



LUND UNIVERSITY
School of Economics and Management

Department of Business administration

FEKH49

Degree Project Undergraduate level in organization, Business Administration

Semester: Spring semester 2015

The heartbeat of Valcore AB

A qualitative study of the relationship between core values and managerial work
in a knowledge intensive firm

Authors:

Lena Lindström

Isabell Dimblad Gonzalez

Olivia Håkansson

Supervisor:

Christine Blomquist

Acknowledgements

This Bachelor thesis has been written at the institution of Business Administration at Lund's University. This study has provided us with the opportunity of insight in the work with core values at Valcore AB it has been an exciting thesis to write with a subject that interests all the authors.

We would like to thank all the interviewees at Valcore AB, who have given us the possibility of gaining insight in their work and their company. Without your valuable insight to the subject of the thesis, we would not have found the results that we did - thank you!

We would also like to thank our advisor Christine Blomquist for providing us with valuable advice during the work of this thesis. Thank you for sharing your knowledge!

2015-06-01

Lund, Sweden

Lena Lindström Isabell Dimblad Gonzalez Olivia Hakansson

Abstract

- Title:* The heartbeat of Valcore AB - A qualitative study of the relationship between core values and managerial work in a knowledge intensive firm
- Seminar date:* 2015-06-04
- Course:* FEKH49, Degree Project Undergraduate level in organization, Business Administration, 15 University Credit Points
- Authors:* Isabell Dimblad Gonzalez, Olivia Håkansson and Lena Lindström
- Advisor:* Christine Blomquist
- Key words:* Core values, managerial work, trust, freedom, identification
- Purpose:* The purpose of this study is to interpret in what ways the core values are expressed in managerial work as well as in what ways these values impact the managerial work in a knowledge intensive firm.
- Methodology:* This study views the world as a social construction and has an interpretative starting point. The qualitative methodology is embraced, and the empirical data is collected through observations and eight semi-structured interviews with five different managers. The study has an abductive approach which perceives the study as a process.
- Theoretical perspectives:* The theoretical framework presents three main areas of theory: core values, managerial work and identification theory. The main focus is core values.
- Empirical foundation:* The study's empirical gatherings consists of the observations in meetings and interviews with five managers, whereas four managers are from one department at Valcore AB. Valcore AB is a knowledge intensive firm.
- Conclusion:* This study suggests that core values are expressed both implicitly and explicitly in managerial work. It is also suggested that the core values have an impact on managerial work in the form of trust and freedom. The study also indicates that the employees' sense of identification with Valcore AB can explain why this impact does occur.

Table of content

1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACKGROUND.....	1
1.2 PROBLEMATIZATION.....	2
1.3 PURPOSE.....	3
1.4 DISPOSITION.....	3
2 METHODOLOGY	4
2.1 SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES.....	4
2.1.1 <i>Ontological approach</i>	4
2.1.2 <i>Epistemological approach</i>	4
2.2 ABDUCTIVE APPROACH.....	5
2.3 QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY.....	5
2.4 APPROACH FOR GATHERING EMPIRICAL DATA.....	6
2.4.1 <i>The studied organization</i>	6
2.4.2 <i>Interview as method</i>	7
2.4.3 <i>Observation as method</i>	9
2.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	10
2.6 METHODOLOGY OF ANALYSIS.....	10
2.7 QUALITY ASSESSMENT.....	10
3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	12
3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE THEORETICAL FIELD OF ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES.....	12
3.1.1 <i>Background to the theoretical field of organizational values</i>	13
3.1.2 <i>Core values</i>	14
3.2 MANAGERIAL WORK.....	15
3.3 THEORIES ABOUT IDENTIFICATION.....	16
3.4 ABSTRACT OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	17
4 ANALYSIS	18
4.1 CULTURE AND CORE VALUES AT VALCORE AB.....	18
4.2 CORE VALUES EXPRESSED IN MANAGERIAL WORK.....	20
4.2.1 <i>Everyday interactions</i>	20
4.2.2 <i>Employee evaluation</i>	21
4.2.3 <i>Reprimand of the employees</i>	23
4.2.4 <i>Recruitment</i>	24
4.3 THE IMPACT OF THE CORE VALUES ON MANAGERIAL WORK.....	26
4.3.1 <i>Trust</i>	27

4.3.2 Freedom.....	27
4.4 IDENTIFICATION.....	30
4.4.1 Centrality	31
4.4.2 Distinctiveness	31
4.4.3 Endurance.....	32
5 RESULTS	35
6 CONCLUSION	37
6.1 THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS	37
6.2 PRACTICAL AREAS OF USAGE	38
6.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH.....	38
7 REFERENCE LIST.....	40
APPENDIX 1	45
APPENDIX 2	47
APPENDIX 3	48

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

“A strong corporate culture is key to success” (Simoneaux & Stroud, 2014, p.51), this is often said to be an unchallenged implication in today’s business world. When taking a closer look, however, the concept of corporate culture seems to be more complex than this quote reveals. There are numerous ways of attempting to describe the complex matter of corporate culture. The definitions range from being as concise as “the way we do things around here” (Bolden et al. 2011, p. 91; Deal & Kennedy 1982, cited in Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 298) to as elaborate as “a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned... that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (Schein 1992 cited in Bolden et al. 2011, p. 92). As might be concluded due to the variety of definitions, putting words on what corporate culture is and what role it has in organizations is debated (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

Organizational culture is gaining increased attention in leadership studies today (Bolden et al. 2011). Schein (1992) describes leaders as playing a crucial part in organizational culture by arguing, “one of the most decisive functions of leadership is the creation, the management and sometimes even the destruction of culture” (Schein 1992 cited in Bolden et al. 2011, p. 92). This quote is still relevant nowadays, even though there are alternative perspectives. Simoneaux and Stroud (2014) agree with Schein’s viewpoint and state that in order to support the corporate culture, managers should encourage involvement and accountability of their employees at all levels. Additionally, they argue that “bad managers create bad cultures” (p.52). The terms manager/management and leader/leadership are used interchangeably as this study focuses on core values in relation to managerial work (which will be defined in 3.2 *Managerial work*).

The interest in corporate culture can also be seen from the growing attention on organizational symbols since the 1990’s (Bolman & Deal, 2003). It is the organizational symbols that showcase and communicate the culture (Bolman & Deal, 2003) and there are different ways of categorizing these symbols. Bolman and Deal (2003) suggest a categorization that reflects what cultural role the different symbols have in the organization. Myths, visions and values constitute one category as these symbols give organizations a purpose and determination.

Other suggested categories are histories, stories and fairy tales, metaphors, humor and play as well as ceremonies, rituals and heroes and heroines. (Bolman & Deal, 2003) The focus in this thesis will be on values as it is considered crucial in many different organizational phenomena, culture being one of them (Schein 1985 cited in Bourne & Jenkins, 2013).

1.2 Problematization

Organizational culture is a vague concept (Duncan, 1989) with no universally accepted definition (Muscalu, 2014). Although elusive, culture is still an important concept to work with in organizations (Daft 1980 cited in Duncan, 1989). According to Daft (1980 cited in Duncan, 1989), the concept's importance is reliant on whether or not organizational culture is considered real. If considered real, then managers and researchers need to find ways to describe and use the concept in order to help companies accomplish their goals. (Daft 1980 cited in Duncan, 1989). As previously shown, there is an increasing interest in organizational culture which can indicate that the concept is taken seriously by companies and researchers. Since the concept is elusive, however, it is difficult to study. Willmott's (1993 cited in Robertson & Swan, 2003) request for "empirical studies that are historically embedded and provide dynamic explanations of the emergence and effects of culture" (p.837) might be considered an expression of that. This is particularly acute in knowledge intensive firms due to the normative control in that context (Robertson & Swan, 2003). Moreover, with some exceptions, cultural analyses are often highly prescriptive (Robertson & Swan, 2003) with a focus on describing what kinds of cultures are required in certain situations (Maister 1993 and Starbuck 1992 cited in Robertson & Swan, 2003).

The above written indicates an opportunity for other, non-prescriptive focuses when studying culture in knowledge intensive firms. When surveying the field of organizational values, which is part of the organizational culture concept and the main focus of this thesis, we were not able to find theory describing in what ways organizational values are expressed on a concrete, practice-based level. Additionally, we were not able to find theory describing in what way organizational values impact managerial work in knowledge intensive firms. Since managers/leaders and their actions play an important role in culture related issues, as already mentioned, we thought it was odd that we could not find a connection between managerial work and organizational values in theory. Robertson and Swan (2003) seem to indicate similar remarks by stating that it is not clear how the high-positioned in knowledge intensive firms are expected to act in order to establish consensual and strong corporate values.

In this problematization we make an attempt to shed light on a potential opportunity for a more concrete approach in describing the expressions and the impacts of the elusive concepts of organizational values. Since the company that has been researched in this study seems to share most characteristics with theory conceptualizing organizational values as *core values* (which will be further elaborated in the theoretical framework and in the analysis part *4.1 Culture and core values at Valcore AB*), the main contribution will be in the core value area of the theoretical field of organizational values.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to interpret in what ways core values are expressed in managerial work as well as in what ways these values impact the managerial work in a knowledge intensive firm.

1.4 Disposition

This study is divided into six chapters: introduction, methodology, theoretical framework, analysis, result and conclusion. In the introduction, which was presented above, a background and problematization of the topic as well as the purpose of this study have been provided. In the second chapter, methodology, the study's scientific approaches, approach for gathering empirical data, methodology of analysis, research question and quality assessment are clarified. Thereafter, in the theoretical framework, the theories relevant to this study are put forward such as values, managerial work and identification theory. In the fourth chapter, analysis, the collected empirical data is presented and analyzed with the help of the theoretical framework. The aim of this chapter is to problematize the already existing theory as well as to answer the research questions. In the fifth chapter, result, the findings of the research will be presented. Lastly, in the sixth chapter, conclusion, a description of how the contribution of this study can be used in other companies as well as suggestions for further research are put forward.

2 Methodology

Initially, in the first section, 2.1 Scientific approaches, the scientific approaches on which this study is based are described. Furthermore, in the sections 2.2 Abductive approach and 2.3 Qualitative methodology, parts of the research strategy are presented. The succeeding section, 2.4 Approach for gathering empirical data, describes the reason for performing a study with case study characteristics in order to fulfill the purpose of this study as well as it motivates the choice of organization. Additionally, this section involves the methodology of gathering empirical data and how the empirical data has been interpreted in the analysis section. In section 2.5 Research question, the specific research questions of this thesis are presented. Moreover, in section 2.6 Methodology of analysis, the method of analysis is described which sets the foundation of the analytical work. At last, in section 2.7 Quality assessment, the trustworthiness of the results of the study is analyzed.

