Creativity as a key determinant for success

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of this descriptive and comparative study was to examine which conceptions and opinions different organizations within two different sectors have about creativity, how it is expressed and if the respondents see creativity as a key determinant for success.

Research questions:

1. How do the respondents perceive creativity and how is creativity expressed within their respective organizations?
2. Are there any differences in the expression of creativity in a public organization vs. a private company?
3. How do the respondents define success?
4. What is the link between creativity and success? Do the respondents see creativity as a key determinant for success?

Limitations: This study was limited to three publicly owned (two non culture producing/one culture producing) organizations and two privately owned (culture producing) companies.

Methodology: The research method used in this thesis is a qualitative method wherein we have conducted five semi-structured interviews in five different organizations. After conducting the semi-structured interviews, we analyzed the results and looked for different themes and specific areas of interest.

Conclusion: We found that creativity is an important factor for success in all organizations and that it is expressed as well as perceived in different ways depending on the organizational context and sector affiliation. Interesting tendencies and patterns regarding the different sectors could be noticed. Overall, creativity was found to be an *important* and in most cases a *key* determinant for success within the participating organizations in both the private and public sector.

Keywords: Creativity, Success, Innovation, Organizational creativity, Private vs. Public sector, Organizational context

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CHAPTER 1 - Introduction
1.1 Problem and background

This chapter presents an introduction to the concept of creativity and outlines the problem background forming the basis for this study.

During recent years, creativity within organizations has grown to become a highly focus area for both academic scholars as well as businesses (Englund, 2015). The primary definition of creativity that many scholars refer to is *"creativity as the generation of products or ideas that are both novel and appropriate"* (Amabile & Hennessey 2010, p. 570), which is the main background that we have had when conducting this study. Creativity is generally considered of vital importance of various areas of work; science, culture, human resources etc. In this study, we have focused on the perception of creativity as a key determinant for success and compared five different organizations in two different sectors. We have focused on the perceptions and opinions about creativity within the contexts of two cultural producing organizations within the private sector and two non-cultural producing organizations within the public sector. A perception of creativity within one cultural production organization that acts within the public sector has also been studied. Creative ideas may be produced by employees in any job and at any level of an organization (Shalley et. al, 2004), hence, interviews were conducted with different people in different levels within the chosen organizations.

Previous research has shown that a creative permissive culture leads to increased motivation and production (Dackert & Rasulzada, 2009). Employee creativity can substantially contribute to organizational survival, effectiveness and innovation (Amabile et. al, 1996) and development and implementation of creative ideas allows the organization to compete by adjusting to shifting market conditions and to grow and adapt (Shalley et. al, 2004). With these statements, we believed that it would be interesting to look at how creativity is linked to the overall success within organizations. Previous research has focused on the vital importance of leadership when discussing organizational creativity (Amabile, 1998). However, this thesis focused on the context in which creativity is expressed and how the different contexts can influence its expression. Our aim was to compare non-cultural producing organizations to cultural producing organizations, within the public sector as well as the private sector. We consider that comparisons between

these two sectors in terms of perceived creativity have not been investigated as much as the organizational context and leadership aspects. Therefore, specifically, we wanted to investigate whether the perception of creativity as a key determinant for success differs between private and public organizations.

We have a preconceived notion that creativity is an important factor for success in all organizations; mainly due to harshening global competition and the belief that all people can be creative. However, we believe creativity is expressed as well as perceived in different ways depending on the organizational context and sector affiliation. We also had a preconceived notion that bureaucratic organizations within the public sector tend to be less responsive to creativity than non-bureaucratic organizations within the private sector.

1.2 Objectives and purpose

The main purpose of this descriptive and comparative study was to examine which conceptions and opinions different organizations have about creativity, how it is expressed and if they see creativity as a key determinant for success. Therefore, we have tried to account for how the respondents in the different organizations interpret the concept of creativity and how these interpretations differ from each other, mainly between the two different sectors. These interpretations can also be compared to other relevant studies within this field of research. With these objectives and preconceived notions, the following research questions were formulated.

Research questions

1. How do the respondents perceive creativity and how is creativity expressed within their respective organizations?
2. Are there any differences in the expression of creativity in a public organization vs. a private company?
3. How do the respondents define success?
4. What is the link between creativity and success? Do the respondents see creativity as a key determinant for success?

CHAPTER 2 – Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, a number of current definitions of creativity and innovation will be presented, as well as definitions of the term success. The reason for also defining innovation is its close relation to creativity, and it is important to distinguish them from each other. Our own preferred definitions of the central concepts are presented. The second part of the chapter is a presentation of the theoretical perspectives.

2.1.1 Definitions of creativity

Creativity has historically been seen as a personal characteristic and trait which only certain people could possess, but the concept has developed to now being seen as a production of ideas (Amabile & Pillemer, 2011). Nowadays, it is often believed that we all have a creative potential that we can use, no matter which education or job we choose (Jacquemot, 2013). Creativity is partly about the creative process and partly about the result of the process, namely the new ideas, solutions and modes of action (ibid). *"Creativity gives us meaning and creates positive feelings. It makes us explore, invent and develop as people. Creativity is often connected to challenges we need to solve, but it is not as often we label what we do with the word creativity. For some people, creativity is always present, bubbling with new ideas and unexpected associations. Many of these people work within creative professions where they can exercise their creativity; they compose music, paints, designs, researches, work with handcrafts or invents. But it is important to separate typical creative jobs with being creative as a person. We all have a creative potential that we can use, no matter which education or job we choose. Creativity can be used in every context."* (Jacquemot, 2013, p.11)

The concept of creativity could be difficult to define, which could make the research results difficult to interpret. Put in an organizational context, the definition is slightly adapted to revolve around the *usefulness* of the idea (Amabile, 1998). However, if an idea or a solution is considered to be creative from the view of one stakeholder, it is not necessarily seen as creative in the eyes of another (George, 2007). In some cases, what is considered to be creative for one party could potentially be destructive for another. Since Amabile and Hennessey's (2010) definition "*creativity as the generation of products or ideas that are both novel and appropriate*" (Amabile & Hennessey, 2010, p. 570) calls for ideas to be both *useful* and *novel* at the same

time, issues are raised concerning viewing creativity as problem-solving, since these two factors are not necessarily present at the same time (George, 2007).

According to Pontus Wasling, a neurologist at Sahlgrenska Hospital in Gothenburg, creativity is largely connected to our memory (Minne och kreativitet, 2013). Every time we have a new experience, the brain produces a new synapsis and these large networks of synopses create the foundation for being creative (ibid). Steven Johnson, a popular science author and media theorist, claims that creativity is more of a large network within the mind and ideas that we might consider to be eureka-moments is in fact the result of a slow hunch developed over time (Where good ideas come from, 2012).

2.1.2 Definitions of innovation

Innovation is closely connected to creativity, and is also a concept that has many definitions. One early definition of innovation was stated by Thompson (1965) as *"the generation, acceptance and implementation of new ideas, processes, products or services"* (Thompson 1965, p. 2). Baragegh et. al (2009) have come up with the following definition in an attempt to find a multidisciplinary definition: *"Innovation is the multi-stage process whereby organizations transform ideas into new/improved products, service or processes, in order to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace"* (Baragegh et. al 2009, p. 1334). Looking at the difference between innovation and creativity, innovation could be described as the transformation and implementation of ideas that improve the organization in some way, whereas creativity refers to the actual generation of ideas.

2.1.3 Definitions of Success

Measuring by financial performance is considered to be one of the most important ways to measure success (Thiry, 2006). However, some academics and practitioners highlight the importance of measuring success by including other variables such as benefits realization and regulatory and legal impacts (ibid).

Since the meaning of this concept appears to be based on which context the organization

operates within, the definition of success differs between different organizations (ibid). However, when defining the word *success* – the Oxford Dictionary (2015) describes it as *"the accomplishment of an aim or purpose".*

We have used the following definitions as a foundation when writing this thesis. These are the definitions that we consider to be the most applicable ones when discussing creativity within an organizational context, since they are broad and include wide perspectives of complex phenomena's.

Concept	Definition
Creativity	*Creativity is the generation of products or ideas that are both novel and appropriate* (Amabile et. Al, 2010, p. 570)
Innovation	*Innovation is the multi-stage process whereby organizations transform ideas into new/improved products, service or processes, in order to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace* (Baragegh et. Al 2009, p. 1334).
Success	*Contextual based* (Thiry, 2006). *The word success is defined as the accomplishment of an aim or purpose* (Oxford Dictionary, 2015)

Table 1. A self-constructed figure with the chosen central concepts used in this study.

2.2 Theoretical perspectives

The theoretical perspectives in this study include theories such as organizational creativity theories, the investment theory of creativity and unconscious thought theory, and these are used in this study when investigating the expression of creativity within the public vs. the private organizations. Therefore, the presented theories provide useful tools for answering the research questions of this study.

2.2.1 Organizational creativity

Organizational creativity can be defined as the "*creation of a valuable, useful new product, service, idea, procedure or process by individuals working together in a complex social system*" (Woodman et. al, 1993, p. 293). *Business Creativity* can be defined as ideas created that must be useful, appropriate and actionable and they must in some way influence the way business gets done—by improving a product, for instance, or by opening up a new way to approach a process (Amabile, 1998). Hence, arts and originality is not enough in the creative process within an organization (ibid). Haselwanter and Soila-Wadman (2014) suggest that having artistic interventions such as theatrical presentations, brainstorming sessions, storytelling activities and creative afternoons can help develop organizational creativity.

