



SCHOOL OF
ECONOMICS AND
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Nudging Innovation Through the Physical Working Environment

A multiple case study investigating physical working environments of Swedish
Born Globals within the tech industry

by

Alicia Hylander

Vilma Mollstedt

Jesper Palmborg

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Supervisor: Martin Blom

Abstract

This bachelor's thesis seeks to investigate how the physical working environments of Born Global firms affect innovation, and more specifically analyze which physical attributes in the working environment nudge towards innovation. Born Globals are characterized as young firms with the ambition to gain global presence near founding. Since Born Global firms are at the beginning of their development and have limited resources and capabilities, innovation is of particular importance. Through a qualitative and explanatory research design, this study examines how managers and employees of three Born Global firms experience their physical working environment, and if it has an effect on their creativity and innovation capabilities. A conceptual framework is constructed based on previous literature and then refined by adding the key findings from the collected data, to represent Born Global firms more accurately.

The contribution of this thesis is threefold. Firstly, the findings confirm that previous research regarding designing an innovative working environment for MNEs and start-ups is applicable to Born Globals. Thus, the results show that the physical working environment of Born Global firms can nudge towards increased innovation and creativity. However, attributes that previous literature has not discussed, are also concluded to be of importance. Secondly, since Nudge Theory is rarely applied to corporate contexts, this thesis can provide decision-makers with practical examples of how an office environment can be designed to nudge innovation, and which physical attributes are most important in doing so. Thirdly, the refined conceptual framework presented may serve as a basis for future research within the area of innovative working environments for Born Globals.

Keywords: Born Globals, Innovation, Creativity, Physical Working Environment, Nudge Theory, Nudge Management, Innovative Working Environment

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1 Introduction

The introductory chapter provides an overarching understanding of the main themes of the thesis. Firstly, since the thesis investigates the physical working environment of Born Globals, the background is given to the phenomenon of Born Global firms, how physical working environments can serve different purposes, and Nudge Theory. Further, the concepts of Born Globals and innovation are defined. Secondly, the identified research gap is described and problematized before the research aims and objectives are presented. Thirdly, the research purpose is stated along with the research question and sub-questions. Fourthly, the delimitations and scope of the study are discussed, and lastly, the overall thesis outline is introduced, presenting an overview of the study's main elements.

1.1 Background and Problematization

Back in 1988, a new term that challenged the traditional theories was introduced to International Business literature, namely “Born Global” (Welch & Luostarinen, 1988). Traditional theories advocate for gradual internationalization in sequential steps (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). It promotes the initial expansion to be in countries with similar cultures, languages and where the flow of information is smooth (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). Since Born Globals typically do not follow the internationalization patterns of traditional firms, they have sparked an interest for numerous researchers. In a study conducted by Welch and Luostarinen (1988), Born Global firms were referred to as those intended to export immediately upon inception. Close thereafter, researcher Michael Rennie (1993) applied the term to firms that from founding perceived the entire world as their potential marketplace. Since then, the number of studies investigating the strategies and internationalization patterns of Born Globals has increased significantly. The fact that successful Born Globals internationalize shortly after founding, despite having limited resources and capabilities, has left researchers puzzled (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004). Growing research suggests that the disruptive internationalization strategies of Born Globals depend on multiple success factors, ranging from internal to external (Andersson, 2017) on both individual and organizational levels (Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen, 2021; Dow, 2017; Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015). Internal resources and innovation culture are two factors that impact how small

firms can challenge large corporations (Oviatt & McDougall, 1994; Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen, 2021; Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015; Bishwas & Kumar, 2015). Thus, building an innovative working environment and innovation culture is essential for the survival and growth of Born Global firms (Monferrer, Moliner, Irún & Estrada, 2021; Del Sarto et al., 2019; Bishwas, 2015). The physical working environment of a firm is a central meeting point for colleagues and can resemble parts of the firm's innovation culture (McCoy, 2005). Over the years, research has examined how the physical working environment affects employees. More specifically, employees enhanced innovative behavior, participation and job satisfaction, as well as overall corporate performance (Yang & Wu, 2021; Odoardi, Battistelli, Montani & Peiró, 2019; Merga & Fufa, 2019; Hoque, Gwadabe, & Rahman, 2017). Recent research argues that innovation and entrepreneurship are the two largest driving forces for the economic (Galpin, 2022) and social development of firms and that physical working environments may stimulate innovation (Yang & Wu, 2021; Amabile, 1996; Wu, et al., 2021; Moultrie, Nilsson, Dissel, Haner, Janssen & Van der Lugt, 2007).

During the past century, physical working environments have been designed to serve different purposes. The intention has evolved from promoting efficiency to improving job satisfaction, to today's focus on nurturing innovation engagement. During the early 1900s, classical U.S. organizations, such as Ford Motor Company, designed their workplace with an emphasis on control, specialized tasks and formal rules, procedures (Cameron & Quinn, 2011), and technology, advocating the philosophy of efficiency (Turner, 1955). Furthermore, during the 1920s, several experiments were conducted at the Hawthorne Works Electricity Factory in The United States, investigating which aspects affected workers' efficiency (Mayo, 1945). It was observed that changes in lighting, workstation maintenance, cleaning, and workstation relocation, increased productivity because of workers' awareness of being observed (Mayo, 1945). Later studies have concluded that employee satisfaction also affects productivity (Vischer, 2007; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Clements-Croome, 2015; Spector, 1997; Brill, Margulis, & Konar, 1985; Davis, 1984). According to Herzberg motivation-hygiene theory, employees who enjoy their job and working environment are more productive than those who do not (Teck-Hong & Waheed, 2011). External factors linked to job satisfaction include office layout, availability of relaxation rooms and the design and ergonomics of furniture (Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2016).

Looking further at ergonomics and the safety of work environments, Sweden has come a long way to ensure the safety, health, and satisfaction of working environments (Swedish Work Environment Authority, 2022). The Swedish Work Environment Authority has specific regulations and laws which must be fulfilled when designing office environments. The Authority ascertains that some minimum requirements are met in terms of safety of construction, ventilation, lighting, emergency exits and more (Swedish Work Environment Authority, 2022). Although these requirements promote job satisfaction, companies must do more than just comply with the minimum requirements to create and sustain a creative and innovative workplace (Lee, 2016; Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015).

Approaching the 2000s, firms gradually changed their mentality from maximizing profits through efficiency to investing in social contribution and technology through innovation (Benkler, 2006; Von Hippel, 2005; Chesbrough, 2003). Organizational innovation and the innovative behavior of employees are particularly of importance for young firms like Born Globals (Amabile, 1998; Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Lewin & Massini, 2003; Zheng, Yang & McLean, 2010). As argued by Yang and Wu (2021), the success of a new venture depends on innovation which in turn is related to the work environment. With the ever-changing business climate and the need for structural flexibility to meet the demand of consumers (Calof & Beamish, 1995), innovation is a crucial aspect for today's firms, not only new ventures (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Grant, 2016; Moultrie et al, 2007). Utilizing the physical working environment to increase employees' innovation engagement is thus one efficient solution to enhance innovation (Hoque, Gwadabe, & Rahman, 2017; Yang & Wu, 2021; Lee, 2016; Oksanen & Ståhle, 2013; Chandrasekar, 2011) since people are influenced by their surrounding environment.

Nudge Theory, specifically, can steer employees to certain behaviors that align with company values and goals (Ebert & Freibichler, 2017; Galpin, 2020; Stieler & Henike, 2022). Nudge Theory originates from the concept of *Libertarian Paternalism* coined by Thaler and Sunstein (2003). It is a combination of the liberal concept of free choice and the concept of paternalism which is about influencing the decision-maker to make better choices (Thaler & Sunstein, 2003). Through this concept, people are influenced, or *nudged*, towards making certain decisions and

avoiding poor ones (Rauscher & Zielke, 2019). Nudging has mostly been utilized in situations to affect society. Examples include displaying the calorie count on unhealthy food (Nanayakkara, Wilkinson & Halvitigala, 2021) and self-assigning people to certain pension plans if no active individual decision is made (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008). Yet, Nudge Theory is less applied in the corporate context (Stieler & Henike, 2021; Rauscher & Zielke, 2019), even less regarding innovation and the physical working environment (Leegard, 2019).

Researchers examining the impact of the physical environment agree upon the fact that the physical working environment affects innovation, regardless if the effects are direct or indirect (Lee, 2016; Yang & Wu, 2021; Kaufmann & Kaufmann, 2016). There is growing research suggesting that the physical work environment has a direct, cognitive effect on the creative behavior of employees (Lee, 2016; Oksanen and Ståhle, 2013). Therefore, Moultrie et al. (2017) argues that the physical working environment should be an intentional aspect of all firm's innovation strategies. Despite the growing evidence, there is still lacking research examining which physical attributes nudge towards innovation (Stieler & Henike, 2021; Moultrie, et al, 2007; Mažar, Robitaille & House, 2021). Additionally, literature does not answer whether the decision-making process concerning the design of the physical work environment is based solely on managers' perception of creativity and innovation, or if it is a consensus between managers and employees.

1.1.1 Definition of Born Globals

Arguably one of the most used and cited definitions of Born Globals is that of Oviatt and McDougall (1994). Their definition is related to the initial literature by Welch and Luostarinen (1988) and focuses on ambition and managerial drive to seek superior business performance and international presence. Oviatt and McDougall (1994) define a Born Global firm as “a business organization that, from inception, seeks to derive significant competitive advantage from the use of resources and the sale of outputs in multiple countries” (Oviatt & McDougall, 1994, p.49).

Another commonly used definition focuses on realized performance, rather than the ambition to achieve a global presence. Most Born Globals progress quickly - the time from the firm's initial domestic formation, to foreign market entry, is typically less than three years (Rennie, 1993; Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen, 2021). One definition of Born Globals developed by Rasmussen et al. (2001) focuses on this time window, as well as realized performance. They define Born Global firms as those that "have reached a share of foreign sales of at least 25% after having started export activities within three years after their birth [...]" (Rasmussen et al, 2001, p.77).

The first definition, by Oviatt and McDougall from 1994, will be used in this thesis because it is the most frequently discussed one in literature within this field. In short, Born Globals will be referred to as firms that have the goal of becoming global immediately from founding. Typically, firms that are characterized as Born Globals according to the second definition, also comply with the first one.

1.1.2 Definition of Innovation and Creativity

This thesis will refer to innovation and creativity frequently and since the terms can be misinterpreted, explicit definitions are necessary. Innovation can be defined as the implementation of new products (good or service), processes, solutions, or methods in an organization (OECD, 2005; Amabile, 1988). It could also be defined as "[...] a process which can be organized and managed [...]" (Bessant & Tidd, 2015 p.12). Thus, a combination of the two definitions will be used in this thesis. Innovation will therefore be defined as the organizational implementation of creative solutions or methods, which itself is a process that can be organized and managed.

Thus, since innovation and creativity are interconnected, creativity needs to be defined as well. Research discussing creativity typically defines it using two different perspectives - either as a *personal characteristic* of an individual when engaged in a creative process, or as the *product of creativity* referring to the outcome of ideas generated by employees (Amabile 1988; Stein, 1974; Gurteen, 1998; Legrenzi, 2005). The first definition viewing creativity as a personal

characteristic will be used in this thesis since the data collection will be based upon employees' experience and personal reflections.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

Based on the problematization, the overall aim of the study is to contribute to current literature on Born Globals, physical working environment, and Nudge Theory, by adding a new perspective on the importance of creating physical working environments that stimulate innovation through nudges. Swedish Born Globals have proved to be an important contributor to the Swedish Economy, since they offer new innovative solutions which meet customer demands, as well as bring new ideas to traditional industries (Andersson, 2017). Most of the literature covering the topic of the physical working environment aims to explain *how* to design creative and innovative workplaces for multinational enterprises (MNEs) and start-ups (Vos & van der Voordt, 2001; Oksanen & Ståhle, 2013; Lee, 2016). This research aims to investigate *if* the physical working environments of Born Global firms have been designed in a way that complies with literature and *how* it can nudge towards creativity. Since innovation is an important factor in the success of Born Globals (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Yang & Wu, 2021), researching the effects of the physical working environment on innovation is of interest. Additionally, since Born Globals have limited resources and capabilities (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Sepulveda & Gabrielson, 2013), it is also of interest to research to what extent these firms have invested in their physical working environments and to what extent it promotes creativity and innovation.

To achieve the aim, the research was carried out through three main objectives. The first objective was to develop a theoretical construct covering Born Globals, Nudge Theory and Innovative Working Environment, as well as create a conceptual framework visualizing the relationship among them. The second objective was to gather data from Swedish Born Global firms within the tech industry through interviews, to understand their perception of how the physical working environment is connected to innovation. The third objective was to test and compare the theoretical patterns and the patterns observed in the data through a flexible pattern matching analysis, and refine The Conceptual Framework previously created in the literature review.

1.3 Research Purpose

As described in the problematization, the phenomenon of Born Globals is rather unexplored. The research covering innovative working environments of Born Global firms is especially lacking. Additionally, Nudge Theory is seldom applied to corporate contexts (Mažar, Robitaille & House, 2021), even more rarely to the physical working environment. The general purpose of this study is therefore to understand how the physical working environments of Born Global firms may affect innovation, more specifically analyze which physical attributes in the working environment nudge towards innovation. By basing the research on two contrasting perspectives, namely managers and employees of the same firm, it aims to contribute with a new perspective to the current literature.

Firstly, fulfilling this purpose could provide managers of Swedish Born Globals insight into the importance of designing the physical working environment strategically using nudge management. In particular, it could give insight as to how certain physical attributes can nudge employees towards creative work and innovation. Secondly, the key findings contribute to the current literature by adding new perspectives which have not been frequently researched. This could in turn advance the theoretical construct concerning Born Globals and Nudge Theory. Lastly, The Refined Conceptual Framework could lay ground for future research. Thus, based on the aims and objectives, the overarching research question that will be answered is as follows:

How does the physical working environment affect innovation for Swedish Born Global firms within the tech industry, according to managers and employees?

This research question is further divided into two sub-questions:

- 1. Which physical attributes are most important when designing an office environment that nudges towards creativity and innovation?*
- 2. Are the ideas on physical working environment and innovation aligned between managers and employees?*

1.4 Delimitations

For the findings of this thesis to be applicable, it is crucial to limit the scope of this research. Firstly, the study is of qualitative nature and is limited to three case studies based on Swedish Born Global firms within the tech industry. Multiple cases were chosen to gather a wide range of perspectives. The total number of cases was limited to three, in order to ensure the research scope was feasible and could be completed within the time limit. Secondly, it is important to note that the research will consider the concept of innovation as a type of culture, rather than a process of commercialization. Thirdly, the study will not discuss workplace design details that are required by law, since all Swedish firms must meet certain requirements (Swedish Work Environment Authority, 2022).

