On a Final Note

The Legacy Building of Ingvar Kamprad and its' Reception on Social Media

By: C. Adrian L. Schmidt

Abstract

Title: On a Final Note: The Leagacy Building of Ingvar Kamprad and its' Reception on Social Media

Author: C. Adrian L. Schmidt

Supervisor: Sverre Spoelstra

Submission Date: 24th of May 2019

Key Words: Leadership, organisational values, narrative, deification, legacy, social media, Facebook, post-mortum leadership, IKEA, Ingvar Kamprad

Purpose: To explore and explain the legacy creation by Ingvar Kamprad and how it was perceived after his death. Thus, expanding existing knowledge on how a deified leader can influence the employees after passing.

Research Question: How did Kamprad use language and create a narrative in promoting organisational values and building a legacy? How were these efforts by Kamprad perceived by employees and consumers?

Methodology: A document study in two parts, covering to key documents written by Kamprad, *The Testament of a Furniture Dealer* and a letter to the employees to be found after his death, and the response to the letter from employees and consumers on the official Facebook-page of IKEA. A qualitative study with abductive reasoning as its core, data was categorised and analysed using relevant theories and literature.

Findings: The study clearly illustrates the way Kamprad went about in crafting his own legacy by using language in creating a narrative for employees. The final letter sets the final tone for how he wished to be remembered and how he wanted the employees to continue. The response was overwhelmingly positive and there are signs of deification of Kamprad by both employees and consumers. Based on the findings and apparent lasting influence of Kamprad, I would argue that this is what could be called post-motum leadership.

Contribution: The hope is that this study may be the first steppingstone in understanding how the death of a great leader is perceived, and further understanding of how they may create a legacy and are in control of it. The concept of post-mortum leadership is worthy of further research.

Acknowledgements

Writing a full master thesis one once lonesome is no easy task, especially when circumstances forces you to start over from scratch with only a couple of weeks to deadline. In all frankness I, at many times did not believe that I was going to make it in time. And, if it was not for my extraordinary supervisor, Sverre Spoelstra, I am sure that I would not have. The level of support, engagement, and feedback is what kept me going, even at times when I felt like giving up and I am forever grateful for your assistance in finishing it. The rest of the faculty also have my gratitude as they have all taught me new things that helped form the way I have conducted my research.

Further, I would like to thank all my friends for their support when the going was tough and LundaEkonomerna student union for providing relief, purpose, and the huge amounts of coffee consumed over the last few weeks.

A special thanks should also be directed to my bachelor's degree professor, Nadja Sörgärde, for truly driving home the importance of critical thinking and to question conventional truths. A lesson that will stay with me forever.

Lastly, with the risk of being perceived as ostentatious, I would like to thank myself for finishing this in time, it has been a rigorous, and at times tedious, labour. I am, nevertheless, too conscious of the quality of this paper, and there are many things that I, given the time would have done different and explored further. Time is however a luxury one cannot always afford.

Happy reading!

Adrian L. Schmidt, Lund, 24th of May 2019

Ad Victorem Spolias

Table of Content

1.Introduction

1.1 Background

Over the last few decades, there has been an increased popularity of organisational values and culture, both within companies themselves and in academia. This increase has led to a great many companies' onus being put on implementing value-focused organisations with strong cultures (Gagliardi, 1986). With this emergence of value-focused organisations still being a relatively new occurrence, I realised during my planning of writing this thesis, there was an immense knowledge-gap in existing literature on how these types of organisations react and cope after the loss of the leader behind it. The importance of a leader in implementing values and an organisational culture is often great, especially if they are the founder of the organisation, and large amount of research has been done on how important leadership is in maintaining and sustaining organisational values and culture (Bourne & Jenkins, 2003, Gagliardi, 1986). But what happens when the leader who has been instrumental in creating the value-focused organisation dies was the big question on my mind that needed exploring.

I quickly realised that IKEA was the perfect research subject to answer my question. Founded in 1947 by Ingvar Kamprad, the company was not only one of the most recognisable brands worldwide with around 150.000 employees globally and a famously strong focus on their values (Björklund, Jansson, & Schmidt, 2017), but, most relevant, Kamprad passed away last year from old age. Whilst there was originally a plan for conducting this study at IKEA and interviewing employees about the effect Kamprads death had had on the organisation, my contacts at the company had to pull out due to inability to partake. Thus I had to come up with a solution and I was still interested in the subject matter, which was when I stumbled across a final letter written by Kamprad to his employees after his demise. This letter had been posted on the Facebook-page of IKEA and aggregated a large amount of responses from both consumers and employees past and present. This intrigued me as the comments to a large extent consisted of personal reflections or anecdotes about Kamprad and IKEA. This led me to the new focus on how Kamprad had built a legacy on the organisational values and culture and how it had been perceived by both the public and employees alike.

My interest in organisational values and leadership still got to play an important role, as this study focused on how values and leadership is used in building a legacy, creating a narrative, and how it was received by those interested.

1.2. Problematisation

As previously mentioned, there is currently relatively little research on how value focused organisations react to the passing of a leader who had been instrumental in implementing and sustaining it. Whilst this thesis will not be able to answer this specific question, it tries to create a part of an explanation for it as I have aimed to explore how Kamprad went about in creating his legacy, the use of language and setting of a narrative for employees to adhere to. It also explores how he was perceived by employees and consumers as a businessman, leader, and person. This study can thus be considered a first step in researching how the death of a leader affects the organisation, but nonetheless needs further research, as it tries to explain how a leader can use language and narrative to create a legacy that may echo even after he or she is gone.

Based on this, the research questions for this paper were framed like this:

1. How did Kamprad use language and create a narrative in promoting organisational values and building a legacy?
2. How were these efforts by Kamprad perceived by employees and consumers?

The purpose of my research has thus been to expand our understanding of how legacy-building may be done and how it is reflected on by employees and consumers after the death of the leader. It is further aimed at exploring and expanding our knowledge of the results this age of value-focused leadership and organisations may have in the long-term. I aim to add expanded knowledge of how this emerging focus and new modus operandi of organisations and leaders affect the way they are in turn perceived by those involved (employees and customers), this also ties together with the increased tendencies of leader deification (Gabriel, 1997) and creation of narratives (Tietze, et.al., 2003).

The purpose of this study should thus be considered the expansion of knowledge of how a leader may use language, to create a narrative and focus on values, from both how it was

phrased by the leader in written form and how it was reflected on by employees and consumers alike. Especially central is how a leader can colour the way his death is perceived by the creation of a narrative on his own demise and legacy.

1.3. Relevance

As previously mentioned, the sharp increase in value-focused organisation and leadership is an ongoing trend (Alvesson, 2015, Gagliardi, 1986). And, whilst much research has been conducted on the role a leader plays and the different aspects of how to work with organisational values, the crass truth is that some of these will have had a specific founder or leader that has been instrumental in its inception that at some point will pass on. With this in mind, this study should be construed as a first take of understanding how a legacy was not only created but perceived after the leader's death. The relevance of this study is, therefore, its focus on how employees react to a leader's passing, whereas previous research on the topic of death in many cases centres around the reaction of consumers (Bell & Taylor, 2016). It further gives insight to how leaders may set the narrative for their own death and how employees should continue after. By the setting of narrative and usage of language, the legacy can live on and the leader may even have the role of a leader *post mortum* in an organisation.

The relevance of this study should thus be considered mainly within the fields of leadership and organisational values, and culture, and for how it should be understood. Further it should just be considered a first stage in exploring these topics and useful for consideration in future research on the subject.

1.4. Disposition

The outline of the thesis is as follows. Chapter two covers the method through which this study was conducted, its philosophical and academic grounding (in relation to previous research). It should be considered an outline for how I went about researching, gathered empirical data, and subsequently analysed and discussed it. It further explains the reasoning behind the types of data chosen and its possible implications. Chapter three consists of a literature review, or theoretical section, covering the existing theories and research that I found to be relevant in the pursuit of understanding and explaining that which was found in the empirical data and the subsequent analysis of it. Chapter four is the analytical section in which I have tried to explain and categorise my findings of empirical data. It is a document study that consist of two main parts. The first one covers the documents, their content and the

language used, and the second contains the analysis and categorisation of the comments posted on IKEA's Facebook-page in response to the letter by Kamprad which was posted there (by IKEA). The fifth chapter is where these findings are discussed on the basis of existing theories, how can the empirical data be understood and what implications does it have for understanding the subject. This centres around a deeper understanding of the effects of a strong narrative and legacy, as well as the idea of post-mortum leadership. Lastly, the sixth chapter is the conclusion of the study, a shorter summary of the research conducted and its result. It also suggests further research that would be of interest in the field.

