis is in collaboration with Dansk Standard, which argues that we make use of a case design. By collaborating with an organisation, we are able to get valuable insights to the field we are studying. The main data consist of the standard DS-5001, which is the foundation of our thesis. To analyse the standard, we use Fairclough's three-dimensional model and interviews from relevant interviewees to support the findings in the analysis. Towards our methods we have various ethical consideration that we must be aware of when using the critical discourse analysis and the conducted interviews. Furthermore, our methodical approach is explained step by step in order to ensure reliability in our thesis.

5

Analysis

The following section will be an analysis of the standard DS-5001, which deals with organisations' responsibilities to handle questions related to equality and diversity.

We will use Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional critical discourse analysis, and supplement with Foucault's theory of discourse and power, Ashcraft's theory of gendered organisations as well as the studies from the literature review and statements from our interviewees as a frame to critically explore the power structures, ideological positions and the construction of gender and diversity in the standard. Through a critical analysis, we will examine the standard and establish how it reproduces or challenges existing social norms and structures that contribute to the overall understanding of equality and diversity in organisations. Furthermore, it will contribute to an understanding of how to better transition the standard from theory to practice in organisations. When we refer to quotes from the standard, we will address it as the text. The structure of the analysis is based on DS-5001, which is divided into different sections, where we have selected the parts that we find relevant to analyse.

4. Context of the organisation

One of the first sections of the standard is called *4. Context of the organisation*, where the first paragraph revolves around understanding the organisation and its context. The section starts with enhancing the importance of organisations identifying and reacting to both internal and external factors, that influence their ability to attain the established goals for equality and diversity, where they write:

> The organization shall determine which internal and external issues affect its ability to achieve the intended outcomes for equality and diversity determined by the organization. The organization shall address these internal and external issues when planning and working to achieve diversity and equality. (appendix 1, p. 11)

The use of the words "determined outcomes" indicates an objective and measurable approach to equality and diversity, which may not take the complexities of the social constructions of gender, race and class into account. This can reflect an institutional interest in maintaining the present status or a superficial understanding of the factors that contribute to inequality. Additionally, the use of the words "planning and working to achieve diversity and equality" refers to an instrumental approach, where equality and diversity are considered as separate,

measurable goals, that can be achieved through rational decision-making. This might neglect the complex social and historical contexts, that influence diversity and equality initiatives.

When viewing the text critically, multiple discursive elements can be identified, such as power relations and ideological positions. This can establish an authoritative subject position towards the organisation, which is where the responsibility is placed to determine and act concerning equality and diversity. When establishing this authoritative subject position, the organisation is placed as the central actor, that has the authority to make decisions and act on behalf of employees. This creates a conception that it is a homogeneous and powerful unit, that makes decisions regardless of internal power relations and external influence.

Lastly, the lack of consideration for power dynamics and conflicts of interest both inside the organisation and throughout society may indicate a lack of critical awareness or an intention to challenge the existing structures. This could be a deliberate move to preserve the status quo and prevent challenges from hierarchy and institutional privileges.

This critical discourse analysis shows how the text refers to and reproduces power relations and ideological positions both inside the organisation and the society in general. This underlines the importance of challenging these discourses and working towards more equitable and inclusive practices within equality and diversity.

From Ashcraft's point of view, it can be argued that the text reflects a certain understanding of equality and diversity that focuses on the organisational processes and goals, but where it is possible that deeper structural and cultural questions are being addressed. It can be argued that traditional power relations and gender stereotypes still would be embedded in the organisational structure, which can influence the implementation of initiatives such as equality and diversity. Furthermore, it can be argued that from Ashcraft's view on organisational communication and power relations, DS-5001 encourages a focus on both internal and external relations, the imbalance of power and hierarchies still impacts the individuals who have influence on the decision-making process and the implementation of the politics related to equality and diversity.

Likewise, it can be argued from Foucault's point of view that by establishing standards and claims the organisation dictates how equality and diversity must be understood and implemented, which can contribute to shaping the subject positions that are obtainable for the individuals in the organisation. Additionally, it can be argued that from the view of Foucault, this exercise of power can create self-surveillance and discipline among the employees,

because there are instructed requirements about planning and working with diversity and equality, which creates expectations towards the employees and the management, that they have to monitor and regulate their actions to fulfil these expectations. Therefore, it can be argued that this text illustrates the complexities of power and its embedment towards organisational structures and practises.

Following the section *4. Context of the organization* the second paragraph concerns *4.2 Understanding the needs and expectations of stakeholders* which is an extension of the former paragraph. This paragraph identifies and addresses the organisation's obligation to stakeholders' opinions and expectations towards equality and diversity. It underlines the demand for organisational analysis and strategic planning to accommodate these needs and expectations decisively, whereto it is written:

> The organization shall create and maintain an overview of which significant stakeholders have an attitude to the organization's focus on equality and diversity. The organization shall identify the needs and expectations of the stakeholders to which the organization relates and, if so, how. (appendix 1, p. 11)

This text indicates organisations' responsibility to identify and understand stakeholders' opinions and expectations towards equality and diversity. The use of the expressions "create and maintain an overview", "significant stakeholders", and "needs and expectations" defines the organisation's factor and task towards equality and diversity strategies and is a way of communicating the organisation's responsibility. Similarly, the organisation is presented as the subject, that performs the steps, which underline the organisation's engagement and responsibilities related to equality and diversity initiatives.

From a discursive perspective the text reflects upon a specific understanding of how organisations interact with stakeholders within the requirements. This emphasises the organisation's power and role as an active decision-maker, who needs to handle and accommodate the stakeholders' expectations. Lastly, the text reflects the wider organisational practice around equality and diversity, which implies an institutional perception, of how these questions should be handled and communicated externally and internally. This means that the organisation's approach to equality and diversity is influenced by external relations and the external environment's expectations. An organisation's opinions and practices towards this field can be shaped by political and public pressure, as well as customer demand and societal

development, where we would argue that the surrounding world has a lot of impact on the way organisations choose to approach the field.

This analysis indicates an organisational practice, where equality and diversity are considered important issues, but at the same time subjected to the management and the control of the organisation. This can create a tendency to centralise the power and the decision-making process, which can be an inhibition for inclusion and diversity in the organisation.

According to Østergaard (2022), diversity in workplaces has many benefits, where it functions as a source of knowledge and innovation because it helps enable new combinations of knowledge and learning since everybody has a different perspective. Likewise, Lucas & Baxter (2012) also argue that diversity increases innovation, creativity, and performance in organisations. Therefore, it can be argued that it is important to make sure that the organisation focus on decentralising the power and decision-making process to decrease the inhibition of inclusion and diversity.

On the other side, it can be argued from Foucault's point of view that employees always will be influenced by the power of the organisation within the practices, norms, and ideologies that they work in. He also states that power is not necessarily hierarchical management, but also more nuanced mechanisms, where the organisation can influence and control in more embedded strategies such as practices, norms and ideologies. Towards this, it can be argued that if the organisation has strategies, norms and ideologies towards equality and diversity, they can influence the work culture through these initiatives.

Further in the section is a paragraph called *4.3 Determining the scope of the management system*. In this paragraph, the management within the organisation is going to determine what extent to which the management system for diversity and equality must be. Here the following is written:

The scope of the organization's equality and diversity management system shall be available and be maintained as documented information. Arguments will be required to support which requirements of this standard the organization determines not to be applicable/relevant.

(appendix 1, p. 11)

When looking deeper into the text, it determines that the scope of DS-5001 needs to be available and documented, which reflects the organisation's intentions when establishing and maintaining the system to handle these equality and diversity questions. In relation to this,

words such as "arguments" indicate a rationalisation and explanation process, that needs to be accomplished, if some of the requirements in the standard are not considered relevant or practicable. This can create discursive power, where the organisation has the authority to determine whether the requirements are convenient or not.

