How do Leaders Share Knowledge?

A single case study of a Multinational Corporation.
Bachelor Thesis in Business Administration

Title: How do leaders share knowledge? A single case study of a Multinational Corporation.

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Key terms: Knowledge Management, Knowledge Sharing, Transformational leadership, Transactional leadership, Cultural Awareness

Abstract

Problem: The number of MNCs in the world are expanding and there is an ever-growing interest in how knowledge is shared since it is said to improve the organization's competitive advantage. It is further argued in existing literature that leadership, and more specifically the leadership behaviors, play a role in how knowledge is shared within multinational corporations. However, few examples from the international setting exist, which led the authors of this thesis to further explore this area of research.

Purpose: The purpose of this research paper is to explore what types of leadership behaviors influence knowledge sharing in a multinational corporation, and how these behaviors impact how leaders share knowledge.

Methodology: In order to fulfill the purpose of this thesis and to properly answer the research question a qualitative approach was chosen. The empirical data was collected through a single case study of a Swedish MNC, Alpha, with subsidiaries abroad. The sample consisted of six participants who hold leadership positions within Alpha, and who continuously travel abroad to the subsidiaries in their work assignments.

Findings: The authors of this thesis found evidence that leaders working in an international setting, such as an MNC, need to possess certain behaviors found in the description of both transactional and transformational leaders. However, the empirical data contribute to the current body of research by showing that these leaders also need to possess the behavior of cultural awareness, to have a deeper understanding of how the different cultures are represented within an organization.
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Chapter 1. Background

In this chapter, the background to the topic is presented to create the foundation on which this thesis is built upon. It will thereafter lead into the problem formulation and purpose of this research paper, and lastly two research questions.

1.1 Background

Benjamin Franklin once wrote that "an investment in knowledge pays the best interest". Still today, many scholars argue that knowledge within the organization is one of the most valuable resources (Szulanski, Ringov and Jensen, 2016; Marouf, 2016). It affects the firm's performance (Krylova, Vera and Crossan, 2016), especially since knowledge is highly dependent on the employees, who create it and whose actions determine the quality of the output (Mueller, 2015; Marouf, 2016). Correspondingly, the impact of knowledge management has gained an increased attention in the intellectual community and have especially been paired with an interest in the growing number of multinational corporations (MNC) (Monteiro, Arvidsson and Birkinshaw, 2008). One of the expressed reasons to why knowledge has become such a vital part of an organization is that it does not only incite productivity and competitiveness but also spur growth within the organization and between organizational units (Szulanski et al., 2016). To further keep the competitive advantage in the marketplace, the importance and quality of the transfer process of knowledge have also gained an increased attention in the research field (Easterby-Smith, Lyles and Tsang, 2008)

Many definitions of knowledge transfer exist, and Krylova et al. (2016, p.1045) emphasize that "inside the firm, knowledge transfer involves either actively communicating to others what one knows or actively consulting others to learn what they know". Yet, a successful knowledge transfer between two units within an organization has been considered somewhat challenging (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008). Not only have there been arguments that various factors can affect a knowledge transfer, but the reality is that knowledge which is also firm-specific and difficult to imitate may be challenging to transfer within an organization as well (Krylova et al., 2016). In later years, there has been a confusion about the terms knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing (Tangaraja, Rasdi, Samah, and Ismail, 2016). The terms, although having separate meanings, are often
used interchangeably. Knowledge transfer is used to describe as the whole knowledge process whereas knowledge sharing is defined as a vital stage of the knowledge transfer process. Although challenges exist, some which were raised by Krylova et al. (2016) above, the sharing of experiences by employees through coordinated events, such as meetings and email conversations, has shown to improve the entire knowledge base of an organization (Easterby-Smith, et al., 2008). Taking the positive findings into consideration, the management of knowledge within organizations is still not viewed as important, and since the benefits of sharing knowledge are not always prioritized, the competence needed may not even exist within the organization (Szulanski et al., 2016).

After further investigating the field, it was found that an increasing amount of research within international business show that the competitive advantage gained from knowledge transfer is more often seen in MNCs rather than firms solely operating within their domestic markets (Asmussen, Foss and Pedersen, 2013). The authors argue that the reason behind a greater competitive advantage within MNCs are due to the naturally diverse knowledge that exists within that organization. Compelling evidence that supports this argument is seen in the report by Statistics Sweden from 2015, where 3,132 Swedish organizations had subsidiaries abroad in 2015, and the number of people employed in these organizations has increased significantly over the last two decades (Cedervärn, 2017). For an organization to keep its competitive advantage, it is also essential that the knowledge and the different information flows within an organization are shared and utilized in all parts of the business (Schulz, 2001).

To be able to share knowledge between the headquarter (HQ) and its subsidiaries, it is further important to understand what factors or individuals are necessary to make knowledge sharing as easy as possible. Employees who are sent from the HQ abroad to subsidiaries on work assignments are often named expatriates, and they have been argued to carry a fundamental role in an MNC. The purpose of an expatriate's work assignment abroad is often to retain the HQ's control, share their expertise, and other vital information to subsidiaries (Chang and Smale, 2013). Many authors, and among them AlMazrouei and Zacca (2015), further argue that certain skills and behaviors are essential for leaders to understand and handle the different situations they face when sharing knowledge at subsidiaries.
1.2 Problem

The number of MNCs in the world are expanding and correspondingly, there is a growing interest in knowledge management within organizations (Monteiro et al., 2008). As seen in the literature, many researchers agree that knowledge is a vital part of the organization and how it helps to increase its competitiveness and success (Szulanski et al., 2016; Marouf, 2016; Mueller, 2015; Krylova et al., 2016). Even though transfer of knowledge can be considered a complex task for an organization, the benefits received includes a stronger relationship between the HQ and its subsidiaries, greater communication (Krylova, et al., 2016), and the possibility for the subsidiary to operate in a more efficient manner (Chang and Smale, 2013).

Further, in the continuing discussion of how MNCs can operate more efficiently, leadership, and more specifically the behaviors leaders use in their role as expatriates, is argued as being of great importance. This is also considered to be a contributing factor when striving towards reaching organizational objectives and goals. Transformational and transactional leadership have long been argued to be the most adequate models to gain a full-range leadership perspective in an organization. In 1985, Bernard M. Bass built upon, at that time, current research and brought the concepts of transactional and transformational into the organizational sphere. He defined the two different leadership styles through characterizing them by six different characteristics that these leaders tend to possess (Bass and Bass, 2008). While these leadership theories are still current in today's society, they have been further developed by other authors arguing to have reached a "fuller full-range model" that will aid organizations to understand their leaders and strategical decisions better (Antonakis and House, 2014). While others argue that the most important behaviors are employee motivation, leader efficiency, and creativity and that these form an exceptional leader, while also creating an inspirational and efficient environment for subordinates (Gridauskienë and Savaneviciene, 2012; Liu and DeFrank, 2013; Arvey, Dhanaraj, Javidan and Zhang, 2015). Thus, the argument still entails that the transactional-transformational paradigm is still of high relevance in today's business environment.

Another discussion that has created a consensus among researchers, is that sending employees to share knowledge at a foreign subsidiary is the most beneficial approach for
MNCs (Chang and Smale, 2013). When leaders are used as facilitators to share knowledge, these individuals naturally practice various leadership styles. It has been argued within the leadership literature that leaders can have attributes coinciding with transformational leadership. Yet, there are still few examples in the literature today connecting the different behaviors of leaders, how these influence knowledge sharing. Further, if the international experience of leaders working for an MNC in a foreign subsidiary provides another view of what behaviors are of importance in an international setting. It has further been recognized that there are other factors than just leadership that may influence how knowledge is being shared. There is an ongoing discussion concerning national and organizational culture and how these factors may affect knowledge sharing (Carmeli, Atwater and Levi, 2010; Karlsen and Gottschalk, 2004). Culture is, therefore, an important aspect to consider, since it affects how individuals act and make decisions, and thus will also impact the knowledge sharing process within an organization operating on different continents. Therefore, there is a need for further exploration, combining these different areas of research with examples and case studies to gain a deeper understanding of how leadership behaviors impact knowledge sharing in MNCs.

### 1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this research paper is to explore what types of leadership behaviors influence knowledge sharing in a multinational corporation, and how these behaviors impact how leaders share knowledge. In order to achieve this purpose, the following research question will be examined in this thesis.

*How do leadership behaviors influence knowledge sharing and what behaviors have the most significance in an MNC?*

### 1.4 Delimitations

This study does not include the behaviors of leaders in organizations operating solely in domestic markets, or any other leaders that are not employed by the selected MNC. Further, only Swedish leaders are considered and selected for the sample, thus the view of leaders of other nationalities are not considered. The selected industry for the thesis is the IT industry, therefore other industries are not examined, and thus the findings cannot provide a generalization of all leaders within all different industries. Lastly, this study
also examines the findings through the lens of transformational and transactional leadership and hence does not consider other leadership theories and models that are made to characterize leaders within organizations.

1.5 Key Terms
Knowledge Management, Knowledge Sharing, Transformational Leadership, Transactional Leadership, Cultural Awareness
Chapter 2. Frame of Reference

This chapter will give you as a reader a solid foundation of the different topics, theories, and findings in the different fields of research. Its aim is to create a deeper understanding and will further aid the authors of this paper to build their research upon.

2.1 Knowledge

Knowledge matter even more today than ever before (Liyanage, Elhag, Ballal, and Li, 2009). Organizations are becoming increasingly more aware of the knowledge within the organization and are starting to understand its value (Little and Deokar, 2016; Szulanski et al., 2016; Marouf, 2016). It further may be easy to use the words information and knowledge interchangeably, however, the general difference is that knowledge holds a greater intensity of validity than information (Schulz, 2001; Maravilhas and Martins, 2018; Tangaraja et al., 2016). Knowledge is often defined to be ingrained in the employees and the structure of the organization (Cheng, 2017), and is more than often argued to be a strategic tool used to gain a competitive advantage (Maravilhas and Martins, 2018). Although a generally broad concept, knowledge encompasses the interpretations, gathered information, perceptions and compiled values of individuals, to provide insight into a chosen field (Schulz, 2001). Not to mention, the management of knowledge has also been described as the key factor for an organization to "create, transfer, assemble, integrate, and exploit knowledge assets" (Meier, 2011, pp.2).