2. Method

This chapter aims to give a clear understanding of how my research for this paper was structured. The reason behind this is to enable the reader to understand the reasoning behind, and the actions taken in the pursuit of writing this paper. This chapter will also grant the reader further insight into the methodological foundation on which is it written, thus encourage a more informed reading of it and understanding of its' relevance while also improving the possibilities for constructive criticism. The first part will be an introduction of what this study aims to cover, as well as the why, and how. The second part will cover the narrative approach and its role in post-positivist research. The third part will describe the document analysis, how it was structured and the reasoning behind the choice of empirical material. Lastly, the fourth part will explain the choice of gathering empirical data on a social network (Facebook), the reasons for this, and why it is relevant.

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore and explain how a leader can create and build a legacy through language and the setting of a narrative. By doing this I aim to deepen the understanding of how a focus on organisational values a leader can not only create a legacy, but how a leader may secure that legacy even after his or her demise. In line with the stated purpose of this study, and how it has been conducted, I have chosen to approach my research from an interpretive perspective as this study aims to make sense of the meaning-making processes of individuals (Bryman & Bell, 2015). This study and my interest in adding to existing knowledge should therefore be considered practical as my goal is to make that which is difficult to understand somewhat easier (Alvesson, 2013).

Based on this I decided to approach the empirical data by the hermeneutics of suspicion. This was to distance myself from what might be considered self-evident and question what one is seeing. Thus, my aim was to conduct my research by questioning the what, why, and how, of the empirical data (Andersson, 2014). This approach differs from the classic positivist ideals of conducting research (quantitative studies, natural science, etc.), as my focus was on creating a deeper level of understanding of the subject, rather than just an explanation of what the empirical data showed (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2013).

The focus of this study is centred around the way a leader can utilise language in the creation of organisational values and narratives. Language is considered one of the most important factors in how individuals create meaning in relation to each other, in this aspect language is similar organisational values as both aim to create shared meanings and frames for understanding (Gagliardi, 1986, Tietze, et.al. 2003). The research has thus been conducted with this in mind when trying to understand legacy created and left by Ingvar Kamprad and how his legacy and leadership was described by both employees and consumers.

The research was done through a document study that consists of two parts. The first part was the reading and analysis of two document written by Kamprad. The first of these is *The Testament of a Furniture Dealer*, an internal document penned by Kamprad in 1976 that covers nine tenets of how IKEA and its employees should operate. The second is a letter that was discovered in Kamprads home after his death in 2018 and was addressed to the employees of IKEA. This letter was subsequently posted on the Facebook page of IKEA which is where the second part of the document study began. This second part consisted of categorising and analysing the 304 comments that where posted in response to the letter. These where used to make sense of not only the response to the letter, but also giving an insight into the view of Kamprad and IKEA amongst commenters.

In the effort of analysing and understanding the empirical data I used abductive reasoning as to the relationship between empirical findings and theory. The abductive thinking works in a similarly ''spiral'' way as the hermeneustic approach, where the findings where viewed through the perspective of theories and vice versa in a continuous process where both are constantly reassessed in accordance to emerging views (Andersson, 2014).
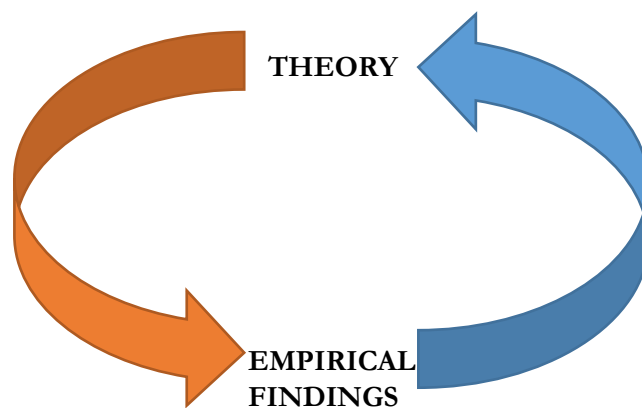

Illustration of abductive reasoning based on authors interpretation of Andersson (2014)

2.2. A narrative approach

The usage of a narrative approach is nothing new. As this thesis aims to take a post-positivist approach to the research in conducting a qualitative study, I have aimed to facilitate the view of reality as something that is socially constructed. That individual truths play a central part in explaining what should be perceived as ''true'' (Prasad, 2005). Within this tradition, narrative plays an integral part in understanding the social reality in which individuals live or operate. A narrative is commonly used to create a shared view of reality and meaning. By the creation of a narrative, individuals can place themselves in a context giving them a reason for doing what they are doing and how they are doing it (Tietze, et.al. 2003).

The view of reality as socially constructed and the examination of narratives within groups is therefore highly interlinked as the way individuals view their own reality can help creating a narrative and vice versa (Tietze, et.al. 2003). The creation of a narrative within a group thus helps in aligning individuals in a shared view of meaning and understanding. As such, it is also important to examine the creation of narratives in organisations, not only to understand how they construct their own reality but in how a narrative is created and can be used. This is especially true to organisation such as the one I have chosen to study due to the highly influential and prolific role the leader has played since certain leaders have an ability to create stronger narratives directly tied to their own values, vision, and actions (Gabriel, 1997).

2.3. Document analysis

 The document study conducted during my research was, as previously mentioned, aimed at an increased understanding of legacy building by a leader in an organization through language and the setting of a narrative. The empirical material consisted of two documents written by Ingvar Kamprad, *The Testament of a Furniture Dealer* (1976) and the final letter he wrote to the employees to be found after his death in 2018, as well as the 304 comments posted in response to the letter on the Facebook-page of IKEA.

The reasoning behind the choice of documents written by Kamprad was in order to get some historical context for how he has communicated the values of IKEA through the years, thus increasing the possibility of getting an increased understanding of his focus, values, and way of describing IKEA. The letter written by Kamprad in preparation for his own death, and the comments posted in response to it, was the initial catalyst for the purpose of this study. It was, however, just one page, and as someone with previous experience of researching the

organization I would argue that *The Testament of a Furniture Dealer* granted an increased opportunity for understanding the way Kamprad worked and used language over the years to create a narrative. *The Testament* has functioned as an internal document for the values employees should adhere to and how. All in all, it contains nine main chapters covering different aspects that employees should consider. This document was also considered to be of interest as it has previously been described by employees as ''*nine commandments''* (Björklund, Jansson, & Schmidt, 2017), indicating that it has played an active role at IKEA.

Together, these two documents should be considered a solid foundation on which to build an understanding of the language used by Kamprad, the vision and mission he wanted to communicate, and what sort of narrative he wanted to create.
The two documents were then read multiple times, and analyzed from to perspectives, the content and values he tried to convey, and the language he used in both texts. In the discussion the results of this from both texts were compared for similarities or differences and viewed through the lens of relevant theories.
The second part of the document study focused on the comments posted in response to the letter posted on the Swedish Facebook-page of IKEA. In total, 304 comments were carefully read, they were then categorized based on content or focus as to make it easier to catalogue the finds. This categorization should in no way be understood as a process in which I, as a researcher, have catalogued general empirical data in neutral categories. It has been influenced by my viewpoint as author and then categorized in the way I viewed them as relevant to the field of study and the meaning I perceived in them based on the underlying theoretical framework (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007). It must also be acknowledged that me conducting this study alone may have resulted in different understanding to what would have emerged if doing it with a co-author, as categorization and discussion between partners generally helps giving different perspectives and understandings from reviewing empirical data (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Once all the empirical data was sorted and categorized, I returned to the theories I considered relevant in how to understand it and then analyzed them based on these theories, very much following the abductive approach (Andersson, 2014).

2.4. Netnography: Social Media as a tool for gathering data

With the evolution of the internet and continuously larger amounts of people having access to it worldwide, it has become an increasingly utilized tool for gathering empirical data (Kozinets, 2015). Especially social media has become popular forum in which to gather data as it is based on the interactions between different individuals, or users, that share information about their lives, opinions, and ideas (Ngai, 2015). By facilitating the millions of interactions that occur online every day, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. contain large amounts of data that can be used in ethnographical studies. This subset has been aptly named netnography as it studies social interactions online and the social behavior individuals show there (Kozinets, et.al., 2017).

Social media has thus become a valuable tool in the gathering of data of social behavior online and, while it remains a relatively new field of study, it is being increasingly used for researching consumer engagement, online cultures (Lima, et.al., 2019), and grieving or celebrating celebrities (Bell & Taylor, 2016). It is, based on this and the purpose of this study, thus, highly reasonably to use the netnographic approach for collecting relevant data to later be analyzed and discussed. The reason for this is to gather the approximately 300 comments posted by users in response to the final letter by Ingvar Kamprad, on IKEA's Swedish Facebook page.