1.5 Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One presented an overall background and problematization of the chosen topic, the research aims and objectives, as well as the research purpose followed by the research questions. In Chapter Two a theoretical construct and literature review covering studies on Born Globals, Nudge Theory and the innovative physical work environment will be presented. It will cover the different success factors for Born Globals and what differentiates them from traditional MNEs. Subsequently, Nudge Theory will be presented and applied to the physical working environment, followed by a detailed description of the innovative working environment presenting important enablers for creativity and innovation. To summarize the findings of Chapter Two, a framework will be constructed to visualize the connections between Born Globals and the innovative working environment through Nudge Theory. In Chapter Three the methodology will be discussed and a transparent explanation justifying the methodological choices is presented. In Chapter Four, the data will be presented using a within-case analysis, a cross-case analysis and lastly a pattern matching analysis. Chapter Five will summarize the conclusions of the gathered data and discuss the theoretical and practical contributions, as well as suggestions for future research. The conceptual framework created in Chapter Two will also be revised and altered according to the key findings to reflect Born Globals more accurately.

2 Literature Review

This chapter reviews relevant literature and theory concerning Born Globals, innovation, and the physical working environment. The thorough review builds the theoretical foundation on which the analysis rests. It begins with literature concerning Born Globals and analyzes their unique characteristics based on an individual and organizational perspective. Thereafter, Nudge Theory is presented and literature connecting the theory to the physical working environment is reviewed. Lastly, components of an innovative working environment and individual creativity are revised. Based on the literature presented, the data collection method was structured and it later lays the foundation for the analysis and discussion.

2.1 Uniqueness and Key Success Factors of Born Global Firms

After the concept of Born Globals had been introduced to International Business literature in the 1990s, the number of studies investigating the key characteristics of Born Globals and how they differ from MNEs increased notably (Andersson, 2017). One difference between Born Globals and mature firms, such as established MNEs, is where in the business life cycle they are positioned (Zheng, Yang & McLean, 2010; Grant, 2016; Knight & Cavusgil, 2004). The business life cycle model has four phases: initiation, growth, maturity, and decline (*see Figure 1*). This cycle is typically characterized by an S-shaped growth curve visualizing the profit over time (Grant, 2016; Jabłoński & Jabłoński, 2016).

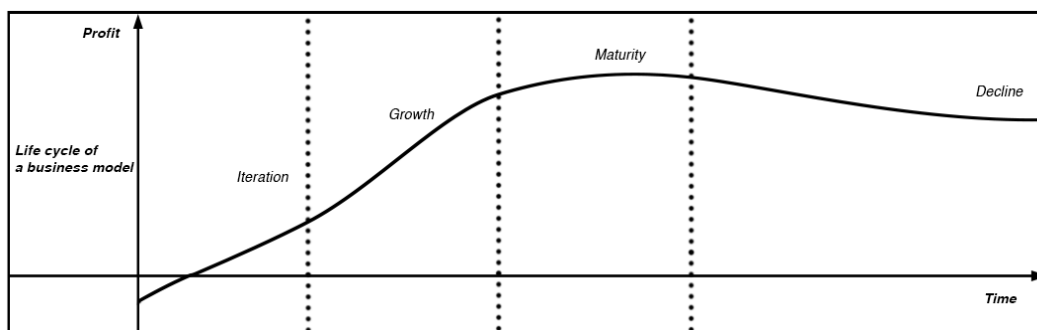


Figure 1: The Business Model Life Cycle Model, representing the profit (Y-axis) over time (X-axis) (Jabłoński & Jabłoński, 2016).

Born Global firms are in the initial stages of development (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Zheng et al, 2010) and therefore typically fall under the introduction stage or in the beginning of the growth phase. These stages are characterized by uncertainty and high competition (Grant, 2016). To continue to other growth stages, firms must differentiate themselves from other firms within the industry (Jabłoński & Jabłoński, 2016; Yang & Wu, 2021). In these stages, product technology is rapidly advancing and rival technologies compete for attention (Grant, 2016). Thus, for Born Globals to compete against the mature firms, they must be innovative and develop technologies which challenges the others' (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015; Grant, 2016), however, this may be challenging because of the instability of the market and their lacking resources (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004). Contrastingly, MNEs typically fall under the mature phase, which is characterized by steady development, low innovation, high demand, stable sales, and a quest for efficiency (Grant, 2016). Research and development (R&D) productivity appears to decline with size and age (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Lewin & Massini, 2003) which points towards Born Globals being more innovative than mature MNEs. However, since MNEs have more capital and resources than Born Globals, they have a greater ability to invest in creating stimulating working environments, advanced technology, R&D, and other factors which may stimulate innovation (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015; Jabłoński & Jabłoński, 2016).

One of the first studies on Born Globals points out two main reasons why the emergence of Born Globals has occurred. Knight & Cavusgil (1996) explain that customer preferences and consumer behavior have become more homogenous worldwide due to globalization. Secondly, technological advances have cut the costs of internationalization through wider use of the internet, advances in communications and information technologies, and more effective transportation modes (Knight & Cavusgil, 1996; Knight & Cavusgil, 2009). Later studies show that there are more reasons why some companies successfully internationalize at a higher speed than others and why Born Global firms are more common today. Since Born Globals have limited resources and capabilities (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Sepulveda & Gabrielsson, 2013) combined with a business environment characterized by high competition, uncertainty and pressure (Grant, 2016; Jabłoński & Jabłoński, 2016), they must work strategically to reach the goal of becoming innovative and global (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004). Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen

(2021) suggest the main explanatory factor to why some firms successfully internationalize more rapidly than others is their choice of business model. A business model is a broad description of a firm's activities and includes how it creates value for its customers through production, sales and delivery (Grant, 2016). It also includes to whom the firm sells its products or services to, as well as how it coordinates its activities (Grant, 2016). As an example, having a global niche business model increases a firm's likelihood of becoming a Born Global (Bell, 1995; Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen, 2021). Dow (2017) supports this statement and argues that by targeting a small number of customers in different markets, through unique product offerings, the probability of achieving global presence increases. Moreover, low transportation costs may also increase that likelihood (Dow, 2017). Other reasons why some Born Globals succeed include a firm's capabilities and knowledge which originates both from the individuals within the firm and from the organization as a whole.

2.1.1 Individual Capabilities and Experience

Since Born Global firms typically have a small number of employees, the capabilities, knowledge, and vision of each employee is highly influential and essential for the success of the firm (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015; Lewin & Massini, 2003; Zheng, Yang & McLean, 2010). Both the definition by Oviatt and McDougall (1994) and the definition by Knight, Madsen and Servais (2004), have in common the goal of internationalizing early on. According to Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen (2021), having a high international orientation among employees increases the firm's likelihood of reaching that goal. Employees' international orientation can be motivated by the organizational culture (Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen, 2021), but also be obtained through experience (Nummel, Saarenketo & Puumalainen, 2004; Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015). Experience may also increase individual entrepreneurs' knowledge, which is an important factor for speeding up the internationalization process (Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015; Andersson, 2017; Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen, 2021; Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Oviatt & McDougall, 1994). Scholars argue that the longer entrepreneurs have worked abroad, the quicker a firm internationalizes (Van Gelderen, Sluis & Jansen, 2005; Zucchella, Palamara & Denicolai, 2007). Previous entrepreneurial knowledge may also increase the absorptive capacity of managers when further expanding (Hennart, Majocchi &

Hagen, 2021). Entrepreneurs' international vision, working experience, and previous knowledge were found to be success factors for both European and Chinese firms (Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015). Additionally, each individual's motivation, creativity, and knowledge add to the overall innovation culture of a firm (Amabile, 1998), which is of importance for the organizational innovation and success (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Lewin & Massini, 2003; Zheng, Yang & McLean, 2010). Having a loose managerial style in which employees can work freely is also seen as beneficial as it promotes flexibility and innovation (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004).

2.1.2 Organizational Knowledge and Innovation Culture

When investigating the success of Born Globals from an organizational perspective, literature points towards innovation culture as a critical influential factor (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Lewin & Massini, 2003; Zheng et al., 2010). In comparison to established MNEs, Born Globals lack tangible resources such as plant, equipment, and funds (Grant, 2016). Instead, it is their intangible assets and knowledge-based capabilities which differentiate them from the rest (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Oviatt & McDougall, 2005). It is argued that "Superior performance is an outcome of the firm's entrepreneurial and managerial knowledge" (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004, p.127) that stems from knowledge management. Knowledge management is the coordination of knowledge-collecting processes within an organization aimed to achieve organizational goals (OECD, 2004). Processes include knowledge sharing, learning regimes, and other activities which enable information to be improved and efficiently employed throughout an organization (Lewin & Massini, 2003; Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; King, 2001). For knowledge sharing to be effective across business functions, it should be flexible (Young, Sapienza & Baumer, 2003) and consistent (Huber, 1991). Since innovation mainly derives from internal R&D (Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015), knowledge management is a key success factor of Born Globals (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004). R&D promotes innovation culture, and simultaneously, innovation culture supports additional R&D and exporting activities (Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015; Knight & Cavusgil, 2004). The importance of innovation culture was also discussed in a study comparing the key competencies of Western and Chinese Born Globals by Anderson, Danilovic & Huan (2015). The study found that one of the biggest strengths of

Western Born Globals was their innovation culture, whereas it was a weakness for Chinese Born Globals since they did not have the same amount of freedom and flexibility to develop it due to governmental policies (Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015).

Another key success factor of Born Globals is the organization's use of advanced technology (Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015; Grant, 2016; Knight & Cavusgil, 2009). Traditional literature argues high technology is a prerequisite for development and internationalization (Knight & Cavusgil, 1996; Rennie, 1993). Although not all Born Globals are tech companies, technology may be a fundamental characteristic of their business model (Knight & Cavusgil, 1996). Not only can technology ease knowledge sharing, but it is also beneficial for product differentiation (Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen, 2021). Although recent literature may argue that previous studies have overestimated the importance of technology, it is still of high relevance for the business model of many firms (Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen, 2021). As mentioned previously, niche business models and product offerings are commonly used in well-performing Born Globals (Bell, 1995; Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen, 2021; Dow, 2017).

Among high-tech firms, networks are also of importance (Cannone & Ughetto, 2012; Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen, 2021, Sepulveda & Gabrielsson, 2013) as they may increase a firm's level of knowledge and reduce the business risk (Young, Sapienza & Baumer, 2003; Knight & Cavusgil, 2015). Networks are created when two or more firms engage in a transaction or relationship (Dubini & Aldrich, 1991), and in turn, learn from one another. Networks are particularly important during the early stages of a firm's life cycle (Sepulveda & Gabrielsson, 2014), and arguably, firms whose founders have preexisting international networks, are more likely to internationalize quickly (Oviatt & McDougall, 2005) and become Born Globals (Cannone & Ughetto, 2012). Nurturing the relationships with external stakeholders may be seen as an effective strategy as they may provide valuable local know-how, linking firms with additional contacts and developing new customer segments (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004). Furthermore, networks may increase a firm's level of innovation (Yaqub, Sreckovic, Cliquet, Hendrikse & Windsperger, 2020), which supports the innovation culture at the organizational level - a key success factor for Born Globals (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Lewin & Massini, 2003; Zheng, Yang & McLean, 2010; Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015).

2.2 Nudge Theory

Nudge Theory can be used as a management and governance tool to affect people's decision-making, without restricting the alternatives for their ultimate choices (Thaler & Sunstein, 2021). Nudging, popularized by the book *Nudge* written by Thaler and Sunstein (2008), is derived from the basis of behavioral economics. It is based on the choice architecture, which refers to the practice of influencing choice by arranging how the choices are presented (Thaler & Sunstein, 2021). Choice architecture is in turn based on Kahneman's work related to the dual-process theory of mind (Thaler & Sunstein, 2021). In broad terms, humans make decisions based on two system thought processes, System 1 and System 2 (Kahneman, 2011; Evans, 2008; Ebert & Freibichler, 2017). System 1: Automatic system, represents intuitive and unconscious thinking (Kahneman, 2011; Evans, 2008; Bellini-Leite, 2022). In contrast, System 2: Reflective thinking, is slow and under controlled forms and is often used for complex problems, such as math problems (Kahneman, 2011; Evans, 2008; Bellini-Leite, 2022). When using thought System 1, the decision-making process is based on intuition and can at glance, lead to poor decisions (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008, 2021). A famous example of such is Shepard's Tables (*see Figure 2*) in which respondents were asked to select which of two tables would be most suitable for a coffee table (Shepard, 1990).

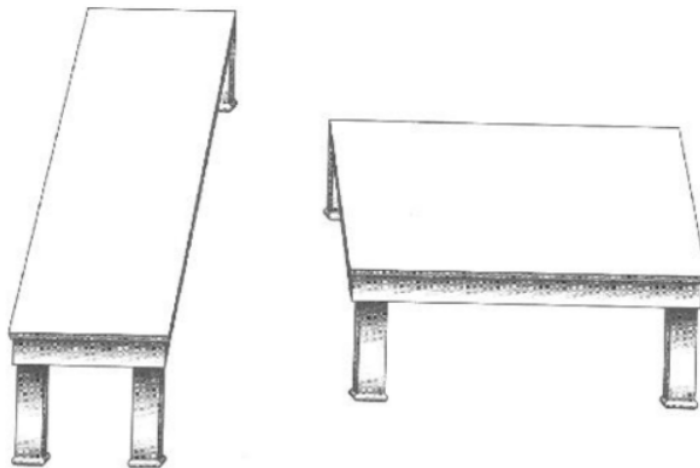


Figure 2: The picture of the two tables used in Shepard's experiment (Shepard, 1990).

The majority of respondents argue that the table on the right appears more suitable since the table to the left intuitively seems narrower (Thaler & Sunstein, 2021). The two tables are however

identical in size, with the only difference being that the parallelogram to the right is tilted 90 degrees (Shepard, 1990; Thaler & Sunstein, 2021). This optical illusion is used to represent the intuitive thinking of System 1, in which decisions are based on bias or misconceptions (Thaler & Sunstein, 2021). Since the bias can lead to poor decisions, nudges can be used to guide people into making better decisions when a situation may be difficult or unfamiliar (Thaler & Sunstein, 2021). As an example, strategically placing healthy alternatives in a grocery store at more reachable and convenient locations could be considered a nudge toward making healthier decisions (Kosters & Van der Heijden, 2015; Galpin, 2022). Despite guiding people to make better decisions through nudging, the freedom of choice is preserved, meaning that people are not restricted to make the decisions they want (Thaler & Sunstein, 2021). Therefore, a nudge is not a mandate and can take various forms for different purposes (Kosters & Van der Heijden, 2015). Nudges are primarily applied to social policies and governmental control to improve the quality of life (Thaler & Sunstein, 2021). However, when applied in business contexts, it is referred to as nudge management (Ebert & Freibichler, 2017). The aim of nudge management is to subconsciously affect the behavior of employees to be in line with organizational values (Ebert & Freibichler, 2017).

