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**THE PERCEIVED INFLUENCES OF MANAGERIAL
ACTIVITIES ON INTRAPRENEURSHIP**

A Case Study at IBM

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Abstract

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Purpose

We aim to unravel employees' understanding and perception of the managerial influences on intrapreneurship and which potential barriers they identify among mostly uncontrolled initiatives and formalized programs. From a theoretical perspective, our project aims to gain new insights into how managerial activities impact employees and their intrapreneurial behavior at IBM.

Research Questions

1. How do employees understand the influence of formalized activities (ifundIT, Intrapreneurship@IBM, etc.) on intrapreneurship?
2. How do employees understand the influence of open activities (an enabling culture, Connections, etc.) on intrapreneurship?
3. What are the perceived tensions of the intrapreneurship process of IBM?

Method

A research based on qualitative, hermeneutic methodology. Empirical material was collected with the help of nine interviews at our case company IBM. Interviews of semi-structured nature and aimed to explore the employees understanding and perceptions. Secondary data was collected with the help of literature and company internal data, available on the employees' platform IBMConnections.

Findings

Participants of this study do not differentiate between open and formalized activities but rather highlight the importance of the combination of both. We found that intrapreneurs are largely intrinsically driven to innovate but also need the support of both an enabling culture and formalized programs that provide, e.g. funding. Participants further mentioned tensions such as a missing link between corporate orientation and actual implementation.

Contribution

We contribute to intrapreneurship literature by providing a deeper and more holistic picture of how employees are influenced by both open and formalized activities that management may engage in. Our main focus was that intrapreneurs need a combination of both supporting elements, where culture forms the basis and programs need to be ingrained.

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1 Introduction

Innovation has long been considered to be a key factor for sustainable competitive advantage (Porter, 1985). It is not only important for newly established companies, or industries, but can be found in all business contexts (Baumol, 2002). While innovation has been studied for a long time, intrapreneurship is a relatively new phenomenon. The term was first introduced in a paper titled ‘Intra-Corporate Entrepreneurship’ written by Pinchot and Pinchot (1978). Pinchot (1985) describes ‘intrapreneurs’ as the dreamers, who actively take responsibility in order to create innovation of any kind within a business. Koch (2014) built thereupon and states that intrapreneurs are the business world’s “secret weapons”. Intrapreneurs work innovatively and creatively, operating within the given organizational environment. They focus on searching for ideas and opportunities and transform them into high-potential and rewarding innovations while receiving the organization’s financial support and access to the necessary corporate resources. Thus, intrapreneurship is considered to be advantageous for both the intrapreneur and the organization (Pinchot, 1985).

Intrapreneurship and innovation management find their ways into more and more companies nowadays. 3M has been setting an example in providing employees with time and financial support (Deeb, 2015) while Microsoft created the online platform ‘Microsoft Garage’ to encourage employees to share their innovative ideas with others inside the company (Microsoft, 2016). Another vivid example is the introduction of Google’s Gmail, which was developed by employees when Google still offered a 20% time release for employees to work on their own projects (D’Onfro, 2015). IBM, where our case study is conducted, has been encouraging employees to act interpreneurially in form of various programs, such as Intrapreneurship@IBM, ifundIT, and their enterprise social network, called Connections (IBM, 2016). Many companies, not only in the technology industry, have followed suit (Deeb, 2015). Thus, management seems to assume that intrapreneurship and innovation can be fostered with the help of management activities.

However, little has been researched about how management and managerial activities as such influence intrapreneurship, and how intrapreneurs themselves understand the influence. While companies invest large amounts of money in intrapreneurship-fostering activities, there is no information about how employ-

ees, being the potential intrapreneurs, perceive those activities. The question remains whether managerial activities impact intrapreneurial behavior, or if intrapreneurship is rather based on the intrapreneurs' predispositions and intrinsic motivation.

1.1 Research Background

Our interest in innovation management was first sparked during a guest lecture held by Peter Bjellerup, on the topic of knowledge sharing and innovation, and consequently when reading articles on the topic of intrapreneurship. As the technology industry is prone to innovation and often competes to invent the most innovative product or service, it was a natural step to orient ourselves in the technology industry, and more precisely IBM, as the company engages in both innovation and intrapreneurship on a daily basis. Historically, IBM has been one of the market leaders in the technology industry for over 100 years and has been known for continuously reinventing their business model with innovative and creative ideas in order to remain competitive (Plantes, 2011).

Hence, intrapreneurship is an important topic to research as IBM offers various activities to encourage intrapreneurship and innovation among employees. The key issue seems to be that intrapreneurship and innovation – which both entail a lot of serendipity and chance, and are not always welcomed by either companies or employees – are now seen as beacons and leading lights for management and for employees. This raises questions as to how intrapreneurship and innovation are understood and translated into managerial practice, but also how it is perceived and acted upon by the employees. When discussing about 'managerial activities', we distinguish between 'open' and 'formalized' activities. We understand formalized systems as systems that allow for very limited user autonomy and high levels of management intervention, such as ifundIT and Intrapreneurship@IBM. On the other hand, open systems, in this research, are assumed to be less controlled by management and allow for greater user interaction and engagement, for example IBM's culture at large as well as its enterprise social network called Connections. However, it remains unclear how employees understand the influences of these activities and what they perceive to be difficult and prone to tensions within the intrapreneurial process. A clearer understanding of the influences and how they

are perceived is necessary and the aim of this research as well as exploring the differences between open and formalized managerial activities and their impact on intrapreneurs.

1.2 Research Purpose and Question

With our research at IBM, we would like to find out how employees understand these influences and which barriers to intrapreneurship they can identify among both mostly uncontrolled initiatives and formalized activities. Accordingly, we aim at highlighting not only the tensions but also potential alignments between intrinsic motivation and intrapreneurial predisposition and formal programmes and organizational culture more widely. Thus, our case study at IBM puts emphasis on how both challenges and the alignment are lived and experienced in a company that cherishes intrapreneurship. Therefore, the following research questions guided us in our study:

1. How do employees understand the influence of formalized activities (ifundIT, Intrapreneurship@IBM, etc.) on intrapreneurship?
2. How do employees understand the influence of open activities (an enabling culture, Connections, etc.) on intrapreneurship?
3. What are the perceived tensions of the intrapreneurship process of IBM?

Thus, the rationales we draw from are not only theoretical, but also based on information received by practitioners, and the importance of intrapreneurship in daily business. Theoretically, our project seeks to provide new insights into how managerial activities affect – or not affect – employees and their intrapreneurial behavior.

Moreover, we are also personally drawn to this research topic as in the near future we may be confronted with a purportedly entrepreneurial and innovative work environment, which seeks to engage employees in intrapreneurship with the help of an encouraging culture and various systems.

1.3 Thesis Outline

The thesis project is structured into six distinct chapters. Each is summarized shortly below.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this section, the theoretical framework of the research is presented. The chapter is further structured into the topics ‘Intrapreneurship’ and ‘Managerial Activities on Intrapreneurship’. In the sub-chapter Intrapreneurship, the focus is on the theoretical understanding, as well as on the motivation and benefits for both the individual and the organization. In ‘Managerial Activities’ we provide deeper insight into the categories ‘open’ and ‘formalized’ activities.

Chapter 3: Methodology

In the third chapter, we provide an outline for the selected methodology. This includes the metatheoretical foundations our research is built upon, as well as insight into how the empirical material was collected and analyzed.

Chapter 4: Empirical Research

The fourth chapter contains the empirical findings of our research, which we gathered and interpreted based on the empirical data collected. We seek to outline the meaning-making employees do when confronted with managerial activities to foster intrapreneurship.

Chapter 5: Analysis & Discussion

In this chapter, we discuss and in-depth analyze our previously presented research findings. We do so by combining research findings with the theoretical framework established, and discussing both in a broader context in order to obtain a holistic picture.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Concluding, we present the main findings in relation to our research question. Moreover, we describe the practical and theoretical contributions our research seeks to make and give proposals for further research.

2 Literature Review

In the following literature review, we discuss the concept of intrapreneurship, as well as the different activities, open and formalized, that can be used to foster intrapreneurship, and how they are implemented at IBM. As part of our secondary research, we employed several online search engines such as Google Books and LUSearch, as well as various online journals and academic papers available online. Additionally, secondary data stems from course literature and other relevant literature retrieved from Lund University's libraries.

2.1 Intrapreneurship

In the economic literature, we find various definitions on the topic of intrapreneurship, relating to different authors. Due to this remarkable variety, we must identify some general term restrictions in order to develop the necessary understanding of 'intrapreneurship' for this work. Below, we define the crucial terms for our research project. We use the term 'intrapreneurship' to describe both the individual's as well as the organizational interests, motivations, and benefits.

2.1.1 Intrapreneurship Defined

For a fundamental understanding of the meaning of intrapreneurship it is essential to consider the evolutionary perspective. From an evolutionary perspective and to historically underline the specific role of intrapreneurs, we must start from the premise of an 'entrepreneur' as the original key actor. According to a definition of the Brockhaus from 1923 the entrepreneur is an independent gainfully employed person (employer), who is the owner of the production means of an economic business and operates at one's own account and risk for the purpose of generating profit (Wehberg, 1923). Thereupon, Schumpeter (1926) extended the concept of entrepreneurship for it to not only consider the independent economic entities to be entrepreneurs but also those persons who fulfill the function of an entrepreneur constitutionally. He makes a clear distinction between the capital and the entrepreneurial function and thus, already paved the way conceptually for a concept that is now known as 'intrapreneurship'. According to him, on the one hand, one's ownership of a business is by itself not crucial for entrepreneurial

thinking and acting, and on the other hand, an entrepreneurial function does not automatically imply the ability to think and act entrepreneurial – an interdependent point of view (Süssmuth Dyckerhoff, 1995). Consequently, the intrapreneur is to be treated as an economic actor who thinks and acts entrepreneurial.

Although the concept of intrapreneurship was first included in the relevant management literature in the 1980s, the origin of the underlying idea dates back much further. Peterson (1967) already talked about new ventures in larger businesses that can combine the economies of scale with the entrepreneurial spirit that predominates in young businesses. This statement already entails that economies of scale will not permanently be the sole guarantee of business success. However, the first person to implement the concept of intrapreneurship in relevant management literature was Pinchot & Pinchot (1978), when referring back to a statement by Macrae (1976) stating that “successful big corporations should devolve into becoming confederations of entrepreneurs.” (p. 42). The term ‘intrapreneurship’ was first used in a paper titled ‘Intra-Corporate Entrepreneurship’ written by Gifford and Elizabeth Pinchot in 1978. Later, in 1982, Gifford Pinchot was credited with the invention of the term and the concept of intrapreneurship by Macrae in ‘The Economist’ (Macrae, 1982). In the same year, the first formal academic case study concerning corporate intrapreneurship was published as a master’s thesis by Howard Edward Haller. In 1985, the term was first used in popular media and in a popular published quote by Steve Jobs, talking about his rise and fall, and thus became commonly known. Gifford Pinchot (1985) describes ‘intrapreneurs’ as the dreamers who actively take responsibility in order to create innovation of any kind within a business. Hisrich (1986) placed this abstract concept in context by saying intrapreneurship can be defined as “entrepreneurship within an existing business structure” (p. 77). In 2014, Koch built thereupon and stated that intrapreneurs are the business world’s ‘secret weapons’. They work innovatively and creative, while operating within the given organizational environment. Considering the vast amount of statements and definitions, it is clear that the term itself is a fusion of different concepts, all of which relate to the theme of entrepreneurship within an existing organization. Thereby, we notice a fundamental direction of thought which is concealed behind the term ‘intrapreneurship’.

The academic approach to intrapreneurship is generally based on the company-

wide re-organization, which is required to foster intrapreneurship and thus, leads to corporate innovation capability. In contrast, the corporate view assumes that innovation is the means rather than the end, driven by the strategic need to grow the core business. Consequently, the vocabulary used differs habitually, with academics favouring ‘intrapreneurship’ and practitioners talking about ‘innovation’ (Capozzi et al., 2010). In this paper, we will use the term ‘intrapreneurship’ comprehensively, assuming that it leads to, i.a. innovation capability within a corporation.

2.1.2 The Individual Level

The intrapreneur focuses on searching for ideas and opportunities and transforms them into high-potential and rewarding innovations while receiving the organization’s financial support and access to the necessary corporate resources. Thus, the intrapreneur is dependent on the corporation (DePaul, 2008; Pinchot, 1985). He or she works under defined rules and regulations, and is bound to the corporate timetable. In addition, the intrapreneur does not bear the full risk of owning and managing a business. Nevertheless, there is a potential danger, which means that the intrapreneur’s career may be at stake in the event of corporate management rejecting an idea, or if the intrapreneur puts his corporate reputation at risk. However, intrapreneurship is considered to be advantageous for both, the intrapreneur and the organization (Pinchot, 1985). In this chapter, we will focus on the intrapreneur, and especially on his or her motives. There are various motives for intrapreneurial behavior – innovations can be perceived as reasonable and useful, as necessary, as interesting or just as fun. Apart from that, the intrapreneur could also just enjoy to initiative and develop his or her own innovative ideas. Another motive could be the opportunity to profile and distinguish oneself by creating an innovation. However, two requirements are inalienable: The decision to implement perceived opportunities for innovation, and then to act accordingly (Simon, 1981).