2.1 Scientific approaches

2.1.1 Ontological approach

The ontological approach in this study is social constructionism which presupposes the world to be socially constructed. Social actors create these social constructions through their perceptions and actions when interacting in a context. (Bryman & Bell, 2011a, p.34) In this study, the managers are viewed as the social actors and the organization within which the managers interact are viewed as the context. When applying the social constructionism approach, culture can be considered “an emergent reality in a continuous state of construction and reconstruction” (Bryman & Bell, 2011b, p.22).

2.1.2 Epistemological approach

The collected data in this research is analyzed with an interpretative approach. The purpose of this approach is to capture the subjective motive of social actions. (Bryman & Bell, 2011a) Thus this study aims to interpret the managers’ perceptions of their reality. More specifically, their perceptions on how they express and relate to core values in their managerial work. This will help fulfilling the purpose of this thesis as it is about interpretation of expression and impact of core values.

2.2 Abductive approach

An abductive approach was used when performing this study. As this study analyzes how managers express the core values in their managerial work as well as in what way these impact their managerial work, the empirical material was gathered through interviews and observations in order to build an empirical foundation. From this foundation the theoretical framework was then put together. During the process of analyzing the empirical framework in relation to the theoretical framework, the studied organization had to be contacted additional times in order to complement the empirical material. After analyzing the empirical gatherings the theoretical framework had to be updated and complemented several times in order to reassure that the theoretical framework provides support for an analysis of the empirical gatherings. This work process of constantly seeking complementary material, both empirical and theoretical, to support the argument is coherent with an abductive approach (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2008), thus this study takes on an abductive approach.

2.3 Qualitative methodology

This study is based on the qualitative methodology which deals with researching a certain aspect of a social world as well as its context. The qualitative methodology seeks to find the subjective image of a dilemma and includes thorough research of a limited area. (Bryman & Bell, 2011a) Other research methodologies, such as the quantitative one, seek to generalize findings (Bryman & Bell, 2011a) which is not compatible with the purpose of this thesis as it aims to *interpret* the empirical findings. Therefore, the qualitative methodology is most relevant for the study of this thesis. When applying the qualitative methodology on this study, the limited research area is the expression of the core values in managerial work and the impact of these values on the managerial work in a knowledge intensive firm.

In the following table, the scientific approaches of this research are summarized.

SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES	THE APPROACHES OF THIS STUDY
Ontological approach	Social constructionism
Epistemological approach	Interpretative approach
Empirical and theoretical generation	Abductive approach

Research design	Qualitative methodology
-----------------	-------------------------

Table 1: The overall methodology of this study

2.4 Approach for gathering empirical data

2.4.1 The studied organization

One organization has been chosen for this study in order to enable depth in the research area. The research methodology will, therefore, have similar characteristics as a case study, where an entire organization is studied in order to give a detailed image of one object (Bryman & Bell, 2011a). This study aims to create an image of a limited research area within one department of the organization, and does therefore not have all characteristics of a case study. Only studying one organization makes the results fully applicable only to the researched organization, which in turn is a limitation when aiming to generate conclusions useful for other organizations.

Personal contacts were used when choosing an organization in which to perform this study. These contacts were accessed through collaboration in a previous course. The previous contact might lead to greater trust which in turn can lead to more elaborate empirical material. It can on the other hand also lead to the interviewed managers assuming that the interviewers have previous information about their work environment and thus not answering as elaborative on the asked questions. This is therefore being taken into consideration when designing the methodology of gathering empirical material which is further elaborated in section 2.4.2 *Interview as method*. Since the selection of the organization and managers is based on already established and easily accessible contacts, the assortment qualifies as a non-probability sampling, more specifically a convenience based sampling (Bryman & Bell, 2011a). A problem with using a convenience-based sampling is the fact that it makes it difficult to generalize the findings from the sample. However, it can serve as a starting point for further research or contribute to already existing theory. (Bryman & Bell, 2011b)

The chosen organization is a knowledge intensive firm that seems to have a strong culture and core values which makes it a suitable setting for fulfilling purpose. This organization has several managerial levels and therefore multiple managers. This study is limited to interviews and observations at mainly one department of the organization. Since the organization and the managers have requested to be anonymous in this thesis, the organization is referred to as

Valcore AB and the managers have anonymous names which are presented in section 2.4.2 *Interview as method*.

2.4.2 *Interview as method*

The research methods that are most coherent with the qualitative methodology, interviews and observations, have been chosen for this study. Interviews are a suitable way of gathering empirical data as these have potential to provide the in-depth research that is sought in qualitative methodology. (Bryman & Bell, 2011a) Thus the empirical gatherings partly consist of interviews with five managers. This small number of interviewees can be a limitation as only five perceptions from the same knowledge intensive firm are represented. Thus making it hard to draw well-grounded conclusions applicable to other organizations.

As previously stated in section 2.4.1. *The studied organization* the organization on which this study is based has been chosen through convenience selection. The interviewed managers have been chosen through the same method. Through contacting one of the previously interviewed managers in this organization, access to the other managers in the department was gained. The contacted person also offered to help approaching the HR-manager, in order to provide the study with a broader perspective.

One HR-manager and three team managers as well as their superior were interviewed. As these managers work on different hierarchical levels, a broader perspective can be provided. The managers were interviewed in order to gain their view on their managerial work in relation to the core values. The HR-manager provides a larger perspective on how the core values are intended to be interpreted and worked with in the organization as well as how he/she works with the core values on a daily basis. The interviews have been performed on several occasions. Four original interviews were conducted with the three team managers and their superior on February 12th, 2015. From March 31st, 2015 up until April 24th, 2015 complementary interviews as well as one original interview with the HR-manager were held. The interviews were performed at the managers' workplace, a setting that was chosen by the interviewees themselves. By doing so, the interviewees had the option to choose an environment where they feel comfortable to answer the questions in an honest way (Bryman & Bell, 2011a). Nevertheless, there is a risk that the managers both say what they think they are supposed to say as well as only talk beneficially about the company. Thus this can affect the trustworthiness of the results.

In the succeeding sections the interviewees will be given the following pseudonyms.

MANAGERIAL POSITION	PSEUDONYMS
Head of Team Managers	Manager 1
Team Manager 1	Manager 2
Team Manager 2	Manager 3
Team Manager 3	Manager 4
HR-manager	Manager 5

Table 2: Pseudonyms for the interviewees

Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions based on themes were used in order to get as elaborate answers as possible. In a semi-structured interview, the interviewer should be able to adjust the questions according to the context of the interview. (Bryman & Bell, 2011a) During the interviews, the themes were the guiding tools, but they were not necessarily brought up in the planned order. The questions during the semi-structured interviews were asked in an open format and leading questions were tried to be avoided. Different interview guides were made depending on the type of manager as well as depending on whether it was an original or complementary interview (see the appendix for interview guides). After performing interviews and analyzing the material, the interview guides for succeeding interviews were adjusted to further gain empirical support for the arguments made in this thesis. Moreover, the length of the interviews differed from 30 minutes to 2 hours as both complementary and original interviews were conducted. All the original interviews except for the original interview with Manager 5 were performed before this study began and therefore also involve questions from other students that are irrelevant for this study's purpose. However, they do include some relevant parts which are used in this study.

In order to analyze the details and gain trustworthiness, the interviews were recorded and transcribed (Bryman & Bell, 2011a). Due to the request of anonymity from the studied organization the transcription also uses the pseudonyms that are presented in Table 2. Since the previous course was held in English and international students were attending, the original interviews were done in English. However, due to the fact that Valcore AB is a Swedish

company and the interviewed managers' first language is Swedish, the interviewees were provided with the possibility of doing the complementary interviews in Swedish. Performing an interview in Swedish and translating it to English may result in loss of linguistic nuances. On the other hand, doing an interview in English when the interviewee's first language is Swedish may result in the interviewees not being open to elaborate their answers due to language limitations.

2.4.3 Observation as method

This study aims to interpret in what ways the core values are expressed in the managerial work and in what ways these values impact the managerial work in a knowledge intensive firm. One way of studying this is through observations, which means to observe a setting in order to analyze the behavior of individuals (Bryman & Bell, 2011a). In order to fulfil the purpose of this study two types of meetings, one management meeting and two daily meetings, were observed. These daily meetings are referred to as daily scrums, which are led by the scrum master. The scrum master is a member of the team who has the responsibility of the daily scrums. The number of observations was suggested by the managers based on what meetings and daily scrums were available during the time of gathering the empirical material and what they thought was suitable for this study. As the managers were aware that they were observed and had knowledge of the topic of the study, it might have led them to act differently and put emphasis on core values, which in turn can affect the trustworthiness of the results.

The following table summarizes this research approaches on gathering empirical data.

METHOD	FUNCTION	EMPIRICAL MATERIAL
Interviews	Provide a depth in the research through gathering the subjective images of managers	3 Team Managers 1 Head of Team Managers 1 HR Manager = Total 5 managers
Observations	Observe the managerial day-to-day behavior	1 management meeting 2 daily meetings = Total 3 meetings

Table 3: The overall methods of gathering empirical data

2.5 Research Questions

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, specific research questions have been formulated:

- In what ways are the core values expressed in the managerial work of five managers at Valcore AB?
- In what ways do the core values impact the managerial work of five managers at Valcore AB?

2.6 Methodology of analysis

In order to analyze the empirical material, the interviews were transcribed from recordings and sorted into categories according to the interview guide as a first draft. As this empirical material was systematized and categorized it made it possible to present the most important and strongest statements to the reader (Jacobsen, 2002). After conducting the first two complementary interviews, the empirical findings were reviewed and the research questions were somewhat changed in order to have a stronger answer to the research questions. Additionally, the questions were slightly modified to get more supporting material and thus a strong supported analysis. This resulted in a more focused collection of empirical data. Thus, at the same time as the data collection was going on, the data analysis was continuously worked with (Bryman & Bell, 2011). When analyzing the empirical material, especially similarities amongst the interviewees were cared for. In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, the material was possessed several times to code it and then put into different patterns and categories (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The analysis of this study is divided into three categories: *Culture and core values at Valcore AB*, *The impact of the core values on managerial work* and *Identification*. The first one aims to answer the first research question whilst the other two seek to answer the second research question.

