



FCG's challenges and enablers to build self-directive organization

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Abstract

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<p>This master's thesis was done as part of Master of Business Administration studies in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. The commissioning company for this thesis is FCG Finnish Consulting Group Oy which is a Finnish consulting company with history for more than 70 years in Finland.</p> <p>The objective of this thesis was to find out how employees in FCG understood the concept of self-directive organization. With research questions the goal was to find structures which are enabling or hindering the self-directiveness in FCG.</p> <p>Research followed Case Study approach. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to gain more thorough understanding of the current situation. The empirical research data was collected through semi-structured interviews and survey. Data analysis brought understanding how different employee groups in FCG understand self-directiveness and what structures employees experienced hindering or enabling self-directiveness in FCG. Development suggestions for FCG senior executives were made based on research results. Implementation plan for development suggestions was excluded from this thesis.</p> <p>Main findings in FCG supported the results from earlier studies made by other researchers in other organizations or communities. Self-directive organization is a complex phenomenon and is commonly understood differently if it is not defined. Results show that there are structures in FCG which are enabling self-directiveness such as feeling of individual autonomy and possibility to have freedom and independency on scheduling own work. Employee experiences also highlighted trust among employees and managers.</p> <p>Research results also provided insights to some challenges which should be addressed if FCG would aim on increasing self-directiveness. FCG should eliminate behaviour which is counterproductive for the team autonomy and FCG should define what is the desired company culture and way of work which would lead to better self-directiveness in teams.</p> <p>Recommendations to FCG Senior Executives were made according to Martela's four theses of self-directiveness. Recommendation's themes titles are 1. Define self-directiveness in FCG, 2. Clarity for individual – rights and responsibilities, 3. Power sharing in FCG, and 4. Structures in FCG.</p>
Keywords Self-directive organization, SMO (Self-Managing Organization), Yhteisöohjautuvuus, Building structures in self-directive organization

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1 Introduction

The self-directive organization model has recently been of interest to business executives and researchers. There are many good examples of great implementation of self-directive organization model and many business executives have been interested to build their own organizations the comparable way. At the same time, it has been discussed that self-directive organization model demands a lot from the organization and business executives and this type of organization model is not necessarily a good fit for every business.

This master's thesis is done as part of MBA studies in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. In this thesis I am investigating FCG Finnish Consulting Group Oy organization and trying to identify challenges and enablers to build self-directed organization.

FCG is a consulting company with more than 70 years of history in serving cities and municipalities. In 1949, FCG started its business in construction, particularly school design. Currently FCG is a global company and partner to cities and municipalities offering multidisciplinary community planning, skills development, the promotion of good governance and software development. FCG is also partnering with international financial institutions and ministries to promote a better quality of life in developing countries. FCG has around 715 employees globally. Offices in Finland and globally is described in Figure 1. Most of the employees around 500, are in Finland (FCG website 2022).



Figure 1. FCG global and local offices

In January 2021 FCG had a huge organizational change and 7 different subsidiaries were merged as one FCG. This change brought different businesses together and re-shaped business units. Management levels were reduced and many initiatives towards leadership development started.

Before the merger, employees and managers were involved in workshops to build a new organization model. After the merger internal discussions about more autonomous teams and a self-directive way of working were happening and some teams were implementing very autonomous ways of working but not all. Teams in more traditional construction and technical engineering businesses are following very traditional top-down organization model and ways of work.

Aim of the thesis

The aim of this thesis is to understand how the concept of self-directive organization is understood in FCG and what activities in FCG so far have worked well and supported the goal towards more autonomous and self-directed organization model and what actions would be needed to achieve self-directed organization model in FCG.

I have selected three research questions to identify and achieve the targets of this thesis.

Q1: How the concept of self-directive organization is understood in FCG?

Q2: What structures in FCG are enablers to the self-directive organization?

Q3: What structures are hindering self-directiveness in FCG?

My target as thesis outcome is to analyze the current situation and organization structure in FCG and how employees understand the concept of self-directive organization. I will focus on finding the key enabling elements towards the self-driven organization and what are the identified challenges which the company would need to resolve. These findings will be presented to the company leadership team and the leadership team can plan how to strengthen the company culture towards self-driven teams.

The possible implementation plan and process for how to re-structure the FCG organization is excluded from this thesis.

2 Theoretical Framework

This chapter concentrates on the theoretical framework of the research. First, explaining the concept of self-directive organizational model and principles which make the organization self-directive. Also, the elements which should be considered while pursuing towards self-directive organization model.

Self-directiveness is a topic to which many work life related articles have referred recently (Vuori 2021). Vuori also explains that the term self-directive is used in multiple contexts, and it is not always clear what it refers to and usually needs some explanation. People tend to have different ideas about what self-directive means, and these assumptions might cause confusion. In context of work self-directiveness usually refers to shared leadership and individual autonomy (Vuori 2021, 349-350).

Each organization needs to solve typical managerial hierarchies. Self-directive organizations aim to solve these universal topics in diverse ways (Lee & Edmondson 2017, 46; Martela 2019, 8-15). These domains are firm strategy; organization and work design; work and resource allocation; work execution; managing and monitoring work execution; personnel and performance management. In traditional hierarchical organizations, a typical manager has authority over all before mentioned domains whereas normal employee has limited decision authority in these domains except work execution. (Lee & Edmondson 2017, 46.) Self-directive organization focus is to decentralize decision rights fully or partially of these domains.

Martela (2019) names self-directive organizations as self-managing organizations (SMO). These organizations systematically lowered the middle management layer. In SMO's, the organization's goal is to set interrelated tasks and subtasks assigned to individuals. Tasks can be divided in a top-down manner, but also bottom-up manner is possible. In bottom-up way every individual has the authority and responsibility to identify what tasks need to be done in order to achieve the overall goal of the organization (Martela 2019, 3-4).

According to Martela (2019) it is also essential that in SMO individual interests and values are considered and their efforts are acknowledged and rewarded. Rewards are typically understood in monetary compensation or bonuses but often it is related to personal development opportunities or other possibilities to contribute to the community. In other words, companies need to ensure that individuals are motivated to contribute to the organizational goal (Martela 2019, 4).

In SMO the company also needs to ensure that individuals have access to all necessary information which they need to execute tasks successfully (Martela 2019, 4).

Organizations which have decentralized all decision rights are called *Holacracy*. Holacracy is an extreme model of self-directive organization which is a leaderless structure. In Holacracy teams are the structure and they design and govern themselves. Leadership is contextual, meaning leadership responsibilities shift as situations change and teams create and define new roles. (Bernstein, Bunch, Canner & Lee 2016, 43-44.)

2.1 Self-management and self-leadership

Self-directiveness has been used to describe individual behavior and this description tends to describe traits which are emerging in self-management and self-leadership. These terms describe the capability of an individual to finalize tasks which are not necessarily very motivating. These are tasks which need to be done to achieve the desired outcome and tasks are done without any external demand. (Martela, Hakanen, Hoang & Vuori 2021, 13-15; Vuori 2021, 351.) Self-leadership requires autonomy to make decisions in prioritizing one's own work and capability to set individual targets which are supporting the company strategy and goals. Individuals need to have competence to make decisions and inner motivation to act independently without managerial guidance. (Martela et al. 2021, 14.)

Self-directiveness is very often referred to with self-determination theory by Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci (Vuori 2021, 351). Self-determination theory explains basic psychological needs and how those affect intrinsic motivation (Martela & Jarenko 2017). Self-determination theory focuses on explaining individual behavior. Self-directive organizations phenomenon is focusing on individuals working together and therefore many researchers are also referring to self-determination theory. Ryan and Deci define the basic psychological individual needs which are autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci 2017, 94-98). Martela adds the fourth dimension for Ryan's and Deci's list for basic psychological need which is "sense of doing good" (Martela & Jarenko 2015). Ryan and Deci also define the construct of intrinsic motivation which is a criterion for individual development. It plays a vital role in individual growth, creativity, and sense of well-being (Ryan & Deci 2017, 99).

Martela and Jarenko (2017, 12) propose that the term self-directive is about individual capability to work independently without any external direction or control. Individual needs intrinsic motivation to be self-motivated to self-direct.

2.2 Commune-directive

Title of this sub-chapter is raw translation from Finnish word "yhteisöohjautuvuus". There is no suitable English translation to this term, but this term is particularly important when discussing self-directiveness as phenomenon. This term was introduced by Finnish researcher Pertti Salovaara.

Commune-directive means that work is organized and coordinated together in teams not by individuals as such. In commune-directive the team is in center on decision-making and the power is equally with each team member. (Martela et al. 2021, 14; Salovaara 2020.) "Yhteisöohjautuvuus" is heavily concentrating to plural leadership and team autonomy to make decisions which affect the community or team.

2.3 Self-directive organization

Self-directive organization is describing the way how organization is organized and where hierarchies and managerial levels have been reduced. In this type of organizing model, the work is organized in ways which do not require old-fashioned managers. Operative work-related matters are solved in teams and between individuals who are related to the topic. (Martela et al. 2021, 14-15.)

Lee and Edmondson (2017, 39) describe self-directive organization and call it self-managing organization. Self-managing organization is defined as an organization that "radically decentralizes authority in a formal and systematic way throughout the organization." These organizations remove the hierarchy which formulates the key mechanism of control. In these organizations all employees possess decision rights, and no one has "veto-rights" because of their role as a "boss" or "a manager". (Lee & Edmondson 2017, 39.)

According to Martela and Jarenko (2017, 12-13) Self-organizing is a term which refers to the community or team capability to organize without or exceptionally low control of pre-defined orders, roles, and hierarchies.

The following Table 1. represents definitions of self-management, commune-directive and self-directive organization (Martela 2021, 16).

Table 1. Definitions of self-management, commune-directive and self-directive organization (Table content originally by Martela 2021, 16).

	Self-management / self-leadership	Commune-directive	Self-directive organization
Actor	Individual	Team	Organization
Definition	Individual ability to work independently without external control or guidance.	Team ability to work autonomously without external control or guidance.	Way to organize way of work with low hierarchy and reduced managerial power.
Opposition	Top-down directive	Team with dedicated leader/manager	Hierarchical organization

In this thesis I am investigating the self-directiveness in organization level and what kind of leadership should be emerging. That is why I am focusing on explaining the self-directiveness phenomenon from an organizational perspective for the following chapters.

Both Salovaara, and Martela and Jarenko agrees that self-directiveness is a complex phenomenon and center of all is people who are part of the same team or group who are voluntarily and autonomously organizing their roles, rules, responsibilities, and targets together without any external direction or orders (Martela & Jarenko 2017, 12-13). There is no description of how many team members self-directive teams should include or what roles or routines self-directive teams should have. All this is agreed together in a team and roles and routines will be changed if there is a need for change.

Frederic Laloux explains the organization model evolution in his classic work of literature of self-directive organization *Reinventing Organizations* (Laloux 2014). Laloux highlights in his book the autonomous of the teams and individuals. This autonomy is in the center of self-directive organization model. Business owners and leaders need to understand the necessity of autonomous decision making and owners and leaders need to give the power to the people and teams. Owners or leaders should only coach and consult if people or teams should ask for their help. (Laloux 2014.)

Laloux (2014) also describes that in self-directive organizations teams and people should define their own targets without any external direction or control.