The perspective of motivation psychology follows Gifford Pinchot’s original approach. Intrapreneurs are to be considered as intrinsically motivated, meaning an employee is intrinsically motivated and thus, entrepreneurial within an established organization in order to successfully implement innovative ideas within

this organization. Hence, intrapreneurial behavior is justified by strongly marked intrinsic motives whereby the realization of the innovation represents a personal motive. An intrapreneur seeks the opportunity to realize his full potential through challenging tasks that are rich in substance (Pinchot, 1985). While, intrapreneurs are mainly intrinsically motivated, acting entrepreneurial within an organization raises expectations towards the provision of corporate resources, funding and time release. Both, official and unofficial networks are another important support system that intrapreneurs expect organizations to provide (Bitzer, 1991; Hisrich, 1990; Wunderer and Bruch, 2000).

One of the most relevant implicit motives for intrapreneurial behavior is the ‘need for achievement’. For intrapreneurs, it is important to deliver a performance, to achieve successes and to be able to follow the progress of their work continuously. In return, they accept long working hours and demonstrate a high personal commitment for their project (Pinchot, 1985; Luchsinger & Bagby, 1987; Bitzer, 1991). Furthermore, intrapreneurs have a high internal locus of control. They are profoundly convinced that the success and progress of their intrapreneurship-project is largely determined by their own entrepreneurial actions (Luchsinger and Bagby, 1987; Wunderer and Bruch, 2000). This is in line with the urge of intrapreneurs, to experience themselves as the initiator and to attribute work results to their own competencies which aligns with a strong sense of self-efficacy. Intrapreneurs venture on difficult tasks with self-confidence and are not easily discouraged by setbacks. (Pinchot, 1985; Bitzer, 1991; Wunderer & Bruch, 2000). A distinctive pursuit of autonomy is another dominant, explicit motive of intrapreneurs. They prefer to solve problems on their own and conceive management instructions or process-related frameworks as restrictive. For an intrapreneur, it is a matter of course to take responsibility for his personal entrepreneurial actions (Bitzer, 1991; Carrier, 1996; Hisrich, 1990; Luchsinger and Bagby, 1987; Pinchot, 1985). Another motive for intrapreneurs is to have a critical view towards the system as a whole – to scrutinize the status quo, to question superior authorities and to implement new ideas in an unconventional way (Pinchot, 1985; Hisrich, 1986). This perspective is also characterized by a strong tolerance of ambiguity and frustration as well as a distinct market-oriented way of thinking and acting (Draeger-Ernst, 2003; Wunderer and Bruch, 2000).

In summary, it can be said that intrapreneurs are inwardly independent employees

who think and act as entrepreneurs, who feel obliged only to their personal goal and overcome all obstacles which might hinder their innovation projects, without paying much attention to their personal hedge (Pinchot 1985).

2.1.3 The Organizational Level

As mentioned earlier, intrapreneurship is considered to be advantageous for corporations as well. Thus, this chapter focusses on the benefits and challenges of intrapreneurship for an organization. Antoncic and Hisrich (2001) credit intrapreneurship with having a positive impact on corporate growth and profitability. They claim that organizations with high intrapreneurial orientation – meaning that they provide structures and anchor values of intrapreneurship – are more likely to grow than organizations with a low intrapreneurial orientation, because they are more innovative and continually renew themselves. Consequently, this proactive approach leads to new business ventures and potential competitive advantage. Intrapreneurs can help their organization to subsist competitively in today’s unstable, rapidly changing and globalized economic environments (Anderson et al., 2004). In this regard, Camille Carrier (1996) stated that “in the context of increasing market globalization and free trade, firms must innovate constantly to improve their flexibility, competitiveness and reactivity.” (p. 5). Monsen et al. (2010) went even further and claimed that “businesses depend on entrepreneurial activities to survive and thrive in competitive markets. Further, they depend on their employees to willingly engage in projects that extend the firm in new directions” (p. 120).

Following, we specify what we consider to be the key benefits of intrapreneurship for the executing organization. As touched upon earlier, intrapreneurship seeks to foster innovation. Especially in today’s global economy, in which technology has alleged its pre-eminence, organizations, which are capable of innovating and successfully bringing new innovations to market can continuously expand their market share and stay competitive in the long-term. Particularly for large corporations, where the implementation of innovation requires a lot of energy and stamina, intrapreneurship represents an opportunity to overcome stagnant innovation structures (Rahim, 2014). With increasing innovation capability, an increase in revenue can be expected as well. Intrapreneurs do make money in

terms of bonuses and honoraria, but the majority of the revenue is directly benefiting the organization as it initially served as a venture capitalist. Concomitant, corporations that encourage innovation and ways to improve operations and products gain economic stability. These organizations can adapt to changes in the market more easily in order to stay competitive and ensure, or at least enhance, their survival. An organization that lacks new business ideas might lose its relevance in the market, which in turn leads to scaling down operations or bankruptcy (Nies, 2011). As well as allowing a company to stay competitive in a market, intrapreneurship also allows an organization to foster market research, as intrapreneurs mostly do the market research on their own before presenting the idea to corporate management. Thus, the corporation needs to spend only very little, if any, money on market search yet gets all the information and knowledge (Rahim, 2014). Intrapreneurship can also help to tap new markets in a similar manner. Entering a new market in an emerging market provides the corporation with an opportunity to reach thousands of potential customers. Additionally, when a new business venture grows, employment increases and more business opportunities arise. Thus, tapping into a new market can provide overall growth (Nies, 2011). Similarly, organizations gain operational benefits with the help of intrapreneurship as it supports the product development and the expansion of the product pipeline. Companies where intrapreneurs are vibrant and encouraged can thus ensure future profitability.

However, intrapreneurship does not only support the organization to stay competitive and gain monetary rewards, it also helps the organization to save financial resources, e.g. on traditional research and development. They do not need to follow the typical review and approval processes anymore, as well as curb expenses on hiring and developing R&D staff. Keeping this in mind, we see a new, evolving employee behavior the organization may benefit from. Employees with an entrepreneurial spirit generate talent and motivation throughout the whole corporation. Their work, commitment and dedication usually have a great impact on their teams and colleagues. It is assumed that employee morale increases when there is a corporate culture that supports intrapreneurship, and promotes it as something that is valued and rewarded. In addition, intrapreneurship can improve the overall productivity since the employees are keen on accomplishing their usual workload faster in order to spend more time on what they are pas-

sionate about. Moreover, intrapreneurship enhances the corporate intelligence. Employees, who behave in an entrepreneurial spirit share their knowledge and ideas within the corporation and thus, create valuable corporate intelligence at no costs. Additionally, an organization that supports intrapreneurship attracts like-minded professionals, which savor a work environment where unbridled creativity is encouraged and acknowledged (Rahim, 2014).

All in all, intrapreneurship provides various benefits for the executing organizations if we are to believe the literature on intrapreneurship. The intrapreneurial trend is especially prominent in the IT sector, however, nowadays other industries are catching on and seizing the great financial and operational opportunities that intrapreneurship can bring (Rahim, 2014).

2.2 Managerial Initiatives on Intrapreneurship

In general, management bears the responsibility to ensure that the organization operates according to its objectives while taking into account the various participants, regulatory authorities and laws. The fundamental notion of management principles was developed by management theorist Fayol (1916), who is credited with the planning-organizing-leading-controlling framework, which still remains the dominant management framework in standard management literature. Accordingly, management activities are commonly divided into these four major functions known as planning, organizing, leading and controlling. These managerial functions include managerial actions, such as setting objectives and creating a detailed action plan aimed at those, distributing resources and systematizing employee activities by delegating authority. Likewise, these functions consist of assigning work tasks and providing direction, evaluating results and controlling work and, last but not least, providing a work environment that stimulates, motivates and inspires leading towards a higher level of productivity (Fayol, 1916).

Having clarified our underlying understanding of management and managerial activities, we now use this chapter to focus on managerial activities on intrapreneurship. Many organizations still struggle with integrating the concept of intrapreneurship into their daily work routines, mainly due to their conventional organizational structures, such as bureaucracy, hierarchy, rules etc., which do not support

intrapreneurial culture and behavior. The high level of defined tasks, schedules and surroundings deter opportunities for serendipity and innovative ideas to be recognized (Schleisinger and Kiefer, 2014). To be able to create sustained corporate value through intrapreneurship within an organization, management support is essential. Practicing managers should strive to increase their organization's intrapreneurial orientation and thus, their capacity for innovation. As managers can provide facilities and mobilize corporate resources in order to achieve a high level of organizational performance, they are competent to introduce intrapreneurship in different aspects, procedures and processes of an organization. Thus, the corporate management is eventually responsible for providing working conditions that enable and cultivate intrapreneurial attitudes and behaviors (Fasnacht, 2009).

In order to promote the entrepreneurial spirit, respectively the entrepreneurial thinking and acting, it is essential to previously create an environment that can satisfy the fundamental line of thought such as flat hierarchies, an open culture of communication and information, and incentive systems. The employees must be trained and encouraged to internalize entrepreneurial virtues, e.g. cost awareness, customer focus, self-initiative. Management structures that promote intrapreneurship particularly include the penetration of the team with the corporate vision and strategy, responsibility for goals and results, and a limited but sufficient amount of rules and bureaucracy. Intrapreneurs need to be given freedom and autonomy that allow for activities outside the job description, tolerance towards errors, transparency and participation in decisions (Willmanns and Hehl, 2009). Hence, management should encourage a transparent and sharing organization, which incorporates intrapreneurship into the strategy and provide the resources required in order to establish an intrapreneurial organizational culture. Therefore, managers need to work on policies and processes to allow and support the sharing of knowledge and ideas and, later on, incorporate and leverage these behaviors. As mentioned before, it is therefore seen as essential to enable and motivate the employees to think and act innovatively, to share their knowledge and ideas and to help and support each other in their intrapreneurial actions. Eventually, management needs some kind of 'system' to enable and support these intrapreneurial activities (Bjellerup, 2015).

In this research, we differentiate between two facets of management - open and formalized managerial activities. We make a distinction based on the arguments

provided in Alvesson (2002) on leadership as something explicit but also something that is lived and experienced rather than directed. Therefore, both categories will be defined thoroughly in the following two subchapters.

2.2.1 Open Activities

Research has shown that there are different managerial activities in order to successfully foster intrapreneurship and innovation capability. There are many scholars who emphasize that innovation and intrapreneurship are dependent on social interaction and contact with knowledgeable others. Thus, they claim that social networks and interaction between people and institutions consequently lead to more knowledge and more innovation (Newell et al., 2002; Nonaka, 1994; Wikström and Normann, 1994).

In order to define ‘open activities’, we make use of a definition provided by Vesper (1984), which emphasizes that managers should establish an intrapreneurial culture, in order that subordinates start developing new ideas and innovations without being asked, expected or even given permission to do so. The organization must establish an enabling culture where employees’ work is appreciated, and intrapreneurs receive inspiration and mental support to come up with new ideas. Open managerial activities include encouraging employees to become innovative, creative and flexible in the course of their daily activities and routine work tasks. They should be empowered to take full ownership of their tasks and request opportunities to make informed choices (Fasnacht, 2009). In other words, management should try to establish an intrapreneurship climate among the whole company and provide open spaces to enforce new innovations in all business areas.

Open systems, in this research, are assumed to be less controlled by management and allow for greater user interaction and engagement. In the following, our main focus will be on IBM’s enterprise social network, IBMConnections, and their corporate culture and values. IBMConnections is an integrated and secure software platform, which enables IBM to accelerate innovation, since it simplifies the interaction within a network of experts in the context of critical business processes. The network provides file sharing, communities, web meetings, email services and calendar but also rich profiles, expertise identification and conver-

sations. The core components of this collaboration and networking platform are content, network and communities. Content, in this sense, includes various files, blogs, wikis, and forums with meta information like ratings, views, downloads and recommendations. The primary interface of the network is one's own homepage, where the individual feed serves the user updates from the platform, filtered through one's own network and communities, and relevant to one's individual content and conversations, and those the user has interacted with or selected to follow. The components in IBMConnections are integrated with each other. Information can be linked between the components and therewith, evaluated. All IBMConnections documents are tagged, and can be easily found by the users due to these tags. It is also possible to contact the creator, based on information in blogs or in social bookmarks, and approach him within the online community to ask more specific questions or exchange information (Bjellerup, 2016; IBMConnections, 2016). The main aim of IBMConnections is to make one's job easier. IBM (2016) claims that with IBMConnections, the employees can stay on top of their work because they can "find the right material in the right place at the right time" as they can read the latest comments, get recently uploaded files and master their to-do items faster. Additionally, IBMConnections shall help to focus and organize work, since it provides a meeting place where employees can share ideas and collaborate on job-related matters, and where they can store information and files. Another very important factor for the culture and the climate is that IBMConnections generates social connections and a sense of community. This is, for example, done by creating interest groups about particular subjects in order to benefit from the wisdom of the crowd. Lastly, IBMConnections was designed to support managing projects with ease, as it allows bringing everything necessary to manage a successful project together in one place. The system invites employees to engage in discussions, to share ideas and to work on their to-do items in one place (IBMConnections, 2016).

