



Organizational identity and identification

The case of Family Inc.

Anna-Maija Perälä

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Author:	Anna-Maija Perälä
Title:	
Supervisor (Arcada):	Henrika Franck
Commissioned by:	
<p>Abstract:</p> <p>The main focus of this study is to discuss about the current organizational identity of a case company that was given a pseudonym Family Inc and how do employees identify with the company. The company is performing in Finland, as a sales organization in machine building sector. Family Inc has gone through various changes in the near history. Organizational identity describes the core essence of an organization, whereas organizational identification acts as a link between the individual work identity and the organization. Theoretical framework covers theories of individual work identity, organizational identity and organizational identification. The empirical part of the study was conducted using qualitative research method, semi-structured, in-depth round of interviews of people working in different positions in Family Inc. Family Inc's organizational identity is influenced by extreme technical expertise of the employees, long and fruitful history, employees' developmental mindset and feeling of forming a small family inside a big one. Due to recent changes occurred in the company, certain identity discrepancies and ambiguities also occurred along the way. Change was however considered positive. Based on the researcher's observations on the interviews in the company, the role of feedback, value concretization, feeling of playing towards the same goal are suggested development issues. These developmental areas influence on the organizational identity of the company and how people identify to it. Organizational identity and identification are wide subjects to study. Organization's culture and image both have an affect on the identity creation and according to Hatch and Schultz dynamic model there is a constant flow around identity between culture and image that have an influence both internally and external audiences.</p>	
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FOREWORDS

I have always been interested in psychology. In recent years, especially organizational psychology. What interests me is, what kind of an organizational culture brings out the best of the employees working towards the same goal. What motivates people. What do people bring to the organization's core essence. How people fit together in an organization. Basically, I am interested in what kind of an organizational culture forms a successful business. I presented my ideas to my Thesis Supervisor and she presented me a whole new construct: organizational identity and identification. I got immediately interested in the organizational identity construct, as I thought now, I also have a perfect chance to dive into organizational psychology. I would like to thank Mrs Henrika Franck for supporting me along this journey of organizational identity and identification studies. I am extremely happy for the opportunity to deepen my knowledge in organizational psychology in the perspective of organizational identity and identification.

I am very thankful for the interviewees who participated in this study. The conversations were very interesting and important point-of-views were presented in every single interview session.

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Anna-Maija Perälä

1 INTRODUCTION

Organizational identity is the true essence of who and what an organization is. The reason identity is important is, that it's kind of an organizing element of everything that is said and done. It effects the character of the organization, values, decisions, strategy. When a company has a strong identity, it becomes easy to make decisions, people know what to expect and they know where the decisions are coming and where the company is going, and they all feel a part of the team that is working together to accomplish something together. When an organization has a weak identity, even the smallest decisions become difficult to make, because there is no guiding light.

The benefits of a strong identity run through the whole organization. It begins with differentiating the organization from all competitors, so that there is a reason to choose that particular company from competitors. All of the company strategy, marketing, communication etc. begin with the identity, what does an organization do and why does the organization matter. Why does it exist in the first place. If that isn't clear, then all the other things done, aren't clear. Identity is the most valued thing in the chain what organizations do. (<https://www.marshallstrategy.com> accessed 14.4.2019).

Organizational identification acts as a link between the organization and the individual work identity. Usually a perfect match is when an employee shares the same values and stands behind the organization's identity.

This study discusses different aspects of organizational identity and identification with the empirical research of a company that has gone through multiple changes in the organization the past years, I have given it the pseudonym "Family Inc". I want to find out what is the current situation of the organizational identity and how identified to the company are employees working in different positions. I also want to find out if there are similarities in peoples' ideas of what the company is and where it is going.

To support the empirical part, I will discuss work identity, social identity theory, organizational identity and organizational identification in more detail with the help of scientific research articles.

For the empirical part, it was clear, that I would do qualitative research as we are talking about quite an abstract construct to study in the first place. I wanted to find out people's feelings of their relationship with the work in Family Inc and also what they thought of the identity in an organizational level. Interview method, or, as I also call it, conversation was semi-structured in-depth interview.

My mission is to raise important issues in Family Inc. Modesty is a strong Finnish personality but bringing out and emphasizing the elements of company's core competence, is important in today's tough competition.

1.1 Aim of the study and research questions

The aim of this study is to find out what is the current organizational identity of the case company and how do employees identify to it. Research questions are:

What is the organizational identity of Family Inc?

How do people identify with Family Inc?

1.2 Limitations

I chose to interview people working in different positions. I did not interview the CEO nor the owner. I thought it is interesting to discuss with the employees, also the ones who do not necessarily have the chance to open up their opinions on their relationship with the company, their relationship with the work itself and its core essence and their opinions of the core competence on a daily basis. The employees working in every single position, have an important role in influencing the whole organizational identity.

1.3 Thesis structure

I will first present what I found interesting in terms of theoretical framework of the subject. After going through the individual work identity, organizational identity, social identity theory and identification, I will continue presenting the empirical part. Empirical part

is based on a research done using qualitative research method. I chose qualitative method, as I wanted to interview people and ask their opinions on the matter, create kind of a conversational session with the research interviewees of the subject. In the beginning of the empirical part, I will present the case company, however, I will keep the name anonymous and call it Family Inc. I will go through how I analyzed the interviews, after which I will present the research findings, themes and subthemes. After presenting the results in the research findings part, we will move on to research discussion where I have also created a summary of the findings. What are the main themes influencing the organizational identity and identification of the case company. In the discussion part, I will examine important issues that were brought up from the interview and reflect them with theoretical aspects. I will end this study with a conclusion and recommendations, where I will bring my own observations from the research and what I found could be the developmental areas in the case company.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, I will present theoretical framework to give scientific study support to the empirical part my study. There are a lot of different angles available for diving into the world of identities in organizational concept. My plan is to first go through the identity from *individual perspective*, as we cannot deny the fact that in one organization, there are as many different identities as there are people working. Thus, firstly I will go through my findings from the theories of *individual work identity* or in other words, employee identity. Secondly, I will present *social identity approach* simply because us humans are most commonly considered as social beings. Followed by *organizational identity*, from the very basis of Albert and Whetten's *central, distinctive and enduring* to more recent organizational identity studies. Theoretical framework is finalized with what scientific studies tell about the *identification to organizations*.

I chose this theoretical framework plan as in the empirical part, in the interview, I will add questions for each theoretical framework category to get a concise picture in the field of identity and identification in Family Inc.

2.1 Individual work identity

According to Walsh' and Gordon's research on Creating an Individual Work Identity:

"An individual's work identity refers to a work-based self-concept, constituted of a combination of organizational, occupational, and other identities that shape the roles a person adopts and the corresponding ways he or she behaves when performing his or her work." (Walsh & Gordon p.4, 2008)

Thus, individual work identity has a huge effect on how people act and think in their workplace. Work identity is kind of the "claimed central character" of the individual, whereas Albert and Whetten talk about "claimed central character" of the organization. I will go towards examining the theoretical framework of organizational identity in later chapters, but first, let's look at the identity at work in an individual level.

So how do people create individual work identities? How are professional, individual work identities constructed? Pratt et al. (2006) had an interesting study of medical residents' professional identity construction. First, study shows that work itself and learning more about it, acts as the core of the identity construction. When work changes, also the identity changes and not vice versa. When talking about individual work identity, it always starts by the work itself, the role, the position one is working for and identity is tailored to fit to it. Pratt et al. (2006) talks about identity customization when there is a mismatch between what you do versus who you are. You can customize your identity by improving your work performance or make changes in how you view yourself. Pratt et al. (2006) mention three types of identity customizations, which are identity enriching, patching and splinting. It was common that when tasks and individual work identities are blurry or unsure, usually very common in the beginning of one's career, splinting is a good way of starting to build the identity. When professional identity begins to mature, major misalignments with work can be solved with previous identities, that is, patching. Finally, identity enrichment happens when there is development at work, when you have a strong professional identity, but through professional development, you can enrich it. (Pratt et al. 2006)

An important point of view in the whole identity construction is also the identity validation, what kind of feedback you get from the superior level professionals or other people you appreciate professionally. Furthermore, there is also the role-model point of view, how you see yourself compared to your role-models, that can be superior level professionals, same superior level professionals who give feedback and whose feedback you appreciate. Feedback and role-models were important in the path of constructing work identity (Pratt et al. 2006).

The importance of feedback, and furthermore, how you bring your work identity visible to others, what you think others think of your work identity and above all, what others really think of your work-related identities is another interesting aspect. Meister et al. (2014) made a research on identity asymmetries for individuals at work. They argue that:

“If an individual believes there is misalignment between her salient work-related identities and this perceived professional image, he/she would experience internal identity asymmetry.” (Meister et al. p.9, 2014)

When experiencing asymmetry, it was said to have an impact on interpersonal relationships. However, depending on the tone of the asymmetry, it can either have a positive or negative impact on the interpersonal relationship. E.g. “If resolved, positively-valenced internal identity asymmetries will have strong positive impacts on individuals’ well-being (e.g., positive affect, self-efficacy)” (Meister et al. p.28, 2014) or on the other hand “if resolved, negatively-valenced internal identity asymmetries will have slightly positive impacts on individuals’ well-being (e.g., relief), and slightly positive impacts on their interpersonal relationships (e.g., psychological safety)” (Meister et al. p.30, 2014).

All in all, to solve the asymmetries, it is very important for team leaders and management of the organization to have feedback sessions with the employees in order to avoid misunderstandings and to open and resolve such asymmetries. However, there might also be employees who do not give so much emphasis on what others’ perceptions of their work identity is, thus, they will count on their own perspective and do not get involved with asymmetries in the first place. But either or, management and leaders need to be well aware of what kind of asymmetries there might be and try to fix them in order for the whole team to work in its best possible way. (Meister et al. 2014).