2.4 Towards self-directive organization

As explained earlier, self-directiveness describes individual or team behavior and traits. One could easily think that individuals who are very self-directive and self-driven would-be ideal candidates for team members when building self-directive organization. This is not always true as Salovaara (2017, 70) describes. Individuals with high autonomy and drive can be very efficient but might also be too independent and not the ones who put first what is the best solution for the entire team or community. People who tend to be very self-driven have strong opinions and their own ways of working. They might end up in conflict with other team members and find it hard to find common ground. (Salovaara 2017, 70.)

According to Martela (2019) SMOs (Self Managing Organization) should solve how to motivate individuals to co-operate and create reward systems which do not allow freeriding. Freeriding is a universal problem, and some individuals might want to exploit this type of reward system. This type of exploitation might harm the whole community. If colleagues, see freeriding occurring and no action is taken it might risk the whole co-operation in teams. (Martela 2019, 4-5.)

When there is a desire to pursue self-directive organization, this starts by sharing responsibility and decision-making. Salovaara (2017) introduces four organization traits emerging among those organizations who have pursued towards self-directive organization model.

1. "Getting loose": Purpose is to let go centralized management and non-necessary hierarchies. This means that management is surrendering to the situation and is no longer defining the rules. Management lets people express themselves and find solutions on their own.
2. "Engaging": This means working together and increasing democracy. People need to have a sense of making an impact and sense of psychological safety to bring different views to the table.
3. "Coaching and facilitating": There is no more appointed managers in self-directive organizations so this means that all members of the organization can take the role of a leader when necessary and if teams or team members decides to ask for consultation from former leaders and managers, they can only coach or consult but not make any decisions or give orders.
4. "Horizontal leadership": This means value creation to the customer by horizontal leading processes compared to the vertical hierarchy. Employees are taking the responsibility for value creation; responsibility is no longer among very few. (Salovaara, 2017.)

Bernstein et al. (2016) mentions three distinctive characteristics for self-directive organizations. First, the organization structure is teams. Within teams the roles are collectively defined. Tasks and

goals are tackled as they emerge. Second, teams design and govern themselves. The teams are like circles which are interconnected with other circles. Teams are constantly refining and shaping the structures. Organization is not defining how people are doing their tasks, the structure explains how circles and teams should be formed and how circles should interact. And third, leadership is contextual. In self-directive organizations people tend to have multiple roles. Leadership is distributed among roles which are shifting as new people and talents are joining the teams. Transparency is crucial and technology needs to support information flows and accessibility. (Bernstein et al. 2016.)

In recent study Martela et al. (2021) expresses recommendations which leaders should acknowledge when pursuing towards self-directed organization.

- a. Self-directive organization is not about reducing structures but replacing the structures. Self-directiveness is not anarchy it is a different way of organizing structures.
- b. Managers' important responsibilities must be handled, and with new ways of working, there must be a way to organize these actions. For example, resourcing decisions, information sharing, enabling continuous development, and settling conflicts.
- c. Organization structure change takes time and requires a comprehensive approach. Change does not happen overnight. Change requires thorough reviews and questioning of the status quo. Changing human behavior takes time and individual change pace and curve are different.
- d. Make the change in iterative approach with people. Do not introduce readymade plan. Self-directive organization should not be built top-down. Building and re-structuring the organization is already a phase which is needed, and people need to be engaged throughout the change journey.
- e. Trust your people. Self-directive organization is based on mutual trust. Managers and leaders no longer steer the ship. Power is shared and leaders need to accept that they can only coach and facilitate but no longer give orders. (Martela et al. 2021, 29-33.)

Making the change happen towards self-directive organization in existing hierarchical organization takes lot of time, courage and energy and has high probability in failing but has enormous potential when succeeding (Martela et al. 2021, 34).

2.5 Leadership in self-directive organization

Salovaara and Bathurst (2018) have researched plural leadership based on Mary Parker Follett's notions of "power-with" and "power-over" from early 20th century. Follett was ahead of her time and her research was seen very unconventional (Salovaara & Bathurst, 2018). Salovaara and Bathurst explains how Follett defined the concept of power-with and power-over. From 1924 Follett's

definition of “power-with” should be called “genuine power” whereas “power-over” should be called “pseudo power” (Salovaara & Bathurst, 2018). According to Follett power-with is enabling and liberating people to collaborate for a better society. Leaders’ responsibility is to ensure all available resources for the team. (Salovaara & Bathurst, 2018.) Considering the previous description of Follet’s definitions one can clearly see that Follet’s ideas from 20th century are still fully accurate in context of self-directive organization.

Salovaara and Bathurst (2018) explains “the romance of leadership” which occurs in many organizations. In this concept the individual leader is seen as the critical resource which has led the company to impressive results. As in plural leadership the view is broader and not dependent on any one individual. Salovaara (2017) defines leadership as phenomenon which can be seen in team or group and how organization directs itself.

In self-directive organizations business leaders and owners need to adapt their perception of leadership into plural leadership. In self-directive organizations there are no more nominated leaders. The role of a leader should be considered as enabler, facilitator, and coach. Leaders are providing autonomy to teams and individuals to improve creativity and self-guidance. (Salovaara 2017; Salovaara & Bathurst, 2018.)

Salovaara and Bathurst (2018) summarized that the current phenomenon of leadership is still practically viewed through very traditional and hierarchical way.

Frank Martela (2020) defines four theses of self-directiveness. In these theses Martela explains the foundations of self-directiveness and expresses concrete ways on how to increase productivity and innovativeness.

Martela’s First thesis of self-directiveness

In first thesis Martela describes the differences in individual and organizational self-directiveness. This needs to be noticeably clear for all leaders in the organization. Organization needs to define the level of self-directiveness which the organization is trying to achieve. It is quite different to pursue towards complete self-directiveness as described in Laloux (2014) Teal-organization where all the power is given to employees compared to the organization where the aim is to encourage individuals to take more self-initiated approach to their tasks and help them become more independent. (Martela 2020, 22-23.)

Martela's Second thesis of self-directiveness

In the second thesis Martela (2020) lists what rights self-directive organization requires. Organizations cannot unilaterally demand individuals to be self-directive. Individual needs to have it clearly explained what his/her rights are to make own decisions relation to own work for example prioritizing, working processes, ordering tools and equipment. Organization needs to also clarify rights to manage work. Individuals need clarity about who can set targets and goals. How will progress be monitored, if any? Who will be reviewing if the goals are achieved or not? Individuals also need to understand their rights to participate in work and community development. Organization needs guidelines at which level the individuals can impact strategic initiatives and decisions, work process development and other matters which affect the whole community. It is necessity that the individual wants to take more responsibilities and autonomy to his/her work. Organizations also need to support and enable individuals to carry out tasks independently and autonomously. (Martela 2020, 23-24.)

Martela's Third thesis of self-directiveness

In the third thesis Martela (2020) explains the concept of self-directiveness which is opposite to top-down management. Power is given to employees to be more precise; power is given to teams and not to any individual. Martela also uses the term in Finnish "yhteisöohjautuvuus" which is emphasizing the power of the whole community. (Martela 2020, 24-25.)

Martela's Fourth thesis of self-directiveness

In the fourth thesis Martela (2020) overrules the thought of self-driven organizational model to be reducing all the structures and processes. Self-driven organization functions with less managerial levels but the organization is structured differently. Martela reminds that the solution is not to fire all the managers and think that the organization continues running on its own. Martela also reminds that building self-directive organization demands a lot of thinking and planning and engaging all employees to build new structures, processes, and ways of work. New structures and processes are not based on hierarchy nor anarchy. It is based on joint coordination, clear instructions, and practice. (Martela 2020, 25.)

3 Methodology

This chapter introduces the chosen research methods and describes the overall process of the development project. In this chapter, I will focus on reasoning my decisions on selected methods in relation to research questions. I will also provide definitions for all chosen research methods. In this chapter, I will also discuss the data analysis methods and the research's reliability and validity.

3.1 Research Approach – Case Study

I have selected Case Study as approach to my thesis. Case Study is often selected when the research aims to produce suggestions for development and create ideas solving the perceived problem. Case Study also helps researchers to understand the relationships between employees and operations in the company. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2015, 53.) In this development work I am trying to understand holistically how employees understand the concept and phenomenon of self-directive organization. I am also trying to understand how current organization structure is supporting the self-directive approach or are there some structures which are hindering pursuing towards more self-directive organization. The process of case study is demonstrated in Figure 2. (Yin 2009, 2).

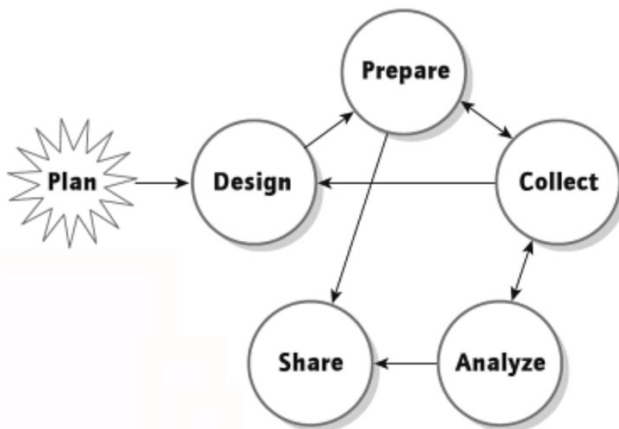


Figure 2. The Process of Case Study Method (Yin 2009, 2)

Case Study usually starts by analyzing the research case not from the general theories. Researchers usually have some experience of research cases or special interest in the phenomenon. (Ojasalo et al. 2015, 54.) The case study constructs single unit cases while understanding conclusions outside of the formal research scope (Gerring 2004). Characteristics of the case study have been mentioned in-depth and detailed knowledge of the case (Gerring 2004; Moilanen, Ojasalo & Ritalahti 2022). Gerring (2004, 347) also explains in his article that the case study research can also be seen as part of the research scope of the argument which the

researcher is demonstrating. In single-unit study the researcher may test the causal implications of a theory. This is also called pattern-matching. (Gerring 2004, 348.) Case study also suites well for research method when investigating for example organizational, social, and political related phenomena. In case study there is defined research target in its environment so the case can be limited to specific group of employees, or process, or the scope can be the whole company (Moilanen et al. 2022; Yin 2009). Gerring (2004) describes case study as intensive study of a specific case which aims to generalize across a larger set of units. In case study it is typical to use different methods of data collection (Moilanen et al. 2022; Yin 2009). Multiple observations in case study research provide firmer evidence of given proposition accuracy (Gerring 2004, 353). Evidence in case study is usually collected from six dissimilar sources: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. The objective in the case study is to collect data about human events and behavior. (Yin 2009, 98.) In this thesis I am using semi-structured theme interviews for different employee groups and surveys.

For this study I have chosen to use both qualitative and quantitative research methods. By using both methods my goal is to gain a deep understanding of how employees understand and experience self-directiveness in FCG. In the following chapters I will explain in more detail the differences between these two research methods.

3.2 Research Method – Qualitative Research

Qualitative research aims on answering the questions through individuals' perspectives. Qualitative research is guided by theory (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018). In Figure 3Figure 3. The process of qualitative research is presented as a cycle.