Next to IBMConnections, we put further focus on IBM's corporate culture and values. As said before, intrapreneurship should be embedded in the overall culture of the business – to flourish, it should be embraced, acknowledged and celebrated as a core practice, and aim towards the organizational goals. IBM's main companywide purpose is to 'Be essential'. In order to fulfil that purpose, IBM CEO Ginni Rometty and her management, with the input of IBMers worldwide, es-

tablished three corporate values, with one on them calling for ‘Innovation that matters – for our company and for the world’. Based on those three values, they introduced nine practices, three for each value, in 2013. The three practices that should be executed in order to create innovation that matters, are to ‘restlessly reinvent – our company and ourselves’, to ‘dare to create original ideas’ and to ‘treasure wild ducks’ (IBMConnections). According to IBM’s former Chairman Thomas J. Watson, Jr. (1963), who established the term already back in the 1970s, wild ducks are visionary people, whose questioning minds and unconventional ideas are transforming the world, and who question the way things are and challenge the status quo (IBMConnections). In order to cultivate a creative work environment, IBM’s management launched a ‘Wild Ducks’ pilot program in summer 2014. In this program, participants were given ten minutes to pitch either an innovative idea that might improve a process, or solve an existing problem, or increase employee morale. The audience consisting of about one hundred IBM employees was then given five minutes to ask questions, provide recommendations and contribute feedback. Having a look at this program leads us to formalized managerial activities, as this program is, from our definitions, a rather formalized management activity, but was implemented to support the culture and an intrapreneurial climate.

In our research, we treat the corporate culture as an open managerial activity since Lou Gerstner was intentionally hired to turn IBM’s existing corporate culture around, and make a grand change turning IBM into a modern and customer-oriented organization (DiCarlo, 2002). Thus, we assume that culture can be created and developed by management. Based on Alvesson’s (2002) distinction of different ways to change a culture, we identify IBM’s first attempt to execute cultural change as a ‘grand technocratic project’ (p. 178) assuming that IBM intended for a large-scale transformation of their existing corporate culture to a more superior one. According to this approach, cultural change is a top-down project which emerges from and is designed and executed from above. When transforming IBM’s culture, Gerstner was the person to evaluate the current corporate culture, and determine the strategic direction and the desired culture, thus designing the execution plan of the change and the change itself. One of his key decisions, which was made against top management’s initial suggestion was to keep IBM as one unified company and re-establish one united corporate culture

instead of dividing the company into several independently operating units. In accordance, his attempt was to change the culture towards teamwork, cooperation and collaboration, prohibiting the strong existing internal competition of the divisions. Additionally, Gerstner reinvented a way to measure results and started rewarding teamwork and collaboration (DiCarlo, 2002).

While these actions are considered to be top-down managerial activities, IBM's attempt for a cultural change then shifted towards being an 'organic social movement' (Alvesson, 2002, p. 179), after once being initiated and implemented by Lou Gerstner. Since then, and still today, the cultural change is considered to be emergent and to happen without managerial intention. The change is seen as originating from within the organization, through people who readjust their thinking and who give meaning to phenomena on their own accord, or who feel discontent about prevalent ideas and practices and seek for new ones. An organic movement assumes that a group within an organization follows the flow of new ideas, incrementally leading to cultural change. In this particular view, top managers are not considered to be central anymore, nor are they considered to be the initiators or those who actuate most for the transformation. However, it is emphasized that they need to share and support the ideas and movements in order to facilitate cultural change. According to Alvesson (2002), the key characteristics of an organic movement change are "(1) the relatively broadly shared exposure to something implying a change in beliefs, ideas and values; and (2) the change implications of these already without top management or any other key actor being highly significant" (p. 179). It is to be seen as a transformation that requires a common, mutually carried, new understanding within an organization, thus working on a deeper level of people's commitment and involvement.

Owing to Gerstner's work at IBM and him providing a meaningful direction, IBM established a setting for organic cultural changes. However, from our research, and due to its organic nature, we do consider this change to still be a work in progress. Thus, we seek to observe the interplay between managerial ambitions and organizational future, and the daily realities of IBM's work environment.

2.2.2 Formalized Activities

While speaking to our corporate supervisor Peter Bjellerup before starting our research project (Bjellerup, 2016), he informed us about IBM's increased interest in enabling their employees to use part of their workweek to explore personal projects, which may in the end be marketed by the organization. With the technology at hand, employees working on their own projects can now also be supported more easily by formalized managerial activities, such as IBM's Intrapreneurship@IBM or their enterprise crowdfunding program ifundIT, which allows IBM's employees to share, develop and fund their ideas or projects. Thus, ideas may travel more smoothly, while the exchange and creation of knowledge and ideas is actively encouraged. There are also authors like Antoncic and Hisrich (2001) and Barringer and Bluedorn (1999) who find a positive relationship between intrapreneurship and formalized management activities. Similarly, a survey conducted by McKinsey in 2010 supports the assertion that organizations with formal innovation processes report higher success rates (Capozzi et al., 2010).

We define formalized managerial activities as those that give employees a regulated framework to operate in, that structure their intrapreneurial work activities and processes and that govern them by rules and procedures. They are to be deemed as incubators for intrapreneurship. They are designed for limited reach and tailored mainly to small communities of intrapreneurs. Thus, they can only be entered by a certain group of people. In order to be able to participate, the employee has to either apply and be selected or to register. Formalized managerial activities and systems are designed to support the intrapreneur from the set-up of the idea via the testing of beta versions through to the final resulting product or service. They allow for very limited user autonomy and high levels of management intervention.

One of IBM's key program initiatives is called Intrapreneurship@IBM, which was founded by Craig Rhinehart in 2014 and was designed to foster intrapreneurship and to aid in bringing IBM's innovation to market. The program aims at, i.a. accelerating new offering to market and leveraging new businesses. Rhinehart (2015) said that his intention was to create a way to help IBM to commercialize its "large treasure trove of intellectual property and more". Since the launch of the program, he organizes and runs the Intrapreneurship@IBM community and

its associated 8 Minute Pitch program with a start-up philosophy that quickly went viral. Over the last year, their community grew from zero to about 3,000 members. Still, he puts strong emphasis on the great volunteer component of his model (Rhinehart, 2015).

Another example for a formalized management activity is IBM's internal enterprise crowdfunding initiative, which was first jointly implemented in 2012, when one of the research vice presidents of a New York state research office decided to revitalize IBM's innovation culture (Muller, 2013). The process is fairly similar to public crowd funding programs: Participants scan through the submitted projects over the course of one month and then decide which one they want to support and provide cash for. While scanning through the projects and ideas, the participants can ask questions about particular proposals in a comment section in order to encourage discussion and collaboration in the decision-making process. The projects with the most merit reach their funding goals and are expected to be implemented by their owners. Another of those established enterprise crowdfunding initiatives is IBM's ifundIT initiative, which aims at encouraging and enabling employees to progress with innovative ideas and at getting them funded for implementation, while using the wisdom of the crowd. Also similar to public crowd funding programs, ifundIT is an open and inclusive program for the submission and selection of innovative projects. The program, on one hand, allows intrapreneurs to propose, build and deploy mobile applications and, on the other hand, it helps to prioritize funds to these projects. The current crowdfunding initiative is devoted to mobile application projects which, in the end, will be used by IBM's workforce while conducting business. Each round of funding, there will be another area of innovations to be proposed for funding (Cote, 2014).

2.3 Summary

In this chapter, we defined the theoretical understanding of intrapreneurship underlying this research, on the individual as well as on the organizational level. Secondly, we examined different managerial activities, open and formalized, that can be used to foster intrapreneurship and, in regards to our case study, outlined examples of IBM's implemented managerial activities.

The core theoretical understanding of intrapreneurship is based on Gifford Pinchot (1985) who was credited with the invention of the term and the concept of intrapreneurship and who once said that intrapreneurs are the dreamers, who actively take responsibility in order to create innovation of any kind within a business. Thus, we infer that intrapreneurs work innovatively and creative, operating within a given organizational environment and with given organizational resources. While the academic approach assumes that fostered intrapreneurship leads to corporate innovation capability, the organizational view sees innovation as the means rather than the end, driven by the necessity to grow the organization's key business. In this research, we use the term intrapreneurship meticulously and suppose that it leads to i.a. organizational innovation capability.

On an individual level, we discuss the intrapreneur as well as potential drivers and predispositions of intrapreneurs, especially focussing on motivation psychology theory. We identified various motives for intrapreneurial behavior which range from just having fun being innovative and creative, to seeing a necessity for innovation, or to taking an opportunity to profile and distinguish oneself. Based on the perspective of motivation psychology, we assume that intrapreneurs are to be considered as intrinsically motivated whereby the realization of an innovation signifies a personal motive. The intrinsic motives we discovered are the intrapreneurs' 'need for achievement' and their dedication to their idea or project, their high internal locus of control, their strong sense of self-efficacy, their distinctive pursuit of autonomy, their natural critical view towards the system as a whole as well as their strong tolerance of ambiguity.

On an organizational level, we focussed on the advantages and challenges associated with intrapreneurship for corporations. Intrapreneurship is presumed to have a positive impact on organizational growth and profitability because being innovative and constantly renewing oneself leads to new business ventures and potential competitive advantage. We found a great number of key benefits of intrapreneurship for the executing organization. One of the main advantages for an organization is the ability to expand their market share and stay competitive in the long-term, especially with regards to today's ever-changing business environment and globalization. In line with that, intrapreneurship increases revenues and therewith economic stability for innovative organizations and represents an opportunity, especially for large organizations, to overcome their stagnant inno-

vation structures. Moreover, intrapreneurship allows organizations to decrease their monetary spending on market research while still receiving all the information and knowledge intrapreneurs have. In a similar manner, it can help to tap into new and enter emerging markets and thus, reach thousands of potential new customers as well as increase internal employment. Lastly, one of the main corporate benefits is a new evolving employee behavior, as intrapreneurs generate talent and motivation throughout the organization and enhance the overall productivity as well as create valuable corporate intelligence.

Our second main focus in this literature review was placed on the managerial activities a corporation can execute in order to support and foster intrapreneurship and intrapreneurial behavior. In our research, we differentiate between open and formalized managerial activities. Open managerial activities that foster intrapreneurship are considered to be enterprise social networks that frame the interaction among employees and thus lead to more knowledge and more innovation. Moreover, open activities are defined by making use of Vesper's (1984) definition, which emphasizes that managers should establish an intrapreneurial corporate culture and climate among their organization. Consequently, the open activities we concentrate on in regards to IBM are not only its enterprise social network, which is called IBMConnections, but also its corporate culture and values. Formalized activities are assumed to give employees a regulated framework to operate in, which structures their intrapreneurial work activities and processes and govern them by rules and procedures. They are designed to support the intrapreneur from the set-up of the idea to the testing of beta versions and to the final resulting innovation, and are renowned as intrapreneurship incubators. In this regard, we focus on IBM's key program initiative Intrapreneurship@IBM, which was designed to foster intrapreneurship and aid in bringing IBM's innovations to market, and IBM's internal enterprise crowdfunding initiative ifundIT, which aims at encouraging and enabling employees to progress with innovative ideas and getting these ideas funded for further development and implementation.

We assume that our findings are overarching in content, meaning that intrapreneurship is vital to the renewal and agility of firms but that it is a phenomenon, which develops at the interface between employee motivations and organizational leadership and strategy. Hence, we are studying various forms of aligning intrapreneurship and management activities. Our findings will be placed in this context.

3 Methodology

Any research is shaped by the epistemology and ontological approach the researchers assume (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009), meaning it is essential for us to define the paradigm and approach we operate in. Therefore, we split this chapter into two sub-categories. Firstly, we discuss the metatheoretical foundations underlying our interpretive paradigm, as well as our understanding of reality, and a critical reflection of us as researchers. Secondly, we focus on the empirical research conducted by giving an overview about the research site, participants, as well as the methods used for data collection and analysis, and the limitations are associated with this approach.

3.1 Metatheoretical Foundations

The metatheoretical foundations include information about the epistemology and ontology we assumed in this research, as they are of fundamental importance in regards to our view towards both secondary and primary data considered during this research. Moreover, this chapter focuses on the different theoretical methods used to analyze the data. Lastly, we focus on our reflexivity, which guided us throughout this research.

3.1.1 Epistemology & Ontology

Before conducting our study in practice, we need to define the metatheoretical paradigm we operate in, since this greatly affects the research design we employ in our research (Merriam, 2002). Our quest to understand how employees at IBM perceive the influences of management activities to foster intrapreneurship and where they see potential tensions in both formalized and open systems is based on our view on reality.

