INNOVATIVE TEACHING METHODS

Project Management

edited by
Lidia Pokrzycka
Robert Wallace Vaagan

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press

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Introduction

Information and communications technologies (ICT) influence every aspect of human life nowadays. They play a significant role at work, in business, education and entertainment. In the digital era, it is important to use ICT in the academic education in order to provide students with a chance to learn the 21st century skills and apply them in practice. Furthermore, it is crucial to master effective and innovative corporate management in view of the constantly changing labour market. Scientists should also regularly update their knowledge of project management with the use of modern technologies.

Practical teaching which introduces web applications, blended learning/e-learning and social media not only enriches the process of education. Using the modern methods, students are able to share knowledge, solve tasks, find solutions and achieve goals through educational activities. Furthermore, many research projects can be conducted and coordinated remotely. What is also important, remote communication and development of ICT skills are conducive to finding partners for cooperation, comprehensive support, and knowledge sharing, which leads to achievement of better results and correction of actions when they are consulted e.g., in the international environment. The role of a teacher/project coordinator is to work out the best possible route of teaching/communication, to adjust it on a regular basis, boost productivity, motivate students to gain knowledge (from theory to practice) and acquire professional social competence.

Moreover, it is crucial to use the most attractive applications and e-learning platforms available which engage users with functionality and graphic design. It is also essential to implement appropriate tools which help accommodate new solutions, exchange educational and scientific experiences in the domestic and, even more importantly, international environment, diversify teaching methods and make students more involved in the learning process. In modern education it is not the lecturer who is in the centre of teaching/management but the student who can enjoy maximum independence and develop creative thinking as a result.

Owing to web applications it is possible to master numerous skills, including effective group work, to translate theory into practice by means of case studies, to teach in online laboratories through games and simulations, and to educate appropriately thanks to regular evaluations. It is also possible to model practical actions, by preparation to operate in real situations, learning how to adapt knowledge to market realities, and improving IT and social skills. However, it is necessary to build up trust in teaching applications, online study and remote management of educational and scientific projects.

The publication discusses innovative education of students with the use of e-learning/blended learning and ICT, both in Poland and from the international perspective (with special focus on Norway). An important part of the present publication is the presentation of the specific character of research project management. This e-book contains articles of students and doctoral students from Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin and from Oslo Metropolitan University. Doctoral students in Poland discuss their experiences related e.g., to innovative teaching, while young Norwegian researchers present case studies concerning innovative management of international and domestic companies (the papers are based on the authors' own research, interviews and detailed case analyses). The Norwegian research is the result of the course "Strategic Leadership in Organizational Communication" taught remotely in March and April 2021 in which, apart from Norwegian students, also Polish researchers participated (they held a two-week online visitation).

Although this publication covers a broad range of topics, it is focused on innovations – in education, science, and business. All articles refer to the subject of innovative teaching and management, especially in practice. Therefore, the authors believe that this e-book will prove useful both to practitioners of innovative teaching at all levels of education and to managers of scientific and educational projects in these difficult (post)pandemic times. The publication can also be recommended to all people interested in innovative modern corporate management, including students of majors related both to social and exact sciences.

From the Norwegian side, our experiences are very similar to those outlined above. As noted in the introductory article to the Norwegian student articles, digitalization of the private and public sectors is already extensive, and students are expected to have a high level of digital expertise when they enter the job market. All Norwegian higher education institutions have digitalization as a key component in their strategies. During the COVID-19 pandemic from early 2020, this has helped secure a rapid transformation of physical classroom teaching to online teaching and e-learning, using a variety of ICTs including Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Webex etc.

Digital expertise is also one of the main objectives in the European Commission's recently announced Digital Education Action Plan (DEAP) 2021–2027. Furthermore, digital expertise has long been an issue in the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) which was revised most recently in 2017. This framework reflects expected learning outcomes for all types of qualifications among EU member states plus 11 other countries including Norway. It is fully compatible with the framework of qualifications for of the European Higher Education Area and the 3 cycles of the Bologna Process, and it is also closely linked with national qualifications frameworks. EQF operates at 8 levels ranging from kindergarten (level 1) to higher education represented by level 6 (BA), level 7 (MA) and level 8 (PhD). For instance, expected learning outcomes e.g., in terms of skills at level 7 (MA) are: "Specialized problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields." At level 7 (PhD) they are: "The most advanced and specialized skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice." (For details on DEAP and EQF, see the introductory article to the Norwegian student articles).

Therefore, there can be little doubt that there is a constant need for updated literature on innovations in education, government, science and business which is the purpose of this edited anthology.

In the publication, the authors use the British or American variant of the English language. The editors of the book decided not to change the existing variety.

Lidia Pokrzycka and Robert Wallace Vaagan
Lublin/Oslo June 15, 2021

LIDIA POKRZYCKA

Blended Learning in Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Innovations in Distance Learning in PhD Students' Opinion Surveys

ABSTRACT

What is the effectiveness of distance learning? Is the effectiveness of e-learning satisfactory or does it reduce the quality of education because students work unsystematically? The article is based on a survey on the effectiveness of distance learning, conducted among doctoral students in the field of media sciences at Maria Curie Skłodowska University (the collected data was analyzed qualitative), preceded by a presentation of the applications used by the author during remote lectures.

After the completion of the research, it turned out that teaching with the use of web applications and e-learning is effective, students work independently and the quality of teaching increases. Therefore, it seems that modern teaching methods (ICT and e-learning) should be used on a larger scale, especially among masters and doctoral students. Blended learning is the basis for the information society, which enables development, especially when there is not enough free time (also in the case of adults). As a result, teaching has a flexible form. In addition, computer skills are upgraded, life-long learning is implemented in practice, and the education system is properly organized. The new media compel educators to follow appropriate methods of teaching which make efficient education of students possible. It is also important to adjust forms of education to requirements of employers.

Keywords: E-learning, ICT in practice, applications, effectiveness of distance learning

Introduction

The basic problem associated with the use of e-learning in the field of teaching English in higher education is the effectiveness of learning. Does e-learning really help improve foreign language skills? What applications/teaching methods are beneficial for higher education and do PhD students consider e-learning to be effective in language teaching?

E-learning makes it possible to teach effective teamwork with the use of various tools associated with the social media. The teaching process becomes flexible but still requires regular work. In e-learning it is necessary to introduce relevant tools supporting this manner of education, to have at least basic knowledge of ICT, and to be able to use teaching platforms, preferably also in a mobile version. E-learning platforms are supposed to be a kind of educational centres which offer an opportunity e.g., to send current information between project groups (Ubachs, 2012). Owing to e-learning platforms, it is possible to introduce the most recent teaching materials from various sources to our classes, also in the multimedia form. Furthermore, e-learning platforms enable constant support of learners by the teacher, direct online contact and supervision of students' work on a regular basis. Educational applications encourage their users to look for alternative ways of task performance, while innovative teaching tools expand students' intellectual horizons.

Online teaching ought to encompass a maximally broad range of skills of people participating in a course/training/classes. On the one hand, participants should not get bored, but on the other hand they should not become discouraged by excessive requirements. For people of lower knowledge and skills, additional quizzes and self-check questions can be added to their online courses. Furthermore, it is important to be in touch with students on a regular basis (Shadiev, Wang & Huang, 2020).

During university courses it is possible to implement partly remote education with obligatory hours of face-to-face contact with the teacher. Such a form of teaching is still not very popular in Poland, especially due to a high amount of effort which needs to be devoted by the teacher at designing courses on e-learning platforms, as well as during classes (it is necessary to frequently visit websites and check the tasks assigned on a regular basis) (Dalzie, 2016).

Some students are focused on the content of the learning process and understanding of the issues discussed, while others concentrate on rewards – grades and final results. In the case of online teaching, proper motivation is important, but also the presentation of specific skills (personal, professional, social) which the students are going to master during their remote learning classes. In such a mode of education, emotional attitude also matters (Moore, 2017; Puntambekar, 2005).

Students get more involved when they engage in cooperation, creative thinking and practical use of helpful applications. It is necessary to hold discussion face to face and online, to present specific goals of courses and to adjust them to the participants' needs. However, we should not forget about regular monitoring of progress, reviewing of student's work by a teacher, and two-way communication, achieved through regular contact with learners (Laurillard, 2012; Novak, 2002).

Among consecutive threads and subjects, it is useful to implement knowledge revision projects, based on the social media. Effectiveness of online teaching increases when the goals of study are specified, various teaching methods are used, and knowledge is verified from time to time (also in the form of learning through fun). In e-lectures the selection of information is very important, as well as knowledge management, its integration with the results of study, transfer of practical knowledge and appropriate visual setting of the courses (Clark & Mayer, 2016; Biggs & Tang, 2011). In the education of journalists, blended learning methods are increasingly used. Owing to implementation of the remote education forms, teachers can support students through development of practical action strategies encompassing organization of work, quick sending of instructions, assistance on the basis of students' past achievements and filling the gaps in knowledge at the same time (Mishra & Koehler, 2016; Sánchez-Gelabert, Valente & Duart, 2020).

Blended learning in teaching English for Specific Purposes at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (MCSU)

In the case of English for Specific Purposes (language of the media) for PhD students, the proportion of e-learning classes/tasks to the total number of the course hours is 50/50. Classes in the remote system are given every two weeks. This model makes it possible to study the materials uploaded to Edmodo platform, work with them at home (translation into Polish or English language, illustration of articles' content in various applications), and then to brainstorm, discuss, and check translation accuracy at personal meetings in class.

The course lasts three years and the majority of PhD students are professionally active, so they are unable to participate in all classes. Therefore, blended learning is very convenient for them, enables them to master vocabulary, translate, record their speech in any place and at any time. Personal meetings in class are also recorded and uploaded onto the platform.

The main goals of the introduction of internet technologies to the ESP course (language of the media) are to make classes more modern (in order to avoid monotonous translation of English-language texts during lessons) and to implement ICT in work with PhD students (they also teach classes to their students), what is also important – in the stress-free formula. Studying such a subject as ESP should not entail regular presence at university. The author's purpose is to enable the PhD students who have completed the course to attend international conferences, translate papers without inhibitions and implement e-learning methods of teaching in practice.

Due to the fact that the course is taught throughout the three years of PhD studies, the author had to divide the tasks into the ones intended for particular years of doctoral studies, and for all PhD students participating in the classes. Accomplishment of online tasks accounted for 80% of the final grade. All tasks on Edmodo platform had to be completed, but other elements were also taken into account: active participation in chat discussions, online teamwork (each member of the group was evaluated by his or her colleagues) and use of ICT in work with BA and MA students (on the basis of reports on the classes taught). PhD students translated texts from English into Polish and the other way around, recorded video materials about the topics assigned and made animated movies using the vocabulary learned. During the meetings in our online classroom discussions about the topics assigned were held and vocabulary level was checked.

Examples of e-learning applications

Blended learning was used by the author predominantly at ESP classes for PhD students specializing in the media studies. The author regularly uploaded articles to be translated from English into Polish (or the other way around) and asked for comments on English-language texts concerning e.g., public relations, media education or ethics in science. Moreover, tools were used to create posters, memes or word clouds owing to which it was possible to learn difficult vocabulary faster.

Badges awarded at the end of each semester of work (English language course at PhD studies is run for three years) turned out to be a great incentive to studies in the e-learning formula. The graphic forms of appreciation, created by the author, became an additional element motivating students to work on Edmodo platform on a regular basis.

The eclipsecrossword.com enables creation of crosswords and their edition on the basis of an earlier list of words. Descriptions of crossword clues can be in Polish or in English. Eclipsecrossword.com makes it possible to design and print crosswords, as well as to create an interactive website with our project.

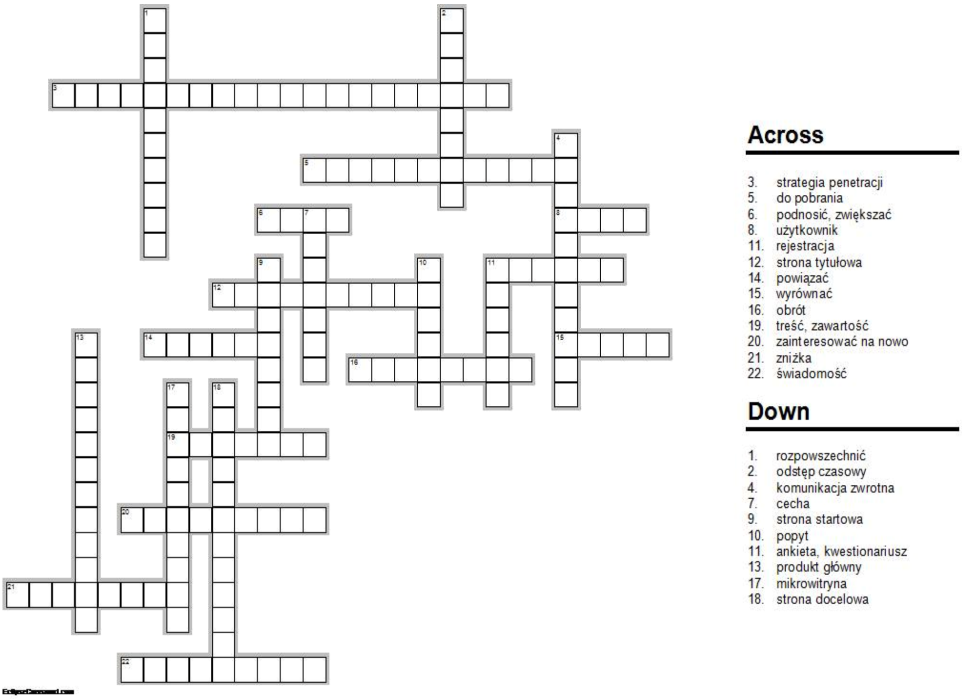

Figure 1. An example of a crossword puzzle made in Eclipsecrossword

Source: Author's own elaboration

On the other hand, Xmind (www.xmind.net) enables creation of notes and mind maps with relevant icons which greatly improve the clarity of the message. It is possible to comment and edit particular branches in the created projects.

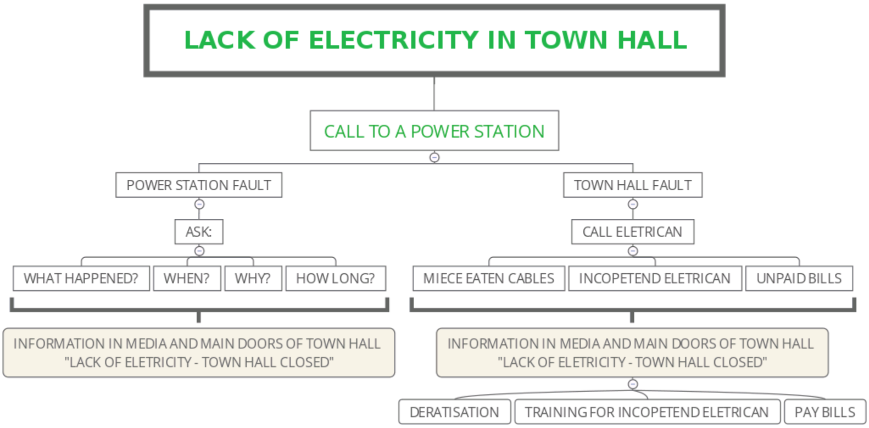

Figure 2. An example of a mind map made in Xmind

Source: Author's own elaboration

During classes we can also use the Movie Maker software, for instance for creating movies on the basis of photos selected by ourselves add simple visual elements, animations and captions explaining the presented issues. We can upload our projects to YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr or Facebook. An account in the LearningApps.org application is also very useful in teacher's work. With this application we can design various interactive games which can be modified any time. On this platform it is possible to create an own classroom and work in the e-learning system by making games available to particular students or groups.

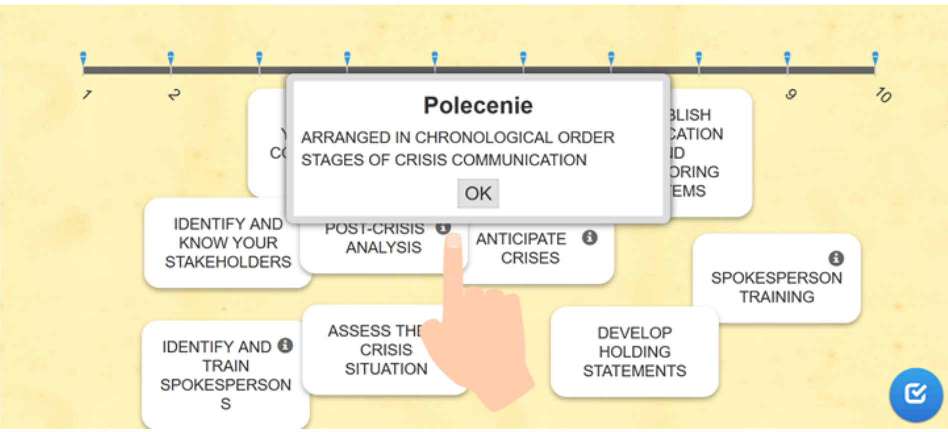

Figure 3. An example of an interactive game made in LearningApps

Source: Author's own elaboration

A very attractive tool for students, as well as for teachers themselves, is Google Cultural Institutes. This platform offers an opportunity to use during classes the materials from exhibitions and photos from over 400 cultural institutions worldwide. It is also interesting to teach classes using resources of a virtual museum, multimedia handbooks, educational films and games available in Google Cultural Institutes.

Moreover, it is possible to create an own Google site (these are the options available to Gmail account holders) which shall enable us to develop a classroom website with intranet – an internal network (Google Apps for work) and to conduct classes in the e-learning system (synchronously with students), or learners themselves shall be able to communicate with each other directly, without teacher's involvement. The site's layout can be edited freely.

Tools for creation of word clouds are especially useful for memorized difficult words. The students' favorite software is tagul.com which offers many opportunities for editing. The applications: wordle.net and worditout.com are also easy to use.

Figure 4. An example of a word cloud made in wordle.net

Source: Author's own elaboration

Labs would also be made more attractive through games which can be a form of testing our learners' knowledge at the same time. Interesting games are e.g.: playing Millionaires, solving crosswords which can be interactive or classical (printed by the teacher), or a popular word search in an interactive or standard form. All these methods of checking knowledge are stress-free, encourage learning (achievement of high results in games) and are very effective in assimilating new knowledge through fun.

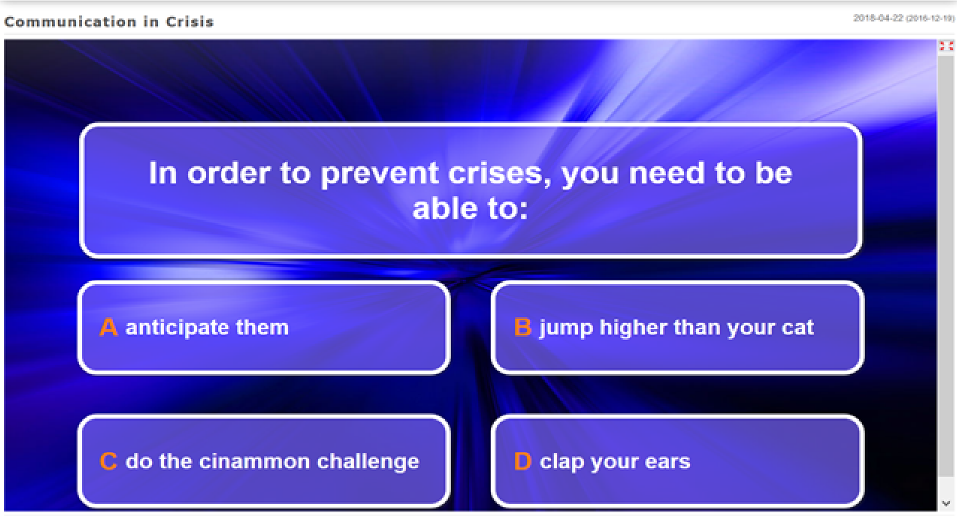

Figure 5. An example of a game made in Millionaires

Source: Author's own elaboration

During classes with PhD students the author used the work with Wikipedia. Students work in teams writing encyclopedia entries and thus learn how to cooperate and select materials. Wikipedia is a great tool for checking the accuracy of reasoning both by students and teachers. The development of the Wiki is aimed at maintaining and developing personal and personal skills. Professional competences include such competences as: critical thinking, decision making, drawing, teamwork and languages (Altanopoulou & Tselios, 2017).

The author has also learned in practice how useful the creation of Gmail accounts can prove. Quality of communication within a group improves as a result of using various applications connected with this account. Designing of the own Google sites and communication via e.g., a website set up especially for a group or a year also contribute to successful promotion of a given university major. Regular publication of interesting facts from the course, photos and movies illustrating the classes motivates students to more intensive work. They know that the final outcomes of distinguished projects shall be published on the Internet and shall contribute to achievement of a better grade and to promotion of their accomplishments (Tawil, 2019).

Results of a questionnaire survey among PhD students specializing in the media studies

Summing up the three years of the ESP course at PhD studies, the author carried out a questionnaire survey on the effectiveness of blended learning and e-learning in social sciences among 30 PhD students in the field of media sciences at the Maria Curie Skłodowska University (many of whom taught already courses on their own) in May 2018 and May 2019. The respondents evaluated remote teaching from the perspectives of a student and a teacher. The main question asked in the questionnaire pertained to the effectiveness of English language teaching by means of e-learning or blended learning. The supplementary question concerned the attractiveness of using e-learning and didactic applications in learning English (from the perspective of a lecturer and a student). The survey was conducted in a stationary manner – during classes and anonymous. It should be emphasized that the study did not compare the results of the group learning remotely with the results of the group learning the same material in full-time teaching. I did not use statistical methods due to the small group of respondents and open-ended questions.

According to the respondents, e-learning offers primarily many innovative options owing to the application of online tools. One of them writes:

> From the perspective of a student, I can claim that, most importantly, this stimulates creativity, because reading long texts and discussing them is less interesting than using software to make creative summaries, write conclusions etc. The point is that the brain does not tune out and gets boosted by such stimuli. Another advantage is time saving: I mean the possibility to complete tasks and participate in classes almost everywhere, as long as we have access to the web. This is a genuine lifesaver when other obligations get in the way of classes at the university.

The respondent admits that as a lecturer she has not introduced many e-learning elements. However, she uses audiovisual aids, presentations, films, videos, memes and cases from the social media, and achieves very good teaching results owing to them. The use of ICT stimulates thinking, eliminates boredom, and boosts creativity.

Another PhD student thinks that the e-learning method should definitely be used at social science courses in higher education (including ESP). The main advantages of this method are:

- access to knowledge resources all the time and everywhere (on condition that Internet is available),
- learning how to be independent, search for knowledge and be curious,
- an opportunity to return to the material already read,
- knowledge can be communicated in various forms (written, audio, video materials), which facilitates its comprehension and memorization.

On the other hand, in the case of social sciences, the lack of discussion can be a disadvantage (unless classes are conducted in real time, or there is a chance to comment in a thread at a forum). Much depends on the teachers themselves, their technical skills and their will to approach each student in an individual way, which certainly takes more time than in the case of traditional classes.

Furthermore, the respondents claim that the effectiveness of e-teaching languages in higher education is closely correlated with the selection of appropriate tools and methods or materials. A proper choice of means is the indispensable basis for the effective use of e-teaching. This technique is very useful and needed in the contemporary higher education.

E-learning refers directly to the idea of self-education and self-improvement of students – according to the respondents. From the perspective of a student, such tools enable mobile education process and open up new opportunities for a dialogue or discussion. On the other hand, from the perspective of an academic teacher, e-learning or blended learning enables broader presentation of the materials selected and their regular extension. Furthermore, it is possible to introduce motivating methods of teaching and managing a group in a consistent way (absence from meetings can be compensated for on the online platform).

One of the respondents emphasizes that in the time of omnipresent media messages (especially Internet) e-learning is a good idea. This is not only considerable time, energy and voice saving, but also significant support for teachers of low charisma and persuasion powers, because fear of public speaking sometimes prevents full communication of knowledge. However, nothing is going to replace face-to-face contact with another person, a meeting and a lively debate. Moreover, the conduct of a teacher can be very inspirational and opening. Nevertheless, sometimes it happens the other way around – a lecturer's behavior can intimidate the students and shut them off. In my opinion, this is a flexible and relative issue and should be based on a conversation with students in order to learn about their expectations.

Another respondent considers blended learning to be a very useful method in education, not only at the academic level. Apart from being convenient for students who cannot participate in classes for some reasons, this is also a great help for teachers.

Yet another respondent claims that the efficiency of e-learning depends not only on the level of materials prepared or techniques used, but predominantly on a learner's attitude to studying. E-learning methods require students to get involved and be willing to learn, which can be more stimulated by the teacher with traditional methods. The effectiveness of e-learning methods is high but on condition that a student is willing to learn and to master the material. On the one hand, e-learning methods create many opportunities, but on the other hand they provide numerous occasions for misuse. It depends on the learner what he or she is driven by. One of the respondents writes:

As a person who has been using e-learning methods for years to learn and develop language skills, I have been able to observe tremendous effectiveness of these methods at a student's involvement, and at the same time great opportunities for deceiving all platforms and software with very little effort. In the case of learning which is graded or has an influence on the final grade, there may be a temptation to cheat and to involve third people. However, such a problem occurs in all methods of teaching. As a lecturer, I must claim that e-learning seems to be suitable for students who have developed a certain kind of inner discipline.

Participants concluded that e-learning was very useful, for instance due to the fact that absences could be quickly made up for (according to 25 respondents). E-learning places the whole responsibility on a learner – emphasized one of the respondents. E-learning can make one lazy if someone lacks motivation but saves much time – claimed the graduates. Another advantage of e-learning is that all materials, assignments and correspondence with lecturers are gathered in one place (20 respondents). One of the respondents stressed that she knew the e-learning formula from both perspectives (of a learner and a teacher). This is an effective method which produces tangible results provided that there is an appropriate approach to this working method. E-learning entails adjustment of the pace and duration of work to learner's capabilities, but on the other hand this system demands self-discipline and self-control.

E-learning is useful for all respondents also because it enables solution of tasks and preparation of projects at one's own pace and spreading particular stages in time. The respondents emphasized that with e-learning they were able to study when they had time and felt like learning, so this was convenient and contributed to effective time management.

The new teaching methods/web applications were a novelty to the majority of students who at the same time declared that they intended to use them in their professional work and personal life (23 respondents). One of the respondents used these applications in the workplace, which was highly appreciated by the superiors. The respondents emphasized that a very important element of learning new web applications was the ability to present information in an attractive way later. All the respondents declared that they were going to use these applications and software, as well as to return to them frequently in order to find their favorite ones, most suited to their professional needs.

To sum up, all the respondents admit that e-learning/ICT is effective in the case of teaching English (and foreign languages in general). From the perspective of a teacher e-learning:

- adds variety to a course and offers a chance to catch up with the material online (20 respondents),
- provides an opportunity to test new teaching methods (28 respondents),
- offers a chance to approach this method in a scientific way (10 respondents),
- gives an opportunity to teach innovation and modern technologies (30 respondents),
- brings satisfaction with work on modern educational platforms (12 respondents).

On the other hand, from a student's perspective, e-learning:

- adds variety to a course (30 respondents),
- offers a chance to catch up with the material online, especially for professionally active students, and a chance to study at the time and place of one's choice (24 respondents),
- provides an opportunity to get familiar with a form of teaching which differs from the traditional one (30 respondents),
- develops a habit of regular studying (15 respondents).

Conclusions

During the courses with the use of free online applications and e-learning platforms the author was able to observe that students were very interested in the new teaching methods. They readily got acquainted with the new applications and used an opportunity to illustrate their projects or articles with graphic elements from the apps. The basis for the surveyed PhD students was that e-learning gives an opportunity to teach innovation and modern technologies, adds variety to a course and provides an opportunity to get familiar with a form of teaching which differs from the traditional one.

On the basis of the analysis of effectiveness of classes conducted in the blended learning system with educational applications, it is possible to identify advantages and pitfalls resulting from the introduction of new technologies to teaching. The advantages include primarily: more modern courses, higher interest of students than in the case of classical teaching methods, an opportunity for more customized work, and better memorization of more difficult issues thanks to their illustration in relevant applications. The disadvantages of remote teaching and modern educational applications are lack of regular work on the part of students (depending on learners' personalities), as well as fears connected with providing personal data at logging in consecutive apps. Customization of online classes is highly beneficial, but meetings in the online classroom. fill in certain gaps connected with the limited direct communication.

Modern teaching methods are certainly more attractive to students. Internet is their natural environment, so there is high probability that knowledge communicated via the new media will be assimilated better and teaching will be more effective. New technologies start to dominate in early education. Open courses available online offer another chance to learn at home and contribute to significant popularity of remote education.

The effectiveness of education in the e-learning/blended learning formula is considerable, but with respect to elder students/PhD students. Remote teaching is grounded in responsibility, regular work, independent search for sources of knowledge, as well as honesty in performance of tasks. Having analyzed the effectiveness of classes conducted in the blended learning system, the author is able to claim that its level is satisfactory. All tasks uploaded onto platforms are completed (usually without considerable delays), students do not copy solutions from the Internet, they solve problems creatively and on their own, prepare business plans, engage in brainstorming in a group, use methods associated with Design Thinking. Regular contact with students imposes additional duties on a lecturer, but this effort pays off.

Remote teaching is effective, which is confirmed e.g., by the participation of most PhD students in conferences with papers in the English language. As they claim, they have got rid of language barriers and have got accustomed to the foreign language. The author carries out evaluation of classes on a regular basis (not only within the framework of the official questionnaire survey system). All PhD students from three years of studies are satisfied with classes in the remote system in which they have participated. They confirm that such studying is effective, even though it demands responsibility and regularity.

* * *

Most authors of the following articles in this part of the publication are doctoral students. An exception is a PhD holder who has completed her doctoral media studies (she also participated in the aforementioned course).

Doctoral students describe educational innovations in the teaching practice, including the role of visual communication in the effective teaching process in higher education.

Marlena Stradomska discusses the educational innovations in remote teaching (with special focus on visual communication), but also the results of a survey conducted among students of Maria Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin (MCSU) during the coronavirus pandemic from March 2020 to July 2021.

On the other hand, Katarzyna Hałas examines the effectiveness of group work in innovative teaching. She presents benefits and difficulties arising from cooperation within a group and discusses the students' attitudes towards this form of task implementation. Moreover, she reflects on the effectiveness of task performance within groups.

Furthermore, Magdalena Pokrzycka-Walczak presents the specific character of innovative management of international English-language projects (including remote management). Project management is very difficult nowadays, hence the case studies presented by a doctoral student – practitioner with teaching experience seem especially valuable (the author teaches a course on public relations in international projects at MCSU Public Relations and Media Marketing studies).

The part of the publication which is connected with the research center at MCSU is completed with an article by Ewelina Górka, a participant of the remote course at Oslo Metropolitan University in March and April 2021. The researcher describes the e-learning formula in Norway and discusses the innovativeness of this teaching method from the perspective of a person visiting the classes.

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KATARZYNA HAŁAS II

Students' Attitudes Towards Group Work

ABSTRACT

The ability to work in a group is a desired competence in the contemporary labor market. The necessity of teamwork seems to be an integral part of professional activity. Research among employers has shown that effective group work facilitates the achievement of set goals and conditions the implementation of planned projects. It is a popular form of carrying out tasks not only in business, but also in the educational environment. The article is based on the author's own research and it presents students' attitudes towards this form of work, their observations and experiences related to group work on projects or tasks. It also discusses the limitations and benefits associated with this method, as noticed by the students. Moreover, it identifies personality traits necessary to master the ability to work in a group.

Keywords: group work, team, collective work, cooperation

Introduction

Currently, the educational process is much different than it was a decade ago. Teachers are expected to achieve other goals, while students face new tasks related to the requirements of the modern American English market. The role of educational institutions is to systematically transfer the knowledge and shape socially desirable attitudes, but teaching should be centered around developing traits among students that will allow them to find their place in the demanding labor market. In the information society, students must be equipped with knowledge that meets the economy needs, therefore the abilities and knowledge they gain should during the study, above all, be a bargaining chip on the labor market and make it possible for the graduates, to participate in building a cohesive society. This is evidenced by the fact that one of the key professional competences of the future, according to the participants of the last World Economic Forum in Davos[1], is the ability to cooperate with others (Włoch & Śledziewska, n.d.).

The average person is faced with teamwork at every stage of life, from the beginning of education to career and family life. In business culture, the ability to work in a team was considered as a factor that contributes to the achievement of tangible results, and this method of operation was gradually adapted to other areas of social life, like education. The aim of the article is to present the benefits and difficulties resulting from teamwork, as well as students' attitudes towards it and to provoke a discussion focused on the implementation of tasks in the group from the perspective of the effectiveness.

In this section, the definitions of the most important terms used will be quoted. A group can be defined as two or more people interacting with each other to achieve a specific goal. The group operates within the same standards. A group is characterized by a specific hierarchy, and each participant is assigned a specific role (Czekaj & Świech, 2021). Adrian Pyszka (2015) notices that not every group can be called a team. A team can be defined as a group of people in which the members pursue a common goal, and the tasks and skills of each member match the others. In order for a group to be considered a team, it must go through four phases – formation, turbulence, normalization and achievement of results. In the context of this research, effectiveness can be defined as the achievement of the intended goals and a sense of satisfaction of team members.

It seems that the group implementation of tasks positively influences human development, contributing to the formation of personality traits and competences desired on the labor market, such as the ability to empathize, listen to and understand other people and to cooperate with them. Currently, ignoring teamwork in the business model is associated with the outdated scheme of action, ineffectiveness and it is considered a factor that trivializes a given organization. However, it should be noted that teamwork does not always favor success (Espot & Nubiola, 2019; see: Hammar Chiriac, 2014).

[1] The World Economic Forum is the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation. The Forum engages the foremost political, business, cultural and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

The claim that tasks should be performed through cooperation of individuals is not always correct. Espot and Nubiola (2019) emphasize that teamwork, in fact, can contribute to the achievement of the intended results, but there are types of tasks that cannot be performed effectively in a group, because the collective model of work makes them more difficult and labor-intensive. An example would be the preparation of a written dissertation. Further, the researchers note that performing tasks with the use of this method may be a source of frustration for individuals who are forced to perform them in such a model. In some individuals, this way of work may provoke a thought that the work does not advance fast enough and, as a consequence, give them a sense of wasted time. It happens especially when teamwork comes down to numerous, tedious and chaotic meetings of team members that have not been well-organized in terms of content or properly conducted.

Key assumptions of effective teamwork

Espot and Nubiola (2019) note that the concept of teamwork is associated with various forms of activity, often involving team members meeting and working together rather than individual work. In this context, it is worth emphasizing that when it comes to cohesion and efficiency in a team, a sense of responsibility of each team's members is a key factor. It means not only taking responsibility for performing one's own scope of duties, but also about feeling responsible for the work of the team as a whole. Being part of a cohesive, friendly group can be an added value: cooperation, the possibility of mutual help, showing care or empathy contributes to the development of the desired personality traits such as: communication improvement, assertiveness and conflict resolution skills. A team helps to ensure a sense of security and increase self-esteem (Czekaj & Świech, 2021).

One of the elements that fosters effective teamwork is the personality of a strong leader. The presence of other competent team members is also meaningful, as well as formulating clear goals and establishing and maintaining relationships based on kindness and mutual trust between team members. The role of the leader includes assigning and distributing tasks, setting the pace of work, coordinating the activities of others and combining the effects of all participants' work into a coherent whole. A person who leads a given group should be characterized by a high level of substantive and personality competences, the ability to build relationships based on mutual respect and trust, as well as the ability to notice and take into account individual personality traits of team members The leader is the person expected to be loyal, committed and knowledgeable. (Espot & Nubiola, 2019).

On the other hand, Teresa Myjak (2017) argues that achieving the effectiveness of group activities, especially in the business culture (which is important in a student's professional career), depends on the clear definition of the challenge or goal along with the intended effects, the estimation of the necessities (human capital, tools, budget), as well as the definition of the principles of the team's functioning (the role and autonomy of the leader and other members). The established team structure and the methods of communication are also of a great importance. The results of cooperation within the group rely upon the diversity of the people making up the team.

The current social trend often enforces readiness to change and a sense of temporariness. Lack of stability creates a sense of insecurity in people, which can result in creating fragile bonds. Building relationships essential for effective teamwork, such as trust, takes time and cannot happen spontaneously. Appropriate circumstances contribute to building a spirit of cooperation, creating an atmosphere conducive to the good functioning of the team, and, consequently, achieving efficiency. Members of a group need to feel that they are part of a stable project that is a source of emotional attachment and belonging for them, with which they can identify in the long term (Espot & Nubiola, 2019).

Success is rarely a coincidence. Often it is the human factor and the attitude of each team member that determine whether a group is harmonious or not. There is no room for internal competition within such a team. Equal relationships and the lack of antagonisms between team members is one of the key factors of success. The team's leader cannot supervise, control and evaluate the work of others so as not to create an atmosphere of power instead of authority, and choose team members taking into account the availability, individual way of thinking and acting of each of every person (Espot & Nubiola, 2019).

Effective teamwork may be hindered by insufficient preparation for this type of work, lack of knowledge on how to adopt certain attitudes necessary in team building, incompetence of those initiating this way of performing tasks and selecting other group members, lack of interest in the opinions of others and fatigue. Eliminating these obstacles requires earlier preparation for such a model of work, as well as the development of appropriate mechanisms such as: openness to joint action, learning from each other or readiness to oppose defensive attitudes that frequently result from differences of views. Overcoming these difficulties can result in personal development, and, moreover, enable the combination of knowledge and skills in such a way that the effect of the teamwork exceeds the sum of their individual efforts (Espot & Nubiola, 2019).

One of the attributes of the information society is the transfer of activity to the web and the replacement of face-to-face contact with mediated relationships. This also applies to cooperation within a group, which has a virtual or a mixed virtual-traditional character. Among the greatest advantages resulting from the implementation of virtual teams there are: shortening the time of task completion, greater efficiency of team members, organizational flexibility, and independence of team members' work (see: Krawczyk-Bryłka, 2016; Samul, Zaharie, Pawluczuk & Petre, 2020).

Teamwork in higher education – own research

The opinions of students as co-creators of the education process are very important, therefore a survey was conducted among this group. The aim of the questionnaire was to evaluate the attitude of students towards working in groups and confronting their opinions with observations regarding their individual work. The research group consisted of undergraduate third-year students of Journalism and Social Communication at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, who in the 2020/2021 academic year participated in Public Relations classes via the Virtual Campus of UMCS and Microsoft Teams. The survey was published on the Virtual Campus and then completed by students online in May 2021. It consisted of 9 questions: 5 close-ended (single and multiple choice) and 4 opened-ed. The questionnaire was prepared in Polish. The statements of the students were translated into English by the author.

In the first question, students were asked to introduce their own definition of the word team. The respondents entered such definitions as: "a harmonious group, at least 2 people", "a group of people cooperating with one another in order to achieve a specific goal", "a group with a common goal", "a group of people who form a harmonious unity", "a group of people, which works for a common goal"[2].These are the first 5 responses. Further definitions of respondents, refer to a common denominator, which are teamwork attributes such as: a group of people and the achievement of a common goal. Such responses were indicated

[2] Based on questionnaires no. 1– 5

by 25[3] and 22 people respectively[4]. In addition to the attributes quoted here, the respondents associate team collaboration with a common theme[5], a sense of unity[6], joint forces[7], experience[8], work for the benefit of a group members[9] and bonds of affection[10].

In question number two, the respondents had to define their preferred method of project implementation. There were two options to choose from: independent/individual work and teamwork. Most of the respondents (15 people) opted for independent work, the remaining ten people preferred to work in a group[11]. The low percentage of responses in favor of group work proves that students are reluctant to work in a group.

The third question was of a different nature. Students had to mark a number on the scale from 1 to 5, assessing their preferences in relation to work/task/project implementation. Responses regarding the claim that the group work on project is faster are evenly distributed. Almost half of the respondents (12) agree with this statement, almost a quarter (6) have a different opinion, and the rest of the respondents did not express an opinion on this topic. Only three respondents agreed with the opinion that working in group results in superficial performance of tasks, because in this mode of work it is possible to delegate responsibility to others. Eight people categorically disagreed with the above claim, while eleven people chose the “I disagree” option. The necessity to work in a group in order to achieve effectiveness is noticed by eight respondents. Nine students disagree with the opinion that working in a group increases the ability to act effectively. According to the respondents’ opinions in terms of assessing the effects of work, individualistic attitudes prevail. More than half of the respondents (14) prefer to be assessed independently while only five as a team. Ten respondents agreed with the sentence “I am happy to learn by working with someone else or in a group, the ability to discuss problems or their solutions with others helps in acquiring knowledge”, while almost every

[3] Based on questionnaires no. 1–25
[4] Based on questionnaires no. 2, 3–5, 6, 8–11, 12, 14, 16–25
[5] Based on questionnaire no. 7
[6] Based on questionnaire no. 20
[7] Based on questionnaire no. 8
[8] Based on questionnaire no. 9
[9] Based on questionnaire no. 10
[10] Based on questionnaire no. 11
[11] Based on questionnaires no. 1–20

third respondent expressed an objection[12]. The results are presented in the table below:

Table 1. Answer to question no. 4

	1	2	3	4	5
When I work in a group, I perform the commissioned project/task faster.	3 (12%)	3 (12%)	7 (28%)	6 (24%)	6 (24%)
When I work in a group, I perform the commissioned project/task "superficially", because I hope that other members will contribute to the work more efficiently.	8 (33%)	11 (46%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)
When I work in a group, my ability to act effectively increases.	2 (8%)	7 (29%)	7 (29%)	4 (17%)	4 (17%)
I prefer to be assessed individually than as a team.	2 (8%)	3 (13%)	5 (21%)	8 (33%)	6 (25%)
I am happy to learn by working with someone else or in a group; the ability to discuss problems or their solutions with others helps in acquiring knowledge.	4 (17%)	4 (17%)	6 (25%)	4 (17%)	6 (25%)
Total	**19 (16%)**	**28 (23%)**	**27 (22%)**	**23 (19%)**	**24 (20%)**

Source: Author's own elaboration

In the fourth question, the respondents mentioned the benefits of working in a group. The respondents indicated greater creativity and the resulting greater variety of ideas, going beyond the usual thought patterns[13]. Students also appreciate interpersonal contact and the opportunity to discuss[14]. One of

12 Based on questionnaires no. 1–20
13 Based on questionnaires no. 2–3, 5–6, 11, 16, 18–20, 23, 25
14 Based on questionnaires no. 1, 4, 7–10, 13–14

the students admitted that such work is more enjoyable[15]. In addition, there were such factors as: motivation[16], speed of project execution[17], distributed duties[18], work activity, learning new competences[19], creativity, strengthening relationships between team members, coping with failures, better efficiency[20], strengthening bonds[21].