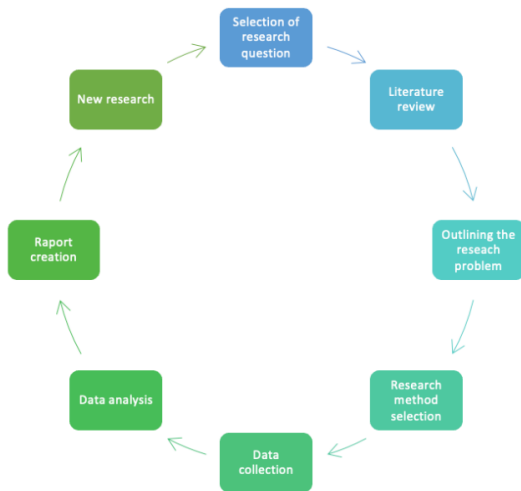


Figure 3. Qualitative research process (based on Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 174)

By qualitative research, the aim is to understand events which have happened, how participants have experienced them and how something is understood by them (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott & Davidson 2002). In Qualitative research, the purpose is to understand the phenomenon better (Moilanen et al. 2022). In qualitative research people involved are referred as participants as they are telling their views and experiences (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey 2011, 17).

There are three principal research paradigms in qualitative research empirico-analytical also referred positivist, interpretive and critical. These paradigms represent diverse ways of viewing the world. Positivist paradigm is driven by theory and the scientific method relies on deductive logic. Scientific methods also assume that an objective truth exists. The other two paradigms interpretive and critical emphasis on finding the understanding of the meanings of human actions. In research of human sciences, the positivist paradigm has been criticized for the above-mentioned reasons therefore interpretive and critical paradigms are more common in human science research. (Fossey et al. 2002, 718.)

For this research I have selected Interpretive methodology which aims understanding of human experiences and actions. I find this approach more appropriate to my research compared to the other alternative critical approach which emphasizes the social and historical origins and context of meanings. My research is also focusing on phenomenology approach which refers to the study in the “ordinary life world” (Fossey et al. 2002, 720).

Contrast to quantitative research the data in qualitative research is textual and generated through different methods such as interviews and the data analysis is interpretive. Researchers are interpreting the meanings of participant views and experiences. (Hennink et al. 2011, 16 – 26.) Qualitative research is done based on theoretical framework and author will need to open the

philosophical perspective to orient the reader to understand author viewpoints and approach (Fossey et al. 2002; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018). Qualitative research gives the privilege to participants perspective which affects the quality of qualitative research. Researcher is solely responsible for the analysis of the data. Researcher needs to return to the question for him/herself if the participant perspective is authentically represented in the research process and are the interpretations made coherently. (Ketokivi & Mantere 2010, 315-316.) Ketokivi and Mantere (2010) acknowledge the challenge in drawing theoretical conclusions from empirical data and convincing the audience of the credibility to researchers claim. Ketokivi and Mantere encourage researchers to choose one strategy and continue reasoning consistent with that selected strategy.

3.2.1 Data collection method

Most common data collection methods in qualitative research are interviews, surveys, observation, and different data archives. These methods can be used separately or as most used parallel and combined. The most used methods are interviews and surveys. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 83.)

Interviews can be structured or semi-structured. The difference between surveys and interviews is usually understood the way questions are addressed to participants. Interviews are usually done personally in face-to-face meetings, or through phone or in virtual meetings. Whereas surveys are usually sent to participants beforehand, and they will answer the questions by themselves at home or in observed situations. Interviews are also described as a dynamic situation where the interviewer will ask additional questions after receiving answers from the interviewee to gain a more in-depth view of the topic. This possibility is not available in surveys. The benefit of the interviews is the dynamic situation where the interviewee can ask for clarification for the interview question. Interviews are also very convenient as it does not require the interviewee to have any special technical tools or writing skills. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, 85.)

In interviews it is especially important to select a suitable situation and convenient time for the participant. The interviewee needs to feel relax and the interviewer needs to clarify how the data will be handled. Disadvantages of the interviews are time-consuming, and the data might not be reliable if the interviewees do not have the skills to respond to the specific topic (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018).

Interviews

For qualitative research I have selected semi-structured interviews as the main data collection method. Interviews provide me with the opportunity to acquire in-depth information, and the interviews will give individuals the opportunity to express their thoughts and understanding freely.

Interviews will give me as a researcher the opportunity to bring up matters and go deeper into the selected topic when necessary.

Moilanen et al. (2022) remind that interviews are often combined with other data collection methods. Interviewees were selected based on organizational hierarchy. Based on organizational hierarchy three groups were defined: employees, managers, and senior executives. To ensure a broad organizational view I selected five members for each group. In selection I tried to find participants from all different business groups and units. I also aimed that I would have participants with different lengths of career history. I used email, phone, and Teams to contact interviewees. I explained what the master thesis and research is all about and asked if I could interview them for data collection. I also explained that participation is voluntary. I explained how I will conduct the interviews and how the data will be handled. We decided on a suitable time for our calendars and the interviews were conducted on live face to face meeting or in Teams. Example of calendar invitation to interview is in Appendix 1. Interviews were conducted between 7.9. – 3.11.2022. Interviews lasted between 30 to 60 minutes; the average length of an interview was 41 minutes.

Interview questions were following five themes. Themes were Organization, Decision making, Management and leadership, Individual, and Wellbeing. These themes consisted of 2-3 questions. Interview questions are listed in Appendix 2. Interview themes are based on Martela et al. (2021) recommendations which leaders should acknowledge when pursuing towards self-directed organization. These recommendations were described in chapter 2.4 Towards self-directive organization. Interviews were recorded and transcribed before analysis. Results are coded and analyzed in a way that will not identify interviewees.

3.2.2 Data analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis creates clarity and order to collect data. The aim of analyzing the data is to summarize the content without losing the information value which exists. (Eskola, 1998, 137.) Eskola (1998, 162) reminds that researchers should return to the research questions during the data collection. Very commonly the data is collected early and the actual thinking and reflection to research questions is forgotten.

For data analysis I used the method of content analysis. In content analysis documents can be analyzed systematically and objectively. In this context, the word document can be understood broadly. Documents can be interviewing notes, letters, and articles. This analysis method aims to describe the phenomenon broadly and the material is collected to draw conclusions. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, 117.) In content analysis the material is categorized or coded in themes. Material is evaluated by how much some theme is appearing and in which context. Also, themes which are

not appearing can be analyzed. Content analysis can be used both in qualitative and in quantitative research. (Eskola, 1998, 185-187; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, 117-121.)

I started data analysis to organize transcribed interviews in matrix to see the themes which were appearing and themes which were not raised during interviews. I search for similarities and differences between interview groups and their answers. When comparing the interviews, I noticed that participants reflected their views and opinions based on their current role and this brought the variance between the responses. Though over all responses reflected the organizational rank it was also interesting to see that there are some individuals in all three groups who are understanding self-directive organization very similarly and it did not dependent their role or rank in organization.

3.3 Research Method - Quantitative Research

In quantitative research, the aim is to analyze questions based on larger amounts of data usually presented in numbers and percentiles. It examines the relationship between variables. Variables are measured numerically and analyzed using statistical and graphical techniques. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019, 177.) Data should be large enough and represent well the phenomenon which is being studied. Data collection methods are many but mostly data is collected by standardized forms with standardized answer options. Often the data is demonstrated by tables and figures. The aim is to present the analysis by using means of statistical reasoning. (Heikkilä 2014, 15.)

3.3.1 Data collection method

I have selected survey as data collection method for quantitative research part in this study. Survey method can be efficient way to collect data when there are many participants as in this case all FCG's employees in Finland.

Questionnaires such as surveys are commonly used as data collection methods in quantitative research. Surveys work best with standardized questions and researchers should ensure that responders interpret the questions the same way. The benefit of using surveys as a data collection method is that surveys are easy to send out to responders as web surveys. Hyperlink can be sent through email and responder can answer using web browser. The risk in using web surveys is that researchers might not get enough responders. (Saunders et al. 2019, 505.)

Surveys are usually used for either descriptive or explanatory purposes. Survey sample should be as representative and accurate as possible. (Saunders et al. 2019, 510.) In this thesis I am using survey results mostly for explanatory purposes.

Survey

The survey was done with Webropol survey tool. For questions I wanted to follow similar themes in survey as I did on interviews. By using the same themes, I can enrich the research results and add comparisons. The aim was to send the survey for all FCG Finland employees which means ~500 employees. To ensure the volume of responses I wanted to keep the survey as simple as possible. Simple and short surveys will provide more answers compared to exceptionally long and detailed surveys.

At the start I explained why I would like the respondent to answer the survey and how the results are used. In the beginning of the survey there was couple of background questions. Background questions were formed in a way which still allowed survey results to remain anonymous. In background questions responders gave information about their current role in FCG's organization and length of their professional career.

For the main survey questions, I select the Likert answering scale. I used the five step Likert scale where the alternatives were disagree, somewhat disagree, not agree nor disagree, somewhat agree, and agree.

A link to the survey was sent through email on 28.12.2022 and responses were collected until 15.1.2023. When the survey was closed on 15.1.2023 125 responses were received. Responses deviation by role is shown in Table 2. Survey questions are presented in Appendix 3.

Table 2. Number of Survey responses

Role	number of responses	Share of all responses (%)
Employee/Professional	103	82.4 %
Team Leader	7	5.6 %
Manager	11	8.8 %
Senior Executive	4	3.2 %

3.3.2 Data analysis

In Quantitative data analysis researchers need to ensure that the data is quantifiable. Data should be recorded as numbers. Researchers should remember there are diverse ways to analyze the data, and selecting the analytical strategy is recommended. Researchers should reflect on how

data is distributed and how it correlates with one another. (Williams, Wiggins & Vogt 2021, 104-109.) Subsequent analyses explore relationships using statistics and testing for significance. Research questions and objectives, and sample size influences choice of statistics. (Saunders et al. 2019, 625.) Quantitative data is usually analyzed with statistical analysis software, for example IBM SPSS Statistics (Saunders et al. 2019, 567).

The Mann-Whitney U test is a non-parametric test. The Mann-Whitney U test is usually used to detect differences between two variables. The Mann-Whitney U test has been used by many researchers. There is also some critic from researchers who see the Mann-Whitney U test performance variation threatening the result reliability. The Mann-Whitney U test usually performs well with small sample size. (Feltovich 2003, 273-274, 279.)

In this thesis data analysis was done with the Mann-Whitney U Test. In the Mann-Whitney U Test there is no prerequisite for normal distribution in data. It is a non-parametric test which compares two variables and tests if variables are equal or not. The Mann-Whitney U Test suits well for Likert-scale data. (Taanila 26.9.2020.) The Mann-Whitney U Test uses P-value. P-value indicates the probability that the sum of the rank numbers of the group deviates. Assumption is that the null hypothesis is true. The smaller the p-value is, the more support the alternative hypothesis gets. (Taanila 25.10.2013; Taanila 26.9.2020.) Taanila (25.10.2013) also reminds that in statistical testing the testing never proves the null hypothesis to be correct.

I started quantitative data analysis by downloading the data from Webropol Survey tool in SPSS format. Then I uploaded this file into IBM SPSS Statistic tool for further analysis. I edited the data so that SPSS can make the analysis from the Likert scales. I changed variables type for Scale so that nonparametric test could be executed. For SPSS analysis I excluded the open text responses as this is not number format data. Open text responses I analyzed manually and used content analysis method to divide comments under certain themes.

For number format data I used SPSS analysis to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the responses between groups. I needed to combine Team Lead, Managers and Senior Executives as one group to gain enough responses. This group is named Management. Group of professionals are employees who do not possess managerial roles in the current organization hierarchy.

I will present the Mann-Whitney U Test values for all statements under quantitative results chapter. I will focus more on statements where the test results reject the null hypothesis which means there are statistically significant differences between the responses of the selected groups.