Crotty (1998) defines ontology as being “concerned with [...] the nature of existence, [...] [or] the structure of reality as such” (p.10). Bryman and Bell (2011) further define two different ontological stances which differ in answering the question whether “organi[z]ations can and should be objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social

actors” (p. 20). The two stances are described as objectivist and constructionist (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

We adopt a constructionist stance in this research, and therefore assume that reality is socially constructed, and consequently, subjective to the individual (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009). Perceived reality and thus meaning making of events is influenced and very much shaped through interaction with others (Creswell, 2014). Hence, we do not seek to find an underlying ‘essential’ truth, but rather assume that anything is constructed. Signs, symbols and language are considered to be important objectifications of the previously described constructed reality, and will consequently be of high importance for our research (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011).

Epistemologically, we will operate within the interpretive paradigm, as our study aims to gain greater understanding of how employees at IBM make sense of the influences of management activities on their intrapreneurial behavior. Therefore, we do not seek to find one essential or underlying truth as suggested in positivism, but rather different meaning making individual truths, subjective to the respective interviewees (Crotty, 1998). Merriam describes interpretive researchers as those who seek to “understand the meaning people have constructed about their world and their experiences” (Merriam, 2002, pp. 4-5). The researchers thus assume an active role in gathering rich, qualitative, descriptive data.

3.1.2 Theoretical Methods

Our aim is to place the phenomenon of perceived influences of different managerial activities to foster intrapreneurship on actual intrapreneurial behavior in a wider context, thus leading us to assume an interpretive, hermeneutic orientation. Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009) introduce the hermeneutic circle, which allows us to move from part to whole and back again. In relation to the hermeneutic circle, we plan to advance in loops to “establish the linkage between a text and its wider context” (Prasad, 2005, p. 34). A text can only be fully understood in relation to ‘the whole’ or context, while understanding of the context can only be achieved when understanding ‘the parts’ or texts (Prasad, 2005). In practice this means that we will move between ‘the parts’, e.g. our interview material, and ‘the whole’, composed of contemporary literature and common understandings of

the phenomenon. This approach mitigates the risk of developing a blind spot for contextual material, while encouraging us to develop our own conclusions based on the empirical data gathered.

In accordance with hermeneutics, we will conduct our study in an abductive manner, which features a variety of both inductive and deductive attributes (Alvesson and Sköldbberg, 2009). Abductive reasoning aligns with our hermeneutical approach, since we continuously alternate between theoretical material to enhance our pre-understanding and empirical findings to readjust our pre-understandings. Translated into practice, we will first do a theoretical review of textual material from contemporary literature to have a broad understanding of the context we operate in. Following, we will go into the field to gather empirical data, which in turn helps us readjust or improve our pre-set understanding of the context. Contemporary literature will focus both on intrapreneurship as such, and managerial activities used to foster intrapreneurial behavior. Moreover, our primary source of data stems from qualitative research, namely semi-structured interviews with various employees at IBM. Therefore, our qualitative, primary data will serve as our main indicator, while textual secondary data allows us to place our findings into context, and consequently ratifying and underpinning our arguments.

3.1.3 Reflexivity

Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009, p. 9) describe reflexivity as paying great attention to the intertwining ways of “linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements [...] in the knowledge-development process, during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted, and written”. Translated into practice, this suggests that researchers who aim to be reflexive need to be able to take a step back from material, and consequently question their assumptions. By reflecting not only on written material, but also immersing ourselves into the interview data and context, we were able to gain additional insights from interviewees. Reflecting on interview questions and answers helped us develop a more concrete interview guideline along the way, refining and adjusting our interview questions according to insights we gained, and information that was missing.

As we assumed an interpretive paradigm in our study, we were aware of the value-laden nature of responses on one hand, and of human biases or subjectivities dis-

played by us, the qualitative researchers, on the other hand (Merriam, 2002). In order to be reflexive, it is important to acknowledge that the political-ideological context plays an important role. Therefore, we took into consideration that interviewees are potentially biased in their answers, regarding social standards or personal desires (Callegaro, 2008). This aspect is relevant for our research, as participants might answer based on their self-aspiration or self-image as an intrapreneur and socially accepted attributes of a ‘stereotypical intrapreneur’.

Lastly, we were aware of the the possibility of touching upon the critical paradigm by unravelling power struggles through the language displayed during interviews. Our research is, however, neither intended nor designed to criticize the status quo, but rather understand the phenomenon at hand.

3.2 Empirical Research

The following sub-chapter provides general information about the research site, as well as about the interviewees selected for this research. Moreover, we will present our approach to data collection and analysis, as well as the limitations associated with this approach.

3.2.1 Research Site

IBM is a multinational technology and consulting corporation, which was founded over 100 years ago and currently employs more than 400,000 employees across the globe (IBM, 2016). Innovation is rooted deeply not only in IBM’s purpose, but it is also one of the essentials IBM, and the technology industry, need to sustain their competitive advantage. Thus, it is not surprising that IBM draws on employees and their ideas to develop and improve their current product and service offer – therefore, turning employees into entrepreneurs. Moreover, IBM has a history of trying to draw on the capacity of its employees but also a history of being rather complex as an organization, which makes this a relevant and thought-provoking case (IBM, 2016)

Once we decided to focus on innovation and intrapreneurship in particular, the tech-scene was a logical place to turn to. As we had met Peter Bjellerup during a

guest lecture on innovation and knowledge sharing before, we decided to contact him and pitch our idea to him. Fortunately, IBM actively engages in intrapreneurship and was interested in learning more about how employees understand the managerial activities intended to foster intrapreneurial behavior.

Throughout the research process our main contact person was Peter Bjellerup, who also assisted us in selecting and contacting suitable interviewees, as well as the HR department, which organized all administration, such as a formal contract and a non-disclosure agreement.

3.2.2 Data Collection

There are three major sources for data collection in a qualitative research: interviews, observations, and documents (Merriam, 2002). In our research, we decided to focus on interviews and documents as we did not have the possibility to observe how IBM's employees understand managerial influences on intrapreneurship due to (1) geographical distances and (2) time limitations. Our main data collection roots from semi-structured interviews with various employees at IBM. We used additional documents, available on the company platform as well as website, to confirm or re-adjust our findings, in accordance with the hermeneutic approach selected, in order to answer the following research questions:

1. How do employees understand the influence of formalized activities (ifundIT, Intrapreneurship@IBM, etc.) on intrapreneurship?
2. How do employees understand the influence of open activities (an enabling culture, Connections, etc.) on intrapreneurship?
3. What are the perceived tensions of the intrapreneurship process of IBM?

In the following sections, we provide detailed information regarding primary data collection, as well as the gathering of secondary data.

Primary Data Collection

As mentioned above, interviews serve as our source for primary data collection. At IBM, we interviewed nine employees, with each interview lasting around 25 to 40 minutes. In principle all employees at IBM could have been selected for

interviewing, however, Merriam (2002) in this context states that it is of utmost importance to select a purposeful sample, meaning a sample from which we can learn the most. Therefore, we decided to establish two requirements for the final selection of participants: They must either be currently engaging in intrapreneurship or have done so in the past, or, are or have been engaged in the development of management activities aimed to promote intrapreneurship and innovation. Consequently, participants were grouped into two categories: managers and intrapreneurs. The decision is based on our assumption that employees who have been involved with intrapreneurship and management's activities to foster it, have a better overview and understanding of the topic at hand than those who have not or rarely been in contact with intrapreneurship and innovation.

Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way, which means that there were very few guiding themes selected previous to conducting the interview, while engaging with participants on an ad-hoc basis during the interview. Pre-selected questions mainly aimed at the how participants understand intrapreneurship at IBM, if and how IBM has supported them in their idea-to-product/service process and which 'managerial activities' helped them most, or needed improvement.

Interviews were either held via Skype or telephone conference call, as all interviewees are geographically spread out. All participants contributed voluntarily and each person was interviewed individually by both researchers at once. Interviews were held by both co-authors, while one took an active role of interviewing and the other of observing and reflecting. Additionally, interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed.

The following table provides information about the participants, and their respective categories assigned. Names have been changed in order to provide anonymity for all interviewees.

Table 3.1: Interviewees

Name	Category
Ken	Manager
Nick	Manager
Ben	Intrapreneur
Harry	Intrapreneur
Ian	Intrapreneur
Olivia	Intrapreneur
Steven	Intrapreneur
Tina	Intrapreneur
David	Intrapreneur; Manager

Secondary Data Collection

Literature

In order to create a substantial foundation for our discussion, we gathered secondary data from both contemporary as well as established literature. In this case, secondary data consists mainly of articles, books, journals and academic papers. To obtain this information, and in alignment with the hermeneutic circle, we collected secondary literature throughout the research project, constantly readjusting our focus based on our interview findings. Relevant literature was gathered mainly online, via Lund University's LUBSearch website, as well as Google, Google Scholar and Google Books. Additionally, we collected material from Lund University's libraries, with the main focus being on the Lund School of Economics and Management library.

Company Internal Information

Once we gained access to IBM's online sharing platform ESN, we were able to study the broader context surrounding our interviews and the phenomenon at hand. Internal information and documentation we obtained does not directly relate to intrapreneurship, and how it is understood by employees, but rather helps us draw a more holistic picture of IBM's view on intrapreneurship and innovation as a whole. Documents, in an online format, included newsletters, wiki entries, and blog entries.

Data Analysis

Our plan was to analyze empirical data simultaneously to collecting it, as it allows

us to make adjustments along the way, and to refine our interviewing questions or techniques. Moreover, by employing this approach we may collect more reliable and valid data (Merriam, 2002).

Once we had gathered empirical data, we thus started the process of transcribing the data to detect and define themes. The selected categories were based on simple thematic coding, therefore mainly repetition and the use of metaphors (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). This rather long list of themes helped us form a framework and focus on the relevant information. When reading the material a second and third time, our focus was much more on more sophisticated thematic coding, which is again based on structure and use of language. This means that we paid attention to unfamiliar terms, rhetoric such as metaphors or similarities and differences (Ryan and Bernard, 2003), and overall structure of the interviews. Rennstam (2016) calls this process ‘sorting, reducing and arguing’. After having read the interview transcripts several times, individually and as a team, the following themes were identified: Motivators, culture, programs, obstacles and IBM’s support. However, Ryan and Bernard (2003) stress that not all themes are equally significant and that researchers have to focus on the most salient themes. In order to establish the most salient meta-themes, we compared the interviews with the secondary data we had gathered from literature, not only to establish a broader picture but also to determine if there was any information that was missing in the data stemming from interviews. With the help of hermeneutics, we were therefore able to place bits of our interviews into a theoretical context and then to draw new conclusions for our interviews, and therefore, meta-themes.

3.2.3 Limitations

There are several limitations to this case study, some of which were unavoidable due to the sheer research project design. The ten weeks’ timeframe constrains the depth of specific parts of our research analysis. Due to the ambiguous and intangible nature of the phenomenon at hand, it is barely possible to draw a holistic picture within such a short time frame, and therefore, some aspects are not discussed as in-depth as desired. Moreover, the relatively small sample size of interviewees, in relation to IBM’s over 400,000 employees, hardly allows for a reliable, and therefore repeatable, research project. Additionally, we only met

participants during a ‘snap shot’ of their daily lives and were not able to observe whether actions resemble their statements, thus not allowing us to analyze at a deeper level, which requires a longitudinal observation period, potentially of several months.

Therefore, our research is not meant to provide a generalized picture of employees’ meaning-making of managerial activities to foster intrapreneurship but rather an inimitable case study – a glimpse into IBMer’s understanding of intrapreneurship and possible tensions surrounding the managerial activities to foster such behavior.

4 Findings

In the following chapter, we elaborate and present our findings by grouping them into three different themes. The different themes are Individual Level, Organizational Level and Tensions. For each theme, we developed a number of arguments, which are based on the interviews, quotes, and consequently, the interpretations we made. The arguments serve as a basis for further discussion in Chapter 5. The theme Individual Level offers insight into intrapreneurship, the perceived qualities and motivations of an intrapreneur and an understanding of the given culture at IBM, all from the perspective of the employee, and potential intrapreneur. The Organizational Level provides insight into the impact of both programs and culture on intrapreneurship, as understood by both management and intrapreneurs. Finally, in the last theme Tensions we provide insight into one of the most interesting discoveries we made throughout the research process: not all is golden, and intrapreneurs and management may perceive managerial activities to be controversial, or simply lacking. To provide the most holistic picture of the given situation, we decided to form three categories, present our findings largely in form of quotes in this chapter, while discussing them in relation to theory only in the next chapter.

4.1 The Individual Level

The individual level is divided into three categories, with each category representing one argument.

4.1.1 Entrepreneurial Predispositions

Argument: Intrapreneurship requires people with entrepreneurial predispositions.

Most participants describe intrapreneurs to have an intrapreneurial spirit, which is something that is intrinsic to the person, much like a predisposition or talent one has. Ken on this topic notes:

“[...] [Intrapreneurs] are just that way inside and they come up with new ideas themselves all the time and they’re very interested in how

things work, and in trying out new things, I think there's probably about 90% of the organization would like to but don't often get the chance [...]"

