



Navigating the Hybrid Workplace: Social Capital Dynamics within Self-Managing Teams

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Tässä opinnäytetyössä tarkastellaan sosiaalisen pääoman vaikutusta itseohjautuvien tiimien suorituskyykyyn ja yhteistyöhön erityisesti hybridityöympäristössä. Tutkimuksen tavoitteena on ymmärtää tekijöitä, jotka edistävät tai estävät sosiaalisen pääoman kehitystä itseohjautuvissa tiimeissä. Tutkimus sijoittuu suomalaisen finanssialan organisaatioon, jossa on viime aikoina tapahtunut merkittäviä organisaatiomuutoksia, muun muassa siirtyminen kohti itseohjautuvia tiimejä ja hybridityömalleja.

Opinnäytetyö on laadullinen tutkimus, jossa hyödynnetään temaattisia haastatteluja tiimin sisällä keräten näkemyksiä heidän kokemuksista, havainnoista ja sosiaalisen pääoman dynamiikasta tiimityössä. Tutkimus tarkastelee sosiaalisen pääoman käsitettä keskeisten teoreetikkojen näkökulmasta sekä sen toimintaa ja merkitystä itseohjautuvassa tiimissä. Opinnäytetyössä tarkastellaan myös sitä, miten itseohjautuvan tiimin käytännöt eroavat perinteisistä työskentelytavoista ja miten nämä erot vaikuttavat tiimin dynamiikkaan ja sosiaaliseen pääomaan.

Keskeiset havainnot korostavat luottamuksen, avoimen viestinnän ja yhteisten tavoitteiden merkitystä sosiaalisen pääoman edistämisessä. Tutkimus tuo ilmi, että itseohjautuvassa tiimissä roolien vakaus ja selkeys sekä tehokkaat kommunikaatio- ja luottamusta lisäävät käytännöt ovat ratkaisevan tärkeitä tiimin suorituskyykyyn ja hyvinvoinnin parantamiseksi. Haasteet, kuten tiimin vaihtuvuus ja etätyödynamiikkaan sopeutuminen, tunnistetaan mahdollisiksi esteiksi vahvan sosiaalisen pääoman kehittämiseksi.

Opinnäytetyö auttaa ymmärtämään sosiaalisen pääoman ja itsensä johtamisen monimutkaista vuorovaikutusta nykyaikaisissa työympäristöissä ja tarjoaa arvokkaita oivalluksia organisaatioille, jotka haluavat parantaa ryhmätyötä ja työntekijöiden sitoutumista hybridityöympäristössä. Tutkimus korostaa sosiaalisen pääoman vaalimisen tärkeyttä tiimin kehittämisen ja organisaation menestyksen kriittisenä voimavarana.

Avainsanat Sosiaalinen pääoma, itseohjautuvuus, hybridityö, työn resurssit

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Abstract

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This thesis investigates the influence of social capital on the performance and collaboration of self-managing teams, particularly in a hybrid work environment. It aims to understand the factors that enhance or impede the development of social capital within such teams. The study is set in the context of a Finnish finance sector organization undergoing significant organizational changes, including a shift towards self-management and hybrid work models.

The research adopts a qualitative approach, utilizing thematic interviews with team members to gather insights into their experiences, perceptions, and the dynamics of social capital within the team. The study explores the concept of social capital from the perspectives of key theorists and examines its function and significance within a self-managing team. It also delves into how self-management practices differ from traditional work approaches and how these differences impact team dynamics and social capital.

Key findings highlight the importance of factors like trust, open communication, and shared goals in fostering social capital. The study reveals that in a self-managing team, the stability and clarity of roles, alongside effective communication and trust-building practices, are crucial for enhancing team performance and well-being. Challenges such as team turnover and adapting to remote work dynamics are identified as potential barriers to developing strong social capital.

The thesis contributes to understanding the complex interplay between social capital and self-management in modern work environments, offering valuable insights for organizations looking to improve teamwork and employee engagement in hybrid settings. It underscores the importance of nurturing social capital as a critical resource for team development and organizational success.

Keywords Social capital, self-management, hybrid work, work resources

Pages 32 pages and 2 pages of appendices

Content

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Background.....	1
1.2	Purpose of the study	2
1.3	Research question and sub-questions	2
1.3.1	Main research question	2
1.3.2	Sub-research questions.....	3
1.4	Commisioning company.....	3
2	Theoretical framework.....	5
2.1	Social capital.....	5
2.1.1	Conceptual background of social capital.....	6
2.1.2	Social capital in previous research	8
2.1.3	Role of social capital.....	10
2.2	Self-management.....	11
2.2.1	Common elements of social capital in a self-managing team.....	13
2.2.2	Previous research of self-management	14
3	Research methology	16
3.1	Research design.....	16
3.1.1	Data collection.....	17
3.2	Target group	19
3.3	Analysis of interview data.....	20
3.4	Reliability	21
3.5	Validity	23
4	Research findings	24
4.1	Employee experiences of the impact of social capital in a self-managing team.....	24
4.1.1	Sharing and asking for advice.....	24
4.1.2	Common ways of working and doing things together.....	25
4.2	Development points for building social capital in a self-managing team	26
4.2.1	Turnover in team	26
4.2.2	Interaction in a team	27
5	Conclusion	28
6	Recommendations, limitations and future research.....	30
7	References	31

Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview Protocol: Impact of Social Capital in a Self-Managing Team

Appendix 2. Data Management Plan

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

One of an employee's key assets is a well-functioning work community, which at its best provides valuable support and security for employees. A well-functioning work community emphasises communality, trust, shared goals and norms, which together form the social capital for the team (Iisakka & Alanen, 2006). In order for the team to be able to achieve common goals and develop together, strengthening and importance of social capital is significant. In a team, the decline or loss of social capital has a negative impact on both individual and teamwork. Social capital should be developed and nurtured, as it has been proven to promote the well-being of the team and enhance the achievement of common goals (Iisakka & Alanen, 2006).

This research aims to provide new knowledge and tools to the commissioning company for developing social capital in the context of self-managed and a hybrid work environment. The research team has observed the importance and impact of social capital in the team, and has previously piloted psychological safety training together and developed on giving feedback to each others. The topic of the study arose from these in order to gather more information about developing their community as a team to be as functional as possible and to increase common well-being. Thesis seeks a basis for why taking care of social capital is important for the team and why its strengthening should be developed. This thesis explores the concept of social capital by studying the definitions of the most significant theorists in the field and delving deeper into its meaning in this study. Theoretically this research is also examining what self-managed work is and how it differs from traditional work. The case study team is working in a hybrid work environment, meaning that the employees are combining both remote work as working in the workplace. The conclusions of previous research made in the field is presented later in the material. This research also considers the possible impact of hybrid work on the development of social capital in a self-managing team.

This thesis does not focus on actual measurement or the creation of specific indicators but justifies the connection between self-managed work practices and social capital. The researcher wants to take into account study team's capabilities and the challenges faced when it comes to working as a self-managing team and building social capital to lead the team to perform more seamlessly. In addition to that, the goal is to examine different

perspectives, ideas, and find solutions for developing social capital, where the responsibility of everyday work lies within the team itself.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the research is to raise awareness that the impact of social capital has on the development of the team's resources in Company X. The aim of the research is to find out which factors increase and decrease the building of social capital in a self-managing team. According to Meng et al. (2018), high social capital in a work community is linked to better coordination of work tasks, which in turn can be expected to increase work efficiency and cooperation between employees. Moreover, social capital can also be considered to have an impact on other positive states, as a high level of social capital can affect employee engagement and the formation of positive relationships among co-workers. (Meng et al., 2018). It is easier to develop social capital in the team community when it can be better identified which factors affect the development on social capital. After gaining knowledge of these, the team can utilize the findings when improving their goals in the field.