3.4 Ethics, Reliability and Validity in Research

In qualitative research data collection methods are often informal and data collection methods are approaching real life interaction (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 147). Interacting with the participants, the researcher needs to pay attention to possible ethical dilemmas. Researchers might use unintended power over the interviewees and these situations can harm the ethics of the qualitative research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 147). Eskola (1998) reminds that if a researcher is thinking of possible ethical dilemmas, most likely the researcher is following the ethical principles and conducting ethical research.

As a researcher, I needed constant reflection on how I was conducting the interviews, and did I stick to the defined questions? I also needed to be aware of my own comments or notions during the interviews. I tried to keep myself calm and not express so many gestures or facial expressions to avoid any unconscious biases. I felt that in some interviews it was hard to stay completely objective when the interviewee was asking how I felt about the topic.

Researchers' ethical guidelines and principles should direct researchers throughout the entire research. The core research ethics are principles of respect, beneficence, and justice. (Hennink et al. 2011, 62-63.) Researchers should consider ethical approval process as an option to improve and refine the data collection methods (Matthews & Ross 2010, 72-73).

As a researcher, I needed to ensure that all interviewees were treated equally. All participants got the same information before the interview and all participants had the same interview questions. Interviews were conducted with similar techniques in all groups. I was using Teams and face to face meetings and questions were presented in same order to everyone.

Research ethics is a summary of different decisions and to minimize possible ethical dilemmas researchers should ask participants' consent to be studied, for example interviews. Participants need to have the option to decline the invitation to participate. Researchers also need to ask permission to record discussions/interviews and inform how the collected data is being handled after the research. Researcher also need to think how he/she might influence to the research community. (Eskola 1998, 52-56.)

As earlier described all interviewees and survey responders were volunteers and consent to collect their answers were required. I explained to interviewees how the data will be collected and how it will be handled. Similarly, there was an explanation to survey respondents how the data will be collected and handled.

Research validity and reliability is understood as the trustworthiness and objectivity of the research (Eskola 1998, 208-209; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 158-159). In qualitative research the research information should correspond to the real-life reality and observations (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 159-160). If the reader doubts the research results or has different real-life experiences, it is easy to claim the research result as non-reliable. Researchers should justify his/her interpretations and decisions coherently throughout the entire research. (Eskola 1998, 208.)

As a researcher, to ensure reliability, I have kept the research transparent. Research is conducted in a way that allows any other researcher to repeat the research and get the same results. Threats to reliability could involve responses from the participants or other biases. Participants were engaged in this research, so I do not see immediate threats to reliability.

The internal validity of the research is evaluated based on coherency. Researchers need to ensure that the research results are presented as detailed as possible and describe the path of interpretation openly so that the reader can assess the research process and analysis. (Eskola 1998, 212-213; Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, 163-165.)

I have aimed for transparent interpretation process to ensure the validity of this research. As author of this thesis, I provide quotes from interviews and add summarizing data analysis based on quotations. With these summaries I have tried to help the reader quickly grasp the main points from each theme.

4 Research findings – Qualitative research

Research was conducted with different data collection methods. Different methods were selected to support one another so that, for example, themes for interviews were the same as themes for survey questions. The following chapters I will introduce qualitative research results. Interviews were conducted in Finnish, so quotations are translated in English from original interviews. The final number of interviews conducted was 15 and interviews were divided equally in all groups, five employees, five managers and five senior executives.

4.1 How self-directiveness is understood?

All employees started to describe employee autonomy as synonymous with the possibility to decide what tasks should be done and in which order. Employees also highlighted the importance of trust and individual responsibility.

Organization gives freedom to employees and there is no need for bureaucracy.

Employee can decide him/herself own work schedule and in what order he/she will do the work. Employee is responsible for own time management and can use self-management skills.

Compared to employees' managers concentrated in their interviews one step further on individual autonomy. Managers mentioned the importance of understanding the company target and individuals should have intrinsic motivation to work towards a common goal.

Self-directiveness happens when an individual is working independently and makes decisions in their own work which concerns the employee and tasks at hand. Managers should not need to direct what to do and when.

It means that an individual can decide from different alternatives how to pursue towards common goal. Individuals cannot do whatever they want but they should focus on a common goal and figure out ways to get there.

Senior executives followed a similar path with the managers and highlighted the responsibility to work with the team and ensure that the whole team is working towards the same targets. Senior executives also mentioned individual skills to identify situations where they might need help. Some senior executives also mentioned the importance of understanding company strategy. Many responses also included critical thinking and encouraged employees to evaluate ways of working critically to find out issues to improve.

Self-directiveness is in present when an individual has understood their role in organization and is committed to act in their role towards common targets. Individuals also acknowledge the situations where they need guidance or support.

In self-directive organization everyone should understand the basic principles of private business which is in simple: to make profit for company owners. Individuals should critically

view the processes in their own team and group and address if something should be changed. These activities should serve the team targets and by the end the whole company strategy.

Interview results indicated that most of the participants were reflecting their views of self-directiveness to their current role and what type of responsibilities they have. Self-directiveness as a term has not been defined in FCG nor is there any definition of what it means in FCG. Individuals thought that the whole phenomenon was remarkably interesting, and they felt that many parts of it exist in their current role, but it was quite hard to define what it was. Many participants said that the word means different things to different people. So, there is a clear need to define what it means in FCG if FCG would like to increase the autonomy and self-directive ways of work in the future.

4.2 Self-directive organization

Interviewees started to think of self-directive organizations which they have heard about, but most interviewees described some sort of hierarchy which included teams and managers. Interviewees with experience of very traditional organizations tend to describe their own experiences and reflections.

Employees mostly described minimum level of hierarchy and teams which does not require top-down control. Mostly employees described teams who can lead themselves by utilizing the team member's potential.

There is no need to top-down management and control. The company needs to know what is being done but employees are given the freedom to plan and execute their own duties. Organizing happens in teams.

Organization is based on teams where team members' potential is taken into use. There are people who might need more support than others and there should be a leader who will hold the accountability at the end.

When employees described the traits of self-directive organization which they have seen in FCG they mentioned the possibility to work independently and the trust which they have experienced from their own manager.

In FCG employees can select what tasks they want to do and when. Employees can also suggest if some additional training is needed and how to increase their professional skills.

In FCG we are critically viewing processes and identifying those which should be improved.

A new CEO has started, and he has brought more transparency to topics and the CEO seems to act more as a coach which might lead towards self-directive organization.

Managers described self-directive organization as a well-defined structure where there are clear roles and responsibilities. Some interviewees also mentioned agile way of changing things if there is need to revisit some plans or strategy.

In self-directive organization all employees know what the company mission and target is. All employees are committed to achieve towards the goal and targets.

Self-directive organization needs a clear structure where all employees have clear job descriptions and roles are clear. If employees do not know what is expected from them, it is hard for them to develop their professional skills and be self-managing. The team should also utilize employee potential in full. Self-directiveness requires clear rules which are done together in teams.

Managers described Self-directive organization traits in FCG and many of them mentioned trust and independency.

In FCG there is low hierarchy and enough managerial levels. Organization is clear and everyone knows their own role and responsibilities.

In FCG employees are trusted. Employees are assigned to their tasks and managers trust that they can execute their tasks independently. Employees can also select project teams with whom they want to work with. Unclear job roles have caused some problems for autonomous work and responsibility areas are not that well defined.

Senior executives described self-directive organization as group of individuals who are independent and co-working with their team members. There might not be a need for managerial hierarchy, but there is a need to define where individuals or teams get the support now given by manager or unit leader.

Self-directive organizations consist of individuals who are independent and self-directive and from autonomous teams who are given the tools, time, and resources to do what is expected from them. Usually teams are built from top-down or with some external assistant but in some organizations teams can form independently.

The company has central key processes and those can be revisited if needed. I believe in clear structure and therefore think that there should be a clear description of responsibilities and accountabilities.

Senior executives described Self-directive organization traits in FCG, and some interviewees acknowledged that employee experience most likely differs dependent on which business unit individuals are working.

In FCG some business units possess better premises to self-directive organization than others. Some managers have 50 direct reports as someone has 20. Often people tend to speak who is leading who, but people tend to forget what the individual's capability is to work independently and in self-directive way. I have seen that people in FCG are respecting the top-down type of leading and people are expecting that someone is saying what individual should or should not do. In FCG there is an organization structure but there is no plan how "manager services" should be handled.

I have heard of previous culture in FCG which was "my business, my way". There is a lot of potential in this type of independent and autonomous way of working but it is not always serving the greater good. There are some unhealthy structures which have grown inside the company, and we should now change these structures or culture.

Based on interview results organizational hierarchy was visible in interviewees responses. It is encouraging that in all interview groups there were clear examples of some traits of self-directive

organization in FCG. Based on the results there is also a lot of work to be done to get the self-directive organization experience equally in all business units.

4.3 Decision making in self-directive organization

Many interviewees returned to what they had already described in earlier questions and felt that it was quite difficult to add something new.

Employees described that individuals should be able to make decisions concerning the work at their hands and topics which are affecting individuals. Other decisions are made above or by someone who has the mandate for it. Employees also highlighted the availability of information. It is necessary to have access to information to which they would need to make decisions.

In Self-directive organization decisions are made together in teams not top-down. All members of the team should be able to explain their viewpoints and decisions should be made by those individuals to whom it concerns.

Individuals should be able to make decisions in smaller matters but as the scope of the matter expands more people should be involved. People should remember to involve others in decision making and not make all decisions alone. Accountability limits should be also considered when making decisions.

When asking the traits of decision making in FCG some interviewees described that they do not see such traits in FCG. Some mentioned the decision power matrix which exists in FCG.

I do not see clear traits of self-directive decision making at FCG. A large part of decisions needs to be approved by higher rank manager.

I feel that keeping people informed and information sharing is happening in FCG, and this is part of self-directive organization decision making. We have a decision power matrix which is clear, and it supports people in decision making. There needs to be clear boundaries under which it is easy to work on.

Managers started to think decision making mostly through roles and hierarchy. Managers also felt that defined roles and responsibilities in decision making are particularly important and should be in place. Many interviewees mentioned accessibility to information which is needed in decision making. Some also mentioned peer-to-peer sparring in decision making.

Decision making should be based on organization hierarchy, by which I mean that decisions should be made in all levels of hierarchy. A company should define clear responsibilities and people can make decisions based on these responsibilities. It is important to trust people. Employee motivation will drop if micromanagement occurs. The company should also support junior professionals to make decisions in their work-related topics.

Targets are given top-down so I think all business units or teams should define their own targets. They are the experts to know what could be the expected outcome which that team can deliver. The team would carry the responsibility for profitability and find its way to reach the targets. By giving freedom to the teams the company will also give accountability and responsibility. Organization should also provide help and support for decision making if individuals or teams are looking for it.

Managers described traits of decision making in self-directive organization in FCG and comparing the previous answers from employees' managers have slightly different views on the topic.

Roles and responsibilities are defined in FCG so in theory everyone should know what kind of decisions they can make and what not. Individuals have freedom to take responsibility if they wish to. In FCG decisions made are not questioned and if someone makes mistakes, they will not get punished for it. They can learn from it.

I feel that in FCG there is no sparring culture in decision making. I would expect that someone could make questions and provide different viewpoints when an individual is introducing some ideas. There is freedom in decision making but people still would like to know better how decisions should be made. Decision power matrix is helping when making decisions, but it guides only on those decisions which are considering euros.

Senior executives raised related topics as managers. They described ideal decision making which would be structured with mutual agreements and responsibilities. They also mentioned that senior executives would save time on more strategic decisions if the operative decisions were made in teams and by individuals. When it comes to FCG, many interviewees thought individuals have freedom in making decisions but wondered if there are skills or will to act autonomously and independently.