2.7 Quality assessment

Within qualitative methodology the terms trustworthiness and authenticity are used in order to ensure the quality of a study (Bryman & Bell, 2011a). One way of achieving trustworthiness can be through a respondent validity check, which means accessing the result of the study to all participating respondents in the social environment. Providing a thorough presentation of how the research process has been performed can be another way of fulfilling the criteria of trustworthiness. Furthermore, it is important from a trustworthiness perspective that the subjective interpretations of the authors are limited when presenting the study's result, thus one of the respondents, Manager 1, has been able to comment on this theses. During the interviews, additional questions have been asked in order to confirm the image from the first

answer, and by doing this, the trustworthiness of the study is further strengthened. In order to capture the interviewees' opinions without the interpretations of the interviewers, the interviews have been transcribed and the analysis has been built upon quotes from the transcribed interviews. Moreover, in order to enhance the trustworthiness of the study, the methodology chapter aims to describe how the study has been performed in a clear and thorough manner. In order to provide insight and trustworthiness of the process of gathering the empirical material the interview guides for each interview are included in the appendix. All three authors have participated in writing the analysis section in an effort to minimize subjective values and opinions being expressed.

Authenticity is another aspect of the quality assessment in qualitative studies. How well the study reflects a realistic image of the studied phenomena and to what extent all perspectives of the subject are expressed determines the authenticity of that study. (Bryman & Bell, 2011a) In an attempt to achieve authenticity in this study, the interviews have been held in the interviewees' normal work environment and the authors have limited the study to involve an HR-manager and four managers from the same department at Valcore AB. By gathering interviews from managers of different hierarchical levels, the study has captured different perspectives of this study's subject. However, it is important to point out that the purpose of a qualitative study is not to provide the general and statistical image of the subject. (Bryman & Bell, 2011a)

3 Theoretical framework

The following chapter aims to provide theoretical support for the later chapter of analysis. Section 3.1 Introduction to the theoretical field of organizational values presents the main concept of this thesis, organizational values and in particular core values. The section provides broad explanations of the terms and previous research within the area of the study. Section 3.2 Managerial work involves existing theories of what can be considered managerial work. Section 3.3 Identification presents theories on identification with the organization.

3.1 Introduction to the theoretical field of organizational values

When reviewing literature on organizational values, there is an evident lack of agreement on how organizational values are to be conceptualized and defined (Agle & Cadwell 1999 and Dose 1997 and Rohan 2000 cited in Bourne & Jenkins, 2013). Organizational values can be viewed and studied from different perspectives as well as in present and future contexts, and thus this results in disagreements among different scholars regarding definitions and conceptualizations. (Bourne & Jenkins, 2013)

Organizational values consist of a number of values within an organization that are developed over time by individuals and groups through learning. These organizational values are broadly coherent constellations of values that prioritize some values over others and can be referred to as value systems. (Schwartz 1992 cited in Bourne & Jenkins, 2013)

Moreover, the organizational values represent the central conception in an organization (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). This centrality is evident in their important role in organizational phenomena such as culture (Schein 1985 cited in Bourne & Jenkins, 2013), identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hatch & Schultz, 1997), socialization (Dose 1997 cited in Bourne & Jenkins, 2013) and person-organization fit (Cable & Edwards, 2004). The significance of values in organizational contexts is further underlined by looking at what aspects of the organization that they influence; which is everything from organizational goals, vision (Hatch & Schultz, 1997) and ethical stance (Finegan & Theriault, 1997) to strategic choices (Pant & Lachman, 1998) and employee commitment (Ostroff, Shin & Kinicki, 2005).

Organizational values provide norms that guide employees' decisions and behavior at work (Edwards & Cable, 2009). Thus, conformity to organizational values is an alternative to bureaucratic control (Ouchi, 1980).

3.1.1 Background to the theoretical field of organizational values

In order to gain a better understanding of the field of organizational values, some of the value terms that we came across the most have been summarized below. The main focus of this study, core values, will be described in the next section.

Espoused and enacted values

Espoused values are described as the values that top management has decided that the organization should operate by in order to achieve its goals (Bourne & Jenkins, 2013). Furthermore, Schein (1992 cited in Bolden et al. 2011) describes espoused values as reflecting the rhetoric of the organizational culture. This is further elaborated as the statements comprising strategies, philosophies and goals which justify organizational processes such as visions and targets (Schein 1992 cited in Bolden et al. 2011).

In many theories espoused values are described in connection to enacted values. Enacted values are described as the values driving the everyday behavior whereas the espoused values are the stated values that organizations say guide their practices (Howell, Kirk-Brown & Cooper, 2012). When the espoused values are enacted in the everyday work, they are said to be in alignment. This in turn can have the positive effect of strengthening organizational culture and serve as a source of identity (Argyris & Schon, 1978 and Delcampo 2006 cited in Howell, Kirk-Brown & Cooper, 2012)

Attributed values

Attributed values are representative of the organization according to its members. They are established and accepted social structures that the members have agreed on but that do not necessarily have to be shared personally. (Bourne & Jenkins, 2013)

Shared values

Exposure to norms and practices socializes people so that the features of organizations and groups are manifested in the personal values of the members (Rokeach 1979 cited in Bourne & Jenkins, 2013; Schwarts 1999 cited in Bourne & Jenkins, 2013). Shared values are the

accumulated personal values of an organization's members and they point to the underlying organizational values (Bourne & Jenkins, 2013).

Aspirational values

Aspirational values are the values that members believe should be part of the organizational values in the future. As they are future-oriented, they might entail a break from historical patterns. (Bourne & Jenkins, 2013) Lencioni (2002) suggests a similar definition by stating that aspirational values are those values that an organization needs in the future in order to achieve success but which currently lack.

Permission-to-play values

These values are the ones that an organization has listed on its wall poster but which are “all talk and no action” (p.35) and which do not tend to vary much among companies (Lencioni 2002 cited in Meserve, 2006; Lencioni, 2002).

3.1.2 Core values

Core values are described as organization wide, collectively held values that constitute what the organization stands for (Fitzgerald & Desjardine 2004 cited in Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014; Rev. Rowe & Cadzow, 2014). More metaphorically, Lencioni (2002) describes core values as the heartbeat of the organization. They are the traits that the people in the organization choose to follow (Fitzgerald & Desjardine 2004 cited in Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014) and that the organization as a whole takes pride in (Rev. Rowe & Cadzow, 2014). Furthermore, Barchiesi & La Bella (2014) state that an organization's core values should be the “anchors” (p. 161) when things are changing. The core values steer all actions within the organization as well as its connections to the outside world. Everything from strategic mission determination to everyday practices used in the organization are influenced by the core values. (Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014; Rev. Rowe & Cadzow, 2014) Moreover, the core values are deeply held within the organization and help to guide all of the company's actions and decisions regarding culture (Lencioni, 2002) as well as they influence the beliefs, norms and attitudes of the people who work in the organization (Manohar and Pandit, 2013). This is in line with Barchiesi and La Bella (2014) who state that core values should guide how the organizational members behave (Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014), for example how they communicate and how they justify their actions (Sathe 1985 cited in Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014). Furthermore, they should be the basis for handling all employee-related processes such

as hiring, promotions and rewards criteria and firing (Lencioni, 2002). This view is shared by Simoneaux and Stroud (2014) who argue that the core values should permeate *all* actions in a company, including hiring and firing. Another characteristic of core values are their stability over time (Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014; Center for Ethical Business Cultures, 2011), there is however often a need for revisiting and refreshing them as business environments change (Center for Ethical Business Cultures, 2011).

Many organizations put effort on defining core values (Simoneaux & Stroud, 2014), which is usually done by the founders (Manohar & Pandit, 2013), however they are not always successfully matched with everyday organizational practices (Simoneaux & Stroud, 2014). In order for organizations to gain respect from peers and impact the external world, they need to align the organizational actions to their core values (Collins & Porras 2002 cited in Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014). In line with this reasoning are research studies showing that companies who are long lived and successful have a distinguishing feature in that their core values guide their decision-making (e.g. Osborne 1991 and Collins & Porras 1996 and Bart et al. 2001 and Barrett 2006 cited in Manohar & Pandit, 2013).

3.2 Managerial work

One of the most known definitions of managerial work was put forward by Fayol (1949 cited in Lamond, 1998) who states that it consists of forecasting and planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating and controlling. *Planning* includes the art of handling employees and *organizing* deals with decision-making, recruitment and performance management of employees. Moreover, *commanding* deals with the motivation of employees and *coordinating* includes team meetings. Lastly, *controlling* deals with contributing to the smooth working of each department through pointing out weaknesses and errors and rectifying these. (Lamond, 1998) This definition of managerial work by Fayol is supported by Bolman and Deal (2003) who argue that handling employees comes with certain managerial challenges such as recruiting, motivating, coordinating, controlling, handling conflict and using employees' personalities in the best way. According to Tengblad (2012) managers' actions include walking around and communicating with their employees, thus to talk, listen, joke and chat. He also argues that these actions are very important as they can lead to motivation, a sense of direction and identity. Considering these definitions, we define managerial work as including, everyday interactions, employee evaluation, reprimand and recruitment.

The work environment in knowledge intensive organizations brings distinct managerial challenges. In studies of knowledge intensive firms, there is often a notion that knowledge workers are in less need, or at least experience themselves as being in less need, of managerial leadership (e.g. Alvesson 2004 cited in Blom & Alvesson, 2013). Moreover, Alvesson and Sveningsson (2003) state that people who are autonomous require a low level of managerial involvement. Since managers have less detailed expertise of work tasks that are carried out within the company, managers should give knowledge workers much space and freedom (e.g. McAuley et al. 2000 cited in Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003). Additionally, to provide knowledge workers with too much managerial leaderships can be seen as displaying distrust and exercise unmotivated interference. Thus, managerial leadership stands in opposition to confidence, freedom and competence, and should be minimized. (Blom & Alvesson, 2013) There are, however, those stating that knowledge workers need managerial leadership, just in a different way. One suggested way is to focus on directing and/or supporting the work in the knowledge intensive firm (Mumford et al. 2002 cited in Blom & Alvesson, 2013).

3.3 Theories about identification

Identification of individuals seeks to answer the questions of who am I and how should I act (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2004). Since this study partly aims to interpret in what ways core values impact managerial work in a knowledge intensive firm, which can be considered a social context, the following theories involve identification in the social context of organizations.