2.1.1 Similarity versus distinctiveness

In constructing work identity, there is an interesting paradox research on similarity-distinctiveness by Cuganesan (2017). Similarity-distinctiveness tension is said to be in the very core of individual identity construction and no doubt, organizations need to have different professionals with distinct knowledge and knowhow in their areas, and furthermore at the same time, everyone needs to act towards the same goal and have similar abilities. It is argued to be important for managers to consider different heterogeneous ways people react in the similarity-distinctiveness paradox. Other people may want to emphasize their distinctiveness in their work, otherwise it might have a strong impact on their self-esteem. Whereas, other people might feel more comfortable when having strong

similarities with other members of the team. To get to know employees' reactions on this paradox, it is a good starting point of a well-functioning team (Cuganesan 2007).

Now I have dived into the world of individual work identities, what impacts on the work identity construction process, how to deal with asymmetries and how people react in the similarity-distinctiveness paradox. I found these theories interesting angles thinking of work identity. It is a very complex issue and there are so many ways to investigate it. Human beings are social beings, but everyone have their own identity. I think the similarity-distinctiveness paradox gives a very good extreme example of us human beings working in a same company, towards a same goal. I also like to see organization members as one big sports team. All players, that is, employees have their distinct abilities, but the goal is the same so there must be means to play together.

2.2 Organizational identity

Organizational identity is mainly conceptualized from the social identity theory that I will present in the next chapter. The theory of organizational identity has evolved from perspectives as: functionalist, social constructionist, psychodynamic and postmodern. It is said to be an important aspect in organizational context in terms of understanding strategic change, decision-making, understanding internal conflicts, understanding organizational communication, among others (He & Brown 2013).

According to functionalist perspective, organizational identity is the essence of the organization that all organization members must follow blindly. Functionalist perspective though, was not seen in practice because in practice, on the contrary to organizational identity being followed blindly, it depends on members' assigned meanings of the organization. In other words, what does the organization mean to the member individuals. Thus, the understanding of individual members' perspectives of the organization, led scholars to evolve thinking from social constructionist perspective. Social constructionist perspective takes into account the cognitive abilities of organization members and goes towards thinking "who we are" as an organization. On the other hand, social constructionist perspective also considers "how others see us". Organizational identity has then two focus areas: internal and external. Internal focus sees organizational identity internally, in

organization's culture, whereas external looks from the organizational image side. There has been a lot of discussion in social constructionist perspective on culture and image, whether they are the same thing or not. Evolving towards the postmodernist perspective of organizational identity from the main issue of the social constructionist framework, that is, how to measure the politics between management and employees. (Cooper & Burrell 1988)

And now we start to go towards a more practical perspective. The postmodernist perspective takes into account individual employees' working methods. This perspective sees organization in a way that individuals work in contrary to their individual desires, beliefs or regimes of truth. "In the postmodern view, organization is less the expression of planned thought and calculative action and a more defensive reaction to forces intrinsic to the social body which constantly threaten the stability of organized life" (Cooper & Burrell 1988, p. 91, emphasis added)" (Mujib p.7, 2017)

"Psychodynamic perspective takes into account the unconscious emotional life of individuals. It has been argued that organizational identity is defensive to individuals' own identity." (Mujib p.7, 2017)

But what is organizational identity? In a more practical perspective?

There are data of discussions on organizational identity before, but the first famous definition and discussion about the whole construct was by Albert and Whetten in 1985. They argued that organization's identity was built by a set of claims regarding what was central, distinctive and enduring of the organization. Albert and Whetten also noticed complicating factors in the claim studies and therefore realized there can be multiple identities to characterize one organization. Moreover, it is very common that identities' claims are political acts, that can be ambiguous, complementary, unrelated and contradictory. Thus, organizational identities are not very straight-forward, and the definition of the construct can also be a bit complex. Further theories found different aspects on the organizational identity construct, and defined it in a simpler way, organizational identity is really "the theory that members of an organization have about who they are" (He & Brown p.5, 2013)

Similar to defining individual identity, right – it also starts with the question “who am I”. But how organizational identity is formed? And what kind of process is it?

Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz (2002) created a dynamic model of four processes through which organizational identity is formed, maintained and transformed. Formation process is a long one though, organizational identity is not something that can be built overnight, it is the core competence of the company and every single employee should have internalized it, at least in their own way. Hatch and Schultz theory of dynamic organizational processes was born from Herbert Mead’s theory of self, where “I” is organizational culture and “me” is the image. Just as individuals form their identities in relation to internal and external definitions of themselves, also organizations form their identity in relation to culture (subjective perception) and image (objective perception). According to this theory, organizational identity is a continuous, or dynamic as they call it, cooperation between the culture and the image. Figure 1 below visualizes this dynamic. (Hatch & Schultz 2002)

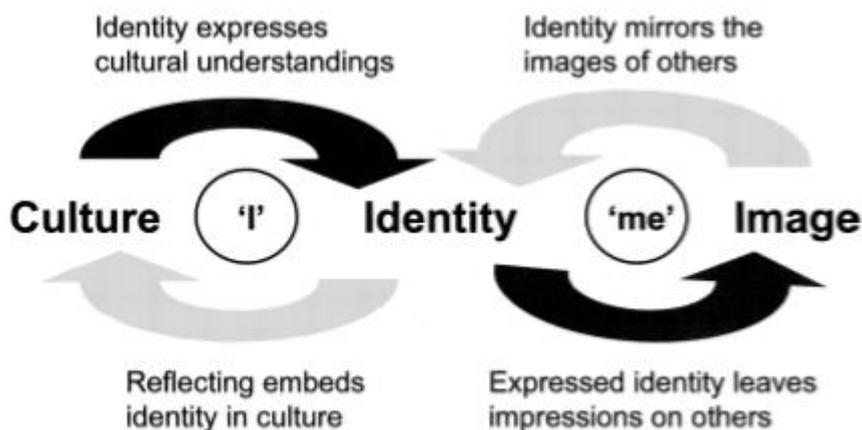


Figure 1: Hatch & Schultz (p.120, 2002) "How the organizational 'I' and 'me' are constructed within the processes of the Organizational Identity Dynamics Model"

The arrows in Figure 1 visualize the flow of reflection from different angles. Grey arrows describe the influence of images, being more precise, stakeholder images on organizational culture. It is the process of mirroring organizational identity in stakeholder images

and reflecting who we are as an organization. Black arrows describe the process of expressing cultural understanding in identity claims and using these expressions of identity to impress others (Hatch & Schultz 2002). Continuous and dynamic model is very useful nowadays as it is more normal to go through a change than staying still. Dynamic model shows that reflections are also floating continuously. An interesting aspect of what effects and changes the emphasis of dynamic floating of reflections is power. For example, top management can make decisions with a chosen advertising agency on logos and marketing campaigns that are not in line with the common cultural self-understanding, it does not have a very good effect on the identity. However, using wisely, power can also have a positive influence on the identity dynamics. Power can be used to enhance the dynamics by encouraging continuous interplay with all the functions presented in figure 1 (Hatch & Schultz 2002).

Hatch & Schultz (2002) also argue that in case an organization does not have balanced dynamics between influences of culture and image, it may lead to dysfunctions, such as narcissism or hyper-adaptation. Dysfunctions and unbalanced dynamics usually occur when culture and images become disassociated, and this is due to ignoring or denying the links between culture and images. According to the dynamics model, narcissism occurs when organization's identity is only dependent on expressing and reflecting itself. In other words, they see themselves only in the light of how they express themselves to others and accordingly, reflect on who they are in the shadow of their own self-expressions. They kind of shut their ears and do not hear the voices from the outside, that is, from the stakeholder's side. Especially nowadays, when organizations are under a magnifying glass from many sides and angles, especially in the digital world, there should be a good balance between the culture and the image in order to survive from all possible critics and feedback and in order to emphasize the main functions of the organization. (Hatch & Schultz 2002).

On the other side of the coin, hyper-adaptation means there is too much power from stakeholder images that cultural heritage is totally ignored or abandoned. For example, in case a sales organization does not have a balanced dynamics between the culture and the stakeholder image, their customer-centric mindset leads to too much emphasis on customer preferences that the own cultural heritage and the whole organizational identity, "who we

are” is totally lost. Whereas an example of narcissistic dysfunction, sales organization may put too much emphasis on product development for example and does not take into account what happens in the market. It is, however, difficult to keep the balance. Moreover, I think the dynamics model is a very good one, because in case of a balanced model, it for example takes into account the changes in the market that reflect to the culture but does not change it totally, but takes it into account and makes changes according to what the company can offer and where it really wants to concentrate on. (Hatch & Schultz 2002).

2.2.1 Social identity theory and the organization

I will shortly go through the main points of social identity theory also called as SIT as it is a theory from the early development of organizational identity theories, it is also an important part of my study and an important aspect of the whole organizational identity. According to the founder of Social Identity Theory Mr. Henry Tajfel, term social identity is understood as:

“that part of the individuals’ self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.” (Tajfel p.2, 2010)

Social identity theory is about classifying oneself into different social categories (or groups). Organization serves as one type of social category. According to SIT, categories, i.e. in this case organizations, are defined by prototypical characteristics abstracted from the members of the organization. But why is social classification important? What functions does it serve? (Hatch & Schultz 2004)

Social classification has two functions. Firstly, it provides a social environment where individuals can systematically define themselves and others. Second function is to locate or define oneself in the social environment. One’s self-concept in the social environment consists of personal identity, including idiosyncratic characteristics of a person and also social identity that links a person to the group with similar group classifications. Here, as a continuum, we can talk about social identification that is the perception of oneness with,

or belongingness to some human group, that is in this case, the organization. Identification serves as kind of the process or link between the individual and the social group. (Hatch & Schultz 2004)

According to SIT, organizational identification is one form of social identification and individual's organization can actually offer an answer to identity question "who am I". How to apply SIT to organizational life? Hatch and Schultz (2004) discussed it in terms of socialization, role conflict and intergroup relations. Socialization is best understood when thinking of a new employee, how to find the identity in the new social category? SIT socialization suggests defining the organization or subunit in terms of what is distinctive and enduring central characteristics. Identification makes it easier for the newcomer to concretize the organization, feel loyal and committed to it and facilitates the understanding of organization's values and beliefs. Role conflict includes the fact that individuals usually belong to many different types of social groups and individuals' social identity may consist of a lot of different identities that do not necessarily have similar demands from that person. This type of conflict may also cause conflict with individual's personal identity. However, it is not the identities that conflict, but values, beliefs, norms and demands typical to the identity (Hatch & Schultz 2004).