We have chosen to focus on one of many models of organizational creativity. The areas of individual creativity; *creative-thinking skills*, *expertise* and *motivation*; (Amabile & Hennessey, 2010) could be enhanced and developed through leadership and management practices. Managers could boost creativity within the organization through the practices of giving challenges, freedom, resources, work-group features, supervisory encouragement, and organizational support to the individuals. To illustrate this, a model/instrument called *KEYS - Assessing the Climate for Creativity* was developed (Amabile et. al, 1996).
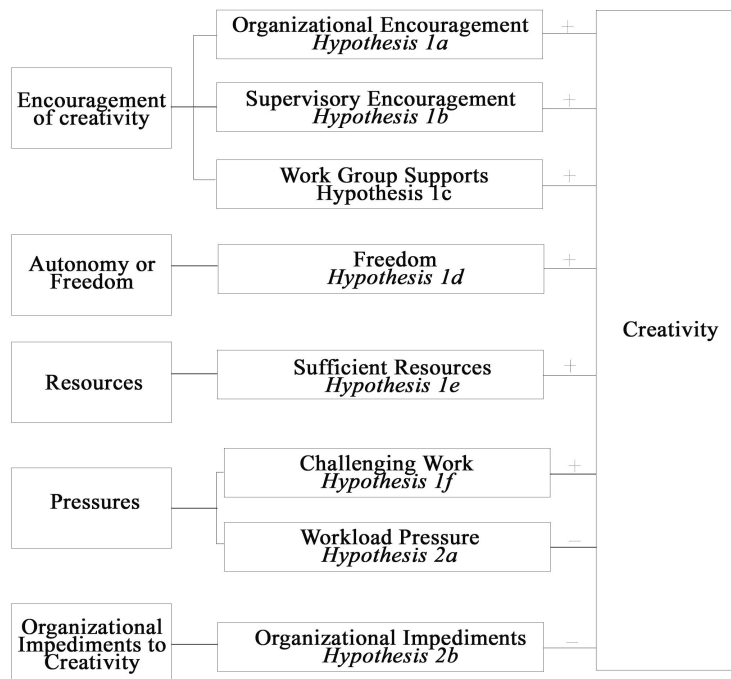
Figure 1. A self-constructed illustration of the KEYS-model that can be found in the article "Assessing the work environment for creativity" (Amabile et. al, 1996, p. 1159)

Six out of eight KEYS Environment Scales lead to a higher assessed creative outcome of the work. These are; *Organizational Encouragement, Supervisory Encouragement, Work Group Supports, Freedom (autonomy), Sufficient Resources* and *Challenging work*. Two factors that seem to decrease the creativeness of the work outcome are *Workload Pressure* and *Organizational Impediments*. According to this model, some pressure, in the form of *Challenging Work*, is considered to have a positive impact on the level of creativity on the work outcome. George (2007) highlights other contextual factors such as the nature of the job at hand as well as the nature of the workdays that could be brought forward when trying to understand what elements that could affect organizational creativity.

2.2.2 The Impact of Contextual and Personal Characteristics on Creativity

As mentioned previously, the impact of organizational characteristics might nourish or impede creativity. Hence, the impact of contextual characteristics on creativity is important for the analysis of the expression of creativity within the organizations and for the discussion if

creativity is seen as a factor for success. A theory of specific contextual characteristics has been brought forward (Shalley et. al, 2004) and has been acting as an important theory for our study.

The characteristics mentioned in this theory are (a) job complexity; (b) relationship with supervisors; (c) relationship with coworkers; (d) rewards; (e) evaluation; (f) time deadlines and goals; and (g) spatial configurations of work settings. In summary, previous research brings forward that these different contextual characteristics have to interact with one another in order to influence creativity (ibid).

Also, research suggests that employee's personal characteristics influence the way they respond to contextual factors. Under the impact of contextual characteristics on creativity, aesthetics - how we see, feel, taste and smell through our senses also matters (Strati, 1999, 2007; Welsch, 1997). Improving conditions for innovation and creativity can result in better psychological well being for the individual (Dackert & Rasulzada, 2009). Therefore, a short discussion around personal traits and characteristics when it comes to creativity was held with the respondents.

Divergence and convergence in teams should be combined in order to produce creative high-quality outcomes (Hoever & Zhou, 2014). Having a trusting relationship with leaders is important, however, how this relationship affects team performance depends on the interplay between the actor/individual and the context (ibid). "Collective creativity" in teamwork is where the context promotes creativity and where it is more likely to be expressed (Bechky & Hargadon, 2006).

Creativity can therefore be seen as a function of the employee's personal characteristics and traits, the contextual characteristics in which he or she works, but more importantly the interactions among these characteristics. The argument that personal and contextual characteristics interact with one another essentially asserts that certain contexts "match" individuals' personal characteristics and that this match results in high levels of employee creativity. This framework is derived from earlier theory on creativity that has emphasized the importance of person-context interactions (Amabile et al, 1996; Woodman et al, 1993).

Situational and contextual forces matter, but if you have a creative personality external characteristics and factors matter less (Amabile & Pillemer, 2011).

2.2.3 Theory of Motivation

Previous research has also been done in an attempt to find what enhances creativity on an individual scale and a concept that is often discussed is motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When discussing the theory of motivation it becomes apparent that there are two main kinds of motivation - intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (ibid). *Intrinsic motivation* refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and *extrinsic motivation* refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome (ibid). The interplay between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their effect on creativity has been examined in previous studies.

2.2.4 Creative Requirement

Being told to be creative as part of the job description, or that employees perceive it as a requirement, might influence the creative behavior/the perception of being creative (Unsworth et. al, 2005). "*In other words, people are creative at work because they are expected or required to be*" (Unsworth et. al 2005, p. 541).

2.2.5 Investment theory of creativity

Creativity is not just given to a few people as a part of their personalities, instead, anyone who wants to be creative can be so if they are willing to invest the time and effort needed (Kunce, 2015). Robert Sternberg, a creative researcher and professor, suggests that six areas need to be invested in in order for creativity to flourish; *intellectual skills, knowledge, thinking styles, personality, motivation* and *environment* (Kunce, 2015).

2.2.6 The Unconscious Thought Theory (UTT)

The unconscious mind has a much higher capacity than the conscious mind (Dijksterhuis & Nordgren, 2006). The result from numerous research has shown that consciously thinking on a task or problem in some cases leads to less creativity than when letting the unconscious do some of the work by focusing on something else than the actual task that you are trying to solve (ibid).

It may be beneficial to take a break from the task at hand since this break could result in the employee approaching the task differently and thereby removing the previous blocks (Dijkesterhuis & Nordgren, 2006). The UTT suggests that thinking taking place during the incubation time is beneficial and that the ideas an employee generates during and after this unconscious-thinking period might not even be possible to generate if you are consciously thinking about the task. In accordance to this, Elsbach and Hargadon (2006) suggested that there is an idea of scheduling periods of relatively routine "mindless" work into the workdays of professionals facing numerous time pressures.

2.2.7 Public and Private Sector Employees' Innovative Behavior

There is a preconceived notion that public sector employees are less innovative than employees in the private sector (Bysted & Hansen, 2013). For profit-driven organizations whose life depends on new and useful ideas being brought forward to innovate the organization and hence contribute to a larger profit, creativity is a desirable trait within organizations (ibid). However, research has shown that creativity plays an important role within the public sector as well and that people employed within the public sector regard themselves as just as creative as employees within private organizations (ibid).

Bysted and Hansen (2013) stated that previous research has focused on finding whenever the effects of sector, job function, and subsector/industry can be mediated by four factors, as a way to potentially explain the difference between sectors in level of innovation. These factors are; job autonomy, risk culture, room for innovation and expectancy clarity. The results from this research showed that there is no difference in perceived innovative behavior between the sectors. Bysted and Hansen (2013) continue by explaining that the reason for the lack of findings supporting sector differences could be a result of several new public management changes that has influenced the characteristics of public organizations in a significant way. Important to notice is that public organizations with more regulatory tasks instead of a focus on service production could be perceived as having the lowest degree of innovative behavior due to the fact that they are more regulatory (Bysted & Hansen, 2013). However, this is not always necessarily the case, which is why it is of outmost importance to understand the different types of tasks and the overall environment to understand why the innovative behavior might be perceived as different

in different subsectors (ibid). According to Bysted and Hansen (2013), a better understanding of the public sector differences in order to understand public sector innovativeness is therefore desirable.

"*In a sense, almost every communal, regional, governmental and supranational as well as some large or middle-size organizations that constitute the commercial and industrial life is in some form organized in unison with a bureaucratic organizational model*" (Styhre, 2009, p. 15). Bureaucracy is among other things to have functionally divided work, a hierarchic way of giving orders, a high degree of specialization and the employment of a professional workforce with education and experience within the field of knowledge (ibid). Styhre (2009) also states that bureaucracy is often associated with negative definitions such as being inefficient and slow moving. Creativity decreases when productivity and control is the main focus within an organization (Amabile, 1998). Business goals can actually be contra productive; if we only think about numbers and obligations all the time it might have a negative influence on creativity (Haselwanter & Soila-Wadman, 2014).

2.2.8 The Measurement of Creativity

There is a rising level of interest in developing creativity within organizations, but it is difficult to analyze the consequences of using it (Haselwanter & Soila-Wadman, 2014).
Most previous studies have measured creativity using ratings provided by other individuals. In particular, laboratory studies have used the consensual assessment technique (Amabile et. al, 1996) in which two or more expert judges rate the overall creativity of each solution or product generated by a research participant. An alternative approach that has been less widely used is to have multiple judges evaluate the two components of creativity *originality* and *usefulness* (ibid).