As a strategic tool, knowledge management is argued to assist organizations to execute their work more effectively as well as establishing a competitive persona within the marketplace (Bavik, Tang, Shao, and Lam, 2017). Furthermore, knowledge management does not only increase the overall performance and outcomes of a company but also minimizes costs, improve customer relationships, encourage innovation and pinpoint new markets (Marouf, 2016; Carmeli, Gelbard, and Reiter-Palmon, 2013; Liyanage et al., 2009). Various approaches and views of knowledge are based on the different perspectives within the field. When discussing the type of knowledge that is available in organizations, scholars tend to divide the term into two different categories to further be able to understand them and their differences.
2.1.1 Tacit and Explicit Knowledge

Knowledge can be described to exist in two different forms, tacit and explicit. Tacit knowledge is explained to be harder to grasp, evaluated as "non-verbalized" (Liyanage et al., 2009, pp. 119), and connected to senses and experience of each individual (Nylund and Raelin, 2015). It is explained as a rule of thumb rooted behaviors, a gut feeling, and can, for example, be a culture or a dress code at the workplace (Nonaka and von Krogh, 2009). Tacit knowledge has also been argued to be referenced to as knowledge and insights gained from experience (Riusala and Suutari, 2004), and is therefore also described as being a complex and long process to convert into a written document (Nylund and Raelin, 2015). When Liyanage et al. (2009) compare tacit knowledge with explicit knowledge, the authors argue that tacit knowledge add more value to an organization. On the contrary, explicit knowledge is described as knowledge which can easily be put in writing and transferred to different parties. These include an organization's code of conduct, policies, or educational material. Although Reiche, Harzing and Krammer (2009) argue that both tacit and explicit knowledge have their places in the organizational context, the authors also shed light on the discussion that transferring tacit knowledge is seemed to be more problematic and may require more effort from the sender to the recipient.

2.2 Knowledge Transfer

Knowledge transfer is characterized by the movement of one business unit’s tacit and explicit knowledge to another unit within the organization (Nylund and Raelin, 2015). The key components of knowledge transfer involve the sender and recipient of the needed knowledge and are dependent on how the relationship between these two actors is defined (Cheng, 2017; Riusala and Suutari, 2004). To ensure a successful knowledge transfer, the sender needs to, accurately and effectively, organize the knowledge that is supposed to be passed down to the recipient in a usable form (Liyanage et al., 2009). One of the oldest arrangements of transferring knowledge is the act of mentorship, which is stated to be a support to a successful knowledge transfer as well as demonstrating the importance of the relationship between the sender and the recipient (Fleig-Palmer and Schoorman, 2011). Empirical research has stressed the significant role which trust has for knowledge transfer and that it is executed correctly, implemented and understood by the business unit.
Knowledge transfer is a fundamental factor for organizations to gain and keep a competitive advantage, by creating opportunities for learning between business units (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Riusala and Suutari, 2004). It involves \"the process through which organizational actors ... exchange, receive and are influenced by the experience and knowledge of others\" (van Wijk, Jansen, and Lyles, 2008, pp. 832) and is therefore driven by the perception that knowledge transfer will result in a mutual increase in advantages for both parties. It is further perceived to lead to a gained understanding of the recipient who, accordingly, incorporate and utilize the transferred knowledge within the new business unit (Nylund and Raelin, 2015).

Not only can knowledge transfer be located at higher levels or high involvement of communication within a group, organization, or department (Paulin and Suneson, 2012), but it can also occur on other involvement stages where the participation level is lower (Tangaraja, Rasdi, Ismail, and Samah, 2015). While many conflicting perspectives exist on what is essential for knowledge transfers to add value to the company, the evidence provided acknowledge that some level of human interaction need to be present (Zhang and Jiang, 2015). This is particularly exhibited in the way organizations effectively share their knowledge internally as well as externally (Boer, Berends and van Baalen, 2011). Yet, it has been discussed that knowledge transfer within an organization is perceived to be more simplistic than the transfer of knowledge between two firms (van Wijk et al., 2008). Knowledge transfer materializes through technological and oral communications. In fact, technological communication takes place between two or more individuals interact online (e.g. email or communication applications), while oral communication requires the sender and receiver of knowledge to meet face to face (Tangaraja et al., 2016).

![Fig. 1](image)

*The knowledge transfer process based on the literature search*
A decade ago this research area within knowledge management was rather undiscovered and incomplete (Schulz, 2001; van Wijk, et al., 2008). However, today the field has been further discovered where more current and relevant research has been conducted about what is making the process of knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing adequate (Krylova et al., 2016). As of recently, some of the confusion shown in the literature has been brought to attention by Tangaraja et al., (2016), specifically regarding the use of the terms knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing. In different publications, the term has been used interchangeably (van Wijk et al., 2008; Mueller, 2015). Therefore, by conducting a more current and extensive literature review based on relevant research and findings, Tangaraja et al., (2016) produce substantial evidence that show how knowledge transfer and sharing are not the same, but rather interconnected. While knowledge transfer comprises the whole transfer process, from the identification of the knowledge to the final stages of implementation of the recipient, knowledge sharing describes where the knowledge transfer actions take place (Mueller, 2015) and characterize the action as being on an individual level (Liyanage et al., 2009). The most common form of sharing knowledge is between individuals and social networking (Cheng, 2017), and knowledge sharing is therefore also considered one of the most crucial phases within knowledge transfer (Liyanage et al., 2009).

2.3 Knowledge Sharing

The process of knowledge sharing has become more widely discussed, recognized, and attractive during the last decades and correspondingly, the trend in the field of knowledge management have shifted the focus from knowledge transfer to knowledge sharing as of recently (Shao, Feng, and Liu, 2012; Paulin and Suneson, 2012; Tangaraja et al., 2016). The concept can be described and used in a unidirectional (Yi, 2009) or bidirectional perspective (van den Hooff and Ridder, 2004). A unidirectional sharing behavior involves one active source, where an individual shares knowledge with other individuals within the organization (e.g. provides a colleague with documents without further interaction or interpretation). Whereas a bidirectional knowledge sharing process involves two, or more, active sources that process and create knowledge together (Tangaraja et al., 2016). The process of knowledge sharing can be described as a "people-to-people process" (Liyanage et al., 2009, pp.122) and as "face-to-face interactions" (Cheng, 2017, pp.870).
Likewise, the growing body of research argues that it has a positive effect on efficiency, organizational competitiveness, innovativeness, and a central role in the constantly evolving knowledge management (Nonaka and von Krogh, 2009; Carmeli et al., 2010; Carmeli et al., 2013).

However, a crucial standpoint has been made for knowledge sharing, where it is argued that for the knowledge sharing process to provide value for the organization, the employees in charge (i.e. the leaders) need to obtain enthusiasm and motivation for the shared knowledge (Riusala and Suutari, 2004; Carmeli et al., 2010; Bavik et al., 2017). One could conclude that without motivation and trust from employees, the knowledge will not be received and coded by the recipient in the same effective way as if the employee sharing knowledge also shared motivation. Further, Carmeli et al. (2013) point out that if knowledge is not shared within an organization, it interrupts and hampers the chance of increased competitiveness.

To stay competitive in an ever-changing market, it is important to realize that the benefits gained from knowledge sharing are more common in MNCs than in purely domestic firms. One factor that is argued to be contributing to this differentiation is the naturally diverse cultures and knowledge that thrive in international organizations (Asmussen et al., 2013). The importance and quality of the process have also gained an increased attention in the research field, especially for organizations to further keep a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). The knowledge shared from HQs to foreign subsidiaries are crucial in order to be able to run the operations efficiently (Chang and Smale, 2013). It has also been argued that the knowledge sharing between an HQ and its subsidiaries are powerful incentives for keeping the competitive advantage and expanding the knowledge in markets that still do not have all the competencies available in the organization (Asmussen et al., 2013). One essential tool used for the process of sharing knowledge, to ensure an easy and successful transfer, is by sending employees from the HQ to help assimilate and implement the new knowledge physically at the subsidiary (Riusala and Suutari, 2004).

Yet, the discussions among researchers stress the issue that firm-specific knowledge, although strategically important (Riusala and Suutari, 2004), may be hard to share
(Krylova et al., 2016). Therefore, it can be argued that the process of using simply codification, which implies a one-way communication and no interaction between the different parties (Tangaraja et al., 2016) may hinder the progress of the knowledge sharing to a foreign subsidy. This is because of no interaction between the different parties is created, which is needed when sharing tacit knowledge to be able to ensure strong value and validity for all individuals involved in the process. By instead using personalization, which indicates sending employees to communicate the knowledge directly to the foreign subsidy (Tangaraja et al., 2016), one could argue that the chance of a success is greater and will thereby minimize any chances of misinterpretation. This further raises the relevance of how the right attributes obtained by the leaders sent from the HQ and how the role of leadership can help improve the knowledge sharing process in an MNC. Evidence from a recent quantitative study where 203 employees within the R&D sector were asked to complete various surveys shows that by sending the right leader in the process to share knowledge, any opposition faced at the subsidiary may be minimized through social interaction and the role of authority (Carmeli et al., 2010).

2.4 Expatriates as Leaders and Facilitators of Knowledge Sharing

Leaders are recognized as critical components for a knowledge sharing process (Riusala and Suutari, 2004; Choi and Johanson, 2012). To be able to efficiently share knowledge from an HQ to its subsidiaries, expatriates are often used, especially, to improve the control and to ensure a safe and valuable knowledge sharing process (Riusala and Suutari, 2004). An expatriate is defined as an employee living abroad and working at another business unit of the organization, either for personal development or as a strategic business move (Chang and Smale, 2013). They are often employees that hold a formal or informal leadership position within the organization and they are, equally, an important factor to assure competitiveness in the foreign operations (Lee, Veasna and Wu, 2013). These leaders work as a global link between subsidiaries and the HQ to capture and seize useful, valuable knowledge by enriching the learning process within the MNC (Hocking, Brown and Harzing, 2007). It may be argued that by using expatriates, HQ's decrease the chance of misinterpretation of information. These leaders also possess the extensive knowledge and have retained experience from previous assignments at foreign
subsidiaries and will, therefore, be able to forward knowledge that might be difficult to transfer without any personal interaction (Hocking et al., 2007). Given that expatriates can circulate among various subsidiaries, it may be argued that these leaders are the vital source of knowledge and it can also explain how knowledge is being spread across the MNC for organizational competitiveness and learning (Nery-Kjerfve and McLean, 2012). Similarly, it has been brought to attention that expatriates are essential for not only the knowledge sharing but also the entire surrounding organizational process (Asmussen et al., 2013). Thus, it could thus be argued that it is increasingly important for MNCs to find employees with specific behaviors, and making them eligible facilitate knowledge between the organizational units (Cassiday, 2005).

2.5 Factors Influencing Knowledge Sharing

It is important to emphasize that there are diverse behaviors and factors that may affect knowledge sharing. Karlsen and Gottschalk (2004) argue that information technology (e.g. communications databases) has a great impact on how knowledge is being shared, which can therefore also be argued to influence knowledge sharing between countries as well. Duan, Nie, and Coakes (2010) argue that other factors such as relationships between the HQ and subsidiary, organizational infrastructure, and language barriers should be considered as important aspects as well that may hinder any knowledge sharing process. In contrast, Kang, Rhee, and Kang (2010) have further analyzed the association between frequent communication among receiver and sender and how this may impact the sharing process. Yet, one of the most discussed factors that is said to possibly affect the sharing of knowledge is culture. Both organizational culture and national culture are argued to have a significant impact on knowledge sharing (Karlsen and Gottschalk, 2004; Cassiday, 2005). It can influence the behavior of how leaders function, and correspondingly, how the receivers at the subsidiary receive the knowledge (Karlsen and Gottschalk, 2004; Carmeli et al., 2010). However, even if leadership has shown to be a contributing factor (von Krogh, Nonaka and Rechsteiner 2011; Bavik et al., 2017), where it is suggested by Carmeli et al. (2013, pp. 100) that “leaders play a critical role in knowledge management and knowledge sharing”, one may argue that this field of research needs to be explored continuously to further understand what factors influence the decisions leaders make, and
what factors need to be considered when choosing to share knowledge within an organization.

