

UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

MASTER'S THESIS

**POST-HEROIC LEADERSHIP AND EMPLOYEE INNOVATIVE
WORK BEHAVIOR IN A SELECTED COMPANY**

Ljubljana, September 2022

NATAŠA MEDVED TADIĆ

AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

The undersigned Nataša Medved Tadić, a student at the University of Ljubljana, School of Economics and Business, (hereafter: SEB LU), author of this written final work of studies with the title Post-heroic leadership and employee innovative work behaviour in a selected company, prepared under supervision of prof. dr. Miha Škerlavaj

DECLARE

1. this written final work of studies to be based on the results of my own research;
2. the printed form of this written final work of studies to be identical to its electronic form;
3. the text of this written final work of studies to be language-edited and technically in adherence with the SEB LU's Technical Guidelines for Written Works, which means that I cited and / or quoted works and opinions of other authors in this written final work of studies in accordance with the SEB LU's Technical Guidelines for Written Works;
4. to be aware of the fact that plagiarism (in written or graphical form) is a criminal offence and can be prosecuted in accordance with the Criminal Code of the Republic of Slovenia;
5. to be aware of the consequences a proven plagiarism charge based on the this written final work could have for my status at the SEB LU in accordance with the relevant SEB LU Rules;
6. to have obtained all the necessary permits to use the data and works of other authors which are (in written or graphical form) referred to in this written final work of studies and to have clearly marked them;
7. to have acted in accordance with ethical principles during the preparation of this written final work of studies and to have, where necessary, obtained permission of the Ethics Committee;
8. my consent to use the electronic form of this written final work of studies for the detection of content similarity with other written works, using similarity detection software that is connected with the SEB LU Study Information System;
9. to transfer to the University of Ljubljana free of charge, non-exclusively, geographically and time-wise unlimited the right of saving this written final work of studies in the electronic form, the right of its reproduction, as well as the right of making this written final work of studies available to the public on the World Wide Web via the Repository of the University of Ljubljana;
10. my consent to publication of my personal data that are included in this written final work of studies and in this declaration, when this written final work of studies is published.

Ljubljana, September 6th, 2022

Author's signature: _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
1 POST-HEROIC LEADERSHIP	4
1.1 Theoretical underpinnings and conceptual models	4
1.2 Traditional heroic versus post-heroic perspective	8
1.3 Post-heroic leadership types and behaviors	12
1.3.1 Servant leadership.....	12
1.3.2 Shared leadership.....	19
1.4 Outcomes of post-heroic leadership	22
1.5 Critiques of post-heroic leadership theory	24
2 EMPLOYEE INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR	27
2.1 Theoretical underpinnings of innovation	27
2.2 Employee innovative work behaviour.....	30
2.2.1 Determinants of innovative work behavior	34
2.2.2 Ability, Motivation, Opportunity framework and innovative work behavior.....	37
2.3 Relation between post-heroic leadership and innovative work behavior	38
3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND RESULTS	42
3.1 Presentation of company ELTAS d.o.o.....	42
3.2 Research design and methodology	44
3.2.1 Research objectives	44
3.2.2 Research questions	44
3.2.3 Methodology.....	45
3.2.4 Design of Interview	46
3.3 Analysis of results	49
3.3.1 Elements of postheroic leadership.....	49
3.3.2 Mediator variables	55
3.3.3 Moderator variables.....	66
4 DISCUSSION	77
4.1 Key findings.....	77

4.2 Recommendations.....	82
4.3 Limitations and further research.....	85
CONCLUSION.....	86
REFERENCE LIST	88
APPENDICES	99

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Conceptual model of post-heroic leadership	7
Figure 2: Conceptual model of servant leadership.....	15
Figure 3: Overall model of antecedents and outcomes of servant leadership.....	17
Figure 4: Summary of mediating variables between leadership and creativity, innovation	39
Figure 5: Own conceptual model of post-heroic leadership and innovative work behavior	45

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Overview of theoretical framework on determinants of innovative work behavior	35
Table 2: Research sample characteristics.....	47
Table 3: Interview questions	48

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summary in Slovene language).....	1
Appendix 2: Summary of key findings to research questions.....	3
Appendix 3: Transcripts of interviews in company ELTAS d.o.o.....	4

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMO – Ability, Motivation and Opportunity framework
HRM – Human Resource Management
VUCA – Volatile-Uncertain-Complex-Ambiguous
CEO – Chief Executive Officer

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary global political themes are revolving around the need for sustainability, resilience and environmentally responsible development which is calling for new working ways and innovations (United Nations, 2022). Clearly, progress in different business environment cannot be evoked through same existing solutions as well as work today is embedded differently in people's lives as centuries ago. Whilst provided higher education and more opportunities, motivation and expectation from employees is changing. In order to be more competitive, agile and innovative, companies need to lead and treat employees differently; otherwise their return on investment will not reach full potential.

Given the increasingly knowledge-intensive working environment and spread of team based organizational structures innovation is considered one of the key drivers of sustaining competitive advantage and thus companies are coerced to apply practices which engage innovative work behavior. In support to new requirements leadership theory has shifted narrative in the last decades towards a so-called post-heroic leadership emphasizing a collective and social process driven by follower's needs and perceptions (Fletcher, 2004; Collinson & Collinson, 2009; Higgs, 2009). Post-heroic leadership contrasts the traditional leader-centric paradigms which advocate that »only the strong will survive« (Parris & Peachey, 2013, p. 390). Post-heroic leaders aspire for a society where we pay attention to all associates and collective is stronger when it works together, thus turning the focus from leader's traits to rather investigate the implications of the relationship between leaders and followers.

In order to fully depict concept of post-heroic leadership, this master's thesis will give special attention to perspectives of servant and shared leadership. Findings of recent studies on shared leadership convey that there is no single formula for a successful leader as leadership should not be exercised only by outstanding individuals, but should be exchanged between associates depending on the situation requirements. Pearce and Conger (2003) attest that shared influence and responsibility can be applied to almost all organizational types and situations. The role of principal leader is to build community, shared governance and capitalize on the knowledge of employees in order to drive the changes and continuous improvement.

Sobral and Furtado (2019) present the servant leadership as an »other-centered process« in addition to relational and collective perspective of post-heroic leadership. It rests on groundwork of Greenleaf (1970) with core notion that all members are in active role where they are heard and feel valued for their contributions to the organization. The servant leadership focuses on the needs of the employees in order to unleash the talent and encourage growth of the followers and their same behavior towards others.

Taking the above reflections in consideration in the Slovenian business environment we concur to Crevani, Lindgren and Packendorff (2007, p. 44) statement that companies in high extent remain personified by individual leaders which may have contributed to the spread of startup companies as young talents pursue other career forms instead of climbing the managerial ladder. Therefore, we invite scholars to further extend the empirical data on benefits of post-heroic leadership so as to encourage the society and companies towards long-term journey to more inclusive leadership practices.

The interest of this master thesis is to explore the relation to employee's innovative work behaviour, as we argue that this is the key ingredient to address the changing environment. Innovative behavior itself is a complex activity, involving two contradictive approaches – creativity in the initial phase and more structured management during the idea implementation steps (Škerlavaj, 2022). The thesis will investigate whether post-heroic leaders have an advantage provided by their encouragement of mutual learning, ability to cope interdependency and uncertainty through collaboration, empowerment and tailoring activities to different people.

Elaborating further, the purpose of this thesis is to advance the theoretical knowledge in Slovenian academic environment on the construct of post-heroic leadership and through exploration of mediating mechanisms and moderators show its benefits towards construct of innovative work behaviour on the basis of study in the selected company ELTAS d.o.o. Both constructs are undisputedly among key studied components to bring impact on success of organizations. In our view the selected topic is addressing the challenges of modern business environment and an integral question whether in environment recently popularly marked as VUCA world (volatile-uncertain-complex-ambiguous) (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014; Mack, Khare, Kramer & Burgartz, 2015) organizations require heroic leaders to achieve continuous development. The study may discover potential contributing factors to post-heroic leadership which have not yet been investigated in depth. As conclusive step to the thesis we will offer our research findings and prepare set of recommendations to further develop leadership supporting the innovative endeavours in the studied company.

The core objective of the thesis is therefore to determine the relation of post-heroic leadership to individual level innovative working behaviour.

We elaborate additional supporting objectives as follows:

1. To present, analyze and compare current definitions of constructs of post-heroic leadership and innovative work behaviour through review of foreign and domestic scientific and professional contributions.
2. Examine the moderators linking post-heroic leadership to employee's innovative work behaviour.
3. To validate theoretical findings with own research results - perform qualitative research in a selected company.

4. To evaluate results on the basis of theoretical and empirical studies in order to provide actual state of both constructs in the company, their interrelation and provide them with practical recommendations for further development in leadership to facilitate innovative practices.

In recent years there has been a growing body of research on diverse outcomes of post-heroic leadership forms, especially related to sub-construct of servant leadership, however this thesis will summarize them briefly. Study aims to gain understanding on what leaders ought to exercise so as to achieve increased innovative behaviour. We will be interested in our empirical research in organizational contextual factors, what methods, tools, practices and values do the leaders apply and what is their interaction with followers.

In accordance to the above our set basic hypothesis is that post-heroic leaders due to their approaches positively influence the employee's innovative work behaviour. Thus, this study addresses the following research questions:

- R1: To what extent are core elements of post-heroic leadership present in the selected company?
- R2: How do post-heroic leaders stimulate employee's innovative work behavior?
- R3: Which organizational factors act as strongest moderators between post-heroic leadership and employee's innovative work behavior?

The thesis reflects to a certain extent a highly used structure in scientific research. Namely, the first two chapters are dedicated to represent the theoretical background and empirical findings as well as critically assess constructs of post-heroic leadership and innovation, specifically innovative work behaviour. First chapter comprises of key conceptual models to post-heroic leadership, outlying separately servant and shared leadership definitions, within which specific traits of leaders are elaborated. Moreover, chapter provides comparison to traditionally hierarchical form of leadership, critiques to our studied leadership as well as overviews key findings of studies on outcomes of post-heroic leadership.

Second chapter analyzes innovation construct, focusing on innovative work behaviour and its determinants. Chapter concludes by depicting so far identified relation of post-heroic leadership to innovative work behaviour. Within the theoretical review part we use secondary source data of scientific literature and deploy descriptive method which comprehends describing of characteristics of studied phenomenon, observation, analysis, supported by comparative method for comparison between contributions and different viewpoints from several authors which leads us to certain conclusions. The research data, books and articles were found in majority through usage of online databases such as EBSCOHost, Science Direct, Emerald, Sage Journals, SpringerLink and Web of Science.

In last two chapters we strive to further underpin the interrelation of both concepts by empirical research in order to further address the limited research and contribute to understanding of potential of the newer leadership style. Given the necessity to explore the relations by interaction in greater extent with the participants of research, we have decided for qualitative research method. We used mainly primary data gathered through conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with leaders and employees from various departments in the selected company. This method allows us to use prepared questions which can be further developed during the interview depending on the course of provided insights. With regards to research sample we strived to involve different functions to ensure higher objectivity of data and validity so as to enable generalization of results. The latter was analysed and findings interpreted offering practical implications and recommendations.

1 POST-HEROIC LEADERSHIP

1.1 Theoretical underpinnings and conceptual models

Following the globalization, social changes and overall progress of mankind also business environment is constantly evolving which demands the same from business practices and leadership theory. Clearly, working environment today requires more knowledge and cross-functional collaboration which contributes to rapid spread of team based organizational structures. As per created interdependencies, it is important to understand the full process chain and how different functions can work together, nevertheless organizations still seem to often struggle with functions setting isolated strategies and objectives which may even contradict to others involved in the process. For instance, whether we are on the commercial side as a customer to supplying units or the latter we should find common solutions and reconcile goals to serve all and ensure an effective end to end supply chain.

In this chapter we aim to reflect on findings of key studies on the subject of post-heroic leadership whilst reader should consider there is vast range of leadership theories emerged through history. In the interest to the reader, we inform that Škerlavaj (2022) provides an exhaustive overview of key qualitative studies of post-heroic leadership, while we endeavor in this thesis to summarize and connect key theoretical findings.

While we seek to shed light on latest developments in leadership theory, we must delve back to firstly clarify that leadership although conceptualized closely to management has distinctive implications. Both share responsibility for performance as outcome, however they differ in function and power. Bohl (2019) resonates with Kotter that functionally speaking management »copes with complexity« and emphasizes on ensuring stability, whereas leadership »copes with change«. Drawing from his review, we understand leadership is present through direction (of vision, mission), alignment and lastly commitment of individuals to prioritize the needs of the team over their own. Furthermore,

in this thesis we adopt a position aligned with the following definition which recognizes the multidimensionality of leadership:

»A leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives.« (Winston & Patterson, 2006, p. 7).

According to several authors leadership is a relational phenomenon which cannot exist without followers' legitimacy (Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014; Uhl-Bien, 2011). Škerlavaj (2022) suggests that it is not seldom that people transcend from an expert role to a leader position which builds on their credibility to be accepted and followed by the associates. Depending on the area of leader's domain, he /she needs to possess certain knowledge of company's processes, governance and possibly even technical know-how of products in order to provide guidance and coaching to its team. In spite of the former expertise, often leadership skills need to be built and we argue that leaders are developed rather than born.

Despite common portrayals of companies in the media, where CEO figure is pictured as main attributor of success, more recent literature now acknowledges that CEO is supported by a »complex network of leadership practices distributed throughout the entire organization« (Broni & Velentzas, 2012, p. 67). In last decades leadership theories have shifted narrative from traditional hierarchical towards post-heroic leadership as a collective and social process between team members (Fletcher, 2004; Collinson & Collinson, 2009). The latter leadership is claimed to be born from investigations of communication and interaction between leader and followers which found effective relations were fueled with empathy and inclusivity (Khan, Williams, Williams & French, 2021). Conversely, earlier heroic approaches conceptualize styles, traits and identities of leaders (Collinson, 2018). Interesting to note, a certain share of scholars defend the notion that both individual as well as collective dimensions need to be co-used in leadership practices.

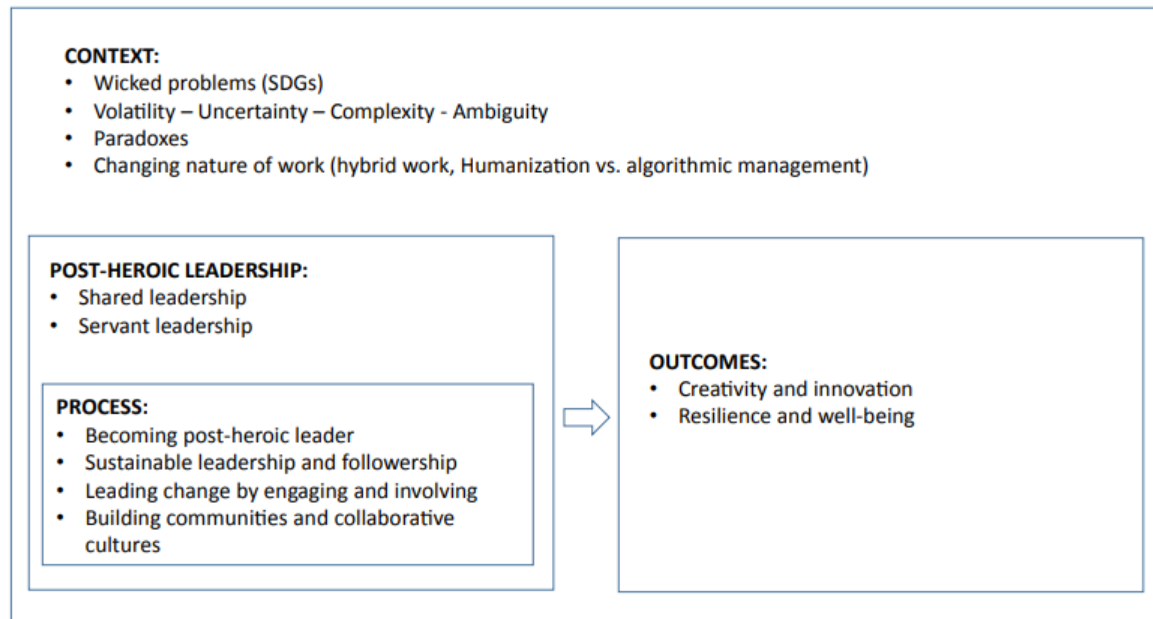
Elaborating further on collective forms of post-heroic leadership, research has focused on shared leadership theory which we further overview in subsequent chapters. It resonates that everyone has ability to share influence and responsibility to a certain degree, which can be applied to almost all organizational types and situations (Pearce & Conger, 2003). In addition to relational and collective perspective, Sobral and Furtado (2019) present a third perspective which they name »other-centered process«. The latter puts all members in active role where they are seen and heard. The theories building on this ideology are humble and servant leadership. Fletcher (2004) summarizes characteristics of post-heroic leadership as shared practice, interdependant human interactions and leadership as mutual learning. Moreover, author recaps the earlier findings which invoke shift to collective achievement, social networks, teamwork and shared accountability.

Picard and Islam (2020) portray a phenomenon of »liberating leadership« as a variant of post-heroic approach with indication towards its transformational advantage. The so-called liberating leaders reduce formality and hence create an environment fostering »self-motivation and growth«. This to some extent associates to Pearce and Manz (2005, p. 133) elaboration on self-leadership, whereby an individual manages its behaviors to meet objectives set typically by others. It comprehends intrinsic motivation, strategic oriented cognitions as well as self-influence skill development, in particular self-observation, goal setting, rewarding and job redesign. As Škerlavaj (2022) demonstrated through qualitative data, provided level of freedom is set to allow emotional connection to the vision, in return employees exert responsibility. The latter can contribute to sustainable working life for followers. On a similar note, Openo (2019) finds in online course context that certain extent of chaos was required, in sense of providing less structure and allowing students to direct the agenda so they can become accountable for their decisions and learning. On the other hand, critique of liberating leadership argues that absenteeism of leader can lead to augmented social pressure and stress on followers (Picard & Islam, 2020).

Other scholars highlight »Leadership-as-Practice« (Raelin, 2016), which was argued to be another variant of post-heroic leadership (Collinson, 2018). Raelin (2016) emphasizes practice as the engine of collaborative agency and suggests it is time to trust the people. It continues to theorize on building community, facilitated through inviting everyone to participate, unleashing those who have persisted in backstage and reflecting to boost learning. Scholar recaps four leadership activities, namely scanning of resources, signaling in terms of mobilizing attention of team members, weaving networks of interaction and stabilizing through feedback. The collective agency and sensemaking in turn encourage individuals' creative activity. The reader should not neglect the power of respecting mutual needs and when decision is made considering input of all involved actors, it augments their dignity. On the other hand, it builds belonging to a higher purpose that elevates above one's own.

Škerlavaj (2022) attests that post-heroic leadership is formed through shared and servant leadership. Placing it in context of wicked problems and changing work nature, he advocates that salient post-heroic leadership behavior entails building of community and collaborative cultures. Evidently, this fosters work meaning and sense of belonging to the same purpose, where everyone brings a certain piece to the whole puzzle. Community is essential to gain follower's commitment as well as it creates a platform for them to discuss their issues (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). This supports the understanding of servant leadership as post-heroic leadership subconstruct due to community orientation being highly attributed to it by other academics. Author's qualitative data indicates post-heroic leadership practices can facilitate an innovation ecosystem. Namely, joint problem-solving can potentially bring more innovative solutions compared to individualistic endeavours. Given the research interest of this thesis, we find Škerlavaj's developed conceptual model an important insight for our questions and thus provide it in the following Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptual model of post-heroic leadership



Source: Škerlavaj (2022, p. 187).

Emerging literature succeeds to offer some foundation into what post-heroic leadership should be in practice, nevertheless leadership cannot be taken as a consolidated manual to fit all individuals. The social cognition theory is offering some insights into what leads behaviors and suggests not solely environment but as well individual person experiences and observation of others are important contextual factors. Actions in different contexts can be perceived differently which ultimately can mold individual's leadership practices. Moreover, interweaving composition of personality, skills, personal experience and learning play vital role to development of a leader and certain personality traits were identified as predictive of effective leadership (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm & Mckee, 2014). Furthermore, Fletcher (2004) for instance emphasizes the gender dynamics claiming that it significantly influences how behavior is interpreted and thus experience of post-heroic leadership will differ for men and women. Fletcher laid the groundwork for additional research, where several scholars are unified to enact leadership styles are not gender neutral. It is associated to historical picturing of men as authority figures, prone to competition as opposed to post-heroic leadership perceived through weaker feminine traits i.e. empathy, motherhood, democracy and collaboration. Kelan and Wratil (2018) agree that heroic leadership was traditionally perceived to exclude women and that for promotion of gender equality post-heroic leadership is yet more adequate. Nevertheless, leadership approach interrelates with gender identity construction and power conceptions (Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff, 2007). Thus, despite post-heroic leadership inclined opportunity for »female advantage«, Fletcher (2004) claims this has not materialized yet due to perceived lack of power.

Bennett and Murakami's (2016, p. 7) study of leadership practices among principals in US emphasized the following post-heroic traits: well communicated vision with a moral purpose, strong relationships with stakeholders, influence by optimism and enthusiasm, personal qualities coupled with skills to drive change and lastly high visibility and engagement of leader in community activities. According to Schweiger, Muller and Guttel (2020, p. 413) post-heroic leadership theories emphasize collaboration, reaching consensus through dialogue and collective harmony overruling power. The approaches allow higher self-expression of team members.

As established so far, while we may detect some commonality among general leadership definitions, the more ambiguity and less agreement among scholars we find when it comes to leadership styles which have evidently ensued the evolution of organizational business. They span from autocratic, authoritarian, transactional to democratic, participative, transformational, laissez-faire etc. Our thesis focuses on newer conceptualizations of post-heroic leadership styles. Reflecting on above captured studies findings, we understand the role of post-heroic leader is utter use of individual's or team's potential by facilitation and drawing ideas and solutions from the team members instead of promoting solely its own. Facilitation can be displayed in different forms, from asking oriented questions, engaging the more introverted and silent members, building climate and communities, coaching and providing constructive feedback. Based on this initial conception we elaborate further on this notion in subsequent chapters.

1.2 Traditional heroic versus post-heroic perspective

In order to gain deeper understanding of post-heroic leadership we ought to have a view of its antecedent theory of heroic leadership. As established earlier, academic community is not fully aligned to whether it represents the opposite theory by all means. An integral question arises, whether in environment recently popularly marked as VUCA world (volatile-uncertain-complex-ambiguous) (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014; Mack, Khare, Kramer & Burgartz, 2015) team requires a heroic leader to get projects or work overall effectively done. For instance, Harter and Heuvel (2020) argue that heroism is necessary even with new leadership types. With emergence of post-heroic theories, the concept of heroism received a negative connotation which amid the claims of some authors seems to be widely misunderstood. From time of ancient Greece a hero was a positive character that possessed strength, charisma and courage, which joint in context of leadership suggested that these individuals positively transform companies and employees (Pearce & Manz, 2005). Vast research therefore focused on understanding behavior characteristics that drive leader's inspiration to followers.

Today, heroic leader is often perceived as self-centric, assertive, superior and dominant or power eager, extraordinary, self-reliant masculine role model who drives all change and is responsible for team's performance. It is the only individual to form vision and strategy,

assigns roles, motivates and finally evaluates team member's contribution and rewards them accordingly (Fletcher, 2004). Škerlavaj (2022) argues that heroic leader focuses on individual competition and culture of constant availability for work related issues which in long-term perspective can lead to exhaustion. The latter does not hold promise of sustainability. The respective discourses view followers exactly by its meaning – following the leader's influence as passive executioners of tasks and obedient to provided rules (Sobral & Furtado, 2019), they were seen as the only ones to serve, not to each other but rather to the leader. To conclude on the point of necessity of heroism, we invite the reader to contemplate on the claims from Efthimiou, Allison and Franco (2018) that is imperative of each person to engage in heroic actions and links the benefit to their own and collective well-being, directing away from a single heroic.

In effort to understand further what lead to post-heroic theories, we encounter several assumptions. In earlier heroic theories leadership was executed centrally by one person and merely through »top-down command and control« (Pearce & Manz, 2005). Authors take it further in hierarchical perspective stating that the leader is a single source of not only decision-making, but also overall wisdom and ideas. However, with the vast development throughout industries, it is no longer simply about mastering the art of service or product, but also how to present it and enhance through new technologies. Thus, it is reasonable to claim that due to augmented complexity one person does not embody all the required skills and know-how to direct by micromanagement as well as cannot control every detail of complex tasks and problem-solving. Waldersee and Eagleson (2002) while studying re-orientation implementation in hotel industry argued that shared leadership between one task-oriented leader and the other relations-oriented brings higher success. By shifting from singularity to collaborative setting, by involving more individuals in so-called shared leadership process we can assure sufficient competence as well as manage the time for a team leader (Pearce, Conger, 2003). Shared leadership is argued to be especially suitable for knowledge-intensive working environments (Sobral & Furtado, 2019).

Secondly, the management practices nowadays need to support better the change processes to suit the constantly evolving business environment and to cope with potential resistance to change. Škerlavaj (2022) describes that change needs to be mobilized by engaging and evolving rather than through promising individual rewards or punishment. The latter may result in counterproductive competition between team members. Post-heroic leaders aim to develop a culture where people focus on their continuous improvement and contribution to the team instead of being burdened with comparison to others or fear of failure. It is critical to understand, what motivates people to accept and drive the change. On that note, Pink (2011) suggests autonomy, mastery and purpose drive individuals. Team members need to understand the purpose of change, have ability to grow personally and see their contributions to collective achievements. Škerlavaj (2022) also iterates that research shows post-heroic leadership can enhance prosociality.

Additionally, Pearce and Manz (2005) offer a twofold perspective to necessity for shared leadership. From one side, it stems from changed composition of workforce and employee's expectations of job and management. Higher educated employees search of meaningful contribution and not solely financial perks. As Gandolfi and Stone (2018) rightfully exposed based on Gallup study with 7,200 people, bad manager was stated rootcause for almost half of job resignations. On the other hand, extremely competitive global market and consequential seek of new ways to compete call for employing full potential of organizational knowledge. The latter could be considered an advantage of post-heroic leadership as it can leverage the strengths of others (Sedounik, 2015). Post-heroic leaders are assumed to boost this potential by retaining psychological well-being of employees and cherishing the successes of their team over their own personal achievements or title / position in the company. Heroic leadership therefore is »self-defeating« as it widens the gap between dependency and empowerment (McCrimmon, 2010). Leaders today realize more that the success is not measured through notion how team has followed the orders but rather through performance. Due to this, it is important to have appropriate recognition tools installed so as to identify such leaders who often prefer to stay in the backstage rather than be exposed as contrary to traditional heroic leaders. In our modest opinion, organizations should also adjust reward systems to acknowledge active contribution, improvements that generate value, dedication, right behaviors and foster collective achievement.

Offering a high-level view to the reader, leadership should not be contemplated solely in the business domain, namely it is largely exercised in practically all areas of life. Considering politics and media influence on leadership, literature as well suggests the new forms of leadership were derived from loss of public trust in existing leadership (Khan, Williams, Williams & French, 2021).

As we seek to shed light on the differences among heroic and post-heroic theory, we ought to understand the expectations for leaders and individuals. Today it is commonly argued that progress can only be evoked by bringing people out of their confort zone. Traditional unitary command approach conversely provided much confort zone for those individuals who were fond of routine and low accountability. Recent pandemic of Covid-19 seemed to set the premises for change in working structures, whereby a shift from controlling to empowerment is evoked. Priorly, time was the essential component of measuring people's work, whereas now we are emphasizing the results and outcome of individual efforts.

Crevani, Lindgren and Packendorff (2007) summarized the academic groundwork of differences:

- Single accountable heroic leader vs. post-heroic participation of coworkers who as well take responsibility.
- In heroic leadership, subordinates are inferiors, whereas in post-heroic theory leader becomes dispensable, decision-making is performed in consensus.

- Heroic leader as source of all wisdom opposite to encouraged innovation, participation and growth of all individuals in post-heroic leadership.
- Static roles vs. post-heroic dynamic interchangeable roles.
- Heroic leadership supports individualism, dominance and control, vulnerability in case of leader's resignation. Post-heroic literature suggests empathy and collectivism.

Despite the forementioned differences, it is noteworthy to return to the open discussion on whether newer post-heroic and traditional heroic or even vertical leadership can possibly work together. Already Pearce and Conger (2003) have pointed out the need to answer question on what role a vertical leader can play as facilitator of shared leadership. It is argued that without this individual as catalyst of developing self-leadership in team shared leadership has fewer opportunities to evolve. Furthermore, unclarity of final responsibility for the team could potentially lead to conflict of interest or coordination bottlenecks due to different priorities. Taking this into account, authors proceed to question what responsibilities should the team take versus the leader. One proposal dictates to leader the assignment of vision whereas »how to« be left completely to the team. Furthermore, leader needs to build group norms grounded on commitment, facts, reasoning of arguments, constructive critics without moral infringement. Another valid point is that leader should engage the silent individuals to express their thought as well in order to achieve the best team decision based on facts and arguments. Lastly, leader needs to play an active role in assuring efficacy while dealing with uncertainty and conflicting information. Motivation, training, information sharing, problem solving on the other hand is implied to occur throughout the team.

Another advocate to potential interplay of heroic and post-heroic leadership practices stems from context of situations and circumstances. Several studies attempt to show that leaders need to be agile to use different approaches as situation requires. The notion of combining the two models of leadership was addressed by several scholars who used terms such as hybridity (Gronn, 2009; Fulop, 2012) and blended leadership (Collinson & Collinson, 2009). The later found that employees seeked for both forms of leadership in sense of desire for independant decision-making with provided consultation or direction from the leader. On a similar note, leaders should »lead but also be lead«, in sense of one situation requiring to take more control and convey way forward and associated aspirations to accelerate progress, whereas another situation allows leader to step in the back, listen and learn from the team (Ryömä, 2020). The author investigated how leadership can be fostered in varying power relation settings and referenced that dynamic delegation can work as well in hierarchical structures, for instance in organizations such as medical teams where power and expertise are legitimated by academic background or on other hand in sports teams. Using sport context as example the message to convey becomes more obvious - real progress can be evoked only if leading player looks beyond goal scoring, seeks less fame and focuses more on facilitating the other players so they can together achieve more goals. However, some circumstances require from the leading player to take solo action.

1.3 Post-heroic leadership types and behaviors

1.3.1 Servant leadership

The academic groundwork on servant leadership was undisputably laid by Greenleaf in 1970s with the first out of three well known essays establishing the term servant leadership, which were later cited by majority of scholars investigating this field. He founded a nonprofit Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership in 1964 and its movement is well active today building on his remarkable legacy. Yet important to note that although being less perceived and conceptualized servant leadership sprang in various forms likely much earlier in mankind history. Tribal leadership, Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King and even Christian religion main characters are put as exemplar in manifestation of selfless care for followers (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018).

Greenleaf's work rests on notion that leader must be willing to serve first. In fact, author invites full organizations to serve customers and broader society (Langhof & Guldenberg, 2020). His descriptive approach offer a great display of lifetime philosophy, nevertheless presented a substantial challenge to test empirically and operationalize, thus the more moduled definitions ensued later on evolving on his below assertions:

»It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead... The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant – first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants?« (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 15).

Later on, the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership described it as servicing others, promoting sense of community and sharing of power in decision-making. Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008) develop definition further; servant leader is to treat follower's needs before his own and facilitate their growth to achieve their potential and ultimately organizational success. Page and Wong (2000) emphasize that there is no room for self-interests, such as serving others to please them and gain their acceptance, the core motivation is genuine desire for common good. Literature provides assertions that serving behaviors translate from leader to followers. The latter frequently see the leader as a role model stemming from their respective formal power, however servant leadership can support in this aspect greatly as it brings attractive attributes for the follower. Leader's genuine care for followers and moral integrity form a higher respect and trust. Under such circumstance followers are more inclined to imitate leader's behavior (Liden, Wayne, Liao & Meuser, 2014). The same authors contend that a serving culture established on full team level will lead to higher group identification. Individuals will accept team's values and feel accepted from the team, thus take pride in their work and wish to perform it which utterly differs from obligation to do certain actions. The latter indicates the change in individual behaviors. Team members are

increasingly prone to support and rely on each other, either through knowledge and experience sharing or with emotional support. For servant leaders trust is crucial component (Patterson, 2003; van Dierendonck, 2011; Škerlavaj, 2022), as individuals will not fear to make mistakes but rather learn from them and therefore will not be reluctant to try out new ways of working, consequently engaging in innovative working behavior.

Nevertheless, the concept was initially accompanied by reluctance of corporate business audience. The nomenclature itself has a contradictive sound which some may challenge as to how a servant can lead when it serves. It conflicts with historical perception of great man with authority and power (Northouse, 2018), compared to this portrayal it comes out as weak and incapable of making a change, despite our earlier claims of higher attractiveness for followers and great influence on their individual behaviors. A question arises whether servant leadership stands a chance in nowadays individualistic cultures. We dare to contend it does as per our understanding it benefits the individual who not only serves, but is as well served back without the coercion. Advocates claim servant leadership is proactive, enthusiastic and does not let actions flow unattended. Finally, it shall benefit the full organization which was empirically demonstrated by several scholars and we elaborate further in the chapter capturing outcomes.

Despite commonalities to other contemporary leadership styles (ethical leadership, empowering leadership, transformational leadership, authentic leadership etc.), its differentiation lies at minimum in three tenets. Firstly, leader's motivation and priority are followers's needs and their empowerment which leads to successful fulfillment of joint mission, whereas many other leadership styles posit the focus the opposite way, on organization starting with mission. Additionally, considering the scope servant leadership is claimed to extend to broader community, not solely its team or organization and implies a philosophical concept beyond actions of a leader. Last distinction is the moral responsibility to followers (Langhof & Guldenberg, 2020, p. 39). More elaboration is offered by van Dierendonck (2011) who compared servant leadership to seven other styles. Lastly, the variance to other positive leadership forms was investigated as well by Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn and Wu (2016) who demonstrated through meta analysis that servant leadership has a higher correlation with outcomes, however lower correlation with transformational leadership and therefore is adequate to be treated as a separate construct. The authors associate positive leadership forms with leader behaviors and interpersonal dynamics which influence follower's confidence and lead to outcomes exceeding the task expectations.

Whilst reviewing the abundant literature we find several indications to support the above distinctions, namely relationship between servant leadership and sense of community, ethics and moral code is emphasized by various authors. Starting with the Greenleaf Center, it is interesting to note its original name was »The Center for Applied Ethics«. Greenleaf made foundation for identification of behavioral traits of servant leader, which we denote crucial to capture in our thesis as servant leaders are defined more by character and their intrinsic commitment than leader's doing as more common in other leadership theories (Parris &

Peachey, 2013, p. 379). To support this, Page and Wong (2000) for instance place character in the centre of their conceptualization, claiming that the attitude affects leader-follower interaction and how the task of leading is performed.

The second influential theorist was Spears who was heading Greenleaf Center for seventeen years and later on established his own center. Likewise, his contribution is practice-based and lacking empirical evidence. He consolidated ten characteristics from Greenleaf's work: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, philosophy, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building community (Spears, 2010). The third significant contribution was Laub's (1999) research in an organizational context instead of individual level. He depicted six attributes to effective servant organization: valuing people, developing them, building community, authenticity, providing leadership and sharing leadership through facilitation and power sharing. The latter links servant to shared leadership construct.

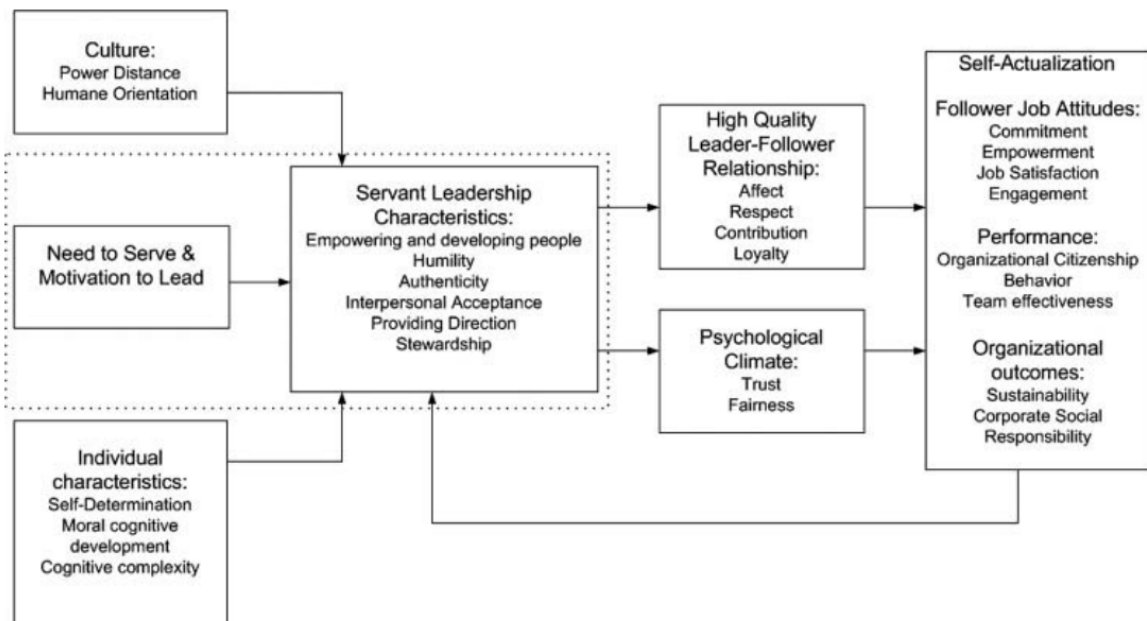
We can find similarity to Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson (2008) who not only conceptualize »ethical behavior« as one of the key required skills for a servant leader, but use multidimensional measure to validate servant leadership: emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills such as problem solving and task knowledge, empowering, helping followers grow and succeed, prioritize followers first and forementioned ethics.

Although lacking methodology, Russel and Stone (2002, p. 146) offer conceptual model by parsing servant leadership in nine functional and eleven accompanying attributes. Among functional attributes they position vision, honesty, integrity, trust, service, modeling, pioneering, appreciation of others and empowerment. The accompanying attributes are: communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching and delegation. These scholars note that servant leadership's success depends on personal values and beliefs of the leader.