In the last question, the students were asked to indicate the limitations resulting from this form of work. The respondents primarily pointed to the uneven division of duties[22], disagreements, differences in character[23], the need to find free time adapted to the availability of others[24], various levels of involvement of team members[25], delay in performing work[26], chaos, lack of understanding and mess[27], as well as "the need to adjust one's pace and way of work to others"[28]. One interviewee noted that:

> many times, there are people in groups who do nothing, expecting someone to do the work for them. Sometimes you have to sign your name on a project that you are not proud of or where our ideas have not been used, with which you disagree[29].

Another opinion was similar: "It happens too often in a group that one person works while others play, and then they receive grades for the work of that one person"[30]. There were also statements such as: difficulties resulting from finding a compromise[31], mutual distraction, conversations on side topics[32], carelessness

15 Based on questionnaire no. 17
16 Based on questionnaires no. 1, 11
17 Based on questionnaires no. 7, 10–12, 21–22
18 Based on questionnaires no. 15, 18
19 Based on questionnaire no. 25
20 Based on questionnaire no. 24
21 Based on questionnaire no. 19
22 Based on questionnaires no. 7, 10.
23 Based on questionnaires no. 2–3, 5, 8, 12, 16–19
24 Based on questionnaires no. 1, 8, 12
25 Based on questionnaires no. 1–2, 7, 8, 13, 20–21
26 Based on questionnaires no. 2, 14
27 Based on questionnaire no. 9
28 Based on questionnaires no. 6, 16, 24
29 Based on questionnaire no. 11
30 Based on questionnaire no. 15
31 Based on questionnaires no. 4, 10, 14, 18
32 Based on questionnaire no. 25

about results, avoidance of responsibility, fear of being judged by other members and[33] laziness of other team members[34].

The respondents were also asked to indicate the personality traits associated with working in a group. The respondents associate this form of work with the possibility of mutual discussion[35], good organization, charisma[36], the ability to negotiate and present arguments[37], diligence[38], flexibility and discipline[39]. Some answers, such as: openness to the ideas of others, patience, commitment, the ability to compromise, confrontation of different points of view, creativity and communication appeared several times[40]. One of the students commented that "working in a group involves facing different characters. There is always someone who does nothing and has to be forced, and person whose ambitions are too high for the rest of the group"[41]. There were also answers pointing out to the division of duties, such as: "the ability to divide tasks, listening, the ability to change one's mind when someone proposes a better solution"[42], "an unequal division of labor"[43]or "specific and clear division of responsibilities and tasks. The leader must divide them, and the rest must do their best"[44]. Two of the respondents associate group work with the personality of a leader[45], one with solidarity, and the others with peace and respect[46]. One student mentioned empathy[47]. One of the interviewees did not understand the question[48].

Eighth question was meant to check which tools the students use in teamwork. All respondents unanimously declare the use of social networking sites, almost half of the respondents (10 people) use video messaging. The respondents eagerly pointed to PowerPoint online (6 responses). Virtual boards were selected by four people. The other three people chose an online editor[49].

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33 Based on questionnaire no. 23
34 Based on questionnaire no. 22
35 Based on questionnaire no. 4
36 Based on questionnaires no. 16, 23
37 Based on questionnaire no. 8
38 Based on questionnaire no. 24
39 Based on questionnaire no. 22
40 Based on questionnaires no. 1–6, 8–9, 11, 13, 16, 18–21, 23
41 Based on questionnaire no. 10
42 Based on questionnaire no. 6
43 Based on questionnaire no. 7
44 Based on questionnaire no. 15
45 Based on questionnaires no. 9, 12
46 Based on questionnaires no. 17, 25
47 Based on questionnaire no. 25
48 Based on questionnaire no. 14
49 Based on questionnaires no. 1–20

A high percentage of positive answers to the question: "Do you think that teamwork is possible without personal contact with group members, using communication via the Internet?" proves the positive attitude of students to group work via the network[50]. As many as twenty-three students agreed.

In the ninth question, the respondents unanimously confirmed[51] they carried out the task/project using the Internet.

Own research – analysis of the results

Responses regarding the definition of the team were coherent and were centered around descriptions such as: a group of people working towards a common goal. Apart from the human factor, a common course of action seems to be particularly important here, which seems to be an element that connects individuals working in a group. Most students opt for independent work. Supporters of such a solution point to greater creativity and a variety of ideas and the possibility of discussion. However, this statement can be denied. On the one hand, teamwork can be creative and innovative, e.g., through well-known brainstorming. It happens, though, that the established structure of the team suppresses creativity. It happens, for example, in the case of introverts who are reluctant to speak in public and share their ideas. The results indicate that the greatest difficulty of teamwork is the uneven division of duties and differences in opinions. The respondents pointed out a very important aspect here. In teamwork, delegating tasks seems very important in order to avoid organizational chaos. The distribution of tasks strengthens the sense of security and responsibility for a specific goal - the student is aware of the requirements set for him in this context, it seems crucial to allocate everybody's duties even before starting the task, so as not to overburden any of the members while others are bored due to little work assigned. Differences of views are natural and they may lead to conflicts. The decisive factor here is the leader, whose role is to identify the source of the problem and solve it before it escalates, and to reconcile contradictory positions by finding a compromise. A network and a computer can be an excellent tool when it comes to implementation of group educational projects. Students eagerly use digital tools for distance education due to the time and cost saved when compared to face-to-face meetings. The Internet also facilitates communication

[50] Based on questionnaires no. 1–20
[51] Based on questionnaires no. 1–20

among team members, while applications and programs used for remote work make project execution more attractive. Students identify working in a team primarily with the possibility of confronting their views, good organization of work, charisma and the ability to negotiate their views. Certainly, the above are the competences employers seek, so developing such qualities will certainly be useful in terms of competitiveness on the labor market. Achieving the intended results within the framework of group work is a task that requires a lot of effort and commitment from all group members. It seems important to have good work organization related to the equal division of duties in order to avoid conflict situations and expand team's potential.

Summary

The results of the research show that students prefer to work individually rather than in a group. Despite the fact that working in groups enables faster completion of assigned tasks and has a positive effect on the effectiveness, students associate more difficulties than benefits with teamwork. Moreover, the results indicate the need to develop some of the features necessary for teamwork due to the fact that they are required by the contemporary business culture. Among those features there are: the ability to conduct discussions in a substantive manner, the ability to reconcile contradictory positions and a sense of responsibility for the performance of entrusted duties. It should be noted that students are very eager to work in a group via Internet, using digital tools. This method of work is likely to become more and more popular in the future.

The results of the research do not prove that group work should be eliminated, but one should be aware of the limitations of this form of work. It should also be emphasized that the results of the research are not unambiguous and indicate the need for further research in this area, e.g., in order to check the degree of change in the students' attitudes towards teamwork.

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MARLENA STRADOMSKA

Visual Thinking (VT) in Educational Issues

ABSTRACT

The subject of issues related to Visual Thinking (VT) has recently become a more and more interesting issue for many social and professional groups. Teaching elements that can be created and used with the help of modern technology and aspects related to innovative teaching techniques are important. This article describes part of the research – a case study that was carried out during the course of the coronavirus pandemic from March 2020 to July 2021. The research covered students of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. In connection with the coronavirus pandemic, they learned about issues and programs related to visual thinking in practice. Additional objectives of the study are: presenting the subject of Visual Thinking, reviewing the literature on the subject, assessing the reasons for using visual thinking in education and coaching, reviewing selected programs for creating visual notes. This paper also includes practical implications for the use of visual thinking and the possibility of using specific programs or applications (Canva, Powtoon, Prezi, Miro, Mural).

Keywords: visual thinking, education, modern teaching techniques, computer programs, Canva, Prezi, Powtoon, Miro, Mural.

Introduction

Visual Thinking is associated with the ability to think with images, graphical thinking and the use of visualization in thinking. Dzidowski (2016) notices the significant potential of drawing to implement scientific issues or create a broader context. Even organizations use many visual tools to contribute to a better development (Zielińska-Stecyna, 2018). Elements such as charts, maps or diagrams can help in solving problems and explaining new perspectives (Dzidowski, 2016, p. 48). An important issue in the context of Visual Thinking is that people code information based on two planes. The first is verbal, based mainly on the traditional transmission of messages – the sender, message and recipient are important. The second level is based on non-verbal communication, which is related to the fact that information is transferred not only through the use of a message, but also aspects such as facial expressions, body posture, and manner of presentation are significant. What is important in visual thinking is that the verbal and non-verbal messages are combined (Lindkvist, 2005, pp. 1189–1210).

Moreover, introducing innovations to training is necessary for the effectiveness of learning to increase. What is more, in a knowledge-based economy, employee training is one of the most important ways organizations can keep improving. A major issue is also to use visual thinking (Mateńko, 2017, pp. 123–136). The prime elements of VT include that it is possible to enrich the way of thinking with images. Interestingly, the research described in the Wall Street Journal (Shellenbarger, 2014) proves that even making simple drawings can improve concentration and increase the possibilities of cognitive processes. Sometimes, infantile drawings, which do not even have to be closely related to the content of the conversation, can lead to a number of positive changes in human functioning. The use of intelligence and creativity in teaching may contribute in the longer term to the possibility of ensuring students' success (Stenberg, Jarvin & Grigorenko, 2018, p. 35). At the time of the outbreak of the pandemic and the need to perform the function in the new reality, it was necessary to deal with technological challenges (Doskocz & Doskocz, 2019).

The ability to learn and remember new information is also important today. An interesting aspect is also the fact that the advantages of training with the use of visual aspects are described by trainers or people who run specialist workshops. It is also important to prepare the recipient as best as possible for the use of the content (Muszyńska, 2005; Puzykiewicz, 2019).

What is important, drawing is polysensory. The activity of drawing engages the senses such as hearing – thanks to it, notes are created, touch – using sheets or writing instruments necessary to make notes and smell – the smell of a marker, felt-tip pen, cards and eyesight (Jóźwik, 2017). This paper is only an introduction to important aspects related to research on the visualization of information, as well as promoting modern teaching and professional opportunities.

In recent years, research into visualization of information has been developing. This type of content is created by specialists in many fields, including IT specialists, scientists, specialists in visual presentations and graphic designers. However, in the last decade it is possible to observe a huge development of issues related to visual communication (Osińska, Malak & Bednarek-Michalska, 2017, pp. 58–76).

Selected programs useful for data presentation

There are many books that will help people in learning or developing aspects related to Visual Thinking or Sketchnoting in a practical way. Selected programs that can improve Visual Thinking in organizations or enterprises. Relevant issues can be used in working with students in an academic environment. In this section, only a few websites and web applications will be presented that may be an inspiration for students, academic teachers or people who are interesting in modern work and Visual Thinking.

These are also possibilities to be used by anyone who is interested in personal development and the possibility of carrying out their lectures in a more interesting way. Each part presents a short description of the application. There is also a photo of the start page of the application or the page for easier identification of resources.

1. Canva

Canva is an online graphics program. The program can be operated via a web browser or by installing an application. The program is available for free (the free version has about 8,000 templates), although it also has paid updates. As an online tool, it works on any system platform. However, the functionality of the program in the mobile application is somewhat limited. Canva is also available in Polish. The Canva program does not allow the user to create a new graphic from scratch – it contains ready-made graphic elements that can be combined with text, background or a photo. Over 100 groups of projects have been selected in the program, e.g., business cards, leaflets, posters, graphic designs, projects posted on social networks. Payments in the Canva program applies to additional options (Canva Pro) – e.g., access to a photo library (about 60 million), 60,000 templates, removing backgrounds from photos, creating graphics with transparent backgrounds. Canva Pro costs $9.95 per month.

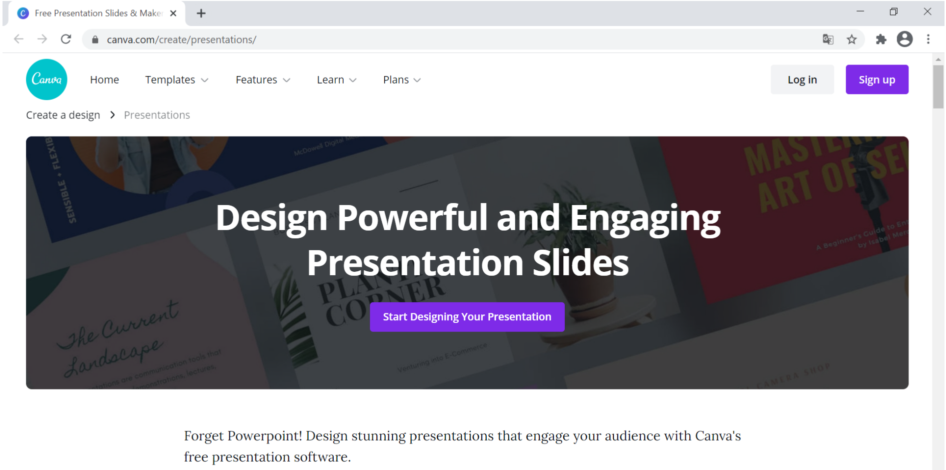

Figure 1. Canva's home page

Source: https://www.canva.com/pl_pl/ (retrieved June 12, 2021)

2. Prezi

Prezi is offered in the cloud computing model (SaaS) software for creating and performing on the so-called virtual canvas, using the Adobe Flash and Adobe AIR platforms. Prezi uses the zoom mediation (ZUI), which allows users to zoom in and out of their presentation and to display and move between its individual elements along axes in the space conventionally designated as 2.5D.

Prezi is used as a platform for combining linear and non-linear information and as a tool for both free brainstorming and structured model presentations. Texts, photos, videos and other types of content are placed on the canvas (2.5D space), with the possibility of grouping in frames. Authors can then designate the relative size and relative position of all presentation objects, as well as move and resize them. For linear presentations, user can create predefined navigation paths during the show. The software is made available in the so-called freemium model. Prezi Public's free license obliges its users to publish their works on the publicly accessible site Prezi.com. Users of the commercial versions of Prezi Enjoy or Pro can make their presentations private. The Prezi Pro version allows access to the desktop for independent (stand-alone, off-line) editing of prescriptions. Educational and student licenses are also available. The presentation of presets has been criticized for using zoom as inducing nausea. The authors of the program respond to this by offering guides for experienced users on how to avoid excessive visual stimulation during shows.

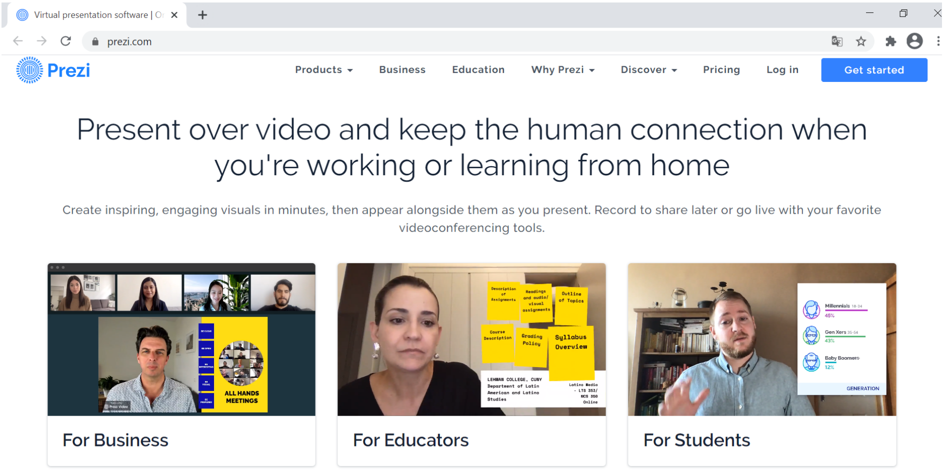

Figure 2. Prezi's home page

Source: https://prezi.com/ (retrieved June 12,2021)

3. Powtoon

Powtoon was founded in January 2012, following a $180,000 seed round investment in December 2011. The beta version was released in August 2012 and has seen a rapid increase in subscribers since then. And in December 2012, Powtoon secured $600,000 of investments from the Los-based venture

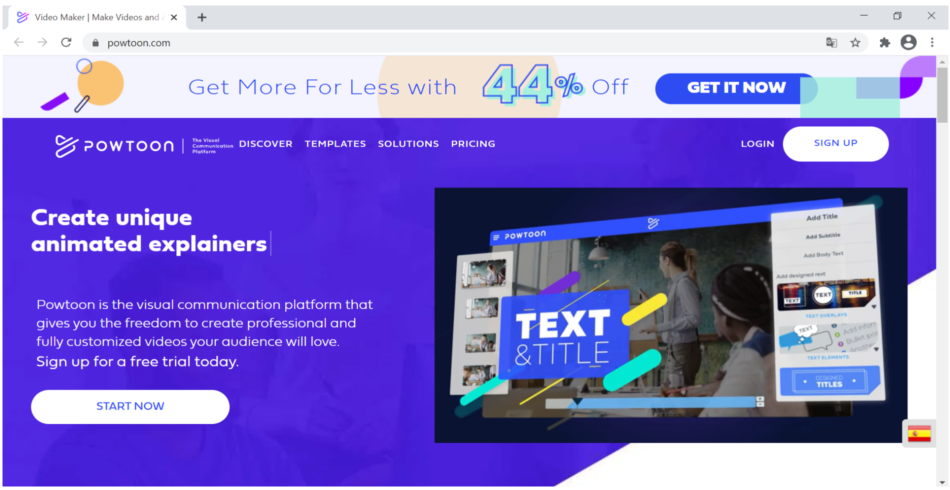

Figure 3. Powtoon's home page

Source: https://www.powtoon.com/ (retrieved June 12, 2021) capital company Startup Minds. In February 2013, Powtoon introduced a free account option allowing users to create animated videos that can be exported to YouTube. Free movies include the Powtoon brand.

4. Miro

Miro's Infinite Canvas gives the freedom to choose how to use it for the own teamwork – user can choose digital brainstorming, documenting a meeting, running a class, or managing a smooth workflow, the collaboration possibilities are endless. It is possible to distribute and remote teams in brainstorming, processes, workshops, and decision making with digital workspaces that enable asynchronous and synchronous collaboration – as easily as if everyone is in the same room.

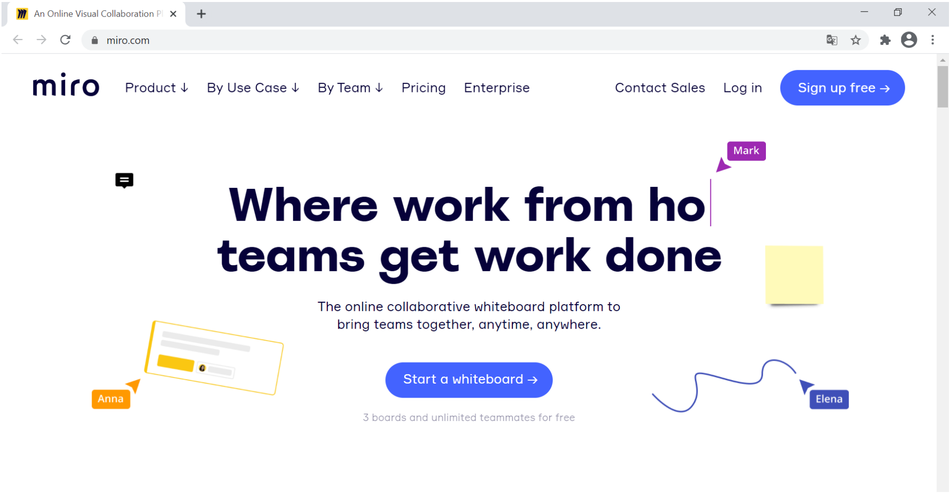

Figure 4. Miro's home page

Source: https://miro.com/ (retrieved June 12, 2021)

5. Mural

By creating the platform, the company asked itself a question, how can we facilitate visual collaboration? Today, Mural enables large-scale innovation by providing a platform for product strategy and planning, facilitating engaging workshops using agile methodology and design thinking, sales and consulting services, and research and design. What is important is that a growing network of global enterprises, consulting firms, schools and teachers and non-profit organizations are taking advantage of modern job opportunities. When people have space to visualize ideas, methods to brighten imagination, and the freedom to share people vision – anytime, anywhere – one can accelerate the innovation process.

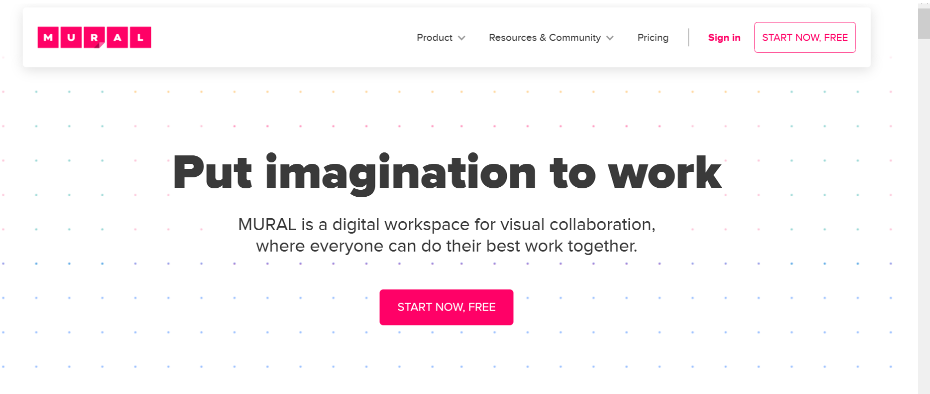

Figure 5. Mural's home page

Source: https://www.mural.co/ (retrieved June 12, 2021)

Own research

Research methodology

In order to obtain information on the perception of Virtual Thinking by students, an original survey was carried out. It is another study in the series on Visual Thinking. Its aim was to get to know the level of knowledge of people in early adulthood on this subject and to initially understand the relationships that may arise during their application. More information about the research procedure, hypotheses and the research group will be presented in the following chapters. In addition to questionnaires, structured interviews were conducted.

Research hypotheses

The following hypotheses were developed for the purpose of the study:

1. The respondents aged 19 to 26 have knowledge about the use of Virtual Thinking in education.

2. The respondents aged 19 to 26 are familiar with computer programs supporting the creation of visual materials and are aware of their advantages and disadvantages.
3. The respondents aged 19 to 26 perceive the use of visual thinking as innovative compared to the traditional teaching model without the use of VT.

Research methods

The research is part of a larger project at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. Only part of the research carried out during the pandemic is described in this paper. At least 3 thematic blocks have been planned on the issue related to the use of new technologies in human life, both in the professional and personal aspect.

The research tool has been prepared in an interactive form from Google. An original questionnaire was prepared for the purposes of the study. The study was conducted with the use of an interactive Google survey covering the period from March 2020 to the present (June 2021). The period covers the period of distance learning at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. Research continues until now. The survey consists of 25 open and closed-ended questions. In addition, the respondents were asked to provide contact details in order to conduct in-depth interviews carried out by educational platforms such as Microsoft Teams and the Virtual Campus of UMCS.

The research was divided into several thematic topics: experiences of visual thinking, knowledge of creating visual materials in specific countries and aspects related to the advantages and disadvantages of these programs, evaluation of the use of visual thinking in specific areas.

Study group

The survey was voluntary, the anonymity of the respondents was also ensured. The form was sent to over 400 people. For the final analysis, 220 respondents – 171 women and 49 men. The disproportion between men and women is related to the study group. Relatively the same number of women and men were invited. The number of female students prevailed in the classes conducted by the researcher. Additionally, it was noticed that women responded much more frequently to the questionnaire. The respondents were students of home university who were randomly invited to participate in the study and gave their voluntary consent to participate in the fields of psychology, pedagogy, cognitive science, philosophy, and physical education. Some of them did not give their consent to the use of their answers in research work or had no experience with Visual Thinking. Structured interviews were conducted with the examined people, which allowed for a qualitative analysis after nine months of distance learning. In this work, the author will focus on describing 2 randomly selected structured interviews.

It is important from the psychological perspective that in structured interviews, the respondents analyze the last three semesters of remote work. The author believes that this may become an interesting reflection on the evolution of this issue and multi-faceted changes in the perception of specific situations.

Due to conducting classes in a foreign language, the respondents were asked to fill in the questionnaire in English. Students who attended the classes in English answered the questions in the English questionnaire. The quoted statements are a transcription of the realized content.

Case study I

Gender: female
Age: 19

1. Did you have knowledge about the use of Virtual Thinking in education before the pandemic?

The woman concluded that she had no theoretical knowledge of visual thinking prior to the pandemic. Additionally, she said:

> I had no knowledge of Visual Thinking in education. Regarding this issue, I had the opportunity to learn something during classes at the university. These were psychological classes. However, I am afraid that if there had not been a pandemic, I would not have had such a possibility.

2. What computer programs did you know that can assist in the creation of visual materials?

The respondent believed that before the pandemic started, he knew only the basic tools available in the MS Office package. She never needed to search for new programs and learning opportunities.

Additionally, she said: “I have always felt like someone who will not be able to complete tasks in the on-line space. It turns out that it is possible, but the encouragement on the part of the lead party contributed to it. It would be difficult for me to pursue such issues on my own".

3. Do you know the advantages and disadvantages of the selected programs?

It is difficult for a woman to choose the advantages and disadvantages of specific programs because she believes that the period of a pandemic is too short a time to be able to define it.

Additionally, she said:

> Interestingly, I had the use of these alternative learning and work opportunities only in one subject related to psychology. The rest of the people mainly used the Virtual Campus and MS Teams. There was a lack of innovative opportunities there as everyone was taking advantage of it.

The respondent appreciates the possibilities of Mural and Miro, because did not know these platforms before and would not have found such opportunities on the Internet had it not been for certain activities.

4. Do you think that the use of visual thinking can contribute to better memorization of the material?

The respondent believes that the use of visual thinking can contribute to better remembering the material due to the change in the implementation of specific issues to be implemented. It turns out that a presentation, article or other materials are not always helpful for a woman.

Additionally, she said:

> Using visual thinking, I think on some subjects it has allowed me to function better. I believe that my learning opportunities were difficult due to the covid fog. However, such new interest in the platform sometimes motivated me in such a way that I wanted to use these activities 100%. Although I don't think it was easy.

5. Do you think that the use of new technologies in teaching can be more beneficial for young people?

The respondent believes that the use of new technologies can be useful for people of all ages – not only for young people.

Additionally, she said:

> I believe that every person should benefit from new teaching methods. It seems to me that the more we learn, the better results we may have in the future. It is also interesting that apart from solving puzzles or crosswords, a person can

> learn something completely different. Although I know that it is not so good and natural for everyone. Moreover, many people find it unnecessary. Yet, during job interviews, there are a number of questions and tasks to be done. In some cases, our skills are better appreciated and that also has a financial dimension.

Case study II

Gender: male
Age: 26

1. Did you have knowledge about the use of Virtual Thinking in education before the pandemic?

The man believes that he is interested in technical innovations, therefore starting a pandemic and distance learning was not demanding for him. The respondent also believes that the disproportions related to the ability to deal with technology were also visible among academic teachers. He also found that some teachers did not conduct online classes due to the lack of appropriate equipment or technical skills.

Additionally, he said:

> I know for some it was a huge shock. I belonged to this group where I helped others to cope with various technical problems. There were a lot of such people. I did not know that, for example, some of my friends did not have a computer, and most of their university stuff was done using a tablet. It was an amazing discovery for me. Perhaps the worst thing was that, due to the lack of scientific skills, classes were not conducted in the traditional formula. At that time, no notes allowed me to make up for the materials, because the exam differed to a large extent from the set literature.

2. What computer programs did you know that can assist in the creation of visual materials?

The respondent believed that before the start of the pandemic, he knew many computer programs that allowed him to create visual notes. The most interesting are Canva and Powtoon, which enabled the subject to create materials for classes that were assessed very well by academics due to their innovation.

Additionally, he said:

> I have always tried to make my presentations or prepared teaching materials perfect for me. I am glad that many teachers appreciated this during the pandemic.

> Interestingly, many of these people did not know the techniques and possibilities of how I work. It was very important to me, and it motivated me to develop further and look for new possibilities to create graphics or visual materials.

3. Do you know the advantages and disadvantages of the selected programs?

The man believes that each of the programs he learns is of great importance in the world of science. During one of the psychological classes, he got to know the functioning of programs such as Canva, Prezi, Powtoon, Miro and Mural. He believes that Canva and Prezi are the simplest programs that anyone can handle if they spend up to several hours learning and getting to know the application. However, the rest of the programs are rather advanced. Powtoon may be difficult for a beginner, where short animations are created and basic knowledge is needed about saving and possibly editing movies, and the program is in English.

Additionally, he said:

> I think each of these programs has a great application. It is difficult for me that I learned about such technical innovations only in one subject. It was obvious that some people were afraid to pursue something new. Some were not at all eager to do something interesting for students. The lecture itself, where an academic teacher spoke for 1.5 hours without the webcam being turned on, was an intellectual nightmare. I am glad that I had the opportunity to learn new techniques.

4. Do you think that the use of visual thinking can contribute to better memorization of the material?

The respondent believes that the use of visual thinking can contribute to better remembering the material.

Additionally, he said:

> Of course, this is actually a summary of the entire interview. It is impossible not to include visual thinking in education if we want to plan very good classes, workshops or trainings. The scary thing is that so many people don't know about it and don't want to do anything about it.

5. Do you think that the use of new technologies in teaching can be more beneficial for young people?

The respondent believes that the use of new technologies may be useful for young people. He adds that children should also learn topics such as robotics, computer science, spatial planning and other engineering subjects.

Additionally, he said:

> I think that from an early age you should use technology, computer science, graphics and visual thinking. So that in the future children, adolescents or young adults use their intellectual abilities. The lack of such solutions may lead to the fact that they will be able to perform only basic and low-paid tasks and professions.

Summary

It is important to pay attention to the developmental potential of students in early adulthood. At this age, it is worthwhile, especially during a pandemic, for people of that age to cope with the challenges of civilization in the best possible way. The issues of visual communication largely contributed to the broadening of the knowledge of the respondents. According to the results, it turns out that 100% of the respondents considered that the use of visual communication elements can contribute to better remembering the material. Selected case studies are described in detail in this article in order to better present the issue. This article is one of a series of studies conducted during a pandemic on modern learning opportunities.

In order to answer the first research question, it turns out that only – 13% of respondents have knowledge about the use of Virtual Thinking in education. Referring to the second question, it turns out that only a few respondents know computer programs supporting the creation of visual materials (18%), and only a few are aware of their real advantages and disadvantages (14%). An important issue for the future is the diversity of gender and the field of study. Referring to the third research question, respondents aged 19 to 26 perceive the use of visual thinking as innovative compared to the traditional model of teaching without the use of Visual Thinking (95%). Moreover, respondents believe that the use of such techniques can be an interesting and effective way to present data (100%).

Summing up, 88% decided that they would like to learn the possibility of using the platforms and would also like to take advantage of the possibility of purchasing a license by the university in order to learn about the programs. The majority (76%) decided that they would be willing to take advantage of training courses and specialist workshops that would allow them to learn about the programs in detail. Many people were surprised by the number of programs and materials that could be used to improve the quality of education (78%).

As mentioned earlier, the article is only a part of the analyzed data. Not all aspects examined in the survey were analyzed. In this case, an important issue was to present a case study in order to approach the analyzed topic individually. However, in this case, the focus was mainly on qualitative data analysis, valued in social sciences, mainly in the field of psychology. Based on the case studies that were selected randomly for this article. It is possible to analyze several needs and try to expand the research in such a way that in the future it can be used in practice throughout the university learning.

The paper also presents selected practical implications that may constitute a reference to the academic activities carried out.

Selected practical implications

1. Students should be informed about the proposed method of conducting classes with the use of visual thinking.
2. It is important to ensure regular contact in the didactic process between students and academic teachers.
3. Information about the benefits of visual thinking should be explained in theoretical and practical terms and displayed on educational platforms.
4. It is desirable to implement modern teaching methods also during traditional academic classes, also after the period of distance learning.
5. The ability to use modern educational methods, including visual thinking, can be helpful in the career development of students.
6. Information on modern teaching methods should be conducted by specialists in order to counteract stereotypes on this subject.
7. Elements related to visual thinking should be introduced at every stage of education, including at the academic level, due to the possibility of multi-faceted development.
8. It is essential to create opportunities for students to practice visual thinking.
9. The academic teacher should have knowledge and practical skills on the tasks or didactic methods, including visual thinking.
10. Academic teachers should encourage the participants of their classes to prepare materials using new techniques (the teacher’s attitude and out-of-the-box thinking in this regard is also important).
11. More attention should be paid to skills and abilities, as well as finding and analyzing strengths and weaknesses of undergraduate and graduate students.
12. The creators of the platforms should help in the implementation of modern teaching methods in institutions by training the staff, providing information

about their products, etc. In order to better prepare the academic staff to conduct remote classes.
13. Teachers in both schools and colleges should be offered free training in modern teaching methods in order to prepare adequate resources for educators.
14. Visual thinking after a specific theoretical introduction and practical exercises should be helpful in further educational stages for students.
15. Having knowledge and inspiration regarding aspects related to visual thinking and modern teaching techniques may be associated with a lower intensity of factors related to professional burnout.

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MAGDALENA POKRZYCKA-WALCZAK

International Research Projects – Experiences of An Administration Officer at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin

ABSTRACT

This article describes some main issues connected with the application, implementing and reporting matters, with special emphasis on pandemic as a crisis-generating factor. It is also a case study of a few international research projects, implemented at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, by an administration officer, with 12 years of experience in the International Research' Projects Office.

Keywords: teamwork procedures, ICT, communication, crisis management

Introduction

This is the first article on implementing international research' projects with focus on concrete case studies, including pandemic influence on the life cycle of projects. This proposal also includes ICT tools as the methods supporting the project management in crisis situations.

How to support researchers in administrative procedures during the application process for international funds, offered not only by European Union programs? How to become member of an effective project team during the process of implementation of international research projects? How to be an effective assistant of the project coordinator during reporting, evaluation or audit procedures? How to support coordinators of international research projects in solving crisis situations, like pandemic, which caused many unpredictable circumstances? How to be an equal partner in a project team, how to organize model relationship, which allows to achieve excellent results? It is difficult to answer these questions without an analysis of good practices in implementing projects in the light of the legal internal procedures of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (hereinafter: MCSU) in Lublin.

Model projects have more effective results

There are a few model projects implemented at my workplace at International Research' Projects Office at MCSU, which may serve as a good example for other researchers, also because every application form and potential project should be the basis for the following ones.

First of all – prof. Andrzej Machocki, together with his research team, took part in project called "Development of an Internal Reforming Alcohol High Temperature PEM Fuel Cell Stack", acronym IRAFC, implemented from January 1, 2010 to June 30, 2013. Together with a few partner researchers from universities and research institutions from Greece, France, Germany and the Netherlands, he participated in the development of a prototype of a new fuel cell fed by a mixture of methyl alcohol and water. A research team from MCSU worked on developing new low-temperature catalysts for the direct conversion of methanol and water to hydrogen and carbon dioxide. Hydrogen in the fuel cell is oxidized into water, producing electricity. A fuel cell is a small element sized 5 by 5 cm, thickness of ca. 1 cm. It is composed of two platinum electrodes, situated between of polymeric membranes. Placing a layer of methanol conversion catalyst adjacent to one of the cell electrodes provides direct hydrogen production and at the same time improves the efficiency of the entire system. The main purpose of the research team was to prove that this type of fuel cell equipped with a small container with liquid methanol can replace solutions in which pressure vessels with hydrogen are used (e.g., used in hydrogen cars). The application of a steam reforming methanol catalyst to such a compact system was worldwide innovative in 2012. The project was co-financed from 7. Framework Programme, within the Joint Initiative Technology and at that time, in 2013, when project was finished, it had a great chance to be used by Americans. A prototype of this equipment was used in production, performed by a specialized company from The Netherlands. The solution, co-created with MCSU team participation, had a great opportunity to revolutionize the power supplying market of electric and electronic equipment. I was member of the Polish team, on administrative side, and supported prof. Machocki, as leader of the Polish team in implementing the project, also in preparing documents for the audit by certified EU auditors. Prof. Machocki, thanks to my support, did not waste time on administrative issues, but was ready for new challenges, like a new project, which became a continuation of the former one. The new one, in the same international consortium, had a slightly different acronym, IRMFC, and was called "Development of a portable internal reforming methanol high temperature PEM fuel cell system", implemented from May 1, 2013 to October 31, 2016. Thanks to very interesting, promising results on the European and worldwide scale of the former project, the new one became another success. I took part in the other project team, too, my obligations were to organize all formal and financial issues and being in close touch with the Project leader at MCSU, who was prof. Machocki. If there were any issues to discuss or to support – I depended on support from prof. Machocki side. It was very good team communication, I was informed about every important issue by prof. Machocki and other team members, if it was necessary, and the other way around. On the other side – the knowledge of the guidelines from EU regulations and internal procedures – was a key factor in implementing and reporting both projects properly. Strengthening of international cooperation was also possible thanks to the development of the university's research infrastructure, including the implementation of the project cofounded by EU Centre for Functional Nanomaterials in years 2008–2015, led by prof. Machocki. The initiated international scientific cooperation, knowledge and experience gained as well as cooperation with partners in previous projects resulted in the implementation of the project "Development of an Innovative Concept for Carbon Dioxide Utilization as Side Stream of Integrated Bio-refinery Concepts" (acronym ICOCAD) carried out in 2016–2019 within ERA-Net Bioenergy programme with the partners from Germany, with participation of a research team contributing to the implementation of previous projects, led at the MCSU by prof. Wojciech Gac. The main objective of the project was to develop catalysts and new reactor concepts for the conversion of waste carbon dioxide, e.g., from biogas streams, and hydrogen produced from renewable energy sources to methane. The topic of the project was in line with the today extremely important climate actions connected with the development of technology for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

The research topics of the above-mentioned projects concerning hydrogen production with renewable sources of raw materials are continued by members of prof. Machocki's team. In 2016–2020, Magdalena Greluk, PhD in leaded the National Science Centre funded project entitled "Regulation of the ethanol-water conversion mechanism by the size of the active phase nanoparticles of metal-oxide catalysts". Team members participated in national and international research teams working on different aspects of catalysts for hydrogen production and its utilization. Studies resulted in numerous publications in international scientific journals. The intention of the team members is to conduct further research studies on catalysts for production and utilization of hydrogen, better understanding of the relationship between their physicochemical and catalytic properties with the participation of national and international research teams.

It shows how important good, innovative ideas are – it is just "a gate" for donations, because excellent projects with European value added are more than welcome by European Commission (hereinafter: EC).

Honeybee as an example of research project so as challenge for new ideas

It is very important to use good practices from other international research projects, implemented within Horizon 2020, by other educational and research institutions in EU, to prepare own application forms for different calls for proposals, not only within the EC offer. One of the professors of MCSU with specialization in honeybee health decided to apply for a research grant within the programme called "Foreign promotion" of the Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange (NAWA). The title of the project is "Phenomenon of honeybee: research on microbiome and resistance". The trigger of her idea was the information about the project acronym FOG "Frequency protector generator for honeybees" funded under H2020-LEIT, H2020 Societal Challenges and H2020 SME and its results. The project has developed a frequency generator which emits a signal lethal to target organisms and so it can protect bee colonies, and other animals, against various types of fungi and fungi parasites (Frequency Generator Helps Protect Honeybee Colonies, 2020). The administration officer in charge of supporting the professor in the application procedure at NAWA pointed out, as one of the crucial merit-related issues, that potential project would have complementarity value regarding the project FOG. Because of the pandemic crisis it was impossible, within the project, to share research on honeybee abroad, but a few research articles were printed in international magazines. Moreover, a promotion of the project was possible during the EU event "EU Green Week" – its second edition was organized in Lublin in early June 2021. A dedicated research conference as well as some workshops and meetings for the local audience (inhabitants of Lublin) were made to present the honeybee phenomenon, not only from a researcher's perspective but also that of the users of honeybee products. The conference, alongside some other initiatives, were held with the use of ICT tools, because of restrictions connected with pandemic crisis. In the NAWA final project report, prepared by the administration officer on request of the project leader, the author used her long-term experience in implementing and reporting European and other national and international donation programs. One of the most important part of the merit report was to describe the long-term effects of the project results. It was recommended to write new applications in international research programs, with a network of universities, which are members of Baltic University Programme (BUP). MCSU is also member of this network. One of the main goals of BUP is to convert common ideas into innovative projects, using the potential of all members and supporting candidates. Another idea how to use effects of honeybee project is to prepare an application in the Transborder Cooperation Program Poland-Belarus-Ukraine with partner universities from Lviv and Minsk. One of the most important EU Programs to fund innovation projects connected with cleaner environment and biodiversity is LIFE Program. It is required to have partners from EU countries, and it is possible to have all members from BUP (Frequency…, 2020).

MCSU and German research institutions – how far is it from Lublin to Leipzig

It was possible to compare the internal procedures of supporting researchers between MCSU and Fraunhofer Institute for Cell Therapy and Immunology at the Leipzig University in Germany. During a one-week study visit of administrative and research representatives in Leipzig there were many opportunities to talk about common internal procedures regarding the pre-application process. Although in Leipzig research institution like universities there are more friendly procedures, than at MCSU – the pre-application form is easier to fulfil in Germany. It is necessary for researchers to share their ideas for the international research project, like basic information regarding co-financing and consortium, but it is no problem for the researchers, everything is clear. At MCSU, the pre-application form is complicated, researchers have to spend more time asking about the meaning of many issues to be addressed. It causes stress, but also doubt, because it is also necessary to put information regarding the know-how of the proposal. At MCSU in many cases, the researchers are afraid of sharing their ideas before their application form in response to a particular call for proposals is sent. There is another system at Frauenhofer Institute where researchers inform their colleagues using webpage bookmark about the opportunities to cooperate within the application process or implementing potential project.

Another important issue regarding formal procedures and implementing international projects is fruitful, namely good and friendly relationships, cooperation between administration and implementing members of research projects. There are model cooperation practices in German institutions, whilst at MCSU there is still a lot of work to do in this matter – administration and teams are sometimes working in their own fields, it depends on the concrete project, there is no good communication between them, which sometimes results in wrong signals given to international project teams. As an example – a new H2020 project (acronym: GOLD) where MCSU is one of the partners – and its issue regarding formal requirements. There was a complete lack of understanding between a member of administration and the project team, which resulted in a delay in processing formal documents for the coordinator in Greece. The Administration at MCSU, despite the efforts towards internationalization, still has no procedures to support researchers in English – many documents have to be translated into English or from English into Polish, which needs time and patience of the project partners in other countries.