According to the same study, it is not advisable to integrate the different identities. Better way is to resolve the conflict by for example separating them from each other and prioritize the use of them depending on the situation. Social identity theory argues that the reason for existing conflicts in the first place is the reason for groups existence. Theory has slight pessimistic view of the intergroup relations. It is said that "given the relational and comparative nature of social identifications, social identities are maintained primarily by intergroup comparisons." (Hatch & Schultz, p.149, 2004) And also "given the desire to enhance self-esteem, groups seek positive differences between themselves and reference groups." (Hatch & Schultz, p.149, 2004).

According to Hogg & Terry (2001) when a specific social identity becomes the core and most important basis for self-regulation in a certain context, self-perception and behavior become ingroup stereotypical, whereas the comparative outgroup behavior has its own stereotypes. In case the relationship between the ingroup and outgroup is not positive, it

may lead to competitive and discriminatory properties. Hogg and Terry (2001) emphasize that social identities are not only descriptive and prescriptive, they are also evaluative. Evaluation is made in comparison to ingroup-outgroup stereotypes and the favor is in ingroup, and also, individual self. Serious conflicts occur when there are strong in-group favoritisms inside an organization, in work teams. However, if in-group favoritism is in the organizational level, and outgroup means the competitor, then it is considered as normal competition (Hogg & Terry 2001). In other words, giving a more practical example of the in-group favoritism is when for example different teams have competitive opinions on how to market their products. That is quite a normal situation, but in order to solve conflicts, teams should eventually make a compromise and together decide on the market strategy of their products. In case conflict is not solved, and there is no compromise of the situation, it may lead to situations where different team members show their differing opinions to the customers. And this has a big influence on the image and the whole reliability of the organization.

2.2.2 Creating organizational identity based on organization's history

Family Inc has been in the industry for more than 90 years and I want to bring out the point of view of history playing a role in creating the organizational identity. In their study, Oertel and Thommes (2018) argue that:

“By making connections to past behavior and decisions, identity can be understood as a promise to adhere to certain norms and expectations.” (Oertel & Thommes p.4, 2018)

History acts as a certain root on many performance levels, reliability, customer satisfaction, result making, and so on. It is very important to understand how organizations render their history in order to understand the promises organizations state. Depending on the company's history and the way they want to bring out historical events, history as a part of organizational identity can either be presentation of their own history, the history of their organizational field, or histories beyond the organizational field. (Oertel & Thommes 2018)

In their study of Using history in the creation of organizational identity, Zundel and Holt (2014) distinguish two related uses of history in the identity process: means of committing external audiences and means of finding inward commitment. They argue that history plays a big role in aspects of organizational identity. They say that:

“History most obviously acts when being invoked to create or recreate an identified sense of organizational presence, direction and ambition. The identity acts as a theoretical means to gather and manage audiences of the organization, its authority is legitimated through a strategic concern for current and emerging problems facing the organization, and it is secured by appeal to earlier sources, either those of the organization or its wider associations.” (Zundel & Holt p.6, 2014)

In other words, history can be used in situations of organizational change and in the situation of identity ambiguities among members of the organization (identity ambiguity is being discussed more in the organizational identification part). To kind of go back to the time when the company first started its business, to clarify where the business all started from and what was the actual core essence of the company in the first place. This sort of history usage in clarifying the organizational identity, could work well internally. And also, for the external audiences.

In the means of committing external audiences, to seek reputation based on historic events and through that clarify organizational identity to external audiences Zundel & Holt (2014) present an example of history presentation in Hewlett Packard’s web pages. Such means of presenting the history is not only to present the history, what they have done in the past, but also through presenting historic events, organization wants to explain what it is going to be in the future. And moreover, they also want to clarify their organizational identity. In their web pages, HP explains the history presentation:

“Capturing history in print is always a tricky business. Beginnings are rarely clear; endings are constantly evolving. In this article, one of a series relating to the HP garage, hpNOW takes a look back through time and focuses on the house on Addison Avenue where the seeds of the electronic revolution took root.” (<https://www8.hp.com/us/en/> accessed 7.4.2019)

HP wants to emphasize that the business they are in, is a tricky one, but as they have gone through a difficult beginning, they have gone through the rocky road, meaning they can manage the constantly evolving business in the best possible way in future.

In the means of creating inward commitment, Zundel & Holt (2014) present an example of Danish toy manufacturer Lego. Lego wanted to revitalize itself, reconstruct its organizational identity by invoking textual, material and oral memories to its employees. Through invoking textual, material and oral memories they also wanted to increase inner commitment and re-configure Lego's strategic direction. Lego did this by using speech act theory, which basically means communication. It is argued in the study that, if speech acts, that is, if communication works in the way it was meant to, then speech act theory is both a useful way of theorizing the performative role of history in the context of organizational identity but also challenges the ideal of history being a collection of existing evidence awaiting to discover them. (Zundel & Holt 2014)

2.3 Organizational identification

"Identities situate entities such that individuals have a sense of the social landscape, and *identification* embeds the individual in the relevant identities." (Ashforth et al. p.326, 2008).

Also, according to an older study made by Dutton et. al (1994) "when a person's self-concept contains the same attributes as those in the perceived organizational identity, we define this cognitive connection as organizational identification". (Dutton et al. p.2, 1994) It was argued that the level of organizational identification is strong when an employee's identity as a member of an organization is more central than employee's other identities. Moreover, identification is in a strong level when employee's self-concept has many of the same characteristics, he/she believes define the organization as a social group. (Dutton et al. 1994)

Now we have talked about the work identity, where the work identity is related to, social identity theory and furthermore, organizational identity, what is special about an

organization, what is the core essences of an organization. Now we talk about organizational identification. How does an individual identify with an organization? As mentioned in the starting line of this chapter, identification acts as the link between the individual and the relevant organizational identity.

“As Sluss and Ashforth (in press) put it, OI “is more than just considering oneself a member of an organization, situated identification, it is the extent to which one includes the organization in his/her self-concept.”” (Ashforth et al. p.332, 2008). Thus, organizational identification is not just a bought membership or a work contract as we are talking about organizational life, it is a deeper membership towards one’s self-concept. Moreover, in their study, Silliance & Golant (2018) talk about identification as a dynamic and turbulent process. First of all, they argue that identification is not just a perception of belongingness to a group:

“We prefer to view identification in a structuration theory terms more actively as a process of connection that provides ontological security and as the forging, maintenance, and alteration of linkages between persons and groups” (Silliance & Golant p.4, 2018)

In other words, identification is about continuously building and relying on connections during the process of identity appearance. This study of identification process emphasizes the fact that organizational identification is an active process rather than a state of being. And what affects the identification process are the co-present persons, enacted in interaction or recounted by narratives that are brought alive in specific social contexts. (Silliance & Golant 2018)

But why does it matter to talk about organizational identification? Isn’t that a self-evident mindset and come automatically when signing a work contract? Identification is the process that starts with first defining the identity. Defining the identity helps to capture the essence of who people are and why they do what they do. It is the reason why people join organizations and in a case of a voluntary resign, why they voluntary resign is because of the identity. Identity defines how people approach their work the way they do and why they interact with others the way they do, and identification is the construct of this process. (Ashforth et al. 2008)

There are two sides in discussing about the outcomes of organizational identification – what does it mean to the organization and what does it mean to the individual. Through identifying with a group ie. organization, individuals seek self-enhancement. People have the desire of developing their sense of collective self-esteem, they want themselves to be seen in a positive light. (Ashforth et al. 2008)

Same research also mentions five additional self-related motives for identification: self-knowledge, self-expression, self-coherence, self-continuity and self-distinctiveness. Self-knowledge refers to locating the defined self in the organization. Self-expression means enacting valued identities. Self-coherence makes sure there is a link between the set of identities to build a wholeness of them all. Self-continuity is maintaining a sense of wholeness across time and valuing a sense of uniqueness i.e. self-distinctiveness (Ashforth et al. 2008).

Furthermore, the very basic human needs were important motives for individuals' organizational identification. These needs include safety, affiliation and uncertainty reduction. It was mentioned that identification often changes or increases during key points in the socialization process depending on increasing or declining fit with the group. Us humans are seeking meaning, the process of identifying with collectives and roles, basically referring to the teams, reduce the uncertainty associated with working in new environments or with changes in familiar environments. Many day-to-day rituals and routines can act as providing meaning, especially in organizational life of continuous changes and uncertainties (Ashforth et al. 2008). According to a research made by Cooper & Thatcher (2010) there are different motives employees have towards the identification. I will go through this in the sub chapter 2.3.1.

But what does organizational identification mean to the other party, i.e. organization? Organizational outcomes of identification are seen in numerous researches, as organizational identification is considered as one of the core theories. These outcomes include “cooperation, effort, participation, organizationally beneficial decision making, intrinsic motivation, task performance, information sharing and coordinated action, turnover and turnover intentions, job satisfaction and work adjustment, organizational citizenship

behaviors, improved processes in virtual teams.” (Ashforth et al. p.336-337, 2008). In other words, there is a huge impact of identification for organizations.

All in all, when an organizations identity is clear and easily identifiable, it influences in employees becoming so rooted in the organization that acting on behalf of the organization is similar to acting on behalf of themselves. However, this may sound a bit scary and may lead to overidentification, that might, on the other side, have negative effect on for example research and development. While overidentified, people might not be very open minded to new ways of working and furthermore, it may also cause big refusals to change. Therefore, the identity should be created in a way that it is not refusing but helping the process of change (Ashforth et al. 2008).

2.3.1 Employee self-concept orientations as motives in organizational identification

We have learned that employee identification has a huge affect on the key outcomes at work. Key outcomes, meaning effort, cooperation, organizational support and citizenship behavior, among others. The awareness of employee identification among organizations management is increasing all the time. However, there is little awareness of different identification motives among different individuals (Cooper & Thatcher 2010). In their study, Cooper and Thatcher argue that:

“To increase our understanding of managing multiple targets of employee identification in diverse work environments, we examine the influence of self-concept orientations and identification motives on organizationally relevant identifications.” (Cooper & Thatcher p. 2, 2010).