When expressing that organisations can argue if the requirements are relevant, it emphasises the discursive practice by legitimising or rejecting certain aspects of equality and diversity practices, which can create hierarchies and power relations within the organisation. Furthermore, the process of documenting information regarding equality and diversity demonstrates discursive practice when producing and communicating knowledge about it, which might impact how employees comprehend and handle it.

The sociocultural practice is reflected through the text's organisational politics, procedures, and cultural norms about equality and diversity. When giving the choice to argue if the requirements are relevant, indicates a broader sociocultural context, where some of the practices towards equality and diversity, can be objects for discussion or resistance, which can affect how the organisation interprets and implements the requirements. This means that the already existing social norms, values and power relations in the organisation will shape how equality and diversity will be understood and put into practice.

Gathered, this indicates that the way organisations shape their approach towards equality and diversity is embedded in a complex network of discursive and sociocultural practices as well as it reveals the power relations and ideological positions.

In addition to this, one of our interviewees Lena, was asked about how they had elaborated the standard, where she pointed out why they had chosen to write the given part, where it is possible to decline some of the requirements, to this she stated:

> [...] by now you have probably seen that there are a few places we have written where it is relevant [...] That if it became known, let's say, that the legislators ended up using this standard as regulation, or say, if you offer a task, then you must be certified. Then there will be some of these requirements that we have in the standard, such as the small and medium-sized ones, which you cannot follow up on, because they do not have these management layers, for example. So that's why we've made this limb where you have to argue for it, so it's not something you can just say, it's not relevant. But it was important so that we didn't exclude an entire group, if that was the way you ended up going. (appendix 2, p.3, trans.)

Lena points out that to include both small and medium-sized organisations in the standard, it is essential to make limbs in the standard, even though it can create multiple discursive practices as well as define the power in the organisations. To this, the quote introduces an important dimension, where she acknowledges that the standard can have unexpected consequences, especially if legislators lay down regulations towards the standard. This awareness identifies potential challenges when using the standard in different organisational contexts and sizes. This quote from Lena also gives a deeper understanding of the complexity of how the standard of equality and diversity can be negotiated, implemented and understood in practice, within different organisational and external contexts.

From Ashcraft's point of view, the text presents how organisations navigate and negotiate power and hierarchies proportional to equality and diversity. It can be argued that discursive practices will occur, because the organisations would legitimate or reject chosen aspects towards equality and diversity practices, as well as how these practices can influence the employees understanding and managing these subjects.

Foucault would argue that discursive practices will occur because the organisation claims to rationalise and explain why these requirements are not relevant or practical. Furthermore, it can be argued that this process creates power relations and hierarchies within the organisation and shows how these power relations are embedded in broader sociocultural contexts.

Collectively, both Ashcraft and Foucault would look at this text as an example of how power, hierarchies and discursive practices are embedded in organisations' approach to equality and diversity, and how these approaches are shaped from wider sociocultural factors.

Further on in the section *4. Context of the organisation*, there is a paragraph concerning *4.4. Management system processes*. This paragraph deals with processes that the management needs to obtain throughout implementing the standard. Some of the processes include determining the processes needed as well as addressing the risks, providing the resources etc. Whereas at the end of the paragraph it is written: "To the extent necessary, the organization shall: g) maintain documented information to support the operation of its processes; h) retain documented information to ensure that the processes are followed" (appendix 1, p.12).

When looking at this text from a critical discourse perspective, the textual dimension indicates a request for organising and sustaining documented information to support the processes driven and ensure that the processes are observed. This creates a particular conception of how the

organisation needs to work and monitor their goals. Towards this, the language that is used indicates the necessity of documentation and control to ensure the processes, which can imply a certain degree of control or monitoring within the organisation. Furthermore, a discourse is established, which reflects a specific perception of how organisations should function, with a focus on control, obedience, and documentation. This can indicate a hierarchical and bureaucratic approach towards control. There is an implicit assumption that documented information is crucial to guarantee the processes are correctly followed, which can create an understanding of how regulation and control should be in an organisation. This means that a discourse can be created in the organisation, that controlling the employees is the most appropriate approach to lead. Considering the social dimension, this can result in revealing the power relation in the organisation, where some individuals can have more control of the processes and documentation than others. It can also influence the employees' autonomy because it can establish a feeling of ongoing supervision and control.

All of the above can insinuate a specific power structure and control practice in the organisation, which can have implications towards the employees' work culture. It can also influence how organisations are perceived by external stakeholders, depending on how they follow the processes and maintain the documentation.

Towards the text stated above, it can be argued from Foucault's point of view, that the request to maintain documented information is an example of disciplinary power, where the organisation seek to regulate and monitor behaviour through a documented and controlling system. Through a Foucauldian view, it is important to know how documentation and monitoring are applied to discipline and normalise the employees' actions and ensure that they follow the organisation's defined processes. Additionally, it can be argued that these practices of maintaining documentation can create a hierarchy of knowledge and power, where the ones who have access to and control of the documents, can gain control over the other employees. This can be an example of how modern organisations perform disciplinary power through monitoring and documentation to maintain control and normalise behaviour, which also can lead to developing a new behaviour towards the views of equality and diversity at the workplace.

A study by Johnsen (2002), shows the connection between organisational development and the communicative change program, highlighting how discourses impact communication within organisations. Through the study, it is concluded that for creating communicative organisational transformation, action and a gradual change in meaning creation are required.

Therefore, it can be argued that discourses that will be created in the organisation towards equality and diversity, can have a positive impact on the employees, because they will be aware of the change in the organisation, as a result of the new meaning creation that is required in order to change.

This means that the retention of documented information is an example of disciplinary power, where the organisation seeks to regulate and monitor behaviour through a documented and controlled system. In addition, it emphasises how communication and discourses influence organisational development and that it can promote changes towards equality and diversity.

5. Leadership

In section *5. Leadership*, the first paragraph is called *5.1 Leadership and commitment*. It is emphasised here that the management must develop their equality and diversity policy, which should serve as the foundation and goal for their efforts on the subject as well as how they will pursue it. Additionally, it is addressed that the management is responsible for all the leaders at all levels are aware and competent to embed with the plan of equality and diversity. Towards this, there are listed ten responsibilities that the management must follow, where two of them concern the following:

b) ensure that the organization's equality and diversity objectives are incorporated in relevant policies, strategies and other relevant documents; [...] f) deal with and reprimand behaviour that is inconsistent with the organization's equality. (appendix 1, p.12)

Looking at the text from a textual perspective, the word "ensure" implies an intention to establish and maintain the requirements. This indicates that the organisation acts to ensure that its equality and diversity goals will be accomplished. The expression "incorporated in relevant policies, strategies and other relevant documents", indicates the need to embody the equality and diversity goals in the organisation's existing policies and strategies, which indicates an aspiration to embed these principles in the organisation's frame structure and practices. Additionally, the text is divided in counts from a) – j), which makes a structured and administrated approach to the subject, where organisations can approach the handling of equality and diversity structured. From the discursive perspective, the organisation is expected to act proactively and integrate the equality and diversity goals in the practices and policies. This reflects society's discourses about equality and diversity, where it is expected that

organisations take responsibility to encourage these values. The sentence "deal with and reprimand behaviour" indicates an authoritarian attitude to handle deviant behaviour towards the principles. This can create a hierarchical structure, where the management have the power to apply sanctions and rectify the employees' behaviour. This is reflected in society's norms and values about equality and diversity, where organisations are expected to act responsible and promote it into the work-culture. When analysing the text from a social perspective, it implies that organisations must have procedures towards how to handle behaviour that is contrary to the principles, to implement the standard properly. This requires an effective implementation of the policies, which can involve training, monitoring, and sanctions. In addition, an organisation's culture and values indicate how it approaches diversity and equality, which means if they prioritise these topics, it will be reflected in the practices and actions towards it. This can also influence the employees' opinions and behaviour toward equality and diversity.