Another model for measuring creative climates in organizations was created by Ekvall (1997), an academic researcher in the area of climate for creativity and change as well as leadership behavior and values that encourage creative productivity. The model contains different measurement dimensions, such as challenge/motivation, freedom, idea-support, risk taking and humor/playfulness. The looser structure with more freedom, idea-support and a playful

atmosphere tended to stimulate creativity (Ekvall, 1997). This can be connected to the model of *KEYS - Assessing a climate for creativity*, where some of these dimensions also are discussed.

2.3 Summary of theories

We have reviewed theories that concern organizational creativity, the impact of contextual and personal characteristics on creativity and theories about organizational climates. Also, motivation, the unconscious thought theory and the measurement theory have been presented. This is the theoretical framework used throughout this study.

CHAPTER 3 - Methodology

In this chapter, our methodological choices are described as well as the chosen academic approach.

3.1 Academic approach

The academic approach chosen in this thesis was a *hermeneutic approach* instead of the positivistic approach, since the *hermeneutic approach* is based on creating understanding instead of establishing evidence by numbers (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Since we were not looking to find a general truth or explain reality, but to look at different aspects of the phenomenon of creativity, we considered this approach to be the most suitable.

To capture a phenomenon like creativity, we considered, in addition to the *hermeneutic approach*, the *abductive approach* to be the most appropriate one. It is the approach that connects theory with empirical research to interact with each other (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). An *abductive approach* helps the researcher to create theories based on perceptions of reality (ibid).

3.2 Research method

When attempting for credibility in a thesis, the choice of method selected by the researcher must be consciously made and in line with the research questions as well as the research material available (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Previous research, the chosen questions and the material available should be in line with what is possible to conduct during the time given to conduct the thesis (ibid).

In this thesis, a *qualitative method* was preferred to the quantitative method since the aim was to create a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, where according to Bryman & Bell (2011) a *qualitative method* can be useful. The qualitative method is not as formal and structured as the quantitative method; it opens up for interpretations, insights, discussions and a deeper understanding (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Choosing this research method reflects the earlier choices made regarding a hermeneutic as well as the abductive approach, since individual interviews with persons well familiar with the concept of creativity hopefully reduce the risk of leaving out important and relevant observations and thoughts. The qualitative method has also been used in

previous research within this research area, which indicated that it is a good way of collecting empirical material in order to capture different aspects of creativity.

3.3 Gathering of theoretical framework

To provide an overview of previous research that has been done in the field of creativity, a collection of information of previous research for the theoretical framework has been made. Creating the theoretical framework, scholarly reviewed articles and books gave important information from both Gothenburg University and Chalmers University of Technology. Common keywords for finding appropriate articles have been *"creativity"*, *"organizational creativity"* and *"creativity"* combined with *"success"*. Since we were interested in the comparison between the public vs. the private sector, we also searched for information touching this field.

The chosen theoretical framework has connections to our research questions, however, not all aspects within all theories have been used. A selection was made in e.g. Investment Theory of Creativity, which has been acting as a guideline when studying the different organizations when asking questions regarding resources put on creative work. What has been studied most from this theory is work environment, not thinking styles and personal characteristics, even though we have gained some perceptions of the interviewed respondents' personas.

In this thesis, the theory of motivation has been acting as a theory in order to understand extrinsic motivation, and therefore also external factors affecting creativity. The purpose of this thesis was not to measure creativity, but we have been looking at some of the measurement dimensions in the measurement theory while discussing creative climates within the organizations.

3.4 Data gathering design

The qualitative method aims to identify phenomenon and concepts, and one way to gather information to answer the proposed research questions is through primary data where the researcher herself collects data through surveys, or as in this case; interviews. We chose to conduct five qualitative semi-structured interviews with persons in different levels within the chosen organizations. The chosen respondents are further presented with brief backgrounds in

chapter 4 (Results, p. 26), here only presented by names, titles and organizational name.

- Anonymous respondent, *Design Director at The Advertising agency*
- Charlotta Ollesdotter, *Quality Assurance Manual Tester at Spotify AB*
- Anonymous respondent, *Head of division of Cardiothoracic and Respiratory disease at The University Hospital*
- Anonymous respondent, *Chief Investment Strategist at The Pension Fund*
- Rasmus Hayman, *Manager of Operations at ADA*

Four out of five interviews were conducted in person, which give us an opportunity to observe and interpret reactions and the body language of the respondent. The fifth interview was held via telephone because of difficulties in being able to conduct an interview in person with the respondent at Spotify AB. The sound from the interviews were recorded on our phones and then transcribed, with permission from the respondents. Recording interviews reduces the risk of leaving out important parts and reduces the risk of misunderstandings. It might have made the respondents feel insecure, but we felt that the positive advantages with recording outweighed the disadvantages.

3.5 Analytical Method

The analytical method used in this thesis is a qualitative data analysis, a method with an analytical induction and a theoretical foundation (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The interpretation and analysis of this thesis is based on the hermeneutic approach, in which the empirical results are based on the respondents' interview statements (ibid). When conducting semi-structured interviews, one way to analyze the results is to look for different themes and specific areas of interest in the empirical findings, with help from an interview guide (ibid). The interview questions were formulated with six different themes in mind; *information about the respondent, work environment, organizational structure, working procedures, definitions of central concepts* and *recruitment*. These themes were chosen based on the research questions and our theoretical framework, in order to answer our purpose. Since we wanted to look at how creativity is expressed within different organizations, we considered *work environment* and *working procedures* to be of importance. *Organizational structure* and *recruitment* were chosen as

themes since our theoretical framework suggested that contextual conditions might influence creative processes. Also, in order to answer what conceptions and opinions the respondents had about the core concepts, *definitions of central concepts* were also chosen as a theme. The empirical findings from the interviews were analyzed and interpreted within these different themes and with the four research questions as a foundation. We were able to go back and listen through the interviews (since the interviews were recorded) while searching for key words expressed by the respondents. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), one way to code interviews is to summarize the respondents' statements by writing down specific citations and key words. The interview statements were then compared to our theoretical framework, and also with the other interviews where we looked for differences and similarities.

3.6 Selection

In order to gain greater understanding of the area of research, conducting interviews is one way to get information. However, choosing respondents must be done with cautiousness (Bryman & Bell, 2011). There are several aspects that are important for the researchers in the process of selecting respondents. In order to get a wide range of respondents and different perceptions of the concept observed, choosing respondents with different backgrounds is of outmost importance (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The chosen respondents should also have great insight and knowledge of the field of research, in this case, creativity. Having these two aspects in mind while choosing respondents will add relevance to the study (Holme & Solvang, 1997).

3.6.1 Selection of organizations

We were able to conduct five interviews, two within the private sector and three within the public sector. The selection of the different organizations was based on the fact that not only a public vs. private approach was desirable, but also that the organizations would be cultural producing companies or at least have a creative approach in their daily work, to add relevance to our study. Therefore, representing the private sector, one interview has been conducted with *The Advertising agency* where the respondent wished to be anonymous, and one with *Spotify AB*. Additionally, an interview with *ADA*, an organization that works for creative people in the Gothenburg region, was conducted. What was interesting here was that *Business Region*

Göteborg, an organization that represents the public sector, publicly funds ADA. As for the public sector only, one interview was conducted with *The University Hospital* where the respondent wished to be anonymous; hence the city's name of *The University Hospital* is also anonymous. One interview was conducted with a Swedish state owned *Pension Fund* where the respondent also wished to be anonymous. The organizations are different in size and our respondents have different roles within their organizations. The implications of this turnout are unknown and it might have made it harder to make a comparison, but we definitely think that the different organizations have brought valuable and interesting thoughts for us to analyze.

3.6.2 Selection of respondents

In order to get information that would be as relevant as possible for our research questions, we decided to contact the specific organizations mentioned previously and ask for someone with knowledge about the creative work within the organization, no matter which level of expertise the person would have. Within the public organizations such as the *University Hospital* and the *Pension Fund*, we asked for someone responsible for recruitment within the organization or someone interested in the field of creativity. Therefore, given our research field and criteria's, the selection of respondents was relatively simple.

3.7 Limitations

We have been in contact with the Swedish authority *Arbetsförmedlingen* as well as the media bureau *Complete Media*, both have been positive to our requested interviews, but unfortunately we have not been successful in conducting interviews because of difficult circumstances in both cases. Because of time constraints, more interviews were hard to conduct but we managed to conduct three more interviews in the end with *ADA, Spotify AB* and the *Pension Fund* that absolutely contributed to valuable information and credibility of this thesis. Limitations were therefore mainly connected to the time given, but also to the difficulties to get in contact with the different organizations, especially the public organizations. Additionally, the theoretical framework of this thesis has been limited to only cover a small selection of theories. In order to answer the research questions and the purpose of this study, the specific theories have been chosen. However, we are well aware of the fact that there are multiple theories touching this

research area and that the secondary data could have been investigated more if the time period was not as limited as it was. Other dimensions and perspectives could therefore have contributed to this study.

Another limitation in this study is the fact that we only examined how creativity is expressed and perceived in five different organizations, and if it is seen as a key determinant for success. This study cannot prove that creativity is a key determinant for success within the entire sectors, nor industries working with creativity. However, this study could possibly contribute as one small component to a broader question if all sectors and all types of organizations are dependent on creativity and innovation as important factors for success.