Corley and Gioia (2004) describe organizational identity as something created by the members. Their definition of organizational identity involves the members' shared sense of identification with an organization. Furthermore, Alvesson (2001) argues that organizational identity originates from the identification with the organizational culture and a sense of belonging amongst the employees. Organizations can make use of this belongingness and thus for example influence the employees' beliefs and norms. Another perspective put forward by Ashforth and Mael (1989) who do not agree with Alvesson's (2001) view of culture being the reason for individuals' identification with organizations. Instead they suggest a social identification perspective in the context of organizational identity which states that individuals tend to find their identity in the belongingness of a social group. Social identity theory views the organization as one or several social groups and claims that the reason for

individuals identifying with an organization is their need to determine their identity. (Ashforth & Mael, 1989)

Furthermore, there are three pillars of organizational identity, centrality, distinctiveness and endurance, which set the conditions for the individuals' organizational identity (Corley et al. 2013) regardless whether it is due to the organizational culture (Alvesson, 2001) or the belongingness of a social group (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Firstly, centrality is defined as the central characteristic of an organization which can involve values, practices and products. (Corley et al. 2013) This first pillar is said to be the most essential of the three since it involves the central characteristics of an organization, and thus it would be hard to identify without these (Corley et al. 2013). Secondly, the concept of distinctiveness involves the organizational characteristics that separate the organization from others (Albert & Whetten, 1985). This pillar puts emphasis on the members' internal perception of the organization's internal characteristics in comparison to their perception of other organizations. When members experience a distinction it increases their sense of identity with their organization. (Corley et al. 2013) Lastly, endurance involves the concept of identity as consistent over time (Albert & Whetten, 1985; Corley et al. 2013). There needs to be some characteristics in the organization that are consistent and stable in order for identification to occur (Corley et al. 2013).

3.4 Abstract of the theoretical framework

Organizational values, managerial work and identification theory are the main categories in this theoretical framework as they are of importance for the analysis, result and conclusion of this thesis. Organizational values, with an extended focus on core values, are the main focus since the core value conceptualization of the organizational values seems to come the closest to the values described by the interviewees from Valcore AB. In short, theory suggests that core values guide employee behavior, permeate every aspect of the company and be stable over time. Moreover, our definition of managerial work, involving everyday interactions, employee evaluation, reprimand and recruitment, based on presented theories are put forward. Following this section, theories on managerial work in knowledge intensive firms are presented in order to highlight the concepts of freedom and trust which will be part of the analysis. Lastly, identification theory with the main concepts, centrality, distinctiveness and endurance are described.

4 Analysis

In the following chapter, the ways in which core values at Valcore AB can be expressed in the managerial work of five managers as well as which impact these core values can have on the managerial work of five managers is analyzed. Section 4.1 Culture and core values at Valcore AB describes the managers' view on the culture and the core values and presents definitions of these values. Section 4.2 Core values expressed in managerial work seeks to answer the first research question and thus tries to show in what ways the core values are expressed in managerial work. It is categorized into everyday interactions, employee evaluation, reprimand and recruitment. Section 4.3 The impact of the core values on managerial work, aims to answer the second research question and thus tries to present in what ways the core values impact the managerial work at Valcore AB. This section is divided into two categories: trust and freedom. Lastly, section 4.4 Identification aims to discuss why core values might have an impact on managerial work in the form of trust and freedom.

4.1 Culture and core values at Valcore AB

This first section seeks to present the centrality of culture and organizational values at Valcore AB. Additionally, as the managers refer to the company's values as "core values", this section also aims to examine whether the company's values can be defined as core values according to theory. Thus, it serves as a foundation in order to understand the following sections.

During the interviews, the strong culture and organizational values at Valcore AB is highlighted. All of the interviewed managers at Valcore AB are seen to work according to and live by the values of the company.

"Valcore AB is a very culture based company, the three core values that relates to all employees in Valcore AB. The core values really describe our culture and what people do and how they relate to each other." (Manager 1)

"Core values. That is the most important thing. [...] We should all work according to core values." (Manager 2)

"Very strong values. Valcore AB has three core values that echo everywhere you go." (Manager 2)

“Culture, we have our core values and I think describes it quite well.” (Manager 3)

“This culture thing is a very powerful tool, because you do not have to manage every single detail but you can make sure employees themselves know.” (Manager 4)

From these quotes it can be perceived that there is a connection between the strong culture and the core values of Valcore AB. When being asked to describe the company’s culture, the managers explicitly refer to the company’s core values. As Manager 3 states, the core values describe the culture of the company very well. Furthermore, Manager 4 argues that having a strong culture is a powerful tool. This is in line with theory, which highlights that values play an important role in culture (Schein 1985 cited in Bourne & Jenkins, 2013). Even though there are disagreements of how organizational values are to be defined and conceptualized, the company’s values can be defined as core values due to certain characteristics. As can be interpreted from the quotes, Valcore AB’s values seem to be deeply held within the organization and thus can be said to constitute the heartbeat of the company (Lencioni, 2002). Moreover, the core values seem to steer all actions in the organization (Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014; Rev. Rowe & Cadzow, 2014). As Manager 1 points out the core values relate to everyone at the company and as Manager 2 states the values echo everywhere.

In order for the reader to understand Valcore AB’s core values and to be able to make sense of the succeeding analysis, these values will be defined below. The company has three core values which the managers coherently describe in the interviews. *Act as one* is defined as working in a team and always helping each other out. *Always open* is about being transparent and the doors always being open. *Think big* deals with seeing the bigger picture and being ambitious.

(Act as one) “We need to do this as a team. That’s sort of important to all of our employees and the relation we have, we’re one. If we don’t do this together we won’t succeed.” (Manager 1)

“If you have knowledge and you don’t share. That person is not working according to the core values because that’s not acting as one.” (Manager 2)

“It is also to share with others and to simply each and everyone helps out all the time.” (Manager 3)

“Valcore AB separates itself very much in the sense that it is extremely open, you get that feeling. You can book a meeting with anyone.” (Manager 3)

(Always open) “We are transparent with all decisions, if people ask I try to answer as good as I can. There is nothing I try to hide from anybody on purpose.” (Manager 1)

“I can easily go into perhaps not the CEO’s office but at least [the CIO’s] office and just have a chat, no problem. Doors are always open.” (Manager 4)

(Think big) “So I think it is important when you aim high, you should always aim high, but you have to get there in steps. Like, take one step at the time.” (Manager 4)

“It’s all about strength, making results, deliver, use your innovation thoughts in a big way, don’t be shy to announce what you are thinking about, have a big picture, have a holistic view and also to attract ambitious people.” (Manager 5)

4.2 Core values expressed in managerial work

This section aims to answer the first research question: In what ways are the core values expressed in the managerial work of five managers at Valcore AB? When reviewing the empirical material, it is found that the core values are seen to be expressed within everyday interactions, employee evaluation, reprimand and recruitment. As previously mentioned, according to our definition all these can be considered parts of managerial work.

As previously presented, in theory on organizational values and more specifically in core value theory, it is stated that a company’s core values influence every aspect of the company. (Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014; Rev. Rowe & Cadzowe, 2014) For example, they are directing how organizational members behave (Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014), justify their actions and communicate (Sathe 1985 cited in Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014). The core values should also be the basis for all employee-related processes such as hiring, promotions, reward criteria and firing (Lencioni, 2002; Simoneaux & Stroud, 2014). Thus, it might not seem surprising that the core values are found to be expressed in everyday interactions, employee evaluation, reprimand and recruitment. However, this section is important since it contributes to understanding how the influence of core values might manifest itself on a practical level, which we could not find when looking at current theory on core values and managerial work.

4.2.1 Everyday interactions

During the interviews, emphasis is put on the influence of the core values at Valcore AB. Moreover, the managers are seen to frequently think about and use these values in different situations within their everyday interactions.

“I think many people relate to them in ordinary discussions, if they sit with a decision they think about the values. Is it act as one if we do this is it think big if we do that? Everyone can relate to that discussion as well.” (Manager 1)

“They influence me on a daily basis. My basic instinct in almost every decision I make together with other goes back to ‘is this always open to do it like that’, ‘is it think big to do like this’” (Manager 1)

“Yes definitely if there’s a conflict and people don’t get along you can always say, this is not acting as one. Or if someone is lazy, doesn’t want to do anything or has no motivation you can always say this is not thinking big. So definitely, they play a big role.” (Manager 2)

“I think of them [the core values] the times when someone asks questions, so of course I think about that we have to be open and honest in this and answer and simply try to help. I think that I do this all the time.” (Manager 3)

“I actually use them quite a lot within my daily work. For example if somebody asks, is it ok to show this to that person? Of course, we are always open, we act as one, we try to not have that many barriers and try to spread these values and this culture.” (Manager 4)

The managers explicitly mention that they relate to the core values in their everyday interactions and thus these values seem to be embedded at Valcore AB. On a concrete level, core values seem to influence how the managers decide on a course of actions and what advice they give to employees. As can be seen from the quotes, the managers have different ways of relating to the core values. Manager 1 and 3 state that they have the core values in the back of their minds, whilst Manager 2 and 4 point out that they verbally express these values by questioning for example if it is thinking big if the employees act in a certain way.

4.2.2 Employee evaluation

The managers are seen to be constantly referring to the core values when talking about employee evaluation. Thus, they have the core values in mind as well as communicate them during the evaluation talks. In addition, the core values are seen to be used by managers as evaluation criteria and as the basis for the employees’ salary development.

“We have discussions about them [core values] all the time in our development talk which we have once a year so there we look at it and even in salary revisions which we also have once a year, where you look at, shall one get higher salary.” (Manager 1)

“You should have meaningful work tasks, you should have a reasonable salary for what you do, but sure we have the core values as an evaluation criterion when establishing the salary”. (Manager 1)

“We actually evaluate people during the goal talks each year, to see ‘how do you fulfill our core values, are you still thinking big? Are you still always open? And do you understand what it means? Do you have it in mind when you work?’ So our core values are really important here.” (Manager 2)

“I communicate them [the core values] during meetings. I have meetings once a month with each individual, we talk for half an hour about how things are going, how they’re doing, and it’s always with the core values in mind even if I don’t ask ‘are you working as one, are you acting as one?’ It’s still a part of it, is the teamwork going okay, have you been able to do this and that with the core values in mind.” (Manager 2)

“Then this is something we take up in every PO-dialogue [Plan and development dialogue], then we talk about the core values.” (Manager 3)

“When I am sitting with you in a performance and appraisal, we can talk about ‘I think you are a really good ambassador for always open, I could see that you take care of other people and you are respecting the persons around you.’ So I am trying to have the dialogue both in a positive way and in a negative way.” (Manager 5)

As the core values serve as evaluation criteria, this can indicate that they are embedded in the managerial work at Valcore AB. On a concrete level, the core values are expressed through being part of the evaluation criteria that the managers use when discussing employees’ performances in the evaluation talks. Moreover, the core values are expressed in the managerial work through being a criterion for employees’ salary development. As with the everyday interactions, implicit and explicit referral to the core values can be interpreted. An example of explicit referral is provided by Manager 5, as he/she describes him/her praising an employee for being a “good ambassador for always open”, thus explicitly referring to the core value in the evaluation talk. Manager 2 expresses a different approach as he/she describes how the core values constitute the implicit basis of the evaluation discussion. Instead of using

the core value formulations explicitly through, for example, asking “are you acting as one?” he/she implicitly refers to that core value by asking about how the teamwork is going which is an overall accepted definition of act as one as presented in section 4.1 *Culture and core values at Valcore AB*. In addition, the core values are seen to be expressed in both positive and negative contexts, as stated by Manager 5.

