



UNIVERSIDADE
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PORTUGUESA

**INFLUENCE OF THE PERCEPTION OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON THE
AUTHENTICITY OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS:
THE ROLE OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATION**

Dissertation submitted to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to obtain a
Master's Degree in Communication Sciences

By

Frauke Oedekoven

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Communication, Organization and Leadership

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Under the supervision of Professor Dr. Mariana Victorino

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Abstract

The number of women in leadership positions and women starting their own businesses has noticeably grown over the course of the past decades. Despite this positive trend, an underrepresentation of female leaders is yet still detectable. This rather young development towards closing the gender gap in leadership consequently also implies an underrepresentation of female leader role models. This research investigates how the leadership styles of female entrepreneurs are shaped through previously perceived leadership styles. Further, it explores whether these perceptions influence the authenticity of their own leadership styles and how they communicate internally. Hence, next to investigating the influence of leadership perceptions, this research provides an examination of Authentic Leadership behavior of female entrepreneurs and of their internal communication structures.

For this investigation, a mixed methods research approach was carried out by conducting four semi-structured interviews with female entrepreneurs from Germany and gathering supportive data from the respective employees through quantitative online surveys. Subsequently the raw data was analyzed and evaluated to answer the research question and five derived propositions.

The findings indicate that the influence of previously perceived leadership styles on the leadership style of female entrepreneurs is rather low or even non-existent. While the studied women all showed Authentic Leadership traits, indicators for Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communications systems could be found, but not reliably confirmed due to insufficient quantitative data. Aligning with previous studies, a positive relation between Authentic Leadership and Two-Way Symmetrical Communication could be identified.

Further, it was found that female entrepreneurs rather follow their intuition during their initial leadership style development than specific role models.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership, Female Entrepreneurs, Internal Communication, Female Leaders, Leadership, Symmetrical Communication

Resumo

O número de mulheres em posições de liderança e de mulheres que iniciam os seus próprios negócios tem aumentado visivelmente ao longo das últimas décadas. Apesar desta tendência positiva, uma sub-representação das mulheres líderes ainda é detectável. A evolução bastante recente de práticas para reduzir a diferença de género na liderança também implica, consequentemente, uma sub-representação de modelos de liderança feminina. Esta pesquisa investiga a forma como os estilos de liderança das mulheres empresárias são moldados através de estilos de liderança predicament percebidos. Além disso, explora se estas percepções influenciam a autenticidade dos seus próprios estilos de liderança e a forma como comunicam internamente. Desta forma, além de investigar a influência das percepções de liderança, esta tese fornece uma análise do comportamento de liderança autêntica das mulheres empresárias e das suas estruturas de comunicação interna.

Para esta investigação, foi levada a cabo uma abordagem de investigação de métodos mistos através da realização de quatro entrevistas semi-estruturadas com mulheres empresárias da Alemanha e da recolha de dados de apoio dos respectivos empregados através de inquéritos quantitativos em linha. Subsequentemente, os dados em bruto foram analisados e avaliados para responder à questão da investigação e cinco proposições derivadas.

Os resultados indicam que a influência dos estilos de liderança anteriormente percebidos no estilo de liderança das mulheres empresárias é bastante baixa ou mesmo inexistente. Enquanto as mulheres estudadas mostraram todas características de liderança autêntica, foram encontrados indicadores de sistemas de comunicação interna simétricos bidireccionais, mas não confirmados de forma fiável devido a dados quantitativos insuficientes. Alinhando com estudos anteriores, foi possível identificar uma relação positiva entre Liderança Autêntica e Comunicação Simétrica Bidireccional.

Além disso, verificou-se que as mulheres empresárias preferem seguir a sua intuição durante o desenvolvimento inicial do seu estilo de liderança do que modelos de papel específicos.

Palavras-chave: Liderança Autêntica, Empreendedorismo Feminino, Comunicação Interna, Liderança Feminina, Liderança, Comunicação Simétrica

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Abbreviations

ALI	Authentic Leadership Inventory
ALQ	Authentic Leadership Questionnaire
F	Female
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
M	Male
P	Participant
PAL	Positive Approach To Leadership

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and justification for the research

While the importance of women in leadership positions is continuously growing, research on entrepreneurial leadership is often characterized by the dominant influence of men in leadership roles (Tlaiss and Kauser 2019; Galloway et al. 2015; Hamilton 2013; Harrison et al. 2015; Henry et al. 2015). Women do, however, “make up a substantial proportion of the entrepreneurial population”, according to Yousafzai et al. (2015, p.587). Further, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2020/2021, shows that the trend towards closing the gender gap in entrepreneurial activity is continuing in the 2020 data. The analysis however shows that men are still more likely to start businesses than women. Thus, men are, and have been, predominant in entrepreneurial leadership positions and, consequently, there are also less women who can function as role models for female entrepreneurs. Adding to the growing body of research about women in entrepreneurial leadership positions, this dissertation investigates how female entrepreneurs perceive the leadership styles they have been exposed to, and if - or how - they have been influenced through these perceptions in regard to their own leadership styles. Do they perceive the way they are leading their organizations as authentic and truly how they want to behave as a leader? Or is their authenticity influenced by predominant norms and assumptions that a leader must behave in a certain manner? Trying to behave like someone else eliminates authenticity, but clearly, learning from others’ experiences helps when finding ourselves in new circumstances. But how much do we take over from these learnings? And what if the role models women are surrounded by are predominantly men?

Moreover, it is to mention that leadership does not exist without followership. As Hollander (1992) states, “leadership and followership can be considered to be reciprocal systems requiring synchronization” and points out that even though leadership is often considered to be the more active system, followership can be proactive as well, and the two sides can, therefore, be seen as interdependent systems. Therefore, it is crucial for this dissertation to also consider the role of internal communication to assess the authenticity of the respective leadership styles.

1.2 Research problem framework

1.2.1 Research Objectives and Research Question

The main objective of this research is to understand if female entrepreneurs are influenced by previous perceptions of leadership styles to shape their own leadership style and how it might be reflected in the way they communicate internally in their organizations. Further, this study dissertation seeks to understand how the leader's authenticity is perceived by employees through internal communication. Thus, the research object is located in the field of leadership with focus on the subdomains of Authentic Leadership and internal communication. Therefore, the research question of this dissertation is the following:

How does the perception of leadership styles influence the authenticity of female entrepreneurs and how they communicate internally?

The single components of the research object such as Authentic Leadership, perception of leadership styles, internal communication and authenticity are well researched topics by themselves. This research aims to combine these aspects, in order to contribute to the research on female entrepreneurship and Authentic Leadership. Considering that women in entrepreneurial leadership positions are still underrepresented, this study further aims to encourage aspiring female entrepreneurs to lead their companies authentically, regardless of previously perceived leadership styles.

Therefore, the objective of this research is to provide an extensive understanding about the

- perceptions of previously perceived leadership styles
- leadership style development
- authentic leadership behavior
- internal communication structures

of female entrepreneurs.

1.2.2 Scientific positioning

A scientific positioning in terms of ontology, epistemology, and methodology is necessary for this study. To begin with, in regard to ontology, this research is located in the paradigm of change since, as previously mentioned, the number of women in entrepreneurial leadership positions is steadily increasing and this research is, therefore, focusing on a field that is undergoing constant growth and change.

Regarding epistemology, this research is within the socio psychological tradition (Craig, 1999), thus focusing on interaction, behavior, perception, and personality, and can be situated in the empiricists' paradigm.

Moreover, in regard to methodology, this research follows the interpretivism branch. According to Ryan (2018), "Interpretivism argues that truth and knowledge are subjective, as well as culturally and historically situated, based on people's experiences and their understanding of them" (p. 17). This research is following the "Verstehen" approach by Weber (1947), which focuses on the "exploration of the understanding and perception from the points of view of research participants [...] to understand why a phenomenon exists or why they behave the way they do" (Ryan, 2018, p. 17).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Leadership

As leadership is not only a century old concept, but also a very well researched topic, endless definitions can be found. Robinson's definition (2013), however, found recognition by many other scholars, and is also a preferred definition for this dissertation: "Leadership is exercised when ideas expressed in talk or action are recognized by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them" (Robinson, 2013, p. 93). This definition not only includes the approach of the vision of the leader him or herself, but also includes the foundation of interaction with the followers and the focus that leadership is an action in order to fulfil tasks.

Moreover, it is to say that the progressive nature of leadership is constantly evolving and can therefore be considered as “a timeless concept that must simultaneously reflect the times yet stay ahead of them” (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014, p.24). For instance, historically “leadership research neglected followers and focused on leaders as transformative agents” (Fairhurst & Connaughton, 2014, p.12), while more recent research started to also focus on the followers and the interaction between both through a communicative perspective.

Leadership styles, however, can vary broadly and are an in-depth researched field. There are numerous different leadership styles and a corresponding growing body of empirical work on each of them, alongside scholars arguing that a clear distinction of them is nearly impossible.

2.1.1 Leadership Styles

To begin with, leadership styles can be considered as a combination of specific traits and behavioral patterns, relatively consistently demonstrated by the leader (DuBrin, 2015). In the following passages, the most discussed leadership styles and the current state of research are being portrayed, undergoing the attempt to differentiate the styles. Authentic Leadership, as a core element of this dissertation will, followingly, be reflected on more extensively.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is the most thematized leadership style in research in the past two decades (Anderson and Sun, 2017). According to van Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013), “interest in charismatic-transformational leadership research in organizational behavior only really took off in the mid-1980s” (p.3).

The first model of transformational leadership was developed by political scientist James McGregor Burns in 1978 who divided leadership either into transactional or transformational. Seven years later, in 1985 the researcher Bass extended the model into the transformational leadership model. According to Bass (1985), the transformational leader is

defined through empowering his or her followers to develop their own autonomous leadership qualities and go beyond what they prior thought would be their capacities. In short: The transformational leader as defined by Bass (1985) can be considered to be highly motivational, empowering their followers in order to achieve high performances.

Bass' model of transformational leadership (1985) is based on: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration as the four main distinctive elements. Further, "transformational leadership has much in common with charismatic leadership, but charisma is only part of transformational leadership" (Bass and Riggio, 2006, p.5). Many scholars, however, argue that the charismatic leadership style can be questioned to be distinctive to transformational leadership (Fiol et al. 1999) since "within short time, the terms transformational and charismatic leadership became intertwined in the organizational literature" (Conger and Kanungo, 1994, p.441). Van Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013), however, state that "the problem is not the notion of attributions of charisma, per se. The problem is that the current models of charismatic-transformational leadership are first and foremost behavioral models that do not target attributions of charisma as one of their outcomes, but rather as equivalent to the set of charismatic-transformational leadership behaviors identified" (p.15) and therefore argue for independent definitions of these two styles.