3.8 Credibility

To achieve validity, we have tried to have our purpose of the thesis linked to all questions in our interviews. Some of our interviews were conducted with managers within the field of creativity, which we feel contributed to a higher validity because of their knowledge within this research area. However, interesting answers about the concept of creativity were given from all our respondents, no matter which level they had within their organizations.

There are some weaknesses in this study that should be criticized. During the conducted interviews, we believe that there was a risk that the respondents might have left out some aspects. The respondents might not want to share their true opinion, since they might feel that they will hurt the organization they work for, especially the non-anonymous respondents. The fact that three out of five respondents chose to be anonymous also indicates that the subject of matter is highly personal.

One could also discuss the fact that all of our respondents work in different levels within the different organizations. It would have been interesting to conduct interviews with other employees within the same organizations to create an even deeper understanding of the chosen organizations, especially in the *University Hospital* and *ADA* where both our respondents held managing positions. To see what their subordinates think about their organization and ask about their perceptions of creativity in order to make a comparison would have been an interesting

alternative approach. However, we chose to have a broad selection of different organizations rather than to go deep within one or two organizations, mainly in order to capture the aspect of sector affiliation.

Another dimension that could be discussed is that the interviews were held in Swedish even though this thesis was written in English. Translation and interpretation of important interview statements could have been misunderstood and there could be differences in the meaning of the words in these two different languages (Bryman & Bell, 2011). When interpreting and analyzing the empirical material, we considered this fact and therefore sent the written summaries in English of the empirical findings to our respondents for approval. A few corrections have been made afterwards, however, nothing we felt affected the empirical results drastically.

3.9 Ethics

The problem with the research conducted around the field of creativity today is that it is hard to have objectivity, since studying creativity could be seen as a subjective assessment. Having preconceived conceptions in mind when writing a thesis makes it difficult to be absolutely neutral. Conducting a qualitative study with semi-structured interviews where you try to identify themes could be questioned, since it could influence the results. When having preconceived notions there is a risk that one might find support for what you want to find. However, we have tried to have a neutral approach to the findings while conducting this thesis.

It is important to ensure that each respondent is aware of the purpose of the research thesis (Bryman & Bell, 2011). We have taken this into consideration and we have informed each respondent of the main background and purpose of our thesis. The respondents were sent the transcribed interviews to review, in order to ensure that no misunderstandings were made. We plan to provide each respondent with a copy of the finished thesis. In order to maintain the requirement of confidentiality, we have handled all information with great confidentiality and avoided to communicate information to unauthorized people (Bryman & Bell, 2011). We have also asked all respondents if they wanted to be anonymous and ensured that each respondent have approved of us using their personal as well as their organizations names in the thesis.

CHAPTER 4 - Results

In this chapter, the empirical findings from the interviews are presented. In order to separate the five different organizations we will begin by presenting the interviews conducted at the private companies, followed by the public organizations. The interviews are divided into six themes; information about the respondent, organizational structure, work environment, processes, definitions and recruitment. In some cases other comments that were expressed during the interviews are presented. These are comments we could not categorize, however, we believe they contribute to our thesis.

4.1. The Advertising Agency

Interview with anonymous respondent, Design Director at The advertising agency

Information about the respondent

The advertising agency started 2006 and ever since, the agency has been working with complex and large organizations as clients, but also with small and less complex organizations. It is a small advertising agency with around six employees, situated in Gothenburg. The agency has received creative awards for their work and they call themselves a *creative* advertising agency. The respondent is a Design Director at the advertising agency and has been working there for about eight years. He/She has a background in advertising and an education from School of Design and Crafts at Gothenburg University, a bachelor in Graphic Design and a Magister Degree in Design. He/She got to know the founders of the adverting agency through internships while studying, hence, they knew who he/she was when they were about to recruit new staff to the firm. The respondent's major focus areas within the company are graphic design, art directing, acting as a project leader and describes his/her role as a Design Director since he/she acts as an Art Director focusing on Design.

Organizational structure

When looking at the organizational structure, the respondent said that it basically does not exist. The advertising agency recently hired a CEO that might change the dynamics in the future, but as a whole, the organization is open and has a flat structure, and he/she highlighted that the CEO does not set any limitations for creativity. Structure and clearness is something that the organization needs, and what the respondent thinks the CEO will provide them with.

Work environment

When describing his/her workplace the respondent used words as familiar, humane, open and humoristic. Since the workplace environment is open and humane, new relevant and good ideas are welcomed with respect. Whenever problems occur in the working process, the open climate creates an environment where they discuss the specific problem. The respondent said that risk taking is in a way a natural part of a creative advertising agency, since testing new creative solutions requires risk taking itself.

"If we wanted to play safe, we could not call ourselves a creative advertising agency."
/ Anonymous respondent, the advertising agency

You are free to take as much responsibility as you want within the organization, but that can also mean that if you are a self-driven and responsible person, as the respondent said that he/she is, it can be a problem. Support is not given to a person that everyone relies heavily on. The workplace environment is therefore not very supportive, but it might change now that there is a new CEO in the company. The relation between the employees and the new CEO is very good, though it is a big step for the owner of the company to give away the responsibility, it has worked out well so far according to the respondent.

Working procedures

What the respondent described as a possible problem with being a small agency is the fact that he/she alone has to do the whole production line process – from idea to original. Some help from an assistant, someone to cooperate with, is desirable and one of the goals for the agency is in fact to grow in number of people. It would mean more time for creativity, the respondent said, not having to do the non-creative parts of the production process. Even though he/she is often engaged in the whole production process, working in teams consisting of at least two people is normally the approach.

Resources given to the creative process are not many, other than the time you can give to creativity. It is always room for the employees to focus on creativity, but it is up to you if you want to develop your personal creative skills. The company is positive to employees wanting to

take different courses or attend seminars. Idea meetings are held whenever a new project is about to start, and creativity is highlighted within the projects, but she points out that standardized brainstorming sessions etc. is not used everyday, and that the organization are not very good at taking care of *all* new ideas - they often dismiss those which are not relevant early in the creative process.

Matching different projects and work assignments with the right employee is something the respondent expressed the organizations is good at. Good work has not been rewarded enough throughout the years, but it is something that the respondent thinks will change now with a new CEO.

Definitions of central concepts

The respondent defines creativity as problem solving, and it does not have to be connected to aesthetics. As for innovation, the generated ideas have to be new and no one should have done it before. He/She highlights, though, that one can be innovative within a specific sphere - the idea could have been used before, but not within that specific context. The respondent would describe the advertising agency as a creative organization, but not as an innovative agency. Success for the organization is getting rewards in creative contests, but also financially by achieving goals. Creativity is definitely a key determinant for success; it is the cornerstone of the company, not just a product that they sell. Within the company, creativity is measured through creative contests.

Recruitment

When recruiting to the firm, it is important that applicants have a creative approach to every problem. But it is not only the ideas and the problem solving that has to be good, the handcraft and implementation is at least as important. Interns normally have an education, but the founders of the firm do not have a specific education, they have been working their way up within the company. The respondent said that the same approach is not applicable in the same way today. Hence, interns and new employees generally have an education from college of higher vocational studies. He/She highlighted, though, that people generally come from different backgrounds

within advertising. When recruiting to the firm, creativity is measured through applicant's portfolios, which therefore is a personal subjective judgment.

4.2 Spotify AB

Interview with Charlotta Ollesdotter, Quality Assurance Manual Tester at Spotify AB

Information about the respondent

Spotify AB is a multinational organization which provides a music streaming service, both online and offline. Today, the organization has over 60 millions users, both premium and free users, all around the world. Quality Assurance Manual Tester Charlotta Ollesdotter at Spotify has an educational background in systems science as well as two years at Musical arts and Performance in Gothenburg and Umeå. She has been at Spotify for a little more than two years where her work tasks mainly evolve around manual testing for mobile phones with Android and iOS as operating systems. The respondent explained that she is part of the whole process from the beginning to the end from developing a new idea to designing and testing it. She said that a lot of focus is put on ensuring quality and usability for the end-user by testing every suggested change to make sure that there are no faults in the system or the service that they provide.

Organizational structure

The respondent described the organizational structure as being relatively flat, where the employees have influence over the work they do and the processes they use. She described her closest manager as a friend who cares about both her and her work. The office in Gothenburg has three departments, one for playback and downloads, one department in charge of Your Music (a place where you can save your playlists, songs and artists) and one desktop department. Spotify AB is a large organization with around 1 500 employees, however, the Gothenburg office has around 30 employees.

Work environment

The respondent described her work environment as rewarding, stimulating and varying. She expressed she has a lot of influence in her daily work. She described the office hours as flexible

where most people try to be at the office between 9.30 and 15.00. She also explained that they have the opportunity to work from home if needed and that Spotify do not encourage working over-time.

The respondent said that working towards deadlines is something that is a regular part of their work. She said that they have so called two-week sprints before e.g. releasing new updates where the work is often quite concentrated and focused. Besides these sprints, other projects also have their own deadlines. Some projects only involve the Gothenburg office whereas some projects are done in collaboration with other teams and at other offices.

The respondent herself described the work environment as calm and explained that they have an open landscape. She said that there are often a lot of laughs and described her office to have an overall good work environment. She explained that she has always been allowed to be herself which she expressed is important in many aspects. She also said that she feels like she has support in her daily work from both co-workers and managers, and they have weekly appraisal meetings.

"Ever since I started at Spotify I have always felt that the managers have boosted my confidence and reminded me of that I am important to the organization."
/ Charlotta Ollesdotter, Spotify AB

If there is a stressful period and they have a lot of things to do, they sometimes get complimentary breakfast and lunch in order to facilitate everyday life. At the office they have the opportunity to play pinball, ping-pong and video games. You can go away for a while and do something else and then come back with more energy to tackle your work. The respondent said that they have a good health insurance where one can see a psychologist or a doctor for different types of ailments and it does not have to be specifically related to work. At the office, they have several fridges filled with healthy foods and drinks.