During the interview, Rikke was asked if she had experienced any positive changes among the employees related to the implementation of the standard, where she said:

> That sometimes you can conclude that it is only something that lives up to HR or only something that lives up to strategy. But actually, the fact that we came out and spoke to these employees. That they actually think and know about a lot of those initiatives. Among other things, we have created such a bias guide for all managers in AP-pension when hiring. That it was actually used. That we had done anti-bias training for all employees [...] That it was something you noticed, and it wasn't just another course that you sat and listened to.
>
> (appendix 3, p.4, trans.)

She points out that such initiatives, including those directed towards the promotion of equality and diversity standards, frequently terminate within the confines of the Human Resources department, wherein only superficial compliance to the initiatives is observed. This circumstance may be construed as an obstacle to the comprehensive implementation of the standards. Afterwards, Rikke stated that they had spoken to their employees, where they noticed that the employees were aware of the initiatives. Additionally, Rikke talks about how they ensure that all employees have had specific anti-bias training. It can be argued, that Rikke and her team, noticed that communication in the organisation is important when implementing new initiatives, given that they talk to the employees about it and prioritise training to help

them reach the goals, and embed new practices and norms in the organisation that provides for more equality and diversity.

As written in the former sections, communication is an essential element when implementing a standard which can require changes. According to Ashcraft communication has a great power in organisations, where structural changes in organisations are essential when addressing gender. She argues that to encourage equality and diversity in workplaces, changes must be included in organisations' policies, practices and procedures, which should be included in training and education towards these topics. When these changes occur, it contributes to more awareness of gender as well as equality and diversity, which strengthens the employees' capabilities to change practices.

This means that it can be argued both from Ashcraft's point of view and Rikke's statement that it is important to focus on how to communicate changes in organisations, which the standard assists when having structure in how to implement the standard.

The next part of the standard concerns *5.2 Equality and diversity policy*, where several points and a formed agenda are carried out in the standard, which organisations must follow when implementing the standard. In the standard it is addressed:

> The organization shall develop an equality and diversity policy. The policy shall, as a minimum, contain:
> a) a definition of equality and diversity in the organization;
> b) a description of how the policy interacts with the organization's overall vision, mission or objective, if formulated;
> c) an identification of the responsibilities of management and employees;
> d) definitions and prohibition of unreasonable discriminatory treatment and abusive behaviour, including bullying and sexual harassment;
> e) a description of applicable complaints paths for dealing with complaints about non-compliance with the policy;
> f) a description of the consequences of non-compliance with the policy.
> The quality and diversity policy shall:
> g) be available and maintained as documented information;
> h) be available to significant stakeholders, as appropriate. (appendix 1, p.13)

The text is formulated as multiple requirements and expectations towards the organisations regarding the preparation of a policy when implementing equality and diversity. The use of words is clear and specific, which can imply a formal and authoritarian rhetoric. This can indicate the organisation's power structure and its expectations of the employees. Furthermore, when implying these requirements, the discourse of the importance of equality and diversity is reflected in the organisation. The discourse is reflected in the mentioned requirements of the definitions of the concepts, which is integration with the organisation's mission and the identification of the management and employees' obligations. Additionally, it emphasises the significance of dealing with and sanctioning subjective differential treatment and insulting behaviour. This discourse contributes to establishing these particular norms and values within the organisation. Along with this, the text indicates that the organisations that follow these requirements and want to implement the standard have a desire to establish a policy that includes equality and diversity, indicating wider social practices in the organisation, that encourage inclusion and respect for different backgrounds and identities. Likewise, the requirements of documentation and availability indicate an organisational culture where responsibility and transparency are important. This can contribute to building more trust and legitimacy both internally and externally for the organisation.

This analysis illustrates how the text is a part of reflection and shaping the organisation's discourses and practices towards equality and diversity. On the other side, the text does not consider cultural and structural changes that may be a factor when implementing the standard and the requirements, which can make the implementation more challenging.

It can be argued from Ashcraft's point of view that the text is an expression of institutional control and regulation of behaviour through policies and procedures. To this, it can be argued that the policy for diversity and equality is part of the organisation's endeavour to shape and control the employee's behaviour and interactions at the workplace. Additionally, towards this, it is important to look into how the policy reflects and reproduces particular power structures and hierarchies within the organisation. Examining the text from Foucault's point of view, he would argue that it is an example of disciplinary power, where the organisation pursues to normalise the employees' behaviour through sanctions and control. With Foucault ideas in mind, it would be relevant to examine the policies for equality and diversity and delve into how it works as a tool to create and maintain the norms and values within the organisation, concurrently when it controls and discipline people who deviate from those norms.

Additionally, he would be aware of how these policies can create hierarchies of knowledge and power in the organisation, where the ones with the power of the policies also have the power to define acceptable behaviour.

Even though the text makes it possible to get these initiatives structured in the organisations and create a discourse that focuses on the norms and values the organisation desire related to equality and diversity, it is important to evaluate the power structures and hierarchies. Differentiation of power can occur, which means that the ones with power also make the rules of acceptable behaviour which eventually can resolve in hierarchies and power structures where the management possess all the power.

6. Planning

Furthermore, the next section in the standard is called *6. Planning*, where the organisations implementing the standard elaborate on how to plan the standard. There are multiple things to consider, referred to as issues, risks and opportunities that need to be addressed. Herein, the last paragraph in the section deals with *6.2 Changes to the management system*, where they write: "When the organization determines the need for changes to the management system and/or individual actions, the changes shall be planned and managed, as necessary, and their effectiveness validated" (appendix 1, p.15).

In this text, formal and authoritative rhetoric is used, indicating the control organisations possess over the change processes. Towards this, there are attached great importance to words such as "determines", "changes", "planned", "managed", and "validated", which point to a more process-orientated approach with a focus on control and efficiency. On the other side, there are used words as "necessary" which is ambiguous and makes it possible for different interpretations, which can create uncertainty and abuse of power, when implementing the standard. Furthermore, the text represents discourses about organisational control and efficiency, where the changes are planned and controlled centrally. This is reflected in the organisation's top-down ideology of control, which can hide or constrain the employees' autonomy and initiatives. From a social perspective, the text reflects the organisation's power to control and define the changing processes, which can influence how the employees feel ownership and autonomy because the power is attached to the management, who can decide for the employees, which can create unequal power relations. These decisions and processes about changes can potentially exclude the employees from participating in the process, which

can contribute to resistance or deficient acceptance of the changes. This analysis indicates that organisations have to focus on the power relation, to involve the employees, in the process, to prevent unequal power structures and resistance from the employees when changes are needed.

It can be argued from Ashcraft's point of view, that organisations that implement the standard, can through language and discursive practices use power, where the formal and authoritative approach in the standard can create hierarchies and control structures that influence the employees' perception of themselves and how they are a part of the organisation. Additionally, words such as "planned" and "managed", indicate a top-down approach to managerial changes, which can be a part of oppressing the employees' voices in the organisation and create resistance towards the changes. Ashcraft would argue that it is important to concentrate on the power structures in the organisation, because it can create unequal gender norms. In order to create an inclusive and effective organisation, it is important to have a critical approach to gender and identity dynamics in the workplace.