4.2.3 *Reprimand of the employees*

The interviewed managers are seen to reprimand employees that do not work according to the core values. Furthermore possible consequences of not properly following the core values, such as no salary development, relocation or firing are mentioned.

“This [not working according to the core values] can be a reason for relocation; this can be a reason why we maybe do not give an equally good salary increase.” (Manager 1)

“You will hear it [core values] during the goal talks, that ‘you are not working according to core values, you are not contributing the way we want you to do, so you need to change your ways’” (Manager 2)

“Well, that person failed on Act as one, so that person was very keen on his own development, to make sure that he would only work with certain kind of tasks and not move around like other people, and I had to tell him eventually that, ‘this isn’t okay, everyone has to do everything even if it’s not fun, you have to do it’. [...] He’s still in my team and it will also show in his salary review that ‘you failed on this, so you won’t get as much as everyone else.’” (Manager 2)

“Then you have to bring it up, it is an important evaluation criterion, so you can be very good at your job, but if you do not work according to the core values, then you don’t perform. Then it will have consequences in the long run, one: salary talk, two: you can even be warned and three: then you might have to leave.” (Manager 3)

“Remind that we do not work like this here, say that we don’t mark our territory but it is open, if someone wants help, you help, you don’t try... Become ‘petty kings’ is not okay at Valcore AB. Here you have to work as a team and if you do not do that then you are way off so you just have to remind and it is usually okay.” (Manager 3)

“Maybe the salary development, because if you are not able to respect your colleagues or be opened, then we are doing an improvement plan for you.” (Manager 5)

As these quotes indicate, working according to the core values is essential at Valcore AB and there are consequences if someone is in conflict with these values. Furthermore, the reprimands seem to be an accepted part of the managerial work in order to ensure that everyone acts according to the core values. As mentioned in the previous paragraph *Employee evaluation*, the core values serve as evaluation criteria and are mentioned both explicitly and implicitly. Thus, on a practical level, Manager 2 explicitly mentions the core values by saying that people do not work according to these values. Manager 3 reminds his employees about the core values, however, not by explicitly mentioning the core values but rather by saying that this person has to work in a team which is an overall accepted definition of Act as one, as shown above.

4.2.4 Recruitment

The core values are seen to be incorporated in the recruitment process at Valcore AB. The managers talk about the importance of the potential employees to understand and be able to relate to the core values in order to for them to be recruited.

“It's a very big issue when we recruit people that we feel that people understands the core values, that's one if you don't you, you won't be working at Valcore AB, you won't be comfortable at Valcore AB.” (Manager 1)

“These we have tried to summarize into three core values which we try to test almost everyone who looks for a job here on, if they stand for these and can relate to them and understand what we mean.” (Manager 1)

“When you conduct interviews and someone applies for the job, if they don't pass on those three values they don't get the job and that's how strong it is.” (Manager 2)

“You try to ask questions about how they act in situations. I mean; are you a team player or do you prefer to work alone? You try to get a picture of; is this a person who

will be open, help us to achieve big goals and Act as one and not point fingers and say you did that?” (Manager 2)

“We try to be very picky when we hire people as well. We do not just hire anybody who has the best skills on paper and it is at least as important how you are as a person, how you behave, how you respond to situations and things like that.” (Manager 4)

“We have a structured interview guide as well with the core values. Some are using it, some are not.” (Manager 5)

These quotes indicate that the core values are embedded in the recruitment process. As Manager 1 mentions, potential employees need to understand, relate to and stand for the core values and are being tested on these in different ways. Thus also in the recruitment part of the managerial work, the core values seem to be expressed both explicitly and implicitly. The managers ask the potential employees how they act in different situations in order to get an understanding of whether their behavior is in line with the core values. In addition, they ask questions such as whether they are team players or prefer to work alone. This can indicate that the managers express the core values implicitly through different types of questions. Furthermore, as can be seen from the quotes of Manager 5, the core values are included in the structured interview guide which some of the managers use. Thus some of them express the core values more explicitly than others. From the interviews it can be interpreted that the managers use the values rather implicitly as they seek to find out whether the potential employees stand for the company's values without the managers mentioning these explicitly.

Furthermore, during observations made for this study, at a management meeting, Manager 1 comments on the importance of Manager 4 viewing the big picture and viewing all aspect of the issue before making a decision, which is an accepted definition of Think big. Additionally, Manager 1 informs the other managers of her being home the following day but that the telephone will be on either way which is an accepted definition of Always open. Thus, it can be interpreted that the managers implicitly express the core values during this management meeting.

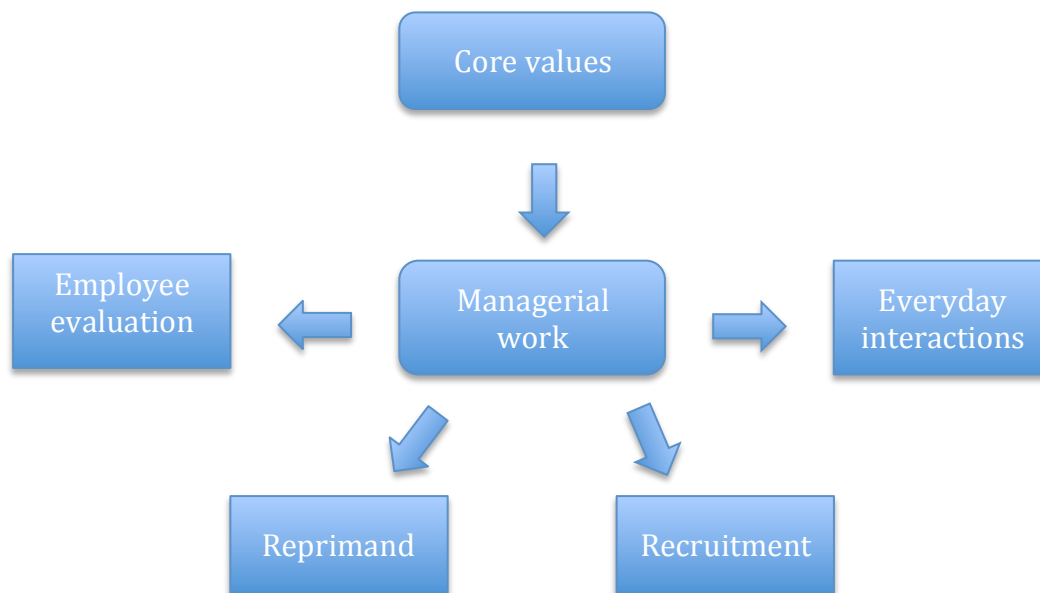


Figure 1: Core values in the different parts of managerial work

As this figure shows, the core values are central and have an impact on managerial work which consists of everyday interactions, employee evaluation, reprimand and recruitment. As the analysis of the quotes show, the core values seem to be important and embedded at Valcore AB. In the interviews, the managers seem to be referring to the core values when describing different parts of managerial work such as everyday interactions, employee evaluation, reprimand and recruitment. On a practical level, the core values are perceived to be expressed both explicitly by mentioning the core value and implicitly by using an overall accepted definition of the core values or by having them in mind when talking to the employees.

4.3 The impact of the core values on managerial work

As presented in the theoretical framework, core value theory argues that core values should be the basis for all employee-related processes (Lencioni, 2002) and should permeate all actions in an organization (Simoneaux & Stroud, 2014). As already shown in sections *4.1 Culture and core values at Valcore AB* and *4.2 Core values expressed in managerial work*, the empirical gatherings indicate that the company's core values are embedded and expressed in different ways in the managerial work. Thus the core values seem to have an impact on the managerial work.

This section aims to answer the second research question: In what ways do the core values impact the managerial work of five managers at Valcore AB? When gathering the empirical material for this study, two possible impacts of the core values on managerial work are seen: increased trust and a sense of freedom. These two categories seem to be interrelated.

4.3.1 Trust

The managers point out that they trust their employees' actions. Moreover, the managers are seen to encourage their employees to be themselves and allow them to make mistakes.

“Well, we trust each other. My managers trust me, I trust the people working under me. And each and every one is valued in their own way. So I think that makes people feel like they can do something good here and maybe feel like they belong here.”
(Manager 2)

“You have to trust that people do their work, then that they might not do exactly like I would have done it is a different matter.” (Manager 3)

“So I think we have a lot of trust in our employees and we also encourage people to do things and make decisions. It's a bit more free I guess.” (Manager 4)

“You will not be punished if you are doing the wrong things. Of course you shouldn't do it too many times, but you are allowed to do the wrong things. So I think that it is also a trustful thing that you are dare to be yourself and to create.” (Manager 5)

4.3.2 Freedom

The managers are seen to give their employees freedom to make their own decisions instead of controlling every detail of their actions. Furthermore, the managers talk about how they do not get involved in the daily scrums.

“I know that the scrum-master has the knowledge, she can plan the work and she can make sure that people do what they should do, so why should I be there, like a police.”
(Manager 2)

“Yes, those [daily scrums] I have time to attend [...] I try to be as quiet as possible. I shouldn't butt in on this level.” (Manager 3)

“I usually let my teams recommend the best decision but I think it’s their decisions and therefore I sort of just support them.” (Manager 1)

“We’re a very culture-driven company [...] I don’t go into much detail with my employees, unless something is really wrong or broken or something like that, but I want people to have the confidence and the information needed to make the right decisions by themselves.” (Manager 4)

“I think it is very powerful tool to have a strong company culture because you can as the company grow, you can’t really control everything. It is much better to have the people do the right thing on their own, without having to control every single details.” (Manager 4)

As the quotes indicate, the managers at Valcore AB point out that they trust each other and their employees and encourage them to make decisions by themselves. Manager 5 states that it is okay for the employees to make mistakes and that it is a trustful thing that the employees dare to be themselves. In addition, the quotes of Manager 2 and 3 show that the managers usually do not attend the daily scrums which can be interpreted to be due to the trust that they have in their employees. Furthermore, the managers can be perceived to give their employees freedom and thus let their team recommend the best decisions without exercising much control and going into much detail. From two observations made for this study, at daily scrums, it can be interpreted that the managers had given the scrum master freedom to perform the scrum as well as make decisions regarding it. At one daily scrum, the manager did not attend and at another one, the manager did attend however it became apparent that he/she did not interfere and instead the scrum master had the leading role. This is in line with managerial work theory that suggests that knowledge workers, which the employees of Valcore AB can be considered as, should be given more freedom and trust from their managers in order to perform their work tasks (e.g. McAuley et al. 2000 cited in Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003).