There are, as with any method of sampling empirical data, limitations to the netnographic approach. Firstly, one has to rely on the data posted by the users themselves, this means that they may be omitting data or falsifying it to suit a specific narrative (Kozinets, et.al. 2017). It is also limited as to the interaction one can have with the commenters as opposed to holding interviews for the gathering of data. The subtleties of body language, tone etc. cannot be observed in the same way online as in person (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Secondly, one has to be aware of the possibilities of moderation social media grants. Users themselves may delete their own comments or the owners of a specific page or group may delete comments they do not like or go against their community standards. Thus, there is a risk of pages removing perceived negative comments and thereby creating a narrative that is not necessarily accurate to the response of the commenters overall (Kozinets, 2015).

However, despite these potential shortcomings of netnography, it also has some advantages to other methods. The vast amounts of online interactions on social media means that there are great opportunities to find large amounts of relevant data. And, thanks to the relatively easy process of gathering of the data, it should be considered one of the most time-efficient ways for sampling large amounts of data. Since the data in many cases consist of online comments one can move straight to the process of analysing and categorising, in contrast with the time-consuming process of holding interviews and transcribing them (Kozinets, et.al., 2017).

3.Theory

In this chapter explore and review existing literature and theories that should be considered relevant to the area of research and empirical data analysed. It initially covers the subject of leadership and its role in the implementation and maintenance of organisational values and culture, followed by how leadership plays an integral role in setting narratives and the tendencies found of deifying certain leaders. The second part covers social media and how it has become an increasingly utilised tool for organisations in communicating and interacting with consumers.

3.1. Leadership and Organisational Values

Leadership is a highly researched subject within academia, and as such it may be no surprise that there exists so many different descriptions of what leadership is that it is almost impossible to give one, clear, definition. One was, however offered by Yukl (cited in Alvesson et.al. 2017) by condensing it to the ability of an individual to assert influence over other individuals. Despite the apparent fuzziness of the term, it stands clear that leaders can have a large impact in the direction of organisations and their employees (Alvesson, Blom, & Sveningsson, 2017).

3.1.1. Creating and Maintaining Organisational Values

Organisational values and culture are popular subjects, in both academia and amongst industrial leaders a great deal of focus and research have been done on how to understand and use them in an organisational setting. It has also resulted in many organisations working with their organisational values and creating and sustaining a culture based on them (Alvesson, 2015, Gagliardi, 1986). Organisational values can often be viewed as working in tandem, with the values forming the framework for how and why employees operate in a specific way (Gagliardi, 1986) which create established and shared meanings amongst individuals, forming how they view and interpret events in their culture (Tietze, et.al., 2003). Further, as cultures are fluid and ever changing (Alvesson, et.al., **2017**), with changes in the culture the way in which the values are viewed and understood may also shift (Gagliardi, 1986).

In the implementation of organisational values, the leader often plays a vital role. One explanation of the implementation process and stages values may take was created by Gagliardi (1986) in his four-step framework covering both values and their impact on the organisation. The four steps are as follows:

1. The first step starts with the founding of a company and the founder stating a clear vision and values for the organisation to follow. Since the employees may not be convinced or share the values, the founder must ensure they are followed by direct control or monitoring.

2. The second step occurs when the organisations success is perceived as directly correlated to the values and vision of the founder by the employees, whereupon they identify with and implement them in their work on their own initiative, without the founder, or a manager, having to assert direct control or monitoring.

3. In the third step the progress and success of the organisation lends itself to an institutionalised view in the collective mind of the values and advancements as interconnected, and thus the correlation between them is not ever reflected and taken for granted by the employees. Due to this, an idealised view of the values and culture is formed in the organisation leading to it only cementing its grasp. The values and culture thereby grow from being an instrument for reaching organisational goals to being goals in themselves. The new structure and loyalty towards the values and culture eventually get so strong that employees who do not share the values or differ in their interpretation of them get marginalised or choose to quit. This increases the sense of an ´us´ in the organisation as a group with a clear consensus of what the values and culture mean and how it should be interpreted.

4. In the fourth and final step, the values and culture are absolute and supreme. As such, they are barely ever questioned within the organisation and have reached a stage where employees identify themselves so strongly with the values that their actions are affected by them without being aware of it. By this point the organisational values have laid the foundation for a collective frame of understanding and shared meaning, reproduced and fortified over time by through symbols, rituals, and ceremonies as the organisation has evolved. A culture that is expressed through actions and where the values and success are perceived as intertwined on an emotional level rather than a rational (Gagliardi, 1986).

When an organisation transcends to this extensive identification with the values, and a high level of emotional attachment occurs it may even lead to a sanctification amongst employees of the values and how they should be followed. When this level of commitment and attachment to values and culture occurs in an organisation, it creates the framework and basis

for all organisational decisions and actions. In this stage the values have been described as a ''Sacred Cow'' (Alvesson, 2015).

This metaphor draws heavily from the status and sanctification of the values as untouchable, as they now provide guidance and meaning for all in the organisation. The fact that the values and culture affect all decisions made for the organisation mean that change efforts that could be considered out-of-line with them would be incredibly hard to implement (Gagliardi, 1986). The reasoning behind the description of the values and culture as a sacred cow thus come from the high level of emotional commitment to, and personal identification with, them as they form a shared meaning in an almost religious way (Alvesson, 2015).

As stated by Gagliardi (1986), the founder plays an integral role in the vision and implementation of the values and how they should be adopted in the organisation. Due to this, the founder often maintains an important role as a proverbial figurehead of the values and culture in the organisation (Sveningsson, & Alvesson, 2017). And the importance of the founder, and/or other leaders in the organisation, continuously following and emulating the values is inherently important in ensuring employees continued faith in them (Cha, & Edmondson, 2006).

The reason behind this often ascribed to the duality in value-focused leadership. As mentioned above, strong organisational values and cultures can be of help in establishing and aligning shared meaning amongst the employees (Gagliardi, 1986), and thereby helping them work together towards a common goal. There is, however, a danger of the shared values creating problems if the employees perceive that the management is not following them or opposing them (Bourne, & Jenkins, 2013). This can act as a seed of disenchantment or distancing from the values and the culture and thereby make them put their whole organisational reality into question. This duality of the values, as something that can be a great asset or create a great deal of harm, is why it has been described by Cha & Edmondson (2006) as ''double edged sword''.

The reason that it may be difficult to create total alignment in shared values and meaning lies in the different types of organisational values that are in play. Generally, organisational values can be divided into four different subsections of values, all important components to understand if to maintain a value-focused organisation (Bourne & Jenkins, 2013). The four types of values, as described by Bourne and Jenkins (2013) are:

1. **Espoused Values:** These are the values that have been explicitly communicated within the organisation by the management as part of the strategic plan or vision for the company, for example an official policy document. These are the values that have been deemed necessary for employees to follow if the organisation is to succeed in reaching strategic goals. In organisations with entrepreneurial roots, these are often values stated by the founder that have been revised and specified to apply to their operations.

2. **Attributed Values:** The values employees attribute as characteristic of the organisation and thus are based on the view they have of it. These values implicitly create the framework for how the employees make decisions and meaning in their everyday operations, they represent historical patterns and existing preferences in action and behaviour.

3. **Shared Values:** These are the aggregated, individual, values of all employees that are shared by most of them. It thus creates the cultural profile from the values shared by organisational members. These values may change over time as the employees interact with each other and adapts to changes, is reflected by shared patterns in actions and behaviours.

4. **Aspirational Values:** Those values that are seen as appealing or vital for the long-term prosperity of the organisation, that need to be strived towards to create a better future.

In describing the four types of values, Bourne and Jenkins (2013) argue that the four categories should be considered equal in importance and viability. They are all partial representations of the organisational values as a whole, with the relations between them fluctuating over time. This relation between the different types is characterised by the dynamic and ever-changing nature of values with both overlapping and gaps occurring. This dynamic is also continuously affected by both exogenous and endogenous factors.

