FEEDBACK ENVIRONMENT IN LESS-HIERARCHICAL AND SELF-MANAGED ORGANIZATIONS

Exploring work engagement and organizational citizenship behavior

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Abstract

This research provides a better understanding of communication processes such as feedback environment, work engagement and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) in less-hierarchical, self-managed organizations. Recent studies shed light on feedback environment, work engagement and other motivated behaviors that employees perform in organizations. Theories such as Organizational Citizenship Behavior, which describes employee's voluntary commitment within an organization, were used to understand employees' behaviors at work. However, little research has been made regarding feedback environment, work engagement and Organizational Citizenship Behavior in self-managed and less-hierarchical organizations. Therefore, this study aims to understand how feedback environment engages employees and further, how their work engagement enhances their Organizational Citizenship Behavior. This study follows a qualitative approach, including 33 semi-structured interviews and 3 focus groups, studying the case of a Swedish-Ukrainian IT company characterized by self-management and the lack of middle management. The findings indicate that a positive feedback environment in a less-hierarchical organization with self-managed teams affects work engagement positively. Furthermore, work engagement affects certain aspects of Organizational Citizenship Behavior; specifically, social participation, knowledge-sharing and helping. Although the findings reflect the perception of a medium-sized organization, this paper can still deliver important qualitative insights for organizations and raises topics for future research regarding communication processes in a less-hierarchical and self-managed environment.

Keywords

Feedback environment, work engagement, organizational citizenship behavior, less-hierarchical organization, self-management, qualitative approach

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1 Introduction

Phenomena such as the feeling of detachment and disengagement of work are issues that trouble organizations worldwide. The 2012 Global Workforce Study Engagement (Towers Watson, 2012) showed that about two-thirds of the participating workers did not feel highly engaged in their work. In the last decades, researchers tried to understand the reasons of work engagement and Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB). OCB describes behaviors that employees perform voluntarily apart from their contractual tasks, such as participating in social events or sharing knowledge with their colleagues. Research also tried to grasp whether feedback processes can influence the employees' work engagement (see also Kahn 1990; Bakker, 2011; Organ, 1988; Organ et al., 2005). At the same time, the ideas of a less-hierarchical organization that decentralizes power throughout the organization and creates a workspace that offers increased autonomy and a holistic view concerning the employees' well-being has been embraced and discussed by practitioners and business magazines (Laloux, 2014; Bernstein et al. 2016).

Due to the increasing interest in organizations that follow new organizational designs and provide more holistic strategies, academia sought to shed light on new developments in self-managed organizations (see also Lee and Edmondson, 2017; Velinov et al., 2018). Researchers conducted case studies and showed the structure, the culture, the practices, and processes (Laloux, 2014) and tried to understand how these less-hierarchical organizations work and which limits they pose (Lee and Edmondson, 2017; Bernstein et al. 2016). Breevaart et al. (2014) found that daily self-management and the resourcefulness of the work environment (e.g. feedback) are connected positively which leads to daily work engagement. The more decentralized approach of self-managed organizations and teams could make the employees more productive, engaged and responsive because those teams gather and collect information and share the responsibilities of the actions (Barker, 1993). Lee and Edmondson (2017) showed also that self-managed and less-hierarchical

organizations are connected to positive organizational behavior such as raising voice. Peng and Chiu (2010) researched Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB), which is employees' voluntary commitment to the organization and their role in it (see also Organ, 1988). The researchers made the connection between positive OCBs and a positive feedback environment.

Nevertheless, little research has been done regarding how feedback environment influences work engagement and OCB in self-managed, less-hierarchical organizations. To fill this gap, this research project focuses on how feedback environment in less-hierarchical organizations affects the employees' work engagement. Furthermore, the authors of this study attempt to find out how work engagement affects OCB in less-hierarchical organizations. For the aforementioned reasons, this paper aims to understand the connection between feedback environment, work engagement and organizational citizenship behaviors in a self-managed environment. Specifically, the study at hand answers the research questions "How does feedback environment affect work engagement" and "How does work engagement affect OCB". This study is approached with qualitative methods, including focus groups and interviews, and examines the case of a Swedish-Ukrainian IT company which is characterized by a less-hierarchical structure without middle management and self-managed teams. This study was chosen because of the continuing interest and importance of employees' work engagement in the organizations. Exploring work engagement in a less-hierarchical organization that uses the relatively new organizational design of self-managed teams throughout the structure is alluring and innovative because of the agility and flexibility such a design provides.

This paper is divided into nine sections; section 2 introduces previous cases and studies. Section 3 comprises the theoretical framework used for the analysis of the results. Section 4 presents the research design together with the method. Section 5 presents the results of the data analysis and answers the research questions. Section 6 presents the discussion, implications and limitations of the study. Section 7 comprises the key points of prevalent findings and suggests future research. References and appendix can be found in section 8 and section 9 respectively.

2 Background

In the following section, the authors present the background of previous research and give an overview of the research field regarding 1) less-hierarchical organizations, 2) feedback environment, 3) work engagement and 4) OCB. Through reviewing the previous research, the authors observed that little research has been done regarding feedback environment, work engagement and OCB in self-managed, less-hierarchical organizations.

2.1 Less-hierarchical organizing

Since the 1970s ideas such as less-hierarchical organizing and self-managed teams evolved among practitioners and organizational researchers (Lee and Edmondson, 2017). Self-managed teams increased in popularity in the business world and were established throughout Europe (Bernstein et al. 2016). New organizational designs such as Holacracy (Robertson, 2007; Velinov et al. 2018) were adopted by big companies like Morning Star, Patagonia, Valve and Zappos (Laloux, 2014) and throughout industries (Velinov et al. 2018). Many big corporations that are hierarchical in a traditional sense, strive towards the phenomenon of self-management and e.g. implement self-managed teams in their hierarchical organizational structure (Laloux, 2014).

According to Lee and Edmondson (2017), self-management is a crucial aspect of less-hierarchical organizations. The concept of a self-managed organization (SMO) is used for organizations "that radically decentralized authority in a formal and systematic way throughout the organization" (Lee and Edmondson, 2017, p. 39). The researchers define trends of less-hierarchical organizing as "efforts to adapt the managerial hierarchy so that authority is decentralized relative to classical hierarchical principles of unity of command, supervision of lower offices by higher offices and obedience to superiors." (p. 37). Specifically, they point out that in

SMOs, the authority is decentralized throughout the whole organizational structure in a formal and systematic way. These changes lead employees of SMOs to a level of self-management. However, aspects of management like "monitoring of progress [...], designing tasks and organizational structures and providing feedback to individuals" (p. 46) remain crucial for the effectiveness of the organizations. As Bernstein et al. (2016) point out, in SMOs the teams make up the structure in the organization and are not as static as in traditional organizations; instead of having departments and units, these organizations are characterized by a very finely segmented structure. The design and governance are up to the teams; they can decide how they want to work, how they want to be composed and leadership depends on the roles and not on individuals. The researchers stress the fine line between reliability and adaptability that make the balance between "a stable working environment, access to critical resources, and clear goals and responsibilities" (p. 40) as well as flexibility and discretion crucial. While the traditional management hierarchy is inflexible and not able to adapt, the self-managed environment poses the risk for a too high ambiguity. Further, Laloux (2014) points out that modern, less-hierarchical and self-managed organizations often use the advice process for decision-making; this entails that any organizational member can make any decision if everyone that is affected by the decision or people who have experience with the object of the decision are consulted for advice. In practice, the person seeking the advice is not forced to accept the advice, the responsibility for the decision lies with the decision-maker (see also p. 99-105).

Under the umbrella of self-managed organizations, several organizational designs gained fame recently such as Holacracy, Obliquity (see also Robertson, 2007; Velinov, 2018) and Teal (Laloux, 2014). Laloux investigates organizations that embrace the ideas of self-management, natural evolution and wholeness. According to Laloux, the latest evolving organizational type is labelled and called Teal and its metaphor concerns a living organism that follows its own purpose, evolves naturally and in which self-management is applied. Velinov et al. (2018) analyze the development of recent organizational designs and management methods such as Holacracy, Obliquity, Adhocracy and Sociocracy, in 97 companies worldwide. The researchers conclude that smaller companies tend to be more agile because there

are often self-managed teams and the hierarchy is often flatter compared to bigger, multinational organizations. Velinov et al. point out that this makes it easier for smaller companies to adopt innovative organizational designs that are based on self-management.

Moreover, research shed light on psychosocial and communicative processes in SMOs. Zárraga and Bonache (2005) study the team atmosphere in self-managed teams and show the value of psychosocial factors influencing the dynamics of knowledge transfer and creation. The researchers base their research on the assumption that knowledge transfer flourishes in high-care environments (e.g. mutual trust, active empathy, lenience in judgement, courage and access to help (see also p. 665). They also investigated initiatives for such environments ("team leader", "reward systems linked to knowledge-sharing", "teamwork training" and "social events") and found that not all initiatives are as important for various high-care dimensions (see also p. 675).

2.2 Feedback environment

According to Whitaker et al. (2007), the importance of feedback seeking in an organization and how that could lead on reducing uncertainty on the employees is a noteworthy idea. Moreover, the researchers refer to other researchers' attempts of connecting feedback seeking, knowledge-sharing, job performance and motivation as well (as cited in Hackman and Oldham, 1976; Mignerey, Rubin, and Gorden, 1995; Morrison, 1993; Murphy and Cleveland, 1995; Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000). Whitaker et al. claim that feedback seeking behavior can be affected by a supportive supervisor and co-worker feedback environment. The researchers conducted a quantitative research in which 170 pairs of subordinates and supervisors participated. Through their research they show that employees who work in an environment where supervisor and co-worker feedback is supported, then the employees demonstrate feedback seeking behaviors, higher clarity and performance in their role. They tried to define the tie between feedback seeking behavior, task and contextual performance with the use of role clarity as a mediator. In order to measure whether the working environment encourages feedback

seeking attitudes, they used the feedback environment scale - FES (Steelman et al., 2004). Moreover, they pinpoint that the relation between feedback seeking behavior and a co-worker feedback environment is regulated by effort cost.

Dahling et al. (2017) build on and criticize Steelman's Feedback environment scale (see also Steelman et al. 2004) that was centered around variables rather than on people. The researchers conducted two extensive studies in which they reviewed literature and used a person-centered research approach to study supervisor feedback environment perceptions. They found three different profiles of feedback environment perception; moderate quality feedback environment, high quality feedback environment and unfavorable feedback environment. Through their studies, the researchers reconfirm the relationship between high quality feedback environment and positive organizational outcomes such as affective commitment, psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation and a low perception of politics. The researchers conclude that unfavorable feedback should be studied closer in the future.

2.3 Work engagement

The source of motivation, engagement and motivated behavior at work continues to bother theorists and practitioners (Hackman and Oldman, 1976; Kahn, 1990; Schaufeli et al., 2002; Miner, 2015). Since the 1990s, new theoretical concepts such as work engagement emerged. One of the first theorists to describe this concept was Kahn (1990) who views work engagement as "'the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles, by which they employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performance" (p. 694). Today, the updated definition of work engagement by Schaufeli et al. (2002) describes the concept as "a positive, fulfilling, motivational state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption".

The 2012 Global Workforce Study Engagement (Towers Watson, 2012) questioned 32.000 employees about their opinion regarding leadership, salary and benefit programs in their organizations. Towers Watson found that about two thirds of the participants felt detached or even disengaged. Other key findings were that the participants felt stressed, insecure and anxious about the future, and that the employees

perceived a lack of support and commitment from the upper management. Moreover, Bakker (2011) draws the connection between work engagement, job and personal resources. Specifically, Bakker found that job and personal resources predict work engagement, that engaged employees show proactive behavior and i.e. change their environment in order to sustain work engagement.

Green et al. (2017) agree with Lee and Edmondson that today's' employees "look for greater levels of fulfillment than traditional organizational forms provide" (p. 15). The researchers present a new approach regarding research of employees' needs at work and base it on an extensive literature review of work engagement research. They suggest that engagement is driven by experiences at work that meet employees' expectation of need fulfillment. According to the researchers, especially interaction and values such as self-expression and authenticity at work are crucial for workplace experiences. Breevaart et al. (2014) draw the connection between self-management and daily work engagement. The researchers show through their study on daily work engagement and self-management how employees self-regulate their own daily work engagement. Moreover, they found a positive relationship between daily self-management and the daily work environment's resourcefulness such as feedback and developmental opportunities, which leads to daily work engagement.