1.3 Research question and sub-questions

In order to achieve the main aim of the study, this chapter presents the following research question that has been formulated.

1.3.1 Main research question

What is the impact of social capital on the performance and collaboration of a self-managing team?

By studying the question, the researcher wants to gather meaningful information for the case study team to help them identifying the possible challenges in their social capital as the team's resource. The research question is formulated to cover the three important topics for the study: social capital, self-management, hybrid work. In addition to the promote study team's capabilities, the aim is to reveal new perspectives around the subject and their possible causal links.

Social capital as a concept is multidisciplinary, and the researcher also wants to spread awareness of the concept and its significance as an intangible asset to the work community.

In addition to the main research question, the goal is to collect thoughts and insights through the following sub-questions:

1.3.2 Sub-research questions

What are the crucial factors that should be considered while building the social capital in a self-managing team?

How do self-managing teams perceive the importance of developing social capital to promote teamwork?

1.4 Commissioning company

The commissioning company is one of Finland's largest finance sector organizations. The organization has been through significant organizational changes during the past couple of years. The aim of the change was to respond to changes in the operating environment and in customer behaviour as well as to the changing requirements of regulations more quickly than before. Through the organizational change the company wants to improve employee experience, customer experience and operational efficiency.

The changes have had notable effects in the whole organization level, most importantly for the research is the new formation of working in self-managing teams. This model gives freedom and responsibility to teams and renews the leadership style in a company. This is one of the most significant changes in the company's history which will shape tasks, roles, leadership, the organization and its operations as a whole.

Self-management in teams in the commissioning company means that the team members are sharing the responsibility of achieving common goals and continuously developing their working methods together. The role of a manager for the team is administrative, although the manager is available to monitor and support the team's work whenever necessary. The case study team consists of 10-15 employees. Each employee is sharing the same substantive knowledge. In equal teams, asking for help and offering help is utilised with a low threshold.

As the coronavirus situation escalated, the entire personnel switched to remote work from March 2020 and since then, the company has continued the use of remote working. The organization is currently working in a hybrid model, and the team has decided to work

together in the office once a week. The team has the power to decide if they want to meet at the office more often, and as individuals they have the possibility to utilize working in the office environment as they wish.

The company has a good reputation and different surveys show that employees are mainly satisfied with their employer and current work situation. The commissioning company sees their employees as an important resource, and therefore the employees are very well taken care of. The company offers modern tools, ergonomic workstations and competitive employee benefits. In addition to this, organizational culture is immediate, hierarchy low and the tone of communication and interaction is positive. Successes are highlighted and celebrated, and praise is shared in the company in different ways. In order to promote the atmosphere and trust within teams, psychological safety is considered important in the commissioning company. The cultural development that has taken place in recent years has had a positive impact on the organization and employees have been receptive and positive about the changes. Especially the change to a self-managing organizational model has been adapted well. Of course, there is always resistance to change in situations of change, and even in this team, the change is still partly in progress: the team is constantly working to develop its ways of working.

Even though the coronavirus situation forced all employees to work remotely, technology-mediated communication and the use of digital solutions in everyday work were already a familiar and regular way of working in the organization.

It has been taken into account in the case study team that participation in daily tasks, meetings and brainstorming ideas requires strengthening and developing of the team's social capital. The meaningfulness of social capital has also an impact on a team's well-being and the internal motivation of employees. In the research, it is important to bring out the core of possible challenges and explore ways to strengthen social capital for stronger cooperation for the case study team. The purpose of the research is to increase knowledge about the influence of social capital as part of the team's resources in different activities.

2 Theoretical framework

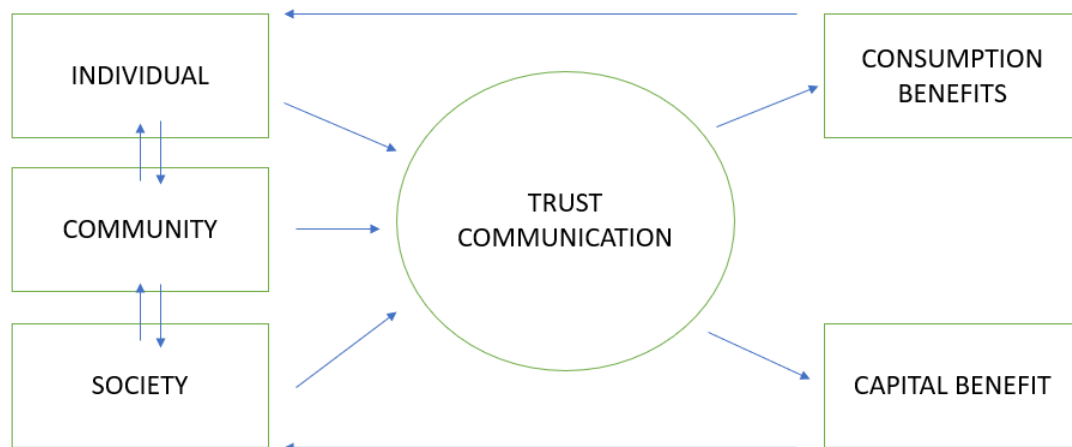
2.1 Social capital

Social capital has a long history as a term. It has frequently appeared in economic and social science discussions since the 19th century. The meaning of social capital varies in different perspectives from a micro-level or local phenomenon to broad societal models. (Meyong, 2021) Due to the extent of social capital, it is particularly important to define the research perspective and subject area. Ruuskanen defines in his research (2001 & 2003) the theoretical models of social capital which have been utilized as a central source for the conceptual definition and theoretical framework in this thesis. Ruuskanen's definition and models were chosen as the framework for the thesis because they describe well the theoretical essence of social capital. In this study, the concept of social capital is understood as a part of social environment and refers from social network to norms and trust that promote social interaction between members of the community and thereby enhance the realization of team's or individuals' goals (Ruuskanen, 2003 p. 56) In addition to that, social capital in this research can also be defined by its function. It is a resource related to the social structure of community, which aims to facilitate and ease the intentional actions by the members. It can be seen as a dimension of social structure, or a form of a social capital, that simplifies the functioning of certain interests and actions (Ruuskanen, 2003, p. 62).

Social capital is therefore intangible capital, which requires trust and reciprocity. Since it is an intangible subject, it is difficult to show with calculations what is the share of social capital on the results and growth. Social capital is considered a characteristic of the community, but when studying it, data must be collected from individuals. Based on previous research (Meyong, 2021), social capital has a significant impact on team cohesion and achievements. When thinking the building and maintaining of social capital in self-managing team in hybrid work environment, recurring changes, shifts to more decentralised ways of working and technology-mediated communication may bring new kinds of challenges (Meyong, 2021).

Ruuskanen (2001) presents a model of the levels of examination of social capital in his study. In the model, social capital is divided into macro (= society), meso (= immediate community, identity groups) and micro levels (= individual, companies, organizations). At the individual and organizational level, social capital is examined by observing the available network of relationships and its structure, the ability of members to trust and inspire trust, and the ability to achieve benefits in social situations. (Ruuskanen, 2001, p. 50)

Figure 1. Sources and outputs of social capital (Ruuskanen, 2001)



In the model outlined by Ruuskanen (2001, p. 45–47), social capital is examined through sources, mechanisms and outputs. In the model, the sources of social capital are individual, collective and societal phenomena; and the mechanisms that mediate them are trust and communication. These mechanisms bring resilience to the individual from interaction that acts as a "consumption benefit", and to the community as "capital benefit" which facilitates coordination and cooperation of activities and reduces operating expenses. In the model, the concept of trust is described and defined through the nature of the activities between the parties. Reliability is considered to be the predictability, uniformity and simplicity of operations. In the communication mechanism, shared understanding and smooth flow of information between members are highlighted as essential factors.