Elaborating further on traits, van Dierendonck (2011) gives yet another conceptual model in order to operationalize definition of servant leadership which entails six core elements: humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, empowering and developing people, stewardship and providing direction. Especially first three mentioned are viewed as key distinction of servant to transformational leadership, due to their focus on followers whom leaders trust to direct their own actions to benefit the organization. Author builds reasoning on Greenleaf's input that leader sees himself equal to his team members, which he demonstrates as well through commitment of respectful relationship with followers, persuasion and leading by example, replacing usage of power to drive individual's actions. Thus, Greenleaf puts emphasis on autonomy, personal growth and well-being. We reason this will bring increased input from followers and effort to create added value. Furthermore, Dierendonck contends that serving and leading are alternating: »being a servant allows a person to lead; being a leader implies a person serves«. The servant perspective leads this

leadership style to be the most interactive one (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). We highlight van Dierendonck's conceptual model in his below figure as it builds on theoretical contributions up to date of his work. The model is centered on combination of »motivation to lead and the need to serve«, where also cultural aspects and individual characteristics are considered to influence the motivation. The six characteristics affect the leader-follower relationship and psychological climate. The set outcomes are associated to individual's positive job attitudes, increased performance and team effectiveness, as well as fostered sustainability and corporate social responsibility on organizational level (van Dierendonck, 2011, p. 1243).

Figure 2: Conceptual model of servant leadership



Source: van Dierendonck (2011, p. 1233).

Patterson (2003) develops its model on virtues which are described as part of individual's character and demonstrate human excellence. In spite of paying too little attention to the leading aspect, this model gives higher explanation to the need to serve. It defines seven virtuous constructs: agapao love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment and service. The »agapao love« is set as a principle virtue, leaning on Winston's (2002) definition that this is moral love, in terms of »doing the right thing at the right time and for the right reasons«. It personifies associates, leader pays tribute to their needs and best interest first, secondly on their talents and lastly on how this will bring value to the organization. According to Patterson, servant leaders honor associates and through genuine sympathy and appreciation, achievement acknowledgement and active listening they boost hope and courage, help others become better than they expected, contribute above their duties. Author continues with agapao love affecting humility and altruism to followers, expressing good intentions and unselfish care for other's welfare. Furthermore, servant leader requires future orientation and be visionary to support associates growth. As depicted earlier trust is basis for servant leadership, moreover it allows for empowerment where associates are given

significance and option of independent decision-making. Empowerment encourages teamwork and according to Russell and Stone (2002) servant leaders empower through sharing knowledge or coaching and developing people. Lastly, Patterson advocates the primary purpose of servant leader is the service of offering himself to the team in terms of time, energy, care, empathy and encouraging creativity of people. In 2004 Winston performed case study in which he combined Patterson's and his model variables. Winston provides the lacking background to how followers return service to leaders. Namely, follower's reciprocal agapao love consequently leads to commitment to the leader and augmented self-efficacy. Due to being able to follow its' vision and purpose intrinsic motivation increases which results in higher altruistic behavior and more service to leader.

Page and Wong (2000) relate to above mentioned inner motivation and evolve around character stating that all motives and actions of a leader stem from »inner reality«. They design a conceptual framework for measuring servant leadership, which integrates it in four domains: personality (what kind of person is the leader), relationship (how does the leader relate to others), task (what does the leader do) and process (how does the leader impact organizational processes). Within these domains they identify twelve attributes to measure servant leadership: integrity, humility, servanthood, caring for others, empowering, developing others, visioning, goal setting, leading, modelling, team building and shared decision-making.

In further attempt to operationalize and offer measurement for servant leadership, Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) conduct a factor analysis study on eleven dimensions sourcing from Spears with outcome in five fundamental factors. They reconfirm some of the earlier defined traits of servant leadership, namely altruistic calling, emotional healing as empathy and listening and persuasive mapping. In addition, they confirm wisdom and organizational stewardship as factors to servant leadership. Wisdom is described as understanding surroundings and anticipating development, in other words optimizing knowledge and utility. Organizational stewardship is associated to building community and ensuring taken actions satisfy commitment to improve things for stakeholders.

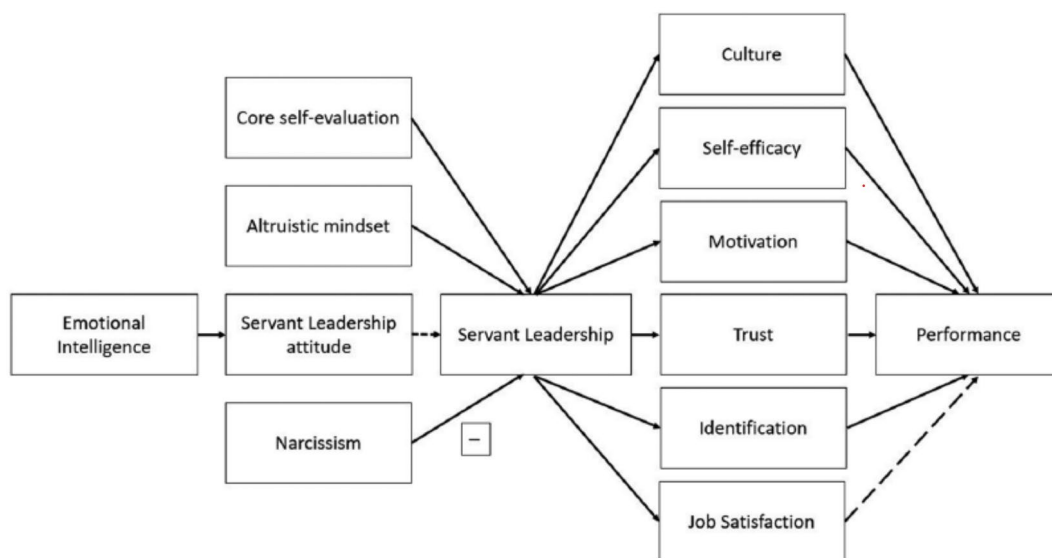
More clarity to vast literature was brought by Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck and Liden (2019) who joined forces to provide holistic view from existing theory. They divide the scientific progress on the topic into initial conceptual development phase, followed by measurement and current model development phase. Accordingly, servant leadership empirical study took off in 2008. Bringing commonality to servant leadership, it engages followers in relational, spiritual, ethical, emotional aspect to facilitate their development. Even though reader might understand that focus on followers neglects entirely the organization and its performance, authors attest servant leadership ensures the latter in a more sustainable way and on long-term, holding followers accountable for their work. The contribution of this recent paper is a new proposed definition of servant leadership capturing the motive, mode and mindset:

»Servant leadership is an (1) other-oriented approach to leadership (2) manifested through one-on-one prioritizing of follower individual needs and interests, (3) and outward reorienting of their concern for self towards concern for others within the organization and the larger community.« (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck & Liden, 2019, p. 114).

Considerable number of above-mentioned theorists concur that salient trait of servant leadership is humility to put the needs of others above their own and support the growth and development of its followers and this will result in fully exploited potential of the organization. Instead of claiming praisal for achievements themselves, leaders assume a modest note by putting their team in the forefront. Greenleaf (1996) argued that humility is expressed through sense of responsibility for team members. Study of Hu, Erdogan, Jiang, Bauer and Liu (2018) exposed humility as key leader trait to augment team creativity, mediated by psychological safety and team information sharing. In their work, humility is »how a leader views own shortcomings and other's strengths, added by strive for and appreciation of follower's contribution«. Other authors as well confirmed humility enhances team collaboration and collective humility contributes to higher team effectiveness, whereas Chiu, Owens and Tesluk (2016) linked it with our next addressed construct. Namely, their findings reveal that humble behaviors facilitate development of shared leadership.

Deepdiving into antecedents of servant leadership, empirical data is rather scarce on other than characteristics of a leader. Langhof and Guldenberg's (2020) recent literature review revealed narcissist mindset as a negative antecedent, as opposed to altruism having a positive effect on servant leadership behavior. Moreover, emotional intelligence was as well argued to be an antecedent, through facilitation to build trust in relationship of leader and followers. Authors build a model of antecedents and outcomes of servant leadership which is displayed in below Figure 3.

Figure 3: Overall model of antecedents and outcomes of servant leadership



Source: Langhof & Guldenberg (2020, p. 56).

Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck and Liden (2019, p. 119) as well reported antecedents of other studies, in summary the leaders who exhibit higher agreeableness and core self-evaluation, low extraversion and strong identification with organization are more prone to servant leadership practices.

Based on available literature we assess servant leadership to be the most investigated construct within post-heroic leadership, resulting in numerous non-uniformed conceptualizations. In attempt to put it in practice, research was conducted in wide contexts across cultures, its attributes, organizational settings from education, medical, financial to public sector etc. Moreover, authors exercise numerous measures to investigate it, adding that higher number considers team level analysis compared to individual level.

Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck and Liden (2019, p. 116-117) examined the multiple measures used across literature and suggested to use in future three measures which have proper construct validity, namely measures of Liden et al. (2015), Sendjaya, Eva, Butar-Butar, Robin and Castles (2019) and van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011). The first one shows advances due to inclusion of community dimension and competencies besides the character-based dimension. The second measure of Sendjaya, Eva, Butar-Butar, Robin and Castles (2019) has outstanding feature in spiritual dimension which is in line with Greenleaf's belief that servant leadership depends on spiritual factors and humility as source of influence. The last measure offers a longer spectre summarized in eight dimensions: standing back, forgiveness, courage, empowerment, accountability, authenticity, humility, and stewardship.

To conclude, despite the lack of coherency we observe the following traits associated to servant leadership and reoccurring throughout the conceptualizations of various scholars: humility, empowerment, stewardship, community orientation and moral code or authenticity. In addition, we are witnessing several outlined benefits of servant leadership which link it to positive organizational behavior, from contribution to more sustainable working life and potentially as well resilience and increased ethics. Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck and Liden (2019) suggest servant leadership is more adequate for companies striving for long-term growth, where it has an indirect impact on organizational outcomes. Servant leadership can only flourish if a culture of serving others is established and practiced by all, following example of the leader. The model has received increased attention in academia as well as support from business representatives.

Langhof and Guldenberg (2020, p. 33) highlight the Fortune magazine survey brought a significant evidence of servant leadership in practice, claiming almost a third of America's top 100 companies to work for exhibit traits typical for servant leadership. Furthermore, a significant share of these companies are active members in The Greenleaf Center. Several authors concur to this and provide more practical evidence, such as organizations that implemented servant leadership: Starbucks, Southwest Airlines, Ritz Carlton, Intel, Marriott etc. Provided that empirical research is still not comprehensive, it would be interesting to

see more in future research a measured influence of relations and beliefs, whether teams with strong servant culture are more effective than teams with stronger focus on the final deliverable or objective.

1.3.2 Shared leadership

The construct of shared leadership started with pioneers Parker Follet and Gibb (D'Innocenzo, Mathieu & Kukenberger, 2016, p. 1968) nearly a century ago, however similarly with this concept it was only in recent decades that research has progressed which likely can be attributed to the rise of interest in team working setting. Some academics used other nomenclature in similar however not the same conceptualization, for instance distributed leadership (Gronn, 2002), collective leadership, peer leadership and team leadership. Drawing upon a number of past definitions, core conceptualization of shared leadership indicates that all team members are engaged in leadership by mutual influence process over each other in pursue of a joint goal. The team therefore can consist of multiple leaders, either formal or informal, and considers switch in role interplay from leader to follower as situation requires. In other words, emphasis is drawn to horizontal peer influence process and exchange, however can constitute as well of upward or downward hierarchical influence. We understand this as in all members are given opportunity to influence and navigate the path of the team. On a similar note, shared leadership could be exemplar of full empowerment in the team (Pearce & Manz, 2005; Pearce & Conger, 2003). This links to individual freedom to perform things differently, proactively or ultimately to innovate (Wang, Waldman & Zhang, 2014).

Carson, Tesluk and Marrone (2007, p. 1219) further conceptualize it as a »team property« and continue that more individuals in a group involve in activities that influence the team such as negotiation, direction, motivation and support. It is a dynamic set of social interactions and relationships among group of individuals that forms in leadership. The salient common nominator is the egalitarian, fluid and multidirectional collaborative approach (Pearce & Conger, 2003). A newer theory basing specifically on relational perspective is the Leader-member Exchange (LMX) (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). As supported by research we echoe relational aspect to be vital to success of leadership. Nevertheless, we provide the reader as well the view of Ospina, Foldy, Fairhurst and Jackson (2020) who investigate the emergence of leadership manifestation and denote two perspectives: leadership residing in the group and in the system. By system as source leadership is seen separately from relationships, rather as a system of shared meaning which guides action.

Hoch (2013) mentions collaborative decision-making and shared responsibility of outcome as characteristics of shared leadership. The latter sets ground for an empirical question what is the relation to individual accountability. McCrimmon (2010) suggests team members will feel responsible provided certainty that their ideas are valued. As well, we are interested to

learn what is the impact rate of coaching or stewardship towards task definition compared to a mere command of a task.

Whilst investigating what conditions facilitate development of shared leadership, Carson, Tesluk and Marrone (2007) found the following dimensions of so-called »internal team environment« which are interrelated: »a shared purpose, social support, and voice«. Leaders should seek to establish shared sense of direction and objectives, which in turn results in team member's willingness to share leadership responsibilities. The latter should be backed by a positive working environment where associates provide emotional and psychological support to each other and acknowledge their contributions. May we add to the last dimension of voice, theorized as change oriented communication, essentially indicating active participation – in our view it revolves about creating a speak-up culture whereby associate does not fear to express contrary opinion, silence on the other hand would mean consent. Speaking of culture, some organizations build unbossed (Škerlavaj, 2022) and collaborative cultures to facilitate shared direction setting.

Elaborating on prior note, according to Randhawa and Kaur (as cited in Bilal, Fatima & Imran, 2019) organizational climates are crucially influencing discretionary behaviors. Thus, we believe they need to be adapted to enable exercising shared leadership. In the context of educational sector authors demonstrated that shared and collaborative leadership styles are more adequate and empirically confirmed foremost climate for initiative but as well psychological safety are mediators between shared leadership and taking charge. Their conceptual model portrays shared leadership through participative decision-making, power and communication, whereas the latter dimension was the most mediated. Shared leadership comprehends acceptance and support from management as well as team members, reduced risk of political behaviors and seek suggestions and input. As depicted by Kahn (1990) psychological safety is established when individual can express and engage himself with no fear of consequences. Leaders can contribute by practicing inclusiveness, and open communication, in reverse such climate is claimed to increase the level of interpersonal risk taking (Bilal, Fatima & Imran, 2019). Daring to make mistakes can boost willingness to experiment and learning from rootcause analysis.

Secondly, empirical results show that external leader coaching of teams (Carson, Tesluk & Marrone, 2007) can as well complement shared leadership, especially in instance of weaker internal team environment. This is ensured through encouraging, assisting with conflicts, providing input to task strategies and rewarding situations of associates demonstrating leadership (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). With regards to our second studied construct of innovative behavior, several researchers have proved that external team leaders promote innovation through supporting climate to new ideas (Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta & Kramer, 2004; Edmondson, 1999; Hunter & Cushenbery, 2011). On the other hand, group members have ability and duty to undertake different leadership behaviors which ultimately lead towards self-managing team, for instance defining collective vision, creating supportive climate, segregating tasks, providing their insights and inputs to complex problem-solving

(Morgeson, DeRue & Karam, 2010). To conclude, shared leadership can only thrive when group members acquire skills as effective leaders and followers and take responsibility to engage in both (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Therefore, training is among essential sources to enable individual to take more initiative towards responsibility (Pearce & Manz, 2005).

With regards to formality of leadership position, it depends on the organization how it structures the leadership roles. Some teams divide the areas formally and assign a business process owner for each which may level the distribution of power. As well, Ziegert and Dust (2021) findings point out that organizations should reduce role ambiguity. In spite of somewhat undermining commonality of shared leadership concepts, they even propose a designated leader should be considered when trying to boost innovation. Nevertheless, one must not overlook the significance of informal leadership process among other team members, whereby they lead each other towards collective goal achievement. Pearce and Conger (2003) suggest that »visible heroes are supported by a network of leadership practices distributed throughout the organization«. Similarly, some authors found the latter may influence substantially to team's effectiveness (Wang, Waldman & Zhang, 2014). Due to diverse expertise encouraging more constructive dialogue the potential for collective learning is bolstered. To further nurture learning, it is crucial to deploy few of internal leadership functions theorized by Morgeson, DeRue and Karam (2010), training and development of team members as well as providing feedback. Important to note, development needs to be carried out in proper manner to serve the progress of the whole collective. Namely, Pearce and Conger (2003, p. 26) highlight a paradox that developmental path in individual's early stages entails competition or differentiating oneself from the others through individual accomplishments.

Elaborating further, the reader should take note that shared leadership faces a significant challenge with leader's mindset. Ability of individuals to manage their egos and excessive self-confidence and share the credit is a turning point for successful outcome. In addition, it is important how tasks are distributed, how effectively positions are aligned on key decisions, how crisis is tackled through their intercommunication (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 259). In addition, we may highlight the fact that post-heroic leadership entails facilitation where leader as well depends on others instead of taking independent decisions; ultimately this consumes more time, effort and negotiation. A leader should embrace the bottom-up challenges and question the team more rather than perceiving it as a threat to his position (McCrimmon, 2009). The leader is only as powerful as the belief of his team in joint goal.

If we place the studied concept into a modern setting, where Covid-19 pandemic has increased the changes in working ways, we begin to comprehend that trust is an inevitable component also to shared leadership. Now more than ever employees require autonomy and purpose which copes with social distance (i.e. work from home) (Škerlavaj, 2022). New possibilities of remote work have created a worldwide job market, where physical location is no longer a limiting factor, consequently individuals may be more inclined to change jobs. A valid question arises how organizations can ensure a welcoming working environment

which fosters individual's sense of belonging to organization. By building trust and psychological safety we can bring a small piece of stability to formed relationships in teams.

1.4 Outcomes of post-heroic leadership

One of the key interest areas when studying organizational outcomes is surely performance. We bring notice to the Greenleaf's (1970) initial expectations of servant leadership, which insinuate besides growth of followers as well the organizational performance and impact on society. Meanwhile, there is a growing body of studies demonstrating positive correlation of post-heroic leadership forms to team performance. For instance, Liden, Wayne, Liao and Meuser (2014) confirmed with empirical research involving 71 restaurants that serving culture was positively related to restaurant's performance and employee job performance, creativity and customer service behaviors. On the other hand it decreased the turnover intentions. Langhof and Guldenberg (2020) recall as well of other studies demonstrating culture and climate as mediator associated to outcomes of increased performance and work engagement. Both papers posit positive outcomes to team in addition to individual level. Exposed to servant leadership practices, individuals are more likely to return the serving behavior towards team members and customers, ultimately this leads to increased customer satisfaction (Huang, Krasikova & Liu, 2016).

D'Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger (2016) demonstrated through meta-analysis the positive relationship between shared leadership and team performance, which is notably moderated by task complexity. Yet, authors indicate that literature underspecifies the extent of the relationship. Attested by other scholars, higher performance is claimed to be achieved on the account of augmented knowledge pool (Pearce & Manz, 2005), more active learning (Hallinger & Heck, 2010), information sharing and individual's engagement (van Dierendonck, 2011).

Results from study of Wang, Waldman and Zhang (2014) indicate higher team effectiveness under shared leadership. Similarly to D'Innocenzo, Mathieu and Kukenberger (2016), relationship between shared leadership and outcomes is found stronger in more complex task and knowledge intensive settings. Through promotion of knowledge sharing and motivating towards taking accountability for decisions, shared leadership positively impacts on team cohesion, consensus and satisfaction (Wang, Waldman & Zhang, 2014). Furthermore, psychological safety is evidenced among strongest predictors of team effectiveness and therefore seen as crucial mediator to post-heroic leadership practices (Edmondson & Mortensen, 2021).

In Klasmeier and Rowold's (2020) research on wide sample of 160 teams, trust and transformational leadership were revealed as antecedents of shared leadership, whereas the outcome was associated to positive team performance and creativity in regards to creation of new ideas. Moreover, shared leadership fosters team cohesion (Mathieu, Kukenberger, D'Innocenzo & Reilly, 2015) and open communication (Park & Zhu, 2017), which were

found as antecedents of team creativity and innovation (Hülsheger, Anderson & Salgado, 2009). Closely related, theory depicts additional outcomes such as collective learning and mutual empowerment.

In order to understand the outcomes on team or organizational level, it is crucial to gain knowledge of the individual level which brings utter results to organizational level. Assessment reveals several empirical studies showing that servant leadership fosters individuals well-being, namely by building adequate or positive organizational climate or as suggested by Škerlavaj (2022) by humanizing work. Consequently, this enhances organizational commitment which in turn increases individual's job satisfaction and as mentioned earlier leads to lower turnover of employees (Parris & Peachey, 2013). Similar cognition is found in other studies which connect servant leadership to individual's positive outcomes in job satisfaction, motivation, self-efficacy, trust, identification and exceptional effort (Langhof & Guldenberg, 2020; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006). As established, some may play a mediating role towards the final outcome. Bilal, Fatima and Imran's (2019) findings mentioned under shared leadership chapter, on the other hand demonstrate taking charge as an outcome of shared leadership.

Škerlavaj's recent book (2022) dedicates chapters to outcomes of post-heroic leadership concurring with some of above claims why it brings value to the individuals and ultimately organizations. Its qualitative data emphasize impact on resilience and well-being, creativity and innovation. Resilience can only be achieved by focusing on individuals and raising their self-confidence as well as through change of perspective. Several approaches are suggested to support this process, among them coaching, learning from challenging events and time-blocking to allow work routines. Accordingly, shared and servant leadership forms contribute to build individual's psychological ownership to change initiatives, improving their cognitive and affective reactions to drive the process, which ultimately is seen in resilience, i.e. ability to overcome major difficulties. Moreover, post-heroic leaders facilitate innovative working behaviors through »autonomy, mastery, purpose and prosociality« and it is the leadership that pushes innovation to performance. Recently, so-called »hackathons« have come to centre of attention of post-heroic leaders as a facilitating tool of open innovation, namely these are events joining different interest groups, including external communities with the intention of resolving a specific challenge given through exchange of ideas and talent sharing.

In attempt to summarize the vast research, we highlight Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck and Liden's (2019, p. 119-121) comprehensive outcome overview based on review of 285 articles, primarily categorizing the main evidence of servant leadership outcomes as follows:

- Follower behavioral outcomes comprising mainly organizational citizenship behaviors with broader focus on community, associates and customers; positive impacts are

identified as well to collaboration, employee corporate social responsibility, helping and proactive behavior.

- Follower attitudinal outcomes such as employee engagement, job satisfaction, well-being, excelling at work, work-life balance, positive organizational identification and negative relationship to turnover intention and job boredom.
- Performance outcomes on various subject levels (individual, team, organization) in terms of creativity, individual innovative behavior, customer service quality, value creation, customer satisfaction, customer-oriented prosocial behavior, knowledge-sharing etc.
- Leader, team and organization outcomes: higher trust in leader and his integrity, team creativity and innovation, organizational commitment among others.

While our thesis seeks to explore further the innovation related outcomes in next chapter, we reiterate our view on above outcomes by highlighting van Dierendonck (2011) arguments that servant leadership affects relationship between leader and follower as well as psychological environment in team and organization. It is expected to influence the individual's self-actualization, job attitudes and performance, consequently affecting team effectiveness and on organizational level sustainability and corporate social responsibility.

1.5 Critiques of post-heroic leadership theory

Literature often implies post-heroic leadership types cannot be used in every setting and situation. Pearce and Manz (2005, p. 135) for example offer five factors through which we can judge whether self and shared leadership is appropriate: level of urgency, the importance of employee commitment, the need for creativity and innovation, the level of interdependence, and the degree of complexity.

We see connection to McCrimmon's (2010) claims that in relation for newer in vogue leadership type we forget of importance to have the courage and be prepared to take risks which he presents as non-positional heroic leadership, in other words using influence to drive improvement, challenge status quo and convince individuals to take risky steps. Overall, the author sees four leadership styles, namely positional heroic or post-heroic and non-positional heroic or post-heroic. Positional dimension indicates decision-making manner, where post-heroic or unheroic leaders call for joint ownership of decisions. In terms of non-positional perspective author believes heroic and unheroic leadership can be used depending on the level of personal risk. Some of similar claims on combining both forms have been elaborated in prior chapters. Harter and Heuvel (2020) concur that heroism is necessary and is even attributable in many directions on post-heroic leadership therefore they propose to abandon the term post-heroic and rather replace it by connective leadership. They argue that post-heroic literature pictures leaders in same way as heroic, with intelligence, commitment, energy, courage and integrity. Accordingly, all associates should be on personal hero quest in which leadership and following are intertwined.

Schweiger, Muller and Guttel (2020) further explain what keeps the heroic leadership still actively used. They warn of potential ineffective decision-making as reaching consensus could sometimes be timeconsuming. Jackson (2000) similarly noted that team attitudes, irreconcilable differences and individual career aspirations impede decision-making. On the other hand, followers might avoid responsibility or exert lack of interest in decision-making, or alternatively it imposes excessive stress on them. Moreover, power is not equally distributed, in fact leadership gets reconstructed as the stakeholders interact over time and such dynamics can spur ambiguity and conflict. Some individuals might struggle more with role ambiguity which creates uncertainty around responsibilities. As per author's findings, leaders avoid ambiguity and place themselves as heroes by striving to be more prepared, knowledgeable and in overall control of the situation. Additionally, they are burdened by self-expectations of the need to be a hero and experience doubts to be able to cope with complexity.

Considering the power distribution, as earlier established it is seldom equal among team members. The members contributing knowledge and best ideas are evoking higher progress, however provided that they are heard and influential. Instead, individuals with better articulation and stronger communication skills more often emerge as leaders which can lead to unoptimal decisions (Pearce & Conger, 2003). On the other hand, the leadership may be dispersed to such extent that it cannot be recognized, which contradicts the ideology of modern (especially western) organizations and academia who value leadership as the key activity (Rippin, 2007, p. 214). The leadership might be substituted by self-management and motivation to perform better.

We find post-heroic approach at test of successful implementation as well when working environment is supportive of one person taking charge. O'Toole, Galbraith and Lawler (2002) reason the resistance to post-heroic leadership forms with historical cultural demarcations where leadership is a singular activity. Fletcher (2004) concurs that new forms of leadership cannot prosper in organizations positioning around beliefs in individualistic meritocracy. In addition, author highlights that gender stereotypes do not favor the newer leadership theory and a social shift would be required. Hale and Fields (2007) remind again of cultural aspect, namely in higher power distance cultures, post-heroic leaders may be seen as weak. As Rippin (2007, p. 220) suggests, »heroic, father substitute leaders let us down as do inadequately loving post-heroic mother substitute leaders«. This leads us to understanding that the organization firstly needs to undergo a cultural change and commit to it. An important cognition is made in study of Brooks, Gino and Schweitzer (2015) whereby they find that »asking for advice increases perceptions of competence« and enables knowledge sharing. The relationship is found to be moderated by task difficulty, advisor egocentrism and advisor expertise.

Grint (2010) advises that while seeking options to engage followers in community, organizations should not deny the »sacred« nature of leadership which he describes as the separation between leader and follower, the sacrifice of both and the leader's silencing of

anxiety and resistance. If neglecting the latter, the organization would destabilize the ability to function, to make decisions. He suggests the post-heroic alternatives are more viable in practice only in smaller scale communities or short-term missions and demand significant effort. Conversely, Nayab (2010) claims the benefits are displayed only through a long-term practice. Author marks criticism of servant leadership is grounded on its softer approach which hinders accountability and is seen as unsuited for competitive business environment. Among enumerated situations when servant leadership would need to contradict its core purpose are crisis events, when listening and consultation would be limited. Other depicted situations are company's resource cuts hindering development of employees, events requiring confidentiality and situations calling discipline reinforcement or corrective actions. Noteworthy, individual's objectives must be in line with the organizational ones, otherwise the latter ones will remain unreachable. Concluding on the notion of servant leadership, Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck and Liden (2019) as well point out that difficulties in putting it to practice stem from low construct clarity, measurement and poor design.

Following argumentation that formation of communities is prerequisite for successful post-heroic leadership, we see high potential for its use in politics or public organizations which aim to serve broader society. Private sector organizations on the other hand must not neglect the needs of their customers. The scholars argue that by focusing on internal followers' needs and their development will consequently show through innovative behavior and bring results to improved products or service to customers, yet we propose the organizations should periodically check the set of principles, values and actions of their employees are serving the common interest of their clientele. At this point, we see valuable to raise the general assumption of post-heroic theories that followers desire to proactively contribute, take responsibility and commitment, however a contrary motivation is also possible, whereby follower sees reduction of control mechanisms and freedom as opportunity to exploit and invest less effort to work activities. Another remark from literature considers that some individuals may find leadership tasks stressful and over their capabilities which utterly can limit team performance.

Reflecting on provided drawbacks and arguments, we conclude that post-heroic leadership forms need to evolve further in its construct to provide more tangible approaches. As well, such leadership cannot be established overnight or without adequate change in organizational culture. It is not solely the actions of the leader that trigger the shift, it requires formation of community and full organization, all associates to be devoted to it in its actions. Moreover, situation nature needs to be evaluated for proper approach, namely referring to Pearce and Manz's level of urgency. In situations requiring quick decisions or non-negotiable measures (such as several Covid-19 restriction measures in organizations) a heroic unitary command might bring better result. Nevertheless, we argue to instead rather use interplay of heroic and post-heroic leadership forms as the latter will contribute to the next step after decisions, which is reliable execution by followers. Aligning the plan with all

stakeholders and by addressing the associates' concerns and different views will help to preserve their commitment to the shared goal.

2 EMPLOYEE INNOVATIVE WORK BEHAVIOR

Briefly stated, innovation has become one of the most studied phenomena in modern society with its roots well back in twentieth century. Diving into literature on innovation we begin to comprehend the diversity of this concept for which numerous definitions are available and we lack of a unified interpretation. The following chapters offer a secondary source analysis in order to gain comprehensive understanding of key academic learnings on the topic. The initial part covers the overall innovation concept, followed by overview of employee innovative work behavior.

2.1 Theoretical underpinnings of innovation

During 1930-1950s, one of the first contributors to innovation theory, Joseph Schumpeter, argued that economic change and competitiveness revolves around innovation and entrepreneurship. He coined the term »creative destruction« to describe that the old is constantly being replaced by the new, which according to his belief is the essence of capitalism. Further, he defined development as a process of structural changes driven by innovation. His works divide the innovation into four dimensions: invention, innovation, diffusion and imitation. Another key theory he advocated is the importance of entrepreneurship as by this new combinations are made. In light of this, he initially suggested that small entrepreneurial firms were the source of most innovation whilst large firms with higher access to capital and labor were the ones to carry it out (as cited in Han, 2019; Śledzik, 2013).

Drucker (1985) marked innovation in organizations as a systematic activity, in other words focused, purposeful and organized. He also outlined the need for analysis and hard work, indicating that purposeful innovation can be learned. According to his work, innovation is initiated with analysis of seven sources of opportunity, part of them deriving from companies or industries and the rest from social or demographic trends. These sources are: unexpected occurrences, incongruities, process needs, changes in industry, changes in demographics, changes in perception and new knowledge.

In essence, innovation is »the introduction of new and improved ways of doing things at work. It concerns those processes where individuals, groups, or organizations seek to achieve desired changes, or avoid the penalties of inaction« (Škerlavaj, Černe, Dysvik & Carlsen, 2016, p. 64). A comprehensive view on innovation is provided by Crossan & Apaydin (2010, p. 1155) who consolidated academic research papers into definition as follows: »Innovation is production or adoption, assimilation, and exploitation of a value-added novelty in economic and social spheres; renewal and enlargement of products, services, and markets;

development of new methods of production; and establishment of new management systems. It is both a process and an outcome.« From process perspective, innovation captures design and creativity, invention, development and implementation. In addition, Carlson and Wilmot (2006, p. 4) well summarize the main aim of innovation which is creating value for the customer and sustainable profit for the company. Innovation is frequently discussed in studies in terms of organizational or employees' innovativeness which being a measurable outcome of this construct.

Most of theory as well as economic institutions emphasize the imperative of innovation for all parties, i.e. companies, governmental bodies and society itself. Nevertheless, it provides foundation especially for new businesses, jobs and boosts productivity, economic growth and development (OECD, 2015, p. 3). Through these levers it helps solve societal challenges.

The Oslo Manual (OECD, 2005, p. 47) defines innovation as »the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service) or process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations.« The source reports of growing recognition that innovation besides research and design also encompasses organizational changes, training, testing and marketing. As such innovation demands a degree of novelty, which according to OECD (2015, p. 16) can be classified either as innovations new to the firm, new to the market or new to the world.

Inspired by Rogers (1995, p. 250), we should also look to innovation from a human perspective apart from its scientific value. The author showed how individual's perceptions of the defined attributes of innovation influence the innovation's rate of adoption. Namely, if innovation is not adopted by majority of stakeholders it shall not reach its purpose. His theory is based on diffusion which is a process of communicating or spreading innovation through certain channels among the members of social system. As an innovation decision is made under circumstance of uncertainty, people need to believe that innovation will bring an improvement to their work. According to Rogers, personal judgement is founded on five attributes: relative advantage to previous solutions, compatibility, complexity, trialability and observability. Further, in his pursue to understand how to adapt the innovation he provides a categorization of different type of adopters. The latter is deeply rooted in individual's characteristics and risk inclination.

Despite the fact that creativity and innovation are often used interchangeably in literature, there is a significant distinction established between the two concepts. Whereas creativity is associated with generation of novel and useful ideas, innovation starts with production or adoption of useful ideas which is upgraded with idea implementation as well. By adoption which does not constitute in creativity process theorists refer to adaptation of preexisting products or processes from outside the company (Scott & Bruce, 1994, p. 581). Thus, innovation prevails in studies as a broader concept, yet interestingly by above definitions newness is compulsorily present only in creativity process. To sum up, creativity is said to

represent the start of innovation process, but on the contrary some authors claim it also has a role in transforming the idea into practice (Škerlavaj, Černe, Dysvik & Carlsen, 2016, p. 337).

Referring to above, these two concepts overlap also with the concept of invention. There is a certain transformation path required from invention to innovation, during which all ideas without commercial potential are eliminated. Similarly described by several authors innovation is »the development of an idea or invention and its conversion to a useful application.« It is formulated as invention plus exploitation, revealing that invention process creates new ideas and makes them work. The exploitation on the other hand disseminates the innovation commercially (Damanpour & Wischnevsky, 2006, p. 272). We also came across linkage between invention and creativity, namely some interpret connotation of creativity and innovation through invention as the creative work of scientists. Yet, we should take into account that invention is not an absolute prerequisite for innovation, it depends on the kind of innovation and as previously mentioned a preexisting solution can be adopted.

Needless to say, technology plays an essential part as enabler and influential stakeholder in innovation. Already in 1942 Schumpeter argued that »new technologies create market opportunities while simultaneously damaging or destroying demand in many existing markets« (as cited in Han, 2019, p. 63). Kanter describes different periods as waves which brought about new interpretations of innovation. The latter also reflect varying economic conditions. Starting in the late 1970s with the evolution of global information technology and moving forward with World Wide Web rise in 1990s companies understood that traditional forms of business were out-of-date and they need to search for new business models. The companies that adapted well enough to survive such turbulent era of technological change implemented innovation as their corporate theme, among them are reputed General Electric and IBM. The current era returned the focus on consumer needs as well as enforced a practice with many companies to outsource R&D and use so-called »idea shops« (Kanter, 2006, p. 74). Technology itself drove changes in ways of companies' production as well as a more vast change in the society, our way of living. In contrast, we observe misconception of its meaning, namely technology is only a component of innovation and some innovations might not be technology-based. To conclude, technological innovation is solely one type of organizational innovation.

Another key factor to foster creativity and innovation are social networks which gained value in contemporary theories. They can promote innovation diffusion and connect key resources as they provide opportunities for learning and problem-solving. Social network analysis is used as a tool to explore the phases of innovation and to avoid uncertainties related to the process (Kolleck, 2013, p. 1).

Innovation in business nowadays takes on several forms, the emergence of startup companies building on information technology with their global center in Silicon Valley and business incubators and accelerators stand as an exemplar of innovation concept.

Lastly, we should also understand the reasons that drive innovation. The most basic reason we could all agree on is the necessity of companies to face up their competition and sustain their position in the market, it is the nature of survival. In addition, Kanter (2006, p. 73) claims innovation reappears every few years as a »prime focus of growth strategies.« This is coupled with literary evidence of many researchers (i.e. Scott & Bruce, 1994; Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2011) who suggested that innovation plays a fundamental role for the enduring economic performance of companies. Furthermore, if we take a look at our basic regular activities, we also comprehend that innovation is essential to tackle problems. When faced with an obstacle, one must exercise new or different approach to solve the issue. Damanpour and Gopalakrishnan (2001, p. 47) view innovation adoption as »an organization's means to adapt to the environment, or to preempt a change in the environment, in order to increase or sustain its effectiveness and competitiveness.« Moreover, contemporary consumers are subject to change their preferences more often due to a vast choice of available products of which they are well informed. Consequently, firms must constantly seek new ways to excite consumers which revolves around creating an experience for them.

2.2 Employee innovative work behaviour

Innovation is considered one of the key drivers of sustaining competitive advantage in nowadays continuously changing business environment. Associated behavioral concept is innovative work behavior which comprehends focus on all forms of innovation. Companies ought to resort to practices which engage innovative work behavior as employee's efforts ultimately bring added value or even innovations.

Despite the fact that innovative work behavior is much desired by companies usually we cannot find it incorporated in certain function's key accountabilities. By latter we mean that it is seldom formally prescribed to employees as part of their daily activities. Ramamoorthy, Flood, Slattery and Sardesai (2005, p. 143) call this discretionary, extra-role behaviors. With this in mind we question to what extent it is integrated in business practices and how well the incentive system is developed. Namely, the presence of the latter demonstrates that innovative behavior does not benefit solely the companies but also the employees.

The construct of innovative work behavior has been widely researched and conceptualized from different perspectives such as personality characteristics, outputs and set of behaviors (De Jong, 2007, p. 18). Literature separates individual innovation from organizational innovativeness, however supports the positive relationship between the two notions. For instance, Campbell, Gasser and Oswald (1996) showed a positive correlation between organizational performance and innovations-specific behaviors.