She described her closest manager as a friend who is both playful and funny. Cohesion in the team is encouraged and improved by making sure that the team spend quality time together each

month and do activities together such as playing boule or going to the theater. You are also free to join courses and conferences, and you have opportunities to change your position within the organization if you wish.

Working procedures

The respondent explained that new ideas are encouraged and if an employee has a new idea they are encouraged to test it. About every second week they organize so called hack days where employees share ideas with each other and try to generate new ideas together. During these days, the employees are allowed to work on whatever they want and you have complete creative freedom.

If headquarters give them a task to develop e.g. a new function, they start by arranging planning meetings. She described that kind of process as that they get the framework set out for them but that they have free range to design and develop details within the given framework. It is a constant process of idea generation and a continuous testing of those ideas. She also said that they try to match the right person to the right task by judging both their interest in the project as well as their competence.

If someone makes a mistake, say for instance that they released a new feature and it turns out to have a problematic fault, they have a way of dealing with it. They fill in an "incident" report and then discuss it so that they do not make the same mistake again and so that they can fill in a "death" report when the problem is eliminated/fixed. When asked about the evaluation process, the respondent said that they try to evaluate their work and review what has happened since the last meeting as often as every third week. They put up post-it notes where they can vote on which issues that needs to be dealt with first and then evaluate these issues and problems to come up with a plan as to how to avoid it for happening again in the future.

Definitions of central concepts

When asked about her own definition about creativity the respondent defined it as an inner drive and ambition that makes you feel stimulated. She argued that it revolves around having a personal commitment to her work. She defined Spotify as an organization, as well as herself, as

being creative. She said that part of her reason for defining them and herself as creative is due to the fact that everyone within the organization is ambitious and that they sincerely care about their work and what they do. When asked about the definition of innovation, she defined it as creating something new and based on that definition she argued that Spotify is an innovative organization. Spotify define success as reaching out to as many people as possible with their services, that their users are continuously satisfied and to be the largest streaming service in the world. Furthermore, success would be to get more free (non-paying) users to go over to the premium paid model. Also, receiving good results in their employee survey is also one type of success.

Recruitment

When recruiting a new employee to the organization, the process often starts in Stockholm. Overall, the recruitment process is conducted in many steps but is described to be quite relaxed. Most of the employees working at Spotify in the Gothenburg office have a technical background in engineering or data. However, not everyone has a formal education but some are instead self-educated by experiences of different sorts.

4.3 The University Hospital

Interview with anonymous Head of division of Cardiothoracic and Respiratory disease, the University Hospital

Information about the respondent

The University Hospital is a large public organization situated in a medium sized city in Sweden, and is a part of a region covering different types of operations. The anonymous respondent has been working at the hospital since 1990, he/she studied music for one year and medicine for 5,5 years before starting his/her career. His/her role in the organization is Head of division of Cardiothoracic and respiratory disease, which the respondent has been for three years.

Organizational structure

The respondent described the organizational structure as hierarchic with five levels of managers under the political structure.

Work environment

The respondent described his/her work as interesting; even though every meeting might not be stimulating and meaningful, it is always interesting. His/her working hours are formally eight hours per day, but in reality, he/she works more than that. Working against deadlines occurs in forms of operations monitoring, setting prognoses and measurements. When describing the work environment, the respondent said that you create your work environment together with your co-workers, and he/she argued that humor and laughs are crucial for survival.

The respondent expressed that the organization has none or little control over the co-workers, and that you are free to take much responsibility in your daily work; the degree of freedom is quite high. He/she said that the work environment and his/her co-workers are supportive, and it exists a general understanding and respect among co-workers of how the organization looks like. In the practical work with patients risk minimization is important, but higher up in the hierarchy when working with the strategic goals it is an ongoing process of assess risks on investments such as new devices and building new departments. The respondent expressed that the organization is quite good at taking decisions based on uncertain grounds, and doing so demands brave politicians.

Work procedures

The University Hospital has special days dedicated to quality-work, where different groups are encouraged to present different ideas. That way is only one way to encourage innovation; what is most important is that operations managers nourish a culture where you can take care of all ideas. The respondent said that you might notice 10 out of 100 ideas, and that only one idea actually get implemented, but you need to take care of all the 100 ideas in order to find that special one.

"It is extremely important that there are systems that take care of new ideas and innovation from below, otherwise; all types of organizations will eventually die."

/ Anonymous respondent, the University Hospital

When problems and obstacles occur within the organization, the respondent always prefers personal contact and avoids contact by e-mail. Good work gets compensated in the way that those who do a good job will be taken care of, be promoted into new positions with more power; or the organization will try to create resources if they want to develop new projects. Monetary compensation is difficult to rise because of all regulations; the freedom to affect salaries is quite small within the University Hospital.

The respondent expressed that matching the right person to the right project and work assignments is a difficult task that, as a manager, you must look out for. Pros with matching a person who is good at one thing to do that special assignment, is that it often gets done very well, but the cons are that you might lock the organization's development, you get dependent on certain people to do certain tasks. It is important to try to get rotation, recruit younger people since everyone has a tendency wanting to make themselves indispensable for the organization, which clearly is undesirable.

Definitions of central concepts

When defining creativity, the respondent defined it as "being visionary, thinking strategic, combined with new thinking". He/she sees the organization as a creative organization, but some people are more creative, others are not but they still do their job as they are told to. You need these different types of people within an organization, but where the creativity is working well is where people think new *and* are practical. When defining innovation the respondent defined it as a creative thought, which is practically implemented that actually leads to something, such as a product or a new process. It should also have a spread, a potential commercial idea or as a process which will develop the organization's operations. Parts of the University Hospital are very innovative, but it is always possible to develop.

The respondent defined him/herself as a creative person, being visionary, strategic and innovative. He/she defined success within the organization as the University Hospital being featured with the highest quality possible, good security and cost efficiency. The University Hospital should be a good brand that can stand for competition. Creativity is definitely a key determinant for success.

Recruitment

When recruiting within the organization the respondent said that they look at formal competence, but the most important thing is the personality and the ability to be social and cooperative. When recruiting new leaders chief experience and the capacity to develop, lead and change is important. When it comes to creativity as a personal trait, the respondent said that you could possess it, but it can be nourished and stimulated with help from your co-workers and the board. Success is not dependent on whether the leader is creative or not, but it is crucial that the leader is social and can interact with other people.

Other comments

The research department connected to the organization has many crucial creative processes. The county council regulates the University Hospital, and the university connected to the hospital is owned by the state. The respondent believed that there is a conflict between the free, loose, creative environment within the research and development department and the strict regulated and controlled environment at The University Hospital. The university itself has more creative capital than the hospital, but on the other hand, there might be people at the university who are totally non-creative, but at a hospital, you cannot afford to have a non-developing organization.

4.4 The Swedish Pension Fund
Interview with the anonymous Chief Investment Strategist at the Pension Fund

Information about the respondent

The Swedish Pension Fund (henceforward known as the Pension Fund) is one of four so-called buffer funds in the Swedish national pension system. It is a government agency investing in a highly competitive financial market but without being a commercial organization in itself. An interview was held with an anonymous respondent, a Chief Investment Strategist (henceforward known as the Strategist). He/she holds a B.A in Economics from Stockholm University and has worked in various Swedish banks, such as Handelsbanken and Nordic Bank before joining the Pension Fund. The respondent is responsible for the overall long-term portfolio strategy of the Fund.

Organizational structure

The Strategist described the organizational structure as clear with clearly defined departments, all of which falls under political governance. They have 65 employees with pretty diverse backgrounds, but not uncommonly with a background in finance. He/she described their work hours as pretty much 8.30 - 17.00 with some flexibility, but in reality, he/she often works more than that.

Work environment

The respondent described the work environment as extremely flexible and it is up to the individual to organize one's day as best suited. He/she also described the work as rewarding, exciting and meaningful. He/she described the atmosphere to be very good, but points out that it is often dependent on if the organization performs well or not.

Giving different functions within the organization their own responsibility encourages new ideas or suggestions, and how to best reach their goals. The Strategist expressed a feeling of having a lot of freedom, but it comes with responsibility. He/she also expressed a feeling of support from his/her co-workers, and the relationship between top management and the employees is good and prestige less.

According to the respondent, co-workers' health is extremely important and yearly medical checkups are part of the job offering. Every year the Pension Fund aggregates the individual medical situation to detect potential medical or stress issues at the organization level. A healthy and well-balanced life situation is considered critical to the overall success of the organization.

Work procedures

The Strategist expressed that the Pension Fund does in a sense encourage their employees to challenge themselves, but he/she highlighted that the employees oftentimes do that all by themselves. And when they ask for resources to do this, if that means going on for example a business trip, taking a course or maybe start an executive education - the Pension Fund is there to help. Teamwork is an important principle, the whole organization divided into different

teams/departments. There is an outspoken ambition to collaborate across teams for the sake of reaching the overall objectives of the organization.

According to the respondent, flexibility is important when solving a problem. If a problem is considered to be critical for the success of the organizations the mentality goes from focusing on why the problem cannot be solved within the current framework to asking how the framework can be changed in order to solve the problem. Testing new ideas occurs through analyzing the potential return on a specific asset class or strategy and to what extent an inclusion of these ideas could contribute to how the organization reach their overall objectives.