According to Cooper and Thatcher (2010) identification refers to how individuals define themselves compared to another individual, relationship or group. In organizational context identification means the value attached to that specific organization. There is a difference between how individuals identify to organizations though. We are talking about relational or collective identification. Relational identification refers to identifying to relationships, whereas collective identification means identifying to groups. There is a

certain difference between these two identification types. In organizational context, the difference is seen in the relationship with coworkers and supervisors for example, which means relational identification. Collective identification is when individuals define themselves in terms of a specific organization and the value attached to that self-definition (Cooper & Thatcher p.2, 2010).

Cooper & Thatcher (2010) argue that employee identification motives come from different types of self-concept orientations. To understand different individual motives, it is vital to understand different self-concept orientations. The term self-concept orientation means:

“the general tendency to think of the self in terms of individual characteristics, role relationships, or group memberships.” (Cooper & Thatcher p.5, 2010)

Study argues that all individuals have those three self-concepts, but there are differences in how people use them in different situations. And this is the main reason, it is inevitable for management to recognize these different self-concepts as they act as the motives of organizational identification. In working environment, the three self-concepts are individualist orientation, relationist orientation and collectivist orientation. Individualist orientation means that some people value independence and see themselves as unique and autonomous. Relationist oriented employee values interpersonal relationships and sees him/herself in terms of role relationships with others. Collectivist oriented employee views him/herself in terms of group membership. (Cooper & Thatcher p.5, 2010)

In the following table there are 6 different identification motives and how associated different types of self-concept orientations are towards the motives:

TABLE 2
Proposed Associations Between Self-Concept Orientations and Identification Motives

Proposition	Self-Concept Orientations	Self-Enhancement Motive	Uncertainty Reduction Motive	Self-Expansion Motive	Personalized Belongingness Motive	Depersonalized Belongingness Motive	Self-Consistency Motive
2a	Individualist	++		+			++
2b	Relationist		++	++	++	+	
2c	Collectivist		++		+	++	

Note: ++ Strongly associated, + moderately associated.

Figure 2: Cooper & Thatcher (2002) "Proposed Associations Between Self-Concept Orientations and Identification Motives"

For example, the employee with individually oriented self-concept has a strong association with the identification motives of self-enhancement and self-consistency and has a moderate association towards self-expansion. To use this knowledge, managers could emphasize specific organizational areas that individually oriented employee could be interested in. When managers are aware of the individualist employee's concern towards self-enhancement, they could remind that particular employee that the organization only recruits new employees from top rated universities because of high performance expectations. That could be an important feedback for individualist employee in diminishing his/her self-enhancement concerns. Managers could emphasize that as a colleague and mentor to the new recruits from top universities, the employee is very important to the organization. This emphasis made by the manager could strengthen the relationship between the employee's self-enhancement motive and organizational identification. All in all, study suggests organizations' managers to understand the self-concept orientations and identification motives that form a base in coworker, workgroup and organizational identification. It is also mentioned that due to organizations being extremely diverse, it is important to encourage and manage effectively the organizationally relevant identifications. (Cooper & Thatcher p. 5, 2010)

2.3.2 Identity ambiguity and discrepancy

As the case company in the empirical part of my study is having a spin-off from the previous Group and owner changed, I wanted to investigate theoretical research about identity and change. Furthermore, as we are living an era where change is more normal than stability, I think it is extremely important to know what happens identity wise in a company, when big organizational changes occur. How to keep the same motivation, awareness of goals and awareness of the whole company existence, when basically everything changes? How to keep employees and the whole workforce identified to the company? This is not a study of an organizational change, as my aim is to dive into the current situation of the organizational identity. However, we cannot deny the fact that change affects on the current situation very much, that is the reason why I point out the change issues also.

When talking about organizational change, it is important to understand what ambiguity means and vice versa. In their study of Identity Ambiguity and Change in the Wake of a Corporate Spin-off, Corley and Gioia (2004) defined ambiguity as "an ongoing stream that supports several different interpretations at the same time" (Corley & Gioia p.2, 2004). In other words, there can be a lot of different ideas when change is happening and there can also be as many interpretations of the situation as there are employees working for a company. Study points out the fact that change is always challenging as it brings out issues people are not aware of before. It brings out the unknowns. And through the unknown issues, come ambiguities. When the ambiguities reflect to organizational identity, it is difficult to make sense of the core question "who are we as an organization". When people interpret the core essence and the features of the core essence differently, it can result in tensions. When there is no guiding light or red string, instead, the past is changed and is replaced by unknowns, everyone of course has their own opinion on company's future image. Therefore, the study suggests that leaders should be very attentive in the situation of change and they should actively take steps in promoting collective sensemaking. By sensemaking, leaders can clarify the renewed, possibly a bit altered identity. It is, however, emphasized in the study, that:

“All change, however, involves some process of moving from an existing clarity of understanding to doubt, uncertainty and/or ambiguity, and ultimately to a state of renewed clarity that resolves into an altered form.” (Corley & Gioia p.3 2004)

According to the Corley & Gioia (2004) it is usual that identity discrepancies occur when there is a change in organizational identity. Or a change in the organization’s structure that might lead into a change in the organization’s identity. An example of an identity discrepancy is when the employees of the company feel content on the change process, but they get negative feedback outside the organization. This could for example occur due to company’s poor efforts at external communication. (Corley & Gioia 2004)

3 METHODOLOGY

Let's move on to the empirical part. In this chapter, I will open up what kind of research I did and what was the context. To keep the red string going throughout this study, I would like to remind the reader of the research questions, which were:

What is the organizational identity of Family Inc?

How do people identify with Family Inc?

3.1 Qualitative research method

It was very clear in the early stages of this study that I would use qualitative research method for data collection. Supporting the choice, in their book of *Research Methods in Business Studies*, Mr Ghauri and Grønhaug (2010) clarify the use of qualitative method as follows:

“Research problems focusing on uncovering a person's experience or behavior, or when we want to uncover and understand a phenomenon about which little is known, are typical examples of qualitative research.” (Ghauri & Grønhaug p.105, 2010)

Organizational identity and identification go in this category of understanding a phenomenon or understanding a relationship the person has with the organization and characteristics, point of views of people working in the organization. Comparing quantitative research method from qualitative one, qualitative research method focuses on observations, understanding, subjective insider view and closeness to data. Whereas studies that are using quantitative research method have emphasis on facts, logical approach and controlled measurements. We are talking about quality versus quantity. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010)

There are different ways of collecting data, but using interview was also clear from the beginning. According to Ghauri and Grønhaug (2010) it is a very common opinion that interviews are the best data collection methods. I created the question list beforehand, but

in case a certain area of interest relevant to this study, was raised by the interviewee, I used spontaneous additional questions. As an example, I noticed that in almost all interviews, feedback was raised. I got curious as according to Pratt et al. (2006) feedback is an important area in creating individual work identity. Thus, my interview is considered as semi-structured in-depth interview. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010)

3.2 Research context and case company

Family Inc is a sales organization in machine building sector. We are talking about a previously Finnish family owned company that a year ago experienced a change of ownership. Now speaking, company has about 130 employees and is owned by a massive Swedish owner, also dates back to always being family owned. Family Inc has long roots of being in the industry, it has a long history among Finnish machine builders. Why I chose this company? Company has gone through a lot of changes and I wanted to find out what people think about the company, what is their relationship with their work and what are their opinions on the existence of Family Inc, ie. what areas influence on the organizational identity and identification.

I chose Family Inc as my case company based on the knowledge of it living an era with pretty interesting, but continuous changes. This company has long roots of being a Finnish family owned company. Now it is owned by Swedish massive corporation, family-owned also, though. I wanted to find out what is the organizational identity of Family Inc, in this particular moment. I wanted to find out how people identify to Family Inc. Change is not the subject in this study. The fact that the ownership changed, and a lot of functions are changing all the time, was all in all considered a good thing in the company. I consider the change being kind of a boosting element for the company to now really emphasize what is their organizational identity and what do people value in the organization, how do they identify to it. The ownership changed and through that, also the old Group was divided into 3 separate companies. On my personal opinion, when I got the chance to get to know the company, I thought it also being a good thing that these changes were made. Management wanted to emphasize that business is done “as is”. Meaning that business continues its successful path. No changes to that. That also describes the fact that management was content on how business was done previously. That was another reason for

my opinion of the change being as a boosting element for the organization to now clarify what does this “business as is” means. What kind of an organizational identity does this “business as is” means? How do people who do “business as is” identify to the company. Also, the Swedish owner who bought the company, was clearly extremely satisfied of how business was done in Family Inc. They had made the acquisition decision in the first place. Thus, there are many reasons for this company, supplying components and services for Finnish machine builders clearly having a core competence, distinctive organizational identity that should be further investigated. And that is what I am doing in this study. I try to find out what is the organizational identity of Family Inc and how do people identify to it.

3.3 Interview and analysis

I interviewed 10 people working in different positions. It was easy to find volunteers for the interview and people were very happy to participate in it. Some interviewees mentioned that it was a good timing to really stop and think about what has happened, where is the company heading to, in what areas are they good at and what areas are challenging, what should be on the development list and what is the function of Family Inc in the first place. For some people, word organizational identity and identification were a bit abstract, but research questions were created not to emphasize those terms too much.

I promised to keep this study anonymous, thus, I do not mention any names of the interviewees, their positions nor the name of the whole company. I sent a common invitation e-mail to the interviewees and got immediate positive response from all chosen interviewees. Interviews were held a week before Christmas 2018. I chose not to send the interview questions beforehand, as I wanted to raise spontaneous conversation on the matter. Interview was made in Finnish. Research questions are attached to this study and I have also translated them in English to follow the language of this study. In the actual interview, I used additional questions in case needed, ie. semi-structured in-depth interview. This deepened some of the answers. I have, however, attached only the main questions to this study and bring out the important points from the additional questions in case they are relevant to this study.