As argued earlier, Valcore AB is a knowledge intensive firm and the three core values seem to have an impact on the managerial work of the company. Additionally, the quotes in this section can be perceived to show that the managers seem to trust their employees and give them freedom, which is specifically important in a knowledge intensive firm. However, we suggest this impact to not only stem from the fact that the company is a knowledge intensive firm but as a result of the company’s core values having an impact on managerial work. This

is suggested since the core values, which seem to be lived by in this company, seem to encourage trust and freedom. Therefore, it can be interpreted that there is an impact on the managerial work at Valcore AB in the form of freedom and trust because of the company's core values. The relation between managerial work and freedom and trust has previously been suggested in theory on knowledge intensive work, however, we believe that the relation between the core values and freedom and trust has not been described in theory before.

The company's three core values seem to be connected to managerial work and thus can be interpreted to lead to trust and/or freedom. Act as one, as defined in section 4.1 *Culture and core values at Valcore AB* means to work together as a team and trust each other's ability. This can also be seen from a management meeting, an observation made for this study, where Manager 2 and 3 start presenting a decision they have just made for Manager 1, to seek Manager 1's approval. Manager 1 says that it sounds like they have already made the decision and that the decision sounds wise. Additionally, later on in the management meeting, Manager 1 shifts focus and informs Manager 2 of the fact that Manager 1 has had a dialogue with one team member for Manager 2's team, and that Manager 1 and this team member has made a decision concerning the team member's future job design. It is apparent that Manager 2 has not been involved in this dialogue, but this does not seem to bother neither Manager 1 nor Manager 2. From this it can be interpreted that the managers trust each other's abilities. Thus, as the managers act as one, they can be viewed as having trust in each other to perform as a team.

Moreover, Always open is defined as being honest, transparent and not hiding any information from others. This means that the managers and employees need to trust their peers to always provide each other with honest information. During the management meeting, Manager 3 raises concerns of what type of replacement the budget allows and that the possible solutions are by a temporary post or by a consultant. Thus Manager 3 is open and honest about what he/she thinks which can be interpreted to lead to trust as the managers honestly say what they think. Due to this, both Act as one and Always open can be interpreted to lead to the managers trusting their employees.

Moreover, to provide freedom for the employees can be in line with the core value Think big. Think big by definition means to see the bigger picture but to take small steps in order to get there, to dare, to use innovation thoughts in a big way and to not be shy. For this to be

realized, a sense of freedom can be interpreted to have a pivotal role. In the management meeting, for example, Manager 2 brings up a suggestion of a template for support during PO-conversations and Manager 1 also expresses joy over the fact that the managers present new ideas and take own initiatives, using Manager 2's suggestion as an example. Thus, as the managers are able to use their own innovation thoughts and dare to develop and bring up suggestions for different things, they can be perceived to have a sense of freedom due to the core values.

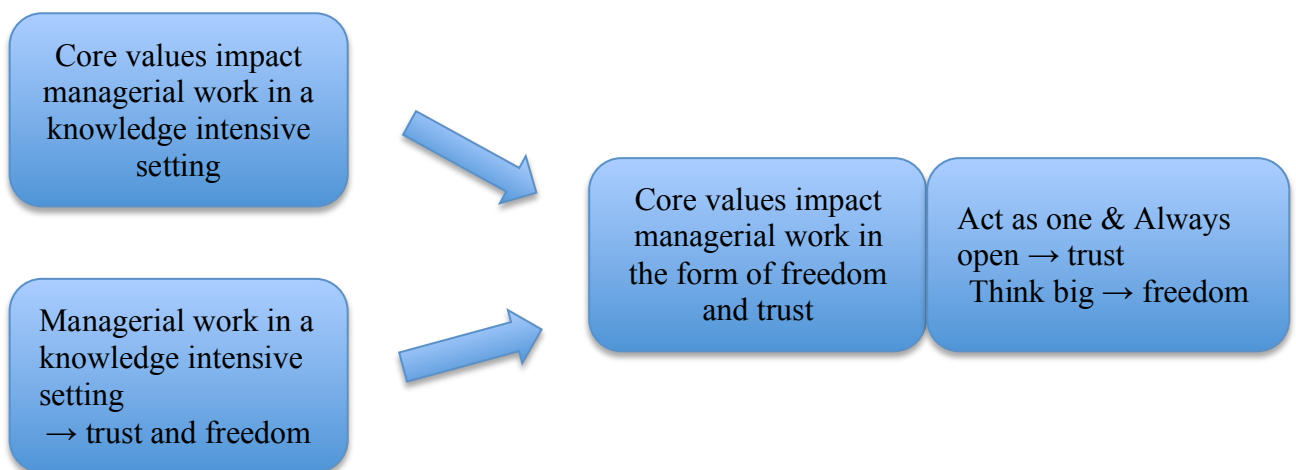


Figure 2: The impact of the core values on managerial work

As this figure and the analysis show, the strong core values of Valcore AB, a knowledge intensive firm, impact managerial work and managerial work in a knowledge intensive setting requires trust and freedom. The quotes and observations indicate that the managers trust their employees and give them freedom. Thus, it can be interpreted that core values impact managerial work in the form of trust and freedom. Act as one and Always open seem to result in the managers having more trust in each other and their employees and Think big seems to lead to the managers giving the employees more freedom to perform their tasks.

Additionally, the interrelation between core values and trust and freedom can possibly be explained by interpreting the theory of identification. This argument will be further developed in the following section.

4.4 Identification

As presented in the earlier section 4.3 *The impact of the core values on managerial work*, core values seem to have an impact on managerial work in the form of trust and freedom. This

section aims to discuss why core values seem to have an impact in the form of trust and freedom. Thus, this section suggests that the manager's identification with the company, and therefore with the core values, makes it possible for the core values to influence managerial work in the form of trust and freedom. Therefore, core values and identification seem to mutually reinforce each other.

4.4.1 Centrality

As can be seen from section 4.1 *Culture and core values at Valcore AB* as well as from the below presented quotes, Valcore AB is a culture-driven company and the core values are seen to be the central characteristic of the company. The core values are seen to affect the mindset and the behavior of both the managers and employees at Valcore AB.

“If you talk to employees in Valcore AB, they would feel that they have this, if you wake them in middle in the night, they will know this. And everyone lives by this [...] Valcore AB is a very culture based company, the three core values that relates to all employees in Valcore AB. The core values really describe our culture and what people do...and how they relate to each other.” (Manager 1)

“It's [the core values] affecting everyone.” (Manager 2)

“Nobody acts if is they are more than anybody else. It is a very humble culture I would say.” (Manager 4)

“We are working with the values as a manager, when I am meeting my employees, when we have the performance and appraisal, when we are talking about your development, when we are talking about your salary. The values are always there.” (Manager 5)

4.4.2 Distinctiveness

During the interviews, the managers talk about being proud of working at Valcore AB and referred to themselves and their employees as “Valcorians” which is a play on the company's name. Additionally, the managers highlight the differences of how Valcore AB incorporates its core values in comparison to other organizations that they have previously worked at.

“I think people can say that ‘I am an Valcorian’. And thus you are one that takes in all of these core values. If you work at Valcore AB you are a Valcorian.” (Manager 1)

“It’s [Valcorian] someone that works at Valcore AB I guess [...] who embodies Valcore AB if you put it like that, then it’s an engineer that walks around and is pretty nice, and cozy and open and very good at what he does.” (Manager 3)

“So I think there is something a little bit special, to be so proud about the brand and you feel like a Valcorian.” (Manager 5)

“In other companies that I worked for either they didn’t have core values or it was just a poster on the wall and you didn’t know what to do with it. Here it really is something that everyone talks about.” (Manager 1)

“Always open, that is the most characteristic for Valcore AB I think when it comes to culture [...] which is a big difference if you come here and have been in other companies, at least the ones I have been at before [...] and Valcore AB differentiates itself a lot in the way that it is extremely open, you get that feeling.” (Manager 3)

“So this is actually the first time I have really seen that the values are working in real life. I’ve been working in very, a lot of nice companies with the values as well but the values have been more visual on mouse pads [...] and on the walls, posters and so on.” (Manager 5)

4.4.3 Endurance

The core values at Valcore AB have existed since the early nineties and the managers believe that the core values are going to stay in the future as well. Additionally, the managers talk about how the employees who have worked at the company longer are more Valcorian as new employees.

“[The core values] are decided in the company, and I think it was early nineties that they came up. [...] We changed the definition a little bit, but the idea is still the same.” (Manager 2)

“Yes I think so and I think they will be more important especially Always open, I think, that is going to stay.” (Manager 3)

“You have to come into the routines, I think, at Valcore AB to become [a Valcorian], I don’t think that you as a new employee can say that you are, or yes I guess you actually are from day 1. So yes it is someone that works at Valcore AB.” (Manager 3)

“I prefer to say that every employed person is an Valcorian and maybe the persons who have been here forever feel that they are a little bit more Valcorian.” (Manager 5)

As mentioned in the theoretical framework, the three pillars centrality, distinctiveness and endurance are the foundation for the identification with an organization (Corley et al. 2013). As the quotes show, the managers state that the core values are always present and affect everyone as well as that everyone lives by them. Thus it can be interpreted that the core values are the central characteristic of Valcore AB. Additionally, as Alvesson (2001) argues this identification with Valcore AB’s culture, and therefore with the core values, and the sense of belonging among the managers and employees leads to them identifying with the organization. During the interviews, the managers give the impression that they as well as the other employees seem to identify with Valcore AB’s three core values.

From these quotes it can be perceived that the managers talk about two ways of making a distinction between the characteristics of Valcore AB and other organizations. Firstly, they call themselves Valcorians which is a play on the company’s name. This can be interpreted to be due to the fact that they identify themselves with the organization and are proud to such an extent that they want to explicitly proclaim their participation in the organization. Secondly, they compare how the core values are used at Valcore AB to other organizations that they have previously worked at. As Manager 5 argues, at Valcore AB he/she has seen for the first time that the core values actually work in real life. Also Manager 1 and 3 point out that Valcore AB actually lives the core values while other companies only have them as a poster on a wall. When making this distinction, the managers recognize themselves as a social group separated from others, in this case other organizations. Moreover, as Valcore AB seems to incorporate the core values, this can be interpreted to lead to the managers having a more positive perception of the organization compared to the other companies that they have worked at. As theory argues (Corley & Gioia, 2013), this experience of a distinction increases the members’ sense of identity with their organization. Thus, the managers can be interpreted to identify themselves with Valcore AB partly due to this positively viewed distinction.

Furthermore, as the core values have been the same or only undergone minor changes since the early nineties and are predicted to stay the same for a long period of time, it can be argued that these values are stable over time. This is another aspect for the employees to be able to

identify themselves with the organization which is coherent with the third pillar for identification, endurance. Also stability over time is a characteristic of core values (Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014; Center for Ethical Business Cultures, 2011). Furthermore, both Manager 2 and 5 point out that the employees who have worked at Valcore AB for a while are a bit more Valcorian than new employees. This can also be connected to the characteristics of endurance since the longer the employees work at the company, the more they seem to identify with it.