Charismatic Leadership

While the transformational leadership approach focuses on the outcome of the followers, the charismatic approach rather focuses on how the leader is perceived by the follower. In 1987, the researchers Conger and Kanungo first developed a model of charismatic leadership in organizations. According to the two researchers, "Charismatic leaders differ from other leaders by their ability to formulate and articulate an inspirational vision and by behaviors and actions that foster an impression that they and their mission are extraordinary" (Conger and Kanungo, 1994, p. 442). The findings of their study, in 1994, validated their previously developed Conger-Kanungo model¹, including the factors of charismatic leaders being

¹ "Toward a Behavioral Theory of Charismatic Leadership in Organizational Settings", Conger and Kanungo (1987)

sensitive to constraints, threats, and opportunities in the external environment, articulating an appealing strategic vision, taking personal risks, exhibiting unconventional behavior and being sensitive to the follower needs.

A few years later, in 1999, Conger, however, uttered liability issues in regard to the charismatic leader. Among other critics he, for instance, states that “charismatic leaders often have a difficult time developing successors. They enjoy the ‘center stage’ too much to share it. To find a replacement who is a peer may be too threatening for leaders who tend to be so narcissistic” (p.172).

Transactional Leadership

Another interrelated, and yet distinct, leadership style to transformational leadership is transactional leadership.

As previously mentioned, Burns’ concept of leadership (1978) includes the concepts of either transformational or transactional leadership. While the transformational leader encourages the followers for higher performances through intrinsic motivation, the transactional leader as firstly introduced by Burns, leads through offering rewards (or the lack of such). Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) define transactional leadership therefore as the following: “Transactional leadership involves contingent reinforcement. Followers are motivated by the leaders’ promises, praise, and rewards, or they are corrected by negative feedback, reproof, threats, or disciplinary actions” (p. 184). Further, Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) point out that a clear distinction between transformational and transactional leadership is difficult since “most leaders have a profile of the full range of leadership that includes both transformational and transactional factors” (p.184). Since both, transformational as well as transactional leadership, evolve around motivating the followers in order to achieve a certain outcome, it is clear to see that the concepts are similar. They do, however, differ. As the name says, transactional leadership includes a transaction, thus a contingent reinforcement which fulfills the motivating aspect, and can therefore be very effective (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Nevertheless, “a greater amount of effort, effectiveness, and satisfaction is possible from transactional leadership if augmented by transformational

leadership” (Bass and Riggio, 2006, p. 11). The motivational aspect of both concepts thus differs mainly through the fact that the transformational leadership style is supposed to increase the intrinsic motivation of the follower long term, while the transactional approach holds the risk of a short-term motivation only which declines after the reward has been gained.

Ideological Leadership

While transformational, transactional, and charismatic leadership could also be considered to follow a specific ideology, ideological leadership is also a distinctive leadership style. However, especially the distinction between charismatic and ideological leadership can be rather difficult, since both styles are based on visions.

The first distinct definition of ideological leadership was delivered by Strange and Mumford, in 2002, comprising a sample of 60 historically notable leaders. Their work draws the conclusion that there are two different types of visions that allow a distinction between charismatic and ideological leaders: While ideological leaders place more attention on personal values, standards to be maintained and the derivation of meaning in their vision formation, charismatic leaders “emphasize perceived social needs, events to change, and interpersonal meaning derived from the effects of these change” (Strange and Mumford, 2002, p. 346). Especially the aspect of maintaining standards shows that the vision of the ideological leader is rooted in beliefs and places “an emphasis on a shared collective past and the values and standards necessary for a just society” (Bedell-Avers et al., 2009, p. 300). In fact, ideological leaders are known to “actively reject situational causes of injustices” (Bedell-Avers et al., 2009, p. 300) which provides them with support of their followers. While this situational aspect could lead to the assumption that their actions are rather responsive, their overall ideological vision differs them from the upcoming discussed leader who practices a pragmatic leadership style.

Pragmatic Leadership

Pragmatic leaders, in contrast to ideological leaders, do not communicate a specific vision, but rather react to current issues or situations. Referring to previous findings from Mumford

and Van Doorn (2001), Strange and Mumford (2002) therefore, point out, that “vision is a less noteworthy influence on performance” for the pragmatic leadership style. Pragmatic leaders can hence be seen as functional problem solvers who use their expertise in order to enhance performance and improve the status quo (Mumford and van Doorn, 2001; Bedell-Avers et al., 2009).

Servant Leadership

A different take on leadership takes the servant leadership style; especially in regard to the leader-follower relationship. According to Graham (1991), the paradox of the servant leadership concept is that it is not the followers who serve the leader, but in fact the leader him/herself who offers service to the ones being led “rather than expecting to be served by them” (Graham, 1991, p.111). Further, she states that servant leadership “recognizes social responsibilities in the call to serve, or at least not ‘further deprive’ the have-nots in our world, who are recognized as organizational stakeholders to be served, together with all the others” (Graham, 1991, p. 113). Therefore, Graham (1991) argues that this leadership style takes the previously outlined transformational leadership style defined by Bass (1985) further in a way that the serving leader influences or transforms the followers to “become wiser, freer, more autonomous” (Graham, 1991, p. 113) through displaying the desirable behavior first. Therefore, these leaders could be considered to be more credible, which in turn leads to followers being more likely to follow this example and become servants themselves. Graham (1991) refers to followers who then freely decide to serve, as well as “responsible moral agents at work and in society”. Thus, the moral and ethical part of this servant leadership can be considered to be crucial, which leads to another leadership style: Ethical leadership.

Ethical Leadership

The scholars Brown et al. (2005) focused their research on the ethical dimension of leadership and theorized ethical leadership as a distinctive style. Their definition of ethical leadership is “the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making” (Brown et al., 2005, p. 120). According to Brown et al. (2005), an ethical leader is therefore likely “to be honest,

considerate of their followers, fair in their decisions, use rewards and punishments to promote ethical conduct, and make decisions based on ethical values” (p.122). The portrayed ethical leader according to the definition of Brown et al. (2005) thus not only demonstrates integrity and ethical standards him/herself, but also seeks symmetrical exchange with their followers or employees and treats them fairly.

Nevertheless, they also state that like many leadership constructs, these aspects do not exclusively apply to ethical leadership. Brown et al. (2005) thus state that “the ethical dimension of leadership represents a small component that falls within the nexus of inspiring, stimulating and visionary leader behaviors that make up transformational and charismatic leadership” (Brown et al., 2005, p. 117).

Positive Leadership

Responding to the post 9/11 environment, Luthans et al. (2001) provided a new direction for organizational leaders through their Positive Approach To Leadership (PAL). Referring to potential future economic and psychological challenges, the scholars developed this new approach based on research of positive organizational behavior and positive psychology. The PAL by Luthans et al. (2001) consists of four RICH components: (1) Realistic optimism; (2) emotional Intelligence; (3) Confidence; and (4) Hope.

Therefore, Luthans et al. (2001) point out that leaders “must remain optimistic in troubled times and take an appreciative perspective regarding their people’s capabilities and resiliency” (Luthans et al., 2001, p. 8). They do however state that while being optimistic, the leader has to remain realistic as well to keep their credibility.

Next, the scholars state emotional intelligence as one of the key components for positive leadership. Referring to Goleman’s (1998) approach to emotional intelligence, which implies self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills, Luthans et al. (2001) argue that emotional intelligence has a greater impact on positive leadership than traditional IQ.

Confidence, as the third component of the concept, is referred to as self-efficacy based on the theory of Bandura (1986). According to Luthans et al. (2001), the leader's confidence is directly linked to the performance outcome and therefore an existential component of their model.

Lastly, Luthans et al. (2001) state that leaders need hope in the way that "the hopeful leader has both willpower and waypower" (p. 16). The importance of hope as a component of the concept is explained through pointing out that especially in turbulent times, "hopeful leaders have alternate pathways determined and the willingness and ability to implement them when the obstacles and problems inevitably occur" (Luthans et al., 2001, p. 16).

This first positive approach to leadership by Luthans et al. (2001) has gained growing recognition over the past years. Eight years later, in 2009, Cameron offered another concept for positive leadership which she defines as the following: "Positive leadership means promoting outcomes such as thriving at work, interpersonal flourishing, virtuous behaviors, positive emotions, and energizing networks" (Cameron, 2009, p. 4). Based on principles of positive psychology, positive change and positive organizational scholarship, Cameron's concept of positive leadership "refers to an emphasis on what elevates individuals and organizations" (p. 3) through focusing on positive points of views and actions. The concept has three connotations: 1) "positively deviant performance", (2) "affirmation bias", (3) "facilitating the best of the human condition" (Cameron, 2009). The first pillar states that positive leadership facilitates extraordinarily positive levels of performance. The second connotation includes a focus on strengths instead of weaknesses or obstacles, without ignoring negative events. Lastly, positive leadership embodies an orientation "toward virtuousness in individuals and organizations" (Cameron, 2009, p.3).

Distributed Leadership

While the previously outlined leadership styles focus on the single leader's behavior, the concept of shared or distributed leadership offers a different approach. Instead of solely focusing on one leader, shared leadership refers to a distribution of leadership among team members.

Firstly introduced by Gibb, in 1954, leadership can differ between being focused, thus based on a single individual, or distributed between different individuals. Based on this conceptualization, Carson et al. (2007) define shared leadership “as an emergent team property that results from the distribution of leadership influence across multiple team members” (p.1218). In their concept, each team member can take a following or leading position, while providing leadership influence on each other. The turns of leading or following of each team member can differ over time in a way that “different members provide leadership at different points in the team's life cycle and development” (Carson et al., 2007, p. 1220).

Even though this approach differs extensively from the previously mentioned leadership styles, overarching points can be pointed out as well: Anderson and Sun (2017), for instance, argue that transformational leadership and distributed leadership could be overlapping since “transformational leadership by the team manager is able to create (such) a supportive internal team environment” (p.89), while the internal team environment “characterized by shared purpose, social support and voice is an important antecedent for distributed leadership” (p.89).

2.2 Authenticity

To discuss the concept of Authentic Leadership, authenticity itself and how it is perceived in this dissertation need to be explored first.

Authenticity is a very well-known term that most of us are familiar with. The Oxford Dictionary offers the definition that authenticity means “the quality of being genuine or true”. According to Harter (2002), the origins of the concept of authenticity reach back to Greek philosophy “as revealed in injunctions such as ‘Know thyself’ and ‘To thine own self be true’” (Harter, 2002, p. 382).

Embedded in the positive psychology literature (Snyder and Lopez, 2001), Harter (2002) points out that the lack of authenticity has received a lot more attention than the concept of authenticity itself. This is even demonstrated in the English language through the amount of

words that focus on the absence of authenticity such as “artificial, two-faced, manipulative, calculating, dishonest, hypocrite, chameleon, fake, imposter” and a lot more (Harter, 2002).