Foucault would argue that the text is an example of disciplinary power, where the organisation through the standard can seek to control and regulate the employees' behaviour by controlling and planning the changing processes. It can be argued that the organisation needs to consider how they will accomplish the changes towards shaping and normalise the employees' behaviour in agreement with the organisation's goals and interests. Foucault would argue that power is not necessarily a bad term, but needs to be used correctly, so people cannot abuse the concept of power. When using the word "validated", Foucault would imply that the organisation needs to monitor and evaluate their employees, which also can strengthen the organisations control over the employees.

This indicates that the organisations need to be aware of how they implement the standard, to avoid power structures, that controls the employees to a certain degree. They also need to focus on the employees throughout the process and ensure that their autonomy is not invaded and that they have a voice in the process. This can create more efficiency when implementing the standard.

7. Support activities

Further in the standard there is a section concerning *7. Support activities*, where the organisation shall establish and allocate the recourses and competencies needed to accomplish

the implementation and maintain improvements of the standard and the completion of the actions towards it. In the section, there is a paragraph called *7.3 Awareness and transparency*, where seven items are listed, in which two of them are concretised in the following: "The organization shall ensure: a) that employees have been made aware of: 1) the organization's concrete goals for equality and diversity; [...] 6) any consequences of not complying with the equality and diversity policy;" (appendix 1, p. 15).

When examining the text from a textual perspective, it is written with imperatives such as "The organization shall ensure", indicating a direct and authorial approach. This can generate a hierarchical structure, where the organisation is in a position that has the power to demand action from the employees. Moreover, the consequences of disobeying the equality and diversity policy are highlighted, which could generate a sense of threat or fear among employees and increase the organisation's authority. Furthermore, the text creates discourses about equality and diversity as an important organisational goal, which the employees must be aware of and follow. When emphasising the consequences of not following the goals of equality and diversity, it contributes to the conception that equality and diversity goals are a necessary part of organisational success and integrity. From the social perspective, the text reflects the organisation's power above the employees when expectations and consequences are established when employees lack obedience to the quality and diversity policy. This can create a hierarchical structure, where the organisation practices control above the employees' actions and behaviour towards equality and diversity. Additionally, the text demonstrates and strengthens the organisations influence and regulation of matters pertaining to equality and diversity among its employees through language use and the creation of meaning. It also creates a discourse that concentrates individuals attention on the importance of equality and diversity to make a successful and accommodating organisation. In relation to this, it can be argued that organisations that implement this standard want to make a change and focus on equality and diversity. Ashcraft argues that to establish an ethical and inclusive organisation there needs to be structural change and awareness of the subject. This text creates a discourse that emphasises the importance of equality and diversity that will require structural change. Ashcraft also argues that organisations need to understand and acknowledge their problem towards the subject of gender and diversity before they can address them effectively in the workplace. It can be argued that change is essential to suppressing the previous work environment. When implementing the standard, the organisation is willing to focus on these changes. On the other hand, from Foucault's point of view, the text is an example of disciplinary power, where the organisation

will regulate and normalise the employees' behaviour through directions and expectations towards equality and diversity. He would also argue that the textual practice contributes to establishing and sustaining hierarchies and control within the organisation, which can reproduce power structures and inequality.

Furthermore, research from Zutshi & Sohal (2004) shows that irrespective of the standard, managers experience resistance and difficulties when implementing the standard. They highlight that education and training for employees need to be a priority, to effective the adoption by the employees in the organisation. This means that, although there are different requirements and monitoring towards the employees, they need to be enlightened and be a part of the change, for a successful implementation. This would indicate that the organisations are committed to ensuring awareness and transparency about equality and diversity. The text underlines the organisation's authority and power to demand actions from the employees that create discourses about the importance of equality and diversity. Ashcraft points out the necessity for structural changes and awareness, whereas Foucault views the text as an example of disciplinary power. Research shows the need for education and training to improve the implementation of the standard and ensure the participation of the employees in the changing process. Furthermore, this analysis presents the complexities of implementing and maintaining equality and diversity policies in the organisation.

8. Action areas

The next part of DS-5001 that we find relevant to analyse is section *8. Action areas*, where the first heading is called *8.1 General*, where the following is stated:

Based on the description of the current status of the equality and diversity plan (5.2.3 a), management shall decide when and how, and with what objectives, work is performed within the selected action areas. Moreover, management shall allocate the resources needed and keep abreast of results. (appendix 1, p.17)

The text itself presents a language where the management is granted a significant part of the authority and decision-making power concerning the equality and diversity plan that must be implemented in organisations that wish to be certified with DS-5001. By stating that the management "shall decide" and "shall allocate", it is possible that unequal power dynamics

will persist and serve to legitimise the management's authority in determining the course of action and resource distribution within the equality and diversity plan. This legitimisation may reinforce existing power imbalances and restrict broader participation in decision-making processes.

Keeping this in mind, research from Heras-Saizarbitoria & Boiral (2013) contends that studies that attempt to analyse the reasons behind the adoption of management system standards should include a focus on internal stakeholders, such as middle managers or employees who do not handle management responsibilities, as well as external stakeholders, including clients, suppliers, and consultants. Heras-Saizarbitoria & Boiral (2013) explain that a deeper and more thorough understanding of a process such as implementing a standard system might be achieved when focussing on these elements. Based on this, it can be argued that more transparency regarding how several layers of organisations could be a part of the decision-making of the implementing process of DS-5001 should be addressed in this part of the standard.

To this Foucault is addressing in his work how language is a relevant component, where individuals inevitably become involved in prevailing power dynamics inherent within language itself. Within Foucault's work, he addresses the importance of understanding how discourses are integrated into society's institutions and practices, which is shown in the stated text above, where the management is granted all of the power and authority in ensuring that resources are allocated to meet the goals that are created in the equality and diversity plan.

The subsection is called, *8.2 Inclusive culture*, where they address how the organisation promotes an inclusive culture. There are listed six recommendations about how to create an inclusive culture where one of them are presented:

> The organisation shall maintain and retain documented information on how it works to achieve an inclusive culture. An organization promotes an inclusive culture, e.g. through.
> e. examining how workplace codes can exclude employees due to gender, gender identity, gender expression, gender characteristics, race, colour, religion or belief, political opinion, sexual orientation, age, disability, or national, social or ethnic origin, etc. in order to ensure equal recognition. (appendix 1, p.17)

The text addresses the need for organisations to maintain and document efforts to promote an inclusive culture. The language in the text presents an authoritative tone, which may be because DS-5001 is part of a policy document or guidelines for an organisation. This text reflects the social practice of addressing diversity and inclusion in organisational culture and it recognises the importance of addressing potential bias or discriminatory practices within workplace rules and policies.

While the text appears to advocate for inclusivity, it also indirectly acknowledges systemic problems within organisational structures that sustain discrimination. The mention of different identity markers such as gender, race, religion etc. highlights the intersectionality of discrimination and the need for comprehensive measures to address it. To this Ashcraft argues that organisations are dynamic environments where gender can be established, maintained, and reproduced through everyday actions and interactions. This indicates that language and discursive practices, such as the use of gender-specific terminology and expectations in professional communication, have an essential effect on the construction of gender in organisations. These practices can also have an impact on the precepting of gender identity and roles. In relation to this, Lena from Dansk Standard mentions in the interview that:

It's that when you embark on such a standard. Then you become aware of some of the structures you have. And some of it, it's also the language, it's also the language we use. Is it a gender-neutral language used when posting job advertisements? So, there are many elements to this. (appendix 2, p.3, trans.)

This suggests how the implementation of a standard such as DS-5001 can elucidate certain internal organisational structures that always have been inherent within the organisation yet remained unnoticed.