2.4 Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)

Dekas et al. (2013) try to reconceptualize the idea of Organizational Citizenship Behavior, that was firstly originated by Organ (1988). The researchers base this reconceptualization on modern organizations that are fast paced, diverse and innovative and have OCB as a basic element of the organizational and employee performance. Dekas et al. talk about the concept of Knowledge-Work (KW). KW concerns knowledge workers that are "workers who think for a living" (cited after Davenport, 2005). Their working style does not follow routines and the knowledge workers are crucial in modern organizations. Dekas et al. introduce new OCB aspects that can be used for studying organizations with KW as well as a way to measure creativity in the organizations. This OCB-KW scale includes social

participation, knowledge-sharing, employee sustainability, helping, voice, civic virtue, individual initiative and administrative behavior.

Norris-Watts and Levy (2003) conducted a quantitative study with 140 undergraduate students from the U.S. assessing the role of affective commitment, feedback environment and the OCB-categories by Organ (1988). The investigation included a number of measures designed including surveys and questionnaires. Furthermore, the Norris-Watts and Levy distinguished OCBs that are directed at the organization as a whole, such as civic virtue, conscientiousness and sportsmanship from OCBs that are directed at individuals such as altruism and courtesy. They concluded that affective commitment serves as a mediator between feedback environment and OCB. This relation is mediated more when OCBs are directed at an organization. Peng and Chiu's (2010) findings endorse Norris-Watts and Levy's findings that a positive supervisor feedback environment enhances the employees' perception of person-organization fit and organizational commitment (see also p. 599). In their study Peng and Chiu explore supervisor feedback environment and OCB with quantitative methods. The researchers collected data from 259 supervisor-subordinate couples in various organizations in Taiwan. Peng and Chiu specifically investigated supervisor-feedback environment, role stressors, job burnout, OCB, organizational commitment and person-organization fit with the help of a structural model.

3 Theory

The authors of the study at hand use the theoretical framework of 1) feedback environment, 2) work engagement, 3) OCB and 4) role theory to shed light on how feedback environment in less-hierarchical organizations with self-management affects work engagement and how work engagement affects OCB. These theories were chosen because they are used in recent studies and help to answer the research questions. More specifically, for feedback environment, the authors decided to use Steelman et al.'s (2004) definition of feedback environment and the feedback environment scale for identifying the various feedback aspects. Secondly, Peng and Chiu are consulted by the authors of this study because they discuss a connection between feedback environment and work engagement. Thirdly, the authors of this study chose Schaufeli et al. (2002) and Green et.al (2017) for the definition of work engagement and Schaufeli et al. (2006) scale to identify aspects of work engagement. Furthermore, in Green et al.'s (2017) study the connection between fulfilment of need-expectations by the employer and work engagement is made and it is stated that work engagement leads to positive behaviors related to work. Additionally, the authors of this study used Organ et al.'s (2006) definition for OCB and Dekas et al.'s (2017) OCB-KW scale for identifying aspects of OCB in organizations characterized by knowledge work. Lastly, the authors of this study decided to investigate the employees' role, since the setting concerns a less-hierarchical, self-managed organization in which the employees have roles which come with "clear areas of responsibilities" (Laloux, 2014, p. 121). The authors of this study wanted to understand how the individual roles look like in regard to feeling of responsibility and ownership and role problems such as ambiguity, conflict and overload. Thus, role theory is used to complement the analysis so to get a better understanding of the employees' situation. Specifically, the authors of this study consulted Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) and Kalbers and Cenker (2008) who describe role responsibility and ownership that employees feel because this aspect is important

while working in a self-managed team. The other aspects of role theory serve for better understanding and completing the authors' way of thinking.

3.1 Feedback environment

Feedback environment is defined in relation to "the contextual aspects of day-to-day supervisor-subordinate and co-worker-co-worker feedback processes rather than to the formal appraisal feedback sessions" (Steelman et al., 2004, p. 166). According to Peng and Chiu (2010), feedback environment shows how the organizational members interact with each other and exchange feedback. They indicate that a feedback environment serves as a pool of information for the employees and can support work motivation or display employee behaviors. Then, the employees can adjust their behaviors to their work goal so as to improve their skills and eventually their job performance.

Feedback practices and processes according to Steelman et al. (2004) can be assisted by a tool which is called feedback environment scale (FES) so as to identify feedback processes in organizations. Steelman et al. try to describe, improve, and validate a tool with many aspects that measure feedback environment regarding supervisors and co-workers as feedback resources regarding context on mundane processes. The feedback environment is described as "a multifaceted construct with two major factors (supervisor and co-worker) manifested in seven facets" (p. 169). FES is a new tool, which has seven facets: a) source credibility concerns the source's expertise and knowledge and trustworthiness of the source to distribute accurate information, b) feedback quality concerns how consistent, specific and useful the feedback is, c) feedback delivery refers to the feedback's provider intentions and delivery processes, d) frequency of favorable feedback such as compliments, e) frequency of unfavorable feedback such as critique and phrases of dissatisfaction, f) source availability refers to the availability of receiving feedback through daily interactions, and g) promoting feedback seeking refers to whether the working environment allows the employees to seek feedback and whether they feel comfortable to do it. Regarding those facets, a co-worker feedback environment can be

measured; the higher the level is, the more supportive the feedback environment is. (see also Steelman et al., 2004, p. 165-170)

Another parameter Whitaker et al. (2007) take into account for feedback seeking behavior is the effort cost, which describes the effort the employees need to expend while they are in the process of seeking feedback (as cited in Ashford and Cummings, 1983). Whitaker et al. (2007) claimed that the effort cost will make the relation between co-worker feedback environment and co-workers' feedback seeking less extreme. For Whitaker et al., role clarity constitutes a mediator between feedback seeking and job performance that makes the connection between those two more understandable. It is also claimed that a role with higher clarity leads to better understanding responsibilities of the given tasks. When employees seek for feedback, role clarity might be enhanced because less uncertainty increases the employees' job performance (as cited in Taylor, Fisher, and Ilgen 1984).

3.2 Work engagement

Schaufeli et al. (2002) describe work engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, motivational state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (p. 74). The researchers view work engagement as a persistent and pervasive state that is negatively related to burn out and that can be directed towards any object, behavior or situation (see also Schaufeli et al., 2006, p. 74). Green et.al (2017) summarize the original definition of work engagement by Schaufeli et.al (2002) as "(a) a positive emotional state that (b) yields a feeling of energy and (c) leads to positive work-oriented behaviors" (p. 14). According to Green et al., the fulfillment of human need expectations at the workplace leads to an energizing feeling that might further lead to work engagement. They stress that a growing number of employees expects fulfillment of their needs regarding authentic self-expression from their employer and that interactions play an important role at the workplace.

Schaufeli et al. (2006) developed the Utrecht-Work Engagement-Scale (UWES-scale) that measures work engagement through the categories vigor, dedication and absorption in a systematic way. According to Schaufeli et.al, a vigorous employee

shows high levels of energy, is mental resilient, willing to invest effort, and is persistent even when facing difficulties. A dedicated employee is characterised by a strong involvement into work, shows a sense of significance, is enthusiastic, proud, inspired and likes taking on challenges. An employee that shows absorption, is fully concentrated and happily immersed in work so that time could pass quickly and has difficulties to detach from work (see also Schaufeli et al., 2006).

3.3 Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB)

OCB is "individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and in the aggregate promotes the efficient and effective functioning of the organization" (Organ et al., 2005, p. 3). Organ (1988) originally described OCB with the help of five categories; altruism, conscientiousness, sportsmanship, courtesy, and civic virtue. Dekas et al. (2013) describe the modern workplace as one that is characterized by increased flexibility regarding time, result-oriented performance and directed to knowledge economy. Consequences of these changes were that the original descriptions of OCB were not sufficient anymore. Dekas et al. (2013) created the OCB-KW scale that is tailored for measuring OCB in knowledge-work-organizations. OCB-KW includes civic virtue, voice, helping, individual initiative, personal sustainability, social participation, knowledge-sharing and administrative behavior. The researchers suggest that social participation and employee sustainability are essential for organizations with knowledge work because the competence of the organization depends on team building processes.

Dekas et al. (2017) ranked the categories by occurence in their case. Employee sustainability describes the participation in activities that serve the purpose of one's or colleagues' health and well-being. Social participation means the participation in social events and activities that are non-work-related. Civic virtue describes the dedication of employees towards the community of their organization and the acceptance of involved responsibilities. Voice describes actions like speaking up, giving suggestions that serve to improve the goals, processes etc. in the organization. Moreover, helping includes helping other colleagues on a voluntary basis in regard

to tasks and other work-related issues. Knowledge-sharing occurs when colleagues share and exchange their knowledge and expertise actively and individual initiative describes conscientious behavior regarding task-related behavior such as voluntary extra tasks. Lastly, administrative behavior occurs when organizational members organize, plan, supervise or control organizational aspects. The five categories employee sustainability, social participation, civic virtue, voice, helping are further described and identified by 23 items that build the OCB-KW scale (see also appendix 3).

3.4 Role theory

According to the role theory (Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970), role conflict happens when the expectations on employee's behavior are inconsistent and that creates stress, dissatisfaction and a decrease in performance. Role overloaded (Rizzo et al., 1970) exists when employees feel like having too many tasks and responsibilities or when the expectations on them are too high. Kalbers and Cenker (2008) state that the responsibility for the role in the organization is positively connected to job performance, experience and autonomy while it is negatively connected to role ambiguity. According to Rizzo et al. (1970), role ambiguity exists when an employee faces uncertainty regarding decision-making, goal-expectations, and performance appraisal. This leads to hesitation in decision making and the only way to fulfill the task and to meet the employer's expectation is a trial-error approach. Whitaker et al. (2007) examine how role clarity and its less uncertainty can mediate feedback seeking and task performance. They claim that feedback seeking behaviors can be associated positively with task performance and contextual performance when there is enhanced role clarity. Firstly, they showed that an environment that is open for feedback seeking helps the employees to look for feedback. Secondly, co-worker feedback environment and feedback seeking are regulated by the effort cost the employees take when they seek feedback from their co-workers, and that role clarity can play the role of the mediator among a co-worker feedback environment, job performance and OCB. Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) show a connection between the feeling of ownership and commitment towards the

organization and the task. The researchers propose that feelings of ownership lead people to see their possessions as parts of themselves and that this feeling of possession or ownership leads to a feeling of responsibility.

4 Method

4.1 Research design

For the design of this study, Maxwell's (1996) five aspects were considered "goals, conceptual framework, research question, method and validity" (p. 216-217). The researchers aim to understand the feedback environment, work engagement and OCB in a less-hierarchical and self-managed environment. Therefore, the researchers chose a qualitative approach for this research design, conducting a study that focuses on one organization including 33 interviews and 3 focus groups. The researchers chose this qualitative approach because it helps "to make sense of and recognize patterns among words in order to build up a meaningful picture without compromising its richness and dimensionality" (Leung, 2015). The researchers decided to intensively investigate the case of Beetroot, a Swedish-Ukrainian IT company, to get an insight into a modern, less-hierarchical and self-managed environment characterized by knowledge work.

Three focus groups were organized so that the researchers a) get an understanding of the investigated company, its different departments, the work environment and the employee's perception of it and b) get the sense of a group of people where they can discuss a topic and develop their ideas. In this way, more ideas and diversity can be generated than in individual interviews. The employees can provide their insight, their personal views, explain their way of thinking and acting processes and they can have the chance to discuss together (Treadwell, 2017, p. 202-203; Krueger and Casey, 2000, p. 4-5;). The researchers chose the semi-structured interviews because through them, the interview can be kept focused but at the same time, the researcher and the interviewer still preserve their right to move uncharted and make more questions when necessary (see also Treadwell, 2017, p. 199). Furthermore, Leech (2002) points out that semi-structured interviews offer an adequate

way to build on already existing knowledge and serve as a middle way between the ethnographic interview and the journalistic interview.