In the research findings part, translations in quotation marks are translated by me, from the original interview, that was held in Finnish. I reserved 45 minutes for each interview. Actual timing was 45 minutes on average. A couple of interviews took almost an hour, and a couple of interviews did not need the whole time. All in all, I think 45 minutes was a good time for this kind of conversation. However, if I would do this again, I would send the interview questions before hand, then people have the time to really think what their relationship with the subject is and therefore probably the conversation could be in an even deeper level. Interviews were held in a comfortable meeting room located in the premises of the company.

I asked for a permission to tape the interviews. I got green light from all 10 interviewees; thus, I had the chance to analyze the interviews afterwards. I used transcription and wrote down all the interviews, after which I had the chance to read them through multiple times. After I had transcribed the interviews, and read them through multiple times, I grouped them into themes according to how the interviewees saw themselves in relation to their work (individual work identity), how they related to the company (organizational identity) and how they saw themselves as part of the work community (organizational identification). For example, in the first part of the interview, I had questions relating to individual work identity. Interviewees emphasized that “the meaning of work comes from the content of work”. I interpreted the work content being one important aspect in individual work identity and when I relate this interpretation to what I learned from the theories in individual work identity, I found support. For example, according to Pratt et. Al (2006) study on medical residents’ professional identity construction, work itself and learning more about it, acts as the core of the identity construction.

I then went on scrutinizing these three themes and grouped subthemes for each of them. To clarify the three themes and their subthemes, I will present the division in the following Figure 3:



Figure 3: Interview analysis: Division of themes and their subthemes.

Within the theme Individual work identity, I grouped work content, personal development and level of proudness as subthemes. Subthemes for organizational identity include long and fruitful history, being the best partner to customers and strong trust level between the employer and employee. Organizational identification has subthemes of being fascinated by the industry, good orientation program and negative side of the history.

I will present the findings in the next chapter. In that part, I will go in more detail of how I interpreted the findings in each of the three themes and their subthemes. After I have presented the findings, I will summarize the findings in the research findings summary and discussion part. After that, my intention is to discuss about the study and the whole subject in a wider perspective also reflecting the theoretical part and eventually bring out some points that can be regarded as recommendations. Eventually I wrap up the whole study with a conclusion.

4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter concentrates on the research findings. The interview had 2 parts. First part was to discuss about individual work identity of the interviewees, and the second part was about organizational identity and identification. I wanted to first find out what is the meaning of work for the interviewees in the case company, before going towards discussing about organizational level aspects.

Findings I have chosen to quote from the interviews represent what is important in the formation of individual work identity and in the later chapter, in the organizational identity. Furthermore, what is important in the process of identification. I have divided the findings in three themes with each theme having three subthemes (please check Figure 3).

4.1 Individual work identity

As a reminder of what the individual work identity is all about:

”An individual's work identity refers to a work-based self-concept, constituted of a combination of organizational, occupational, and other identities that shape the roles a person adopts and the corresponding ways he or she behaves when performing his or her work.”
(Walsh & Gordon p.4, 2008)

Individual work identity is an important part of person's identity. It is not just a separate area of the main identity, but it is more like an important part of the whole identity. In my study, I first concentrated on finding out the interviewees' individual work identity. What is their relationship with the company. I did this through questions around meaning of work in the case company, what made them feel they have succeeded in their work, I also asked examples of these cases. I wanted to find out in what kind of situations, interviewees felt they had succeeded in their work. I also wanted to find out how proud are they working for the company. Many interviewees also wanted to explain the reason for their answer, which was numerical between 1-5 (1 not being proud at all and 5 very proud). This sections' main idea was basically to find out the feelings of the interviewees'

relationship with the case company. In this part, interviewees also pointed out how identified are they with the industry itself and the company. It was interesting to find out that even though the industry itself is not close to everyone's heart, the company itself, the content of work, and above of, the work community, made it easy to identify to the company. Furthermore, for some interviewees' the reason why they felt identified for the company, was exactly because they felt it was interesting to be part of a work community with people who are not similar to themselves. They felt that because they are working with people who are different from who they are, and different from for example the people they spend time with, during their social life, is not a bad thing, but more like an advantage and regarded as a positive challenge.

When thinking of the individual work identity, I would like to mention how many years interviewees have been working for the case company. 50% have over 10 years of working experience, 40% have over 20 years' experience, 80% have over 5 years' experience and only 10%, i.e. 1 interviewee has been working for the company less than 5 years, but more than 3. All in all, for 50% of the interviewees, working for the case company is an important part of their whole working identity because they do not have that much experience elsewhere. It was a common thought that the individual work identity has been pretty much created and further developed in the case company. Now let's move on to the meaning of work and aspects that relate to that.

4.1.1 Work content

“Meaning of work comes from the content of work”

Work content is very important for the interviewees. Furthermore, it was emphasized that it is important to get ones' voice heard. That brings out the motivation to be able to develop things. The interviewees said that their managers make it possible to develop things, and all in all it was mentioned that there are a lot of things to be developed. Moreover, people are positive about developments really happening easier today than before, because of the ownership change. This combination acts as the most important motivator for a lot of the interviewees. Even though some interviewees said the industry itself, does

not make them feel passionate about their work, the content of work goes above the passion for the industry and therefore people feel proud to be working for the company.

4.1.2 Personal development

Personal development is important. Company has made it possible for employees to learn new things and develop themselves. This was also an area where there were differences among the interviewees. Some interviewees felt there could be more possibilities for personal development, but then again they also felt that the work content is good because you get to work with different kind of people and the fact that the work is hectic, gives out the motivation and feeling oneself important in the work place. It was also a common thought that work is different every day, and that is an aspect that affects how people feel about their work.

“It is nice to solve difficult cases. You can plan your day beforehand, but eventually you never know what a new day brings in front of you. That is one reason I like this job.”

People like the challenge. They felt they had succeeded in their work when they have solved difficult cases, managed to survive difficult times with a lot of changes going on, they felt success when people have notified what they had done.

“It motivates me, and I think it motivates everyone, when you get feedback from your work”

Feedback was continuously mentioned as being important to get and to give. In the original interview questions list, I did not have a question around feedback, but when I gave the first couple of interviews, I realized that is an important factor of feeling succeeded and accomplished of ones' work. I then started to ask additional questions around it.

“I want to work towards equality. I want equal rules for my team, and I feel I have succeeded when I see equality is really happening.”

Some interviewees mentioned their interest and importance towards sustainability, and they shared important thoughts that on their opinion should be taken into consideration. Some interviewees thought that the company does not make an impact on important developments thinking of our society and the environmental issues, but eventually shared their thoughts what could be done in the company to raise these important values:

“We could emphasize the material recycling in our warehouse”

“World-weariness worries me, if I would go strictly by my own principles, I would be working in an industry with more emphasis on environmental issues. We supply components that are transported by air back and forth. But then again, we have the chance to make more sustainable decisions. Choose more ecofriendly ways for transportation as an example.”

Interviewees who felt strong importance personally towards environmental issues, were positive of the new owner’s having sustainability as one of the important values. They wish sustainability issues would raise attention in Family Inc.

One important issue that was mentioned in all interviews, was the work community. Interviewees felt they are very content with the work community. It was also regarded a positive challenge, that there are strong, different people working for the company.

“Workmates and well-being of the work community affects how I feel about my work. If there are challenges in those areas, then I see myself thinking of work-related issues in the middle of the night.”

4.1.3 Level of proudness

Level of proudness. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the last question in the individual work identity part, was to find out how proud the interviewees are working for the case company. 100% of the interviewees gave number above 3, 70% gave 4-5 and 20% could not be prouder when giving the company full grades, i.e. 5.

“I like the values. I consider this as an honest and a good company to work for. I also feel safe when thinking of the company, for example compared to companies in the stock market... Values and people here are top notch! I feel proud to be a part of the work community”

Some interviewees compared the case company inside the industry it is working in and thought that it is an advantage to point out to be a part of the case company. They felt that the company has a good image and position in their market.

“The name of the company is respected in Finland. You can always say you work for this company”

“This company is safe, has a good financial standing and has a brilliant history”

Whereas some interviewees thought about the company in a more general level and therefore didn't find proudness from the company being famous but found proudness in other aspects.

“Outside our customer base, I don't feel that we do meaningful work thinking of our society. In our own industry yes, but not that we would be famous for doing something very meaningful. But I am very proud to be a part of a good working community”

Corporate social responsibility was important for some of the interviewees. Some really started to think of the sustainability factors, whereas some interviewees mentioned that the company is not very famous in other means. I used additional questions as I wanted to know what kind of being famous was this all about. I received an interesting comparison that I will further discuss in the discussion part of this study:

“For example, if I would play in FC Barcelona, I could say I am super proud to be a part of that team. The team is just so good, and everyone knows it.”

The interviewees emphasis on the importance of work content represent the process of individual work identity construction. As mentioned above, interviewees felt that

meaning of work comes from the content of work. As we learned from Pratt et. Al (2006) research, that work itself and learning more about it, acts as the core of the identity construction. The importance of being able to develop oneself and develop things in the workplace represent the identity enrichment, that happens when an employee has a strong professional identity but wants to enrich it along the way. (Pratt et al. 2006)

As we learned from the theoretical framework of individual work identity, feedback plays an important role of identity validation that is an important part of the work identity process. Findings show that feedback was also mentioned as important factor in feelings of success. However, there were no signs of identity asymmetries even though people felt there could be more feedback giving and getting kind of culture. In identity asymmetries, I refer to Meister et. Al (2014) research on identity asymmetries may occur in case of lack of feedback that we learned in the theoretical part. I base my opinion of not seeing signs of identity asymmetries, as people mentioned they understand why feedback giving and getting culture is not that fluent in our Finnish culture.

4.2 Organizational identity

We learned in the theoretical part of this study, that organizational identity, in all of its simplicity, is:

”the theory that members of an organization have about who they are” (He, Brown p.5, 2013).

Now, let’s see what we can find about the organizational identity in the research. I started the second part of the interview by asking what do the interviewees think is the main function of the case company. Interviewees were of course well aware of the financial essence of the sales organizations’ main existence, but then also thought of the question in the organizational identity perspective, or, in a broader perspective. What is the function of the case company? Why does it exist in the first place?