In self-directive organization power of decision making is distributed and should be done low in hierarchy. Decisions will be made according to mutual agreements and rules.

In self-directive organization decision power is described in central processes which are supporting the company strategy. Decision making according to central processes should be without thresholds. Employees should be able to make decisions independently according to the given frames. Decision making requires accessibility to information and understanding what the impacts with these decisions are. The latter also requires personal traits from the individual. Individuals should possess skills and interests to take responsibility. Structures should enable easy access to information and that people have time to introduce themselves to the topic at hand.

Senior executives mentioned similar traits of decision making in self-directive organization in FCG as managers, but senior executives' views were quite different compared to employees' responses.

Power of decision making is well defined in FCG. Currently the power is tight to the position. Business Unit leaders are accountable for their own budget and business profitability. Autonomous decision making is happening in my own unit but most likely this varies a lot between the business units. Some units have organized their team structure to support autonomous decision-making, but some are still struggling with this. Previously FCG has had culture where access to information has been used as power over. This is something which needs to be changed. This type of culture is not enabling self-directive organization.

I have seen that distributed decision making is happening in FCG, but people are not seeing the impact to other teams or business units. It is easy for individuals to pick the cherries and make "nice" decisions but are not ready to make the harder ones. Decision power matrix is guiding decision making but it is more of a controlling tool than guiding tool. This should be changed so that the decision power matrix supports everyday decisions.

Based on interview results decision making in self-directive organization divided responses between the interview groups. Employees expressed different experiences than managers. According to employees an individual has a restricted opportunity to make decisions, whereas managers and senior executives feel there are clear decision-making roles.

4.4 Leadership in self-directive organization

Employees mostly described decision making roles through the job role. There was not any spontaneous mention of the coach or advisor role.

Manager has a role for personnel related topics, finance, and competence development. Decision roles are boundaries which are given to people.

Hierarchy should be low. Professionals should have their own role for decision making when it comes to their expertise, and some decisions need to be taken up to business unit or executive level. In teams people discuss topics and look for opinions and views. Euros are impacting the role of decisions.

Managers started to mention changing roles in decision making. They brought up more views on people taking decision roles in matters which are in their own area of expertise.

If decisions are made by individuals who most likely know best about the topic, then decision roles change too. There is no process of decision roles when the decisions are made where the matter is being handled. Hierarchical decision roles should be limited to a minimum.

If organizational hierarchy is low, most likely decision roles are few. I would trust in swarm intelligence where a bigger crowd is participating in decision making and different views are considered.

Senior executives divided in their responses. Some said that there should be hierarchical decision roles, and some described that decision roles are changing. All interviewees thought that someone should carry the responsibility. If this is not clearly defined no one carries the responsibility.

There needs to be clearly someone who is responsible nevertheless how self-directive organization is at hand. Accountability is also important, and that people know who is accountable for clients, competence etc. Top management should support and enable the team to succeed. Top management cannot have all the answers and they should coach and advise individuals to find solutions to their challenges.

Decisions should be prepared with multiple individuals who are involved in the matter at hand. Decision is made after the common vision is formed. I have not yet seen a company where all decisions are made at team level. This type of decision making most likely will adapt well in IT companies or otherwise agile environments. Traditional businesses this has not yet been visible. Most likely the company's financial situation might affect this type of decision culture. If the finance is in good shape, it is also easier to let teams and individuals make decisions which might have a huge impact on company financial results.

I also wanted interviewees to describe what kind of leadership emerges in self-directive organizations and here the responses between employees, managers and senior executives were remarkably similar. Employees mostly described leadership to be open and conversational and

decisions should be transparent. Employees also emphasized that leadership should be equal across the whole organization. Managers brought more insight into target-oriented views and felt that leadership should support the company targets and strategy on all fronts. Senior executives also discussed trust and highlighted the empowering the employees into organization development. Good leadership requires humility and individual needs must be considered.

4.5 Individual in self-directive organization

Employees reflected actively to their own role and responses underlines the individual responsibility to understand one's role in team.

Individuals should understand and fulfill his/her own role in team and support the community. Individual should not think about his/her own benefit rather the whole team benefit.

Individual should know him/herself and own strengths. Individuals should use these strengths to support the whole team or community. Consultancy can be very lonely work sometimes, but individuals should understand and work in a way which benefits the company.

Managers responses were like employees' views. Managers brought more understanding of the responsibility what freedom or independence brings.

Individual roles are especially important in the community. Individual should understand his/her role, why he/she is in the organization and how he/she succeeds. Individuals cannot concentrate on their own targets and expectations but also see the benefit of the team. Sometimes roles can be in conflict and these conflicts just need to be handled.

Senior executives concentrated on co-operation and collaboration. They saw that individuals need to have intrinsic motivation to be active actor in community.

Individual roles are important. Individual needs to participate actively not isolate.

Individuals need to have self-managerial skills and will. Carrying the responsibility is shown in engagement to organization and "doing good". Individual responsibility is also willing to develop own skills.

When asking about an individual succeeding in self-directive organization the answers were very alike with the interview groups. Interviewees acknowledged that succeeding depends very much on individuals' own skills and willingness to act independently.

Employees described the attitude and other traits which an individual should have which enables individuals' success.

Succeeding usually depends on one's own attitude and persona. What you want to learn and take into account your responsibility. If an individual feels the need of being more controlled this needs to be raised and discussed. Individuality can affect how one can act. It is easier to be self-directive if you are open to new things.

Managers also saw the individual traits as crucial to success in self-directive organization.

Self-directiveness is a very individual trait and whether it suits you depends on your personal traits. One might recognize success if individual gets things done which is according to the company or team targets.

An individual succeeds when he/she has the needed tools and when he/she understands the goal and aim of the company. Clear organization structure helps individual to understand his/her role in organization.

Senior executives described self-directive traits very similar as employees and managers.

“Individual succeeds by being active. When you communicate, take care of your responsibilities, share information with your colleagues, take responsibility for your own tasks and team tasks. One cannot think that there is someone who takes care of it. There is no “someone”. Things need to get done with the team which is surrounding you.”

“When an individual does things self-directively where no one has guided you to do things. Individual knows him/herself when they have succeeded. He/she needs to know their own targets and what activities are serving the purpose. To most employees it is very important question how one can say if they have succeeded or not.”

Finally, in this theme I asked interviewees what support for self-directiveness an individual can get in FCG. All interviewees mentioned the support function in FCG like HR (Human Resource), communication team, and IT. Many interviewees also mentioned FCG Coaches. Employees mentioned their manager and team colleagues who give support in FCG now. Managers started describing more limitations which the current organizational setup might bring where one manager might have more than 40 direct subordinates and this is not allowing managers to give proper support for employees. Similar notations came from senior executives. They acknowledged that getting support varies a lot in FCG where there are teams who are very satisfied with the level of support, they are getting whereas there are teams who are struggling. This is also something to which senior executives have paid attention and many changes in team structure have been made in the past couple of months.

Senior executives also raised the concern which is caused by the hybrid-work situation. The COVID-19 pandemic forced all organizations to re-think their ways of working and slowly teams are returning to offices. Senior executives also mentioned increased remote work as one topic which might have increased the numbers of individuals who might feel the need to get more support from their managers or peer colleagues.

4.6 Wellbeing in self-directive organization

Employees listed many very practical topics like physical work environment at the office, ergonomic table and chairs, and good occupational health care services. Quite many underlined the importance of discussion and time to reflect how people are feeling.

One should reserve time for pauses in one’s own calendar. Individuals need to take care of the length of the workday.

There should be someone who is interested in how you are doing. Someone should ask this. This should be one-on-one time, not just a question in team meetings with lots of participants. Individuals should have good tools, a pleasant working environment, and not too much workload.

Managers on the other hand highlighted the importance of teamwork and peer support which should be happening in everyday activities such as coffee breaks and other informal events. Managers also point out that no-one should have the feeling of loneliness, and everybody should pay attention if any colleague starts to be very isolated.

The time of Corona has caused individuals to be independently responsible of taking care of themselves. Feeling of security is important in the working community and everyone should feel the importance of their own role. Interaction is important so that no-one should be left alone or isolated. Individuals can work very independently but they should never feel lonely in their work.

Senior executives concentrated on balance in workload and peer responsibility to look after one another.

Right and reasonable resourcing without over booked calendars individual have time to analyze and do retrospectives. Psychological safety is important. There can be many different co-operations and collaboration at work but if psychological safety is missing and workload is too heavy any fun activities at work will not fix the situation. Individual needs to have the opportunity to impact on his/her own work. When the basic stuff is in balance then we can add some benefits etc. which help people in wellbeing.

It does not matter if the organization is self-directive or not. People need to take care of each other and ask if everything is ok if there are any such signs. Wellbeing is not organization model dependent topic.

It was clear that almost all interviewees started describing some role or function who is responsible for individual wellbeing at work. People tend to think that there is someone responsible for their wellbeing. It can be manager, HR or even at the end the company CEO. When the discussion moved forward, and people started talking, quite many ended up at the conclusion that all individuals are holding quite much responsibility for their own wellbeing. This responsibility includes the consciousness of one's own wellbeing and raising the topic if there are any signs of anxiety.

To the question of who is responsible for wellbeing at FCG, the answers reflected the previous descriptions. Employees described the managerial hierarchy and every individual him/herself. Managers responses were mostly focusing on reflecting their own position and role in wellbeing. They felt that they carry the responsibility but also noted that all individuals are responsible for their own and colleagues' well-being. Senior managers mostly responded that wellbeing is everybody's business. People in managerial roles carry certain types of responsibility but all individuals are responsible for their wellbeing at work.

4.7 Summary

Based on research results it is easy to agree with Vuori (2021) that people tend to have different ideas what self-directive means. Research results also show that self-directiveness is a complex phenomenon as Salovaara, and Martela and Jarenko claim (Martela & Jarenko 2017; Salovaara 2015). Mostly all interviewees mentioned individual autonomy and trust in others. Interviewees described diverse ways individuals can make decisions independently but mostly all descriptions were considering individuals. There were no mentions about autonomous teams and how the autonomous teams collaborate. As Lee and Edmondson (2017, 39) explain self-managing organizations give individual decision rights that cannot be overruled by anyone just because there is a boss or a manager. Most likely none of the interviewees has previous experience of this kind of structure or organization. Interviewees mentioning self-directive teams also described teams still led by some specific leader. One interviewee mentioned autonomous teams but did not think those exist in the genuine business world or those organizations could do profitable business. Many comments indicated that interviewees would need a common definition of what self-directive means in FCG.

Based on research results some interviewees do not see that FCG would be ready to self-managed organization structure which Lee and Edmondson (2017, 39) describe. Lee and Edmondson's description for SMO is explained earlier but the fundamental of SMO is that organization creates mechanisms to coordinate work without heavy top-down control (Lee & Edmondson 2017, 39). Interviewees mentioned the need for clear structure where company strategy and targets are created and defined on top and there should be clear responsibilities who implement tasks to teams as top-down activity. Similarly, interviewees mentioned that there should be someone, in this case referring to a single individual, who carries the responsibility. Though interviewees are valuing autonomous teams and decentralized authority. Previous thinking is in line with Martela et al. (2021) where researchers explain common error where self-directiveness is understood that companies get rid of all structures and after that there would be anarchy which would rule.