4.1.1 Reliability and validity

The authors took into consideration that qualitative methods are often criticized for their reliability and validity. Regarding reliability, criticism concerns the reliability of the explanations provided, whether the explanations reflect the whole organization or just a specific situation and how reliable the interpretation of transcription is (Silverman, 2000). The conducted interviews are representative for the organization since 33 employees participated out of 230 coming from every department. To reassure a systematized process and to limit misunderstanding, both researchers were present during the data collection process, whereas one acted as the interviewer and the other one as a note taker. During the data analysis process, the authors discussed their understanding of transcribing and coding at several instances. Regarding validity, criticism concerns the choice of the chosen interviewees and the subjective selection of examples that support the authors' arguments. Participants, for both interviews and focus groups, were chosen randomly. However, six participants (M1, M2, M3, M7, HR2, F1) were chosen deliberately due to their experience and their position in the company. For this study, the authors wanted to capture all main opinions that is why they discussed the selection of the presented examples in the result part. (Silverman, 2000)

Moreover, the authors assessed their paper according to Silverman's (2000) list of criteria for evaluating research. Specifically, the authors of this study investigated the appropriateness of the chosen method, the connection to preexisting theory and research and the description of the process of the data collection and analysis. Further, the authors investigated whether the method is adequate to the research questions, and whether the data collection and the recordings were made in a systematic way. The authors also followed a systematic analysis with references, and looked into how concepts, categories and themes derive from the data. Lastly, the authors checked whether there is a discussion of the evidence and if a clear distinction between data and interpretation is made.

4.2 Case description

Beetroot, a Swedish-Ukrainian IT company, is the object of this research project. This company is specialized in assembling teams of developers and designers for other companies. Its offices are located in Stockholm, Poltava, Odessa and Kiev. In March 2018, the company engages about 230 employees in three offices, from which the vast majority works in Ukraine. The company's vision attunes with responsibility, trust and equality and draws inspiration from the organizational design of a Teal organization by Laloux (2014). Apart of the commercial part, Beetroot has also a non-profit part, the Beetroot Academy, which provides IT and design courses in over ten schools in Ukraine. The focus of this research project lies on the commercial part of Beetroot. However, three employees who participated in the interviews are currently connected to Beetroot Academy and were chosen for the interview due to their experience with the commercial part.

The company's organizational structure is characterized by a missing level of middle management, the employees are responsible, autonomous and flexible in terms of job task and decision making. The teams are self-managed and have direct client contact. The organization, apart of the Academy and the teams of developers and designers, is structured into the following departments as in March 2018 (see table 1): HR, Communication, Sales, Administration, Finance, System administration, Project, and the two founders. Now that the company is in a phase of continuous growth, it also faces some challenges that arise with increased complexity. This complexity comprises two risks. The first risk is that the company could turn away from the practice of self-management and less-hierarchical organizational designs and moves towards more hierarchical processes and a traditional management mentality. Secondly, there is also the risk of having disengaged employees.
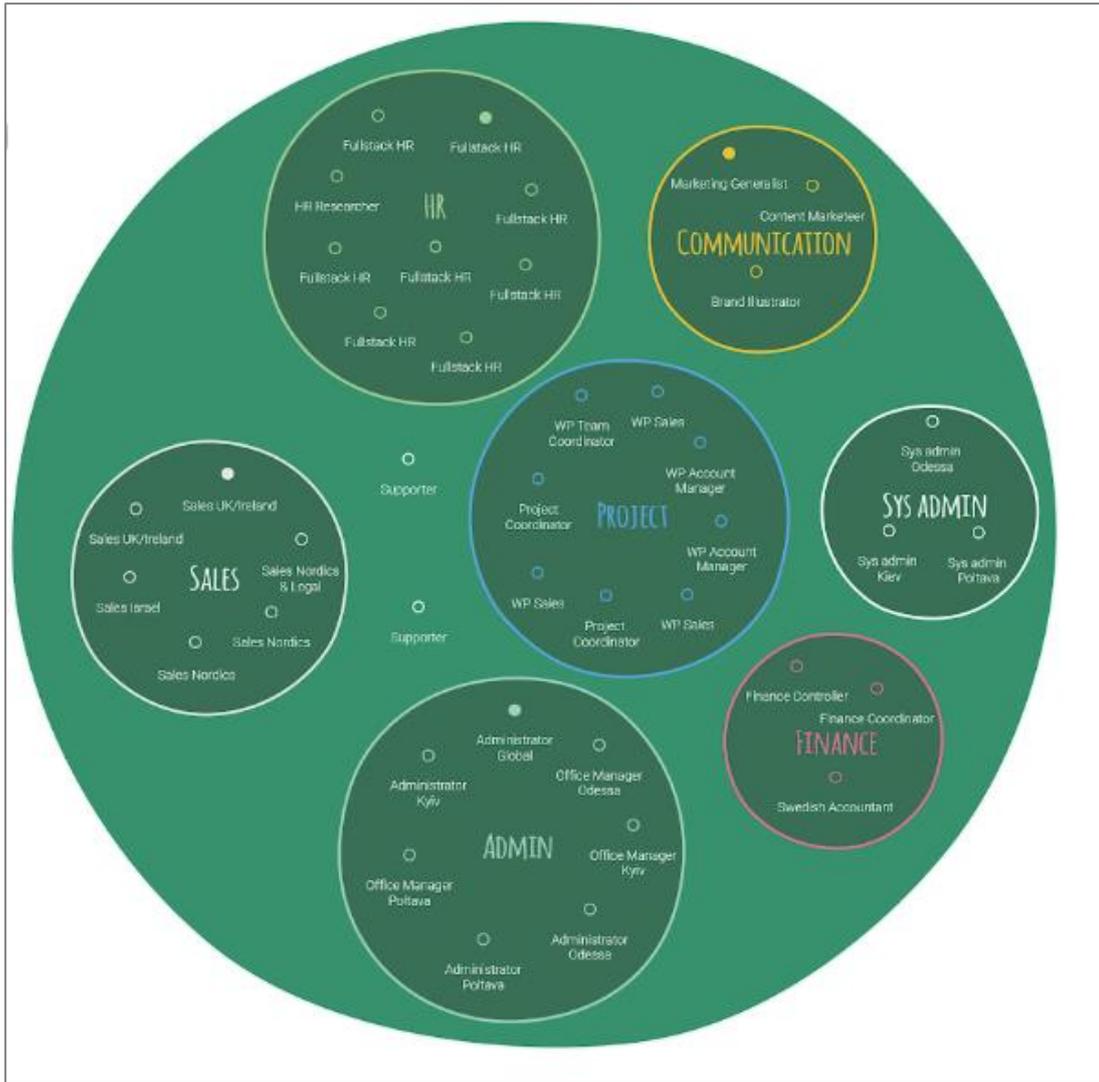
Table 1 Beetroot's organizational structure; Source: Beetroot 2018

4.3 Data Collection

The authors travelled to the offices of Beetroot in Kiev, Poltava and Odessa in Ukraine on 26th February until 16th of March where the focus groups and interviews were conducted. In both focus groups and interviews, the composition of the sample was done either by "random sample" where all the employees had the chance to take part in the interviews or "judgment sample" where the authors chose their interviewees regarding the employees' position and experience within the company (Wray and Bloomer, 2006). The common characteristics of the

participants were that they were working in average one year in the organization and the age was approximately between 25 and 35 years.

Ethical implications were taken into consideration by the authors. For instance, the research was conducted under the scope of ethics with honesty, and no intention of deceiving the participants. Anonymity was offered, and confidentiality was assured as well. The participants were informed about the project and how the data were going to be collected and used. Before conducting the interviews, the participants were asked for their permission about recording them and they were shown a consent form about the use of their data. Discretion was ensured by not publishing any personal information of the participants and by stating that the recordings will be erased after the transcription.

4.3.1 Focus Groups

For the focus groups, three sessions were held in which eight, six and six interviewees participated. The sessions lasted between 25 and 30 minutes. The setting of the sessions was informal; the focus groups took place in the lounge areas of the offices. After an introduction of the moderators and all participants, the participants were informed that the focus groups serve to get an understanding of the company and that the session will be audio recorded with the consent of all participants. Moreover, the moderators pointed out that there are no right or wrong answers; they are interested in what the employees feel and think in order to create a good atmosphere before starting with the first question. After each question, the participants shared their opinion and discussed different answers; the moderators monitored the discussion and acted merely as facilitators. As pointed out by the researchers Puchta and Potter (1999), elaborate, open-ended questions are used for the focus groups so to create a forum where participants answer spontaneously to non-mundane questions and discuss and share their opinion within a pre-planned setting.

4.3.2 Interviews

The authors conducted 33 semi-structured interviews including the chief executive officer (CEO) and the chief financial officer (CFO) of the company. The

participants are categorized in nine groups: Administration, HR, Finance, Academy Employees, Sales, Dedicated teams, Mixed roles, CEO and CFO. This categorization is based on the role descriptions of the interviewees. The authors matched each participant with the departments of the organization. Interviewees with mixed roles were put into a special category, Mixed roles. The length of the individual interviews varied and lasted approximately between 20- 40 minutes (see table 2). For the interviews, the authors chose a rather relaxed setting because the authors wanted to have a neutral, safe and relaxing environment and they wanted to avoid the setting affecting the interviews. Moreover, they tried to create an atmosphere of trust with the interviewees by introducing themselves and presenting their research topic. Then, the authors of this study refered to ethical aspects and showed a consent form to every interviewee asking for permission of recording. The authors also mentioned that the recordings will be accessed only by them and that the recordings will be erased after transcribing. (see also Treadwell, 2017, p. 200-201)

	Code	Department	Duration of working	Length of recording
1	M1	Sales & Legal	1,5 years	32:01
2	HR1	Human Resources	2 years	22:23
3	CEO	-	-	43:12
4	AE1	Academy manager	2 weeks	17:52
5	D1	Dedicated team	5 months	24:10
6	HR2	Human Resources	4 years	24:12
7	D2	Dedicated team	9 months	18:57
8	D3	Dedicated team	9 months	19:19
9	A1	Administration	2 years	18:07
10	CFO	-	-	55:49
11	HR3	Human Resources	1,5 years	23:58
12	D4	Dedicated Team	1,5 years	18:32
13	S1	Sales	1 month	18:14
14	M2	Sales, Operations	2 years	39:22
15	F1	Finances	1 year	40:49
16	F2	Finances	1 year	23:14

17	D5	Dedicated Team	1,5 years	21:18
18	D6	Dedicated Team	9 months	40:49
19	D7	Dedicated Team	9 months	18:30
20	M3	Finances, Administration	5 years	39:16
21	M5	Sales	3 years	36:26
22	AE2	Human Resources, Academy	1 year	24:47
23	D8	Dedicated Team	2 years	31:53
24	HR4	Human Resources	6 months	18:42
25	M4	Marketing and Sales	9 months	31:02
26	D9	Dedicated Team	2 years	25:32
27	M6	Marketing and Communication	2 years	31:30
28	D10	Dedicated Team	3 years	23:57
29	D11	Dedicated Team	1,5 years	18:21
30	HR5	Human Resources	2,5 years	27:19
31	AE3	Academy Manger	2 years	25:28
32	D12	Dedicated Team	2 years	26:43
33	M7	Sales & Administration	2 years	18:43

Table 2 Interview participants (M=Mixed, HR=Human Resources, AE=Academy Employees, D=Dedicated Teams, A= Administration, S= Sales, F= Finances)

Regarding the creation of the interview guideline (see appendix 2), the authors used three types of questions descriptive, structural and contrast questions in order to guide the discussion and get an understanding of the employees' point of view (Treadwell, 2017, p. 199-02). Another type of questions that the authors used were the open and closed questions when necessary so to get detailed information and deeper meanings from the interviewees (Wray and Bloomer, 2006, p. 155). The authors used a deductive approach, thus, the theoretical framework helped to structure the interview guideline. The authors were thinking about the research questions when formulating the interview guideline and broke down the interview questions into parts. Moreover, they determined the order according to the theories they used. Specifically, general questions regarding the employees' role were posed in the beginning of the interviews. After this, they continued with simpler topics and moved

to more complex questions exploring feedback environment, OCB and work engagement. For example, the authors asked about the employees' role and continued by asking about the working environment, feedback and whether the participants engage in non-contractual events. In the end of the interviews, the authors posed more open questions, for instance regarding motivation. Then, after holding a pilot session with IT consultants from the company, the authors revised the interview guideline regarding the order of the interview questions. The pilot session assured that the questions posed are simple to understand and lead to an in-depth understanding of the researched subject. The set of the questions used for the CEO and CFO were not exactly the same with the ones used for the employees because the authors wanted to retrieve some extra information from the founders of the company regarding their perception of a motivated employee, the decision-making processes in the company, their role as leaders, and their vision (see appendix 2).