Pandemic – challenge and chance to use ICT tools in the most effective way

The pandemic of coronavirus has become an important challenge, opportunity but also a problem for the international research projects at MCSU. It caused a particularly unusual situation for one of the projects which is coordinated by MCSU, namely "The Bargaining for working conditions and social rights of migrant workers in Central East European Countries", acronym BARMIG. The project examines the role of established industrial institutions in addressing the effects of migration on changing labour markets, and how trade unions and employer organisations in Czechia, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia, and Poland respond to these changes. The project is co-financed by the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission. and implemented by MCSU, the Association of Electrotechnical Industry (Slovakia), the Central European Labour Studies Institute (Slovakia), the Institute for Development and International Relations (Croatia), and the University of Tartu (Estonia).

At the beginning of the project the pandemic broke out and the material and financial plan had to be changed, also because the project consortium's analysis, written in the application form, was based on economic indicators. Because of the pandemic it was impossible to compare the indicators in real time, as it was planned and accepted by the EC. The project coordinator decided to ask, by mail, the project officer at EC to change the indicators – and the decision was positive. But the coordinator was responsible for organizing project meetings, among others a so-called kick-off meeting, which was scheduled before in Lublin, with participation of representatives of all partner institutions. In the application form it was planned to organize the kick-off as a face-to-face meeting, but because of the new pandemic rules, like travel restrictions, plans had to be changed. The Polish coordinator decided to organize the kick-off in a hybrid form, with the use of ZOOM communication platform. The Polish project team members were sitting in a big room, wearing masks and at two-meter distance from each other, looking at the big screen where all other representatives of project partners were shown. The project partner representatives were at their computers, at their homes. It was possible to discuss and make important decisions connected with work packages and indicators to be achieved. The kick-off was planned for two days, eight hours a day, and it was fulfilled according to the agenda, also sent to the project officer at the EC. The administration officer of BARMIG, dedicated to the preparation of a report, was also responsible for writing "minutes", main points which were discussed, like the decisions made and agreed to by the whole consortium (Pokrzycka-Walczak, 2020). One of the most important issues during the kick-off was the necessity of changing, in a radical way, the data collecting methods for the project. The epidemic crisis, with forced the implementation of new methods of collecting interviews with social workers – one of the main tasks within a sociological project. Interviews would be made and collected with the use of communication platforms only and this challenge caused also changes within the budget of the project. Modifications in the material and financial plan were made on consulting the project with the officer at the EU, and more expenditures were planned for ICT methods of communication and collecting data. If the epidemic situation improves there is still the option to use some financial sources from the budget for travelling.

Crisis management – how to avoid issues in EU projects

There is still the question how to lead an EU project in a crisis situation. One of the most effective methods of communication between members of an international consortium is the use of a special ICT tool (like ZOOM) and a dedicated team communicator, where it is possible to discuss, organize team events or work together on reports (Pokrzycka-Walczak, 2021).
Crisis management should predict any problems between the members of the project team. In a situation like COVID-19 crisis the relationships might be difficult and an unimportant tension, misunderstandings might entail a big conflict, and affect the implementation of the project. In order to avoid conflict, the project leader should prepare regulations for the case of crisis relationships. In the well-being of the team members in long-term crisis situation should be included. Every member of the project team should sign the regulations before starting the project. And this procedure should be included in Quality Handbook, which collects the regulations providing regular implementing of the project (Pokrzycka-Walczak, 2021).

Regarding the questions from the beginning of this paper: An experienced project administration officer is able to support the researchers in implementation procedures, also suggesting concrete notes, sharing his/her knowledge from other international research projects successfully finished, with concrete results. If there are good relations, and project team is complementary, composed of researchers and administration officers, there is a great chance to implement international model research projects. Regarding MCSU – there is still much work to do towards convincing the researchers that the administration officer is not their opponent, but their helper who wants to use the knowledge to achieve excellent effects of teamwork.

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EWELINA GÓRKA V

E-learning in Norway and Innovative Teaching Methods (Based on the Online Course "Strategic Leadership in Organizational Communication")

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to describe the teaching methods used in the visited course "Strategic Leadership in Organizational Communication" organized by Oslo Metropolitan University (Oslomet) in Norway and their innovativeness. The author and two other participants from Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin had the opportunity to participate in this course, thanks to the cooperation within the Polish-Norwegian project with prof. Robert W. Vaagan. These analyzes are also based on reports about e-learning in Norway.

Keywords: e-learning, innovative teaching methods, distance education, Norway

Introduction

Teaching or learning with the use of IT tools has become an extremely important phenomenon in our professional and social life. However, access to IT tools and the Internet is not everything. The development of innovative methods supporting learning and accelerating the proper development of pupil's or student's competences translates into success in their later professional life.

Trends in distance education (DE) change dynamically over time. It is influenced by various circumstances that relate to the cultural, social, political and technological spheres. According to researchers:

> DE and technology-enhanced learning have been evolving over time and closely related to innovations in the field of educational technology. Researchers paid attention to development, innovation, and change in the light of new and emerging digital tools and media to facilitate teaching and learning in DE. (Bozkurt & Zawacki-Richter, 2021, p. 28)

The role of these tools in the learning process is important and fosters innovation.

Bozkurt and Zawacki-Richter (2021, p. 28) also suggested that "social interaction is a key factor in supporting learners and learning processes, and changes in online networks require the application of innovative technological and pedagogical approaches to foster learning communities". The use of new technologies and applications is conducive to establishing interactions, which therefore have a chance to translate into effectiveness also in the educational sphere.

E-learning in Norway

Pokrzycka emphasized the great importance of e-learning and modern teaching techniques in Norway. She wrote:

> During the classes, a lot of attention is paid to innovation. New methods of education and e-learning are systematically introduced, but there is also an emphasis on the need for continuous training and introducing technological innovations. Students receive knowledge in the field of new technologies, media economics or public relations methods – along with issues in the field of professional ethics, focused on new methods of journalistic work. (Pokrzycka, 2018, pp. 755–756)

Innovation and the primary role of practice are the elements that dominate in the preparation of courses for students. Theoretical issues are translated into skills used in practical tasks. In terms of these skills, great importance is attached to the use of new technologies, which also increase the level of innovation.

Through the example of journalistic education in Norway, it is shown that this system is based on practice, projects, work activities in a professional work environment (Pokrzycka, 2016). Equally important is the emphasis on the student's independent work, which has a chance of success in the event of regularity and own work, also after the completion of specialization classes.

To show how to achieve such results, it is worth using studies and reports on Norwegian higher education. They pay attention to the use of IT tools and innovative methods needed in the field of education. Among the reports, those from the period 2015–2021 were selected, some of which also refer to current events, e.g., analyzes given during a pandemic.

One of the reports published in 2015, was produced in the framework of the project “Quality of Norwegian Higher Education: Pathways, Practices and Performances”, funded through the program Research and Innovation in the Educational Sector (FINNUT), Research Council Norway (RCN) (see: Preface of Report).

One of the chapters of this report entitled “Teaching and learning in technology-rich environments” is focused on “technology-rich learning environments”, they are to say “environments in which teachers and/or students use technologies for diverse educational purposes” (Quality in Norwegian Higher Education, 2015, p. 51). Technologies are used to achieve the highest possible level of education efficiency. Among concepts of using digital technology there are: e-learning, net-based learning, technology enhanced learning (TEL), ICT-supported teaching and learning, computer-supported collaborative learning (CSCL) and online learning (Quality in Norwegian…, 2015). According to the report, there are 4 models of teaching:

- “Campus model”: digital technology is used in campus (the same time and the same place),
- “Blended Model I”: students only meet online (the same time and different places),
- “Blended Model II”: online meetings and physical meetings,
- “models”: net-based model, therein asynchronous (see Figure 1 in: Quality in Norwegian…, 2015, p. 53).

The application of a specific model of education, as well as attempts to combine them, are a challenge for the teacher, causing also changes in the way of teaching. Using digital tools and resources can facilitate students’ activity in different ways, e.g., by digital storytelling, the use of digital cases and digital e-assessment (Quality in Norwegian…, 2015). In online learning the role of a teacher is very important; this role seems to be that of a facilitator. However, an important role is played by the involvement of students in both synchronous and asynchronous participation.

Research carried out in Norway shows that teachers are not only interested in testing the latest applications and technological innovations. Instead, they are looking for solutions that will be most appropriate for the entire education process, for communication with the students and for their scientific development. The study also highlights the role of video records, although opinions were various, e.g., the students preferred lectures in real time than video-recorded ones (Quality in Norwegian…, 2015). Research has shown that: "it seems that variation and a careful incorporation of technology in the study program is of key importance, and that more blended learning settings are becoming more and more popular" (Quality in Norwegian…, 2015, p. 10). Similar considerations about ICT at school level (first, second and vocational level) can be found, inter alia, in the document "European Schoolnet. Norway Country Report on ICT in Education" (2018).

In the next report about situation in Norway, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is said that Norway aims at:

> ensuring continued access to learning and smooth educational pathways: To support online learning, the Directorate for Education and Training published a list of information and resources and all schools received free access to tools for online teaching. The government launched a grant scheme for local initiatives that aim to support distance education (…). (Education Policy Outlook Norway, 2020, p. 4)

The situation in education, at the primary, secondary and tertiary level, has changed. The option of conducting classes in the remote formula has become an option to ensure continuity of education. Among the reports presented, there is also a reference to the degree of preparation for these changes, e.g., "CountryNote. School Education during Covid-19 were teachers and students ready?" (2020).

Especially since March 2020, new technologies have been used on a large scale. Digital learning offers opportunities, but also requires adaptation to the applicable conditions. Interesting research results are presented in the article entitled "Norway utilizing digital technologies offer e-education during corona pandemic" (2020). It draws attention, among others, to on the social and socializing role of science: "There is also focus on the social aspects of learning, and the need for pupils and students to meet and interact with their peers and their teachers".

Oslomet

Oslomet – Oslo Metropolitan University is a state University. It was created from the merger of the University of Oslo and the University of Akershus. The university has three campuses, including one in Oslo. The university has four faculties: Faculty of Health Sciences (HV), Faculty of Education and International Studies (LUI), Faculty of Social Sciences (SAM) and Faculty of Technology, Art and Design (TKD). In addition, they operate at the University Research institutes and centers: Norwegian Social Research (NOVA), Work Research Institute (AFI), Consumption Research Norway (SIFO), Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), Centre for the Study of Professions (SPS), Centre for Welfare and Labour Research, Centre for Work Inclusion (KAI) and School of Management, National Centre of Multicultural Education (NAFO) (retrieved June 12, 2021, from https://www.oslomet.no/en/about/faculties-centres).

The main vision that guides the functioning of the university is that: "OsloMet aspires to play a leading role as a provider of research-based knowledge related to the welfare state, in Norway and abroad"[1]. The course "Strategic Leadership in Organizational Communication" was conducted at the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Online course

The course was conducted in an online formula. Since it is not possible to present strictly substantive issues, in the article I use the information generally available along with commentary from the perspective of the observer. As we read on the course website: "The target group is master's students of journalism or media studies from our partner institutions". For its completion, students received 10 ECTS points. This year's offer also informs about the duration, i.e., 1 semester. The course structure was divided into two parts.

The subject of the course oscillated around theoretical issues related to the main concepts included in the name of the course, as well as practical elements that were to enrich the entire learning process. The general description of the course highlights the following cognitive categories:

> The course examines and critically evaluates selected theories, models and practices of strategic leadership in organizational communication in the media and

[1] See more: https://www.oslomet.no/en/about/strategy-vision

communication field, nationally and internationally. Students are encouraged to identify and justify which approaches are most appropriate under which circumstances, including disruptive change and crises" (Strategic Leadership in Organizational Communication – course description, n.d.).

Therefore, the following contents were included in the description:
- "strategic leadership in organizational communication in different types of organizations in the media and communication field
- cross-disciplinary perspectives on strategic leadership in organizational communication
- main challenges and issues pertinent to strategic leadership in organizational communication" (Strategic Leadership…, n.d.).

The issues mentioned above made up the theoretical layer of the course.

Teaching methods

The following teaching methods were used during the course: lectures, analysis of case studies, group work and student presentations. Thanks to the inclusion of information in the teaching materials, the students also had the opportunity to conduct self-tuition of the syllabus and lectures (Strategic Leadership…, n.d.). During the course, bibliographic information appeared on the scope of bibliography and the most interesting industry publications, reports and expert studies. The sources were presented in the form of both book publications, articles and data in the form of audio-visual recordings and online studies.

Lectures: lectures were delivered in the first part of the course due to the necessity to introduce the whole subject. They were a kind of theoretical introduction that was later developed in the meeting. The lecture on the theories of leadership from a historical perspective allowed to introduce the necessary definitions. Further development and presentation of the literature on the subject allowed to clarify the definitional doubts and results of the latest research in this field. A separate segment was devoted to methodological threads. Paying attention to methodological issues was connected with its later application in the student's final works. Examples are provided in the second part of the book. The lectures conducted by invited speakers also referred to the practical side of the discussed phenomena. The practical demonstration of communication leadership in the organization was the best illustration of theoretical contents. Among the invited guests there were representatives of important institutions on the Norwegian media market. During the lectures, presentations, fragments of short recordings, journalistic articles, reports, and audiovisual sources were used.

Analysis of case studies: the introduced subject matter was discussed on the basis of examples directly related to the main theme of the meeting. Case studies were related to the latest events and were topics that were frequently discussed, for example in social media, in the press or on television. The invited guests representing various sectors and media industries also allowed for a multi-faceted approach to the topic. The analyzes of individual cases were selected in terms of the topics discussed. They also referred to issues related to trust in the media and the strategies used, which contributed to the success. Case studies also appeared among the later papers. It was an interesting form of students' own work.

Group work: Discussions allowed to verify theoretical assumptions in practice. The discussions moderated by the leader/teacher were interesting because the participants referred to their previous professional experiences, as well as to current events in Norway and around the world. An opportunity to speak was also reading press articles relating to the topic. The selection of materials for the discussion allowed to supplement the previously provided content. Apart from press articles, there were also other texts, reports and scientific studies. In connection with meetings with people from the media world, there were also questions & answers sessions that allowed for direct contact and exchange of opinions with these people. Interesting discussions in which the invited guests took part did not refer only to the description of a phenomenon or success. There was also an opportunity to exchange opinions and examples of good practices that can be successfully applied in various industries. The methods used also include brainstorming. Students actively participated in these sessions, both encouraged by the facilitator and spontaneously contributing to the discussion.

Students' presentations: in the second part of the course, student presentations and discussions were held. The topics of future works were discussed during the class on the basis of previously prepared abstracts. Finally, individual works and group works were very well prepared and developed by speakers. The presentations were prepared individually or in groups of 2–3 people. The presentation during the course lasted up to 30 minutes, followed by a discussion. People participating in the discussions, in turn, had very substantive questions and comments that enriched the entire message on a given topic. The presentations took the form of study, presentations and lectures. Selected students' works are presented in the second part of the book.

According to the course provisions, thanks to the assimilation of the above-mentioned material, the students had knowledge “both in the public and private sector, nationally and internationally”. This knowledge was also to be translated into skills related to “can plan, lead and implement sustainable organizational change in both public and private sector organizations, nationally and internationally”. Among general competence we can find information that „student is competent to be part of the leadership team in a public or private sector organization in the media and communication field, both nationally and internationally, can discuss professionally strategic leadership in organizational communication with co-professionals in the media and communication field and can contribute to ethical decision-making processes and sustainable development” (Strategic Leadership…, n.d.).

After the end of the classes, an evaluation was carried out. Among the opinions expressed by students, there were positive comments on the substantive layer of the course. The comments concerned the intensity of meetings in the first part of the course and the time devoted to the preparation of final assignments.

From the perspective of the person observing this course, it is necessary to emphasize the fact that the course participants are open-minded people who willingly exchange opinions, take the floor in discussions, ask the speakers questions, are curious about the experiences of their colleagues from the group. The knowledge transfer process had a chance to be successfully implemented due to the involvement of these people. The use of innovative teaching methods strengthened this process.

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ROBERT WALLACE VAAGAN VI

The Online Master Course "MEDK4100 Strategic Leadership in Organizational Communication" at Oslo Metropolitan University, Spring Term 2021

ABSTRACT

This article addresses a new and innovative online master course which is part of a new master's degree program in Media Development at Oslo Metropolitan University. The 120 ECTS master program was launched in August 2020 and the optional 10 ECTS course MEDK4100 Strategic Leadership in Organizational Communication was offered as one of several English-language optional courses in the spring term 2021. 23 students passed the exam, most with excellent grades, and student evaluations were very positive. The article first discusses the wider issues of digitalization, didactics and e-learning in tertiary education during the global pandemic, especially the situation in Norway. Following this we briefly present Oslo Metropolitan University and the research group Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Design in Media (MIED) founded and led by the current author. We then consider the new master program and the course MEDK4100 Strategic Leadership in Organizational Communication. International comparative perspectives are introduced by bringing in the European Qualification Framework, including how to encourage students to undertake research. Finally, a selection of five term papers by students from the MEDK4100 course that have been adapted as articles for this anthology, are presented.

Keywords: tertiary level education, innovative online teaching, didactics, strategic leadership and organizational communication, AMEC

Introduction

In August 2020, the Department of Journalism and Media Studies of Oslo Metropolitan University launched a new master program (120 ECTS) in Media Development, with three tracks: one for Journalism, a second for Non-fiction writing and a third for Media and Communication. The new master program will gradually replace an earlier master program in Journalism. From a record number of 260+ applicants, a total of 70 were enrolled (full time and part time) for the available 29 places. The reason so many were admitted was due to the pandemic and the policy of the Ministry of Education and Research to facilitate access to higher education during the lockdown situation.

In Norway, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a lockdown from 13 March, 2021 which has lasted until 25 September, 2021. In education, this has meant that traditional classroom teaching had to be quickly replaced by online teaching both at the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels. In many ways, the digital transformation that has been well under way for many years in Norway and in other countries, had to be speeded up considerably in a relatively short time span due to the pandemic.

The master program in Media Development is structured with compulsory courses in theory, methodology and media production taught in Norwegian in the first semester, followed by a variety of optional courses (many in English) in the second semester while the third and fourth semester are reserved for the master dissertation. Although students are enrolled in one of the three tracks and must write their master dissertation in this track, they are encouraged to choose optional courses from other tracks to broaden their scope. The 10-ECTS optional course "MEDK4100 Strategic Leadership in Organizational Communication" which was designed by the author as a new and innovative course in the Media and Communication track, was first offered in the spring term 2021 and consisted of two week-long online (Zoom) sessions 22–26 March and 26–30 April gathering 23 students. In addition, four Polish colleagues from Maria Curie-Skłodowska University attended online as observers, as part of a Norway Grants research project between the two universities and the editors. Most of the 23 students were from the Media and Communication track, but some were also from the other two tracks or exchange students from Norwegian and German universities. The results were very successful, both in terms of student evaluations, learning outcomes and grades. Among the articles in this e-anthology, five articles are included from the course. These are based on the course term papers and adapted for this anthology. Three of the articles are written by single authors while two others are written jointly by two and three authors, respectively. A brief introduction to these five student articles is given at the end of this article.

Digitalization, didactics and e-learning

In pre-Internet times, distance learning was synonymous with correspondence courses by mail, but with the Internet from the 1990s onwards, e-learning has increasingly become the norm. In Norway, where 98% of the population are online (World Bank, 2021), this process was accelerated from 2012 when the Norwegian government launched a long-term campaign of digitalization designed to transform all communication between the public sector and citizenry from analogue (paper-based) to digital. Each citizen would gradually become accustomed to their personal digital post-boxes as the normal interface for communication with the public sector (Vaagan, 2015). The private sector has been extensively digitalized and, in many ways, led the way for the public sector in Norway by introducing webinars as a cost- and time-saving way of communication with colleagues and clients. Today, this process of digitalization of the private and public sectors is seen e.g., in e-health where 80% of Norwegian general practitioners offer online consultations and each citizen has a personalized e-profile with an extensive array of online medical information (Vaagan, Torkkola, Sendra, Farré & Lovari, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has further reinforced digitalization in many countries, including e-learning where the classroom has been replaced by home offices and dispersed, mobile workplaces.

One confirmation of this is the impressive and steadily growing volume of academic literature about e-learning, addressing innovation and practical teaching in tertiary education (Pokrzycka, 2021), didactics (Schneuwly & Vollmer, 2018; Liu, Tretyakova, Fedorov et al., 2020), learning technologies (Jiao & Lissitz, 2020; Kergel, 2020; Glăveanu, Ness & de Saint Laurent, 2020), learning design (Spence 2020, Daniela, 2020; Hai-Jew, 2020; Lowenthal & Dennen, 2020), or the future (Nichols, 2020; Alexander, 2020; Dede & Richards, 2020; Bull & Keengwe, 2020). For instance, Schneuwly and Vollmer (2020) discuss how Humboldtian *Bildung* can be used today for research in subject didactics. Kergel (2020) focuses on technology and mobility, noting how changing media impacts on digital learning environments. The volume edited by Daniela (2020) contains contributions that highlight learning design, particularly the knowledge-building dimension, e.g., feedback technology, mining of research results, online referencing and learning tools, virtual reality solutions. Nichols (2020) looks ahead to the future of digital distance education in tertiary education and stresses organizational requirements for successful implementation of online programs. Also, in leadership theory and organizational communication, which are key components of the course MEDK4100 that will be discussed later, digitalization has become paramount (Martinsen, 2019; Arnulf, 2019).

These largely academic perspectives interact with the scenarios outlined by commercial, multinational enterprises, especially Microsoft, which has made inroads into higher education worldwide with its software programs. In Norway, Microsoft has a dominating market share in education: a study from November 2017 showed that 65% of primary school pupils use Microsoft products, compared with 92% of secondary school pupils and 73% of university/college students (UUTilsynet, 2017). Another, smaller, company is Citrix which specializes in servers, applications and desktop virtualization, networking, software as a service (SaaS) and cloud computing technologies. In a recent report on higher education in Norway, Citrix Norway argues that their solutions (Citrix Workspace linked with Microsoft 365 and Azure) facilitate tertiary education institutions to be part of a global digital ecosystem. Likely game changer developments for all tertiary education institutions include 1) globalization and digitization of learning, education, research and cooperation, 2) that IT organization and infrastructure are transformed from resources to strategic game changers and 3) that a sustainable IT solution becomes a future-oriented competitive edge (Citrix Norway, 2021).

OsloMet – Oslo Metropolitan University

Briefly, OsloMet is Norway's third largest university with 22,000 students, 2,200 staff, 4 faculties and 5 specialized research centers, offering 43 BA programs, 33 master programs and 7 PhD programs. Three basic institutional values (learning, innovation and diversity) are also central in the university strategic plan for the period 2017–2024. The strategy was revised in 2020 to also incorporate sustainability and the UN millennial goals[1].

[1] OsloMet currently has around 100 research groups. About half of these were started in 2013 to intensify our institutional research performance and obtain full university status, which was achieved in January 2018. One of these research groups is Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Design in Media (MIED) which this author founded in 2013. One important requirement for all the research groups was that research had to be founded firmly on

From the outset, our research group was interdisciplinary with members from all three department tracks: Media and Communication Studies, Journalism and Photojournalism, as well as several international associate members. MIED was one of four research groups in our department, but the only one issued from the BA program in Media and Communication Studies. The other research groups were all based on the BA and MA program in Journalism Studies. An important input in MIED was the third year BA-level course this author had taught since 2011: Entrepreneurship and Project Management. From 2013, the Norwegian government's qualification framework for higher education required that all three levels (BA, MA and PhD) must ensure competencies in entrepreneurship and innovation. Therefore, the research focus of MIED was – and remains – an important government priority in higher education and research. It is no coincidence that innovation, along with learning and diversity, are the three core values of today's OsloMet. Entrepreneurship and innovation feature also prominently in OsloMet's Strategy 2024. In October 2019, I invited my colleague prof. Dagny Stuedahl to become co-leader of MIED to reinforce the media design dimension.

MIED and innovation

There is a vast corpus of literature dedicated to entrepreneurship and innovation. Today, the media landscapes and the entire communication sectors in most countries are typified by rapid and largely technology-driven changes, new stakeholders and markets, the emergence of new professions and roles, as well as new media usage preferences. Research in MIED is strongly linked with our educational programs, as well as with the labor market. The anthology "*Entreprenørskap og ledelse i media*" edited by Vaagan & Barland (2015) analyzed these developments in 19 articles by 24 authors from most tertiary-level media programs in Norway. In terms of theory and methodology, MIED draws on analytical frameworks linked with theories of agenda setting, framing, visual communication, design, media usage preferences, diffusion of innovation, networks, viral marketing and cultivation. Methodologies embrace both quantitative

the teaching programs. At the same time, and with government support, several formerly independent research institutes were incorporated in order to accelerate research: The Work Research Institute (AFI), The Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), Consumption Research Norway (SIFO) and Norwegian Social Research (NOVA). These later were unified under the umbrella Centre for Welfare and Labour Research (CWLR).

techniques (data sets, surveys, trend analysis) as well as qualitative techniques (content analysis, interviews, observation).

Whereas innovation in business highlights breakthroughs in product and service development, marketing and sales[2], innovation in research and academia is different. Many researchers and academics would argue that research, depending on whether it is classified as basic, applied, or experimental research (cf. the OECD Frascati Manual, 2015), is synonymous with innovation.

In media-related research, Storsul and Krumsvik (2013) distinguished between 5 forms of media innovation: product innovation, process innovation, position innovation, paradigmatic innovation and social innovation (pp. 16–17). In addressing the theme of innovations, technology and organizational change, Lucy Küng (2013) drew up a distinction between minor incremental, architectural and major discontinuous/disruptive innovations (pp. 9–10). She later also stressed the close dependency between cognition and innovation, noting how organizational cognitions can hinder new ideas. (2017).

Two important international R&D projects that MIED have been involved in the Erasmus projects Youth on the Move (2011–2014) and the European Media Cloud Campus (EMCC) 2015–2017. EMCC was an Erasmus+ funded strategic partnership between media programs in Germany, the Netherlands, Turkey, Denmark and Norway. Through 20 workshops in partner countries (of which four at OsloMet), students and staff created an innovative online environment for creative and collaborative content production across languages and cultures. (Vaagan, Rinsdorf, Boers et al., 2012; Vaagan & Pashevich, 2014; Vaagan, Rinsdorf, Kirklar et al., 2016). Internationally, MIED has also worked with The International Association for Intercultural Communication Studies (IAICS) where this author served as President 2017–2019. In recent years MIED has also addressed issues such as innovative leadership (Vaagan, 2020). As leader of MIED this author has regularly encouraged students, especially at the BA and MA levels, to take active part in research and has also on several occasions included students as co-authors in scientific articles or as authors in their own right in edited anthologies.

2 See for instance: Desjardins, J. (2021). 10 types of innovation. *The Visual Capitalist*. (retrieved June 8, 2021, from https://www.visualcapitalist.com/10-types-of-innovation-the-art-of-discovering-a-breakthrough-product/)

New joint master program

In August 2020, six months into the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown situation, The Department of Journalism and Media Studies launched a new three-track master's degree program in Media Development. This replaced the old master's degree program in journalism which over several years had suffered from a dwindling number of applicants. The new joint program has three tracks: one for journalism, a second for non-fiction narrative writing and a third for media and communication. A record number of 246 applicants of which around 62% came from media and communication students, registered for the available 29 places. Due to the pandemic situation and in order to activate students, OsloMet (like many other HE institutions and with the blessing of the Ministry of Education and Research) more than doubled the enrolment figure to 70 students. This posed challenges to infrastructure and teaching staff. Since the lockdown on 12. March 2020, all teaching in higher education in Norway had to be transformed, more or less overnight, into Zoom-based online teaching. This transformation was successfully implemented and continued through the autumn of 2020.

In the new joint three-track master program in Media Development, full-time students in their first semester must complete two compulsory 10 ECTS courses in theory and methodology plus an optional 10 ECTS course from one of the three tracks, all taught in Norwegian. In the second semester students choose three courses among several optional 10 ECTS courses (many taught in English) to gain the necessary 60 ECTS before they concentrate on their master dissertations in the third and fourth semesters. Part time students have a slower progression and we will not go into this here. Personally, I also drew on experiences from courses I had given at the BA, MA and PhD levels in Norway and other countries (Germany, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan) including the use of student-active focus with student plenary presentations and student respondents, flipped classroom, role plays and case studies.

The idea of offering an optional English-language course on Strategic Leadership in Organizational Communication came up in 2019 when my colleagues and I were planning the new joint master's degree and the track in Media and Communication. Focusing on leadership would allow students a broader and deeper understanding of the project management dimension in my third year BA-course MoK3000 described above. We also believed this would give our students an edge in a very competitive job market.

Of course, in 2019 we did not foresee the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for a rapid transformation of classroom teaching to an online environment. But with hindsight I think it is fair to conclude that many of our students and staff were well prepared through undergraduate programs and courses. For instance, in my case, since 2011 my third-year undergraduate students in entrepreneurship and project management have been given assignments involving comparing a variety of video conferencing platforms (e.g., Skype, Facetime, Google Hangout, Adobe Connect, Webex, etc) and used the dedicated video conferencing room at OsloMet as well as visits to market leaders in video conferencing Microsoft and Cisco (Vaagan, 2018). This has built up skills and competence before Teams/ Zoom became dominating during the pandemic. Additionally, looking ahead, OsloMet's new sustainability policy will mean less physical travelling to conferences and more home-based video communication.

MEDK4100

The full details of the course are available online[3] so here we will only dwell on the learning outcomes. Briefly, the course examines and critically evaluates selected theories, models and practices of strategic leadership in organizational communication in the media and communication field, nationally and internationally. Students are encouraged to identify and justify which approaches are most appropriate under which circumstances, including disruptive change and crises. The course consists mainly of lectures, analysis of case studies, group work, student presentations and self-tuition of the syllabus and lectures. The group work is linked with themes from lectures and the syllabus. In their assignment, the students apply theory to self-chosen empirical cases and the assignments are presented in a plenary session with a student respondent. The course is arranged as two week-long gatherings at OsloMet, dates and other practical details are made available well in advance. In terms of learning outcomes in knowledge, skills and general competence, students who complete the course are expected to have acquired the following:

[3] OsloMet (2021). *MEDK4100 Strategic leadership in organizational communication*. (retrieved June 7, 2021, from https://student.oslomet.no/en/studier/-/studieinfo/emne/MEDK4100/2021/H%C3%98ST)

Table 1. MEDK4100 learning outcomes

	Knowledge	***Skills***	***General competence***
The student	has acquired thorough knowledge of the academic literature on strategic leadership in organizational communication in different types of organizations in the media and communication field, both in the public and private sector, nationally and internationally has reached a deeper knowledge of cross-disciplinary perspectives on strategic leadership in organizational communication has a solid overview of the main challenges and issues pertinent to strategic leadership in organizational communication from external and internal forces	is able to navigate independently and critically in the academic literature and in other relevant sources relating to strategic leadership of organizational communication in the media and communication field can plan, lead and implement sustainable organizational change in both public and private sector organizations, nationally and internationally. can use in an independent way relevant theory and methods in research on strategic leadership in organizational communication applicable to the media and communication field	is competent to be part of the leadership team in a public or private sector organization in the media and communication field, both nationally and internationally can discuss professionally strategic leadership in organizational communication with co-professionals in the media and communication field and can contribute to ethical decision-making processes and sustainable development.

Source: Oslomet (2021). *MEDK4100 Strategic leadership in organizational communication*. (retrieved June 7, 2021, from https://student.oslomet.no/en/studier/-/studieinfo/emne/MEDK4100/2021/H%C3%98ST)

These learning outcomes were inspired by both the Norwegian national qualifications standards as well as the European Qualification Framework (EQF).

European Qualification Framework (EQF)[4]

The EQF is a framework set up in 2008 and most recently revised in 2017. It is based on learning outcomes for all types of qualifications among EU member states plus 11 other countries (see below). This serves as a translation tool or interface between different national qualifications frameworks. The framework operates at 8 levels ranging from kindergarten (level 1) to PhD (level 8), and helps improve transparency, comparability and portability of people's qualifications and makes it possible to compare qualifications from different countries and institutions. The EQF is fully compatible with the framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area and the three cycles of the Bologna process. The EQF is closely linked with National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs)[5] and thereby provides a comprehensive map of all types and levels of qualifications in Europe, which are increasingly accessible through qualification databases. EU member states are committed to further develop the EQF and make it more effective in facilitating the understanding of national, international and third-country qualifications by employers, workers and learners. In addition to the EU Member States another 11 countries work towards implementing the EQF, namely Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway (European Economic Area countries), Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey (candidate countries), Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kosovo (potential candidates) and Switzerland. In the context of higher education, it is interesting to take consider especially levels 6, 7 and 8 (BA), level 7 (MA) and level 8 (PhD). These correspond, respectively, to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd cycle of the Bologna Process mentioned above.

In Norway, the harmonization of the Norwegian national qualifications framework with the EQF and Bologna process cycles are monitored by The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT). The harmonization process has been underway since 2012 when a NOKUT report (NOKUT, 2012, p. 4) concluded that while there was some discussion on especially self-certification procedures, "the NQF descriptors are compatible with the EQF, and a clear and demonstrable link between the qualifications levels in the NQF and the EQF exists".

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4 retrieved June 7, 2021, from https://europa.eu/europass/en/european-qualifications-framework-eqf

5 retrieved June 7, 2021, from https://europa.eu/europass/en/national-qualifications-frameworks-nqfs

Table 2. EQF levels 6, 7 and 8

Learning outcomes/ Level	Knowledge	Skills	Responsibility and autonomy
Level 6 (BA/cycle 1)	Advanced knowledge of a field of work or study, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles	A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems	Manage complex technical or professional activities or projects, taking responsibility for decision-making in unpredictable work or study contexts; take responsibility for managing professional development of individuals and groups
Level 7 (MA/cycle 2)	Highly specialized knowledge, some of which is at the forefront of knowledge in a field of work or study, as the basis for original thinking and/or research. Critical awareness of knowledge issues in a field and at the interface between different fields	Specialized problem-solving skills required in research and/or innovation in order to develop new knowledge and procedures and to integrate knowledge from different fields	Manage and transform work or study contexts that are complex, unpredictable and require new strategic approaches; take responsibility for contributing to professional knowledge and practice and/or for reviewing the strategic performance of teams
Level 8 (PhD/cycle 3)	Knowledge at the most advanced frontier of a field of work or study and at the interface between fields	The most advanced and specialized skills and techniques, including synthesis and evaluation, required to solve critical problems in research and/or innovation and to extend and redefine existing knowledge or professional practice	Demonstrate substantial authority, innovation, autonomy, scholarly and professional integrity and sustained commitment to the development of new ideas or processes at the forefront of work or study contexts including research

Source: *The European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning*. (2021). (retrieved October 7, 2021 from https://ecompetences.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/EQF-broch_2008_en.pdf)

Looking ahead, the European Commission's recently announced Digital Education Action Plan (DEAP) 2021–2027 will hopefully support the sustainable and efficient adaptation of EU member states´ education and training systems. The two main priority areas are: 1) Fostering the development of a high-performing digital education ecosystem; 2) Enhancing digital skills and competences for the digital transformation.[6]

Involving students in research: articles by MEDK4100 master students
In Norway, all tertiary teaching and education must by law be research-based, i.e., either based on one own's research or state-of-the-art research. Previously, I have addressed the didactical and pedagogical challenges of involving especially undergraduate students in research (Vaagan et al., 2012; Vaagan & Pashevich, 2014). Yet at the master and PhD levels this should not be a problem since independent research is a requirement, as we can see from levels 7–8 in Table 2 above. But submitting term papers and passing exams are not the same as publishing your research in a scientific, peer-reviewed journal. With this in mind, and in cooperation with my colleague professor Lidia Pokrzycka, a selection of 5 articles from the course MEDK4100 have been included in this anthology. These articles are introduced below in alphabetical order and have been adapted for this anthology.

Nora Presttun Hindenes: "The Music Festival Øya's Boost in Engagement Through Green Action"
The Øya music festival has since it started in 1999 become one of Norway's biggest outdoor music festivals, arranged annually in the capital Oslo. In 2019, the organizers made environmental sustainability a key feature of the event management strategy. While the festival had to be suspended in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 situation, environmental sustainability will be evident when the festival once again is arranged in August 2022.

Helene Mosaker: "Schibsted and Diversity"
Founded in 1839, the Schibsted company grew over the years into Norway's largest private media company. Today it has branched out into digital consumer brands across media, online marketplaces and technology ventures and in this process become a multinational company with a global presence, including

[6] retrieved June 11, 2021, from https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/digital-education-action-plan_en

Poland. This article uses interviews with Schibsted Group top leadership to explore the company policy on recruitment and diversity.

Fanny Skaug, Dina I. Danielsen, Daniela Dahle: "Petter Stordalen and Nordic Choice Hotels: Leadership in Organizational Communication Prior to and During the Corona Crisis"
The COVID-19 pandemic and the attendant restrictions on travelling and gatherings, have affected societies, industries and people worldwide. This article is a study of the Norwegian hotel chain Nordic Choice Hotels and its charismatic founder and leader, Petter Stordalen. Despite receiving generous compensation from the Norwegian government during the lockdown and pandemic, Nordic Choice Hotels has had to downsize, and its front figure and leader has had to make some of the toughest decisions in his career.

Tine Skjelstad: "Strategic Leadership in Organizational Communication: From Strategy to Everyday Action on Climate Change"
This article offers a comparative analysis of the two Norwegian environmental organizations: LOOP Environmental School and Action founded for Ocean. Although they are organized and led differently and have different target groups, they both share an ambition to influence people into better handling of the challenges of climate change and how to meet the UN Sustainability Goals.

Camilla Solberg and Mathilde Turvan Paulsen: "Surviving a Global pandemic as a Small Business"
Norway was in a privileged position during the COVID-19 pandemic because immediately after lockdown in March 2020, the Norwegian government implemented several largescale financial rescue operations for the private sector to shield enterprises from bankruptcies and employees from furloughs. This article analyzes how two small and medium-sized Norwegian businesses in communication and PR with their different leaders managed to survive the pandemic.

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NORA PRESTTUN HINDENES VII

The Music Festival Øya's Boost in Engagement Through Green Action

ABSTRACT

The Norwegian music festival "Øya" is one of the world's most environmentally friendly festivals. Meanwhile, people are standing in line to volunteer, and the tickets have been sold out the last 18 years. Amidst the audience raised awareness of the climate crisis, stepping over trash and plastic waste from the remains of another memorable day on a festival is now becoming history. With reusable cups and electricity grid to power the festival in favor to damaging diesel generators, the artists choice of travel is now the Øya festival's biggest environmental problem.

Keywords: music festival Øya, Green Rider, environmental sustainability

Introduction

The Øya music festival started in 1999, as a result of an increasing growth of new interesting Norwegian artists (Øyafestivalen, 2021). As the festival experienced success, they saw that the event generated a lot of environmentally harmful emissions. This made a big impact on the leaders, and they started to look for solutions to run the festival in a more sustainable way. In 2019, Øya, together with the energy company Fortum, launched an initiative called "The Green Rider" to encourage artists to set environmental requirements for the festival's they play at. The campaign created a huge engagement, and one of the world's largest music medias, Billboard, referred to Øya's actions as "going green is the name of the game" (Skjeseth, 2019, p. 1).

The article's purpose and research question

In light of the initiative, the article will study the following research question: To what extent does the Øya music festival's decision to communicate the Green Rider engage participants?

Through analyzing the festival's leadership style and communication, the article aims to research the internal aspects of running a sustainable business as an inspiration for the culture and entertainment industry. The paper will firstly explain "The Green Rider" as a case, and thereafter present the theoretical background for the importance of strategic leadership in organizational communication. It will further investigate the purpose of sustainability, with theories of corporate social responsibility and the importance of reputation. Thereafter the methodology will be presented, followed by qualitative interviews with the management in the Øya festival, and the PR agency behind the concept, namely Trigger. The findings from the interviews will be seen in light of the AMEC-framework and further be discussed together with the theory. Finally, a summary and conclusion will be presented.

The Green Rider as a case and restrictions of the assignment

Based on the scope of the thesis, the article will be based on "The Green Rider" to analyze how the Øya festival and its leadership has performed during a specific period. The article will not focus on issues connected to the COVID-19 crisis, as the research aims to examine the impact of making sustainable choices. The Green Rider initiative, launched in 2019, offers artists an opportunity to reduce their environmental footprint through clear and consistent environmental demands to concert and festival organizers around the world. The idea behind the campaign is a collaboration between the Øya festival, Fortum, and their PR-agency Trigger.

Theoretical background

Strategic leadership

Peter G. Northouse (2019) argues that over the past 60 years, a range of different classification systems have been developed to try to define the dimensions of leadership. He highlights that some definitions view leadership as the "focus of group processes". This perspective views the leader as "the center of the group change and activity and embodies the will of the group" (Northouse, 2019, p. 5). Other definitions perceive leadership in terms of the power relationship that occurs between leaders and followers, where the leader has the power that they wield to effect change in others. It can also be viewed as a transformational process, where the leader moves the followers towards accomplishing more than is usually expected of them.

Despite the different ways leadership has been conceptualized, Northouse (2019, p. 5) specifies a set of components that can be identified as central to leadership as a phenomenon: "Leadership is a process, leadership involves influence, leadership occurs in groups, and leadership involves common goals". Based on these components, Northouse (2019, p. 5) defines leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal". The scholar outlines different styles of leadership, but in light of the research question, this article will look further into authentic and adaptive leadership in line with leadership ethics, which suits the Øya festival's mindset. As the Øya festival is dependent on volunteers, the followership aspect will also be drawn.

Authentic leadership

As a result of failing leadership in both public and private sectors, authentic leadership is emerging in response to societal demands for good and trustworthy leadership (Northouse, 2019). It represents one of the newer areas of leadership research, and therefore needs to be considered tentatively. The foundation of authentic leadership focuses on whether leadership is genuine and real, by being morally grounded and responsive to people's needs and values (Northouse, 2019). However, Northouse underlines that authentic leadership is a process that is difficult to characterize. Some view the leadership style as it incorporates the leader's self-knowledge, self-regulation, and self-concept. It has also been drawn that it is something that can be nurtured in a leader, rather than a fixed trait (Northouse, 2019).

Adaptive leadership

Adaptive leadership conceptualizes the leader as one who encourage others to solve problem, by helping people change and adjust to new situations (Northouse, 2019). Northouse (2019) emphasizes that the leadership style addresses the adaptations of followers, rather than how leaders adapt.

Followership

Northouse (2019) argues that leadership requires followership, and that it is necessary to understand what the act of following entails, to understand leaders and leadership. Followership is defined as “a process whereby an individual or individuals accept the influence of others to accomplish a common goal” (Northouse, 2019, p. 330).