In explaining these categories of values, Bourne and Jenkings (2013) created the following framework to clarify their use and role:
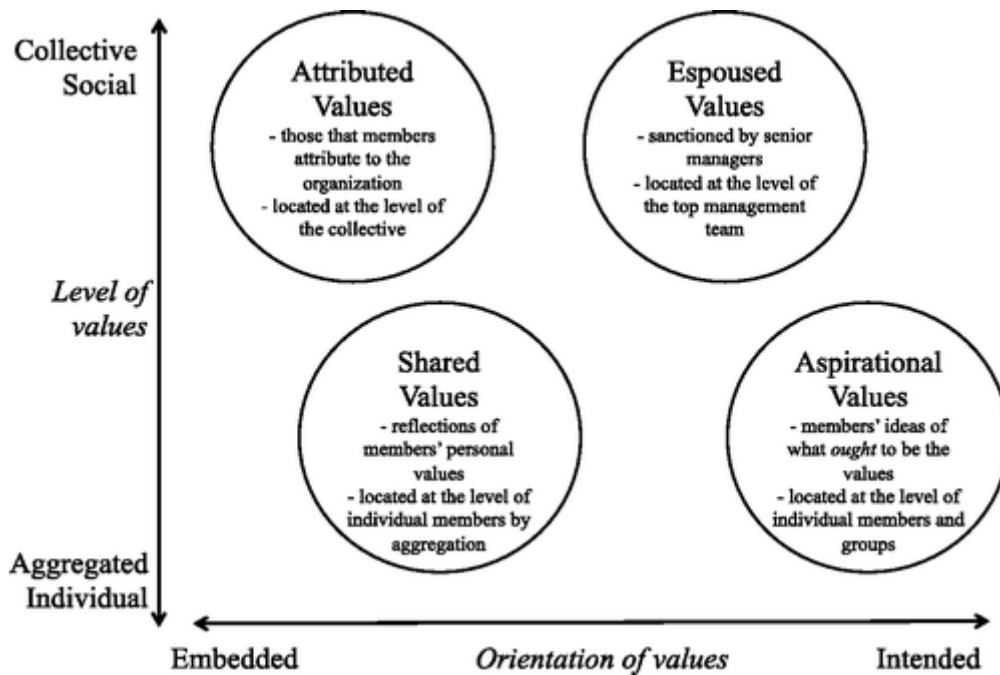
Figure 1: Forms of organisational values. Source: Bourne & Jenkins (2013)

Figure 1 helps us in understanding the difficulty in maintaining an aligned view of organisational values amongst organisational members. It also emphasises the importance of continuity in the approach to the values if said alignment is to endure (Bourne & Jenkins, 2013).

3.1.2. Setting a Narrative

With organisational values and culture both framing, and being framed by, a shared sense of meaning amongst employees, it also means that the way of communicating and the sense of identity can be understood from the values (Tietze, et.al., 2003). In the creation and implementation of organisational values, storytelling and narratives are often used as a method for justifying and create meaning behind them as necessary in pursuing the mission and vision of the company. Sometimes to the extent that the values themselves become a part of the mission (Gagliardi, 1986).

As previously described, culture establishes a sense of shared meaning and alignment of how we interpret the world around us. In the creation of this, the usage of language in the description of the values and mission by the leader plays an integral part. The way language is used may of course vary between different countries and cultures, but the key importance of language is that it imbues different meanings depending on how it is used. Using two synonymic words can result in two completely different interpretations by the receiver as,

even if the message is the same, the meanings can be different (Tietze, et.al., 2003). Culture thus entails that the group in it shares a similar way of meaning-making and understanding, framed by the values set by the founder (Gagliardi, 1986).

The way language is used in an organisation is often set by the founder, or other leaders, as they implement their vision for its' creation and the values needed to achieve it (Gagliardi, 1986, Cha & Edmondson, 2006). In the early days, with a limited number of employees, the values and vision are often easily communicated by the leader to the employees. But the larger organisations get, the harder it is for the leaders to influence individual employees personally. And this is where the creation of a narrative may prove useful. This is often done by the founder through formally setting up the vision of the company, and the values needed to achieve it, in some sort of official leading document meant to provide purpose and meaning to the employees. The document often answers the what, why, and how, the vision is and shall be achieved combined with language that gives meaning to it (Tietze, et.al. 2003).

By doing this successfully, the leader can create a strong narrative for the employees conveying purpose, commitment, or even a higher mission. Similar to culture, it helps frame their identity within the organisation, and often plays an important part in it as culture by its nature consists of shared meanings, symbols, and values (Alvesson, 2015). The narrative, and language used, works as a tool to elevate the values into a form where they are more easily shared and absorbed throughout the organisation (Tietze, et.al., 2003).

3.1.3. Deification of the Leader

Historically, people have often ascribed great leaders with some sort of divine qualities or connections. Alexander the Great, for instance, was revered as a god in Egypt after his death, as were many of the Caesars, and most European monarchs ruled ''by the grace of god''. This tendency of describing leaders as supernatural or divine became more widespread in the 19th century. The reason for this has been ascribed to the decreasing role of religion in European society as a whole with many states becoming increasingly more democratic and thus had a lesser need for the authority religion granted leaders. However, this ''death of God'' lent itself to the creation of two influential theories about leadership, the *Great Man* theory by Carlyle and the *Ûbermench* theory by Nietzsche (Spoelstra, 2018).

Albeit different, these two theories are similar in that they both ascribe a higher ideal to a great leader, possessing traits ''normal'' people lack, the important difference to note is that

Carlyle claimed great men to exist whilst Nietzsche argued the übermench ideal as something we must invent and work towards (Spoelstra, 2018). Whilst both have been largely abandoned in modern leadership teachings, except to give historical context of the subject, to give way to more nuanced, contemporary, ideas (Alvesson, et.al. 2017) the idea of a successful leader as special or even divine still occurs.

This reverence is usually attributed to the personality, leadership-style, and success of a leader that employees admire and aspire to emulate (Tietze, et.al. 2003). In his research, Gabriel (1997) found that employees can have a religious experience when meeting certain leaders within the organisations they are working. By interviewing individuals whose interaction with a leader was described as religious a number of similarities between the leaders in question emerged. They where usually very successful in their field, in itself a catalyst for admiration, but more importantly it was when combined with frequent interactions with employees and humility towards them the more religious experiences took place. It was seemingly the leaders capability of being at ease with employees and building relationships, however shallow, with them that raised these leaders above others (Gabriel, 1997). The religious view of a leader seemingly revolves around four factors:

1. The leader is perceived as caring for his or her subordinates, shows recognition to efforts and success, or protection if under threat.
2. The leader is accessible, that can be seen or heard (even if only on special occasions).
3. The leader considered omnipotent, unafraid, and capable of anything. Knows what is happening and how to face it.
4. The leader has a legitimate claim to power, deserves the position and has the trust of employees.

 These four combined easily lends themselves to the leader not only being admired, but even revered or viewed as divine (Gabriel, 1997).

3.2.   Social Networks

With the emergence of the age of the internet of the last couple of decades, both individuals and organisations have shown an increased presence on it and social networking platforms. This has provided us with an increased capability of communication and interaction with others, and social media has become an important tool for how organisations interact with the public (Kozinets, 2015).

3.2.1. Organisations and Social Media

Social media has been defined as online sites where users (individuals or organisations) can create profiles with which they can communicate with others in their social networks about their lives, ideas, and interests (Ngai, et.al., 2015). For many organisations, this has created a line of quick and direct communication with their consumers or potential consumers since social media as a channel is an effective way of sending out information and receiving feedback (Lima, et.al. 2019). As such, social media can help organisations in creating stronger relationships with their consumers and a stronger engagement in regards of consumers sharing content with people within their own social network based on their own experiences, good or bad (Sabate, et.al. 2014)

The process for this interaction on Facebook is as follows: an organisation starts by creating a company page through which they can share promotions, information, etc. with the purpose of marketing and/or relationship building. The relationship with the consumer is then initiated when a user on Facebook either likes or starts following the page, thus getting automatic updates about the company in their ''feed''. However, the value for organisations and consumers alike comes from the interaction from the reactions on the content posted on the page. These reactions can take different forms, from pressing the reaction button (indicating type of reaction), to sharing the content in their own network, or providing more specific feedback through comments (Muniz & O'guinn, 2001). Comment can be considered the most valuable form of interaction as it can communicate meaning and feedback in ways the others cannot (Lima, et.al, 2019).

Running a Facebook page can, thus, be considered a type of brand management on the side of the organisation, not only meant to interact with consumers, but also to mould the perceptions they have of the company. But it also creates value for the followers as they tend to follow companies they identify, or want to identify, with. The interaction through social media can thus help customers form their own identity, something that is enhanced by the perceived closer relationship via the direct communication via social networks (Lima, et.al., 2019). By using this, companies have the opportunity to play a larger part in the lives of the consumers as they form more emotional and consistent bonds, they also increase the likelihood of retaining a more faithful and committed following of consumers (Gobé, 2010).

3.2.2 Virtual media, group and culture

Due to the relationships organisations can build using social media platforms such as Facebook, there is also a possibility of the consumers interacting forming a sense of

community or group-mentality (Lima, et.al. 2019). Since brand management through social media aims heavily on creating an emotional tie with the consumers it is likely that the followers may share some characteristics or ways in which they identify with the company. Further, by commenting and interacting with each other the followers are mere likely to form some sort of relationship or sense of who they are as a group (Kozinets, et.al., 2017).