David further claims that:

"[...] [T]hese are people who are entrepreneurial – they are people who are proactive and who get involved and help shape things, so I think we attract those kind of people."

He goes even further when stating:

"[...] [T]his gets done through your DNA and what type of person, what type of human being you are, and, so it's a combination of both [nature and nurture]."

Tina, a young intrapreneur, describes her personal motivation as:

"[...] I love it, I think there is something you just feel like, and to be able to feel like, and I still feel like I am making a much better impact on these side things [...] because I am so passionate about it."

Ben adds:

"It was just because of myself or my aspirations in the company, so I started – I wanted to develop myself in that area of innovation, strategy, intrapreneurship. So because of the career plan I did before, so it was something coming from me."

Intrapreneurs are therefore understood as employees with a high intrinsic drive who take self-initiative and have a passion for innovation. Intrapreneurs, in our research, frequently refers to other intrapreneurs as 'people like me'. While intrapreneurship can be nurtured, intrapreneurs often times claim that a certain character quality is essential and serves as a basis for nurturing intrapreneurial skills. Olivia in this context states:

"The cohort that we [management] are trying to appeal to is forward thinkers, it is people who care about innovation, people who care

about progress. [...] I mean, there has got to be something there – it can be helped, it can be encouraged, it can be nurtured, but I think you need to have a predisposition to want to make a difference in the world, to want to transform, to want to make progress.”

“And if you are that sort of person [...] there are extraordinary opportunities for people who want to do this kind of work, who are passionate about this work.”

Thus, intrapreneurship is considered to be carried out by employees who have an intrapreneurial spirit to begin with. It is people who want to transform, who see a problem, and who make it their quest to find a solution to it. In many cases intrapreneurship is based on one’s inner ambition or passion to change something, while IBM seeks to support and further nurture these character qualities.

4.1.2 Intrinsic Motivation

Argument: The first motivator comes from within.

In close relation to the predisposition of an intrapreneur, we also found that many intrapreneurs and managers understand motivation to come from the individual, as opposed to an external factor. Intrapreneurs do intrapreneurship because they seek self-fulfilment and ownership, want to learn and grow, and want to feel empowered. Moreover, it is important to most participants to ‘be better’ for the benefit of the company, as well as, in an idealistic sense, for the world. Ian in this regard states:

“I value learning and I value teaching. So, I find that learning new things, a new way of doing things, helps me being more efficient at my job and I like to be there to help people. [...] I believe that it helps IBM to run more efficiently and it helps our people to make IBM a more valuable company [...].”

“[...] I do think it’s important for people to do things like that because they learn to be better citizens, citizens within the company, they learn to be better citizens in the world, they learn new tools, they learn new ways of doing things, they learn to work together with

people in other groups – so I think it’s a benefit to the individual and to the company as a whole.”

“I believe that in the long run those intrinsic values will serve to increase things like process and engagement – I think a lot of it comes back to engagement as employees, and I believe that employees that are engaged and employees that enjoy their tasks and the people that they work with make better employees and serve the company goals better than if they’re not engaged and they are not enjoying their jobs or if they don’t like the people that they work with.”

Harry mentions that self-fulfilment and ownership are vital motivators:

“[...] I think it’s successful because there is no pressure, there is no business directly behind this, it’s something that people use to express themselves.”

“[...] [S]elf-direction is a key for bringing the best out of people and making them proud of what they do and getting them to take full ownership, which means not just deliver for some function that was in the requirements set, but make sure that it has all the features that they themselves would probably love to have.”

Steven goes further in his statement, saying that intrinsic motivation needs to be given at any point in order to be prepared for an opportunity to serve IBM:

“[...] [Y]ou constantly need to keep growing and adding to your inventory of skills, and so when you do that, opportunities come at different points in our careers, but if you aren’t constantly growing and continuously learning, you may not be the person, that the opportunity needs when the opportunity comes.”

While most participants stated intrinsic motivators, there are also external factors that influence intrapreneurship. The two examples below demonstrate that an external trigger can provide the necessary push for innovation as well.

“[...] [W]hy I started to build this tool because I couldn’t survive without the tool.” – Harry

“[...] [O]ur chairman’s challenge to employees at the time, called ‘make the most of this moment’ [was] that got me thinking about what I could do to make the most of this moment and that is what I did, I started the community [...]” – David

That intrinsic motivation is highly important becomes evident looking at the following two statements, which exemplify that internal motivation is not only beneficial but crucial in intrapreneurship:

“And really, when you boil right down to it, most people in IBM that are intrapreneurial and innovative in their work, most of them are the ones doing that on their own – I don’t think there [are] many that are encouraged by their management to be that way, I think for the most part you’ll find that a lot of these people are doing this on their own.” – Ian

“It is not going to be handed to you on a plate. So for anybody who cares enough to put effort and time into developing this into a set of skills, there are endless opportunities.” – Olivia

As can be noted, most intrapreneurs state intrinsic values and a genuine interest in innovating, and supporting the business to be their main motivators to be intrapreneurial. In addition, while some intrapreneurs mention external triggers, it can be noticed that they are easily encouraged, and generally do not need specific management encouragement, but have a personal, internal desire to develop themselves further.

4.1.3 Collaborative Culture

Argument: Collaborative culture is key to intrapreneurship.

IBM’s culture is perceived as a culture based on collaboration, knowledge communities and communities of practice, which serve as a basis for several subcultures, which are completely independent of IBM’s formal structure and official roles. Participants consequently describe collaboration, the principle of helping and supporting each other, as the most important aspects of the culture. David explains how this particular culture impacts the intrapreneurship process:

“So, it is part of your culture, the people that you collaborate with, you need to collaborate with, to do anything important in a large organization; those people have the same mentality and are equally as collaborative and supportive. [...] [I]t’s people who are either motivated and they drive these things to success or they don’t [...] – the impact on the employee and ultimately the way that your peers or colleagues choose or don’t choose to collaborate with you.”

Other participants further mention:

“[T]hrough all these connections you make via Connections and your network, there are a lot of people who are willing to donate their time to your work efforts or your ideas that you’ve proposed.” – Steven

“Well, the community is something that is there, that has material that anyone can use, have access to and is a very good help in order to develop the strategy [...]” – Ben

In the following, three interviewees reflect on how the work environment is central to the realization of intrapreneurial thinking. They highlight the learning-engaging atmosphere:

“I think that’s really super amazing about IBM, if you want to figure out how to do something, there is a course out there, there is a subject matter expert, it’s up to you to reach out to them and make that happen.” – Steven

“I find participating in something like that is not only a group experience but it’s also a way for you to meet other people and learn what other parts of IBM are doing. And the more that we learn, we make new connections and learn about how things are done in other parts of IBM – the better that we can work together and that when we need to.” – Ian

“Sametime (Connections’ messenger) is very enabling – it’s a very open company. And everyone has that at IBM in common, so everyone is happy to help each other out.” – Tina

Harry comments on how this new culture, based on communities and networking, got introduced to IBM in the late 1990's:

“[...] [I]n the mid 90s people started to say ‘we are interested in what you think, what are your suggestions, we really want to listen’. People said ‘yeah, understand’ (laughs), but they were serious so and these were the mechanisms where people started to network and develop their own ideas and so I think that has changed IBM quite dramatically. [It was] never possible in the old IBM, starting with setting up the knowledge communities, communities of practice that were not part of standard business line of command, but it was a grass root movement.”

Several interviewees, however, mention that, while these communities and the culture at large are enabling them to work collaboratively on projects and intrapreneurship, they have to do so during their private time:

“[...] [W]anting to volunteer their time. So they got their day job, 40+ hours a week, and then they are willing to commit, you know, 10 hours a week more to learning games.” – Steven

“We run it like a start-up, there is no real funding it's basically a volunteer effort by the people who are, you know, passionate about seeing it succeed.” – David

A collaborative culture is considered to be given at IBM, and many participants mention the positive impact of this purportedly unique and dynamic environment. However, this culture is not a natural precondition, but something that was actively introduced and encouraged by management, roughly 20 years ago. And while intrapreneurship is, in alliance, actively promoted, interviewees mention the lack of time attributed to those activities, whilst praising employees' willingness to 'go the extra mile' as part of the collaborative and engaging culture.

4.2 The Organizational Level

The organizational level is divided into three categories, with each category representing one argument.

4.2.1 Formalized Program Initiatives

Argument: Formalized program initiatives support intrapreneurial behavior.

From our interviews, we found that IBM offers numerous formalized program initiatives and social tooling, such as internal games, communities, competitions and learning opportunities, in order to stimulate employees intrapreneurial behavior and trigger opportunities for intrapreneurship. These program initiatives are generally used to empower people to bring their own ideas to life and to provide the social connections additional to one's core group. Employees use these connections to talk to or to share ideas with like-minded people. Nick states:

“This brings out things, formal initiatives, like Cognitive Build, ifundIT, shark tanks and so on. And they make it both possible and encouraged to do some new thinking but also makes it okay to put time and effort into something that may be new, disturbing, disruptive, revolutionary and so on.”

Ben adds:

“[...] [The development of my idea] is also thanks to another program, that was launched by the corporation starting in 2014 as an internal community for intrapreneurship and also calling for people who wanted to be intrapreneurs to launch and submit ideas in order to develop a new business for IBM.”

Some of these program initiatives are even used to provide a framework for employees to try their ideas out and get results, so that they can present them to their respective business units. Ken explains:

“[...] but we do provide a means for people to develop that and bring it to a Proof of Concept to try out in the organization and if the organization likes it or it works well, then we can get it; they can then bring it to their business owners ‘hey this is working, this is good process, here are the results, you should fund [it] to do more or to make it a business process’.”

Still, many of the participants mention that those formalized program initiatives need to be executed in a correct way and carefully managed in order to successfully support intrapreneurship and an intrapreneurial culture. They state that management has to formally organize play and provide organized freedom around intrapreneurial program initiatives to not lose focus. Nick therefore claims, that:

“It takes a lot of management and care of what you do and how you prepare it, what you get out of it, to make some value of these different things.”

“And that’s where the tools like innovation hubs and the Cognitive Build [...] popped up. But they also have to be managed carefully so that they’re not just losing focus [...]”

However, most of the participants not only see formalized programs, but also the corporate culture as an enabling factor of intrapreneurship and intrapreneurial behavior.

4.2.2 Enabling Corporate Culture

Argument: The organization needs to provide an enabling culture.

During our research, we found that many interviewees highlight the importance of an enabling culture in order to foster intrapreneurial behavior among employees. In 1995, then CEO Lou Gerstner started a cultural change in the direction of intrapreneurship, which was, on one hand, seen as a grass root movement, but on the other hand considered as a half-hearted attempt to change the corporate culture, because it has not been distributed through all hierarchy levels. Harry states that:

“[...] and he (Lou Gerstner) was the first who was doing a lot of things to change the IBM culture, and intrapreneurship was one of his very specific mantras, one of the cultural changes that he wanted to drive.”

“[...] [I]n the mid 90s people started to say ‘we are interested in what you think, what are your suggestions, we really want to listen’. People

said ‘yeah, understand’ (laughs), but they were serious so and these were the mechanisms where people started to network and develop their own ideas and so I think that has changed IBM quite dramatically.”

“So in that sense, a lot of things have happened since 1995 or around that time, that were never possible in the old IBM, starting with setting up the knowledge communities, the communities of practice that were not part of standard business line of command, but it was a grass root movement.”

In this regards, Olivia adds:

“It’s like a disruptive shift, really, that we kind of manufactured in order to create that opportunity for people.”

Other participants reflect on IBM’s struggle of distributing cultural change among all hierarchical levels. They do recognize the positive attempt by management while at the same time elaborating on the difficulties that are still ongoing as of today:

“The key for doing this in an organized way is not to provide the tools and get people engaged, because people, the workers, have always liked to do it. It is actually doing this cultural change to all the management hierarchy levels, and that was difficult in the past so that never happened.” – Harry

“[...] but the problem is that if they’ve only done as far [...] – a feeble attempt, I guess you could say – then [the programs] don’t get ingrained into the culture and I think that’s part of the problem that we have; is that we’re starting up programs to try to get them ingrained in the culture, but we’re not working at the whole organizational change perspective to make it drive the culture. So, I think there [are] attempts to try to change the culture within IBM but they’re half-hearted. They’re not done in a correct manner.” – Ian

In their statements, it is noticeable how reflective participants of this research are

not only of the conditions for cultural change, but also of the difficulties that are associated with it. Employees were very open and sharing about their experiences with change, and managerial activities in general.