2.6 Knowledge and Leadership

Leaders have a significant impact on how knowledge is managed and shared within an organization. It has been argued that since leaders are key figures within an organization, they have the ability to support, implement, and strengthen the mutual collaboration and format of any knowledge sharing process between employees or business units. Especially by promoting trust and safe-spaces, for sharing information (Carmeli et al., 2013; Carmeli et al., 2010). Some scholars have argued that the relationship between the leader's behavior and knowledge sharing has been insufficiently researched (Bavik et al., 2017). Yet, it has been argued that there is a strong relationship between transformational leadership, knowledge management, and innovation (Liu and DeFrank, 2013). Understanding the contributions of transformational leadership is beneficial in order to understand how to manage any knowledge within an organization (Carmeli et al., 2010).

It has further been argued whether organizations that use transformational leaders and empower their employees, experience more knowledge sharing between employees and business units (Carmeli et al., 2013; Carmeli et al., 2010). Additionally, researchers argue that transformational leaders may not only inspire employees to share more knowledge (Carmeli et al., 2010), they also argue that by creating a connection between the employees, it increases the employees' intention to share knowledge (Liu and DeFrank, 2013).

2.7 Leadership

In their article, AlMazrouei and Zacca (2015, pp.406), define leadership as it "permeates all aspects of the organization and reinforces the strengths in other facets of the organization". Even though a tremendous amount of various leadership definitions exists, they all possess the same foundation of a process of reaching objectives and goals by influencing others (Arvey et al., 2015). For an organization to fully be able to work and create a competitive advantage, a well-established and structured leadership style is
essential. Leadership is also the factor that directly affect the organizational environment and the motivational aspect for employees, as well as the employees' work-life balance (Antonakis and House, 2014), and is further proven to encourage better performance and innovation (Carmeli et al., 2013; AlMazrouei and Zacca, 2015). Lee et al. (2013) also provide evidence in their study on 156 expatriate managers of MNCs, that leadership enhances confidence among employees and guidance on how to achieve objectives and goals.

Effective leadership are needed to create internal cooperation and to be able to reach the organization's ambitions and purpose (Antonakis and House, 2014). Yet, it is equally important to consider a global perspective and leadership style when analyzing the knowledge sharing process within MNCs (Chaudhuri and Alagaraja, 2014). As a matter of fact, Sanchez-Runde, Nardon and Steers (2011) distinctly argue that most of the research conducted on leadership is based upon Western assumptions, and fails to incorporate other, as important, factors that shape how leaders behave in organizations worldwide (e.g. differences in culture, preferred organizational structure, and hierarchy). Together with Arvey et al. (2015), Sanchez-Runde et al. (2011) argue that leadership literature is divided into two sections, a universal course of action that acknowledges leadership as fully transmittable among different countries and cultures, and another section defined to be grounded by cultural consensus.

2.8 Leadership Behaviors

By identifying leadership as a universal practice, one argues that it is transferable to any organization within any part of the world, and the practice is constant (Sanchez-Runde et al, 2011). The effectiveness of leadership is dependent on the leader's ability to motivate employees and create an environment where the organizational objectives are met (Arvey et al., 2015). Many of the defined leadership theories in literature today are considered to be universal, amongst the most mentioned is transformational and transactional leaders. Throughout the study of leadership management, many different theories have been developed and analyzed (Antonakis and House, 2014). Rowold (2014) argues that the two most discussed and investigated leadership theories are transactional and transformational leadership. Bernard M. Bass was one of the most prominent researchers and he further

### 2.8.1 Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is defined by Bass and Bass (2008) as the intention to fulfill one's own self-interest through a leader-follower relationship. Within transactional leadership, there are two behaviors that are discussed more in depth by the authors, and these are Contingent Rewards and Management by Expectation. Contingent Rewards is described as the behavior where the leader engage in assigning work, goals, and objectives to followers where they clarify expectations and rewards that will be given when goals and expectations are met (Bass, 1997). Further, Management by Expectation is argued to obtain two different aspects – active and passive leadership behavior. Active management by expectation is expressed as when the leader monitors and oversee the performance of the followers and interfere accordingly. Rules are strict and important to follow to ensure avoidance of mistakes. However, Passive Management by Expectation, on the contrary, is described by Bass and Bass (2008) as the behavior of a leader who simply is passive and does not make an effort until problems or issues are brought to the surface, this also entails that the leader does not interfere or monitor the followers' performance and results closely.

Even so, it has also been argued by Anderson and Sun (2015), among various scholars, that transactional leadership tend to provoke employee creativity and optimism, while also making sure that the achievements made by the followers are coordinated with the larger goals of the organization. Draft and Marcic (2015, pp. 492) states that "transactional leaders clarify the role and task requirements of subordinates". When a leader possesses the behaviors of transactional leadership, it is argued that incentives are identified as a crucial component, where if an employee follows the leader's intentions and directions, will be rewarded (Shao et al., 2012). This can be related to Bass' (1997) view and statements of contingent rewards. One can argue that transactional leadership may work as a motivator, to push employees to increase effectiveness to reach and succeed the leader's goals and objectives.
2.8.2 Transformational Leadership

In their book, The Bass Handbook of Leadership (2008), Bass and Bass define transformational leadership as leader’s possessing the behaviors of Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration. The behavior of Idealized Influence, which includes the commonly known characteristics of charismatic leaders, indicates that leaders walk the walk, through leading by example and inspire their subordinates to go beyond the expected performance (Bass and Bass, 2008). The authors continue to argue that the charismatic behaviors of idealized influence are not necessary for transformational leaders to have, although it generally is a behavior seen in transformational leaders. In other publications, Bass (1997) emphasizes that idealized influence imply how leader's stress the importance of trust, have strong values and let purpose guide their decision and way of leading. Further, Çekmecelioğlu and Özbağ (2016) argue that subordinates feel a sense of trust and have greater respect for transformational leaders that manifest a behavior of idealized influence. The second behavior, Inspirational Motivation, is defined as the ability of leaders to introduce an engaging vision, by using persuasive rhetoric and symbols. Transformational leaders that have the behavior of inspirational motivation also have great communication skills and have high expectations of their subordinates, while simultaneously providing an environment of encouragement (Bass, 1997). Bass further defines Intellectual Stimulation as a leader’s ability to push their subordinates to think outside the box and to "question old assumptions" (1997, pp. 133). By possessing the behavior of intellectual stimulation, leaders lean towards encouraging subordinates to think creatively and work autonomously to solve problems and find solutions as they go. It has further been argued that leaders who use intellectual stimulation view themselves as being part of a process that is not restrained by processes or other courses of actions known by the organization to date (Bass and Bass, 2008). Lastly, the behavior of Individualized Consideration is one of the relationship-oriented behaviors that indicate a leader’s ability to consider the needs and motivators of the individuals and separate these from the generalization of an entire team. Thus, a transformational leader who possesses this behavior is able to help individuals to develop in their significant work-roles and understand the composition of teams, as well as how individuals can work together in the most productive way possible (Bass, 1997)
The subject of transformational leadership is popular and well discussed by many researchers in today’s society. Several definitions exist, and Daft and Marcic emphasize that "transformational leaders are distinguished by their special ability to bring about innovation and change" (2015, pp. 492). Other scholars highlight the benefits of transformational leaders to create organizational commitment from employees, job satisfaction, and motivation (Lee et al., 2013; Liu and DeFrank, 2013). Equally, transformational leadership is also highly correlated with team creation abilities, leader efficiency, task performance, decreased stress level among employees, as well as increased work commitment. Additionally, to motivate employees, strategies such as teamwork and common goals are used (Anderson and Sun, 2015). While some commonalities exist between the two different leadership theories, such as increased team achievements and commitment to change, there are other factors that separate a transactional leader from a transformational (Anderson and Sun, 2015). A transformational leader has, additionally, been identified as more effective and accepted by employees than a transactional leader (Arvey et al., 2015). Further argued by Girdauskienè and Savaneviciene (2012) is that transformational leadership inspires employees and spur creativity in the workplace, while the opposite is said for transactional leadership.

2.9 Summary: The Current Body of Literature

When a leader shares knowledge or ensures that knowledge is being shared within the organization, one may argue, along with the findings of previous research that it is important to possess certain behaviors. A body of research connecting transformational leadership behaviors and knowledge sharing can be found, however, the behaviors that compose a transformational leader have been differentiated among various scholars. The behaviors of transactional and transformational leadership are concepts which have been argued to be sufficient approaches when wanting an overview of the field of leadership (Daft and Marcic, 2015). Correspondingly this is the general shared consensus based on the transformational and transactional behaviors drafted in the research by Bernard Bass, as mentioned earlier. There is further a general consideration that transformational leadership is correlated to knowledge sharing. Liu and DeFrank (2013) found through their study of 272 surveys from 42 separate R&D teams and 42 HR departments, that followers’ intention to share knowledge was positively related to transformational
leadership. Additionally, Shao et al. (2012) expanded on the leadership definitions of Bass' but rearranged the behaviors and gave them new names. Although having the same meaning the authors acknowledge in their result that all of the behaviors have an indirect, positive, relationship to Knowledge Sharing when looking through the lens of organizational culture.

Engelen, Schmidt, Strenger and Brettel (2014) however studied leadership behaviors connected to transformational leadership in 954 organizations. Their findings revealed that providing intellectual stimulation and the creation of group goals can be considered as the two main leadership behaviors that are important when portraying the transformational leadership style. It may thus be argued that the findings of Engelen et al. are in line with Bass's behaviors of Inspirational Motivation and Intellectual Stimulation. A transformational leader's ability to influence their subordinates through inspirational motivation was also argued by Bavik et al. (2017). They conducted a study with a sample of 337 full-time employees where they found motivation as a factor when sharing knowledge. The authors especially argued that an ethical view of leadership and employee knowledge sharing had a strong correlation and therefore raised the importance of having competent leaders within one’s organization. Comparatively, another study conducted by Carmeli et al. (2013) suggested a relationship between the intentions to share knowledge and various behaviors. The focus of their study was especially on the leader's ability to create structure and their ability to support their subordinates, expressly the leader's behavior of individualized consideration. In other words, the simple idea that subordinates within the organization is aware and feel a sense of support from organizational leaders, which in order encourages them to strive towards sharing knowledge more productively.

A various amount of studies coincides with the findings of Carmeli et al. (2013), which suggest that caring for the individual instead of solely establishing the wellness of the organization on a team-basis is an important organizational factor to consider. In their research, Carmeli et al. (2010) demonstrate that leaders, who possess transformational behaviors, are important for developing relationships in the workplace. The authors additionally present that transformational leaders tend to create a place where employees feel a sense belongingness, which in turn generates a greater amount of knowledge
sharing. In contrast, Lanaj, Johnson and Lee (2016), argue for the importance of leaders to possess a sense of structure and participative leadership, which may be considered a composition of the different behaviors that separates transactional from transformational leaders. This is expressly seen in the need for transactional leaders to take disciplinary actions through their behavior of active management by expectation, and transformational leaders ability to consider the needs of all individuals through individualized consideration. Further, Lanaj et al. also raises the idea that leaders who have more extrovert qualities may adopt transformational leadership behaviors better than individuals who are characterized with more introvert qualities. Lastly, the findings of Fu, Tsui, Liu and Li (2010) show that transformational leaders that feel a greater level of personal happiness in their authoritative role, tend to be better at their work, and therefore be able to perform their tasks more efficiently. Hence, one could argue the importance of not only ensuring the employees' motivation and happiness, but also one self’s well-being when practicing transformational leadership.