According to Harter (2002), authenticity involves both, “*owning* one’s personal experiences” such as emotions, thoughts, or beliefs, and *acting* “in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings” (Harter, 2002, p. 382). In contrast to owning one’s personal experiences and consequently acting truly, Harter (2002) explains false-self, thus inauthentic behavior as hiding personal thoughts and acting in a way that others expect. However, she also points out that behaving differently in different contexts can also be legitimate as long as the person still acts in his or her own will, based on their own experiences. If that is not the case, the “false self is experienced as socially implanted against one’s will, and as such it feels foreign” (Harter, 2002, p.383).

Authenticity, however, can be seen as a rather dynamic state, as Erickson (1995) explains: She argues that “authenticity is not an either / or experience” (Erickson, 1995, p. 122) as one is not either authentic, or not, but much more moves between being more or less authentic. Following this approach, being authentic can be seen as a personal process that one is undergoing. Since this dissertation focuses on how the authenticity of female entrepreneurs could be influenced, the developmental nature of the definition of authenticity, as provided by Erickson (1995), will be used to move forward.

2.2.1 Authentic Leadership

“Think of your life as a house. Can you knock down the walls between the rooms and be the same person in each of them?” (George et al., 2007, p. 7)

As discussed in the previous passage, being authentic means owning one’s experiences and beliefs and acting genuinely true to them and oneself as much as possible, in every situation. Imagine being in a position that includes exposure of your own actions and words to a multitude of stakeholders internally, as well as externally. Imagine overseeing decision-making processes and having responsibility for other people. Being authentic, as a leader,

can be challenging, since learning from others' experiences clearly is helpful, especially when we find ourselves in new situations, but being successful through imitating previously perceived behavior is almost impossible.

Moreover, the rapid development of technology over the past decades not only makes information freely accessible, but also requires consistent transparency: "One leader after another has made the mistake of saying one thing in public, only to then be contradicted in "private". In the world of leadership, there is very little that is "private" anymore" (Luthans and Avolio, 2003, p. 243). In the changing environment in terms of technology and fast paced developments, authenticity is needed more than ever. And especially leaders are being watched closely for their authenticity of actions and words, not only by the broader public, but also by their employees.

Recognizing these needs, the researchers Luthans and Avolio therefore firstly developed a model for Authentic Leadership, in 2003. The authentic leader is defined as the following by them:

"The authentic leader is confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, transparent, moral/ethical, future-oriented, and gives priority to developing associates to be leaders. The authentic leader is true to him/herself and the exhibited behavior positively transforms or develops associates into leaders themselves. The authentic leader does not try to coerce or even rationally persuade associates, but rather the leader's authentic values, beliefs, and behaviors serve to model the development of associates" (Luthans and Avolio, 2003, p. 243).

Luthans and Avolio (2003) introduce their model of Authentic Leadership as a synergy of three other leadership styles, that have been outlined in previous passages: (1) Positive leadership, (2) Transformational leadership, and (3) Ethical leadership. According to Luthans and Avolio (2003), "the confluence and synergy of all three approaches through Authentic Leadership may best meet what most informed observers agree is a turning point, a paradigm shift, in the way societies and organizations must be led in order to survive, let alone thrive and gain competitive advantage" (Luthans and Avolio, 2003, p. 243).

Luthans and Avolio (2003) represent the opinion that leaders are not born but are in constant development. This developmental approach not only aligns with Erickson's (1995) view on authenticity, but the scholars also combine it with the key psychological features of the positive leadership concept by Luthans et al. (2001), namely realistic optimism; resilience (referred to as emotional intelligence in the original model by Luthans et al. (2001)); confidence; and hope.

Moreover, Luthans and Avolio (2003) state that through the addition of positive psychological aspects derived from the positive leadership and ethical leadership concepts, Authentic Leadership includes, but goes beyond, transformational leadership. As discussed previously, transformational leadership – based on the conceptualization of Burns (1987) and developed by Bass (1985) – encourages fundamental changes in the follower's behavior, in fact, a transformation. The Authentic Leadership model by Luthans and Avolio (2003) is therefore based on the transformational aspect of it but adds the psychological aspects of the other two concepts (positive and ethical leadership). Further, Luthans and Avolio's (2003) model clearly distinguishes transformational leadership (Bass, 1985) in the point of charisma. While Bass (1985) points out charisma as an important feature of the transformational leader, Luthans and Avolio (2003) state that authentic leaders do not necessarily have to be charismatic. While the charismatic aspect of the transformational leader in Bass' concept (1985), as well as the concept of charismatic leadership itself, has gained criticism from different scholars (i.g. Conger, 1999) regarding the liability of the leader and his or her self-interest, the Authentic Leadership model by Luthans and Avolio (2003) does not put focus on the leader's charisma. In fact, they state that “Authentic leaders transcend their self-interest because they are guided by something more important than self-interest, which is to be consistent with their high-end values, which were shaped and developed across a leader's lifespan” (Luthans and Avolio, 2003, p. 248).

The positive profile of Authentic Leadership as proposed in the model of Luthans and Avolio (2003) is based on specific proactive positive characteristics of the leader. Firstly, the scholars point out that the authentic leaders are aware of their end-values and act accordingly, while believing that each individual contributes positively to the group. Further, the authentic leader tries to create coherent consistency between their values and their

actions. Thirdly, potential vulnerabilities of the leader are openly discussed so that they “turn transparency regarding their vulnerability into a strength, whereby associates can complement the leader in terms of the strengths they bring to their collective challenges” (Luthans and Avolio, 2003, p. 248). Fourth, the authentic leader of this model takes the risk before others and becomes a role model through representing their values. Fifth, Luthans and Avolio (2003) state that one of the main aims of their authentic leader is to develop their associates to lead too. And lastly, the authentic leader is able to explore different situations from different angles in order to judge it credibly. Through their credibility gained from acting upon their values, the leader therefore remains to be perceived as authentic even when they happen to change their mind in specific situations.

As mentioned before, the model of Luthans and Avolio (2003) is based on the belief that the authentic leader undergoes a development and is therefore not born as a leader. This aligns with their perception that the high-end values of the leader are being shaped by trigger events throughout their lifespans. According to Luthans and Avolio (2003), these so-called trigger events can either result from crisis situations or be proactive in a way that the individual actively trains to be an authentic leader.

Therefore, Luthans and Avolio (2003) proposed an Authentic Leadership Development Model (see Figure 1) in which they recognize not only personal life experiences of the leader, but also the organizational context and trigger events as crucial points for developing their way of Authentic Leadership throughout the leader’s lifespan. The positive organizational context of this model foresees a highly developed organizational context and culture, as well as the next higher level of leaders provided. According to Luthans and Avolio (2003), these organizational cultures will also provide trigger events in order to challenge emerging authentic leaders.

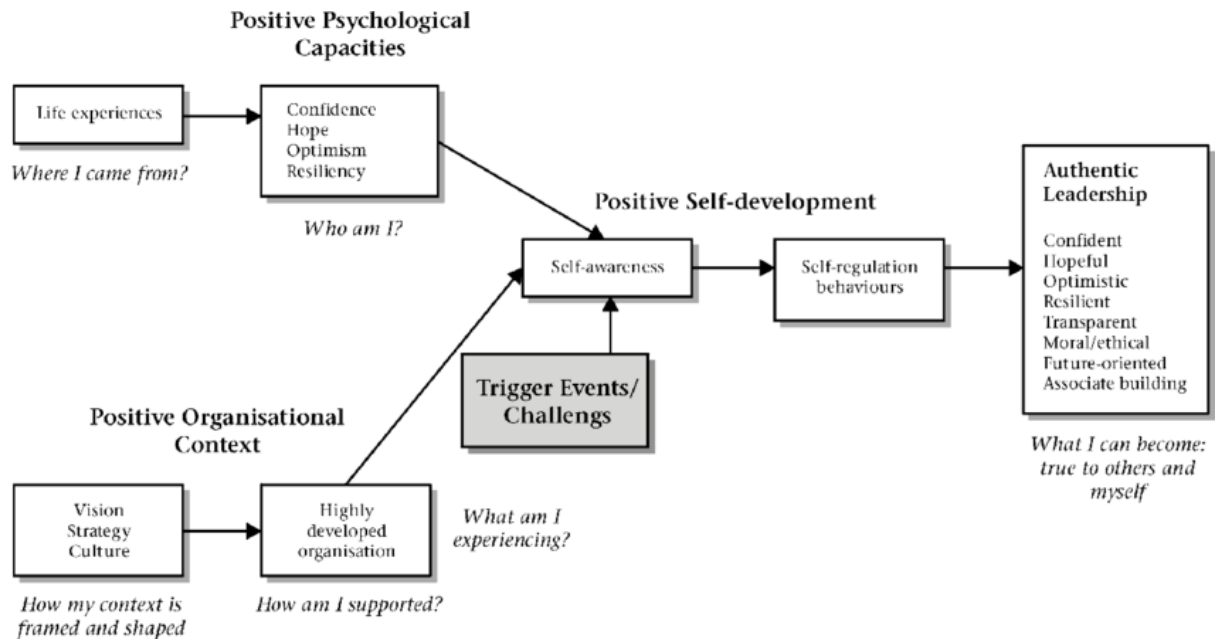


Figure 1: Adapted from “Authentic Leadership Development Model” by Luthans and Avolio (2003)

Considering the previously outlined leadership styles, the concept of Authentic Leadership offers overarching points with quite a few of them. As outlined in the model of Luthans et al. (2003), especially aspects from transformational, positive, and ethical leadership can be found. However, the humble aspect, in combination with the strong correlation between leader and follower development, also allows a comparison to servant leadership aspects in which the leader puts him or herself into service for the others. As mentioned before, one of the central aspects of Authentic Leadership is conveyed in the transformational part as derived from the transformational leadership definition by Bass (1985). This part includes the premise that the leaders know their core values and act absolutely truthfully to them in every situation, to model consistent authentic behavior towards their followers. This consistency not only provides these leaders with a high level of credibility, but also encourages the followers to trust the leaders and behave authentically themselves. Therefore, the authentic leaders can function as key figures for their followers to become authentic leaders themselves. This goes hand in hand with the fact that authentic leaders demonstrate a kind of humbleness, which is explained through the fact that charisma is not – as opposed to other leadership concepts – a key aspect of this leadership style. In fact, “authentic leaders recognize that leadership is not about their success or about getting loyal subordinates to

follow them. They know the key to a successful organization is having empowered leaders at all levels, including those who have no direct reports” (George et al., 2007, p. 7).

As this dissertation focuses on the internal communication aspect in regard to the authenticity of the leader, the correlation between Authentic Leadership and follower behavior is of central importance. While Luthans and Avolio’s model (2003) focusses on the development of the authentic leader him or herself, the scholars Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May and Walumbwa also took the development of the authentic follower and the interaction between both sides into account, in their research of 2005. According to their research, “authentic followership development largely mirrors the development processes of authentic leadership” (Gardener et al., 2005, p. 346). Based on the previous definition of the authentic leader delivered by Luthans and Avolio in 2003, the self-based model of authentic leader and follower development by Gardener et al. (2005) shows how the interactions of authentic leader and followers results in an authentic relationship, which promotes a positive organizational climate and increased performance based on trust, engagement and workplace well-being (See Figure 2).