To give an illustration of the vast complexity the concept of individual innovation poses, we provide a brief summary of key theoretical contributions. Analysis of several studies indicates most widely referred definition is from Janssen (2000, p. 288) who drew on West

and Farr's as well as Ford's definitions from 1989-1990: »innovative work behavior is the intentional creation, introduction and application of new ideas within a work role, group or organization, in order to benefit role performance, the group, or the organization«. As a result, the company should record a better performance as well as social-psychological benefits such as job satisfaction and better interpersonal communication for employees or groups of individuals.

Most notably, innovative work behavior should be distinguished from employee creativity which as mentioned earlier does not include the implementation of new ideas. Nonetheless, creativity is seen as a crucial component of innovative work behavior, most commonly displayed at the beginning of the innovation process. At this point we should remind that purpose of innovative behavior lies not solely in creating new products or services, but also can aim to improve company's processes, methods and operations (Ramamoorthy, Flood, Slattery & Sardesai, 2005, p. 142).

Following Zaltman, Duncan and Holbek (1973), De Jong (2007, p. 18) mentions activity-stage model as most commonly used tool to describe the process of innovation. In detail, this model focuses on »the actual activities that are carried out to develop a new product, service or work process by breaking down the innovation process into a number of activities. In its most simple form activity-stage models distinguish between just two phases: initiation and implementation«. In fact, these two phases are integrated in innovation theories of most prominent researchers.

Diving deeper into research, Kanter's individual innovation begins with problem recognition, followed by idea and solution generation, may it be novel or adopted. This behavior generally derives from problems present in work processes or from emerging trends. Further, an individual shall search for supporters of his idea. In this aspect, Kanter was not alone to emphasize the importance of acquiring backers and sponsors who help to protect and carry out the ideas. In the final phase of innovation process, the individual produces a »prototype of the innovation« which is tangible and can be turned to productive use or institutionalized (Scott & Bruce, 1994, p. 581-582). The theorists also suggest that all stages are not necessarily performed by one single person, some individuals may involve in only one part of the process. On the other hand, Kleysen and Street (2001, p. 285) assumed five factors categorizing behaviors associated with individual innovation: opportunity exploration, generativity, formative investigation, championing and application.

Lastly, let us not forget more recent contribution of De Jong and Den Hartog (2010, p. 24) who identified, slightly differently, four dimensions:

- *Idea exploration*

Something new typically begins when a person identifies opportunities. It is frequently initiated by chance through discovery of opportunity, problem arising or a puzzle to be solved. Furthermore, it can be a chance to improve conditions or to react immediately to a

posing threat. According to Drucker there are seven sources of opportunities: »unexpected successes, failures or outside events; incongruities or gaps between 'what is' and 'what should be'; process needs in reaction to identified problems or causes of failure; changes in industrial or market structures; changes in demographics such as labor force composition; changes in perception and finally new knowledge (as cited in De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010, p. 24).«

– *Idea generation*

It refers to generating concepts aiming for improvement. »The generation of ideas may relate to new products, services or processes, the entry of new markets, improvements in current work processes, or in general terms, solutions to identified problems.« Main proposed characteristic in this step is to tackle problems from a different angle, sometimes adapting already existing parameters in a new composition. In other words, idea generation is achieved through creativity and knowledge sharing which flourish mostly in this phase (Schimansky, 2014, p. 2).

– *Idea championing*

After generation, idea needs to be promoted which is performed by mobilizing the right resources, persuading and influencing, pushing and negotiating, challenging and risk-taking. To summarize, championing refers to finding support and building coalitions.

– *Idea implementation*

Idea is put into practice. This step also includes routinization, meaning that innovations are made as part of regular processes. Lastly, implementation covers either improvement of existing products or processes or development of new ones.

De Jong and Den Hartog draw on Kanter's theory, whereby they divide his first stage in exploration and generation as they presumably have different cognitive abilities, personality and environmental determinants.

Janssen (2005, p. 573) describes innovation as a sociopolitical process which could possibly be resisted by employees who are »committed to the existing frameworks of thoughts and actions«. Furthermore, employees' interest to engage in innovative activities is claimed to depend upon their perception of their influence in the workplace. This draws connection to the role of leadership which we investigate in this thesis. Notwithstanding, they are dependent on their leaders in terms of information, resources and sociopolitical support. The author investigated and confirmed that leader's supportiveness was a mediating factor between employees' perceived influence and their levels of innovative behavior. Janssen's (2000, p. 287-289) research a few years earlier also suggested fairness perceptions between effort and reward to be a significant contributing factor. The author added that innovative behavior as a response to higher job demands could be considered as a form of problem-focused coping strategy.

It is worth mentioning that various recent studies in domain of individual innovation are shifting focus towards proactive behaviors of individuals, for instance taking initiative to change and improve the situation or oneself, in other words going beyond the assigned tasks, exceeding expectations and requirements (Parker, Williams & Turner, 2006, p. 636).

Notably, Parker et al. propose proactive behaviors can be part of innovation process, yet are not necessarily innovative.

Organizational innovation in comparison to individual innovation is a much broader concept. Several theorists offer a compelling view that it represents »a company's tendency to engage in support of new ideas, novelty, experimentation, and creative process that may result in new products, services or technological processes« (Borocki, Tekic & Cvijić, 2013, p. 153). In addition, besides new products Wang and Ahmed (2004, p. 304) mention also innovative capability to open up new markets »through combining strategic orientation with innovative behaviour and process«. Yet others believe organizational innovativeness is the capacity of an organization to improve existing products or processes and to fully exploit the organization's creativity resources (Gebert, Boerner & Lanwehr, 2003, p. 42). In either perspective, it should be considered as a strategic and competitive orientation of an organization.

According to Damanpour (2017, p. 1-2) innovation in organizations is seen from two perspectives, as a process and an outcome. Evolving from this, research on innovation as a process investigates how organizations »create, develop, adopt, implement and use innovation«. Studies on innovation as outcome however explore the contextual, organizational and managerial conditions under which organizations innovate. The author further elaborates that studies of innovativeness are based on large sample and multiple innovations, whereas in studies of innovating we can see prevailing case studies of one or few innovations in organization. Drawing a parallel, innovativeness features durability as innovative organizations exhibit innovative behaviors consistently over time (Subramanian & Nilakanta, 1996, p. 633). Moreover, Damanpour (2017, p. 17) dedicated attention to antecedents of organizational innovation, dividing them into three dimensions as follows: environmental, organizational in terms of structure and culture and lastly managerial in terms of leadership and human capital.

Returning to the main interest of this thesis we found some studies shedding light on the correlation between leadership and innovative behaviors. An increasing number of researchers addressed the question how leadership fosters or constrains innovative behaviors. Already in infancy of innovation theory Scott and Bruce (1994, p. 581) drew attention to leadership as one the determinants of innovative behavior which affect directly and indirectly through »perceptions of a climate for innovation«. The additional two were individual problem-solving style and work group relations. Their model assumed individual innovative behavior as the outcome of interaction between individual, leader, work group and climate for innovation. Additional empirical evidence was provided by Krause (2004, p. 80) who found correlation to freedom and autonomy in her article covering »leadership-related conditions of innovation at the individual level from a psychological perspective«. Following in their footsteps, De Jong and Den Hartog (2010) investigated among other the impact of participative leadership on innovative work behavior. Their findings suggest that participative leadership increases employees' intrinsic motivation added by their feelings of

responsibility, efficacy and control. Consequently, this is likely to enhance employees' willingness to engage in innovative work behavior.

All above things considered, it seems reasonable to assume individual innovation as a multistage and multidimensional construct as argued also by Scott and Bruce (1994, p. 582) and Kleysen and Street (2001, p. 285). Nevertheless, in retrospect most studies preceding De Jong and Den Hartog (2010) used a one-dimensional measure of innovative work behavior. Even the latter study found weak evidence of the distinctiveness among dimensions which indicates innovative work behavior as one-dimensional. The reason is believed to be in reciprocal innovation processes with overlapping stages. The authors suggest further research in this aspect as empirical evidence on multidimensionality are limited. In comparison, organizational innovation studies are claimed to be multidimensional. The focus of these studies are internal and external conditions triggering innovation, management of innovation process and influence of innovation on organizational conduct and outcome (Damanpour, 2017, p. 2).

2.2.1 Determinants of innovative work behavior

As companies are increasingly focusing on the methods to foster individual innovation in their employees, this topic has received considerable academic attention with attempts to find facilitators of innovation. This resulted in many factors at different levels of analysis. So far, a wide range of determinants has been identified at the individual, team and organizational level. Similarly, a smaller body of research tackled environmental factors (Anderson, De Dreu & Nijstad, 2004, p. 149).

Within first category displaying individual factors much credit is given to individual's personality, job characteristics and motivation, the one being one of most studied concepts in management theory. Despite the initial phases of innovation process are more recognized as individual tasks by theory, the last stages are associated with team and organizational factors. By this we comprehend that an individual can generate new ideas rather on its own, whereas the implementation phase usually demands participation of other coworkers, possibly of a dedicated team. Therefore, the effects of team factors should not go unnoticed as they also can affect on individuals behavior, not only team innovation. We found empirical data showing that team support, climate and team leader support significantly influence individual innovative behavior (Axtell, Holman & Wall, 2006, p. 510).

Reviewing the literature we found a few factors that provoked most interest among researchers, namely we saw focus on intrinsic motivation, empowerment, climate, knowledge sharing and foremost leadership. The latter is addressed briefly in previous section. At this point we would like to add that quite a number of scholars focused on one form of leadership which they believed to have positive influence on individual innovation, among most frequent are participative, supportive, transformational, transactional and influence-based leadership (Scott & Bruce, 1994; Krause, 2004; Janssen, 2005). Most of

listed leaderships in some way grants higher autonomy to employees which in return raises motivation level and sets a sense of ownership. Although extensive research of factors based on psychological nature is merited, we estimate empirical investigation on reward system or financial incentives is slightly deficient, notwithstanding its strong motivational power. Nevertheless, the importance of pay as an extrinsic factor was noticed and investigated by Ramamoorthy et. al. (2005, p. 149) proving that it influences innovative work behavior directly as well as through »mediating psychological contract variables of met expectations and perceived obligation to innovate«. Table 1 shows an overview of factors captured by theory, although the reader should note this is only indicative, not exhaustive.

Table 1: Overview of theoretical framework on determinants of innovative work behavior

Level of analysis	Factors
Individual	Intrapreneurship personality
	Proactive personality
	Intrinsic motivation
	Cognitive ability e.g. divergent thinking style
	Self-efficacy
	Taking initiative
	Problem solving style
	Education level
	Learning goal orientation
	Expected performance outcomes
	Job characteristics: job autonomy, job demands, role orientation, job tenure, job control, obligation to innovate, influence in workplace, empowerment, appropriate training
Team	Team climate
	Team leader support
	Team role breath
	Team support
	Team processes
	Team structure
	Team member characteristics: education level, heterogeneity
Organizational	Leadership style: participative leadership, supportive leadership, Transformational leadership, transactional leadership, leader-member exchange, influence-based leadership
	Organizational climate
	Innovation strategy
	Corporate entrepreneurship strategy
	Knowledge structure
	Pay
	Culture: tolerance of idea failures, risk-taking norms, support for experimentation, desire for employee innovation
	Organizational structure e.g. centralization, matrix etc.

Source: Anderson, De Dreu & Nijstad (2004); Oukes (2010).

As accented earlier, human resource practices take the driving seat in academic research offering competence focused incentive systems, evaluation systems and job design as core antecedents of innovative work behavior. Provided that evaluation system is set-up correctly and also integrates co-workers' assessment it shall develop employees into high-performing individuals. Its value is in offering feedback not solely about performance, but rather about their skills and contributions which in return raises self-confidence to take more risk prone approach towards innovation. In our opinion, employee satisfaction may also demonstrate a significant impact on innovative work behavior. Only a satisfied employee shall have the desire to contemplate about new ways and solutions, to escape from routinized work processes and practices. Feeling of reciprocal relationship is most frequently accompanied by sense of belonging and trust which ultimately should form best conditions for engaging in innovative behaviors. Prieto & Perez-Santana (2014, p. 185-188) assert that employees under impression that they have a significant impact on the organizational outcomes through their participation in decision-making, will more likely bring forward their innovative ideas. This is intertwined with empowerment which is also seen as a common tool to grow employee's enthusiasm, by reducing controls and increasing responsibility we are showing them respect and trust in their abilities as well as expectation of results from their independent operation.

Relating to the above, innovative behavior is considered complex and ambiguous, consequently employees are not prone to engage in innovative behavior unless they are as said enticed, rewarded and supported. Hence, a higher degree of support and reward as well as showing trust to employees' judgement result in employees increased efforts to behave innovatively. Building a culture of trust therefore demands tolerance for mistakes which is part of the learning process. Scholars warn that failure or mistakes when displaying innovativeness should not negatively impact individuals career as this would raise their concerns of consequences and ultimately would inhibit innovative behavior (Xerri & Brunetto, 2011, p. 11).

Likewise, job autonomy in terms of freedom also plays its role. Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby and Herron (1996) asserted that freedom accompanied by supervisory encouragement, and organizational support is closely related to innovation. Providing employees sufficient freedom in how they approach work process strengthens their intrinsic motivation as well as sense of ownership. Yet, in our opinion the most compelling argument on the subject is presented by Krause (2004) who investigated whether granting freedom and autonomy to employees could exert influence on the innovation process. In detail, the author suggests that individual's inclination to innovative behaviors is dependent on freedom and autonomy which improve their perception of being in control of the situation. Furthermore, she empirically demonstrates interdependence between freedom, autonomy and generation, testing and implementation of ideas. In our view, this indicates as well a correlation to post-heroic leadership which manifests its intent on building autonomy, mastery and purpose

(Škerlavaj, 2022). In Škerlavaj's book qualitative data demonstrates higher enabled autonomy is returned by employee's higher shown responsibility.

Taking discussion further, we believe that by deploying development and coaching plans for employees with clearly defined promotion or job rotation opportunities the management takes yet another step towards innovative climate. In reverse, innovative work behavior deserves a place under job role description, in other words should be formalized and ought to play as an assessment factor when considering promoting an employee.

All of the above contribute to an innovation climate which is successfully developing under the principles of communicating creativity as a duty and right, financial incentives, resolving deriving envy, public praise of employees' achievements as well as presenting innovation success stories or cases to the employees. Especially the latter we find very much in vogue with the large corporations in the recent years; needless to say, such method is more affordable than other incentives.

2.2.2 Ability, Motivation, Opportunity framework and innovative work behavior

The ability, motivation and opportunity (hereinafter AMO) framework has been developed by Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg & Kalleberg in 2000 and ever since it has been widely applied in human resource management (hereinafter HRM) due to its compelling illustration of the linkage between HRM practices and performance. The reason why we wish to bring this concept to reader's attention is that it was demonstrated as another approach to effectively stimulate employees' innovative behavior. This model was mainly applied at individual level, nevertheless we see it appropriate also for a team-level based study. Companies can draw from this concept in terms of which HRM practices to exercise for team members to exhibit innovative behavior leading to good performance.

The model proposes three elements which all need to be present in order to enhance employee performance. Company firstly needs to support and enhance employee's ability which encompasses skills and knowledge by introducing human resource practices such as training and development, recruitment and selection. Further, motivation can be fostered through compensation, career development and information and knowledge sharing. Intrinsic motivation on the opposite of extrinsic can be enhanced through commitment as employees feel rewarded and thus want the company to succeed. Extrinsic motivation is achieved through financial or other types of rewards. The last element of opportunity »can be influenced by autonomy, teamwork and the communication structure within the company«. It is a set of environmental and contextual mechanisms with focus on participation. More simplified, authors stress that employees perform well when they are capable of doing their job, encouraged by various possible incentives and working environment provides sufficient opportunities for them to excel. In Schimansky's research (2014, p. 3) AMO model is used as mediator between high-commitment work system and employee's innovative behavior which is said to be the final desired outcome of the study.

Reviewing the literature we also came across Prieto & Perez-Santana study which proved that ability and opportunity-enhancing HRM practices are positively linked to innovative work behaviors. They hypothesize management and coworkers support as mediating factors for the fact that they are considered important mechanisms for the development of employee initiative. The authors evolve their study around relations between coworkers. They argue that ability-enhancing HRM practices create conditions for development of coworkers trust and associability (Prieto & Perez-Santana, 2014, p. 189). Employees will support each other provided that they get an opportunity to work together for instance in a team setting. In spite of scarce empirical data on AMO application to team level, we rely on contribution by Trošt, Škerlavaj and Anzengruber (2016, p. 94) whereby team innovation is explained as a result of motivation (efficacy beliefs) pushing members towards the finish line, ability (proactivity) to promote change and influence the environment and lastly opportunity (supportive supervision) as a set of mechanisms strengthening belief in conjoint capabilities of the team.

Taking the above into consideration, the AMO framework contributes to the understanding of HRM practices and how they can influence employee's behavior and inspire for innovation. We are not alone in thinking that this construct can be linked to leadership practices as well, namely Trošt, Škerlavaj and Anzengruber (2016, p. 95) attested to this with indication that a leader can influence all three aspects of AMO model. In terms of abilities »by providing supportive environment for promotion of change and taking action to influence the environment«, whereas their impact on opportunities is also undisputed through supportive supervision and »showing concern for team members' needs.«

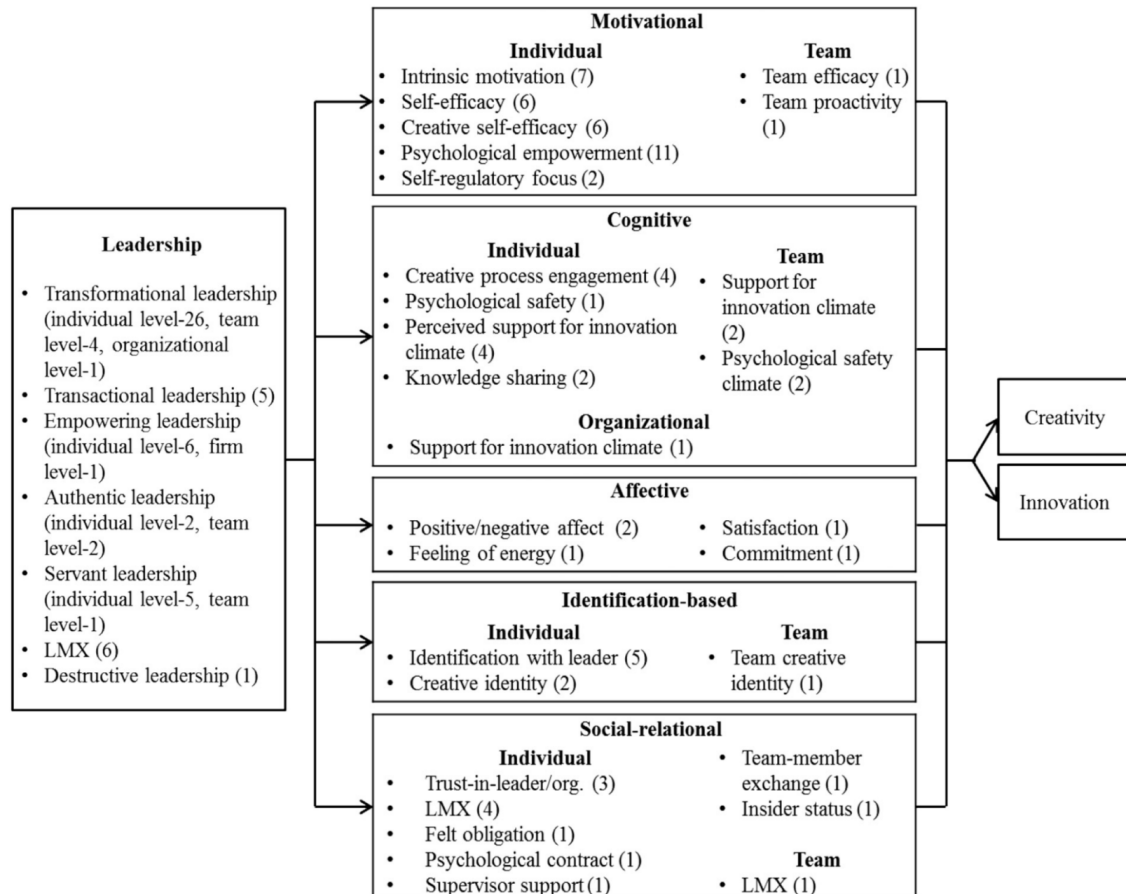
2.3 Relation between post-heroic leadership and innovative work behavior

After thorough examination of both constructs, innovation and post-heroic leadership, we see ample evidence of leadership playing an important role to innovation. Leaders have been advocated as agents of change (Krause, 2004). Already in 1989, West and Farr have drawn association between shared leadership and team innovative behavior which they posit as the agent to respond to change and preserve competitiveness. It is however less evident or underspecified which exact set of skills, behaviors or underlying processes of leadership foster the innovative work behavior of employees or a team. Later in this thesis, we attempt to examine which moderators are strongest predictors of employee innovative work behavior. We adopt similar position to Wang, Waldman and Zhang (2014, p. 182) by expecting different magnitude of impact in terms of varying content of shared leadership.

Accordingly, the effect on innovative behavior can vary per leadership type and depending on the industry context, therefore empirical study is limited to underlie which leadership type would work best. Hughes, Lee, Tian, Newman and Legood (2018, p. 551-556) argue that preceding academic definitions of innovation do not consider its antecedents. Moreover, creativity and innovation which are often not adequately separated in terminology are driven by different antecedents, more individual level variables act as predictors of idea generation,

while managerial support influences innovative efforts. Authors further state that literature cites different mediating mechanisms, among them are motivational, cognitive, affective, identification-based and relational-based. Several of mediators from their model in Figure 4, such as knowledge sharing, self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, psychological safety and trust, have been iterated in various studies on post-heroic leadership types, therefore it is an interest of this thesis to explore how they impact innovative work behavior.

Figure 4: Summary of mediating variables between leadership and creativity, innovation



Source: Hughes, Lee, Tian, Newman & Legood (2018, p. 556).

Among few, Hoch (2013) has empirically demonstrated that shared leadership was a strong predictor of team innovative behavior. At the same time, its research has shown that vertical transformational and empowering leadership as well as team member integrity in terms of personality disposition represent antecedents of shared leadership; the latter therefore functions as a mediator. The results are supportive of findings from preceding literature, whereby an important aspect is the knowledge and information sharing which results in building on each other's ideas through constructive criticism (Carson, Tesluk & Marrone, 2007; Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta & Kramer, 2004) towards new innovations. Wang and Noe (2010) concur to this, stating that effective knowledge management through enhanced creativity, innovation and reputations drives competitive advantage and profits. Isolated knowledge of an individual does not produce nearly as much outcomes as collective

organizational knowledge. The sharing has a higher probability to occur under supportive climate, higher levels of trust and collective goals. Supportive studies exist showing positive influence of shared leadership on innovative behavior through organizational trust and knowledge sharing (Song, 2019). In addition, Yoshida, Sendjaya, Hirst and Cooper (2014) delivered first evidence that servant leaders need to accomplish trust and identification of followers with leader who represents their collective belief so as to foster creativity and innovation. Identification based mediating mechanisms as included in Figure 4 along with collective empowerment were connected as well to higher engagement of associates in developing each other and innovation (Hoch, 2013).

Satisfaction and motivation depicted earlier was positively associated to provision of challenging tasks and encouragement of innovative working methods, especially in team setting (Morgeson, DeRue & Karam, 2010). As Pearce and Manz (2005, p. 136) articulated, under individual's motivation »to lead himself and share influence with his peers in making decisions, solving problems, and identifying opportunities for the future, widespread creativity and innovation are encouraged.«

As elaborated in West's paper (2002), shared decision-making by logic decreases resistance to change and by provided influence to all team members, they will engage in innovative work behavior to achieve the mission which aspires greater chance of innovation implementation. Furthermore, shared leadership places control in the hands of people through empowerment and in our view such practice enables formation of psychological safety where it is safe to learn from mistakes, in nutshell people are given opportunity to experiment without pressure to guarantee immediate results. On similar note, Škerlavaj (2022, p. 188) suggests post-heroic leaders should base innovative working ways on experimentation, human orientation and iterative process, i.e. create, test and repetitively revise until reaching final desired outcome.

Among key studied motivational mechanisms is psychological empowerment. Faraz, Mughal, Ahmed, Raza and Iqbal (2019) research is applied on different levels of innovative work behavior, which is at idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization. Servant leadership alone was linked to above 50% variance in all levels of innovative work behavior, whereas through mediator of psychological empowerment it has increased variance by 19%. The results attest to Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson's (2008) dimensions of servant leadership, namely they see empowerment, emotional healing, ethics and help to followers as crucial methods to augment innovative behaviors.

On similar note, Krog and Govender (2015) offer relevant insight for project management, namely they find persuasive mapping, mediated by individual's perceived empowerment to have the highest positive impact on employee innovative behavior. Marked as a »pull« strategy, persuasive mapping is understood as influence to followers so as to achieve freewill in following; individuals are empowered to choose whether to follow. Study investigated as well altruistic caring, emotional healing, wisdom and organizational stewardship.

Interestingly, the last two resulted with negative influence on individual's perceived empowerment.

Panaccio, Henderson, Liden, Wayne and Cao (2015) investigate through social exchange theory application the mechanisms that mediate servant leadership with innovative behaviors and organizational citizenship behaviors. Their findings attest the correlation through mediator of psychological contract fulfillment. The latter refers to individual's perception of employer's fulfillment of their relationship. Psychological contract is met by addressing follower's needs and social exchange. Bou Reslan, Garanti and Emeagwali (2021) added to the empirical evidence a study of the impact of servant leadership on innovative work behavior and knowledge sharing through mediating effect of job autonomy. The influence of servant leadership on knowledge sharing behavior is increased by 70% when mediated by job autonomy and by 40% on innovative work behavior. On the other hand, we have found a study connecting team and individual level (involving 64 management teams and above 400 people in hospitality industry) which demonstrated knowledge sharing not as an outcome, but rather predictor of shared leadership, which mediated towards an increase in individual's innovative behavior (Vandavasi, McConville, Feng Uen & Yepuru, 2019). Accordingly, »shared leadership at the team level improves creativity in individuals and pushes them to innovate.« The findings of Bou Reslan, Garanti and Emeagwali (2021) support the notion that servant leadership nurtures motivating work environment which is a psychological need to engage within team. The latter was investigated by Rasheed, Lodhi and Habiba (2016) in an empirical quantitative study on commercial banks in Pakistan, which builds as well on Liden, Wayne, Zhao and Henderson's (2008) dimensions on servant leadership, showing that under higher work engagement and employee commitment servant leadership will have a positive and stronger impact on individuals innovative work behavior. Authors suggest that studied organizations ought to motivate employees and offer incentives to promote their engagement. Thus, servant leadership is recommendable for organizations searching to promote creative potential of employees in order to achieve innovations.

Other scholars have enacted as well self-efficacy as mediating factor to innovative work behavior (Yunho & Hyun, 2021; Liu et al., 2022). According to Liu et al. (2022) shared leadership changes cognition, emotions, psychology and behavior of individuals which at certain point will reflect on team level. Authors focused on psychological factors while studying shared leadership in university scientific research context and found conducive indications that shared leadership influences followers through creative self-efficacy, which builds achievement motivation and ultimately innovative behavior is generated. Data offers confidence that this leadership style can be exercised in both, Eastern and Western cultures.

Whilst relationship between leadership and innovative work behavior has been extensively studied, the main empirical research body generated data for vertical forms of leadership. Only in recent years studies of outcomes of post-heroic leadership forms have augmented, focusing primarily on mediating mechanisms, while we see smaller share of investigation on moderators. We seek to explore further in our given company setting how post-heroic

leaders stimulate individual's innovative work behaviors and which organizational factors influence the level of this relationship.

3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND RESULTS

3.1 Presentation of company ELTAS d.o.o.

Company ELTAS d.o.o. has been founded in 1996 and is based in Šentjernej, Slovenia. It specializes in the development, construction, production and marketing of membrane keyboards, foil overlays and user interfaces. These products represent components to electronic devices and are intended for diverse industries, for instance telecommunications, medical equipment, industrial electronics, measuring instruments etc. According to company's Business Plan (ELTAS, d.o.o., 2022), it currently employs 61 people. Company has a clear growth strategy which we depict in the next paragraphs. Moreover, in recent years company has continuously demonstrated annual increases of revenue above 20%.

The basic orientation of the company is the development and production of small and medium series of products. These are exclusively custom made products which are developed and manufactured for a known customer, in accordance with their requirements and technical specifications. The company markets its products mainly on the European market. The generated profit is further invested in development, knowledge and modernization, as well as in the purchase of new production hardware, which consequently increases the volume of production and sales, as well as the number of employees. Systematic investments in the development of new innovative products carry prospects for expansion into new markets and extending customer base. In 2022, the export share represents 68% of sales.

Development and production are supported by modern information technology. Most of the existing products are partially or fully developed in ELTAS' own development department in cooperation with domestic and foreign experts. Core orientation focuses the company towards seek of innovative ways of working. The production is environmentally friendly and consuming low energy. Operations are held in a new production and business facility with a total size of approx. 2,700 m². The company is committed in investing of min. 10% of annual realization in modernization of technology and processes as well as increase of production capacities. The intention is to expand its activities in the future by creating new jobs and increasing added value per employee, which is important in solving unemployment in the municipality. The latter claim of company indicates the interest for contribution and integration with larger community.

The process is largely dependent on interaction with the client from the initial idea and development phase until final manufacturing. In this manner, the company creates value for their customer through resolutions to their construction challenges, which in turn shortens

the implementation time and reduces costs imposed on customers. In the phase of collaboration on development, the company offers knowledge concerning basic concepts, consulting, planning, application development and production. Competitive advantage of ELTAS d.o.o is its speed, flexibility in adapting production and R&D to provide the customers products according to their needs. Important to note is that the company operates with a fairly large number of clients, on average collaborating with 200 customers annually. In terms of suppliers, the company's strategy entails cooperation with long-term strategic partners providing high quality products, whilst ensuring alternative sources are in place for each procured material so as to avoid supply bottlenecks and achieve favorable negotiation power.

Summarized reflection of past performance per Business Plan (ELTAS, d.o.o., 2022):

- High growth trends in total revenue.
- Growth of absolute values in revenue achieved on foreign markets.
- Growth in share of exports compared to total revenues.
- Growth of value added per employee.
- Growth in the number of employees.

The company has grown in 2021 to a medium-sized organization, nevertheless their vision entails fulfilling the last condition of stated category which is to reach above 8 million EUR sales revenue in the next five years. Vision comprehends automation and digitization of processes so as to sustain competitiveness in the long term in Central Europe. The key approach to the increase of revenue is to raise added value per employee. Hence the mission of the company states among other that ELTAS d.o.o. strives to be distinguished by adequate care for employees and reputation of people-friendly company with good and safe working conditions, whereby they point out incentives and promotions, education and personal growth of employees, added by social responsibility towards employees. Furthermore, mission includes aim to integrate customers as part of their company processes, whilst taking responsibility for the sustainable environment with above average ecological orientation. One of their objectives is to obtain an environmental certificate in 2024 and paperless operations.

While the company is development-oriented it strives to deliver their customers top quality products at competitive prices. Key objective of the company is to strengthen their recognition in Central Europe as an innovative, reliable and competitive long-term partner. According to their Business Plan (ELTAS, d.o.o., 2022) they aim to achieve it through strengthening the values of organizational culture, commitment, creativity and ambition, responsibility, overall quality, respect and cooperation, care for customers and employees, loyalty, meeting requirements and expectations. The company's strategic direction from perspective of growth is encouraging an innovative work environment, with addition of innovation technologies. Based on the above, the company has set the organizational context and values favorable to support post-heroic leadership practices.

3.2 Research design and methodology

3.2.1 Research objectives

Based on publicly accessible data there is limited theoretical body on post-heroic leadership in Slovenian environment, therefore we strive to raise awareness among Slovenian businessmen and organizations as well as encourage further research in this field. As established earlier, organizations nowadays are strongly focused on innovation practices in order to build resilience and grow in the global market; therefore we are keen to investigate how post-heroic leadership can contribute to it and to understand whether leadership theory has provided adequate measures to support innovative endeavours. The purpose of the research is to collect primary data and assess them in combination with priorly collected secondary information which leads us to answer the research questions.

The research process was initiated by problem statement, followed by literature review, definition of research questions and selection of methodology. At the initial stage of the research we aim to identify the extent of presence of post-heroic leadership elements in the selected company, having started with the review of company's website and Business Plan provided by the company's management team. The latter point of interest has been further investigated during the interviews. The core objective we have identified for this research is to determine the relation of post-heroic leadership to employee innovative working behaviour in our selected company and through analysis of the results provide additional insight into both constructs demonstrating the necessity to treat them holistically rather than separately. We argue that in this manner maximized value can be achieved for the company, employees, customers and ultimately for the society. The research output for the company is generated through reflection on findings and elaboration of recommendations for further development in leadership to facilitate innovative practices of their employees.

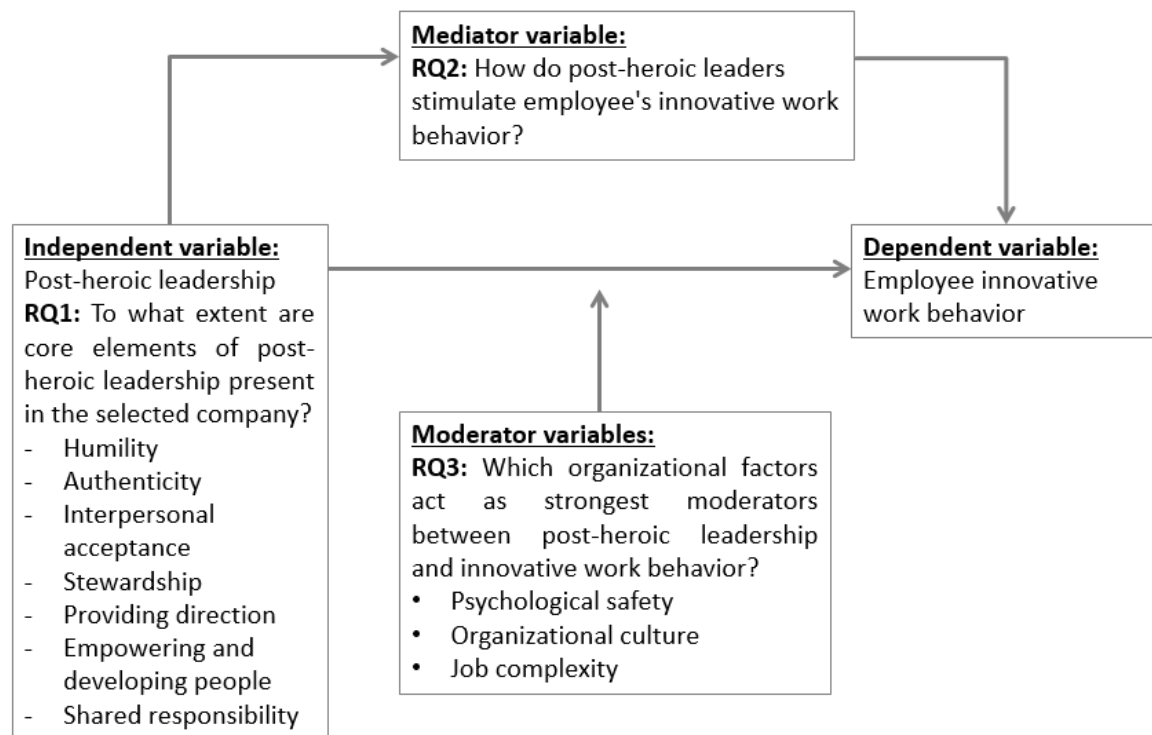
3.2.2 Research questions

The interview is structured to address the following three research questions:

- R1: To what extent are core elements of post-heroic leadership present in the selected company?
- R2: How do post-heroic leaders stimulate employee's innovative work behavior?
- R3: Which organizational factors act as strongest moderators between post-heroic leadership and employee's innovative work behavior?

On the basis of our research intent we build a conceptual model as displayed in the following Figure 5.

Figure 5: Own conceptual model of post-heroic leadership and innovative work behavior



Source: Own work.

3.2.3 Methodology

The empirical research conducted for this master's thesis has applied qualitative scientific research approach. Namely, the latter is widely used by scientists when interests of the investigation are the reasons for human behavior, opinions, underlying motives and desires (Kothari, 2004, p. 3). Generally, it comprehends a smaller share of participants, however with a longer time dedication. We see it appropriate for our research foremost due to given ability of sharing personal experiences and gaining deeper understanding of circumstances which may not be acquired through predefined measures and responses in quantitative research. During the research we may discover new factors, of which we would be deprived through other method. Our selected methods are as well broadly used by researchers of post-heroic leadership as suggested by Škerlavaj (2022, p. 16).

Among five types of qualitative research (Godwill, 2015) our empirical study undertakes phenomenology whereby we strive to explore how post-heroic leadership phenomenon is experienced by carefully chosen individuals. We have selected semi-structured in-depth interviews which allow the interviewer a freedom to ask supplementary questions or omit some depending on the evolution of the provided answers. Furthermore, in such manner interviewer has the opportunity to provide further explanation to questions. The reason for our decision to keep a certain extent of predetermined open questions is to enable a higher comparison during the analysis of results as well as due to lower experiences on the

interviewer side. Nevertheless, the qualitative method is not utterly focused on generalization of results, instead it seeks to expand the knowledge of the dedicated phenomenon. According to Kothari (2004, p. 98) the key advantage of such method is that more information can be obtained, flexibility, better control of the samples and lower misinterpretations of questions.

Our research has integrated descriptive method especially within the theoretical review of secondary data, whereas comparative method is used to evaluate different contributions as well as during review of interview results.

3.2.4 Design of Interview

The semi-structured in-depth interviews took place in person at the company's premises on 1st June 2022 and have been conducted in Slovenian language. Considering that the theme and research questions are relevant to the entire company which is development-oriented, ten participants have been selected from senior, middle management and employee levels from various departments to achieve broader understanding of company's practices. Altogether the sample represents 16% of company's resources. Table 2 summarizes key characteristics of participants.

Each interview was opened by a brief explanation of the purpose of research, whereby participants were asked about their understanding of post-heroic leadership. Majority of the participants were not closely familiar with the term, therefore short introduction to the concept was made. The interview consist of six sets of priorly prepared open questions with accompanying subquestions which have been shared with the company's CEO beforehand. The questions have been slightly adapted per functions of leaders or followers in order to separate the views on leadership and compare opinions on how it drives innovative work behavior.