Research results are supporting the idea which Martela and Jarenko (2017, 12-13) also explain that different organizations are somewhere in scale where in one end there are companies who are organized and managed very high in bureaucracy and on the other end there are companies which are organized in holacracy model which is describe by Bernstein et al. (2016, 43-44). Martela et al. (2021) explains that amount of hierarchy levels does not prevent individual self-directiveness. The level of individual self-directiveness is also dependent on how much space the management gives for individuals and teams. FCG needs to find its own way to utilize the benefit of autonomous

teams but keep on defining structures which will help employees to understand what is expected from them.

Thesis research results also support Martela et al. (2021) research results' which express that greater autonomy for individual and team is correlating the better wellbeing at work (Martela et al. 2021). Interviewees highly value the freedom and trust which exists in FCG, and this was also tight together in wellbeing. There were few mentions that colleagues should pay attention to the wellbeing of others if the individual does not see his/her own workload. Which brings us to the conclusion that interviewees saw some risks of too much independence if an individual is lacking skills on identifying if they have too much work to do. Interviewees also pointed out that it is hard to get help and provide support if an individual does not raise the topic and ask for help. FCG should define structures and roles to ensure that all individuals can get support in their daily work. Based on interviews, the current assumption is that manager or team lead is expected to support individuals.

5 Research findings – Quantitative research

In this chapter I will introduce quantitative research results. Background information and open text comments were not analyzed in SPSS. Survey statements and questions are translated in English.

Survey question statistical analysis was done in SPSS using the Mann-Whitney U Test. Survey results were divided in two groups to compare if there are statistically significant differences how employees and management understands or experiences self-directiveness. The aim was to find statistically significant differences between the responses between groups. The Mann-Whitney U Test results are demonstrated in Appendix 4. Significant differences in test results where the null hypothesis is rejected are marked in yellow color.

In the following chapters I will focus on test results with significant differences. Later I will also analyze open comment responses and summarize the findings on those.

5.1 Significant differences

Based on SPSS analysis, I found eight questions with statistically significant differences between the group responses. I will take a closer look at those statements.

Table 3. is demonstrating the detailed distribution for different group answers. Questions considering interest in developing organization, understanding the concept of self-directive organization, open team goals, and getting enough support for wellbeing have the most significant differences according to the Mann-Whitney U Test. Significance result (p-value) between 0.000 to 0.005.

Table 3. Detailed response distribution for Survey Questions sorted by Mann-Whitney U Test significance

No	Survey Question	Group	1 = Disagree	2 = somewhat disagree	3 = Not agree nor disagree	4 = somewhat agree	5 = Agree	Mann-Whitney U Test Sig
4	I am interested in developing organization	Employees	1.90 %	9.70 %	7.80 %	52.40 %	28.20 %	0.000
		Management	0.00 %	4.60 %	0.00 %	22.70 %	72.70 %	
1	I understand well the concept of self-directive organization	Employees	7.80 %	15.50 %	31.10 %	30.10 %	15.50 %	0.000
		Management	0.00 %	0.00 %	9.10 %	63.60 %	27.30 %	
15	My team goals are clearly defined, and they are known by all team members	Employees	10.70 %	25.20 %	31.10 %	26.20 %	6.80 %	0.002
		Management	4.60 %	9.10 %	13.60 %	54.50 %	18.20 %	
17	I get enough support to take care of my wellbeing at work	Employees	13.60 %	19.40 %	23.30 %	34.00 %	9.70 %	0.005
		Management	0.00 %	9.10 %	18.20 %	50.00 %	22.70 %	
16	Increase of self-directiveness has not increased the feel of burden	Employees	9.70 %	18.40 %	35.00 %	24.30 %	12.60 %	0.010
		Management	0.00 %	13.60 %	13.60 %	54.60 %	18.20 %	
10	I have access to information which I need for making decisions	Employees	1.90 %	10.70 %	24.30 %	52.40 %	10.70 %	0.021
		Management	0.00 %	4.60 %	9.10 %	63.60 %	22.70 %	
3	I feel self-directiveness is important in my work	Employees	0.00 %	4.90 %	16.50 %	35.90 %	42.70 %	0.022
		Management	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	36.40 %	63.60 %	
8	Management in FCG is open and conversational	Employees	3.90 %	28.20 %	31.10 %	34.90 %	1.90 %	0.048
		Management	4.60 %	18.20 %	13.60 %	54.50 %	9.10 %	

Based on results management has a more positive view of interest to develop organization than employees. This type of behavior is usually expected in roles of management, but it is also fundamental idea of self-directiveness. Individuals in the organization should have some interest in developmental activities. As Lee and Edmondson (2017, 51) express it is necessary to explore are individuals' jobs enriched by greater autonomy and is it increasing individual well-being.

Results also show that understanding the concept of self-directive organization is more positive among management compared to employees. This is an important topic to be solved if FCG is pursuing towards more self-directive organization. Management also has more positive experience in that team goals are clearly defined and shared with all team members. Employees do not share the same view. This is an important topic which needs to be solved when pursuing autonomous

teams. All team members need to know common targets and what is expected from everyone in the team.

Results show that management has more positive experience in getting support for taking care of their own wellbeing at work than employees. This is an interesting result as there should be equal opportunities for all individuals to get support for their wellbeing. Based on this result more thorough research would be needed to identify where these differences might arise. Differences between the responders' views are correlating to the traditional organizational hierarchical role. Usually in hierarchical organizations, management has more influence on developing organizations and is usually responsible for defining targets for teams and individuals (Lee & Edmondson 2017, 46). It is therefore understandable that management has a more positive view of how information is available for all team members. Whereas experiences among employees are different.

Questions considering the feeling of increased burden, access to information, the feeling of importance of self-directiveness, and open and conversational managements show significant difference in test results (p-value) between 0.010 to 0.049. These questions are more general and individual experience might not be dependent on hierarchical rank in organization.

Management experience is stronger to importance of self-directiveness in their work compared to employees. Similarly, management has not experienced increased burden when and if self-directiveness has increased in their work. Based on the results employees have mixed feelings about experiencing increased burden in their work. Some explanation for this result can be seen from open comments which are analyzed later. Employees' increased feeling of burden might be because there is no clear definition what self-directiveness means in FCG.

Based on results there is also significant difference in experience accessing the data which is needed to make decisions. Employees share a more critical view of this experience than managers. Results do not identify what data is missing from employees' perspective.

5.2 Findings from survey open text comments

In the survey I asked responders to describe in their own words topics which enable and/or hinder self-directiveness in FCG. In data analysis I found three common themes which were emerging in open comments. These themes are ways of work, structure, and management & leadership. Responses are divided into themes as shown in Table 4. There is deviation between the themes emerging.

Table 4. Survey result: Open comments by theme.

Themes	Topics which enable self-directiveness in FCG			Topics which hinder self-directiveness in FCG		
	Employees	Managers	Senior Executives	Employees	Managers	Senior Executives
Ways of work	18	7	2	30	3	1
Structure	21	4	1	13	5	
Management and Leadership	5			10	2	1

Enablers

Ways of work is a large theme. In the enablers category, the responses described how people are acting in FCG. Some of the responses are referring to the responders view how the ways of working should be but most of the responses are describing their view of current situation. Responses in ways of working are describing the individual flexibility to select what to do and when. Responders are valuing the freedom of working hours. Responses also include mentions of a variety of projects and broad skills of different individuals whose knowledge can be used in tendering processes. The overall responses describe the trust in team colleagues.

In second theme, Structure, the responses were not that clear if the responder is describing the current situation in FCG or are they referring to structures which should be in place in FCG. Responders are describing the project management process, team targets, and responsibility. There are also quite a lot of mentions of communication and transparency.

The third theme focused on topics which describe views about managers and their work in organization and leadership. In many comments there is a mention about trust in people. Responders see that in FCG managers trust individuals. In open comments, responders describe the situation where managers are busy and have many direct reports, causing individuals to be independent. This independence is seen as self-directiveness.

Challenges

When participants describe challenges which hinder the self-directiveness in FCG the number of responses in ways of working theme increased compared to enablers. Based on responses responders see internal competition and holding back information to be quite common problems. Responders also see the weight of history in ways of working still to be alive in many teams and within many individuals. In history individuals tended to collect work for themselves to secure their position in an organization. People have not learned to share. Therefore, this type of behavior can be interpreted so that there is no willingness to cooperate in the team. There were also mentions that workload is not shared equally, which is easy to understand if the way of work is as described earlier. Responders see the current hierarchy creating bottlenecks in decision making when business unit leaders are extremely busy and are not able to push things forward which are required to get decisions done. Decision power could be shared if it would be defined better.

Previous mention on decision power was also visible in challenges in theme of structure. Under this theme responders were mostly questioning if employees of FCG know what is expected from them and do they understand the company strategy and targets. Responders were looking for definition of self-directiveness and it became obvious that this has not been defined. At the same time, responders were looking for defined ways of working, as such definitions do not exist.

In theme of leadership and management responders were mostly criticizing the current decision power and how managers do not see the opportunity to engage team members and professionals in decision making. Some responses reflected the senior executives and unpredictable changes. Some responders criticize managers' skills to lead self-directive organization. There were signs of micromanagement and fear of failure.

5.3 Summary

Based on interviews and surveys, employees in FCG understand self-directiveness differently. This is understandable as there is no definition of what self-directiveness means in FCG. Results show that most of the employees have some idea of the concept, but management tend to have a stronger view on this matter. Based on interviews management view of self-directiveness is still quite limited. Some individuals expressed diverse views on the concept but mostly people did described individuals who are working independently and with high self-motivation. Employees and management tend to lack a view of autonomous teams and how these teams are interconnected. In the survey, employees and managers strongly said the organization needs managers and a clear structure, but interviews or surveys did not answer how the structure should be built. Respondents also expressed that daily work can be managed by someone else than a manager.

This indicates a less hierarchical way of working but is not strong enough for interpretation of autonomous teams.

Interviews gave the impression that employees and managers are interested in developing the organization. Surveys provided views that not all employees are motivated to develop an organization. This would need more thorough investigation into what type of developmental activities employees and managers would consider motivational. Changing the company culture requires engagement and motivation to collaborate in all levels of company hierarchy.

Both surveys and interview results stated that information sharing is not yet at a required level. Self-directiveness requires access to relevant information to make decisions. Based on the survey results the situation is a bit better among management but also interviews provided evidence that this is something which should be improved at FCG. This will need more thorough exploring of what information is missing and how this could be solved. Accessibility might be limited because the information is scattered in many different systems or employees do not have permissions to view some data. Another option can be that there is information available, but employees and management do not know how to access it.

Results both in interviews and surveys supported the thought that employees and management trust each other and individuals can trust each other. There were many mentions of trust among colleagues and that management trust their subordinates. This is one of the fundamental cornerstones of self-directiveness.

Individual wellbeing was seen two sided. However, employees and management were concerned about individual wellbeing and support for this is not provided as good as it should. At the same time, all respondents and interviewees mentioned that individuals are responsible for asking for help if needed. The organization is responsible for providing enough support and building structures which enables wellbeing happening. And individuals are responsible for acting if they notice any signs of anxiety in themselves or of a colleague.

6 Recommendations

Based on previously shared results I have concluded recommendations which might help FCG Senior Executives and the whole organization to build more autonomous teams and reach towards more self-directive organization. I have excluded the implementation plan from this thesis.

My recommendations to FCG are following the Frank Martela four theses of self-directiveness (Martela, 2020). I found Martela's four theses very practical and adaptable to any organization who is approaching this topic. In my recommendations I am not suggesting FCG to pursue towards Holacracy model. I am expressing ideas where to start to increase self-directiveness in teams and within individuals' behavior as demonstrated in Figure 4.