More recently, IBM (2016) has integrated innovative behavior into their corporate values, encouraging their employees to create “innovation that matters – for the company and for the world” and putting emphasis on treasuring ‘wild ducks’. Most of the participants perceive intrapreneurship as being a key part of how IBMers operate and as part of what IBM is. The following quotes show how Olivia, David and Ken experience the incorporation of IBM’s values and their effect on innovative behavior:

“And it’s all through our values, [...] the value of innovation that matters [...]” – Olivia

“[Intrapreneurship] is basically part of what IBM is [...]” – Olivia

“One of our statements is ‘innovation that matters’, so this is an important thing. If you work for IBM and in an innovative environment that’s what it gives, that’s what it enables. It’s inspirational, it has a great culture for someone like me and others like me.” – David

“I mean the only way you’re going to solve problems is by being innovative, so people are being innovative all the time in what they do [...] for me it’s a key part of how we all operate.” – Ken

In line with that, most of the participants state that IBM has a culture of innovation – a start-up culture – where being innovative and intrapreneurial is not only allowed but also expected from everyone and in certain cases even incorporated in the job description. Thus, the intrapreneurial culture is seen as an organic element in the company, supporting intrapreneurial actions. Participants express this by saying:

“[...] so if they want to be innovative, and by the way, they are expected to be [...]” – Ken

“On the one hand, there was a clear official encouragement, so every IBMer has to do [intrapreneurship] – I am an architect in my profession, so I part of the architect profession’s way of life is [to] give back, so if you don’t provide something for the community – it’s not

really defined, it could be intellectual capital, it could be mentoring, it could be any of these unofficial community oriented activities – If you don't do that, you cannot be an architect, okay? You can't get certification.” – Harry

“[Intrapreneurship] has been an organic element [...]” – Olivia

In order to establish an innovative culture, official support is crucial. By celebrating and recognizing innovative outcomes, IBM's employees feel empowered. Thus, IBM reinforces intrapreneurial behavior and the intrapreneurial culture. In this regards, Ken states that:

“And then the last thing is, when we do get an idea and implement it, celebrating that and recognizing it, and mak[e] sure that it's publicized, so that you can keep reinforcing the behavior [...]”

Nick goes even further by saying that IBM needs to establish a culture where it is accepted to be your own competitor:

“You need to have an organization where it's okay to be competing with your own solutions, with your own thing, so that you're not being killed off by an external, but being killed off by an internal competitor when the time is right.”

However, Harry emphasizes that intrapreneurship needs to be tolerated consistently in order to establish an intrapreneurial culture by saying:

“[...] and I think what they need to do is, they need to at least tolerate it consistently.”

Having an intrapreneurial culture and programs to foster intrapreneurship seem to both be important and of great value for IBM's employees. Thus, our aim is to find out more about the relationship between culture and programs, and whether IBM's employees think that both are necessary, that one component would suffice, or that they are mutually dependent.

4.2.3 Interplay of Programs and Culture

Argument: Intrapreneurship is a multifaceted phenomenon.

“It’s like baking a cake, you need more than just flour, you need multiple ingredients or the cake doesn’t come out right.” – David

Most of the participants indicate that both methods – formalized programs and an enabling culture – are needed in order to foster intrapreneurship. Some of the participants state that the corporate culture is essential and of higher value and formalized programs can only support the culture. Others believe that they are equally important and mutually dependent, because the community associated to the culture helps and supports in general, and the formalized programs support developing something concrete. Participants holding the prior point of view state:

“I think it’s a chicken and an egg kind of thing. Because you need to have programs like this [...] to help to influence the culture [...]. So, yes, I believe that culture is more important but we have to have programs to support it, but the programs have to be done correctly in order to make that culture change.” – Ian

“I think, the most important thing that you need is management commitment. If people feel that their management team [is] visually committed and are asking ‘how are we being innovative here, what are we doing’, I think, if people hear that and see that in operation, then you don’t need to have a formal system, because it will happen. But I think if people don’t see that type of thing coming, then you need to have the formality to force it.” – Ken

Participants with the latter point of view, like David, state:

“[...] culture is just the environment and it’s one important contributing factor, it’s probably the empowering factor, the key enabler but once you have set on the path of innovation, you have to have all of those other things.”

“[...] but ultimately we need more than just one community, we need more programs, we need more emphasis on those types of innovation.”

“[...] they are sort of co-equal in importance, you have to have support, you have to have funding, you have to have a process that you’re following, that gets you from point A to point B, you have to have people who are collaborating with you, those people have to have the right set of skills to contribute, to help you get to the outcome, because no one person is going to have all the skills necessary.”

In the end, it seems like most of the participants think that a supportive corporate culture is the fundament for intrapreneurship, but also believe that culture and formalized managerial activities are equally important and in a way mutually dependent. It was especially interesting to see that participants of this study describe the relationship between open and formalized management activities to be of a reciprocal nature, therefore reinforcing each other. We thus assume, formal management is part of culture in the workplace and hence can be difficult to separate out from culture.

4.3 Tensions

The subchapter Tensions is divided into three categories, with each category representing one argument.

4.3.1 Cultural Orientation versus Organizational Practice

Argument: There is a discrepancy between cultural orientation and organizational practice.

The first tension we discovered in most of our interviews was the discrepancy between IBM’s cultural orientation and their organizational practice, as most of the participants stress the missing link between upper management and lower management. The participants found no goal alignment and no clear management style distributed throughout the company. They further state that there is high support from corporate top management, encouraging innovation and intrapreneurship and recognizing achievements. However, they also criticize that upper management does not send a clear message about the intrapreneurial culture, which leads to a big discrepancy within the corporate management culture

and management style. They say that there is no encouragement from lower management, some even go further and claim that lower management restraints intrapreneurship, as they see intrapreneurship as wasting time and energy. Most of the participants thus wish for more support and acceptance on lower management level, and say that a mind change is needed in the lower level key decision makers. Following, we provide some exemplary statements:

”I think upper management at a very high level at IBM was behind the Cognitive Build, all of the top management, [...], but I never heard anything from my manager other than maybe passing down an email that said ‘we should get involved’, but there was not really any management support at the lower levels.” – Ian

“I do believe that at least at the lower levels of management, there needs to be more support for intrapreneurial and innovative work that people do.” – Ian

“[...] I had situations where my management would come and say ‘what are you doing there, why are you wasting energy for stuff that doesn’t help our unit?’” – Harry

“[...] you’re getting something that in a way is from top level management, congratulating you for your work, but my direct manager hasn’t said anything to me about it.” – Ian

“But one thing that is missing is that those people in the business should have to be more receptive, more willing to listen to intrapreneurs, more reachable. [...] It’s very good at corporate or very high global level, but then, that new mindset needs to get within the business key decision leaders as well, not only at the Innovation level or Innovation leaders who are already pushing for it.” – Ben

“I think that lower level management needs to be more involved, supporting some of those initiatives and trying to be more innovative. I mean, how can we be better at doing work, if management doesn’t support innovation at the bottom level?” – Ian

“I definitely think that IBM needs to work on somehow attaching the top, the goals that top management level has, with management at the lower levels, because there always seems to be a disconnect there,

and a reason for that, I believe, is that lower level management is being told that they need to make their numbers and they need to get utilization for all their team members [...]” – Ian

“And I think that’s the reason why upper level management puts value on it but the problem is, that they’re not sending the same message to lower level management because they’re telling lower level management ‘we need you to make your numbers’ and those two things do not mix too well.” – Ian

In summary, participants emphasize especially on the missing link between upper management and lower management style, and communication practices. This leads to a rather big discrepancy between corporate management’s goals and daily execution. Interviewees criticize lower management’s lack of support and acceptance for intrapreneurial activities. Intrapreneurs express their wish for a mind change, aiming towards a more intrapreneurial culture.

4.3.2 Bureaucracy

Argument: Bureaucracy constrains intrapreneurship.

Especially the last two quotes by Ian lead us to the next tension we detected. Most of the participants perceive utilization as something valued higher than intrapreneurship, meaning in consequence that intrapreneurship is valued less than daily business. Some participants further claim that management believes that intrapreneurship takes away from full utilization, and that it is only being encouraged in order to support IBM’s competitive advantage or when there is a need for innovation. Participants say that management, especially lower management, is too focused on measurable outcomes and business results. They state:

“There is this official encouragement, but in the end if the business results were critical, then all of that is quickly forgotten.” – Harry

“I mean, when it gets right down to it, it’s more like ‘are we making our numbers, are we making money, are we maintaining our costs and are we making the share price for IBM’s stock raise?’” – Ian

“It is a tricky thing to do intrapreneurship, it is a tricky thing to achieve something out of intrapreneurship. [...] it’s a difficult balance to build new stuff internally, to have intrapreneurship. At the same time, you want new ideas, you want crazy ideas, you want new markets, you want to have clients. At the same time, you want to be able to kill off ideas, that are not going to pay off, that are either just too internally focused or take a lot of resources but not really give a lot off, they are not moving the needle forward, they are not moving the solutions that are called for in a real sense. And [...] you want people to get to the new and interesting and fascinating stuff, so they can grow and become fantastic parts of the organization.” – Nick

An additional tension, which is closely related to the missing link between upper level management communication and lower level management execution, was bureaucracy at large. Most of the participants identified people, outdated procedures and complex bureaucratic steps that prolong processes as barriers that hinder intrapreneurship. One of the interviewees even referred to such barriers as ‘trolls’. The following quotes of Steven are examples of what they mention:

“There are trolls at IBM, and they are people and processes that restrict what you can do.”

“And so over that time, there have been processes and procedures that keep getting more and more lengthy, as new requirements get on and on, and sometimes that process or procedure that made sense five years ago doesn’t really anymore, but it’s still in there, in the loop.”

“Too many times I talk to people and they feel beaten down or defeated, and you just need to keep going.”

Concluding, interviewees express that bureaucracy, processes and so called ‘trolls’ hinder them in their intrapreneurial behavior. Intrapreneurs therefore seek to have more freedom to decrease the current limitations imposed on them by the organizational structure.

4.3.3 Resource Limitations

Argument: Resource dependencies constrain intrapreneurship, especially financial and time-related resources.

Another major tension is related to funding issues. Many of the participants criticize that they feel restricted in being intrapreneurial, not only due to budget constraints and control on budget but also due to the difficulty to receive funding and sponsorships. However, we also found out that IBM's current focus regarding intrapreneurship is on ifundIT, IBM's internal crowdfunding, and its facilitation in order to provide the backend process, the process of raising the funds. Still, ifundIT makes funding available for developed ideas and viable projects. We interviewed both intrapreneurial employees and a manager of ifundIT and they state:

“The most important point I would say is this one about getting sponsorship because all the current existing help is helping until reaching to this point. But in order to launch a new business, starting the execution the key point is sponsorship.” – Ben

“You have to have ideas, those ideas have to be viable, they have to be validated. It depends all on your idea [...]” – David

“[...] but I guess, it assumes that people have had the chance to think through their project idea and put some flesh on it [...]” – Ken

“[...] people are maybe not willing to go the extra mile, especially if there is no way that they're going to get funding, so they have to do it on their own, without any support really from the organization and that can be the difficulty [...]” – Ken

“I think the main barrier is that if people believe they don't get support from the organization in a formal way, people therefore feel that – that there is no point.” – Ken

In line with the lack of financial support and funding, we found that employees also perceive a lack of released time. They say that they have no additional time set aside in order to be intrapreneurial and that it has to happen next to the IBM

tasks. Moreover, the high business pressure leads to less spare time and thus less time for individual projects and intrapreneurship. In the end, the intrapreneurs must be willing to donate their spare time to those intrapreneurship initiatives, additionally to their daily job. Some of the participants explain:

“[...] in the end, this is not actually my real job, so all this has been done in a long period of time, because the time I’ve been able to do this, has always been in my spare time.” – Ben

“I think the problem that people have is: they are busy and their day job takes up every hour that they have, so if they want to be innovative, [...], they feel that maybe that is different to their normal job, that that’s not supported, whereas actually what we’re trying to do is to encourage people to come up with new ideas, [...] that makes their job easier, or new ideas that may develop into products as well for IBM.” – Ken

“This (intrapreneurship) is all strictly done in my spare time, so it’s not my job [...]” – Harry

“I think that’s something IBM could learn from, the more you empower people [...] I live, breathe and think about this job, and I enjoy it. So it’s not like a burden, it’s not like I am looking at it like ‘wow, I have to put in this extra time’.” – Steven

Overall, time and money were identified as two of the main barriers that hinder employees from acting intrapreneurially. Due to a greater emphasis on daily tasks and very limited room to focus on personal projects, interviewees expressed their discontent concerning these areas of tension for IBM’s intrapreneurship strategy and corporate support.

4.4 Summary

In this chapter, we presented and elaborated on the findings made throughout this research. Findings were mainly focused on three different areas: individual level, organizational level and tensions, all based on the perceptions employees

in general, and intrapreneurs in particular, at IBM have. For each main area, we defined different arguments, based on the interviews conducted.

On the individual level, participants mainly stated that there are certain qualities ‘the intrapreneur’ has to have – something that is in the DNA. Thus, while these predispositions were not coherent among interviewees, all mention that intrapreneurs ought to be passionate about making an impact, need to be thinking about the future, and show great commitment towards their own projects. This is closely linked to the idea that intrapreneurs’ motivation is mainly intrinsic; that intrapreneurship is something they seek to do and will overcome obstacles, such as bureaucracy, procedures and other potential barriers, due to their high personal motivation to achieve something valuable for themselves, the organization, and in an idealistic sense, for the world. At IBM, participants perceive to be encouraged by a collaborative culture, and other employees who they describe to be like-minded people.