Leadership ethics

As leaders usually have more power to influence than its followers, they also have an ethical responsibility. Northouse (2019, p. 365) suggests that “ethical leadership is rooted in respect, service, justice, honesty, and community”. They serve others by placing their welfare ahead of their own in an effort to contribute to the common good. Leaders should practice justice by placing fairness at the center of their decision making. This includes being fair to the individual, while simultaneously being fair to the common interest of the community. Ethical leaders are also committed to building community, which includes searching for goals of followers and with society as a whole.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Peggy Brønn (2018) defines corporate social responsibility, or CSR, as a company’s role in the society. This includes how a company affects people, the society, and the environment, and how their purpose contributes to solve environmental and social challenges (Brønn, 2018). The value of CSR has in the recent decades received increased attention and a strengthened position in the society (Haski-Leventhal, 2018). This has generated a growing public demand for information about companies' purpose, as they are now facing demands for ethical behavior, trust, credibility and openness from constantly more active and interested stakeholders. CSR creates the opportunity to discuss the company's responsibility in the society, in contrast to centuries where companies have acted for their own good. On the other hand, Brønn (2018) highlights that for a majority of Norwegian companies, the most important motive for taking social responsibility is to build a reputation and a brand. This was also argued by the economist Milton Friedman, who believed that the only social responsibility a company takes is as a market strategy to maximize profit for its shareholders (Haski-Leventhal, 2018).

Greenwashing

As the field of corporate social responsibility has expanded, the issue of humanity's role in climate change has become a case that can no longer be denied and must be addressed by governments, businesses, and individuals. Miller (2015, p. 7) argues that "the vast majority of scientists now agree that recent changes in our climate can be attributed to the activities of individuals and organizations". For businesses, addressing global warming can open opportunities to raise their level of environmental responsibility, and promote themselves as "green companies" to consumers (Miller, 2015, p. 7). However, changing a company's strategy in terms of becoming more sustainable, can be associated with the term "greenwashing". Greenwashing is a form of misleading profiling where a company or a product is portrayed more environmentally friendly than it actually is. An example is if one emphasizes the environmental benefits of a product, without informing about the disadvantages (Haski-Leventhal, 2018). At the same time Haski-Leventhal argues that greenwashing can provide benefits, and that there is therefore a market for it.

Theory of reputation

Reputation can be defined as individual's associations with an organization (Brønn, 2018). Brønn (2018) makes the point that everything an organization does contributes to building either a good or a bad reputation. Building a good reputation therefore requires that the entire organization is involved and engaged. Reputation building is about recognizing that organizations need others to survive, and that their behavior will have an impact on the lives of others. One of the most important factors that affects reputation is the perception of what social responsibility the company takes. This is formed by communication and action (Brønn, 2018). Communication through the mass media, including advertising and free publicity, plays an important role in reputation building (Brønn, 2018). Advertising can be a tool to convey authenticity. If there is not consistency between what an organization actually stands for and does, and what it says it stands for and does, there will be a clear deviation in authenticity. Brønn (2018) emphasizes that people often tend to be critical of company motives and are skeptical when the business community communicates their good deeds. It is therefore important that if a company claims to be ethical, it must prove this through action. The opposite can be detrimental to the company's reputation (Brønn, 2018).

Methodology

As mentioned in the introduction, the article can be defined as a case study. A case study indicates qualitative studies of one or a few research units. This involves going in depth into one or a few research units to shed light on a general phenomenon (Andersen, 2013). By examining characteristics of Øya's leadership and communication with qualitative interviews, and by using the AMEC-framework to analyze the answers, the methods aim to create a broader insight into the case.

Qualitative interview

Qualitative research can be defined as a «multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter». It aims to interpret phenomena by analyzing the meaning people are giving them (Ryen, 2017). A qualitative interview is characterized by being a "face to face interview to reveal the personal, as the subject's private self" (Ryen, 2017, p. 15). The article will address a semi-structured interview. This type of interview can be described as a conversation between the researcher and a respondent, where the course of the conversation is controlled by the researcher. In advance, the researcher has made an interview guide, with a plan for which topics to be discussed (Andersen, 2020). The interview guide is made based on the research question.

The article covers interviews with the sponsorship manager at Øya, Cathrine Røsseland, and Project manager, Erik Hauge Stangeby. It also includes a shorter interview with Markus Eckbo Endresen, consultant in Trigger.

AMEC framework based on the Barcelona principles

The Barcelona principles are a common industry standard for measuring and evaluating communication founded by the international Associations for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC). To prove the value of communication in a time with increasing demands of efficiency, it is crucial to measure more than just content (Ringen, 2021). Communication consultants must now show what effect the communication work has had on the organization's objectives. AMEC's framework illustrates how the Barcelona principles can be operationalized, by turning the principles into action, and prove the value of the communication work (AMEC, 2021). The approach covers four areas: preparation, implementation, measurement and insights, and impact. The framework starts with aligning objectives on an organizational level, as well as specific communications objectives in the preparation stage. Objectives need to be focused and have a measure of impact. This is followed by identifying the target audiences of the project and defining the strategic plan. The implementation section focuses on strategies used for research projects or content production, and implies the difference between paid, earned, shared, and owned content (AMEC, 2021). Thereafter, measuring outputs shows the core statistics around the PESO (paid, earned, shared, and owned) content, in qualitative and quantitative ways. The measurement of the effect of the communications is evaluated in outcomes. The organizational objectives are evaluated in the final section, to get an understanding of the impact. The framework results in how business outcomes link to the organizational objectives (AMEC, 2021).

Validity, reliability and generalizability

The purpose of the research is to provide an insight into the reality, but often there is a possible discrepancy or measurement error between the reality and the research data. Therefore, it is important to look further into the different factors that determine the quality of the research, through validity, reliability and generalizability (Østbye, Helland, Knapskog et al., 2013).

Validity

Validity is about to what extent the data and analysis are relevant in relation to the research question (Østbye et al., 2013). The article aims to answer the research question to what extent does the Øya music festival's decision to communicate the Green Rider engage participants. The interviews with the management in the festival, and input from the PR agency behind the concept, form the basis for the analysis on the AMEC framework. Put together, the different methods will provide a foundation for answering the research question.

Reliability

Reliability is about the quality of the collection, processing and analysis. It addresses whether the processing of data is reliable and accurate and looks for discrepancies that may arise while processing the material (Østbye et al., 2013). In a qualitative analysis, it must be taken into account that the researcher's own understanding and interpretation will affect the analysis and the results. The questions in the interview guide, and the selection of informants could therefore be done differently by another researcher. The interview guide focused on open-ended questions, in order to make the informants talk freely. The informants were chosen through a dialog with the Øya festival and Trigger, where the ones from the management who had most knowledge on the subject volunteered to answer. The informants where informed that audio records were taken during the interview, which may have had an impact on the answers. However, the experience was that the informants talked freely and where happy to provide information. Although insight from Fortum would be interesting as an input on the collaboration, the assignment does not include interviews with the company due to the scope of the thesis.

Generalization

Generalization is about drawing conclusions beyond the phenomena that have actually been observed and analyzed (Østbye et al., 2013). With regard to case studies, it is pointed out that since each situation is unique, it becomes seemingly impossible to generalize (Østbye et al., 2013). In terms of the research question, it is hard to find specific data that establishes a connection between high voluntary engagement and sustainability. However, one can argue that there is a clear connection as the sustainability aspect has affected the festival's reputation, and positive publicity. This will be further discussed in the following sections.

Findings from the qualitative interviews

The following paragraphs will examine the answers from the qualitative interviews with the sponsorship manager, Cathrine Røsseland, and the project manager and market consultant, Erik Hauge Stangeby, from the Øya festival's management. It also includes a shorter interview with a representative of the PR agency behind the concept, Trigger.

The organizations' structure and leadership

On an everyday basis, there are 10 people working full-time with the festival. Each of them is the leader of their own department. During the months before the festival, 200 people are working part-time with the preparations. 2,800 people are volunteering during the period before, after, and under the festival. On being asked if the festival needed to make any changes in the organizational structure in case of being a sustainable business, Cathrine Røsseland answered:

> It is not always easy to run a sustainable business, as no one really likes to change. In Øya we experience a willingness for change in the employees, as the passion for the environment is present, and therefore people are willing to adapt for the reason that makes it worthwhile.

Røsseland underlines that it is really important that the leader is passionate about the aspect, and that it is implemented in their values:

> People are good at seeing through initiatives, and it is therefore important that the focus on sustainability is not only a trend, but an important part of the organization. It is also important that the leader dare to renew the organization.

Furthermore, the sponsorship manager says that the festival has employed after requirements over the years, and the management is working across their positions. They now have an employee as head of environment and food.

Øya and sustainability

As mentioned in the introduction, the Øya festival saw that their event generated a lot of environmentally harmful emissions, when they experienced success. This made a big impact on the leaders, and in 2002 they hired a person to look for solutions. Røsseland underlines that the aspect of sustainability has always been present during earlier leadership. The current leader is passionate about helping others to make sustainable choices and encourages to share information for others to become better. Røsseland emphasizes that: "the head of the Øya festival thinks it is important to behave properly, and therefore to consider sustainability as a part of the Øya festival's identity".

Røsseland argues that everybody in the festival is connected to the sustainability aspect in some way, and that they are really proud of the organizational culture. Together they create loyalty through being passionate and proud of the festival as a project – "We have good solutions, resources, and proficient colleagues. This shows that the festival is something we all are really proud of". Finally, Røsseland concludes that their good reputation is a result of the festival's genuineness.

Volunteers

The Project manager, Erik Hauge Stangeby, is convinced that the Øya festival has always focused on giving the volunteers a rewarding experience, both when they contribute, and when they have their time off:

> We try to build a sense of community and motivate through factors such as gaining work experience, the opportunity to make new acquaintances and to experience being behind the scenes at a music festival. We have a lot of focus on making volunteering at the festival a pleasant experience.

Stangeby argues that as a volunteer you should be treated seriously, get good organic food when you work, and feel safe and included. At the same time, Øya makes demands in line with a regular employer in relation to keeping agreements, meeting up to the specified time and providing the best possible experience during work. In return you get free access to the festival, a sufficient amount of nutritious food throughout the working day, work clothes that give a sense of identity, and at the end an exclusive party is hosted for volunteers.

Both Stangeby and Røsseland believe that Øya's focus on sustainability has a positive impact in relation to the recruitment of volunteer crew:

> We have no concrete figures to refer to that prove that increased focus on the environment has an effect, but we still choose to assume that it has. We believe that our actions for the environment and focus on sustainability make them feel safe and motivated.

Røsseland highlights that the volunteers often have in common that they want to do something meaningful: "Surveys among the volunteers, show that there is an extremely high number of people who are concerned about sustainability, and 40% of the volunteers choose to eat vegetarian food during the festival".

The Green Rider

The idea behind the "Green Rider" started as a collaboration with Øya's corporate partner Fortum and their PR agency Trigger:

> We had to figure out a connection between their brand and our brand. A concept that could show the affiliation between the collaboration. We tried to figure out which aspects that were missing in the festival community, and how we could make an impact.

Røsseland says that they found out that the most important practical connection with the artist, with possibilities to make a change, were their rider. A "rider" is a list of artists demands, including everything from the stage setup to food and drinks that are available backstage. The rider therefore often focuses more on showing the artist´s popularity, and less on what the artist is passionate about. The two companies therefore wanted to inspire the artists to use their power to make an impact.

Trigger on the Green Rider

The Green Rider was further developed by the PR agency Trigger. Markus Eckbo Endresen, consultant in Trigger, observed on the impact of the campaign:

> We had over 220,000 who watched more than 75% of the documentary we made. That's in line with the viewer statistics on movies screened on Norwegian cinemas, so we were very happy with those numbers. The Instagram post about the campaign from "Unge Ferrari", is the one that has generated the most engagement in his social media. But the real effect came when we brought with us partners like All Things Live, who want to use the rider above their artists throughout the Nordics. Then we are on our way to really setting a new industry standard!

The campaign got caught up by one of the world's biggest music medias, Billboard. Eckbo argues that an important factor for the article, was the fact that Sigrid[1] joined the campaign. Both of the artists, Sigrid and Unge Ferrari agreed to join without any payment. He further describes that by seeing international potential in the campaign, they were able to accomplish a broader range for the initiative. Through creating a concept that could hit the public's nerve, they contributed to inspire to green change in the festival industry.

Table 1. AMEC framework

Align objectives

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES	COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES
- The campaign's purpose is to enjoy music without harming the environment - The campaign intends to inspire with knowledge, and convey information - Strengthens Øya's position as a role model for sustainable business	- Communication objective: The Green Rider - The campaigns purpose is to create a connection between Øya and Fortum - The collaboration aims to make an impact on the festival industry - The campaign intend to inspire artists to use their power to make a difference

Source: AMEC, 2021

The first part of the framework contains the Øya festival's overall organizational objectives, which often form part of the organization's business plan and

1 Sigrid is a Norwegian musician. She has achieved commercial success in several countries and has won and been nominated for both national and international awards (Bergan, 2021).

strategy. The most important part of their vision is to be able to deliver music experiences without harming the environment. Further, they want to be a role model as a sustainable business and aim to inspire and convey information. This forms the basis for the communication objectives, which are the specific and measurable objectives that the communication campaign is designed to achieve (see Table 1). The main communication objective is The Green Rider, with the purpose of creating a connection for the collaboration between Øya and Fortum. The collaboration aims to make an impact on the festival industry by inspiring artists to use their power to make a difference.

Table 2. AMEC framework: Inform and prepare information

Inform and prepare communication

TARGET AUDIENCE	STRATEGIC INPUTS
1 The public **2** Artists **3** Partners **4** The media **5** Volunteers	Existing research data: The idea started with inspiration from other European festivals Background and context information: As a collaboration with Øyas partner Fortum, they had to figure out a connection between the two brands. A concept that could show the affiliation between the collaboration Resources: Øya and Fortum, had Fortum's PR-agency, Trigger, with them on the campaign. Trigger developed the strategy for the campaign.

Source: AMEC, 2021

To inform and prepare the communication, the target audience and strategic inputs must be covered. The campaign target audience is identical with the audience Øya wants to communicate the campaign´s message to. This includes the public, artists, partners, the media, and volunteers. Furthermore, the strategic inputs are listed. The inspiration to the idea comes from other European festivals, and as a result of finding a concept that could show the affiliation between the collaboration. As Fortum's PR agency Trigger was with them on the campaign, they became an important resource for developing the campaign's strategy and outcome.

Table 3. AMEC framework: Activities

Activities

IMPLEMENT
ACTIVITIES
P Collaboration with PR-agency, Trigger **E** Interested artists **S** Together with Fortum they researched the field to find out how they could make an impact **O** Good reputation based on loyalty and sustainable choices

Source: AMEC, 2021

This step describes which activities the companies have implemented prior to the campaign. Together with Fortum, they researched the field to find out how they could make an impact. They had a good base for the campaign, as they had Trigger with them, interested artists, and also a good reputation based on loyalty and sustainable choices.

Table 4. AMEC framework: Outputs

Outputs

OUTPUTS
O Advertisement on Øya's own social media **P** Website for the campaign **E** Publicity about the campaign **S** Collaboration with Øya's sponsor Fortum **E** Further advertisement from Fortum with a documentary on the campaign in 2021 **E** Collaboration with Sigrid and Unge Ferrari to share the initiative on their social media **E** Collaboration with different artists to sign the campaign

Source: AMEC, 2021

The specific activities for the campaign were advertisements in the company's own social media channel, as well as a website for the campaign. Fortum also did further advertising with a documentary on the campaign in 2021, with the artist Unge Ferrari. Through press releases they achieved publicity, and they also collaborated with different artists to spread the message about the initiative.

Table 5. AMEC framework: Audience response and effects

Audience response and effects

OUT-TAKES	OUTCOMES
1 Over 220,000 saw over 75% of the documentary for the campaign 2 The artist Unge Ferrari's post on Instagram generated the most engagement of all his posts on the social media 3 The event company "All Things Live" wanted to use the rider for for all their artists in the Nordic region 4 A wide range of artists signed the rider 5 Hundreds of fans signed the rider 6 Billboard, one of the biggest music medias in the world, wrote about the initiative 7 The Norwegian news media, TV2, NRK, Dagbladet, and different media from the industry wrote about the initiative	1 High number of volunteers wanting to register 2 The festival was sold out 3 Increased operating revenues 4 Positive publicity strengthens the reputation

Source: AMEC, 2021

The out-takes are the target audience's initial responses and reactions to the communication. As mentioned in the interview section, over 220,000 people saw over 75% of the documentary for the campaign. The artist Unge Ferrari's post generated the most engagement out of all his posts on social media. The event company "All things live" wanted to use the rider for all their artists in the Nordic countries. A wide range of artists, and hundreds of fans signed the rider. Billboard, one of the biggest music media in the world, wrote about the initiative, as well as the Norwegian news media TV2, NRK, Dagbladet, and other media from the industry. The same year as the campaign, Øya increased their operating revenues, and the festival was sold out in the 18th year in a row. There was also a high number of volunteers wanting to register, resulting that they had to close the voluntary registration many months before the festival. The outcomes also resulted in a further good reputation.

Table 6. AMEC framework: Organizational impact

Organizational impact

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT
1 Improved and strengthened reputation **2** International recognition **3** Strengthened partnership **4** Reaching targets **5** Continuation of the strong organizational culture **6** Status as a pioneer in the work towards green change in the music industry **7** Loyalty towards Øya as a platform for knowledge and experimentation

Source: AMEC, 2021

Discussion

In the following chapter the two analyses will be discussed in light of the theory presented in the theoretical background. The discussion will consider how the Øya festival's leadership works with sustainability, and how their volunteers are affected by their actions.

Leading for a greener future

The two different analyses point at Øya's way of leading as authentic and adaptive. Their leadership style is morally grounded, as well as responsive to people's needs and values. As they have been concerned with the environment since the early beginnings of the festival, and still push boundaries to find new solutions, there is no doubt of the sustainable aspect being morally grounded. They are also concerned with the volunteers´ needs, and passionate about implementing the engagement. By including every part of the management in the different processes, they create a feeling of a community, which gives the employees a sense of ownership in every part of the festival. The interviews with the sponsorship manager and project manager at the festival, also prove that the leadership is based in ethical choices. The leader of Øya's ability to work for being an inspiration for other organizations, is an extremely important factor. The festival could have chosen to keep their successful methods on being a sustainable festival to themselves, but instead they inspire others to do the same.

The paradox of collaborating with an energy company

However, as a green company, Øya's collaboration with Fortum must be considered. As Miller (2015) argues, addressing environmental issues can open opportunities to raise their level of environmental responsibility, and sell themselves as green companies to consumers. This is also argued by Brønn (2018), who said that the most important motive for taking social responsibility is to build a reputation and a brand. Fortum aims to work for a cleaner world, but at the same time their waste management facility is the largest emission point in Norway, with 400,000 tons of annual CO_2 emissions. The emissions come from the residual waste which cannot be recycled (Krekling & Eide, 2020). On the other hand, Fortum is using the waste heat from the waste incineration to create electricity and district heating (Fortum, 2021). Haski-Leventhal (2018) emphasizes the fact that greenwashing actually can provide benefits, and that there is therefore a market for it. One can argue that Fortum is in the grey area for greenwashing, as they refer to themselves as a "clean energy company" (Fortum, 2021). However, it is difficult to have a holistic sustainable company when producing energy, and Fortum's actions to improve for the better is an important step in the right direction. The collaboration could affect Øya's good reputation, but as a festival is dependent on electricity to exist, the collaboration gives an understandable impression.

Building reputation through collaboration

One of the most central factors that affects the reputation is the perception of what social responsibility the company takes. Brønn (2018) argues that communication through the mass media, including advertising and free publicity, plays an important role in reputation building. The fact that both Sigrid and Unge Ferrari, shared the campaign on their social medias without any payment, indicates an important aspect on the Øya festivals position in the society. The Green Rider became an important campaign, that gave positive outcomes for both Fortum and Øya. As Fortum's PR-agency, Trigger contributed to find the common ambition between the two companies. Having a PR-agency on the team, was a central factor to reach an international success. As the AMEC-framework pointed out, Øya increased their operating revenues, and the festival was sold out in the 18th year in a row the same year as the campaign. There was also a high number of volunteers wanting to register, resulting that they had to close the voluntary registration many months before the festival.

Volunteering with meaning

As Northouse (2019) emphasizes leadership requires followership, a process whereby individuals accept the influence of others to accomplish a common goal. As Røsseland emphasized in the interview, Øya experiences a willingness for change in the employees, as the willingness to adapt for a greener world makes it worthwhile. The common goal of sustainability is present, not only in the management, but in the rest of the organization as well.

One can argue that the fact is a result of the passionate and morally grounded leadership, but as Stangeby argues, the volunteers often have in common that they want to do something meaningful. The festival therefore seems to attract people with similar mindsets. In addition, the importance of treating the volunteers seriously, as well as giving them a valuable experience, makes it attractive to be a volunteer at the festival.

Summary and conclusion

Through analysing the Øya festival's leadership style and communication in light of The Green Rider campaign, this article aimed to find the connection between green change and the will of volunteering. The case study indicates the importance of how reputation through action can benefit every level of an organization. As seen in the discussion, the way Øya practices leadership is almost identical to Northouse´s definitions of good leadership. One can therefore argue that the Øya festival's great success is due to their passionate and genuine engagement. The genuine engagement, in addition to strategic communication from Trigger, made The Green Rider a success for both Fortum and Øya. There is unfortunately no data that can prove the simultaneous outcome of the campaign and number of people wanting to volunteer, but the aspect of meaningful volunteering is an important factor. It is clear that the Øya festival has experienced great success by working towards delivering a unique festival experience without harming the environment. The case study indicates that although it is not always easy to run a sustainable business, the Øya festival shows that the outcome makes it worthwhile. As Billboard stated, going green is definitely "the name of the game".

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Schibsted and Diversity

ABSTRACT

Schibsted is the largest privately owned media company in Norway. In this article, I will analyse the development of Schibsted's definition of – and work with – diversity and inclusion in their organization. The work and research done in this paper is based on my role as research assistant for Professor Robert W. Vaagan in the master course MJ4800 Research Assistant. Owing to this, I have gained insight into how Schibsted both defines and works with diversity today, by conducting an interview with EVP/Chief People & Corporate Affairs Mette Krogsrud, and organizational director in News Media Grethe Marie Malkmus, done on 10 March 2021. An earlier interview had been done in 2017 regarding similar topics[1]. The interview from 2021 was done to update the 2017 interview for further research. Thanks to this material I have gained insight into, I wanted to investigate more closely to what extent Schibsted's work with diversity has changed in the time period 2017–2021.

This paper's theory and literature to investigate this topic, the paper is divided into four parts. The first part provides an overview of the research context for the paper, the research question I have chosen, and why. Next, the second part introduces my choice of theory and literature review, and the third part presents the material I have collected. Finally, in the fourth part, I will analyse to what extent Schibsted recruitment policy regarding diversity has evolved from 2017 to 2021, based on the material I have collected and the theoretical perspectives. The theory and literature review will mainly be based on the following: "Organizational communication: approaches and processes" (Miller, 2015), "Leadership: theory and prac-

1 The interview from 2017 was done in conjunction with research for the article "Diversity and media in the Netherlands and Norway", written by Clyde A. Moerlie and Robert W. Vaagan, in: Atay, A. and D'Silva (eds.) (2019). *Mediated Intercultural Communication in a Digital Age*. New York: Routledge.

tice" (Northouse, 2019), and "The AMEC Framework" (AMEC, 2021), in addition to other relevant sources.

Keywords: Schibsted, recruitment diversity, leadership styles, organizational communication

Part 1: Introduction

Preface

My part in Prof. Vaagan's ongoing research project has given me insight into how Schibsted values and views diversity, both today and in 2017. The insight and information I have gained access to regarding Schibsted's organization and administration when it comes to recruitment policy and diversity, has given me knowledge of how diversity and inclusion are handled in the media industry in real life. Schibsted has shown us, both in the interviews and other documents, that they are expanding their definition of diversity, and shown more attention to the concept. Yet, an organization might acknowledge diversity, but the internal process might show something else. As a student, who soon will be working in the media industry, I want to be part of and contribute to a tolerant and inclusive work environment. To understand how I can do this, I need to understand how these organizational and management processes work in real life, yet how transforms over time.

Research question and context

This article will research how Schibsted and its leadership-within has performed on the topic diversity, during the time period from 2017 to today. My research question is thus: To what extent has Schibsted´s recruitment policy regarding diversity evolved from 2017 to 2021?

Since 2017, Schibsted has made several major changes in their organization. First of all, they recruited their first female CEO, Kristin Skogen Lund, in December 2018 (Jordheim, Haugen & Nordstrøm, 2018). In addition, the company went from being located in about 33 markets in 2017, to only five countries today (Schibsted, 2021a). The company reorganized to focus more on the Scandinavian markets, which today includes Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Poland in addition. Today, on its webpage, Schibsted defines itself as a Nordic-focused digital growth company with global ambitions (Schibsted, 2021a). Since 1839, the company has become one of the largest media houses in Scandinavia, with leading marketplaces and digital services. Organizationally speaking, the company includes the sections Nordic marketplaces, Next and News Media (Schibsted, 2021b). Nordic marketplaces include digital marketplaces such as Finn.no in Norway and Blocket.se in Sweden, while News Media, in Scandinavia, includes media houses such as VG, Aftenposten, and Bergens Tidende in Norway, and Aftonbladet and Svenska Dagbladet in Sweden. Although the company has had great growth and progress over the years, they also express how important their contribution is to a sustainable and democratic society (Schibsted, 2021c). This includes diversity and inclusion. To understand how Schibsted establishes goals within these topics, and if they reach them, we must first of all understand how they define diversity. Secondly, to understand their management of diversity and recruitment policy, we must comprehend their organizational changes over the years. To investigate these topics, I will first review relevant theory and literature regarding organizational communication and leadership, to then further analyse the material collected on Schibsted's development from 2017.

Part 2: Theory and literature review

Organizational Communication

This article will mainly base its analysis of Schibsted's organizational communication on Katherine Miller's "Human Relation and Human Resources Approach in Organizational Communication: Approaches and Processes" (2015, pp. 37–59). More accurately, the Human Resources approach's principles are the most often reflected in today's organizations, which is built on the contributions of Classical and Human Relations theories (Miller, 2015). Yet, the Human resources approach also differs from the earlier approaches in especially two ways: (1) It aspires to maximize both organizational productivity and individual need satisfaction, (2) and to optimize these two goals, the approach emphasizes the contribution of employees' ideas can make to organizational function (Miller, 2015). An overview of how the Human Resources approach has evolved from the earlier approaches can be summarized as in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1. Communication in Classical, Human Relations, and Human Resources Organization

	Classical approach	Human Relations approach	Human Resources approach
Communication of content	Task	Task and social	Task, social, and innovation
Communication direction	Vertical (downward)	Vertical and horizontal	All directions, team-based
Communication channel	Usually written	Often face-to-face	All channels
Communication style	Formal	Informal	Both, but especially informal

Adapted from Miller, 2015, pp. 51–53, table 3.1

An important aspect of the Human Resources approach regarding content communication, mentioned in the table above, is innovation communication, meaning interaction about how the organization's tasks, products, structuring, and so on, can be done better. Secondly, the organization's communication direction includes all directional flows, most often in team-based settings; downward, upwards, horizontal, and diagonal. Next, a Human Resources organization's communication channels are not limited, but rather adapted to the message and the situation. Owing to this, the communication style can be both informal and formal, again depending on what being said when, and to who. Finally, the ideal way to run contemporary organizations today can further be described with the two system approaches (within the Human Recourses Approach): Learning organizations and knowledge management (Senge in Miller, 2015). The former meaning promotes participation and dialogue in the workplace, emphasizing mental flexibility, team learning, a shared vision, thinking, and personal mastery. The latter refers to an organization which facilitates knowledge creation, development, and application. Furthermore, Pfeffer's seven practices of successful organizations can be used to analyse what is done in an organization today that are consistent with human resources principles (Table 2.2). The practices highlight both the important role of the organizational communication and structure.

Table 2.2. Pfeffer's seven practices of successful organizations

Practice	Description
1. Employment security	Job security demonstrates a commitment to employees and develops employees who understand the organization.
2. Selective hiring	Employees who are a good fit for the organization – in terms of skills, abilities, and other attributes – will stay with the organization and enhance organizational performance.
3. Self-managed teams and decentralization	Teams will permit employees to pool information and create better solutions as well as enhance worker control over work processes.
4. Comparatively high and contingent compensation	Contingent compensation connects performance outcomes with critical rewards.
5. Extensive training	Frontline employees need training to identify workplace problems and contribute to innovative solutions.
6. Reduction of status differences	By reducing both symbolic (e.g., language and labels) and substantive (e.g., pay) inequities, all employees will feel more valued.
7. Sharing information	Employees can only contribute if they have adequate information about their own jobs and about the performance of the organization as a whole.

Adapted from Miller, 2015, p. 55, Table 3.2

Next, the employee involvement can be described as "a participative process that uses the entire capacity of workers, designed to encourage employee commitment to organizational success" (Cotton, 1933 in Miller, 2015, p. 54). In contemporary organizations, programmes are often initiated to educate and improve their employees work and attitudes, in addition to including them in their overall shared values. Miller (2015, pp. 56–57) highlights some of the issues that should be evaluated when instituting the major change required by most human resources programs. "(1) Know when team-based management is appropriate, (2), consider the attitudes of top management, (3) deal with cynicism about change, (4) and facilitate the translation process". First of all, employees must be involved in plans and overall shared values, but the responsibility for change mostly lies on the top management. Although change also happens in some chosen groups in the organization, the employees must also be motivated for change. Lastly, a new program also introduces a new working language to the employees, which is not used overnight overall in the organization. Change is sometimes an evolution, not necessary a revolution.

Finally, knowledge of the typical Norwegian work environment is relevant to understand how Miller's approach, which is based on an American work environment, can be applied to analyse Schibsted's organizational communication. According to Hofstede's cultural dimension theory, we can understand culture through six dimensions: "(1) Power distance, (2) Collectivism-Individualism, (3) Uncertainty avoidance, (4) Femininity-Masculinity, (5) Short-term-long-term orientation, (6) and Pleasure-Mastery" (Northouse, 2019, p. 436). Norwegian culture is, among other things, characterized by the individualistic and feminine features (Hofstede Insights, 2020). First of all, individualism means that the "self" is individual and not just part of a group, and personal opinions are important. When it comes to the leader-employee relationship in this context, the personal career is often put more in focus than the collective one. Nevertheless, Norwegian culture is also very feminine, which means that dominant values in society are care for each other and quality of life. It also means that a good quality of life is a sign of success. Lastly, in more masculine cultures, motivation will be driven by wanting the best, while feminine cultures are more about liking what you do.

Leadership Theory

It is one thing to recruit regarding diversity, the next step would be to make these voices actually heard. Also, Schibsted's change in positioning from 33 countries to five makes a severe change in how the company overall views and defines diversity. When an organization is being modified through several major changes, the leader and employees must transform with it. Therefore, when analysing Schibsted's leadership styles regarding diversity, this paper will rely on Peter G. Northouse's theory of leadership regarding Transformational Leadership (2019).

Burns (1978) distinguished between two types of leadership: Transactional and Transformational (Northouse, 2019). The former focuses on leadership with ambitions to improve their employees, which focuses on the exchange between leader and employees, such as rewards for achieving goals. The latter means leadership with ambitions to change his or her company's corporate values, by changing both the leader and the employees in the process. The approach emphasis emotion, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals and satisfying the employees motives and needs. Transformational leadership means influencing the employees to accomplish more than what is expected of them, and to have ambitious goals. Further on, according to House (1976), a charismatic leader act in unique ways that have specific charismatic effects on their followers. House's theory is often described as similar to or even synonymous with Burns' Transformational leadership theory (Northouse, 2019). Table 2.3 gives an overview of the effects House referred to, both in the leader's personality characteristics and behaviours, and the effects on followers.

Table 2.3. Personality Characteristics, Behaviours, and Effects on Followers of Charismatic Leadership

Personality Characteristics	Behaviours	Effects on followers
Dominant	Sets strong role model	Trust in leader's ideology
Desire to influence	Shows competence	Belief similarity between leader and follower
Self-confident	Articulates goals	Unquestioning acceptance
Strong moral values	Communicates high expectations	Affection toward leader
	Communicates high expectations	Obedience
	Expresses confidence	Identification with leader
	Arouses motives	Emotional involvement
		Heightened goals
		Increased confidence

Adapted from House in Northouse, 2019, p. 167, table 8.1

Later, Bass (1985) developed an expanded and refined version of the work done by Burns (Transactional and Transformational Leadership theory) and House (Charismatic Leadership theory) (Northouse, 2019). Research indicate that leadership is most effective by combining transformational with transactional leadership, in addition to *Laissez faire* leadership (Northouse, 2019). The latter represents absence of leadership, also described as a strategic behavioural choice by the leader to decrease the employees' dependency and increase self-determination. All approaches to leadership have strengths and weaknesses, thus the best approach is a combination of approaches. This is represented in Bass' Leadership factors, illustrated in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4. Leadership factors. Bass's (1985) expanded and refined version of transformational leadership

Transformational leadership	Transactional leadership	Laissez-Faire Leadership
Factor 1 • Idealized influence Charisma	Factor 5 • Contingent reward • Constructive transactions	Factor 7 • Laissez-faire • Nontransactional
Factor 2 • Inspirational motivation	Factor 6 • Management by exception • Active and passive • Corrective transactions	
Factor 3 • Intellectual stimulation		

Adapted from Northouse, 2019, p.168, table 8.2

However, prejudice, stereotypes and ethnocentrism can be typical challenges for management of diversity. Ethnocentrism means the tendency for individuals to place their own group at the centre of their view of the world, linked to ethnicity, race or culture (Northouse, 2019). The concept results in a close-minded and less tolerant environment, preventing individuals from understanding others and their cultures. This can be a major obstacle of an effective teamwork and leadership. A skilled leader needs to find ways to negotiate with followers from various cultural backgrounds (Northouse, 2019).

Also, Kent, Blair and Rudd's article "Gender Differences and Transformational Leadership Behaviour: Do Both German Men and Women Lead in the Same Way?" (2010) is interesting research regarding this paper's topic. The article researched differences between German men and women regarding transformational leadership behaviours by using the Leadership Behaviour Inventory (LBI), which assesses leadership behaviours in five categories: (1) Visualizing Greatness, (2) Empowering the "We", (3) Communicating for Meaning, (4) Managing One's Self, (5) and Care and Recognition. The questionnaire is administered to subordinates who are asked to describe their leaders, in German work environments. The research showed that followers hold different prototypes for male leaders and for female leaders (Offerman et al., 1994 in Kent et al., 2010). In addition, it can be assumed that many German organizations are male dominant, since women only make up 25% of managers and 5% of top managers (Kent et al., 2010). The women in Kent's et al. article were also slightly underrepresented. However, the study found, for the most part, no differences in the behaviours of male and female leaders. It was found that women raters were more critical of both men and women leaders of the single factor communication for meaning. Also, an interesting point made in the research was that women raters were more critical of female leaders than they were of male leaders.

Diversity and the Media in the Netherlands and Norway (2019)

Further, the article "Diversity and media in the Netherlands and Norway" itself gives important insight for my analysis (Moerlie & Vaagan, 2019). The article researches and analyses diversity and media in Norway by interviewing the representatives of both the private company Schibsted and the public NRK in 2017–2018. It provides a good overview of Schibsted's situation then, including the interview from 2017 with Schibsted used in this paper, a choice of media coverage and relevant statistics from 2017. This paper will include Moerlie and Vaagan's research regarding mainly Schibsted.

In 2019, 16% of the Norwegian population were immigrants or children of immigrants, while in Oslo the proportion exceeds 30% (Kjeldstadli & Brochmann, 2014 in Moerlie & Vaagan, 2019). The largest groups of immigrants then were from Poland, Lithuania, Sweden, Somalia, Germany, Iraq, Syria, the Philippines, and Pakistan. Further on, the media have often framed the immigrant groups through negative stereotypes, portraying them mostly regarding crime and failed integration (Eide & Simonsen, 2007; Jahr, 2015 in Moerlie & Vaagan, 2019). Schibsted is Norway's largest privately owned media house, where 47% in 2019 were Norwegian-owned (Moerlie & Vaagan, 2019). Operating revenues globally in 2016 amounted to 15.8 billion NOK of which 6.7 billion NOK were generated by online classified advertising. In 2017, Schibsted was an international media group with 6,900 employees in 33 countries, with 200 million customers worldwide. The board is mostly composed of Scandinavians, yet regional considerations are important to Schibsted for understanding of diversity, according to Tina Stiegler, the Executive Vice President for People, Change and Strategy. This is also one of Schibsted's consideration in their recruitment policy, in addition to gender and culture. In addition, to achieve their long-term goal of improving gender equality in the organization, they established a pilot mentor program. In this program, the board acts as mentors for a group of 20 mid-level leaders. Finally, international experience and knowledge is important attributes to Schibsted, yet their trainee programs and summer internship mainly recruit Scandinavians.

Part 3: Methodology and material

Qualitative interviews

As part of the research for the article "Diversity and media in the Netherlands and Norway" (Moerlie & Vaagan, 2019), an interview with Schibsted was done in 2017. The interview was done by Vaagan with then research assistants, Margret Stray-Pedersen and Maylin Skjærmoen Kristiansen, and interviewee was Tina Stiegler (Executive Vice President for People and Strategy) in Schibsted.

In 2021, Professor Vaagan and I, in my role as his research assistant, conducted an interview with EVP/Chief People & Corporate Affairs Mette Krogsrud, and Organizational Director in News Media Grethe Marie Malkmus, on 10 March 2021. The interview provided new information about Schibsted's ongoing recruitment processes and policies regarding diversity, their definition of diversity and inclusion, as well as their plans for further work in the future.

Schibsted and leadership: Kristin Skogen Lund, keynote lecture & DN interview

During the spring semester 2021, Kristin Skogen Lund had a guest lecture for the course MEDK4100 Strategic Leadership at the university OsloMet. By including this material in the analysis, this paper gain insight to how leadership and communication is defined and valued in Schibsted, from the CEO herself.

First of all, Skogen Lund points out that Schibsted has a balance which combines traditional values with new ones, including digitalization and distribution: "It is hard to be both, but that is what is unique with Schibsted" according to Skogen Lund. When it comes to leadership and communication, she points out thrust and transparency as important values. In addition to this, she uses a leadership principle named 5-15-80: 5% of the effort go to a good strategy, 15% to the position, and 80% to the implementation. According to Skogen Lund, a good strategy can be copied or stolen, and is not the most important part of leadership. Secondly, a position can be lost quickly, depending on reputation, which can make you defensive. And finally, the implementation is all about empowering the people, which cannot be copied. She also mentions that several small changes make the difference, and that these differences are made by the people. As a leader, it is also important to be bold, and not just meet the expectations that are already there. If you are going to do great things, you must do something new, maximize your potential and be ahead of the game. Do not sit and wait, but do it before it is an obvious solution. Further, she introduces the term “slam dunk”, which refers to somebody who only wants to score. She often meets people who are very talented, but not necessary good leaders. What they often do wrong is holding on to their control, while in reality a leader’s job is to distribute responsibility and trust. As a leader, you need to include more people to get innovation, good ideas and solutions. It’s not a one-man show, and it’s not always your own preferences that are the best ones. Finally, she says that it is important that others want you to succeed. Those who succeed are brave, they seek challenges and do not stay within their comfort zone. In her presentation she included an illustration of how Schibsted is structured, with the three divisions: (1) Foundation: how we work together, (2) Portfolio of brands & businesses: How we grow, and (3) Purpose: who we are (see Figure 3.1.). She comments that the company’s structure is not top down but bottom up. By that she means that those closest to the target groups are especially important to listen to. Or as Skogen Lund put it: “Put the money where the potential is”.

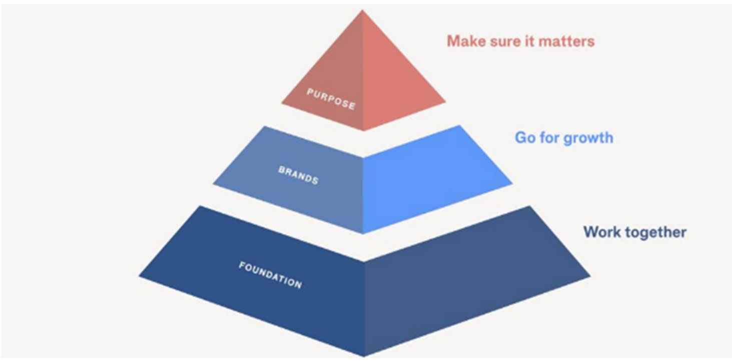

Figure 3.1. This is Schibsted

Source: Courtesy of Schibsted

In addition to this guest lecture, this article includes the Norwegian news media DN’s interview with Kristin Skogen Lund, named “Leaders about leadership” (DN, 2021). In the interview, when asked “How do you recognize a leader talent?”, Skogen Lund answered: “(…) you spot someone who is a little different, thinks more challenging, manages to think new thoughts, encourages new ideas, takes initiative. That is very often what you are fascinated by.” Further on, she says that it is not always about a good education and a good resume, but more about who you are as a person. When asked: “are you the leading type?” she answers yes, and that this is something she discovered over time. She also adds, when asked about myths regarding leadership, that as a female leader you do not have to be like a male leader. According to Skogen Lund, there are no differences between male and female leaders. Lastly, when asked about her preferred work tool in Schibsted, she answers: "(…)It's very old-fashioned to say, but I'm very fond of my email. Even though we are now working through "Slack" and all sorts of channels, I sometimes think "why do we really need to have four or five channels, why can't everyone just send mail?" (…) it's very old-fashioned (of me), but I'm a bit of a mail person." The working tool "Slack" is an online platform used to work with ongoing projects combined with a chatrooms and face-to-face video-chats (Slack, 2021). The channel keeps work organized, which also can invite other companies to work on projects and partnerships together on the platform. Schibsted therefore uses different channels to communicate, even though some might prefer the old-fashioned e-mail as communication platform.