At the individual and community levels, the sources of social capital mechanisms (trust and communication) are rational action of the individual, rules of conduct in community reciprocity, and the overall use of networks. At the level of society, the sources of the mechanism of trust are the guidance of authorities, the laws of society and the legal system. The mechanism of communication, on the other hand, is influenced by the openness of public communication. (Ruuskanen, 2001, p. 45–47)

2.1.1 Conceptual background of social capital

Social capital as a concept is familiar in a wide variety of disciplines. The most well-known contemporary writers of the subject have been Pierre Bourdieu (1985), James Coleman (1988) and Robert Putnam (2000). According to Myeong (2021), Bourdieu (1985) defines social capital as a set of actual or potential resources that are connected to institutionalized

relationships of mutual acquaintances and recognition. The individual must understand what is valued in the group and strive to act in a way that is valued by the group in order to gain honor and recommendations.

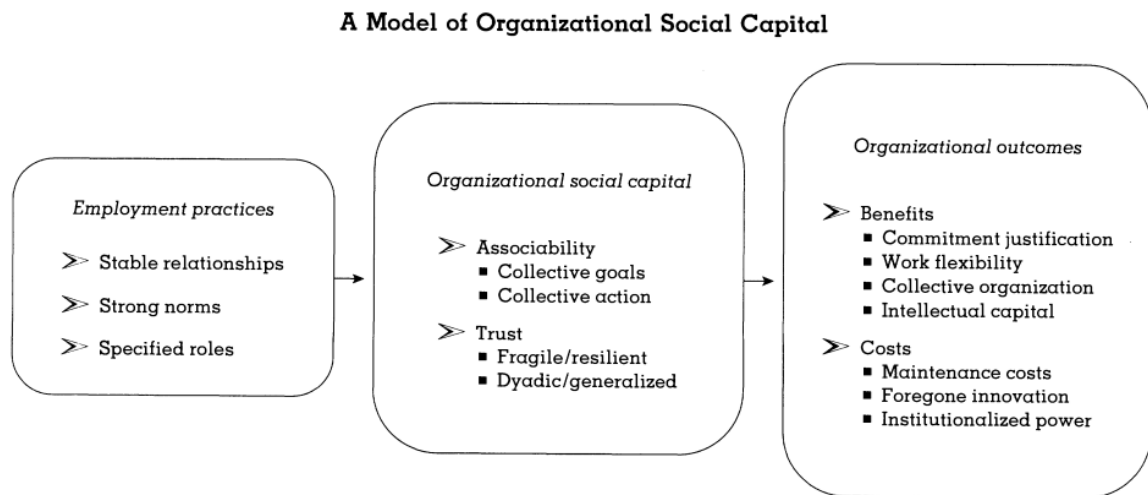
Coleman (1988) sees social capital as a function consisting of different entities united by two elements. All of them consist of some aspect of the social structure and facilitate the actions of members within the structure. In Coleman's theoretical model social capital is divided into three different forms: the obligation of reciprocity, the flow of information, and norms. The obligation of reciprocity refers to the trust created between the members, that in the future each other will return the favour in turn. The flow of information, on the other hand, means obtaining useful information for one's own activities from the network of social relationships. Norms are important for the formation of social capital, because they prevent the problem of free-riding, i.e. acting at the expense of others. However, norms only work in a closed community, where there are penalties for violating the norms. (Meyong, 2021)

Putnam's (2000) view of social capital is seen as connections between individuals that form social networks, and the norms of reciprocity and loyalty building from it. In Putnam's view, social capital manifests itself especially in the practices of the community, which are the result of a long development. In particular, monitoring local decision-making and focusing on issues instead of individuals indicate social capital. (Meyong, 2021)

The most referred model of forming social capital is presented in this chapter. Leana and Van Buren (1999) have studied organizational social capital and presented in their theory both prerequisites as consequences carried by social capital. In their definition, the social capital of the organization is understood as an asset which is commonly owned by the work community and its members, and which reflects the nature of social relations in the organization. The social capital of the organization is created in the social relations between the members and orientation towards common goals and shared trust, which can help the organization's cooperation to be more successful. Therefore, high social capital benefits both the individual and the organization. (Leana & Van Buuren, 1999, p. 538)

According to Leana's and Van Buren's Model of Organizational Social Capital (1999, p. 547), organizational social capital is consisting of two different components, associability and trust.

Figure 2. A Model of Organizational Social Capital (Leana & Van Buuren, 1999)



Above model illustrates that organization's social capital can be increased with the help of employment practises. The model is listing that nurturing stable and long-term employment relationships, producing strong norms of mutual behaviour and defining the roles precisely can affect that positively. The author of this study wants to examine how the self management in the team can affect to different practises more precisely when increasing social capital and if the importance of social capital can be emphasised in new ways. The mechanisms of social capital affects each other interdependently. Investing in the organization's social capital produces benefits for the organization, but also costs. Following the model presented, the biggest cost can be considered the time spend on maintaining social relationships. Strong relationships require time to develop, and this time is therefore take away from working time that is traditionally considered productive. Other costs may arise if social capital is too high and the unity of thoughts between the members prevents them seeing new possibilities and opportunities. However, the benefits what social capital can bring to the organizations and teams are more useful than the disadvantaged described.

2.1.2 Social capital in previous research

Meyong (2021) has been conducting research of how organizational social capital is linked to employee well-being utilizing Leana's and Van Buuren's (1999) definition and insights regarding subject. Meyong's study is supporting the previous finding that organizational social capital can be promoted in organizations and therefore employee well-being can be fostered through that (Meyong, 2021). Meyong recommends in her research that the management practices in organizations should enhance social ties, mutual trust and shared

vision between employees to make them feel more engaged to the company and more pleased with their own lives. (Meyong, 2021)

Saraniemi et al. (2022) have made previous research in the field regarding social capital and Finnish social worker's experiences of their work communities during the pandemic situation. Their ideas support the impact of social capital on the work environment, where social capital is crucial in explaining the functional capacity, well-being, coping, professional growth and employee development of work communities (Saraniemi et al., 2022). Developing and maintaining social capital is influenced by time, interaction, interdependence and group closure. For example, the formation of norms, values and shared codes to promote trust, which is a key element of social capital, requires stability and a continuity of interactions. Factors influencing the development and maintenance of social capital includes time, interaction, interdependence and group closure. A key component of social capital is the norms of the team and the formation of their values. In order to develop norms and values, the stability of the team and the continuity of interaction play a key role. (Saraniemi et al., 2022) Saraniemi et al., explains the concept of interdependence as a factor in strengthening social capital, assuming that team interdependence is more significant the more the members of the team are dependent on each other and the more support they receive from each other. Interaction is key element of social capital, and social capital needs continuous interactions to maintain and develop. Closure refers to how strong group identity is, and cohesiveness will therefore strengthen social capital.

Key findings according to previous research which have been the cornerstone of social capital construction concerns the importance of interaction and its impact on work, especially how the employees experience it in remote work. The threshold to ask help is described to increase as the employees do not want to disturb their colleagues through online platforms. This was also felt to have an impact on well-being, as the lack of discussion kept work matters more easily on the mind also during free time, because the face-to-face chat with colleagues during workdays were not an option. The lack of face-to-face encounters resulted in increasing misunderstandings among colleagues, as nonverbal communication for example gestures and facial expressions were absent from online interaction. (Saraniemi et al., 2022)

According to the previous results, clear everyday structures and practices, such as joint meetings and synchronised working rhythms, emerged as key factors in maintaining social capital. In the light of the new study, it can be examined whether the research team also feels that daily joint meetings promote the construction of social capital. In addition, a

common professional value and knowledge base was felt to support the maintenance of social capital in the work community.

In light of previous research, it was also found that the smooth use of digital applications and the functionality of platforms also affect the fluidity of interaction and thus the development of social capital. If the use of digital applications is found to be difficult, this may also significantly undermine the construction of the group's social capital.