Table 2: Research sample characteristics

Characteristics	Number of participants
Gender	
Male	4
Female	6
Age group	
up to 29	3
30-39	2
40-49	1
50 +	4
Work experience	
0-5 years	2
5-10 years	2
10-15 years	1
above 15 years	5
Education	
Primary	1
Secondary	2
Tertiary	7
Current position in the company	
Manager with direct reports	5
Employee	5
Department	
Chief Executive Officer	1
R&D	1
Manufacturing Technology	3
Product design	1
Sales	2
Finance	1
Head of printing	1

Source: Own work.

The duration of the meetings was on average 35 minutes, ranging from 27 to 45 minutes with each participant due to limited time which was dedicated during their working hours. The notes were taken with a recorder. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality so as to encourage transparent responses based on their true perceptions. Table 3 provides a list of prepared questions which have been used in semi-structured interviews and their relation to studied theoretical model. We have prepared questions on the basis of prior theoretical study from secondary data which is summarized in first two chapters.

Table 3: Interview questions

Interview questions and subquestions	Relation to conceptual model and research questions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How would you describe the leadership style in your team? What characteristics do you see in current leadership style? 2. How would you describe the relationship between the leader and the followers in your team? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How do you react to such leadership? Towards what actions does it encourage you? 3. Think of a recent situation when you collaborated in any innovation project where task complexity or cross-functional interdependence was present. How did you reach solutions? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How was communication going and feedback shared within the team and with the leader? b. What reactions did it trigger in you? 4. How would you describe your innovative work behavior - describe your innovation process, what was your engagement from idea creation, promotion to idea implementation? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What role did the leader have in your generation of ideas? b. What was the key contributing factor to idea realization? 5. What motivates you to exercise innovative work behavior? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How does current leadership style affect your innovative work behavior? b. What would help to enhance your innovative work behavior? c. Is the approach to complex tasks different from the approach to simpler tasks? 6. What are the expectations of management regarding employee innovation? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What values does the leader promote? 	<p>RQ1 Elements of post-heroic leadership</p> <p>RQ2 Mediator variables</p> <p>RQ2 Mediator variables</p> <p>RQ3 Moderator variables</p>

(table continues)

Table 3: Interview questions (continued)

Interview questions and subquestions	Relation to conceptual model and research questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. What values does the leader promote? c. What is your affiliation with the company's objectives? d. What is the manager's attitude towards risk taking and mistakes? How does this affect your behavior? e. What support does the leader and other team members provide for your new suggestions and ideas? f. How does the leader support your personal development and innovative work behavior? 	RQ3 Moderator variables

Source: Own work.

3.3 Analysis of results

The analysis captured in this chapter is structured per segments of interview questions in order to provide the answer to our research questions. After the execution of the interviews we have firstly made transcripts of all interviews in Slovenian language followed by translation to English. The next step was identifying the codings by using a thematic analysis approach, namely starting with familiarization of the data and search for commonalities across the data set. Thus, we have compared responses among interviewees to the same questions as well as searched for patterns across the full interview transcripts. Based on the analysis we summarize key findings in the subsequent chapter.

3.3.1 Elements of postheroic leadership

The first set of questions is intended to identify the core post-heroic leadership elements presence and their extent in the company. Therefore, the participants were asked to describe the traits of their leaders or their own leadership as well as their relationship.

Majority of the employees have highlighted several traits of either servant or shared leadership directly or indirectly through the discourse. The answers to first question captured element of providing direction, empowering and developing people which are consistent with Dierendonck's (2011) six traits of servant leadership. Majority of interviewees have repeatedly stated that they have a free hand in their work, which Škerlavaj (2022) has linked to emotional connectivity with the vision and exercise of accountability.

Empowerment fosters proactiveness and offers an employee a sense of power or influence on outcome. On the other hand it enables their personal development (Dierendonck, 2011), whereby it is crucial to recognize the individual's abilities. The strive for empowerment and development of people is advocated by at least three interviewees indicating that leaders search for best strengths of their employees.

»Leadership is democratic, meaning that we have a free hand. Everyone can have their say and everyone can decide on certain things. Still, there is a »hand« that guides me and monitors my tasks, which is also correct... There is no complication, the leader is very open. I would say that I have grown a lot personally, in terms of knowledge, in business and professional experience since we have a new director (since 2017). I gained a lot of knowledge on my own as well, but above all the leader put a lot of trust in me. He entrusted me with the task which was previously performed by the former director. And I believe I did it well. I returned from the maternity leave and he was very open, he always knew how to find that sparkle in me. I grew up to the point where I always wanted to be in business life. He also knew how to find it and see it in me.« (Person A)

»I am thinking about employees. For example, a boy who turned out to be very good, I asked him whether he would go to study... Another example: we identified the planner as the potential for becoming a production manager... We offer trainings and they can choose which one they would like to have. The company must grow, the company is a living being. It is necessary to monitor the potential in employees and react.« (Person H)

»The recommendation I gave to the shift managers: "you see there is a lot of work, you cannot control it all. You have to empower employees, put them in charge. Select competent associates and give them a group of products or to cover certain functions, business or manufacturing." I try to ensure that responsibilities are shared to the last worker.« (Person F)

According to Dierendonck (2011) providing direction entails clear expectations and securing sufficient accountability which is evident from the responses.

»Basically, I see it as providing direction. The leaders help to guide us to the right path, towards the expected goal, whatever we are doing at that time. Through the process they let us to explore on our own and seek solutions to the problems. For instance, when I got employed here, I did not have many working experience and yet they gave me enough space to explore on my own and find resolutions.« (Person D)

»Foremost it is team work oriented leadership. We have quite some responsibilities and enough independence.« (Person C)

Several authors cite active listening as key activity of a servant leader (Spears, 2010; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Patterson, 2003; Russel & Stone, 2002) which was captured as well by several interviewees.

»Respectful, quite democratic, willing to listen, receptive to different ideas... Listen to the person when he has something to tell you. Not just briefly, take your time. I will make up for those two minutes, while it means a lot to someone to be able to express some emotion, an opinion, a problem. It is crucial that you are available for people. Either to a superior, to a worker or to someone who started working yesterday. They are all equally important.« (Person G)

»Leadership style is determined. It profoundly encourages all employees. My leader tries to listen to everyone. If he considers something will ease the work, he engages to get the actions forward.« (Person B)

»If you need anything, you go to him and he listens to you. He always has the door open, no matter what time it is.« (Person A)

Reflection of the leaders on their leadership style revealed that there is significant amount of discussion within the teams and leaders seek feedback from their associates as they recognize they can benefit from their expertise. This indicates the humility is present with the leaders. Similar to employees' responses captured above the leaders' feedback shows a high extent of the element of providing direction. Two leaders expressed that joint decision-making is crucial to ensure effectiveness.

»I certainly lead through questions. In the end, I make a decision if necessary. When someone comes to me with a problem I ask them: "What would you do?". Looking back to my career path, certain people have had an intense impact on me as a person professionally and in private life... Listening is necessary.« (Person H)

»Impulsive, very fast. I make decisions quickly. We have relatively few meetings. When we have a project, we meet with key people in production once a month to go over the results and convey what awaits us. Otherwise, there are many daily short meetings... If I describe a development investment project we had, called P-4-I: we scheduled a meeting and looked at what our company needs this year. There was a discussion on robotization, digitalization. It was very much in our direction and all the key stakeholders in the project, we sat down together. We wrote on the board all the required activities and agreed together where each one will contribute. Joint decision-making was crucial, especially as we do not hold many meetings... I only guided others with counseling, for example "maybe drive in that direction, add this, we want to show this to get these and these points"... Similar approach is taken with some improvement or savings projects in production. Project orientation and guidance is provided, then the indicative status is monitored. The team has in my opinion vast competencies and they have a lot of free hands. 5 years ago, when the owner and director was one person, everything went through him. I am certainly not an expert in this field, I worked in completely different fields. But I saw that there was a lot of potential in the employees and I gave them more responsibilities. On the one hand, this is nice, and on the other hand it is a commitment. But we made the shift, it is hard to work if you are constantly

being controlled and limited, if you have to go to the boss for every decision. No, it is not necessary. It is good to be informed, but they have extremely free hands. I try to encourage innovative behavior through leadership... I am not interested in a chamber of commerce award or anything like that. I want this to be a top and exemplary company in all parameters, fitting a medium size company. One more thing, man matures over the years. We no longer collect every euro at any price. I tell every worker that I am not interested in the euro I take from him. This euro will make him very unhappy, whereas it will not make me rich. We must learn how to earn in a different way.« (Person F)

»In my view it is teamwork, we speak a lot with each other, there is a lot of communication. In the past this was not the case and there were problems. I am looking for feedback from co-workers, every idea is welcome.« (Person I)

»I manage work in the printing house as well as perform printing. I have to connect with assembly and mechanics in order to assure pieces go out in the same time. We need to be constantly connected with the workers, otherwise it would not flow effectively. Together with the team we decide how to proceed when resolving matters.« (Person J)

Asked about the relationship with their leader, the elements of providing direction and stewardship are highlighted again. Statement of person A indicates the serving practice is transferred from the leader to the follower. The leaders are replacing the prior practice of control with rather open communication, advice and search for contributions of the entire team. Moreover, responses to other questions demonstrated the latter cognition as well. Nevertheless, one employee suggested he would like to be more informed and involved in decisions. Two participants expressed through dialogue the identification with the leader who sets the right example and empathizes with employee's personal needs, thus we can identify genuine care for employees, which are returned by mutual trust and respect. Furthermore, the leaders acknowledge the importance of building a community and rewarding through financial as well as non-financial incentives, such as creating a good organizational climate.

»In my opinion, very correct. He is not a leader to command. He tells you the expectations from our work. But he will not say that you have to do it now in an hour. So, it guides, but it gives us a certain amount of a free hand.« (Person B)

»A respectful relationship. You will not get the feeling of being dominated or that you are approached in a commanding way.« (Person D)

»Personally and professionally we grew with our director. Our leader knows how to find a potential in everyone and gives us a free hand... Our leader helped to develop a family-friendly company... The workday can also be flexible. If your child gets sick overnight, he never says a negative word. He never said task cannot wait or that you cannot finish it from home. He always knows how to listen and one was never punished. In my view, he is a leader with a heart. When he comes to work and you see him smiling together with us, the

motivation grows. Not to embellish anything, but this is how it actually is... My approach is that if I see that a colleague in my group needs some help or a quick reaction, I offer my support. I am never intrusive. I say: "look, I will go look that up for you, you finish this". We are like friends with each other, family members, we act in that sense... It is nice to be at work, to put it briefly. Our leader also takes care of our motivation. He does it so spontaneously and I learn a lot from him. I observe his leadership practices, I follow this through meetings to learn the leadership skills. He is my role model with his vast knowledge pool. I imagine him as a lecturer when he gets old and retires. Because he has so much knowledge and he knows how to react with confidence in certain moments. He manages every situation well and we also reflect on this with others, we learn from him. Which is surely positive« (Person A).

»Always positive because we are usually very well motivated. So there are clear goals and based on clear goals there is a high level of motivation.« (Person C)

»Communication would need a bit more connectivity, we could make a step forward in the communication field. Sometimes I do not collaborate in decisions related to my work.« (Person E).

»I think they consider me strict actually, but in a good way. There is a lot allowed, but there are also certain principles... I have always wondered about foreign companies compared to Slovenian companies. A Slovenian company has always had to have a carrot and stick approach. In our company we never did... There is a lot of work to be done, let us make it work. We enable workers to work responsibly, also trust in competence of employees. They are not stupid, workers are not numbers, workers have knowledge. Workers can enjoy their work, they can also find themselves prosper in some lower position. Not everyone is a director in the end, but you can also make an interesting everyday work-life for an employee so that he can grow and enjoy his work. I think we somehow achieved that even now that we worked nine hours recently and held few working Saturdays. I had the feeling that the atmosphere was good... On the other hand, for example on Friday we will have a snack for the whole company, we also plan a trip together. During Covid-19 we could not socialize that much, but we usually have a New Year's party. The recourse payment is also at highest rate with us, we also have Christmas bonuses. People need to be fairly rewarded. We also raised salaries this year.« (Person F)

On a similar note, the relationship from leaders' point of view emphasizes equality, reduced formality, interpersonal acceptance and operations performed through teamwork where everyone can raise their voice. One interviewee demonstrated authenticity as his treatment of associates as persons exceeds the position.

»Informal. Maybe this also describes me a little bit, for example as an intern I only addressed formally one person, with the rest I used informal speech... Also when the new employees come, I suggest the same approach. I do not want hierarchy because of the title - if the respect

is based on perception of someone as a person or due to his knowledge, then it is alright, otherwise it is irrelevant. Interpersonal acceptance is important.« (Person H)

»It seems to me that we have foremost democracy. The opinions of both subordinates and superiors matter. In fact, we negotiate and run things together.« (Person G)

»Equivalent. They (associates) can turn to me at any time when required. During the process we check briefly that everything is going well. It seems to me that we have already achieved something through the speak-up culture where everyone can raise their voice.« (Person I)

»We work together constantly and have teamwork so there are normally no complaints. Communication is open.« (Person J)

The followers share their impressions on how they react to the current leadership and what does it encourage with them. The responses show relation to one of the motivation elements elaborated by Pink (2011), namely autonomy. Majority of interviewees see the ability to influence the course of their work and share their ideas. In addition, individual responses recognize the importance of care for others and shared responsibility.

»That I am involved. When the project is finished, I would like to have a look together at what was good and what wasn't. When I conclude the project successfully, I am personally fulfilled.« (Person E)

»It encourages independent search for solutions, at least for me. It promotes the accountability, to take responsibility for your work and defend what you do, argue your standpoints.« (Person D)

»Personally, it was very good for me, because I had some power over what I could do myself. I knew what I had to do, for example the samples were waiting for me, and I was making the call if I needed to hurry up a bit or I needed to slow the pace and be more precise. That is the thing I like here. I choose the way myself and I feel in power.« (Person B)

»It is motivational. It encourages creativity in me. I like to go to work, come in the morning with a smile and do not get up with difficulty. I love being in my team. My entire team is person B, H, developers. We are truly a one collective. Family is one thing, work is another. But the job has been for me lately as a family, I have two families. And if you like to take care of your family, so do you care for your job. Also the leader encourages me to act with care, as you would at home.« (Person A)

»Usually very positive, that is, we are always looking for new solutions, because we are also a development-oriented company. Above all, we are looking for everyone's suggestions, the direction of the solution, and based on that we choose the best solution. Sometimes we can also start to tackle the issue individually and when we get to a common point, we move forward together.« (Person C)

Inquiring with the leaders on what reactions they want to encourage through their leadership revealed their commitment to develop people and offer them responsibilities, as well as genuine interest for others and joint growth. Several scholars pointed growth of people as salient interest of post-heroic leaders (Spears, 2010; Liden, Wayne, Zhao & Henderson, 2008; Crevani, Lindgren & Packendorff, 2007).

»I want them to grow, to evolve. Even in previous jobs, whenever I left, I wanted the one who replaced me to be maximum prepared, to have proper handover. I want us to grow together.« (Person H)

»My leader elicits good reactions from me. I feel my leader is listening and appreciates my opinion, therefore I feel good and gain momentum. You feel heard, respected. And at the same time, I pass this on to my employees. I listen to them, embrace their opinions and suggestions. I want to encourage that they feel more responsible, to get the impetus to want to get things done and that they grow through the process.« (Person G)

»So if they have ideas – for example a girl who is innovative sees how she can do something easier, I do not want to obstruct this with ego in the sense of “that’s how you have to work”, but rather discuss it together. We analyze it together. If it is okay, we go for the approach which suits this person. I believe that the result is important, we must follow the same purpose, but the way can differ.« (Person I)

»We have a production operation which is still a repetitive process. Thus, democracy has some limitations, yet everyone has a chance in certain context. Looking back at one of the decisions, the reason why we eliminated production management as a business function. We go directly from the plan preparation to the shift managers and we have given them all the competencies so that they can deploy work according to their knowledge and up to expected outcome. Of course, who has more knowledge than those who do it every day. They combine process orders, plan sequences, of course within some time unit. With that we have again gained something; everyone was given importance, they feel important. In production some tasks may seem simple, but in fact they are not as great precision is required. We keep emphasizing these values as well: accuracy, reliability. We appreciate that.« (Person F)

»I want them to be independent. When new apprentices come, we dedicate time to them so they can become independent. This also relieves me to certain extent so I am able to perform additional activities.« (Person J)

3.3.2 Mediator variables

The participants were requested to think of an example of a recent project with cross-functional interdependence and complexity of tasks. Their reflection on the process to reach new solutions entails thorough preparation and active collaboration to implement ideas. The feedback of interviewees is rather unified that resolutions are reached through dialogue and

collaborative decision-making. Several participants indicate through their statements that the process is mediated by knowledge sharing, in particular they emphasize that the employee who performs the task has the highest knowledge and insight to potential bottlenecks.

»At least since I am here (2 years), it was done in a manner of preparing as much as possible in advance... When it all came together, we reviewed everything that it will work well and gave it to the production to test on live example. We are very much focused on the preparations, we do not want to rush to implement one idea right away without prior assessment, for example to have new tools made. It is more thoughtful, we prefer to think five times than once... Together we decide in a group of at least 3-4 people. Usually, if I have a task for innovation, I take person E, C, I and G. At least these people come together, discuss what the problem is and what improvement we would like to reach. Then we decide collectively what to do... People who did not have relevant experience for this project were not involved, so experts from individual fields are taken... In the end, of course, when it came together, it was holistically reported to everyone... Lastly, everyone is informed, but there is some involvement in terms of experience, knowledge and function.« (Person B)

»We have two types of projects: one is related to the technology, new equipment, new programs. The second type is for existing products and technology where only smaller enhancements need to be installed in order to get the final product. Namely, we do not have a permanent product. Every customer initially comes up with a request, however they never come with an exact plan "I want to buy this from you". We have formal and informal resolution process. We always contact the relevant people with the necessary knowledge to cooperate. We present to them at the beginning what we want to achieve or what is the goal, what are the tasks. In this team everyone gives their vision... Team participates in decision-making, that is why they are there to pass on their knowledge. We need to find a way how to get to that final product and to identify what the customer wants.« (Person H)

»When new development project is initiated we must discuss together what is possible... We usually have enough free hands in communication with the customer. For instance, when we have a new product and the customer does not specify exactly his needs, we can direct him.« (Person E)

»I participated mostly towards the end of the process, for example when we applied for tenders... The first steps were prepared in the group which managed the project. In the phase of handover they came up to me and we sat down together. They explained to me exactly what they were doing, thus I did not solely get some papers on the desk in the sense of "here you go," but they explained what it is all about... If simpler solutions are required, I do it myself. If it is more complex and I need the opinion of others, we go to the leader and then we work together.« (Person D)

»Together as a team, we had meetings. First we set a plan, the director invited us to his office. He writes on the board the focus points, but not alone. We provide it to him, so that

he listens to us. Each of us contributes a part of our vision to the resolution. When it is more complex, we engage even more collectively. Such innovation takes longer to reach the goal. In the meantime, we all cooperate, we listen to each other, everyone gives their opinion and no one is criticized. Solution from each of us is crucial, because we complement each other, due to complexity of the products different fields of expertise are required and one person cannot solve it alone. The director also listens, together we find a solution, he helps us and always offers support.« (Person A)

»...We make final decisions in a joint conversation, namely in a joint meeting where we reach consensus: the proposals are these, this solution should be the best. We are able to express our disagreement.« (Person C)

»We sit down together... Sometimes there is a complaint or a technical challenge. Then a meeting is scheduled. For instance, today we are meeting in a small team. We have gained a very important customer from Germany and the first order was received, thus it is necessary to drive it through a team. We require a constructor, a technologist in production, three or four people will be in charge from start to the end to deliver per customer's requirements.« (Person F)

»There is usually a mild friction. For example, someone would solve it in one way, the other colleague in a different way. Then we test ideas through dialogue, everyone has the right to argument their meaning of the idea and how it will make something easier. We resolve it by mutual agreement. We are also talking to those who are preparing a new project and looking for a solution together.« (Person I)

»With a conversation. For instance, some tools do not function properly and we approach it together... We look for solutions during the production process itself. As soon as we detect a problem, we call each other over the phone and solve it on the spot with a direct communication. The one who performs a job knows all the obstacles and specifics, the little details that are essential.« (Person G)

Several interviewees recollected the ability to engage external support. The latter fills the gap in knowledge and supports to implement the new ideas.

»There is no issue in case we need any external resources, the leader gives us the chance to use it.« (Person A)

»Firstly, we have searched together for all the internal knowledge and practices and afterwards as well the external knowledge. For example, where it was more complex, where we had problems or we did not have enough knowledge or equipment, we also turned to external support. By this I refer to colleagues and acquaintances in companies where something similar is in place.« (Person C)

»As far as special devices are concerned, it is quite frequent that they call external people to come and help, to give their opinion. We can for example test their product. The external collaborators are for instance machinery suppliers.« (Person B)

An important aspect recalled by one of the leaders is the speed of decision-making process, to which the magnitude of the projects and the company itself may have contributed. Nevertheless, according to person I this is not yet seen with financial decisions on material purchase.

»I give an example through an anecdote. The second or third day when we got a new colleague from company X. Once we have agreed on the assignments, he was surprised and inquired when we will have the next meeting. We said: "Why is it needed?" He replied: "That we will make a decision." We responded that we have made the decision to proceed with the clear activities, now we shall materialize them and then reunite to look at where we stand and define next steps. The decision was made, we are here together and have agreed on how to execute, we only need to carry it out now.« (Person F)

Two interviewees refers to building of purpose through storyline which mediates between leadership and innovative work behavior.

»I built it in a storyline and gave guidance what we need to show or deliver in order to be successful.« (Person F)

»He often shares an anecdote from a similar situation. He tells me how he reacted and what was the outcome. From this you can gather some learning and adjust your reaction according to perceived needs of your situation.« (Person A)

With regards to the communication between the team members and with the leader the employees have described it as open, polite, frequent and persuasive with presence of honest feedback and trust which fosters speak-up culture. One of the leaders suggests that a joke on its own account contributes to the right climate.

»There is no negative criticism. If you do anything wrong, you are never punished for it and it is not the end of the world. The leader knows how to communicate in a nice way, he is not aggressive... Constructive criticism is presented to us in a calm tone. For sure it is expressed, there is nowhere only agreement, everyone sees things slightly differently. But we say it in a normal way, we talk about it. We trust the whole team.« (Person A)

»It is open communication. There is no fear that you will make a proposal and someone will reject you or laugh at it. You can give your honest opinion whether it is right or wrong, here we are all very open... Communication takes place on a daily basis. We mostly communicate by e-mail and orally in the team. There are not many meetings, there are only few intermediate meetings. Unless, of course, the problem is very challenging, then we also sit together in the team and offer all the knowledge we have.« (Person C)

»I prefer to joke at my own expense so as not to offend anyone. Secondly, I am very open to constructive criticism. We are not only performing well, especially in this rush. I think we are quite direct in communication. We praise, we also criticize, but we try to do it constructively. I think it is a speak-up culture, we do not hold it within ourselves. I have one principle, I prefer to tackle the task once. Let's find a solution, work on it and then move on to the next challenges. I do not wish to procrastinate actions.« (Person F)

Half of interviewees suggest that open office supports the knowledge and information sharing. At the same time it supports the effectiveness of communication and time management as it reduces the number of meetings.

»Knowledge is certainly not hidden, we also have an open office which contributes to this. Basically, people talk out loud, we also do not communicate much via e-mail, more commonly used is word of mouth. So you can gain a lot of knowledge, through this open communication.« (Person D)

»In order to manage the project we communicate as a group in the meeting room or in the office. We have an open office. The leader comes to us and we talk freely about the project. Everyone tells in their own way what stage they have reached, what has been resolved, what you still have unresolved. The status is clear and so we receive all the information.« (Person A)

»Communication takes place a lot through personal conversation and during the work itself. We are in one room, so we just meet over coffee or speak over the desk or walk to each other. So the communication is extensive. Because we are not separated by departments, there is a lot of formal and informal communication. So as far as that goes, it is very effective.« (Person C)

»The individual stages of development are evaluated, namely if it is going in the right direction, whether there is a need for correction and lessons learnt out of it. Otherwise, we have the characteristic that we have very few formal meetings. That is why we also have an open space, I rather walk to the production and technology departments. But to sit down, we do not use extensive time for that... We have mainly small scale projects. However, we have applicative development, where we have daily two new products in production. This means documentation, production process, technological process, communication with customers in the development phase, validation of drawings etc. We do this practically in teams of two to four designers. We communicate across the table, but surely as well keep records and spreadsheets. I want to say that we are always connected when reviewing projects. We have built this intensity through all these years. Sitting together allows for quick communication, we also designed the spaces with this intention.« (Person H)

»By direct contact. We share knowledge with everyone who wants it. We know what is our goal, however a new way of working is always a test. Let us say that we do not always get

good pieces out and we need to go back and communicate with everyone what went wrong to learn from it. This seems to me to be the case everywhere while innovating.« (Person I)

According to one employee there is room for improvement in the communication aspect, namely full clarity on status and timelines is crucial in order to retain the commitment and eagerness of all involved stakeholders.

»If the sales department allocates the project to me, then I know how the trail runs... On the other hand, when I am participant to project and someone else is coordinating it, we could have a bit more communication about the status. A situation can occur where the customer says he needs the product in a week which can cause some bad mood because I am currently engaged in another project that is also urgent. I have to then switch priority. Collaboration is stronger when stakeholders see the benefit in it... I am a bit of an emotional introvert, yet generally a cheerful person. When something throws me off track, I shut myself in a bit and I am angry. If you start a project like that, you are less effective. « (Person E)

Following the claim of person B in earlier questions, also person A suggests that leaders are supporting the so-called unbossed culture, where an individual has the power over his work and contribution. Moreover, the response indicates that associate also takes the leadership role when required, for instance by challenging or motivating the colleagues to ensure successful execution of the project.

»According to the current structure, we are functioning well. Because we have the opportunity to be our own organizer. We assign the tasks, however even when I assign a project to each developer, he has the opportunity to schedule himself when he will do something. I set the deadline, but he decides when he will take over which project or when he will complete it in this time frame. Because he knows how long it will take him... During the process we talk, agree on topics, monitor the status. Nevertheless, I feel we are our own bosses... We have daily innovations, I have three new ones today. In the morning I was already in communication with the technical director, then with the developer, with the product designer, each in his field. It is important to agree, deadlines need to be set. The co-worker says »I cannot perform in the terms you have set, I can do it in such due date and way«. Then I try to adjust. Sometimes I also come back and challenge: »here it is not feasible, we need to endure and put all our efforts«. I am open for agreements and if there is a possibility, I am flexible to adjust.« (Person A)

Based on the communication practices some leaders have described the reactions received from the team members. We identify the respect and confidence in leader's knowledge. In addition, one leader shared experience of criticism through amusing connotation.

»We respect each other, they respect me and I absolutely listen to them too. Even if I suggest otherwise, they accept it as common good and do as we agreed. I think the reactions have a successful outcome.« (Person G)

»Criticism is seldom received, at least from subordinates. I will not say that criticism would never be justified. Maybe they have a lot of respect, at least per my observation. I was surprised when co-worker told me that he saved my e-mail to learn from me because I have quite some miles behind me. But for example they joke when I am slightly distant with thoughts or in lower spirit: "Where is person H from the last week?" This is also a kind of criticism.« (Person H)

The interviewees described their own innovative work behavior. We observe that the innovative behavior is highly perceived as part of their daily job and thus mindset favours constant search of new solutions. Additionally, the leaders influence employees to think differently. Despite the less structured communication in terms of meetings, employees are well familiar with the procedure how to promote their ideas and the further implementation process. In addition, seeing their ideas materialized through the support of the leaders for innovation encourages employees to further engage in such behavior. Noteworthy, the financial incentives complement the climate as detected by majority of interviewees under questions captured in the next chapter.

»In principle, innovation comes from two sources; either myself as a technologist put myself in a situation and try to improve something, or it comes from the workers. If it is an idea for the entire process it is even more beneficial, but also when limited to a particular product we consider it as a progress. As far as this is concerned, an innovation idea is usually written here. We have a form where the worker writes a suggestion in detail. Then it is handed over to the office for the evaluation and further proceeding, for example if material needs to be procured... The initiator of the idea is involved in communication. « (Person B)

»Innovation proposals are written down and, if feasible, implemented. Everyone has a chance and I encourage them to do so, the more ideas there are, the better. I am not fully involved in the implementation of the idea, but I am being consulted.« (Person J)

»Several ideas are generated by employees. There are some major development projects which are conducted through meetings where the status is reported to some extent... Now we have investment projects where we have to go to the banks, collect offers; we agree on these assignments, everyone gets something to manage. Despite the intensity, there are usually not so many meetings, but more checks are done. We ask: "How is it going now with this project, where are we? Have we already received this and that, have we implemented something, have we tried certain approach?" It progresses quickly. If a new tool is required, a constructor gets involved. If production needs an innovative process, we have associates who know what to do. They are given the opportunity to change the process.« (Person F)

»As far as innovation itself is concerned, we have that form, we also have formalized that everyone who submits an idea, if he only writes it down on the form, he gets 20 euros. But the issue is that our employees are highly devoted to the company, often some minor improvements are made, but they do not take the time to write a sentence about it. We also

had a case where I told a colleague that I will write it for him. In a nutshell, we have a system built for it. When someone suggests something, it is evaluated, there is a policy in place and it gets posted on the bulletin board. We give 1,000 to 2,000 euros a year to employees for such small proposals.« (Person H)

»When one of my girls comes up with a new idea, we discuss it, give it a try. If we see that it is fine, it gets implemented. Even if I sometimes think it will not work optimally, I believe it is always worth to try. Of course, by not doing any harm. If the result is good, we capture it in the innovation proposal form.« (Person I)

»Where we are most innovative in production team are the procedures or ways of working. There we are actually negotiating the way forward together as I mentioned earlier. Someone sees that something is too difficult and it will not bring the wanted outcome. Then we propose for example to try on a template. Actually, we innovate throughout the processes... We have innovation proposal sheets hanging on the bulletin board, they are available to everyone. The employee takes it, writes his idea and submits it to me, I collect them. Once we have collected a few ideas, we gather together and go in order. Initially without initiators of the idea, but feedback is returned to them. We encourage this a lot, we get a lot of ideas, very commendable. But I think innovative ideas depend on a person's character. Some are very innovative by nature and have a lot of ideas. We usually have a few people who make more use of it, while someone does not show so much of that perspective. But we encourage everyone, even a new employee is always told that we have this on the bulletin board.« (Person G)

»Firstly, my mindset is that anything is possible... Because if you set a goal big enough and if you work in the right direction, you will achieve that goal. I want to move those boundaries with my team, that sometimes it is necessary to look out of the box. Sometimes we can approach it quite differently.« (Person F)

Two interviewees detect that persuasive mapping is a more effective approach in bringing the community together to work for the same purpose.

»I guide employees to think for themselves. Even if I think a little differently sometimes, I will not oppose harshly, I try to guide the person with the right questions to come to a conclusion on his own. If I say, we have to do it that way, normally the reactions will not be the best.« (Person G)

»However, a leader has a very good trait, which I am also learning. If anything goes in the wrong direction, he explains the situation so nicely that you do not feel that it is too critical, but you realize that something needs to be fixed or changed in that direction.« (Person A)

Conveying of collective achievements should not be neglected as the purpose is one of the drivers of motivation (Pink, 2011). On the other hand, one person reports that company exerts low confidentiality and honestly informs all employees of good or bad results as the

responsibility is shared by all. Throughout the interviews it was suggested by several participants that recognition as well contributes to it. Furthermore, two leaders show commitment to engage the full community.

»Reliable workers are recognized. Every idea which gets written down is considered.«
(Person F)

»You praise him for doing something well... It is nice when the director sees the efforts and praises us. But they always praise the team, not only individuals. Even the departments among themselves, without one the other cannot work... We help ourselves with resource rotation between departments. For example, when one unit is lacking resources, we pull them from another unit. We have a great understanding for each other needs and we all work for one goal.« (Person G)

»... But I am also happy when I get the feedback, when we come to the conclusion, to the realization. When I receive back the compliment that the samples are great and a gratitude for my support and quick response I do not share this just for myself. I include everyone who was on the team. If by chance the director was not involved, I also include him and send it to everyone for information or we say it out loud that they know that the whole team was praised. Whatever I respond is on behalf of the whole team because it is not right to share the credit yourself. I concluded the activity in the end, but we were all involved... We have monthly college meetings and so far we have been praised every month, I hope it stays that way.« (Person A)

»I always advocate the involvement of employees in the business of the company. Also that they are aware of the effects of their work, with the results, both positive and negative. It ranges from sales success to quality. The second is that they are familiar with the development and that they are thinking about the company. Today we spend more time in the company than at home, I function in such a way that my job is a way of life. I have a family as well, but I expect this mindset from the co-workers as well. That sometimes at home they think of their job, perhaps of a certain challenge. By this I mean that all employees are involved... Today we have accesible prices for each product, I openly tell the production employee: "look, this piece or this frame is worth approx. 30 euros. Due to undetected scratch in the initial step, we lost these 30 euros." On the other hand, we also have very good results, so responsibility of each employee is demonstrated. We have sales figures, plans and objectives posted on a bulletin board. Our business is an open book, regardless of positive or negative results.« (Person H)

»...Then the material is usually purchased, which is not a problem in this company for the needs of testing... When all this is ready and then implemented in production with the help of a production technologist, we are engaged. And we also encourage workers who love to take part in these development parts. When a problem arises, we consult, for instance: "let's go this way, try several variants"... This continues until we come to a conclusion, to a

product that we think is fine. Lastly, we need to test it. It is crucial to test in order to see if certain criterias are met, namely the standards that apply to a particular product. Whatever you introduce as innovation, this matter must also meet quality standards.« (Person C)

Inquiry on the role of the leader in employee's idea generation revealed the presence of informal leadership based on knowledge and experience. The leaders motivate employees, offer them autonomy, but at the same time engage themselves and support with advice. Nevertheless, one person detected that leader's support is higher when the innovative proposal serves the bigger community.

»The leader promotes the equality of ideas. However, interest is the crucial point for implementation, depending on applicability of idea – is it for the common good or only for an individual.« (Person E)

»For me it is a somewhat broader concept as I basically see more leaders in our collaboration, for instance person H, person I, also person G who is perceived as well like a kind of human resource manager. Because person I has utmost knowledge about the processes, how it is carried out, how long it takes. Person H, on the other hand, is the one who gives the confirmation that this heads for the next stage towards improvement... In most cases, it is left to me (problem solving) or person I or to the initiator of the idea. The leaders enable your autonomy, but they advise you along the way.« (Person B)

»He is always open to new ideas, he creates an atmosphere for that. If he sees the potential, he encourages you. He asks you if you need extra support, someone else to help. He asks if a meeting is needed. He also offers his opinion.« (Person A)

»The leader motivates us, but we also motivate ourselves. When you notice a certain problem at work, you then engage in finding either an alternative material or an alternative solution or another way of making it.« (Person C)

In terms of key contribution factor to idea realization most often recalled were presentation of the expected benefit, leader's support and collaboration of all associates.

»Personal commitment and responsibility for what we do.« (Person E)

»Otherwise, I believe the support of the leader because he passes the idea on and supports the realization.« (Person D)

»That I presented the problem and the solution well and that it was put into the process. Approval from person H and person F as well. Minor matters that have no financial impact are done normally with no monitoring. However, if it is a project that requires higher resource investment, it is usually managed with the leaders. When a certain solution is given to a problem, a vision of what it should solve is also given. For instance, this procedure would save so many hours per month.« (Person B)

»To see the benefit, for example we claim the improvement will drive faster completion of some activity.« (Person J)

»Flexibility and openness.« (Person A)

»Certainly not without collaboration. Such a complex development project rarely depends on just one person. Here, cooperation and high motivation are mandatory.« (Person C)

»It is important to the employees that the processes are clear and as simple as possible. If they are complicated, then they have problems, it is difficult to do. They are focused to work with quality. They also do not want a high risk of something going wrong, they like to be on the safe side. In our company the employees show an interest in improvements. They also have an interest in making the company grow, because if it is bigger, it has some more perseverance and security. Therefore, they are interested in expanding business, within normal limits... We inform the workers, we do not hide information. We are a successful company, we share the goals. Every now and then when we are at a turning point, a meeting is made with all the workers, a short 10-15 minute session. We share where we are, what we have done, what still awaits us. The management wants to address these challenges through a consensus and motivate employees. As well to argument what will improve if we achieve this. Workers like to work in a successful company, in a company where there will be profit.« (Person F)

»Certainly, if the senior management had not given support, this would not have happened. We have a certain team of 3 people who sit down, review, evaluate, ask questions. If the proposal is categorized as a system or technological innovation, we initiate a project. We determine who will participate in it, what is the potential savings generation, what compensations we will give to the employee. They can receive 300-500 euros.« (Person H)

»That everyone is involved, collaboration. To hear each other and accept their ideas.« (Person I)

»That it is productive and benefits you. That it is done quickly and with quality. This counts for us, we are a productive company, we make our own products and this brings us added value. It is also crucial that you are open-minded. That you listen to your co-workers, that you, too, as a leader, step behind them, engage yourself. Additionally, to promote the idea to other leaders, for example: "You know that would be really good, let's give it a try." You get involved right away, you should not approach their ideas with the communication "we will do it the next time". I think that would be a shame. We never suppress an idea... That is why we have developed a form in production where workers write innovation proposals themselves. If they see an improvement for the particular process, they write it there. We then sit down together with the technologists to examine if this is acceptable for us and if it will benefit us. Then it is also stimulated, evaluated contribution.« (Person G)

3.3.3 Moderator variables

The third set of questions aimed to identify which factors act as strongest moderators between post-heroic leadership and employee's innovative work behavior. A moderator influences the level, direction or presence of relationship between selected variables, displaying under which circumstances the relationship will withstand (Bhandari, 2021). The participants were asked what motivates them to exercise innovative work behavior. As a result, the employees see the company as a community and value it. In addition, they display intrinsic motivation, satisfaction and desire to help each other and ease the work. Lastly, interviewees mention as well fair financial rewards. Related to this person A indicates the fulfillment of psychological contract which attests to the study of Ramamoorthy, Flood, Slattery and Sardesai (2005).