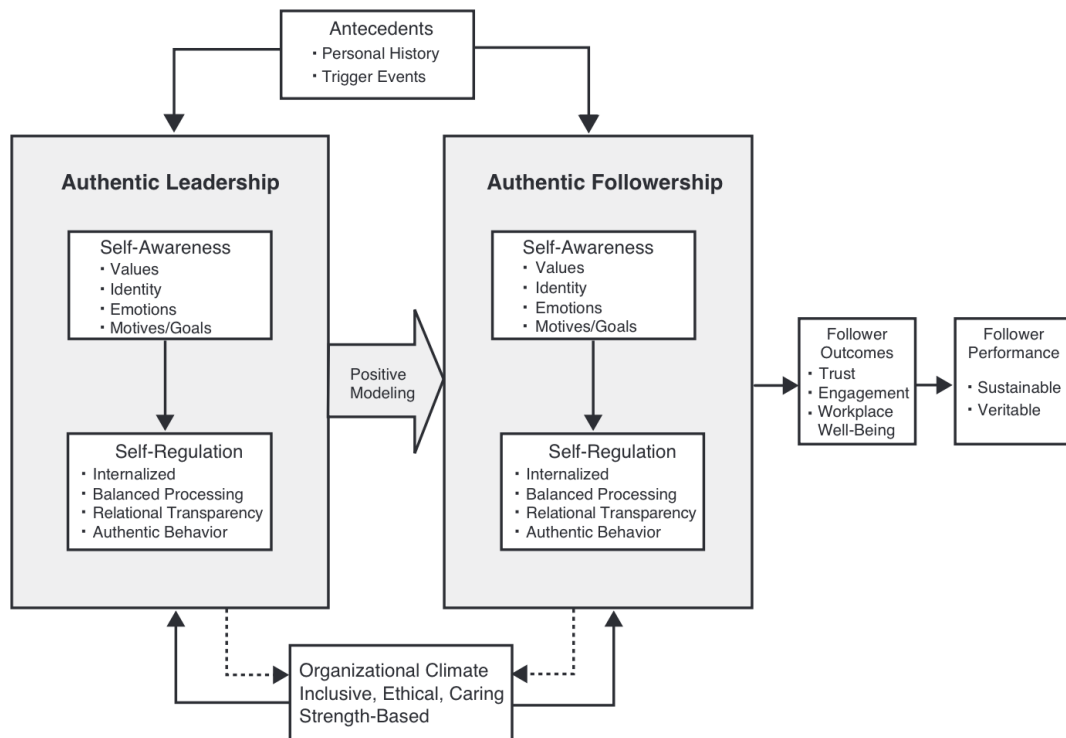


Figure 2: Adapted from “The conceptual framework for authentic leader and follower development” by Gardener et al. (2005)

In their framework for leader and follower development (see figure 2), Gardner et al. (2005) point out the correlation between Authentic Leadership and followership, especially in regard to how it can influence the follower outcomes and performances positively. Further, they define trust as one of the essential premises for the relationship between leaders and followers. They point out that “as higher levels of trust emerge among followers, it becomes imperative that they are dealing with authentic leadership” (Gardner et al., 2005, p. 365).

Aligning with trust as one of the major linkages between Authentic Leadership and follower development or behavior, Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans and May also introduced their framework for linking Authentic Leadership to follower’s attitudes and behaviors, in 2004, which keeps the aspect “trust” in the center.

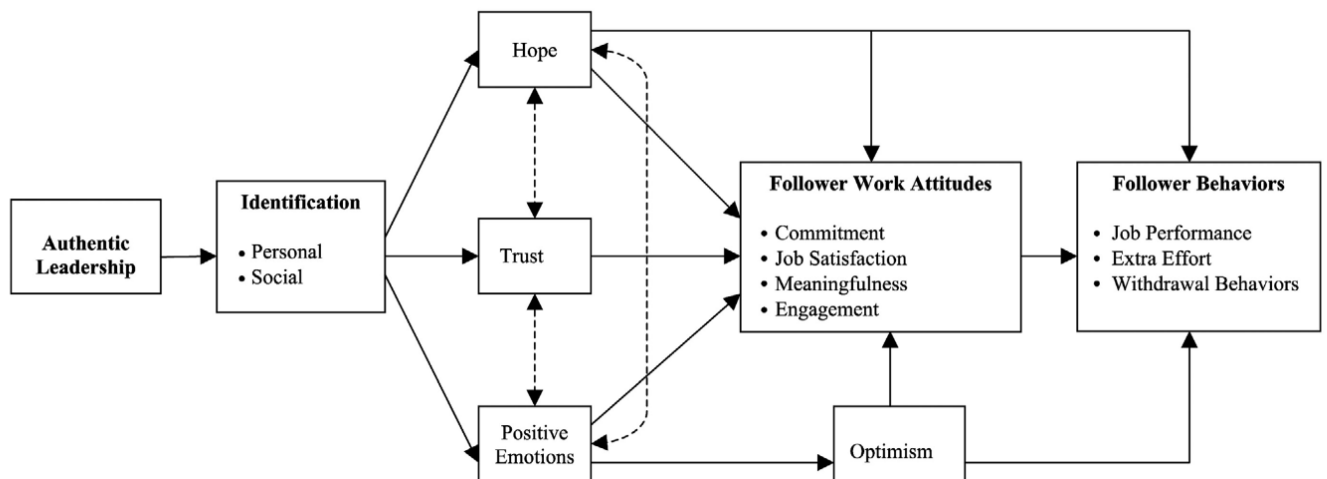


Figure 3: Adapted from “Proposed framework linking authentic leadership to follower’s attitudes and behaviors” by Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans and May (2004)

Next to the other intervening features “hope” and “positive emotions”, “trust” plays a major role in this model by Avolio et al. (2004). In fact, they state that authentic leaders “as they transparently convey their attributes, values, aspirations, and weaknesses to followers, and encourage them to do likewise, the foundations for trust and intimacy are established” (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 15). Further, the authors point out that these intimate relationships between leaders and followers are based on the authenticity and self-acceptance of the

leaders. The beneficial outcomes regarding follower work attitudes and follower behaviors such as “commitment, job satisfaction, meaningfulness, engagement, job performance, extra effort and withdrawal behavior” are therefore directly linked to Authentic Leadership, identification, and trust as one of the greatest linkages in this model.

Also, Men (2015) shows in her study about the effects of leadership communication, that Authentic Leadership has a positive impact on transparent communication within an organization and contributes to employee engagement. According to Men (2015), Authentic Leadership promotes a context that enables the organization’s transparent communication, based on the trust in leaders and the quality of leader-followership relation. These findings align with the statements of Avolio et al. (2004) that “authentic leaders build benevolence and integrity with their followers by encouraging totally open communication, engaging their followers, sharing critical information, and sharing their perception and feelings about the people with whom they work” (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 14).

However, the correlation between Authentic Leadership and internal communication such as transparent communication will be discussed to a wider extent in chapter 2.5.

2.3 Entrepreneurship

After discussing different leadership styles in the previous chapters, it is now to narrow the field a little bit more in regard to the research question of this dissertation. Leaders and leadership positions can occur at different levels of organizations. In this research, however, we are looking at leaders at a specific position: Entrepreneurs.

To begin with, the term entrepreneurship needs to be defined. Entrepreneurship can be seen as a multidimensional phenomenon, and the definitions vary broadly. One recognized, however, has been delivered by Venkataraman and Shane (2000) as the process of “how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited” (Venkataraman and Shane, 2000, p. 218). This definition includes the aspect of novelty in a way of how potentially completely new systems or parts of already existing systems are being put together to create something new.

Therefore, entrepreneurship can also be seen as a method, or a way of thinking, raising, and answering issues (Fayolle and Matlay, 2010). The entrepreneur, thus, is an active component of this ecosystem, as he or she is the one who started this new organization or company.

It is to mention that not every entrepreneur has to be in a leading position, even though he or she might be the founder of the new economic construct. However, many entrepreneurs do, in fact, function as a leader. How leadership and entrepreneurship are interlinked, will therefore be discussed in the next passages.

2.3.1 Leadership and Entrepreneurship

As mentioned before, entrepreneurship is directly linked to innovation and change which leads to the question if this aligns with specific leadership behavior. Since entrepreneurship has gained more and more scientific interest in the past decades, consequently the idea of entrepreneurial leadership evolved.

While some scholars consider entrepreneurship as a sub-domain of leadership (Vecchio, 2003), others argue that entrepreneurship is the essence of leadership (Kuratko, 2007). The absolutism of these two positions does not fully meet the understanding of entrepreneurial leadership within this dissertation. Entrepreneurial leadership is rather seen as an intercorrelation between entrepreneurship and leadership.

The first definition of entrepreneurial leadership was delivered by Cunningham and Lischeron (1991), who defined it as the following: “Entrepreneurial leadership involves setting clear goals, creating opportunities, empowering people, preserving organizational intimacy, and developing a human resource system.” (p.53). Based on this initial definition and aligning with following definitions (Ireland et al., 2003; Gupta et al. 2004; Thornberry 2006; Surie and Ashley 2008), Renko et al. (2015) define entrepreneurial leadership as “influencing and directing the performance of group members toward the achievement of organizational goals that involve recognizing and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities” (p. 55).

In their research, Renko et al. (2015), point out that entrepreneurial leadership is a distinctive leadership style that can occur in organizations of any size or type. As key elements of entrepreneurial leadership, Renko et al. (2015) put focus on the entrepreneurial goals for leadership: “opportunity, recognition and exploitation”. They explain that the entrepreneurial leader therefore not only recognizes opportunities but also puts them in action through committing to gain returns from these opportunities. Hence, they conclude that “opportunity recognition is about perception, exploitation is about action, and the goals set by entrepreneurial leaders involve both” (Renko et al., 2015, p. 55). Further, their approach includes that the entrepreneurial leader encourages their followers to aim for the same entrepreneurial goals through acting as role models for them. Further, Renko et al. (2015) state that it is crucial for “employees at every level of an organization to embrace entrepreneurial behaviors and attitudes” (p.54) and therefore adapt the leader’s behavior. Moreover, Bagheri et al. (2020) found in their research that “entrepreneurial leadership was positively and significantly related to employee’s innovative behavior” (p. 14). Further, their research showed that “creative self-efficacy and passion for inventing partially explained the influence of entrepreneurial leadership on employee’s innovative behavior” (Bagheri et al., 2020, p.15)

This premise clearly leads back to the transformational leadership style, as proposed by Bass (1985), to which the entrepreneurial leadership style is closely related (Renko et al., 2015). Nevertheless, Renko et al. (2015) point out that even though entrepreneurial leadership aligns with major aspects of the transformational leadership style by Bass (1985), it mostly differs from it in the charismatic aspect. While the transformational leadership concept (Bass, 1985) holds charisma as one of its core elements, the entrepreneurial leadership concept by Renko et al. (2015), does not include charisma. Similarly, as previously outlined in the Authentic Leadership concept provided by Luthans and Avolio (2003), Renko et al. (2015) argue that entrepreneurial leaders are not necessarily charismatic, but still act “as a role model in entrepreneurial behavior, inspiring imitation” (Renko et al., 2015, p. 58).