At the Pension Fund, financial risk taking is at the heart of the overall operation, without taking risks; overall objectives will not be reached. The respondent believed that a forgiving attitude to taking a personal risk in suggesting potentially "stupid" ideas in a creative process is important in order to keep the flow of ideas running. If a mistake occurs, you should learn from it by analyzing and understand why it happened in the first place. The Pension Fund's attitude is to in some form or another evaluate their work frequently, mapping all processes and on a yearly basis assess if new risks in different processes have emerged.

Definitions of central concepts

The respondent defined creativity as thinking-outside-the-box and as finding potential alternative ways to achieve the overall objective not relying on traditional approaches. The Strategist viewed the Pension Fund as a creative organization in some aspects. One of the Pension Fund's core values is "constant improvements". It rests on the premise that everything can always be done better and constant improvements necessitates new thinking and therefore also creativity. The respondent defined him-/herself as a creative person in the sense that he/she has been one of the architects behind an innovative portfolio design at the Pension Fund. When defining innovation the respondent defined the concept as the more concrete part of a creative process where the creative ideas are implemented, e.g. when the portfolio is changed in accordance with the findings within the creative process. He/she viewed the Pension Fund as an innovative organization since they repeatedly have implemented ideas that stems from the creative thinking process.

The respondent explained that according to the overall objective of the Pension Fund, success is to improve the living standards of present and future Swedish retirees. To achieve that, portfolio performance needs to be good and the capital need to grow. When asked about whether or not he/she sees creativity as a key determinant to success, the Strategist said he/she wants to be a bit more modest and say that creativity is an *important* factor rather than the *key determinant* for success. It is a key determinant in the sense that it increases the *probability* to achieve their success in a more efficient way. But the respondent also explained that part of the reason that he/she has this view of creativity as an important factor (instead of a key determinant) is due to the fact that the Pension Fund is a public agency and not directly exposed to market competition.

Recruitment

When recruiting to the organization, the first thing they look at is relevant competence, if applicants do not have the right competence nothing else matters. Team-player skills are important and values that are in line with the Pension Fund's own values. The idea of matching the right person with the right task is quite apparent when hiring a new person, but it is also important when already hired employees change work tasks within the organization. Neither the organization nor the individual employee gain anything from having an employee doing tasks he/she is not suitable for or truly interested in doing.

Other comments

The respondent argued that the basic salary compensation is generally good at the Pension Fund, but points out that people aspiring for top quartile compensation levels should probably look for opportunities within the private sector. Variable (e.g. bonuses) compensation program is not competitive at the Pension Fund, which could be a problem in a highly competitive industry. The government mandates this structure of compensation. However, the respondent also pointed out that other non-pecuniary incentives are of course important as well (e.g. a meaningful job, job security or a network connectivity).

"I do not believe that our ownership structure necessarily leads to a suppression of our work. To have a truly long term mission and objective could rather help creativity and innovation in the sense that it increase durability and is not subject to sometimes short-term profit expectation."
/ Anonymous respondent, the Pension Fund

However, the Strategist stated that the less restrictions you have the more choices you can make and that is usually not negative from an innovation point of view.

4.5 ADA

Interview with Rasmus Hayman, Manager of Operations at ADA

Information about the respondent

ADA is an organization that exists to promote creative industries, with special focus on communication and form. Since the start in 2005, the main agenda is to create meeting places for creators and facilitate sustainable development for those industries. Business Region Gothenburg publicly funds the organization. We have held an interview with the Manager of Operations at ADA, Rasmus Hayman. He has a background in Arts and was self-employed in the art scene for seven years before he enrolled in the European program with a political science profile. After completing his studies, he landed an internship at ADA where he eventually got a permanent job.

Organizational structure

ADA is a small organization with only three employees. They are a small group of people who sit in a shared room but with relatively clearly defined areas of responsibilities. Between the three employees, they have a combined background in Arts, Design and Business, and all of them have previously been self-employed. He described their work context as more of a team construct rather than an organizational structure.

Rasmus described the organization as having to be constantly creative in the sense that they have to come up with new editorial content, find new models for meeting places and continuously try to develop their business. Because of this he does not think that a public organizational owner structure in itself suppress creativity. He described that it is not the public ownership in itself that

affect the maneuvering capability but rather the laws and regulations that are put in place. He continued by highlighting that a lack of efficiency could negatively affect creativity within the organization.

Work environment

He described the work environment as open where a lot of the ongoing work is developed in cohesion with the team. He said that it has become almost a norm within the group to focus on the more non-traditional issues and ideas rather than the more traditional focus on the business side of the creator's work. However, he emphasized that he always tells his co-workers are welcomed. Rasmus believed that no one should filter their ideas in the beginning of a brainstorming process because in order to be creative one must have the ability to come up with many ideas, regardless of the quality of them. To come up with one good idea it might take 10 or even 100 bad ideas to be expressed before that can even happen.

The respondent described the degree of freedom/autonomy as high between him and the people higher up within the organization. He said that they have to be able to explain what they are doing and their owners have to approve it. When ADA is given a certain task - with goals such as sustainable development within creative industries or gender equality and social growth - Rasmus said he feels that ADA has autonomy to maneuver within the specific task given.

If one of the employees would like to participate in some form of personal development class, it is up to the individual herself to let him know. They try to promote and find ways to structure the organization in a way that helps increase the employee's' creativity, e.g. through brainstorming sessions.

Working procedures

Rasmus explained that they have so called brainstorming sessions, however, these sessions are not strictly structured. The most important rule when brainstorming at ADA is that you have to distinguish between the *idea phase* and the *evaluation phase*. New ideas are written down on separate post-it notes and every team-member gets a certain amount of stickers each to distribute among the ideas as they wish. The ideas with the most stickers attached on them (amount of

votes) are the ones that the team as a whole believes to be the most important ones at the moment. Since a lot of their work is based outside of the office - e.g. out on meetings or participating in different activities - they make a point out of scheduling their internal activities such as their weekly Monday meetings in the beginning of the week and try to schedule external activities such as meeting with other organizations in the end of the week. This is so that they can achieve good cohesion within their team.

The respondent said that when evaluating their performance, they usually evaluate their overall performance as an organization rather than evaluating each individual project. If an employee has a problem the respondent tries to deal with it face-to-face as often as possible. He believed that it is better for an employee to contact him first, to avoid involving everyone. Mistakes have occurred in the past, and when it happens, the respondent expressed a desire to discuss the employee's work tasks if it seems as if he/she lack competence in some areas that is needed in their current role. In that case, work tasks and role descriptions can be changed. He makes sure to have regular meetings with his team members to discuss what is going good or bad and how they should deal with it.

Definitions of central concepts

The respondent defined creativity as the ability to create. Within the word create lies a notion of being original. To illustrate his point he chose the following analogy; if you have made a chocolate cake, you have done it based on a recipe but if you have created a cake you have also written the recipe. He said that some people believe that creativity is synonymous with problem solving and that the number of ideas you come up with is what matters rather than the quality of them. In his definition, the important thing is to come up with a solution and successfully implement it. The respondent expressed that ADA is a creative organization based on his definition of the concept. He believed that they create new things and projects, which they look at angles that others have not thought of and he believes that there is some originality in that. The respondent defined himself as a creative person.

"I believe that creativity is largely connected to the desire to be creative or not. If you have decided not to be creative, you will continue to do things like you have always done them."
/ Rasmus Heyman, ADA

Creativity is an ability that you can get better at relatively quickly. The respondent also highlighted that a lot of people are more or less creative depending on whom they work with and depending on which conditions they are under.

The respondent said that in order to be innovative, you have to be creative. However, you can be creative without it necessarily leading to innovation. Innovation is a solution to a problem, to fill a certain function, but it does not just apply to technical innovation, but also social innovation. ADA as an organization does not focus on the process of innovation and the respondent expressed a feeling of ADA being more of a creative organization rather than an innovative one.

The respondent defined success as achieving goals and for that you need to be creative when creating the frame of the mission as well as the content. In the long run, ADA as a brand might not be interesting for creators if ADA themselves stop being creative. Hence, creativity is a certainly a key success factor.

Recruitment

Recruiting a new employee rarely happens, but when it does, the respondent explained that since they are a publicly owned organization, they have to follow certain standard procedures when recruiting new employees. An interest in creative industries as well as an interest in design and communication is definitely something that any employee at ADA should possess. In this business, one is not often concerned about a potential employee not being creative but rather that he/she lacks structural skills.

Other comments

The respondent described ADA as having a humanistic approach where they try to include a broad scale of creators, not just the ones who can actually live on their creative work. He said that social responsibility is an important part of their work. He expressed a feeling that

organizations within the public sector normally are humanistic and inclusive rather than exclusive, which he believed to be more common in privately owned organizations that tend to be more vulnerable to global competition. The respondent explained that he believed that one might find that there is more room for creative maneuver for organizations that operates within the private sector and he thinks that it can be explained by the type of business and mission they have. Looking at the public sector, the large budget spending goes to healthcare that typically does not have a large space for being creative. However, if you have a business whose main focus is product development, then the potential for being creative might be considered better.

4.1.6 Summary of empirical findings

After conducting the interviews there were a few results that we believe to be of special importance. The interviews confirmed that the concept of creativity is complex and highly personal. Our empirical material brings forward interesting general differences and similarities between the public and the private sector; these will be further discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5 - Analysis & Discussion

This chapter provides an analysis and discussion of the empirical data, forming the actual result of the research study.

In order to answer the research questions of the study and to discuss whether our preconceived notions could be supported or not, an analysis and discussion based on previous research and the theoretical framework is presented below.