Schibsted annual reports

Schibsted annually publishes a Future Report, which CEO Kristin Skogen Lund describes as a way of "(…) looking around the corner" and viewing it as "an opportunity to get new perspectives on trends and topics (Schibsted) find interesting" (Schibsted, 2021d, p. 1). In addition, Schibsted published their fourth Sustainability Report, which covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2020 (Schibsted, 2021e). Including these reports in this analysis gives great insight to the values and actions regarding diversity that Schibsted wants to promote externally of the company Kristin Skogen Lund introduces the Sustainability Report for 2020 on its very first page with "We take responsibility when the world is transforming" (Schibsted, 2021e). Schibsted had, at year-end, 5,182 employees (full-time equivalents) in nine counties in 2020, compared to 5,006 employees in 2019 (Schibsted, 2021e). In 2017, the company set a target of a 60/40 gender ratio for the three top management levels by the end of 2020, which was reached with a proportion of women of 44%, by 31 December 2020 (2021e). The proportion of women in the management groups in all companies in Schibsted was 38%, while the proportion among other managers was 42%. However, they did not succeed in expanding their gender pay gap project in 2020, due to the corona crisis (Schibsted, 2021e). This work will continue in 2021, with a new implemented online tool in the organization from 2020, which improves their quality of potential gender pay gap mapping. Further on, one of the company's focus aspect, "Diversity and equality", has be rephrased to "Diversity, inclusion and belonging" (2021e). In the fall of 2020, a long-term project for implementing diversity and inclusion policy was launched (Schibsted, 2021e). The action plan regarding this project will focus on how to unlock potential in a diverse workforce, to further create value and innovation. Finally, due to other necessary use of resources (for instance the corona crisis), no training in unconscious bias was provided in 2020, as was done in 2019 (183 people) and 2018 (599 people).

Regarding the topic diversity, the Future Report from 2019 says that "(...) diversity and inclusion became a topic of high priority in 2018", when the Change-makers program was born (Schibsted, 2019). This program consists of an online education at Cambridge University, followed by the "change-makers" getting assigned to work on projects within Schibsted. During the program, the participants will complete a course in sustainable business management, support implementation of the sustainable strategy, and act as internal hubs to entrench the sustainability perspective in Schibsted's business operations (Schibsted, 2021e). One of the "change-makers", Niklas Hermansson, CFO at Prisjakt Group in Schibsted in 2021, thinks the program has opened his eyes: "To me it's become obvious how sustainability is about so much more than the environment. It's about societal impact, equality, how we can work smarter – the perspective is broad" (Schibsted, 2021d, p. 47). Another program at Schibsted today is the Schibsted Connect Program, where students from universities in Norway and Sweden are matched with a "Schibsted buddy", to share knowledge and experiences. Kamilla Abrahamsen, Employer Branding Coordinator at Schibsted, says that the idea with this program is "(...) a win-win situation where both the student and the Schibsted employee will learn and develop" (Schibsted, 2021d, p. 47).

Regarding recruitment, talent is repeatedly mentioned in the Future Reports. Lena Berlin Stålhammer, Head of Talent Acquisition in Media Division in 2019, says in the Future Report for 2019 that she "(...) looks forward to being part of future proofing recruitment in Schibsted by working more data driven" (Schibsted, 2019, p. 45). By this, she means that there is a big change in Schibsted's recruitment, where the power now lies with the candidates. Lena and her team therefore worked on implementing a tool that is measuring candidates' experiences, giving Schibsted input on how to improve, in 2018–2019. As a result of this, Schibsted are offering a training program to leaders on how to handle recruitments. Further on, Schibsted mentions software programmes and marketplaces like GapJumpers, Textio, and Search party, which filters out talent when recruiting regardless of gender and ethnicity, in their report from 2019 (Schibsted, 2019, p. 54). They facilitate blind auditions, by solely focusing on the applicant's skills, by for instance removing names and pictures in the applications. Textio even helps with the job descriptions being written with less gender-associated words. This, according to Schibsted's report, increases the numbers of female applications and employees. The recruitment policy promotes diversity, inclusion and belonging by encouraging managers to build more diverse teams in 2020, according to their sustainability report (Schibsted, 2021e). Also, the recruitment process should be equal, fair, unbiased and inclusive.

Lastly, in addition to giving an overview of the company's strategy and anticipated trends for the upcoming year, the annual report also describes the leadership styles and communication in Schibsted. Kristin Skogen Lund mentions in the Future Report for 2021: "In Schibsted, we want to keep making bold moves and keep being a force for change and empowerment in people's lives" (Schibsted, 2021d, p. 1). Mette Krogsrud, EVP People & Corporate Affairs also gives an input on leadership under pressure during the corona crisis and uses Milton Friedman's quote: "Only in a crisis – actual or perceived – produces real change" (Schibsted, 2021d, p. 48). Further on, Krogsrud describes four behaviours in leaders and their teams to move forward in a crisis, developed by Nichols, Chatterjee Hayden and Trendler in Harvard Business Review: Leaders must (1) decide with speed over precision, (2) reliably deliver, (3) engage for impact, (d) and adapt boldly. She also praises her CEO, Kristin Skogen Lund, for her speech to her employees in the beginning of the corona crisis, where she encourages to "(…) keep calm and carry on. Be safe, look after each other and we will get through this together" (Schibsted, 2021d, p. 50). Lastly, Krogsrud mentions pulse surveys they used the past year to identify some areas that were the most important to her colleagues during the crisis, which included: A sense of belonging through interaction with colleagues, information sharing, well-being, and leadership.

Media coverage

This article will examine some of the media coverage of Schibsted in the context of leadership and diversity, in a selection from 2017 to today. These are relevant external factors which also play a role in Schibsted's motivation to transform their recruitment policy.

In 2017, editor Hanne Skartveit of VG, which is a part of Schibsted's media houses, publicly criticized Schibsted for only recruiting two women out of 11 in their top management group (Mathisen, 2017). Skartveit accused the organization of having a male-dominant culture, that not only is hostile to equality, but also weakens the companies' reputation and their ability to recruit. The media coverage in 2017 was further on characterized by headlines such as "Schibsted top management challenged on lack of recruitment of women" (FVN, 2017) and "Schibsted hand-picked man for leadership position" (ABC Nyheter, 2017). The following year, Schibsted made headlines again with their new diversity goals: 40/60 gender balance in the organization (Michalsen, 2018). In the article by Michalsen, then CEO of Schibsted, Raoul Grünthal, commented "(...) It is positive that we are now clearer and more transparent about what we are to achieve, when and who is responsible. Then it is also possible to follow up in a good way – continuously, and on a daily basis". In addition, Schibsted's plans to use trainee programmes in their media houses to attract more multicultural competence in their newspapers made the news (Aarli-Grøndalen, 2020). Their ambition was to develop and educate journalists who can contribute with increased diversity and new perspectives in their news coverage. During the spring of 2021, the goal is to have a total of four trainees in place, one in each of Schibsted's media houses.

The AMEC framework

Finally, the AMECs Integrated Evaluation Framework can give an overview of Schibsted's communication process and its effects over the years. The elements of the evaluation framework can be used as a guide through the process from aligning objectives, to establishing a plan, setting targets and then measuring the outputs, outtakes, outcomes and impact of your work (AMEC, 2021). This framework will be used as a summary of Schibsted's recruitment policy regarding diversity and how it has evolved from 2017 to 2021 in this paper, which can be reviewed in Attachment 1. The AMEC Framework is firstly divided into the three parts: Preparation, Implementation and Measurements and Insights (AMEC, 2021). The first part consists of describing Align Objectives (Organizational and Communications Objectives) and Plan, Set Targets & Other Inputs (Strategy and Target Audience). Secondly, the Implementation-section describes the Activities implemented. Lastly, the section for Measurements and Insight includes Audience Response & Effect (Outcomes and Out-takes) and Organization & Stakeholder Effects (Impact).

When developing an AMEC framework for an organization, one can also take the *Barcelona Principles* into account, which in many ways are similar to the AMEC Framework's six parts (Burke, 2020). There are in total seven principles, which read as follows: (1) Setting Measurable Goals is an Absolute

Prerequisite to Communication Planning, Measurement, and Evaluation, (2) Measurement and Evaluation Should Identify Outputs, Outcomes, and Potential Impact, (3) Outcomes and Impact Should Be Identified For Stakeholders, Society, & the Organization, (4) Communication Measurement and Evaluation Should Include Both Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis, (5) AVEs are Not the Value of Communication, (6) Holistic communication measurement and evaluation includes all relevant online and offline channels, (7) and Communication Measurement and Evaluation Are Rooted in Integrity and Transparency to Drive Learning and Insights.

Part 4: Analytical approach

Definition of diversity

According to Northouse (2019, p. 334), "diversity" can be defined as existence of different cultures or ethnicities within a group or organization. Further, "culture" can be explained as learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions that are common to a group of people, who share qualities, a way of life, customs, and scripts which makes them unique. Although we have a general definition of diversity, Schibsted's might tell us something else. Their definition is central to this paper, because it reflects on their actions and values in the company regarding their recruitment policy. In 2017, regional considerations were important to Schibsted's understanding of diversity, according to their then Executive Vice President for People, Change and Strategy, Tina Stiegler. It was implied that geographical diversity was important to their definition, due to their positioning in more than 30 countries in 2017. In addition to this, gender and culture was the organization's considerations in their recruitment policy (Moerlie & Vaagan, 2019). When reviewing material collected for this paper, we see that Schibsted's objectives for 2020 most of all is focused on gender, as analysed in this paper's AMEC Framework (Attachment 1). Ethnicity, culture and backgrounds are briefly mentioned in the sustainability report, while the data they have collected is mostly of diversity regarding gender. Schibsted has mainly had their focus on developing a more gender balanced organization, which they have achieved by the end of 2020. Today, Schibsted is positioned in only five countries, which also changes their situation regarding this topic. In 2020, most of their employees are Scandinavians; 3,046 in Norway and 1,641 in Sweden, while the remaining 405 employees are in Finland, Poland and "other" countries (Schibsted, 2021e). Today, Schibsted has left the geographical factor behind when defining diversity and moved on to focusing more on inequality in personality, competence, language, emotional and cognitive approaches. Schibsted sees it as a major potential to work with diversity management in the organization, and to create value of using all the differences people consciously represent. It is demanding to put together teams that are more diverse, yet over time the organization will create great value and innovation based on this, according to EVP/Chief People & Corporate Affairs, Mette Krogsrud. This is a recognition by Schibsted, which is a beginning, as it is a demanding and complex topic. In the future, Schibsted strive to train their leaders in diversity competence to operate with a more "mature" definition and expand their view on a diverse organization, for instance with the Change-makers programme. Today, it is also important that this mission, and the diversity in society, is reflected in their products, according to Grethe Marie Malkmus, Organizational Director for News Media in Schibsted.

Recruitment policy

Finally, the recruitment policy is the basic result of the how Schibsted defines and values diversity in their company. In 2017, their recruitment policy did include diversity, but to a very small degree, according to Tina Stiegler. The recruitment policy in 2017 was the same for every company included in Schibsted's organization. In 2020 and in 2021, Schibsted has stated publicly in their Sustainability Report 2020 that their ambition long-term is to be "ranked as the most diverse and equal employer within (their) segment" (Schibsted, 2021e, p. 29). Their targets for 2021 regarding their recruitment policy "diversity, inclusion and belonging" is still mostly focused on gender equality but does also include the goal: "Redefine and raise (their) ambition and targets on diversity, inclusion and belonging", which can be interpreted as an ambition to expand their definition and policy regarding recruitment.

Organizational communication and diversity
Human resources approach

As shown in Table 2.1, the Human Resources approach both resembles and differs from the two earlier approaches to organizational communication in (1) communication of content, (2) communication of direction, (3) communication channels, (4) and communication style. Analysing Schibsted as a human resources organization regarding these four factors can give insight into how the organization has changed from 2017 to today. First of all, the input from employees is critical to the content of communication (1). Secondly, the communication of direction is not restricted to the hierarchy of the organization but can flow all directions (2). As mentioned in her guest lecture, the CEO Kristin Skogen Lund described Schibsted structure as not top down but bottom up (see 3.2. in this paper). In addition, she describes the foundation of the organization with "how we work together". The goal is not to "slam- dunk," as she described it, but to work as a team, which a human resources organization's communication direction is mostly based on. Further on, regarding Communication channels, Human Resources theorists desire to maximize the productivity of the organization, by using adaptive communication channels. Schibsted has, as Skogen Lund mentioned, a balance which combines traditional values with new ones, including digitalization and distribution. This also affects their communication channels (3), and therefore also their communication style (4), which then can be both informal and formal. Skogen Lund describes herself as old-fashioned when she mentions in the DN-interview that she prefers e-mail when it comes to organizational communication. However, she also mentions that Schibsted uses a lot of different communication channels, most likely adjusted to the topic, setting, project and people involved. One of the mentioned communication tools is for instance the "Slack"-platform, which can be used to both internal and external projects. However, like Skogen Lund expresses in the mentioned interview, the choice of different channels might be overwhelming or even feel unnecessary to some in the organization. Still, it is important in a contemporary organization to facilitate for participation and dialogue in the workplace for everyone, which can result in a more stable shared vision for the whole organization, in addition to team learning, according to Senge's Learning Organizations Approach (Miller, 2015).

Currently, Schibsted relies on four core values, published on their webpage: "(1), We have integrity, (2) We are innovative, (3) We are a team, and (4) We are here to win" (Schibsted, 2021b). The company's promoted values can therefore reflect on Senge's ideal way of running a contemporary organization today; both sharing values with the learning organization approach and the knowledge management approach (Miller, 2015). In addition, Schibsted has implemented several programmes in their organization to train both leaders and employees, to become a more sustainable and diverse organization (see 3.3. in this paper). Some of these programmes is for instance the Change-makers program implemented in 2018 (Schibsted, 2019), and the Mentor program implemented in 2017 (Moerlie & Vaagan, 2019). However, some issues may occur regarding major changes in an organization implementing these kinds of programmes, according to Miller (2015). The responsibility for change lies mostly on the top management, although, as Kristin Skogen Lund said it: Several small changes make the difference, and these changes are made by the people (see 3.2. in this paper). Change does take time, especially in an organization like Schibsted which has been around since 1839 with more than 5,000 employees today (Schibsted, 2021e). Further on, as we see in the AMEC Framework in this paper, these programmes are activities which have made a great change for the better in the organization, helping them achieve their gender ratio of 60/40 in leadership (three levels) by the end of 2020. However, the organization must facilitate the translation process, according to Miller, which refers to implementing and operating with a new “language”. For instance, in 2017, diversity was referred to mostly regarding the gender balance in the organization, while today, Schibsted wants to expand their definition and use the word differently. This is explained further in 4.3 in this paper. Another example is how Schibsted in 2017 used to refer to a “diversity and inclusion policy”, which today is changed to the “diversity, inclusion and belonging policy” (Schibsted, 2021e).

Communication of values and goals in the organization

Lastly, Pfeffer’s seven practices of successful organizations can be used to analyse what is done in Schibsted today, and was done in the past, that follow human resources principles (see Table 2.2 in this paper). First of all, Schibsted does, through their programmes and projects, train their employees to become a part of their organizational shared values, developing a shared understanding of the organization (employment security). By doing so, the organization can train employees to identify problems in the workplace and contribute to innovative solutions (Extensive training). The “Change-makers” is also valuable ambassadors for Schibsted, to promote their sustainability agenda both internally and externally, according to Grethe Maria Malkmus, organizational director of News Media. In addition, Schibsted rewards those who work with the organization to achieve their organizational and communication goals, to motivate their employees (Comparatively high and contingent compensation). An example of this is the bonus paid to the leaders who contribute to gender balance in the organization. Further on, by doing a fair *selective* hiring based on talent rather than other “traditional” attributes, Schibsted can recruit employees more fit for their ambitions and more “mature values” today. Next, a team-based work environment can create better solutions through innovation for the organization, like Skogen Lund said herself: You need to include more people to get innovation, good ideas and solutions, rather than strive to "slam- dunk" by yourself (see 3.2. in this paper). She also describes Schibsted as a bottom-up organization, which values input from their employees to find new solutions and ideas, which can contribute to reducing status differences in the organization, making the employees feeling more valued. And finally, sharing information is the key to successful communication in an organization. In this paper's selected media coverage (see 3.4 in this paper), Schibsted's previous CEO in 2018, Raoul Grünthal, expressed that the organization wanted to be more transparent about their ambitions in the future. Schibsted's current CEO, Kristin Skogen Lund, confirms this communication value, by pointing out that thrust and transparency are the most important values regarding leadership and organizational communication (see 3.2. in this paper).

Leadership and diversity
Transformational leadership

Kristin Skogen Lund can be defined as one of those leaders most people would describe as a natural born leader, which is commonly expressed by those who take a Trait Approach towards leadership (Northouse, 2019). She expressed the importance of empowering the people, which cannot be copied, and makes out the 80% in the 5-15-80 leadership principle as mentioned earlier. Skogen Lund also characterizes leadership with the ability to do more than the expected, and to maximize your potential if you want to do "great things". This can relate to House's Charismatic Leadership Theory, with the personality characteristics: Dominant, desire to influence, self-confident and strong moral values. In her behaviour, Skogen Lund also communicates high expectations of her employees, articulates goals and arouses motives as a strong role model herself. As long as she is doing this, according to House's theory, her followers can believe in similarity between themselves and Skogen Lund, as well as increase their confidence and heightening their goals. In addition to the transformational and transactional leadership style she uses, by inspiring motivation and manage expectations, she also uses Laissez-Faire leadership. She describes the leader's job as distributing responsibility and trust to the employees instead of holding on to control over them. Inclusion and empowerment of the employees is the key to innovation, good ideas and solutions, according to the CEO herself.

Diversity regarding leadership in Schibsted has transformed since 2017. Tina Stiegler mentioned in 2017 that diversity generally was important to her, but also to women in general, and that these values and responsibilities were usually attributed to female leaders rather than male leaders. In 2017, Schibsted's two top management female leaders were heads of Communication and HR, which Stiegler pointed out as typical and traditionally expected. Further on, when asked about when Schibsted would recruit their first female CEO, she said that a CEO needed the full package of competence, experience, relationships, and understanding of the industry. Traditionally the CEO was recruited internally in Schibsted, and Stiegler added that they customarily did not recruit top leaders from the HR or Communication departments in the organization. She concluded that everyone "wants" the CEO to be a woman, yet that would not be possible until far into the future, especially to recruit externally for Schibsted. Stiegler therefore supported the findings in Kent's et al. research: Followers hold different prototypes for male leaders and for female leaders. Stiegler's hypothesis was therefore not based on research, but rather on traditional norms and attitudes in society and her own work environment. She also confirmed one of the findings in Kent's et al. research: Women are more critical of female leaders than they were of male leaders. This also relates to ethnocentrism, placing a traditional view on culture in the workplace that most leaders, and employees, in the organization usually are male-dominant. This concept can result in a less tolerant environment which creates obstacles to goal achievement regarding recruiting more women to Schibsted. Because, as mentioned in this paper's research context, Schibsted recruited their first female CEO, Kristin Skogen Lund in December 2018, about one and a half year after the interview with Stiegler (Jordheim, Haugen & Nordstrøm, 2018). The organization has therefore transformed both its corporate values, when it comes to female leadership, as well as its employees and leaders.

Since 2017, Schibsted has made several major changes in their organization. In the 2021 interview, Mette Krogsrud comments that they have had an increased awareness of diversity, not only regarding gender. Schibsted's media houses today, *News Media,* has a female editor in the newspapers Aftenposten, Bergens Tidende, Svenske Dagbladet and Aftonbladet. In addition, News Media has an even a higher proportion of women than men at the top management level. Therefore, the organization does not only have an improvement when it comes to gender balance at the management level, but also downwards in the organization. This is goals and values in the media industry in general, which we also saw in the media coverage included in this paper (see 3.4 in this paper). Krogsrud also commented that they had to make several changes in their diversity recruitment, due to pressure from the media in 2017. Further on, Krogsrud comments that there are several reasons for this, including better communicated goals, work done with the recruitment processes, and more systematic work with talent development internally in the organization. She also shows satisfaction with their achievements regarding gender diversity in the organization but observes that they have a lot of work to do regarding expanding their definition of diversity in the future. By comparing the attitudes and values in 2017 and 2021, we see a transformation in both motivation and confidence. The goals set for the recruitment regarding diversity is also more ambitious today than in 2017, showing that the employees in Schibsted want to achieve what is expected of them, and more in the future.

Conclusion

In response to the research question, we can conclude that since 2017 Schibsted has undergone significant changes regarding diversity. The focus on diversity, inclusion and belonging began in 2018 as a reaction to the media coverage at the time and the media industry in general, in addition to internal pressure to change direction. In 2020, the organization achieved their gender ratio of 60/40 in leadership (three levels). Schibsted even recruited their first female CEO in 2018, Kristin Skogen Lund, who has been involved in major changes in the organization. A result of this is transformational leadership, defined by the ambition to change a company's corporate values, by changing both the leader and the employees in the process, with emphasis values, ethics, standards, long-term goals, and satisfying the employees motives and needs. In addition, analysing the organization with the Human Recourses approach gives great insight into how Schibsted preforms as a contemporary organization, and how values are communicated in the organization. All this is reflected in their recruitment policy, and how the organization values and defines diversity today. As their Sustainability Report 2020 has stated, they have achieved most of their gender equality related goals but are still working on an expanded definition. Schibsted has left the geographical factor behind when defining diversity and moved on to focusing more on differences in personalities, competence, language, emotional and cognitive approaches. As said by Mette Krogsrud, the EVP/Chief People & Corporate Affairs today: "Many things are being done, but we still have a long way to go".

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Appendix 1. AMEC Measurement Framework: Schibsted and diversity

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">1. ALIGN OBJECTIVES</th></tr>
<tr><th>ORGANIZATIONAL OBJECTIVES</th><th>COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Long term ambitions:
1. Ranked as the most diverse and equal employer within our segments.

Objectives 2020:
2. Gender ratio of 60/40 in leadership (three levels) by the end of 2020.
3. Implement the diversity and inclusion policy.
4. Implement our recruitment policy in everyday business operations.
5. Continue roll out of gender pay gap project.
6. Continue unconscious bias training for employees and leaders involved in recruitment.</td><td>Goal regarding values
1. Expanding the definition of “diversity”, “inclusion” and “belonging” (leave the focus on geographical diversity)
2. Better communication of the importance of diversity in the organization
3. Recruitment focusing on talent

Linked SDG Target
4. Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
5. Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard (10.3).</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">2. INFORM AND PREPARE COMMUNICATION</th></tr>
<tr><th>TARGET AUDIENCE</th><th>STRATEGIC INPUTS</th></tr>
<tr><td>1. Employees at Schibsted
2. Potential Employees at Schibsted</td><td>1. Becoming more attractive as employers</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">3. IMPLEMENTS</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">ACTIVITIES</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">**1.** Bonus payed to leaders who help achieve the gender related goals
2. Mentor program
3. The Change Makers Program
4. Blind Interviews
5. Diversity within meaningful journalism (in the Media Houses)
6. Implement the diversity and inclusion policy
7. Implement Schibsted’s recruitment policy in everyday business operations
8. Continue roll out of gender pay gap project
9. Continue unconscious bias training for employees and leaders involved in recruitment.</td></tr>
</table>

4. MEASURE ACTIVITY	
OUTPUTS	
1. Pulse surveys	
5. AUDIENCE RESPONSE & EFFECTS	
OUT-TAKES	**OUTCOMES**
	1. 44% women in leadership **2.** First Female CEO, Kristin Skogen Lund, 2018 **3.** 3/7 in corporate management are women **4.** The levels below corporate management has a higher proportion of women than the corporate management. **5. Female editor in Aftenposten, Bergens Tidende, Svenske Dagbladet and Aftonbladet.**
6. ORGANISATION & STAKEHOLDER EFFECTS	
ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT	
The 2020 process: **1.** The gender ratio target was reached during 2020. **2.** Extended efforts to ensure a diverse workplace by implementing the recruitment policy and establishing a group initiative aimed at defining an action plan for how diversity, inclusion and belonging policy will be implemented over the coming years. **3.** Did not succeed in expanding the gender pay gap project (due to the corona crisis). **4.** Did not arrange any training sessions in unconscious bias (due to the corona crisis). **5.** Did not set performance benchmarks for Schibsted's segments (due to the corona crisis). Targets 2021: **1.** Still expanding their definition of "diversity", "inclusion" and "belonging" in 2021. (Interview 2021) **2.** Continue rollout of gender pay gap project. **3.** Redefine and raise our ambition and targets on diversity, inclusion and belonging. **4.** Establish a cross-functional project that will lead the work. **5.** Map the current situation in three of our companies as pilots. **6.** Map the current situation in all Schibsted through the employee engagement survey tool and a self-assessment tool. **7.** Based on the mappings, define a plan to fill the potential gap between the ambition and targets and the current situation	

FANNY SKAUG, DINA J. DANIELSEN, DANIELA DAHLE IX

Petter Stordalen and Nordic Choice Hotels: Leadership in Organizational Communication Prior to and During the Corona Crisis

ABSTRACT

The pandemic has put a heavy burden on the hotel industry, also in Norway. This article focuses on the Norwegian entrepreneur Petter Stordalen and his handling of the corona crisis. He is the owner and leader of the hotel chain Nordic Choice Hotels. How did Stordalen appear as a leader during the crisis? And what evident changes took place in the hotel chain's organizational communication? The aim is that the article will contribute to more knowledge on leadership and organizational communication under highly demanding circumstances. We hope that the findings can transfer to similar cases in the future.

The research and findings of this article are based on a mixed methods approach, using content and framing analysis. We examined the media coverage prior to and during the crisis. A time span between March 2019–March 2021 was set to compare and show contrasts in the media coverage. We combine these methods with the AMEC Framework and use theory on leadership, organizational and crisis communication to answer the research question. The results from the analysis showed several dominant media frames, including financial and employee concern. Stordalen's media appearances exposed a vulnerable side of him as a leader. Nordic Choice Hotels' crisis communication strategy appeared to be focused on controlling the information flow towards the media. However, the findings also showed that Stordalen's leadership was sought out in dealing with employee furloughs. At this stage, effective crisis communication towards the employees was lacking, even though they appeared to be most affected by the crisis.

Keywords: transformational, authentic and adaptive leadership, organizational and crisis communication, human relations, AME

Introduction

Petter Stordalen is a well-known name in Norway. Petter Anker Stordalen. We know him as the energetic "hotel king", the founder of one of the Nordic region's largest and most successful hotel chains: Nordic Choice Hotels (NCH). The hotel chain has a total of 17,000 employees and 200 hotels in the Nordic and Baltic countries. The company's business concept, values, and vision stem from its "triple bottom philosophy"; people, planet, and profit (NCH, 2019). Strawberry Group owns the hotel chain, which in turn is owned by Petter Stordalen. But Stordalen is not just a hotel owner. He is also a co-owner of the airline Ving and a significant shareholder in the cruise company Hurtigruten (Rydne & Nilsen, 2020). Stordalen allegedly started his career as a strawberry seller and is now one of Norway's most successful entrepreneurs.

When the pandemic hit the Norwegian business community at large in March 2020, Stordalen was at the storm's centre. The hospitality industry suffered tremendously, and empty hotels led to significant revenue losses. As a result, Stordalen's hotel chain temporarily laid off nearly 3,000 people in Norway (Brunborg & Ghaderi, 2020), and some were later dismissed. Even though Stordalen is not the CEO of Nordic Choice, we will argue that he is the *de facto* leader. He is also responsible for much of the communication towards the media and his employees. In this article, we will argue that Stordalen is, in fact, so strongly associated with the hotel chain that it is impossible to separate him from the company's communication strategy and brand, both internally and externally. Along with the crisis faced by NCH, this makes him an exciting subject to examine as it allows a more holistic approach to the study of leadership in organizational communication. Our research question (RQ) is therefore as follows: In what ways have Petter Stordalen and Nordic Choice Hotels handled their organizational communication in the media prior to and during the Corona crisis?

When a crisis strikes, a leader's qualities are put to the test – possibly even more so with the Corona crisis, as it is still not over. We will try to answer our research question by drawing on theory from leadership and organizational communication and the field of crisis communication. We will examine it from several angles, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. However, we will mainly focus on events in Norway, even though the hotel chain extends beyond Norwegian borders.

Figure 1. Peter Stordalen and Nordic Choice Hotel logos

Source: https://www.nordicchoicehotels.no/

Theories of leadership styles

Choosing the theoretical basis for this article, we will lean on both established and tentative leadership theories. There is no single accepted or global definition of what "good" leadership is or means. What characterizes most attempts at a description is, according to Peter G. Northouse (2019, p. 15), "an influence process that assists groups of individuals toward goal attainment". There are several approaches to leadership, but before we present these, it can be useful to first look at the different perspectives of leaders.

One of the first things Northouse mentions is that there is a difference in how people might perceive someone as a leader. He differentiates between a born leader, where certain personality traits determine whether someone is considered a leader, and a skilled or trained leader, in which any follower could become a leader through a learning process of "interactions between leaders and followers" (Northouse, 2019, p. 7). Northouse also distinguishes between assigned and emergent leadership. The emergent leader is viewed as "the most influential member of a group or an organization" but is not necessarily the CEO, while the assigned leader occupies the official position in an organization (Northouse, 2019, p. 8). Being a leader is thus not the same as having the title of a leader. Northouse (2019) underlines that leadership theories apply to both assigned and emergent leaders.

Furthermore, it is also important to establish the difference between leadership and management. Despite overlapping tasks, organizations need both roles to ensure operational efficiency (Northouse, 2019). Leaders motivate for change, lay out strategies for the future, and communicate their goals efficiently. A manager's role is to maintain the status quo, seek stability and structure (Kotter in Northouse, 2019). The much-valued qualities of a good manager – planning for safety, consistency, and structure – are not necessarily the same qualities that ensure innovation (Northouse, 2019).

The different leadership styles, theories, and approaches that Northouse highlights are intertwined, and a leader may fit into more than one category. This is the case for Stordalen as well, as his leadership style matches several theories. Different contexts and situations may also occur that require a change in approach. However, we had to choose the theories we considered most relevant for this article. We will therefore look closer into Transformational, Authentic, and Adaptive leadership styles.

Transformational leadership

One of the most established theories in this field of research is transformational leadership. It emerged in the late 1970s and is now a popular, well studied, and widespread leadership theory: "Transformational leadership involves an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them. It is a process that often incorporates charismatic and visionary leaders" (Northouse, 2019, p. 164).

We chose to emphasize this theory because it instinctively can be applied to Petter Stordalen as a case. In 2017, he won the award for the most innovative leader of the year (Bjørshol, 2017). He is also known for being very charismatic and building a solid corporate culture with strong followership (Hembre, 2020). Transformational leaders are exceptional at arousing the inner motivation of employees by showing consideration for their personal development and creativity. As well as creating a common ideological platform in which employees feel at home (Northouse, 2019). Transformational leaders emphasize emotions over transactions and attempt “to change his or her company’s corporate values to reflect a more human standard of fairness and justice” (Northouse, 2019, p. 165).

According to a theory developed by Bernard M. Bass (in Northouse, 2019), we can spot a transformational leader by four distinct behaviours called the four I’s of leadership, of which two are relevant for this case: (a) Idealized influence and (b) Inspirational Motivation:

a) Transformational leaders inspire and influence employees by leading the way as good role models with a solid foundation in their values. Employees often have great admiration for their leader, making them more willing to strive to follow in the manager’s footsteps. The leader is often described as visionary, charismatic, and motivating (2019).
b) The leader makes an effort to build up a strong “team spirit” and motivate their employees by making them feel essential and involved in achieving the organization’s long-term goals (2019).

Authentic leadership

Authentic leadership is a more tentative approach; there is still no clear definition of an authentic leader’s character or whether authentic leaders create better results (Northouse, 2019). The leadership style is said to develop through experience and often after tackling a crisis (Northouse, 2019). Through trial and error, leaders can learn to be more authentic because they learn to understand themselves better. It can lead to behavior that is perceived as honest and truthful in the eyes of followers (Northouse, 2019). Due to rapid changes in work life and society, Northouse points out a demand for more authentic leaders (Northouse, 2019). Uncertainties give rise to a need for more value-based leadership and stronger relationships among leaders and followers. It is a field with a growing body of literature that we will slightly touch upon in the analysis.

Adaptive leadership

Adaptive leadership is about helping followers to face complex adjustments and problems in working life. This applies particularly to problems that cannot be solved by technical expertise or decision-making alone, so-called “adaptive challenges” (Northouse, 2019). These challenges often need a different remedy, like behavioral change, changing core beliefs in the organization, or empowering somebody to take more responsibility. Adaptive leaders motivate their employees by giving them the tools and support to meet their challenges and facilitate change (Northouse, 2019). One of the ways leaders can do this is by creating a safe "holding environment", where people can freely express their concerns and emotions through dialogue with the leader (Northouse, 2019).

At the same time, one of the first steps an adaptive leader should take during challenging situations is to draw back from the stage to gain more perspective. Looking at the situation from above, usually referred to as "getting on the balcony", can mean taking a time-out or just being a silent observer (Northouse, 2019). A leader should be able to alternate between the holding environment and getting on the balcony (Northouse, 2019). Adaptive leadership is, however, a relatively new direction in the field of leadership and lacks conceptual clarity, according to Northouse (2019). Considering recent events, where the whole job sector has gone through a profound change during the ongoing pandemic, the theory can be helpful to have in mind.

Organizational communication

The world is a complex place and requires us to think of communication in organizations in complicated ways. To deal with the complexity issue, Karl Weick (in Miller, 2015) emphasizes a concept he calls requisite variety, where he explains that: "(…) successful organizations and groups need to be as 'complicated' as the problems that confront them". The bigger the organization, the more complicated it becomes to make sure it runs smoothly. Miller emphasizes that the same goes for organizational communication; it needs to be a tool "for approaching the challenges of today's world" (2015). Therefore, an organization's communication must be as complicated as the situation it faces.

In order to understand why organizational communication is essential, it is important to investigate some underlying concepts of it. In the classical approaches, it has been quite common to use metaphors when describing organizations. Since each one builds on different constructions, it becomes easier to understand when resembled with objects. However, many scholars have moved beyond objectifying organizational communication, explicitly opposing the "container metaphor", which only sees communication as transmitting information within corporations (Miller, 2015). Instead, the trend is now towards more constitutive approaches, where organizational communication is seen as something that can both “create and recreate systems of meaning and understanding” (Miller, 2015). Based on this, Miller suggests different approaches and processes related to the subject of organizational communication: “These ideas about approaches ranging from human relations to (…) culture and about processes including decision making, conflict, change, emotion (…) and technology are highly relevant in today’s organizations” (2015, pp. 254–255).

This article can easily use several theoretical standpoints, models, and approaches Miller (2015) suggests. Despite the many options she offers, we limit ourselves to considering the most relevant theories for discussing the RQ. The selection intends upon serving a solid theoretical basis without going too broad, focusing on the Human Relations Approach, the Systems Approach, and Processes of Emotion in the Workplace.

The human relations approach

In the early twentieth century, classical approaches prevailed in organizations. These used a machine metaphor, which saw people within organizations as having specific functions, being easily replaceable and predictable (Miller, 2015). However, this changed in the 1930s after the Hawthorne studies got conducted. They prompted a change in direction towards the human relations approach, where “human needs and social interaction” were considered critical elements of a successful organization (Miller, 2015). One of the most prominent theories that evolved from this was Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs. This theory “serves as a prototype of a human relations approach to organizing and management” (Miller, 2015, p. 40). Of course, we could elaborate on this to a greater extent. Still, to keep the theory as clear and relevant as possible, we will focus on the two most elementary needs – psychological and security (Miller, 2015).

The systems approach

Karl Weick has also written about Sensemaking in Organizations (in Miller, 2015). In the context of systems approaches, Weick highlights yet another dimension of organizational communication, equivocality. This theory suggests that an organization should, at its best, attempt to reduce the equivocality to make sense and avoid being a workplace with a scattered information environment. However, when organizations face a crisis, “equivocality is likely to be high" (Weick in Miller, 2015, p. 69). To make sense in this type of environment, Weick recommends "that members use assembly rules and communication cycles" (in Miller, 2015, p. 69). Accordingly, this will guide the members to greater sensemaking, which" (…) proposed by Weick also highlights the concept of requisite variety" (in Miller, 2015, p. 70). In cases of low equivocality, the principle of requisite variety suggests "simple decision rules and structures", while "more complex communication cycles and systems" are required when the equivocality is high (Miller, 2015).

Processes of emotion in the workplace

According to Waldron (in Miller, 2015), if someone is conversating about a possible downsizing, emotional 'buzzing' can potentially make rumors "(…) spread like wildfire in the workplace". Recent scholars, such as Kramer and Hess, have tried to understand how emotional rules work within organizations and have developed the Emotional Display Rules (in Miller, 2015). As part of this, they consider emotional intelligence to be a part of the "variety of workplace interactions", which suggests that some people are better at emotional dealing than others; still, one can learn this to some extent (Miller, 2015, pp. 202–203).

Crisis communication

An organizational crisis can jeopardize a company's reputation or even survival and affect its leader and stakeholders negatively in multiple ways. Organizations must therefore establish a clear plan in order to foresee and deal with potential crises efficiently and effectively. Joep Cornelissen broadly defines a crisis "as an event or issue that requires decisive and immediate action from the organization" (2017, p. 212). However, some crises can be nearly impossible to predict and, therefore, even harder to prepare for. This could involve the risk of terrorism or natural disasters, or as we have seen happening right now with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Organizations must nevertheless prepare, acquire and build up the best possible crisis communication strategy to address what specific actions and performances are needed to minimize the negative impacts on the company, its reputation, and stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2017). In these situations, there is a need for clear communication from the leader and the communication practitioners towards internal and external stakeholders (Miller, 2015). For this case study, internal would mean the employees of NCH, while customers, business partners and the general public would define the external.

The choice of crisis communication strategy depends on the type of crisis a company and its leader are facing. Crisis expert Timothy Coombs distinguishes between four types of crises – faux pas, terrorism, accident, transgression – across two dimensions: internal-external and unintentional-intentional (Figure 1) (Cornelissen, 2017).

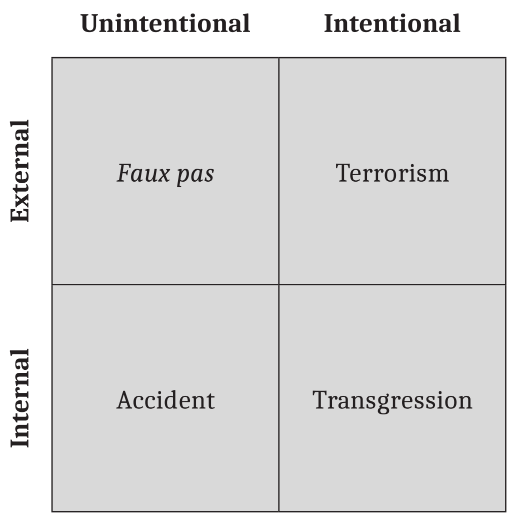

Figure 1. Types of crises

Adapted from Joep Cornelissen/Timothy Coombs

Identifying and choosing the correct strategy involves establishing whether the society and stakeholders perceive the company as responsible for the crisis or not (Cornelissen, 2017). Because of the nature of the Corona crisis, these strategies may not be directly applicable but still provide essential aspects of how to deal with uncertain situations in an organization. Furthermore, once a strategy gets identified, the company must "maintain effective control over the release of information" to the media and make sure that they, themselves, provide all the information sent out (Cornelissen, 2017, p. 221). We will look further into what strategy Stordalen and NCH used in the analysis chapter.

Organizational change and leadership

Most changes occur naturally in organizations. However, crises often require rapid change. As the Corona crisis escalated and became prolonged, companies worldwide had to adapt and implement changes to survive. Stordalen and NCH were no exception, mainly because the hospitality industry has become one of the hardest-hit industries in Norway (Næringslivets Hovedorganisasjon, 2021). Implementing changes requires good leadership skills and effective communication towards stakeholders, and "often implies a disruption of the status quo" (Cornelissen, 2017, p. 231). However, they also provide opportunities "to both address the crisis at hand and reshape perceptions through communication" (Miller, 2015, p. 183). Through this process, communication from the leader is important for managing the crisis, but how and when the leader communicates is crucial (Miller, 2015). In other words, the way the leader frames a crisis can impact both internal and external stakeholders, for instance, in terms of trust, commitment, and loyalty.

Methodology: research design

This study builds upon the mixed methods' explanatory sequential research design (ESRD). Historically speaking, mixing methods evolved from "(…) the idea that all methods had bias and weaknesses (…)", and as John W. Creswell and David J. Creswell (2018, p. 14) pinpoint, it became an argument that "neutralized the weaknesses of each data". Ivankova, Creswell and Stick (2006, p. 3) write that, separately, the methods are weak components "to capture the trends and details of a situation" – yet another argument for mixing quantitative and qualitative methods. Appendix 1 shows how our ESRD is built, inspired by the similar model showcased by Ivankova et al. (2006). They advocate that using graphic modelling serves to highlight priorities and decisions that are made. Visualization of the research design would also increase the understanding of its characteristics and how each part of the study is linked to another (2006).

Three main concerns need to be specified when using ESRD. First, one should note the priority of which of the two phases that get most emphasized, something that creates the challenges of this method; time and resources (Morgan, 1998; Creswell, 2003 in Ivankova et al., 2006). Second, where the integration of the two phases occurs should become apparent through the research paper (Ivankova et al., 2006) – and, as mentioned above, will be more distinctive when using a graphic model. Lastly, implementation seeks to concretize the sequence of which the two phases got conducted. For this instance, the method has two consecutive phases that start with the quantitative research in phase one (P1). It follows up with the qualitative phase (P2) to add another dimension with the more '"in-depth step'" two (Ivankova et al., 2006). P2 builds upon the results from P1, where this method is especially well suited for cases where the outcomes in P1 are unexpected (Ivankova et al., 2006).

Our approach for answering the research question in the analysis will be threefold to compensate for potential weaknesses. Method triangulation is used to gather empirical data and study different aspects of leadership in organizational communication. This includes a communication evaluation framework, used to examine NCH's communication efforts amidst the crisis.

Methodology: content and framing analysis

Quantitative content analysis is well suited for analyzing extensive text material properties, which can be counted and measured. It is a suitable method when working with large amounts of text over time (Østbye, Helland, Knapskog et al., 2013). We can, for example, count how many times Stordalen is the primary source in the articles about him. Are journalists talking about him or with him? It can tell us something about his priorities and whether he has used the media as a channel during the crisis or not. That alone gives us some hints about NCH's communication strategy. However, the content analysis does not allow us to examine the deeper socio-cultural meaning of texts connected to reality (Hansen & Machin, 2019).

By counting news genres, we can see if there have been any categorical changes in the material, and by listing up the authors, we can see if there are some journalists that seem to follow the topic more up close. We included many different variables in the content analysis because we did not know what would prove to be fruitful in the end. We used the keywords: "Petter Stordalen and Nordic Choice Hotels" in the analysis tool Retriever. One of the authors of this article gained access to Retriever through their workplace. The following variables are counted and measured: publication, genre, frame, headline, journalist name, source 1 and 2, main narrative[1].