On the organizational level, there are different opinions regarding the perceived importance of both formalized management initiatives and an enabling culture. While all participants in essence agree that both components are crucial to provide intrapreneurs with the necessary support, there are two popular opinions: firstly, the view that an enabling culture is the basis for intrapreneurship, and formalized programs support an enabling culture, and secondly, the opinion that both culture and programs are co-equal, like ingredients to a cake, which support and reinforce each other for a better outcome.

While all participants stated how content they were with the working environment, and the support of intrapreneurship at IBM, there are a few aspects that are the root for tensions. These aspects have been identified as the discrepancy between cultural orientation from top level management and organizational practice on a daily basis, bureaucracy at large, and the scarceness of time and funding available for intrapreneurship. In our findings, it also became clear, that IBM does offer funding, but that intrapreneurs are required to invest substantial amounts of their personal free time to develop an idea to a point where it is viable enough to receive funding. Overall, and this is in line with the characteristics associated with an intrapreneur, interviewees were happy to invest their personal time in order to see their ideas come to life, and be a valuable asset to IBM.

5 Analysis & Discussion

In the following chapter, we combine both theory and empirical findings to discuss and analyze the material at hand in order to attach meaning to the findings presented. We discuss how employees perceive both culture and programs on an individual as well as on an organizational level, while lastly pointing out and analyzing the tensions that employees face when engaging in intrapreneurship at IBM.

5.1 The Individual Level

In this sub-chapter, the focus is largely on the intrapreneur himself and the characteristics associated to him, his motivations as well as his perception of the given culture at IBM. While we simply present and describe the findings on these topics in the previous chapter, our main focus will be on placing the findings in greater context and assigning meaning to them by discussing them in depth. Therefore, the focus remains on the arguments introduced in the previous chapters: ‘Intrapreneurship requires people with entrepreneurial predispositions’, ‘The first motivator comes from within’ and ‘Collaborative culture is key’.

Argument: Intrapreneurship requires people with entrepreneurial predispositions.

In the literature review, we find several attributes that have been ascribed to ‘the intrapreneur’, which are mostly considered to be characteristics, or internal predispositions that prompt people, even when working in an employee-position, to act in an entrepreneurial spirit. Pinchot (1985) describes intrapreneurs to have certain characteristics such as problem-solving skills, a sense for responsibility and the urge to change the status quo. We see that intrapreneurs and managers at IBM alike use these attributes, and more, to describe themselves and others as well. They mention that intrapreneurs are “interested in trying out new things” (Ken, 2016), thus meaning that they are curious and question the given situation, in order to possibly provide meaningful solutions for the future. These viewpoints very much align with Hisrich’s (1986) claim that intrapreneurs ought to have a critical view towards the system as a whole.

Intrapreneurs are therefore employees with a high intrinsic drive who take self-initiative and have a passion for innovation. Intrapreneurs frequently refer to other intrapreneurs as ‘people like me’. While intrapreneurship can be nurtured, intrapreneurs often times claim that a certain character quality is essential and serves as a basis for nurturing intrapreneurial skills.

Moreover, Pinchot (1985) as well as Luchsinger and Bagby (1987) portray intrapreneurs as people who are proactive in their actions, like to take responsibility and have an intrinsic desire to see their ideas come to life. Intrapreneurs are said to have high levels of self-confidence and are not set back easily (Pinchot, 1985; Bitzer, 1991; Wunderer and Bruch, 2000). At IBM, we find that intrapreneurs are highly driven to see their ideas turn into products and Tina explains that for her a key aspect is to make an impact with her intrapreneurial work. In respect to the proactive nature participants mention that intrapreneurs are people who “get involved and help shape” (David, 2016). Additionally, the term ‘forward thinker’ is stated several times, suggesting that intrapreneurs are considered to be proactive and to think one step ahead.

While there are many skills mentioned in the interviews that align with the theory presented in the literature, the most interesting finding was that participants of this study do not ascribe a certain set of talents, or predispositions, but rather seem to associate a certain type of person with the term ‘intrapreneur’. According to their understanding, an intrapreneur is a ‘type of human being’ and intrapreneurs are shaped in this particular way through their DNA, who care about innovation, progress and who want to transform. Thus, even though there was no coherent skill set or set of predispositions described during the interviews, participants of this study perceive intrapreneurs to have certain entrepreneurial talents that others do not possess, but that form the basis for intrapreneurial success.

Argument: The first motivator comes from within.

The argument of ‘the first motivator comes from within’ the intrapreneur is closely related to the idea of one having entrepreneurial predispositions that allow for intrapreneurial behavior. According to Pinchot (1985), intrapreneurs are intrinsically motivated, which means that an employee is naturally driven to successfully develop and implement innovative ideas within an organizational setting. Pin-

chot, as well as other authors, rarely define the concept of intrinsic motivation further. However, at IBM, we see a clear tendency towards certain intrinsic drivers that are shared by many participants. On the one hand, intrapreneurs mention learning and teaching, while on the other hand it is aspects such as ownership of a project or self-fulfillment that roots in developing and implementing one's personal ideas. Ownership is important to IBM's intrapreneurs, as it does not only provide the freedom to work on one's projects without external pressures, but also allows for the intrapreneurs to be celebrated and valued based on their achievements.

Luchsinger and Bagby (1987) further note the 'need for achievement' to be an implicit motive for intrapreneurial behavior. That statement suggests a desire to deliver a performance, achieve success and to be able to 'own' the process of one's work. This aligns with the argument stated above, as well as with IBM's intrapreneurs' desire to achieve greater goals, not only for their individual development but also for the company – and in a greater sense for the world.

While achievements, ownership, self-fulfillment and other intrinsic motivators support the intrapreneur in the most organic way possible, it is noteworthy that in both theory and practice, intrapreneurs accept long working hours and have to demonstrate high levels of personal commitment towards their projects (Pinchot, 1985; Luchsinger and Bagby, 1987; Bitzer, 1991). At IBM, intrapreneurs spend time on their intrapreneurial projects mainly in their spare time, which shows high levels of personal interest and commitment towards project. At the same time, it suggests that internal drivers help intrapreneurs overcome obstacles, such as time limitations in order to fulfill their desire for achievement and to take ownership of a project.

In conclusion, it can be noted that the theory presented aligns very much with the perceptions the interviewees have of intrinsic motivation. A fitting quote from one of the participants summarizes the understanding intrapreneurs have of the inter-dependency of intrinsic motivation and external drivers perfectly: "First motivator comes from within, second motivator is the environment and they very much interact" (Ken, 2016).

Argument: Collaborative culture is key.

In academic literature, it is assumed that collaboration within a whole company supports intrapreneurship for various reasons, such as knowledge creation and sharing, supporting each other's ideas and projects and exchanging feedback with co-workers. Working within a collaborative corporate culture stimulates, motivates and inspires the employee's, which results in a higher intrapreneurial orientation (Fayol, 1916). Moreover, many scholars find that intrapreneurship is dependent on social interaction and contact with knowledgeable others. This assumes that collaboration and interaction leads to further intrapreneurship and thus, innovation (Newell et al. 2002; Nonaka 1994; Wikström et al. 1993).

Several interviewees identify collaboration as one of the most important aspects of the corporate culture in order to enhance intrapreneurship. In our research, we find that IBM's enterprise social network IBMConnections is perceived as providing a corporate network for collaboration and interaction within knowledge communities and communities of practice, which are seen as the basis for several subcultures leading to one innovative and collaborative corporate culture. In that regard, IBM's culture is perceived as very open and its employees as very supportive and helpful – especially since the mid 1990s, where IBM's culture was intended to crucially change in the direction of intrapreneurship because IBM started to set up the communities and people started to network and to develop their own ideas. The platform provides a network, where employees can engage in discussion, share their ideas and benefit from the wisdom of the crowd. In order to get information or more knowledge on different subjects, IBM's network provides courses, and the opportunity for one to reach out to a subject matter expert and get support. Thus, IBMConnections is perceived as generating social connections and a sense of community. Interviewees experience participating in this community as a group experience, as a way to meet other people and learn about their parts of IBM and thus being able work together successfully. One of the participants, David, perceives that collaboration – meaning helping and supporting each other – is necessary in order to “do anything important in a large organization”.

Overall, most of the interviewees mention that IBM's network and the culture at large are enabling them to work collaboratively on projects and intrapreneurship. Thus, a collaborative culture is considered to be given at IBM, and many partic-

ipants mention the positive impact of this engaging and dynamic environment. However, this culture is not a natural precondition, but something that was actively introduced and encouraged by management, roughly 20 years ago. And while intrapreneurship is, in alliance, actively promoted, interviewees mention the lack of time attributed to those activities, whilst praising employees' willingness to 'go the extra mile' as part of the collaborative and engaging culture.

5.2 The Organizational Level

Argument: Formalized program initiatives support intrapreneurial behavior.

In the literature review, it is said that intrapreneurship can be supported by formalized managerial activities, which allow IBM's employees to share, develop and fund their ideas and projects. Authors like Antoncic and Hisrich (2001) and Barringer and Bluedorn (1999) assume a positive relationship between intrapreneurship and formalized management activities, which is supported by a survey conducted by McKinsey in 2010 showing that organizations with formal innovation processes report higher success rates. Generally, IBM's formalized programs were designed to foster intrapreneurship and to aid in accelerating new offering to market and leveraging new businesses. Since 2012, IBM also provides open and inclusive funding initiatives, which aim at supporting employees to progress with their innovative ideas or projects and at getting them funded for implementation.

In our interviews, we found that there is an abundance of formalized program initiatives and social tooling offered at IBM, which encourage employees intrapreneurial behavior and propose opportunities for intrapreneurship while empowering people to bring their own ideas to life. Interviewees say that they feel encouraged by the formalized programs and that they allow putting time and effort into intrapreneurial activities. They perceive those initiatives launched by the corporation to be leading to actual products, services, etc. to be launched and thus, to new business for IBM. Some of the formalized programs provide a framework for intrapreneurs to try out their ideas and see if they work well, and present them to their respective business owners and try to make it a business process.

However, several interviewees mentioned that, in order to successfully support intrapreneurship and an intrapreneurial culture, the formalized program initiatives need to be executed in a correct way as well as carefully managed. In their perception, management needs to formally organize intrapreneurial play to keep the intrapreneurial actions focus. Participants state that the implementation and execution of intrapreneurial programs need a lot of management and care in order to make value out of it.

Argument: The organization needs to provide an enabling culture.

As discussed before, research has shown that an organization needs to provide an enabling culture in order to support and encourage employees to act and think intrapreneurially. Vesper (1984) said that management needs to establish an intrapreneurial culture in order to have employees develop new ideas and innovations without being asked, expected or given permission. In an enabling culture, intrapreneurial work is appreciated and encouraged and intrapreneurs receive inspiration and mental support. In order to establish this kind of culture, employees need to feel encouraged to be innovative, creative and flexible in the course of their daily routine work tasks and activities (Fastnacht, 2009). As said before, intrapreneurship needs to be embedded in the overall culture of the business, thus needs to be embraced, acknowledged and celebrated, and perceived as a core practice aiming towards the organizational goals.

Likewise stated in the literature review, one of IBM's core values is calling for 'Innovation that matters – for our company and for the world' and its associated practices 'restlessly reinvent – our company and ourselves', 'dare to create original ideas' and 'treasure wild ducks'. Not surprisingly, most of the interviewees not only knew of that particular value but also mentioned it during the conversation. Some interviewees also put emphasis on 'treasuring the wild ducks' in regards to IBM's corporate culture. Most of the interviewees expressed that IBM incorporates their values, thus having a positive effect on their innovative behavior. They perceive the culture, and especially that particular corporate value, as inspirational and motivating. However, IBMers we interviewed were also honest and willing to share about a noticeable disconnect between the cultural orientation that is aimed for by corporate management and the culture that is experienced on a daily basis, which does not always support intrapreneurial

actions, due to the need for meeting corporate goals, numbers, and managing their daily workload. This disconnect that employees experience might be due to the cultural change attempt, which Lou Gerstner introduced in 1995 and which is still ongoing with many areas that are too stiff, too bureaucratic or simply do not support employees in their quest to intrapreneurship.

In line with that, the participants state that IBM has a culture of innovation, where being innovative and intrapreneurial is not only allowed but expected from everyone, and sometimes even incorporated in the job description. From our interviews, it seems like IBM started to change its culture in the direction of intrapreneurship under Lou Gerstner in 1995, which was perceived as a grass root movement. The interviewees say that management started to seriously ask about their opinions and suggestions and that they were listening to the employees wishes and ideas. Back then, IBM started to set up the networks, the knowledge communities and the communities of practice, and based on that movement, the employees started to network and develop their own ideas, thus acting with an intrapreneurial mindset. This movement was perceived a disruptive shift that created an opportunity for people to be intrapreneurial. Hence, intrapreneurship is seen as being a key part of how IBMers operate and as part of what IBM is after this shift. The intrapreneurial culture is perceived as an organic element in IBM, supporting intrapreneurial actions.