4.2.1 Long and fruitful history

“Long history, dates back to 100 years. Certain supplier representations all started when we had to find a solution to customers’ problems. One by one the business started to grow. We have a very distinct technical knowledge on our products and services. It is the entity that makes us special”

Long and fruitful history was pointed out in almost all of the interviews, in one way or another. Reason for existence was said to be in the long customer and supplier relationships. It was said that due to long history in the business, the company is kind of a forerunner. In most supplier representations for example, the case company has been the first one in Finland to have the representation in the first place. This is a perfect example of history playing a role in creating organizational identity based on organization’s history and therefore get clarification first of all internally, and also clarify the existence of the company to external audiences. Mentioning the history in the interviews, represent very well what Zundel & Holt explained in their research:

“History most obviously acts when being invoked to create or recreate an identified sense of organizational presence, direction and ambition. The identity acts as a theoretical means to gather and manage audiences of the organization, its authority is legitimated through a strategic concern for current and emerging problems facing the organization, and it is secured by appeal to earlier sources, either those of the organization or its wider associations.” (Zundel & Holt p.6, 2014)

Reasons for company existence was also explained:

“The company forms a partnership with the customers and suppliers, and through wide technical knowledge, the company can help the customers to build better machines. That is one reason we exist.”

Then, I wanted to find out how the interviewees see the case company compared to its competitors. My idea was to find out what makes the company distinctive and being distinctive dates back to Albert and Whetten’s very first theories of what the organization

identity is all about, giving a comparison to the competitors I think the question and point of view is easier to understand than just mentioning what makes them special. I actually tried that at first, but it was easier for the interviewees to answer to the additional question: what makes them special compared to the competitors.

It was clear for some interviewees:

“We do a lot by ourselves: we purchase, stock, further produce, market, we do everything ourselves. Additional services we provide, are in a better level compared to competitors.”

For some interviewees, it was difficult to put in words what makes the case company special. What makes them distinctive. But then it all comes with discussing about the long and fruitful history and the technical knowledge that was widely considered as a big advantage. There are long employee relationships within the company, and that also means the technical knowledge and knowhow is well kept in the company and during the long working years, it has also further evolved:

“I think it’s the strong technical knowledge, roots come from 100 years back. I have also received feedback that because the company is not too big, information is also shared more easily. Compared to massive corporations, it makes it difficult to find a suitable person who can fix your problem. We can help the customers easily.”

4.2.2 Best partner to the customers

Being the best partner to the customers was one of the main answers. And here, history plays a big role and again we can refer to Zundel & Holt research about history having a big influence in forming organizational identity. Furthermore, it was said that when the company has during the years formed reliable partnerships, it is easier to maintain them today and even in the digital world when face-to-face contacts become even more rare. What is challenging in the future, is how to form relationships with the millennial generation that acts a bit differently compared to the older generation. That was said to be a challenge in the business now and even more in the future. Another challenge was the increase in competition. Some interviewees shared their feelings that the company really

has extreme technical knowledge and knowhow of their products and services, they can offer additional service to the customers and there are long supplier relationships, or better to say, partnerships as well as good partnerships to the customers side. But similar do competitors. Thus, it was mentioned that the company should not be so modest about emphasizing its main advantages. That is, the big expertise of the business for example. The interviewees pointed out that they would be interested in knowing what strategical moves will be done in the future to become stronger in the increasing competition in the industry. One interviewee put it in a way that:

“We are too modest. I mean, I have always said that it is nice to be a part of the winner’s team. We are the ones who can solve customers’ problems. We are the ones who can really apply our knowledge to solve customers’ problems. And this is what we should bring out to our customers, we should bring out our success stories. We are so damn good! But we are also too damn modest.”

When I asked questions on how to describe what the case company forms together, the interviewees started to raise comments on the people. The working community is considered special and familiar:

“Somehow, we all are kind of similar, or, even though we all have different identities and everything but still through what we do here in this business, I feel like we form a family. We have a connection with one another. And we have a sense of pride that we want to serve our customers in the best possible way. A very nice working community we have!”

4.2.3 Strong trust between the employer and the employee

People felt there is a strong trust between the employee and the employer.

“Nobody spies you at your back. There is this mutual trust between the employer and the employee. You have freedom and management’s trust. And then there is this certain humor, that is important. To kind of share the fun!”

History had a side of company being very safe and sound. Nowadays people felt that through the ownership change and through competition getting harder in the industry, it is important to feel dynamic and show it to the customers also:

“We want to give an image that we are dynamic, and we want to and really can be flexible in solving customers’ problems.”

“Nowadays it is easier for us to feel we are in the same boat. Previously, when we grew too big, we lost the cooperation. Now we are getting it back, which is good! We have been a family-owned business. Now, after the ownership change, we are a small family inside a bigger one”

There were different opinions among the interviewees about all of the company working well together and towards the same goal.

“Hmm I’m not sure whether we are in the same boat. We could form a stronger unity. I think in a lot of cases there are people comparing themselves between different teams. I think we must work towards being together in the same boat. There is a small progress, but more emphasis should be put in forming a stronger unity”

Interviewees thought that information sharing should be clearer and more transparent. There was no doubt that everyone was doing the best they could, in their own positions and roles. There was no doubt that everybody is doing a lot of work to do the best performance individually. But the problem is, that there should be more cooperation between the teams and more emphasis on feeling everyone in the company is working towards the same goal. Feeling of being in the same boat is missing. Here, again, the lack of where the company’s focus is, was pointed out. Some of the interviewees were thoughtful of what the focus will be in the next years. They had applied managements message on doing business as is, after the ownership changed, but still, it was pointed out that they are waiting for further information on the focus, mission, vision and new strategic moves to be happening soon. There are differences in how the ownership change has affected on employees. Some employees work changed totally, someone only had slight changes. The

need to bring out that the company is working towards the same goal was mentioned to be an important message to the customers side also:

“We should bring more cooperation and commonweal to our customers”

4.2.4 Negative side of the history

History has also its negative side. Some of the interviewees pointed out that some of the “old ashes” of separating different Group companies from one another and kind of competing with one another should be put a side. Cooperation and commonweal should be now the emphasis. Every salesperson should be telling similar story to the customers. No competing, instead cooperating.

New owner brought their values to the awareness of the case company. Values are similar to what values used to be in the case company, but the interviewees thought values should not just be fancy lines that nobody really follows. Some of the interviewees thought the values should be discussed among every single person working for the organization and they should have a big impact on decision-making processes for example. Interviewees felt that strong values act as an important guiding light when doing important decisions. Because you can make decisions in the company. Employer trusts the employee, there was no doubt about that. What is challenging, is that now the guiding light is missing, and it effects on peoples’ day-to-day work because people want to know what is happening in the future. Where is the focus. What strategic moves is the company going to take in the near future, and so on. However, even though there were a lot of question marks and a lot of unknowns that were keen on getting cleared up, people felt very positive towards the future. Interviewees first of all mutually felt that the ownership change was an important event to happen. It has a big positive effect on the company. Now, the case company just need to clarify its future and bring it to day-to-day awareness also.

Values are considered to be an important part of the whole red string in the business and in the company. Now speaking the awareness and application of new values have not been taken into effect. However, some of the interviewees thought the values should be self-evident to everyone. Whereas it was also mentioned that in case values are not in line

with individual values, it affects on choosing the employer in the first place. In other words, in case there are mismatches over individual values and company values, it was mentioned to be an important issue in choosing the employer. What comes to the case company, values were in line with the interviewees' values.

4.3 Organizational identification

We learned in the theoretical part of the study, that in one way investigating, organizational identification:

“is more than just considering oneself a member of an organization, situated identification, it is the extent to which one includes the organization in his/her self-concept.” (Ashforth et al. 2008)

There were different levels of noticeable aspects relating the identification to the case company. People also felt the identification from different angles. For some people the reason for feeling identified was mainly because he/she has been working for the case company his/her whole working life. They felt a strong connection to the workplace and also felt proud of working for the case company.

4.3.1 Fascinated by the industry

Some interviewees felt they were fascinated of the industry; they were technically oriented and dealt with the products and work-related cases also in their free time. Some interviewees felt a strong connection to the other people working in the company. They felt they belonged in a very special working community, which they were also very proud of. For some people, identification to the case company was because they felt they had the chance to develop things. The emphasis was then on the work itself. They emphasized the fact that the company relies on its employees and it is easy to get your hands in the development issues which was also important aspect of what they valued in working life in general.

4.3.2 Good orientation program

Interviewees also pointed out that the case company has a very good orientation program for the new employees. We learned in the Social Identity Theory that in order for the new employees to quickly feel loyal and committed to the organization and also in order to facilitate the understanding of organization's values and beliefs, identification process to the organization is important. A good and concise orientation program acts as a tool to improve the identification process to the organization. To repeat the function of the Social Identity Theory, firstly it provides a social environment where individuals can systematically define themselves and others. Another function for it, is to locate or define oneself in the social environment (Hatch & Schultz 2004).

5 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

I will first go through the summary of the findings, with Figure 4 visualizing the four themes. I will then discuss about the study in a broader perspective.

5.1 Summary of the findings

It was truly an interesting round of interviews. A lot of important aspects regarding organizational identity and identification to the case company was pointed out and I could relate those aspects with the theoretical framework I learned during my studies. However, the subject is just so wide that it is impossible to get a concise picture of what was the aim of the whole study – what is the current organizational identity of the case company and how identified are the employees. Furthermore, 10 interviewees out of the 130 people that is the total amount of people working for the company, is just a small margin. In order to get a bigger picture of different teams and in order to gain more data as roots in forming the results and answers to the main question, more interviews should be done. Also, I am not sure whether the interview questions were clear enough. Moreover, as learned from the the Dynamics Model of Hatch & Schultz (2004) the external image plays a role in forming the organizational image, and this study concentrates on the opinions of internal audience only. However, I think this study has a good starting point in getting to know what aspects influence on the organizational identity of the case company and though this study, there is a good chance in expanding the knowledge to other areas also. On the other hand, as mentioned in the Dynamics Model study, “expressions of organizational culture can make important contributions to impressing others that extend beyond the managed or intended impressions created by deliberate attempts to convey a corporate sense of organizational identity” (Hatch & Schultz 2002). Thus, thinking of the external image, it is also important to look what people from the inside think of the whole thing.