On the other hand, when reading the text, it also becomes evident that it focuses primarily on adjusting workplace rules rather than addressing deeper systemic issues that can maintain inequality in organisations. This might create the effect that employees within the organisation may view the standard as a compliance requirement rather than a genuine commitment to inclusion, where it can be argued that more comprehensive measures are needed to challenge

existing power dynamics and promote genuine inclusion within organisational cultures. Concerning this, Rikke mentioned in the interview that:

So, I believe those who have faced the most resistance to it is probably the HR team. Because they are simply pressed for time. And what should we do now? What should we incorporate into the system? Should we do it just for the sake of the system and similar considerations?

(appendix 3, p.6, trans.)

This demonstrates a part of the organisation that may be doubtful if this standard would have a real impact on the organisation. But contrary to the scepticism that Rikke experienced in the beginning of the implementation of the standard, she also mentions the following in the interview:

It just created a huge sense of pride, I must say. Now, I've only been here for two years, but I don't think I've seen anything we've been so proud of since we got that certification. Just a kind of "wow." We're just a company that cares and engages in this. It was really cool. And I also think it contributes to creating even greater awareness that we should have more of this.

(appendix 3, p.10, trans.)

This statement presents an organisation that is proactive and proud of promoting a diverse and inclusive workplace, in which researchers Özbilgin, Tatli, Ipek, & Sameer (2016) also argue that diversity fosters a positive work environment and increased productivity in an organisation where employees come from a wide range of cultural and racial backgrounds which is an aspect that ideally should be addressed more clearly in DS-5001.

The next sections that we wish to analyse in DS-5001 is *8.4 The organization's communication, profiling, and physical environment* where they address: "The organization shall document that it has assessed and minimized bias in its communication, profiling and physical environment" (appendix 1, p.18). Whereas further in section *8.6.1, Applications for employment*, the following is stated:

When posting job advertisements, the organization shall document that, at the first screening for required competences, applications are rendered anonymous in respect of name, age, civil status and photo, the screening being performed by someone other than those who will be in charge of the selection process. (appendix 1, p.18)

In this text it is noticeable that it uses formal and directive language, indicating authority and control. Phrases like "shall document" and "required competences" imply a regulatory and authoritative tone, suggesting adherence to the standard and guidelines. By using more direct language in the text, the organisation will gain an understanding of the importance of minimising bias in their communication and hiring processes. To be able to ensure real changes in organisations, the right discourses must be used to create understanding and action for the reader. Jaynes (2015) presents in his study how discourses are not only used in shaping organisational culture but also a central power factor. He explains how organisational leaders take advantage of discourses by using prominent discourses, like those in business and science, to support and carry out certain strategic changes in the organisation. By creating and presenting specific discourses as realities and requirements in the text, power is performed. Therefore, it can be argued that this shapes reality and influence how individuals and organisations perceive themselves.

Furthermore, the text reflects the importance of assessing and minimising bias, suggesting attention to social problems such as discrimination and inequality. However, the text does not explicitly address the deeper causes of bias or offer strategies to address structural inequalities. This can reflect an underlying neoliberal ideology that prioritises individual accountability over structural change.

The text normalises certain practices, such as making job applications anonymous during the screening process, which is relevant to creating a more unbiased recruitment process and thereby better ensuring a more diverse organisation. But while this may reduce bias based on factors such as name, age, marital status and photo, it does not address deeper structural issues such as implicit bias or discrimination based on socio-economic background or education. The text does not specify how bias will be assessed or minimised, nor does it mention accountability measures or consequences for non-compliance. This lack of detail leaves room for

interpretation and raises questions about the effectiveness and sincerity of the organisation's efforts to address bias. The text does not acknowledge the potential biases or prejudices that individuals within the organisation may have, nor does it address power dynamics within the selection process. When interviewing Rikke from AP Pension, she also addressed the following obstacles they were met with when implementing the standard:

And there were some individual things that we couldn't be compliant with at all, for example, stuff like blinding CVs. We have an HR system called HR-on, and well, there isn't any system in Denmark right now that handles blinding of CVs, which is a problem when you're making a Danish Standard. (appendix 3, p.3, trans.).

Rikke is addressing how blinding CVs was not a reality that they could accommodate within their HR system. The inability to fully comply with certain aspects of a standard due to technological limitations suggests potential shortcomings in the standardisation process. Rikke's comment highlights the importance of considering practical constraints when formulating standards or regulations. Standards must be designed to be both feasible and adaptable to diverse realities. The challenges encountered during the implementation of the standard present opportunities for improvement. In this case, technological advancements can be pursued to better accommodate the practical limitations of reality.

The next part of DS-5001 that we wish to analyse is called *8.6.2 Employment interview and test*, where the following requirements are mentioned:

The organization shall aim to invite a diverse selection of qualified applicants to an interview. The organization shall document that:
a) it aims to ensure that representatives of several genders are invited to an interview;
b) interviews are conducted in a way that minimises the effects of unconscious bias;
c) when tests are used, it ensures that the test is used targeting the tasks, characteristics, qualifications, and competences required for the position. (appendix 1, p. 18)

The language used in the text seems to promote inclusion and equality in recruitment practices. The text describes DS-5001 requirements regarding employment interviews and tests. It underlines the importance of inviting a diverse number of qualified applicants for interviews and ensuring fairness and impartiality in the interview and testing process. The text hides potential gaps between rhetoric and reality, since the effectiveness of the measures described in the text, such as minimising unconscious bias and targeting tests appropriately, may be limited by institutional barriers or implicit bias among decision-makers, which has not been addressed in the text.

In addition, the framework of the texts may reveal hidden underlying power dynamics or systemic inequalities within organisations. Research from Delmas & Montes-Sancho (2011) presents how normative and regulatory forces in institutional environments can oppose each other in the early stages of the implementation of standards in organisations and influence the willingness to adopt new practices. However, Delmas & Montes-Sancho (2011) suggest investigating how these institutional forces can be used to implement standards in organisations. The state plays a central role in influencing the adoption of standards through formal and informal regulatory pressures that reward or punish organisations based on their acceptance or rejection of the standards. To this, it would be important to investigate how rules and norms set by institutions can work better together with organisations to ensure motivation and help them follow the standards. This could include providing rewards or training to support organisations to follow the standards. Furthermore, it is important to understand that different organisations have different challenges and opportunities when following standards. It is necessary to adapt the support and the approach to each organisation, so it becomes more effective and lasting.

The social practices surrounding the implementation of this standard are crucial to understand its impact on organisations. It would be relevant to require documentation from organisations interviewing potential employees to ensure that they are conducted in a way that minimises unconscious bias, as well as documentation for how applicants are treated during the interview process. This part of the text does not require any monitoring or evaluation of these practices to ensure compliance with the standard. Practices like these could be relevant and provide insight into the organisation's actual commitment to diversity and equality.

Furthermore, we wish to analyse the following part of DS-5001 which is called, ***8.6.4, New recruitment***. In this part, there are listed two requirements that the organisations need to ensure when recruiting new employees. We have chosen to analyse one of the requirements which is stated by Dansk Standard:

> The organization shall ensure: a) that new employees are informed soon after their arrival about the organization's core values, including those concerning equality and diversity, as well as the processes that ensure compliance with the organization's equality and diversity policy, including any whistle-blower schemes; (appendix 1, p. 18)

The text opens with the phrase "The organization shall ensure" which signals a directive tone suggesting authority. The use of "shall ensure" also implies a level of obligation, framing adherence to the standard as non-negotiable, which is necessary when evolving a standard with requirements that organisations must follow.