To understand the group or community that may emerge from a Facebook page, it is important to understand for what reasons the consumers are following the page. Whilst there may be many such reasons, the most common are an interest in the products, organisation, or the brand. If the motivations of the consumers for following the page align the sense of community is usually stronger and they share a similar emotional bond to the organisation (Kozinets, et.al., 2017). Through this there is a chance that the followers develop some form of culture as followers of the specific page (Lima, et.al. 2019). A culture is created when a group of individuals share a sense of meaning and shared values amongst each other and interact accordingly to this (Gagliardi, 1986). An organisation can thus form community with a shared culture on a social network such as Facebook if they manage to publish content that attracts consumers with aligned interests (Kozinets, et.al., 2017).

4.Analysis: The Building and Securing of a Legacy

This chapter explores and analyses the empirical data collected from the two documents, *The Testament of a Furniture Dealer* and the letter to employees written by Kamprad, and the response to the letter posted on the official Facebook-page of IKEA. The two documents have been analysed separately from two aspects, that of the content and that of the language used therein. The sections regarding the Facebook comments shows the categories into which they have been sorted based on content, and these have then been analysed.

4.1. Preparing the Legacy

Published in 1976, The Testament of a Furniture Dealer covers the thoughts of Ingvar Kamprad on what IKEA should be, work towards, and what values they should follow. Apart from the introductory summary behind the reason of the document, it covers 9 different topics (referred to as chapters).

The Testament of a Furniture Dealer	*Key-Focus*
Intro: To create a better everyday life for the many people	Stating the overall vision and mission of IKEA
Ch.1. The product range – our identity	Clarifying the role of the product range in achieving the vision and mission. Also sets down over-arching rules for what the product range should encompass to work with their profile.
Ch.2. The IKEA spirit – a strong and living reality	Outlining the spirit and mindset the employees should possess, not only at work but through life. Focus on dedication, motivation, enthusiasm, and responsibility.
Ch.3. Profit gives us resources	Defining how profit should be viewed – as means to an end rather than an end in itself. Encourages self-reliance (instead of state subsidies) in securing financial resources to work for their long-term goals.
Ch.4. Reaching good results with small means	Emphasises the importance of reaching good results with small or very limited resources. Describes wastefulness as a mortal sin and ascribes expensive solutions to mediocrity.
Ch.5. Simplicity is a virtue	Importance of avoiding bureaucracy and excessive planning as it tends to paralyse or lead to corporate death. Common sense, humility, and simplicity set as the key for relying on their fortitude and their own will.

Ch.6. Doing it a different way	Reasons that a key reason for historic success has come from daring to questioning existing structures and trade "truths". Illustrates importance of always improving and adapting.
Ch.7. Concentration – important to our success	Illustrates the importance of concentration of resources, or focus, depending on the situation. Also covers the need for concentration in product range as not to overflow.
Ch.8. Taking responsibility – a privilege	Responsibility is something that can, and should, be taken by every individual, independent of position or education. Importance of being willing to make mistakes – fear of mistakes as root of bureaucracy and enemy of progress.
Ch.9. Most things remain to be done. A glorious future!	The feeling of being finished leads to stagnation and loss of vitality – it is about the journey and not the destination. Importance of humility and to realise that the future lies ahead and always will.

Full text can be found in appendix

4.1.1. Content

The document outlines what Kamprad wanted IKEA to be and become. Starting of in the introduction and emphasised through all the chapters, Kamprad describes IKEA not much in the terms of a business but more in lines of an idea or way of life with the headline of the introduction reading:

''*To create a better everyday life for the many people*''

- *Ingvar Kamprad*

This, being the stated mission he wants IKEA working towards, is then followed by the nine chapters, each of them covering the key aspects of achieving is.

The chapters mainly describe, rather than set rules, the mindsets, values, and ideas he believes all employees need to posses for IKEA to fulfil its overarching mission. Only chapters one and three cover more specific rules for the ''business'' part. Chapter one with its description and rules for the product range, and chapter three by promoting the importance of maintaining profit. The product range is given several rules for what it should be and can be narrowed down to:

1. Range must encompass all the needs of a modern home
2. Must maintain a clear profile as '*'typically IKEA''* or '*'typically Swedish''*

3. Function and technical quality of all products based on use
4. Maintaining low prices, on all fronts, to serve the many people
5. Declaration that the rules for the range should never be changed

Whilst working as a clear outline of what and how IKEA should operate the product range, it continuously ties back to their overarching mission of serving the many people by ensuring that they have access to all products needed for their home and maintaining a high quality at a low cost. Chapter three further builds on this sentiment by stating that profit should be made, not to create wealth, but to ensure the company's capability continuing to serve their mission over time.

´´The aim of our effort to build up financial resources is to reach a good result in the long term. You know what it takes to do that: we must offer the lowest prices, and we must combine them with good quality. If we charge too much, we will not be able to offer the lowest prices. If we charge too little, we will not be able to build up resources. A wonderful problem!´´

- *Kamprad (Chapter 3)*

Whilst these to chapters mainly covers what can be described as the specific ''business side'' of IKEA, they are also clear in describing that they are in service of their mission.

The rest of the chapters are more specific in covering the different traits, values, and spirit co-workers at IKEA need to possess for them to serve their mission. Chapter two covers the ''IKEA-spirit'', the importance of responsibility, humility, and togetherness, how work should never be just a livelihood but something one is continuously enthusiastic and engaged in.

``If you are not enthusiastic about your job, a third of your life goes to waste´´

- *Kamprad (Chapter 2)*

Overall, the chapters can be condensed into a number of core values and ideas that Kamprad wants to bestow on his employees. The overarching values could be but as:

- Togetherness – working together and in consort to achieve their mission. Further tied in with the idea of enthusiasm, they are working together towards a larger goal and that can only be achieved if co-workers are engaged and passionate about what they are doing.

- Responsibility – everyone can and should take responsibility over all functions they can, of the whole picture, in this also not fearing making mistakes. This also ties in with the idea of questioning conventional truths.
- Simplicity – not only in promoting humility, but also in economic aspects and problem-solving, concentration of resources, creating solutions in a cost-effective way, and avoiding *''over-planning''*.

Further, throughout the text Kamprad continuously returns to his view on bureaucracy as something that should be avoided at all costs. This ties back to the values as bureaucracy is described as incompatible with them. It cannot work with togetherness as it creates to much of set structures and hierarchies, nor with responsibility as a bureaucracy does not allow for initiative or questioning of conventional truths. Lastly, it is by its' very nature incompatible with simplicity as bureaucracy means over-planning and over-complication.

4.1.2. Wording and use of Language

If the previous section covered the content of the Testament, this one will cover the how it was written, and the wording used by Kamprad. In the chapters, the focus on values was accompanied by wording specific wording to drive the point home. There is, for example, tendencies of using religious language:

``*Wasting resources is a mortal sin at IKEA´´*

-   *Kamprad (Chapter 4)*

The phrasing used is meant to emphasise the meaning Kamprad wants the reader to take with them, describing wastefulness as a mortal sin rather than just wrong or bad. Further examples of this can be found in the description of simplicity as a virtue and strong language used in describing bureaucracy:

``*...exaggerated planning is the most common cause of corporate death!´´*

-   *Kamprad (Chapter 3)*

He continues this form throughout the chapters, regularly calling back to their mission of *making everyday life better for the many people* and maintains the strong focus on the values for which IKEA should stand. This focus on the mission is emphasises at the end of the last chapter where he states that one should never feel finished and that their mission always stays in front of them. The point of the Testament as a whole is concluded with the final phrase (in the original, Swedish, version):

``Most things remain to be done […] That which we want to achieve, we can and shall do together, glorious future´´

- *Kamprad (Chapter 9)*

The section clearly states that theirs is an ongoing mission to which many challenges lie ahead and ends the whole document with an encouragement that they can achieve anything together and to look at the future with optimism.

4.2. The Letter

Ingvar Kamprads final letter to his employees was his goodbye to all his co-workers at IKEA. In it he thinks back on his memories and imparts his final wisdoms on them. The letter (translated from Swedish) reads as follows:

Dear Entire IKEA-family

Thank you and Farewell!

And so, my own story ends. A fantastic life, albeit rough at times, but to have been together with the worlds greatest co-workers for such a long time overshadows everything. Furthermore, having a loving family that is always there for each other.

 I miss it all. All the hugs and handshakes, that underlines this important togetherness, a sweetly throbbing pain in the hand after the 1500 handshakes at the Christmas party in Älmhult.