Regarding the linkage between entrepreneurial and Authentic Leadership, Jensen and Luthans’s (2006a) exploratory research showed that the “entrepreneur-leader’s perceived authenticity may have (a positive impact) on their employees’ work-related attitudes, and

happiness” (p. 658). Further, their research suggests that “the perceptions of authentic leadership may not only positively affect employee work attitudes and happiness but may also at least have an indirect impact on venture-performance” (Jensen and Luthans, 2006a, p. 658). Another research of Jensen and Luthans (2006b) showed a “positive relationship between entrepreneurs’ positive psychological capital and their self-perception of authentic leadership” (p. 266). They continue that “Entrepreneurs’ reported levels of optimism, resiliency, and hope which demonstrated a significant positive relationship with the perception of their authentic leadership” (Jensen and Luthans, 2006b, p. 266). Nevertheless, the body of literature on the relation between entrepreneurial and Authentic Leadership is rather limited.

2.3.2 Entrepreneurial Leadership and Women

As previously outlined, the research question of this dissertation is stated as the following:

How does the perception of leadership styles influence the authenticity of female entrepreneurs and how they communicate internally?

Therefore, female entrepreneurs are in focus of this research. Nevertheless, it is to say that gender is not fixed, but much rather constructed through social interactions depending on the given context, which lead to an understanding of which roles men or women are considered to play (Goffman, 1979).

Moreover, before going further into depth about the role of women as entrepreneurial leaders, it is important to point out that this dissertation does not claim to be a gender specific research. In fact, the exact same research could, and maybe should, be conducted with a sample of male entrepreneurs.

Gender inequalities and disparities are still a global issue, especially regarding women in leadership positions. The global number of women in senior management and leading positions has been growing slowly and irregularly, over the past decades. While the

proportion of leadership roles held by women worldwide only stood at 19%, in 2004, it never dipped below that level ever since. In fact, it increased to 29%, in 2019, and hit 31% this year, which means that, by now, women hold a third of all leadership positions (Women in Business 2021 Report, 2021). Across the globe, Africa shows the highest proportion of women in leadership positions with 39%, directly followed by Asia with 38%, and Latin America with 36%. Regarding the European Union, 34% of all senior positions are now held by women, while it was only 30%, in 2017 (Women in Business 2021 Report, 2021).

The still existing gender disparity within leadership positions can be traced back to several barriers women face during their career paths, not few of them having to do with gender stereotypes. These stereotypes refer to expectations about how people belonging to a specific group are typically perceived and, in this case, reflect how people assume women or men should be like (Phelan and Rudman, 2010). Since women are associated with being warm, communal, and people-oriented, they face the risk of not being respected in leadership positions. If they, however, act in a more confident and achievement-oriented way, they might rather gain credibility in their leading position, but lose likability because they do not fulfil society's expectations towards women's behavior anymore (Phelan and Rudman, 2010). This concept is called the 'backlash' effect, which consequently makes "career women face a unique double bind, in that they must choose between being liked but not respected (by displaying communal qualities), or being respected but not liked (by displaying agentic qualities)" (Phelan and Rudman, 2010, p. 809). The backlash effect is especially associated with moments of competition and hiring discriminations for women applying for leading positions (Phelan and Rudman, 2010), but not all women in leading positions applied for their jobs, many of them simply created them themselves: "They have given up adapting their styles to more masculine ways in order to attain the well-deserved promotion, with equal power and equal pay. Instead, many women, even those few who have been successful as executives and CEO's are leaving the corporate arena to create new businesses under their own terms" (Kephart and Schumacher, 2005, p. 12).

The number of female entrepreneurs has been steadily increasing over the past years. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2020/2021, the trend towards closing the gender gap in entrepreneurial activity is continuing in the 2020 data. The

analysis, however, shows that men are still more likely to start businesses than women. In Europe, less than one in 20 women are starting their own business (GEM, 2020/2021).

Consequently, research on entrepreneurial leadership is often characterized by the dominant influence of men in leadership roles (Tlaiss and Kauser 2019; Galloway et al. 2015; Hamilton 2013; Harrison et al. 2015; Henry et al. 2015). On the other hand, coherent with the still existing underrepresentation of female entrepreneurs, one main literature stream regarding female leadership behavior in entrepreneurial firms addresses the lack of role models who display how individuals enact leadership roles (Kakabadse et al., 2018). Leadership perception, however, “is complex and multidimensional in nature, including attitudinal dimensions (content, structure and function) and a wider social context which, in turn, has profound effects on a leader’s judgement of her/his social world, as well on her/his conceptualization of the leadership role” (Kakabadse et al., 2018, p. 158).

The first gender-aware framework for women’s entrepreneurship was delivered in 2009 by the researchers Brush, Bruin and Welter. Based on an existing framework by Bates et al. (2007), which refers to ‘market’, ‘money’, and ‘management’ as the three requirements for entrepreneurs to launch and grow venture, their framework adds another two aspects: ‘motherhood’ and the ‘meso/macro environment’ to extend the previous ‘3Ms’ to a ‘5M’ framework (see figure 4). While Brush, Bruin and Welter agree to the previously established framework that shows that money, markets, and management are essential for founding any business, they argue that especially women face barriers to access these blocks at first place. Therefore, ‘motherhood’ and the ‘meso’ and ‘macro’ environment has added by them.

The aspect of ‘motherhood’ refers to the household/family context, arguing that it might have a larger impact on women than on men in the process of founding a company, since “gendered power relations and inequalities within the household still remain largely invisible” (Brush, Bruin and Welter, 2009, p.11). This unequal division of labor and access to household resources, could in turn impact the access to the other three requirements namely money, market, and management.

The ‘macro and meso environment’ aspect in the 5M’s model refer to two different layers: The macro environment “is typically defined as then national level policies, culture, laws and economy”, while meso environment “refers to regional, support services, initiatives and organizations” (Brush, Bruin and Welter, 2009, p.11). Especially the macro environment can, therefore, be seen as an influence that female entrepreneurs themselves have almost no control over. Further, these social, cultural, and institutional aspects “frame not only how many women perceive opportunities and make strategic choices, but also how these women and others view their businesses” (Brush, Bruin and Welter, 2009, p.12).

The ‘meso environment’ of the model represents the structures between the “macro society- and economy-wide level and the micro level” and thus includes networks and business associations (Brush, Bruin and Welter, 2009, p.12). Therefore, the macro and meso environment are highly interlinked.

In their proposed model, ‘motherhood’ is placed in the center of the model (see figure 4), to point out the importance of the position of the women, not only in the family, but also as to put focus on gender awareness for the whole model in general. The standard 3M’s (money, market, and management) are arranged in overlapping circles, showing the interdependences between them. The macro and meso environment aspects are demonstrated as circles around the whole model, showing the influences coming from the outside, as well as demonstrating that these are mostly uncontrollable preconditions.

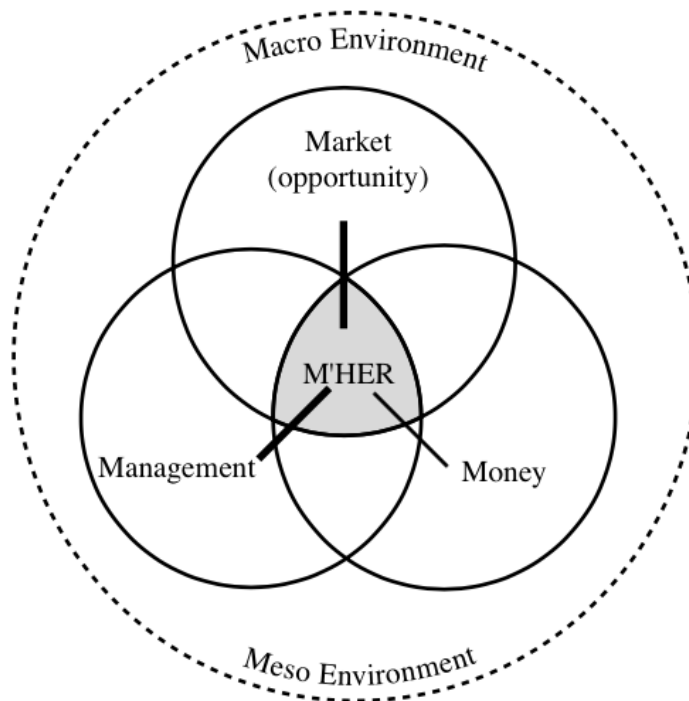


Figure 4: Adapted from “Women’s entrepreneurship ‘5M’ framework” by Brush, Bruin and Welter, 2009

While the model of Brush, Bruin and Welter (2009) focusses on the preconditions female entrepreneurs encounter when starting their own businesses, a wide range of entrepreneurial research also focusses on gender differences in leadership and the represented leadership styles. Female entrepreneurs are often described as “highly motivated, initiating action and activity without direction, and having a high internal locus of control and achievement motivation” (Tibus, 2010, p. 749). Further, multiple studies showed a correlation between female entrepreneurial leaders and a transformational leadership style (Bamiatzi, Jones, Mitchelmore et al., 2015). Further, in her investigation of female and male constructs of leadership and empowerment, Alimo-Metcalfe (2010) found that the perception of qualities and behaviors of leadership differed broadly between the male and female participants. She stated that “at times, they are almost the opposite of each other” (p. 641). According to Javadian and Singh (2010) and Al Dajani and Marlow (2010), as referred to in Tlaiss and Kauser (2019) “women do not merely passively adopt highly gendered constructions of their leadership identities. To the contrary, they actively work, participate in, and resist the structures that simultaneously impede and facilitate their entrepreneurship and influence

their status as women entrepreneurial leaders” (Tlaiss and Kauser, 2019, p. 519). In regard to the construction of entrepreneurial leadership identity, Tlaiss and Kauser’s research (2019) showed that “all the interviewees criticize the traditional approaches to gender and the masculinization of the entrepreneurial career path” (p. 528).

Acknowledging the underrepresentation of women in the context of entrepreneurship allows linkages to the level of authenticity of female entrepreneurs. In her interview study of female business owners, Lewis (2013) points out that since entrepreneurship is rather linked to masculinity, it could be easier for men to connect “their internal self-identity with the external social identity of entrepreneur which the discourse of enterprise offers, thus achieving a sense of authenticity” (Lewis, 2013, p. 254) than for women. Consequently, she argues that women’s entrepreneurial identities are currently rather understood to be actively created which could impact their authenticity.