The mention of "core values, including those relating to equality and diversity" is consistent with current societal ideologies that promote inclusion. These are dominant discourses in the text which reflect broader societal expectations for corporate social responsibility and diversity initiatives. It constructs the subject position of new employees as recipients of the organisation's values and compliance requirements and shapes their roles within the organisation. Studies from Marynissen (2011) present how societal discourses and organisational communication mutually influence each other, where organisational communication plays a role in shaping social discourses, while also being influenced by them. With a focus on social practice, the text reflects power differentials between the organisation and its employees, where the organisation exercises control over information dissemination and adherence of the policies. While on the one hand, the text promotes equality and diversity, the text also reveals underlying ideologies of surveillance and control, particularly through the mention of whistle-blower schemes. For Foucault, power is exercised through various forms of control and governance mechanisms, such as monitoring, assessment, and disciplining, that are embedded in the structures and practices of the organisation. These power strategies do not only shape individuals behaviour but also the social relations and hierarchies that exist within the organisation.

The next section of DS-5001 that we will analyse is called *8.7 Career pathways*, which concerns ensuring security for employees' careers during different stages of their work-life, where the following is stated:

> The organization shall document that it offers multiple career pathways, respecting and taking into consideration the life stages that enable workers to resume and continue their career at the same level in relation to life events such as maternity and parental leave or past illness. (appendix 1, p. 19)

Whereas, in the section *8.8 Promotion* it is addressed that "The organization shall document that it communicates and applies evaluation criteria that foster equality and diversity for the promotion of employees and leaders." (appendix 1, p. 19).

The texts address two points, which are career paths and promotion within an organisation. In the texts, it is emphasised that documentation about offering several career paths must be submitted and promoting more equality and diversity in the evaluation criteria's related to employee and manager promotion. The language itself in this text is also considered to be formal and direct, which typically reflects the communication method in a standard that organisations must follow.

The text focuses on prioritising inclusivity and fairness in career development and promotion processes. However, the language used in the text lacks a focus on concrete implementation strategies or responsibility measures. The text suggests a commitment to accommodate life events such as maternity and illness as well as promoting equality, which is a relevant discourse to highlight in this standard. Societal values regarding equality and diversity in the workplace are addressed in this text, where it aligns with contemporary discourses on inclusivity and equal employment opportunities.

As mentioned, the text lacks clarity on how these goals will be achieved. In addition, Rikke mentions in the interview that DS-5001 lacks a focus on women in menopause, where she specifically mentions that:

I think something is missing about menopausal women in the workplace, because it is a big challenge that costs society really, really big money, every year. I would like that to be included in the standard (appendix 3, p.13, trans.).

The fact that DS-5001 lacks focus on menopausal women reflects a blind spot or lack of recognition of the challenges that women in this life phase can face in the workplace. Rikke also mentions the following in the interview: "It turns out that there are a lot, lot, lot of women leaving the workforce. I mean, they stop working because workplaces aren't designed for them to be there when they're going through menopause" (appendix 3, p.9, trans.).

It can be argued in continuation of the quote that women in menopause experience physical, emotional, and mental changes that can potentially affect women's work performance and well-being at the workplace. This is a strong argument for the consequences that can arise from ignoring this relevant life phase. Here it can be argued that the standard overlooks important needs for support, adaptation and consideration of women's health and well-being at work during menopause. This can lead to a lack of inclusion and minimise the standard's effectiveness in promoting real equality and well-being in the workplace. This is therefore a focus that should be included in the standard in order to include minority groups and thereby create more diversity in organisations. Bebbington & Özbilgin (2013) suggest in their research that the regulation of diversity and equality in workplaces is shaped by political, social, and economic trends in our society. Therefore, a broader perspective on diversity is necessary for its integration into organisations, which argues that DS-5001 should embrace and include more categories of society in the standard. The benefits of diverse workplaces are argued by Østergaard (2022) who states that organisations with a more diverse workforce in terms of gender, nationality, and education tend to be more inventive than those with less diversity.

9. Performance evaluation

Another part of the DS-5001 that we find relevant to analyse is called *9.1 Monitoring, measurement, analysis, and evaluation*, where monitoring the established requirements and goals is addressed, and the following is stated:

The organization shall retain appropriate documented information on the results of monitoring and measurements, and decisions that may have been made directly on that basis. This information is to be used, among other things, for comparison with previous and future measurements. (appendix 1, p.19)

The language of the text is again more formal and direct, reflecting a document of regulatory information. In this text, there is a focus on words such as "monitoring", "measurement", as well as "analysis", and "evaluation" in the headline, which suggests a systematic approach to quality management in organisations.

An important discourse that is presented in this section is the emphasis on "documented information" and "comparison with previous and future measurements", which may reflect an ideology of responsibility, efficiency, and repeated improvements at the organisation. On the other hand, this can also help reinforce a monitoring culture in organisations where they are generally monitored and evaluated. According to Foucault, power is used and managed by a variety of strategies and mechanisms that shape individual identities, behaviours and manage discourses and social norms. He focuses on the ways that practices normalise behaviours and identities inside organisations such as surveillance tactics, disciplinary measures, and normalising practices serve as tools of power. Foucault argues that administrative structures, institutional norms, and management practices are all embedded power relations within organisations. To this, he focuses on the ways in which power is used through a range of observation, monitoring, and control strategies that not only shape individuals behaviour but also regulate social dynamics and hierarchies inside organisations.

Furthermore, we wish to analyse the section called *9.1.2 Employee satisfaction*, to get a deeper insight into the requirement that DS-5001 have for employee satisfaction in organisations. In this part, the following is mentioned:

At planned intervals, the organization shall measure employee satisfaction with the organization's equality and diversity policy, objectives and actions and the results achieved. The data collection and review of this survey shall be based on anonymisation and with certainty of the integrity of responses. The survey should clarify, among other things, whether

employees experience equal opportunities within the organization, regardless of their gender, gender identity, gender expression, gender characteristics, race, colour, religion or belief, political opinion, sexual orientation, age, disability, or national, social or ethnic origin, etc.

(appendix 1, p. 20)

"Equal opportunities" and "employee satisfaction" are two examples of elements that suggest a strong emphasis on promoting diversity and inclusion in organisational settings. In this case, the organisations management has been assigned with evaluating satisfaction among the employees, which suggests that they also have an obligation to ensure that every employee has equal access to opportunities at the organisation. The fact that the document focusses on creating equal opportunities for all employees with different backgrounds, will possibly create awareness for organisations about inclusivity, social justice, and recognition of the importance of diversity among employees. This can help create a workplace with an environment where it is valuable to promote diversity in the organisation. Studies from Jaynes (2015) presents the power aspect of communication, where the management in organisations have the ability to define and impose certain discourses as valid and dominant. This means that discourses alone do not shape organisational culture, but the management plays a part in defining the correct communication strategies in which the organisation can reflect on. As a result of that, Jaynes (2015) explains that there is a hierarchy of knowledge and meaning created, with some discourses having a greater impact than others. He concludes in his studies that through these certain discourses, management in organisations has an impact on how employees perceive themselves. To this Ashcraft additionally explains the various ways that gender is embedded in organisational practices, structures, and culture. The construction of gender in organisations is one of the main concepts in Ashcraft's research on gendered organisations. Rather than being a clearly defined biological category, gender, from Ashcraft's view, is a social construction that is established in organisational contexts.

She also argues that gender can be formed, maintained, and reproduced through regular interactions and behaviours in dynamic workplaces. Thus, language and discursive practices play an essential part in the creation of gender in organisations. Examples of these practices include the use of gender-specific terminology and stereotypes in professional communication. On the basis of this, it can be argued that in order to establish an inclusive workplace,

organisations that seek DS-5001 certification need to concentrate on the discourse they offer regarding gender and diversity.