With the current state of the research in the field of leadership, it can be argued that there is room to question the universality of the leadership theories of transactional and transformational leadership practiced in organizations and their effect on knowledge sharing. As argued before, there is not an extensive amount of research in the literature today that takes the international experience of the leaders into consideration when evaluating their leadership behaviors and its effect on knowledge sharing. When reading literature that covers the subjects of knowledge sharing, leaders, leadership behaviors, or the experiences of leaders abroad, one may argue that it raises questions on how leadership behaviors influence knowledge sharing and what behaviors have the most significance within an MNC. Further, some factors that are mentioned previously that may portray an influence over the knowledge sharing process is the established relationship between an HQ and its foreign subsidiary, communication, as well as any language barriers that may exist within the organization. Likewise, another factor and one of the most discussed one that affecting the sharing of knowledge may be culture, both organizational and national. The researchers of this thesis will thus further explore what types of leadership behaviors influence knowledge sharing in a multinational corporation, and how these behaviors impact how leaders share knowledge.
Chapter 3. Methodology

This chapter will make you as a reader familiarized with the chosen methodology of this thesis. It will describe the arguments behind the chosen method, discuss how the sample of this study was selected, and further how the empirical data will be collected and analyzed.

3.1 Research Philosophy

Under the philosophical framework that this study is conducted, an interpretivist paradigm was used. The interpretivist paradigm is grounded on the notion that there are multiple realities, and the realities are subjectively based on exploring to gain a more informative decision (Collis and Hussey, 2014). This approach was chosen because, on the other hand, a positivist paradigm would rather assume that the action and assumptions made in this study would all be logically and mathematically defensible. Therefore, by using the interpretivist philosophy one could be able to attain the different experiences and perceptions of the leaders in this study as they are, without comparing them to the one true reality, that positivism states exist. Also, an interpretivist approach was used to justify the findings of high validity by producing rich qualitative data from a small sample.

3.2 Research Approach

There is a major difference in the research field when conducting a quantitative or a qualitative study (Collis and Hussey, 2014). A quantitative study is grounded in the positivist paradigm and has a scientific approach. It is also commonly characterized by larger samples that are created to help draw conclusions to generalize over a whole population, mainly through hypothesis testing. Whereas a qualitative study rather stems from the interpretivist paradigm and is characterized by smaller samples. A qualitative study was conducted to gain further understanding and investigate the complexity of a social phenomenon in the research field (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009; Collis and Hussey, 2014). Qualitative research is descriptive research, aiming to help the researcher understand the reasoning, and actions taken by the studying of a sample. In this study, the authors are seeking to gain a greater understanding of the leadership behaviors expatriates exhibit when out on assignment. Therefore, it is most suitable to conduct the study using a
A qualitative approach, to be able to further understand the underlying reasoning, experiences, and the decisions taken by the interviewed leaders.

3.3 Research Strategy

3.3.1 Case Study

This research paper was constructed to explore the role, and significance, of different leadership behaviors in knowledge sharing. The authors intended through this study to further understand the phenomena of knowledge sharing by analyzing the experiences and perceptions of the chosen leaders. Therefore, the chosen research strategy is a case study. A case study is characterized by “understanding the dynamics present within single settings” (Eisenhardt, 1989, pp.534), other methods that are being used are in-depth methods, such as interviews, conducted in the sample’s real-life setting to acquire new understandings and knowledge (Collis and Hussey, 2014; Yin, 2009). The strategy to use a case study was primarily selected to acquire further understandings of the organizational context where a specific field of research is being accomplished (Saunders et al., 2009), mainly by using preceding developed theories and frameworks to help maneuver the process (Yin, 2009).

Although there have been arguments that the strategy of using a case study may become time-consuming (Collis and Hussey, 2014), there is evidence showing that a case study is one of the more popular approaches for researchers when attempting to additionally understand the complexity of international businesses (Tsang, 2013). By conducting a case study, the authors aimed to find answers to further explain the question of why organizations share knowledge and what significance the role that different leadership behaviors have (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.3.2 Case Study Design

For this research paper, a single case study was conducted, and existing theories were used to interpret the acquired findings. The other option when conducting a case study is to involve multiple actors, and thus conduct a multiple-case study (Baxter and Jack, 2008). However, due to time limitations of this research project, it was decided to
concentrate the effort to go in-depth into one larger organization to further understand the contributing factors to knowledge sharing, rather than to involve more organizations. By choosing a multiple case study, it would not have been possible analyze the various aspects in depth, which in turn could result in low validity of the research project.

To understand the experiences and the decision-making process leaders face when sharing knowledge to a foreign subsidiary, an exploratory approach was used. This approach was chosen to develop an understanding and further explore what factors are, in fact, affecting the knowledge sharing process of the leader, and thus examine the outcomes where no clear solution or right answer exist (Baxter and Jack, 2008). A holistic approach to a single case study gives the opportunity to isolate the events and behaviors of leaders assigned to the same subsidiary at different points in time. The researchers chose to evaluate and analyze the leaders traveling from the Swedish HQ to the subsidiary in Sri Lanka.

### 3.3.3 Case Study Selection

To be able to answer the research question for this thesis, the authors turned to Statistics Sweden in order to find more information and evidence for the current business climate in Sweden. Some of the findings revealed that 3,132 organizations had subsidiaries abroad, and the report further exhibited that Swedish organizations spend approximately 37.6 billion SEK on research and development in their operations abroad (Cedervärn, 2017). These numbers made the authors question how the organization communicates internally and how leadership is viewed in the different subsidiaries, which led to them to reach out to their contacts. It was shown that relocating the organization's R&D offices abroad were common within the IT industry and that the organizational teams were usually located on different locations in different continents. Therefore, the criteria for the selection of single case for this thesis was that the organization is a multinational corporation with an HQ located in Sweden and at least one subsidiary located abroad. This was followed by the criteria that the MNC had employees in leadership positions with considerable experiences working with subsidiaries abroad, and that these leaders had also worked as expatriates at one, or more, at the subsidiaries. The case that was selected for the thesis was an MNC with its HQ located in the south of Sweden, with
employees who traveled abroad for work assignments to the MNCs subsidiaries. The organization has three subsidiaries abroad, with offices in Denmark, the UK, and in Sri Lanka where their main R&D department is situated.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Sampling Method

Probability sampling and non-probability sampling are the two methods one can choose from when conducting an empirical study. This indicates whether all individuals have an equivalent opportunity of being selected or not (Collis and Hussey, 2014). The approach of using a non-probability sample was chosen for this research paper, meaning that not all individuals of the population had an equal chance of being selected, due to resource and financial limitations, as well as time restrictions. After the decision was made, the authors of this thesis selected convenience sampling, or so-called natural sampling, which is a description of a non-probability sampling method, and indicates that the sample is easier to access, and convenient, where not the extensive effort is put in to locate the sample (Koerber and McMichael, 2008). By doing so, the authors were able to save time that instead could be used to focus on matters such as researching existing literature within the chosen field of study.

Within the chosen case for this study, there were certain criteria that the participants needed to fulfill in order to qualify as candidates for the selected sample. The criteria they needed to possess to be credible candidates were that they were full-time employees at the HQ and that they all obtained a higher position which entailed them to have responsibility for other employees. The most important criteria were that the chosen sample had experience with working in multinational teams, as well as being positioned abroad working with leadership as expatriates for a longer period of time. When a first contact had been established, the snowball sampling method was further used, which entails that the researchers extended the sample through recommended possible future participants to contact at the MNC (Collis and Hussey, 2014). Accordingly, the final selected sample for this research paper were six employees. However, it can be argued that a limitation with snowball sampling is that the sample is dependent on the first contact, meaning, if the collected data were to be incorrect, the validity of the empirical data would show low validity and may result in a sampling error. But, the authors
reviewed, investigated, and made sure that the participants of the final sample all met the defined criteria. This indicated that the employees were the most suitable candidates to help explore and answer the research question.

3.4.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Since this study aimed to further explore the behaviors of leaders and how they influence the leaders' knowledge sharing, face-to-face interviews were held with all six participants. The decision to conduct the interviews face-to-face was because the benefits of being able to, not only record and guide the verbal communication but also to be able to detect any non-verbal indications that will give the interview more depth (McIntosh and Morse, 2015). Additionally, an interview can be conducted in a structured, semi-structured, or unstructured way (Collis and Hussey, 2014). While a structured interview has predetermined questions and is mostly used under a positivist paradigm, the interpretivist paradigm uses semi-structured, or unstructured techniques. This is especially done to further examine the similarities, or differences, of the interviewees’ experiences, behaviors, or opinions (Arksey and Knight, 1999). An unstructured interview is characterized by informality and no prearranged questions. The primary purpose of unstructured interviews is to gain a broader insight into an area of interest. Contrastingly, a semi-structured approach is rather represented by a general predetermined interview guide of topics to discuss during the interview (Saunders et al., 2009). Yet, even if the topics and questions have been identified beforehand, the order of them may change depending on how the interview evolve over time.

The decision by the authors to conduct semi-structured face-to-face interviews was principally distinguished by the opportunity for the interviewees to be able to speak openly and candidly about a few selected pre-determined topics. The authors also decided to hold the interviews in Swedish, the native language of the interviewees, to remove any language barriers that may occur when speaking a second language. However, during a semi-structured interview, the order of the questions prepared was of less importance, it was considered more important for the interviewer to steer the conversation into the right direction (Collis and Hussey 2014). This was mainly done through the use of open and comparison questions that enforced the interviewee to elaborate their responses further than a simple closed question, characterized by a simple factual answer.
3.4.3 Interview Guide: Composition of Questions

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner, the authors chose to ask open-ended questions, as well as hypothetical questions and probes with the help of an interview guide (See Appendix A). An open-ended question is used to be able to gather more extensive information as well as to help the authors avoid any biases in the interview. Additionally, hypothetical questions are used to help the interviewee to speak broader in terms of scenarios where the researcher can gather rich data from hypothetical cases. Lastly, probes were used to lead the interview beyond the established questions in the interview guide to gather further information not thought of by the researchers (Collis and Hussey, 2014). More general questions were asked at the beginning of the interview to make the interviewees comfortable and gain trust to be able to continue the conversation at a deeper and more analytical level.

The underlying purpose of the chosen questions and structure of the interview guide were based on the research question of the thesis, as well as the different behaviors of transactional and transformational leadership formalized by Bernard Bass and the knowledge sharing process in Chapter 2. The researchers aimed to let the constructed framework guide the interviews, especially to be to able gain a deeper understanding of the underlying principles of the interviewed leaders, and how their experiences and behaviors influence how they interact with their subordinates and share knowledge within the organization.