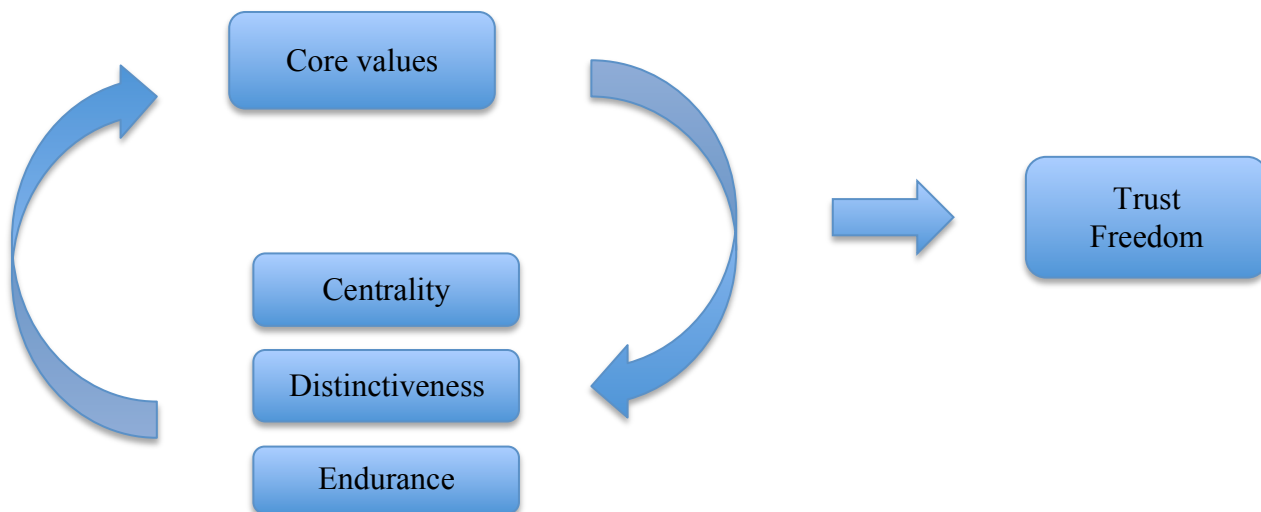


Figure 3: Identification as a possible explanation for core values impact on managerial work

As can be seen from the analysis, the managers can be interpreted to identify themselves with the organization due to the core values. The quotes can indicate that the core values are the central characteristic of Valcore AB and lead to the managers distincting themselves by calling themselves Valcorians as well as comparing the centrality of the core values to other companies that they previously worked at. In addition, the core values seem to be stable over time. As the figure shows, centrality, distinctiveness and endurance are the foundation for the identification with the organization. Thus, the core values can be interpreted to lead to the managers' identification with the organization. As the core values and identification are mutually reinforcing each other, however, it can also be argued that due to the manager's identification with the organization, they are also identifying with the core values. This makes it possible for these values to impact managerial work in the form of trust and freedom.

5 Results

This chapter aims to answer the research questions of this thesis. The first section aims to provide an answer to the thesis's first research question: in what ways the core values are expressed in the managerial work of five managers at Valcore AB. The second section aims to provide an answer to the thesis's second research question: in what ways do the core values impact the managerial work of five managers at Valcore AB.

In what ways are the core values expressed in the managerial work of five managers at Valcore AB?

Some of findings of this thesis, which serve as a foundation for this question, can be connected to already existing theory. The core values of Valcore AB can be interpreted to be the heartbeat of the company (Lencioni, 2002) and something that the entire organization takes pride in (Rev. Rowe & Cadzow, 2014). Moreover, Valcore AB's core values seem to help guide all the companies actions and seem to be the basis for handling all employee-related processes (Lencioni, 2002) such as everyday interactions, employee evaluation, reprimand and recruitment. Additionally, the core values are perceived to guide how the employees behave (Barchiesi & La Bella, 2014).

However, it is also found that the core values, on a concrete non-prescriptive level, are expressed in different ways in the managerial work, which we were not able to find in current theory. As can be seen from the analysis, the core values are expressed through managerial work such as everyday interactions, employee evaluation, reprimand and recruitment. On a practical level, the managers are seen to express the core values in different ways and contexts, both explicitly and implicitly. Within everyday interactions, some managers are seen to verbally point out the core values whilst others have them more in the back of their minds. Furthermore, especially when talking about employee evaluation, some managers are seen to express the core values explicitly in the way that they say "is this Act as one if you do this?" whereas others express them more implicitly by saying "is this really teamwork?". As these quotes indicate, teamwork is a commonly accepted definition of Act as one and thus the employees understand that the manager is implicitly referring to Act as one when saying teamwork. Moreover, the managers seem to use the core values in both positive and negative contexts regarding the reprimand of the employees. On a more concrete level, they point out that "you are a good ambassador for Always open" and "you are not working according to the

core values”. In addition, one manager talks about how some managers use a structured interview guide including core values, during the recruitment process, whereas others do not. Thus, the core values are perceived to be expressed both explicitly and implicitly.

In what ways do the core values impact the managerial work of five managers at Valcore AB?

Valcore AB is a knowledge intensive firm and theory argues that managers in that setting should give knowledge workers freedom and trust (e.g. McAuley et al. 2000 cited in Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2003; Blom & Alvesson, 2013). Additionally, as interpreted in the analysis, the core values seem to be embedded at Valcore AB and have an impact on managerial work. Thus, it can be argued that core values impact managerial work in the form of trust and freedom. Always open can be perceived to lead to trust as it involves transparency and honesty and thus not hiding any information from the other employees. Act as one can also be interpreted to result in trust as it is defined as teamwork, helping each other out and sharing knowledge with others. Thus, acting according to these core values, can lead to the managers trusting their employees. Moreover, Think big can be interpreted to lead to freedom as it is about not being shy, using innovation thoughts and daring. Furthermore, the managers can be perceived to identify themselves with Valcore AB due to the core values. The core values lead to identification due to the three pillars, centrality, distinctiveness and endurance, of identification which are the foundation for managers’ identification with the company. The core values can be interpreted to be the central characteristic of Valcore and are perceived to be stable over time. Additionally, the core values seem to lead to the managers making a distinction between the incorporation of these values at Valcore AB compared to other companies and referring to themselves as Valcorians. As the manager’s identify themselves with the core values, it makes it possible for the core values to have an impact in the form of trust and freedom.

6 Conclusion

This chapter aims to present the contribution of this thesis in relation to the purpose. The purpose of this thesis is to interpret in what ways core values are expressed in managerial work as well as in what ways these values impact managerial work in a knowledge intensive firm. This can be a contribution to organizational values theory and core values theory since previous theories that we have found within these fields seem to lack a concrete, practice-based perspective.

6.1 Theoretical contributions

The first part of the theoretical contribution from this thesis is that core values can be expressed both implicitly, for example by having the core values in mind when formulating questions in the context of a job interview, as well as explicitly, for example by describing employees' performance in terms of how well they work according to the core values. The implicit and explicit expression of core values in the context of managerial work seems to, according to our findings, contribute to previous theory within both core values theory and organizational values theory in the sense that our study provides concrete examples of how these core values are expressed.

The second part of the contribution is that core values can be seen to impact managerial work in the form of freedom and trust. It seems like this relationship is not being mentioned in existing theory on core values and organizational values, although that trust and freedom is required in managerial work is mentioned in theory of managerial work in knowledge intensive firms. Moreover, this conclusion provides the theoretical field with a concrete perspective on core values' impact in organizations.

The final contribution is that the managers' identification with the company due to the core values, can be viewed as a possible way of explaining why core values might impact managerial work in the form of trust and freedom. Thus making a potential contribution to core values theory and identification theory by introducing this interrelation.

6.2 Practical areas of usage

Although the study is performed in a knowledge intensive firm, the contribution of this thesis must not necessarily be limited to be applicable in these settings. In an overall perspective, the contribution of this thesis can be applicable in all organizations where managerial work is performed. On this level, the contribution of this thesis would also be interesting for all organizations with an interest in incorporating and living by their core values. However, since the setting for this study is in a knowledge intensive firm and since the managerial work explored in this thesis is limited to the managerial work of a knowledge intensive firm, the contributions of this thesis is best applicable in organizations with knowledge intensive settings. As the managers talk about how the core values are just a poster on a wall in organizations that they have previously worked at, the contributions of this thesis can be specifically applied at these types of organizations. Using this thesis's contributions, it is possible for organizations to gain an understanding of how core values can be expressed within an organization and in what ways these can impact the managerial work.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

Finally, this thesis can be viewed as an extended, non-prescriptive, perspective within the field of core values in an organizational context. As previously presented, the contribution of this thesis is the implicit and explicit expression of core values, the impact these values have on managerial work, especially in form of trust and freedom, and how this impact can possibly be explained through the employees' identification with Valcore AB. An aspect for further research might therefore be to put more emphasis on this practical perspective of core values in the organizational context. Other possible impacts of core values might be interesting topics for further research and the results of such research can possibly be applicable in organizations that struggle with the implementation of values.

Even though the subject of core values and some of its aspects have been discussed in this thesis, a few aspects was found interesting but could be elaborated due to lack of support in the empirical material. One of these aspects was that implementing and working according to the core values at Valcore AB seems to have an impact on both the managers and employees own confidence in their ability, in the sense that they can rely on the core values to guide their actions in the right direction. Another aspect that appeared in the empirical gathering is the strong support amongst the managers for the core values and the consequences that follow if

you do not perform according to the core values. At the same time the managers describe how the core values make them feel more free and enable them to be themselves. This potential paradox between having these strong core values as guidelines, leading to consequences if these are not being followed opposed to the freedom and ability of being yourself that the employees have, is a suggested aspect for further research.