Dahl, Lawrence, and Pierce (2011) describe that “the best thinking can come from anywhere in the organization” (p.20), highlighting the importance of innovation regardless of function, department or role. Stieler and Henike (2022) build upon this by explaining that nudge management can increase the participation rate in an organization’s innovation activities. Stieler and Henike (2022) also emphasize two more benefits of nudge management. Firstly, nudging helps companies improve engagement in strategic and foresight planning as more opinions are leveraged (Stieler & Henike, 2022). Secondly, nudging facilitates more permanent innovation engagement among employees (Stieler & Henike, 2022). The four key nudging activities designed to emphasize innovation are (1) digital workflow tools, (2) collective foresight radar, (3) topic campaigns, and (4) curation (Stieler & Henike, 2022). Firstly, implementing digital workflow tools, such as digital idea generation platforms, may reduce manual and individual effort and increase employee participation (Stieler & Henike, 2022). Employee participation is necessary for successful and diverse corporate innovative activities (Stieler & Henike, 2022). Secondly, nudging through collective foresight radar activities, more opinions may be voiced,

which may result in improved suggestions and strategic decisions in the long run (Stieler & Henike, 2022). Thirdly and fourthly, topic campaigns and curation are nudging activities that bring new perspectives to employees and subconsciously encourage open thinking (Stieler & Henike, 2022). An example of such activities includes building inspirational walls consisting of updated trends, articles, and reports (Stieler and Henike, 2022).

Leegard (2019), discusses how nudge management can be utilized when designing the physical working environment to push for a more creative mindset among employees, which may result in a more innovative culture. Galpin (2022) also stresses how nudge management can increase innovation and how it can lead to superior revenue growth and market performance in comparison to less innovative peers. Through an extensive study of large listed corporations, Galpin (2022) found that only 25 percent utilize physical working environment nudges, such as placing cross-functional teams in the same physical space, to foster interaction and innovation. Subsequently, only 7 percent incorporate large-scale internal innovation activities, such as innovation awards or innovation days gathering all functions and departments (Galpin, 2022). Galpin (2022) means that successfully coordinating the company culture with its innovation strategy through nudging can be considered a competitive advantage.

In this study, Nudge Theory will be used as a tool to investigate how nudging can be used to strategically design an innovative working environment and affect employee innovation participation. This will be done by examining which physical attributes within the working environment that nudge towards innovation.

2.3 Innovative Working Environment

Research shows evidence between job satisfaction and job performance among employees (Vischer, 2007; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Clements-Croome, 2015; Spector, 1997; Brill, Margulis, & Konar, 1985; Davis, 1984). Moreover, efficient and effective workplace design must balance out different personalities and behaviors to ensure maximum creativity and productivity (Baldry, 1999). Many factors may affect the working environment. Some scholars refer to the working environment by characteristics such as job security, wages, working hours, and top

management (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015; Athirah Saidi, Michael, Sumilan, Lim, Jonathan, Hamidi & Ahmad, 2019), while others refer to solely physical attributes (Oksanen & Ståhle, 2013; Vos & van der Voordt, 2001). In this thesis, the working environment refers to the physical space in which a firm's operations are performed. The literature on innovative working environments addresses two main categories: factors enhancing employee creativity, and the attributes of an innovative working environment. The literature in this thesis will cover both categories in the following segments.

2.3.1 Factors for Individual Creativity

Lee (2016) emphasizes the importance of understanding the characteristics that promote employee creativity, as it positively affects innovation within the organization. Innovation is critical for new ventures as they barely generate profit in the initial stages (Bishwas, 2015; Yang and Wu, 2021). For that reason, it is important that organizations understand how individuals' participation in innovation can be increased. According to Yang and Wu (2021), one way this can be accomplished is through the physical work environment. There is a growing body of scholars examining how creativity can be managed and enhanced on an individual level (Sternberg 2006; Hargadon and Beckley, 2006; Cummings, & Oldham, 1997; Kremer, Villamor, & Aguinis, 2019). Other scholars have tried to connect individual creativity with organizational innovation explaining it as a symbiotic relationship (Amabile, 1988, 1996; Lee, 2016; Yang & Wu, 2021). Without individual creativity, no innovation is implemented and without any innovation, no creative solutions are enforced (Amabile, 1988).

Sternberg's (2006) Investment Theory of Creativity focuses on the individual aspects of creativity and explains the concept of investing in unknown, yet promising ideas, which may face resistance when first presented. Despite the resistance, the creative individual resiliently pursues the idea and seeks to find the next idea after successfully monetizing it (Sternberg, 2006). The theory includes six resources that are required for individual creativity. These are (1) intellectual abilities, (2) knowledge, (3) styles of thinking, (4) personality, (5) motivation, and (6) environment (Sternberg, 2006). The author further explains that although one might possess all

resources, without a suitable environment, the creative ability of an employee might never be presented (Sternberg, 2006).

Further building upon creativity, Hargadon and Beckley (2006) developed the concept of creativity providing a model of collective creativity. The model derives from the moments when social interactions between individuals generate new interpretations and discoveries that could not have been possible by the individuals alone (Hargadon & Beckley, 2006). Through four related activities: (1) help-seeking, (2) help giving, (3) reflective reframing, and (4) reinforcing, collective creativity can occur (Hargadon & Beckley, 2006). On the one hand, help-seeking activities concern a situation where an individual actively seeks help from others when in a problematic situation. On the other hand, help giving describes the activities where individuals intently seek to aid others (Hargadon & Beckley, 2006). Reflective activities explain moments where participants in an interaction build upon comments and actions of others (Hargadon & Beckley, 2006). Finally, reinforcing activities holistically augment the organizational values that encourage individuals as they partake in the other three activities (Hargadon & Beckley, 2006).

2.3.2 Attributes for an Innovative Working Environment

Lee (2016) describes the key characteristics of physical working environments that promote individual creativity. The author highlights three important aspects which enhance employees' ability to identify creative ideas. These are balanced layout, a technology interface for collaboration, and spaces for idea generation (Lee, 2016). The balanced layout of an innovative working environment should address various types of working styles, where both individual and collaborative work can be performed (Sailer, 2011; Lee, 2016). Researchers suggest that a collaborative working environment should be of open design, where communication and interaction are emphasized (Davis, Leach & Clegg, 2011; Vos & van der Voordt, 2001; Sailer, 2011; Samani & Alvani, 2020). McCoy (2005) describes that the physical work environment can support teams to be creative by bringing them together. Yang and Wu (2021), discovered a significant correlated relationship between leadership support, teamwork, and work stress in the working environment and that it affected innovation behavior. This suggested that a physical working environment should be designed purposefully to not cause stress (Yang & Wu, 2021).

Research has also found evidence that the physical working environment positively affects individuals' innovation engagement which in turn affects corporate performance (Yang & Wu, 2021; Chandrasekar, 2011).

Oksanen and Ståhle (2013) investigated the characteristics of an innovative space and suggested five key characteristics: (1) communicativeness, (2) modifiability, (3) smartness, (4) attractiveness, and (5) value reflections. Physical spaces which have characteristics of being communicative promote the social process of space (Oksanen & Ståhle, 2013; McCoy, 2005). Thus, enabling teamwork, knowledge sharing and social interaction, results in increased job satisfaction, motivation and collaboration (Oksanen & Ståhle, 2013; Cheung & Zhang, 2021). Samani and Alvani (2020) and McCoy (2005) also highlight that an open office space can affect individual creativity because they argue that the creative process is partly a result of social interactions. A limitation of a communicative space is the risk of distraction from work (Oksanen & Ståhle, 2013). However, to meet this limitation, spaces need to be modifiable, allowing the space to be altered to support all the needs of employees (Oksanen & Ståhle, 2013). Such alterations should ensure that a space can serve different purposes at different times. As an example, a room could be adjustable and used as an office during the day and as a venue for events during the evenings (Oksanen & Ståhle, 2013). The third characteristic, the smartness of a physical working environment, refers to an intelligent office environment that provides employees with the technical solutions they need to be more efficient (Oksanen & Ståhle, 2013). This aligns with the research by Salgado, Flegl, and Fejfarová (2020), stating that intelligent spaces are a predominant factor in employee satisfaction and engagement.

Yet, the most predominant factor for employee satisfaction in Salgado, Flegl and Fejfarová's (2020) study is the attractiveness or comfort of the space, which is the fourth characteristic in Oksanen and Ståhle's (2013) study. Examples include leisure rooms, the balance between innovative attributes and interior design, and access to condiments among others. The final characteristic Oksanen and Ståhle (2013) describe is the value reflecting space. An office space designed purposefully to reflect company values may result in physiological effects on its users, in which they feel inspired and motivated (Oksanen & Ståhle, 2013; Nanayakkara, Wilkinson & Halvitigala, 2021).

2.4 Applying Nudge Theory to Physical Working Environments

The key findings from the literature on innovative physical working environments are to an extent connected to the Nudge Theory since certain physical attributes of the working environment can trigger certain behaviors (Leegard, 2019). As an example, it can increase employee participation in innovation (Stieler & Henike, 2022). To increase the understanding of how the two are related, a conceptual framework was created by the authors of this thesis. The framework connects the dots between the key aspects of the literature review, by visualizing the relationship between the physical working environment, innovation, and Nudge Theory. The boxes represent key components of the literature, the blue arrows represent nudges, and the black lines represent the connections between the components. Since the working environment can nudge towards both collective and individual creativity through different physical attributes, lines are pointing to both.

In the framework, the symbiotic relationship between creativity and innovation is visualized using innovation culture. The connection goes both ways - innovation culture is compiled by both individual and collective creativity, and simultaneously innovation culture encourages both individual and collective creativity. Without an innovative culture, there is no motivation for neither the individual nor the collective creativity to occur. Moreover, without individual creativity, there would be no participation in collective creativity, and without collective creativity, there would be no innovation culture, since culture can not rely on a single individual.

Finally, Amabile (1988) emphasizes the importance of innovation management, arguing that organizational innovation cannot occur without it. Although innovation management is not discussed thoroughly in this thesis, it is included in the framework as a nudge towards innovation. It can be used as a nudge towards innovation since it signals to employees that their innovative suggestions are considered valuable and the ambition is to implement them.

To summarize the literature on Nudge Theory and innovative working environments, the physical attributes of the working environment which may nudge certain behaviors can be seen in Table 1.

Physical working environment nudges towards collective creativity :	Physical working environment nudges towards individual creativity :	Managerial nudges toward organizational innovation :
- Balanced layout	- Balanced Layout	- Innovation Management
- Open and communicative layout	- Spaces for idea generation	
- Spaces for idea generation	- Resources, tools and technical solutions	
- Resources, tools, and technical solutions	- Spaces modifiable for multiple purposes	

Table 1: Physical working environment nudges.

The Conceptual Framework (see Figure 3) includes these nudges, and is constructed as follows:

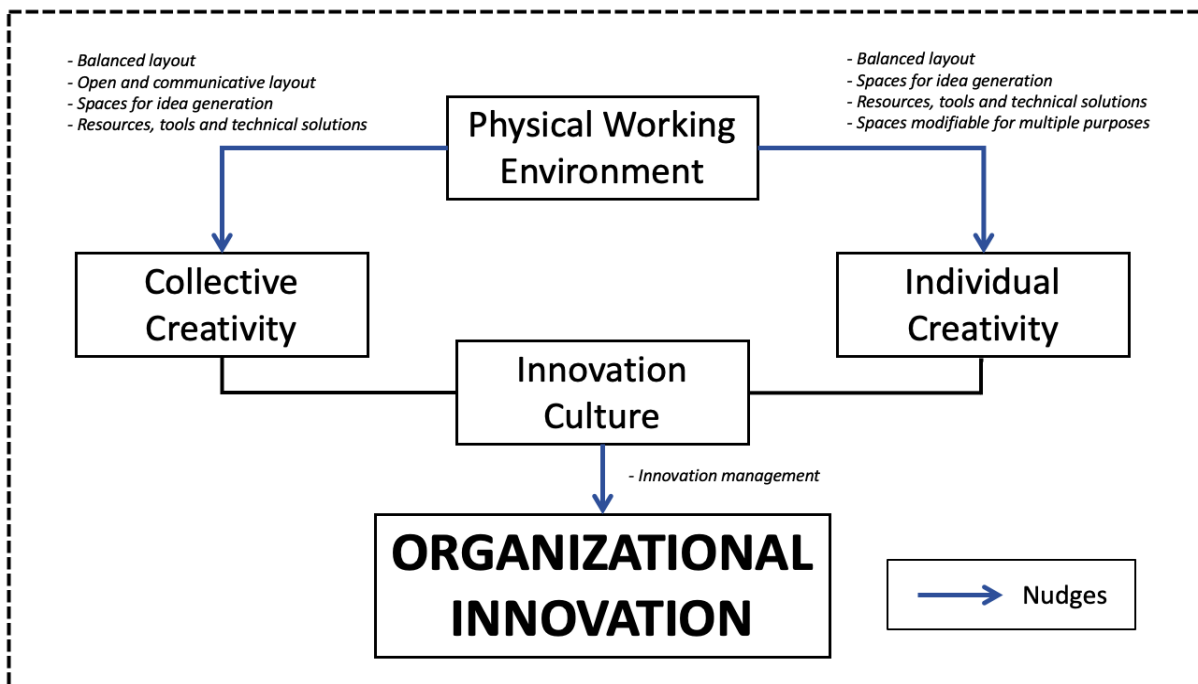


Figure 3: The Conceptual Framework: How nudge management can be used to encourage collective and individual creativity through the physical working environment, leading to organizational innovation.

3 Methodology

This chapter looks into the methodological decisions made in this thesis. The research was based on qualitative and abductive research. Data was collected through eight semi-structured interviews. Further, a thorough analysis of the data collected was made in three steps. In this section, the selected methodological approaches are argued for and the choices made in the research are justified.

3.1 Research Approach

The research approach represents the relationship between empirical data and theory (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A clear choice between using a qualitative or quantitative, as well as deductive, inductive, or abductive research approach was therefore made before the research was conducted. This was to ensure the data collected was beneficial when answering the research questions. In the segment below it is argued why a qualitative and abductive approach was selected for this research.

3.1.1 Abductive Approach

When conducting research, one of the most important decisions is whether one should use a deductive or inductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A deductive research approach selects and analyzes a theory, decides on a hypothesis, collects the relevant data, and then discusses the data based on the theory presented (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It is the most common way in which research is conducted and rests on the principle that predetermined theory sets the ground for the data collection. A contrasting approach is inductive research, where the theory is the outcome of the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Thus, it involves drawing conclusions and presenting a theoretical background based on observations and gathered data.

The distinction between the two approaches is however not always well defined, and both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. It is also a wide spectrum, where research

is likely to have stronger or weaker tendencies from one of the two main approaches. To overcome these disadvantages and ambiguities, authors Anna Dubois and Lars-Erik Gadde (2002) discuss how a hybrid between the two approaches can be beneficial. They present the abductive approach, which refers to the iterative development of the theory once new knowledge or data is acquired (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). In the abductive approach, the theoretical framework and the overall content of the thesis are continuously altered, as a result of new empirical findings and further theoretical knowledge obtained in the process (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). This leaves room for novel discoveries of relationships and connections not covered in the theory at first.