[1] The Excel sheet resulted in 14 columns and 100 rows which was too large to include in this article.

We will combine the content analysis with a framing analysis, looking at which frames were most dominant (see Appendix 2). This method is quantitative with qualitative traits (H. Hornmoen, personal communication, September 9, 2020). Framing is a popular and widespread method often used in mass communication studies (Matthes, 2009). It is closely related to the agenda setting theory; however, framing has "become much more common" (Weaver, 2007, p. 143). At the same time, it is more fitting to look at frames to answer our RQ because we are more concerned with how the main messages communicate rather than why something is on the public agenda. Robert Entman (1993, p. 52) is one of the most famous scholars in this field of theory, and we will use his definition of frames as a guideline: "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation". According to Entman, keywords, repetition, and placement in a text are some of the elements that help us recognize and determine the frames (1993). In other words, the issues, actors, attributes, and events that are most prominent in the communicating text, shape how the frames are perceived (Hansen & Machin, 2019). The frames function as "an invitation or an incentive to read a news story in a particular way" (Van Gorp, 2007, p. 63). Therefore, we have only counted the first two sources in the articles, as these have a higher placement in the text and thus are more salient. We have also chosen to focus specifically on which solutions to a problem or morality the text promotes, as Entman suggests.

Baldwin Van Gorp (2007) stresses that frames exist in our shared culture, not in the text itself. This view on framing is called the constructionist approach. How the reader interprets a frame is connected to the discourses, myths, and narratives we take for granted in our culture. Frames communicate more efficiently with the recipient if they correspond to our own belief systems, so-called schemas. These can, for instance, be cultural biases and stereotypes that we use to decipher the world around us (Van Gorp, 2017).

An essential aspect in interpreting the frame on the receiving side is whether the frame provides a context, a greater narrative, from which the news can be interpreted (Van Gorp, 2007). An example is how the neoliberalism in Western society works as a more profound narrative or discourse for our economic consequences frame, that we will elaborate more on in the analysis. This frame communicates well because it speaks to our shared cultural perception of how the world "should" be structured. However, the interpretation on the receiving side also depends on factors "such as the receivers' degree of attention, interests, beliefs, experiences, desires, and attitudes" (Van Gorp, 2007, p. 63). Therefore, the impact of the frames on opinion formation may vary. In this article, however, we will not measure the effect of the frames on an audience.

When we study frames in media texts, we see communication through the media filter, and our own perception. Thus, we cannot be sure that the frames we find in the texts reflect the message that NCH intended upon. As researchers, we are predisposed to our own perceptions and our own experience. When defining the frames, we had to make several decisions where subjective interpretation was impossible to avoid. That is a paradox one should be aware of as a researcher, according to Van Gorp (2007).

Methodology: selection and approach

In the analysis, we primarily refer to the media as the press, but we also include material from social media and TV. In terms of news media, the empirical data consists of 97 articles about Stordalen and NCH in Norwegian newspapers. The chosen timespan between March 1, 2019 and March 1, 2021 highlights the contrasts in the media coverage of NCH and Stordalen prior to and amidst the crisis. We have decided to look at four papers with different profiles. E24, because it is a business newspaper and VG, because it is the biggest newspaper in Norway (Schibsted owns both). Dagbladet is a newspaper with a more tabloid approach. Lastly, NRK, which is a free online news site (state-owned). We intend that this selection may lead to a more nuanced analysis. To avoid any questions about impartiality, we have deliberately chosen not to include the newspaper Aftenposten in the selected material since the person who conducted the content analysis works as a journalist in this paper.

We chose two videos that got frequently cited from the content analysis and one debate article of interest. The first video is an official statement from Stordalen on his Instagram profile after the national shutdown. The second video shows his appearance at the talk show Lindmo two months later. The debate article refers to the Lindmo show, and the author highlights dissatisfied employees. Variables from combining framing analysis with content analysis can say something about their connection. Mainly, we will consider written text and comment on visual content, such as images in news articles, as a supplement to elaborate on the prominent frames.

Methodology: the AMEC framework

The Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication – AMEC, has created an integrated evaluation framework used to showcase the effect of organizational communication, compared to set objectives by the company (AMEC, 2021). This tool will provide a systematic and comprehensive overview of how Nordic Choice Hotels organized its organizational communication towards various stakeholders amidst the Corona crisis. It is worth mentioning that developing a communication strategy involves not just certain practitioners but also “support from the top of the organization” (Cornelissen, 2017, p. 109). The AMEC Framework consists of seven sections, or tiles, which allow for a step-by-step process in evaluating the organizational communication (Figure 2): Objectives, Outputs, Inputs, Activities, Out-takes, Outcomes, and Impact (AMEC, 2021).

Figure 2. The AMEC framework

Source: Courtesy of AMEC

Methodology: selection and approach

AMEC will be used to examine Nordic Choice Hotels' external organizational communication, through their crisis communication strategy. The empirical data here also consists of Norwegian media coverage, as well as NCH's Norwegian website, statistics from their Facebook page and annual report from 2019.

Turning to validity and reliability, the analysis one is conducting, and the results that follow, must be trustworthy and reasonable (Skovsgaard & Svith, 2014). In other words, the methodological tools used in an analysis must first correspond with what one is analyzing for the results to be considered valid. Even though there can be different perceptions of validity and what it involves, it is mainly concerned with transparency, quality, and authenticity (Skovsgaard & Svith, 2014). Because Stordalen and NCH are widely known in Norway, we do have a perception of him as an ambitious leader and the organization as a successful hotel chain. However, as we do not have any personal affiliations or interests towards Stordalen or NCH, our approach is neutral and objective in this sense.

Secondly, the research needs to be consistent *or* reliable. In our article, this depends on the measurement validity for both the quantitative and qualitative methods. With the former, we need to measure what we want to measure (Skovsgaard & Svith, 2014). With the ladder, we need to show how the central concepts translate to our research through operationalization (Johannessen, Rafoss & Rasmussen, 2018). Based on this, others should be able to reproduce the similar results under the same circumstances at any other point in time (Skovsgaard & Svith, 2014).

In our content analysis, we have tried to be objective, but we are aware that this is not always entirely possible (Hansen & Machin, 2019). Lack of objectivity can affect the validity of the research. To ensure intercoder reliability, we could have included a codebook that describes how we have proceeded to code the material and on what basis we have established the frames (Matthes, 2009). Due to the length and structure of this article, we have chosen to omit the codebook for now. In terms of our framing analysis, it is not given that everyone will interpret the frames in the same way, which may affect the reliability. However, applying triangulation is useful for "increasing [both] reliability and validity" (Hansen & Machin, 2019, p. 8) and may aid in strengthening the accuracy of the results.

Another key methodological consideration involves delimitations. We considered interviews as these would have been a great way to broaden the scope of our article and give additional value to it. This would involve talking to subjects, elected representatives, and top management to get more insight into what went down communication-wise during corona, especially behind closed curtains. It was also suggested amongst the feedback from our presentation that we could contact Stordalen for an interview without it affecting our results (R.W. Vaagan, personal communication, April 29, 2021). Shortly before our presentation, we tried to send Stordalen a private message on Instagram, where we asked a couple of questions and indicated our desire to conduct an interview. However, we did not expect our less formal inquire to be answered, and as we anticipated, we did not get any response. We could, of course, have tried to contact him by e-mail or through his office staff.

Instead, we focused on final touches and changing or adding elements that could be carried out within the two weeks before the article was due. Since we did not have an appointment settled with Stordalen, it seemed too much of a risk to rely on getting an interview within this short time frame. On the other hand, if we were to develop this article into a master's thesis, an interview would be our top priority. Because so many media interviews of Stordalen already exist, both new and old, we have chosen to use the available material to limit the scope of the article.

We also tried to find reputational surveys that said something about either Strawberry Group or NCH. We searched through Kantar/TNS Gallup and Ipsos. We aimed to find surveys that illustrated how the company or industry was ranked or rated during the crisis and compare it to 2019. Unfortunately, we could not find any surveys that were published in 2020 or later. The latest surveys of businesses in the private sector are from 2018. They do not include the relevant information needed for this article and are behind a paywall (Nerdrum, n.d.). Additionally, NCH has not yet published its annual report for 2020. It may have included information about their reputation or ranking, especially considering that they were awarded two times during 2019 (NCH, 2019).

Analysis and Findings

The main goal of the analysis is to uncover in as much detail as possible how Stordalen and NCH dealt with the corona crisis in the media. The analysis is split into three sections. We begin with clarifying which frames were most prominent in the news media, what the content consisted of and who was responsible for the external communication. Further on, we have chosen two samples from the content and framing analysis to discuss in-depth. These samples consist of two of Stordalen's media appearances, which sparked controversy and led to a media frenzy of different opinions. Additionally, we will look at Stordalen's and NCH's strategy, and use theory to discuss whether their handling of the crisis through the press was optimal and if they had any professional help in the matter. Here, we include chosen parts of the AMEC framework. Lastly, we will provide a summary of our findings and a conclusion of the overall discussion.

Content and Framing Analysis

The good leader frame (March 2019–February 2020)

Before the Corona crisis emerged, journalists in the selected material primarily wrote about Stordalen's values as a leader. There were articles about him supporting gay rights and criticizing the industry for not recruiting enough female leaders. Besides, there are several articles where he talks warmly about his then wife, Gunhild Stordalen, for her environmental commitment to the organization EAT. Stordalen is intimately linked to Gunhild Stordalen's commitment, and the media also writes that he bans disposable plastic and bacon at his hotels. In this period, Stordalen also transfers his legacy and company shares to his children. It generates several positive posts in the media. In August, there are news articles about Stordalen's financial activities. He is expanding his empire and constantly opening new hotels, which is an example of his innovative and visionary qualities as a transformational leader (Northouse, 2019). The dominant narrative in this period is that Stordalen is a loving husband, father, and boss. In general, this time period lacks critical perspectives.

At the end of October, Stordalen became co-owner of the travel company VING. He received some criticism that the acquisition does not correspond to his environmental commitment. However, the complaint originates from Sweden and quickly fades in the Norwegian press. In mid-November, Petter Stordalen and his wife Gunhild Stordalen divorce after 14 years together. The news generates a lot of media coverage. The mention of Stordalen is nevertheless positive. They allegedly broke up because they were too passionate and too involved in their own projects. He says that he will continue to support her organization, EAT, and remain good friends after the break-up. He buys her a luxury apartment in Oslo and is generous in the divorce settlement. In December, there is a wage settlement in Nordic Choice. The employees receive a minimal salary increase. Stordalen receives criticism from trade unions for paying the employees too poorly. Stordalen himself does not answer the critics, and the coverage dies off. Even though Stordalen faces some criticism, it quickly fades, and the dominant narrative in this period is still that of "the good leader".

Entman (1993) states that it can be risky for the press to deviate from established frames in our shared culture because frames communicate better if they match the audience's schemas. In this case, it can be that portraying Stordalen in poor light in the Norwegian press does not communicate well with the readers because Stordalen is established as a popular figure. Another reason could be that Stordalen carefully monitors his image and has loyal followers that do not leak negative info to outsiders.

Stordalen's statements in the media firmly establish his values, which are in line with two pillars from NCH's triple bottom philosophy – people and planet (NCH, 2019). He also appears as a fair, charismatic, and empathetic person. By emphasizing moral and value-based communication, he establishes himself as a role model for his employees, which in turn can motivate his followers. Put together, these personality characteristics may point to Stordalen being seen not just as a natural leader (Northouse, 2019), but again, a transformational leader as well. According to the 4 I's of the transformational leadership model, we can say that he exercises idealized influence and inspirational motivation (Northouse, 2019).

Employee concerns frame (March 2020)

At the beginning of March 2020, the first article in the material states that NCH announces furloughs. The coverage intensified from mid-March when the Corona crisis reached its peak in Norway. The content shifts focus from Stordalen as a person to the concerns of the employees. What characterizes this frame is that the employees are the lens through which we understand the crisis. The problem is the people who face an uncertain future. The main focus of communication is on the human costs, not the financial ones. This way of viewing the problem is dominating this period.

The difficult situation that the employees are facing seems to be a genuine concern on behalf of NCH. Unfortunately, there are no articles that personally address those who are at risk of losing their jobs. The employees are faceless, and we only hear a top-down concern. It might be the journalists' professional practice that is the reason behind this lacking perspective. It is also possible that NCH discouraged employees from talking to the media to control the outlet of information.

From March 8 to March 18, Petter Stordalen was absent from the media. He did not post anything on his Instagram account either. Now CEO Torgeir Silseth rises from the shadows and takes care of informing the press. Before March 2020, Silseth only appeared once in the material. During March, he speaks to the selected newspapers eight times. Even though Silseth is the one speaking, there are few images of him; mostly, Petter Stordalen is the one depicted. It might suggest that Stordalen is viewed as the emergent leader by the media and the general public, even though Silseth is the assigned leader of NCH. In one news article from E24, they even refer to Silseth as the "Stordalen director" (Lydersen & Sættem, 2020). It shows how closely Petter Stordalen is connected to the brand of NCH. Although he does not speak to the media himself, Stordalen is often both mentioned and pictured. Stordalen breaks the silence on March 18 via an Instagram video.

The responsibility frame (April–August 2020)

In this period, Stordalen is often the primary source of the material. Still, the statements were obtained from press releases, social media, and an exclusive interview on the TV program Lindmo. Over the summer of 2020, the focus is on restructuring the company and cooperating with other stakeholders. Stordalen uses his former crisis experience, that guides him in his adaptive work as a leader. Even though he has not faced this particular crisis before, he works with NCH to find new solutions during a time of change (Northouse, 2019). NCH is rethinking how to attract customers and increase revenue. They collaborate with the authorities to set up quarantine hotels, and they work intensively to increase the economic support they receive from the state.

What characterizes the responsibility frame is that the crisis becomes a question of who is responsible. Should the state save Stordalen's falling empire, or should Stordalen take personal responsibility and sell off his private jet planes? NCH are demanding that the government take their share of responsibility. The underlying moral solution is that the government should reinforce its economic measures.

The economic consequences frame (Sept 2020–March 2021)

During this period, there are almost exclusively articles that deal with the economic consequences for Stordalen and his companies. We only see the crisis by the numbers, and the cost of the pandemic is the issue that is enhanced. Preventing tourism by closing borders is seen as the problem that leads to economic suffering. Stordalen is fighting to save his hotel chain as he loses revenue for each day that goes by. E24 dominates the coverage from this period. They are an online business paper, and it is no coincidence that the financial perspective is of their interest, rather than the employee aspect. Implicit in this coverage is the notion of NCH as an influential organization in Norwegian society that needs to be watched closely.

The coverage is so frequent that it almost appears to be a corona update about the new figures and infection trends. The frame communicates well with stakeholders and the business sphere. Everyone who is invested in the company will naturally be concerned about their earnings and loss. The frame will probably not communicate in the same way with someone more concerned about the environment that sees traveling as something that is not done sustainably and not appropriate at the time. At the same time, the intense coverage can also gain Stordalen some sympathy because it is not his fault that his company is losing money. E24 talks about Stordalen, but not with him. The quotes usually come from other sources.

Other findings

Some articles in the material were not directly about Stordalen or NCH. For instance, many articles were celebrity interviews of Gunnhild Stordalen (ex-wife) and Emilie Stordalen (daughter of Petter Stordalen) or other actors associated with Stordalen (the human-interest frame). There were also articles with political proposals, where NCH and Stordalen got mentioned in a sub-sentence. We chose to collect all these findings in the category “Others” in the table. We did not see this as relevant to answering our RQ. However, these articles made up a significant proportion of the material and are worth mentioning.

Petter Stordalen's media appearances

In a video posted on Instagram on March 18, shortly after the national shutdown, Stordalen tells his followers that he had hoped he never needed to post such a video (Stordalen, 2020). In the 5:16 minutes long video, Stordalen tells how the crisis has affected himself, his employees, as well as his entire hotel empire. However, the most prominent thing about the speech is how sincere and heartfelt he appears, especially when thanking his employees and contributors for supporting him and standing by his side (Stordalen, 2020). "To me, 'the culture' and employees mean everything. […] The employees are my family and everything I do now is about doing the best for them, for their health, for their families, for their jobs, for their future prospects" (Stordalen, 4:30–4:56). By looking into the "Emotional Display Rules", Stordalen comes through as someone who "express[es] emotions to the right people" (Kramer & Hess in Miller, 2015, p. 202). As our content analysis suggests, Stordalen has reasonable control over when he communicates and to whom. It may be that posting and managing his own statements is a strategic move. It eliminates the possibility of being exposed to influential factors that could interrupt or change his emotional state and take the attention away from the message. In addition, this self-regulated distribution of media eliminates the possibility of any unpredicted media show that could backfire on NCH's interests. Furthermore, some people are better at dealing with emotions than others, and this example could suggest that Stordalen is emotionally intelligent. He seems to understand "the emotional needs of the situation" (Miller, 2015, p. 202–203).

The first time Stordalen let himself interview on national television since the crisis began, he attended the Norwegian talk show, Lindmo in May 2020. Almost two months after the Instagram video. All of a sudden, his smiling face turned into a severe appearance. Despite his stone-faced attitude at the beginning of the interview, he soon appeared to be personally affected. It seemed that the pandemic had put a dent in him, even though he admits having gone through five previous crises.

When Stordalen chooses to be transparent and show emotion, he does what an authentic leader is supposed to (Northouse, 2019). Authentic leadership traits often occur in a leader after navigating crises and are signs of maturity in the leader's behavior. When leaders show their true selves, it strengthens the connection with their followers. They appear more honest and trustworthy (Northouse, 2019). As mentioned in the theory chapter, Northouse (2019, p. 197) emphasizes that the need for authentic leaders is "timely and worthwhile" in a constantly changing world. It suggests that Stordalen qualifies as the right type to face this crisis. Even though his businesses were well-prepared for several crisis scenarios, Stordalen confesses no plan existed for the whole company to shut down because of closed borders and occupation bans (Rydne & Nilsen, 2020). This helpless situation left Stordalen with no other choice than to make promises and ensure his employees that he will put in any necessary effort to help his organization through this crisis (Lindmo, 2020; Stordalen, 2020).

Merethe Solberg, department manager for Fellesforbundets hotel- and restaurant workers in Oslo-Viken, claims that Stordalen did not live up to his promises on Instagram and Lindmo. She would like to see him in a more personal dialogue with the representatives (in Okpe, 2020). Therefore, she requests direct meetings with the hotel owner in the way Cornelissen (2017, p. 216) suggests: "Disseminating information openly and engaging with those affected in a dialogue on the crisis through direct meetings, newsfeeds and blogs is often seen as an important first step in an effective crisis response". On the one hand, the Instagram video and Lindmo-interview are direct and honest ways of communicating to the public. If this was the only thing the employees had heard from Stordalen at the time, it is no wonder why Solberg (in Okpe, 2020) seemed frustrated – Stordalen's behavior creates uncertainty, and it threatens the Norwegian model, which is based on an organized working life. Had he in action shown his "fighting will" to the employees, by meeting them and the shop stewards, let them get sufficient information and discussed solutions, yes, then he would have practiced what he preaches.

Another factor that can cause restless employees is what Waldron (in Miller, 2015) emphasizes when stating that conversations about a possible downsizing could become a potential source for "emotional buzzing" or rumor spreading in the workplace. Solberg claims that inquiries were sent down the system whenever a representative tried to contact Stordalen (Okpe, 2020). When communicating on behalf of colleagues, it is self-explanatory that this becomes a delicate subject when the management does not respond to the given inquires. It contradicts "the people pillar" of Stordalens and NCH's corporate philosophy (NCH, 2019, p. 12).

In chapter 2.1.3, we mentioned the holding environment concept, described by Northouse. This concept is concerned with aiding leaders in making sure the dialogue with followers in tense situations does not get "too heated or explosive" (Northouse, 2019, p. 274). Miller supports this by addressing social support, where one should protect the employees from "major and minor stresses of life" (2015, p. 209). She also mentions another way of coping with communicative issues, through participation in decision-making (PDM). PDM can serve employees with the feeling of being valued and influencing the workplace, as well as strengthening the information flow as "worker satisfaction and productivity" increases (Miller, 2015, p. 209).

Drawing on this insight, it might be that it would have been helpful for NCH to delegate tasks and responsibilities amongst the sub-leaders, supervisors, and managers within the organization at an early stage of the pandemic. By providing clear and precise information to responsible managers, all staff members would have had access to the guidance of a leader. Again, this could have made them feel taken care of, and it might have helped to reduce some stressors. The fact that these elements mentioned above did not occur during NCH's meeting with the pandemic confirms that Stordalen is not an adaptive leader in this sense.

The consequence of the furloughs and resignations hits the core of what is considered the topmost elementary physiological need according to Maslow's (in Miller, 2015, p. 41) theory: "In the organizational context, these needs can be most clearly satisfied through the provision of a living wage that allows individuals to buy adequate food and clothing".

These consequences affect the second listed need as well; the need for safety, which also strengthens by having a steady wage to eliminate or decrease "danger". The danger in this context could occur when not having money to buy mouthpieces and hand sanitizers. Economic security/safety becomes crucial if one must stay home due to restrictions.

Solberg's statements point towards a workplace where internal communication has been equivocal. Although the information given by NCH should have provided Solberg with an understanding of why the representatives got put on hold, she might have spoken differently about Stordalen's management. As the chance of equivocality being present is higher during a crisis, Weick's (in Miller, 2015, p. 69) theory is likely to be relevant in this case. Other than this confirmation, we do not have any other staff members' statements to strengthen her point of view further or confirm that the dissatisfaction is mutual amongst the NCH staff.

Specifically, what contribution Stordalen has had towards his employees, how he has motivated, taken care of, and communicated with them during the pandemic, remains unsure. However, from both the media coverage and appearances, one thing is sure – Stordalen is seen as the emergent leader by his employees. He is the one they want to get in contact with and get guidance from, even though he is not their assigned leader. Furthermore, when NCH, with its size, faces a crisis even more extensive, an inconsistent relationship between the organization's size and the volume of needed communication occurs. Finally, due to Weick's (in Miller, 2015) encouragement to requisite variety, it becomes clear that no one in this position would ever be capable of dealing with these challenges in an ideal way. Altogether, this indicates that NCH's communication strategy has shortcomings.

Crisis communication measures

To understand how NCH communicated and dealt with the crisis, it is necessary to establish the nature of the crisis they faced. Seeing that the scope of the Corona pandemic quickly grew in size and impacted the business with little to no warning, we can say that NCH experienced a *faux pas* crisis. Cornelissen explains that this type of crisis is caused by an external source and is not directly and intentionally brought on by the organization itself (Cornelissen, 2017). In general, this means that NCH's communication efforts towards their stakeholders and the media had to be adjusted to match the crisis.

According to Cornelissen, what a company should do when faced with a *faux pas* crisis is to distance itself from it (2017). However, this is not fully applicable to the Corona crisis, which extends beyond the company itself and involves everyone that may in some way connect to NCH. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to try and reduce the damage caused by the crisis (Miller, 2015). Cornelissen explains that before communicating widely with all stakeholders, the company first needs to address the "physical and psychological concerns of those directly affected by the crisis" in the media (2017, p. 216). What is important to consider during this phase, is if the information is distributed to the media in a timely manner and who is responsible for the communication.

Using the content analysis findings as a basis to fill out the AMEC Framework (see Appendix 3), we discovered that NCH took measures by reaching out or responding to media inquiries to some extent. In most of the media coverage, statements from Stordalen stemmed from second-hand sources. The organizational and communication objectives highly connect to two parts of their "triple bottom philosophy" – people and profit (NCH, 2019, p. 11). We found that the employee concern frame was most prominent at the beginning of the crisis, in the media coverage. For instance, in March 2020, Stordalen pinpoints the amazing work of his employees and that putting so many of them on furlough has impacted him deeply (Eriksen, 2020). The publicity shows that NCH responded to the crisis early and that the media focus was on those directly affected. They were also open about the situation and made sure the information came directly from the head of the company. Being in "control over the release of information" (Cornelissen, 2017, p. 221) is highly important when dealing with a crisis.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, after the initial crisis communication in the media, it is essential to turn towards stakeholders that are not directly affected, such as potential customers. This is why we have included customers as part of the company's objectives in AMEC. First of all, Stordalen says that he is determined to get his businesses through the crisis no matter what. He collaborates with several external key stakeholders, and NCH manage to secure financing for the hotels to avoid going bankrupt (Folvik, 2020). These actions refer to the profit pillar of their triple bottom philosophy (NCH, 2019). In addition, the content of the NCH website was updated with information and used to communicate about the changes they had implemented to prevent infections and ensure a safe stay (2021). Using the internet to distribute information, especially directly from the company's website, serves as a suitable method for coping with a crisis (Miller, 2015). By doing this, they were able to aim their communication towards key target audiences, such as Nordic Choice Club members, businesspeople, and potential guests from Norway or abroad. These measures can be seen as efforts in securing the flow of profit during the crisis.

Practicing crisis communication, especially in the long run, can be draining. Many businesses tend to hire or co-operate with crisis communication specialists to be better prepared for these types of events. During our original class presentation of the term paper that this article is based on, our respondents wondered if Stordalen had any professional help handling the crisis (C. Solberg & M. Paulsen, personal communication, April 29, 2021). Looking into this matter, we found that Stordalen's Strawberry Group merged with the PR and communication agency Kruse Larsen in 2018 to create a shared sister agency for PR called Storm Communications, led by Marius Parmann (Strawberry, n.d.; E24, 2018; Westeng, 2018). However, in February 2020, when the pandemic was not yet a fact, Kruse Larsen decided to sell out. Stordalen bought them out through his company Storm Holdings, in partnership with Per Valebrokk and two main members of The Norwegian Labour Party (Hammernes, 2020; Hauger, 2020).

These changes may help explain Stordalen's and NCH's crisis communication management and choices. Storm Communications specializes in crisis, financial and corporate communication (E24, 2018). Even though a continued partnership would have been beneficial when the pandemic started, Stordalen still had highly relevant expertise to deal with the situation and was involved in it himself. In this analysis, we have already mentioned how Stordalen can be perceived as a "born leader". However, having experience and knowledge in this area shows that he has learned about it and can therefore also be viewed as a skilled leader (Northouse, 2019). This is reflected in Stordalen's and NCH's external communication towards the media – the way the crisis got framed during some of the different periods shows their control over the information flow. The issue was also dealt with promptly, as is suggested by Cornelissen (2017).

However, Stordalen was also out of the spotlight for some time during March 2020, as mentioned in chapter 4.1.2. It may suggest that he exercised adaptive leadership by "getting on the balcony" (Northouse, 2019). It is also a strategy proposed by the well-established communication agency Apeland. They explain that a leader should not feel pressured to take a step back and get an overview of the situation, in order to be better prepared in dealing with the crisis (Apeland, 2013). In this case, it may have been a strategy that Stordalen chose after the early media presence. Nevertheless, considering the backlash and speculations about the employees in the media, he may have overdone this aspect of the adaptive leadership style. In a crisis of this magnitude, he simply might have stood on the balcony for too long when the uncertainty was at its highest.

Summary and conclusion

In this article, we have taken a closer look at how Petter Stordalen and Nordic Choice Hotels used organizational communication to deal with the Corona crisis in the media. We examined this through the lens of several media outlets, news articles, and visual components. Additionally, the AMEC framework provided us with a common thread of the situation that aided in understanding how the company's core values guided their choices.

Firstly, the content and framing analysis findings reveal that the coverage before the crisis mostly revolved around Stordalen as a person. It also showed that the general media view Stordalen as the leader of NCH, and presumably, the general public does too. As the Corona crisis hit the industry, the media focus swiftly changed towards the employees of NCH, and later the question of responsibility and financial consequences were brought to the surface. We discovered that Stordalen seldom spoke directly to the press, as the press based their articles on secondary sources that initially derived from both Stordalen and the company. It was here that the CEO Torgeir Silseth became the leading spokesperson, even though Stordale''s name and images were used as clickbait. These factors show that Stordalen and NCH remained in control of the flow of communication towards the media. The frames were more likely to be in line with what NCH and Stordalen wanted to communicate in the first place, to some extent.

Second, Stordalen's own Instagram content and his attendance on Lindmo showed a more authentic side of him as a leader. It also led to negative reactions from stakeholders that did not believe in his authenticity. The criticism revolved around him appearing to be more interested in giving speeches about the futures of his employees in the media, instead of discussing the issues directly with them. It only added fuel to the fire and created uncertainty amongst his staff.

Lastly, as the company experienced an unpredictable, unintentional and external crisis, its main strategy was to deal with the consequences of the pandemic. Their crisis communication strategy became prominent when we measured the effect of the communication in AMEC. NCH tried to make use of their triple-bottom philosophy towards both internal and external stakeholders. The most urgent issues concerning the fate of the employees reached the media first. Subsequently, the communication was directed towards stakeholders that were not directly affected. According to the set objectives in AMEC, the organizational impact of NCH was somewhat scattered. In terms of their profit, customer, and overall objective, they managed to reach out to the right audiences through the appropriate channels. The employee objective, however, did not reach its full potential.

Our article shows that Stordalen's leadership and NCH's organizational communication changed in line with the crisis but did not manage to fully protect the psychological and safety needs of their most important assets – the employees. The pandemic has proven leadership and communication to be even more crucial than we originally thought and hopefully serves as a template for how Stordalen and NCH may handle similar situations better in the future.

In terms of future research on this particular case we wish to suggest the following: It should be highly considered to reach out to top management. This insight can provide an additional dimension into how the hotel chain dealt with the corona crisis internally. Another idea is to contact some of the most recurring journalists that emerged from the content analysis. They may provide answers as to why large parts of the media coverage came from second-hand sources and aid in clarifying Stordalen's relation to the press. Lastly, we propose conducting a comparative study including other hotel chains. Looking at Norwegian or Scandinavian hotels is one option, but it will also be interesting to look beyond the Nordic borders and corporate cultures.

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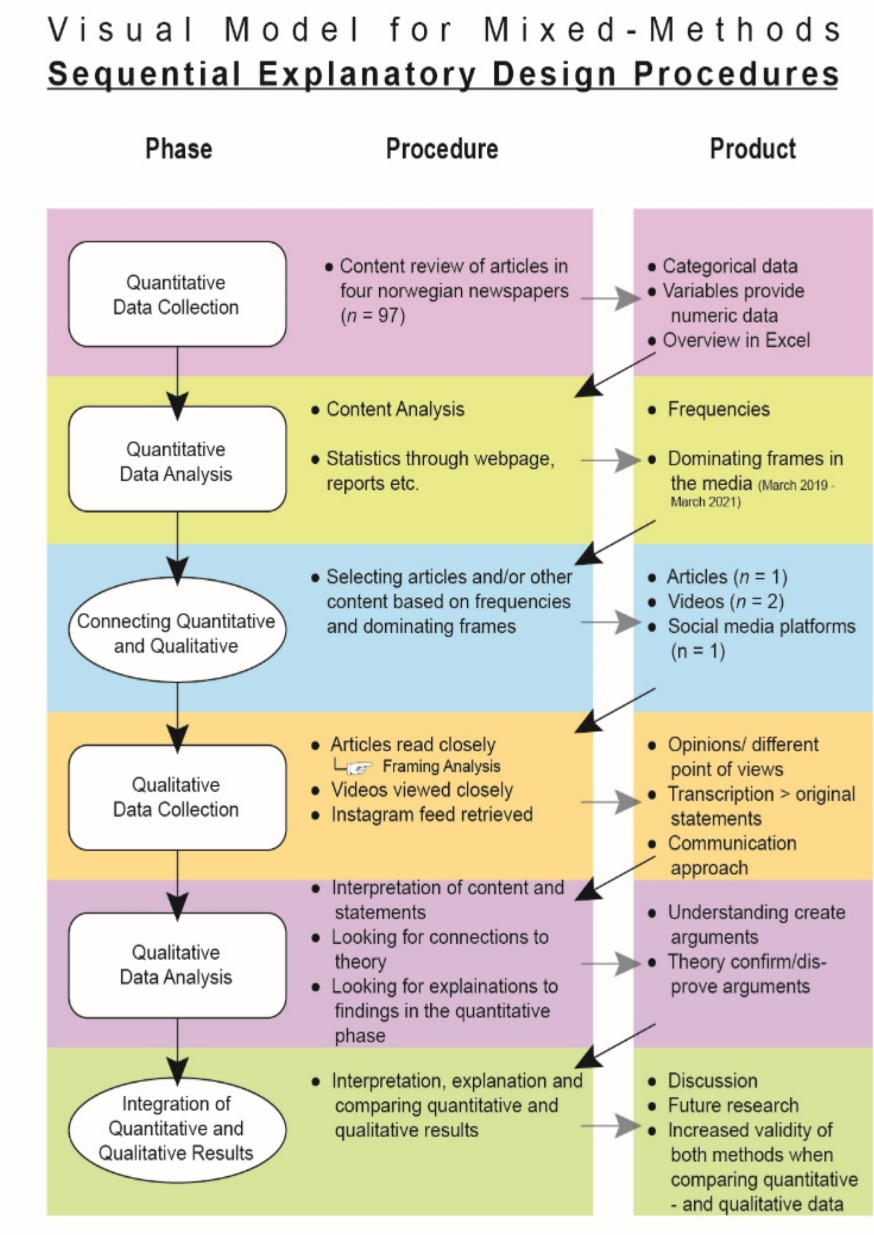
Appendices

Appendix 1. Visual Model for Mixed Methods



Appendix 2. Framing Analysis

Date	Source			Dominant Frames				
	PS	TS	O	GL	EMC	R	ECC	O
March 2019		1					1	
April 2019	2		1	2				1
May 2019	1			1				
June 2019	3		2	3				2
July 2019	1		1	2				
August 2019	2		2	3				1
September 2019	1			1				
October 2019	3		1	3				1
November 2019	2		2	2				2
December 2019	1		2		1			2
February 2020			1	1				
March 2020	3	6	9		11	2	5	
April 2020	1		2			1	1	1
May 2020	2		3			1	2	2
June 2020	2	2	3	3	1		1	2
July 2020	5	2		1	1		5	
August 2020	1	1	1		1		2	
September 2020			5				4	1
November 2020	3	1	1	1	2		2	
December 2020			2				1	1
January 2021	1	1	3		2		3	
February 2021	1	1	5		2		5	
March 2021		1					1	
Total:	**35**	**16**	**46**	**23**	**21**	**4**	**33**	**16**

Date: month and year
Sources: PS=Petter Stordalen, TS=Torgeir Silseth, O=Other
Dominant frames: GL=Good Leader, EMC=Employee Concerns, R=Responsibility, ECC=Economic Consequences, O=Other

Appendix 3. AMEC Framework

AMEC Measurement Framework
Stordalen and NCH

PREPARATION

ALIGN OBJECTIVES

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES	COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES
(Overall objective) Get all our hotels through the The Covid-19 pandemic and through the consequences that it has caused - (Customers) Implement changes in the hotels and add sanitary equipment - (Profit) Get financing for all hotels and building projects, and complete all deals. Collaborate with other actors such as partners, banks, authorities, tenants, suppliers and customers - (Employees) Collaborate with all employees about the furloughs and make the process as gentle as possible	- (Customers) Ensure our customers that we follow guidelines and restrictions to enable a safe stay + informing about measures on the website - (Profit) Communicating with external stakeholders for financial aid - (Employees) Treat our employees with respect in the media

INFORM & PREPARE COMMUNICATION

TARGET AUDIENCE	STRATEGIC INPUTS
1 Nordic Choice Club Members **2** Visitors **3** Health personnel **4** Business people **5** Other stakeholders	- Create new and relevant content for the website (info about Corona measures) - Create information sheets for staying guests physically in the hotels - Newsletters with updated information - Press release team - Inform about quarantine hotels near airports in the media and on the website

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENT

ACTIVITIES

O Press releases
O Social media channels / Webpage
O Newsletters
E Applying for stimulus check/financing
S Banks, partners, government authorities, tenants, suppliers
S Podcast - Stormkast
P Social media advertisements
P Loopon
P Paid influencers on Instagram

MEASUREMENT & INSIGHTS

MEASURE ACTIVITY

OUTPUTS

- **S** Press releases
- **S** Stordalen interviews
- **S** NCH staff interviews
- **O** Updated website information on Covid-19
- **O** Social media
- **S** Podcast - Stormkast
- **S** Quarantine hotel and other contributions

AUDIENCE RESPONSE & EFFECTS

OUT-TAKES

1. Increased SoMe activity - reactions, likes, comments
2. Good media reach towards stakeholders
3. Health personnel can make use of available accommodation
4. Ranking 3.4 out of 5 on NCH Facebook page
5. Financial support from the government
6. Negative reactions on Stordalens media statements
7. Critique on economic aspects of the crisis
8. Mixed reactions to the furlough situtation - sympathy and discust

OUTCOMES

1. Stordalen invited to Lindmo talkshow
2. Sympathy for the people with furlough/laid off
3. Loan from DNB - 1 billion
4. Increased understanding amongst stakeholders
5. Still a decrease in bookings
6. Less conferences
7. Turnover in 2020 reduced by 5.1mill NOK
8. 300mill NOK in compensation in 2020, from the government

ORGANISATION & STAKEHOLDER EFFECTS

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

1. Overall Objective: 2020: The hotels have survived, but NHC has had a 43% decrease in turnover, equivalent to 1,93 billion NOK before taxes (ca. 200 million NOK every month)
2. Customers: Social change - Coronavirus measures have been undertaken. Sanitary equipment etc. is included in all hotels. Website is frequently updated. The media has been informed.
3. Profit a): Managed to secure financing from DNB - 1 billion NOK.
4. Profit b): Also obtained financial support from the government.
5. Employees a): The furlough process turned out to be quite turbulent, but we managed to secure the information going out to the media.
6. Employees b): There should however have been more direct meetings with employees in the initial phases of the crisis, instead of focus on the media.
7. Social responsibility: Arranging deals with the government to help the public and health personell with accomodations in quarantine hotels

TINE SKJELSTAD

Strategic Leadership in Organizational Communication: From Strategy to Everyday Action on Climate Change

ABSTRACT

This article offers a comparative analysis of strategic communication in two Norwegian environmental organizations: Action for Ocean / Passion for Ocean and LOOP Foundation for Recycling, based on leadership theory and the AMEC framework communication analysis tool.

Keywords: LOOP Foundation for recycling, Passion for Ocean, climate change, strategic communication, AMEC

Introduction

Two organizations are highlighted – their original names are: LOOP Foundation for recycling and Passion for Ocean. These have both developed into several organizations and subdivisions and their practice has evolved on how they organize their activities connected to communication on target goals in strategic communication. The author has no affiliation with either organization discussed in this article. The article will first discuss what leadership traits and skills are needed to maintain a flexible, positive and active role during constant evolvement in times of change. I will start by giving a brief presentation of who these organizations are, followed by a short comparison by analysing them with the strategic communication measurement tool AMEC. Following this, their similarities and differences are addressed in two areas: how they are organized and how they communicate their visions, objectives and activities to their audiences. Through the discussion I will include insights from the organizations' own activity and reports, interviews with leaders within the organizations, external advice on leadership in general, and look at some theoretical frameworks on leadership and communication, in addition to statistics on sustainability connected to climate change. The empirical data used includes annual reports and information gathered from interviews for the implementation of information into the AMEC Framework. Throughout the text, I also refer to the UN Sustainability Goals, and most relevant for this article are the indicators stating sub-goals to the main categories listed:

> Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable administration of water and sanitation for all; Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation; Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable; Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns; Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts; Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development; Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. (SSB – Statistisk sentralbyrå, 2017; UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development, 2021)

The Norwegian government's prioritization includes reducing by 50% the waste of food and reduce the production of waste.

When discussing climate change and global warming in terms of organizational communication, it is extensive and can be traced to factors that began with the Industrial Revolution, such as energy production and transportation (Miller, 2014). However, there are useful leadership styles that are beneficial to such a complex and uncertain situation. I will therefore look at purpose-based leadership where a key element revolves around why leaders do what they do and how this contributes to forming leadership style. Closely connected to the development of sustainable leadership in an organization is transformational leadership theory, which is also partly driven by the situational approach and contains elements of authentic and adaptive leadership. A transformational leader must be able to work towards adaption to situational challenges (Northouse, 2010). Important factors to take into consideration include the organization's members and the followers' relationship to their leaders. One example is how leaders go about executing the way they communicate, and how they choose to focus their work in order to reach members and followers to encourage active participation in our common effort to integrate the UN Sustainability Goals in our society as a whole (United Nations, 2021). When the need or wish to change the world emerges in an organization dealing with transformation or when a situation arises, such as working on attitudes and responsibility concerning both recycling and taking action to save the ocean, the organization, and the mission, will benefit from working with a constitutive model that includes the audience as participants in that communication. This is because a model that promotes an overarching way of thinking works better when trying to create engagement and spread knowledge that will inspire and promote change (Northouse, 2010; Miller, 2014).

Presentation of two organizations

First a few basic facts. Passion for Ocean started as a foundation in 2012, and by 2021 had become divided into three different organizations, Passion for Ocean, Action for Ocean and Knowledge for Ocean. I will include two of these in this analysis; Passion for Ocean and Action for Ocean. For practical reasons I will, in general, address the two as one and call it Action/Passion for Ocean (A/PfO), and I will clarify when these two are discussed as separate organizations. The other organization, LOOP Foundation, was founded in 2000 and had by 2021 developed the LOOP Miljøskole (LOOP Environmental School) as a subdivision. This was in order to promote direct participation in education and projects in selected schools in Norway. Both organizations have concentrated their work in Norway, but are currently developing cooperation, or are in communication with other European countries for potential cooperation, sharing of information and networking. In the Table 1 below, I provide an overview showing some useful key points representing the organizations I will discuss.