4.4 Data analysis

For the data analysis, the authors proceeded with a qualitative content analysis that helps to subjectively interpret "the content of text data through systematized classification process of coding and identifying themes" (Hsie and Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Specifically, this data analysis is based on the approach of a directed content analysis that is used, according to Hsieh and Shannon, when research is built on pre-existing theory and research about a phenomenon that needs further studying.

For the interviews, the authors did an orthographic transcription. After transcribing the interviews and creating the coding sources with the help of a word processing software and an audio player software, the transcripts from the interviews were imported into the program NVivoPro, that is designed to support research in qualitative analyzes. Regarding the focus groups, which had an informative character, the authors were interested in the content of the discussion. Thus, the decision of not using the orthographic transcription on the focus groups was made (Wray and Bloomer, 2006, p. 167). The authors registered the different opinions in the form of a table (see appendix 1).

As a next step, a code book (see appendix 4) was created before start coding. Theoretical definitions were used for creating the code book (see appendix 3). Specifically, for feedback environment and the FES scale by Steelman et.al (2004), for Role, Rizzo et al. (1970), Katz and Kahn (1978), Van Dyne and Pierce (2004) and, Kalbers and Cenker (2008), for work engagement and the UWES scale by Schaufeli et al. (2004) and for OCB and the OCB-KW scale by Dekas et.al (2013). The codebook is divided into five categories which are feedback environment, role, work engagement, OCB and undefined. Each category included specific labels:

1. Feedback environment: feedback environment, effective feedback, effort cost, favorable feedback, feedback delivery, feedback quality, promoting feedback seeking, source availability, source credibility, unfavorable feedback
2. Role: challenges, responsibility, ownership, role ambiguity, role conflict, role overload
3. Work engagement: absorption, dedication, vigor, personal development, frustration
4. OCB: administrative behavior, civic virtue, employee sustainability, helping, individual initiative, knowledge-sharing, social participation, voice
5. Undefined: less-hierarchical environment, perception of politics, process of decision-making, organization's vision and leadership, organization's fast growth

The authors conducted a pretest that included the coding of two interview transcripts. There, the usability of the codebook, regarding a common understanding of the categories, was tested. Furthermore, the authors improved the code book by merging some unessential categories into the node "undefined" and adding more descriptions to each category for a better understanding. After improving the code book, the authors coded each source by the pre-created nodes.

After the initial coding, the authors tried to develop themes and categories. (Treadwell, 2017, p. 208-211) Then the authors merged the project in NVivoPro and created a word cloud for visualizing the analysis (see appendix 5). The authors bore in mind that any visualization of qualitative research poses the challenge of "adding structure to the data without oversimplifying or misrepresenting them and without losing the subtle meanings or emotions rooted in them." (Henderson and Segal, 2013, p. 57). After this step, the authors exported the coding summary and the

project and started the follow-up coding. The follow-up coding included the analysis regarding frequency, quantity, outstanding examples of coded nodes and cases. After summarizing each concept, representing examples were chosen.

5 Results

The authors of this study analyzed the interview data by doing a content analysis with a directed approach. To address the research questions "How does feedback environment affect work engagement?" and "How does work engagement affect OCB?" the authors present a summary of the findings of each category together with representative examples.

The data from the focus groups (see appendix 1) are not analyzed in depth because the authors wanted to use them as a tool for getting an overview of the employees' perception about the organization. To the question what the employees appreciate about the organization, all three focus groups replied atmosphere and family feeling, freedom, relationships at work and the flexibility at work in terms of their tasks and job safety.

In the following subsections, the data from the 33 interviews are displayed through the categories 1) Feedback environment and effort cost 2) Role, 3) Work engagement, 4) OCB, 5) Organizational characteristics and special interest and, 6) Answers to the Research Questions (RQs). While presenting the examples in the text, the interviewees are referred to via a code, for instance D1, (see table 2). The line numbers indicated in square brackets refer to the concerning transcript-excerpt, for example: [line 1-5].

5.1 Feedback environment and effort cost

Feedback environment, which is aspects and processes regarding feedback in every day work environment, is assessed through the categories of the feedback environment scale (FES). The FES includes feedback quality, feedback delivery, promoting feedback seeking, favorable/ unfavorable feedback, source availability, and source credibility. By overviewing these categories and considering the amount of people referring to low effort cost, this study shows that the feedback environment

is positive. The majority of the participants refer to positive aspects of the feedback environment; Out of 33 participants, 30 stated that the environment promotes feedback seeking, 26 respectively experience source availability and, credibility, 25 experience feedback delivery and, 23 experience feedback quality to be positive. Favorable feedback was mentioned by nine participants and unfavorable feedback was mentioned by three. Moreover, 12 participants mentioned low effort cost in their environment.
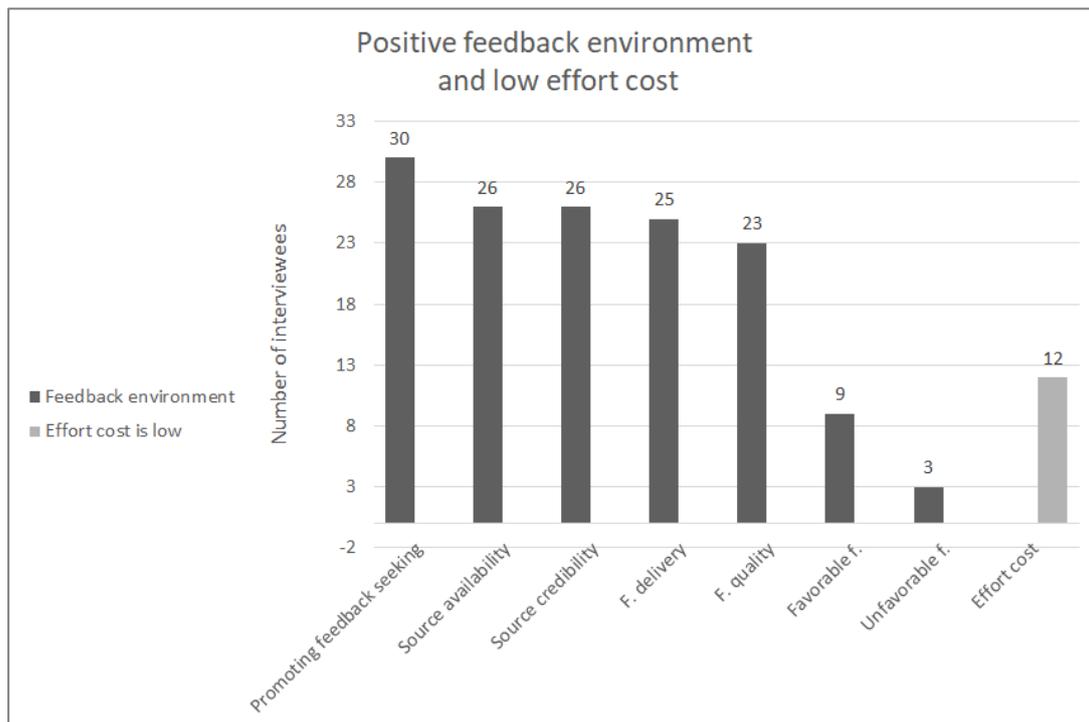
Table 3 Frequency of participants mentioning positive feedback environment and low effort cost

Feedback quality

Feedback is consistent, specific and perceived as useful when feedback quality is high. This study shows that feedback quality is high. About half of the participants stated that feedback is specific and useful. For instance, a third of the participants perceive feedback as specific and a few mentioned also honesty as an essential aspect of feedback. Further, the participants mentioned that they perceive feedback as constructive, clear and direct as well. For example, interviewee HR1 said *"I think effective feedback is when you can tell something good for this person […] so it is more constructive."* [line 79-82].

Feedback delivery

Feedback delivery describes the feedback source's intentions and delivery processes. Feedback delivery is considered positive when the employees perceive feedback as helpful, when they are satisfied with it and when the feedback session atmosphere is positive. This study shows that feedback source's intention is perceived positively, and the delivery processes exist and support feedback exchange. About a third of the participants perceive feedback as helpful. For example, interviewee M1 said *"instant feedback is the most effective one and of course it should be it should be valid and not subjective in that sense and hopefully it is as objective as it can be but at the same time it is honest"* [line 141-143]. Moreover, the participants mention different processes of delivering feedback such as meetings, reviews, interactions with their colleagues and via different means of communication.

Promoting feedback seeking

Promoting feedback seeking exists when the environment enables the employees to seek feedback comfortably. This study shows that the company's environment enables the employees to seek feedback through different ways of communication. The participants mentioned that they seek feedback via interactions, online communication, written form of feedback, meetings, discussions with the CEO/CFO and, via discussions with the responsible person. For example, the CEO stated *"The CFO now is doing coaching sessions […] but I do have a lot of five minutes conversations here and there. Like 100s of five minutes conversations each week."* [line 63-65]. Another interviewee mentioned regular meetings via skype or video channels and the online platform slack. Moreover, some interviewees stated that the organizational design, less-hierarchical organization, enables them to seek feedback as well. For example, another interviewee stated to be in favor of the communication style of the company because of the flat management that enables discussions [see also HR4: line 21-23].

Favorable and unfavorable feedback

Favorable feedback concerns the perceived frequency of positive feedback such as compliments and unfavorable feedback concerns expressions of dissatisfaction or criticism that are related to performance. This study shows that the feedback environment provides the employees with a sufficient amount of favorable feedback whereas unfavorable feedback is only mentioned in three cases. Some of the participants mentioned that they appreciate favorable feedback such as confirmations, two appreciate performance reviews, one stated that favorable feedback is motivating and another one mentioned that there is too little favorable feedback. Regarding unfavorable feedback, one participant mentioned negative expressions of criticism and another one mentioned expressions of dissatisfaction. For example, F1 uttered *"But the Swedes don't do that 'they try to package everything and the most negative direct feedback is something like "Mhmmmmm." instead of "no, that is a very stupid idea".*" [line 119-122].

Source availability

Source availability describes the employee's perception of how easy feedback seeking from colleagues and supervisors is in day-to-day communication. This study shows that source availability is high because the employees can reach the source for feedback through planned and unplanned interactions. Most of the participants commented that the feedback availability is high. The participants mentioned that source availability is succeeded through daily interactions such as during their face-to-face interactions, or online communication. For example, interviewee A1 shared *"I think that it is not like huge hierarchy you can have a talk with anyone in the company [...] just go and ask. And when that person is not there then you can reach him online"* [line 87-93].

Source credibility

Source credibility describes the trustworthiness and knowledge of the feedback source and whether the distributed information can be trusted. This study shows that employees have access to sources that they perceive as trustworthy and credible and they use them for exchanging feedback. Most of the participants mentioned

that they mostly turn to their colleagues/team members, to experts/responsible people. Moreover, some participants stated that they turn to the CEO/CFO, use online means of communication, meetings and, use performance reviews as a trustworthy source for feedback. For example, HR3 stated *"We have a general chat, everyone is there – if the question is global, that would go to the general chat – if a question is local in this office, we have our Kiev HR team chat. If something is outside of HR or whatever, you can go to Teamapps."* [line 100-102].

Effort cost

Effort cost tries to capture how employees perceive the effort cost for seeking feedback. This study shows that the effort cost for perceiving feedback is low. The participants mentioned three ways for achieving feedback; more specifically workshops, consultations and meetings: (daily, monthly, planned, unplanned, departmental, between the three offices, via online chat, and via face-to-face interactions with colleagues). For example, D10 mentioned *"if you have a problem you can just stand there and say "hey guys I have a problem with that, is someone know how to solve that" and usually guys and girls can come to me and help. Or I go and help them."* [line 66-68]. Another example is stated by HR3 *"and then I thought "Ah, let's go to girls" and we have a HR chat […] I received answers and hints of who had this experience."* [line 95-96].