This thesis focused on the abductive approach. The research's starting point was a thorough literature review concerning Born Globals, Nudge Theory, and the innovative working environment. However, as new data was collected, parts of the report were continually adjusted to fit the discoveries. As an example, the Theory of Work Adjustment was used at first, however, when the interviews had been completed, it was realized that Nudge Theory was more applicable. It made more sense of the data and was, therefore, replaced the Theory of Work Adjustment in the literature review. Thus, the thesis writing process was based on constantly adjusting and re-writing segments of the report, as new information was gathered. In that way, the thesis includes relevant and fitting literature from other studies, in connection to the data gathered from interviews and case studies.

3.1.2 Qualitative Approach

The process of gathering data to answer the research question is defined by the research method, which is conducted either through a quantitative or qualitative approach (Kumar, 2014; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Normally, a qualitative approach allows for more flexibility and the opposite applies to a quantitative (Kumar, 2014). Qualitative research emphasizes words when gathering and analyzing data, hence, the focus is placed on the generation of theory (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It is further discussed that a qualitative approach allows researchers to make an extensive analysis of how selected individuals describe certain matters (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Doz, 2011).

This way, the gathered data reflects the respondents' opinions and personal reflections. Contrastingly, a quantitative approach instead emphasizes a high quantity of data, and the focus is placed on the testing of theory (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Making use of statistical methods to analyze data is common and the main focus is placed on numerical data and making generalizations across a larger group of people (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

A qualitative approach was selected to thoroughly examine and discuss the topic in this study. The approach was favorable as the aim of the study was to analyze and compare the opinions and perceptions of staff. A quantitative approach was considered, as it would allow for data to be gathered from a larger population easily. However, respondents are typically limited in the extent they can express their opinions in quantitative approaches. Interviews were therefore conducted through the qualitative approach, as the respondent's answers could be developed and follow-up questions could be asked. It also needs to be mentioned that a qualitative approach often is connected to the inductive approach and theory building rather than theory testing (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Doz, 2011). Doz (2011) however argues that a qualitative approach also can be used when testing theory. Thus, as the study deploys an abductive approach where the goal is to do both, this research approach is justified.

3.2 Research Design

There are several different ways in which research can be designed. It is commonly one of five approaches: longitudinal design, experimental design, comparative design, cross-sectional design, or case study design (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In the following part, it is argued why a multiple case study design was the most appropriate for this research.

3.2.1 Multiple Case Studies

The case study design aims to understand complex situations and phenomena, and is a favored approach when one wants to ask questions concerning the how and the why (Yin, 2003). A basic case study requires a detailed analysis of one single case and is a commonly used research design

when the goal is to gain a deeper knowledge of a specific case (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Eisenhardt, 1989). Case studies often involve data collection methods such as interviews, observations, or surveys (Eisenhardt, 1989). A case study usually refers to an extensive examination of a specific setting in an entity, workplace, or organization (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Eisenhardt, 1989). A case study can also consist of multiple cases (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Eisenhardt, 1989). In a multiple case study, the aim is to contrast and compare cases against one another (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Eisenhardt, 1989).

For this research, a multiple case study approach was selected. Since the aim of this study was to investigate the interconnection between the physical working environment and innovation for Swedish Born Globals in the tech industry, conducting multiple cases was necessary to ensure a thorough analysis could be made. Moreover, it was necessary to assure the conclusions could be applied to that segment of the industry. One firm is simply not enough to reflect a whole population (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Eisenhardt, 1989), therefore, three firms were chosen to gain more perspectives and a deeper understanding. Ideally, examining more than three firms would have been preferable, but due to the strict time limit, no more than three case studies could be conducted. Secondly, to increase the reliability of the research, it was important to gain perspective from multiple sources. Single-case studies tend to be biased since they only focus on one viewpoint (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Eisenhardt, 1989). Moreover, since the research question includes the perspectives of both managers and employees, multiple viewpoints from multiple companies were of interest. This is another important aspect according to Eisenhardt (1989), who discusses that multiple case studies can also include numerous levels of analysis.

3.3 Data Collection Method

The selection of a data collection method is a crucial aspect when determining how to collect data and when deciding which data is necessary for the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It mainly involves selecting a sampling strategy and which primary and secondary sources to use (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This section will present and motivate the choice of the cases,

interviewees, and literature, as well as present the reasonings behind choosing the purposive sampling method and the primary data.

3.3.1 Purposive Sampling

Before collecting data, a suitable sampling method needs to be selected (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling method where the researchers select the respondents strategically and purposefully to guarantee they are relevant to the research, instead of selecting them randomly (Bryman & Bell, 2011). When attempting to understand a specific phenomenon or situation, purposive sampling is preferable (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The selection of the case companies in this thesis is a type of purposive sampling. Before collecting data, the scope of the research had to be narrowed down to assure the study was feasible. Therefore the cases selected had to adhere to certain criteria in regards to ambition to go global, industry and location. Thus, this case study is based on Born Global firms, based on the definition by Oviatt and McDougall (1994). They define Born Globals rather broadly and describe them as firms with the ambition of internationalizing from the founding. Their definition was used to select the case companies. Since Born Global firms are young and most have not gone public, the data available to the public is limited, making it difficult to find the relevant figures and reports. The definition by Rasmussen et al (2001) that focuses on realized performance, will thus not be the focus in this thesis. Further, the companies selected for this research are all based in Sweden and conduct business within the technology sector. As the aims and objectives of this study are to understand how the physical working environment can influence innovation within this target group, firms that suited that description needed to be carefully chosen. Thus, the primary sources in this study were selected based on these criteria.

Swedish firms within the tech industry were selected due to various reasons. Firstly, technology is an important aspect of why Born Globals thrive (Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen, 2021; Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015; Grant, 2016). Therefore it was of interest to examine firms that have succeeded based on their technological resources and business model. Further, Born Globals are over-represented within the high-tech industry of Sweden (Halldin,

2012) indicating that they could represent a large fraction of firms. Secondly, Born Globals were of particular interest to all the authors after having researched the phenomenon recently before the topic had to be chosen. Thirdly, Swedish firms were chosen because of their close proximity to the authors, thus, a certain relation was invoked.

3.3.2 Selection of Cases

The case companies in this research had to adhere to the criteria specified through purposive sampling. Thus, the selected case companies had to be Swedish Born Global firms acting in the tech industry. The first company was selected because the authors were aware of their Born Global status before this research was conducted. The second and third companies were found through reading articles about Swedish new ventures in the technology industry. The websites of all companies were then visited separately to ensure they complied with the chosen definition of Born Globals.

One of the interviewed companies preferred to be anonymous. Hence, for consistency reasons, all firms will remain anonymous throughout the thesis, beyond the fact that they are Swedish Born Globals in the tech industry. When a subject wants to be anonymous, they are commonly referred to as “Company A”, “Company B” or “Company C” to remain fully anonymous. However, to give the reader some insight into their specific fields of business, the three firms will be referred to as (1) “The Sports Company”, (2) “The Fintech Company”, and (3) “The Blockchain Company”, after being confirmed by all companies. The short descriptions of each firm was also approved by all companies.

3.3.3 Selection of Interviewees

As one of the research questions in this study is to contrast the managers’ perceptions against the one of the employees’, the interviewees had to be selected based on their positions. The main criteria were therefore that one of the interviewees from each case had to hold a managerial position while the other two had to be employees. Generally, there are more employees than

managers at firms. Therefore, to represent this proportionally, two employees were selected from each company. In total, the goal was to conduct nine interviews, three for each case.

To find potential interviewees who fulfilled these criteria, emails were sent out to the representative of the selected companies, informing them about the thesis and requesting the participation of relevant staff. This way, the representative could contact the employees and manager they found to be relevant for the research. Contact information to the participating employees and managers was then sent to the authors of this thesis and interviews were scheduled via email. A broad mix of employees was interviewed, making sure not all were from the same function at the company, which could have led to a bias.

Due to non-response bias, solely eight out of the nine interviews that were planned at first were conducted. The three managers' positions were Chief Technical Officer (CTO) and Co-founder, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and Head of Workplace Design. The employees were Head of People, Head of Growth, Head of Strategy, Bank Relations Coordinator, and Business Development & Partnerships Coordinator. The varying positions amongst the interviewees ensured that several perspectives were taken into account.

3.3.4 Selection of Literature

Theory is an important aspect of a study and is key when attempting to explain patterns, understand previous research and increase the reliability of the research that is conducted (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Thus, theory and research literature was used in this study to increase understanding and guide the collection of primary data.

The two databases LUBsearch and Google Scholar were used to gather relevant empirical research. By searching for specific keywords related to the desired literature, previous studies and articles written on the topic were found. Multiple papers were read to grasp the width of the theme and identify a gap in the literature. To identify more valuable information, the reference lists of relevant articles were examined to find further research on the topics.

The relevance and quality of the research literature used were also checked against the Academic Journal Guide and the Norwegian Register for Scientific Journals, Series and Publishers, to ensure credibility. The ranking system of each register was used as a benchmark for reliability.

3.3.5 Interview Design

Interviews are a common data collection method in qualitative studies, especially in case studies (Yin, 2003). There are various ways in which an interview can be designed, such as structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Structured interviews follow a standardized schedule, where the aim is for all interviewees to be given identical questions and thus every interview follows the same order and structure (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Contrastingly, unstructured interviews do not rely on any set of questions, but at most have an overarching theme the interview should cover (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer follows a general interview guide but is able to vary the order of questions and decide which questions are of importance for the understanding of data (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

This study deployed a semi-structured interview design, which allowed for more flexibility in terms of which questions were asked, instead of adhering to a strict schedule. It also opened up for follow-up questions to be asked whenever the interviewees' answers had to be further developed for the understanding of the data. Thus, ambiguity could be tackled and it was possible to explore relationships and perspectives that were not anticipated from the start of the interview. Additionally, the face-to-face interviews allowed for nonverbal communication to be picked up, which was of importance when deciding which follow-up questions to ask.

Furthermore, Mats Alvesson (2003) discusses that people and the organizations they represent, generally want to give off a good impression when participating in research interviews. Alvesson (2003) refers to this as "moral storytelling and promotional activity" (p.21). This could imply that the managers and employees of the Born Global firms want to portray their company in a positive manner, which may lead to a certain bias. By asking questions where the interviewees

could reflect upon both positive and negative aspects of their working environment, this bias could partly be addressed. However, the potential bias also needs to be considered when the data is analyzed.

Two separate interview guides were written, one targeted at managers, and one targeted at employees (see appendix). Both interview guides shared the same structure of having three main themes. Firstly, the interviewees were asked a few brief questions about their role and previous entrepreneurial experience, as well as a background of the company. Secondly, the interviewees were asked to describe their physical working environment and the intention behind the office layout and design. Lastly, the interviewees were asked questions regarding their personal reflections and opinions of the office and how the office affected their individual work and creativity as well as collaboration with others. Since the goal of data collection was to gather information from both managers and employees, different questions had to be asked to grasp both perspectives. Only a few questions differed between the two interview guides.

All interviews were conducted online, via the meeting software program Zoom. Online interviews allowed for more flexibility for the sake of both parties, both in terms of when they could be scheduled, but also in terms of where they could be conducted. The interviewees had the choice to conduct the interviews in the most suitable location in which they felt they could express themselves freely. Before the start of each interview, the interviewees were given information about the structure of the interviews and the main themes it would cover. They also needed to approve that the interviews could be recorded and stored for the purpose of transcribing before starting. They were recorded using the iPhone's voice memo application, or via the computer software OBS Studio. The interviews had a duration of between 30-50 minutes, depending on how evaluated the answers given were. It would have been beneficial to visit the offices to get a clearer picture of the space itself. However, due to the interviewees being pressured by time constraints and that the offices were located far from the interviewers, neither offices could be visited. As a solution, the interviewees were asked to send photos of the spaces they had described to allow for interpretation by the interviewers.

3.3.6 Primary Data

Primary data collection focuses on collecting data that directly aims to answer the research question (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this thesis, the primary data was derived from the interviews which have been discussed more in detail in previous sections. Moreover, pictures of the office environment of the three cases have been used in the analysis. The pictures aim to assist the reader in understanding how the physical working environment looks more in detail while supporting the short description provided by the interviewees. The pictures were provided by the case companies and are therefore relevant primary data.

3.4 Research Quality

There are two vital criteria when evaluating the quality of business research: reliability and validity (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The concept of reliability refers to whether or not the results of a study are repeatable (Kumar, 2014; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Validity refers to the accuracy and trustworthiness of a result and describes how precisely a study measures what it was supposed to investigate (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It consists of internal and external validity, where the former represents to what extent the causal relationship tested is accurate (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Bryman & Bell, 2011) and the latter represents to what extent findings can be generalized and applied across settings (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Golafshani, 2003; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Both concepts are widely discussed in quantitative research, however, it has been debated that the terms may need to be altered or refined to be more suitable for qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Golafshani, 2003). Arguably, many researchers design their own interpretations of validity and reliability when conducting research (Golafshani, 2003). Thus this section is included to describe how the terms *validity* and *reliability* are interpreted and answered in this thesis.

The reliability of qualitative research is presumably low (Kumar, 2014), hence, multiple actions were taken to ensure the reliability of this study. Firstly, to guarantee the interviews were conducted in the same manner, the interview guides were used as guidelines and the same person was responsible for all interviews. This assured that the data collection was done consistently

and the answers could be compared to one another. Secondly, through a purposive sampling of the companies, accurate and trustworthy information could be gathered about the research topic. Moreover, the trustworthiness of each interviewee was ensured by asking questions regarding their role and the duration of employment at the company. Since the research question is based on individual experiences and perceptions of the physical working environment, the interviewees had to have enough working experience to understand how the environment has affected them. Thirdly, a detailed methodology chapter was written in which data collection and research design were carefully motivated, to ensure transparency and replicability.

Moreover, the validity was addressed in two ways. Firstly, to ensure the authenticity of the data, eight individuals were interviewed to allow for multiple perspectives to be taken into account. Secondly, the data collected was transcribed, which enabled it to be interpreted and analyzed by all three authors. The data were thus tackled from three different angles, promoting validity. Moreover, the interviews were held in English, which is the second language of both the interviewers and the interviewees. Despite this, it was deemed a necessary action to eliminate the risks associated with translation errors.

Lastly, generalizability is a common aspect when determining the level of validity of a study (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Since the sample size in this study is small, the results cannot be generalized and applied to other populations. The aim of the study was however not to generalize the findings, rather the focus was on giving a more in-depth view of each of the companies and comparing the findings. However, since the data was proven to be similar to the available literature when tested against the framework developed in Chapter Two, the conclusions could arguably be applied to firms other than Swedish Born Globals within the tech industry.