However, some interviewees emphasize that intrapreneurship needs to be tolerated consistently in order to establish an intrapreneurial culture. Therefore, official management support is crucial. The employees feel empowered by the celebration and recognition of innovative outcomes, which reinforces intrapreneurial behavior and the intrapreneurial culture. Some of the interviewees considered that cultural change as a half-hearted attempt, because it still has not been distributed through all management hierarchy levels even though it exists for roughly 20 years by now. As this issue seems to be a great tension, we decided to discuss the discrepancy between different management hierarchy levels later in the course of its own argument stated in Chapter 4.3 Tensions.

Argument: Intrapreneurship is a multifaceted phenomenon.

Given the analysis above, having an intrapreneurial culture and formalized programs initiatives to foster intrapreneurship are both crucial and of great value

for IBM's employees. Investigating further into the relationship of the corporate culture and the formalized initiatives, it shows that there are principally two different opinions about their relation. However, in general, both parties indicated that both methods are needed in order to foster intrapreneurship.

Some interviewees recognize the corporate culture to be essential for intrapreneurship and thus, more important and of greater value. They state that culture is the empowering factor, the key enabler. They believe that formalized program initiatives can only support the culture, can be used to make people notice management's commitment, and that they are allowed and expected to act and think intrapreneurial, or to force people to be innovative.

Others interviewees consider corporate culture and formalized program initiatives as equally important and mutually dependent. They perceive the community associated to the culture as generally helping and supporting, and the formalized programs as supporting the development of something concrete. They state that culture is only the environment and once you have established that, you need to have all of the other initiatives as well.

Although these viewpoints slightly differ in some points, especially in rating the importance of the different managerial activities, it seems like most of the participants think that having the right corporate culture is fundamental for intrapreneurship, but also believe that culture and formalized managerial activities are equally important and intertwined, and in a way mutually dependent.

5.3 Tensions

Tensions may arise both on the individual level as well as on the organizational level. Thus, tension may impact the intrapreneurial process on the individual's level, as well as when tension arises on the corporate level. The tensions detected during our empirical research have been identified in the previous chapter, while tensions in general have not been discussed in depth in the literature review as particular difficulties or tensions are often tied to the organizational background. Hence, our focus for this sub-chapter remains on assigning meaning to the different tensions detected, and discuss them within a greater, theoretical context. While all arguments concerning potential tensions are interlinked, there are dis-

cussed separately in this chapter in order to provide a valuable discussion.

Argument: There is a discrepancy between cultural orientation and organizational practice.

From our empirical findings, we know that interviewees identify one of the main tensions to be the discrepancy between cultural orientation and organizational practice. Translated into more detail that means that upper level management, on the global corporate level, attempts to actively encourage intrapreneurship, and intrapreneurs themselves understand their role and work as something that is valued. On the other hand, intrapreneurs say that lower level management is not following suit with the message sent from top management due to various reasons. Also in literature, this seems to be a point of potential tension. While Carrier (1996) states that „in the context of increasing market globalization and free trade, firms must innovate constantly to improve their flexibility, competitiveness and reactivity.” (p. 5), this does not automatically translate into organizational practice. There are various reasons for that, which are mainly need for full utilization, budget and time constraints, as mentioned by IBMers participating in this research.

Several participants mention a change in culture that was initiated by top management, however, it seems that this change has not arrived at all management levels and that there is little room for lower level management to actively encourage intrapreneurship as part of the official tasks that employees are required to perform based on their position in the organization. Consequently, almost all interviewees feel that the discrepancy between cultural orientation from the top and organizational practice, as seen and experienced on a daily basis, do not match and therefore, cause difficulties for intrapreneurs to advance in their projects, or intrapreneurial behavior in general. Fasnacht (2009) stresses that it should be management’s objective to increase their organization’s intrapreneurial orientation and thus, their competence for innovative thinking. While IBM does seek to enforce this culture among all levels, as can be noted in top management’s commitment to intrapreneurship, it still seems to be one of the main factors hindering employees to act intrapreneurially.

Argument: Bureaucracy constrains intrapreneurship.

Closely linked to the discrepancy between cultural orientation and execution discussed above, the argument is that bureaucracy constrains intrapreneurship. According to Schleisinger and Kiefer (2014) a lot of organizations still have difficulties with integrating intrapreneurship into their daily lives, which is largely due to the conventional organizational structures, such as bureaucracy, hierarchy, rules, etc. These might constrain employees in their quest to behavior and act in an intrapreneurial spirit. IBMers in this context, mention that there were so called ‘trolls’ including bureaucracy, processes and the need for full utilization among employees. One participant in particular referred to these items as ‘trolls’, which implies a negative connotation, thus meaning that certain, especially outdated, procedures and the sheer amount of bureaucracy is a barrier to intrapreneurship.

However, literature does not suggest abandoning bureaucracy and processes altogether, as they may actually support intrapreneurial behavior as well. Willmanns and Hehl (2009) state that there needs to be a sufficient amount of rules and bureaucracy in order to provide a framework for intrapreneurs. Additionally, Pinchot (1985) describes ‘the intrapreneur’ to be someone who is proactive and not set back easily, thus bureaucracy and procedures are considered to be just one obstacle on the road ahead. IBMers seem to agree, however, it is certainly considered to be an annoyance along the way from idea to final product.

Argument: Resource dependencies constrain intrapreneurship, especially financial and time-related resources.

Another aspect that is understood to be a point of tension is the scarcity of time and financial resources that intrapreneurs at IBM identify to be a major obstacle to their intrapreneurial behavior. Whilst an intrapreneur by definition is supported financially by his employing organization (Pinchot, 1985), there seems to be a lack of adequate financial support for intrapreneurship available at IBM. While IBM offers crowdfunding possibilities via programs like ifundIT, there are still very limited funds available and intrapreneurs themselves feel that maintaining costs and raising IBM’s stock price are considered to be more important than activities related to intrapreneurship. This suggests that once numbers were not meeting expectations, intrapreneurship was seen as a side-activity, which was less relevant than core business activities. While funding is crucial, it is also one of

the most salient barriers to intrapreneurial behavior at IBM.

According to Pinchot (1985) the intrapreneur is bound to the corporate timetable, and has to adjust his intrapreneurial actions accordingly. This is also true for intrapreneurs at IBM, who are not only bound to the corporate timeframe, but are also potentially limited to it. One participant states that developing an idea into something concrete takes a long time since intrapreneurship is strictly done in one's spare time. However, as stated by various authors (Pinchot, 1985; Luchsinger and Bagby, 1987; Bitzer, 1991), intrapreneurs are generally willing to accept longer working hours and demonstrate a high personal engagement for their project. At IBM, intrapreneurs showed great levels of personal commitment, with one participant stating that he lives, breathes, and thinks about his job not only during the week but also on the weekends and did not perceive additional working hours to be a burden. However, at the same time intrapreneurs and management alike mention that this might constrain other potential intrapreneurs who are simply too busy to put in additional time to work on personal projects. Thus, while time limitations do not seem to constrain active intrapreneurs, IBM may fail to encourage more employees to engage in intrapreneurial activities due to tight timetables and monetary restrictions.

6 Conclusions

Concluding, we present the main findings in relation to our research question. Moreover, we describe the practical and theoretical contributions our research seeks to make and give proposals for further research.

In our research, the main goal was to understand how grasp how employees at IBM understand the managerial activities imposed on them in relation to intrapreneurial behavior. We conducted nine interviews with different participants, located in different parts of the world to compose as holistic a picture as possible. To do so, we additionally collected secondary data in form of literature and contemporary data available online as well as via IBM's platform Connections.

6.1 Theoretical Contributions

Our research questions aim to apprehend how employees understand and perceive the influence of both open and formalized activities on intrapreneurship, as well as uncover potential tensions that IBM employees consider to be of importance and may limit them in their intrapreneurial behavior. This could, in consequence, lead to less intrapreneurship and innovation at IBM.

Our study showed that all of the intrapreneurs interviewed identify themselves as people with certain characteristics or predispositions, who have an intrinsic motivation to act in an entrepreneurial spirit. This confirms and manifests the view that scholars, such as Pinchot, have on intrapreneurs, meaning that a typical intrapreneur is someone who wants to achieve change and seeks an opportunity to realize his full potential.

Moreover, our research has shown that programs and other managerial activities, such as providing an enabling culture, are perceived to have an impact on the intrapreneurial behavior and actions of employees. Our secondary research (McKinsey) suggests higher rates of success for organizations that employ formalized programs as well as for organizations that create an encouraging environment for intrapreneurs. Interviewees of our study largely confirm this finding by highlighting the importance of all managerial activities. However, something that our research highlights, which was not as evident in existing literature, is the

importance of a combination of both culture and programs, and the difficulties that are at times associated to this complex interplay.

During our research we found that participants perceive the relationship between corporate goals and actual execution to be difficult. In our case study, participants describe this missing link between upper management communication and lower management implementation to be a barrier for intrapreneurship. In the consulted literature difficulties were often left unaddressed or downplayed, which suggests that there are few problems associated with creating an enabling environment and formalized programs at the same time. One of the main contributions of this paper is therefore to highlight the tensions that may arise in implementing an intrapreneurship strategy in a globally active organization, which is characterized by a great amount of bureaucracy. In this particular case, we can also observe the difficulty of successfully implementing a cultural change, confirming Alvesson's (2002) critique of the flaws of grand technocratic projects. While employees and management were eager to implement a new, more intrapreneurial culture already 20+ years ago they are still struggling to move the change through all levels of hierarchy, as well as combing the existing bureaucracy with employees' wish for more freedom to engage in intrapreneurial ideas and projects.

Moreover, this research contributes to literature by showing the reciprocal relationship between formalized programs and an enabling culture. We found that employees perceive culture, and other open managerial activities, as well as formalized programs to be of great value. While for many culture forms the basis, formalized programs are just as important and need to be ingrained in the culture in order to develop their full potential. In existing literature, many scholars only highlight either culture or formalized programs, while this research seeks to address the inseparability of the two concepts. Hence, we wish to highlight the reciprocal nature of the two forms of managerial activities, meaning that neither can successful without the other, and the two form a synergy.

6.2 Practical Implications

Though our main purpose for this research was to explore IBM employees' perception on managerial activities to foster intrapreneurship from an academic research

perspective, we believe that our findings may also provide practical implications for IBM and organizations in similar situations.

Participants were overall very happy with their situation regarding intrapreneurship at IBM, however, we also identified several tensions that leave room for improvement and that may help IBM in their quest to create a competitive advantage based on intrapreneurship and innovation in general. Thus, the following recommendations are based on the tensions discovered and discussed in this research.

First and foremost, we believe that it is important to send a coherent message from all levels of management to employees. This means that the missing link between corporate goals for intrapreneurship and daily implementation needs to be made. This would result in a clearer understanding of the importance of intrapreneurship for employees as well as for lower level management. Currently, lower level management is too focused on full utilization, which often times nips innovation and ideas in the bud. Therefore, it is essential to develop a more coherent message that encourages intrapreneurship among all management levels.

Moreover, we recommend IBM to place a greater emphasis on funding and thereby strengthening the position of intrapreneurship. While funding is available, it lacks in transparency regarding where and how to apply for funding. This suggests that IBM should focus on limiting bureaucracy in order to encourage new intrapreneurs and simplify the process to support active intrapreneurs. By doing so, IBM would consequently highlight the importance and value of intrapreneurship. Another step could be to include intrapreneurship in job descriptions to further promote and strengthen the necessity for continued intrapreneurship and innovation.

6.3 Reflections

Like every other research ours has flaws. While the main limitations have been addressed in the methodology, we take this opportunity to reflect on the empirical research and the conclusions drawn from it.

Our research deals with one case study, hence making it a snap shot into a complex, global work environment. From over 400,000 employees only nine partici-

pated in this research and thus only provide very limited insight into the various intrapreneurship practices at IBM. We did not focus on a specific geographic region, which in turn means that we did not gain insights into local intrapreneurship initiatives and therefore, there might be regional differences that we are not aware of.

Additionally, our interviewees are part of a very homogeneous group. The vast majority consists of intrapreneurs. This suggests a limited, one-sided view on perceptions, tensions and intrapreneurship at large. In an organization as large as IBM, one can surely find differing opinions. We, however, chose to focus on intrapreneurs to generate the perceptions of employees who are actually impacted by managerial activities that seek to foster intrapreneurship.

6.4 Future Research

Our research shows that intrapreneurs are people who are on the one hand intrinsically motivated and possess certain traits that, according to literature, an intrapreneur ought to have. On the other hand, it showed that intrapreneurs are impacted by managerial activities to foster and support such behavior. Thus, it would be of pronounced interest to see how a larger, more heterogeneous group of employees perceives these managerial influences. It would be especially noteworthy to see how, for example, a group of lower management employees perceives the managerial activities and the tensions uncovered in this research. Studying the missing link between corporate orientation and actual implementation and how this is understood and perceived by lower management is therefore highly recommended. This would not only place our research in a more holistic context but also provide further guidance in regards to the practical implications we suggest.

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Laura Reichartz & Lea Weinert