»I believe I am an innovative person, constantly looking for solutions. That makes me happy. Since we are time-constrained perhaps I innovate a little bit less, but my character also drives me in that direction. It also motivates me to see that there is an opportunity for the company to grow. This business development that we all see in this company drives us, we see how many options one has for suggestions. That is why I got employed here, because I saw how many open opportunities there are for personal development and the development of the company.« (Person D)

»I am a technologist, it is basically the nature of my job to look for new solutions. A lot of things are implemented in order to ease the work for associates. We bring a lot of ideas to life internally without the leaders, as we are motivated to make our work easier.« (Person B)

»Two factors in particular - the first one is that the leader himself sees potential in me, a talent that needs to mature. I feel responsibility due to this reason. And I also love my job. And last but not least, financial stimulation, which is the way it should be.« (Person A)

»New challenges. When things are brought to me undefined and I can bring suggestions. I am looking for something new.« (Person E)

»I want to be personally satisfied. Because you feel good if you do something very well, it is in sense a self-affirmation. So, motivation is not solely the remuneration or to please the leader, but as well self-affirmation. Contributing to the community is a great affirmation of well-being. Just educating employees offers great pleasure. When you tell someone, we will do it to make it better and easier for him, these are great successes because it will be easier for everyone.« (Person C)

»A praise and a reward.« (Person I)

»It gives you some satisfaction when you see that you are successful, that you are doing well and that you are growing. Also a contribution to the company motivates me... As a result you get more orders. We all strive for that. When you achieve something, you are certainly

pleasantly tired. However you say: “great, we did it”. You breathe with the firm.» (Person G)

The current leadership style affects individual's innovative work behavior through building the system, culture to support innovation and positive climate.

»...We are given a free hand regarding development or innovation itself. Practically everything here is an innovation. Lots of development projects, lots of new products... we actually feel the need for innovation, change, improvement. Because the system itself convinces us to do so through the leadership practices and processes. When you have a problem and solve it successfully, it brings a great satisfaction. It means a contribution to better quality. This is what motivates us. Satisfaction with yourself, with co-workers, the atmosphere consequently gets better. Creativity and team spirit are then on completely different level.» (Person C)

»... But in the normal months, they detect for themselves where more needs to be done. We also get along well with each other. I come to production area during the lunch break. They have everything nicely served there, it gives a sense of being at home. You get a warm feeling, you do not feel compelled to be here at work.» (Person G)

»In a very good way. I have a concrete example, they put me to school now. The company paid my tuition. Personally, I see this is as a great incentive for personal growth. Furthermore, I am glad they give me a free hand. I can investigate a matter myself and contribute to overall work and to the team. Of course, if there is a larger project involving purchases, it is necessary to request for financial means.» (Person B)

»We are also building this through teambuildings, with trips for employees, picnics, New Year's party... By doing so, the employees release tensions.» (Person H)

In our attempt to understand what would further enhance employee innovative work behavior we consulted the interviewees. Several people suggested that time constraint slightly hinders further idea generation, thus focus on time management would be beneficial. Furthermore, individual recommendations suggest more structured meeting governance to help in communication and additional knowledge.

»Permanence in terms of quick meetings. Maybe to have a daily or weekly quick meeting. No lengthy discussions, but rather a quick status review from all participants to see if we have any delays before we get any new project. To know what capacities we have and capabilities on what we can still do today.» (Person E)

»Currently, we are so crowded with work that it would be great if we had a bit more time for such meetings, more ideas would also come to the forefront... Given that we do not dispose of much time for meetings, it would be great if we could write down other ideas somewhere. We have innovation proposal forms, but they are more suitable for ideas to

change the process. However, if you have an idea unrelated to the process, you do not have such tools to address it. It would not be so bad if we had similar to some companies that some ideas can be submitted anonymously. A leader is open and available, but it may be easier for some people to share their opinion further.« (Person D)

»The problem is that we have been constantly overwhelmed for the last year and a half. When I see that something is going wrong in production, I go to help them. The workday is busy, we all take on many responsibilities and it is difficult to coordinate everything, we have time constraints.« (Person B)

»The only obstacle is the very large volume in production, thus we have time constraints.« (Person C)

»Additional knowledge. Even more personal education. When something comes along, I try to educate myself in that area first. Perhaps, I would like something similar with my colleagues. In other words, when you see that technology is going in a certain direction, you should start educating yourself in this field and then you foresee the future.« (Person H)

»In production, we depend on senior management for certain financial things. Sometimes we would like to have more approval for our requests. If we need to order something, a decision is made in the office... With the materials we need, sometimes it is timeconsuming, the decision could be made faster.« (Person I)

Interviewees were asked to compare their approach with simple tasks to complex ones. As agreed by all the job complexity influences the level of mutual collaboration and decision making, however post-heroic leadership practices are present with simple and complex tasks. Neither does the job complexity necessarily affect greatly the level of innovative work behavior. Namely, the leaders will allow for higher autonomy in case of lower job complexity, whereas higher complexity drives increased teamwork and requires consensus.

»Big difference. If it is simpler, the work will be left to you to look for solutions individually. When something more challenging happens, leaders also want to get involved. Otherwise, you are expected to do the thing on your own.« (Person D)

»Complex developments have a complex composition in the background. More knowledge is needed, certain things we may not have certain component materials, we need to connect with our suppliers and obtain all the offers. Sometimes we do not get all the technical parameters. It is necessary to contact the customer, to support each other, to make adjustments in our development. It is more team-oriented and there are more of us involved. With the simple ones, sometimes I can be alone or me and the developer, it is faster. In the case of complex ones, everyone must agree with the decision, there must be a common consensus.« (Person A)

»I believe I have the competencies and the ability to decide for myself with simple or with complex tasks. I only inform the manager. Until now, we have gotten to know each other to the extend that I mostly know on which topics I can fully decide on my own. That also means a lot to me.« (Person H)

The management team has high expectations for innovative behavior which is as well noted by the employees. The aim is to increase the added value which can be contributed by each associate. It is expected that employees seek opportunities and also convey what are the requirements at work. Judging from the responses the collective embraces changes as the tool for achieving common good. This partially captures the organizational culture which is oriented to support changes and innovations.

»The company is expanding rapidly. Management now certainly has more appreciation for various improvement initiatives. Because they see that we can do more without increasing certain capacities, for instance resources or facilities. For example, person F and person H have recently been very encouraging of innovative thinking in terms of optimizing the entire production process... To look for opportunities. Many machines are being bought now. We have bought as many machines in the last six months as we haven't in ten years.« (Person B)

»The desire is for as much innovation and independence as possible. Innovative suggestions are always welcome because it is also healthy for any business. The leaders expect that we say what we need, an innovative proposal can also be associated to the workplace to make your job easier. This is never a problem, they are open.« (Person A)

»Already the process is oriented towards innovation, especially when you are in the role of a technologist or when you are in charge of development projects. The expectations are that you give your maximum potential here.« (Person C)

»Changes are very welcome in this company, especially if they make our work easier and increase the added value. Every innovation is seen as a change with potential.« (Person J)

»I want to encourage innovation, that employees bring their ideas. I want us to implement them to a greater extent. For an employee to see that his idea is valid, that is of the greatest value. This also demonstrates the strategy of the company to employ people who carry some potential.« (Person F)

»Sometimes to think a little bit more about their job... The expectation is that people are already behaving innovatively in the process. If leaders think in such way, we pass that on to our employees and so it translates to a bigger community. Our company specializes in small and medium batches. The product can be produced perhaps twice or once a year, but we do not have regular products. Thus, surely people need to feel good about the changes and new things, such people enjoy this company. We also had a case where the employee came up with the problem of not finding himself in this work because he would like to come

in the morning at 6am and forget about work at 2pm when he finishes. In our company, innovation inclination is really strong.« (Person H)

»Someone will turn the product around, observe and detect what would make it easier to build, while the others will do exactly as you show them. I would also like to encourage these people. Everyone must take some responsibility.« (Person I)

»If a person sees and knows something, it is right that he conveys it. On the other hand, in my view he should not just change a process without saying as it is right that everyone is informed of the change. The second reason is as well to be able to reward the person if he has improved something.« (Person G)

»Significant. Part of the management is striving for continuous improvements, whereas some part appreciates the current way of work and believes it is already at good level.« (Person E)

According to the interviewed employees the leaders in ELTAS d.o.o. promote independence, creativity, knowledge, honesty, teamwork and interpersonal acceptance as key values. These values and principles are the core guiding mechanisms for employee's behavior.

»Above all, knowledge, here leaders appreciate education. Additional education or training is desirable. Especially if you are exploring or operating in a new field and if you want to engage in it. It is almost expected that you will have a basic background in this field on the basis of which you will be able to work. Otherwise, honesty. There are absolutely no lies present or tolerated here, nor shifting the blame onto someone else. Above all, it is emphasized that if anything happens, it is acceptable, all humans make mistakes. You can openly say what you did and you will never be punished for it. Together we always find a solution if a problem arises.« (Person D)

»Teamwork, also production is organized in such manner. When a problem occurs, the girls come together and solve the problem as a team. The leader promotes as well family values, healthy lifestyle. In addition, I would say it boosts positive daily vibes, is motivational, the leader likes to see that we are satisfied. Moreover, it is important to him that we have good interpersonal relationships.« (Person A)

»Consistency, independence, reliability, creativity, meaning creative solutions.« (Person C)

»Everyone should be determined, independent, precise. That we are communicative and do not seek disputes.« (Person B)

Leaders mainly highlight the above identified interpersonal acceptance.

»Every worker is responsible for their work, we share responsibility together. I encourage helping each other.« (Person J)

»Celebration and joy over the success and result of your work. I want to pass on values to co-workers. I never favored formalizing, being someone's boss. If someone tells me I am his boss, I do not feel good about it.« (Person H)

»Coexistence, people spend here eight hours, there is a lot of interaction. As you can see, all spaces here are open. We want to promote that we appreciate each other, cooperate show respect. As people and as co-workers, respect seems to me to be extremely important in both directions, from managers to employees and vice versa.« (Person F)

Respect and tolerance for each other. I

»They are all equally important. What is the value of the leaders without a team to drive it.« (Person G)

Assessing affiliation with the company's objectives showed that goals are aligned between departments. All interviewees show high ownership for the objectives as they take them for their own due to their contribution to their setting. The latter in our view indicates that the teams work for the same purpose. One of the leaders mentions that objectives need to serve us as a learning tool.

»Usually, we are all involved in goal setting. I think we all get a sense of belonging to a goal because we contribute one piece to it, almost everyone in every process.« (Person D)

»I certainly feel the possibility of contributing. Many of these innovations to which I contributed or initiated them have enabled us to double our business in the last three years. I am in production most of the time and I feel more part of the production. It feels lately that everyone wants to do more by not having to work so hard. We would like to do it with greater efficiency.« (Person B)

»They include me when setting the goals. In practice, as far as sales are concerned, I am to propose what will be the annual plan for next year and how will we achieve it. They express their opinion, I say mine. We assess whether it is feasible. Also production manager is involved in defining how we will reach the goal. We feel responsible for the goals and that we are important in this story. Namely, my reaction and my answer will lead to actions that I must then make sure that are successfully concluded. So I feel that these are also my objectives.« (Person A)

»Here in the office we are involved in goal setting. We are highly committed to our goals, we take them as our own as we have a key role to play in order to achieve them.« (Person C)

»Great affiliation, my opinion is that we are all on the same boat. Everyone contributes their part to the whole.« (Person J)

»The goals are set each year based on the history of past results. Sometimes we see we will not reach the target and adjust them from a certain number to some percentage. We try to be reasonable and set ourselves such goals that we can follow them and in return the goals tell us something. I would say we do not pursue unrealistic goals but yet they need to tell us something and that we learn something from it... Workers care about it, everyone wants to be successful and in my view they identify with the goals. We receive suggestions on how to improve performance.« (Person F)

»Employees are involved in setting goals. These are the goals that we set at the company level. At the beginning when they are not yet fully defined, associates get acquainted with them and we discuss them. The aim is that they agree and take the objectives as their own. Affiliation is seen through actions. When we put them together it is the right moment to speak up, they are encouraged to argue if someone disagrees. Speak-up culture is encouraged.« (Person H)

»In our company, I think we are very committed to our goals. When there is a lot of work, we all make the effort to support. The majority of the group believes that we can contribute something to the goals.« (Person I)

»Affiliation is high. I see it in their relationship. Employees have access to monthly plans of what we need to do. When we face a challenging situation, you do not have to ask someone twice to make an extra step. They see it for themselves, they devote saying "we will be here for two hours today and another two hours tomorrow and we will make it happen".« (Person G)

Based on the responses concerning the leader's attitude towards risk taking and mistakes all interviewees concur that mistakes are a constant companion in their work due to the fact that they need to manufacture new products on a regular basis, thus there is lack of routine work. Their impression is that mistakes are highly tolerated and they are not afraid of rejection, thus psychological safety is high. Nevertheless, the leaders try to ensure that mistakes do not re-occur. Moreover, the conflicts are resolved on the spot, consequently are not carried into other situations. The above enables establishing a trust which was reported at minimum by person A and F and leads to interpersonal acceptance. Several interviewees expressed their impression considering the broader working collective which offered an insight to company's culture. Noteworthy, when tackling the risks and failures, the company consults as well their customers. The responses of majority research participants confirmed that mistakes are considered as an opportunity to learn from them and implement changes. The associates claim to be supporting each other.

»Throughout my career I have identified myself with the company, the company is of great value. It is very important that the company has a culture and we think that this level of culture is very high. Our conflict sensors are at a very high level. In some companies, conflicts must be severe in order to be detected, whereas in our company the conflicts are

detected at early stage and resolved immediately... We work in our production based on the acquired knowledge and experiences over the years... We make changes while making sure it is okay... We weight the decision for ad-hoc changes. Yet, surely we take on as well bigger risks. We had a certain type of machine, now we have started to buy a completely different type. We change entire processes because we feel it is necessary. If the outcome is not fruitful, you also need to learn to accept it.« (Person F)

»Mistakes can be substantial, but we still manage to resolve them. Generally, we do not take huge risks, we priorly perform analysis. It is welcome that when we are embarking on something new that we prepare with an analysis, check risks an opportunities and warn the manager in sense “you know, this and that is potential drawback”. However, we do not avoid all risks. We have already applied to various risky tenders and we did a large extent of renovation of production facility. We risked a lot with this as it could lead to interruptions in the process and delay to fulfill customer orders. We still decided to pursue it and prepared for it as much as possible. When you propose an innovative idea, the manager also gets involved and helps to assess the risk. If the risk is too great versus the benefit, logically we will not go for it. But the leader is open to it.« (Person D)

»When I find out that I have made a mistake, I am usually saddened by it, and emotion is shared by my leaders... Clearly, mistakes happen, mostly because of superficiality. They prefer to see we take the already tried out approaches.« (Person E)

»We face risks and mistakes daily. 50% depends on the situation. Sometimes we are all careful, whereas sometimes we say: "we will go ahead, we will try". We have to conquer this new technology. If we do not try, we will not understand what the unknowns are, to what degree we have grown... Sometimes we also take a certain risk. By this we also grow personally and develop in our work... At the college meeting, we communicate what point we have reached. When the project was not so successful, we have an immediate debate. One suggests another approach, the other perhaps to try another material. We call our supplier to tell him what are the results of the measurements. Then the supplier suggests something else, we look at the composition of the product and whether it will work and then we seek for holistical solution... We never get scared, we do not stay at that point “ok, now this project is over”, but we move forward. Out of the mistakes we want to implement some changes.« (Person A)

»There are always risks and mistakes in this work. There is no such attitude from a superior that one would feel fear if you do something wrong. It is normal that certain steps go in the wrong direction and then it turns out that there is no solution in this direction. But then let's talk about what is the reason it was not the right way. However, there is no pressure that one would not dare to proceed in his work or that he would want to ask 300 times for confirmation. We are able to experiment even with a chance of errors, because you cannot do without it. There is no progress without mistakes.« (Person C)

»We have a relatively large number of mistakes. Not intentionally, it is due to such a diverse production where we do not make 10 different products but rather 10,000 different products. So it is normal that mistakes happen. I would say it is a very tolerant environment. They try to ensure that mistakes are not repeating. Meeting is made, the leader sits down with the people who made the mistakes. He explains to them the problem and they try to solve all these problems on the spot.« (Person B)

»We all make mistakes, but we want it to happen only once. To learn something from this... I always want the mistake to be identified as early as feasible. That we do not spend time eliminating the consequence, but rather that it is found in the beginning. It does not make sense to set extra control in the end, but to find the root cause of where this error occurs and to establish the conditions that it does not repeat... I agree with a thoughtful risk. To gather all possible information upfront, but of course in the end some risk remains. It depends on the field, but the employees often come to ask for advice because they do not want to take the risk. Then I try to get them thinking what is the consequence. Through questions - if there is such a consequence, what would you do?« (Person H)

»In my opinion it is best that the one who makes a mistake as well corrects it. That is how we learn the most... If he can, he will fix it himself, otherwise the whole team will grab it and we will do it together.« (Person I)

»We encourage self-control so that every worker looks at and checks the product at different stages... If we have a project limited in time, we shorten something and go in the X direction, which will still be acceptable, we give it a try. However, if we know that the new method will take us a week, then we do not take the risk because we will miss the deadline. There may be opportunities later on. We take a certain percentage of new products or components for ourselves. And even after the dispatch we can later continue to develop this new thing we envisioned.« (Person G)

According to the employees the leaders and team members support their innovative ideas through personal engagement, coaching and sharing of their lessons learnt. One interviewee mentions as well moral support. Moreover, three people claim that the leader supports to promote the idea and ensure resources. Nonetheless, the engagement might differ depending on the interest and benefit of the idea for the broader community.

»If it will also be useful for the leader, he cooperates, guides and provides support to continue progressing on the matter.« (Person E)

»The leader always gives his opinion and you receive feedback. Of course, if it seems logical to him, he helps a lot in bringing things forward, he also engages with his superiors. Otherwise, in general company setting, there is support to some extent. Everyone loves to work in their field. Not everyone is happiest if you interfere with their idea in their field.« (Person D)

»Training is provided by the director and the technical head. Everyone also supports you with their knowledge and experience from their field. We learn together.« (Person A)

»For the most part, everyone is very interested in new ideas and is happy to offer help, even if you do not assign them to the team. As soon as they hear about your problem they share their view if they have an idea. We have very open relationships, we all know for practically everyone what they do and where they might have problems. I must say that we are very conscious collectively. That is in terms of aid, selfless sharing of knowledge, information and ideas.« (Person C)

»When an innovative idea is initiated, the leader encourages it to be done as soon as possible. So, he also engages or facilitates the steps, also talks to co-workers... To some extent we discuss the problem together, then it continues to be reported.« (Person B)

»I encourage them to contribute, we talk extensively about our challenges. Everyone contributes something and together we make a proposal. Most innovative ideas are brought however by those who are newly employed. Us who have been in the company for a long time sometimes do not see opportunities that much.« (Person J)

»We provide verbal encouragement. Every idea is also rewarded, but I would like to highlight more the following – my approach is to try to implement, even if it is not the most promising idea or not a priority. We try to bring the idea to life. This seems important to me, in such way it is the greatest confirmation and recognition for the initiator of the idea.« (Person F)

»If it is necessary to move forward, I help to secure financial resources. I can decide up to certain financial limits, if it is necessary to go to a higher level, the idea is presented to them. If I believe in an idea, I definitely help.« (Person H)

»I help them write an innovative proposal, properly design it if necessary. This also helps to get any additional idea, I share as well my experiences since I have been here for a long time. Usually, on a personal level, we have a lot of fun with our colleagues.« (Person I).

»A moral support, I stand behind him. You praise him for doing something well. We give it a try and then you follow up, it is important not to forget about it. In two days you ask him how he is progressing. If he needs any help, I support him. We also connect with other departments if it needed. For example, we call the developer to approach and resolve the matter together. One cannot cover everything, it is too complex.« (Person G)

Inquiry about leader's support to employee's personal development and innovative work behavior pointed out the importance of knowledge sharing among the associates and understanding how others work. Several interviewees mention job rotation as frequent method, which we understand as correlation to understanding better other people's work and gaining knowledge of the end-to-end process. On the other hand, one leader indicated that

job rotation addressed the followers needs. The company offers diverse trainings based on employee wishes, yet one employee believes there is no advanced system or formal objective for enhancing personal development.

»If I express an interest for an additional training, the company pays for that education. Otherwise, my leader shares her knowledge without any problems and shows me many things on her own initiative. She wants to ensure that in case she is not here, everything runs smoothly. Basically, I know for a lot of people here in the office what and how they work, even though it is not my job. They share this knowledge, we trust each other.« (Person D)

»He encourages me. He shares his suggestions and experiences with me.« (Person A)

»We have the chance to get an additional education, for instance through workshops and seminars that are on the Internet. Moreover, the company also procures certain magazines or acquires professional support.« (Person C)

»When it comes to encouraging workers to do different things and different jobs, we see that a lot here. I would dare to say that 20-30% of production employees know how to work in 50% of all production jobs. It is very flexible in this perspective.« (Person B)

»There are many opportunities for promotion in this company, including exchanges between departments.« (Person J)

»We are performing some trainings, we also bring in professional support. Last year we hosted a reknown psychologist to give us more breadth - motivation, the role of the employee in the company in a broader context.« (Person F)

»Certain co-workers can do a lot of things. I definitely enable those who have the opportunity or desire to learn elsewhere. So they can rotate between departments. Some people like machines and if they are content with their work they will be more successful there. Others prefer manual labor, so we put those people to such functions. There is a lot to do here, we try to listen to their wishes and needs.« (Person I)

»It seems to me that we do not have an advanced system in terms of personal development. Ever since we have an open office, you can ask anything at any time. However, I think that some topics would be good to discuss behind closed doors. If you want to achieve this, you have to make an effort or find the appropriate moment. They want us all to grow, but we do not have a defined actual goal what would be good to achieve in this area. Or I do not know it.« (Person E)

4 DISCUSSION

4.1 Key findings

Based on the conducted qualitative research and review of secondary source data we conclude that all core elements of post-heroic leadership are present in the selected company. We have been able to identify patterns in participant's responses showing the presence of all six elements proposed by Dierendonck (2011). The responses revealed the highest extent of interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, empowerment and humility. Slightly lower share of interviewees indicated stewardship, whereas authenticity was the least directly highlighted trait. However, the reportings of ability to share honest criticism and argumentation demonstrated as well ability to express their »true self«. At minimum one of the five leaders demonstrated directly the higher ethics or promoted verbally a moral code to employees.

The provided illustrative examples from interviewees' worklife in ELTAS d.o.o. demonstrate as well the presence of employee innovative work behavior which we instated as our dependent variable. Moreover, interviewees indicate this is the case with the broader community in the company. Their stories support the findings of Drucker (1985), namely the innovation is focused and bases on analysis of opportunities, mainly reported are process needs, incongruities and changes in technology. Moreover, the interviewees show through same examples their belief in the improvement that the innovations will bring to their work and therefore they succeed to reach the purpose, which confirms Rogers' claims (1995).

Per our observation, the business orientation of the company demands higher adaptability to customer's needs and innovations. The three most theorized innovation types are evident in company's practices. They implement product and process innovations, for which Goedhuys and Veugelers (2008) argue that occur through technology acquisition and improve company growth provided that a company has sufficient access to finance. Secondly, we identify presence of technological process innovations (Garcia & Calantone, 2002) and mainly incremental innovations which bring small changes to improve products performance, lower its costs, enhance its desirability, or simply result in a new model release (Norman & Verganti, 2014). The latter we identify in their smaller adaptations in order to customize their products, whereas we detect the company as well is trying to increase its radical innovations. Furthermore, the statements confirm that company practices open innovation as several stakeholders claim external partners are involved when situation requires. Chesbrough (2006, p 2-3) claims that even companies which excel in research and development should find and connect to external knowledge sources as a core process in innovation.

From the responses of interviewees it is evident that leadership style comprehends active listening, respect, seek for engagement of all team members and willingness of leaders to

lead by serving rather than control. The leaders wish to inspire the behavior of their team members and act as a role model. Within reflection on the relationship with the leader, we have detected with two interviewees their identification with the leader which confirms the above. The situational examples provided show an extent of informal leadership among the employees, where they exchange roles based on their expertise or experience; however the employees did not express their leadership explicitly. The participants also testify that leaders show empathy for their personal needs, for instance they support working schedule adjustment to attend personal obligations.

The responses insinuate that leaders acknowledge the importance of creating a community which was recalled in terms of their company, whereas the outside community was not mentioned frequently. Several interviewees expressed that they greatly value the company and therefore strive for its growth. With reference to the feedback received on the affiliation to objectives, we see higher dedication among all interviewees to the shared goals, whereby everyone believes they can make a contribution. The latter is a key factor to successfully build a community (Škerlavaj, 2022). Three interviewees emphasized through examples the sense of belonging to a community, namely through the informal relationships, socializing among workers and perceptions of work as a second home.

The descriptions of the leader-follower relationships and interactions which we analyze throughout the interviews provide ample evidence that leaders opted to replace the priorly experienced practice of strong control and micromanagement with an open communication, advice, sharing knowledge and their past experiences. Majority of interviewees attested that leaders seek for opinion of the full team and employees see their ability to share the influence which is linked with often suggested high level of freedom at their work and sharing the responsibility. All leaders remarked that the persons who works in a certain field or process has the highest knowledge and insight into opportunities for improvement, therefore they fully trust their expertise and believe the whole company can benefit from it. One of the leaders suggested that their associates have a high level of competence and also the production workers require a longer onboarding due to complexity and variability of production processes. We believe this is correlated with the expressed need for constant and additional training, whereby majority of associates explained that company offers employees to choose training suited to their needs and also offers to pay school tuition. Based on the above and prior research of the company through their website and business plan we gather that the company operates in a knowledge-intensive working environment, which creates a higher need for involving more people in resolution process. We argue that identified leadership practices in the company contribute to prone to innovative work behavior. Another argument to support the latter is the comparison between prior and current leadership style recalled by three interviewees. In the last years the company has grown significantly; acquired new customers, technologies and continuously evolved its products in light of the technological advances.

According to the employees, the current leadership style motivates them in terms of autonomy, accountability and sense of being heard and in power to influence the course of action. On a similar note, the leaders want to encourage through their leadership the growth of their followers. As shared by one employee, the leader offers associates enough room to explore the solutions and listens to their ideas. To conclude on the presence of post-heroic leadership in the selected company, we may add that by using a thematic analysis approach we have been able to detect in overall interview responses the consistency with Greenleaf's theory (1970), whereby the leadership emphasizes equality and respectful relationship, leading by example and advocating autonomy, personal growth and well-being. All these elements have been detected within the interviews. Additionally, the identified elements are consistent with Laub's attributes (1999) and several other theories depicted in the first chapter of the thesis.

Through analysis we additionally found that the company's practices are in line with the AMO theoretical framework (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg & Kalleberg, 2000). Namely, the management team strives to enhance employee's skills and knowledge by training and job rotations. The motivation is fostered through knowledge sharing, joint purpose as well as through fair compensation for their extra efforts. The last element of opportunity is influenced by autonomy, teamwork and through participatory communication structure.

To address the second research question on how the post-heroic leaders stimulate employee's innovative work behavior we have received participant's insight into their innovation process. The projects commence with a gathering of the team of experts which make joint decisions in the kick-off meeting as well as throughout the project. Many decisions are often less formalized and taken in a joint verbal discourse as many interviewees report that they call or speak to each other and solve the issue on the spot. With reference to crucial decisions the full team is summoned to reach consent on the way forward. Interviewees therefore emphasize active collaboration, but as well thorough preparation. Several participants indicate that the process is mediated primarily by knowledge sharing, which is not limited exclusively to internal community as the company often engages the external support.

Innovation is carried throughout the processes and it mainly stems from a certain identified problem or desire to make work easier and more efficient. The respondents demonstrate that intrinsic motivation partially drives their seek for new solutions as they feel it is beneficial for the company, their personal growth as well as will make their work easier. We agree with Pink's (2011) motivational elements and believe that storylines suggested by two interviewees help to persuade the followers for the same purpose. Employees have described the communication as persuasive, open, polite and honest. Leaders promote speak-up culture in order to build trust among the full team, which was attested by several interviewees. Some suggest that addition of amusing connotation helps to develop the environment enabling constructive criticism. Interestingly, half of interviewees suggest that open office is a key factor in open communication, namely it supports the knowledge and information sharing.

At the same time it supports the effectiveness of communication and time management as it reduces the number of meetings. In our view it additionally fosters sharing of individual's lessons learnt which was also mentioned by two leaders as an important feedback.

Another identified mediator suggested by half of interviewees is recognition. Namely, the employees see their contributions to collective achievements and report that the management team regularly praises collective efforts in the college meetings. The performance feedback and financial results are shared with all employees as well on bulletin boards. Despite the focus is on team's achievements, one of the leaders highlighted the importance of materializing individual's ideas as the greatest sign of recognition.

Leader's support was identified as key mediating factor in the employee's idea generation as well as up to the phase of implementation. Several interviewees highlighted that the leaders take the time to provide advice, share their knowledge and engage with the management team to secure the necessary resources and knowledge. We understand that the engagement of the leaders does not stem from the motivation to control every aspect as majority of employees display the appreciation for leader's involvement as they trust the leader's knowledge. Moreover, the company uses a method of bulletin boards where innovation proposal forms are placed for everyone to submit their ideas. The feedback of interviewees is rather unified that this is an effective tool and promoted as well by the leaders. The latter offer support to employees with defining their ideas or to elaborate them to a certain stage, designating that they engage already during the creative process. The leader's support is higher when the idea serves a larger community. Noteworthy, the tool for idea submission is bringing higher results as well due to the right level of combination with the financial incentive. The company values the effort of employees and rewards all generated ideas regardless of the final outcome in terms of implementation. Furthermore, several participants mentioned that key factor to bringing an idea to life was to properly present the expected benefits to the team which in our view indicates active idea promotion by its initiators. Consequently, we reason that all three elements of innovative behavior suggested by Janssen (2000) are taking place in the selected company, namely idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization.

Taking into account the above mentioned innovation proposal form it provides a clear structure for idea generation as well as supports further the climate for innovation. During the interviews we have observed through all interviewees' feedbacks that innovative work behavior is perceived as part of their daily job and the supportive values are integrated in the company's culture. Adding this to the intrinsic motivation of interviewees, we believe that foremost the company's organizational culture strengthens the positive relationship between post-heroic leadership and employee innovative work behavior. This brings us to the third research question on the moderators. Interviewed employees agree that the management team has high expectations for innovative behavior which we see encouraged through the above-mentioned tools and practices. Additionally, the strong affiliation with the company's objectives witnessed with majority of interviewees supports to direct the behavior to reach

the desired outcome. On the other hand, the culture entails setting right values and there is a vast number of values suggested by the interviewees. In our view the values of independence, knowledge, teamwork, honesty, help to each other and interpersonal acceptance favour post-heroic leadership more extensively than innovative work behavior.

Majority of interviewees concurred in their impressions on risk approach and dealing with mistakes. Based on the responses captured in prior chapter we conclude that through the existing practice the leaders have established a psychological safety which significantly influences the level of employee innovative work behavior. Namely, the employees are willing to test new methods as they do not fear of failure and rather see it as opportunity to learn. Moreover, it was reported by one interviewee that employees in ELTAS d.o.o. embrace the changes as a constant part of their working life and see them as beneficial. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the teams thoroughly evaluate the risks beforehand and decide on experimentation based on the assessment.

Surprisingly, several suggested traits have led us to conclusion that organizational size as well acts as a moderator, namely the smaller size of the company enables faster and more efficient communication and decision-making. It is evident that everyone knows who they can turn to in order to get an idea or proceed with resolution. In addition, given the smaller size of teams, it is easier for associates to build genuine relationships and they are interested in more socializing events. We would like to see more studies in this respect as we have not encountered research on organizational size as a variable to post-heroic leadership.

While inquiring what would contribute to enhance the individual's innovative work behavior, interviewees were rambling about time constraint, thus we detect time availability as a moderator between the experienced leadership and innovative behavior. Despite that employees are motivated by their leaders they claim that time hinders them to explore opportunities more actively and sometimes decide for same approach in order to spare time or catch the deadline. This does not necessarily represent an organizational factor, however we consider it noteworthy as recalled by several participants.

Despite our initial expectation that job complexity would stand out as greatest moderator in the relationship between post-heroic leadership and employee innovative work behavior, we did not retrieve enough evidence to fully evaluate this in the case of ELTAS d.o.o. Whilst comparing the leadership and innovative practices in simple and complex tasks we observe that post-heroic leadership is present in both circumstances, either through more focus on teamwork or through higher empowerment. Nevertheless, the diversity in the responses did not offer sufficient arguments to confirm that under circumstance of higher complexity employees would resort to more innovative behavior, in spite of such claim by two interviewees.

Lastly, we would like to offer our replica to critiques of post-heroic leadership depicted in first chapter. Based on the interviews with the selected company, we learnt that joint

decision-making was crucial to bring all stakeholders on board and to devote to the joint purpose. One of the leaders indicated that joint decision-making process makes it in fact faster as no additional communication, reasoning or conflict resolution is required afterwards. Therefore, we opt that concern of Schweiger, Muller and Guttel (2020) that consensus is timeconsuming and potentially leads to ineffective decision-making is not valid for ELTAS d.o.o. Nevertheless, from reply of one interviewee we see opportunity to encourage the above practice for financial decisions on material purchase, whereby potential reoccurring meeting could be planned with slightly broader team to address and confirm financial investments based on open innovative proposals.

In addition, through the descriptions from interviewees we see ample evidence of accountability on team level instead of limited to the leaders which is facilitated by clear purpose and identification with company's objectives. Thus, our findings do not concur with Nayab's (2010) criticism that servant leadership hinders accountability due to softer approach. The company as well manages the crisis events collaboratively.

This master thesis offered an insight into practices of the selected company and we have been able to retrieve answers to all three set research questions (Appendix 2). Based on the above captured findings we confirm our basic hypothesis that post-heroic leaders has positive relation to the employee's innovative work behavior. In order to further enhance the positive relation we provide recommendations in the following chapter.

4.2 Recommendations

Recommendations captured are grounded on the literature review and outcomes of the interview sessions. We see presence of core elements of post-heroic leadership, nevertheless for those least recognized we provide advice on how to further upgrade the level throughout the organization.

As denoted by few scholars in first chapter (Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck & Liden, 2019; Nayab, 2010) it takes a long-term journey and commitment to culture of serving others in order for post-heroic leadership to bring the benefit. We recommend this is embedded in the company's culture as well as to raise more awareness and educate all associates on their leadership skills. The managers have the feasibility to set the example and convey to employees the expectation that everyone can and should sometimes take the leading role, depending on the situation, expertise and requirements. The latter also contributes to the employees' personal development as only through new and challenging tasks one can learn. By raising this expectation, this may unleash the colleagues who have persisted in the backstage.

One of the interviewees commented that the communication is open, however one needs to make an effort in order to be able to address certain topics more privately. An offered biweekly or monthly one to one meetings by the managers could be a simple response to the

mentioned shortcoming. In order to facilitate small group meetings some companies dedicate a small glass box meeting place in size of two people. Besides, we see the latter as potential facilitator to enhancing authenticity as leaders would have a forum to connect personally, express their honest thoughts and commitments as well as display vulnerability. Furthermore, the company is expanding its workforce which may test their well established and effective communication practices. As larger collective might not enable such direct and frequent communication, it is recommendable for company to prepare its future strategy. Tools such as quick employee pulse surveys could contribute to evaluate the climate and retrieve feedback whether communication effectiveness is still maintained.

Providing less structure can be beneficial in terms of speed and flexibility, however we propose to review what additional permanent structure could support to increase the awareness of overall project status. For instance, designing a common template how to capture key project points of common interest with interdependencies and due dates. These should be available as well by any external companies offering project management tools. The company could establish a sharepoint or other platform for storage of project information and crucial updates accessible to all employees. The crucial factor is to find the right balance in order not to increase bureaucracy beyond its benefit. In addition, one of the employees advised to implement short weekly meetings. In order to optimize the learning from mistakes, we recommend as agenda point to include post-project evaluation or reflection on lessons learnt to help future projects.

In order to drive a certain individual behavior the company ought to set the right values. We recommend defining the suitable values formally and conveying them to all the associates through communication channels as well as through visual material, for instance with posters expressing the values in the meeting rooms or in the offices. The values oriented towards innovative work behavior could be for instance: go big, be bold; different makes us feel alive; choose to explore your way; obsessed with knowledge and new technology. On a similar note, the company may consider elaborating the organization's culture profile which could also help them in the recruitment process in order to employ people who embrace such values. The latter could comprehend a set of guidelines to maintain the moral code as focus in the worker's relationships as well as encourage authenticity. Additionally, we see this as a step further in strengthening the community in the company.

With relation to bolstering community, we see that the company effectively fosters connection between associates through open office, occasional gatherings and organized events. The interviewees themselves express a desire for continuation and increase of such events. Since the company is innovation and project oriented, the management team can explore option of combining social component with learning. Namely, a team-building event may include practice workshops on innovation process, mastering self-management or leadership skills, teamwork tools and methods or more specialized training on project management. Perhaps, also a visit to any modern technology manufacturing company of an industry of their interest could enhance new ideas. It would offer the employees a dedicated

time to leave all pending activities and reflect specifically on their processes. We iterate as well the gatherings from first chapter that servant leadership is claimed to extend to broader society, thus suggest that company defines how their environmental sustainability aspiration can connect and engage the company with external community or specifically what role the company plays in the broader society context. On the other hand, the company as well could source volunteers from the external community in order to mitigate the time constraint of certain associates.

Taking into consideration that the company already customizes training process to suit the employees' needs, we recommend keeping this practice and enriching it with internal mentorship or coaching programmes which are a well-established method in last decades. As mentioned by one of the interviewees, the onboarding of newcomers is complex and the gatherings from interviews suggest the coaching is running informally with the leader and between coworkers. However, a newly employed associate could be assigned an additional mentor besides the leader who would support to pass on the knowledge, connect him with the right coworkers and build relationships which additionally supports his independence, overview of the full process across the departments and lastly his personal development. Ideally, the mentor would be from another function to facilitate cross-functional collaboration and break down silos.

With respect to developing people we echoe the suggestion of one of the interviewees that the strive is to implement yearly process of personal development conversations of leaders with employees as well in production department in order to explore employees' ambitions and seek benefit as well for the company in terms of fulfilling the resource or knowledge gaps. The stakeholders should build a vision what the company aims to achieve in employee's development and install it in company's objectives so as to foster commitment from the management as well as from the employees.