3.5 Data Analysis

The analysis of data in qualitative research is considered a complex process, due to a large amount of data (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Sinkovics, 2018). It is further discussed that when analyzing qualitative data, there is not one way which is suitable for all research. It is argued by Eisenhardt (1989) that a within-case analysis is critical to prevent processing information poorly

and drawing ill-considered conclusions. Thus, the within-case analysis will provide the researchers and readers with the main findings from each case in the study (Eisenhardt, 1989). A cross-case analysis is also a common analysis tool and focuses on exploring similarities and differences across cases to support or challenge theoretical predictions (Eisenhardt, 1989). Lastly, pattern-matching analysis is the process of matching theoretical patterns from the literature with the observed patterns which emerged from the collected data (Bouncken et al, 2021). In this thesis, the data were analyzed in three steps to get a thorough understanding of its contributions - using a within-case analysis, a cross-case analysis, and a flexible pattern matching approach.

To begin with, to analyze the gathered data carefully, each interview was recorded. This allowed for transcription upon completion of the interview. The within-case analysis began by reading and highlighting important citations from the transcript. Thereafter, to identify the key findings and their relevance to the research questions and aim of the study, the highlighted citations were discussed. To address the issue of interpreting data differently, the discussion was carried out within the group. This approach is similar to coding, which is typically the starting point for most qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Coding includes finding patterns and categorizing data and later outlining connections between the categories (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The key findings, or codes, were based on descriptive citations and commonly discussed themes that laid the foundation for each within-case analysis.

Secondly, a cross-case analysis was conducted, which compared the findings of each case to one another to identify similarities, differences, and general patterns. Three main patterns were identified among the cases, which were then described separately to give more depth. Although there was a risk of repetitiveness, it was deemed necessary for the simplicity of the pattern matching process to have compared and discussed the cases against each other before matching them to the theoretical realm.

Thirdly, a flexible pattern matching was conducted by analyzing each pattern derived from the cross-case analysis and comparing them to the literature presented in Chapter Two. Pattern matching is the process of matching theoretical patterns from the literature with observed

patterns that emerged from the collected data (Bouncken et al, 2021). It further aims to determine the relationship between the theoretical construct and the observed data. Pattern matching is applicable regardless of adopting an inductive, deductive, or abductive research approach (Sinkovics, 2018). It can further be divided into three sub-categories: partial, full, and flexible pattern matching. A flexible pattern matching logic aims to discover how deviations derived from the pattern matching can help develop theoretical ideas (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2007), as well as evaluate and refine existing theories (Bouncken et al, 2021). A flexible pattern matching logic was selected in this study, as it allows for continuous iteration between existing theories and empirical data. Since the starting point for this research was based on a theoretical realm, and the fact that the collected data could challenge that realm, the continuous iteration was of importance. Moreover, the flexible pattern matching analysis allowed for conclusions to be drawn which could test the descriptive framework developed in Chapter Two.

In this thesis, the pattern matching analysis was conducted by analyzing the key patterns identified in the cross-case analysis. The patterns were matched against the theoretical constructs of Nudge Theory, innovative working environments, and Born Globals to investigate similarities and differences. They were also matched to determine whether the patterns could develop the theoretical ideas and refine existing theories. This way, findings that would later be added to The Conceptual Framework were identified.

3.6 Methodological Limitations

There are certain limitations to the chosen methodology. Firstly, interviewees may have restrained from mentioning aspects that could negatively reflect their firm. Alvesson (2003) discusses how this bias is common, and that firms want to portray themselves and their business in the best way possible. The interviewees may have refrained from the truth or purposefully avoided sharing certain details or simply not answered some questions. This is specifically a risk when interviewing managers (Alvesson, 2003). By interviewing both managers and employees from the same firm, more perspectives could be taken into account, thus, the limitation was addressed to some extent. The larger the sample size and the broader the perspectives, the more reliable outcome (Berenson, Levine & Krehbiel, 2012).

Secondly, in one of the cases, only two representatives were interviewed, instead of three as originally planned. This non-response bias resulted in fewer perspectives from that case, which could be viewed as an overall limitation in the data collection. However, since one of the interviewees was a manager and the other was an employee, both perspectives of the research question could be taken into account as aimed.

Additionally, the data collected in this study was based on the questions asked during the interviews. This could give rise to limitations, as a semi-structured interview does not directly guide which questions are asked (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Thus, the comparability amongst cases could be difficult, as the content and questions asked in each interview could differ. However, since the interview was based on three main themes, the interviews are kept rather similar for all three cases. With interviews, there is also always a risk of misinterpretation, both from the interviewer's standpoint and also from the interviewees'. This could be overcome to some degree because both parties in the interview had the opportunity to ask questions whenever something needed to be further clarified. However, follow-up questions from the interviewers could be leading. Leading questions risk affecting how interviewees interpret and answer the questions, thus not giving their initial or honest answers (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Despite this limitation, a semi-structured interview was chosen because of the possibility to ask follow-up questions.

Lastly, the use of purposeful sampling instead of random sampling could invoke a bias, since the firms were selected with a purpose (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Nevertheless, since this study is qualitative research and because of the specific type of companies that were examined, this sampling method was necessary.

4 Analysis

In this chapter of the thesis, the primary data is presented and analyzed. First, the data and key findings from the interviews of the three cases are presented, both from the managerial and the employee perspectives. Second, the data are discussed and compared among the three different cases. Last, the findings are discussed in comparison to the theoretical framework through a pattern-matching analysis.

4.1 Within-Case Analysis

In this section, the data and key findings from each of the three cases are presented. The main themes of the interviews were: the layout and design of the physical working environment, the experienced effect of the physical working environment, and the connection between the physical working environment and innovation. The key findings were determined based on these three themes and to what extent they could be connected to the research question, as well as the theoretical realm concerning the Nudge Theory, Born Globals, and the innovative working environment. The data presentation begins with a short description of the case company, then a brief visualization of the physical working environment, both using descriptive words and pictures. Subsequently, the key findings from the interviews are presented by summarizing their opinions and inserting quotes of strong opinions. This is presented through the managerial perspective first, following the employee perspective.

4.1.1 The Sports Company

The Sports Company was founded by two co-founders with the shared vision of building a global sports platform. They currently have over 200,000 users (and counting) from more than 50 countries. They have expanded rapidly since its founding, and to date, they have two offices in Sweden and one in the United States, and 20 employees. All three interviewees work from their office in Stockholm, Sweden.

The rented office is a converted apartment in an old apartment building in the center of Stockholm. It mainly consists of one large room, in which ten desks and computer screens are placed. It is from this room most employees work, although they also have company access to two larger meeting rooms, three phone booths suitable for one person each, and a kitchen with a small lounge. These rooms are shared with four other companies who work from the same office building, although the rooms are most typically used by The Sports Company's employees. The office is bright, with white walls, tall ceilings, and large windows. The wooden floors are dark and most decorations and furniture are of bright colors. The office also includes some sports-influenced decor, and a large logo on the wall, reflecting the brand.



Picture 1 and 2: The main office room with desks.



Picture 3: Main office room with desks. Picture 4: Shared meeting room.



Picture 5: The shared kitchen. Picture 6: The shared dining area.

4.1.1.1 Managerial Perspective

The interviewed manager of The Sports Company is their CTO and Co-founder. Back in 2004, he founded another sports club management platform with his current Co-founder, before starting The Sports Company together in 2017. Although the products are similar across the two firms, more focus is placed on The Sports Company since it has the ambition of connecting a global audience.

The main intention behind the design of the office was to keep it clean and practical. The Co-founder also mentioned that the office includes decorations of sports influence to reflect the brand of the company. Although this was not an intention at first, as time has gone by and the company has grown, the visualization of the brand has become more important. But in respect to the other companies, the Co-founder says they feel rather limited in what they can change. The initial intention behind the office was to create an office space that felt like home. He believes that goal has been met, as the office does not feel like a typical office. One detail he enjoyed is that no one wears shoes inside of the office. He believes the office is relaxing and frequently touched upon its “home:y” feeling, and reflected:

“We have always seen the office as our like extended home” - CTO and Co-founder

The Co-founder thinks the office environment is very important and described that it influences how he works and collaborates with colleagues. The main reason behind transitioning from working from home to returning to the office was to stimulate collaboration and creativity. He said that collaborating digitally on Zoom was difficult, but that collaboration is easier now when returned to the office because of its open layout. The Co-founder believes his employees share the same perception as him in terms of how the office invites collaboration and discussion, although not all of them spend as much time at the office as him. During their monthly digital meetings, knowledge is shared, and input regarding the office environment can be brought up. Additionally, the employees are offered tools such as whiteboards, digital programs, and noise-canceling headphones to stimulate creativity and increase focus. They are flexible in what tools they offer - if an employee wants to use a new certain tool, the company is open to the idea. As an example, recently an employee was given an iPad after requesting one to sketch and be more creative.

When the Co-founder was asked about whether the office affects his creativity when working, he was rather hesitant and responded:

“Ehm, I think it has an effect. But I think, just from [a] creativity point of view, it's not like the layout and the design does affect me that much. It's more of, I guess, other stuff.”
- CTO and Co-founder

And later added:

“I feel like I can be creative in many different environments, it's more so I can control the time.” - CTO and Co-founder

The “other stuff” he referred to, which affects his creativity, includes avoiding time pressure and having enough time to tackle tasks and problems. He explained that he typically works privately in the conference rooms or leaves the office when he needs to stay focused and work creatively since he at times gets distracted by his employees. He said:

“At the office, there is always some sort of interesting conversation going on, and then it's really hard to just not listen to it. So I then go away to one of the rooms we have [...] just so I can be more concentrated.” - CTO and Co-founder

Although these discussions might affect his focus at times, the collaborative openness of the office is seen as a strength. He also pointed out the importance of the success of the company and believes the firm's most prominent strength lies in its recruitment. He said they always aim to recruit people better than themselves, and instead of putting high goals on them, let them work freely.

4.1.1.2 Employee Perspective

The two employees interviewed in this section are the Head of Growth, who has been with the company since 2019, and the Head of People, who has been working at the firm for approximately 8 months. Both have worked within separate fields for many years, and have experience working for global firms.

Both employees shared the same vision of the office and described it as cozy and relaxing, and frequently compared it to a home or apartment. Both also discuss how their “no shoes policy” adds to the relaxed and “home:y” feeling of the space. They believed the office was chosen because of its practicality and cost-effectiveness. When asked if the office environment was important to them, both agreed. During the interview they both compared their current office to other offices they have worked at previously and not enjoyed. The Head of Growth valued the fact that people sit together and that the office is not too overcrowded, because he feels creative when he is relaxed and when he has creative discussions with others. He further explained how it may influence his way of collaborating with colleagues:

“When you sit together, it's so much easier to have informal discussions, and you start brainstorming of things that you would never plan to brainstorm about, and ask each other questions. That's something that doesn't come up as easily when you work from home. I think there is a huge advantage in doing that” - Head of Growth

The Head of People had a similar opinion and explained how she enjoys the relaxed feeling at the office. She believes it is important to take breaks to feel creative and believes a good office has room for relaxation. Contrastingly to The Head of Growth, she typically wants to have conversations in private and voiced that, at times, it may be difficult to find space for those conversations since there are few meeting rooms. Additionally, she does not believe that the office represents the brand as much as she would have liked. She thinks it is rather boring looking, and that the overall interior and choice of colors could be improved for the sake of employee satisfaction. She also thinks it is important to show potential employees an office that is attractive and reflective of the brand. Although she has not had a say in the design of the office, she believes that the managers would be open to new ideas and improvements.

When the importance of innovation for The Sports Company was discussed, the Head of People answered:

“Yeah, it's crucial. Because obviously, we need to make sure that we are on top. [...] So for our product to succeed, we need to be creative all the time.” - Head of People

The Head of Growth answered the question similarly and said:

“Innovation is... it's supercritical in what we do. [...] To be able to be the biggest company, we need to be better than our competitors, and that's about innovation. So innovation is the most important thing.” - Head of Growth

He explained how he thinks there is a connection between the physical working environment and innovation since the office gives room for creative work and conversations. One final insight shared in the interview was concerning the growing importance of communication for global firms. Because the company has multiple offices and employees around the world, he believes that it has become more important to create offices with spaces where employees can sit alone and easily communicate with other people online. The Head of People rounded off her interview by contrasting start-ups to larger companies and explained that they typically do not have the investment opportunities to design large and attractive offices. Along with lacking resources, the

uncertainty of the company's future may also limit how they can affect their physical working environment. She said:

“So you can't commit to three years, to a huge costs, if you don't even know if the company will exist in three years.” - Head of People

4.1.2 The Fintech Company

The Fintech Company is a Stockholm-based company in financial technology. The company has experienced rapid growth in recent years and currently has over 170 employees, serving customers all over Europe. The company has multiple offices, but the one discussed in the interviews is located in Stockholm. Since that office is too small for the number of employees, they also rent a space in a coworking office within proximity, which all employees may utilize (although not discussed in detail in the interviews).

The office is a converted apartment of approximately 270 square meters located in an old apartment building. It consists of two main rooms separated by glass walls, in which a total of 24 desks are located. There are also three conference rooms, all of which have screens and whiteboards, as well as drapes to ensure privacy. There are also three smaller rooms suitable for one person each, and one small phone booth. The phone booth resembles a closet and has room for one person. There is also a large kitchen with a dining table for 14 persons, as well as a separate lounge area with a large sofa, several chairs, and two whiteboards. The overall design of the office is simple with white walls, black carpet, and minimal decor except for some greenery.



Picture 1 and 2: The open desk area.



Picture 3: Conference room. Picture 4: Open office area and phone booth.



Picture 5: Kitchen and dining room. Picture 6: Lounge area.

4.1.2.1 Managerial Perspective

The manager interviewed at The Fintech Company is the Head of Workplace Experience, and she started working at the company this year. She has previous experience in scaling up a project and organization before taking on her role at The Fintech Company. She believes that the willingness and ambition of the employees are the company's main strengths.

She explained that the office is located in an old apartment building, and describes it as small, crowded, cozy, and "home:y". Since they have experienced rapid growth in the number of employees and overall size of the business, she believes they have outgrown their office and are ready to move on to the next step in their development. She said:

"I think it is the homey-feeling, it suits a start-up company rather than where we are today. We are ready to switch, to have a different suit on, we are ready for that but we still want to keep on to this one." - Head of Workplace Experience

According to the Head of Workplace Experience, the office is simply too small for the number of employees. Although they have access to another co-working space, many employees still complain about the lack of space. The Fintech Company currently has a booking system through which employees decide where they want to work every week. She argued many employees use

the limited space at the office as a reason to work from home, although she does not believe that is the main reason. They are currently searching for a completely new office, and have therefore only done the minimum to keep their current office functional and safe to cut costs. Since more than half of the employees work from home, the goal of the new office is to suit as many employees as possible and encourage them to work from there. With this in mind, she discussed the difficulties of quick growth and uncertainties concerning start-ups and scale-ups. She said:

“I mean we also do not know how much we will grow... we have no idea, so we need to plan and sign an office lease contract, and we have no idea how large it will be. We need to sign it for like at least five years ahead and we have no idea where we will be in 5 years [...]” - Head of Workplace Experience

She believes it is important that a company is flexible, and needs to find an environment where everyone can “be their best self” and help creativity grow. All employees work differently and therefore various needs and preferences must be satisfied. She mentioned that she is looking into what new tools should be implemented at the new office, for it to suit the employees in the best way. The Head of Workplace Experience discussed how multiple things affect her creativity, including working in inspiring and stimulating environments, as well as having room for relaxation and informal conversations with colleagues. She also values having the opportunity to sit alone and focus in private when it is necessary. She does however understand that some prefer to work differently. Despite the varying preferences, one conclusion she can draw from their current office is that all employees want functioning and effective technology since this is lacking at their current office. She also explained that she is looking into what tools will be important at the new office.