10. Improvement

The last section we wish to analyse in DS-5001 is *10. Improvement,* where the first paragraph is *10.1 General* and here the following is addressed: "The organization shall determine opportunities for improving the management system and implementing actions decided on to achieve equality and diversity in accordance with the organization's policies and the requirements and expectations of selected stakeholders" (appendix 1, p. 21).

In continuation to the stated above, section *10.3 Continual improvement*, addresses the following:

The organization shall continually improve the suitability, adequacy, and effectiveness of the management system. The organization shall consider the results of analysis and evaluation, and the management review outputs, to determine if there are needs or opportunities that shall be addressed as part of continual improvement. (appendix 1, p. 22)

The language of the texts again suggests a formal tone where terms such as "opportunities for improvement" and "continual improvement" present a focus on quality management practices. The text also uses terms such as "equality and diversity", as well as "stakeholders", which may reflect a focus on external expectations. The text itself presents a hierarchical structure where management is responsible for improvements in relation to equality and diversity. By focusing on "continuous improvement", the text also highlights the idea that organisational systems such as DS-5001 are incomplete and that there is thus always a requirement to strive for improvement. This text reflects a culture in the organisation where stakeholders' expectations about quality management are prioritised, which also helps to shape the employees' view of the organisation. The fact that the text mentions "demands and expectations from selected stakeholders" indicates that there is an influence from external factors, such as customers and public opinion. This helps to emphasise the need for organisations to balance internal goals with external requirements.

The impact of societal discourses is discussed in various studies. Jaynes (2015) highlight in his study the influence society has on modern organisations, as societal discourses can serve as a foundation for strategic changes within organisations. The organisations that are best at comprehending and applying these discourses will be able to define their role and place in society. Additionally, Besio & Pronzini (2014) shows in their study how moral statements in media discourse put pressure on organisations to take responsible action and how companies respond to these demands. Here, Besio & Pronzini (2014) highlight the various tactics used by organisations to transform these ethical principles into practical frameworks, including the development of official and informal moral standards. The result of this study also demonstrates the complexity of how organisations deal with discourses of social responsibility. This highlights the importance of accommodating external factors, such as public opinions and stakeholders' expectations in organisations communication strategies.

Based on Foucault's understanding of power and society one must pay attention to the scientific discourses that are embedded in society and shape its function in addition to political and economic systems. He argues that scientific discourses have a direct connection to politics and society and are essential to the way society functions and how power is used. This implies that studying how scientific discourses are incorporated into political activity such as DS-5001 by society is essential to understanding it.

In relation to continually improvement of initiatives in the organisation, Rikke also mentions that:

It can be anything from gender diversity to age diversity, and we calculate that every year. And these are figures that we pull out on an ongoing basis and that are reported on through the HR system. There, we simply have an employee in HR who only sits with data. And she sits and pulls out those reports for management reporting to all the managers. So, they can constantly monitor how things are going with the goals that have been set. And they do that on a monthly basis's. (appendix 3, p. 10, trans)

It demonstrates a recognised commitment to ensure that the organisation remains responsible for its growth towards diversity objectives. Applying particular HR systems demonstrates a focus on a data-driven approach to the process of improving the objectives established and,

therefore, ensures that any obstacles are addressed as effectively as possible continuing. As the management also gets involved in this, the organisation expresses that this is a priority for the entire organisation.

Summary of analysis

Overall, the critical discourse analysis of DS-5001 Management Standard System with a focus on the transition from theory to practical implementation in organisations have given an insight into how DS-5001 allows the opt-out of several points, which strengthens the power of managers and can create a hierarchical culture. By allot all the power to the management within organisations this might create and shape the perception of equality and diversity in the organisation and affect existing norms and power relations. Furthermore, it can be summarised in the analysis that cultural and structural issues in society is not addressed properly enough in DS-5001 and that there is a lack of focus on ensuring that more categories within individuals lifecycle are included. Furthermore, the findings shows that the employees and middle manager needs training to know how to handle the implementation of DS-5001. Likewise, there are a lack of focus on the employees when elaboration on the different policies that is needed in the implementation, which give the management more power. In various places in DS-5001, the language does not appear to be clear which create room for different interpretations of how to handle the different aspects of the standard.

6

Discussion of findings

This thesis contributes to the literature by shedding light on various aspects of the standard DS-5001 and its implications for organisational dynamics related to equality and diversity. Our findings offer valuable insights that extend the current understanding of how standards such as DS-5001 influence organisational culture and practices. Our thesis examines the implications that DS-5001 have regarding organisational power structures and the culture around equality and diversity in organisations. Through a profound analysis of the standard and its barrier, important aspects will be emphasised, that has significance for how equality and diversity are understood and practiced in organisations.

A central observation is that the standard gives the management a prominent power because it allows them to opt out of several items. These actions can create a hierarchical culture, where the management is responsible for shaping the dominant discourse in the organisation. These power dynamics can potentially reinforce existing social norms, values, and power relations, which can influence how equality and diversity will be comprehended and implemented. This adds to the literature on organisational power structures and their impact on equality and diversity standards in organisations. On one hand, having the management in charge of implementing the standard shows the employees the importance of these initiatives towards the organisation. On the other hand, the standard gives the management a great power to decide and monitor the employees, which through our findings can create a hierarchical culture where the employees can be neglected in the implementation process. Additionally, our analysis shows that the standard does not encourage broader participation or voices in the organisation. Instead, it is the management that primarily manages the execution and decisions of the different policies and initiatives regarding equality and diversity. This can decrease the diversity of perspectives and experiences that are included in the decision process and create a feeling of exclusion among the employees. To suppress a hierarchical culture and exclusion among the employees in organisations when implementing DS-5001, our findings show that by decentralising the power and decision-making process a decrease of the inhibition of inclusion and diversity will occur.

Despite this, is it a positive factor that the standard creates an increased awareness of diversity and equality in organisations and thereby shed light on the importance of this topic. However, our analysis present that the standard does not properly address cultural and structural problems that appears in both society and organisations, which can result in certain societal group being excluded. Since our study presents the essential of monitoring the employees to be able to

achieve the established initiatives and secure the implementations process, an atmosphere of mistrust can limit the employees autonomy and freedom of action.

Our analysis also presents the importance of communication in organisations to ensure a successful implementation of the standard. Clear and open communication channels are crucial in creating understanding and engagement among the employees and leaders. Our examination of the language presented uncertainties and indistinctness which could lead to different interpretations of the standard. These interpretations present the power aspect of communication in which the management have the power to define and present certain discourses as valid and dominant. Our findings demonstrate the complexity of negotiating, implementing, and comprehending the standard of equality and diversity in various internal and external organisational settings. It also highlights how discourses and communication affect the implementation process and how it might encourage changes in the direction of diversity and equality. Organisations aiming to obtain DS-5001 certification should focus on their gender and diversity discourse in order to develop an inclusive workplace. This emphasises an important field in which clarity and precision are required for defining equality and diversity policies, contributing to the debate over the significance of language in such standards.

Our study also underlines that there is insufficient focus on training and courses for the employees and leaders in the standard. Our findings demonstrate that training of the employees can provide new practices and norms in the organisation to reach the goal of more equality and diversity. The standard concentrate on the management competencies towards diversity and equality but lacks a focus on the employees training and education in this area. This lack of awareness of the employees can lead to an absence of understanding and skills in handling the implementation of equality and diversity initiatives.

Considering these findings from the analysis, our recommendation is to revise parts of the standard aimed at addressing the identified challenges and furthermore adding the provided improving initiatives in the standard. The findings indicates that DS-5001 situated in the semi-institutionalisation phase, where the standard is relatively widespread but not yet adopted by the majority of organisations. Therefore, our aim in this thesis is to provide concrete recommendations and improving initiatives for DS-5001, where these recommendations are intended to bridge the gap between the theoretical framework outlined in DS-5001 and its

practical implementation within organisational contexts and also shed light on areas that is not included in DS-5001. By identifying areas of improvement and suggesting specific initiatives, we strive to facilitate a more seamless and effective application of the principles and guidelines in DS-5001 for organisations seeking to be certified. Our goal is to ensure that organisations can successfully translate the theoretical concepts of equality and diversity into tangible actions and policies that promote diversity and equality in the organisations.