Organizational communication is highly integrated in the debates about the climate crisis and what to do about it (Miller, 2014). With the continuous challenges of changing demographics, and the choice of whom to reach, we need to carefully consider, and update, how we communicate in order to be effective in our ways of communicating. This applies both to achieving organizational goals, and at the same time to respecting differences and cultural diversity. In order to execute effective and responsible communication, both internally and externally, organizations need to have leaders who focus on their own traits and skills, as well as the organization’s culture (Northouse, 2010). Having a focus

Table 1. Overview of key organizational features[1]

Name	Action for Ocean	Passion for Ocean	Loop Foundation for recycling
Website	actionforocean.com	passionforocean.no	loop.no
Org. form	Joint stock company	Association	Foundation
Funding	Campaigning and cooperation with Passion for Ocean festivals	Handelens miljøfond (Trade environmental fund), Miljødirektoratet (The Norwegian Environment Agency), Oslo Havn (Port of Oslo), Kulturetaten (the Government Agency for Cultural Affairs), Bymiljøetaten (the Urban Environment Agency)	Municipalities in Norway pay for membership and can use and order a wide range of LOOP's material, and get access to the LOOP app.
Org. objectives	Reduce negative human social impact on ocean	Reduce negative human social impact on ocean	Contribute to more recycling and less waste, contribute to EU's goal to reach 65% material recycling in households within 2035. (LOOP is developing new objectives spring 2021)
Main partners/ audiences	Business leaders and businesses who locate their activity close to the coast	Young adults 15+, young children+parents, producers, politicians/ authorities, other stakeholders	LOOP Foundation – municipalities and companies who do renovation and recycling LOOP Miljøskole – children in schools and kindergardens

1 I have chosen to present both Action for Ocean and Passion for Ocean separately in this table, in order to make visible the differences and similarities in the two sister organizations. For a more detailed overview, I refer to the AMEC Measurement Framework (Appendix 1).

Main activities:	Consultancy and projects, work with business leaders to promote change and responsibility, Campaigns with Ocean Front Runners, and currently developing course curriculum on circularity for the construction industry	Education and projects. Yearly festival to raise awareness and education to promote knowledge about the ocean (Bryggeprat, stands, education, sales and networking), and summer camp for children in Oslo, TV-series "På tur med Deigen" (knowledge-heavy)	Education, campaigns, projects Delivers services and information to recycling companies, TV-series "Bærekraftskolen" in cooperation with NRK[2] Skole, lectures and key talks. New national waste labelling-system for private households and workplaces
Comm. objectives	Increase people's awareness about their choices and positive changes for ocean environment	Increase people's awareness about their choices and positive changes for ocean environment	Cooperate with municipalities and recycling companies, support municipalities with materials and knowledge, produce informative content for young people (LOOP is developing new objectives spring 2021)

Sources: LOOP, 2019; Passion for Ocean, 2019; LOOP, 2021; Passion for Ocean, 2021; Brønnøysundregistrene, 2021

on followers and constantly analysing the situation in the global biological, political and financial field of climate change are crucial to maintaining a positive development for the organization as a whole. In the business of climate change, the importance of positive impact and action that engages inspired followers cannot be underestimated. After the UN General Assembly, through "Agenda 2030" (Utenriksdepartementet, 2020), clearly stated that the issue is urgent, and in 2015 presented the UN Sustainability Goals, much has happened to organizations which had already been active in the arena for years. As both leaders in Action for Ocean, Rebekka de Leon, and Project Leader for LOOP Environmental School, Fredrikke Friis Bertheussen, confirm in interviews, their organizations have gone through considerable changes both in terms of the way they made changes to the organizations, but also with respect to clarifying and altering strategic objectives, goals and activities. Before I continue bringing

2 NRK is the national broadcasting company in Norway.

their strategic choices into my discussion on leadership theory, I will present the AMEC measurement tool.

Figure 1. AMEC and the Barcelona Principles

Source: Courtesy of AMEC (https://amecorg.com/barcelona-principles-3-0-translations)

What is AMEC?

Due to the growing complexity of required presence on a variety of platforms, and the need for continuous measurement and evaluation of communication, the AMEC (AMEC, 2021) saw the need for a more focused and complete way for businesses to operationalize the Barcelona-principles (Barcelona Principles 3.0, 2020; Wynne, 2016), turn their principles into action and prove the value of their work on communication. After presenting the need for an upgrade of the already existing Barcelona principles, AMEC developed the interactive Integrated Evaluation Framework. The Framework is meant to be a response to a vast selection of other program evaluation tools in PR and communication which they found not to be holistically sufficient in terms of outputs. AMEC wanted to include practice from several other fields such as public administration, management studies, social science disciplines and social psychology in order to present more complete opportunities for measurement of the organization's communication efforts. Their work has resulted in a framework that allows an organization to analyse results related to defined goals based on their own inputs on objectives (organizational and communicative), target audience, strategy, activities, outputs, out-takes, outcomes and impact. The intended analysis will allow the organization to dive into detailed discussion on what their message is and to what extent it gets across. For example, if planning and execution are going according to plan, consider both quantitative and qualitative measures, define ethical practice, recognize potential bias, etc.

As Nothhaft, Werder, Verčič et al. (2018) discuss in their article on strategic communication as an elusive concept, there is no common denominator defined by the communication community on what strategic communication actually is, or what it should be. Communication has many aspects and can be seen as a transmission from a sender to a receiver, or as "a process that produces and reproduces shared meaning"; the constitutive model (Miller, 2014). However, when one looks closer into the field of strategic communication and whether it is an emerging discipline that is ready to go, or already has defined its concepts, or if it should continue to be a discipline in progress operating closer to the natural sciences, testing and trying out hypotheses, there are no clear answers. Nothhaft et al. name the two camps: sophisticators and progressers and bring in Kuhn's theory on scientific revolution and Schneider's four-stage model for disciplinary emergence (Nothhaft et al., 2018). The four stages in Schneider's model are: 1) The invention of a discipline, 2) Contributions and implementation of ideas, 3) Technical expertise and testing, and 4) Discoveries from mature disciplines. Not all of these stages apply to all types of disciplines. There are certain traits that make some disciplines, or researchers, more fit than others in the different stages. The article suggests stage 1 and 4 are the most suitable for our field, strategic communication. So why then would strategic communication be elusive? Because, according to Nothhaft et al. (2018, p. 358), "the value of a concept lies largely in its explanatory power" and how it seems elusive because strategic communication is not introducing a new explanation, but is based upon Schneider's fourth stage, bringing back an old one. Therefore, good method is the key.

If we transpose this to the AMEC, it is closely connected to the values stated in the Barcelona principles, already from the first principle: “Goals start with the change you want to see, and should be founded in research” (Wynne, 2016, p. 4), and the explanatory power stated in the principles can be referred to throughout; where we are today, planning, execution, differentiation of outcomes, out-takes and outputs, exploring communication efforts and measure effect, analytical approaches with focus on both quantitative and qualitative measurement, what to do, what not to do, etc. These are just keywords from the extensive explanation of the principles. The leader’s pursuit of progress and balance, and efforts that aim to put focus on the people, might be aligned with the leaders’ intentions, but members of an organization also might see things entirely differently.

> If there is one recommendation to take away from Schneider’s model, it is to look for a language that first and foremost allows for operationalization in methods and techniques, that allows for empirical research, for testability, at least in principle. (Nothhaft et al., 2018, pp. 357–358)

The AMEC Framework (AMEC, 2021) is intended to point communication workers in the direction of strategic measurement and has taken into account that strategic communication can be elusive and that it is in a state of constant becoming (Nothhaft et al., 2018), but still the framework can be implemented as part of a communication process during a process of becoming.

Analyzing Action / Passion for Ocean and LOOP with the AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework

In my introductory overview of the organizations, I listed a brief overview on their main objectives and activities. In this section I will investigate what happens after that. When working with the AMEC framework, the organization lists its collection of objectives, goals and activities listed in the beginning. Further along the categorization in AMEC can help to analyze and measure this activity (AMEC, 2021). This gives the organization a unique opportunity to investigate quantitative and qualitative measures side by side, and to differentiate between outputs, out-takes and outcomes, and finally what impact has our activity made? In her experience connected to the goal AMEC has set for the Framework, Rebekka de Leon, the CEO of Action for Ocean, refers to the AMEC as a tool from which she gained unexpected insight and could draw out a broader overview on connections between different areas in the communication work within an organization. However, she could not see how it could be a useful tool to create a full ad campaign (Passion for Ocean, 2021).

The features in AMEC can strengthen the organization's planning during periods of transition, both traditionally during the change in markets or other changes in situations within the organization. However, in 2021 we see a whole new scope when it comes to planning for new scenarios, day-to-day changes and different kinds of futures than we anticipated. It can help enhance change management, not only connected to responsiveness, but to be able to design and plan for you customer needs on all levels in the organization. This will allow the organization to take use of knowledge that already is broadly embedded within the company and produces new demands for leaders to fulfill their role that might contrast with traditional views of a leader. Looking to the framework in transformational leadership, this resonates with the need to model the way and inspire for a shared vision, both very relevant for communication to engage climate change in individuals and groups, private and in other organizations.

This way of thinking can be closely connected to the practice in the organization LOOP and in NRK Skole (National Broadcasting company in Norway's education/school department) by looking at how they chose to implement their collaboration in the production of a short film campaign on recycling and consumption connected to the UN Sustainability Goals and sustainable living (LOOP, 2021). The two organizations developed a small idea, originally planning to make two mini documentaries together, into a quite large project with a series of 16 short films hosted by individuals already well-known to their audience from tv-series, tv shows, blogging and productions for young people in Norway. By doing this, they have merged followership into their organizations' ecosystems, and consider and treat citizens and followers as members, thus creating a common shared vision and purpose. Leading an organization this way demands an extended view of the organization´s responsibilities of leading the way for society as a whole in climate crisis. I will further use this example to bring in the topic of transformational leadership, following an introduction to the idea of transformational leadership, pivoting back to AMEC and my two chosen organizations further down in the article.

What is transformational leadership?

In a world that is moving and changing in unforeseen ways every day, the ability to be agile and to look at perspectives from different angles, almost on a daily basis, is very important in order to be a learning and responsive organization (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). Your plans might be quickly outdated and the need for prospective thinking is needed to find your effective position within your market. This does not only apply to financial goals, but also to objectives that include to engage and inspire followers. Being a transformational leader with an authentic approach to life and work, will give the organization stable processes and relations. Simon Sinek compares this to leading like a parent (Sinek, 2014). A leader who leads to inspire and to encourage the heart will have a larger impact when that same organization is trying to enable others to act. This closely echoes the view of Bertheussen from LOOP Environmental School when she explains the hard work she put into the short film project, considering it to be like a "child" to her (LOOP, 2021). This also falls well into de Leon's description of how she created an organization that has now developed from a place where she herself was leading and doing "everything", to now having employees and is expanding into several separate sister organizations (Passion for Ocean, 2021). Sinek underlines the importance of natural inspiration, that the leader goes first, and "gives blood, sweat and tears", thus being able to stand through the sometimes resource and energy consuming processes required for campaigns and films. Especially when working with sustainability for citizens and societal processes of change, the possibility to reflect this within the organization itself would enhance possibilities for people to understand the future and to plan responses. Safe people have more self-efficacy (Northouse, 2010).

In a "VUCA world" (VUCA – volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity), what members of organizations can benefit from is stability (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). It is not just about things, it is about trust, authenticity and people. When trying to solve problems in order to change the world, looking at the organization's financial goals isolated from its communication goals is no longer sufficient (Miller, 2014). "Great leaders would never sacrifice their people to save the numbers" (Sinek, 2014). Great leaders do heart counts, not head counts. Great leaders lead with the heart to raise moral and positive action and will match it's input to fit the situation; great leaders adapt their behaviours to the situational challenges. This complex way of embracing leadership is demonstrated by example in Action for Ocean, as the CEO de Leon describes the importance of choosing to work with something you believe in when starting a new organization. She emphasizes her view on the importance of commercializing the sustainability goals:

> If taking care of the ocean remain a surplus agenda, it is never going to work. We need to make sure that the people who work with taking good care of the ocean also make money from doing this work. It has to be integrated into the business model if we are going to make this work sustainable and a lasting effort that will lead to changes. Not all will agree with this. Others are not motivated by making money. And this is exactly where we get these really important and fruitful discussions. We chose to solve this by separating our organization into several parts, and I am now leading the part of the organization that will focus on the part connected to commercialization, while others work on the part that is more idealized and directed towards communication and training of children and young people. In this collaboration we use tools to create common goals and objectives, and I think the AMEC Integrated Framework is a very good tool to communicate in this type of diverse cross-communication work internally and between organizations. (Passion for Ocean, 2021)

Further, following up from the example on how the Project Leader for LOOP Environmental School described the process of making the short films, this example is state of the art for how to perform transformational leadership with authenticity, motivation and inclusion (Northouse, 2010). This is leadership performed in contrast to transactional leadership, where the transformational leader takes into account engagement with other people and communication with co-operators and participants that enhances a sense of connection and contribution. This leader aims to help followers and participants, and members, fulfil their fullest potential. This is highly relevant and closely connected to the core values of LOOP Foundation which already pays attention to their followers´ and members needs and motives, and the foundations focus on how we are aiming for a common, greater good for all. Listening to Bertheussen talking about how they experienced that "everyone" seemed to want to be engaged in their project, how people volunteered and helped spread the finished product is true to all of the four I's described below.

To take a step further into the transformational leadership style, I will present a model of "The Full Range Leadership" (Northouse, 2010, p. 178)[3].

[3] Model based on Bass, B.M., & Avolio, B.J., (1994) *Improving Organizational Effectiveness Through Transformational Leadership*. SAGE Publications, as presented in Northouse, P.G. (2010). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (5th ed). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

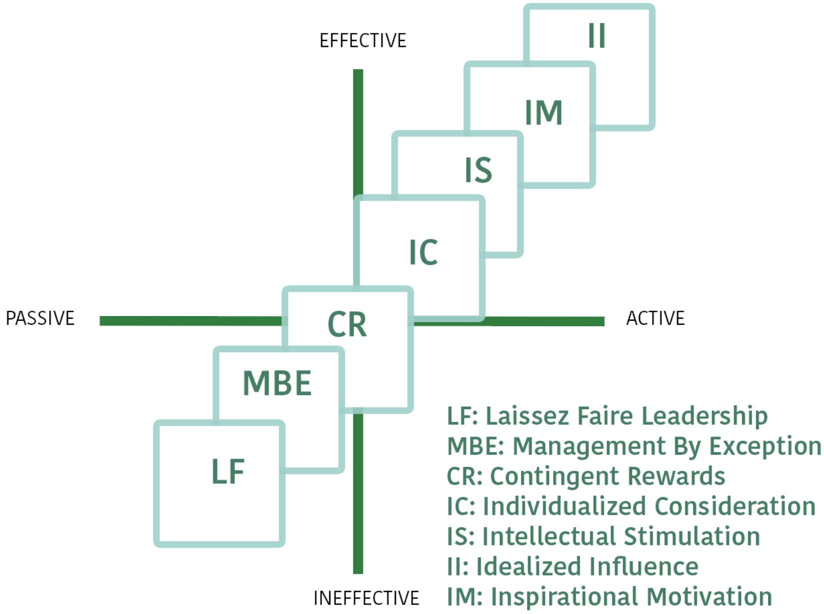


Figure 2. The Full Range Leadership Model

Source: Courtesy of Northouse, 2010

A quick glimpse at this model provides knowledge about what a leader should bear in mind when taking on responsibility of leading through change and uncertainty. I will give a short explanation of some of the terms listed in the model; the 4 I's: 1) Idealized Influence: Charisma, leaders as role models, followers identify with leaders, others want to follow their visions. 2) Inspirational Motivation: Leader communicate high expectations to followers, commitment to shared vision. 3) Intellectual Stimulation: Leader stimulate followers to be creative and innovative and to challenge own beliefs. 4) Individualized Consideration: Leader provide supportive climate, listen carefully and act as coaches and advisers, help followers become fully actualized.

The next model shows how transactional leadership needs more in order to be inspiring and effective, and thus can form transformation and performance beyond expectations: "The additive effect of Transformational and Transactional Leadership" (Northouse, 2010)[4].

[4] Model based on Bass, B.M., & Avolio, B.J. (1990). The Implications of Transactional and Transformational Leadership for Individual, Team, and Organizational Development. *Research in Organizational Change and Development, 4*, 231–272, as presented in Northouse, P.G. (2010). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (5th ed). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

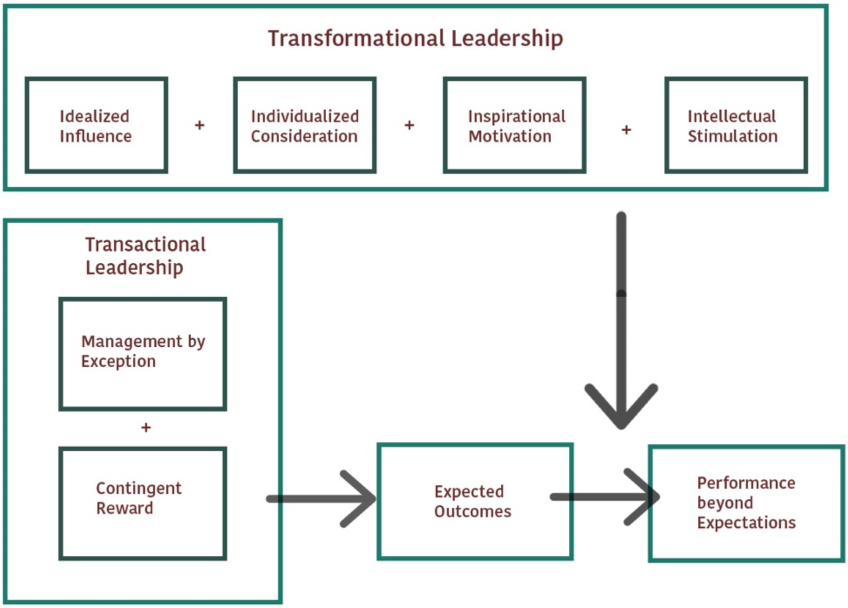


Figure 3. The Additive Effect of Transformational and Transactional Leadership

Source: Courtesy of Northouse, 2010

The work of a transformational leader, who is aware of the importance of situational adaptivity, focuses more on the emotional elements than prior models of transformational leadership and shows that for example charisma is a necessary, but not sufficient condition. Rather than simply focusing on expected outcomes, a transformational leader aims higher. In short, we can say that transformational leadership aims to improve the performance of followers and to inspire followers to expand and develop to their fullest potential. They focus on a broader aspect of the person and the project than reward-based action or criticism and negative feedback, which in the model above are shown as contingent reward and management-by-exception. A philosophy that takes into account the value of the four I's added, would be very useful for the organizations in their internal work, but is also particularly useful for the organizations which have taken on responsibility to participate in providing citizens with the knowledge that will help them make good choices that can have direct impact on whether we reach the sustainability goals set by the UN (Utenriksdepartementet, 2020), it makes the focus on what choices a leader should consider an even more pressuring issue. As a leader who successfully tries to create positive development, the leader must consider its position according to the situation, organization members and followers. This is the integrated Model of Leadership. It involves considering several aspects which mix theories and approaches in leadership in order to create and maintain an organization who communicates effectively. The leader is dependent on not only certain traits and skills, but also needs to consider its competence and commitment, behaviours and decision styles, and context and task structures.

Discussion – Communicating climate change and leadership

In the book "Organizational Communication", Katherine Miller (2014, p. 8) poses some relevant questions that are closely related to how the organizations work, and I will use a selection of them as guiding questions in my discussion on the two organizations.

"How can organizations reinvent themselves to reduce or eliminate their contributions to global warming?" (Miller, 2014, p. 8). This question goes straight to the core value of both LOOP and Action/Passion for Ocean (A/PfO). Along with "How can organizations effectively enhance awareness of the ways in which individuals make a difference in influencing the process of climate change?" (Miller, 2014, p. 8). Both organizations aim to give solutions for individuals to make their own good choices on recycling or conserving the ocean. Both organizations have gone through structural changes in how they are organized, in order to make communication work on specific programs or make campaigns more effective. The agility both organizations show, mainly explained in both interviews, are closely connected to what Northouse describes as authentic leadership and is connected to leadership traits as emotional intelligence (Northouse, 2010), ability to make sustainable and fair choices in delegating, supporting, coaching and leading. The need for responsible, trustworthy, transparent and morally grounded leadership (Northouse, 2010) is emerging, according to Northouse, due to leadership failures in public and private sectors. But Simon Sinek sees this also as closely connected with the emerging crisis the world must solve together. And according to Sinek, the world needs an authentic leader who would never value profit over person but would rather be the trusted companion of the employees, comparable with how military training relies on their leader's ability for compassion and support to keep people alive (Sinek, 2014).

"How can entrepreneurs address the 'greening of organizations' as an opportunity for both profit and social responsibility?" (Miller, 2014, p. 8). This question is interesting in a historical sense, as this is the exact consideration taken to form Action for Ocean out of the already existing Passion for Ocean (Passion for Ocean, 2021). Historically, global warming and climate change are rooted in the Industrial Revolution, and the related industries had to be included in the work on reversing negative impact on the environment (Miller, 2014). The campaigning we have seen up until recent years has been focused much on oil, trawling, plastic and the melting of ice. When looking at campaigning connected with the sorting of waste and recycling, we have traditionally been mostly occupied with what waste goes in which bin (LOOP, 2021), and not so much with seeing why we should be sorting waste.

Both LOOP and A/PfO have existed long enough to see a shift in how effective communication to young people is being produced, and also if the audience reach is successful. Traditional ways of running campaigns on climate change had to be moved from activists to the general citizen, thus demanding agility and ability to understand and analyze what the "new society" was requiring of them (LOOP, 2021). In order to meet the new challenge of showing citizens and target groups the bigger picture, the organizations are faced by new challenges. The way A/PfO's organization considered its most effective potential, was to split parts of the organization into a joint stock venture, Action for Ocean, where Passion for Ocean would still remain a foundation (Passion for Ocean, 2021). This was done to be able to focus on broader target audiences and to create real-value impact in, for example, businesses operating along the Norwegian coastline. This would allow parts of the organization to work more aligned with business forces, especially in the construction industry, which are ranked very high on the list of which industries cause the most pollution and damage to their surroundings. LOOP Environmental School developed in a similar way. Their mission was from the beginning to communicate with young people and school children in an inspiring way, and further developed into a larger company whose additional objective became to inform and affect all municipalities in Norway through their sorting campaigns directed to both citizens and companies (LOOP, 2021).

"How do organizational and government representatives speak to various publics about ways in which energy policy and practices influence the environment?" (Miller, 2014, p. 8). As we investigate earlier in this article, LOOP and NRK Skole made a large production cooperating on making short films for young people to explain what they can do about the situation we are in concerning changes we ought to make in order to reach the UN Sustainability Goals. Their project is being launched in spring 2021, but also Passion for Ocean has gone into a similar project (Passion for Ocean, 2021). Due to the pandemic, COVID-19, that spread globally in spring 2020, Passion for Ocean had to cancel their summer festival, and restructured their funds creating a video project that could replace the reach they would have seen visiting the five major cities in southern Norway (Asdal, 2020). After choosing a program host, they sent him to the five cities, initially being part of the festival program. The host is followed by a film crew in his meetings with people who live by, and work with, or on, the ocean and in marine industries.

It is a knowledge-intensive series, approximately 30 minutes per episode, longer than LOOP's five-minute short films, and Passion for Oceans' films have more action in them. We meet the host on his travel to see people along the coast, and he brings his audience into meetings with aqua-tech experts and testing of the latest technology developed in order to have a positive impact on life in the ocean, as well as on laid-back explorative walks on the beach. The meetings result in an inviting view into the world of development of devices to clean or engines that produce less emissions. We also meet an enthusiastic biologist (Pia Ve Dahlen from Knowledge for Ocean, the third of the sister organizations mentioned in the above presentation of the organizations) who explains the variety of micro marine life along the coastline, and we see alternative options for vacations close to the sea in Norway. The focus is local, sustainability, saving species diversity, building and innovating technology that can have an impact; all very close to what we introduced at the beginning of this article as the Norwegian government's main priorities. The target group for these films might be the group just a little older than LOOP's age group 13–17 years. The CEO of Action for Ocean, Rebekka de Leon, is working in cooperation with TV2 Skole, who are interested in using their content as an educational series, thus a suitable contribution to the important change in the national school curriculum in Norway (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2021). Apart from the production of videos, both organizations have a vast selection of activities ranging from campaigns, school visits, festivals, harbor projects, activity material for children, etc., and they both include well-known faces from tv or other media in their choices on who will represent their cases. They are also considerate to the inclusion of all age groups, the increasing multicultural society, and working on adjusting their information for people who might be prevented from understanding the information due to developmental disabilities, language barriers, etc. (Moerlie & Vaagan, 2019; LOOP, 2021).

How to engage and speak to audiences when trying to influence on the environment?

> No (…) organization is able to tap into the full potential of the Internet. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid hidden normative assumptions about how (…) organizations should use the Internet and analyze how they actually use it. (Nitschke et al., 2016, p. 745)

If we compare LOOP Environmental School's and A/PfO's results in AMEC, we can see they are quite similar in their choices on campaigning, activities and what social media they are represented on, but they also have their differences in prioritization and where they put their main focus. Looking to the social media part of this picture, we can see that their numbers before LOOP Environmental School's mini documentary campaign, were quite similar in terms of engagement and increase; LOOP Environmental School had approximately 20,000 people engaging on social media (LOOP, 2021), where A/PfO had approximately 17,000 people (Passion for Ocean, 2021). LOOP Environmental School saw a 42% increase in followers over the past ten years, where A/PfO saw 22% increase over the past five years. However, after the launch of the short film campaign LOOP Environmental School had in cooperation with NRK Skole and 45 other leading brands in the business of climate change awareness (WWF, Fremtiden i våre hender, etc.), they ran a paid campaign on Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, in addition to having their co-operators upload and share their trailer for the campaign on their own social media channels. (The Sustainability School, 2021). This led to an increase, and the numbers quickly rose to 161,000 people engaging through their social media, and the numbers are still growing. It also allowed for LOOP Environmental School to segment their reach more accurately and thus be able to hit their target group for this precise topic, the young people who need to see the clearer picture on why we need to make changes to how we are living, and at the same time fulfilling the new demands connected with the new Norwegian school curriculum initiated in 2020/2021, as we touched upon earlier in this article. To sum up, I will pose the last of the selected questions from Katherine Miller (2014, p. 8): "How can government representatives engage in productive debate about ways nations can work together to influence climate change?" and reframe this to broaden her scope of a "government representative". In light of how these organizations are working to contribute to a global reach in results connected to the UN Sustainability Goals, we could assume all organizations, businesses, industries, citizens, young and old, are affected by this question. What our two chosen organizations are developing next, in order to continue to broaden their reach, is to look to global cooperation on information to other societies that could benefit from drawing upon experience already tested out in Norway. Specifically, this concerns waste handling, sorting and recycling, in LOOP Environmental School´s area, and awareness, innovation and consideration of environmental influences in the construction industries operating along the coast, in Action for Oceans' area.

Their communication work has resulted in both organizations being contacted to develop and share their experiences through education in new areas. LOOP Environmental School has been asked to present solutions and ideas projects in the Balticum (LOOP, 2021) and A/PfO has been asked to develop a new part of the education program for the construction industries based upon the new curriculum for schools in Norway initiated 2020/2021, that includes sustainability as an individual subject area that will integrate across in interdisciplinary studies (Passion for Ocean, 2021). These are promising inquiries for the development of international and multicultural cooperation for both organizations. LOOP Environmental School and A/PfO have in this sense embraced the complex process of effective communication which modern society requires and are executing their organizational communication through intricate networks with expanded connectivity partnerships, and thus audiences, rather than simply sending their message through a traditional S-M-C-R (Sender-Message-Channel-Receiver) model (Miller, 2014).

Closing remarks

To conclude, I will pose a last question; what have we learned about our two chosen organizations on how they execute leadership to communicate and activate? We started out by looking into the UN Sustainability Goals, and what the Norwegian governments priorities are in this context. Then I gave a brief introduction of my two chosen organizations LOOP Foundation for recycling and Action/Passion for Ocean, listing an overview of how they are organized and what their main objectives are. Further I explained the AMEC Framework, which I have used both to extract the information to present these two organizations, but also to make a comparison and analysis of who they are, how they organize and what they do, in a relatively similar field of work. Explaining the AMEC Framework as a strategic measurement tool, I have also given a brief look into why the AMEC was created and what principles it is based upon, the Barcelona Principles. To show in practice how the organizations work and develop, I chose to connect it with Northouse's theory on transformational leadership, which has been explained by presenting the values through the four I's; idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration; and how they add on to transactional leadership, creating a more value-based transformational type of leadership that is closely connected to authentic and situational leadership. To show how the organizations choices reflect transformational leadership, I have focused mainly on their video campaigns, which included many new collaborators and created highly increased engagement through social media, and in addition has led to new openings for more possibilities on global cooperation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. AMEC Measurement Framework – Action for Ocean

AMEC Measurement Framework
Action for Ocean

PREPARATION

ALIGN OBJECTIVES

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES	COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES
Reduce negative human made impact on ocean	Increase peoples awareness about their choices and positive changes for ocean environment

INFORM & PREPARE COMMUNICATION

TARGET AUDIENCE	STRATEGIC INPUTS
1 Young adults (15+) **2** Young children + parents **3** Producers **4** Politicians/authorities **5** Other stakeholders	Knowledge about how the ocean works/marin biologists and researchers Knowledge about what can be done/engineers and LCA's Motivational factors for key audiences/ communication and interaction Waterlovers... different activities and reasons to love the ocean Business successes based on branding for good

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENT

ACTIVITIES

P survey general on population - knowledge
S target partners for activities and interaction - role models/volunteers
O SWOT-analysis for activities
O Webpage, social media channels
E Microinfluencers and people with "names" ++
activity
S Network industries/relevant examples
S Knowledge partners
S Logistics and organizing
E Applying for support

MEASUREMENT & INSIGHTS

S Facebook Event - 24 hours long
S Activity within group on FB
S Inviting partners to participate and share in their own channels

O Personal engagement and sharing microinfluencers
O Preparing events

AUDIENCE RESPONSE & EFFECTS

OUT-TAKES

1 3-5000 visitors main event
2 Followers increased rapidly
3 Interest rise - likes and comments
4 Biologists - facilitate quality discussions
5 Increase number who want to participate in activities
6 People who want to support with money
7 Volunteers for events - many want to take part

OUTCOMES

1 Media started to ask us for participating in programmes
2 TV-series Planet Plast / we are part of
3 Referred to as an organization awakening awareness among young people
4 Business partners want to collaborate, know what to do
5 Authorities ask for methodology / how to make change this way
6 Business leaders want to be associated / Ocean Front Runners
7 Part of Norwegian UNGC-platform

ORGANISATION & STAKEHOLDER EFFECTS

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

1 2019: 10.000 visitors in Oslo + Event in Trondheim and Bergen
2 2020: Summercamp for children Oslo (2 weeks) 2021: 4 weeks
3 2021: Additional events in Stavanger and Arendal
4 2019: Action for Ocean new organization established to work more commercially with producers and consoumers
5 2021: Participating in International projects developing knowledge about human impact on ocean
6 2021: Asked to develop studies: Innovation, circularity and sustainability within construction and urban development

Appendix 2. AMEC Measurement Framework – LOOP

LOOP

PREPARATION

ALIGN OBJECTIVES

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES	COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES
Contribute to reaching EU goal of 65% material recycling of household waste etc. within the year 2035. Inspire people to recycle more and throw away less. LOOP is currently reframing their strategies and will present a new formulation on objecitves spring 2021	Increase poeples awareness about their choices and positive changes for ocean environment.

INFORM & PREPARE COMMUNICATION

TARGET AUDIENCE	STRATEGIC INPUTS
1 Young people school-ages **2** Renovation workers **3** Municipal workers **4** All citizens all ages - recycling	Collaborate with municipalities and waste disposal companies (wdc), who use our services to reach with information (based on facts) about all sorts of waste. We also work as a connector between municipalities and waste disposal companies. Lectures/workshops in schools.

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENT

ACTIVITIES

P New education films 2019, campaing short films
E Visiting schools
O Develop and distribute educational materials
O New webpages, new toolbox on webpage
O Recycling app
O #5forhvalen
O The Ocean starts here
O Dovett-campaign
S Ballott Bin
E Media work, presence in magazine articles and tv-shows

MEASUREMENT & INSIGHTS

MEASURE ACTIVITY

OUTPUTS

E FB+Insta organic - shared through NRK Skole + article 20,1k delinger
S share by blogger Ingrid Vik Lysne - good responde and broad reach on share
P Measure knowledge through IPSOS Omnibus
O Appr. 20% of all primary schools and 12% of all kindergardens have ordered physical material. Additional to this is the digital material
P trailer som egen annonse med to forskjellige tekstvarianter + spons av sideinnlegg 161.000 likes CPM 11,77

AUDIENCE RESPONSE & EFFECTS

OUT-TAKES

1. Several cooperators link vidoes on their pages
2. Broad cooperation with WWF, Strømmestiftelsen, Fremtiden i våre hender, Bellona, Naturvernforbundet, NRK Skole, Forskerfabrikken, osv.
3. trailer on FB+Insta reached young 13-17, spot on target group, 10.378 ppl. has seen as much as 25 % of the video

OUTCOMES

1. Planned 2 short films with NRK turned into 16 short films
2. Recent request to participate on internatioanl recycling projects, produce webinar in Balticum
3. Trailer campaign additional reach to people 35+
4. Target group has most reach, but Teacher group has more plays
5. Additional share through WWF, huge impact

ORGANISATION & STAKEHOLDER EFFECTS

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

1. 42% increase in inquiries from 2010 to 2019
2. Most Norwegian municipalities hold membership
3. Free materials for schools and kindergardens for all teachers in schools in member municipalities
4. Close cooperation and observations in selected school projects
5. Cooperation with other environmental organisations, national and international projects, e.g. development of recycling systems Mali
6. NRK Skole, who produced LOOP's short films, are used by 70% of all teachers in Norway
7. Broadening strategy from spring 2021

CAMILLA SOLBERG AND MATHILDE PAULSEN XI

Surviving a Global Pandemic as a Small Business

ABSTRACT

In this article, we have conducted an analysis of two companies from the communication industry. Due to the pandemic COVID-19, there have been challenging times for enterprises. We are curious about how small businesses have adapted to survive the crisis, and have therefore ended up with the following research question: How did the marketing agencies Top of Mind and Mana Communication adjust to survive the global crisis, COVID-19, through strategic leadership?

Through our literature review we define different theories of leadership in organization communication that are relevant in crisis management. We have chosen to include three methodological approaches in our article. In order to obtain more information about Top of Mind and Mana Communication, we have conducted two in-depth interviews with the leaders: Petter Omdal, and Line Rolfsnes, respectively. With the intention of getting a more detailed impression of their leadership style, we have included two questionnaires: The Skills Approach and The Leadership Trait. The purpose is to measure personal characteristics of their leadership. We have used the AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework to evaluate the communication strategy of Top of Mind and Mana Communication, during the time period at the start of the pandemic. In the analysis, we bring questions, data and theory together to answer the research question.

Keywords: crisis management, crisis communication, strategic leadership, COVID-19

Introduction

In 2019, 65,600 new companies were established in Norway (SSB, 2020a). Start-ups bring several benefits to the community, one of them being increased economic growth. However, not every start-up gets the opportunity to expand and live out their corporate vision. New figures from Statistics Norway show that only 28.4% of newly established enterprises in 2013 survived until 2018 (SSB, 2020b). Taking into consideration the low probability of surviving the first five years, how do start-ups and small businesses manage to survive a global crisis? Organizations that remain static, will often not survive for long. However, many naturally evolve and adapt to environmental needs, where success often depends on having effective leadership (Miller, 2015, p. 177). In our article, we will investigate and analyze how small communication firms can adjust to survive a global crisis. We have developed the following research question: How did the marketing agencies Top of Mind and Mana Communication adjust to survive the global crisis, COVID-19, through strategic leadership?

Subject of analysis

In our analysis, we will look into two joint stock companies from the communication industry. Both agencies are established in Bergen, Norway. We consider it appropriate to compare two companies from the same district. Since the pandemic started in March 2020, there have been varying degrees of infection in different parts of the country. As a result, some cities have been subject to strict and prolonged restrictions by the authorities. By choosing two agencies from the same area, we can ensure that they have been exposed to the same restrictions at the same time, which gives them equal prerequisites to adapt.

Top of Mind

Top of Mind AS is a digital marketing agency which was founded in 2018. The company contains one shareholder, the owner and leader, Petter Omdal (Proff, 2021a). Currently the team consists of eight employees: three content developers, three digital marketers, one project leader and the manager. Of these, 50% are women and 50% men. Located in Bergen, they have now reached 60 customers all over Norway. The common denominator for the customers is that they want to increase their presence in social and digital media. In collaboration with the customer, Top of Mind's main goal is to help strengthen the company's digital presence through a carefully planned strategy, good content and an in-depth analysis of results. Omdal does not communicate a vision on their website, but they work with a strategy with the following focus areas: to optimize, inspire, engage and actualize (Top of mind, 2019).

A company's financial situation is crucial when a crisis occurs, especially for newly established organizations. Should a crisis arise, and the company has financial resources, they have the opportunity to pay expenses such as bills, rent and salaries to employees. Economy is therefore essential to include in the analysis. During its first year of operation, Top of Mind had an operating profit of NOK 144,000. The company did not have any long-term debt. In 2019, the liquidity ratio was 1.3, which indicates that there is a satisfactory degree of liquidity. This is positive as it demonstrates that the company's ability to pay is adequate. The equity ratio was at 27.3%, which actively demonstrates that the company has a very good ability to withstand losses (Proff, 2021a).

Mana Communication

Mana Communication AS (Mana) was founded in 2015 by Line Charlotte Johnsen Rolfsnes. The company has three shareholders, with Rofsnes being one of them (Proff, 2021b). Since the company's first year of operation in 2016, they have expanded to five employees. Of these, the team consists of four women and one man. They offer several services to their clients, including consulting, marketing strategy, campaigns, PR, advertising and content marketing in social media. The company's main value is to create attractive strategies and be a teammate for their customers, in addition they want to be creative, innovative and ambitious. The company's vision is to become the preferred digital marketing agency in Western Norway. The mission is to become a leading agency nationally, in Norway (Mana Communication, 2021).

In 2019, Mana had an increase in operating profit, from NOK -453,000 to NOK 118,000. Total debt had been reduced from NOK 1,070,000 to NOK 859,000. The company had a good profitability with 20.5%. Nevertheless, the liquidity ratio was weak at 0.62, and the equity ratio was not satisfactory at -55.3% (Proff, 2021b). The accounts from 2018 and 2019 show that Mana's financial situation has improved. However, the low liquidity and equity ratio does not provide the company with great financial security and can be a risk if an unforeseen crisis occurs.

Literature review

Theory can help researchers see new and overlooked aspects of the phenomenon they are studying, and the value in what they are investigating (Johannessen, Rafoss & Rasmussen, 2018). Before we begin on the analysis, we will therefore conduct a literature review of relevant theory within leadership and organizational communication during a crisis. The theory is mainly based on Peter G. Northouse's book "Leadership: Theory and practice and Katherine Miller's Organizational communication: Approaches and processes".

Leadership and leadership styles

Firstly, we want to define what leadership is, as it is one of the most important key terms in our analysis. There are many ways to conceptualize the phenomenon leadership, but Northouse identifies leadership as: a process where an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (2019). There are several theories about leadership styles. We consider the following approaches as the most relevant in crisis management.

Situational leadership

To be an effective leader requires adapting your leadership style to the requirements of different situations. In a crisis, the employee's skills and motivation have a tendency to vary over time. In a given situation, the leader must recognize what the followers need in order to achieve a specific objective. The situational approach emphasizes that leadership has two dimensions: directive and supportive, and that each must be used correctly when needed. The leader assesses the employees' level of competence and commitment, and adjusts the leadership style hereafter (Northouse, 2019).

Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is a process that transforms people, and often incorporates charismatic and visionary leadership. Leaders with this approach are concerned with values, long-term goals, ethics and emotions. This leadership style involves a strong form of influence, that motivates the employees to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them (Northouse, 2019). This is done by increasing their awareness of the importance of working towards concrete and ideal goals, getting employees to set common goals in the organization before their own, and helping them in the direction of meeting needs at a higher level, such as self-development and self-realization (Einarsen, Martinsen & Skogstad, 2017).

In the book “Leadership: theory and practice”, transformational leadership’s popularity is explained due to its focus on motivation and employer growth. In today’s world, the need for transformational leaders is huge, as employees often want to be inspired and empowered to succeed in times when things are uncertain. Therefore, in transformational leaders, it is important that they are prepared for change when it occurs (Northouse, 2019). As illustrated in The Full Range of Leadership Model, transformational leadership is best suited when the team needs effective and active leadership. The leader should appear as a role model that inspires and stimulates development (Northouse, 2019). These are qualities that are considered well suited in organizational change, and are needed when an organizational crisis occurs.

Adaptive leadership

When environments are changing, the ability to adapt is very critical in adaptive leadership. The importance of preparing and encouraging your employees to deal with the current change, is highly present to adaptive leaders. The common features of an adaptive leader are they often challenge their employees to face difficult challenges. Standing by the side line, they provide their employees with the space and opportunity to learn and grow by dealing with changes that occur. An adaptive leader is often concerned with how their employees deal with new circumstances, mainly in terms of change and adjustment (Northouse, 2019).

Gender and leadership

Considering that we are going to analyze two leaders, it is relevant to emphasize the fact that one leader is a man, and the other is a woman. Powell and Graves pointed out that the gender gap in leadership is a global phenomenon, where we often find women disproportionately concentrated in lower-level and lower authority leadership positions than men (Northouse, 2019). Further, Northouse presents several different studies that distinguish men from women in leadership. Researchers have concluded with different interpretations about gender and leadership style. Some argue that there is a difference, while others argue for the opposite. In our analysis, we will examine whether there are certain variations due to the gender difference in Omdal and Rolfsnes leadership style.

Culture and leadership

Due to our analysis of two companies located in Norway, Bergen, we found it interesting to investigate culture and leadership. The world consists of many countries with different cultures. This leads to a cross-cultural difference in leadership styles, including expectations, requirements and guidelines. Northouse presents data from "The GLOBE" study from 2004. Based on 62 countries, the study provided an analysis of similarities and differences between cultural groups, with meaningful generalizations about culture and management (2019). According to the study, Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, and Sweden) value and prioritize long-term success. Moreover, women are treated with greater equality. The Nordic European cluster scored high on "institutional collectivism, uncertainty avoidance and future orientation". However, they also scored low on "power distance, in-group collectivism and assertiveness" (Northouse, 2019, p. 634).

An ideal example of leadership in the Nordic European countries is characterized by being highly visionary and participative, while also being relatively diplomatic and independent. However, it is not as important that their leaders are humane or self-protective. Nordic Europeans favor leaders who are inspiring and involve others in decision making. Furthermore, it is not expected that their leaders are immensely compassionate, nor overly concerned with status and other self-centered attributes (Northouse, 2019).