1. ***How do the respondents perceive creativity and how is creativity expressed within their respective organizations?***

Creativity is perceived as well as expressed in many different ways in the five different organizations, but some similarities can be observed within the different work environments. All of the respondents said that they are satisfied and pleased with their work environment; however, we found differences in how the respondents expressed themselves. Some of the respondents used words such as "humane", "open" and "stimulating". Three out of five respondents highlighted the existence of humor and laughter at the workplace and one of them expressed it as a crucial factor for survival.

The perceptions of creativity are expressed differently within the different organizations, but all definitions lie somewhat within the area of "*creativity as the generation of products or ideas that are both novel and appropriate*" (Amabile Hennessey, 2010, p. 570), the definition we have had when conducting this thesis. In the private companies creativity was defined as problem solving and as an inner ambition that makes you feel stimulated. Within the public organizations definitions such as "being visionary and thinking strategic" and "think-outside-the-box to find potential alternative ways to achieve the overall objective" were brought forward. The respondent at ADA defined creativity as the ability to create, and within the concept lies a notion of being original. All these perceptions and definitions of creativity evolve around the *generation of ideas* in some way, even though the purpose of the idea generation may be to achieve goals or to feel stimulated, depending on the context.

According to the creative requirement theory, being told to be creative as part of the job requirement - as in the case with the respondent at the advertising agency - might influence the creative behavior and the perception of being creative (Woodman et. al, 2005). We think this theory has a point, although all respondents defined themselves as creative persons no matter which job role they had.

Looking specifically at the expression of creativity within the different organizations, resources and the different contexts encourage creativity in different ways. Creativity within the advertising agency is expressed through their daily work with advertising, idea generation and production of graphic design projects. At Spotify, creativity is expressed through planned "hack-days" where new ideas are encouraged and generated, and employees are encouraged to take breaks and play video games, ping-pong or pinball in order to set the mind free. Within the University Hospital, creativity is mainly expressed within the research departments and during quality days. The respondent at the Pension Fund said that creativity is expressed in the way that they always try to look for alternative ways to invest, and that the organization can always perform better - hence, always try to find new ways to approach a problem is creative. ADA has several structures for creativity to be expressed in their daily work; they have brainstorming sessions and meetings where new ideas are generated within in the organization. These descriptions of how creativity is expressed gave rise to discussions around assessing creative climates and why it is important.

When discussing how new ideas are generated and treated, ADA mentioned that they have idea sessions where all new ideas are welcomed, but that they will pick out the most important ones by voting. The advertising agency also talked about the fact that the new ideas have to be relevant, and that the ideas considered not useful are dismissed early in the process. This is as we define organizational and business creativity, ideas that have to be both *appropriate* and *novel.*

Assessing a climate for creativity, *Organizational Encouragement, Supervisory Encouragement, Work Group Supports, Freedom (autonomy), Sufficient Resources* and *Challenging work* tend to lead to a higher creative outcome (Amabile et. al, 1996). Looking at these different factors in the studied organizations, there are some notable differences. All respondents express some kind of

organizational encouragement in the way that they are all happy with their work places and roles. Supervisory encouragement, though, was only discussed with the respondent at Spotify. She highlighted her relationship with her supervisor, and calls him as her friend more than a manager. Also, performance review meetings are held between employees and their manager once a week within the organization. This does not necessarily mean that the other respondents do not feel supervisory encouragement, but it was not brought forward when discussing support and encouragement in general. Work group support, though, was highlighted within four out of five observed organizations, since the respondents expressed support in their daily work from their co-workers. The respondent at the fifth organization, the advertising agency, expressed that support has not been present recent years but she thinks it will be highlighted now that they have a CEO. However, as she also mentioned, her personality could potentially mediate the lack of support. As Deci and Ryan (2000) argues, she might not get as much of the extrinsic motivation from the organization, but more of the intrinsic motivation.

One factor in assessing a climate for creativity that differs between all five organizations, and especially between the public vs. the private sectors, is the *level of freedom*. Both respondents in the private companies expressed feelings of high autonomy, as for the public organizations the respondents feel that they have freedom, but under responsibility and within a certain regulatory framework. *Sufficient resources* for creativity are mostly given within the private organizations. Almost no resources are given to creativity within the public organizations, except for the possibility to attend seminars and courses within personal development that could be connected to creativity. Hence, assessing a climate for creativity is partially encouraged in these different types of organizations. With Amabile et. al's (1996) "Assessing a climate for creativity"-theory as a base, we consider Spotify to be the organization in which most of these factors are used in order to assess a climate for creativity.

Another theory discussing contextual characteristics on creativity also mentions the relationship with supervisors and relationship with coworkers, but adds the factors of *job complexity, rewards evaluation, time deadlines* and *goals* (Shalley et. al, 2004). All respondents said that their organizations work against deadlines and goals, but not always on a daily basis. Different

projects have different time aspects, and some goals are set over a long period of time (this was especially highlighted within the publicly owned organizations).

Another aspect discussed in the interviews was teamwork, since team performance and producing high-quality outcomes when it comes to creativity depends on the interplay between the actor/individual and the context in which this actor found herself (Hoever & Zhou, 2014). All respondents in the organizations expressed that they work in teams, even though it differed in how often, how big the teams are and what the purpose of the teamwork is. Teamwork is probably one of the factors nourishing creativity within these organizations, as one factor of both personal and contextual character. This could be supported by Amabile et. al (1996) who states that individuals who work in teams are more creative when their coworkers are supportive and encouraging. However, a comparison with people working completely isolated or by themselves has not been conducted in this thesis.

According to Sternberg's investment theory of creativity, anyone who wants to be creative can be so if they are willing to invest the time and effort needed (Kunce, 2015). Looking at the different organizations, creativity is expressed in different ways, but it could be highlighted even more if time and effort were invested in these different areas. Since the main focus of this thesis has been to look at the perceived expression of creativity within the work environments; thinking styles, knowledge and personalities have not be analyzed in the same way, but we are aware of that these factors may affect how creativity is expressed and perceived.

Connecting the results from the empirical findings with the theory of using artistic interventions to improve organizational creativity (Haselwanter & Soila-Wadman, 2014), we could argue that some of the organizations use these artistic processes in forms of e.g. brainstorming sessions. However, the respondents might not be aware that they actually use of this theory per se, but regardless of that – these processes could develop organizational creativity.

The theory of the unconscious mind, formulated by Dijksterhuis and Nordgren (2006), helped when studying the perception of workload pressure, deadlines and working hours within the different organizations. There is an idea of scheduling periods of relatively routine "mindless"

work into the workdays of professionals facing numerous time pressures (Elsbach & Hargadon, 2006). This theory could be connected first and foremost to Spotify, where the respondent said that the flexible work hours and the possibility to take breaks playing ping-pong or pinball during work hours, gives the employees new energy to tackle difficult tasks. We asked ourselves why the other organizations do not have the same routines like these, since it is supposed to lead to a creative workplace.

2. Are there any differences in the expression of creativity between a public organization vs. a private company?

Previous research has shown that people employed within the public sector regard themselves as just as creative as employees within private organizations (Bysted & Hansen, 2013). This could be confirmed by the empirical results found in this thesis, since all of the respondents said that they see themselves as creative beings, even though the organizational contexts are different.

Both of the privately owned companies described their organizational structure as flat. The respondent at the advertising agency said that she did not feel that the CEO sets any limitations for creativity and the respondent at Spotify expressed it as if though the employees have influence over their work and the processes they use. Both of these two respondents work in offices with relatively few employees, even though the respondent at Spotify points out the fact that the whole of the Spotify AB is a relatively large organization. When we asked about the organizational structure at the publicly owned organizations, the respondents used other types of words to describe this rather than using the word "flat". The respondent at the University Hospital defined their structure as a hierarchic one with five levels of managers under the political structure. At the Pension Fund, the respondent described the organization's structure as clearly defined and divided into different departments, all of which falls under political governance. The Strategist also highlighted that he/she did not believe that their ownership structure necessarily leads to a suppression of their work. The respondent at ADA described that the team has relatively clear defined areas of responsibility and described the organization as having a more team structure than an organizational one. He said that he feels as if ADA has a humanistic approach, a trait that he believes is more apparent within publicly owned

organizations than in privately owned organizations due to the fact that they are less vulnerable to global competition. In the private sector, creativity is seen as crucial for survival due to a harshening global competition in a way that publicly owned organizations might not be affected by (Bysted & Hansen, 2013). This could be compared what the respondent at the Pension Fund said about having a truly long term mission and objective could help creativity and innovation in the sense that it increase durability and is not subject to sometimes short-term profit expectation.

Publicly owned organizations are often considered to be bureaucratic which is a term that usually has negative associations connected to it (Styhre, 2009). We had a preconceived idea that bureaucratic organizations tend to be less creative than non-bureaucratic organizations and that creativity is expressed in different ways depending on the organizational context and sector affiliation. When analyzing the empirical findings and connecting it to the theories discussed, we believe that the context such as the organizational structure, resources spent on developing creativity and individual characteristics is what mainly creates these differences in expression of creativity within the different sectors.

According to the respondent at the University Hospital more resources can usually be given to developing employee's creativity within the private organizations than within public organizations. He/she describes it as if though the creative capital is less in publicly owned organizations than within the private sector. This is a statement that could be supported with the results of our empirical material, combined with the theoretical framework of this thesis. We believe that there are creative persons within the public sector; however, they might not get the same possibilities to express their creativity, partly because of the fact that they have long-term commitments and are not subject for global competition.