5.2 Role

The role an employee takes in an organization includes rights, expectations, challenges, responsibilities that the employee needs to meet. This study shows that out of 33 participants, 17 take responsibility and 12 feel ownership of their role and tasks. Out of 33 participants, 26 mentioned that they face challenges regarding personal-, team-, task- and organizational challenges and eight mentioned role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload.
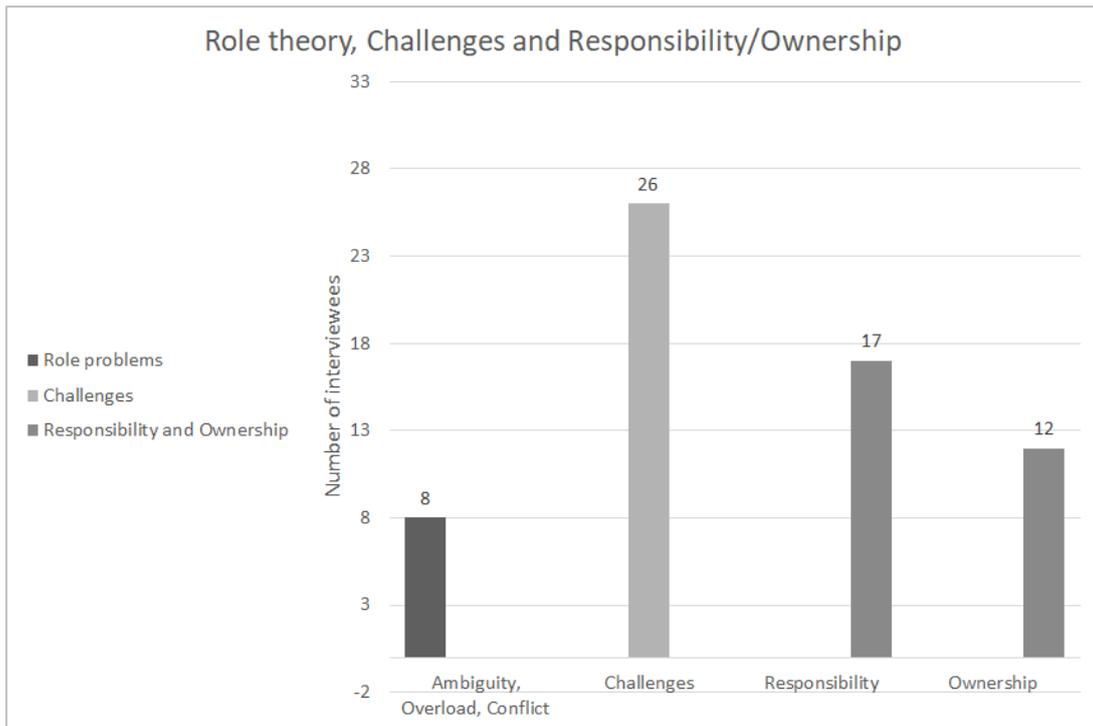
Table 4 *Frequency of participants mentioning challenges, role problems, responsibility and ownership*

Responsibility

The category responsibility describes the feeling of being responsible for one's role and tasks within the organization. This study shows that a sense of responsibility exists among half of the employees. Almost half of the participants reported that they feel responsibility towards their tasks/role, and some of the participants stated that they feel responsible for their colleagues. For example, HR2 mentioned *"we just work with our responsibilities and no one dictates you but advises and supports you. So, I think this makes Beetroot different."* [line 87]. Furthermore, one third of the participants stated that the environment of the company promotes taking responsibility. For example, interviewee D8 stated *"I do like about my role that I can do my coding job and if I want some additional responsibility I take it. [...] So, I like this flexibility."* [line 32-36].

Ownership

The feeling of responsibility can evoke also a feeling of possession/ownership for the organization and the employees' role and tasks. Moreover, people that feel ownership might see their possessions as parts of themselves which leads again to a feeling of responsibility. This study shows that a part of the employees feels ownership over their role and tasks. A few participants expressed the feeling of ownership regarding their role, the control of their working time, and freedom over their tasks. For example, HR2 stated *"Maybe from what I like it is probably it is different combination that I am sometimes on my own with things. That is this freedom, like have your responsibilities"* [line 37-39].

Challenges

The findings show that the participants face different types of challenges that they mostly face with a positive attitude. Most of the participants referred different types of challenges such as personal, team, task, and organizational challenges. For example, a participant mentioned a challenge the self-managed organization faces in decision-making processes. AE2 stated *"we still have some spontaneous decisions with sometimes it could be a bad thing also like lack of structure."* [line 9-10]. Some other participants mentioned challenges concerning working remote, away from one's team and another challenge which was mentioned by HR3 concerned the responsibility that someone feels for the recruited employees [see also HR3: 36-42].

Role ambiguity, conflict and overload

Role ambiguity concerns uncertainty regarding decisions, expectations, and performance appraisals. Role overload exists when the employees feel overloaded with their tasks and responsibilities. Role conflict concerns inconsistencies in role expectations. This study shows that role conflict, ambiguity and overload are low within the organization. Some participants mentioned either ambiguity, conflict or overload regarding their role. Specifically, three interviewees stated that they experience role ambiguity when they do not have clear tasks, two interviewees stated that they experience role ambiguity when they do not have a clear team and one

31

when there are unclear expectations. Role overload was mentioned by four inter-viewees referring to the problem of working remote and being irreplaceable in one's position. Furthermore, role conflict was mentioned by three interviewees, stating contradictory expectations from their working environment.

5.3 Work engagement and personal development

Work engagement exists when the employees show absorption, dedication and vigor. Frustration which is the opposite of vigor, is another aspect that the authors took into consideration for evaluating work engagement. The authors include the aspect of personal development as it was mentioned by most of the participants. This aspect describes employees who seek for self-improvement, self-evaluation or personal growth. By overviewing the aforementioned aspects, this study shows that the employees are highly engaged; out of 33 participants, 31 showed dedication and 27 showed vigor. Absorption is found in 6 cases and frustration is mentioned by 13 interviewees. Moreover, out of 33 participants, 28 mentioned personal devel-opment as an important element of their work life.
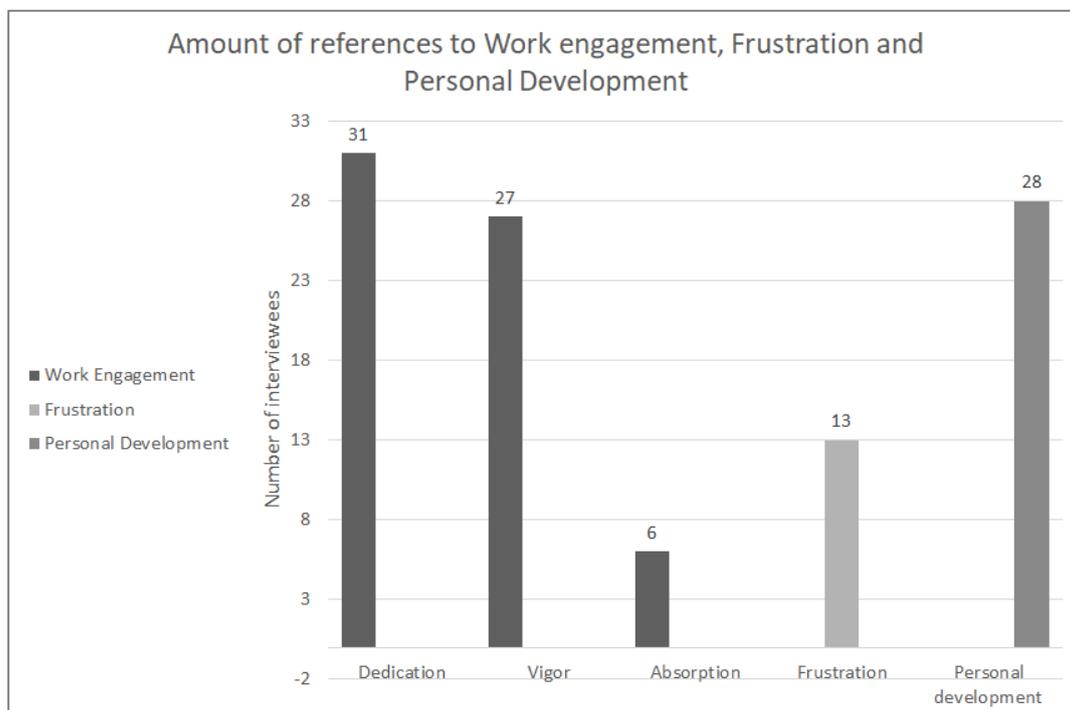

Table 5 Frequency of participants mentioning work engagement, frustration and personal develop-ment

Dedication

Dedication describes enthusiasm, involvement, inspiration, the feeling of meaning and purpose, significance, pride and the seeking of challenges. This study shows that the employees are highly dedicated. A third of the participants stated that they are strongly involved in their work and the majority showed enthusiasm about their work. Moreover, many participants showed inspiration for instance, AE2 mentioned *"what they announce as mission, as culture, goes pretty much along with reality, how things really are. [...] So pretty much honest and open culture."* [line 99-104], and some of them stated that they do something meaningful with significance and they feel proud. Further, about a third of the participants mentioned that they see a purpose in their work, and feel challenged.

Vigor

When the employees are mentally resilient, vigorous and work long periods without fatigue are considered vigorous. This study shows that the interviewees show high levels of vigor. About half of the participant show mental resilience and perseverance/persistence. For example, interviewee AE2 said *"I am looking forward to see people from the office. I like my routine tasks mostly, of course I am getting tired, but mostly I like them. I think the environment is pretty comfortable."* [line 106-109]. Moreover, some of the participants are vigorous and some participants stated that they do not get easily fatigued, and are able to work for long periods. Furthermore, most of the participants stressed that they invest effort in their work.

Absorption

Absorption refers to employees who immerse themselves in work and have trouble detaching from work. Absorption was only mentioned by six participants which suggests that the employees do not show signs of absorption. One of the participants talked about concentration at work. Another participant mentioned working without realizing how quickly time passes or that they cannot detach themselves from work. For example, AE1 *said "The people can help me and want to help me. It is like another home – I don't want to go home because it is a very nice place."* [line 39-40].

Frustration

The interviewees stated that there are cases that they experience frustration. The study shows that frustration exists in the working environment. A third of the participants mentioned frustration coming from not having control over things and people in their surroundings. For example, D2 stated *"Well, there is probably many irritable people, loud talks, even -well sometimes people get really loud here what else, broken coffee machine- it gets broken quite often."* [line 56-58]. Moreover, few participants mentioned workload, uncertainty and not reaching their personal goals as a reason for frustration. Additionally, few participants get frustrated because of delayed responses.

Personal Development

Regarding personal development, most of the participants stated that they seek feedback because they perceive it as a way to develop personally or improve themselves. Most of the participants stated that they wish to develop personally through feedback. For instance, interviewee S1 pointed out *"you respect yourself you can develop grow you just don't do the same job every day and also Beetroot we have such opportunity for our own growth we are, the company gives us 100 dollars per year that we can just spend them for any of the trainings you would like to visit."* [line 138-141]. Almost half of the participants mentioned feedback as a means to self-evaluation and self-enhancement, and few stated that the feedback environment promotes personal development.