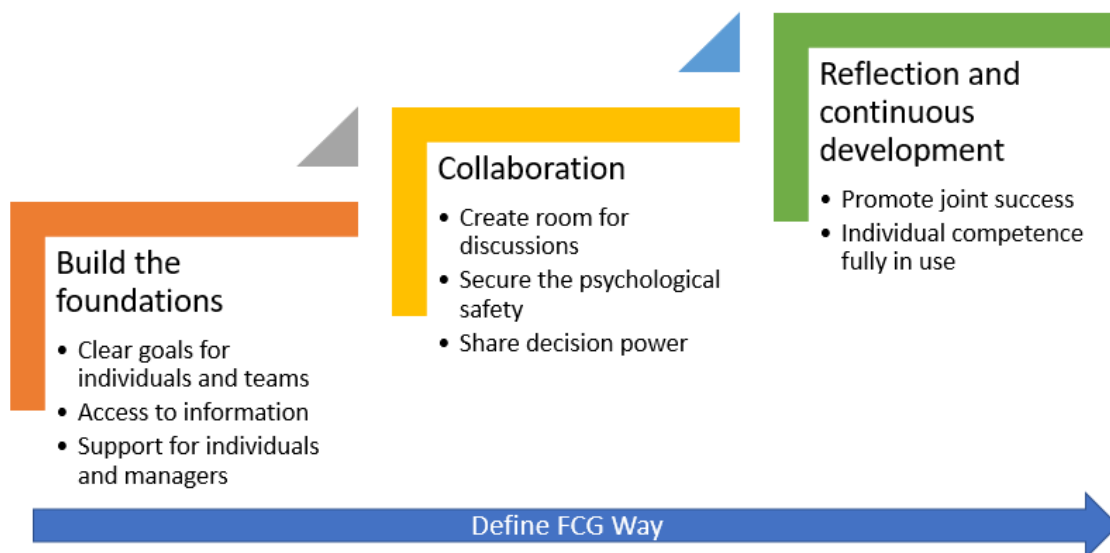


Figure 4. Steps towards increasing self-directiveness

6.1 Define self-directiveness in FCG

If FCG pursues a more self-directive organization this needs to be defined. Employees need to know what is expected from them and how the concept of self-directiveness should be understood in FCG. As already seen in results from interviews and surveys, employees have different views and interpretations of what self-directiveness is. This needs to be defined in a coherent way and this needs to be communicated at every level of FCG repeatedly. Self-directiveness is not happening only by describing it and publishing the definition on the intranet.

Definition needs to be concrete, and it requires communication through various channels. Currently in FCG many decisions require managers' approval or signature. FCG has a decision power matrix

which is guiding people in decision making. This matrix only defines responsibilities based on euro-denominated limits. When the decisions are considering something else it is not defined in matrix.

Self-directiveness is something which needs to be led. Employees need support and guidance. What does this mean for their role and in their daily activities? For this support employees need managers and team leaders. Similarly, managers and team leaders need guidance and support on how to make this change happen in their teams. People tend to assume that employees know what is expected but often these assumptions are wrong. Miia Savaspuro (2019) highlights importance of psychological safety. Self-directiveness requires trust between the employees but for most it requires trust from management to employees. Individuals need to have a feeling of trust and safety when making decisions. Colleagues or organizations cannot judge or punish if a wrong decision is made. Organizations and individuals need to take these errors as learning opportunities, and it is ok to fail sometimes (Savaspuro, 2019).

6.2 Clarity for individual – rights and responsibilities

FCG needs to define clear guidelines to teams and individuals for how responsibility is carried out and received. FCG cannot force people towards self-directive. This needs to be defined but the individual needs to have intrinsic motivation to act independently and towards self-directive organization. FCG needs to give freedom and flexibility for individuals to be able to take accountability. This means that some decisions which have previously required approval from team lead or manager will be decided by individual or together with team colleagues.

An individual needs clarity on how he/she can prioritize his/her own work and this needs to be clear to all team members. Individual is most likely working on multiple projects at the same time so individual needs to have capability to organize his/her own tasks in a way which considers all the aspects of different projects and timelines. Individuals need support and coaching if they have not done this type of prioritization earlier. These roles who can support and coach should also be defined.

FCG needs to define how target setting is done and how individuals can participate in target setting. Currently target setting in FCG is done traditionally from top to bottom. Could this be done differently? If FCG is not yet ready to complete change in target setting this could be tried out in some teams or units. Similarly, FCG needs to define how and who is evaluating if individual has succeeded or not. There might be some room for experiencing diverse ways.

Freedom to take responsibility requires some room for developmental activities. This is something which also needs clarification. This was also one topic which was mentioned in open comments of hindering traits. Currently development activities are not seen as a priority as there is too heavy a

workload and key figures do not complement the hours spent on development work. Prior to work hours which are spent on developmental activities, this type of work should also be defined in job description. Individual needs to understand what type of developmental activities are expected in different roles and positions. Individual also needs to want to take this type of responsibility and new tasks that have not previously belonged to him/her.

Current leaders and managers in FCG also need to find ways to understand and accept that decisions are now done differently, and individuals and teams need to have support for these decisions.

6.3 Power sharing in FCG

FCG must define how decisions are made and how to include people relevant to the topic in the decision-making process.

As already briefly described earlier, leaders and managers need to accept that more decisions are made in teams. This decision-making process needs to be defined. It needs to be clear so that nobody can question how the decision is made. I am not suggesting that FCG should pursue a holacracy model where there are no managers but only autonomous teams, but I am suggesting that FCG finds a path somewhere in the middle. I am proposing power sharing, but this requires communication and educating people about what this means in FCG. Power sharing is at the heart of the term "yhteisöohjautuvuus" which has been described earlier in this thesis. This term is reflecting to the community which has clear structures, ways of working and processes. Where teams are following rules of democracy in decision making. Different voices are heard, and views taken into consideration before making decisions. This type of decision-making process might feel and seem complicated and slow but in practice it can bring fast decision making when individuals have understood it and taken it to practice.

6.4 Structures in FCG

Self-directiveness is not about tearing down all the structures and hierarchy. It is a different way to organize.

Employees in FCG might be working parallel in two to ten different projects. Each of these projects has different project teams so employees need to adapt to many ways of working in these teams.

I would encourage FCG to start building self-directiveness to these project teams. In these teams' employees have common goals, they invest their expertise in certain domains, they trust

colleagues to deliver what is being agreed and the team can make decisions which concern the project at hand.

For this type of collaboration, FCG would need to define clear guidance and how the work is done, in short, describing FCG way of work.

Structures would bring team members clarity in how to handle conflicts in the team, how to share and carry responsibility as a team, how to ensure resources in the project team, how to carry the responsibility of the deliverables to the customer.

Currently FCG organization structure is organized based on certain knowledge or competence. Often people might be working on the same projects in pairs but most often all employees in one team are working on different projects. Therefore, I think it might be hard to define self-directive ways of working for these teams who are just gathered once per week or once per month together to go through the resourcing topics or something else which is relevant for all. The actual value for the customer is provided in these project teams which are building some solution or product for the customer.

Building the structures in FCG brings clarity to individuals and teams can collaborate better as there is a straightforward way of working which is common for all. Teams might be virtual and not directed by organizational hierarchy. Team collaboration model described in Figure 5.

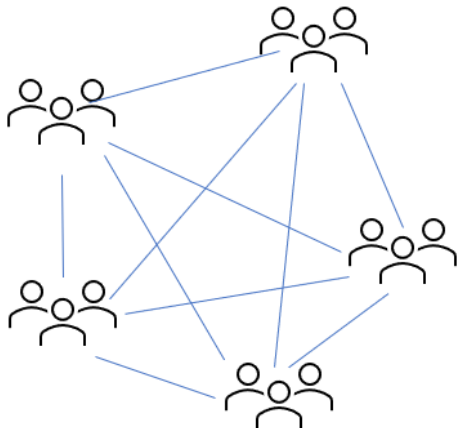


Figure 5. Team Collaboration

7 Discussion

This chapter summarizes the main findings of the research and discusses the benefits for FCG. First, I will reflect on my findings to research questions and then I will focus on self-reflection of my own learning during the thesis process.

7.1 Main findings of the research

In the first chapter of this thesis, I have expressed the aim of this thesis which was to understand how the concept of self-directive organization is understood in FCG. This was also the first research question. Both selected research methods, qualitative and quantitative, provided a similar view for this question. The concept of self-directive organization is not clear to all employees, and they have different views about it. One major explanation is that the concept of self-directiveness is not defined in FCG. This result is correlating with Vuori (2021) study where she explains that self-directive is used in multiple contexts and usually needs some explanation.

Many responses reflected that self-directiveness means freedom and independence of an individual. Most employees have experience from hierarchical organizations and reflections are made to these past experiences. Employees need more information and awareness of how autonomous teams work and how autonomous teams could be structured in FCG. As Martela et al. (2021) summarize in their research, individual autonomy and feeling of self-directiveness has a clear correlation to perseverance and resilience in work.

Second and third research question concentrated on finding structures which are enabling or hindering self-directiveness in FCG. It was interesting to notice that there are structures which enable self-directiveness. Employees have the feeling of appreciation and trustworthiness. These are structures which should be nurtured.

On the other hand, there were findings which disclose elements which are hindering the self-directiveness and these elements FCG should eliminate and change. For example, the process of decision making and feeling of internal competition between colleagues. Many of these elements are connected to ways of working and culture. Lee and Edmondson (2017) describe how self-directive organizations focus is decentralizing decision rights. In context of before mentioned self-directive organization, decisions should be made among those team members whom the decision concerns.

Employees also described some counterproductive behavior which is not serving the best interest of the whole team. Some responders described internal competition and lack of co-operation. To achieve autonomous teams, it is most important to address these types of behaviors and to

remove any elements of non-collaborative behavior. Martela (2019) reminds that any exploitation of freeriding should be addressed immediately. Laloux (2014) also describes that teams should define their own targets. This is a good approach to engage team members to collaborate and take ownership of the deliverables. Based on interview and survey results employees do not share this view in FCG yet.

As a researcher I found the whole phenomenon of self-directive organization remarkably interesting, and this is one reason I chose this topic for my master thesis. The research of the phenomenon is sociologically important. Discussion and debates of employee wellbeing and feeling of meaningfulness is increased in our society and as a researcher I believe that phenomena relating to these should be researched even more. Martela et al. (2021) also express that the common discussion about self-directiveness is ongoing, but the research of the phenomenon is still quite limited.

In my own role as HR Business Partner, I find it particularly important that companies who are heavily dependent on human power and intelligence should constantly find ways to improve and develop company structures in sustainable ways.

I believe that senior executives can use the research findings and development suggestions in their future development activities. Research findings can act as a baseline for future surveys to get more thorough information to specific topics. Senior executives are already highly active in developing the organization and finding new ways to improve employee experience.

7.2 Reflections to Ethics, Reliability and Validity

In chapter 3. Methodology I have described the common dilemmas regarding research ethics, reliability, and validity. As Eskola (1998) mentions, it is beneficial if researcher keeps the possible ethical dilemmas in mind throughout the entire process and is aware of pitfalls. I felt that conducting interviews was easy and I enjoyed all discussions with the interviewees. My own role in FCG organization includes a lot of networking with employees. I feel that interacting with different employees is easy and we can easily find common ground. I believe my role in the organization has not threatened research ethics during interviews. I feel that all interviewees have felt discussions to be important and they can trust that I will handle data confidentially.