That which I knew and could, I learned from you out on the shop-floor, together with you. Therefor my first advice to you is: never forget that the mentorship is the most important mould for education and happiness. You, who belong to the older generation, teach the new generation our unique business idea and company culture, where all co-workers matter and must know they do, about the importance of following our ideas out into the real world. About our societal mission and our labour towards a better world for the many and what enthusiasm, humility, and will power mean for your own happiness and our continuing success.

And you, who belong to the new generation, search for your mentor and learn from her/him. You bring with you new knowledge your mentor would love to learn. It is the greatest of win/win situations. What I have longed for the most over the last 10 years is decisiveness and simplicity and the return of common sense. I myself have never believed in statistics, with their curves and staples, or rigid market surveys – they only substitute a teeny tiny part of the truth and are often the enemies of decisiveness. The age of simplicity and common sense is not yet over, but it faces many threats. From the bottom of my heart that you will place the same generous trust in my sons, Peter, Mathias, and Jonas, as you have placed in me during all these years. The three of them have vowed to, together with you, continue in our labour in service of the many people. Home is and will always be the centre in each person's life.

In the end I only change one word in my ever-relevant final phrase. You know which one. Live well. You are at the starting line – glorious future.

Yours Faithfully,

Ingvar Kamprad

4.2.1. Content

The letter starts off with the acknowledgement that his time is finally up and briefly goes into the ups and downs of his life before stating that it is all overshadowed by having to have worked with the greatest co-workers and having a loving family. Instead of speaking about the success of the business and the impact IKEA has had on the world, he then speaks of what he has missed since he stepped down from the company ten years previously. The longing for the relationship with the co-workers, the hugs and handshakes at the Christmas party, and the sense of community and togetherness at IKEA.

Togetherness is also the theme of the letter. Kamprad talks about how all he learnt and knew came from working together with the employees and how employees old and new learning together from each other is the greatest of opportunities. The focus on older and younger generations learning from each other dominates a large part of the letter, with Kamprad stating the responsibility of those from the older in teaching the newer on the values of IKEA and its spirit. It also states the importance of the ''*IKEA-spirit*'' and values being taken to heart not only in the organisation, but as a way of life thus ensuring the survival of the culture IKEA . Teaching them about:

``*[…] our societal mission and our labour towards a better world for the many and what enthusiasm, humility, and will power mean for your own happiness and our continuing success*´´

> - *Kamprad*

The letter thus puts a great emphasis on the importance of the gran mission of IKEA and what he believes necessary for continuously working towards this. He further expresses his longing for the days of simplicity and common sense, stated that, whilst still not gone, those values are facing many threats. Keeping with this topic, Kamprad goes on to place his three sons as the leaders working towards the mission of serving the many people, asking the employees to place the same level of trust in them as they have always placed with him.

4.2.2. Wording and use of Language

The language of the letter is personal with a great deal of focus on the *us*, exemplified by underlining the words together and togetherness as well as referring to all as co-workers instead of employees. This is further emphasised in the first two sections by him celebrating the impact the employees have had on his life and the recollection of the Christmas party. He was not longing for work in itself, but the relationships that came with it:

``*I miss it all. All the hugs and handshakes, that underlines this important togetherness´´*

- *Kamprad*

This tone continues through the letter with him urging the readers to learn together, work together, and face the future and their mission together. It can also be read in him asking the employees to place their trust in his sons, instead of just announcing them as his successors, what they achieved they did together and if that is to continue, they will continue to do so.

Towards the end of the semi-final section he expresses a sense of regret over the current world we live in aa he finds it lacking in simplicity, decisiveness, and common sense over the previous ten years. It is not yet dead, he claims, but it faces many threats that must be faced. And that is where the reader must play their part in facing those threats and working for the mission of a better world for the many people through the values and ideas on which IKEA was built.

It is with this final focus on the future that Kamprad finishes his letter, changing his final phrase from focusing on *we* to *you,* acknowledging his own death and that he was just a part of something bigger. Finishing with:

``*You are at the starting line – a glorious future´´*

- *Kamprad*

4.3. The Reception

Upon reading through the 304 comments made in response to the letter (posted in Swedish on the page of IKEA-Sweden). Most comments fell under three different types of responses as can be found beneath with a few chosen examples. The ones not falling under these categories mainly consist of people just ''tagging'' a friend or posting emojis but also contained two that could be considered negative in one way or another. These three will be covered in the end of this part.

Type of Response	*Examples*
Personal Anecdote on Employment	1. Every Christmas in Älmhult Ingvar Was there and shook everyone's hand and in later years we also got a hug. I got to experience this for 28 years. 2. So proud and fortunate to have spent my whole career in such a wonderful company with a leader like Ingvar. Sadly missed but what a legacy he left
Celebrating the Leader	1. What a leader! It is nothing that you become but something you are! It comes from the heart… 2. What a fantastic company leader Ingvar was and what a legacy of experiences he has given co-workers and future company leaders. 3. Thank you, Ingvar, for my 10 years at IKEA, Karlstad. Thank you for the leadership, the hugs and for laying the foundation of employees feeling at home Together. Glorious future.
Reactions to Letter	1. This is why we work at Ikea! Thank you Ingvar! 2. Shed a tear this morning when we received his final letter. So missed 3. I am not, or have been, an employee but few things give me Goosebumps. This letter was one of those things. Rest in peace.

4.3.1 Personal Anecdote on Employment

The vast majority of the comments were made by current or former employees at IKEA, and many of these told the personal stories of commenters on their time at IKEA and how it had affected them. Many used words such as *fortunat*e or *pride* in describing working for the company, and were often combined with shorter stories of interacting with Kamprad. Others in this category described the relationships they had with co-workers during their employment, the most common ones being: *family, togetherness*, and *home.*

Most also acknowledged the importance Kamprad had had. Not necessarily as a leader, but in terms of the person he was. Commenters appreciated the love they could feel from him,

during handshakes and hugs, and the sense that he truly cared about all of them on a personal level. This was further described in stories centred around Kamprad often acted and was perceived more as a peer than as a boss:

``*I remember Ingvar as a simple man who presented his lunch coupons in the employee commissary´´*

- *Comment: Barbro*

Many also spoke of the legacy left behind, with a number of the comments covering the responsibility they and their fellow employees have in carrying on his legacy and continuously following the example set by Kamprad.

4.3.2 Celebrating the Leader

One of the most common themes in the comments left where in celebration of Kamprad as a leader with some even calling him *a prime example* or the *very definition of a leader*. It was also among these that we can find many of the longer comments, speaking about how important Kamprads leadership has been to their time at IKEA or how other business leaders should take a cue from him and his approach to leadership. The focus on humility, equality, and leading by example were especially celebrated.

A strong emphasis was put throughout on the perceived excellence of Kamprads leadership with many comments alluding to the importance of togetherness and learning from each other as stated in the letter. Many seemingly wanted to carry this way of operating forward, at IKEA or at other workplace, with some even describing it as their duty towards Kamprad and what they had received during their time there.

The focus on the legacy left by Kamprad, regarding culture and mission, emerged strongest in this category with many responses describing the style of leadership as interconnected with the success of IKEA, their identity, and values.

This category was also the one that seemingly had the most even distribution between former or current employees and people who have never worked at IKEA. The ones who have not been employed still made many similar comments on the leadership of Kamprad and seemingly posses a great deal of knowledge on what type of leader Kamprad was, the values he cared for, and how he wanted to change the world.

4.3.3. Reactions to the Letter

This section mainly covers the many comments conveying some sort of emotional response to the letter and the content therein. Many of these are similar to the ones that can be found above, either describing sadness over the loss of a leader or how reading the letter gave the them Goosebumps or similar. As in both other categories there were a solid amount of comments speaking of the legacy left behind by Kamprad and their role in fulfilling it.

Many of the commenters alluded to the letters focus on their mission, working together, and that the future that lies ahead. Especially the language used by Kamprad was mentioned and many were seemingly moved by the final passage and the change from *we* to *you* regarding the glorious future. Something that some echoed by ending their own responses with the same phrase.

4.3.4. Neutral or Negative Respondents

Around a third of the responses to the letter consisted of users ''tagging'' (linking it to a friend by writing their name) a friend in a comment. As a response it does not provide much as to information or the commenters viewpoint, but due to the nature of ''tagging'' someone, these responses where aimed at making someone else in their social network aware of the letter and its' content. The reason for the sharing cannot be pinpointed, but a number of these responses received replies from the individual tagged, usually consisting of a ''heart'' or ''sad face/crying'' emoji. Whatever the intent behind sharing, as these responses do not contain any easily categorised communication, they have been excluded from the list above.