2.1.3 Role of social capital

Commitment and trust are one of the key elements of social capital. Trust is required for the employee to gain commitment. The employee must trust the permanence of the job and feel appreciated of the skills to increase commitment for the role. Commitment is common core of many business management strategies, as it is expected to contribute to work motivation, work quality and productivity. (Melin, 2010, p. 3).

The culture of workplace holds also great importance. At the heart of a well-functioning work community is a situation where each employee's role and tasks in the company are clear. Smoothness of one's own work and cooperation, good leadership, interaction and flow of information as well as problem-solving skills improve the functionality of the work community. The atmosphere of the work community and the social support received at the workplace increases the confidence of the employees well-being and work motivation. (Melin, 2010, p. 4)

Meng et al. (2020) have been investigating the development of action plans in social capital in their research focusing to Danish dairy section. Their results shows that teams that had developed an action plan to promote social capital had higher amount of social capital and higher work engagement compared to teams without action plans. The statistical difference between the teams were notable, and even partly implemented action plan significantly affected the scale of social capital. The results of the previous study indicates that even the process of making action plan itself may have positive impact and effect for example to work engagement. (Meng et al., 2020)

Having a higher level of social capital means that you are able to achieve more as a team, company or individual. When measuring lower level of social capital, or the group has fewer social connections, reaching goals will be more difficult. Owning social capital can also be an asset for your organization's business. For example, when you have strong relationships with

your colleagues and are good at teamwork, you have great access to the social capital. This is good for the organization because through independent social capital, it is likely that you will do quality work and encourage your colleagues to do the same. Think of a company where there are weak bonds between the team and they have to work together on a daily basis. This set-up makes it difficult to communicate, complete projects on time, and collaborate – trust (which comes from a social bond) is needed for people to feel safe sharing ideas and talking about the problems they face. (Perry, 2022)

2.2 Self-management

Self-management has become a buzzword in working life, which is why the word has dissolved to mean a little bit of everything. One speaks of a radical, completely managerless organization. The second speaks of a more coaching leadership style within the traditional hierarchy. In general, there are different kinds of teams. In a traditional team the manager decides and distributes the work. In a self-managing team, there can be no manager and the responsibility is shared together. Another form of how self-management in teams is working is that the manager can distribute responsibility and power to the team members and act more as a coach-type of person for the team but takes leadership when necessary (Spiik, 2020). Openness and transparency play an important role in case study team as in all self-managing teams, as they lower the threshold for communication and increase the expression of one's own opinions in the team. Self-management and hybrid work often go hand in hand in today's work. Growing number of organisations have organised themselves in a self-management manner, and at the same time the possibility and freedom to organize work in outside the office has become an option. Self-managing teams consist of a small group of people who are committed to common goals. A self-managing team has the authority to decide on the goals of their own work and ways to achieve them, while also being responsible for the results of their work together. (Spiik, 2020)

Open interaction acts as a mediator in how the team creates its own power and responsibilities and distributes work. In this research, instead of one supervisor leading the work, the team as a whole takes responsibility for promoting the work and finds the most suitable procedures for moving things forward. This requires a culture in which everyone feels responsible for advancing common issues, striving to identify issues to be addressed that are brought up in internal discussion (Martela, et al., 2021). The team has rotating responsibilities which include facilitating the common meetings, acting as a team communicator between other teams as well as team representative in larger organizational

meetings. The team decides on their own who will take the responsibility and is rotating the responsible role. Every team member has the ability to take on a responsible role, but the task is not assigned if the member is not motivated by taking the responsibility. The purpose of a self-management team is to allow everyone to work at the level that their own abilities and motivation are sufficient for (Spiik, 2020)

In a self-managing team, time and energy must be allocated to different things than in a traditionally organized team. Self-management and co-direction require resources for joint reflection, communication, openness and experimentation. The team must form a common understanding of what it aims for and how it intends to achieve its goals. In this research, self-management is processed as an individual and team-level phenomenon in connection with social capital. For this reason, this study focuses on individual and team-level experiences of self-management and deeper examination of self-management as a leadership style is left to lesser extent.

People have two types of activities in a team. The first action comes from the employer based on the basic task of the work and the employer's instructions and agreements. The team has been set up for this core activity to get the job done. The second activity is social and is based on the person's need to live their own kind of life and interact with other team members. A person wants approval in the team and wants to be recognized for the work they do. In a functional team, these two different activities are in good harmony. (Kopakkala 2011, p. 18) According to Kopakkala (2011), a team works effectively if the members of the group:

- Know that the performance of an individual member's work is evaluated
- Know that their own performance is visible to others
- Consider the group important to them
- Consider the assigned task important to them
- Consider their own contribution to the performance of the task to be decisive
- Consider the task challenging, but possible.

In this study, the author wants to examine how self-management affects the construction of a team's social capital. Although the study has no assumptions, self-management can positively impact the development of a team's social capital by encouraging members to take responsibility and actively participate in decision-making. This can build trust and strengthen team cohesion.

2.2.1 Common elements of social capital in a self-managing team

In order for a self-managing team to work well together, it is necessary to build the team's social capital. When looking at the characteristics of individuals doing self-managing work in hybrid model, virtual collaboration skills, such as brainstorming and constructive commenting on other ideas, the ability to use necessary technological tools, sticking to deadlines, taking everyone's opinions into account in group decision-making situations, and the ability to reach the team's goals and agree about action plans together are highlighted. In addition, virtual social skills are needed, such as immediate interaction, receiving and utilising feedback, identifying and sharing necessary information with others, volunteering to take on team tasks, and apologizing for mistakes and learning from them. In operating environment in a self-managing team, building trust is seen as a key factor that creates preconditions for the functioning of a team, but is also seen as a special feature of a team: trust is formed in a remote or hybrid environment in a different way than in traditional face-to-face communication. Transparency is essential in building trust, especially in a virtual team. Members must be able to trust their leader, each other's and their organization in order for operations to be effective. (Ford et al., 2016, p. 27)

Interaction can create different ways of participation, which enables both individual and organisational learning. Openness, autonomy and transparency are also important factors for the success of self-management. Transparency in information sharing, decisions and in actions increases trust, which in turn improves the quality of teamwork (Savaspuro, 2019, p. 46). When team members have a common view of where they are going and why, as well as access to the necessary information, the work can be efficient and productive. Trust also contributes to a sense of psychological security. Psychological safety refers to a sense of security and security experienced by an employee that also allows for differing opinions and allows mistakes to be made without fear of punishment (Savaspuro, 2019, p. 48-52).

As mentioned, growing number of companies and organizations have announced taking steps towards self-management, believing that this will strengthen employee motivation as well as organizational performance. Despite the popularity of self-management, it has also been criticised that it can cause stress among employees and increase burnout instead of well-being at work (Martela & Jarenko, 2017, p. 4). The advantage of a self-managing team is quick decisions. Decisions do not need to be approved through long chains, but the team can jointly as well as individually make decisions in an agile manner. A self-managing team has the power to influence how they prioritize and do their work. A self-managing team can also have challenges. The team must be supported in the transition to change and its work

must be well organised in order to get things done in the team. It is important to consider the functionality of the relationships between team members. (Martela & Jarenko, 2017, p. 16)

Self-management is not easy for all people. Many people long for familiar routines that bring security. Self-management requires more, because the supervisor is no longer there to say and advise on everything to do. Increased responsibility may burden the individual and also affect the team's work. Therefore, the organization must create clear support structures that helps the team with self-management. (Martela & Jarenko, 2017, p. 318-319)

2.2.2 Previous research of self-management

There is a lot of talk about self-management, but still the phenomenon is new and there is surprisingly little researched information available. Qualitatively the theme has been studied in the Minimalist Organization Design project, which followed three already self-managing and four aiming to be self-managed organizations (Gamrasni et al., 2021). In previous qualitative research, interviews have been conducted in different organizations and both managers and employees have been interviewed. The purpose of the research and interviews were to gain more understanding about the challenges faced in self-management, as well as the company culture and the logic the companies follow (Gamrasni et al., 2021, p. 8).