Given the nature of products of ELTAS d.o.o. we recommend to explore the possibilities offered by hackathons. We see opportunity for the company to organize a hackathon event involving university students with this major who potentially could bring new ideas and work together with internal associates. At the same time, it would offer the company potential talented candidates for future employment needs. Nevertheless, the company uses a technique of gathering innovative proposals which has proven as very effective. One of the interviewees suggested that company could consider allocating more resources to materialize the proposals even faster.

Elaborating further on possibilities to facilitate innovative work behavior we recommend a technique of time management so as to address highlighted time constraint of employees which potentially hinders individual's generation of new ideas. The company can define a certain hour in the day which would be reserved as so-called focus time for innovations. The latter should be blocked in employee's daily calendars. This recommendation could as well support any excessive communication which may distort the effectiveness or ability of an

individual to carry out certain tasks without interruptions. As cited by Škerlavaj (2022) disciplined work routines such as above proposal are potential contributors to the resilience of the team.

The path towards post-heroic leadership demands a certain adaption not merely in an individual's identity, but as well in the organizational context and structure to support formation of effective leader-follower relationships. Hereby, we encourage scholars to raise clarity on what are all the organizational structure types suitable to enable such leadership. The ELTAS d.o.o. organizational structure at first glance sets as functional, nevertheless during the interviews some of the employees have reported that they hold no direct manager or see several persons as their leads. The lower rate of formality comes in the wake of the rapid growth from a small to medium-sized company as well as can indicate the relationship between leaders and followers. The claimed higher level of employee's autonomy and input suggests unformal positioning towards horizontal structure. Furthermore, the interviews have revealed the strong interdependence between the functions, whereby the associates acknowledge responsibility towards the full team and not solely their manager. Considering that research was performed in a Slovenian company, we see valuable to recollect the findings of Verle, Markič, Kodrič and Gorenc Zoran (2014, p. 932) that in Slovenia traditional hierarchical forms are prevailing in business settings. Their study however demonstrates that horizontal organizational structure facilitates through effect on company's performance and growth on the market the higher value added per employee, which is in line with the expressed strive of ELTAS d.o.o. senior and middle management. As the company expands its business whilst encouraging employee's proactive and higher input, it may consider reorganizing its structure towards horizontal, team-based or matrix form. Changes to organizational structures and administrative systems are considered as managerial innovations (Damanpour & Aravind, 2012, p. 424-427).

4.3 Limitations and further research

Our research and findings are qualified by several limitations which suggest future research is required in order to provide utmost clarity on the concept of post-heroic leadership, its measurement and design. Firstly, the qualitative method and interviews can lead to lower objectivity. We have carefully selected the sample of employees and purposely chosen the distribution of leaders and followers. Five leaders have been interviewed which represent a 50% share of the management team, thus we could assume a fair level of generalization of the results for the selected company. Nevertheless, in order to generalize the results to entire population broader samples would be required which was subject of our limitation to access larger resources. In this aspect, we invite scholars to conduct research in various business organizations across industries or in public organizations and compare observations. Our research could not identify cultural aspects as potential moderators, thus we invite scholars to explore this further through multinational research.

Secondly, Bryman and Bell (2007) and Kothari (2004, p. 99) warn of personal bias of the researcher, namely with regards to observations and data interpretation which depend on what researcher decides to focus on. Moreover, the interviews were held in Slovenian language and translated to English for the purpose of this master thesis, thus potentially causing small discrepancy in articulation; however we consider this limitation minimal.

Due to conducting research in one middle-sized company, we are not in position to disprove the claims of Grint (2010) that post-heroic alternatives are more suitable for smaller scale communities. We invite scholars to investigate and compare the findings in different sized companies.

Despite the stated limitations we believe this thesis research provides valuable inputs to the understanding of the relation of two key constructs, especially in the Slovenian private business sector context and potentially serves as an exemplar practice case and learning for other interested companies.

CONCLUSION

While the concept of post-heroic leadership is gaining prominence in the academic community and has been associated to outcomes such as team performance and job satisfaction, the empirical evidence on mediating mechanisms and especially moderators to innovative work behavior is still in its nacent phase. The companies' higher orientation to innovation is coupled with strategies of creating products to create more demand. Hence it is in the interest of the organizations to develop strong and resilient teams instead of single individuals and to adjust leadership practices to reach full knowledge potential. Many organizations' survival has been utterly tested during the world pandemic which leads us to conclusion that organizations ought to incorporate better scenario planning in order to be prepared for future challenges. The latter is not routinized and requires innovative behavior of the full team. This thesis initially presents the scientific literature standpoints as to the post-heroic leadership construct, its key elements and two key perspectives of servant and shared leadership which support our claim that post-heroic leaders are better equipped to deliver new solutions.

The literature findings comprehend a set of mediators and outcomes of postheroic leadership, whereas there is a smaller share of studies concentrating on relation to innovative work behavior. Among few, Hoch (2013) highlights collaborative decision-making and shared responsibility of outcome as characteristics of shared leadership and associates it to team innovative behavior. Škerlavaj (2022) suggests that post-heroic leaders facilitate innovative working behaviors through »autonomy, mastery, purpose and prosociality« and it is the leadership that pushes innovation to performance.

Our conducted research in company ELTAS d.o.o. confirms that it has progressively changed the culture to support innovative endeavours, open communication with no fear of

presenting opposite opinion, collaboration and shared responsibility. In order to identify whether the company's managers use post-heroic leadership practices we have compared the responses with the conceptual models summarized in first two chapters. Interview findings suggest that post-heroic leadership core elements are present in the selected company and play a crucial role in enhancing employee innovative work behavior. The qualitative research as well validated majority of the theoretical findings presented in this thesis.

Considering our built conceptual model, we confirm independent variable of post-heroic leadership is expressed most strongly through interpersonal acceptance, listening, job autonomy and freedom, providing direction, empowerment and humility, followed by stewardship, shared responsibility and authenticity. Its relation to dependent variable of employee innovative work behavior is mediated by knowledge sharing, active collaboration, external support engagement, intrinsic motivation, building of purpose, trust in leader, his support and lastly by recognition. Furthermore, within the settings of selected company we have observed that relationship was uphold and the strength influenced by moderators of organizational culture and psychological safety, followed by smaller extent of organizational size and time availability.

The objectives of the thesis have been met as well as qualitative research has successfully addressed all three research questions. As the outcome we are able to confirm our basic hypothesis that post-heroic leadership is positively related to the employee's innovative work behavior. The purpose of this thesis has therefore been reached, namely the research has helped us to understand how leaders promote employee's innovative work behavior and which organizational factors need to be considered and co-developed as they affect the strength of the relationship between the two studied constructs.

Following the analysis of interviews we have summarized the key findings and provided few practical recommendations which the company may consider as it sets its path towards further growth. The latter comprehend firstly on the educational component of the leaders who can further contribute to the responsibility of all stakeholders by raising awareness of leadership as a practice to be performed by everyone. Secondly, recommendations entail smaller enhancements to the structure and communication, training and development of employees. Thirdly, advice is offered to strengthen the community through formalization of values which support post-heroic leadership as well as innovative work behavior.

Consequently, our replica to the recent dilemma is that the organizations do not require single heroic leaders, but rather install heroism in the entire collective in terms of bravery to take decisions and courage to think out of the box. Common findings suggest that one of the best strategies to sustain employees' engagement and innovative work behavior is to ensure their ideas are materialized as much as feasible and their contribution to collective achievement is properly recognized and rewarded.

Up to date, there is a larger body of research which theoretically defines servant leadership and shared leadership. To support further learnings and conceptualization we invite scholars to enrich the empirical research on post-heroic leadership construct across industries, different sized companies and including cultural variables. In order to achieve higher generalization, it would be beneficial to see more quantitative research with larger sample size. Our research as well showed that in the case of ELTAS d.o.o. organizational size was moderating the relationship between post-heroic leadership and innovative work behaviour; however we would like to see more scientific studies to correlate this finding to a larger context.

To conclude, control has been a norm to ensure effectiveness for centuries and therefore a change requires a broader social mindset shift which can be achieved only on a long run. Hereby, we recall of the saying by famous Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu: »A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves.« (c. 565 B.C.) (Peterson, 2018). In order to find the right solution companies should look back to the history and then introduce something different to evoke progress. The results of our research indicate that employees' expectations are better fulfilled through post-heroic leadership, thus it has a promising potential to engage the society to achieve common good.

REFERENCE LIST

1. Amabile, T. M., Conti, R., Coon, H., Lazenby, J. & Herron, M. (1996). Assessing the work environment for creativity. *Academy of Management Journal*, 39(5), 1154–1184.
2. Amabile, T. M., Schatzel, E., Moneta, G. & Kramer, S. (2004). Leader Behaviors and the Work Environment for Creativity: Perceived Leader Support. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15, 5–32.
3. Anderson, N., De Dreu, C. K. W. & Nijstad, B. A. (2004). The routinization of innovation research: a constructively critical review of the state-of-the-science. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25, 147–173.
4. Appelbaum, E., Bailey, T., Berg, P. & Kalleberg, A. (2000). *Manufacturing advantage: Why high-performance work systems pay off*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
5. Axtell, C., Holman, D. & Wall, T. (2006). Promoting innovation: A change study. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 79, 509–516.
6. Barbuto, J. E. & Wheeler, D. W. (2006). Scale development and construct clarification of servant leadership. *Group & Organization Management*, 31, 300–326.
7. Bennett, N. & Lemoine, J. (2014). What VUCA really means for you. *Harvard Business Review*, 92(1/2), 27–27.
8. Bennett, J. V. & Murakami, E. T. (2016). Heroic Leadership Redefined in the United States Border Context: Cases Studies of Successful Principals in Arizona and Texas. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 44 (1), 5–23.

9. Bhandari, P. (2021, March 1). *Mediator vs. Moderator Variables | Differences & Examples*. Retrieved on June 4, 2022 from <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/mediator-vs-moderator/>
10. Bilal, A. R., Fatima, T. & Imran, M. (2019). Does shared leadership fosters taking charge behaviors? A post-heroic leadership perspective in the public sector higher educational institutes. *International Journal of Public Leadership*, 15, 137–154.
11. Bohl, K. (2019). Leadership as Phenomenon: Reassessing the Philosophical Ground of Leadership Studies. *Philosophy of Management*, 18(3), 273–292.
12. Borocki, J., Tekic, A. & Cvijić, M. (2013). Measuring Organizational Innovativeness. In: Bullinger, H. J. & Spath, D. (2013). *Challenges for the Future – Engineering Management*. Novi Sad, Serbia: Faculty of Technical Sciences; Stuttgart, Germany : Fraunhofer IAO; Vienna, Austria: DAAAM International.
13. Bou Reslan, F. Y., Garanti, Z. & Emeagwali, O. L. (2021). The effect of servant leadership on innovative work behavior and employee knowledge sharing in the Latvian ICT sector. *Baltic Journal of Management*, 16(5), 729–744.
14. Broni, G. & Velentzas, J. (2012). Corporate Governance, Control and Individualism as a Definition of Business Success. The Idea of a “Post - Heroic” Leadership. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 1, 61–70.
15. Brooks, A. W., Gino, F. & Schweitzer, M. E. (2015). Smart People Ask for (My) Advice: Seeking Advice Boosts Perceptions of Competence. *Management Science* 61(6), 1421–1435.
16. Campbell, J. P., Gasser, M. B. & Oswald, F. L. (1996). The substantive nature of job performance variability. In: Murphy, K.R. (1996), *Individual difference and behaviours in organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 258–299.
17. Carlson, C. C. & Wilmot, W. W. (2006). *Innovation: The five disciplines for creating what customers want*. New York: Crown Business.
18. Carson, J., Tesluk, P. & Marrone, J. (2007). Shared leadership in teams: An investigation of antecedent conditions and performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50, 1217–1234.
19. Chesbrough, H., Vanhaverbeke, W. & West, J. (2006). *Open Innovation: A New Paradigm for Understanding Industrial Innovation*. Berkeley: University of California.
20. Chiu, C. Y., Owens, B. & Tesluk, P. (2016). Initiating and Utilizing Shared Leadership in Teams: The Role of Leader Humility, Team Proactive Personality, and Team Performance Capability. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 101(12), 1705–1720.
21. Collinson, M. (2018). What’s new about Leadership-as-Practice? *Leadership*, 14(3), 363–370.
22. Collinson, D. & Collinson, M. (2009). ‘Blended leadership’: Employee perspectives on effective leadership in the UK further education sector. *Leadership*, 5(3), 365–380.
23. Crevani, L., Lindgren, M. & Packendorff, J. (2007). Shared leadership: A post-heroic perspective on leadership as a collective construction. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 3, 40–67.

24. Crossan, M. M. & Apaydin, M. (2010). A multi-dimensional framework of organizational innovation: A systematic review of the literature. *Journal of Management Studies*, 47, 1154–1191.
25. Damanpour, F. (2017). *Organizational Innovation*. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press.
26. Damanpour, F. & Aravind, D. (2012). Managerial Innovation: Conceptions, Processes, and Antecedents. *Management and Organization Review*, 8(2), 423–454.
27. Damanpour, F. & Gopalakrishnan, S. (2001). The Dynamics of the Adoption of Product and Process Innovations in Organizations. *Journal of Management Studies*, 38(1), 45–65.
28. Damanpour, F. & Wischnevsky, J. D. (2006). Research on innovation in organizations: Distinguishing innovation-generating from innovation-adopting organizations. *Journal of Engineering and Technology Management*, 23, 269–291.
29. Day, D. V., Fleenor, J. W., Atwater, L. E., Sturm, R. E. & McKee, R. A. (2014). Advances in leader and leadership development: A review of 25 years of research and theory. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 25(1), 63–82.
30. De Jong, J. P. J. (2007). *Individual innovation: The connection between leadership and employees' innovative work behaviour*. Zoetermeer: EIM, University of Twente.
31. De Jong, J. P. J. & Den Hartog, D. N. (2010). Measuring innovative work behaviour. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 19(1), 23–26.
32. D'Innocenzo, L., Mathieu, J. & Kukenberger, M. (2016). A Meta-Analysis of Different Forms of Shared Leadership-Team Performance Relations. *Journal of Management*, 42(7), 1964–1991.
33. Drucker, P. F. (1985). The discipline of innovation. *Harvard Business Review*, 63(3), 67–72. Reprint August 2002, retrieved March 5, 2022 from <https://hbr.org/2002/08/the-discipline-of-innovation>
34. Dutton, J. E., Spreitzer, G. M. (2014). *How to Be a Positive Leader: Small Actions, Big Impact*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett - Koehler Publishers, Inc.
35. Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(2), 350–383.
36. Edmondson, A. M. & Mortensen, M. (2021, April 19). *What psychological safety looks like in a hybrid workplace*. Harvard Business Review Digital Articles, 1-7. Retrieved on May 5, 2022 from <https://web-p-ebscohost-com.nukweb.nuk.uni-lj.si/ehost/detail/detail?vid=3&sid=400dd098-21bb-451a-9fc4-2fdb689918e4%40redis&bdata=Jmxhbm9c2wmc210ZT1laG9zdC1saXZl#db=bth&AN=149997865>
37. ELTAS, d.o.o. (2022). *Business Plan of the company ELTAS d.o.o.* (internal document). Šentjernej: ELTAS, d.o.o.
38. Ethimiou, O., Allison, S. T. & Franco, Z. E. (2018). Heroism and wellbeing in the 21st century: Recognizing our personal heroic imperative. In Efthimiou, O., Allison, S.T. &

- Franco, Z.E. (Eds.). *Heroism and wellbeing in the 21st Century: Applied and emerging perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
39. Eva, N., Robin, M., Sendjaya, S., van Dierendonck, D. & Liden, R. C. (2019). Servant leadership: a systematic review and call for future research. *Leadership Quarterly*, 30(1), 111–132.
 40. Faraz, N., Mughal, M., Ahmed, F., Raza, A. & Iqbal, M. (2019). The Impact of Servant Leadership on Employees' Innovative Work Behaviour-Mediating Role of Psychological Empowerment. *International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration*, 5(3), 10–21.
 41. Fletcher, J. K. (2004). The paradox of postheroic leadership: An essay on gender, power, and transformational change. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15(5), 647–661.
 42. Fulop, L. (2012). Leadership, clinician managers and a thing called 'hybridity'. *Journal of Health Organization and Management*, 26(5), 578–604.
 43. Gandolfi, F. & Stone, S. (2018). Leadership, Leadership Styles, and Servant Leadership. *Journal of Management and Research*, 18, 261–269.
 44. Garcia, R. & Calantone, R. (2002). A critical look at technological innovation typology and innovativeness terminology: a literature review. *The Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 19, 110–132.
 45. Gebert, D., Boerner, S. & Lanwehr, R. (2003). The risks of autonomy - Empirical evidence for the necessity of a balance management in promoting organizational innovativeness. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 12(1), 41–49.
 46. Godwill, E. A. (2015). *Fundamentals of Research Methodology: A Holistic Guide for Research Completion, Management, Validation and Ethics*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc.
 47. Goedhuys, M. & Veugelers, R. (2008). Innovation Strategies, Process and Product Innovations and Growth: Firm-Level Evidence from Brazil. *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics*, 23(4), 516–529.
 48. Graen, G. B. & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 6(2), 219–247.
 49. Greenleaf, R. K. (1970). *The servant as leader*. Newton Centre: The Robert K. Greenleaf Center.
 50. Greenleaf, R. K. (1996). *On becoming a servant-leader*. San Francisco: Josey-Bass Publishers.
 51. Grint, K. (2010). The Sacred in Leadership: Separation, Sacrifice and Silence. *Organization Studies*, 31(1), 89–107.
 52. Gronn, P. (2002). Distributed Leadership as a Unit of Analysis. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 13, 423–451.
 53. Gronn, P. (2009). From Distributed to Hybrid Leadership Practice. In: Harris, A. (eds) *Distributed Leadership. Studies in Educational Leadership*, vol 7. Dordrecht: Springer.

54. Hackman, J. R. & Wageman, R. (2005). A Theory of Team Coaching. *Academy of Management Review*, 30, 269–287.
55. Hale, J. R. & Fields, D. L. (2007). Exploring servant leadership across cultures: A study of followers in Ghana and the USA. *Leadership*, 3(4), 397–417.
56. Hallinger, P. & Heck, R. H. (2010). Leadership for Learning: Does Collaborative Leadership Make a Difference in School Improvement? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38(6), 654–678.
57. Han, Y. S. (2019). The Locus of Innovation: A Literature Review. *Journal of Accounting – Business & Management, Journal of Accounting – Business & Management*, 26(1), 63–69.
58. Harter, N. W., Heuvel, S. M. (2020). New Perspectives on Heroic/Postheroic Leadership and on Heroic Followership. *International Leadership Journal*, 12(1), 8–25.
59. Higgs, M. (2009). The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Leadership and Narcissism. *Journal of Change Management*, 9(2), 165–178.
60. Hoch, J. E. (2013). Shared leadership and innovation: The role of vertical leadership and employee integrity. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 28(2), 159–174.
61. Hoch, J. E., Bommer, W. H., Dulebohn, J. H. & Wu, D. (2016). Do ethical, authentic, and servant leadership explain variance above and beyond transformational leadership? A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Management*, 44(2), 501–529.
62. Hu, J., Erdogan, B., Jiang, K., Bauer, T. N. & Liu, S. (2018). Leader humility and team creativity: The role of team information sharing, psychological safety, and power distance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 103(3), 313–323.
63. Huang, L., Krasikova, D. V. & Liu, D. (2016). I can do it, so can you: The role of leader creative self-efficacy in facilitating follower creativity. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 132, 49–62.
64. Hughes, D., Lee, A., Tian, A., Newman, A. & Legood, A. (2018). Leadership, creativity, and innovation: A critical review and practical recommendations. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 29, 549–569.
65. Hülsheger, U., Anderson, N. & Salgado, J. (2009). Team-Level Predictors of Innovation at Work: A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis Spanning Three Decades of Research. *The Journal of applied psychology*, 94(5), 1128–1145.
66. Hunter, S. T. & Cushenbery, L. (2011). Leading for innovation: Direct and indirect influences. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 13(3), 248–265.
67. Jackson, S. (2000). A qualitative evaluation of shared leadership barriers, drivers and recommendations. *Journal of Management in Medicine*, 14(3/4), 166–178.
68. Janssen, O. (2000). Job demands, perceptions of effort-reward fairness, and innovative work behavior. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 73, 287–302.
69. Janssen, O. (2005). The joint impact of perceived influence and supervisor supportiveness on employee innovative behaviour. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 78(4), 573–580.
70. Jiménez-Jiménez, D. & Sanz-Valle, R. (2011). Innovation, organizational learning, and performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 64(4), 408–417.

71. Kahn, W. (1990). Psychological Conditions of Personal Engagement and Disengagement at Work. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4), 692–724.
72. Kanter, R. M. (2006). Innovation: The Classic Traps. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(11), 73–83.
73. Kelan, E. & Wratil, P. (2017). Post-Heroic Leadership, Tempered Radicalism and Senior Leaders as Change Agents for Gender Equality: Change Agents for Gender Equality. *European Management Review*, 15, 5–18.
74. Khan, M. H., Williams, J., Williams, P. & French, E. (2021). Post-heroic heroism: Embedded masculinities in media framing of Australian business leadership. *Leadership*, 18(2), 298–327.
75. Klasmeier, K. N. & Rowold, J. A. (2020). A multilevel investigation of predictors and outcomes of shared leadership. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 41(9), 915–930.
76. Kleysen, R. F. & Street, C. T. (2001). Towards a multi-dimensional measure of individual innovative behavior. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 2, 284–296.
77. Kolleck, N. (2013). Social network analysis in innovation research: using a mixed methods approach to analyze social innovations. *European Journal of Futures Research*, 1(25), 1–9.
78. Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research Methodology : Methods & Techniques: Vol. 2nd rev. ed.* New Delhi: New Age International.
79. Krause, D. E. (2004). Influence-based leadership as a determinant of the inclination to innovate and of innovation-related behaviors - An empirical investigation. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15, 79–102.
80. Krog, C. & Govender, K. (2015). The relationship between servant leadership and employee empowerment, commitment, trust and innovative behaviour: A project management perspective. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 13, 154–169.
81. Langhof, J. G. & Guldenberg, S. (2020). Servant Leadership: A systematic literature review—toward a model of antecedents and outcomes. *German Journal of Human Resource Management*, 34(1), 32–68.
82. Laub, J. (1999). Assessing the servant organization: Development of the Servant Organizational Leadership (SOLA) instrument. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60(2), 308.
83. Liden, R., Wayne, S., Liao, C. & Meuser, J. (2014) Servant leadership and serving culture: influence on individual and unit performance. *Academy of Management Journal* 57(5), 1434–1452.
84. Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Meuser, J. D., Hu, J., Junfeng, W. & Liao, C. (2015). Servant leadership: Validation of a short form of the SL-28. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 26(2), 254–269.
85. Liden, R., Wayne, S., Zhao, H. & Henderson, D. (2008). Servant Leadership: Development of a Multidimensional Measure and Multi-level Assessment. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19, 161–177.

86. Liu, H., Gao, S., Xing, H., Xu, L., Wang, Y. & Yu, Q. (2022), Shared leadership and innovative behavior in scientific research teams: a dual psychological perspective. *Chinese Management Studies*, 16(2), 466–492.
87. Mack, O., Khare, A., Kramer, A. & Burgartz, T. (Eds.). (2015). *Managing in a VUCA world*. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
88. Mathieu, J. E., Kukenberger, M. R., D’Innocenzo, L. & Reilly, G. (2015). Modeling Reciprocal Team Cohesion-Performance Relationships, as Impacted by Shared Leadership and Members’ Competence. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 100(3), 713–734.
89. McCrimmon, M. (2010, February). *Is heroic leadership all bad?* Retrieved on April 24, 2022 from <https://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/is-heroic-leadership-all-bad/>
90. Morgeson, F. P., DeRue, D. S. & Karam, E. P. (2010). Leadership in teams: A functional approach to understanding leadership structures and processes. *Journal of Management*, 36(1), 5–39.
91. Nayab, N. (2010, July 06). *Servant Leadership Theory Strengths and Weaknesses*. Retrieved on April 28, 2022 from <http://www.brighthub.com/office/home/articles/73511.aspx>
92. Norman, D. A. & Verganti, R. (2014). Incremental and Radical Innovation: Design Research vs. Technology and Meaning Change. *Design Issues*, 30(1), 78–96.
93. Northouse, P. G. (2018). *Leadership: Theory and Practice*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
94. OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2005). *Oslo Manual: Proposed Guidelines for Collecting and Interpreting Innovation Data*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
95. OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2015). *The Innovation Imperative: Contributing to Productivity, Growth and Well-Being*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
96. Openo, J. (2019). Can (Post-Heroic) Leadership Be Taught (Online)? A Library Educator’s Expansion of Baldwin, Ching, and Friesen’s Grounded Theory Model of Online Course Design and Development. *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 60, 354–372.
97. Ospina, S. M., Foldy, E. G., Fairhurst, G. T. & Jackson, B. (2020). Collective dimensions of leadership: Connecting theory and method. *Human Relations*, 73(4), 441–463.
98. O’Toole, J., Galbraith, J., Lawler III, E. E. (2002). When Two (or More) Heads are Better than One: THE PROMISE AND PITFALLS OF SHARED LEADERSHIP. *California Management Review*, 44(4), 65–83.
99. Oukes, T. (2010). *Innovative work behavior - A case study at a tire manufacturer*. Enschede: University of Twente.
100. Page, D. & Wong, P. T. P. (2000). A philosophy conceptual framework for measuring servant leadership. In Adjibolosoo, S. (Ed.). *The Human factor in shaping the course of history and development*. Lanham: American University Press.

101. Panaccio, A., Henderson, D. J., Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J. & Cao, X. (2015). Toward an understanding of when and why servant leadership accounts for employee extra-role behaviors. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 30(4), 657–675.
102. Park, J. G. & Zhu, W. (2017). Shared leadership in teams: A qualitative analysis of theoretical themes, antecedents, and outcomes. *Academy of Management Proceedings*, 1, 1–6.
103. Parker, S. K., Williams, H. M. & Turner, N. (2006). Modeling the Antecedents of Proactive Behavior at Work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(3), 636–652.
104. Parris, D. L. & Peachey, J. W. (2012). A systematic literature review of servant leadership theory in organizational contexts. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 113(3), 377–393.
105. Patterson, K. (2003). Servant leadership: A theoretical model. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 64(2), 570.
106. Pearce, C. & Conger, J. (2003). *Shared leadership: Reframing the hows and whys of leadership*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
107. Pearce, C. & Manz, C. (2005). The New Silver Bullets of Leadership: The Importance of Self-and Shared Leadership in Knowledge Work. *Organizational Dynamics*, 34(2), 130–140.
108. Peterson, S. (2018, September 6). *A Leader Is Best When People Barely Know He Exists*. Retrieved on July 10, 2022 from <https://www.interstates.com/a-leader-is-best-when-people-barely-know-he-exists/>
109. Picard, H. & Islam, G. (2020). ‘Free to Do What I Want’? Exploring the ambivalent effects of liberating leadership. *Organization Studies*, 41(3), 393–414.
110. Pink, D. H. (2011). *Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us*. Penguin.
111. Prieto, I. & Pérez-Santana, P. (2014). Managing innovative work behavior: the role of human resource practices. *Personnel Review*, 43(2), 184–208.
112. Ramamoorthy, N., Flood, P. C., Slattery, T. & Sardesai, R. (2005). Determinants of innovative work behaviour: Development and test of an integrated model. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 14(2), 142–150.
113. Raelin, J. (2016). Imagine There Are No Leaders: Reframing Leadership as Collaborative Agency. *Leadership*. Vol. 12.(2), 131–158.
114. Rasheed, A., Lodhi, R. N. & Habiba, U. (2016). An Empirical Study of the Impact of Servant Leadership on Employee Innovative Work Behavior with the Mediating Effect of Work Engagement: Evidence from Banking Sector of Pakistan. *Global Management Journal for Academic & Corporate Studies*, 6(2), 177–190.
115. Rippin, A. (2007). Stitching up the leader: Empirically based reflections on leadership and gender. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 20, 209–226.
116. Rogers, E. (1995). *Diffusion of Innovations*. (4th ed.). New York, NY: The Free Press.
117. Russell, R. & Stone, A. G. (2002). A review of servant leadership attributes: Developing a practical model. *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*, 23(3), 145–157.

118. Ryömä, A. (2020). The interplay of heroic and post-heroic leadership: Exploring tensions in leadership manifestations in the oscillations between onstage and offstage contexts. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 36(1), 1–15.
119. Schimansky, S. (2014). *The Effect of a High-Commitment Work System on Innovative Behavior of Employees*. Enschede: University of Twente.
120. Schweiger, S., Müller, B. & Güttel, W. H. (2020). Barriers to leadership development: Why is it so difficult to abandon the hero? *Leadership*, 16(4), 411–433.
121. Scott, S. G. & Bruce, R. A. (1994). Determinants of innovative behavior: A path model of individual innovation in the workplace. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37, 580–607.
122. Sedounik, V. (2015, November 23). *Why your organisation needs post-heroic leadership*. Retrieved on April 9, 2022 from <https://www.hrzone.com/lead/future/why-your-organisation-needs-post-heroic-leadership>
123. Sendjaya, S., Eva, N., Butar-Butar, I., Robin, M. & Castles, S. (2019). SLBS-6: Validation of a short form of the servant leadership behavior scale. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 156, 941–956.
124. Śledzik, K. (2013). *Schumpeter's view on innovation and entrepreneurship. Management Trends in Theory and Practice*. Poland: Faculty of Management Science and Informatics, University of Zilina & Institute of Management by University of Zilina.
125. Sobral, F. & Furtado, L. (2019). Post-heroic Leadership: Current trends and challenges in leadership education. *Revista de Administração de Empresas*, 59, 209–214.
126. Song, J.-S. (2019). The Effect of Shared Leadership on Organizational Trust, Knowledge Sharing and Innovative Behavior. *The Journal of the Korea Contents Association*, 19(9), 485–500.
127. Spears, L. C. (2010). Character and Servant Leadership: Ten Characteristics of Effective, Caring Leaders. *The Journal of Virtues & Leadership*, 1, 25–30.
128. Subramanian, A. & Nilakanta, S. (1996). Organizational innovativeness: exploring the relationship between organizational determinants of innovation, types of innovations, and measures of organizational performance. *Omega*, 24(6), 631–647.
129. Škerlavaj, M. (2022). *Post-Heroic Leadership Context, Process and Outcomes*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.
130. Škerlavaj, M., Černe, M., Dysvik, A. & Carlsen, A. (2016). *Capitalizing on Creativity at Work: Fostering the Implementation of Creative Ideas in Organizations*. Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing.
131. Taferner, B. (2017). A next generation of innovation models? An integration of the innovation process model big picture © towards the different generations of models. *Review of Innovation and Competitiveness*, 3(3), 47–60.
132. Trošt, J., Škerlavaj, M. & Anzengruber, J. (2016). The Ability–Motivation–Opportunity Framework for Team Innovation: Efficacy Beliefs, Proactive Personalities, Supportive Supervision and Team Innovation. *Economic and Business Review*. 18(1), 77–102.

133. Uhl-Bien, M. (2011). Relational Leadership and Gender: From Hierarchy to Relationality. In Werhane, P. & Painter-Morland, M. (Eds). *Leadership, Gender, and Organization*. Dordrecht: Springer.
134. United Nations (2022). *SDP Progress Report (2022) – Advanced Unedited Version*. Retrieved on July 10, 2022 from <https://www.interstates.com/a-leader-is-best-when-people-barely-know-he-exists/>
135. Vandavasi, R., McConville, D., Uen, J.-F. & Yepuru, P. (2020). Knowledge sharing, shared leadership and innovative behaviour: A cross-level analysis (SSCI). *International Journal of Manpower*, 41(8), 1221–1233.
136. Van Dierendonck, D. (2011). Servant leadership: A review and syntheses. *Journal of Management*, 27(4), 1228–1261.
137. Van Dierendonck, D. & Nuijten, I. (2011). The Servant Leadership Survey: Development and Validation of a Multidimensional Measure. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 26, 249–267.
138. Verle, K., Markič, M., Kodrič, B. & Gorenc Zoran, A. (2014). Managerial competencies and organizational structures. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 114(6), 922–935.
139. Waldersee, R. & Eagleson, G. (2002). Shared leadership in the implementation of re - orientations. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 23(7), 400–407.
140. Wang, C. L. & Ahmed, P. K. (2004). The development and validation of the organisational innovativeness construct using confirmatory factor analysis. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 7(4), 303–313.
141. Wang, S. & Noe, R. A. (2010). Knowledge sharing: A review and directions for future research. *Human Resource Management Review*, 20(2), 115–131.
142. Wang, D., Waldman, D., & Zhang, Z. (2014). A meta-analysis of shared leadership and team effectiveness. *The Journal of Applied Psychology*, 99(2), 181–198.
143. West, M. (2002). Sparkling Fountains or Stagnant Ponds: An Integrative Model of Creativity and Innovation Implementation in Work Groups. *Applied Psychology*, 51(3), 355–424.
144. Winston, B. E. (2004). Servant leadership at Heritage Bible College: a single-case study. *The Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 25(7), 600–617.
145. Winston, B. E., & Patterson, K. (2006). An Integrative Definition of Leadership. *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, 1, 6–66.
146. Xerri, M. J. & Brunetto, Y. (2011). Fostering the innovative behaviour of SME employees: a social capital perspective. *Research & Practice in Human Resource Management*, 19(2), 43–59.
147. Yoshida, D. T., Sendjaya, S., Hirst, G. & Cooper, B. (2014). Does servant leadership foster creativity and innovation? A multi-level mediation study of identification and prototypicality. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(7), 1395–1404.

148. Yunho, J. (2021). The Effect of Servant Leadership on Self-Efficacy and Innovative Behaviour: Verification of the Moderated Mediating Effect of Vocational Calling. *Administrative Sciences*, 11(2), 39–39.
149. Zaltman, G., Duncan, R. & Holbek, J. (1973). *Innovations and Organizations*. New York: John Wiley.
150. Ziegert, J. & Dust, S. (2021). Integrating Formal and Shared Leadership: the Moderating Influence of Role Ambiguity on Innovation. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 36, 969–984.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summary in Slovene language)

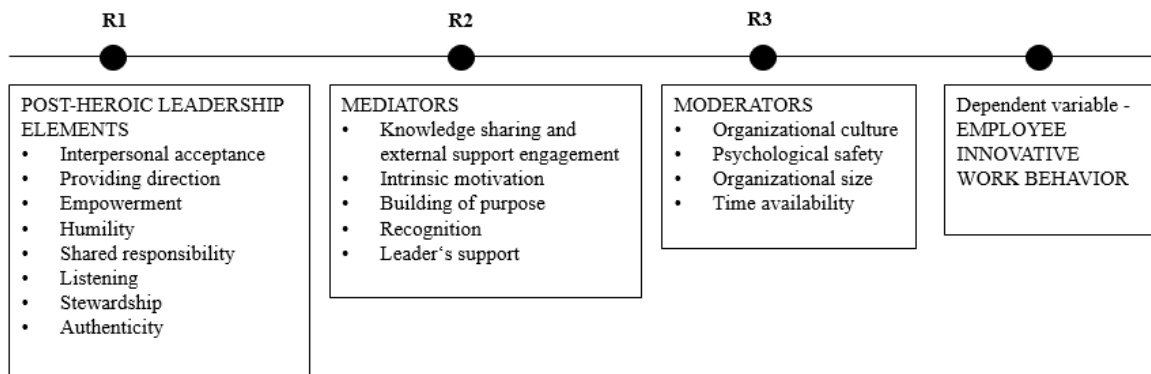
Današnje delovno okolje zahteva več znanja in medfunkcijskega sodelovanja, kar prispeva k hitremu širjenju timskih organizacijskih struktur. Inovativnost velja za enega ključnih dejavnikov ohranjanja konkurenčne prednosti, zato so podjetja prisiljena spodbujati nove prakse. Kanter (2006, str. 73) trdi, da se inovacija vsakih nekaj let znova pojavi kot »glavni fokus strategij rasti.« V podporo novim okoliščinam je teorija vodenja v zadnjih desetletjih naredila korak stran od tradicionalnega hierarhičnega proti postherojskemu vodenju. Slednje se v osnovi razlikuje po načelu kolektivnega procesa med člani tima (Fletcher, 2004; Collinson, Collinson, 2009), pri čemer v ospredje postavlja sledilce oziroma zaposlene namesto vodij.

Da bi v celoti prikazali koncept postherojskega vodenja, magistrsko delo posveča posebno pozornost perspektivam uslužnostnega ter deljenega vodenja. Slednje utemeljuje, da ima vsakdo možnost deliti vpliv in odgovornost do določene mere, kar lahko uvedemo v skoraj vseh vrstah organizacij in situacij (Pearce, Conger, 2003). Sobral in Furtado (2019) predstavljata uslužnostno vodenje kot »proces, osredotočen na druge«, kjer so vsi člani v aktivni vlogi, prepoznani in slišani. Eden od glavnih teoretikov postherojskega vodenja trdi, da tovrstno vodenje temelji na skupni praksi, medsebojno odvisnih človeških interakcijah in vzajemnem učenju. Poleg tega avtor povzema prejšnje ugotovitve, ki se sklicujejo na premik h kolektivnim dosežkom, timskemu delu in skupni odgovornosti.

Namen te magistrske naloge je raziskati odnos med postherojskim vodenjem ter inovativnim vodenjem zaposlenih v izbranem podjetju ter s tem dodatno približati ta koncept slovenskemu akademskemu prostoru. Janssen (2000, str. 288) navaja, da je inovativno delovno vodenje »namerno ustvarjanje, uvajanje in uporaba novih idej znotraj delovne vloge, skupine ali organizacije, da bi prispevali k uspešnosti te funkcije, skupine ali organizacije«. West in Farr (1989) sta že v povojih inovacijske teorije vzpostavila povezavo med deljenim vodenjem in timskim inovativnim vodenjem, za katerega menita, da je sredstvo za odziv na spremembe in ohranjanje konkurenčnosti. Manj očitno ali premalo opredeljeno pa je, kateri natančen nabor veščin, vedenja, orodij ali osnovnih procesov vodenja je najmočnejše povezan z inovativnim delovnim vodenjem zaposlenih. Hughes, Lee, Tian, Newman in Legood (2018, str. 551-556) so ustvarili povzetek mediatorjev, pri čemer so poudarili motivacijske, kognitivne, afektivne, identifikacijske in odnosne spremenljivke. Ugotovitve Bou Reslana, Garantija in Emeagwalija (2021) podpirajo idejo, da vodenje uslužbencev neguje motivacijsko delovno okolje, ki je psihološka potreba po sodelovanju v timu. Z večjo delovno angažiranostjo in predanostjo zaposlenih bo imelo uslužnostno vodenje pozitiven in močnejši vpliv na posameznikovo inovativno delovno vodenje (Rasheed, Lodhi & Habiba, 2016). Ker se odločitev o inovaciji sprejme v okoliščinah negotovosti, morajo ljudje verjeti, da bo inovacija izboljšala njihovo delo. Janssen (2005, str. 573) nadalje opisuje, da naj bi bil interes zaposlenih za vključevanje v inovativne dejavnosti odvisen od njihovega dožemanja vpliva na delovnem mestu, kar Prieto in Perez-Santana (2014) povezujeta z vključenostjo pri odločanju.