5.4 Organizational Citizenship behavior

Organizational Citizenship Behavior describes voluntary commitment of the employees which is not part of the task or role description. OCB includes seven aspects; social participation, employee sustainability, civic virtue, knowledge-sharing, helping and, individual initiative. After overviewing the aforementioned aspects of OCB this study shows that the employees show signs of existing Organizational Citizenship Behavior whereas some aspects are more prominent than others such as social participation, knowledge-sharing and helping. Among 33 interviews,

social participation was mentioned 31 times, knowledge-sharing was found 24 times and helping was mentioned by 20 participants. Moreover, 10 out of 33 participants mentioned that they are engaged in employee sustainability, nine participants mentioned civic virtue and eight participants showed individual initiative and voice. Administrative behavior was mentioned by three participants.
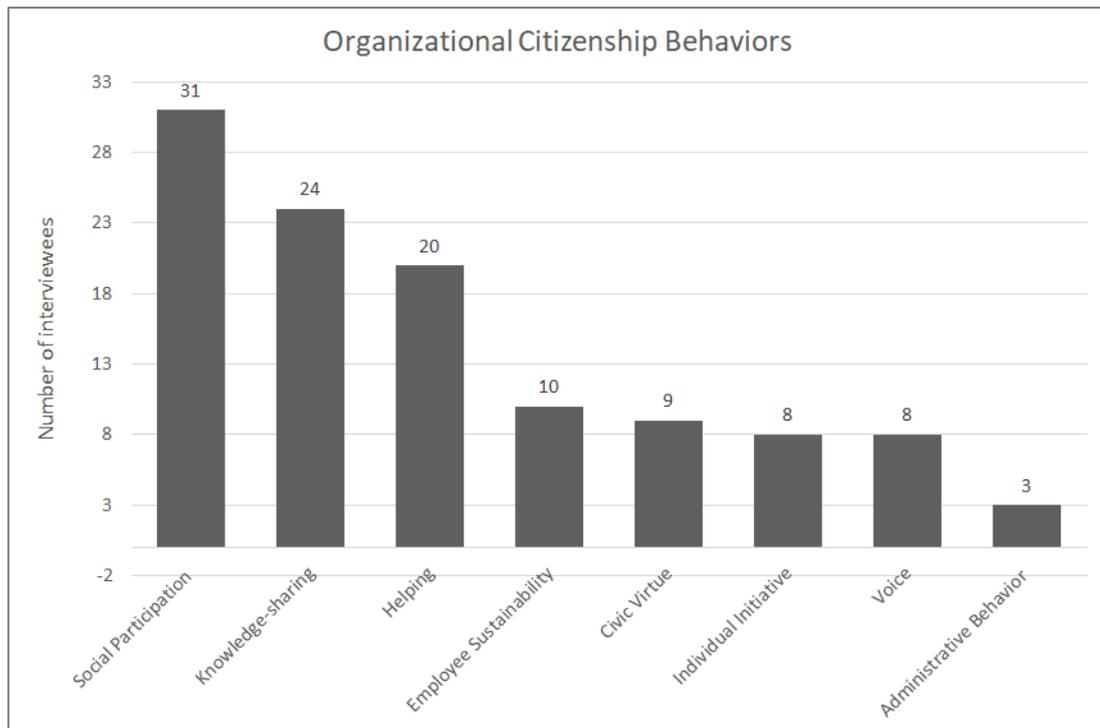
Figure 6 Frequency of participants mentioning organizational citizenship behaviors

Social participation

Social participation occurs when employees participate in activities that are not directly related to the core job tasks. This study shows that the employees show social participation. 31 participants mentioned their social participation in different kind of events and activities that are non-work-related. For example, a few participants stated that they were part of classes/workshops/seminars, one third stated that they participated in team buildings, and 30 that they were present in mingling/parties. For example, D4 pointed out *"I also love very much the attitude among our colleagues, our events, different travels, parties, breakfast and so on. It is not such any kind of job it is a way of life."* [line 22-25].

Knowledge-sharing

Knowledge-sharing includes sharing one's expertise and knowledge with colleagues. This study shows that knowledge-sharing is achieved in the organization. Most of the interviewees responded that there is knowledge-sharing in the company through different processes. A few described knowledge-sharing through meetings. Some participants mentioned the intranet as a mean of sharing knowledge and almost half of the participants stated that interactions or when meeting their colleagues for helping each other is used for knowledge-sharing. For instance, D10 said *"if you have a problem you can just stand there and say "hey guys I have a problem with that, is someone know how to solve that" and usually guys and girls can come to me and help."* [line 66-68]. Active sharing and teaching was mentioned by a few participants as well.

Helping

Helping occurs when employees voluntarily help their colleagues with problems and issues that concern work. Moreover, helping can also concern the prevention of these problems at work. This study shows that there is a positive stance towards helping each other and receiving help in the organization. Most of the participants mentioned that they want to help their colleagues. Furthermore, half of the participants stated that they received help from their colleagues. For instance, AE2 stated *"I am asking "what can I do for you or what can I do for you to be able to solve it?""* [line 72].

Individual initiative

Individual initiative occurs when employees put extra effort into their tasks and e.g. volunteer with extra responsibilities or do more as is expected of them. This study suggests that individual initiative exists in the employees but is not exceptionally distinct. A few participants showed individual initiative as voluntary extra tasks. For example, the interviewee M2 pointed out *"We are constantly growing and it turned out to be I was very enthusiastic about it and I volunteered to do some project management for everything. So guys are developing it in Odessa and I travel to*

Odessa every now and then to know the office, to just see how it goes personally"
[line 41-43]. Moreover, few participants showed conscientious behavior. For example, M4 said *"So I decided I need to know the product I sell and I decided to do research which we call client DNA. So I went through all clients"* [line 11-12].

Employee sustainability

Employee sustainability describes when employees take part in activities that maintain their own or promote their colleagues' health and well-being. This study shows that employee sustainability exists as many employees mention various activities that serve health and well-being. Few interviewees mentioned that they support physical well-being and health. For example, HR5 stated *"we can go on Friday for a drink or dinner or play bowling and we did last year before the marathon, we did the training. So, we have many things."* [line 140-141]. Additionally, few participants mentioned that they support their own or their colleagues' psychological health and well-being. For example, interviewee D1 points out *"working by teams and when we group together in this one room it is cool because we can really ask each other about something like family."* [line 88-89].

Voice

Voice describes actions like making suggestions, asking critical questions or speaking up when something needs improvement. This study shows that voice exists in situations where the employees make suggestions or ask critical questions. Some participants stated that the action of voice happens in cases where they have to ask questions regarding general topics, make suggestions for improvement, raise questions when they are not pleased or speak up. For example, M6 voices doubts about decisions in the organization *"So what I try to do is reason more around why are we picking this chair [...] This is really pissing some people because it makes everything more complicated."* [line 72-77].

Civic virtue

Civic virtue occurs when employees identify themselves with the organization and accept the responsibilities that come with being an active organizational member. This study shows that civic virtue is pursued by a part of the employees. Two interviewees mentioned that they care about their colleagues. Furthermore, few participants mentioned that they care about company's reputation. For instance, D8 pointed out *"it works for the whole image of the company if you deal [...] it feels like you are saving someone's life, save time and makes you feel better"* [line 138-141]. Additionally, two interviewees stated that they understand and spread the company's vision.

Administrative behavior

Administrative behavior occurs when employees actively plan, coordinate, organize and supervise organizational aspects and when they care about work-related resources. This study shows that the employees do not show a lot of administrative behavior. Three interviewees mentioned to perform administrative behaviors such as organizing, planning and coordinating various organizational aspects. For example, M4 mentioned *"I was thinking about, thinking and planning this account structure because we have some people overloaded, we have some people like just recently started in Beetroot and they are not that familiar with things going."* [line 52-54].

5.5 Organizational characteristics and special interest

The interviews shed light on specific organizational characteristics. Firstly, the participants mentioned the benefits of a less-hierarchical environment. For example, AE2 stated *"I like the informal style of communication. I like that we are really have very minimal hierarchy and kind of relatively freedom of decision-making"* [line 8-9]. Secondly, two participants referred to the low perception of politics. For instance, M6 pointed out *"in a hierarchical organization everyone is playing a*

political game, you are kind of used to that because it is just because you like this kind of stuff" [line 62-65]. Moreover, a few participants shared their opinions and perceptions about the organization's vision and leaders. For example, D12 stated *"In Poltava is very bad for work. [...] So, I think you know one time CEO said that Beetroot is like a social elevator for people. […] We try to keep people here and grow some IT class"* [line 41-46]. Moreover, few participants raised their concerns about the company's fast growth. For example, D10 said *"I think, yeah, it is really harder, especially for like if like in our case in our office we have so many people right now it is harder to keep this family feeling."* [line 118-119].

Some participants shared their ideas for improving the organizational structure or work environment. Some participants stated that some processes can be systematized and two expressed their opinions about improving the existing technology. For example, D6 pointed out *"here I don't feel any policies, I think some security policies must be in this company because of security information."* [line 49-50].

Moreover, special interest showed the case of M5 who is the only employee that commented negatively about the salary and employees' cases of quitting. For example, M5 mentioned *"It is ok to pay good salary for [name of the city] but we all know that it is not enough. It can be higher because the thing I don't like about it people started to leave and yes they don't do anything about it."* [line 179-181].

5.6 Answers to the RQs

The authors answer the research questions based on the analysis of the interview data.

RQ 1: How does feedback environment affect work engagement?

The analysis shows that feedback environment affects work engagement positively. According to 30 out of 33 respondents, the environment in the organization promotes feedback seeking and according to 13 participants, the effort cost to take feedback is low. This is important because the employees feel comfortable to exchange feedback and they are willing to do it. Feedback delivery processes, planned and unplanned, occur and promote feedback seeking as well. Source availability and source credibility are high; this indicates that the employees are in a feedback environment where they trust the source of feedback. The quality of feedback that the employees provide or receive includes favorable and unfavorable feedback.

The existence of all these features of a feedback environment increases dedication and vigor of the employees; two out of three features of work engagement. Through the existing feedback environment, the employees feel more involved and realise the meaning and purpose of their task easier as well as its significance. The positive feedback environment allows the employees to share knowledge, discuss possible difficulties, help each other so that they can be vigorous, mental resilient, persistent and willing to invest effort into their task. Moreover, a positive feedback environment can steer against the main reasons for frustration that are things out of one's control, delayed responses, uncertainty and not achieving one's goal. All these aspects of a positive feedback environment enable the employees to proceed in their tasks with dedication and vigor, to be less frustrated since they can find solutions in their working environment and to reach out for help when they need it. Furthermore, the environment promotes their personal development through different processes such as meetings, workshops, stand-ups and other social gatherings. This is because the employees have the chance to develop their skills and gain knowledge about others and about themselves. As a result of the progress in their

personal development, they feel stronger, more vigorous and are able to cope with their tasks and other challenges. Moreover, the employees have freedom in taking responsibility and feel ownership over their tasks and this helps them to feel more engaged to the task, the role and the organization.

RQ2: How does work engagement affect OCB?

This study shows that work engagement affects some aspects of OCB positively. The most obvious OCBs are social participation, knowledge-sharing and helping as the majority of the participants are engaged in them. For instance, out of 33 participants, 31 engage in social participation, 24 in knowledge-sharing, and 20 in helping. Engaged employees who show signs of dedication and vigor are more likely to share their knowledge and help because they feel the meaning and purpose and they are more involved in their work. The employees who are dedicated and vigorous in their work communicate this feeling to extra contractual events. Employees that feel inspiration, significance and pride in their work, employees who feel as being part of a family, are more likely to transfer this feeling of belonging to non-work-related events and activities with their social participation.

Moreover, this study shows that employee sustainability, civic virtue, individual initiative, voice and, administrative behavior are also affected by work engagement but not in the extent of the aforementioned three dominating OCBs. Employee sustainability, which was mentioned by 10 participants out of 33 participants, shows that the engaged employees of the organization participate in activities that serve their health and well-being because they have the energy to do so. Civic virtue was mentioned by nine out of 33 participants and shows that the employees care for their colleagues and the company's vision. Once more, the engaged employees of the organization are more likely to show the commitment and involvement to the organization because of their dedication. Individual initiative was mentioned by eight out of 33 participants. The employees are willing to volunteer for extra tasks or take initiative while performing their tasks because they are vigorous and dedicated. Voice was mentioned by eight out of 33 participants and occurred when the employees were making suggestions or asked critical questions. Engaged employees who want to perform well in their tasks, are more likely to raise their voice

despite of hinders. Administrative behavior was mentioned by only three participants out of 33 participants. The authors cannot make a connection in this case but assume that the high role clarity prevents the need for additional administrative behavior.

6 Discussion

The present study was designed to answer the research questions "How does feedback environment affect work engagement?" and "How does work engagement affect OCB?". The results of this study show that a positive feedback environment affects work engagement positively in a less-hierarchical organization with self-managed teams. Further, work engagement affects positively specific aspects of OCB such as the aspects of social participation, knowledge-sharing and helping.

Consistency with the literature

Consistent with Lee and Edmondson (2017), this research shows that feedback environment is positive and promoted through the organizational structure of the self-managed teams. Secondly, the authors find that knowledge-sharing flourishes in a less-hierarchical organization that is characterized by an environment where caring and helping seem to be crucial aspects. This finding corroborates the findings of previous research by Zárraga and Bonache (2005). Thirdly, the employees take low effort cost when seeking feedback from their co-workers because the environment promotes feedback seeking with different feedback delivery processes. These results match those observed in Whitaker et al. (2007) who state that when employees seek feedback, the uncertainty is reduced and that affects the employees' role clarity and job performance positively. Furthermore, Whitaker et al. stress that employees who do not need to make a big effort for feedback seeking are more likely to increase their effort to seek feedback. The authors of the study at hand observe that working in a less-hierarchical organization with self-managed teams, the employees have the chance to seek and exchange feedback through processes and interactions. In this way, they communicate possible problems and find solutions that makes them more flexible in problem solving and finishing their tasks. Another interesting finding is that when the frequency of favorable and unfavorable feedback was compared, unfavorable feedback was named less often; only by a very small

amount of people. Despite the fact that many employees stated their preference for honest feedback, the occurrence of unfavorable feedback such as complaints, criticism and expressions of dissatisfaction was not mentioned often. As Dahling et al. (2018) showed through their study, unfavorable feedback is not by default negative. The authors think it is important to explore the source of unfavorable feedback because the occurrence of both favorable and unfavorable feedback helps the employees to proceed with their tasks and develop themselves.