3.4.4 Empirical Data

The empirical data for this single case study was collected using semi-structured interviews with all six participants selected by using the non-probability sampling method of convenience sampling. The interviewees all held various leadership roles within the organization as project managers, group controllers, team leads, or R&D managers. All interviews were held in conference rooms at the organization, and the time of the interview was decided through an email conversation between the authors and interviewees. The authors gave the interviewees the option of choosing a meeting time
during week 14, and the decision to conduct all interviews during the same week was mainly because the organization's HQ was situated in another city than Jönköping, making it more effective to have them all concentrated during the time of one week. Both of the authors were present during all interviews and exchanged the roles as the interviewer and note-taker to gain additional experience of the process. It was further argued to be beneficial to conduct the interviews together to be able to detect any non-verbal cues, as well as taking notes while not being distracted from the interviewed candidate. Also, the decision to record the interviews was mainly made to be able to have the chance to listen to it after the meeting to get a second look at the material, as well as to have direct quotes accessible when making the analysis. All interviews were also recorded on two smartphones, to reduce the incident of the recording getting lost.

When approaching the candidates for the case study, it was made clear that their identity and the name of the organization they all work for was held anonymous. This choice was made to make the interviewees comfortable expressing their ideas and experiences in an unrestricted way. Before starting the interviews, the interviewer presented the topic of the research paper and introduced what type of questions that would be asked. An interview guide was created beforehand to give the authors a broader understanding of the experiences of the leaders and to be able to follow a structure. All interviews were between 44 to 54 minutes long to give the interviewee enough time to develop their answers, and for the interviewer to collect data with strong validity that could further be used in the analysis of the problem and research questions. The interview started with more general questions, asking the interviewee to share their interests, how they define themselves, and what is important to them, personally and professionally. The questions then moved to their role in the organization and how they perceive leadership. Further into the interview, the questions looked more specifically into their view on teamwork, and their work assignments at the foreign subsidiary, situated in Sri Lanka. This was due to an attempt of further understanding their experiences and how the interviewees act in certain situations.
3.5 Data Analysis

The process of analyzing qualitative data has been argued to be somewhat ambiguous, simply because the area lacks a generalized collection of practices (Robson, 2011). The purpose of a case study is to help further understand the intricate behaviors, and the everyday situations that cannot be intercepted by quantitative approaches (Zainal, 2007). Collis and Hussey (2014) argue that the common process of making sense of qualitative data includes reduction, displaying and analyzing the gathered material. Data reduction is recognized as the process of eliminating and clarifying all gathered material and by reorganizing it make more sense of it (Miles and Huberman 1994), this was done after the authors transcribed the recorded interviews. To further make sense of the data, the procedure of data displaying includes to visually group the raw data together in a more descriptive form, with the use of networks or matrixes. In this research paper, the authors chose to display the data and relevant quotes with the help of a matrix to more efficiently be able to find patterns and draw conclusions from the collected material.

The practice of analyzing the data has been described by Saunders et al. (2009, pp. 480) as "the process for identifying relationships between categories", while Miles and Huberman (1994) explain it as a gradual process, starting with labeling meaningful quotes, phrases or segments, which further proceeds to reviewing the transcribed, raw data, to find connections, or similarities, between the respondents. By doing so researchers are able to identify themes that can be translated into theories that further help to understand the phenomena researched. For this paper, the authors have proceeded to use this approach, by discovering insightful topics within the raw data, and further reviewing it to find further connections and agreements to be able to draw conclusions and find any patterns among the respondents at the chosen organization.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

To be able to secure this single case study with an MNC in a competitive market, the authors offered the chosen organization and the chosen respondents anonymity. With anonymity, the authors refer to the practice of assuring the participants that their identity, as well as their insights and opinions, are not disclosed and will be handled with caution (Collis and Hussey, 2014). Therefore, in this essay, the organization will be referred to as
"Alpha" and the names of the participants were removed for them to feel comfortable to give their opinions on their previous experiences.
Chapter 4. Empirical Findings

In this chapter, the empirical data will be presented from the six semi-structured interviews. As a reader, you will get a first look of the opinions and arguments made by the sample and their statements and ideas will be compared with each other.

For this study, six semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding and to be able to further investigate the research questions. The interviews were conducted between the third and sixth of April, and the interviews lasted between 44 to 54 minutes. All interviews were conducted in Swedish, since the interviewees are of Swedish origin, to ease the conversation and avoid any language barriers. All interviewees work at company Alpha and have through various leadership roles been engaged at the subsidiary in Sri Lanka. The empirical findings are viewed through the lens of Bernard Bass' framework of the different transactional and transformational leadership behaviors, with further additions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>47 min</td>
<td>3 April 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>45 min</td>
<td>5 April 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Group Controller</td>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>51 min</td>
<td>4 April 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>R&amp;D Manager</td>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>54 min</td>
<td>6 April 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Team Lead</td>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>47 min</td>
<td>5 April 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Face-to-Face</td>
<td>44 min</td>
<td>6 April 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1 Idealized Influence

Many of the different behaviors that signify influence were shown in the interviews conducted with the different respondents. The interviewees answered various questions related to personal charisma and how they tend to influence their employees. They further describe themselves as driven and wanting to set a good example for their subordinates by showing how working hard and being creative enhances the working environment and influence the employees to do the same.

**Respondent E:** "They would describe me as pretty inventive, driven, always the person who comes up with ideas if we are doing something together ... sometimes says a bit too much."
Respondent E: "I am the kind of person that sits down myself and work overtime, or actually puts in the extra time, to show everyone else that I am contributing instead of saying 'you do that'. Instead I also do it, show that I engage myself too."

The respondents further argue that it is very important to possess knowledge of conflict management and that it has a great impact influencing others on how to handle challenges. Respondent C argues the importance of daring to handle conflicts to be able to ensure that the work assignment does not get affected.

Respondent C: "An important quality for a leader is to not fear handling conflict."

Respondent E also pointed out the value of trust and that a leader should possess an authoritative persona whilst also have the ability to inspire the individuals within their team, although pointing out that this might be difficult since not all individuals can be inspired in the same way.

Respondent E: "Someone you can trust and have an open, straightforward, dialogue with. A leader gives constructive feedback and is consistent in their decision-making process. They also inspire their employees – but that one is difficult, since what inspires people are so different."

Further, one of the respondents pointed out that the desired behaviors of a leader should include that they have the ability to multitask, to anticipate errors long before they appear, and that they create an organizational atmosphere that promotes trust within the organization and especially within the closest team.

Respondent A: "A leader is someone who clears the way, so I can do my job, they take away the obstacles that appear along the way. I want to feel the sense of trust in the team, that everyone does not have to report every move"
4.2 Inspirational Motivation

To further get an understanding of the interviewee’s behaviors, questions regarding motivation and how the interviewees, as leaders, are motivated and how they, in turn, motivate others were asked. The resulting answers when looking at self-motivation included the power of an upcoming deadline, the work-life balance, as well as the aspect of having fun. It was seen as important by the respondents to be able to self-motivate in order to motivate others.

**Respondent A:** "To have fun, and that I am driven by the feeling of knowing that I am doing something good, and then I have fun. And humor is very important to me."

**Respondent D:** "To have a good balance between private life and work life. That together have fun, to enjoy each other's company, and to enjoy the people around you that you spend time with."

**Respondent B:** "I am a classic project manager. I like to start up things and then complete them."

Another aspect that was reoccurring throughout the interviews was the importance of organizational success, and how knowing that the growth and progress motivated themselves and their employees to work even harder. They further argued that the knowledge possessed by colleagues and subordinates motivated the respondents to learn from the different team members.

**Respondent C:** "And I am motivated through working with skilled colleges and to learn from them. I also get motivated by the success of the company."

**Respondent D:** "To all the time get better at what we do and to find new ways to move forward and naturally that I also think it is fun to go to work and that it is fun to spend time with people from different cultures."

During the interviews, it was further made clear that the group dynamic was an important motivator that the leader needed to be aware of when leading a team. Respondent A stressed the significance of knowing how team members function, in order to know how to further motivate each other and to inspire them towards reaching the same set of goals.
Respondent A: "Firstly, you need to build up a group dynamic within the group, you need to ask open questions, you need to be open to everyone's opinion, so they feel comfortable coming with suggestions to the problems. But to get people to act and interact you need to start with making the group feel safe, and that doesn’t happen over a night, it is a long-term job ... I motivate them through understanding that we need to become a group that strives towards a common goal. If I don't do that, it won't work"

The interviewees mentioned the importance of face-to-face meetings as a motivating factor when starting up new projects within the organization with new team constellations, especially when the team is distributed across the different subsidiaries. The respondents all discuss how it is a priority to travel to the subsidiary in Sri Lanka for this specific reason. Many of the interviewees argue that the communication within the team becomes more efficient when working long-distance if the team members have the chance to meet face-to-face and get a deeper understanding for the different work roles and their importance for the organization.

Respondent A: "To simplify the communication, especially when we are facing a deadline."

Respondent C: "The purpose is really to see and experience the organization, and how everything works together. Talking to the employees at the subsidiary and get their input."

Most of the interviewees stated that it is also very important to travel to the foreign subsidy for the purpose of meeting people and establish relationships, that will further make future communication easier.

Respondent A: "For me, the work assignments abroad always have an ambiguous purpose. Because you get to know your team and you get a face on your colleagues, but it's also about getting more time together, and working in the same time zone."

Respondent B: "It is really important that you meet early on in the project"
Lastly, some of the respondents highlighted that some behaviors are of certain emphasis for a leader, especially when leading multinational teams. Respondent A stressed the importance of good time management and Respondent C argued that the leader's ability to communicate a clear vision and learning the art of delegating are crucial elements too.

**Respondent A:** "Firstly, you need to make sure that you put down a good time plan, from the start. It is the most important factor in this job, but it can go bad anyway."

**Respondent C:** "A clear vision and being consistent in their decision-making process. A leader also needs to be good at delegating their work."

### 4.3 Intellectual Stimulation

The different behaviors that are related to Bass’ definition of intellectual stimulation, which includes a leader's ability to challenge the ideas and presumptions of how to deal with problems that may occur by thinking outside the box. Also the leader's ability to make everyone understand how their work fit into the bigger picture of the organization as a whole. Some of the responses from the interviewees made these behaviors come to the surface. The respondents claimed that being able to engage the employees to see the bigger picture and to consider how their work fits in as a whole is important for a leader to do in their every-day work.

**Respondent F:** "A leader has a helicopter vision and the ability to predict or forecast."

**Respondent D:** "I think it pretty much involves communication. Talking together on where we are headed, what is important, is important to get people engaged, and to see the bigger picture ... to drive people and to let them oversee their own development ahead."

The interviewees further discussed how working without hierarchical roles is another tool used by the organization to enhance the performance of the employees. At Alpha, the management has recently brought out a new concept of how to deal with dilemmas and
issues that surface in the every-day work of employees, and how they are usually brought to the attention of the leader. The respondents explain how this management style has shifted the responsibility of tasks from the management to the individual. The goal is to influence and push the subordinates to solve situations on their own by inspiring them to think autonomously. The aim is to find solutions for problems that occur in their own work and let everyone take responsibility for their actions under the guidance of the leader.

**Respondent C:** "You need to step aside from the 'boss-subordinate'-relationship and run with a more 'adult-adult'-approach."