Lastly, she spoke of innovation being a core value for The Fintech Company and discussed how it could be connected to the physical working environment:

“I think we can support innovation in the same way as you asked about creativity. I think that gives the possibility of new ideas. It could be anything from a culture where it is okay to have a walk-and-talk meeting as well as a meeting in a room. [...] It’s just about

creating a space that would support you. I think that could help support innovation. [...] Because it doesn't matter how cool of an office you have if you don't encourage and work with it." - Head of Workplace Experience

4.1.2.2 Employee Perspective

At The Fintech Company, two employees within different functions of the firm were interviewed. The first person is the Bank Relations Coordinator, who has worked at the company for slightly over a year, and the person second is the Head of Strategy, who has worked at the company for nine months.

Both interviewees described the office as a cozy apartment, but with a lot of noise and people. The Head of Strategy said:

"Now the main office that we use in Stockholm is a classic start-up small office. It's a bit too crammed, it's a lot of energy though which is good. I like that kind of thing." - Head of Strategy

He then continued by adding that he has a different view of how their future office would best be designed:

"[...] there is a lot of back-office people, we're all kind of squashed together, so there's a lot of noise, but at the moment it is not configured for any kind of collaborative cross-functional teamwork, which is what I want us to have in the future." - Head of Strategy

He said that his team has tried to adopt cross-functional work, but that it needs to become more of a vital part of their day-to-day work as it promotes innovation. The Bank Relations Coordinator agreed with what the Head of Strategy discussed. She added that she values ergonomics and would like to work at an office that provides multiple types of seats, such as couches and pilates balls. Further, she values having an area in which she can do something to

take her mind off work, such as play games, work out, or get fresh air. Neither of these things is satisfied at The Fintech Company's office. One area she enjoys at her current office is the couch area, because it is cozy and relaxing. She also explained how she would want the office to look, to reflect the values of the company in a better way:

"[...] I do not think it reflects what we stand for at all, with innovation and everything. It isn't something they have thought through or implemented to help us be more innovative, even though that is one of the company's core values. I think they could show that they are innovative by having a more bold office space that isn't as traditional, to show that we are not like everyone else. Like here we are not scared of standing out and doing things how they are supposed to be." - Bank Relations Coordinator

The Head of Strategy argued that a company should compose its business model before designing its office and not the other way around. That way, the design of the company can be transferred into the physical space, to ensure that it allows for necessary collaboration and that each team's needs are met. He explained:

"Yeah, I mean if you want people to collaborate you need to give them space to collaborate, and if you want people to be productive they have to be comfortable. If you want people to get the best out of each other, they have to be able to see each other and spend time with each other." - Head of Strategy

He mentioned how their current office lacks enough collaborative spaces and believes this hinders collaboration between employees and creative work to take place. He values flexibility and having the opportunity to choose freely how, when and where he works. He also discussed that whiteboards can increase creativity at the office since they allow the employees to easily visualize their thoughts, and then act upon them. He also mentioned a good collaborative environment can be maintained through virtual tools when the team is not co-located. He also spoke on the importance for The Fintech Company to be innovative and said:

“We have to be innovative, we don’t have a global brand and tens of thousands of people and you know the resilience to ride out economic cycles and business cycles. We have to push forward and try to be as clever as we can” - Head of Strategy

Lastly, the Bank Relations Coordinator believes there is a connection between increased innovation and the physical working environment. She feels creative at her office because she feels comfortable there. Also, the different designs and layout of the spaces inspire her.

4.1.3 The Blockchain Company

The last interviewed company is referred to as The Blockchain Company. It has since been a pioneer in the Swedish blockchain industry. One year ago they had 20 employees, but today they have over 160 employees working from offices around Europe and the United States. Their headquarter, and office described in this case, is located in Stockholm.

The office is located in an office hotel in the center of Stockholm close to outer connections. It is a typical co-working space in which multiple companies rent offices and share facilities such as a reception, canteen, several conference rooms, focus areas, a bar, a piano room, several open areas and relaxing lounges. Amenities such as free coffee, occasional lunch, and breakfast servings are offered to employees. Moreover, the employees have access to all other co-working spaces within the chain. The private office space which only belongs to the Blockchain Company has approximately 20 desks with computer screens, some storage and a whiteboard. The room has plain white walls, wooden floors, and large windows.



Picture 1 and 2: Office room with desks and computers.



Picture 3: Meeting room. Picture 4: Two phone booths.



Picture 5: Shared common area. Picture 6: Shared dining area.

4.1.3.1 Managerial Perspective

The interviewed manager is the company's CFO who has worked at the firm for approximately 2,5 years. She has experience in working at multinational companies but in industries different from the one of The Blockchain Company. She believes the company's core strengths are its decentralized organization and diverse group of employees.

The CFO described their office area as a “messy classroom” in which a bunch of desks and other things are pushed in. When asked whether there was an intention or plan behind the layout and design of the office, she said no, and further explained:

“No, they don't want to be planned, they don't want to be organized and they don't want to have departments. They just want to do their shit and be left alone. That was the plan.”

- CFO

She then added:

“We just need an office to show that we are a company. [For] People, banks, and other actors. [...] There is an importance that is signaled, that it is a proper company although we are messy.” - CFO

She thought the main idea behind the office was to show stakeholders that they are a serious business and show banks that “crypto isn't scary”. Although the CFO typically spends four out of five days at the office, she rarely works from their office room, rather she utilizes the shared lounge areas or conference rooms. Since her role includes recruiting and other HR tasks, she prefers to meet people in a relaxed environment. She explained how creativity is important for her role since people only come to her when things are not working and are in the need of new innovative solutions. She thinks the office is important for social reasons, simply being a place where people can meet and build relationships. The office allows the company to meet in big groups, which the CFO argued opens up for conversation and brings creativity as people can exchange ideas. However, she addressed how it may be difficult to find available meeting rooms, and explained:

“There is an urgent need for more meeting rooms and telephone booths where you can sit and talk and have meetings online. Since there is so much online work going on, people need to do that at the office. So If I could change or wish for anything, the optimal future office will have more room for small meetings.” - CFO

She has voiced her opinion and the need for more rooms for the responsible managers. She explained how they are aware of it too:

“They realized too, because people [are] chasing conference rooms all the time. They are battling over the rooms and double booking, so everyone understands and sees the needs. So I think it will happen... it just takes a bit of time”

The CFO sees a connection between increased innovation and the physical working environment although the company is “remote first” and most work is done digitally. Most of the tools they use are digital, although the manager is open to the idea of adopting new ones. She explained that the employees may use whatever tools they want, either digital or physical. She later explained how the office resembles a campground or the core of the company. It represents a place where all employees can interact and exchange ideas freely, sort of like home. She said:

“You don’t necessarily need to sit there and do your everyday work but it needs to be somewhere where people feel like it is a shared home or physical home.” - CFO

4.1.3.2 Employee Perspective

The interviewed employee is the Business Development and Partnerships Coordinator. He has worked at the Blockchain Company since 2019, after previously being the partner of another blockchain firm. He believes the company's biggest strength is its people, in particular the founders.

The working environment described is located in central Stockholm close to outer connections, a convenient aspect as many employees travel to large extents. The spatial design of the office is

described to be simple but messy, and “techy” with a focus on the accessibility of basic technological necessities such as computers and screens. The employee of the Blockchain Company focused on certain advantages that the physical working environment has. Primarily, the employee values the location of the office. As mentioned previously, working at the Blockchain Company requires extensive travel since the company has teams and offices globally. Thus, being located near outer connections is valued greatly. He does not believe there was an intention behind the design of the space, rather the location was the only determinant. Moreover, since the office-hotel is a chain, the employees can utilize other coworking spaces around the world of the same chain, which he also values greatly since the company is “remote first”. Since the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic have loosened, more people are utilizing the office, which he appreciates because it brings dynamics and conversation into the office. However, since the Blockchain Company is growing rapidly, he explained how the office at times feels too small, and pointed out the difficulties with finding available meeting rooms.

When asked to reflect upon the if the office environment affects how he collaborates with others, he compared it to their previous office and said that it was too crowded and that it was necessary to get more office space. He said:

“So now the programmers and the coders are in one office [space], and financials and business development are in one office [space]. [...] Like a coworking space. So that is super good. We can talk to them, they can talk to us any time. Easy access! It is very easy to access all the departments.” - Business Development & Partnership Coordinator

Although the departments typically communicate via chat, if there is a misunderstanding, it can easily be solved by having a face-to-face discussion. Apart from the easy access to other people, he argued having time and space to work privately is important for his creativity. Although it might be difficult to find available meeting rooms because they typically need to be booked in advance, he likes the interior design of the office and typically spends 70 percent of his work week there. He prefers working from the private rooms, but also becomes creative when working with a good view, and when he can stand up and work. He further explained that he is more creative when at the office:

*“I get more creative, [get] more things done at the office than working from home.” -
Business Development & Partnerships Coordinator*

When asked about the importance of innovation for the Blockchain Company, he said it was important for the firm. He then explained how all departments must work innovatively together, because the direction the Blockchain Company is moving in requires a great deal of knowledge and creative solutions, and because the legal structure between the virtual world and the real world differs. To generate new solutions, the company organizes workshops, some for each department, some cross-functional where all departments attend.

To round off the interview, the employee was asked whether there is a connection between the physical working environment and innovation. Although he was quite hesitant, he responded that he could see a connection. He believes creativity is important in all departments, but which environment is most stimulating may differ between employees. He said:

*“It's important that they are in a place where they feel the most creative. But they have a choice: they don't have to be in the office. I mean some of the best coders like to sit, you know, at home, in their basement or in the kitchen or wherever they feel comfortable.” -
Business Development & Partnership Coordinator*

He then added:

*“We are super flexible there. It is not like you have to be in the office. It is very open-minded [...] If you want to work night hours, you work night hours. If you want to work from home, you work from home” - Business Development & Partnership
Coordinator*

4.2 Cross-Case Analysis

In this part of the analysis, the data was categorized into themes to analyze cross-case patterns among the three Born Global firms. The main patterns identified were based on the theoretical findings in Chapter Two and they are: (1) collective creativity, (2) balanced layout and flexibility, and (3) comfort and attractiveness of the space. All three relate to the physical attributes of the working environment, but also impact the employees' style of working. Each of these patterns are discussed in the section below, through a comprehensive comparison of the main findings in the three cases.

4.2.1 Collective Creativity

All of the eight interviewees reflected upon the importance of collaboration in their interviews. The manager at The Sports Company saw the openness of their offices as a strength since it promotes collaboration. Additionally, the manager of the Blockchain Company described that the employees' ability to meet in groups opens up for informal conversations which otherwise would not have occurred. She said that the areas in which ideas can be exchanged freely are some of the most crucial aspects of the office. Both employees of the Sports Company shared this opinion and described how they feel more creative when informal conversations can happen without much intention.

The Head of Strategy at the Fintech Company frequently reflected upon how cross-functional teamwork is an important aspect of their strategy, and that a good office environment should allow for that type of collaboration. He believes that their current office is lacking since it does not have enough space where collaboration can take place. He then argued the lack of meeting rooms hinders the organization's collaboration and overall level of creativity. The need for more meeting rooms and collaborative spaces was a trend throughout all three firms. This seemed to be most urgent for The Fintech Company because all three interviewees spoke much about how they have outgrown their office. Although The Fintech Company has access to another coworking space nearby, the amount of collaborative space is still not sufficient. Moreover, the workers must reserve spots where they work in advance, which might prevent unplanned

collaboration and spontaneous idea generation. The employee at The Blockchain Company also experienced difficulties with finding available meeting rooms on short notice, since their rooms must be booked in advance too.

Most of the interviewees want more meeting rooms for collaborative work. All interviewed managers are aware of the need for more rooms, however, described that they do not have the available resources to solve the issue. In particular, the manager of The Fintech Company discussed that the main reason why they can not invest in more space is because of uncertainties regarding their growth. They have grown rapidly in recent years and outgrown their office. Additionally, they are looking for new office space and therefore have even more limited resources to spend on their current office. The uncertain aspect of the company's future was also touched upon by the Head of People at The Sports Company. She described that start-ups typically do not have the investment opportunities to commit to the huge costs that come with designing large offices. She, therefore, understands why their office is lacking in space. Since all three firms have experienced growth in the past year, there is a general understanding among the interviewees that the lack of space can be explained by growth, and might not be easily solved.

An additional aspect of the office that contributes to collaboration is the availability of tools. All three offices have access to whiteboards, which according to the Head of Strategy at The Fintech Company allows for visualization of ideas, which in turn, stimulates creativity. Other commonly used tools are digital ones, such as virtual whiteboards, chat functions, collaborative design tools, and document sharing platforms. The Head of Strategy at The Fintech Company argued digital tools are of importance when teams work from different locations since they can help maintain collaboration. All three managers explained that they are open to the idea of adopting new tools, simply stating that their employees may use whatever tools they find necessary for their work or creativity. The manager of The Fintech Company also added that she is looking into what sort of tools will be necessary for the future when their new office is designed.

4.2.2 Balanced Layout Allowing for Flexibility

Another common theme amongst the three firms was flexibility. Flexibility not only refers to how the office environment is designed but also refers to the interviewees' being free to choose when, where and how they work. The design of a flexible working environment includes having the opportunity to work in different spaces within the office. All three firms have conference rooms and phone booths where employees can go when their work requires them to be alone, however, the number of available private spaces differs for each company. It was made clear in all interviews that each interviewee prefers different styles of working. As an example, the manager of The Blockchain company described that she uses their private office room much less than her colleagues. Since her role includes HR tasks and helping her employees when necessary, she typically utilizes the lounge area instead of the office room to have meetings with employees. Moreover, the Co-founder of The Sports Company shared a similar description. Although he enjoys his office, he sometimes leaves to work from other locations whenever he needs to work privately or creatively. This could be a sign that the layout of their office space is not balanced enough to satisfy the needs of everyone.