However, it is to say that comparing female and male entrepreneurial leaders can lead to them being looked at with different standards, which could limit understandings and could be seen as a step back from actually moving closer to closing the gender gap in research (Bamiatzi, Jones, Mitchelmore et al., 2015).

2.4 Internal Communication

Communication is a defining feature of every organization and, subsequently, so is internal communication. Communication within a company or an organization happens constantly. Whether it is formal, managed communication, or informal conversations in between. Since internal communication is, therefore, inevitable it could easily be overlooked or not given as much importance as it requires. This can also be seen in the state of scientific research on internal communication: While internal communication clearly exists since organizations themselves have existed, the field of research on Internal Communication can still be considered to be relatively young and not extensively developed. Only in the 1990s, however, the field gained more and more scientific interest as the importance of internal communication and its outcomes were firstly looked at more closely (Welch and Jackson, 2007; Verčič et al., 2012).

According to van Riel and Fombrun (2007) the concept of Internal Communication can be located in the broader area of Corporate Communications. One of the first definitions of Corporate Communications was provided by Argenti, in 1996. In this article, the operating fields and its subdomains (Image and Identity; Corporate Advertising and Advocacy; Media Relations; Financial Communications; Employee Relations; Community Relations and Corporate Philanthropy; Government Relations; Crisis Communication) have been presented. Within the function “Employee Relations”, Argenti (1996) points out that as “companies become more focused on retaining a happy workforce with changing values and different demographics, they have necessarily had to think more seriously about how they communicate with employees through what is often referred to as internal communications” (Argenti, 1996, p. 80). Further, already in 1996, Argenti states that the area is rapidly growing, and organizations need to put more attention to their internal communication. However, it is to say that this approach towards the importance of Internal Communication is not seen as an independent field, but more like a subdomain of Corporate Communications and as part of “Employee Image”, directly linked to the Corporate Identity and Corporate Reputation of the organization (see Figure 5).

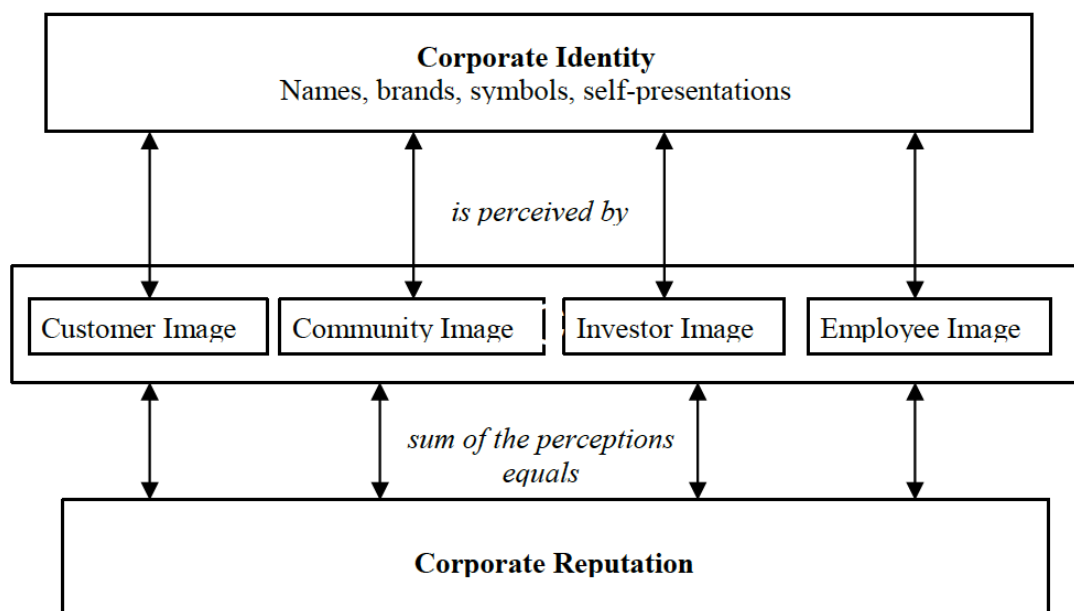


Figure 5: Adapted from “Reputation Framework” (Foreman and Argenti, 2005, p. 249)

Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) further add to this understanding of internal communications, that a by-product of it can be seen in organizational identification, namely “the degree to which employees are proud to work in the company” (van Riel and Fombrun, 2007, p. 189). They state that internal communication increases the employee identification with the company through these three points: “(1) by making the company’s reputation platform more salient to individual employees, (2) by clarifying ingroup and outgroup membership rules – what it means to belong to the company and (3) by communicating the benefits employees will have –implicitly or explicitly – when they participate in organizational life” (van Riel and Fombrun, 2007, p. 189). This perception of internal communication, therefore, aligns with the previously mentioned linkages of internal communication with Corporate Identity and Corporate Reputation as Foreman and Argenti (2005) point out in their Reputation Framework.

However, to find a clear definition of Internal Communication is not very easy. In fact, Grunig (1992) concluded a literature review on Internal Communication saying that “In spite of all this research, however, we emerge from this section with little theoretical understanding of how internal communication makes organizations more effective” (Grunig, 1992, p. 575). Nevertheless, the wide range of definitions show tendencies to either focus on the informational or the relational side of internal communication.

Kalla (2005) for instance defines internal communications first of all in plural, since her goal is “to capture all the communication processes that simultaneously take place inside an organization” (Kalla, 2005, p. 304), and provides a multidisciplinary approach to it which focuses on information processes and knowledge sharing. Therefore, her Integrated Internal Communications model contains four communication sub-domains: Business Communication, Management Communication, Organizational Communication and Corporate Communication.

Welch and Jackson (2007), on the other hand provided a stakeholder approach towards internal communication, which is based on the definition that “internal communication is the strategic management of interactions and relationships between stakeholders at all levels within organizations” (Welch and Jacks, 2007, p. 183). Based in the foundation that internal

stakeholders are divided into different levels (“strategic management, day-to-day management, team and project management), Welch and Jackson (2007) identify the following stakeholder groups: (a) all employees; (b) strategic management: the dominant coalition, top management or strategic managers (CEOs, senior management teams); (c) day-to-day management: supervisors, middle managers or line-managers (directors, heads of departments, team leaders, division leaders, the CEO as line manager); (d) work teams (departments, divisions); and (e) project teams (internal communication review group, company-wide e-mail implementation group) (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p.184).

Since this dissertation is focusing on internal communication, in linkage towards the authenticity of the leader, the definition based on a stakeholder approach provided by Welch and Jackson (2007) can be seen as a good foundation to go further. Taking this into account, the stream of communication has to be looked at: Who is communicating to whom and how does the information flow?

The flow of internal communications can differ between flowing vertically, laterally, upward, or downward, or even diagonally. According to Van Riel and Fombrun (2007) “In most companies, internal communications are more likely to flow vertically rather than laterally, and downward rather than upward” (p. 191). Further, they point out that “employees are more likely to send information upwards if they feel that they have a trusting relationship with the manager” (Van Riel and Fombrun, 2007, p. 191).

Aligned with their stakeholder-based definition of internal communication, Welch and Jackson (2007) provided an Internal Corporate Communication model, which specially focuses on the communication between strategic managers and the internal stakeholders of an organization (see Figure 6).

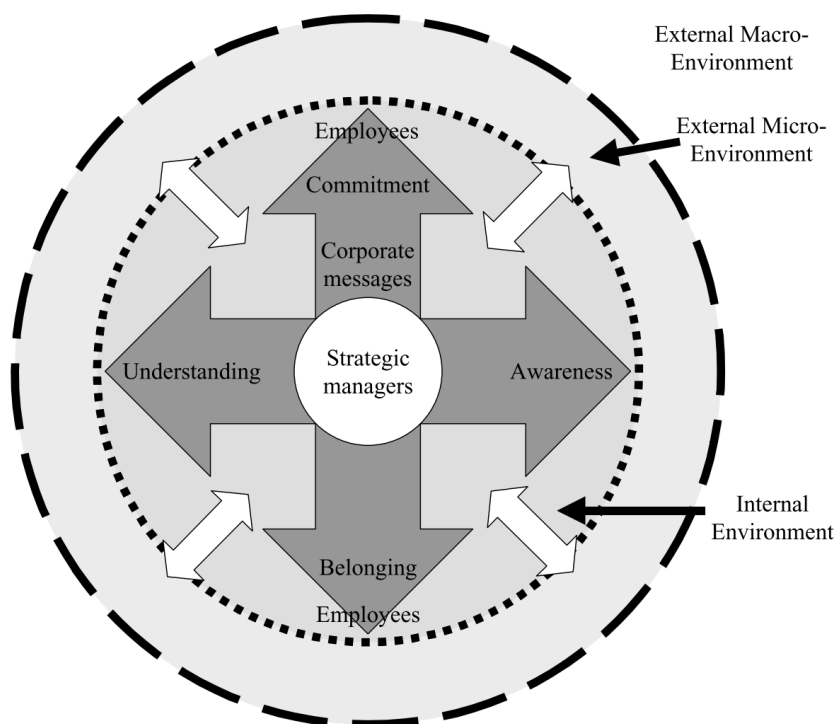


Figure 6: Adapted from “Internal corporate Communication” (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p. 186)

As Figure 6 is showing, Welch and Jackson (2007) see strategic managers at the center of internal corporate communication processes. The dotted line around them represents the employees. The four grey arrows show the communication activities from the strategic managers towards the employees, each linked to one of the following communication goals: Awareness, Belonging, Understanding and Commitment. This figure demonstrates that the direction of communication between managers and employees is predominantly one-sided and classically downward, thus from manager to employee. Welch and Jackson (2007) did, however, add 4 more arrows to their concept to represent potential two-sided dialogues between managers and employees (white arrows in Figure 6). While Welch and Jackson (2007) point out that “it is a practical impossibility for senior managers to meet and discuss strategy with all employees” (p. 187) which makes, in turn, one-way communication from strategic managers “both unavoidable and necessary” (p.187), they agree to the importance of Two-Way Symmetrical Communication. Through underpinning their Internal Corporate Communication model with Two-Way Symmetrical Communication “to provide opportunities for dialogue”, the researchers refer to and include the findings of the influential excellence study conducted by Grunig in 1984, which showed that “a symmetrical system

of internal communication is one of 17 characteristics of excellent organizations” (Welch and Jackson, 2007, p. 187).

2.4.1 Two-Way Symmetrical Communication

But what exactly is Two-Way Symmetrical Communication? Grunig and Hunt published their book “Managing Public Relations” in 1984, in which they introduce the Four Models of Public Relations (see Figure 3), which contains 4 different ways how organizations communicate with their stakeholders. The four models are presented as the following: 1) “Press Agency / Publicity”; 2) “Public Information”; 3) “Two-Way Asymmetric”; 4) “Two-Way Symmetric” (Grunig and Hunt, 1984, p. 20). While the first two models are based on one-way communication, the last two models focus on communication that flows in both directions: from and towards an organization and its public. While the asymmetric model describes that the organization strategically communicates with its public “to achieve maximum change in attitude and behavior” (Grunig and Hunt, 1984, p. 23). The backwards flow of communication coming from the public is limited to a level of “feedback” in this case, according to Grunig and Hunt (1984). Therefore, even though this model is classified as two-way communication, it can in fact be considered to be mostly one-sided, due to its unbalanced asymmetry.