**Respondent E:** "I believe in working more ‘how do you solve this situation’, putting more of the responsibility on the individual. This gives more ... I like that we actually are all adults and should take our own responsibility for our own work assignments without anyone telling us exactly what to do."

### 4.4 Individualized Consideration

In addition, the respondents answered questions where the outcome resulted in their explanation of what is important as a leader when considering the individual needs and motivators of all employees. The respondents raise the importance that as a leader, you need to have an understanding of the benefits of a well working team. It is also important that you make the team members understand how everyone is dependent on each other, and by working together they can achieve a more efficient results than by everyone working individually.

**Respondent E:** "I try to make sure that everyone feels comfortable in a group."

**Respondent F:** "All roles in a team are dependent on each other ... I would not want to sit and work alone. To have the team as the power and strength is important."

**Respondent B:** "A well-working team is a great thing, a non-working team is a great challenge for a person like me."
All respondents acknowledge that diversity within a team is critical as it allows all employees to complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. By understanding this aspect as a leader, it allows them to help the subordinates to further understand their role and the purpose of their contributions, where the final outcome will lead to increased productivity within the team.

**Respondent F:** "A lot has to do with the ability to understand different behavior styles, and how they work together, what drives when and how to motivate different employees. It really is about people."

**Respondent A:** "You need to have different personalities, and they need to have different competencies. Then you teach the team to trust each other, that's when the group becomes extremely productive."

**Respondent D:** "Then you need to have a mix of experiences and maybe competencies. Someone who is a little more analytic and someone who is more driving"

Respondent D mentioned in the interview that some difficulties that may arise working on a team that is distributed across different countries. The respondent mentioned that since some of the required skillsets are only available at one of the offices, it may cause difficulties in their work due to distance and time difference. By having the ability to consider the individual contributions to a team, leaders are able to make these obstacles less visible by having a relationship-oriented mindset.

**Respondent D:** "It is really hard to work with both time difference and language differences. The distance is also an issue since some team members have some very important skills which are also connected to the entire development of the product."

In relation to individualized consideration, the respondents stated that leaders should behave supportively and be coaching towards employees. It is crucial to ensure that a respectful and courteous environment is upheld where subordinates feel free to speak their mind and grow.
Respondent C: "I try to be the person who supports ... I am the kind of person who gives an employee an assignment and then I make sure that they understand their tasks, after that, I try to be supportive, but I also back away to let them do their job. They may return if they get stuck, and I try to give them the bigger picture."

Respondent D: "Someone who is there to support and coach the employees. Someone who can take decisions and help others to make decisions too. They let their employees grow and develop through self-governance."

Respondent B: "I think leaders should be very humble towards other people because there's always a reason behind the actions they do or do not take."

Two of the interviewees touched upon that leadership it highly correlated with the people they lead and the importance of creating relationships since it induces cooperativeness.

Respondent B: "It is also very important that leaders create a relationship with the people in their team."

Respondent F: "It has a lot to do with leading people ... it is mainly about making them able to work together."

Correspondingly, when sharing knowledge within the organization, the interviewees argues for the importance of the leader to understand that people have different preferences of receiving information. By making the shared material available in multiple ways, it ensures that all individuals will be able to intercept the most important aspects. They further state that it is essential to build a trusting relationship between the sender and receiver. It was mainly argued by the interviewees that by further securing an effective relationship the possibility to share information within the team and among its members was greater.

Respondent B: "Because I then think that you should have heard it, seen it, and also received it on paper to read by yourself. There are many here, like different persons, that interpret information in different ways."

Respondent D: "To occasionally meet and have a close, regular communication is unbeatable. Email and large meetings in all glory, but the intimate face-to-face
interaction is what's needed. You need to be present to catch the little things that appear, that seemed too insignificant to book a meeting to discuss."

**Respondent C:** "It makes it easy in a way that we have the engineers that share knowledge with engineers ... they speak somewhat the same language when it comes to coding, new techniques and such. Then they connect on a specific level."

**Respondent F:** "To understand each other helps to break the ice."

### 4.5 Active Management by Expectation

Some of the answers during the interviews went beyond the characteristics that define a transformational leader and rather included behaviors previously used to define transactional leaders. The respondents argue the importance of structure and an organized working atmosphere which enhances the working creativity and their ability to solve challenges proactively that may occur at work.

**Respondent F:** "I am a person that likes to have structure, I am a typical project manager in the sense that I like to see results, control, follow up, work with the power within the people you work together within a project ... I like to have control, which makes some things take longer time, maybe. That you might have more detailed knowledge than needed."

**Respondent D:** "I would describe myself as being results-oriented, structured ... and persistent ... I believe in this that you should keep your head cold ... at this place when things start to happen, it often leads to everyone starts running around everywhere ... and then it is about gaining structure and gather everyone and see what the problem really is and what it is we want to achieve."

### 4.6 Cultural Awareness

In addition to Bernard Bass’ framework of leadership, the interviews revealed a consensus among the interviewees where they viewed their previous work experience, language knowledge, and travel experience as contributing factors in their leading roles within the organization.
Respondent E: "Everything from my previous work life ... I also think that the experience of traveling is also a thing. To meet people and cultures ... then it is also the aspect that I have been involved in sports, which is another kind of experience that could contribute to how you work in a group, or so."

Respondent A: "I have also worked abroad, I benefit from my language knowledge ... but not to detract from all life experience, that is important."

The participants further elaborated on what is necessary for leaders to bear in mind when working in a multinational setting, such as in Alpha. The interviews revealed that when these leaders share knowledge within the organization and among employees of different national origin, they need to possess an awareness of how national culture may impact how various employees operate, namely Swedish and Sri Lankan employees.

Respondent C: "They [Sri Lankan employees] have much more respect for superiors, which we do not want ... it has been a great challenge at Sri Lanka, and for them to stand up for what they think. But it has started to change."

Respondent E: "But since we work in a business where Sweden and Sri Lanka are very different, so we have to share that information with them ... even though we might think that information is quite basic ... so that type of knowledge sharing is really important for us."

Respondent B: "They are quite shy, or not really shy, but quiet and it can be hard to get direct communication."

Through investigating the various religions portrayed in Sri Lanka, one of the participants mentioned that it was easier to gain a deeper understanding of values and behaviors shown from the colleagues working there.

Respondent A: "And by doing so, I was able to reach this trust. So you understand each other and meet on the same conditions, and that made it all so much easier to communicate. And I could understand how I should ask questions, in this, the conversation, how I was supposed to get them to come up with ideas without feeling overridden"
What was further stated by the respondents was that the culture, both national and organizational, have an impact on how the respondents share knowledge and interact with the local employees at the subsidiary. However, they clearly argue that it is important to be yourself and not try to change, in the attempt of easing the relationships and communication.

**Respondent F:** "In the beginning I thought a lot about that I would adjust my leadership, to meet them in a way that was within their culture. And then I learned after a while that I will never be able to do that because I don't have it in me ... when I dropped that role ... then I thought it went easier."

**Respondent E:** "To me, it doesn't really matter who it is, I always try to be respectful."

Through the interviews, the respondents further expressed how their experience from previous work assignments at the subsidiary has helped them to understand what to expect and how to work together with the employees at the Sri Lankan subsidiary, but that it is not possible to fully grasp and anticipate all interactions and outcomes when working together in a project.

**Respondent C:** "It was a little bit different in the beginning, but now I know more why I'm traveling there and what I want to get out of the trip, so it usually is what I expected."

**Respondent D:** "I sometimes still travel home with 'Aha-experiences', like a more understanding of why some tasks are slower than others. You understand them better then you understand more how they think and work."

The interviews led to the interviewees discussing what the greatest obstacles were when trying to communicate and share knowledge with colleagues at Sri Lanka. The answers varied, but it was mentioned that the leader needs to understand that a two-way communication is harder to establish with greater distance and that the differences in working environments affect the working conditions in the two different countries.
Respondent C: "The biggest obstacle is when we have to share decisions made in Sweden ... and that the feedback from Sri Lanka rarely reaches us the way we are organized now."

Respondent F: "Thousands of noises, traffic ... everything is so different. They may have an hour's route to work. ... their everyday lives look so different from ours ... but you understand that context better, helping to understand why they are different."

Additionally, the strong hierarchy at the subsidiary influence the knowledge sharing process, compared to the offices in Sweden, where it is the opposite. The interviewees mention that the hierarchy was a strong factor when determining how to interact with colleagues and that it should always be taken into consideration.

Respondent E: "In Sri Lanka, career is more important, you want to advance. In Sweden, your title is not as important, therefore when you travel to Sri Lanka with a title, it gives an association."

Respondent B: "When I have something to complain about another person, then I don't say that straight to that person. Then I say it to that person's manager, who in their turn tell the person. This is important when we talk about hierarchy. To us in Sweden it is strange."

Respondent F: "It has become more open, a lot have happened the last 10 years ... the first time I was there it was still a civil war, Sri Lanka is another country today. But we have learned together how to be and work with each other. They have also learned that 'the Swedes are like that' and we have learned how they are ... be yourself."

Lastly, the interviewees were asked to reflect on the difficulties that may arise when sharing knowledge between the Swedish HQ and their subsidiary situated in Sri Lanka. Respondent E explicitly mention that language is one barrier that may arise, while other respondents mentioned that since different countries may have various ways of working when two countries merge together, difficulties, consequently, most often arise. The overall insight gained from the respondents is the crucial behavior of being aware and able to acknowledge and work with each other's differences.
Respondent E: "One thing is language. We have English as the official language at Alpha, but I don't have English as my native language, and neither do the people working in Sri Lanka. This means that we use a third language to communicate, which also may create misunderstandings and you may not be able to have the same nuances when speaking."

Respondent A: "I think it is also the goals, that everyone knows what to do. You need to be clear with the vision, and where we are headed. Everyone needs to know this, wherever you live in the world, when you work together."

Respondent C: "I think that, in fact, giving people the prerequisites to succeed, with the answers in our hand we can see that we haven't really succeeded with our offshore operations, and it is very much because that we, in Sweden, weren't ready to put over developments in Sri Lanka, because, preferably you should know the processes and the development methodology before handing it over to a third party, which we did not do."

Respondent F: "Be aware of, and know each other's differences"
Chapter 5. Analysis

This chapter gathers the empirical findings from Chapter 4 and is critically viewed in comparison to the findings presented in Chapter 2. This chapter will give you a deeper understanding of how the empirical findings links together with previous research.

5.1 How do leadership behaviors influence knowledge sharing and what behaviors have the most significance in an MNC?

By looking at the data from the lens of the research question, the authors found evidence that support the transformational leadership behaviors of Bass' and their connectedness with knowledge sharing and therefore raises their significance. Expressly the behaviors of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Further, the empirical data also displayed that the transactional leadership behavior of active management by expectation were also prominent in the empirical findings. However, one behavior that previous research did not mention in depth but that was a recurring theme among all respondents in the empirical data for this study, was the behavior of cultural awareness.