V okviru magistrskega dela izvedemo kvalitativno raziskavo v podjetju ELTAS d.o.o. ter na podlagi rezultatov intervjujev primerjamo ugotovitve z analizo sekundarnih virov iz znanstvene literature. S tem želimo poglobiti razumevanje proučevane tematike in povezave med dvema konstruktoma preko mediatorskih in moderatorskih spremenljivk. Na podlagi zaključkov podjetju podamo priporočila za nadaljnje spodbujanje inovativnega vedenja zaposlenih.

Appendix 2: Summary of key findings to research questions



Appendix 3: Transcripts of interviews in company ELTAS d.o.o.

INTERVIEW WITH PERSON A

1. How would you describe the leadership style in your team? What characteristics do you see in current leadership style?

Leadership is democratic, meaning that we have a free hand. Everyone can have their say and everyone can decide on certain things. Still, there is a »hand« that guides me and monitors my tasks, which is also correct. There is no complication, the leader is very open. I would say that I have grown a lot personally, in terms of knowledge, in business and professional experience since we have a new director (since 2017). I gained a lot of knowledge on my own as well, but above all the leader put a lot of trust in me. He entrusted me with the task which was previously performed by the former director. And I believe I did it well. I returned from the maternity leave and he was very open, he always knew how to find that sparkle in me. I grew up to the point where I always wanted to be in business life. He also knew how to find it and see it in me.

2. How would you describe the relationship between the leader and the followers in your team?

Personally and professionally we grew with our director. Our leader knows how to find a potential in everyone and gives us a free hand. If you need anything, you go to him and he listens to you. He always has the door open, no matter what time it is. Our leader helped to develop a family-friendly company.

a. How is this displayed?

The workday can also be flexible. If your child gets sick overnight, he never says a negative word. He never said task cannot wait or that you cannot finish it from home. He always knows how to listen and one was never punished. In my view, he is a leader with a heart. When he comes to work and you see him smiling together with us, the motivation grows. Not to embellish anything, but this is how it actually is.

b. How do you react to such leadership? Towards what actions does it encourage you?

It is motivational. It encourages creativity in me. I like to go to work, come in the morning with a smile and do not get up with difficulty. I love being in my team. My entire team is person B, H, developers. We are truly a one collective. Family is one thing, work is another. But the job has been for me lately as a family, I have two families. And if you like to take care of your family, so do you care for your job. Also the leader encourages me to act with care, as you would at home.

3. Think of a recent situation when you collaborated in any innovation project where task complexity or crossfunctional interdependence was present. How did you reach solutions?

Together as a team, we had meetings. First we set a plan, the director invited us to his office. He writes on the board the focus points, but not alone. We provide it to him, so that he listens to us. Each of us contributes a part of our vision to the resolution. When it is more complex, we engage even more collectively. Such innovation takes longer to reach the goal. In the meantime, we all cooperate, we listen to each other, everyone gives their opinion and no one is criticized. Solution from each of us is crucial, because we complement each other, due to complexity of the products different fields of expertise are required and one person cannot solve it alone. The director also listens, together we find a solution, he helps us and always offers support. There is no issue in case we need any external resources, the leader gives us the chance to use it.

a. How was communication going and feedback shared within the team and with the leader?

There is no negative criticism. If you do anything wrong, you are never punished for it and it is not the end of the world. However, a leader has a very good trait, which I am also learning. If anything goes in the wrong direction, he explains the situation so nicely that you do not feel that it is too critical, but you realize that something needs to be fixed or changed in that direction. The leader knows how to communicate in a nice way, he is not aggressive. In order to manage the project we communicate as a group in the meeting room or in the office. We have an open office. The leader comes to us and we talk freely about the project. Everyone tells in their own way what stage they have reached, what has been resolved, what you still have unresolved. The status is clear and so we receive all the information.

b. Do associates express disagreement in the team?

Constructive criticism is presented to us in a calm tone. For sure it is expressed, there is nowhere only agreement, everyone sees things slightly differently. But we say it in normal way, we talk about it. We trust the whole team. We have daily innovations, I have three new ones today. In the morning I was already in communication with the technical director, then with the developer, with the product designer, each in his field. It is important to agree, deadlines need to be set. The co-worker says »I cannot perform in the terms you have set, I can do it in such due date and way«. Then I try to adjust. Sometimes I also come back and challenge: »here it is not feasible, we need to endure and put all our efforts«. I am open for agreements and if there is a possibility, I am flexible to adjust. At the same time we also inform our customers, we keep this parallel line of information sharing.

c. What is your impression of the current structure?

According to the current structure, we are functioning well. Because we have the opportunity to be our own organizer. We assign the tasks, however even when I assign a project to each developer, he has the opportunity to schedule himself when he will do something. I set the deadline, but he decides when he will take over which project or when he will complete it in this time frame. Because he knows how long it will take him. Perhaps the easier ones are tackled first. During the process we talk, agree on topics, monitor the status. Nevertheless, I feel we are our own bosses.

4. How would you describe your innovative work behavior - describe your innovation process, what was your engagement from idea creation, promotion to idea implementation?

If it is complex, I have more time to devote. But I dedicate myself as much as possible to each process. My approach is that if I see that a colleague in my group needs some help or a quick reaction, I offer my support. I am never intrusive. I say: »look, I will go look that up for you, you finish this«. We are like friends with each other, family members, we act in that sense. But I am also happy when I get the feedback, when we come to the conclusion, to the realization. When I receive back the compliment that the samples are great and a gratitude for my support and quick response I do not share this just for myself. I include everyone who was on the team. If by chance the director was not involved, I also include him and send it to everyone for information or we say it out loud that they know that the whole team was praised. Whatever I respond is on behalf of the whole team because it is not right to share the credit yourself. I concluded the activity in the end, but we were all involved.

a. Do you have any other forum where praise can be highlighted?

Yes, the monthly college meetings. And so far we have been praised every month, I hope it stays that way.

b. What was the role of the leader in your generation of ideas?

He is always open to new ideas, he creates an atmosphere for that. If he sees the potential, he encourages you. He asks you if you need extra support, someone else to help. He asks if a meeting is needed. He also offers his opinion. It was never received negatively on his part.

c. Do ideas require leader's approval?

Not every idea needs to go for approval, depending on how important it is and for the benefit of the company. The leader also allows us to solve certain matters on our own without any interference. In principle, if we already know what things we can solve ourselves, we carry out the idea and then just inform the leader. Sometimes he gives his opinion. Not every action needs to be strictly validated.

d. What was the key contributing factor to idea realization?

Flexibility and openness.

5. What motivates you to exercise innovative work behavior?

Two factors in particular - the first one is that the leader himself sees potential in me, a talent that needs to mature. I feel responsibility due to this reason. And I also love my job. And last but not least, financial stimulation, which is the way it should be.

a. How does current leadership style affect your innovative work behavior?

Positively. It is nice to be at work, to put it briefly. Our leader also takes care of our motivation. He does it so spontaneously and I learn a lot from him. I observe his leadership practices, I follow this through meetings to learn the leadership skills. He is my role model with his vast knowledge pool. I imagine him as a lecturer when he gets old and retires.

Because he has so much knowledge and he knows how to react with confidence in certain moments. He manages every situation well and we also reflect on this with others, we learn from him. Which is surely positive.

b. What would help to enhance your innovative work behavior?

To be able to make even more decisions in certain things, so that certain leaders do not need to be informed.

c. Is the approach to complex tasks different from the approach to simpler tasks?

Of course. Complex developments have a complex composition in the background. More knowledge is needed, certain things we may not have certain component materials, we need to connect with our suppliers and obtain all the offers. Sometimes we do not get all the technical parameters. It is necessary to contact the customer, to support each other, to make adjustments in our development. It is more team-oriented and there are more of us involved. With the simple ones, sometimes I can be alone or me and the developer, it is faster. In the case of complex ones, everyone must agree with the decision, there must be a common consensus.

6. What are the expectations of management regarding employee innovation?

The desire is for as much innovation and independence as possible. Innovative suggestions are always welcome because it is also healthy for any business. The leaders expect that we say what we need, an innovative proposal can also be associated to the workplace to make your job easier. This is never a problem, they are open. For example, one can state that due to handling a lot of documentation, he is requesting for a bigger monitor. You only need to present what it will bring for your work, for instance it would save me a certain amount of time. You are also involved in the choice of the product. My example is a pretty simple thing, but with other matters, the innovation process is similar.

a. What values does the leader promote?

Teamwork, also production is organized in such manner. When a problem occurs, the girls come together and solve the problem as a team. The leader promotes as well family values, healthy lifestyle. In addition, I would say it boosts positive daily vibes, is motivational, the leader likes to see that we are satisfied. Moreover, it is important to him that we have good interpersonal relationships.

b. How are conflicts resolved?

We have few conflicts. But when they occur we tell each other what troubles us and then we move on. We all have a quite similar character that we do not unravel about same issue all month. Leadership encourages open communication.

c. What is your affiliation with the company's objectives?

They include me when setting the goals. In practice, as far as sales are concerned, I am to propose what will be the annual plan for next year and how will we achieve it. They express their opinion, I say mine. We assess whether it is feasible. Also production manager is

involved in defining how we will reach the goal. We feel responsible for the goals and that we are important in this story. Namely, my reaction and my answer will lead to actions that I must then make sure that are successfully concluded. So I feel that these are also my objectives.

d. What is the manager's attitude towards risk taking and mistakes? How does this affect your behavior?

We face risks and mistakes daily. 50% depends on the situation. Sometimes we are all careful, whereas sometimes we say: »we will go ahead, we will try«. We have to conquer this new technology. If we do not try, we will not understand what the unknowns are, to what degree we have grown. Sometimes we also take a certain risk. By this we also grow personally and develop in our work.

e. When an error occurs, what happens?

We are always looking for a solution, first analyzing why the error occurred. What is in the background and then the solution as well.

f. How do you share that back to the collective?

We have technological development processes led by a fellow technologist. At the college meeting, we communicate what point we have reached. When the project was not so successful, we have an immediate debate. One suggests another approach, the other perhaps to try another material. We call our supplier to tell him what are the results of the measurements. Then the supplier suggests something else, we look at the composition of the product and whether it will work and then we seek for holistical solution. We could identify that we need new hardware or additional resource help. We never get scared, we do not stay at that point "ok, now this project is over", but we move forward. Out of the mistakes we want to implement some changes.

g. What support does the leader and other team members provide for your new suggestions and ideas?

I always have a 100% support.

h. In what way?

Training is provided by the director and the technical head. Everyone also supports you with their knowledge and experience from their field. We learn together.

i. How does the leader support your personal development and innovative work behavior?

He encourages me. He shares his suggestions and experiences with me. He often shares an anecdote from a similar situation. He tells me how he reacted and what was the outcome. From this you can gather some learning and adjust your reaction according to perceived needs of your situation.

7. What would be your suggestion in terms of leadership to further encourage innovative behavior?

Certainly, we still have a lot of potential in production domain and talented people who can contribute. Perhaps they just need a small promotion, a small elevation in job function. To have more opportunities for promotion in production so their contribution comes to expression. Sometimes, when I want to approach an external partner, a formal function seems important to many as contrary to our internal mindset. With certain customers it would be easier and faster to agree on resolution provided a formally higher function.

INTERVIEW WITH PERSON B

1. How would you describe the leadership style in your team? What characteristics do you see in current leadership style?

Leadership style is determined. It profoundly encourages all employees. My leader tries to listen to everyone. If he considers something will ease the work, he engages to get the actions forward.

2. How would you describe the relationship between the leader and the followers in your team?

In my opinion, very correct. He is not a leader to command. He tells you the expectations from our work. But he will not say that you have to do it now in an hour. So, it guides, but it gives us a certain amount of a free hand.

a. How do you react to such leadership? Towards what actions does it encourage you?

Personally, it was very good for me, because I had some power over what I could do myself. I knew what I had to do, for example the samples were waiting for me, and I was making the call if I needed to hurry up a bit or I needed to slow the pace and be more precise. That is the thing I like here. I choose the way myself and I feel in power.

3. Think of a recent situation when you collaborated in any innovation project where task complexity or crossfunctional interdependence was present. How did you reach solutions?

At least since I am here (2 years), it was done in a manner of preparing as much as possible in advance. Firstly, a plan was made and after everything was ready it proceeded to the next stage. Then timelines were assigned. When it all came together, we reviewed everything that it will work well and gave it to the production to test on live example. We are very much focused on the preparations, we do not want to rush to implement one idea right away without prior assessment, for example to have new tools made. It is more thoughtful, we prefer to think five times than once.

a. Yet how do you come up with solutions?

Together we decide in a group of at least 3-4 people. Usually, if I have a task for innovation, I usually take person E, C, I and G. At least these people come together, discuss what the

problem is and what improvement we would like to reach. Then we decide collectively what to do.

b. How is this meeting organized?

It depends on who is the initiator of this and who is actually carrying it out. Recently, most of the projects, at least as far as production is concerned, are carried out by me. Usually, I am the one who calls people. I ask for example person I » tell me if it would be better this way or the other way«. In case we need to procure materials, I ask the one who is most experienced in this direction.

c. How was communication going and feedback shared within the team and with the leader?

E-mail or in person.

d. How was it for instance on this particular project?

People who did not have relevant experience for this project were not involved, so experts from individual fields are taken. I did not, for example, include person I when a particular case will be delivered, which is purely a matter of person X. In the end, of course, when it came together, it was holistically reported to everyone. How long it took, how much money it required. Lastly, everyone is informed, but there is some involvement in terms of experience, knowledge and function.

e. What reactions did this trigger in you?

In principle, everyone would like to know everything about a particular project. So, everyone involved would like to know what step we are in. As long as this is normally communicated and reported on an ongoing basis, everyone is satisfied. Reporting is mostly in person because we are not such a large firm that we would not see each other daily. As far as status updates are concerned, this is continuously running.

4. How would you describe your innovative work behavior - describe your innovation process, what was your engagement from idea creation, promotion to idea implementation?

In principle, innovation comes from two sources; either myself as a technologist put myself in a situation and try to improve something, or it comes from the workers. If it is an idea for the entire process it is even more beneficial, but also if limited to a particular product we consider it as a progress. As far as this is concerned, an innovation idea is usually written here. We have a sheet where the worker writes a suggestion in detail. Then it is handed over to the office for the evaluation and further proceeding, for example if material needs to be procured. If this is a situation that does not require additional lease or purchase of materials, I usually receive this task right away and try to do it with the right people.

a. Do you do it together with the one who was the initiator of the idea?

He is involved in communication. Usually the initiator knows best why this is necessary. Usually he explains this to me first, then comes person H, who also likes to be there when such initiatives are given.

b. What was the role of the leader in your generation of ideas?

For me it is a somewhat broader concept as I basically see more leaders in our collaboration, for instance person H, person I, also person G who is perceived as well like a kind of human resource manager.

c. You may think of the leader you work with the most or you depend on him for certain points in the process.

Then I would say it is person I and person H. Because person I has utmost knowledge about the processes, how it is carried out, how long it takes. Person H, on the other hand, is the one who gives the confirmation that this heads for the next stage towards improvement. In most cases, it is left to me or person I or to the initiator of the idea. The leaders enable your autonomy, but they advise you along the way.

d. What was the key contributing factor to idea realization?

That I presented the problem and the solution well and that it was put into the process. Approval from person H and person F as well. Minor matters that have no financial impact are done normally with no monitoring. However, if it is a project that requires higher resource investment, it is usually managed with the leaders. When a certain solution is given to a problem, a vision of what it should solve is also given. For instance, this procedure would save so many hours per month.

5. What motivates you to exercise innovative work behavior?

I am a technologist, it is basically the nature of my job to look for new solutions. A lot of things are implemented in order to ease the work for associates. We bring a lot of ideas to life internally without the leaders, as we are motivated to make our work easier.

a. How does current leadership style affect your innovative work behavior?

In a very good way. I have a concrete example, they put me to school now. The company paid my tuition. Personally, I see this is as a great incentive for personal growth. Furthermore, I am glad they give me a free hand. I can investigate a matter myself and contribute to overall work and to the team. Of course, if there is a larger project involving purchases, it is necessary to request for financial means.

b. What would help to enhance your innovative work behavior?

Well, perhaps I could be given opportunity to procure the material myself, however this could as well be problematic. By this I mean that I could potentially buy too much of material and in the end it will not work out as well as planned.

c. Is the approach to complex tasks different from the approach to simpler tasks?

The company is expanding rapidly. Management now certainly has more appreciation for various improvement initiatives. Because they see that we can do more without increasing certain capacities, for instance resources or facilities. For example, person F and person H have recently been very encouraging of innovative thinking in terms of optimizing the entire production process.

6. What are the expectations of management regarding employee innovation?

To look for opportunities. Many machines are being bought now. We have bought as many machines in the last six months as we haven't in ten years.

a. What values does the leader promote?

Everyone should be determined, independent, precise. That we are communicative and do not seek disputes.

b. What is your affiliation with the company's objectives?

I am somewhere in between the management and production. I am in the position to improve the processes, but at the same time I cannot determine everything that needs to be improved alone. I certainly feel the possibility of contributing. Many of these innovations to which I contributed or initiated them have enabled us to double our business in the last three years. I am in production most of the time and I feel more part of the production. It feels lately that everyone wants to do more by not having to work so hard. We would like to do it with greater efficiency.

c. What is the manager's attitude towards risk taking and mistakes? How does this affect your behavior?

We have a relatively large number of mistakes. Not intentionally, it is due to such a diverse production where we do not make 10 different products but rather 10,000 different products. So it is normal that mistakes happen. I would say it is a very tolerant environment. They try to ensure that mistakes are not repeating. Meeting is made, the leader sits down with the people who made the mistakes. He explains to them the problem and they try to solve all these problems on the spot.

d. What support does the leader and other team members provide for your new suggestions and ideas?

As far as special devices are concerned, it is quite frequent that they call external people to come and help, to give their opinion. We can for example test their product. The external collaborators are for instance machinery suppliers.

e. How does the leader support your personal development and innovative work behavior?

When an innovative idea is initiated, the leader encourages it to be done as soon as possible. So, he also engages or facilitates the steps, also talks to co-workers. In majority of cases I am fully engaged. To some extent we discuss the problem together, then it continues to be reported. When it comes to encouraging workers to do different things and different jobs,

we see that a lot here. I would dare to say that 20-30% of production employees know how to work in 50% of all production jobs. It is very flexible in this perspective.

7. What would be your suggestion in terms of leadership to further encourage innovative behavior?

If it continues in the manner as in the last six months, it will be perfect. Because the associates are all very open-minded. They take almost any idea seriously, they praise you. What I also see with workers is that some feel more worthy because they actually contribute something to the development of production itself. Due to innovation proposal forms various rewards are also given in financial form.

INTERVIEW WITH PERSON C

1. How would you describe the leadership style in your team? What characteristics do you see in current leadership style?

Foremost it is team work oriented leadership. We have quite some responsibilities and enough independence.

2. How would you describe the relationship between the leader and the followers in your team?

Always positive because we are usually very well motivated. So there are clear goals and based on clear goals there is a high level of motivation.

a. How do you react to such leadership? Towards what actions does it encourage you?

Usually very positive, that is, we are always looking for new solutions, because we are also a development-oriented company. Above all, we are looking for everyone's suggestions, the direction of the solution, and based on that we choose the best solution. Sometimes we can also start to tackle the issue individually and when we get to a common point, we move forward together.

3. Think of a recent situation when you collaborated in any innovation project where task complexity or crossfunctional interdependence was present. How did you reach solutions?

We first divided the areas, that is, whoever is the best in a certain area took it over. Firstly, we have searched together for all the internal knowledge and practices and afterwards as well the external knowledge. For example, where it was more complex, where we had problems or we did not have enough knowledge or equipment, we also turned to external support. By this I refer to colleagues and acquaintances in companies where something similar is in place.

a. How do you come to conclusion that you move forward with certain solution?

We make final decisions in a joint conversation, namely in a joint meeting where we reach consensus: the proposals are these, this solution should be the best.

b. Were you able to express your disagreement there?

Yes, certainly.

c. How was communication going and feedback shared within the team and with the leader?

Communication takes place a lot through personal conversation and during the work itself. We are in one room, so we just meet over coffee or speak over the desk or walk to each other. So the communication is extensive. Because we are not separated by departments, there is a lot of formal and informal communication. So as far as that goes, it is very effective. It is open communication. There is no fear that you will make a proposal and someone will reject you or laugh at it. You can give your honest opinion whether it is right or wrong, here we are all very open.

4. How would you describe your innovative work behavior - describe your innovation process, what was your engagement from idea creation, promotion to idea implementation?

First we set a clear goal, and then we make a written plan of how the development project should look like, what are the stages. Then we stick to some of these phases. First we prepare drawings, sketches, everything we need to have enough information. Then the material is usually purchased, which is not a problem in this company for the needs of testing. Then the construction itself begins and on the basis of these constructions, drawings, films that we usually have or material that needs to be ordered for testing or installation. When all this is ready and then implemented in production with the help of a production technologist, we are engaged. And we also encourage workers who love to take part in these development parts. When a problem arises, we consult, for instance: »let's go this way, try several variants«. Of course, if it is successful, we move forward. This continues until we come to a conclusion, to a product that we think is fine. Lastly, we need to test it. It is crucial to test in order to see if certain criterias are met, namely the standards that apply to a particular product. Whatever you introduce as innovation, this matter must also meet quality standards. Communication takes place on a daily basis. We mostly communicate by e-mail and orally in the team. There are not many meetings, there are only few intermediate meetings. Unless, of course, the problem is very challenging, then we also sit together in the team and offer all the knowledge we have.

a. What was the role of the leader in your generation of ideas?

In my view our motivation is the problem itself. You have a problem that needs to be solved. We all get motivated by this. Ideas on how to do something new, faster, better or with better quality; this is a very big motivation for us. We try to speed up the process or add new materials that are easier to work with. Sometimes it is necessary to look for a cheaper material and implement the matter in production. The leader motivates us, but we also motivate ourselves. When you notice a certain problem at work, you then engage in finding either an alternative material or an alternative solution or another way of making it.

b. What was the key contributing factor to idea realization?

Certainly it would not go without collaboration. Such a complex development project rarely depends on just one person. Here cooperation and high motivation are mandatory.

5. What motivates you to exercise innovative work behavior?

I want to be personally satisfied. Because you feel good if you do something very well, it is in sense a self-affirmation. So, motivation is not solely the remuneration or to please the leader, but as well self-affirmation. Contributing to the community is a great affirmation of well-being. Just educating employees offers great pleasure. When you tell someone, we will do it to make it better and easier for him, these are great successes because it will be easier for everyone.

a. How does current leadership style affect your innovative work behavior?

From this point of view, we are given a free hand regarding development or innovation itself. Practically everything here is an innovation. Lots of development projects, lots of new products. You have probably heard that we practically make one product on a daily basis. Surely, it is a bit standardized. As far as innovation itself is concerned, we actually feel the need for innovation, change, improvement. Because the system itself convinces us to do so through the leadership practices and processes. When you have a problem and solve it successfully, it brings a great satisfaction. It means a contribution to better quality. This is what motivates us. Satisfaction with yourself, with co-workers, the atmosphere consequently gets better. Creativity and team spirit are then on completely different level.

b. What would help to enhance your innovative work behavior?

We already have enough open hands, it is neither a problem to buy material here, nor to buy machines. The only obstacle is the very large volume in production, thus we have time constraints. Otherwise, all rest incentives are really at a high level in our company.

c. Is the approach to complex tasks different from the approach to simpler tasks?

Yes, it is. For the simpler ones, the method is more familiar, routinized. We have practically all the autonomy except in final due dates, for complex challenges as well. Unless it is a very complex project, there you cannot decide alone that we will buy something for huge sums or stretch the timelines. You find an easier way. For large projects, the only limitation is knowledge and ideas. Provided that there is enough knowledge, we have no other restrictions in our company.

6. What are the expectations of management regarding employee innovation?

Quite high expectations. The results are also at a fairly high level. We have more complex projects approximately twice a year. This is the minimum, sometimes we even take six projects. It depends on their complexity.

a. And if we look not only at the project but at your personal innovative behavior?

Already the process is oriented towards innovation, especially when you are in the role of a technologist or when you are in charge of development projects. The expectations are that you give your maximum potential here.

b. What values does the leader promote?

Consistency, independence, reliability, creativity, meaning creative solutions.

c. What is your affiliation with the company's objectives?

Here in the office we are involved in goal setting. We are highly committed to our goals, we take them as our own as we have a key role to play in order to achieve them.

d. What is the manager's attitude towards risk taking and mistakes? How does this affect your behavior?

There are always risks and mistakes in this work. There is no such attitude from a superior that one would feel fear if you do something wrong. It is normal that certain steps go in the wrong direction and then it turns out that there is no solution in this direction. But then let's talk about what is the reason it was not the right way. However, there is no pressure that one would not dare to proceed in his work or that he would want to ask 300 times for confirmation. We are able to experiment even with a chance of errors, because you cannot do without it. There is no progress without mistakes.

e. What support does the leader and other team members provide for your new suggestions and ideas?

For the most part, everyone is very interested in new ideas and is happy to offer help, even if you do not assign them to the team. As soon as they hear about your problem they share their view if they have an idea. We have very open relationships, we all know for practically everyone what they do and where they might have problems. I must say that we are very conscious collectively. That is in terms of aid, selfless sharing of knowledge, information and ideas.

f. How does the leader support your personal development and innovative work behavior?

We have the chance to get an additional education, for instance through workshops and seminars that are on the Internet. Moreover, the company also procures certain magazines or acquires professional support.

7. What would be your suggestion in terms of leadership to further encourage innovative behavior?

It would be beneficial to gather together more often for these specific things, to clarify and discuss them together. There used to be more such gatherings than now, likely due to Covid-19 period. It reduced these kind of meetings. So, a dedicated meeting would be welcome to share ideas.

INTERVIEW WITH PERSON D

1. How would you describe the leadership style in your team? What characteristics do you see in current leadership style?

Basically, I see it as providing direction. The leaders help to guide us to the right path, towards the expected goal, whatever we are doing at that time. Through the process they let us to explore on our own and seek solutions to the problems. For instance, when I got employed here, I did not have many working experience and yet they gave me enough space to explore on my own and find resolutions.

2. How would you describe the relationship between the leader and the followers in your team?

A respectful relationship. You will not get the feeling of being dominated or that you are approached in a commanding way.

a. How do you react to such leadership? Towards what actions does it encourage you?

It encourages independent search for solutions, at least for me. It promotes the accountability, to take responsibility for your work and defend what you do, argue your standpoints.

3. Think of a recent situation when you collaborated in any innovation project where task complexity or crossfunctional interdependence was present. How did you reach solutions?

I participated mostly towards the end of the process, for example when we applied for tenders. I was preparing the tender documentation and submitted it at the end. The first steps were prepared in the group which managed the project. In the phase of handover they came up to me and we sat down together. They explained to me exactly what they were doing, thus I did not solely get some papers on the desk in the sense of “here you go”, but they explained what it is all about.

a. Were you involved in the resolution process?

Yes, in almost every tender we receive some requests for supplement materials and clarifications where I am involved.

b. How does then this process work?

If simpler solutions are required, I do it myself. If it is more complex and I need the opinion of others, we go to the leader and then we work together.

c. How was communication going and feedback shared within the team and with the leader?

Knowledge is certainly not hidden, we also have an open office which contributes to this. Basically, people talk out loud, we also do not communicate much via e-mail, more used is word of mouth. So you can gain a lot of knowledge, through this open communication.

4. How would you describe your innovative work behavior - describe your innovation process, what was your engagement from idea creation, promotion to idea implementation?

I offer the current example of modernization of the entire production. Since I am in charge of the final part of the process, ie shipments, invoicing and inventory, we are consulting together on how we will now facilitate the completion of orders and shipments through the digitalization. It is recommendable that you provide your suggestions for the process where you are involved. We give ideas in the meetings.

a. What was the role of the leader in your generation of ideas?

It is not persistantly being called to come up with an idea, however it is much welcome. Currently, we are so crowded with work that it would be great if we had a bit more time for such meetings, more ideas would also come to the forefront. We are currently focused on managing the process to get delivered what was ordered by customers.

b. What was the key contributing factor to idea realization?

Given that we are in a time crunch, digitalization and renewal of production processes will help to relieve the staff. Otherwise, I believe the support of the leader because he passes the idea on and supports the realization. For instance, we changed the outbound process, the time when dispatches are carried out in order to relieve the quality unit. And it was a minor thing, thus we made a verbal agreement. We conveyed to the production / quality what kind of change will happen and we made it, with no complexity.

5. What motivates you to exercise innovative work behavior?

I believe I am an innovative person, constantly looking for solutions. That makes me happy. Since we are time-constrained perhaps I innovate a little bit less, but my character also drives me in that direction. It also motivates me to see that there is an opportunity for the company to grow. This business development that we all see in this company drives us, we see how many options one has for suggestions. That is why I got employed here, because I saw how many open opportunities there are for personal development and the development of the company.

a. How does current leadership style affect your innovative work behavior?

Neutrally. The leader does not inhibit my innovative behavior, nor does he encourage me specifically.

b. What would help to enhance your innovative work behavior?

Given that we do not dispose of much time for meetings, it would be great if we could write down other ideas somewhere. We have innovation proposal forms, but they are more suitable for ideas to change the process. However, if you have an idea unrelated to the process, you do not have such tools to address it. It would not be so bad if we had similar to some companies that some ideas can be submitted anonymously. A leader is open and available, but it may be easier for some people to share their opinion further.

c. Is the approach to complex tasks different from the approach to simpler tasks?

Big difference. If it is simpler, the work will be left to you to look for solutions individually. When something more challenging happens, leaders also want to get involved. Otherwise, you are expected to do the thing on your own.

6. What are the expectations of management regarding employee innovation?

It is welcome. Currently, for my position I think they are satisfied with the current situation. I am the youngest in the administration Nevertheless, they listen to me when I have an idea.

a. What values does the leader promote?

Above all, knowledge, here leaders appreciate education. Additional education or training is desirable. Especially if you are exploring or operating in a new field and if you want to engage in it. It is almost expected that you will have a basic background in this field on the basis of which you will be able to work. Otherwise, honesty. There are absolutely no lies present or tolerated here, nor shifting the blame onto someone else. Above all, it is emphasized that if anything happens, it is acceptable, all humans make mistakes. You can openly say what you did and you will never be punished for it. Together we always find a solution if a problem arises.

b. What is your affiliation with the company's objectives?

Usually, we are all involved in goal setting. I think we all get a sense of belonging to a goal because we contribute one piece to it, almost everyone in every process.

c. What is the manager's attitude towards risk taking and mistakes? How does this affect your behavior?

Mistakes can be substantial, but we still manage to resolve them. Generally, we do not take huge risks, we priorly perform analysis. It is welcome that when we are embarking on something new that we prepare with an analysis, check risks and opportunities and warn the manager in sense “you know, this and that is potential drawback”. However, we do not avoid all risks. We have already applied to various risky tenders and we did a large extent of renovation of production facility. We risked a lot with this as it could lead to interruptions in the process and delay to fulfill customer orders. We still decided to pursue it and prepared for it as much as possible. When you propose an innovative idea, the manager also gets involved and helps to assess the risk. If the risk is too great versus the benefit, logically we will not go for it. But the leader is open to it.

d. What support does the leader and other team members provide for your new suggestions and ideas?

The leader always gives his opinion and you receive feedback. Of course, if it seems logical to him, he helps a lot in bringing things forward, he also engages with his superiors. Otherwise, in general company setting, there is support to some extent. Everyone loves to work in their field. Not everyone is happiest if you interfere with your idea in their field.

e. How do the associates treat your problems?

Depending on what the problem is. If a problem is a problem solely for me, it may be necessary to remind or ask for a change several times. However, if this poses a problem for me, the Quality or the others, it will be slightly easier to communicate and resolve.

f. How does the leader support your personal development and innovative work behavior?

If I express an interest for an additional training, the company pays for that education. Otherwise, my leader shares her knowledge without any problems and shows me many things on her own initiative. She wants to ensure that in case she is not here, everything runs smoothly. Basically, I know for a lot of people here in the office what and how they work, even though it is not my job. They share this knowledge, we trust each other.

7. What would be your suggestion in terms of leadership to further encourage innovative behavior?

To give employees another forum for their ideas because there are many ideas. Some workers sometimes think that an idea is not important enough to write.

INTERVIEW WITH PERSON E

1. How would you describe the leadership style in your team? What characteristics do you see in current leadership style?

I would not categorize it as utmost teamwork, however it is not individual either. When the offer is being prepared, I have to submit my comments. When we receive the report, I receive comments from those who edit it. In this case the line of communication may not be most optimal. Depending on the situation, certain projects may be prioritized.

2. How would you describe the relationship between the leader and the followers in your team?

Communication would need a bit more connectivity, we could make a step forward in the communication field. Sometimes I do not collaborate in decisions related to my work.

a. How do you react to such leadership? Towards what actions does it encourage you?

That I am involved. When the project is finished, I would like to have a look together at what was good and what wasn't. When I conclude the project successfully, I am personally fulfilled.

3. Think of a recent situation when you collaborated in any innovation project where task complexity or crossfunctional interdependence was present. How did you reach solutions?

When new development project is initiated we must discuss together what is possible. When initial construction is concluded, I need to know the technology and say what is feasible. Once it is defined it goes into production. We usually have enough free hands in

communication with the customer. For instance, when we have a new product and the customer does not specify exactly his needs, we can direct him.

a. How was communication going and feedback shared within the team and with the leader?

If the sales department allocates the project to me, then I know how the trail runs. I also made some primitive timelines to follow the next stages and steps. I have daily approximately twenty projects to review and to progress to the next step, thus this is crucial. On the other hand, when I am participant to a project and someone else is coordinating it, we could have a bit more communication about the status. A situation can occur where the customer says he needs the product in a week which can cause some bad mood because I am currently engaged in another project that is also urgent. I have to then switch priority. Collaboration is stronger when stakeholders see the benefit in it.

b. What reactions did this trigger in you?

I am a bit of an emotional introvert, yet generally a cheerful person. When something throws me off track, I shut myself in a bit and I am angry. If you start a project like that, you are less effective.

4. How would you describe your innovative work behavior - describe your innovation process, what was your engagement from idea creation, promotion to idea implementation?

When having time and support I approach it very holistically. I monitor the product from the entry into production up to the shipment. I follow the process to see the possibilities for progress, improvement. That is the case when I am involved in the process from start to finish. However, if it happens that the project is pushed forward, then I can only partially monitor this process.

a. What was the role of the leader in your generation of ideas?

The leader promotes the equality of ideas. However, interest is the crucial point for implementation, depending on applicability of idea. By this I mean whether it is for the common good or only for an individual.

b. What was the key contributing factor to idea realization?

Personal commitment and responsibility for what we do.

5. What motivates you to exercise innovative work behavior?

New challenges. When things are brought to me undefined and I can bring suggestions. I strive for something new.

a. How does current leadership style affect your innovative work behavior?

Positively and negatively, there are of course pluses and minuses everywhere.

b. What would help to enhance your innovative work behavior?

Permanence in terms of quick meetings. Maybe to have a daily or weekly quick meeting. No lengthy discussions, but rather a quick status review from all participants to see if we have any delays before we get any new project. To know what capacities we have and capabilities on what we can still do today.

c. Is the approach to complex tasks different from the approach to simpler tasks?

Yes. Simple tasks are made with a left hand. Simple ones go per established tracks, no additional explanation is required.

6. What are the expectations of management regarding employee innovation?

Significant expectations. Part of the management is striving for continuous improvements, whereas some part appreciates the current way of work and believes it is already at good level.

a. What values does the leader promote?

Depending on the leader, in my view I do not have solely one direct leader. With one following is good, whereas the other leader encourages innovativeness.

b. What is your affiliation with the company's objectives?

I am very committed to the goals that mean a lot to me personally. For those which I feel are the right for me and for the company.

c. What is the manager's attitude towards risk taking and mistakes? How does this affect your behavior?

When I find out that I have made a mistake, I am usually saddened by it, and emotion is shared by my leaders. When it comes to risk taking, a former co-worker taught me that when you are in an absolute hurry, you need to take your time and breathe. The same approach makes sense to me for any novelties. Clearly, mistakes happen, mostly because of superficiality.

d. What support does the leader and other team members provide for your new suggestions and ideas?

If it is in my favor, a lot. If it will also be useful for others and the leader, he cooperates, guides and provides support to continue progressing on the matter.

e. How does the leader support your personal development and innovative work behavior?

It seems to me that we do not have an advanced system in terms of personal development. Ever since we have an open office, you can ask anything at any time. However, I think that some topics would be good to discuss behind closed doors. If you want to achieve this, you have to make an effort or find the appropriate moment. They want us all to grow, but we do not have a defined actual goal what would be good to achieve in this area. Or I do not know it.

INTERVIEW WITH PERSON F

1. How would you describe your leadership style? What characteristics would you attribute to it?

Impulsive, very fast. I make decisions quickly. We have relatively few meetings. When we have a project, we meet with key people in production once a month to go over the results and convey what awaits us. Otherwise, there are many daily short meetings. May it be with the Head of Sales, technologists or an accountant. Considering that we are in the phase of significant growth for the third year, it is necessary to carry out many such targeted actions to get something done.

a. You have mentioned you make quick decisions. How does decision-making process run?