The symmetric two-way communication, as proposed by Grunig, is in contrast based on the purpose of mutual understanding and consists “more of a dialogue than a monologue” (Grunig and Hunt, 1984, p. 23). While the asymmetric model finds its purpose in persuasion, thus the organization persuading the public, the symmetric two-way communication model also allows the public to persuade the organization, since the communication is equally distributed and can flow in both directions in an honest way. According to Grunig and Hunt, in 1984, the most practiced model of these four is the model of “Public Information” with estimated 50%, while the “Two-Way Asymmetric” model follows with 20%, and the other two only take 15% each (see Figure7). Therefore, the “Two-Way Symmetric” communication model, which this dissertation focuses on, was only estimated to be practiced

by around 15% of organizations, even though it is presented as Grunig's ideal type of communication.

	Model			
Characteristic	Press Agency / Publicity	Public Information	Two-Way Asymmetric	Two-Way Symmetric
Purpose	Propaganda	Dissemination of information	Scientific persuasion	Mutual understanding
Nature of Communication	One-way; complete truth not essential	One-way; truth important	Two-way; imbalanced effects	Two-way; balanced effects
Communication Model	Source → Rec.	Source → Rec	Source → Rec ← Feedback	Group → Group ←
Nature of Research	Little, "counting house"	Little, readability, readership	Formative; evaluative of attitudes	Formative; evaluative of understanding
Leading Historical Figures	P-T. Barnum	Ivy Lee	Edward L. Bernays	Bernays, educators, professional leaders
Where Practiced Today	Sports, theatre, product promotion	Government, nonprofit associations, business	Competitive business; agencies	Regulated business; agencies
Estimated Percentage of Organizations Practicing It Today	15%	50%	20%	15%

Figure 7: Adapted from "Characteristics of Four Models of Public Relations" (Grunig and Hunt, 1984, p. 22)

As stated in the name, the Four Models of Public Relations by Grunig and Hunt (1984), have their roots in the field of Public Relations and hence does the "Two-Way Symmetric" communication model. This model focuses on mutual exchange of information between an organization and its publics (employees, customers, and all kinds of stakeholders). Further, the Two-Way Symmetrical Communication model is based on honest and open two-way communication and mutual respect in order to achieve mutual understanding (Turney, 1998). Within the field of internal communication however, symmetrical communication focuses

on “trust, credibility, openness, relationships, reciprocity, network symmetry, horizontal communication, feedback, adequacy of information, employee-centered style, tolerance for disagreement, and negotiation” (Grunig, 1992, p. 558).

Men (2014) adds that “In such a communication system, managers and followers engage in dialogue and listen to each other; internal media disseminate information required by employees to foster mutual understanding and understanding of individual roles. Thus, symmetrical communication fosters a participative organizational culture and organic structure.” (Men, 2014, p. 260). Many scholars, however, have pointed out that even though symmetrical communication models can be seen as ideal formats, the dialogue nature of Two-Way Symmetrical Communication could be hard to bring into practice. Welch and Jackson (2007) therefore state that “it would be unrealistic to suggest that internal corporate communication can be conducted principally as face-to-face dialogue” (p.187), except in very small organizations.

Nevertheless, symmetrical internal communication is still believed to increase the quality of employee relationships and moreover can “induce affective commitment to change and behavioral support for change” (Men, Neill and Yue, 2020, p. 6). But what is the role of a leader in internal communication and how can he or she increase the dialogue within the organization?

Leaders in organizations are not only responsible for passing on information but also need to stay informed about what is going on throughout the company (Withworth, 2006). That means that it is “just as important for managers and supervisors to know how to listen as it is to talk” (Withworth, 2006, p. 207). Further, employees “expect their senior executives to share their vision for the organization and their ideas and perspectives with the entire team” and provide “open, honest, credible communication” (Withworth, 2006, p. 208).

2.5 Authentic Leadership and Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication

An extensive number of studies have been conducted to examine the influence of different leadership styles on internal communication systems. However, the body of research on the correlation between Authentic Leadership and two-way symmetrical internal

communication, is rather limited. Nevertheless, the existing literature on this relationship indicates a positive correlation between the two concepts:

In their study “Cultivating Quality Employee-Organization Relationships: Interplay among Organizational Leadership, Culture, and Communication” (2016), Men and Jiang examined the linkages between employee-organization relationships and Authentic Leadership, symmetrical internal communication, and organizational culture. Prior to this study, Men (2015) identified that Authentic Leadership has a positive impact on transparent communication and facilitates the establishment of symmetrical internal communication within an organization. Further, the results of the study by Men and Jiang 2016, show that Authentic Leadership has a direct effect on symmetrical internal communication. They state that “authentic leadership emphasizes the symmetrical notion of openness, participation, and empowerment” (Men and Jiang, 2016, p. 474). In a prior study, Men and Stacks (2014) demonstrated that employees, who are supervised by authentic leaders “are more likely to perceive the organization’s communication as symmetrical and transparent” (Men and Stacks, 2014, p. 317). They conclude that Authentic Leadership directly encourages the development of internal symmetric communication.

3. Research Methodology

In the previous part, the theoretical framework of leadership - with a special focus on Authentic Leadership and leadership in association with women -, and internal communication - with focus on the Two-Way Symmetrical Communication -, have been presented.

This chapter outlines the proceeding and design of the empirical work done in this study. It introduces the research methodology used for this dissertation and how the data has been collected and analyzed. To begin with, the fundamental guidelines of the different approaches of qualitative and quantitative data collection are provided. The following passages will then describe the actual data collection for this study, which consisted of qualitative interviews and a quantitative online survey. Moreover, it is to state that this research aims to provide further insights and a better understanding of the subjects but does not aim to provide definite statements or conclusions.

As mentioned previously, this research follows the interpretivism branch, in order to provide an understanding based on the experiences of individuals. Since the interpretivism perspective is largely based on the human as a subject and also relies on the researcher, it conveys some disadvantages that have to be considered. Bias on the behalf of the researcher could be a potential limitation since this approach typically involves observation and / or interviews. However, this approach also allows the researcher to gather honest and in-depth data, due to the interview format.

3.1 Research Question and Propositions

This research investigates the influence of previously perceived leadership styles on the authenticity of female entrepreneurs in regard to their internal communication. As previously stated, the research question is:

How does the perception of leadership styles influence the authenticity of female entrepreneurs and how they communicate internally?

Grounded on this main question, additional propositions have been formulated while researching in order to support the consistent line of reasoning:

1. When founding their own companies, female entrepreneurs believe that they have to behave in a certain way to be a leader.
2. Previously perceived leadership styles have an impact on the leadership style of female entrepreneurs.
3. Female entrepreneurs show Authentic Leadership behavior.
4. Female entrepreneurs encourage two-way symmetrical internal communication.
5. Authentic leadership encourages two-way symmetrical internal communication.

3.2 Research Design

The selected research design for this study is a mixed method strategy. The mixed methods approach for empirical research offers multiple benefits in order to provide a comprehensive understanding and analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2009). Nevertheless, the combination of qualitative and quantitative data can be time consuming which, consequently, could lead to a reduced sample size or limited interviews due to time restraints (Sandelowski, 2000). Agreeing with Creswell (2009) that the results of qualitative and quantitative data can be “used side by side to reinforce each other” (Creswell, 2009, p. 14), the method of a mixed approach of research has been chosen to create a more comprehensive and complete picture of the research problem of this dissertation. It is to mention that the mixing of methods can be conducted in many different ways. In this case, the researcher aims to collect one form of data (qualitative) and then use the second set of data (quantitative) to provide further information that might contribute to explain, corroborate, or contradict the first. An integration of the data and connecting across phases will not be applied. The secondary database provides, therefore, a supportive role to the study (Creswell,

2009). According to Creswell (2009), three general strategies of mixed method research have been developed by numerous researchers since the concept of mixing methods emerged in 1959: 1) “Sequential mixed methods”; 2) “Concurrent mixed methods; 3) “Transformative mixed methods”. The first procedure aims to expand the results of the first method through the usage of the second method. The second strategy seeks to merge qualitative and quantitative data “in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem” (Creswell, 2009, p. 14). Lastly, the “Transformative mixed methods” offers an overlapping framework within the design that contains quantitative and qualitative data. For this dissertation, the second approach, thus “concurrent mixed methods” will be applied, since the findings of both quantitative, as well as qualitative measures, will provide an in-depth comprehension of the research problem, considering different points of view.

More precisely, a concurrent embedded strategy is being followed for this research. A “concurrent embedded approach has a primary method that guides the project and a secondary database that proceeds a supporting role in the procedures” (Creswell, 2009, p. 214). Thus, the second, quantitative part of this research, is embedded in the predominant, qualitative method. The embedding of this second part means that it provides information at a different level of the study. According to Creswell (2009), this procedure can be applied if, for instance, employees are studied quantitatively, while their managers are interviewed in a qualitative manner in order to gain a multilevel perspective to the research theme. The outcome of this procedure are two separate databases, gained during one single collection phase, which can then be analyzed separately and subsequently compared throughout a discussion. Moreover, it is to say that the focus is normally set on one of the measures, while the second part only adds supportive information, which leads to an uneven weight distribution between both parts of the research (see Figure 8). The greatest advantage of this approach is that the researcher can “gain perspective from different types of data or from different levels within the study” (Creswell, 2009, p. 215).

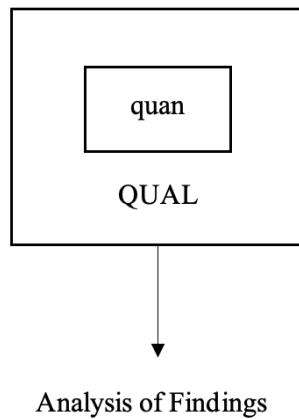


Figure 8: Adapted from “Concurrent Embedded Design” Creswell (2009)

In this dissertation, the different points of view will be provided through an examination of both the perspectives of the female founders, and the perspectives of their employees, through qualitative and quantitative research respectively. As demonstrated in Table 1, the objectives of both parts of the research are the following: Since the first part of the research is based on the experiences of female founders in regard to previously perceived leadership styles before founding their companies, it follows an inductive approach and is based on qualitative research in the format of in-depth interviews. This part of the research is, therefore, based on the personal experiences of the founders and involves the personal involvement of the researcher. Further, since this dissertation aims to investigate the influence of previous leadership perceptions on the authenticity of their own leadership styles, a potential of bias has to be considered. Therefore, the second part of the research will be conducted in quantitative measures, focusing on the employees of the respective companies of the female founders. This part of the study, thus, follows a deductive approach, while the researcher is not involved and strives for objectivity. Further, the quantitative part of the research aims to provide validation of the previously gained data provided through the qualitative research in order to obtain a higher level of validity. The quantitative part aims to validate the founder’s self-perception of their authenticity, demonstrated in their leadership style, as well as indications of the execution of two-way symmetrical internal communication.