5.1.1 Idealized Influence

The findings from the empirical data entail that leadership behaviors by the respondents are in line with idealized influence, such as leading by example, inspiration, and how trust influence the leader’s knowledge sharing in various ways. The respondents explicitly pointed out that leading by good example and portraying a charismatic style are of great importance when wanting to inspire employees to perform at their best, especially to increase the overall productivity and creativity. The findings of Liu and DeFrank (2013) show that a leader who has organizational commitment and brings about change is of great value to an organization. The researchers further argue that an inspirational and motivational atmosphere that is created by leaders who are leading by example encourages subordinates to push themselves to reach beyond expected performance. It is further explored in the empirical findings how leading by example connected to conflict management and highlights its importance in regard to knowledge sharing. The leader need to show and influence subordinates how to, in an efficient and effective manner, ensure that conflicts will not affect the work assignments or become a problem among
employees. By obtaining this behavior and being aware of the different conflicts that may arise within the team, the leader will ensure that small issues will not become large problems, which in turn will not affect the knowledge sharing.

Further, trust was identified in the empirical data as the behavior, which embedded within idealized influence, that had the largest impact on knowledge sharing. As mentioned by several researchers, including Arvey et al. (2015), leaders in an organization are to reach the objectives and goals set through influencing and inspiring others with their charismatic personalities and behaviors. It can, therefore, be argued that the trustworthiness of the leader is of high importance to be able to fulfill their purpose in respective roles. Without having the gained trust from one's employees, one could argue that the work performance may lead to inadequate efforts to reach the desired result. These empirical findings are further strengthened by Bass (1997), who emphasized that a leader’s capability to create a trusting and safe environment where employees feel welcome to speak their minds, particularly through following great example of the leader is extremely valuable when sharing knowledge. Thus, having the ability to gain trust from one's employees will, as mentioned by the respondents, lead to a more effective communication when working together on distance. These findings are also in line with the previous research made by various scholars, including Riusala and Suutari (2008), who are arguing that trust has a significant role for being able to share knowledge in a correct way, that is understood fully by the receivers. The empirical data further imply that when trust occurs in the relationship between a leader and their subordinates, the subordinates are more susceptible to information and are more willing to pass on the information to their peers. In addition, employees will be more comfortable speaking their mind and therefore engage in knowledge sharing in both directions, which in turn may lead to improvements and new creative ideas on how to operate within the organization.

5.1.2 Motivational Inspiration

The empirical data identified the ability to motivate employees through inspirational motivation as one of the greater leadership behaviors that influence knowledge sharing. A number of the respondents identified work-life balance as an important aspect of their life, as well as the opportunity to have fun and enjoy themselves. These findings revealed
that leaders who, themselves, are motivated feel as they have a better ability to motivate others in a more sufficient and better way. This is further strengthened by Fu et al. (2010) who signify the importance of personal contentment of leaders who exhibit transformational behaviors and use them in the workplace. It can therefore be argued that inspirational motivation is a significant behavior to possess for keeping the work-life balance for oneself as well as keeping employees motivated while working. Especially, to ensure that people are willing to receive and share knowledge within the organization. In addition, one can argue that while being motivated as a leader it is, as stated by Bass (1997), simpler to provide an environment where employees are encouraged and where it is easier for leaders to communicate their strategies and vision.

It was also empirically established that some of the more significant factors of leadership are the people, the group dynamic in teams, and the ability to lead employees towards organizational goals and objectives, with a sense of purpose. This, again, can be argued to add depth to the body of research concerning transformational leadership and knowledge sharing, since it according to Anderson and Sun (2015) indirectly relates to a transformational leader’s ability to motivate employees and increase work commitment. Comparatively, Bavik et al. (2017) conducted a study with a sample of 337 full-time employees where they found inspirational motivation as a factor when sharing knowledge. The authors further enlightened the field by arguing that demotivated employees will most likely have less interest in listening to new knowledge being shared by their superior or other colleagues, and where Tangaraja et al. (2016) emphasized the importance of relationships between sender and receiver. The researchers present the argument that without any human interaction, it is hardly possible to share knowledge and keep the validity of the message. These results were mirrored in the empirical data where the respondents acknowledged the importance of traveling to the subsidiary in Sri Lanka to interact with the employees to get an understanding of the processes and the work environment there to ensure a smoother project and better chance of sharing knowledge internally when working long-distance.
5.1.3 Intellectual Stimulation

The respondents argued that teams need to operate in a forum where they are thinking outside the box, have an ability to openly criticize decisions, and where raising their opinions are welcome. These empirical findings are in line with Bass' (1997) depiction of the behavior of intellectual stimulation. It is the leader's responsibility to ensure that this forum exist and that all participants feel comfortable to raise their opinions and to share knowledge within the group. These ideas are supported by Carmeli et al. (2010), who argue that by promoting trust and safe-spaces for sharing information, leaders are key figures within an organization with the ability to support, implement, and strengthen the collaboration and format of any knowledge sharing between employees, or teams. A number of the respondents emphasized that communication is a very important factor when creating value and sharing knowledge in an MNC. The empirical data further show that by engaging employees in the planning of work assignments, especially for them to see the greater picture, and by letting employees be in charge of their development are beneficial factors as well. Additionally, to perform effectively, the employees need to be comfortable in the workplace, take own initiatives and be more open to learning and receiving new knowledge.

The empirical data further exhibited that the leader's ability to engage the employees into seeing the greater picture is important in their every-day work, by making all employees aware how their actions and performances affect the organization as a whole gives them greater sense of purpose in their respective work roles. Furthermore, a demonstration of how increased trust between a leader and its subordinates is beneficial was described by some of the respondents in the form of a new management practice that was implemented at Alpha. This practice changes the relationship from being the more traditional hierarchical practice to more an 'adult-to-adult'-relationship. The interviewees explained how they now, in their leadership positions, coach employees to critically view the problems arising in their work assignments and owning the overall responsibility for their tasks, instead of dictating or demonstrating how a subordinate should perform their job, i.e. micromanaging their work. These actions are in line with the research by Bass and Bass (2008), who state that by possessing the behavior of intellectual stimulation, leaders encourage subordinates to think creatively, make them challenge assumptions, and view the larger picture to solve problems, share knowledge, and find solutions as they go.
5.1.4 Individualized Consideration

The respondents in this study expressed the value of creating functional and diverse teams since they directly affect the outcome and value of an organization's knowledge sharing. All participants at Alpha further felt enjoyment of working in a team setting and clarify that they believe that it is important for all individuals to feel as they belong within the team setting. By creating a dynamic and productive team it was argued that it is important for the leader to consider all of the individuals. Especially how their diversified characteristics, personalities, and competencies complement one another, to ensure as much benefit for the MNC as possible in the process of sharing knowledge. These findings are in line with the behaviors of individualized consideration constructed by Bass (1997) who defines this behavior as highly relationship-oriented and that it further indicates the leader's ability to consider the individual's needs and motivators, while also understanding how the composition of a team can affect the team's performance. The empirical findings are adding to the current body of research by demonstrating that the respondents were aware that better results are achieved where all members of the group complement each other's work performance. These findings are further strengthened by Daft and Marcic (2015) who argue that team assignments decrease stress among employees, and team settings are also highly correlated with motivation and job satisfaction. Previous research made by Cheng (2017) argues that the most common form of knowledge sharing, in fact, takes place in a social network setting or between individuals more privately. This leads to a coherent group where all employees are conscious of everyone's different behaviors, characteristics, but most important, their skills. With all employees being informed of the benefits of diversified teams, everyone will be aware of their team members' strengths and weaknesses and will therefore also have a greater respect towards each other's roles within the team.

The empirical findings suggest that if a leader is able to recognize the specific needs of each individual and how they prefer to perform their assignments, the leader can form more efficient teams where trust can be gained. By doing so, motivation may rise since everyone understand their purpose and how they are contributing to the organization as a whole. However, if a leader is not creating a motivational climate, the employees will not
be driven or excited to perform their work assignments sufficiently, which in turn will lead to misunderstandings and reduced productivity. This may also lead to a negative environment, where employees may engage in demotivating its peers and it could, therefore, impact the whole team and the bottom line of the organization. The findings made by Carmeli et al. (2013) strengthens this argument by displaying a relationship between an employee's intention to share knowledge within a group and the leader's ability to consider the needs of individuals. It is therefore important as a leader to ensure that employees feel motivated and seen, to ensure that the most value is created for the MNC.

On the contrary, if the leader creates a team where the individual needs of the employees are not considered and that the team members are too alike, the consequences will be a very homogeneous team. In an environment where everyone thinks alike, it can be argued that no innovation or unique ideas will grow, and there will be no new knowledge to share within the team. It was mentioned by the respondents that it is important for the leader to have the ability to understand how people working together in a group think, act, and behave. This is supported by Carmeli et al. (2013) who found that caring for the individual instead of solely basing the wellness of the organization on a team-basis one significant organizational factor to consider. A leader's ability to share knowledge with employees was also found to be influenced by the leader's capacity to establish relationships with its employees. This is further demonstrated in the current literature of Lanaj et al. (2016) who argue that leaders that are interacting and actively participating within the team create stronger relationships and have a larger impact on the team performance. The empirical evidence show that the respondents at Alpha saw benefits of developing and cultivating relationships within the organization. Furthermore, all respondents emphasize the importance of the human factor in leadership and for strong relationships in the workplace and between members of a team. These empirical findings are supported by Cheng (2017) among others, who argue that the defined relationship between a sender and a recipient is a dependent variable for any knowledge sharing to take place. Hence, this can be considered as an important leadership behavior that has been found to influence the knowledge sharing within an MNC.
5.1.5 Active Management by Expectation

Throughout the interviews, it was made clear that some of the behaviors that the respondents demonstrated lay beyond the scope of transformational leadership. There was a general agreement within the sample that having structure and an organized working atmosphere was important at Alpha and in their leadership roles, especially to see results. These findings are not related to the general definition of transformational leadership, but rather Draft and Marcic (2015) and Bass' (1997) definitions of transactional leaders, which define a leader to generally work in a structured manner and that active management by expectation entails this leader to monitor and oversee performance and interfere accordingly. Further findings by Shao et al. (2012) display that transactional leadership can thus work as a motivator to push employees forward and active management by expectation are therefore also considered an effective tool to motivate employee performance which spur knowledge sharing within the group. It can be argued that without actively managing the process and having a sense of structure, there will be no significant results or a productive working environment. These ideas are resonated in previous studies, such as Antonakis and House's (2014), who argue that structure in the workplace and thus leaders with the ability to clearly structure the assignments is important to keep a work-life balance, and also to keep motivation and effectiveness high. While other studies by Carmeli et al. (2013) suggested a relationship between the intentions to share knowledge and various leadership behaviors. The focus of their study was especially on the leader's ability to create structure and their ability to support their employees. Showing that by accommodating a structured environment, leaders create an environment where knowledge can more easily be shared.

5.1.6 Cultural Awareness

The empirical findings show that cultural awareness is a leadership behavior that significantly influences the knowledge sharing between Alpha's HQ and its subsidiary in Sri Lanka. Culture is a vital factor to consider when working internationally, however, previous research within leadership and knowledge discusses the impact of culture on leadership and knowledge sharing, but the specific behavior of cultural awareness that leaders need to possess is not immensely discussed. However, Carmeli et al. (2010) intensify this discussion by arguing that culture and knowledge sharing has a strong
relationship, where the understanding of these two elements is crucial to be bear in mind in an ever-changing market to be able to stay competitive. Yet, the authors do not bring up culture as a behavior, instead, as many other authors display the focus towards the impact of culture, both national and organizational, on knowledge sharing. Leaders will be able to gain a greater understanding of how to interpret and share knowledge in various ways through cultural awareness, especially, to ensure that all employees understand and will be able to take away what is most important from the shared knowledge. It can therefore be argued that by obtaining the leadership behavior of cultural awareness, leaders will not only gain a wider perception and a deeper understanding of how both individuals and the environment work, but also why certain situations and decisions have the outcome they have.