Although there is a consensus that an office space should allow for many types of work, not all offices do. It was argued by the interviewees that due to lacking resources and investments, Born Globals find it difficult to achieve fully balanced offices. This was brought up by both the Head of People at The Sports Company and the Head of Workplace Experience at The Fintech Company. As mentioned in the section above, all three offices have in common the need for more meeting rooms. The argument as to why they need them differs among the firms - some interviewees want more rooms to conduct collaborative work, while others want them to work privately. No matter what needs, the fact that all offices have insufficient spaces where people can work freely, shows a lack of flexibility. To exemplify, although all firms value flexibility, the fact that employees of both The Fintech Company and The Blockchain Company find it difficult to get access to meeting rooms on short notice shows a lack of flexibility. Another aspect of flexibility related to the office layout is the availability of desks. Neither of the companies has assigned desks to all of their employees. Instead, they have large areas with multiple desks where employees can select where they prefer to work upon arrival. In addition, there seems to be an

overall agreement that having the choice to move around at the office and work from different locations is beneficial for creativity. Furthermore, the availability of different types of seats was discussed in one interview. The Bank Relations Coordinator of The Fintech Company wants to be able to switch between types of seats, such as chairs, pilates balls, and couches, for a change of position and to not get tired.

Another aspect of flexibility refers to the freedom employees have in terms of when, where, and how they work. One of the firms is remote-first, but all three firms allow their employees to work from wherever they want. It was pointed out by the employee at The Blockchain Company, that flexibility in terms of when and where is of particular importance. Their company allows the workers to work from wherever they feel most creative, during any hours of the day. This may differ for each employee and role, as exemplified earlier. Additionally, The Head of Growth at The Sports Company reflected upon the importance of designing physical working environments that allows for easy communication across offices, in particular for international firms like Born Globals. He believes it has become important to include rooms in which employees can sit alone and communicate with others digitally. Flexibility was also brought up by the manager at The Sports Company but from the perspective of allowing employees to work freely without the pressure of achieving high goals.

4.2.3 Comfort and Attractiveness of the Office Space

The Fintech Company and The Sports Company both placed a large emphasis on the importance of having comfortable offices, frequently describing them as cozy and referring to them as homes. All employees at The Sports Company specifically mentioned that they take their shoes off upon arrival at the office, which amplifies the “home:y” feeling. The manager of The Blockchain Company also referred to their office as a home but placed more focus on how it acts as a symbol for a common ground or camp. Despite being remote-first, she believed that the office represents an important space in which all employees can interact and socialize with one another comfortably. The Head of Strategy at The Fintech Company also argued that if employees are to be productive, they need to be comfortable.

Several of the interviewees mentioned the value of a lounge area, feeling relaxed, and being able to switch between environments within the office. The Head of Growth at the Sports Company said that he feels more creative when he is relaxed. Additionally, although the Head of People at The Sports Company enjoys the relaxed atmosphere at the office, she believes there should be more spaces for relaxation - a fact that the manager at the Blockchain company agreed with. Being able to take breaks is also an important aspect in increasing creativity for the Head of People, which the Bank Relations Coordinator at The Fintech Company agreed with.

Another aspect that was brought up during the interviews was the attractiveness of the office, and the desire for an office that represents the company's brand. The Head of People at The Sports Company believes it is important to design an office reflective of the brand to show potential future employees an attractive office. All three interviewees of the Sports Company believe this could be done to a larger extent, and discuss that their office had been chosen purely because of its practicality and cost-effectiveness. When the manager at The Fintech Company spoke about her current office, she mentioned that they have done the bare minimum to keep the office functional and safe, mainly to cut costs for future investments. The Head of People at The Sports Company and the Head of Workplace Experience at The Fintech Company both believe it is due to their limited resources and investment opportunities, as well as uncertainties regarding the future of start- and scale-ups. The Blockchain Company also mentioned attractiveness, but rather discussed how the office is viewed by other stakeholders. She described that banks and other stakeholders view blockchain and cryptocurrencies as "scary", and argued having a physical office may convince them that they are a serious and reliable business.

4.3 Pattern-Matching Analysis

In this section, the patterns that were identified in the cross-case analysis are examined and matched to the theoretical assumptions proposed in Chapter Two. This was done to validate or reject the current research literature and theoretical constructs relating to Nudge Theory, innovative working environment, and Born Globals. Findings in this section were derived from

the eight interviews and the research literature. The subtitles in this section are the same as in the previous section, to make it easier for the reader to comprehend.

4.3.1 Collective Creativity

One of the most prominent patterns observed in the data is the importance of collective creativity. All interviewees mentioned collaboration as an important aspect of creativity, simply stating that creativity can be boosted through collaboration. Literature points towards innovation culture as a critical influential factor (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Lewin & Massini, 2003; Zheng et al., 2010) and argues that innovation stems from creativity and R&D (Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015).

The idea that collaboration can generate creative ideas was discussed in all cases and is also supported by the literature. Hargadon and Beckley (2006) suggest collective creativity derives from the moments when social interactions between individuals generate new ideas which the individuals could not have come up with alone. More specifically, they argue these moments can appear through help-seeking, help-giving, reflective reframing, and reinforcing (Hargadon & Beckley, 2006). Compiling the data of the three cases, it is made clear that four activities are encouraged through the collaborative office design. One example of such from one of the cases is when employees seek help from the manager and they collaboratively come up with creative solutions together. McCoy (2005) also describes that the physical working environment can support teams to be creative together by bringing them together. An example of such cases is when open discussions and the brainstorming of ideas arise without intention in the common areas.

All cases' offices are of the open layout and none of them have designated desks, which employees enjoy because the easy access across departments allows them to communicate easily. The office design allowing for close proximity between colleagues can be viewed as a nudge towards collaboration since it encourages and facilitates social interactions. This complies with the research literature, as it is suggested that a collaborative working environment should be of

open design, where both communication and interactions are promoted (Davis, Leach & Clegg, 2011; Vos & van der Voordt, 2001; Sailer, 2011; Samani & Alvani, 2020). Moreover, it aligns with Galpin's (2022) argument that physical working environments that support cross-functional teamwork within the same office space foster innovation. Although none of the cases mentioned that the intention behind their office layouts was to promote creativity through collaboration, it was proved in the data that it unconsciously nudges towards collaborative creativity and leads to the exchange of ideas, informal discussions, and brainstorming sessions.

The availability of meeting rooms and collaborative spaces also seems to nudge creativity. All cases explained how the meeting rooms are used for conducting team meetings and collaborative work, both of which lead to the generation of new ideas and in turn creativity. They also discussed the need for more collaborative spaces since having insufficient spaces discourages collaboration and, in turn, limits creativity and innovation. Additionally, according to Stieler and Henike (2022), nudging also helps companies to improve engagement in strategic discussion, a statement that was confirmed in the case studies.

Informal conversations and the exchange of ideas can also be seen as knowledge-sharing activities. As argued by Knight and Cavusgil (2004), knowledge lays the foundation for superior performance. Knowledge, in turn, stems from knowledge-creating processes, routines, and regimes that foster learning and innovation (Lewin & Massini, 2003; Knight & Cavusgil, 2004). The open layout of the offices could thus also be seen as a nudge towards knowledge sharing. Another aspect that nudges toward collaboration and knowledge sharing is the availability and use of tools. Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen (2021) argue technology can ease knowledge sharing and allow for easier collaboration. Moreover, digital workflow tools are one of the four key nudging activities designed to emphasize innovation (Stieler & Henike, 2022). It was brought up in the cases that they make use of digital tools to maintain a collaborative environment when the teams are not co-located and that both digital and regular whiteboards can help generate a flow of ideas. In short, informal conversations and digital tools may thus be used to nudge towards both knowledge sharing and collaboration.

4.3.2 Balanced Layout Allowing for Flexibility

The second pattern observed in the data is flexibility. More specifically, how an office environment should have a balanced layout allowing for multiple types of tasks. The overall agreement among the cases is that an effective office environment should comply with all employees' styles of working, no matter their role or specific task. That finding is supported by Baldry (1999), who discusses that efficient workplace design must balance out different personalities and behaviors to ensure maximum creativity. Additional literature highlights the importance of designing a balanced layout that allows for flexibility. As an example, Dahl, Lawrence, and Pierce (2011) describe that “the best thinking can come from anywhere in the organization” (p.20), highlighting the importance of innovation regardless of function, department, or role. A flexible layout is thus not only important for the individual employee’s creativity, but also for the innovation at the organizational level.

The importance of understanding each individual's needs and characteristics (Lee, 2016) is because of the symbiotic relationship between individual creativity and organizational innovation (Amabile, 1988). It is of particular importance for young firms like Born Globals because they typically rely on innovation capabilities to make profits (Yang & Wu, 2021; Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Lewin & Massini, 2003; Zheng, Yang & McLean, 2010). According to Lee (2016) and Sailer (2011), a balanced layout should include spaces where both individual work and collaborative work can take place. Since the offices of all cases include meeting rooms for collaboration, lounge areas for relaxation, and office rooms with desks for individual work, they can be seen as balanced. The access to a broad range of spaces nudges towards multiple types of behaviors. As an example, in all three cases, it was discussed that informal conversations generate new ideas, and those conversations typically happen in relaxed environments such as in the lounge area or the kitchen. Therefore the lounge areas clearly nudge towards informal conversations and idea generations, which are important factors for innovation. However, since all interviewees discussed the need for more meeting rooms, it is clear that none of the offices are fully balanced since not all individuals' needs are satisfied. Conversely, there is an understanding that the companies cannot satisfy everyone's needs for the time being, due to limited resources and increased growth.

The environment is one of the six resources discussed in Sternberg's (2006) Investment Theory of Creativity. Although an individual might possess all other characteristics of the theory, without a suitable environment, the creative ability of that individual might never be presented (Sternberg, 2006), thus proving the importance of designing an office environment that suits all individuals. According to this statement, not having sufficient meeting rooms could limit the individuals' level of creativity, thus, having a negative effect on organizational innovation. It is discussed in one of the cases that another type of space that would create a more balanced office layout is smaller rooms that employees can use to communicate with people digitally. Since all three cases have multiple offices in different locations and that much work is done remotely, the idea of implementing these types of rooms could be beneficial. Due to Born Globals' international presence (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Hennart, Majocchi & Hagen, 2021), it can be deemed necessary to design the physical working environment to facilitate communication globally. Not only should communication between a company's different international offices be simplified, but also the communication with external stakeholders. External stakeholders are a valuable component of a firm's network and contribute with valuable information and knowledge (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004), which in turn supports a firm's innovation culture (Yaqub et al., 2020).

Another attribute of an innovative working environment is the modifiability of spaces. According to Oksanen & Ståhle (2013), spaces need to be modifiable and serve different needs at different times to be considered innovative. Although alterations of rooms are not discussed in the cases, it has been pointed out that rooms may serve many purposes. As an example, the reasons why individuals want more meeting rooms differed across the cases. Some employees wanted them for individual work, while others for collaborative work.

An additional finding regarding flexibility drawn from the data is that employees value choosing freely how, when, and where they work. All cases allow for remote work and employees are therefore able to work from the office whenever they feel the need to. Although that aspect is not particularly related to the physical working environment itself, literature does argue that a lack of flexibility and freedom decreases the innovation culture of companies (Anderson, Danilovic & Huan, 2015). Therefore, flexibility in this aspect is of importance since it has a positive impact

on a firm's innovation. Additionally, in one of the cases, flexibility is discussed in terms of how employees are monitored. It is mentioned by the manager of that case that he lets the employees work freely without the pressure of achieving high goals. This can be viewed as having a loose managerial style, which promotes flexibility and in turn innovation (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004).

4.3.3 Comfort and Attractiveness of the Office Space

Having a comfortable and attractive working space is another important pattern identified in the cross-case analysis. The common agreement is that an office space needs to be comfortable and relaxing by offering lounge areas, as well as giving the opportunity to switch between environments. The derived data shows that physical working environments that fulfill these requirements stimulate creativity among employees.

Leegard (2019) discussed in their study how nudge management and the design of the physical working environment can push for a creative mindset amongst employees that, in turn, result in an overall innovative culture. Thus, when applying Nudge Theory to this study, it becomes evident that the case companies nudge towards creativity through their office design. The implementation of lounge rooms nudges employees to feel comfortable and relaxed, which in turn nudges towards creativity. This is supported by Oksanen and Ståhle (2013) and Salgado, Flegl, and Fejfarova (2020) since both argue that leisure rooms are an influential factor in attractive and comfortable spaces. Having access to these types of rooms has been said to increase creativity in all cases in this research. There are two main explanations for why. Firstly, they allow employees to take a break from their work, and thus feel relaxed. Secondly, they allow for more informal work and discussions to take place, giving rise to new creative ideas.

All three cases also frequently discussed how their office resembles or feels like a home. Aspects that contribute to that feeling include the type of building the office is located in, the decor and furniture, as well as having a no-shoes policy. As suggested by the interviewees, that feeling makes the environment relaxed, which stimulates comfort. Although this is not aligned with the literature, all interviewees frequently noted that the comfortable feeling had a positive impact on

their creativity. As discussed in one of the cases, the resemblance of a home also makes employees feel like they are in a safe place in which they can express themselves freely.

As discussed, Born Globals are in the initial stages of development (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004; Zheng et al., 2010), which is characterized by limited resources (Knight & Cavusgil, 2004). It was discussed among the cases that the companies have put in minimal effort and investments into making their offices attractive. Rather, the focus has been on making them functional, practical, and cost-effective. One explanatory factor discussed in two of the cases is limited resources. Another explanatory factor is that the future of the firms is uncertain, both in regards to their growth, but also in position within the market. As discussed by Knight & Cavusgil (2004), these two reasons can be explained through their position in the business life cycle (Jabłoński & Jabłoński, 2016). Thus, Born Global firms typically can not invest large amounts of money into designing attractive and comfortable offices.

5 Conclusion

In this section, the thesis is concluded and the main findings are discussed from a broader perspective. Firstly, it is examined to what extent the results from the study meet the research's aims and objectives by answering the two research questions. Secondly, The Conceptual Framework concerning how the physical working environment can nudge towards creativity presented in Chapter Two is discussed. Based on the key findings in the analysis, the framework is then refined to reflect Born Globals. Thirdly, theoretical and practical implications of the research are derived to explain and highlight the relevance of the research. Lastly, suggestions for future research are presented, which may assist future scholars when studying Born Globals and their physical working environment.

5.1 Research Aim and Objectives

The main aim of this study was to contribute to the current literature covering the physical working environment and Born Globals, by adding a new perspective on the importance of creating physical working environments that stimulate innovation [with the help of nudge management]. Since innovation is such an important capability for the success of Born Global firms and because literature argues that the physical working environment can affect innovation, this study was conducted to combine the two using Nudge Theory. Moreover, this research based its findings on the perspectives of both managers and employees from the same firm - a take previous literature has not focused on doing. The research further aimed to investigate *if* the physical working environments of Born Global firms have been designed accordingly to previous literature, by answering the overall research question:

How does the physical working environment affect innovation for Swedish Born Global firms within the tech industry, according to managers and employees?

It was confirmed in all three cases that the offices had been partly designed according to what previous literature discusses. However, some attributes and nudges differed from previous

literature, thus, more aspects were added to the Conceptual Framework created in Chapter Two (see Figure 4) to reflect how the office environment of Born Globals affects innovation.

5.1.1 Sub-question 1

The first sub-question of the thesis was defined as:

Which physical attributes are most important when designing an office environment that promotes creativity and innovation?