Based on these interviews conducted by Gamrasni et al. (2021), self-management can be seen to have two distinct larger goals, which come up in discussions about self-management. These goals can be summarised as follows:

- Self-management enhances operations and increases agility, reaction speed and ability to change, thereby improving profitability.
- Self-management transfers power and responsibility to employees, strengthening employees' autonomy and the opportunity to influence the content and goals of their own work, thereby improving the autonomy, motivation, and meaningfulness of employees' work.

The goals of the perspectives do not necessarily contradict each other, as the first perspective can also be seen to develop the meaningfulness of work, making employees' everyday lives more flexible, which also improves opportunities to influence the ways work is carried out. The second perspective also emphasises that strengthening the meaningfulness of work and transferring decision-making power to employees does support motivation and

employees' desire to develop their own work (Gamrasni et al., 2021, p. 121). Although most of the work is done individually, successful collaboration is a prerequisite for a human community or organization to be more than the sum of individual factors (Gamrasni et al., 2021, p. 39). That is why it is important to emphasise that enabling cooperation is at the core of organization when talking about "self-management". Self-management does not only mean supporting the individual's own work and self-management but examining the operating methods and structures of the entire organisation (Gamrasni et al., 2021, p. 39).

Frank Martela et al., (2021) have studied the relationship between self-management and well-being at work in his research project. His research examined the experiences of self-management and work engagement among the group of Finnish employees. The aim of this study was to understand better whether self-management produces well-being for employees and what factors may explain this connection.

According to Martela et al., (2021), employee self-management is defined to three different levels

- The right to work refers to the power to decide on the ways of doing work
- Management rights refers to the power of employees to decide and define the goals and priorities of work
- Organizational development refers to the power of employee to participate in refining the structures and practices of the organization.

The results of previous research support the fact that self-management has positive effects on employee motivation and well-being. Martela's (2021) results show that people's experience of self-management is linked to work engagement and well-being at work, as well as a lower experience of burnout and stress. Therefore, when people have the power to make decisions concerning their own work, this generally has a positive, rather than negative effect on their well-being at work. In the light of previous research, self-management is seen to strengthen people's motivation, initiative and creativity, thus laying the foundation for more agile, innovative and productive organizations (Martela et al., 2021).

Self-management is not a new concept, although it is trending in organizations in this decade. Self-managing teams can be defined as groups of interdependents who regulate their own behavior in the tasks assigned to them (Cohen & Ledford, 1994). Also Cohen and Ledford have shown in their research (1994), that self-managing teams report higher satisfaction towards work compared to control teams. Self-managing teams also show higher

social relationships between team members, and they react more positively about changes. (Cohen & Ledford, 1994) A higher level of inter-team relationships can also contribute to the development of teaming and thus affect team productivity.

3 Research methodology

The aim of the thesis is to provide an analysis of the impact of social capital in a self-managing team and how the team sees the importance of developing team's social capital. In this paragraph the author describes the methods used to answer the previously set research question.

3.1 Research design

The research is carried out as qualitative research. Qualitative research typically aims to understand phenomena from the persons point of view who are part of the study group for the research. This means that the study is interested about the experience, thoughts and feelings of the people and the meaning they give to the subject of research. (Juuti & Puusa, 2020, p. 9)

This thesis is a case study in nature, because the group and context to be examined are strictly defined. A case study focuses on a specific case or situation that occurs in a particular environment. The object of study is a small group: an individual, a group or a community. The aim of qualitative research is to gain in-depth and detailed knowledge of the case under investigation and the processes involved. (Hirsjärvi et al., 2013, p. 134-135) Therefore, qualitative research makes it possible to examine the studied phenomenon better than quantitative research through the perspective of the target persons of the study. It does not seek specific information of a phenomenon, but perspectives for examining the topic. (Puusa & Juuti, 2020, p. 9) Qualitative research is also considered well suited for studying phenomena based on human interaction (Puusa & Juuti, 2020, p. 74).

The purpose of qualitative research is to focus in depth to small number of subjects. With quantitative research the amount of the total sample would remain too small, because the case study team contains from 15 employees. The qualitative method is better suitable for this study because the purpose is among the outcomes to understand the respondent's experiences and thoughts regarding the subject phenomenon. The qualitative research material for the thesis is collected through thematic interviews, because it aimed to collect

detailed experience data based on the expertise and experiences of employees. Based on the interviews, the aim was to seek answers to the research questions presented in section 1.3. The author interviewed employees of a self-managing team in a financial sector company. The thesis is conducted as case study, because the group and context to be examined are specially defined.

It is natural for qualitative research that there is no hypothesis, which means that the researcher does not have strong presuppositions about the object or result of the research. This study will also be conducted without hypothesis, as the research has no assumptions that needs to be verified as right or wrong. Especially from the point of view of evaluating qualitative research, it must be acknowledged that there are several interpreters and levels of interpretation. Therefore, it is good to remember that it is not possible to achieve absolute truth, because an individual's perceptions of the same phenomenon can be very contradictory. (Juuti & Puusa, 2020, p. 104)

In the form of qualitative research, this thesis utilises interviews in collecting data. The next section discusses the data collection method used in the study.

3.1.1 Data collection

The study is collected with utilizing interviews, which is the most common method in qualitative studies. The methodological advantage of interview is that researcher can select those respondents who have experience or knowledge under the phenomenon, and utilize purposive, discretionary sample as a method. The flexibility of interviews gives researcher the opportunity to direct the acquisition of information to more relevant and in-depth direction. (Juuti & Puusa, 2020, p. 101) Essential is also that the researcher can ask the respondent to clarify or justify the answer if the answer would otherwise be too narrow. During the interviews it is essential to get as much information as possible and diverse picture of the target phenomenon. The interviewees are not given advance information about the interview questions, so that the pre-information does not limit their thoughts or have an undesirable effect on the content of the interview.

Qualitative research is characterized by collecting data through interviews, and also the previous case study researches (Shahzad & Elenurm 2020, Shahzad & Arslan 2023) supports the interview based data collecting method. Shahzad and Elenurm (2020) in their qualitative research have been conducting a structured qualitative questionnaire for the data following analysis in order to support the decoding of the data and gain a deeper

understanding of the statements made in the processing of the interviews conducted. In this research, the data was collected only through thematic interviews and further follow-up with interviewees were not made for both time reasons and the researcher did not feel the need for this due to the smaller number of participants.

There are several types of interviews. They differ from each other mainly based on structuring of how informally the interview proceeds. In this research interviews are conducted as theme interviews, which are carried out as individual interviews. The interviews are conducted using Microsoft Teams and each interview were recorded using the same tool. All interviewees use the Microsoft Teams app daily at work, so using the app came naturally to them. Recorded interviews were saved to authors personal One Drive for the author's use only for the post-processing purpose of the study. Recording was helpful so that the interview proceeded more naturally without the interviewer typing breaks.

The author interviewed in total of eight (8) interviewees. The invitation was informal and were based on the interviewee's voluntary participation during working hours. With each participant, the interview began by reviewing the goal and purpose of the study. The progress of the thematic interview, confidentiality and permission to record the interview were also discussed with the interviewees. The interviewees also knew in advance about the 45-minute time allotted for the interview. All interviews lasted closer to the 45-minute time allotted for each interview. The time was limited, but sufficient enough to evoke discussion around the research questions. The interviews were conducted on four different days, and two interviews were done per date 16.11.2023, 17.11.2023, 25.11.2023 and 26.11.2023.