Organizational crisis and crisis communication

Crises are obstacles that can arise for a company, often unpredictable, but also expected. The characteristics of a crisis are that it is surprising, acts as a threat to the company and it is necessary to act quickly. A crisis can be a threat to an organization as it can concern ongoing projects and goals that can be interrupted, the company's progress can be paused, and the reputation can be weakened to a great extent. At the same time, a crisis can lead to new opportunities to communicate in new effective ways, in addition to being better prepared for new crises that may arise in the future (Miller, 2015).

An organizational crisis usually evolves in three stages: precrisis, crisis, and postcrisis. Miller presents three subprocesses to divide the precrisis: signal detection, prevention and crisis preparation. Each sub-process will take precedence in different ways for different crises. In the crisis stage, there is a trigger that threatens an organization's survival or reputation. This period is characterized by a lot of uncertainty and trying to understand what is happening to the organization. Following this initial phase, the main task is managing the crisis, for instance by reducing damage and dealing with information dissemination. In the postcrisis stage, the focus is to delegate responsibility, communicate with stakeholders and develop systems for dealing with similar crises in the future (2015).

The COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19 stands for "Coronavirus Disease 2019", which is an infection with the virus SARS-CoV-2. The disease primarily affects the respiratory tract, but also other organ systems. In December 2019, an increase of cases of pneumonia was observed in the Chinese city Wuhan. At the beginning of January 2020, the Chinese authorities determined that this was a new type of viral disease (NHI, 2021). The virus continued to spread rapidly and affected every region of the world. On March 10, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a world pandemic; COVID-19 had hit at full force. At the time of writing (June 6, 2021), the virus has killed three million people all over the world since it first was discovered (New Scientist, 2021).

Previous research on the pandemic

In July 2020, Bartik, Bertrand, Cullen et al. (2020) wrote an article containing research on how COVID-19 had an impact on small American businesses concerning outcomes and expectations. They conducted a survey where they drew several interesting findings. Lay-offs were a central factor for the small businesses. Second was the high risk of being shut down, including the impact it had financially.

In October 2020, the global management consultancy firm McKinsey & Company, conducted a survey where they researched over 2,200 small and medium-sized businesses in Europe on how hard their prosperity has been hit during COVID-19. The results revealed that over 70%of the companies had noticed a severe decline in their revenue. The survey also discovered that even though 20% of the businesses had received financial support to pay taxes or payments to furlough staff, they were still concerned about having to enroll bankruptcy and not surviving the following 12 months (2020). McKinsey & Company also did a survey in April of 2021, where they asked 5,000 employees their thoughts about remote work. One of the more interesting findings is that organizations with clearer communication are seeing benefits to employee well-being and productivity (McKinsey & Company, 2021). The informants evaluate detailed information about policies and plans as the most important factor (2021).

Based on these findings, it will be interesting to see what we can discover in our analysis. Is there a similarity between the American and European businesses, or have they dealt with and handled the crisis of COVID-19 in totally different ways?

The pandemic's effect on Norwegian businesses

In order to reduce the infection rate, the Norwegian authorities have initiated extensive measures during the periods of high numbers of virus transition. The business community has been affected by the measurements, including home office, closing of restaurants and stores, travel restrictions and prohibition against events and gatherings (NHI, 2021). Steinar Holden, a professor at the University of Oslo, claims that the corona pandemic has led to great costs for the Norwegian economy. Holden stated that "Looking into previous downturns, COVID-19 has brought a substantial number of outcomes when it concerns the macroeconomic effects" (SSB, 2021).

In the Nordic countries, Denmark and Norway have had far less bankruptcies than Sweden and Finland due to help packages distributed from the Government (Eneto, 2020). On May 12, 2020, the Norwegian Government set a budget of NOK 109.5 billion on financial support for the suffering companies (E24, 2021). Financial aid has been given to businesses that under normal circumstances are profitable but are now facing difficult times adapting to new measures given from the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (Adeb, 2020).

In 2019, The Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration registered 1294 people in Norway who were furloughed. This number increased to 54,856 in 2020 (NAV, 2021). After the strict restrictions introduced in Norway in January 2021, unemployment in Norway has escalated considerably. The number of people registered unemployed has risen to 127,300, which amounts to 4.5% of the workforce (DN, 2021). It is also important to take into account those who work part-time and who do not have the right to unemployment benefits. This can lead to certain deviations.

Methodology

We have chosen to include three methodological approaches in our article. In order to obtain more information and valuable insight about Top of Mind and Mana, we have conducted two in-depth interviews with the leaders Per Omdal and Line Rolfsnes. With the intention of getting a more detailed impression of their leadership styles, we completed two questionnaires with the leaders and their employees. To get an overview of the leaders' handling of the crisis, we have used the AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework on both companies.

In-depth interviews

To answer the research question, we have included a qualitative method in our analysis. The study's purpose is to uncover what their business position was before the pandemic, what measures were implemented in which phase, and how the leaders organized and communicated to adapt to the crisis. Later in the article, we will, as mentioned, employ the AMEC Framework. We have therefore included some questions that will help us assemble information for the evaluation. Taking into account the situation with COVID-19, we considered it more appropriate to conduct the interviews digitally.

Strengths and weaknesses

The main reason why we have chosen to implement a qualitative method in our analysis, is that the subjects are two relatively new established companies. In contrast to large agencies, there is little public information and minimal amount of media coverage about Top of Mind and Mana. Qualitative methods also enable direct interaction, where specific topics can be followed up and misunderstandings clarified. Compared to a quantitative method, in-depth interviews provide the interviewer freedom to explore issues, and produce information in greater detail (Hansen & Machin, 2019).

We chose in-depth interviews instead of focus groups, because the topic of the article can be perceived as sensitive for the interviewees[1]. The pandemic has had a major impact on the society and the communication industry and might be challenging to talk about in front of other participants. An in-depth interview involves interviewing people to gain perspective and insight into a particular topic. We consider this method relevant as our purpose is to get a personal account of the leaders' behavior, opinions and experiences. Conducting interviews face-to-face is also good for developing trust. Due to this, we have chosen to carry through the meetings on the video communication app Zoom. A disadvantage with in-depth interviews, is the amount of time it consumes in terms of planning, contacting interviewers, conducting and transcribing the interview (Hansen & Machin, 2019).

Interview guide

To structure the interviews, we have developed an interview guide (Appendix 1). In-depth interviews are divided into three phases: warm-up, reflection and closing questions (Tjora, 2018). We started with general questions, such as education and work experience, to get to know the leaders better. Further, we asked questions about what kind of leadership styles they have, and how they

1 Both interviewees have graciously accepted to waive anonymization and have agreed in allowing us to publish the results in this edited anthology

would describe the perfect leader. In the reflection section, we chose to divide the questions into two phases: precrisis and crisis.

According to Hansen and Machin (2019), interviewees tend to respond better if the interviewer is well-informed, prepared and shows a genuine interest in them and their work. For this reason, we reviewed their website, publications in social media, and investigated if there was any media coverage on the leaders or the companies. The data from the interviews were collected by recording the conversation, followed by transcription. In this way we ensured that no incorrect information took place. After we had been given permission to take audio recordings, we asked for consent to use the material in our article.

Questionnaire

In addition to the in-depth interviews, we asked Omdal and Rolfsnes to answer the Skills Inventory and Northouse Leadership Trait questionnaire. The skills inventory can give us further insight into Omdal and Rolfsnes leadership competencies and what their skills might be. It is designed to measure three types of leadership skills: technical, human and conceptual (Northouse, 2019). The purpose of the trait questionnaire is to measure personal characteristics of their leadership. In addition to the leaders, this questionnaire should be completed by five people who are familiar with the leader (Northouse, 2019). For this reason, we asked the managers for consent to distribute the trait questionnaire to employees in the company.

The quality of the research

In this chapter, we will evaluate the quality of our research. Firstly, we clarify a conflict of interest and how we have solved the issue. Secondly, we emphasize important research ethics that we have taken into account in our article. Finally, we evaluate the method's validity.

Handling conflict of interest

Before we get into the validity of the method, we want to clarify a conflict of interest in our article. One of the authors is currently employed in one of the two companies we are analyzing. We have taken certain measures to increase the validity of the article and avoid the conflict of interest that we are dealing with. The student who is employed, did not attend the interview and could therefore not interfere with her leader. In this way, we hoped it would feel more like an interview instead of a conversation between boss and employee.

Research ethics

In research, it is important to take ethical guidelines into account, especially since one author is employed in one of the companies of the analysis. Considering we have interviewed two leaders', we provided informed consent and confidentiality. Furthermore, it is important to be aware of and inform the participants about the role of the researcher (NESH, 2016). We have not used any unofficial information from the workplace. Consider that the companies are from the same city, they can be considered as competitors. For this reason, we informed both companies about the conflict of interest before the interviews.

Validity

When assessing how credible and valid the research is, we discuss validity. The term describes to which degree the study actually examines or measures what it says (Hansen & Machin, 2019). Internal validity refers to the certainty that a cause-and-effect relationship in a study is trustworthy and cannot be explained by other factors. Therefore, it is important to consider alternative explanations and the possibility of independent variables that may affect the dependent variable (Hopmann & Skovsgaard, 2014). For instance, we cannot say with certainty that Top of Mind's communication activities during COVID-19 have led to more followers or new customers. This is something Omdal himself pointed out during the interview and admitted that he was not sure what the cause of the organizational impact was. External validity addresses the degree of generalizability of the research (Hopmann & Skovsgaard, 2014). As the article only analyzes two communication agencies and their leaders, the findings cannot be generalized. In addition, in-depth interviews are subjective, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions (Hansen & Machin, 2019).

This weakens the validity of the research. On the contrary, the purpose of our article is to examine how Top of Mind and Mana have adapted to survive the crisis, which the analysis can give an indication of. Finally, Credibility assessment is important because a weakness that occurs in most methods is that informants can lie. There can be various reasons for this, such as having a motive to appear in a desired way or better than they initially are, and low self-awareness (Friberg, 2019). This is a risk in both the in-depth interviews and the questionnaires. We cannot confirm whether the information from the interviews is correct or not. Omdal and Rolfsnes may have a completely different view of how they have handled the crisis compared to their employees. We have not received any specific numbers that can confirm their statements. The trait questionnaire is the only method that gives us an indication of what the employees think about the managers and their leadership style.

The AMEC Integrated Evaluation Framework

Measuring and evaluating the results of a PR activity, often determines the success and growth of your company. The AMEC framework is a smart way for organizations to measure different types of activities. The tool is used from the start of planning and setting objectives, through implementing the strategy and evaluating outcomes. It can be used by any organization of different size and fits all kinds of cases (PRAgencyOne, 2020). In the AMEC framework, we have analyzed Top of Mind (Appendix 2) and Mana's (Appendix 3) communication activities from when the crisis occurred in Norway, starting March 12. In the interviews with Omdal and Rolfsnes, it was pointed out that internal and external organizational communication were important factors to succeed during the pandemic. We have therefore chosen to include both in the framework. The data consist of information from the interviews with the leaders of the companies, as well as their websites and social media accounts.

Objectives

To be able to measure the company's activities, it is crucial to define clear organizational objectives. In comparison to a goal, an objective is often number-based and thus more measurable. It is also essential to include communication objectives. These should reflect on the organizational objectives and fulfill the SMART criteria's, which indicates that the objective is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (AMEC, 2021a).

Top of Mind has not defined any specific organizational objectives. In the interview, Omdal specified that their main goal is to increase market shares. He wishes that his company will continue to grow, to keep his customers satisfied and that he maintains a good reputation in the industry. Since these are not measurable, we consider these more as goals than objectives. In addition, this does not satisfy the Barcelona principle one (AMEC, 2021b). To support the organizational objectives, Top of Minds communication objectives is to be active in social media and communicate their services on different platforms. They also want to increase their client base, as well as maintain a good dialogue with the customers and employees.

Mana's organizational objectives are to keep the operation going and accomplish a positive financial outcome. In the interview, Rolfsnes additionally specified the importance of satisfied customers and achieving a good reputation. To substantiate these objectives, Mana's communication objectives were to build a brand in social media while also maintaining a good dialog and relationship with existing clients. Mana also does not satisfy the Barcelona Principle one, as the objectives are not measurable.

Inputs

Inputs cover two important elements. Firstly, to define the target audience for the campaign. The more defined the target audience is, the more specific the targeting can be. Secondly, you need a list of key inputs that are necessary to design and prepare the communication. This may include relevant data, resources and budget (AMEC, 2021a).

Top of Mind's target audience was mainly decision makers, such as marketing managers needing assistance in the marketing department or leaders who are interested in outsourcing to a digital marketing agency. To reach the target audience, Top of Mind needed content developers who managed to write engaging texts and produce visual content. To increase reach and achieve more targeted marketing, advertising was prioritized. It was therefore an advantage to have expertise in paid channels, such as Google AdWords and Facebook Business Manager. Further, it was useful to collect insight data, analyze results from previous campaigns and conduct desk research of competitors in the communication industry. Omdal did not develop a communication strategy but adjusted the budget along the way for strategic inputs.

Mana's target audience is quite similar to Top of Mind's. They mainly target business leaders and marketing managers in small and medium-sized businesses, who lack expertise in marketing on digital channels. The necessary key inputs for preparation of communication, were content developers for both Mana's and their customers' profile in social media. In addition, Rolfsnes saw the benefit from internships, and therefore hired one unpaid intern. Due to the low revenue. Rolfsnes applied for financial support from the Compensation Scheme. To get an overview of the situation and perhaps get inspired on how to adapt to the crisis, the company did desk research of competitors in the communication industry.

Activities

This section covers all the key activities that have been carried out by the organization. Activities may include formative research to be undertaken, planning, design of materials and content production. It focuses on the essentials of PESO, which stands for paid, earned, shared and owned (AMEC, 2021a). The marketing tool makes it easier for companies to see if there are any opportunities to integrate additional channels into their existing or new activities.

Top of Mind has had several activities through the pandemic. For instance, they published organic content (O) and advertisement (P) on social media. In addition, they used Google AdWords to appear relevant in searches (P). Early in the pandemic, they wanted to inform the public and their clients that the company took the crisis seriously and followed the advice from the authorities and NIPH (O). To increase their network and achieve company development, the team attended digital events and webinars. They also developed new digital services to adapt to the crisis, such as live-stream and podcast. By initiating consistent appraisals, Omdal wanted to take care of and follow-up his employees. Along with this he established digital lunch and team meetings every Monday.

Mana prioritized organic content on social media (O). As a part of their strategy, they wanted to inspire their followers and share content that provides value (O). During the interview, Rolfsnes emphasized the importance of informing that the company cared and followed the advice from the authorities and NIPH (O). They also wanted to show customers the value of hiring Mana and that the company cares (O). By delivering quality and taking care of their customers, Mana hoped to achieve a positive word of mouth (S). The company developed a new digital service that is adapted to the crisis: video editing (O).

Outputs

After we have established activities for the time period, we will consider how they have been communicated out to the public. The importance of paying attention to PESO is also significant in outputs (AMEC, 2021a).

Top of Mind has distributed different outputs during our selected time period. The employees have published informational content on Instagram and Facebook, where promotion of services like marketing, design, advertising, livestream, podcasts, photo and video production has been in focus (O). In the interview Omdal emphasized that corporate content is not as effective as personal content. For this reason, the company shared posts with employees from their home offices and zoom meetings (O). Top of Mind also showed their followers that they were out on work-related missions for their customers, while wearing a facemask and keeping their distance (O). In addition, they shared tips and marketing expertise on blog posts, Instagram and Facebook (O). The company has posted a video on social media, where Petter Omdal expresses the importance of marketing during a crisis and that Top of Mind offers help (P). Lastly the company has used Google AdWords to adjust their paid campaigns with relevant keywords that match their updated services and situation (P).

During the pandemic, Mana has promoted their services on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube. This includes advertising, strategy, content, photo and video production (O). They have also written and distributed blog posts on their own website (O). The company used personal content from employees, such as pictures from their home office. Due to COVID-19, Rolfsnes reused old photos from their photo archive to appear active in social media (O). Mana's employees showed followers that they are out on work related missions for their customers (O). Lastly, Rolfsnes saw the importance of sharing tips and expertise with their followers, which they hoped would inspire and help both new and existing customers (O).

Out-takes

In out-takes we will analyze the target audience's response and reactions to the activities. This may include in what way the audience engaged with the content, or if they looked further into getting more information about the topic (AMEC, 2021a).

Top of Mind received positive feedback on their activities. On their business profile on social media, the target audience responded with reactions, likes, shares and comments. They gained a better understanding of the importance of being digital, especially in a crisis like COVID-19. The company achieved an increased conversion rate on Google AdWords from potential new customers. Clients re-posted work Top of mind had delivered on their social media accounts, such as stories from live streams. As we have not received any numbers, we cannot say with certainty how much there has been an increase compared to before the pandemic.

Mana's target group responded with positive feedback, reactions, likes and comments. As a result of sharing marketing tips on social media, they got an increase in saved posts on Instagram. Rolfsnes also experienced positive word of mouth from satisfied customers, either by being recommended to other potential clients or being boasted on Instagram stories. Mana also experienced reposting of stories published on Instagram, where they often shared tips.

Outcomes

In outcomes we measure what kind of effect the communication has had on the target group. This involves if the target audience has gained an understanding, increased trust or preference, or if the activity has had an impact on the audience's intention (AMEC, 2021a). Outcomes are difficult to measure, especially for recent activities. Firstly, this information is not yet published. Secondly, it is too early for the leaders to comment on the effect.

Top of Mind does not have a large quantity of data to measure during our time period. Nevertheless, Omdal pointed out that the company has gained more customers and that they have developed a greater number of followers on their social media accounts. We asked if Omdal has conducted any surveys to measure the effect his communication has had on the set target group, but he confirmed that this had not been done.

Similar to Top of Mind, Mana does not have much data from the previous year that are measurable. However, Rolfsnes claims that Mana gained more followers on Instagram and Facebook. Existing customers expanded contracts and increased their budgets, which was the company's main strategy to raise income. As a result of focusing on the advertising service, Mana gained a few new clients.

Organizational impact

The final stage in the AMEC framework is where we evaluate the impact on organizational objectives. Here you can analyze if there has been any reputation improvement, if any new relationships have been established or if there has been an increase in the organization's income (AMEC, 2021a). Taking into account that the pandemic is not over yet, it is important to point out that the companies can be affected by the aftermath.

Top of Mind's communication during COVID-19 has had several different impacts on the organizational objectives. Firstly, they gained more customers and employees, which led to increased economic growth. Due to this, Top of Mind was able to expand to a bigger office with space for all employees. The company avoided furloughs to a certain extent. Since March 12, 2020, they had only one furlough with a period of one month. Omdal expressed in the interview that the relations within the team have been weakened, due to working from home.

Not only did Mana achieve a positive result in 2020, but through a careful assessment of profitability and expenses, the company saved 30% of costs. Because of the heavy losses of income in April 2020, all employees were partially furloughed for a longer period, including the leader. During the pandemic they lost a digital designer, but then again managed to hire a new marketer. Rolfsnes emphasized that relations within the team have been weakened, due to working from home and lack of follow-up with employees during the crisis.

Analysis and findings

In the analysis, we bring questions, data and theory together to answer the research question: How did the marketing agencies Top of Mind and Mana Communication adjust to survive the global crisis, COVID-19, through strategic leadership? The analysis is intended to give the reader increased knowledge about the area being researched, without having to go through data generated in the project (Johannessen, Rafoss & Rasmussen, 2018). We will now provide an analysis of the conducted in-depth interviews and the results from the trait and skills questionnaires. Firstly, we will see how the companies were affected by the pandemic, before we move on by looking at how they responded to challenges and opportunities created by the crisis. Based on our findings, we will define what type of leaders Omdal and Rolfsnes are.

Financial management

Top of Mind had a good financial starting point before the crisis occurred. Omdal said in the interview that the crisis had certainly affected the company, but mostly at the start of the pandemic. As a result, Omdal only had to enforce one furlough, with a duration of one month. Because the company was so new, they did not benefit from the Compensation Scheme. The company expanded to a new and large office, centrally located in Bergen city. Omdal also managed to hire three new part-time employees. During the pandemic, Top of Mind used much of their resources on increasing their client base. They prioritized marketing their own brand, by investing financial resources and time to achieve successful advertising. Their financial capital has fluctuated during the pandemic, but the agency has overall achieved economic growth.

Although Mana had been in operation for three years longer, they were in a worse financial situation than Top of Mind at the beginning of 2020. As mentioned earlier in the article, the annual accounts from 2019 showed that Mana had a low liquidity ratio, which is a measure of the company's ability to pay debt obligations. In other words, Mana did not have a high financial security if the income were to be reduced as a consequence of the crisis. During the first month of the pandemic, in April 2020, Mana lost 84% of their revenue. Rolfsnes applied for financial support from the COVID-19 Compensation Scheme. The compensation corresponded to NOK 70,000 budgeted over four months. However, the support from the state was not enough to cover Mana's expenses. Rolfsnes strategically chose to partially furlough all employees, including herself. Since 2018 was a tough financial year for Mana with a negative NOK 453,000 in annual result, Rolfsnes did not have the opportunity to invest more financial capital in her company. She therefore had to make large cuts in expenses to survive, and managed to reduce the company's costs by 30%. Today all furloughs have been lifted, and the company achieved a positive annual account at the end of 2020.

Even though both companies have managed to adapt and survive the crisis so far, Top of Mind has performed better financially. This gives an indication that Omdal's strategy of targeting new clients and marketing his own company, has resulted in faster growth. Rolfsnes stated in the interview that she regretted her decision to not focus on acquiring new customers during the crisis. Further, she expressed that the financial support received from the state was of great help, and that the company would have gone bankrupt if they did not enforce furloughs.

Leadership in organizational communication: leadership styles and role models Top of Mind

Top of Mind's Per Omdal believes that the characteristics that would best describe him as a leader, are fair and inclusive. He likes to lead along with his employees, not above them. It is important for Omdal that they work as a team, and that his employees get the support and feedback needed. When asked about role models, Omdal presents two: Tom Georg Olsen, the leader of Miles, and Petter Stordalen, a Norwegian businessman. These men appreciate and encourage their employees in an admirable manner that Omdal himself wishes to impersonate.

Main focus

Omdal explained during the interview that he did not have time to plan a strategy on March 12th, because he did not think the pandemic would be as serious in Norway. He had to act quickly, considering that timing in crisis communication is critical (Miller, 2015) With his team he implemented the measures they had, to be able to move forward and make the best of the situation. Each day was a new day, and Omdal stayed focused on safeguarding his employees and following them up as well as possible digitally. Another important factor for Omdal, was to maintain good communication with his clients. Although Top of Mind's everyday life had got a great upheaval, did Omdal not lose focus on obtaining new customers. To stay relevant in the market during the radical changes, Omdal decided to customize the services his company distributed by adding the offers live-stream and podcast. Decision making and planned change, is two of the most crucial activities in an organization (Miller, 2015). Often, an organization must take a step back and analyze how they are solving different problems initiated by the environment and discuss if they distribute the most effective ways (Miller, 2015). Omdal has completed a planned change consciously, adapting to the needs of the market by expanding Top of Mind's services.

Measures for employees

As mentioned, Omdal had a big focus on his employees' well-being during the pandemic. The importance of maintaining a good dialogue and an inclusive atmosphere was highly prioritized. The measures that were initiated to achieve this were common lunches, celebrations of various happenings and follow-up one to one, all being held digitally. They also decided to create a Snapchat group, where they could talk and connect with each other socially.

Biggest challenge

After the opportunity to reflect around the past year, Omdal expressed that his biggest challenge was the social environment. Not only regarding his employees, but the opportunity to attend networking-arenas to talk to people and show what you work with, was tough not being able to carry out: “I have a very good network and this is extremely important, both for personal and work-related development”. Before COVID-19, Omdal stated that he more than often was attending seminars, breakfasts and talking to people all the time. This was his way of gaining new customers and expanding his network. Due to the pandemic, this has become non-existent. To solve this, Omdal explained that he decided to sign the whole team up for various webinars and digital conferences, to try to obtain more knowledge and gain a bigger network to a certain extent.

Evaluation and post-crisis

During the interview, Omdal expresses that he is pleased with his handling of the crisis. He means that this is due to their good digital routines from before the pandemic, they were used to working from home. The fact that he managed to hire several new employees and in addition moved to a new and bigger office during the pandemic, are reasons enough to conclude that he solved the crisis well. When asked about what Omdal’s plans were post-crisis, he answered that he absolutely wants to do more social events with his team. He emphasized the importance of linking the staff back together, since they are: “such a nice bunch of people”. Omdal would also like to continue with working from home, due to a great success with this solution. He felt that the employees worked more effectively and were able to do more tasks without so many distractions. Lastly, he hopes that the opportunity to attend more networking seminars opens up, and the possibility to reach out and talk to new potential customers so the increase can keep growing.

Mana Communication

Rolfsnes saw herself as an inspiring and motivating leader, who managed to give positive energy to her team. She considers herself as a relationship-oriented leader, who is generous and solves problems for her employees. On the other hand, she pointed out that she is pretty specific and can be annoyed if someone does not respond to her expectations. Rolfsnes reflected on how she prefers to lead her employees: "It is important for me to inspire my team to become good at their job and give them the opportunity to grow. Don't try to control every little thing they do. Then they fail to bloom as a person". Further she expresses that it is quite difficult for her to distance herself, as she is a "control freak", but she sees the effect of giving the team trust. Similar to Omdal, Rolfsnes also looks up to Petter Stordalen. She described him as a leader with an extreme driving force and energy, and admires that he has created his own family.

Main focus

In the interview, Rolfsnes informed that she did not predict the extent of the crisis. It was an uncertain and chaotic time, and they needed to act quickly. When the crisis occurred, the most important thing for Rolfsnes was to create security for her employees and clients. Firstly, she called all customers and talked about possible problems and solutions. Afterwards, the team discussed internally, and adjusted all communication and publishing plans for their clients. In this way, she included both clients and employees in the decision-making process, which is critical in crisis (Miller, 2015). In the interview, Rolfsnes expressed the importance of including her employees in the decision making. Therefore, she developed the strategy for the crisis in collaboration with her team. They wanted to customize, talk, be honest and show that they cared. With limited work capacity, Rolfsnes focused primarily on relations with existing customers during the pandemic.

Measures for employees

For Rolfsnes it was important to show her team that she cared and was present if someone wanted to talk. She did not want to be strict and gave them a lot of freedom. Several employees in the company have family in other cities. Rolfsnes gave them the opportunity to travel home to their loved ones, and work from wherever they wanted. In the interview, Rolfsnes considered herself lucky to have a self-going team. However, some employees were new and inexperienced, and therefore needed more attention and guidance. She gave people the freedom to manage their own workday. With confidence in her staff, she encouraged them to work when they felt most creative. It was important for Rolfsnes to be open and honest with the employees about the financial situation, and she did not want anyone to be surprised or angry when she had to initiate furloughs. It was also important for her to be part of the team, she therefore chose to partly furlough herself as well.

Biggest challenge

Rolfsnes was unsure about what the main challenges during the pandemic had been. She stated in the interview that she was happy with the outcome, since the company had handled the crisis. However, she pointed out that the biggest challenge must have been obtaining a good dialogue with employees. Rolfsnes arranged a few digital meetings with the team, but not as many as she wanted to. With children attending home school and home office, Rolfsnes struggled with scheduling follow ups with employees and team meetings. At the end of the interview, we asked the participants if they had anything they would add regarding their crisis management. Rolfsnes would like to point out that she is a mother and has a child with special needs in the risk group. This had a huge impact on the business and reduced the opportunity to work extra during the pandemic. Schools were closed and there were no relief offers for many months. This is an important reason why Mana could not bring in more revenue from other services and new clients. The team was partially laid off and the capacity had already been prioritized on existing customers. Because of the distance and restrictions, the team was not able to arrange physical meetings internally and attend network meetings. Network building in the industry has for Rolfsnes been non-existent during the pandemic. She expressed that she did not have the capacity and had to prioritize other things.

Evaluation and post-crisis

In the interview Rolfsnes expressed that there is probably much she should have done differently. She believed it was the right decision to create a calm environment in the first phase of the pandemic, and to be open with the team about the company's financial situation. People who were furloughed showed understanding because they were prepared for it to happen. Thinking back, Rolfsnes regrets that she did not have a bigger focus on promoting the company and tried to get new customers. As to the post-crisis phase, Rolfsnes wants to expand the team and hire professionally skilled people. She also reflects about the need for an office compared to the expenses. Rolfsnes stated that she is positive to continue working from home after the crisis and considers renting meeting rooms when they need it.

Leadership styles: the questionnaires

To help us conclude what type of leaders Omdal and Rolfsnes are, we will analyze their responses to the two questionnaires presented earlier in the article.

Skills inventory

The skills inventory is designed to measure technical, human and conceptual skills that a leader possesses. The technical skills represent competence in specialized areas, analytical ability, and the ability to use suitable tools and techniques. Human skills cover knowledge about working with people, and include working effectively with followers and superiors to accomplish the organization's goals. Conceptual skills contain the ability to work with ideas and concepts. The result gives us an overview of the leaders' strengths and weaknesses. The questionnaire also indicates what level of management Omdal and Rolfsnes might be most suited. The score 23–30 equals a high range, 14–22 moderate range, 6–13 low range (Northouse, 2019).

Both leaders received a high range on all three areas. According to Robert Katz and his model of "Management skills", this denotes that Omdal and Rolfsnes are suitable for their positions as CEOs in terms of their skills approach (Northouse, 2019, p.45).

Omdal	*Rolfsnes*
Technical skill 26	Technical skill 25
Human skill 26	Human skill 27
Conceptual skill 23	Conceptual skill 26

Figure 1. Omdal and Rolfsnes results from Skills Inventory

Source: Northouse 2019, p. 45

Leadership Trait Questionnaire

The purpose of the trait questionnaire is to measure personal characteristics of Omdal and Rolfsnes leadership. In addition to the leaders, the questionnaire was completed by four to five employees. The score provides information about how the leaders see themself and how their employees see them as a leader (Northouse, 2019).

The employees in Top of Mind gave Omdal a consistently high score, and in some areas higher than his own rating. The traits with the highest average rating were friendly (5), outgoing (5), sensitive (5) and trustworthy (4.75). The lowest score given from the employees was the conscientious trait (3.75). The results from Mana were in general lower from the employees' point of view, which indicates that Rolfsnes' perception differs from her team. Her traits with the highest average rating were self-confident (5), outgoing (4.4), friendly (4.2) and diligent (4.2). Rolfsnes' lowest score was the characteristics conscientious (3.2) and articulate (3.2).

Northouse presents a list of key traits that are essential for effective leadership. Among these, the most central traits which correspond with our findings are sociability, self-confidence and integrity (Northouse, 2019). Both Omdal and Rolfsnes scored high on friendly and outgoing, which are important attributes in the sociability trait. This includes to seek out pleasant social relationships. They are concerned with others' needs and their well-being. Leaders with this trait obtain good interpersonal skills, and often have good relationships with their employees. This trait corresponds with the answers given in the interviews, where both Omdal and Rolfsnes pointed out the importance of supporting their employees and implementing follow-up when needed. Containing a good relationship with their customers was also a high priority during the pandemic. The second important trait is self-confidence. The central characteristic is high self-esteem and believes in the ability to make a difference. This trait gives the leader confidence to feel assured that their ability to influence others is correct and appropriate (Northouse, 2019). Both Omdal and Rolfsnes scored high on this trait. In addition, Rolfsnes expressed during the interview the importance of inspiring her team in a crisis situation. The third key trait is integrity. Here is the leader's level of honesty and trustworthiness essential. Characteristics like loyalty, dependability and believability are important factors (Northouse, 2019). They often inspire confidence in others because they can be trusted. Omdal received a high average rating on his level of trustworthiness. Rolfsnes' score is slightly lower, which provides potential for improvement.

Approach

Nancy R. Lockwood (2005) presents in her book "Crisis Management in Today's Business Environment" that leaders play an important role during a crisis. It is crucial that leaders have effective communication, build trust with stakeholders, increase productivity and protect brand value (Bhaduri, 2019). The questionnaire and interview give an indication that Omdal has maintained good communication and built trust with his employees during the crisis. As it emerged in the interview, Rolfsnes has to a greater extent maintained effective communication and trust with existing customers. Both have increased productivity and protected the brand value by adjusting to the situation, and have had a strong focus on the companies' reputation.

The level of success or failure during crisis management, is often dependent on how well the leader has handled the crisis. To succeed, Lockwood emphasizes the importance of the leader having traits like empathy, self-awareness, persuasion, teamwork skills and the competence to manage relationships (Bhaduri, 2019). It is difficult to draw conclusions about the leader's teamwork skills and ability to manage relationships, due to the lack of information from the team members. On the other hand, based on our findings from the interview and questionnaire, Omdal and Rolfsnes possess several of these attributes. They both received a high score on empathic, which includes understanding and identifying with others. Omdal's self-rating does not, to a large extent, deviate from the average score. This can be considered a high level of self-awareness.

The analysis indicates that Omdal and Rolfsnes possess a combination of characteristics from several leadership styles. This especially regards adaptive leadership, where the importance of preparing and encouraging employees to deal with a crisis is central to the leader. An adaptive leader is often concerned with how their employees deal with new circumstances (Northouse, 2019). As mentioned in the analysis, it was of great importance for Rolfsnes to prepare her employees for the outcome of the crisis. Omdal expressed in the interview that a main focus during the pandemic was making sure his employees were followed-up weekly. Rolfsnes adjusted the communication according to the employees' competence and work experience in the company. Some employees were more independent, which is why they to a greater extent could manage their own workday without interference. Other employees were less experienced and needed more attention and guidance. This reflects characteristics of situational leadership (Northouse, 2019). We also see some components from transformational leadership, which is concerned with values, long-term goals, ethics and emotions. Both Omdal and Rolfsnes have stated in the interviews that they set specific goals, and that they have succeeded in achieving these during the pandemic. As mentioned, Omdal and Rolfsnes scored high on friendly, outgoing and persistent. This is included in transformational management, as we consider these traits as a sign of charismatic and visionary management. In addition, Omdal and Rolfsnes focused on motivation and employer growth, which is important in a crisis (Northouse, 2019).

Summary and conclusion

Effective leadership and timing are essential in successful crisis management. Through a literature review, in-depth interviews, questionnaires and the AMEC framework, we have tried to figure out how Top of Mind and Mana Communication managed to adapt to the pandemic through strategic leadership. Both companies were affected by the crisis and responded in different ways. The companies had different financial starting points, but both managed to achieve a positive annual result at the end of 2020. Because of the Compensation Scheme, Mana received support when it mattered the most. This is a major factor in Mana's survival of the pandemic. Taking into consideration that Top of Mind has had a faster growth during the crisis, this indicates that Omdal implemented a more profitable strategy.

Adaptive, transformational and situational leadership are important approaches in handling a crisis. Based on findings from the trait questionnaire and the analysis of their leadership styles, we consider sociability, self-confidence and integrity to be important personality traits. Further, it is crucial that leaders have effective communication, build trust with stakeholders, increase productivity and protect brand value. We consider that these are reasons why the Omdal and Rolfsnes have managed to get through the crisis and handled it in the best possible way. We see that there are some differences between their leadership style, but we cannot state that it is based on gender. This corresponds to the fact from the GLOBE study that women in the Nordic countries are treated with greater equality.

It is important to take note that these are two similar but different companies, and we cannot say definitively that our findings are the answer alone to how they have managed to handle the crisis. Other factors can have had an impact on why they managed to achieve goals, get new customers, hire new employees and stay profitable. It is also essential to point out that the pandemic is over yet, and that the companies can be affected by aftermaths.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview guide

Interview guide

Small talk: 3 minutes
The interview starts with small talk to lighten the mood and create comfort.

Introduction: 2 minutes
First of all, we would like to thank you for your participation. We really appreciate that you took the time to conduct this interview and take part in our research project. We would like to point out that there are no wrong answers, and we want to hear your subjective opinion. If it is comfortable with you, we would like to record our conversation, to ensure that no incorrect information takes place. The audio recording will be deleted after the analysis is completed, and your identity will remain anonymous.

Any questions before we begin?

Warm-up questions: 2 minutes
Gender:
Age:
Work title:
Education:
Job experience:

Reflection: 40 minutes

Leadership:

- **How would you describe yourself as a leader? Your leadership style?**
- **Describe the perfect leader. Do you have any role models?**

Pre-crisis:

- **At the beginning of 2020, how was the operation and economic situation before the pandemic started?**
- **Were you prepared before the crisis occurred on March 12th?**
- **Did you set a strategy for how to cope with the crisis? Did it change along the way?**

Crisis:

- **What was most important to you during the pandemic?**
- **What are the overall and communication objectives for your organization from March 12th?**
- **Who did you define as your key target audience?**
- **What strategy did you plan for your communication to reach the target audience, what did you want to say? (Both new and existing clients)**
- **What measures did you take to adapt to the crisis?**
- **Have you lost or gained any new customers or employees during the crisis?**
- **What measures did you take towards your employees?**
- **Have you had a home office, if so, how has this worked out?**
- **Which channels did you use during the campaign period? Paid, Earned, Shared, Owned.**
- **Which content, materials or activities did you distribute, and to which target audiences?**
- **How did your target audiences react to your communication? (e.g., response, likes, shares, comments)**
- **Which effects did your communication have on your target audience? (e.g., through survey, interview data, inquiries)**
- **How has the organization been impacted during the campaign?**
- **How has the pandemic affected the company financially?**
- **Did your company receive support from the state, Innovation Norway or other organizations?**

Closing questions: 7 minutes

- **How would you consider your handling of the crisis? Is there anything you would have done differently?**
- **Do you feel that you have reached the goals you set for the company when the crisis occurred?**
- **What have been the biggest challenges during the pandemic? How did you meet these challenges?**
- **How has the pandemic affected the business in the long term?**
- **What do you plan to do next? Post-crisis**

Is there anything you would like to add regarding your crisis management during the pandemic?

Appendix 2. AMEC – Top of Mind

AMEC Measurement Framework

PREPARATION

ALIGN OBJECTIVES

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES	COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES
- Increase market shares - Growth and profitability - Satisfied customers - A good reputation	- Increase their client base - Be accessible and active in social media - Communicate their services on different platforms - Maintain a good dialogue with the customers and employees

INFORM & PREPARE COMMUNICATION

TARGET AUDIENCE	STRATEGIC INPUTS
1 Decision makers, such as marketing managers and leaders 2 Companies needing assistance in the marketing department	- Expertise in Google Ads and Facebook Business Manager - Content developers - Analyze results from previous campaigns - Collection of insight data - Desk research of competitors in the communication industry - Set a budget for advertising in paid channels

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENT

ACTIVITIES

P Advertisement in social media
O Publish organic content on social media
O Inform that the company take the crisis seriously, and follow the advice from the authorities and NIPH
O Attend digital events and webinars for company development and to increase their network
O Develop new digital services that are adapted to the crisis, e.g. live-stream and podcast
P Use Google Adwords to appear relevant in searches on the services they offer
O Take care of employees and maintain consistent employee follow-up
O Establish digital lunch and team meetings every Monday

MEASUREMENT & INSIGHTS

MEASURE ACTIVITY

OUTPUTS

O Write and distribute blog posts on their own website
O Content on Instagram and Facebook where they promote services, e.g. design, advertising, live-stream, podcast, photo and video production
P Video on social media. Message: Marketing is important in crises, Top of Mind can help you
O Personal content from employees, e.g. pictures from their home office
O Show followers that they are out on a work related mission for their customers
O Share tips and expertise with their followers

AUDIENCE RESPONSE & EFFECTS

OUT-TAKES

1 Positive feedback, e.g reactions, likes, comments
2 Customers gained an increased understanding of the importance of being digital
3 Increased conversion rate on Google Ads from potential new customers
4 Clients have shared work Top of mind has delivered on their social media accounts, e.g. stories from live-streams

OUTCOMES

1 Gained more customers
2 More followers on Instagram and Facebook

ORGANISATION & STAKEHOLDER EFFECTS

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

1 Increased economic growth and client base
2 Expanded to have their own office with space for all employees
3 Hired three part-time employees
4 Avoided furloughs. The company has had only one furlough since the pandemic started, with a period of one month
5 Relations within the team have been weakened due to working from home

Appendix 3. AMEC – Mana Communication

AMEC Measurement Framework

PREPARATION

ALIGN OBJECTIVES

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES	COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES
- Keep the operation going - Accomplish a positive financial outcome - Satisfied customers - Achieve a good reputation	- Build a brand in social media - Maintain a good dialogue and relationship with existing clients

INFORM & PREPARE COMMUNICATION

TARGET AUDIENCE	STRATEGIC INPUTS
1 Business leaders and marketing managers, in small and medium-sized businesses	- Unpaid internship - Financial support from the Compensation Scheme - Content developers - Desk research of competitors in the communication industry

IMPLEMENTATION

IMPLEMENT

ACTIVITIES

O Prioritize organic content on social media
S Word of mouth from satisfied customers
O Inform that the company cares, and follow the advice from the authorities and NIPH
O Inspire their followers and share content that provides value
O Develop a new digital service that is adapted to the crisis: video editing
O Show that the company cares
O Show customers the value of hiring Mana

MEASUREMENT & INSIGHTS

MEASURE ACTIVITY

OUTPUTS

- O Write and distribute blog posts on their own website
- O Content on Instagram, Facebook and Youtube where they promote services, e.g. strategy, advertising, content, photo and video production
- O Personal content from employees, e.g. pictures from their home office
- O Show followers that they are out on a work related mission for their customers
- O Share tips and expertise with their followers

AUDIENCE RESPONSE & EFFECTS

OUT-TAKES	OUTCOMES
1 Positive feedback, e.g reactions, likes, comments 2 Increase in saved posts on Instagram 3 Word of mouth from satisfied customers on Instagram	1 More followers on Instagram and Facebook 2 Existing customers have expanded contracts and increased their budgets 3 Gained new clients, mainly regarding advertising

ORGANISATION & STAKEHOLDER EFFECTS

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

1 Achieved a positive result in 2020
2 Saved 30 percent of costs and expenses
3 The company had partially furloughed all employees for a longer period, including the leader.
4 Lost a designer and hired a marketer
5 Relations within the team have been weakened due to working from home

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This volume is devoted to innovation in the social life in its broad sense, and directly refers to the crucial current challenges in education and management, perceived both as related and separate, both in connection with the recently occurred exceptional circumstances of global pandemic and detached from it. This means that the issues presented will not lose their validity when the pandemic is over, and the group of its addressees is very large, which always increases the initial value and justification of a publication.

Focusing on societal innovation in the broad sense, this volume focuses on crucial current challenges in education and management. Addressed to a wide audience – which increases the value and impact of the work – the volume perceives these challenges as both related to and independent of the circumstances caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic, therefore ensuring its continued relevance in the post-pandemic era.

Prof. Lucyna Harmon, Ph.D.

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