3. How do the respondents define success?

Measuring success through financial performance is considered to be one of the most common ways to measure the term of success, however, some academics and practitioners highlights the importance of measuring success by including other variables such as benefits realization and regulatory and legal impacts (Thiry, 2006). When trying to define success, one definition

according to the Oxford Dictionary (2015) is "the accomplishment of an aim or purpose". When asking the respondents about definitions of the concept and how they see it within their organizations, different answers were presented. Below, quotas from the different respondents are presented.

"Success for the organization is getting rewards in creative contests, but also financially through achieving goals." / Anonymous respondent, Design Director, the advertising agency

"Spotify define success as reaching out to as many people as possible with their services, that our users are continuously satisfied and to be the largest streaming service in the world. Further more, success would be to get more non-paying users to go over to the premium paid model. Also, receiving good results on our employee survey is also in a sense a success." / Charlotta Ollesdotter, Quality Assurance Manual Tester, Spotify AB

"Success within the organization is that the hospital is featured with the highest quality possible, good security and cost efficiency. The University Hospital should be a good brand that can stand for competition." / Head of Division of Cardiothoracic and Respiratory disease, The University Hospital

"According to the overall objective of the Pension Fund, success is to improve the living standards of present and future Swedish retirees. To achieve that, portfolio performance needs to be good and the capital needs to grow." / Chief Investment Strategist, The Pension Fund

"Success is to achieve goals - e.g. the number of people who show up at our meeting places, bringing forward new ideas or maybe making sure that gender equality in our target group is accomplished." / Rasmus Hayman, ADA Sweden

These different answers verify that success is highly contextual based. Even though the respondents mention that it is important to "*accomplish or reach goals",* they do it in different ways. The different organizations have different goals, operate within different sectors and have

different target consumers.

4. What is the link between creativity and success? Do the respondents see creativity as a key determinant for success?

The link between creativity and success could be considered as complex. After analyzing the results from the empirical material, we found that all of the respondents see creativity as either a *key* or an *important* success factor in one way or another. Four out of five respondents explicitly express creativity as being a key determinant for success, after defining what success is to them. The respondent at the Pension Fund chose to express him-/herself in a different way.

"Creativity is an important factor rather than the key determinant for success. It is a key determinant in the sense that it increases the probability to achieve success in a more efficient way. Part of the reason why I view creativity as an important factor (instead of a key determinant) is due to the fact that the Pension Fund is a public agency and not directly exposed to market competition" / The Strategist, The Pension Fund.

What we considered interesting after conducting the interviews was how the respondents could state that creativity is important for success and then not explicitly spend more resources on developing creativity? Due to the global situation with pressuring prices and a constant increase of global competition, the "computer-like logic, speed, and precision" thinking is no longer what develops the economy (Pink, 2007). *"Today, amid the uncertainties of an economy that has gone from boom to bust to blah, there's a metaphor that explains what's going on. And it's right inside our heads"* (Pink, 2007, p. 10). Even though all of our studied organizations express creativity in some way, and they think it is important for success, the link between creativity and success is not always clear, especially not in the public organizations.

The purpose of this thesis was not to measure creativity, but we have been looking at some of the measurement points while discussing creative climates within the organizations, and to see if some of the points are highlighted when the respondents were asked if they measure creativity. Some of the 10 measure-points in the model for measuring creative climates (Ekvall, 1997) has

been discussed in this thesis, such as idea-support, freedom, risk taking, conflicts and humor/playfulness, and they are important factors when discussing if the work environment is perceived as positive or not. In this study, the link between success and creativity was perceived as strong among our respondents, however, it has not been measured *how* strong the link is.

CHAPTER 6 - Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

This thesis was conducted based on five different organizations; however, this does not mean that any general conclusions can be drawn. Interesting tendencies and patterns regarding the different sectors could however be noticed. Studying the different parameters of organizational creativity has given us a more comprehensive picture of the complexity of the concept. The purpose of this thesis was to examine which conceptions and opinions different organizations have about creativity, how it is expressed and if they see creativity as a key determinant for success. In order to conclude this study and present our most relevant empirical findings, we will reconnect these to our initial research questions and preconceived notions.

Our empirical material could support our preconceived notion that creativity is an important factor for success in all organizations; since all studied respondents believe creativity is important for success. However, this study aimed to examine the respondents' opinions of creativity, not to measure *how* important creativity is for success. Therefore, it is difficult to draw any general conclusions about the importance of creativity – although our theoretical framework supports our empirical findings. The link between creativity and success showed to be contextual based since the different organizations defined both creativity and success in slightly different ways. However, all of the respondents confirmed that they see creativity as an important factor of success, and four out of five described it as a key determinant for success. After reviewing our empirical material, we can conclude that regardless if the organizations were within the public or private sector, culture producing or non-culture producing, creativity was considered to be of great importance for the overall success of the participating organizations.

Our empirical material could also support our other preconceived notion that creativity is expressed as well as perceived in different ways depending on the organizational context and sector affiliation; since all studied respondents perceive creativity in different ways. The public sector organizations tended to be more reserved when discussing the role of creativity within their organizations, with ADA being the most positive to the concept, which could be explained by the nature of their work.

1. How do the respondents perceive creativity and how is creativity expressed within their respective organizations?

All the perceptions and definitions of creativity evolve around the *generation of ideas* in some way, even though the purpose of the idea generation may be to achieve goals or to feel stimulated, depending on the context. It is expressed in different ways in the respective organizations; creating advertisement in the daily work, brainstorming-sessions, hack-days, quality days and thinking alternatively about new strategies.

2. Are there any differences in the expression of creativity in a public organization vs. a private company?

According to our empirical findings, there are some differences in the expression of creativity within the different sectors. When analyzing the empirical findings and connecting it to the theories discussed, we believe that the context such as the organizational structure, differences in exposure to competitive environments, resources spent on developing creativity and individual characteristics is what creates differences in the expression of creativity within the different sectors.

3. How do the respondents define success?

The different definitions verify that success is contextual based. Even though the respondents mention in some way that it is important to "*accomplish or reach goals",* they do it in different ways.

4. What is the link between creativity and success? Do the respondents see creativity as a key determinant for success?

The link between creativity and success could be considered as complex and diverse, mainly due to the different definitions of success, and therefore also goals, which could lead to different expressions of creativity. However, we found that all of the respondents see creativity as either a *key* or an *important* success factor in one way or another. Four out of five respondents explicitly express creativity as being a key determinant for success, after defining what success is to them.

5.2 Recommendations

When researching creativity, both as a concept in itself as well as creativity within organizations, one can find many angles from which you can derive plenty of suggestions for further research. One aspect that we became especially interested in is how creativity is practiced, nurtured and expressed within a school context. As our study showed, support was found for the idea that creativity is a key determinant for success within different kinds of organizations which could imply that setting the framework for being creative early on in life could prove to be beneficial. There are people who believe that creativity is surpassed in early ages and that we need to start by taking a look at how it is encouraged within schools. Sir Ken Robinson, an English author, speaker and international advisor on education in the arts is one of the pioneers for showing the importance of education, innovation and creativity. He believes that creativity is systematically being suppressed from an early age due to the present "layout" of the educational systems around the world (How schools kill creativity, 2006). Although he does not specifically talk about the importance of creativity within corporate organizations, he does bring forward the need for caring and nurturing creativity and how different approaches to a seemingly straight forward system can improve the life of individuals as well as for our society as a whole. With that in mind, we believe that it would be of great interest to look at how the organizational structure within a University context such as School of Business, Economics and Law at Gothenburg University affects future creative work.

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Appendix

Interview guide

We have conducted interviews with people with different job roles in different organizations; hence the questions asked have differed in a semi-structured way. We have begun all of our interviews with some warm-up questions, regarding the respondents' positions, background and so on. All five interviews were conducted in Swedish, and the questions below have been translated into English.

Warm-up questions

What is your background? What education do you have, and earlier work experience?

What is your position within the organization?

When did you start working here?

Describe how you perceive and experience your work. *(examples: giving, demanding, challenging)*

How does a regular day at work look for you?

What are your daily work assignments?

Recruitment

How does the recruitment process look like?

What do you recognize and desire with applicants? *(examples: traits, education, knowledge, experience)*

Overall, what backgrounds in experiences and education do the employees have?

Is creativity as a personal characteristic brought up as a desirable trait in the recruitment advertisements?

Work environment, organizational structure and work procedures

How does your organizational structure look like? (examples: how many employees, departments)

What are your work hours? How do you work with deadlines?

How would you describe your work environment

How does your overall development process look like within the organization? How has the organization changed since you started working here?

How do you treat new ideas and suggestions from the employees?

How do you perceive the degree of freedom and responsibility? Positive or negative?

How do you perceive the support given from your co-workers?

How do you perceive the relations between employees and managers?

Do you experience any kind of surveillance on your workplace?

How often do you work in teams?

How do you experience that you challenge and develop your co-workers?

How do you deal with obstacles and problems within the organization?

How do you handle mistakes and risk taking within the organization?

How do you perceive your co-workers health?

How often do you have performance reviews?

How do you match the right person to the right project or work task?

How compensates or rewards good work?

Do you evaluate your projects?

Creativity (definitions of central concepts)

What resources do you give/get to creative development? How much?

What is done within the organization that encourages creativity in your daily work?

How do you define creativity?

Do you see your organization as a creative organization?

How do you define innovation?

Do you see your organization as an innovative organization?

Do you think that you are creative? In what way?

What is success for you in the organization?

Do you perceive creativity as a key factor of success? If yes, do you measure it?