All in all, I am content on the findings that I will summarize now. I will do the findings summary by pointing out main themes that were continuously being brought up in the interviews. I regarded the following themes the ones that people feel comfortable with,

when thinking of organizational identification. Themes are presented here in the following Figure 4, after which I will go them through one by one:

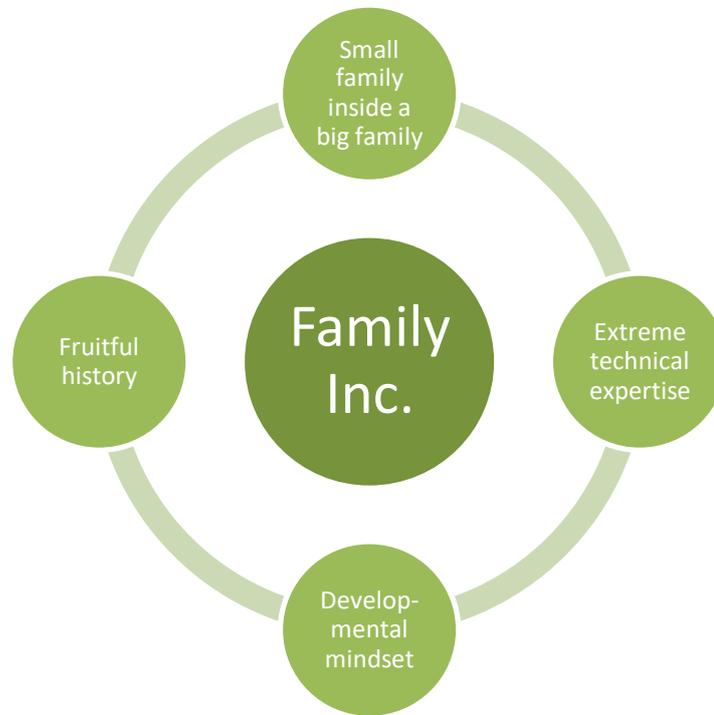


Figure 4: Findings summary: What influences organizational identity and identification in Family Inc.

5.1.1 Small family inside a big family

People respect family-owned values in the case company. Furthermore, people respect the fact that due to the new owner being also family-owned, the values they respect, will be further emphasized. People feel positive about the new owner, even though it is a massive corporation. The feeling of performing as a small family inside a bigger one, was a common thought among the interviewees.

Being a small family also affects on how people see the image to external stakeholders. People felt that the fact that the company has family-owned values, and this kind of down-to-earth way of doing business, is also visible to the customers and other stakeholders:

“We are easily approachable company. People make it easily approachable, because we have this kind of down-to-earth way of doing business. And I think our customers see this characteristic also.”

This is a great advantage and is probably one reason for forming strong partnerships with the customers. If people feel their supplier is easily approachable, it really makes it easier for doing business. They don't see a big gap between the company and the stakeholders but regard them as part of their extended family. And in this case, we are really talking about forming partnerships with the customers, which is an important aspect in organizations playing in the field of business-to-business. That has a big affect on customers getting easily in touch with the company, and furthermore it has an affect on trust issues also. As we learned from the dynamics model of Hatch and Schultz (2002) in figure 1, "expressed identity leaves impressions on others". Expressed identity of down-to-earth way of doing business with family-owned values reflects on the impressions on others.

Small family inside a bigger one describes the working methods in the working community. Interviewees see the working community as a unique one where you can always ask for advice from others:

"People here form a unique working community. You can always ask for help and people are easily approachable. And, the sense of humor! We have very funny people here."

Even though a lot needs to be done in having a mutual opinion on feeling of being on the same boat, it was still common that due to the ownership change, the case company is going towards it. People at least have the feeling how it affects on the way of doing business in the future and that was also a common mission:

"Feeling of being in the same boat makes us more flexible and agile to develop our processes."

Small family inside a bigger one also describes the fact that there are a lot of different identities working for the case company. People felt that was a big advantage that they were part of a working community that consists of different kind of people they spend time with during their free time. Some of the interviewees emphasized it being a positive challenge. According to similarity-distinctiveness paradox by Cuganesan (2017) that was presented in the theoretical part, relates to this fact. Similarity in a way that people feel

being part of the same working community even though having a mutual feeling of being different from one another. That is an interesting point of view and I was happy to notice the paradox also from the interviews in the case company. I think the paradox makes perfect sense. In one organization there are different positions to be filled. Different positions require different professionals with different abilities and therefore also different characteristics. I think it brings good roots to the organization if the difference is being respected internally, and that was really the case in this case company. That is why I raised this fact as a part of the organizational identity factors found from the research.

5.1.2 Extreme technical expertise

We cannot deny the fact that the company has extreme technical expertise on the products and services. This was mentioned in all of the interviews and this was also regarded as one of the factors that makes the case company different from its competitors. In addition to know their products and services, people can apply their knowledge on solving customer's problems, meaning, they are willing to always serve the best possible solution. Long working years in the case company has also made sure the knowledge and expertise has stayed and further evolved in the company. Technical expertise also includes people having such a deep knowledge on their customers' applications that they can apply their knowledge over customers. Meaning that they can advice customers in their purchases to find the best possible solution.

5.1.3 Developmental mindset

In addition to technical expertise, and will to find solutions to customers problems, people have the mindset of looking forward through developmental glasses:

“I think that we should always question our way of doing things. Kind of have the mindset of improving how we work in different processes; can we do things better.”

Even though people shared similar thoughts on waiting for the next, common strategic moves to be published as a guiding map for the future, people felt positive towards the ongoing strategy update project:

“Even though we still don’t have the new strategic moves on a paper, I am convinced that we will have them after the project is finished.”

Long history plays a certain role in the company, because it is a long one. However, there was also a common thought that the company needs to look forward, people were determined that the company needs to be dynamic to stay attractive to the customers:

“We cannot improve our ways of doing business if we constantly just do what we have always done. We must develop our ways of doing business, otherwise we will shrink smaller.”

One example from company history is one of the values the old case company had, and the new one also, but the old one had it clearer. That was, willing to win. That characteristic was seen from the interviews, and that was also a good characteristic to describe the developmental mindset:

“In developments, we must be number one, so that we are in the frontline of all developments happening in the industry. Or at least in the top 3.”

Willing to win was also mentioned when talking about mission and future vision, that the company should bring its historic self of being the first one to bring certain products to customers, up to date in some other respects. For example, gaining a position of being a role model in the industry. That could be in terms of presenting some kind of a successful project for example.

5.1.4 Fruitful history

The history of the case company was mentioned in a lot of contexts during this study. It is no doubt that it plays a big role in first of all thinking of the whole essence of the case company. The case company has been in the industry for more than 90 years, thus, a lot of historic events has happened along its way. In the time of continuous changes, and

during the time of identity ambiguities, it is also a good way of internal clarification. Why are we here in the first place. What is our function in the industry today.

We learned in the beginning of the study, that using wisely, history can be means of creating, or on the other hand, strengthening the organizational identity. It can either be used in means of committing external audiences or finding inward commitment (Zundel & Holt 2014)

According to findings of this research I would say that people value the history. They say that due to the company being in the industry for so long, the expertise has also further evolved. Due to long working years in the company, the expertise has also stayed in the company. People value certain historic events that have happened and also it gives a good base thinking of the future. In addition to internal appreciation, also customers value the case company. Because it has been in the industry for so long, and there are good experiences along the way of the partnership, customers remember the name and can easily justify choosing the case company.

5.2 Discussion

A good example that has taken into account the history and quality, reliable associations of the company name when describing its corporate identity was found in a web page of a company called Valmet:

“Valmet’s corporate identity reflects its strategy and vision - The Valmet name is historically familiar to our stakeholders and is associated with high quality and reliability. This is an excellent base for building our corporate image globally. Valmet’s corporate logo – a green, forward-pointing arrow emblem with the word Valmet in steel grey – reflects a customer-focused and strong forward-looking company with sustainability as a success factor.” (<https://www.valmet.com> accessed 7.8.2019)

The comparison to FC Barcelona made me further investigate if I could find data regarding the success factors of this team. What makes it special and what is FC Barcelona’s identity all about, what can we learn from the team. Harvard Business Review released

an article “What Makes FC Barcelona Such a Successful Business” exactly about this case. There is no doubt FC Barcelona being famous for its players and massive number of trophies, but it is also a successful business:

“With 23 Spanish League championships, 27 Copa Del Rey titles, and, after this last victory, as many as five Champions League trophies under its belt, Barca has earned a unique place in the annals of soccer. It’s also a successful business: the team’s net worth, according to Forbes, was \$3.16 billion, making it the world’s second most valuable sports team, while its revenues touched \$657 million, the fourth highest among soccer clubs (after Real Madrid, Manchester United, and Bayern Munich) in 2014.” (<https://hbr.org/2015> accessed 16.4.2019)

What can we learn from FC Barcelona? Like all organizations, it also has an identity. A very distinct one and it thinks of the identity as a way of driving performance. FC Barcelona’s core identity and a cornerstone is called La Masía. It is a school that has educated over 500 successful players until 1979. La Masía helps to create the teams identity that consists of four roles: “the guardian of the organization’s ideals, the source of the organization’s distinctiveness, the glue which imparts cohesiveness and the compass that points to the organization’s future” (<https://hbr.org/2015> accessed 16.4.2019). FC Barcelona’s key capability is talent development. That is distinctive to them in comparison to other teams.

I now understand the reason for mentioning FC Barcelona as a comparison when talking about being proud of belonging to something unique. Story of FC Barcelona also emphasizes the importance to define who are we as an organization in order to use its core capabilities in the best possible way. Strong identity helps in creating strategy, making big decisions in the company and so on. Just with a simple answer and finding out who are we as an organization.

Individual work identity related questions in my interview raised the importance of giving and getting feedback. There is a clear connection between feedback and personal work-related identity construction. Pratt et al. (2006) found the importance of receiving feedback and called it identity validation, what kind of feedback employees get from the

people one has appreciation towards, in the working community. Thus, feedback plays a big role in the personal work-related identity.