I believe that I have managed to keep research reliability and validity at an excellent level. As Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2018) describe, research information should correspond to real-life reality and observations. In all interviews and survey responses, I asked employees to describe their own thoughts about the specific topic and their own reality. Based on these discussions I have made interpretations and brought quotations from interviews available for the readers. With this

transparency I have ensured that readers can see how my decisions are built coherently. If for some reason some interviewees decided not to tell me their own views it might threaten the research reliability. I do not find this threat relevant as all the interviewees were very coherent in their replies and views.

7.3 Self-reflection

This thesis process has been an educational and interesting experience. During the process I have found interesting sources for the topic, and I have also created new contacts with other researchers in Finland who share the same interest towards the self-directiveness. I will continue following their new research and publications.

When writing the theoretical framework, I found it difficult to explain some of the central ideas as I found very good sources written in Finnish and I found it hard to translate the concepts in English as there is no direct translations for example concept of “yhteisöohjautuvuus”. I have found this concept very interesting, and I have followed Finnish researcher Perttu Salovaara and his work with cities and municipalities. I feel that Salovaara’s work with public organizations is providing hope that also organizations which are traditionally followed hierarchically structures are changing slowly to more agile and autonomous structures.

I have felt that employees in FCG have been engaged to this research and employees find this topic interesting. Some interviewees have been interested in how the thesis process is proceeding and eagerly waiting to read the overall results.

When I started my master thesis process, I had some doubts how I could manage to contribute to this research as I was working full-time, and I still had some courses to attend to. I was very grateful to my thesis advisor who took me under her wings from the start and handled my doubts very professionally and constantly supported my thinking forward. My thesis advisor is a true professional researcher herself, but she also has respectable academic record of accomplishment of own publications considering self-directiveness. She really knew the topic and guided me in the right direction. Based on discussions with my other fellow students this cannot be taken for granted. Therefore, I dare to claim that without my thesis advisor this research could be quite different.

During the thesis process there have been some changes in FCG which might have threatened the research. Thesis sponsor from FCG and my manager HR Director in FCG has also changed and some changes among FCG senior executives has happened. In favor of this research current senior executives and my current manager have supported this research to continue. Without this support this research would have not been finalized.

I also need to thank my family for their constant support. Without their effort this research would not have been possible.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Example calendar invitation for interviews

Hei,

Teen parhaillani opinnäytetyötä Haaga-Helia ammattikorkeakouluun Ylemmän ammattikorkeakoulun tutkintoon Leadership and People Management opintosuuntauksessa itseohjautuvuuden aiheesta. Opinnäytetyöni ohjaajana toimii yliopettaja Johanna Vuori.

Opinnäytetyössäni tutkin miten työntekijät FCG:llä ymmärtävät itseohjautuvuuden ja minkälaisia haasteita tai mahdollisuuksia itseohjautuvuudelle on FCG:llä. Opinnäytetyön otsikko on FCG's challenges and enablers to build self-directed organization.

Tarkoitukseni on teemahaastatteluiden ja kyselyiden avulla selvittää FCG:n henkilöstöryhmien näkemyksiä itseohjautuvuudesta. Henkilöstöryhmät ovat johtoryhmä, esihenkilöt ja työntekijät.

Haastattelut toteutetaan yksilöhaastatteluina Teamsin välityksellä tai mahdollisuuksien mukaan kahdenkeskisessä tapaamisessa. Aikaa on hyvä varata noin 60 minuuttia. Haastattelut nauhoitetaan ja litteroidaan. Haastattelut käsitellään luottamuksellisesti eikä opinnäytetyössä ilmene vastaajien henkilöllisyys.

Jos olet käytettävissä haastattelua varten, niin vahvistathan osallistumisesi hyväksymällä tämän kalenterikutsun.

Kiitos avustasi jo etukäteen!

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Miia Tuominen

Appendix 2. Interview questions

Theme	Question
Johdanto / Induction	Mitä tarkoittaa mielestäsi sana "Itseohjautuvuus"? / What does the word self-directiveness mean?
Organisaatio / Organization	Millainen on sinun mielestäsi itseohjautuva organisaatio? / What is the self-directive organization like?
	Minkälaisia itseohjautuvan organisaation piirteitä näet FCG:llä? / What traits of self-directive organization you can see in FCG?
Päätöksenteko / Decision making	Millaista olisi päätöksenteko itseohjautuvassa organisaatiossa? / What would be decision making like in self-directive organisation?
	Minkälaisia itseohjautuvan organisaation päätöksenteon piirteitä näet FCG:llä? / What traits of self-directive organization decision making you can see in FCG?
Esimiestyö ja johtaminen / Leadership and people management	Millaisia päätöksenteon rooleja itseohjautuvassa organisaatiossa on? / What kind of roles in decision making there are in self-directive organization?
	Minkälaista johtamista mielestäsi hyvin toimivassa/ideaalissa itseohjautuvassa organisaatiossa on? / What kind of leadership emerges in self-directive organisation?
	Minkälaista ideaalin itseohjautuvan organisaation johtajuutta mielestäsi löytyy tällä hetkellä FCG:llä? / What traits of self-directive organization leadership you can see in FCG?
Yksilö / Individual	Millainen on yksilön rooli itseohjautuvassa organisaatiossa? / What kind of role does individual has in self-directive organization?
	Miten yksilö onnistuu itseohjautuvassa organisaatiossa? / How individual succeeds in self-directive organization?
	Minkälaista tukea yksilö mielestäsi saa tällä hetkellä FCG:llä? / What kind of support an individual can get in FCG at the moment?
Hyvinvointi / wellbeing	Miten itseohjautuvassa organisaatiossa tulisi huolehtia työhyvinvoinnista? / How wellbeing is taken care in self-directive organization?
	Ketkä ovat mielestäsi tällä hetkellä vastuussa työhyvinvoinnista FCG:llä? / Who do you think is responsible for wellbeing at work at FCG at the moment?

Appendix 3. Survey questions

Survey was conducted with Webropol Survey tool.

Tehtäväsi taso FCG:llä / Your current role in FCG	asiantuntija / professional	tiimipäällikkö / team lead	esihenkilö / manager	johtoryhmä / executive
kuinka pitkään työsuhteesi on kestänyt FCG:llä? / How long have you worked in FCG?	0- 2 vuotta /years	3-5 vuotta/years	6-10 vuotta/years	yli 10 vuotta/ years
Kuinka pitkä työura kokonaisuudessaan sinulla on? / How long is your career over all?	alle 10 vuotta /years	10-20 vuotta / years	yli 20 vuotta /years	
Tunnen hyvin itseohjautuvan organisaation käsitteen / I understand well the concept of self-directive organization	Likert 1 to 5			
Haluan kehittää omia itseohjautuvuuden taitojani / I am interested to develop my self-directive skills	Likert 1 to 5			
Koen itseohjautuvuuden työssäni tärkeäksi / I feel self-directiveness is important in my work	Likert 1 to 5			

Olen kiinnostunut organisaation kehittämisestä / I am interested in developing organization	Likert 1 to 5
Koen, että organisaatio tarvitsee esihenkilötasoja (hierarkian) toimiakseen hyvin / I feel that organization needs managers (hierarchy) to function well	Likert 1 to 5
Mielestäni on tärkeää, että organisaatiossa on yhteiset pelisäännöt / I feel that it is important to have common rules in organization	Likert 1 to 5
Koen, että päivittäisestä työn organisoinnista voi vastata myös muut kuin esihenkilö / Person other than manager can also be responsible for the organizing daily work	Likert 1 to 5
Koen, että johtaminen FCG:llä on avointa ja keskustelevaa / Management in FCG is open and conversational	Likert 1 to 5
Koen, että saan työssäni tukea FCG:n päätösvaltamatriisista / Decision power matrix is supporting me	Likert 1 to 5
Minulla on pääsy tietoon, jota tarvitsen työssäni, tehdäkseni päätöksiä / I have access to information which I need for making decisions	Likert 1 to 5
Koen, että organisaatiossa jaetaan tietoa, jota tarvitaan työssä päätöksen tekoon / Information is shared in my organization which is needed for decision making	Likert 1 to 5
Koen, että tiimissäni kollegat jakavat toisilleen tietoa, jota tarvitaan työssä päätöksiä tehtäessä / Information is shared in my team which is needed for decisions making	Likert 1 to 5
Tiimikollegani reagoivat usein uusiin asioihin kiinnostuneen uteliaina / My team colleagues react curiously to new things	Likert 1 to 5
Tiimissäni ei sooloilla, vaan toimitaan yhdessä tiiminä / There is no "doing solo" in my team	Likert 1 to 5
Tiimin tavoitteet on selkeästi määritelty ja ne ovat kaikkien tiedossa / My team goals are clearly defined, and they are known by all team members	Likert 1 to 5
Koen, että itseohjautuvuuden lisääntyminen ei ole lisännyt työkuormituksen tunnetta / Increase of self-directiveness has not increased the feel of burden	Likert 1 to 5
Saan riittävästi tukea omasta työhyvinvoinnista huolehtimiseen / I get enough support to take care of my wellbeing at work	Likert 1 to 5

Minkälaiset asiat mielestäsi edistävät itseohjautuvan organisaation toimintaa FCG:llä / What kind of things promotes the functioning of self-directed organization?	Open text
Minkälaiset asiat mielestäsi vähentävät itseohjautuvan organisaation mahdollisuuksia FCG:llä / What kind of things hinders the possibility of self-directive organization	Open text
Minkälaiset asiat mielestäsi edistävät yksilön itseohjautuvuuden toteutumista FCG:llä / What kind of things promotes individual self-directiveness in FCG?	Open text
Minkälaiset asiat mielestäsi vähentävät yksilön itseohjautuvuuden toteutumista FCG:llä / What kind of things hinders individual self-directiveness in FCG?	Open text

Appendix 4. Mann-Whitney U Test results

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. ^{a,b}	Decision
1	The distribution of I understand well the concept of self-directive organization:Täysin eri mieltä is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of I am interested to develop my self-directive skills:Täysin eri mieltä is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.317	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of I feel self-directiveness is important in my workTäysin eri mieltä is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.022	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of I am interested in developing organization is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of I feel that organization needs managers (hierarchy) to function wellis the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.931	Retain the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of I feel that it is important to have common rules in organization is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.829	Retain the null hypothesis.
7	The distribution of Person other than manager can also be responsible for the organizing daily work is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.489	Retain the null hypothesis.
8	The distribution of Management in FCG is open and conversational is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.048	Reject the null hypothesis.
9	The distribution of Decision power matrix is supporting me is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.807	Retain the null hypothesis.
10	The distribution of I have access to information which I need for making decisions is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.021	Reject the null hypothesis.
11	The distribution of Information is shared in my organization which is needed for decision making is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.088	Retain the null hypothesis.

12	The distribution of Information is shared in my team which is needed for decisions making is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.087	Retain the null hypothesis.
13	The distribution of My team colleagues react curiously to new things is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.324	Retain the null hypothesis.
14	The distribution of There is no "doing solo" in my team is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.861	Retain the null hypothesis.
15	The distribution of My team goals are clearly defined, and they are known by all team members is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.002	Reject the null hypothesis.
16	The distribution of Increase of self-directiveness has not increased the feel of burden is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.010	Reject the null hypothesis.
17	The distribution of I get enough support to take care of my wellbeing at work is the same across categories of Role_in_organization.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.005	Reject the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.