Further there are the two comments that can be considered negative. The first of these was purely negative against Kamprad, referring to him as a ''*tax-dodger, nazi, and parasite… pathetic''*. As this comment is purely about the individual's perception of Kamprad and his personality and actions rather than the letter or him as a leader, it does not contain much useful information. Except a possible negative perception of him amongst public, but as this is the only one not to much meaning can be drawn from it.

The comment gave a more nuanced view as it can be considered both positive and negative:

``*I'm sure Ingvar was probably a really good man […] but damn not sure about turning everyone into a blue cult!*´´

- *Comment: Stefan*

The duality of this comment is clear. The individual states his belief that Kamprad was a good man, but also criticises the perceived cult at IKEA. By context most likely aimed at the letter and its responses, as the commenter describes it as a cult in contrast to other commenters celebrating the culture, spirit, leadership of Kamprad, it manages to stand out from the others. The usage of the word cult also entails that the commenter perceives a level of religiosity in how the other followers view and celebrate Kamprad and IKEA.

5.Discussion

As the previous chapter analysed the two texts written by Kamprad and the responses it received on Facebook, this chapters aims to discuss the results of the analysis and setting them in contrast of my theoretical framework. This will aim to explain and contextualise the *Testament* and last letter, and the responses to the latter, in an effort to answer the research question of this paper.

5.1. Valuing Values

When going reading through *The Testament of a Furniture Dealer,* it is clear that a great emphasis has been put on the organisational values and creation of a strong culture at IKEA, even as early as 1976. As a document, it clearly states the vision and mission Kamprad has for IKEA and the values considered necessary for it to succeed. This document and the values contained should thus be considered the espoused values (Bourne & Jenkins, 2003) by a leader emphasising the importance of the employees following them. Further, whilst this document was finalised decades after the founding of IKEA, we can also see similarities of the first step of Gagliardi's (1986) model, albeit in written form. Instead of the leaders physical guidance and presence in showing employees how the values should be implemented and exercising direct control in this process, the *Testament of a Furniture Dealer* cover these topics in his physical absence. As the document clearly lays out the values and what they mean to the product range, IKEA-spirit, mindsets, etc., it should be considered a substitute for Gagliardi's (1986) first step if the leader is unable to be present to do it himself.

But even as we can see traits of the Testament sharing similarities with the first step in implementation of values, it shows clear signs that IKEA, even in 1976, had reached either step three or four. This can be understood from the great emphasis Kamprad puts on the organisational values and culture and the importance of consistently following and adopting them, not only at work but as a way of life. Thus, the values, at least as stated by Kamprad substitute a goal in themselves rather than just means to an end which should place them in stage three or four. This is further collaborated by the final letter penned by Kamprad before his death. In it, he does not speak about how well the business has done over the years, expansion, or personal successes, he speaks about the people at IKEA and the importance of their values.

``*...our societal mission and our labour towards a better world for the many, and what enthusiasm, humility, and willpower mean for your own happiness and our continuing success.´´*   *- Kamprad, Letter*

It is the culture and values that stay in focus throughout the letter and Kamprad continuously brings the point home that it is only through them that their vision and mission can be achieved. He further encourages the employees, new and old, to follow and treasure them by emphasising his belief in them and their reason for their success since:

``*That which I knew and could, I learned from you out on the shop-floor, <u>together</u> with you´´*

- *Kamprad, Letter*

This explanation of them succeeding and learning together, side by side caring for the values and the IKEA-culture, entails that they must continue doing so even after his death, further implying that they are in the latter step of Gagliardi's (1986) framework. The values are described as necessary and are seemingly emotionally intertwined with the identity of the company, at least as expressed by Kamprad.

The placement of IKEA in one of the latter steps of the model is further merited by the comments made in response, by former and current employees, to the letter posted on the Facebook page of IKEA.

``*Your thought on sense of family really could be felt through the bone […] I have never felt as at home at a place of work as I did there. Wonderful, positive colleagues always striving toward having fun together, helping each other develop so that we could help the customer to the best of our abilities […] without prestige and always putting the interests of the customer first´´*   *- Comment: Mattias*

As exemplified by the comment above, many former and current employees have seemingly taken the message of Kamprad to heart, expressing the ways the organisational values played integral parts in all aspects of the company. As can be seen in the analytical chapter, many of the employees viewed Kamprad as embodying the values of IKEA and leading through humility and equality. These descriptions of how the values was the very essence of working at IKEA as well as the admiration and emotional commitment to them, and Kamprad, further solidifies the theory of the values and culture at IKEA having reached the last step as presented by Gagliardi (1986).

This also shows that two more types of values are seemingly aligned with the espoused values previously mentioned, more specific shared and attributed values. Attributed can we find in how many describe values as typically IKEA and are seemingly collective as many describe them similarly. The shared values are slightly hard to differentiate from the attributed from just reading descriptive comments about employee experiences at IKEA. However, by their described experiences, sense of personal belonging, and emotional attachment it should be argued that they also constitute the shared values as they are tied to the aggregated individual values rather than those they just attribute to IKEA (Bourne & Jenkins, 2003).

5.2. A Glorious Future – Evoking Emotions Through Language

Throughout both texts written by Kamprad he has made use of language that seems to be aimed directly at the reader and evoking emotions. The reason behind this in most likely not only to create a sense of commitment or shared meaning but to set a clear narrative for their overarching mission and vision. The clearest example of this, that flows through both texts, is the consistent use of *us* and *we*, that builds on the ideas of togetherness presented by Kamprad. All organisational members are equally important and needed in working towards the mission, further illustrated by referring to all as *co-workers* or *colleagues,* not once does he speak of employees, bosses, etc. This presents an idea of egalitarianism, that they are all partaking in a great quest, means to establish a sense of community and commitment to something larger than just the company. IKEA is in some ways more of an idea than just a business.

``*To create a better everyday life for the many people´´*

- *Kamprad*

This strong emphasis on the mission of IKEA is, of course, heavily tied to the values as described by Kamprad in *Testament of a Furniture Dealer*, and the language plays an important part in how they are described and given purpose. For the reader, all of the nine tenets are seemingly focused on the journey and role of the individual, even in the two chapters covering the what could be considered ''business'' of IKEA puts them in relation to reaching achieving the mission. The first chapter, covering the product range, clearly sets up rules for what it should contain and the purpose of it. The five key point described in the analysis were all ascribed to the pursuit of the mission of IKEA:

Purpose of Product Range	*Ascribed Reason*
Range must encompass all the needs of a modern home	In the service of the many people – all needs there might be must be fulfilled and found at IKEA
Must maintain a clear profile as ''*typically IKEA''* or ''*typically Swedish''*	Sustaining the idea of what IKEA is, means, and reflect the focus on simplicity and straightforwardness with which the organisation operates
Function and technical quality of all products based on use	The importance of not providing *''buy and throw''* products – quality should always be based on the customers long-term interests
Maintaining low prices, on all fronts, to serve the many people	Acknowledge that to serve the many people, prices must be kept at a level which the many can afford
Declaration that the rules for the range should never be changed	Fundamental rules to stay the same - for them to continue *''serving the many people''*

This works as a prime example of the narrative set by Kamprad in *The Testament of a Furniture Dealer*. All aspects of their business practices are there to ensure that they can continue serving ''the many people'', something that strongly aligns with the idea of narratives as a tool for increasing commitment and purpose amongst employees (Tietze, et.al. 2003).

This idea of a clear narrative and mission for the organisation is echoed in how Kamprad in his letter explains that his three sons will take over his role as guardians of the values and culture. This is not only noteworthy as because it shows that the values are goals in themselves that need safeguarding and continuous guardianship (Gagliardip,1986) very much to the degree of them being considered a sacred cow (Alvesson, 2015). More important is the way he asks the employees to place their generous trust in the sons as *''you have placed in me during all these years''.* It is not an appointment of his successors as much as a plea for the trust of the employees in them, implying that it is up to the employees to make the final decision and clearly in line with the rest of the narrative and empowerment of them (Tietze, et.al. 2003).

The perhaps clearest example of the usage of language in the creation of a narrative comes from the final phrases used by Kamprad both in *The Testament* and the letter.

``*Most things remain to be done [...] Glorious future!´´*

- *Kamprad (Chapter 9)*

In both texts he finishes with similar lines about the future that lies ahead and ends with the two same words, *Glorious Future.* From the perspective of a narrative this is extremely important as it clearly shows what Kamprad wants the reader to take in. They are on an ongoing mission which will never be finished, they must all continue working towards serving the many people *in perpetuum.* It gives the reader a role to play in serving this purpose and also sets it as bigger than the individual, illustrated from how Kamprad in the letter speaks optimistically about the future of IKEA after his death and switching from a *we* to *you* in who will achieve it. The idea that is IKEA is larger than just him and the glorious future still lies ahead for the rest, even if his journey is over, giving a clear narrative for why they are doing what they are and how (Tietze, et.al., 2003).