People taking part in my research, have long working years on average and are not in the initial stages of work-related identity construction. However, feedback influences in the organizational identification also, and thinking of already constructed identities, feedback has a big role in work related identity developments. Young and Steelman (2014) examined what kind of influence in supervisor and workgroup identification, feedback environment and feedback seeking have. In their study of “The role of feedback in supervisor and workgroup identification” (2014) Young and Steelman first of all emphasize the importance of organizational identification in today’s business world. Globalization and increasing competition require organizations to be agile in changing their process models and constantly adapt to new environments. But how do employees develop their identities to match the new environments? The development of identification is a process of supervisors’ sense-breaking and sense-giving and employees’ sense-making and enactment. A key component of the whole process is the receipt and integration of relevant feedback. Sense-giving derives from what kind of information employees get from the group they want to belong to and information or feedback about how well they fit in that particular group. “In the process of deriving an identity with that group, an employee will enact or try out possible selves, attitudes and behaviors and then interpret responses from the group, that is, sense-making.” (Young & Steelman p.3, 2014)

In other words, developing employees’ individual work identity, feedback from coworkers, and feedback from the managers act as key components. It has also an important role in the sense-making process that is also discussed in many organizational identity related studies. I find the role of feedback and the role of sense-making, two of the most interesting and also important elements in a well-functioning organization. When I started finding material for the theoretical part of this study, I first studied organizational culture related books and research studies. Asta Rossi’s book about Culture Strategy (Kulttuuristrategia in Finnish, Rossi, 2012) has interesting presentations on what kind of culture strategy is being performed in the most successful organizations. There were a lot of similarities compared to organizational identity related studies. For example, talking about feedback, the story of a Finnish producer of plastic tubes, Pipelife, is a good example.

There are four feedback sessions each year for every Pipelife employee with their managers. However, the feedback sessions Pipelife does, are from bottom-up. Thus, the initial comes from the employees. What kind of support and management does the employee need in order to succeed in his/her work. Whereas of course managers give feedback to the employees' side also, with similar mindset of how on their opinion, can the employees succeed in their work. These feedback sessions have played a role in the sense-making process also. It is important for Pipelife, that every employee is treated equally, which also improves the sense-making in their daily work. Pipelife employees are aware of the consequences of their work and what kind of influence does each position have in the big picture. This mindset has also an effect on making initiatives, on employees' overall capacity among other things. (Rossi, 2012)

The role of meaning of work in people's lives is increasing all the time. That is, making sense of what we do for living, making sense of what we work for 40h a week. According to my research that was one of the biggest factors of motivation for the interviewees also as mentioned in the research findings part of this study. It was said to be important to get ones' voice heard, it was also mentioned that the meaning of work comes from the content of work. Furthermore, developmental mindset that was one of the themes as a summary of the research findings, also relates to work being meaningful because you feel being part of working towards things getting better. Helsingin Sanomat released an article of this issue arguing that a lot of people seek more meaning for their work. The main reason for seeking more sense-making for work is because work plays a big role in finding meaning in life overall. It is not enough for people to get motivation only from money. Staying alive perspective has turned into people really finding a job that is meaningful in their perspective. People want to make sense of what they do. The biggest problem nowadays is the distance between what you do and what is the result of your work, what is the influence of what you have been working for the past years. Organizational psychologist Mr Sahimaa who has been interviewed for this article gives a relieving solution for this problem, that is, people can start to evaluate the meaning of work in different stages. I.e. what is the meaning of work for the individual, for the team, for the whole organization or for the society. Not all aspects need to be filled at once. Solution for the long distance between what people do and the blurry knowledge of where it effects on, is feedback. Individual and team results must be available for every single employee working for the

organization. Furthermore, there is no doubt that individual feedback sessions play a big role in clarifying the influence of one's work. (www.hs.fi accessed 29.3.2019)

An interesting aspect of what affects and changes the dynamic floating of reflections in Hatch and Schultz dynamic model presented in figure 1, is power. (Hatch & Schultz 2002) Even though organization's identity is the common thought of who we are as an organization, dynamic model suggests that power shows the direction and has a big influence in building the base for the organization's culture, identity and image. In his book of Management (Johtajuus in Finnish, 2015) Matti Alahuhta reveals his point of views in what kind of aspects influence on building a successful and competitive business. He states that "people are organization's biggest asset" (Alahuhta p.183, 2015). Therefore, organization's culture is in the core when building a successful business. I think this comment summarizes the meaning of the organization's culture, meaning of feedback, and emphasis on sense-making:

"The development of organization's culture and personnel create base for successful business. But culture and personnel need to be managed. You can manage them by giving feedback, challenge for better performances and focus first on the trickiest questions. However, the most important way to manage employees is that all employees internalize their meaning in organizations road to success." (Alahuhta p.183, 2015)

Alahuhta also argues that innovations are not born if people don't have the courage of taking new possibilities, that includes the fact that the organization's culture should accept failures also. The fact that taking a risk always leads to a success is false. Making failures and learning from failures is important part in the road to success. This was actually pointed out in my research also and refers to the importance of feedback. It was said that:

"We have to have open discussions on failures also, what went wrong, how can we improve. Everybody makes mistakes and you should be able to make mistakes, but the company should also talk about the mistakes. That's the way we improve our business"

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of my study was to find out what is the current state of organizational identity and how do people identify to the case company. Research findings: Family-owned values, fruitful history, developmental mindset and extreme technical expertise, all, have unique aspects thinking of the current state of organizational identity of the case company and what affects on the identification to the case company.

It is important for a company to define its organizational identity and also define how people identify to the company, what kind of individual professional identities does an organization have. People are the ones who influence on the organizational identity and people are also the ones who work towards the organization's goals; therefore, it is important to define what is the core essence of the company, what kind of culture affects on the organizational identity. What kind of image is created to the external audience.

Even though this study is not a study about a change, according to my research the change has affected on certain aspects thinking of the current situation of the organizational identity. However, the ownership change is considered as a very positive change. It even felt it has been waited for. People were waiting for the change. Even though it has created certain identity discrepancies and ambiguities, it is still a positive change. Based on the research, and my observations on the interviews, I would raise the following issues to think about.

New owner, new values. New values are easy to follow because they are similar to the old ones, that is not a problem. Values have not, however, been concretized to everyone. People were waiting for a change, positive change eventually happened. Now the future, mission, vision and values are a bit blurry. It is a good situation to now clarify things for better, towards the feeling of rowing the same boat and feeling of playing towards the same goal. Long and fruitful history plays a role in defining company's organizational identity. However, certain historic aspects should be put aside and clear the old ashes. To clear the mission, vision, values and company strategy to everyone working for the case company. One of the most important things to improve is sustainability, furthermore, how

to communicate the sustainable acts. It is important and becoming more and more important in the future.

Giving and getting feedback affects very much on individual and organizational identity and the process of identification. It should be part of the organization's culture. It is not enough to have discussions with the manager ones or twice a year. The role of feedback should be bigger.

Transparent internal communication. There is no doubt that employees are hard workers in their own positions, however, the red string and feeling of us, feeling of playing towards the same goal could be in a better level. This has also an affect on the external stakeholders, what kind of common associations to the name does the company want to give in people's minds. The type of associations that affect on the distinctiveness of the company. It is not about creating new distinctive aspects but emphasize already existing ones. Emphasize the factors that they are really good at, because there are a lot of factors to bring out from this company. In order to clarify the associations to the case company name, it is easier if the common tone of voice is clarified to everyone.

Organizational identity and identification is not an easy subject to examine and describe. It is quite an abstract term. However, there are important issues inside the abstract term as we have learned in this study. Eventually, all the aspects presented in the study, have an impact on the success level of organizations. Even in the most difficult change processes or in times of recession, everyday life becomes so much clearer in case you sit down and go back to the start: Who are we as an organization and what makes us special.

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APPENDICE

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Ammatti-identiteetti/Work identity

- Kerrotko työstäsi ja työhistoriastasi tässä yrityksessä? Mikä on tuonut sinut tänne?/*Can you please tell me the history of your working life in this company? What brought you here?*
- Mitä sinulle merkitsee työskennellä tässä yrityksessä?/*What does it mean to you to work for this company?*
- Mitkä asiat vaikuttavat siihen, että työsi on tärkeää ja mielekästä?/*What aspects affect on work being important and meaningful to you?*
- Koetko työssäsi onnistumisentunteita? Esimerkki minkälaisista asioista tulee onnistumisen tunteita?/*Do you experience feelings of success in your work? What kind of things make you feel that you have succeeded in your work?*
- Miten se minkälainen olet, on linjassa sen kanssa mitä teet työksesi?/*Is what you are in line with what you do for work?*
- Mikä motivoi sinua työssäsi tässä yrityksessä?/*What motivates you in your work?*
- Asteikolla 1-5 kuinka ylpeä olet työskennellessäsi tässä yrityksessä? Haluatko perustella?/*From 1 to 5, how proud are you working for this company? 5 is very proud, 1 is not proud at all. Do you want to open up your answer?*

Organisaatioidentiteetti ja identifikaatio/Organizational identity and identification

- Kuka tai mikä tämä yritys on? Mitkä ovat tämän yrityksen päätehtävät?/*Can you please describe who or what is this company? What is the main business of this company?*
- Miksi tämä yritys on olemassa?/*Why do you think this company exists?*
- Mikä tekee tästä yrityksestä erityisen? Missä olette erityisen hyviä, esimerkiksi kilpailijoihin verrattuna?/*What makes this company special? In what areas are you especially good at, e.g. compared to your competitors?*
- Kuvaile minkälaisena kokonaisuutena näet tämän yrityksen? Mitä te olette yhdessä?/*What kind of an entity do you see this company forms? Can you describe what are you together?*

- Mitkä ovat tämän yrityksen tavoitteet sinun mielestäsi? Mikä tämä yritys haluaa olla tulevaisuudessa?*/What do you think is the mission of this company?*
- Mikä tämän yrityksen pitäisi olla?*/What do you think this company should be?*
- Kertoisitko yrityksen arvoista ja toimintatavoista? Oletko samaa mieltä? Onko jotain mitä yrityksen tulisi mielestäsi tehdä eri tavalla?*Can you please describe the values and working methods in this company?*