If I describe a development investment project we had, called P-4-I: we scheduled a meeting and looked at what our company needs this year. There was a discussion on robotization, digitalization. It was very much in our direction and all the key stakeholders in the project, we sat down together. We wrote on the board all the required activities and agreed together where each one will contribute. Joint decision-making was crucial, especially as we do not hold many meetings. During that time we had only maybe one or two meetings, but the project was concluded in fourteen days. I only guided others with counseling, for example "maybe drive in that direction, add this, we want to show this to get these and these points". Similar approach is taken with some improvement or savings projects in production. Project orientation and guidance is provided, then the indicative status is monitored. The team has in my opinion vast competencies and they have a lot of free hands. 5 years ago, when the owner and director was one person, everything went through him. I am certainly not an expert in this field, I worked in completely different fields. But I saw that there was a lot of potential in the employees and I gave them more responsibilities. On the one hand, this is nice, and on the other hand it is a commitment. But we made the shift, it is hard to work if you are constantly being controlled and limited, if you have to go to the boss for every decision. No, it is not necessary. It is good to be informed, but they have extremely free hands. I try to encourage innovative behavior through leadership.

2. How would you describe the relationship between yourself and the followers in your team?

Throughout my career I have identified myself with the company, the company is of great value. It is very important that the company has a culture and we think that this level of culture is very high. Our conflict sensors are at a very high level. In some companies, conflicts must be severe in order to be detected, whereas in our company the conflicts are detected at early stage and resolved immediately.

I think they consider me strict actually, but in a good way. There is a lot allowed, but there are also certain principles. I have always wondered about foreign companies compared to Slovenian companies. A Slovenian company has always had to have a carrot and stick

approach. In our company we never did. As well workers in foreign companies seldom complain to the owner of excessive workload. I have worked in the past for foreign companies and tried to incorporate that mentality as well here. There is a lot of work to be done, let us make it work. We enable workers to work responsibly, also trust in competence of employees. They are not stupid, workers are not numbers, workers have knowledge. Workers can enjoy their work, they can also find themselves prosper in some lower position. Not everyone is a director in the end, but you can also make an interesting everyday work-life for an employee so that he can grow and enjoy his work. I think we somehow achieved that even now that we worked nine hours recently and held few working Saturdays. I had the feeling that the atmosphere was good.

a. What reactions or actions do you wish to encourage through your leadership?

We have a production operation which is still a repetitive process. Thus, democracy has some limitations, yet everyone has a chance in certain context. Looking back at one of the decisions, the reason why we eliminated production management as a business function. We go directly from the plan preparation to the shift managers and we have given them all the competencies so that they can deploy work according to their knowledge and up to expected outcome. Of course, who has more knowledge than those who do it every day. They combine process orders, plan sequences, of course within some time unit. With that we have again gained something; everyone was given importance, they feel important. In production some tasks may seem simple, but in fact they are not as great precision is required. We keep emphasizing these values as well: accuracy, reliability. We appreciate that. On the other hand, for example on Friday we will have a snack for the whole company, we also plan a trip together. During Covid-19 we could not socialize that much, but we usually have a New Year's party. The recourse payment is also at highest rate with us, we also have Christmas bonuses. People need to be fairly rewarded. We also raised salaries this year.

b. Do you recall of using any non-financial incentives?

I do not want to have unambitious people, I try to avoid that. On the other hand, I know that if I have more educated people, I have to motivate them in some way to stay so that they do not run away from us. Otherwise, we have not achieved anything, we have a relatively extensive onboarding process and it would be a pity. But the work is also complex in its own way and will be more and more knowledge-intensive, especially if we will go forward with robotics and so on. We need secondary and higher educated staff. One thing is that we go into some education programmes, including schooling, but the most important thing that allows us to expand and grow is that people see the possibility of progress. Either horizontally, that is, within the workplace in the sense of "the more you know, the more you are worth." Let's not forget the index, we look at it once a year and it is possible to get promoted. Secondly, we recruit internally. Thus, the associates see that it is worth investing their effort and doing well. Because, for example they can be a shift manager, the leader of something else and so on.

3. Think of a recent situation when you worked on any innovation project where task complexity or crossfunctional interdependence was present. How did you reach solutions?

I give an example through an anecdote. The second or third day when we got a new colleague from company X. Once we have agreed on the assignments, he was surprised and inquired when we will have the next meeting. We said: "Why is it needed?" He replied: "That we will make a decision." We responded that we have made the decision to proceed with the clear activities, now we shall materialize them and then reunite to look at where we stand and define next steps. The decision was made, we are here together and have agreed on how to execute, we only need to carry it out now.

a. How were the tasks assigned?

We do not have many tasks, we have small projects. In a way, two technologists led an environmental project. As far as purchasing or sales activities are concerned, someone from that department was assigned. I somehow covered financial and strategic aspects that the project required. I built it in a storyline and provided direction what we need to show or deliver in order to be successful.

b. When a project encounters an obstacle, how do you come up with solutions?

We sit down together. Let us detackle from this project. Sometimes there is a complaint or a technical challenge. Then a meeting is scheduled. For instance, today we are meeting in a small team. We have gained a very important customer from Germany and the first order was received, thus it is necessary to drive it through a team. We require a constructor, a technologist in production, three or four people will be in charge from start to the end to deliver per customer's requirements.

c. How was communication led and feedback shared from you to the team and within the team?

I prefer to joke at my own expense so as not to offend anyone. Secondly, I am very open to constructive criticism. We are not only performing well, especially in this rush. I think we are quite direct in communication. We praise, we also criticize, but we try to do it constructively. I think it is a speak-up culture, we do not hold it within ourselves. I have one principle, I prefer to tackle the task once. Let's find a solution, work on it and then move on to the next challenges. I do not wish to procrastinate actions.

4. Describe your team's innovation process, what was your engagement from idea creation, promotion to idea implementation?

Several ideas are generated by employees. There are some major development projects which are conducted through meetings where the status is reported to some extent. Then we have the so-called faster projects, where it's a matter of one week to get something done. So, it differs. Now we have investment projects where we have to go to the banks, collect offers; we agree on these assignments, everyone gets something to manage. Despite the intensity, there are usually not so many meetings, but more checks are done. We ask: "How is it going

now with this project, where are we? Have we already received this and that, have we implemented something, have we tried a certain approach?" It progresses quickly. If a new tool is required, a constructor gets involved. If production needs an innovative process, we have associates who know what to do. They are given the opportunity to change the process.

a. What was the key contributing factor to idea realization?

It is important to the employees that the processes are clear and as simple as possible. If they are complicated, then they have problems, it is difficult to do. They are focused to work with quality. They also do not want a high risk of something going wrong, they like to be on the safe side. In our company the employees show an interest in improvements. They also have an interest in making the company grow, because if it is bigger, it has some more perseverance and security. Therefore, they are interested in expanding business, within normal limits. After all, we had been working overtime this year, conversely we did not have much overtime last year because we caught a rhythm. Now we have to catch it again, we want to return to the normal framework of work.

We inform the workers, we do not hide information. We are a successful company, we share the goals. Every now and then when we are at a turning point, a meeting is made with all the workers, a short 10-15 minutes session. We share where we are, what we have done, what still awaits us. The management wants to address these challenges through a consensus and motivate employees. As well to argue what will improve if we achieve this. Workers like to work in a successful company, in a company where there will be profit.

5. How would you describe your own innovative work behavior?

Firstly, my mindset is that anything is possible. In certain areas I insist on why we would work according to a Slovenian average of added value when we can have a German or Austrian added value, we are not less capable of doing that. Because if you set a goal big enough and if you work in the right direction, you will achieve that goal. I want to move those boundaries with my team, that sometimes it is necessary to look out of the box. Sometimes we can approach it quite differently.

a. What motivates you to exercise innovative work behavior?

I am not interested in a chamber of commerce award or anything like that. I want this to be a top and exemplary company in all parameters, fitting a medium size company. One more thing, man matures over the years. We no longer collect every euro at any price. I tell every worker that I am not interested in the euro I take from him. This euro will make him very unhappy, whereas it will not make me rich. We must learn how to earn in a different way.

b. What would help to enhance your innovative work behavior?

We grew from a small to a medium-sized company, judging from the parameters we are already there. We still need to reach a certain critical mass. We need to strengthen the technological strength tremendously. Once we gain the critical mass of this technological knowledge of our people, co-workers, we will be able to make big leaps. We want to give

the company what it needs or will need. My goal is always to try to put in the right governance and the right resources at every moment. The best resources you can have, because we need to keep in mind that now we grow. If you grow, you cannot have a lot of profit as you spend it on reinforcements, improvements. It is necessary to try to bring added value at any moment and get the optimal yield from everything.

c. Is the approach to complex tasks different from the approach to simpler tasks?

Similar. Big numbers do not frighten me. For example, we will invest 800,000 euros this year, but no problem since we spent only 300,000 euros last year. It is only numbers. If it is important to do so, let's do it. A simpler task is faster and consumes fewer resources, however we still have a similar approach. Everything is important, as well the small things.

6. What are your expectations regarding employee innovation?

Quite big. I want to encourage innovation, that employees bring their ideas. I want us to implement them to a greater extent. For an employee to see that his idea is valid, that is of the greatest value. This also demonstrates the strategy of the company to employ people who carry some potential.

a. What values do you promote?

Coexistence, people spend here eight hours, there is a lot of interaction. As you can see, all spaces here are open. We want to promote that we appreciate each other, cooperate show respect. As people and as co-workers, respect seems to me to be extremely important in both directions, from managers to employees and vice versa.

b. How do you assess your team's affiliation with the company's objectives?

The goals are set each year based on the history of past results. Sometimes we see we will not reach the target and adjust them from a certain number to some percentage. We try to be reasonable and set ourselves such goals that we can follow them and in return the goals tell us something. I would say we do not pursue unrealistic goals but yet they need to tell us something and that we learn something from it. We monitor objectives and report them. Workers care about it, everyone wants to be successful and in my view they identify with the goals. We receive suggestions on how to improve performance.

Reliable workers are recognized. The recommendation I gave to the shift managers: »you see there is a lot of work, you cannot control it all. You have to empower employees, put them in charge. Select competent associates and give them a group of products or to cover certain functions, business or manufacturing. I try to ensure that responsibilities are shared to the last worker. Every idea which gets written down is considered. I go to production area every day, I get involved when I see that it is necessary to change something, to think out of the box.

c. What is your standpoint towards risk taking and mistakes?

We work in our production based on the acquired knowledge and experiences over the years. Certain rules might not encourage excessive experimental innovation. By this I mean that

we are careful, whether with materials or at some stages. Everything is done for the customer, we could quickly receive a complaint. We make changes while making sure it is okay. So, we do not completely leave it to the chance. We weight the decision for ad-hoc changes. Yet, surely we take on as well bigger risks. We had a certain type of machine, now we have started to buy a completely different type. We change entire processes because we feel it is necessary. If the outcome is not fruitful, you also need to learn to accept it.

d. What support do you provide to your employees for their new suggestions and ideas?

We provide verbal encouragement. Every idea is also rewarded, but I would like to highlight more the following - my approach is to try to implement, even if it is not the most promising idea or not a priority. We try to bring the idea to life. This seems important to me, in such way it is the greatest confirmation and recognition for the initiator of the idea.

e. How do you support employee's personal development and innovative work behavior? What in your view fosters their innovative work behavior?

We are performing some trainings, we also bring in professional support. Last year we hosted a reknown psychologist to give us more breadth on motivation and the role of the employee in the company in a broader context. I believe employees behave more innovatively, if they see their idea come to life, to have moved something.

INTERVIEW WITH PERSON G

1. How would you describe leadership style in your team? What characteristics would you attribute to it?

Respectful, quite democratic, willing to listen, receptive to different ideas.

2. How would you describe the relationship between yourself and the followers in your team?

It seems to me that we have foremost democracy. The opinions of both subordinates and superiors matter. In fact, we negotiate and run things together.

a. What reactions or actions do you wish to encourage through your leadership?

My leader elicits good reactions from me. I feel my leader is listening and appreciates my opinion, therefore I feel good and gain momentum. You feel heard, respected. And at the same time, I pass this on to my employees. I listen to them, embrace their opinions and suggestions. I want to encourage that they feel more responsible, to get the impetus to want to get things done and that they grow through the process.

3. Think of a recent situation when you worked on any innovation project where task complexity or crossfunctional interdependence was present. How did you reach solutions?

With a conversation. For instance, some tools do not function properly and we approach it together. When it is necessary to deepen the material, we go to that department, ask for a

new template and the developer draws it. Afterwards we produce it, we try to assemble alltogether again. We look for solutions during the production process itself. As soon as we detect a problem, we call each other over the phone and solve it on the spot with a direct communication. The one who performs a job knows all the obstacles and specifics, the little details that are essential.

a. How was communication led and feedback shared from you to the team and within the team?

This differs, depending on what kind of project it is. If we have a small project that only concerns production and we have problems there, then we solve them there. So, we do not pass them on to leaders. However, if management is involved in some projects, they are absolutely informed. In such a case, we also have weekly meetings with the employees and the director where we pass on the information to them.

b. What reactions did you receive from team members?

I think quite good ones. We respect each other, they respect me and I absolutely listen to them too. Even if I suggest otherwise, they accept it as common good and do as we agreed. I think the reactions have successful outcome.

4. Describe your team's innovation process, what was your engagement from idea creation, promotion to idea implementation?

In regards to core innovation, in principle the development department runs these projects. Once they get into production, we all work together. Where we are most innovative in production team are the procedures or ways of working. There we are actually negotiating the way forward together as I mentioned earlier. Someone sees that something is too difficult and it will not bring the wanted outcome. Then we propose for example to try on a template. Actually, we innovate throughout the processes. I guide employees to think for themselves. Even if I think a little differently sometimes, I will not oppose harshly, I try to guide the person with the right questions to come to a conclusion on his own. If I say, we have to do it that way, normally the reactions will not be the best.

a. What was the key contributing factor to idea realization?

That it is productive and benefits you. That it is done quickly and with quality. This counts for us, we are a productive company, we make our own products and this brings us added value. It is also crucial that you are open-minded. That you listen to your co-workers, that you, too, as a leader, step behind them, engage yourself. Additionally, to promote the idea to other leaders, for example: "You know that would be really good, let's give it a try." You get involved right away, you should not approach their ideas with the communication "we will do it the next time". I think that would be a shame. We never suppress an idea, even if an idea has already been implemented, we say "great, we will give it a try". That is why we have developed a form in production where workers write innovation proposals themselves. If they see an improvement for the particular process, they write it there. We then sit down

together with the technologists to examine if this is acceptable for us and if it will benefit us. Then it is also stimulated, evaluated contribution.

b. How exactly does this work?

We have the sheets hanging on the bulletin board, they are available to everyone. The employee takes it, writes his idea and submits it to me, I collect them. Once we have collected a few ideas, we gather together and go in order. Initially without initiators of the idea, but feedback is returned to them. We encourage this a lot, we get a lot of ideas, very commendable. But I think innovative ideas depend on a person's character. Some are very innovative by nature and have a lot of ideas. We usually have a few people who make more use of it, while someone does not show so much of that perspective. But we encourage everyone, even a new employee is always told that we have this on the bulletin board.

5. How would you describe your own innovative work behavior?

Especially with the relationship. I think they accept me nicely, we have a nice communication with each other. To give an example, we have changed the way of the planning a little bit which they have accepted nicely. I support with scheduling. There comes a situation when something does not go according to plan. That is when a worker has a free hand to decide to change something, do it differently. They only keep me informed. It is about exchanging ideas and taking them into account. However, we are in communication on a daily basis. If not in person, at least by phone.

a. What motivates you to exercise innovative work behavior?

It gives you some satisfaction when you see that you are successful, that you are doing well and that you are growing. Also a contribution to the company motivates me, we monitor every month that we make good sales, that customers are satisfied. As a result you get more orders. We all strive for that. When you achieve something, you are certainly pleasantly tired. However you say: "great, we did it". You breathe with the firm.

b. What would help to enhance your innovative work behavior?

I really don't know. We have the satisfaction, even for the personal realm. For example that your manager grants you a leave when you need it, he allows you to break the workday for personal errands. To me, this flexibility is important. If you have a doctor, an obligation with your child, such requests have never been rejected. This understanding is important. On the other hand, you have to reciprocate with the same attitude, I make up for that spent time. We also have trainings, openness to opinions or wishes. I also commend someone for putting their effort into something. It is nice when the director sees the efforts and praises us. But they always praise the team, not only individuals. Even the departments among themselves, without one the other cannot work. We know that even if one department does everything great and the other does not, we cannot finish the product. We help ourselves with resource rotation between departments. For example, when one unit is lacking resources, we pull them from another unit. We have a great understanding for each other needs and we all work for one goal.

c. Is the approach to complex tasks different from the approach to simpler tasks?

Certainly more complex tasks require more commitment. For the simple ones the decision-making is in individual's hands. As soon as the development processes are over, you need someone else to look at it. The developer confirms, makes observations, compares customer samples with ours. In such case more people are definitely involved.

6. What are your expectations regarding employee innovation?

If a person sees and knows something, it is right that he conveys it. On the other hand, in my view he should not just change a process without saying as it is right that everyone is informed of the change. The second reason is as well to be able to reward the person if he has improved something.

a. What values do you promote?

Listen to the person when he has something to tell you. Not just briefly, take your time. I will make up for those two minutes, while it means a lot to someone to be able to express some emotion, an opinion, a problem. It is crucial that you are available for people. Either to a superior, to a worker or to someone who started working yesterday. They are all equally important. What is the value of the leaders without a team to drive it.

b. How do you assess your team's affiliation with the company's objectives?

Affiliation is high. I see it in their relationship. Employees have access to monthly plans of what we need to do. When we face a challenging situation, you do not have to ask someone twice to make an extra step. They see it for themselves, they devote saying "we will be here for two hours today and another two hours tomorrow and we will make it happen." There comes a month when we work overtime, for example when we have a machine failure or something similar. But in the normal months, they detect for themselves where more needs to be done. We also get along well with each other. I come to production area during the lunch break. They have everything nicely served there, it gives a sense of being at home. You get a warm feeling, you do not feel compelled to be here at work.

c. What is your standpoint towards risk taking and mistakes?

Mistakes happen in our company, mostly due to the human factor. In fact, behind every process is a man who is, of course, fallible. We encourage self-control so that every worker looks at and checks the product at different stages.

d. If we focus on some new ways of working. What is the attitude to risks there?

If we have a project limited in time, we shorten something and go in the X direction, which will still be acceptable, we give it a try. However, if we know that the new method will take us a week, then we do not take the risk because we will miss the deadline. There may be opportunities later on. We take a certain percentage of new products or components for ourselves. And even after the dispatch we can later continue to develop this new thing we envisioned.

e. What support do you provide to your employees for their new suggestions and ideas?

A moral support, I stand behind him. You praise him for doing something well. We give it a try and then you follow up, it is important not to forget about it. In two days you ask him how he is progressing. If he needs any help, I support him. We also connect with other departments if it needed. For example, we call the developer to approach and resolve the matter together. One cannot cover everything, it is too complex.

f. How do you support employee's personal development and innovative work behavior? What in your view fosters their innovative work behavior?

By allowing them to have their hands free. To explore in your own way, sometimes you succeed, sometimes you fail. But you still learn from it and grow with it. For certain things, I allow co-workers to decide for themselves. Further in the process, it quickly becomes clear whether this was the right decision or not. If he has been successful, then he has some kind of confirmation of his good work, he is proud of himself. Workers are involved in meetings, including college meetings. There we review objectives, where we have been successful, where we still need to improve. Once every two weeks, we sit together from all the departments.

7. What do you suggest in terms of leadership to further contribute to innovative behavior?

A little more informal socializing. To connect workers outside the company as well. We did have that, but due to Covid-19 we gave up those trips a bit. It is these approaches that add a human touch. With such a small thing, you do a lot to make co-workers feel more belonging, they come to work with more joy and get more momentum.

INTERVIEW WITH PERSON H

1. How would you describe your leadership style? What characteristics would you attribute to it?

I certainly lead through questions. In the end, I make a decision if necessary. When someone comes to me with a problem I ask them: "What would you do?". Looking back to my career path, certain people have had an intense impact on me as a person professionally and in private life. I still remember the communication style of my first manager in R&D. I have not seen him since five years, but would like to visit him to say thank you. Listening is necessary.

2. How would you describe the relationship between yourself and the followers in your team?

Informal. Maybe this also describes me a little bit, for example as an intern I only addressed formally one person, with the rest I used informal speech. This applies for all associates, not solely in R&D, but also in production unit. Also when the new employees come, I suggest the same approach. I do not want hierarchy because of the title - if the respect is based on

perception of someone as a person or due to his knowledge, then it is alright, otherwise it is irrelevant. Interpersonal acceptance is important.

a. What reactions or actions do you wish to encourage through your leadership?

I want them to grow, to evolve. Even in previous jobs, whenever I left, I wanted the one who replaced me to be maximum prepared, to have proper handover. I want us to grow together. We had doubled sales since 2017. Before we had been on the same level for years, there was a different focus. We were specialists in certain field, there was lack of aspiration for growth and sales. Then this turned around.

3. Think of a recent situation when you worked on any innovation project where task complexity or crossfunctional interdependence was present. How did you reach solutions?

We have two types of projects: one is related to the technology, new equipment or new programs. The second type is for existing products and technology where only smaller enhancements need to be installed in order to get the final product. Namely, we do not have a permanent product. Every customer initially comes up with a request, however they never come with an exact plan »I want to buy this from you«. We have formal and informal resolution process. We always contact the relevant people with the necessary knowledge to cooperate. We present to them at the beginning what we want to achieve or what is the goal, what are the tasks. In this team everyone gives their vision.

a. How were decisions made?

The team members participated (in decision-making), that's why they are there to pass on their knowledge. How to get to that end product, identify what the customer wants.

b. How was communication led and feedback shared from you to the team and within the team?

The individual stages of development are evaluated, namely if it is going in the right direction, whether there is a need to correction and lessons learnt out of it. Otherwise, we have the characteristic that we have very few formal meetings. That is why we also have an open space, I rather walk to the production and technology departments. But to sit down, we do not use extensive time for that.

c. How do you track project status?

Different people are responsible for different types of projects. It is known who is involved, the trustees report to the college meeting or at least once a month, whereas we speak to the director practically daily. We have mainly small scale projects. However, we have applicative development, where we have daily two new products in production. This means documentation, production process, technological process, communication with customers in the development phase, validation of drawings etc. We do this practically in teams of two to four designers. We communicate across the table, but surely as well keep records and spreadsheets. I want to say that we are always connected when reviewing projects. We have

built this intensity through all these years. Sitting together allows for quick communication, we also designed the spaces with this intention.

d. What reactions did you receive from team members?

Excellent, very positive. Criticism is seldom received, at least from employees.

e. Why is this the case in your opinion?

I will not say that criticism would never be justified. Maybe they have a lot of respect, at least per my observation. I was surprised when co-worker told me that he saved my e-mail to learn from me because I have quite some miles behind me. But for example they joke when I am slightly distant with thoughts or in lower spirit: "Where is person H from the last week?" This is also a kind of criticism.

4. Describe your team's innovation process, what was your engagement from idea creation, promotion to idea implementation?

I do not know if anyone has already described to you the innovation proposals board, we have this process in place. Prescribed, evaluated. I always advocate the involvement of employees in the business of the company. Also that they are aware of the effects of their work, with the results, both positive and negative. It ranges from sales success to quality. The second is that they are familiar with the development and that they are thinking about the company. Today we spend more time in the company than at home, I function in such a way that my job is a way of life. I have a family as well, but I expect this mindset from the co-workers as well. That sometimes at home they think of their job, perhaps of a certain challenge. By this I mean that all employees are involved. A past example was with a production plan, in those times it was still written by hand and was made in two copies; one with the prices included and one without. Today we have accessible prices for each product, I openly tell the production employee: "look, this piece or this frame is worth approx. 30 euros. Due to undetected scratch in initial step, we lost these 30 euros". On the other hand, we also have very good results, so responsibility of each employee is demonstrated. We have sales figures, plans and objectives posted on a bulletin board. Our business is an open book, regardless of positive or negative results. As far as innovation itself is concerned, we have that form, we also have formalized that everyone who submits an idea, if he only writes it down on the form, he gets 20 euros. But the issue is that our employees are highly devoted to the company, often some minor improvements are made, but they do not take the time to write a sentence about it. We also had a case where I told a colleague that I will write it for him. In a nutshell, we have a system built for it. When someone suggests something, it is evaluated, there is a policy in place and it gets posted on the bulletin board. We give 1,000 to 2,000 euros a year to employees for such small proposals.

a. What was the key contributing factor to idea realization?

Certainly, if the senior management had not given support, this would not have happened. We have a certain team of three people who sit down, review, evaluate, ask questions. If the proposal is categorized as a system or technological innovation, we initiate a project. We

determine who will participate in it, what is the potential savings generation, what compensations we will give to the employee. They can receive 300-500 euros.

5. How would you describe your own innovative work behavior?

I look for improvement in every matter. I have always thought about the product we produce - we came to the savings when there was a request from someone that you have to be cheap. I have always wondered why we would not make the savings sooner and have that difference in the company. From this perspective I think about what can be improved in terms of quality and price. I also think about new markets, new customers, how to reach them.

a. What motivates you to exercise innovative work behavior?

The result and seeing for myself the effect of my work.

b. What would help to enhance your innovative work behavior?

Additional knowledge. Even more personal education. When something comes along, I try to educate myself in that area first. Perhaps, I would like something similar with my colleagues. In other words, when you see that technology is going in a certain direction, you should start educating yourself in this field and then you foresee the future.

c. Is the approach to complex tasks different from the approach to simpler tasks?

There are no set stages for simple tasks since they are not necessary. From personal perspective, I do not want to deal with a simple task repeatedly, my aim is to solve it with the right quality from the beginning. It may take longer or shorter time, however the biggest consumer of our energy is that you are constantly revolving around the same thing. It can also be assigned to someone. That was not the case in the past when all communication from the company went through one person. The latter caused a bottleneck. We did not actually hire new people, we opened up to employees when the management team has changed. I believe I have the competencies and the ability to decide for myself with simple or with complex tasks. I only inform the manager. Until now, we have gotten to know each other to the extend that I mostly know on which topics I can fully decide on my own. That also means a lot to me.

6. What are your expectations regarding employee innovation?

Sometimes to think a little bit more about their job. We deal with mainly smaller projects, those two developments a day require in fair share a minimal application development. By this we mean that some known technology is used to develop something. The expectation is that people are already behaving innovatively in the process. If leaders think in such way, we pass that on to our employees and so it translates to a bigger community. Our company specializes in small and medium batches. The product can be produced perhaps twice or once a year, but we do not have regular products. Thus, surely people need to feel good about the changes and new things, such people enjoy this company. We also had a case where the employee came up with the problem of not finding himself in this work because he would

like to come in the morning at 6 a.m. and forget about work at 2 p.m. when he finishes. In our company, innovation inclination is really strong.

a. What values do you promote?

Celebration and joy over the success and result of your work. I want to pass on values to co-workers. I never favored formalizing, being someone's boss. If someone tells me I am his boss, I do not feel good about it.

b. How do you assess your team's affiliation with the company's objectives?

Employees are involved in setting goals. These are the goals that we set at the company level. At the beginning when they are not yet fully defined, associates get acquainted with them and we discuss them. The aim is that they agree and take the objectives as their own. Affiliation is seen through actions. When we put them together it is the right moment to speak up, they are encouraged to argue if someone disagrees. Speak-up culture is encouraged.

c. What is your standpoint towards risk taking and mistakes?

We all make mistakes, but we want it to happen only once. To learn something from this. In our company the most common mistakes are complaints, repetition of production or ejection. I have no dispute to this. I always want the mistake to be identified as early as feasible. That we do not spend time eliminating the consequence, but rather that it is found in the beginning. It does not make sense to set extra control in the end, but to find the root cause of where this error occurs and to establish the conditions that it does not repeat.

d. What is your attitude to risks, what approach do you advocate?

I agree with a thoughtful risk. To gather all possible information upfront, but of course in the end some risk remains. It depends on the field, but the employees often come to ask for advice because they do not want to take the risk. Then I try to get them thinking what is the consequence. Through questions - "if there is such a consequence, what would you do?"

e. What support do you provide to your employees for their new suggestions and ideas?

I am open minded, still a developer at heart. Let's talk, evaluate together and then put the energy into making it happen. Whether it is only time investment or financial, we are very open here. If it is necessary to move forward, I help to secure financial resources. I can decide up to certain financial limits, if it is necessary to go to a higher level, the idea is presented to them. If I believe in an idea, I definitely help.

f. How do you support employee's personal development and innovative work behavior? What in your view fosters their innovative work behavior?

I am thinking about employees. For example, a boy who turned out to be very good, I asked him whether he would go to study. I addressed the topic to our director and we then paid his tuition. Another example: we identified the planner as the potential for becoming a production manager. It is necessary to work with people. We offer trainings and they can

choose which one they would like to have. The company must grow, the company is a living being. It is necessary to monitor the potential in employees and react. The company is alive construct, today it is not the same as it was yesterday nor will it be tomorrow. We monitor in great detail, both in terms of data and communication with people. I also informally go for a coffee among the smokers to socialize, you feel the spirit. We have a high identification of the employees with the company. We are also building this through teambuildings, with trips for employees, picnics, New Year's party. The company finances it. We also organized a rafting, bus trip, sightseeing years ago. By doing so, the employees release tensions.

In principle, there is no hiding of knowledge. From the nature of our products and technology every employee must be willing to share knowledge. We need to train a production worker from one to two years. Because he must receive documentation, material, do a stand-alone operation. We have 300 orders every month, there is actually no hiding of information.

7. What do you suggest in terms of leadership to further contribute to innovative behavior?

I find it difficult to say because my suggestions are directly communicated and in majority cases heard. So something new to say is difficult. When I see some possible improvement we sit down, a few minutes every morning - it can also be a conversation about politics, but mostly business. The only thing we do not perform is an annual interview with employees. This applies for production department. We already have something up here in the offices. When I was appointed a director of production I went through the educational stages and in the beginning they gave me the opportunity to have a psychologist with me. Interestingly, the employees thought we were going to talk about pay and working conditions. But the annual interviews are not just about that. Due to our rapid growth we are not able to do this at the moment, we are working in this direction for production unit. Communication and employee satisfaction is important. We want to ask: »where can you see yourself, maybe you would rather work in another department, do you have any wishes?« To give everyone a chance to say this, usually the same people stand out and communicate more.

INTERVIEW WITH PERSON I

1. How would you describe your leadership style? What characteristics would you attribute to it?

In my view it is teamwork, we speak a lot with each other, there is a lot of communication. In the past this was not the case and there were problems. I am looking for feedback from co-workers, every idea is welcome.

2. How would you describe the relationship between yourself and the followers in your team?

Equivalent. They (associates) can turn to me at any time when required. During the process we check briefly that everything is going well. It seems to me that we have already achieved something through the speak-up culture where everyone can raise their voice.

a. What reactions or actions do you wish to encourage through your leadership?

So if they have ideas – for example a girl who is innovative sees how she can do something easier, I do not want to obstruct this with ego in the sense of “that’s how you have to work”, but rather discuss it together. We analyze it together. If it is okay, we go for the approach which suits this person. I believe that the result is important, we must follow the same purpose, but the way can differ.

3. Think of a recent situation when you worked on any innovation project where task complexity or crossfunctional interdependence was present. How did you reach solutions?

There is usually a mild friction. For example, someone would solve it in one way, the other colleague in a different way. Then we test ideas through dialogue, everyone has the right to argument their meaning of the idea and how it will make something easier.

a. How do you come to the final solution or. how do you decide which direction to go?

By mutual agreement. We are also talking to those who are preparing a new project and looking for a solution together.

b. Could you elaborate a bit more?

For example, in production, when the production order comes and the product is already being manufactured. You get the most out of it when you are actually making it. Then mistakes occur and we call each other to find common solutions. It does not work any other way, it is too complex. The one who leads the project knows exactly what the product should look like in the end. I work with information I have available.

c. How was communication led and feedback shared from you to the team and within the team?

By direct contact. We share knowledge with everyone who wants it. We know what is our goal, however a new way of working is always a test. Let us say that we do not always get good pieces out and we need to go back and communicate with everyone what went wrong to learn from it. This seems to me to be the case everywhere while innovating.

d. What reactions did you receive from team members?

I receive good reactions from the employees. Sometimes, of course, there is a worse response and you try your best to resolve the matter. Nevertheless, you will not be able to please everyone, this would indicate something is wrong.

e. Do employees seek your confirmation?

They are more looking for equality. Final confirmation is however required, because when you confirm one product, you must be responsible for it.

4. Describe your team's innovation process, what was your engagement from idea creation, promotion to idea implementation?

When one of my girls comes up with a new idea, we discuss it, give it a try. If we see that it is fine, it gets implemented. Even if I sometimes think it will not work optimally, I believe it is always worth to try. Of course, by not doing any harm. If the result is good, we capture it in the innovation proposal form.

a. What was the key contributing factor to idea realization?

That everyone is involved, collaboration. To hear each other and accept their ideas.

5. How would you describe your own innovative work behavior?

I like to work in such a manner that no one feels that I am the leader. I get involved in the teamwork surely, I am still responsible for getting the products out on time. However, I do not support bossing.

a. What motivates you to exercise innovative work behavior?

A praisal and a reward.

b. What would help to enhance your innovative work behavior?

In production, we depend on senior management for certain financial things. Sometimes we would like to have more approval for our requests. This applies for ordering of the materials we need, sometimes it is timeconsuming, the decision could be made faster.

c. Is the approach to complex tasks different from the approach to simpler tasks?

Of course. For complex ones, we need more information. More integration between functions is required when it comes to new products.

6. What are your expectations regarding employee innovation?

Usually new suggestions are made by the same people. Some individuals do not demonstrate such desire to innovate. Someone will turn the product around, observe and detect what would make it easier to build, while the others will do exactly as you show them. I would also like to encourage these people. Everyone must take some responsibility. If you see an employee is not progressing or growing, you try to change that with him. Nevertheless, when nothing changes after a year or two, you stop trying.

a. What values do you promote?

Respect and tolerance for each other.

b. How do you assess your team's affiliation with the company's objectives?

In our company, I think we are very committed to our goals. When there is a lot of work, we all make the effort to support. The majority of the group believes that we can contribute something to the goals.

c. Who is involved in goal setting?

The employees know how much work is planned. While closing the month we check how to make more sales realization, this is when we get involved. Initial goals are set by the leadership team.

d. What is your standpoint towards risk taking and mistakes?

In my opinion it is best that the one who makes a mistake as well corrects it. That is how we learn the most. For example, if someone makes a mistake and the other one fixes it, then there is no effect. We have tried that before. If he can, he will fix it himself, otherwise the whole team will grab it and we will do it together. If any error occurs, we call the technologist to approve. Because it is much easier if they replace a certain part and we ensure a good quality of the product than if there is a complaint and we get everything back to our table.

e. What support do you provide to your employees for their new suggestions and ideas?

I help them write an innovative proposal, properly design it if necessary. This also helps to get any additional idea, I share as well my experiences since I have been here for a long time. Usually, on a personal level, we have a lot of fun with our colleagues.

f. How do you support employee's personal development and innovative work behavior? What in your view fosters their innovative work behavior?

In my opinion, anyone who does well deserves a praisal. The director also comes to praise us for doing well and putting the extra effort. Obviously, this pleases everyone. Certain co-workers can do a lot of things. I definitely enable those who have the opportunity or desire to learn elsewhere. So they can rotate between departments. Some people like machines and if they are content with their work they will be more successful there. Others prefer manual labor, so we put those people to such functions. There is a lot to do here, we try to listen to their wishes and needs. Also a reward helps. Financial rewards have a sure boost. Additionally, we are considering a trip for a while now. The latter is also a nice incentive. Socializing without work helps to increase the team spirit.

INTERVIEW WITH PERSON J

1. How would you describe your leadership style? What characteristics would you attribute to it?

I manage work in the printing house as well as perform printing. I have to connect with assembly and mechanics in order to assure pieces go out in the same time. We need to be constantly connected with the workers, otherwise it would not flow effectively. Together with the team we decide how to proceed when resolving matters.

2. How would you describe the relationship between yourself and the followers in your team?

We work together constantly and have teamwork so there are normally no complaints. Communication is open.

a. What reactions or actions do you wish to encourage through your leadership?

I want them to be independent. When new apprentices come, we dedicate time to them so they can become independent. This also relieves me to certain extent so I am able to perform additional activities.

3. Think of a recent situation when you worked on any innovation project where task complexity or crossfunctional interdependence was present. How did you reach solutions?

In principle, I am not involved in projects.

4. Describe your team's innovation process, what was your engagement from idea creation, promotion to idea implementation?

We have constantly new ideas. Innovation proposals are written down and, if feasible, implemented. Everyone has a chance and I encourage them to do so, the more ideas there are, the better. I am not fully involved in the implementation of the idea, but I am being consulted.

a. What was the key contributing factor to idea realization?

To see the benefit, for example we claim the improvement will drive faster completion of some activity. Encouragement as well increases motivation.

5. How would you describe your own innovative work behavior?

I have been a worker in the past and I know how the work goes, I draw from my experience. When you become a leader, however, I believe that the key to team spirit is to work successfully with both employees and superiors.

a. What motivates you to exercise innovative work behavior?

I love the change, non-routine work.

b. What would help to enhance your innovative work behavior?

The current environment already supports innovative behavior.

6. What are your expectations regarding employee innovation?

Changes are very welcome in this company, especially if they make our work easier and increase the added value. Every innovation is seen as a change with potential.

a. What values do you promote?

Every worker is responsible for their work, we share responsibility together. I encourage helping each other.

b. How do you assess your team's affiliation with the company's objectives?

Great affiliation, my opinion is that we are all on the same boat. Everyone contributes their part to the whole.

c. What is your standpoint towards risk taking and mistakes?

If mistakes happen, we improve and correct them. Everyone who works, fails sometimes. Certainly each one of us takes on a certain risk. Everyone feels guilty about themselves if it does not go according to the plan. When an error occurs, we stop and I aim to reflect about it. Then we look for a way to resolve it so that the error does not reoccur. Speaking only of the printing house, we cannot fully experiment as we handle technical documentation.

d. What support do you provide to your employees for their new suggestions and ideas?

I encourage them to contribute, we talk extensively about our challenges. Everyone contributes something and together we make a proposal. Most innovative ideas are brought however by those who are newly employed. Us who have been in the company for a long time sometimes do not see opportunities that much.

e. How do you support employee's personal development and innovative work behavior? What in your view fosters their innovative work behavior?

With positive energy, lots of communication. There are many opportunities for promotion in this company, including exchanges between departments.

7. What do you suggest in terms of leadership to further contribute to innovative behavior?

Perhaps to ensure that given proposals for innovation are materialized slightly faster. Perhaps we could allocate more resources for this.