Thematic interview focuses on certain predefined themes. Before making the interview outline, the researcher makes a preliminary report on the studied phenomenon. On the basis of the study, researcher selects certain key issues related to the studied phenomenon that she or he assumes will have an impact on the studied phenomenon. From these facts, the researcher forms the themes of the interview and the interview framework. This type of interview is basically very flexible interview method, and the respondent is encouraged to talk about the topic freely. People's interpretations of subjects, meaning they give to things and how the meaning is created in interaction are emphasized in this data collecting method. (Juuti & Puusa, 2020, p. 107)

The author ended up choosing the thematic interview as a acquiring method for the research material, because the theoretical background gave some clear common factors and themes related to the formation of social capital and self-management in the work community. Author

wanted to gain a more detailed and in-depth understanding by forming interview themes based on factors already identified and described. The thematic interview is a justifiable data acquisition method for data because it provides information on the experiences of individuals and takes the individual perspectives of the interviewees into a central examination. The thematic interview allows researchers to flexibly ask more detailed questions in the interview situation, which helps to get understanding with the phenomenon related to social capital in more detail and depth. A predefined structured interview does not have the same flexibility and the possibility to ask additional questions.

3.2 Target group

This research is conducted as a case study, where the interviewees are placed in one group or team. In qualitative research, a small number of people are selected on a discretionary sampling. In discretionary sampling, the researcher chooses the research subjects from the population by his or her own decision. Discretionary samplings advantage is that the researcher can choose persons who know as much as possible about the studied phenomenon, who have experience of the subject, or who represent a group that is relevant to the purpose of the research. The amount of collected data is study-specific: the sample must include as many interviews as are considered necessary to obtain the necessary information. In qualitative research, the number of research subjects is not decisive for the success of the research, but in the case of qualitative research, the most essential thing is the ability to interpret selected cases and make conceptual generalizations about these. (Juuti & Puusa, 2020)

The target group was selected using a non-random sampling method and discretionary sampling. The population were the members of the study team. Selection criterion was that the interviewees were voluntary (voluntary response method). For the interviews, the researcher gathered fruitful interviewees based on their voluntarily, who would have much information to share regarding the research subject. Each team member has an organizationally equal role in team. Since the goal is to gather information about the team members' views regarding the subject, background factors do not have much influence on the selected interviewees. Each team member had more than a year of experience working in a team. The aim of this study is to gain as broad an understanding as possible of the team's perceptions of the construction of their social capital, on the basis of which the activities have impact to the social capital and how it could be developed in the future.

3.3 Analysis of interview data

The analysis of the data was carried out with data-driven content analysis, in which meanings are sought from the research data. The analysis was carried out on the basis of research data and the aim was to find answers to research questions without relying on theory. Data-driven content analysis is the opposite of theory-based content analysis, where the analysis relies heavily on previous theory on the topic. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 108–110)

Content analysis can be considered as basic method of qualitative research, although it is such a broad concept that it can be considered as kind of theoretical framework and not just a single method (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018, p. 103). Content analysis is text analysis that looks for the meanings of a text. The text can be any material made in written form, such as an article, interview, letter or report. This method describes phenomena in a condensed and general form. However, drawing conclusions is left to the author, because content analysis only organizes the material, it does not provide interpretation of the material to be analyzed. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, p. 117) Data-driven content analysis has three stages: data reduction, clustering and abstraction. Before starting the analysis, a unit of analysis is determined, which can be a single word or even a set of thoughts containing several sentences. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018, p. 122–127)

The analysis of the data began with transcription of interviews. The material was not fully transcribed, but the transcription focused on themes. Interviewee responds to the related themes were transcribed as per the speech. Expressions corresponding to the research question were searched in the data, which were written in a table. Simplified expressions were formed from original expressions, from which expressions with the same meaning were searched and further grouped into subcategories. The classification continued by merging subcategories into upper categories and further upper categories into main categories. The table below has been made to illustrate this process of data. (Table 1)

Table 1. Classification of data according to subcategory, upper category and main category

<u>Original expression</u>	<u>Reduced expression</u>	<u>Subcategory</u>	<u>Upper category</u>	<u>Main category</u>
<u>Social capital is built around trust, that you can be trusted and you can trust</u>	<u>You can trust your colleague</u>	<u>Building mutual trust between team members</u>	<u>Effective teamwork</u>	<u>Results related to social capital in a self-managing team</u>
<u>Ceremonies increase cohesion especially when they take place at the office</u>	<u>Teamwork is enhanced when the team works face-to-face</u>			
<u>Communication suffers if the others do not understand the message</u>	<u>Importance of communication and understanding</u>	<u>Effective communication</u>		
<u>We agree on the rules of how we start to work and how we achieve our goals</u>	<u>Clear common rules and goals for the team to follow</u>	<u>Common operating models</u>	<u>Continuous development of own work and work tasks</u>	
<u>You have to be active about what you do</u>	<u>Individual motivation and knowledge</u>	<u>Managing and developing one's own work</u>		
<u>We should notice when things don't work and discuss how it can be done differently</u>	<u>Identifying and developing issues together</u>			

The *Original expression* is speech produced by the interviewee in the form of text, which was originally considered to contain important information for the research question. *Reduced expression* summarizes the meaning of the original expression without losing its original meaning. After that reduced sentence is placed in *Subcategory*, which constitutes the first category of the influencing factor to the research question. The influencing factors are then classified further into *Upper category* which binds the influencing factors of the subcategory to the larger whole that describes them. The purpose of the *Main category* is to combine and link each previous expression with a broader topic that has been studied on the basis of the data. The purpose of the main category is that the lower categories serve as pillars and answers to the topic of the main category.

3.4 Reliability

The reliability of qualitative research can be considered from the point of view of validity, reliability and ethics. Validity refers to how the people reading the research accept the research results as true and how they trust the appropriateness of data collection and the diligence of the analysis. Reliability refers to how the researcher succeeds in convincing the

reader that the approaches and methods chosen and used by to solve the research problem and carry out the research have been correct and justified. The research must not cause harm to research subjects or other parties related to the research. (Juuti & Puusa, 2020, p. 166– 168) When assessing the quality of qualitative research, the key question is how compatible the research data and analysis methods are in relation to the theory and the collected data (Juuti & Puusa, 2020, p. 188).

In qualitative research, reliability is more complex than simply assessing validity and reliability. When using a qualitative research method, such as thematic interviews in this study, it is essential for reliability that the researcher's interpretations correspond to the views of the research object. Therefore, the researcher must evaluate own actions and interpretation throughout the research process. It is the researcher's responsibility to clearly state in the research report all stages of the work and how they were arrived at. However, it is always possible that a different researcher would have come to a different conclusion. In this study, the aim has been to clearly highlight the different stages of the study, which would make it easy for the reader to reach conclusions. The responses of the research participants have been presented as they have been told, but it is possible that a different researcher could have found different conclusions and development suggestions in the answers.

The interviews were conducted as Teams interviews and recorded on a computer and phone. The eight interviews followed a fairly similar pattern from start to finish, and the same themes were discussed with the interviewees. The aim was to act in the same way for each interviewee, and the transcription was carried out according to the same rules for each of them. The results did not include points from the transcribed material that could have been used to identify the interviewee. The voluntary nature of research subjects and the anonymity of research subjects are important in the ethics of research (Juuti & Puusa 2020, p. 190). The researcher selected the interviewees for the study, and this may increase the reliability of the study, as the researcher was able to select the interviewees best suited for the study. The criterion was that the interviewee should work in a case study team. In a thematic interview, the questions must be broad enough to leave room for the interviewee's own point of view. The aim was to ask the interviewees as open questions as possible, and to create more of a dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee. The assessment of the reliability of the study is facilitated by a clear, illustrative and detailed narrative of the different stages of the study. (Juuti & Puusa, 2020, p. 172) The data turned out to be more extensive than expected, as all interviews lasted the time allotted, or even more time than it was allotted for each interview. Most of the interviewees answered each question according to the topic, but for some interviewees, some of the answers drifted past the topic. This made it a

bit more difficult to analyze the data, but this did not affect significantly. When simplifying the interview data, the aim was to maintain the relevance of the original quote, but any errors in the simplification reduce the reliability of the study.