Stemming from the collected data, three main themes were identified. These were (1) collective creativity, (2) balanced layout allowing for flexibility, and (3) comfort and attractiveness of the space. Scrutinizing each overarching theme, certain physical attributes have a bigger impact on both employees and managers.

Firstly, collective creativity was discussed. The importance of designing an open layout was discussed in all three cases, thus aligning with the literature. According to all three cases, physical attributes which nudge toward collective creativity and innovation include having close proximity to colleagues, having access to meeting rooms and collaborative spaces, as well as access to digital and physical tools. All these attributes have in common that they promote collaboration, informal discussions, and brainstorming of ideas, which are later developed into creative solutions, and in turn innovation. An open layout also nudges toward knowledge sharing, since it allows for ideas to be shared across functions.

Secondly, the importance of designing a balanced layout was also confirmed by the data collected. The cases agreed that an open office layout nudges creativity because it allows for flexibility and suits various preferences. A balanced office should allow for both individual and collaborative work to be done effectively, thus it is important to offer a wide range of spaces. Lounge areas nudge towards informal conversations and brainstorming, whereas quiet rooms nudge towards individual work and creativity. Flexibility was also discussed in terms of how,

when, and where individuals are allowed to work. Although it is not a physical attribute of the office, the data made it clear that it nudges towards creativity and efficiency.

Thirdly, the comfort and attractiveness of the space were discussed. Although this is not frequently discussed in the literature, the data collected shows that in the Swedish Born Globals within the tech industry analyzed in this study, employees feel more creative when they are relaxed and comfortable. Creativity can be nudged by offering spaces for relaxation and allowing employees to freely switch between spaces within the office to take their minds off things.

5.1.2 Sub-question 2

The second sub-question in this thesis was designed as:

Are the ideas on physical working environment and innovation aligned between managers and employees?

Overall, the ideas on how the physical working environment can affect innovation and which attributes are of importance, are aligned between managers and employees. The value of meeting rooms, spaces to work privately, having an open layout, and a relaxing and varying environment where one can switch between locations within the office, were mentioned by all interviewees. One difference is that employees heavily emphasized the importance of tools, in particular digital ones which promote communication and collaboration among colleagues. However, all three managers were open to introducing tools at the office once they were requested and understood how these could assist the employees in their work.

There was a general consensus between both managers and employees that much more can be done in all regard to the office design. However, it was understood in all cases that the lacking resources and uncertainties concerning future growth, limit the company. All interviewees point out the need for more meeting rooms and spaces where they can collaborate.

In regard to the intentions of the selection of office and design of the layout, both employees and managers had similar views although the employees had not been involved in the decision-making process. When asked about the intention behind the design, the employees' answers often reflected the ones of the managers. In one of the cases, the brand reflecting values were more purposefully integrated by the manager, than what the employees believed. In the other two cases, the ideas were almost identical.

5.1.3 The Refined Conceptual Framework

Comparing the key findings derived from the data with the key findings from the literature review, several theoretical ideas are confirmed. The Conceptual Framework developed in Chapter Two should thus be revisited and refined to reflect Born Global firms more accurately. The new components in The Refined Conceptual Framework are represented in red to clearly show the changes made (*see Figure 4*).

The results from this research confirm several of the theoretical constructs from The Conceptual Framework. Firstly, the physical working environment of Born Globals can nudge towards both collective and individual creativity. All nudges presented in the original framework were confirmed and should therefore remain when reflecting Born Globals in the refined framework. However, the comfort of the space should be added to the refined framework as it also nudges toward individual creativity in Swedish Born Globals within the tech industry. It includes designing a space in which employees feel relaxed and comfortable. Meeting rooms should also be added as it promotes collaboration and therefore nudges toward collective creativity.

In addition, flexibility was a key finding derived from the data. Although it does not directly relate to the physical working environment, it is an important factor nudging an individual's creativity. Flexibility includes having the opportunity to work remotely, and the ability to choose freely how and when to work. It should therefore be its own entity nudging toward individual creativity through a loose managerial style. The Refined Conceptual Framework is seen in Figure 4 below.

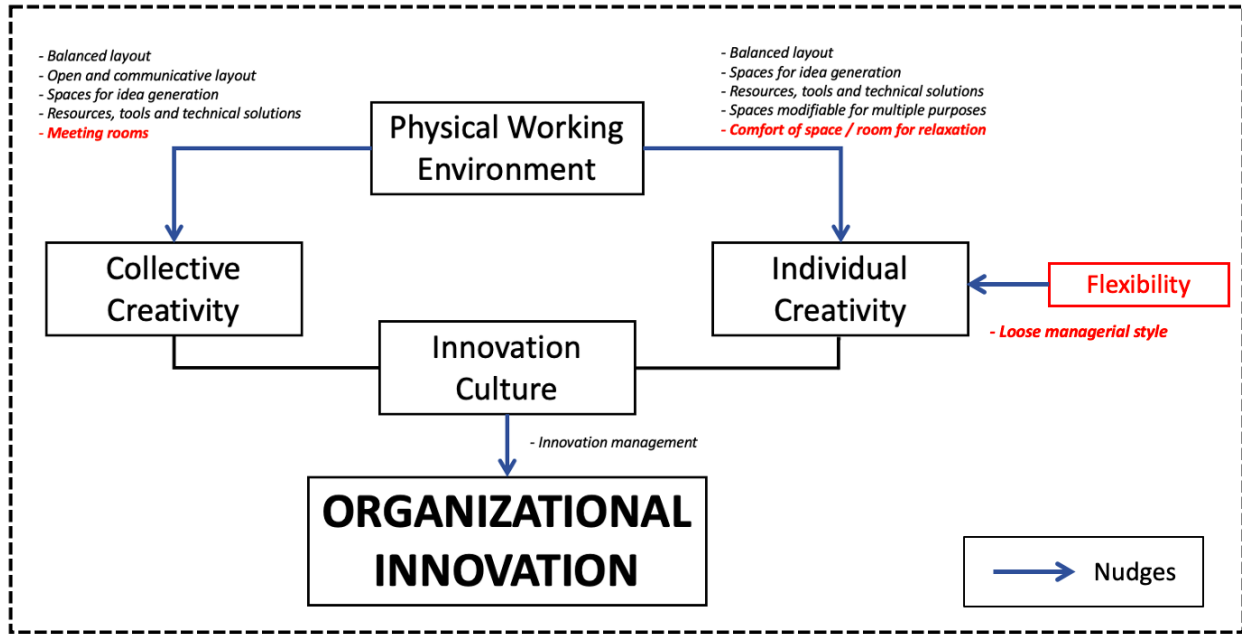


Figure 4: The Refined Conceptual Framework, based on findings derived from the research.

5.2 Theoretical and Practical Implications

The theoretical contributions of this study are threefold. Firstly, the findings confirm previous research regarding designing an innovative working environment for MNEs and start-ups is applicable for Born Globals. Secondly, The Refined Conceptual Framework adds meeting rooms, comfort, loose managerial style, and flexibility, which nudge towards innovation and thus should be included in future literature. Moreover, it adds a perspective unrelated to the physical working environment, namely flexibility, indicating more factors that are of importance for Born Globals today. Thirdly, literature on Nudge Theory is rarely applied to corporate activities and specifically seldom applied to the physical working environment and innovation. Thus, this research and The Refined Conceptual Framework add to the already existing literature on Nudge Theory by showing how it can be applied to the physical working environments of corporations.

There are also several practical implications of this study, which confirm the relevance. Firstly, this thesis can provide decision-makers with practical examples of how the office environment can be designed to nudge innovation and which physical attributes are most important in doing

so. The study analyzed the physical working environment from two perspectives, which ensured that the suggested attributes are agreed upon by both managers and employees. Moreover, The Refined Conceptual Framework visualizes how the physical working environment affects organizational innovation, making it easier for decision-makers to understand the importance of designing an office accordingly.

The conclusions from this study can be applied to Swedish Born Global firms within the tech industry since that is the sample that was included in the research. However, since the research confirms what previous literature has discussed regarding MNEs and start-ups, it may also be applied to a broader range of firms. Since literature mentions that innovation is important for all young firms, the conclusions could possibly be applied to Born Globals in other industries too, as long as they strive to be innovative and view innovation as a key characteristic.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

The Refined Conceptual Framework presented in this thesis may serve as a basis for future research within the area of innovative working environments for Born Globals. A more thorough analysis of the suggested attributes and nudges is encouraged in order to confirm if they are applicable for all Born Globals, or only Swedish Born Globals in the tech industry. Moreover, research should be conducted to identify new attributes and nudges. More focused studies on the nudges of certain attributes could provide more accuracy to the framework that, in turn, offer more guidance to decision makers when designing physical working environments. It could be done through statistical observations, measuring the effects of certain physical attributes. To test the application of The Refined Conceptual Framework, it would also be interesting if it was applied to the physical working environments of Born Globals from countries with cultures different from the Swedish one.

During the analysis, it was realized that lack of resources and investment opportunities, as well as uncertainties concerning future growth, limit Born Global firms in the way in which they design their office environment. Thus, future research could investigate at what stage in their

development Born Globals have the ability to, and should invest in their physical working environment. It could also investigate during which stages it is more important to be cost-efficient and work from co-working spaces, versus when it is beneficial to have fully owned offices.

Additionally, the data collected showed that the comfort of the space had a more significant effect on individual creativity and organizational innovation than what previous literature has discussed. Although this study adds new perspectives on the importance of comfort and space for relaxation, more research should be conducted to confirm whether that is true for other Born Globals, or if it was just a coincidence that the chosen sample valued the comfort of the space greatly.

Further research can also examine the value of flexibility for workers and how it in turn enhances workers' creative abilities. It became evident in this research that a workplace allowing for flexible working hours and the opportunity for workers to choose freely where and how they work has a noticeable impact on creativity. Specifically, the value of working digitally and from home was discussed. Although working from home does not have a direct connection to the physical working environment, it should be further researched since it clearly nudged towards creativity and innovation in the chosen sample. Moreover, flexibility should be further researched in terms of how the physical working environment allows for digital work between offices that are not co-located. Since Born Globals are firms with the ambition of internationalizing and achieving a global presence, the ability to communicate and work across countries is crucial. When comparing the data collected with previous research, it is evident that remote work is more common than what researchers have discovered. Thus, there is an increasing importance of smooth digital communication and a working environment allowing for remote work between offices. This should be further researched, to confirm whether it is true for more Born Globals than the sample examined, as well as how working environments can be designed to support this type of work.

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Appendix

Interview Guide 1: Managers

Background of the Interviewee and the Company

- What is your role within the company?
- How long have you worked at the company?
 - Have you worked since founding, or were you recruited in later stages?
 - Do you have previous entrepreneurial experience?
 - Have you been involved in founding other firms?
- What would you say are the company's most prominent strengths? (or key competitive characteristics)

Physical Working Environment + Intentions

- How would you describe your physical office environment to someone who has never seen it?
 - Summarizing it to only using three words?
- Do you have your own office space / room?
 - Desk sharing? Rotation? Open spaces? Closed doors?
- What sort of building is your office located in?
 - Do you rent or own the space?
- How many employees work from the office?
- How many conference rooms, meeting rooms, lounges etc are there?
- Have you had any say in the layout/design of the office?
 - Are you allowed to do whatever you want with the office?

- Are there any rules by the landlord to comply with?
- Were there any intentions behind the office's design/layout?
 - If yes, what were the intentions when initially planning the design of the office?
 - *(Perhaps: To boost creativity? For employees to have their own space? For it to reflect the brand? Promote collaboration? Be cool? Be fun? For workers to be as effective as possible?*
 - If no, why not?
 - Why did you choose the office and the layout you are in?
- Do you believe that the office reflects the values of the company? (value reflecting via ex: layout, decoration, logos, choices of color etc?)

Personal Experience and Reflections

- Do you believe that the office environment is important to you?
 - What is the one characteristic you like the most?
 - And what is the one characteristic you would like to implement?
- Do you think that the office environment influences how you and your colleagues work?
- Does the office office environment have an effect on how you collaborate with your colleagues?
- Is your perception that the office environment suits your liking?
 - Do you think the office environment affects your job satisfaction?
- Do you think the office environment has an effect on your creativity?
 - If so, are there any specific areas/rooms in the office where you feel more or less creative/innovative than others?
 - If yes, why/what is special about these rooms?
 - Could you say one specific characteristic that affects your creativity the most in the physical office environment?
- How do you utilize the office? For what needs?
 - Do you often work alone or in teams?
 - Does your company have any knowledge sharing routines in place?

- How many hours each week do you spend at the office? (or at home?)
- How do you think your employees use the office?
- Do you, as a leader, offer any tools (digital tools, whiteboards, drapes etc.) to your employees which may help them be innovative?
- How important do you believe innovation is for your company, and why?
 - Do you see a connection between innovation and the work environment?

Interview Guide 2: Employees

Background of the Interviewee and the Company

- What is your role within the company?
- How long have you worked at the company?
 - Have you worked since founding, or were you recruited in later stages?
 - Do you have previous entrepreneurial experience?
- What would you say are the company's most prominent strengths? (or key competitive characteristics)

Physical Working Environment + Intentions

- How would you describe your physical office environment to someone who has never seen it?
 - Summarizing it to only using three words?
- Do you have your own office space / room?
 - Desk sharing? Rotation? Open spaces? Closed doors?
- What sort of building is your office located in?
 - Do you rent or own the space?
- How many employees work from the office?
- How many conference rooms, meeting rooms, lounges etc are there?
- Have you had any say in the layout/design of the office?
 - Are you allowed to do whatever you want with the office?
 - Are there any rules by the landlord to comply with?
- Do you think the managers had any intentions when designing the office?
 - If yes, what do you think the intentions were when planning the design and layout of the office?

- If no, why not? Why do you think the office looks like it does?
- Do you believe that the office reflects the values of the company? (value reflecting via ex: layout, decoration, logos, choices of color etc?)

Personal Experience and Reflections

- Do you believe that the office environment is important to you?
 - What is the one characteristic you like the most at your office now, and what is one characteristic you would implement at your current office?
- Do you think that the office environment influences how you and your colleagues work?
- Does the office office environment have an effect on how you collaborate with your colleagues?
- Is your perception that the office environment suits your liking?
- Do you think the office environment has an effect on your creativity?
 - If so, are there any specific locations/areas/rooms in the office where you feel more or less creative/innovative than others?
 - If yes, why/what is special about these rooms?
 - Could you say one specific characteristic that affects your creativity the most in the physical office environment?
- How many hours each week do you spend at the office? (or at home?)
- How do you utilize the office? For what needs?
 - Do you often work alone or in teams?
 - Does your company have any knowledge sharing routines in place?
 - How many hours each week do you spend at the office?
 - Versus working from home?
- Are you offered any tools (digital tools, whiteboards, drapes etc.) which may help you be innovative, or increase your creativity?
- How important do you believe innovation is for your company, and why?
 - Do you see a connection between innovation and the work environment?