The empirical findings further show that one participant decided to learn about the various religions portrayed in Sri Lanka, which generated new knowledge of why some situations or behaviors have a certain outcome in one culture compared to another. This is connected to previous research by Hocking et al. (2007), who illustrate the significance of how leaders often traveling abroad for work assignments usually possess the necessary knowledge and experience. This lead them to adjust how they share knowledge to local employees in different national settings than their own. However, by not possessing the behavior of cultural awareness, one could argue that the outcome may be that the leader believes that everyone in the organization possess the same mindset and way of handling decisions and situations as they do. This will therefore lead to situations where misinterpretations can occur and may also, from an ethical perspective, be seen as unethical by not acknowledging or respecting the perspective of others in a multinational work environment. Another aspect can be decreased productivity and efficiency as a result of lacking understanding. By being aware of and having an open mind, leaders will be able to make better decisions that are beneficial for both the MNC as well as the relationship between individual employees.

Moreover, hierarchy was another significant factor within cultural awareness that arose from the empirical data. This was argued by the respondents to influence their knowledge sharing in the sense of how employees interpret and codify the knowledge being shared with them. Due to the described differences of importance of organizational hierarchy
between Sweden and Sri Lanka, it is portrayed as crucial for the leaders to maintain a sufficient level cultural knowledge to prevent misinterpretations and avoid confusion. Although, when analyzing the common behaviors described by Lee et al. (2013) and Liu and DeFrank (2013), a strong hierarchy does not generally synthesize with the described leadership. This is mainly because transformational leadership typically involves a flat communication structure, which indicates that employees are encouraged to bring about their own ideas and inputs to create an inspiring and committed environment.

Bearing this in mind, evidence from the empirical data show that the respondents from Alpha continuously work to create an internal culture where one can look past the hierarchy to make communication and knowledge sharing easier between the HQ and the Sri Lankan subsidiary. Thus, it can be argued that cultural awareness is a crucial point to consider for the organization's leaders since it has a great influence on the knowledge sharing process. However, it is important to notice the difference between being aware of the cultural differences and changing the way a leader behaves and acts. The empirical data shows that a leader should not change their personality or how they act, simply adjust their leadership approach. If the leader is not trying to portray the characteristics of their own personality, one could assume that mistrust and confusion could play a substantial role which may bring about other complications instead due to insincerity and lack of transparency.
Chapter 6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the authors will bring the thesis to completion by answering the research question stated in Chapter 1 and together with the empirical data and the analysis conclude the findings.

The purpose of this qualitative single case study was to explore how different leadership behaviors influence knowledge sharing and what behaviors have the most significance in an MNC. Together with the empirical findings and the frame of reference, the researchers of this study found six critical leadership behaviors that are seen to be of significance for the leader’s knowledge sharing at Alpha. These behaviors are idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, active management by expectation, and cultural awareness. These leadership behaviors together influence the knowledge sharing process by creating an organizational environment where employees feel trust for their superiors, are challenged to find creative solutions, with an improved communication process that incentivizes the employees and the leaders to take part in sharing knowledge.

While previous research unanimously discusses transformational leadership as the most beneficial approach when sharing knowledge, the empirical findings from this study reveal that some transactional behaviors are equally important for the leader to possess in order to manage employees and share knowledge within the team. Therefore, a strong interdependent relationship was discovered between the presented leadership behaviors at Alpha. To be able to ensure a knowledge sharing process which lives up to the expectations and standards of the employees and the organization, it is crucial to, to some extent, possess all of the presented behaviors. While culture is often discussed in regard to leadership and knowledge sharing it is nowadays more important than ever to view cultural awareness as an important leadership behavior to possess when wanting to succeed abroad since the world is getting smaller, due to an increased internationalization and easier communication tools, to name a few. What was further discovered through this study was that the behaviors embedded within the definitions of transactional and transformational leaders are no longer enough for a leader to possess to ensure an effective knowledge sharing process. Not only do leaders who work in an international setting, or an MNC, need to possess certain transactional and transformational behaviors, but also need to have a deeper understanding of how the different cultures are represented.
within an organization. All in all, the presented leadership behaviors are thus considered by the authors to be equally important to possess when sharing knowledge between HQs and subsidiaries.
Chapter 7. Discussion

To finish off this thesis, this chapter discusses the contributions made to existing body of literature, it presents the limitations of this research, and propose future areas of research to continue the research in this field of study.

7.1 Contributions

There are some leadership behaviors that have a significant impact on the process of sharing knowledge within an organization. Previous research within the field suggests that transformational leadership provides one of the best fits for leaders in organizations when sharing knowledge. However, transformational leadership does not consider all aspects that are of importance when sharing knowledge in a multinational setting and needs to be further evaluated from a broader perspective. Through this research paper, the authors have contributed with a single case study of an MNC that extends the current, ever-growing body of research within knowledge management and leadership. By creating more awareness towards knowledge sharing, the authors intend to inspire continuous research on the relationship between knowledge sharing and leadership within multinational organizations. This case study's empirical findings contribute with real-life examples on the perspective of how Swedish and Sri Lankan employees work and share knowledge with each other and what leadership behaviors are important to ensure value creation for the MNC when sharing knowledge. It also sheds light towards the perspective of how a leader thinks and act in various situations when sharing knowledge within a multinational corporation.

On an organizational level, the empirical findings of this thesis may serve as guidance in recruitment processes for leaders that are responsible for multinational teams, or that operate in a multinational setting. Further, it can serve as a foundation of what is important for leaders to bear in mind when overlooking or take part of any knowledge sharing processes. By understanding the importance of certain leadership behaviors when sharing knowledge within an MNC, organizations can also proactively prepare their employees for situations that may occur in multinational teams.
7.2 Limitations

Given that the impressions of leadership and the best way to share and receive knowledge are rather subjective, it may be difficult to examine this field of research from a positivist perspective. With that said there are other ways to approach leadership and knowledge sharing than the chosen approach and method in this research study. Firstly, this study only considered one organization with its HQ in Sweden, together with one of their subsidiaries in Sri Lanka. However, the other subsidiaries of this specific organization, which are located in the UK and Denmark, were not considered for this study. Therefore, if including the other subsidiaries, the result may have considered other behaviors that were not discovered when only analyzing the relationship with Sri Lanka. The authors are further in no position to generalize over the HQ and foreign subsidiary relationship from a general perspective of Alpha, neither from the general HQ-subsidiary relationship acquired from a knowledge sharing worldwide perspective. Furthermore, this single case study, naturally, only considered an organization within a specific industry, and can therefore neither draw conclusions for leaders within another industry or in different organizations, which a multiple case study would be able to and show results of.

It can further be argued that another limitation is that the leadership qualities and behaviors of the respondents were only considered from the respondents themselves. By consulting with other individuals at Alpha that is directly working beneath or above the respondent, the authors would have adopted a triangulation practice by getting confirmation of the statements made.

Lastly, this single case study's empirical data is solely based on semi-structured interviews with participants selected from a convenience sampling method. It can, therefore, be argued that the choice of sample and the methodology related to the empirical data collected is another limitation. By considering other methods, such as focus groups or observation as complements to the study, one may have gained a broader understanding of the participants' behavior, work climate, and how their experiences influence the way they share knowledge.
7.3 Suggestions for Future Research

As a suggestion for future research, we argue that it would be of significance to consider the aspect of conducting a multiple case study on how leadership affects knowledge sharing in international organizations. By performing a multiple case study, the data may shed light on other valuable aspects of different leadership behaviors that may not be visible when only looking at one organization, such as Alpha. Further not only can new perspectives and other conclusions can be drawn from a greater context with stronger validity, but it also extends the research towards being able to draw more generalized assumptions on what behaviors affect knowledge sharing.

One of the behaviors found significant in the empirical data was the extent of a leader's cultural awareness. Since this case study focused on the Swedish HQ's knowledge transfer with its foreign subsidiary in Sri Lanka, it would be of interest to further examine if cultural awareness is a significant factor for leaders having a business assignment in foreign subsidiaries situated in other countries, with national cultural differences than Sri Lanka.

To bring even further depth to the research, one last suggestion for future research may also be to examine other industries and their knowledge sharing behaviors between a HQ and a foreign subsidiary, together with investigating and comparing the IT industry, which may also lead to other reflections and experiences to extend the results of the empirical data discovered through this study.
References


Appendix A

Interview Guide

- Present ourselves and the topic and research question of the thesis
- Ask for consent to record the interview and let the participant be aware that the interview is anonymous
- We will ask open-ended questions so please elaborate your answers as much as possible
- Do you have any questions before we start?

Part 1 – Personal questions and how the interviewee views themselves as a person
1. Name
2. Age
3. How would you describe yourself as a person?
   a. What are your strengths and weaknesses? Both privately and professionally.
4. What do you feel are important to you in life?

Part 2 – General information about the organization
1. Can you please describe the organization shortly.
2. What position do you hold in the organization?
3. How long have you had this position, and how long have you worked for this organization?
4. Do you have any previous experiences that you feel are helpful to you in your current position?
5. How would you describe the culture at the organization?
8. Can you tell us more about a situation where you felt especially proud over your work or a special accomplishment?

Part 3 – General questions about motivation, teams and communication
1. What motivates you?
2. How do you motivate others?
3. Can you describe a situation where you faced a challenge?
a. How did you solve it?

4. What do you think of working in teams versus working alone?

5. If you got an opportunity to put together your "dream-team" - what would it look like?

6. How do you define a good leader?

7. Do you have a leader or role model you look up to in your daily work?

8. How should a leader not behave according to you?

9. How do you want to be seen by your manager?

10. If there would be a new policy to be established within Alpha that would affect your daily work, how would you like to receive that knowledge?
    a. How would you later share that knowledge with the employees who you work with?

Part 4 – Work experience abroad at the subsidiary in Sri Lanka

1. How often do employees from the HQ visit the foreign subsidiaries, and the subsidiary in Sri Lanka?

2. When did you make your first trip to Sri Lanka?
    a. Have you visited any of the other subsidiaries abroad?

3. How many work trips have you made during your time at the organization?

4. Have you changed your work approach between your trips?

5. Tell us more about the purpose of the work assignments abroad.

6. How long are usually the assignments at the foreign subsidiary?
    a. Is there a difference in term of the work performed if the assignment is longer or shorter? Please explain.

7. How do you prepare a trip to Sri Lanka?

8. Is there something you need to keep in mind when you travel to Sri Lanka for a work assignment as a foreigner?

9. When you get back home, are the experiences the same as what you expected before going?

10. What are the obstacles do you think affect your work trips to Sri Lanka?

11. What do you think are the largest factors that affect your work relationship with the employees at Sri Lanka?