In addition, the authors find that the employees are exceptionally engaged and the majority shows dedication and vigor since they are engaged and attached to their work. Moreover, the authors observe that the employees express that their personal expectations, such as the need for personal development and growth, are fulfilled within the organization. Since most of the employees are engaged to their work, this could suggest a connection between fulfillment of their need-expectations and engagement. This is in line with Green et al. (2017) who states that the fulfillment of human need expectations creates an energizing feeling that might lead to motivated behavior. Furthermore, this study indicates that work engagement affects especially three aspects of OCB, social participation, knowledge-sharing, helping positively. The authors of this study observed that engaged and enthusiastic employees, who feel involved and are willing to share their knowledge, are more likely to engage in these behaviors. The employees stressed social participation as an important aspect of their working life. These findings are consistent with Dekas et al. (2013) who suggest that social participation and employee sustainability might be essential for innovative organizations since the competence of the organization depends on team building processes. The authors of this study also find that the employees show a sense of role responsibility and this affects their work engagement positively. The employees feel committed to their task, colleagues and the organization and that makes them work with more energy and endurance. This finding is in agreement with Kalbers and Cenker (2008) who state that responsibility and job performance are connected. Moreover, some employees mentioned a feeling of ownership for their role and the organization. The authors of this study assume that this feeling of ownership enhances work engagement, because according to Van Dyne and Pierce (2004), there is a connection between ownership and

organizational commitment. Role conflict, ambiguity and overload were not mentioned frequently. Thus, the authors of the study at hand speculate that the roles seem to be clear to most of the employees.

Interesting findings

It was surprising for the authors that many employees were aware of the organizational structure of the company and also about the organizational design that the founders took as an inspiration; the authors did not anticipate that the employees would know the actual terms of the organizational structure or ideas behind the organizational design. The authors assume that the employees know about these by participating in workshops, team buildings and other social events that the organization offers. Another thing that some employees mentioned is their concern about the growth of the organization in terms of new organizational members. This finding was also worth to mention because it suggests that the employees feel protective about the "family" feeling and that it is imperiled by the growth. As Velinov et al. (2018) stressed, the size of the group and the self-managed structure in the organization allows it to keep its agility. Another interesting finding was that a small number of employees commented that it would be useful to systematize processes and policies within the organizational environment. As Lee and Edmondson (2017) pointed out, self-managed organizations formalize the decentralization of authority throughout the organization. However, Barker (1993) stressed that self-managed environment has the potential to become a bureaucracy-like system where employees are suppressed by peer pressure and rules and norms created by their colleagues. The authors take into consideration Bernstein et al. (2016) who questioned whether all employees fit into organizations following innovative organizational designs characterized by self-management and wonder whether a systematization and formalization of processes and policies would threaten the function of the self-managed environment. Lastly, the authors notice that some employees mentioned frustration about delays in decision-making processes. This is unanticipated because in self-managed teams the decisions are made through the advice process, where the decision-taker consults the people affected by the decision and people with expertise (Laloux, 2014). Since the information flow is not hindered by

hierarchical structure and there is a positive feedback environment, delays in decision making should be prevented. The authors assume that in some cases the employees might be reluctant to take responsibility to make decisions because they rather rely on authority.

Implications

Additionally, some implications are discussed in this paper. Firstly, the authors were surprised to find high work engagement also among the employees that work as developers/designers in dedicated teams outside of the organization. Those employees show dedication and vigor towards their Beetroot although they officially work for another company. The fact that a positive feedback environment exists affecting work engagement positively in this self-managed organization could be used by other organizations that want to follow innovative organizational designs. Secondly, some interviewees mentioned frustration in their everyday work life. At the same time, they were able to show dedication, vigor and a preference for taking challenges. This could be an issue for future research because it is useful and practical to find out how their frustration does not affect their work engagement. Thirdly, future research might be able to investigate unfavorable feedback in self-managed organizations. The authors suggest exploring whether unfavorable feedback occurs in self-managed and less-hierarchical organizations and in which form and context it is expressed. The reason is that unfavorable feedback can assist the employees to deal with their tasks and improve their personal skills.

Limitations

The authors are aware that a qualitative approach poses both strengths and weaknesses. Regarding reliability, the authors' aim was to have a representative sample. Thus, the sample for the interviews includes 33 out of the 230 employees of the population of the organization, representing all different departments. Regarding validity, the authors chose their sample randomly. However, a small number of participants was chosen deliberately because of their position or experience in the organization. Furthermore, findings regarding work engagement show that most of the employees were highly engaged. The authors bear in mind that it is important to

reach the disengaged and unsatisfied employees while investigating work engagement. The authors speculate that it is easier for engaged employees to take part in a study regarding their organization. Unfortunately, coming as researchers to an organization from outside, it is not easy to have access to those employees and it would not be ethical to force employees to participate in a study. Moreover, findings of this study may be somewhat limited by the language capacity of the participants since most of the interviewees did not speak their mother tongue during the focus groups and the interview sessions. In some cases, the interviewees were using Russian words. Fortunately, one of the authors was able to understand and translate. The authors wonder whether the participants would have shared more information if the interviews were held in their mother tongue and translated afterwards.

7 Conclusion

This research project offers an explanation of how feedback environment affects work engagement in a less-hierarchical, self-managed organization and how work engagement affects employees' OCB. From the research that has been carried out, the authors conclude that a positive feedback environment in a less-hierarchical organization, which promotes the exchange of feedback and enhances dedication and vigor in the employees, affects work engagement positively. Moreover, engaged employees are more likely to perform OCB, especially social participation, knowledge-sharing and helping, because they care and have the sense of responsibility for the organization and their colleagues.

More specifically, the following conclusions can be drawn from the present study; firstly, in less-hierarchical organizations with self-managed teams, a positive feedback environment is essential, feedback seeking processes are implemented in the organizational structure and are promoted by the organizational environment. Therefore, there is a functioning information flow because there are processes such as meetings and workshops that support feedback seeking. Secondly, the existence of a feedback environment leads to more engaged employees and enhances the employees' dedication and vigor because it is easier for them, due to the existence of feedback environment, to be committed and engaged to the organization. All of the aforementioned aspects make the employees more functioning and mentally resilient. Moreover, work engagement enhances the aforementioned Organizational Citizenship Behaviors because dedicated employees are more likely to help and share their knowledge; they are more involved and committed towards the organization and they care about the organization and their colleagues.

This research project contributes to the literature regarding how feedback environment affects work engagement in self-managed, less-hierarchical organizations and how employees' work engagement in less-hierarchical organizations affects OCB.

Furthermore, this research delivers a qualitative insight that shows the perspective of employees working in a self-managed environment. Moreover, the value of a positive feedback environment is stressed and how this environment affects the dedication of the employees. Last but not least, the knowledge about the significance of feedback environment in an organization working with self-managed teams can help organizations to enhance employees' engagement. Due to the fact that the employees feel more engaged, have easy access to information, can communicate problems and find answers, vigor and resilience are increased. Additionally, this increased engagement and the sense of pride makes the employees convey their energy to voluntary behaviors and perform OCB.

The authors propose further research regarding communication processes such as decision-making processes, leadership and personality styles, and feelings of responsibility and ownership in less-hierarchical and self-managed organizations. Studying less-hierarchical and self-managed organizations that follow new organizational designs, is intriguing because these organizations hold the potential to overcome problems that traditional organizational designs face. The authors are interested in decision-making processes within a self-managed environment without middle-management. Since the employees decide themselves and within their teams even over broader organizational aspects, it is useful to observe how the decisions are made and how this process functions in practice. This leads to the second intriguing aspect of such organizations, namely leadership. Since the employees are self-managed, they perform leadership within their own role. The authors are curious to investigate which leadership and personality characteristics play a role while working self-managed. As a next step, the authors suggest to investigate in detail employees' feelings of responsibility and ownership and how these feelings emerge and influence the work place. More specifically, the authors propose a research design with combined methods for both steps, including qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods bears the strength of both giving an in-depth insight and the opportunity to make statements regarding a bigger population of the organization.

8 References

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9 Appendix

Appendix 1: Focus groups and analysis

Following questions were used: 1) What is your 3 start-stop-continue in Beetroot? What would you want to start? What would you want to stop? What would you continue? 2) What is effective feedback for you? 3) Can you name 5 things that motivate you in Beetroot?

Focus Groups – Data Analysis

	Kiev	Odessa	Poltava
Atmosphere, family feeling	Yes	Yes	Yes
Freedom	Yes	Yes	Yes
Relationships at work	Yes	Yes	Yes
Flexibility	Yes	Yes	-
Supporting people	Yes	-	-
Advanced equipment	-	Yes	-
Personal development, growth	-	Yes	Yes
Job safety	Yes	Yes	-
Authenticity	Yes	-	-
Responsibility	Yes	-	-
Swedish Attitude	-	Yes	Yes

Appendix 2: Interview guidelines

a.   **Interview questions for the CEO/CFO**

General
- What did you do yesterday in Beetroot?
- What did you like about coming to work yesterday?
- Can you describe some problems that you might face in a typical day at work?
- Which situations could make you feel annoyed? How do you usually react?
- How do you interact with the Beetroots?

Process
- Feedback:
  - If you have a task and you don't know what to do, how do you proceed?

- If you ask for advice how do you choose the person to go to?
        - If a client has a problem or is unhappy, how do you proceed? Can you give an example?
        - If you see that a colleague has difficulties with a task, what do you do?
- Motivation:
        How do you describe a motivated employee?
- Decision making:
        - Is there a decision-making process that Beetroots follow?
        - How do you react when wrong decisions are made?
- Leadership:
        - Is Beetroot close to your vision?
        - How do you see your role as a leader?
- Teamwork:
        - How would you describe effective feedback?
        - How would you describe a successful team?
- OCB: What extra-activities are there in Beetroot? Are you part of any?

General in End
- What is in your eyes the best thing about Beetroot? (strengths)
- If you could change one thing in Beetroot what would it be?
- Do you have anything that you would like to add?

b) General interview questions

General Interview Questions
General Information
1. Name:
2. Department:
3. What did you do yesterday in Beetroot?
4. What did you like about coming to work yesterday?

Role description
- What is your role in Beetroot? What are you doing in Beetroot?
        - How long have you been a part in Beetroot?
        - How did you choose/get this role?
- Do you like your role? What do you like/dislike about it? Examples?
        - Do you experience any difficulties in your role? Can you give an example?
        - Can you describe a typical day as a member of your team? Like how do you interact with each other about your roles?
        - Can you describe some problems that you might face in a typical day at work?
        - Which situations could make you feel annoyed? How do you usually react?

Process
- Feedback:
        - If you have a task and you don't know what to do, how do you proceed?
        - If you ask for advice how do you choose the person to go to?
        - If a client has a problem or is unhappy, how do you proceed? Can you give an example?
        - If you see that a colleague has difficulties with a task, what do you do?
- Teamwork:
        - How would you describe effective feedback?
        - How would you describe a successful team?
- OCB:
        - Are you doing any extra activities beside your job?
        - Are you meeting your co-workers outside of work?
        - Are you doing also other activities with your co-workers?

General in End
- What is in your eyes the best thing about Beetroot? (strengths)
- Can you name 5 things that make you come to work every day?

- How is Beetroot different from your previous working experiences?
- If you could change one thing in Beetroot what would it be?
- Do you have anything that you would like to add?

Appendix 3: Scales: UWES, FES, OCB-KW

a) UWES scale: Source: Schaufeli & Bakker, 2006

Appendix
Work and Well-Being Survey (UWES)

The following 17 statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement care-
fully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, cross
the "0" (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often
you felt it by crossing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that
way.