7 Reference list

- Albert, S., and Whetten, D. A. 1985. Organizational identity. *Research In Organizational Behavior*. 7, 263-295. ISSN: 0191-3085 (Accessed 2015-05-14)
- Alvesson, M. 2001. Knowledge work: Ambiguity, image and identity. *Human Relations*. 54(7), 863-886.
<http://hum.sagepub.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/content/54/7/863.full.pdf+html> (Accessed 2015-05-14)
- Alvesson, M., and Sköldbberg, K. 2008. *Tolkning och reflektion - vetenskapsfilosofi och kvalitativ analys*. 2:nd edn. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Alvesson, M., and Sveningsson, S. 2003. Good Visions, Bad Micro-management and Ugly Ambiguity: Contradictions of (Non-)Leadership in a Knowledge-Intensive Organization. *Organization Studies (01708406)*. 24(6), 961-988.
<http://oss.sagepub.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/content/24/6/961.full.pdf+html> (Accessed 2015-03-27)
- Ashforth, B. E., and Mael, F. A. 1989. Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of Management Review*. 14, 20–39. doi: 10.5465/AMR.1989.4278999 (Accessed 2015-04-07)
- Barchiesi, M. A. and La Bella, A. 2014. An Analysis of the Organizational Core Values of the World's Most Admired Companies. *Knowledge and Process Management*. 21 (3), 159-166. doi:10.1002/kpm.1447. (Accessed 2015-03-27)
- Blom, M., and Alvesson, M. 2013. Leadership On Demand: Followers as initiators and inhibitors of managerial leadership. *Scandinavian Journal Of Management*, 30(3), 344-357. doi:10.1016/j.scaman.2013.10.006 (Accessed 2015-03-27)
- Bolman, L. and Deal, T. 2003. *Reframing Organizations – Artistry, Choice and Leadership*. 3:rd edn. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Bolden, R., Gosling, J., Hawkins, B. and Taylor, S. 2011. *Exploring leadership: Individual, Organizational and Societal Perspectives*. 1:st edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Bourne, H., and Jenkins, M. 2013. Organizational Values: A Dynamic Perspective. *Organization Studies (01708406)*. 34(4), 495-514. doi:10.1177/0170840612467155 (Accessed 2015-05)
- Bryman, A. and Bell, E. 2011a. *Företagsekonomiska forskningsmetoder*. 1:st edn. Solna: Liber AB.
- Bryman, A. and Bell, E. 2011b. *Business Research Methods*. 3:rd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cable, D. M., and Edwards, J. R. 2004. Complementary and supplementary fit: A theoretical and empirical integration. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 89, 822–834. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.89.5.822 (Accessed 2015-05-16)
- Corley, K. G., and Gioia, D. A. 2004. Identity Ambiguity and Change in the Wake of a Corporate Spin-off. *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 49(2), 173-208.
<http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ludwig.lub.lu.se/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=8d0ff318-a14a-4dad-8b77-bd86a47766a9%40sessionmgr113&vid=10&hid=128> (Accessed 2015-05-14)
- Corley, K. G., Gioia, D. A., Hamilton, A. L. and Patvardhan, S. D. 2013. Organizational Identity Formation and Change. *The Academy of Management Annals*. 7(1), 123-193. doi: 10.1080/19416520.2013.762225. (Accessed 2015-05-14)
- Duncan, W. J. 1989. Organizational Culture: 'Getting a Fix' on an Elusive Concept. *Academy Of Management Executive (08963789)*. 3(3), 229-236. doi:10.5465/AME.1989.4274741 (Accessed 2015-05-16)
- Edwards, J., and Cable, D. 2009. 'The Value of Value Congruence'. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. 94(3), 654–677.
<http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ludwig.lub.lu.se/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=8d0ff318-a14a-4dad-8b77-bd86a47766a9%40sessionmgr113&vid=97&hid=128> (Accessed 2015-05-16)
- Finegan, J., and Theriault, C. 1997. The relationship between personal values and the perception of the corporation's code of ethics. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*. 27, 708–724.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/doi/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1997.tb00655.x/epdf>
(Accessed 2015-05-16)

Frommelt, M. 2011. Beyond compliance: anchoring culture in core values. *Center for Ethical Business Cultures*. <http://www.cebcglobal.org/index.php?/events/details/beyond-compliance-anchoring-culture-in-core-values..> (Accessed 2015-03-27)

Hatch, M.J. and Schultz, M. 1997. Relations between organizational culture, identity and image, *European Journal of Marketing*. 31(5), 356.
<http://www.emeraldinsight.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/03090569710167583>
(Accessed 2015-05-16)

Howell, A., Kirk-Brown, A., and Cooper, B. K. 2012. Does congruence between espoused and enacted organizational values predict affective commitment in Australian organizations?. *International Journal Of Human Resource Management*. 23(3), 731-747.
doi:10.1080/09585192.2011.561251 (Accessed 2015-04-15)

Jacobsen, D. I. 2002. *Vad, hur och varför? Om metodval i företagsekonomi och andra samhällsvetenskapliga ämnen*. 1:st edn. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Kärreman, D., and Alvesson, M. 2004. Cages in Tandem: Management Control, Social Identity, and Identification in a Knowledge- Intensive Firm. *Organization*. 11(1), 149-176.
doi:10.1177/1350508404039662 (Accessed 2015-05-14)

Lamond, D. 2014. Back to the future: Lessons from the past for a new management era. *Macquarie University*. (Accessed 2015-04-07)

Lencioni, P. M. 2002. Make Your Values Mean Something. *Harvard Business Review*. 80(7), 113-117.
<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=db58dcd8-01dd-48af-948d-6768027aae44%40sessionmgr112&vid=18&hid=124> (Accessed 2015-03-27)

Manohar, S. S. and Pandit, S. R. 2013. Core Values and Beliefs: A study of leading innovative organizations. *Springer Science*. 125(4), 667-680. doi:10.1007/s10551-013-1926-5
(Accessed 2015-04-13)

Meserve, G. M. 2006. *The development and validation of a values-based organizational and cultural framework useful to higher education institutions*. Diss, (abstract), Capella University.

<https://books.google.se/books?id=X0ZBCbBcfRsC&pg=PA35&lpg=PA35&dq=core+values+talk+and+no+action&source=bl&ots=g65zqmg8pZ&sig=2fXY-MF-Gzhpc1le9ivHwIrvVo4&hl=sv&sa=X&ei=HjcRve27KKSBywPOooDoBA&ved=0CCAQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=core%20values%20talk%20and%20no%20action&f=false> (Accessed 2015-04-02)

Muscalu, E. 2014. Organizational culture change in the organization. *Revista academei fortelor terestre* 4 (76), 392-396 (Accessed 2015-05-16)

Ostroff, C., Shin, Y., and Kinicki, A. J. 2005. Multiple perspectives of congruence: Relationships between value congruence and employee attitudes. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. 26, 591–623. doi: 10.1002/job.333 (Accessed 2015-05-16)

Ouchi, W. G. 1980. Markets, bureaucracies, and clans. *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 25, 129–141. (Accessed 2015-05-16)

<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=b5d7947d-95d0-40ec-895a-eb237c505fc8%40sessionmgr198&vid=1&hid=128> (Accessed 2015-05-16)

Pant, P. N., and Lachman, R. 1998. Value incongruity and strategic choice. *Journal of Management Studies*. 35, 195–212.

<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=b8bff41a-969c-42ec-807a-dc8a51f5f31a%40sessionmgr112&vid=1&hid=128> (Accessed 2015-05-16)

Rev. Rowe, J. and Cadzow, R. 2014. Core Values are the Bedrock of Culture of Compliance in Health Care Agencies. *Home Health Care Management and Practice*. 26(3), 163-166. doi:0.1177/1084822313518557. (Accessed 2015-03-27)

Robertson, M., and Swan, J. 2003. 'Control -- What Control?' Culture and Ambiguity Within a Knowledge Intensive Firm. *Journal Of Management Studies*. 40(4), 831-858. doi:10.1111/1467-6486.00362 (Accessed 2015-05-16)

Simoneaux, S. and Stroud, C. 2014. A strong corporate culture is key to success. *Journal Of Pension Benefits: Issues In Administration*. 22(1), 51-53.

<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=db58dcd8-01dd-48af-948d-6768027aae44%40sessionmgr112&vid=11&hid=124> (Accessed 2015-03-27)

Tengblad, S. 2012. *The work of managers: Towards a practice theory of management*. 1:st edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Appendix 1

Original interview guide

Background

1. How long have you worked at Valcore AB?
2. Could you describe the elements of your position?
3. Could you describe a regular day?

Interviewee's own impression of the workplace

4. How would you describe Valcore AB as a workplace? What is positive with working at Valcore AB?
5. What aspects of your job motivate you?

Values

6. Can you please describe your view of culture of the organization?
7. How would you describe Valcore AB's values?
8. Do your personal values agree with Valcore AB's?
9. How does Valcore AB communicate its goals and values? Please provide us with examples.
10. What role does the HR-department have in communicating the core values of Valcore AB?
11. What role do you play in communicating the core values?
12. Can you describe a situation in your day-to-day work where you consider Valcore AB's core values?
13. Do you have a core value statement?
14. Do you think that core values affect your daily work? In what ways? Do you have examples?
15. How would you define core values (as a term)?
16. Are there any negative aspects of having core values?
17. What happens if someone is not working according to the core values? Examples?

Recruitment

18. To what extent are you involved in the recruitment of new members in your team? Please provide us with examples.

19. What is important for you to consider when recruiting new members?

Appendix 2

Complementary interview guide for the team leaders' manager

Interviewee's own impression of the workplace

1. How would you describe Valcore AB as a workplace? Which three words would you choose to describe Valcore AB?
2. What aspects of your job motivate you and make you like your job?

Values & corporate culture

3. How would you define the company's culture?
4. How does Valcore AB communicate its goals and values? Please provide us with examples.
5. How would you describe Valcore AB's values?
6. Do your personal values agree with Valcore AB's?
7. How do you work with the core values in your role as a manager? Examples please.
8. Can you describe a situation in your day-to-day work where you consider Valcore AB's core values?
9. Do you feel like you "live the values" here at Valcore AB? In what way? Specific examples?
10. Do you feel like it is important to "live the values"? Why?
11. Do you think the corporate culture and the core values are the same?

Decision-making

12. Which type of decisions do you make in your position as a manager? Please provide us with examples.
13. What is important for you to consider when you make decisions?
14. Do you feel like your decision-making is based on Valcore AB's core values? Please provide us with examples.

Appendix 3

Complementary interview guide for the team leaders

Interviewee's own impression of the workplace

1. How would you describe Valcore AB as workplace?
2. Do you feel like you can talk with pride about your workplace to people in your surroundings? In which ways do you feel like you belong at your workplace?
3. What aspects of your job motivate you and make you like your job?

Values

4. Can you please describe your view of culture of the organization?
5. How would you describe Valcore AB's values?
6. Do your personal values agree with Valcore AB's?
7. How does Valcore AB communicate its goals and values? Please provide us with examples.
8. Who initiates the core values?
9. What role do you play in communicating the core values?
10. Can you describe a situation in your day-to-day work where you consider Valcore AB's core values?
11. Are there any negative aspects of the core values?
12. Do the core values influence how you work as a manager? In what ways?

Recruitment

13. To what extent are you involved in the recruitment of new members in your team? Please provide us with examples.
14. What is important for you to consider when recruiting new members?