In this study, all interviewees were volunteers and their identities are not revealed in the study. Only the researcher had access to the research data, and after the completion of the study, the recordings and other material have been destroyed appropriately. The study was carried out without external funding or other personnel. As a matter of interest, it should be mentioned that the researcher worked in the organization being studied. However, the researcher was not in a disqualified position, even though researcher was an employee of the same organization.

3.5 Validity

The starting point for examining the validity of research is the correspondence between the basic structure of the studied phenomenon and the chosen research methods (Juusa & Puuti, 2020, p. 174). The theoretical starting points of the study were two-dimensional, which may have slightly confused the examination of the results. The mixture of the theoretical background of social capital and self-management in the study may have brought new perspectives to the examination but may also have made the examination partly confusing.

In qualitative research, it is often not possible to make firm estimates in advance of how much data is needed (Juuti & Puusa, 2020, p.176). In terms of data, the reliability of the study was partially affected by the small size of the data. The data, which covers eight interviews, does not give a complete picture of the overall experiences of the entire research team. However, saturation can be stated to have occurred in the data, and several different interviews revealed similar descriptive issues from the research point of view. It can still be concluded that all the different experiences were not yet reached in this study. Regarding the results of the study, it can be considered that the objectives were achieved as the results provided answers to the research questions. The results were therefore clear and plausible, with no contradictions. On the other hand, the small amount of research material contributed to the fact that these contradictions could not appear.

When assessing the validity of the study, it is important to note that it is possible that the researcher can make errors of interpretation if the interviewee does not understand the question or the researcher misinterprets the interviewee's answer (Juuti & Puusa, 2020, p. 173). To avoid these errors of interpretation, more specific questions were asked if

necessary from the interviewees. In addition, the aim was to clarify unclear questions during the interviews so that everyone understood the questions as well as possible.

Due to the case study and qualitative approach, direct transfer of the results of this study to another context is not possible. The ways of organizing work are different in each organization and in different sectors. Employee experiences also vary due to many factors related to working conditions, which is why the experiences studied can only be examined in detail in each of these organizations. Of course, the results of this study can give an indication of the themes that affect the formation of social capital also in other self-managing organizations.

The research was observed in the light of these elements and the findings of this study are examined in the following section.

4 Research findings

The most important findings related to the thematic interviews are reviewed in this chapter. From the point of view of the thesis, the most important factors influencing the development of the team's social capital have been listed and opened up as it has come up during the interview situation, to help explaining and justifying the conclusion.

4.1 Employee experiences of the impact of social capital in a self-managing team

4.1.1 Sharing and asking for advice

In the study team's everyday work, social capital is increased by the fact that colleagues are easily reachable. The physical proximity of a colleague at the workplace lowers the threshold for joint discussion and asking for advice. In addition to face-to-face interaction, active communication via Teams messages is also important, especially since most of the team prefers remote work. According to employees, the opportunity to ask questions, talk about difficult situations and discuss work activities informally are essential for strengthening team's social capital.

When working remotely, employees feel that seeing each other's faces and actively communicating increases team spirit. In remote meetings it is good practice for participants

to open a camera to stay connected to others. All of the interviewees also felt that reaching colleagues has been easy through Teams platform. Active messaging with teammates also prevents feeling lonely when working remotely.

'We have our team chat channels where everyone can easily contact each other, and in addition to that, you can always have a Teams call and go through cases together even if you are not at the office. Colleagues are very present and reachable even when you are not in the office.' (Interview, 2)

Team size intensifies interaction. Advantage of a smaller team is that it is easier to get to know a colleague. Feedback within the team is given directly and spontaneously, and team members feel that giving feedback is an important part of their work and also want to actively develop giving feedback to each others. Familiarity and good communication connections are also considered important for the team's social capital.

"I think that if the team sizes would grow, that kind of closer contact might be more difficult. When you can write or ask quickly with small threshold, it somehow requires that you know who is reading those messages and a little bit of how receptive they are to any comments." (Interview, 6)

4.1.2 Common ways of working and doing things together

Study team's common practices facilitate cooperation and create trust between employees. The team's developed work structure supports and guides day-to-day work. In case of doubt, employees' responsibilities are discussed and the nearest manager coordinates the work if necessary. It is important that you can trust your colleagues, because everyone takes joint responsibility for doing the team's work and reaching common goals. The team structure also supports maintaining a good working atmosphere.

Clarity of different descriptions and guidance, jointly agreed roles and structures increase the building of social capital, as the team can discuss and decide together on the smoothness and functionality of everyday work.

"Things have developed a lot since I've been working here, before there were more detailed rules from top to bottom. Nowadays we get to decide a lot more things, for example we get to decide together who will do what each week." (Interview, 2)

"After all, it also develops social capital when we get to influence things and notice that some framework does not work and this could be done differently." (Interview, 1)

In cooperation skills, the interviewees considered important that a colleague had good interaction skills as a valued quality. The colleague's sociability, friendliness and openness were seen important among the interviewees. Positivity and a sense of humour, as well as the ability to be genuinely present were also essential qualities in interaction between colleagues.

"Good team spirit, you want to do things of free will and first of all know how to do them, and you get feedback and there is an encouraging atmosphere" (Interview, 5)

"If we have had for example a week when there has been a certain goal that have still not been reached, in a joint meeting we can motivate each other to push and stretch further towards the goal." (Interview, 3)

The material highlighted the importance of communication, comprehensibility and listening skills, as well as mutual trust, the reliability of a colleague and trust in others. Supporting and helping others and situational literacy were also appreciated. You should be able to read situations in a way that helps others when needed, but also gives you space to focus on independent work. A colleague should be active and take initiative, but still maintain a calm atmosphere. According to the interviewees, respect for others and the ability to praise others are valued in a colleague. The colleague's ability to cooperate, the desire to work towards a common goal, support their colleagues and get along with everyone is also appreciated.

4.2 Development points for building social capital in a self-managing team

4.2.1 Turnover in team

Turnover in an organization, and especially turnover within a team, holds a big importance when developing social capital, as team's social network is perceived to be constantly incomplete when personnel change. The combination of employee turnover and remote work creates difficulties in getting to know new employees, as face-to-face contact is infrequent.

Team stability is another factor to consider when looking at distributed work and social capital. For the organization as for the case study team, the need to recruit new employees is continuous. This means that familiarizing new employees with both the substance of the work and the team's operating methods is an important team process.

"In my opinion, team work is significantly affected by turnover, because when people change then also team dynamics are changing. And getting new employees fully involved in the team's activities always takes it's own time." (Interview, 7)

Even though turnover occurs, one interviewee says that common understanding is usually found quickly and team members feel that they know each other. The team feels that face-to-face meetings in the early stages of these situations are necessary for them to continue developing the relationship remotely.

4.2.2 Interaction in a team

According to the interviewees, the team generally feels that the discussion goes well with all team members. However, according to one interviewee, there is a slight division into smaller groups within the team. The division has also been affected by remote work. According to the respondent, the progress and tone of a one-on-one conversation is affected by how close friends you are with your colleague. Talking with a close friend is more relaxed, but the discussion among any team member is considered to work. It makes it easy to approach, when everyone are experienced as approachable persons in a team.