Speaking of language, it is also imperative to examine how the future is described. It is not described as great, successful, or positive, but as *glorious* (wording used in English version of *Testament,* direct translation of Swedish word *underbar* could be directly translated to *wonderful)*. The very word glorious grants a great deal more meaning, in their service to the many people they are on a mission worthy of glory, it implies great deeds by employees and working for a greater good. This should be considered the most important part in how Kamprad sets the narrative. All co-workers are working together towards a higher goal in the service of a higher mission, relying on the commitment and purpose it gives them (Tietze, et.al., 2003).

5.3. The King is Dead, Long Live the King

In the analysis of the responses posted to Kamprad's letter it became clear that most of the responses centred around his role and importance. By the reviewing of these it became clear that many responses described traits or experiences falling under the four factors for deification as specified by Gabriel (1997). Whilst few comments clearly covered all four factors, they were all covered, separately or in pairs, throughout most positive responses.

``Thank you, Ingvar, for my 10 years at IKEA, Karlstad. Thank you for the leadership, the hugs and for laying the foundation of employees feeling at home Together. Glorious future.´´

- *Comment: Marie*

This quote exemplifies the type of responses that suggest a level of deification of Kamprad by employees. It clearly covers the perceived care he had for his subordinates, the accessibility he had shown by interacting with them, and through also his legitimate position as leader at IKEA. In this way, many of the responses allude to the qualities of a deified leader, even if they may not be aware of it (Gabriel, 1997). All the different factors are ascribed to him in different ways by many different individuals.

Qualities of a Deified Leader	*Ascribed to Kamprad*
Caring for Subordinates	*Handshakes & hugs, focus on equality, humanitarian worldview, focus on togetherness/learning from each other*
Accessibility	*Handshakes & hugs, eating in commissary with all other employees, helping on shop floor and giving advice*
Omnipotence/Knowledge	*Knowledge of how to do it best, understanding employees and consumers, adopting his approach to the future and leadership*
Legitimacy	*Perceived as the perfect leader, legacy he built and left behind, attributing the culture and values to him*

By viewing all these responses by the framework set up by Gabriel (1997), it seems clear that deification of Kamprad as a leader is occurring. Even amongst the responses from non-employees there are apparent similarities in how they describe him, his leadership, and the legacy left behind, that are alluding to some level of deification. Some of these, however, take a somewhat different form with the responses crowning him the leader to whom other leaders should look for an example, perhaps indicating a deification of Kamprad not only as the founder of IKEA, but as to what it means to be a leader.

Further evidence of a level of deification of Kamprad can be found in one of the negative responses to the letter, more specifically the one describing IKEA as a cult. Whilst this

comment can just be considered one of few detractors from revering Kamprad, the use of the word cult implies that he perceives the culture and leadership promoted by Kamprad to be religious and that all of his followers are worshippers rather than employees. This response should, naturally, be taken with a grain of salt as it is the only one using this specific terminology. But in relation to the seeming deification of Kamprad by employees and fans alike, this description of a cult around him is worthy of mention and thought.

With the deification of Kamprad, similar to the one described by Gabriel (1997), established as probable, one must now ask in what ways his legacy and leadership will remain. Throughout this chapter it has become clear that the values and culture at IKEA has reached the fourth step of Gagliardis' (1986) model where the values are absolute and viewed as pursued goals in themselves. This is not only strengthened by the emphasis placed on them by Kamprad in *The Testament of a Furniture Dealer* and the letter, but also in how the letter was received by the commenters on Facebook. Kamprad has set out a vision and mission for IKEA that he presents as bigger than himself, in the service of the many people, and that it is up to the followers to continue his work.

After the clear traits of deification of Kamprad by the commenters, it must also be considered that, with how *The Testament of a Furniture Dealer* is written, may be perceived as more than just a policy document with not just espoused values. It may be considered an almost religious, the nine core values almost read as nine commandments, something that it has already been described as by employees of the organisation according to Björklund, et.al. (2017).

What this paper has thus discovered is the way in which Kamprad created his own legacy and set the tone of how he wanted to be remembered with his final letter. By the reception to it must also be considered clear that he has been deified as a leader by both employees and aspects of the public. By the language used, the narrative created, and by embodying the values he wanted IKEA to follow, he has managed to create a higher mission for the employees to follow. Setting them on an almost religious mission in the service of the many people for them to continue following after his passing. Thus, if we assume the definition of leadership by Yukl (cited in Alvesson, et.al. 2017) as the ability to assert influence, one must argue that by virtue of the leadership of Kamprad and the narrative he set, he should still be considered a continuous leadership figure, even after his passing. Ingvar Kamprad the man may be dead, but Ingvar Kamprad, the idea and narrative, still lives on.

6.Conclusion

In trying to understand how Ingvar Kamprad built his legacy continuously over many years and its reception, there has been several realisations. Firstly, the importance of language in creating a narrative for employees, but also in living them. Secondly, this type of leadership and focus on values lend itself well to the deification of a leader as we see that those points emphasised by Kamprad, and also by the comments on Facebook, are very much the same as the traits that usually lead to the deification of a leader as described by Gabriel (1997). Thirdly, by writing a final letter to employees to be found after his death, a leader may decide on how they will be perceived and what legacy they want to leave based on how they write it. Lastly, by combining the three realisations mentioned above, a leader can, if they work continuously, build a culture and narrative that, may survive their passing given the deification of him/her. This is, arguably, the most important contribution of this study as it shows how a leader may ensure that, even if they die themselves, their vision and mission may live on.

There are of course large amounts of further research that can, and should, be conducted on this subject. I would still like to study how the death of Kamprad has affected the way the organisation now views him, the values, and their mission. Further, as this study has been relatively limited in scope, there needs to be more research done on the building of legacies and narratives, and how these ate affected by the leaders passing. As more and more value-focused organisations have emerged over the last decades, it is more relevant than ever for us to understand how a vision and values are affected by the loss of the leader who embodied them.

Reference List:

Bell, E. & Taylor, S. (2015), Vernacular Mourning and corporate memorialization in framing the death of Steve Jobs, *Organization: Sage Journal, Vol.23 Issue 1*

Björklund, J., Jansson, A., & Schmidt, A. (2017) Bland Kulturvetare, Småpåvar och Heliga kor: en Kvalitativ Fallstudie om Organisatoriska Värderingars Dynamik och Tvetydighet, Lund University School of Economics and Management, Retrieved via LubSearch

Bourne, H. & Jenkins, M. (2013). Organizational values: A dynamic perspective, *Organization Studies, vol. 34, nr. 4, s.495-514*

Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2015). Business Research Methods, *Oxford: Oxford University Press*

Cha, S.E. & Edmondson, A.C. (2006). When values backfire: Leadership, Attribution and Disenchantment in a Values-driven Organization, *The Leadership Quarterly, vol. 17, nr. 1, s.57-78*

Gabriel, Y. (1997) Meeting God: When organizational members come face to face with the supreme leader, *Human Relations, Vol.50 Issue 4*

Gagliardi, P. (1986) The Creation and Change of Organizational Cultures: A Conceptual Framework*, Retrieved via LubSearch,

Gobé, M. (2010), Emotional Branding: The New Paradigm for Connecting Brands to People, *Allworth Press*

Kozinets, R. (2015), Netnography: Redefined, *Sage Publications*

Kozinets, R., Patterson, A. and Ashman, R. (2017), "Networks of desire: how technology increases our passion to consume", *Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 43 Issue. 5*

Lima, V.M., Irigaray, H.A.R., & Laurenco, C. (2019) Consumer Engagement on Social Media: Insights from a virtual brand community, *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal, Vol. 22 Issue: 1*

Muniz, A. and O'guinn, T. (2001), "Brand community", *Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 27 Issue: 4*

Ngai, E., Moon, K., Lam, S., Chin, E. and Tao, S. (2015), "Social media models, technologies, and applications: an academic review and case study", *Industrial Management and Data Systems, Vol. 115 Issue: 5*

Prasad, P. (2005*). Crafting Qualitative Research. London and New York: Routledge*

Sabate, F., Berbegal-Mirabent, J., Cañabate, A. and Lebherz, P. (2014), "Factors influencing popularity of branded content in facebook fan pages", *European Management Journal, Vol. 32 Issue: 6*

Spoelstra, S. (2018) Leadership and Organization: a Philosophical Introduction, *Routledge*

Tietze, S., Cohen, L. & Musson, G. (2003) Understanding Organizations Through Language, *Sage Publishing*