Improving initiatives

This section focuses on presenting and discussing five initiatives that we discovered during our critical discourse analysis and conducted interviews, to better ensure an effective implementation of DS-5001. These initiatives should ensure that the purpose of enhancing diversity and equality strategies is accomplished and furthermore improve the standard's implementation in organisations. We will present different initiatives that would improve the standard and therefore better assist organisations when implementing it in practice, to be able to create a culture that encourages equality and diversity.

1. Lack of Strategies for Addressing the Stated Issues, Such as Bias within Organisational Frameworks

2. Enhancement Needed in the Requirement for Blind Screening of CVs

3. Increased Emphasis on Middle Managers in the Implementation Process of DS-5001

4. Emphasis on Greater Training and Development Programs for Employees to Facilitate Their Inclusion in Organisational Change Initiatives

5. Greater Focus Required on Life Transitions Throughout One's Career, Such as Consideration of Women in Menopause

The first initiative that we have presented concerns the lack of addressing strategies for the requirement listed in DS-5001. This could include specific case studies and examples that illustrate different forms of bias in organisational settings and discuss strategies to address these challenges. Another strategy could be enrolling employees and managers in different courses that would focus on bias in the organisation, so everyone would be aware and understand these

subjects. This would be relevant to mention in the standard, to present concrete strategies that the organisations can follow when implementing DS-5001.

The second initiative that we have presented addresses the requirement for blind screening of CV's in organisations. Our findings in the analysis, presented that this specific area needs more research from Dansk Standard, since Rikke from AP Pension mentions in the interview that this requirement could not be achieved in their organisation, since their HR-system could not meet the requirement. Based on this, we find it relevant to address a solution to meet this initiative, where we recommend that Dansk Standard should research and present different possibilities for blinding CVs, which could attract organisations who cannot accommodate this requirement with the current systems.

The third initiative involves an increased focus on middle managers in the implementation process of DS-5001. Our findings showed that the standard has a great focus on the top-management where they are required to take the decisions towards the implementation of the standard. Research in our thesis presented the benefits of including middle managers who do not handle management responsibilities, when implementing standards in organisations. This would give a broader perspective and multiple opinions on how to implement the standard. Including the importance of middle managers in DS-5001 could therefore create a more thorough understanding of the implementation process of new standards in organisations.

The fourth initiative concerns more training and education of the employees. Our existing literature and interviews reveal the importance of educating the employees when implementing new strategies in the organisation. A request for DS-5001, is therefore to describe and have more focus on training and educating the employees in the standard, resulting in the employees gaining more knowledge about the area, to efficiently handle the changes within equality and diversity at the organisation.

The fifth and last initiative that we have included concerns how DS-5001 should have a greater focus on life transitions throughout the employee's career, where our findings present an absence of addressing women in menopause. To this, DS-5001 could require that internal policies within organisations should address the topic of employees experiencing menopause, including flexible working hours, access to healthcare services, and resource allocation for support programs. Furthermore, could DS-5001 include a requirement that organisations should offer education and training to managers and colleagues on the topic of menopause to

raise awareness, reduce stigma, and promote a more supportive work environment. By implementing these measures, Dansk Standard can enhance DS-5001 by focussing on career life transitions, such as including consideration for women experiencing menopause and thereby contribute to creating a more inclusive and supportive work environment for all employees at the organisation.

7 Conclusion

> *We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now.*
>
> – Martin Luther King, Jr. (2021)

In the present thesis, we are examining what insights can be gained from a critical examination of DS-5001 Management Standard System, specifically focusing on the transition from theory to practical implementation. The thesis is based on a social constructionist worldview, where the focus is on the power of language and how it creates individuals reality. Existing literature has grounded our understanding of the field and allowed us to discover a knowledge gap within research on this specific standard. Our theoretical framework consists of Foucault's theory of power and discourse, as well as Ashcraft's theory on gender, power and communication. To analyse the field of investigation we use qualitative methods in terms of a critical discourse analysis and relevant interviews, where we discovered potential implementation barriers in the discourses presented in DS-5001, as well as in the conducted interviews, that would affect the transition from theory to practical implementation. The findings in our analysis gave rise to the development and discussion of various improving initiatives that would ensure a greater adaption of DS-5001 in organisations.

From our analysis of DS-5001 we can conclude that there appear various gaps and focus areas that Dansk Standard must prioritise in their evaluation of the standard. Through our examining of DS-5001 we discovered that it is currently placed in the semi-institutionalisation phase, where the standard is broadly known but not yet adopted by the majority of organisations.

The benefits of DS-5001 Management Standard System are that it can contribute to a greater focus on gender diversity, establishing legitimacy within this area. In terms of the structure of DS-5001, we conclude that it reveals underlying power dynamics that will serve to legitimise the management's authority in determining the course of action when implementing DS-5001, which strengthens the power of managers and can create a hierarchical culture in organisations. We discovered in DS-5001 that it is an option to exclude certain requirements, in cases where compliance is unfeasible. By allowing the choice to argue if the requirements are relevant, it indicates a broader sociocultural context, where some of the practices towards equality and diversity, can be objects for discussion or resistance, which can affect how the organisation interprets and implements the requirements. By establishing itself as the authoritative entity, the organisation is considered as a central role with the power to make decisions and represent the employees. However, the absence of acknowledgment in DS-5001 regarding power dynamics and conflicts of interest, both within the organisation and in broader society, suggests either a lack of critical awareness or a choice not to challenge the prevailing power structures. To this we argue that the already existing social norms, values and power relations in the organisation will shape how equality and diversity will be understood and put into practice. To

this we conclude that a decentralising of the power and decision-making process will help to decrease the inhibition of inclusion and diversity.

Furthermore, we can conclude that the text in DS-5001 does not specify how bias will be assessed or minimised, nor does it mention accountability measures or consequences for non-compliance. This lack of detail leaves room for interpretation and raises questions about the effectiveness and sincerity of the organisation's efforts to address bias. We found a gap in the text, since it does not explicitly address the deeper causes of bias or offer strategies to address structural inequalities. Through the analysis we found examples of disciplinary power, where the organisation seeks to regulate and monitor behaviour through a documented and controlled system. The findings elucidated in the thesis underscore the significance of managerial communication in articulating significant discourses on diversity and equality, as such communication fundamentally shapes the direction of organisational changes and the employees perception of this area. Lastly, we discuss the results of the analysis and the developed improving initiatives to uncover potential solutions to ensure a better transition of DS-5001 from theory to practical implementation. Five improving initiatives is presented with a purpose of securing that diversity and equality is properly communicated in organisations seeking certification with DS-5001. Based on the findings in our analysis we developed the following improving initiatives that involves the lack of strategies for addressing the stated issues, such as bias within organisational frameworks, enhancement needed in the requirement for blind screening of CVs, an increased emphasis on middle managers in the implementation process of DS-5001, an emphasis on greater training and development programs for employees to facilitate their inclusion in organisational change initiatives and lastly a greater focus required on life transitions throughout one's career, such as consideration of women in menopause.

Overall, we can conclude in our thesis, that serval gaps are portrayed in DS-5001 that would lead to that Dansk Standard should consider revising their formulation of specific requirements and furthermore evaluate whether our findings and improving initiatives should be included in the standard to cover the subject of diversity and equality completely.

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