No major conflict situations have arisen in the team, but in the interview situation, several respondents pondered how to resolve a hypothetical conflict situation. The interviews revealed that social capital is subjectively perceived good if things go as expected. Gaps in social capital were revealed in interviews in situations where smooth teamwork would require intervention in the activities of a colleague.

"It lowers our well-being if we notice that someone is not a team player or that other things are more interesting than team development. I believe that it reduces social capital if some team member is perceived as not so communal." (Interview, 2)

Although the teams have become self-managed, the job description has not changed with the transition. Work is still carried out independently. Thus, the nature of the work itself has not changed to completely teamwork, even though the team's decision-making power has

increased in matters concerning the team. The biggest change related to work has been the change of independent goals to team-oriented goals as well. The work done within the team has become more transparent to all team members and team members are more aware of what everyone are doing during the working day. According to the interviewee, it has also shown that employee's own goals have been prioritized over the team goals, as the importance of independent efficiency is also measured and rewarded in the organization. This causes unfair situations in the team, and people do not dare to intervene enough at the team level.

"Is there a good enough team spirit in our team to intervene and talk if someone is not interested in working together" (Interview, 4)

Intervening was complicated by the feeling that it should require close relationships within the team so that a colleague could be informed constructively related to his or her way of working. The team works mostly without the support of a supervisor in daily work, in which case intervening in matters would require an active approach from the team.

5 Conclusion

Although the situation and development of the team's social capital were approached through two themes, it can be seen from the data that all areas of social capital stand out strongly. The norms of a self-managing team, the existence of common operating methods and adherence to these are seen as an essential factor. Well-functioning networks are also seen as an important source of social capital in self-managed work. In the light of this study, real opportunities to act autonomously and to manage one's own work also emerge as an important factor for working in a team. The employer should ensure that the team has a clear understanding of what it can and what it can not decide on (Martela & Jarenko, 2017).

In the center of everything, the main mechanisms of social capital, trust and communication, are perceived to go hand in hand as described on the basis of previous research (Ruuskanen, 2001., Saraniemi at al., 2022). Open, low-threshold versatile and abundant communication builds trust and improves the functioning of a self-managed team. On the other hand, the trust that already exists in the team improves communication practices and lowers the threshold for communication. When the sources of social capital of a self-managing team are in order and the mechanisms work, the end results can be expected to be effective teamwork and well-being employees.

The stability of the team over time is another factor that needs to be taken into account when examining the social capital of a self-managing team. For the team being studied, the need to recruit new employees is continuous, which means that familiarizing new employees with both the substance of the work and the team's operating methods is an important team process.

When new team members join the team, time must also be given for informal communication, getting to know each other and observing other ways of working, so that team members form common patterns about the team's activities, collaboration can develop smoothly and new employees can commit to the team. Feeding a culture of helping for example through mentoring facilitates cooperation and information sharing on both sides. According to the research material, team spirit was easily formed and also one-on-one conversations with new people worked very quickly. Genuine acquaintance requires a lot of interaction between different people (Kopakkala 2011, p. 56). In light of this study, it seems important for building trust during the formation phase of a team to show trust, communicate abundantly and openly and to keep promises. Meyong's (2021) recommendation to enhance social ties is therefore also seen very practical in the light of this research. The employer plays an important role in enabling the team to come together. The team should continue to get to know each others regularly so that they really get to know their teammates. Every team develop differently, but all teams should strive to develop into a well-functioning team where people genuinely know each other (Kopakkala, 2011, p. 58).

As difficult as it can be to give feedback, it is to receive constructive feedback without being offended. Giving feedback should also be practiced, taught and encouraged systematically by the employer. The ingrained habit of not giving constructive feedback to other team member doesn't change just because it is theoretically the way a self-managing team works. People tend to avoid conflict, so the employer must participate in a change in employee's and team's mindset (Kopakkala 2011, p. 193).

The presence of social capital in a team is important because effective and self-managed teamwork inevitably requires social interaction, information sharing and mutual supporting. One result of the study is the observation that, especially in the context of self-managed and hybrid work, agreeing on team practices, developing them and sticking to them tend to save team members' time. This saved time can be directed to more extensive networking and communication, which maintains and builds trust. Common operating methods also help create an atmosphere of trust, as they improve transparency in the team. When there is high social capital in a self-managing team, it is easy for each individual to function in the team.

6 Recommendations, limitations and future research

During the search for a theory, the importance of defining the research topic was strongly emphasized. Team dynamics have been approached from several different perspectives in the research literature, so this thesis had to consider the boundaries and the amount of information that was going to be used for the research.

The phenomenon of social capital is difficult to understand and put into words in practise. Despite this, the phenomenon was conceptualized for all interviewees along the same lines, and not large differences were spotted in the interviewees' understanding of the phenomenon. Drawing the line was challenging when getting familiar with the topic in more depth, but the research questions guided the search for theory. When reading the theory on the subject, the factors of a certain social capital were emphasized that could have been focused on in more detail, but it was mandatory to exclude it from this study due to the broad subject. The research period itself went smoothly in terms of thematic interviews and was the most rewarding phase of the process. The thematic interviews proceeded naturally according to expectations, and each interviewee seemed to want to tell everything possible about the team's activities. The issues and thoughts raised in the interviews very much confirmed the results of previous studies, but some clear clarifications emerged. The research data as a whole did not contain any major surprises, but on the contrary, the data revealed many smaller things that could also be useful for other self-managing teams.

In order for the team to benefit from the development of its social capital, the starting points for taking the team forward with these factors should be further examined. It is clear that the functionality of the work community has a huge impact on coping at work, well-being at work, and thus work productivity. It is therefore particularly important to work with these factors. The team's activities can be developed through shared team moments, trainings and things that are considered important to the team together. Developing the psychological safety of a team is a great asset for the development of social capital.

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Appendix 1. Interview Protocol: Impact of Social Capital in a Self-Managing Team

Request of permission of interview and recording

Practical information about interview (interview type, time reserved)

Confidentiality

Purpose of the research

Your right not to answer

After the interview (access to research, data management)

Questions related to “experience of social capital”

Can you describe your experiences with self-managing teams and how you have observed social capital being built within them?

In your opinion, what are the key components of social capital within a self-managing team, and how do they contribute to the team's success?

Questions related to “actions and influence of social capital”

Could you provide examples of specific actions or initiatives that have been effective in fostering social capital within self-managing teams?

Can you share any challenges or obstacles that self-managing teams might face when trying to build social capital, and how can these be overcome?

Questions related to “development of social capital”

From your perspective, how does the development of social capital impact the overall performance and cohesion of self-managing teams?

What strategies or techniques do self-managing teams use to assess and measure the level of social capital they have built?

Have you encountered situations where self-managing teams prioritized other aspects of their work over building social capital? If so, why did this occur, and what were the consequences?

Questions related to “teamwork and social capital”

How do self-managing teams view the relationship between social capital and teamwork effectiveness? Can you provide examples of instances where strong social capital positively influenced teamwork outcomes?

How do you believe trust and interpersonal relationships influence the development of social capital in self-managing teams?

Questions related to “leadership and social capital”

What role do leadership and management play in supporting the development of social capital within self-managing teams, and how can leaders facilitate this process effectively?

Appendix 2. Data Management Plan

The research material is processed on the thesis author's personal computer. Only the author has the access to the research material. Material is saved up to the OneDrive service provided by Häme University of Applied Sciences. Research material, analysis and it's results are owned by the researcher and there will be no further use. The commissioning company and case study team will only have access to the thesis after it is published. The researcher keeps the research material saved in OneDrive for one (1) year after the acceptance of the thesis. The entire material will be disposed at the end of the period.

Data is collected through interviews and when presenting the research results, direct quotations are also used. The company or the interviewees can not be identified and any sensitive matters will not be included in the public part of the thesis. No personal data is collected in the interview situation of which the identity of the respondent could be deduced. The company name is neither published.