Never	Almost Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Always
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.[a] (VI1)
2. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose. (DE1)
3. Time flies when I am working. (AB1)
4. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.[a] (VI2)
5. I am enthusiastic about my job.[a] (DE2)
6. When I am working, I forget everything else around me. (AB2)
7. My job inspires me.[a] (DE3)
8. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.[a] (VI3)
9. I feel happy when I am working intensely.[a] (AB3)
10. I am proud of the work that I do.[a] (DE4)
11. I am immersed in my work.[a] (AB4)
12. I can continue working for very long periods at a time. (VI4)
13. To me, my job is challenging. (DE5)
14. I get carried away when I am working.[a] (AB5)
15. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally. (VI5)
16. It is difficult to detach myself from my job. (AB6)
17. At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well. (VI6)

Source: Schaufeli and Bakker (2003).
Note: VI = Vigor scale; DE = Dedication scale; AB = Absorption scale.
a. Shortened version (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale–9 [UWES-9]).

b) FES scale: Source: Steelman et al. 2004

	Supervisor Source	Coworker Source
Source credibility	My supervisor is generally familiar with my performance on the job.	My coworkers are generally familiar with my performance on the job.
	In general, I respect my supervisor's opinions about my job performance.	In general, I respect my coworkers' opinions about my job performance.
	With respect to job performance feedback, I usually do not trust my supervisor.	With respect to job performance feedback, I usually do not trust my coworkers.
	My supervisor is fair when evaluating my job performance.	My coworkers are fair when evaluating my job performance.
	I have confidence in the feedback my supervisor gives me.	I have confidence in the feedback my coworkers give me.
Feedback quality	My supervisor gives me useful feedback about my job performance.	My coworkers give me useful feedback about my job performance.
	The performance feedback I receive from my supervisor is helpful.	The performance feedback I receive from my coworkers is helpful.
	I value the feedback I receive from my supervisor.	I value the feedback I receive from my coworkers.

	The feedback I receive from my supervisor helps me do my job.	The feedback I receive from my coworkers helps me do my job.
	The performance information I receive from my supervisor is generally not very meaningful.	The performance information I receive from my coworkers is generally not very meaningful.
Feedback delivery	My supervisor is supportive when giving me feedback about my job performance.	My coworkers are supportive when giving me feedback about my job performance.
	When my supervisor gives me performance feedback, he or she is considerate of my feelings.	When my coworkers give me performance feedback, they are usually considerate of my feelings.
	My supervisor generally provides feedback in a thoughtless manner.	My coworkers generally provide feedback in a thoughtless manner.
	My supervisor does not treat people very well when providing performance feedback.	In general, my coworkers do not treat people very well when providing performance feedback.
	My supervisor is tactful when giving me performance feedback.	In general, my coworkers are tactful when giving me performance feedback.
Favorable feedback	When I do a good job at work, my supervisor praises my performance.	When I do a good job at work, my coworkers praise my performance.
	I seldom receive praise from my supervisor.	I seldom receive praise from my coworkers.
	My supervisor generally lets me know when I do a good job at work.	My coworkers generally let me know when I do a good job at work.
	I frequently receive positive feedback from my supervisor.	I frequently receive positive feedback from my coworkers.
Unfavorable feedback	When I don't meet deadlines, my supervisor lets me know.	When I don't meet deadlines, my coworkers let me know.
	My supervisor tells me when my work performance does not meet organizational standards.	My coworkers tell me when my work performance does not meet organizational standards.

	On those occasions when my job performance falls below what is expected, my supervisor lets me know.	On those occasions when my job performance falls below what is expected, my coworkers let me know.
	On those occasions when I make a mistake at work, my supervisor tells me.	On those occasions when I make a mistake at work, my coworkers tell me.
Source availability	My supervisor is usually available when I want performance information.	My coworkers are usually available when I want performance information.
	My supervisor is too busy to give me feedback.	My coworkers are too busy to give me feedback.
	I have little contact with my supervisor.	I have little contact with my coworkers.
	I interact with my supervisor on a daily basis.	I interact with my coworkers on a daily basis.
	The only time I receive performance feedback from my supervisor is during my performance review.	
Promotes feedback seeking	My supervisor is often annoyed when I directly ask for performance feedback.	My coworkers are often annoyed when I directly ask them for performance feedback.
	When I ask for performance feedback, my supervisor generally does not give me the information right away.	When I ask for performance feedback, my coworkers generally do not give me the information right away.
	I feel comfortable asking my supervisor for feedback about my work performance.	I feel comfortable asking my coworkers for feedback about my work performance.
	My supervisor encourages me to ask for feedback whenever I am uncertain about my job performance.	My coworkers encourage me to ask for feedback whenever I am uncertain about my job performance.

c) OCB-KW scale: Source: Dekas et al. 2013

Table 1. OCB-KW Scale Items & Emergent Categories of Citizenship Behavior

OCB Category (and definition)	Verbatim Examples from Focus Groups	Final OCB-KW Items	% of Overall Activities Generated
Employee Sustainability (α = .79). Participating in activities to maintain or improve one's own health and well-being, or to support others' efforts to maintain their health and well-being.	"Join a 'stretch circle' one of my co-workers organized to get people up from their desk and doing some worthwhile stretches to keep fit and healthy at work!"	1. Makes others feel comfortable 'being themselves' at work. 2. Expresses his/her own authentic personality at work. 3. Supports others' efforts to make their personal health and well-being a priority. 4. Praises others when they are successful.	18%
Social Participation (α = .78). Taking part in social activities during the workday that are not directly related to core job tasks.	"Participating in internal, for-fun events (e.g., talent show)." "Lunches and playtime (foosball, ping-pong, video games)."	1. Gets to know his/her coworkers on a personal basis. 2. Celebrates coworkers' life events (e.g., birthdays, weddings, etc.). 3. Participates in informal social activities with coworkers during the workday. 4. Is playful in workplace interactions.	17%
Civic Virtue (α = .84). Taking actions indicative of a macro-level interest in the organization as a whole. Actions reflect a person's recognition of being part of a larger whole and accepting the responsibilities that such membership entails.	"Attended Engineering All-hands Meeting."	1. Attends events that are not required, but help the [Google] community. 2. Attends meetings that are not mandatory, but are considered important. 3. Keeps up with organizational news (e.g., [Google]-wide announcements, organizational changes, etc.). 4. Takes part in [Google]-sponsored knowledge-sharing opportunities (e.g., brownbags, talks, training courses, etc.). 5. Volunteers for special projects in addition to his/her core job tasks.	12%
Voice (α = .81). Participating in	"Noticing low-efficiency meetings and proposing	1. Makes creative suggestions to	12%

activities, making suggestions, or speaking out with the intent of improving the organization's products, or some aspect of individual, group, or organizational functioning.	alternate means of communication."	coworkers. 2. Voices opinions about work-related issues even if others disagree. 3. Makes constructive suggestions to improve processes for getting work done. 4. Encourages others in the group to voice their opinions regarding issues that affect the group.	
Helping ($\alpha = .88$). Voluntarily helping coworkers with work-related issues or problems, or preventing the occurrence of work-related problems.	"One of my team members helped me write a macro."	1. Helps others who have heavy workloads. 2. Willingly helps others solve work-related problems. 3. Is always read to lend a helping hand to those around him/her. 4. Tries to prevent problems for coworkers. 5. Considers the impact of his/her actions on coworkers. 6. Communicates with others before initiating actions that might affect them.	7%
Knowledge-sharing. Sharing knowledge or expertise with coworkers.	"Conversing with non-Engineers to explain engineering topics."	n/a	6%

activities, making suggestions, or speaking out with the intent of improving the organization's products, or some aspect of individual, group, or organizational functioning.	alternate means of communication."	coworkers. 2. Voices opinions about work-related issues even if others disagree. 3. Makes constructive suggestions to improve processes for getting work done. 4. Encourages others in the group to voice their opinions regarding issues that affect the group.	
Helping ($\alpha = .88$). Voluntarily helping coworkers with work-related issues or problems, or preventing the occurrence of work-related problems.	"One of my team members helped me write a macro."	1. Helps others who have heavy workloads. 2. Willingly helps others solve work-related problems. 3. Is always read to lend a helping hand to those around him/her. 4. Tries to prevent problems for coworkers. 5. Considers the impact of his/her actions on coworkers. 6. Communicates with others before initiating actions that might affect them.	7%
Knowledge-sharing. Sharing knowledge or expertise with coworkers.	"Conversing with non-Engineers to explain engineering topics."	n/a	6%
Administrative Behavior. Planning, organizing, controlling, or supervising any aspect of the organization's operations and mission; maintaining work-related resources	"Taking care of details of 'events' that would otherwise go undone."	n/a	5%

Appendix 4: Codebook

Feedback Environment
• Feedback environment is "the contextual aspects of day-to-day supervisor-subordinate and co-worker-co-worker feedback processes rather than to the formal appraisal feedback session." (Steelman, Levy, & Snell, 2004, p. 166) • Effective feedback: Perception of the interviewee. • The effort costs are which efforts the employees need to expend while they are in the process of seeking feedback (as cited in Ashford & Cummings, 1983)

	- Favorable feedback: Frequency of favorable feedback such as compliments (Steelman et al., 2004)
	- Feedback delivery refers to the feedback's provider intentions and delivery processes (Steelman et al., 2004)
	- Feedback quality concerns how consistent, specific and useful the feedback is (Steelman et al., 2004)
	- Promoting feedback seeking refers to whether the working environment allows the employees to seek feedback and whether they feel comfortable to do it (Steelman et al., 2004)
	- Source availability refers to the availability of receiving feedback through daily interactions (Steelman et al., 2004)
	- Source credibility concerns the sources' expertise and knowledge and trustworthiness of the source to distribute accurate information (Steelman et al., 2004)
	- Unfavorable feedback: Frequency of unfavorable feedback such as critique and phrases of dissatisfaction (Steelman et al., 2004)
Work Engagement	
	- Work engagement: Work engagement is "positive, fulfilling, work-related state characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzá- lez-Romá, & Bakker, 2002)
	- Absorption: Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly, and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work (Schaufeli et al., 2002)
	- Dedication: Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge (Schaufeli et al., 2002)
	- Personal development: Knowledge, personality, soft skills, authenticity.
	- Vigor: is characterized by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties. The employee is mentally resilient, not easily fatigued, can work for long periods, is vigorous and strong (Schaufeli et al., 2002)
	- Frustration: "What makes you feel annoyed?"
Role	
	- Challenges: Personal challenges, Team challenges, Task challenges, Organizational challenges
	- Responsibility: Feeling responsible for my task and the company, "I feel responsible for"; the responsibility to the role in the organization is positively connected to job performance, experience and autonomy (Kalbers & Cenker, 2008)
	- Ownership: Feeling that something is "mine"; feeling of ownership that leads people see possessions as parts of themselves and this feeling leads to a feeling of responsibility (Van Dyne & Pierce, 2004)
	- Role ambiguity: Role ambiguity refers to unclear or vague performance expectations (Katz & Kahn, 1978).
	- Role conflict: Role conflict refers to simultaneous contradictory expectations from co-workers and employers (Katz & Kahn, 1978).
	- Role overload: Role overload is when employees feel overloaded with tasks and responsibilities, or when too much is expected (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970)
Organizational Citizenship Behavior (Dekas et al. 2013)	
	- OCB: is a person's voluntary commitment within an organization or company that is not part of his or her contractual tasks
	- Administrative behavior: administrative behavior occurs when organizational members organize, plan, supervise or control organizational aspects

- Civic virtue: the dedication of employees towards the community of their organization and the acceptance of involved responsibilities; concrete actions, for example, giving tour on the campus
- Employee sustainability: participation in activities that serve the purpose of one's or colleagues' health and well-being
- Helping: helping other colleagues on a voluntary basis in regard to tasks and other work-related issues is also defined as a category
- Individual initiative: individual initiative describes conscientious behavior regarding task-related behavior such as voluntary extra tasks
- Knowledge-sharing: knowledge-sharing occurs when colleagues share and exchange their knowledge and expertise actively
- Social participation: means the participation in social events and activities that are non-work-related
- Voice: describes actions like speaking up, giving suggestions that serve to improve the goals, processes etc. in the organization

Undefined:

- Politics
- Systematize
- Decision-making
- Growing
- Organizational structure
- Technologies and internet
- Perception of successful team
- Cooperation
- Quitting

Appendix 5: Word cloud

Source: Nvivo 2018 @ Charoula Iliadou and Verena Schödl

Appendix 6: Statement of joint thesis

This thesis was co-authored by Charoula Iliadou and Verena Schödl. The study design, research including review and theory, data collection, transcribing, data analysis, and the analysis itself were conducted as a team. All parts were discussed/written/revised together so that a cohesive style was assured.