Table 1: Objectives of qualitative and quantitative research of this dissertation

Criteria	Qualitative research (Female founders)	Quantitative research (Employees)
<i>Approaches to conducting research</i>	Inductive approach	Deductive approach
<i>Role of the researcher</i>	Personal involvement	Striving for objectivity
<i>Indications for Authentic Leadership</i>	Insider's perspective of the founders, self-perception about leadership style and level of authenticity at work	Employee's perspective and validation of founder's self-perception
<i>Indications for Two-Way Symmetrical Communication</i>	Insider's perspective of the founders, description of internal communication, means and frequency	Employee's perspective and validation of existence of Two-Way Symmetrical Communication
<i>Influence of previously perceived leadership styles on leadership style development</i>	Description of personal experiences of the founders, evaluation of impact on own leadership style	-

Source: Own table

3.2.1 Qualitative Data Collection

In order to gain insights to the previously outlined research question, the first part of the research is conducted with qualitative measures. Therefore, in-depth qualitative interviews with female founders will be conducted. Qualitative interviews can be conducted either individually or in group settings, so called focus groups. Since focus groups “are not recommended for studying sensitive topics that people will be reluctant to discuss in public such as professional ethics” (Qu and Dumay, 2001, p. 243), the procedure of individual interviews will be applied in this research. Individual interviews can take place in different practices. The three most common practices of individual interviews are (1) structured, (2) semi-structured, and (3) unstructured interviews (Qu and Dumay, 2001). In this research, semi-structured interviews will be conducted. This kind of interview “involves prepared

questioning guided by identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner” (Qu and Dumay, 2001, p. 246). The preparation for questioning can be covered through an interview guide to ensure the coverage of the themes and also “help to direct the conversation toward the topics and issues about which the interviewers want to learn” (Qu and Dumay, 2001, p. 246). Advantages of the semi-structured interviews can be found in their flexibility since it enables the researcher to interact with the interviewed person and potentially uncover certain facets in order to gain as much information as possible. Further, the nature of the semi-structured interview offers a wide range of responses through the interaction and interpersonal talk of both, the interviewer and interviewee. However, this type of interview also requires “a great deal of care and planning before, during and after the interviews with regard to the ways questions are asked and interpreted” (Qu and Dumay, 2001, p.247). According to Creswell (2009), the qualitative approach requires open-ended questions to allow room to address sensitive topics and encourage insightful answers.

Interview Guide

An interview guide has been designed for the conduction of the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A). In order to answer the research question, the drafted interview guide contains different topics that aim to gain as much detailed information as possible for each theme. To begin with, it contains questions for (A) contextualization of the interviewed person and their background. Secondly, 8 questions regarding the topic of (B) leadership have been developed. Next, the section concerning (C) authenticity is introduced, with special consideration of the self-perception of the level of displayed authenticity. Lastly, another 8 questions regarding (D) internal communication can be found. Due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, it is to mention that the order of the questions is not strictly the same in each interview. Moreover, depending on the discourse between the interviewer and the interviewee, some of the questions could have been posed in a slightly different manner than in the interview guide, or have been repeated using different terms. Also, in order to maintain a natural flow of conversation, some of the questions could also

be completely left out in case the interviewed person has already answered it in the process of answering a previous question. In this case, the researcher would mention that the planned next question will not be posed and confirm the already given answer with the interviewee. Due to the unpredicted answers of the interviewed persons, a high level of awareness of the interviewer is required.

Further, in the beginning of each interview, the confidentiality and the purpose of the interview have been explained and assured. Since a short briefing about the purpose of the interview has been handed to all respondents prior to the interview, the context has not again been explained by the interviewer. It has also been mentioned that the interviewer will take notes during the interview and that the conversation is being recorded. At the end of each interview, the interviewer offered the space for further statements or information that the interviewed person wanted to add. The interviews were conducted in English and were estimated to have a duration of 30 minutes per interviewee. After finishing the interviews, the interviews were transcribed verbatim. The researcher used otter.ai for easier transcription.

Sampling

The sample consisted of 4 people. The demographics such as gender, age, sector, and company size can be observed on Table 2. The interview partners were approached through snowball sampling. This approach is being used for “locating information-rich key informants or critical cases” (Patton, 2015, p.451) Through personal work experiences of the researcher, the participants of the interviews were contacted through referral. The founder of the company the researcher worked for during the time of the study is not only the author of the book “Starting a revolution: What we can learn from female entrepreneurs about the future of business”, but also well connected in the entrepreneur network, in Germany. Therefore, the initial contact to the interview partners was established through personal contacts, based on the presumption that the contacted women would be open to

share their experiences and provide honest information. The prospects were then sent an email by the researcher to briefly explain the aim of the study. After agreeing to participate, the participants were then provided with a date for the interview.

Table 2: Sample Characteristics

P	Name	Age	Nationality	Sector	Founded in	Size	Position	Int. Length	Date
1	Anna Yona	43	Germany	E-Commerce	2015	240	CEO	33.24 min	21.09.21
2	Ina Budde	32	Germany	Textiles and Fashion	2018	15	CEO	25.20 min	21.09.21
3	Guya Merkle	35	Germany	Jewellery	2015	4	CEO	30.35 min	01.10.21
4	Jeanine Glöyer	31	Germany	Fair Fashion	2014	40	CEO	27.20 min	11.10.21

Source: Own table

Ethical Considerations

It is important to consider ethical aspects during every research in order to examine if any ethical issues are implied in the research topic, the questions, and objectives. While conducting interviews, the researcher needs to follow guidelines to secure the rights of the interviewed person (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), ethical principles include the following aspects: Integrity and objectivity of the researcher, respect for others, avoidance of harm, privacy of those taking part, voluntary nature of participation, informed consent of those taking part, ensuring confidentiality of data and maintenance of anonymity of those taking part, responsibility in

the analysis of data and reporting of findings, compliance in the management of data, ensuring the safety of the researcher (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, p. 244).

Therefore, the researcher was truthful and honest throughout the whole research process and showed respect to those who participated. At all stages, harm to participants in terms of emotional well-being, health or social pressure has been avoided. Further, the researcher provided sufficient information about taking part prior to the conduction of the interviews and the participants freely decided to take part in the research. Further, the researcher ensured confidentiality and asked each interviewed person if they wanted to remain anonymous, which all of them declined. Moreover, the researcher asked the participants for permission to record the interview and only then started recording. In summary, the rights of the participants were respected at all times through providing full transparency about the research objectives and the procedure.

3.2.2 Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative research aims to provide a numerical description of trends or opinions of a specific population. Further, it can be used to test pre-defined concepts that contribute to a theory (Creswell, 2009). This part of the study aims to identify Authentic Leadership behavior of the respective founder as well as indicators of Two-Way Symmetrical Communication through examining information provided by the employees. Therefore, an online survey has been chosen for the data collection.

The use of online questionnaires offers a lot of advantages. They are convenient and time-efficient, since they can be answered in a quick manner and without special tools or instruments as long as a stable internet connection and a laptop or phone are given (Evans and Marthur, 2005). Further, online surveys are cost-efficient, and the online format not only enables an easy and geographical independent distribution but can also be seen as environmentally friendly since they do not have to be printed. The given anonymity of online

surveys is also a great advantage of the format since it can lead to more openness in the answers.

One of the main disadvantages of online surveys can be seen in the response rate which, in many cases, is a lot lower than the actual number of people who receive the survey. Moreover, the self-explanatory character of online questionnaires can be problematic as some participants might not understand the questions. Therefore, special consideration must be paid for the introduction and explanation of the survey. Further, the self-administration factor of the surveys can also lead to an incomplete finishing of the survey.

Conception of the online survey

The popular online software “SurveyMonkey” was used to conduct the online survey. Since the items of the survey are derived from English literature, the whole survey is constipated in English language even though the participants were employees from German companies and therefore most likely to speak German as first language. However, a translation of the items could have caused changes in their meaning so that the measurements could have been negatively influenced. Therefore, the researcher chose to keep the original items in English, since it is very common, in Germany, to learn English at a young age and the questions can be considered to include easily understandable wording.

The online survey conducted within this thesis is built in four sections. First, a short introduction about the researcher and a brief summary of the research is given. Since the survey is distributed to the employees and refers to the leadership style of the respective interviewed founder, the introduction also provides reference to the founder, so that it is clear who the questions refer to, which is especially important in the cases in which the company has more than one founder.

The first set of questions refer to demographic information about the respondents such as age, gender, or duration in the company. To evaluate these first questions, nominal scales are used for measurement. Following, 14 questions regarding Authentic Leadership and another 6 questions about two-way symmetrical internal communication are asked.

The previously mentioned main concepts of this study, including Authentic Leadership and two-way symmetrical internal communication, will be measured through ordinal scales by using 7-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). In order to examine these variables, the measures of the key concepts will be adapted from previous literature (Dozier, Grunig and Grunig, 1995; Neider and Schriesheim, 2011). All items, the theoretical foundation and the measurement scales can be found in Table 3.

Authentic Leadership

The measure of Authentic Leadership in this study will be derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ), developed by Walumbwa et al. (2008). The full ALQ instrument, originally developed by Walumbwa et al. (2008), is commercially copyrighted, which makes the access to it problematic for researchers. Therefore, this study adopted an equivalent measurement scale, the ALI by Neider and Schriesheim (2011). Numerous previous empirical studies have confirmed the reliability and validity of this scale (Men and Stacks, 2014; Men, 2015; Men and Jiang, 2016; Jiang and Men, 2017). Based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008), the ALO by Neider and Schriesheim (2011) is divided into four dimensions: self-awareness (S), relational transparency (R), balanced processing (B), and internalized moral perspective (M) (Neider and Schriesheim, 2011, p. 1147). In order to measure Authentic Leadership according to these components, 14 items will be adopted. Three items will evaluate the aspects of self-awareness (e.g. “My leader shows that he/she understands his/her strengths and weaknesses”), three items evaluate relational transparency (e.g. “My leader admits

mistakes when they occur”), and respectively 4 items will measure balanced processing (e.g. “My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view”), and internalized moral perspective (e.g. “My leader is guided in his/her actions by internal moral standards”).

Two-Way Symmetrical Communication

In order to analyze the component of Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication, items from already established scales will be used. For the measure of Symmetrical Communication, six items from the scale by Dozier, Grunig and Gruning (1995) will be adapted (e.g. “Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be considered two-way communication”). According to Cronbach’s alpha scores from prior studies, the used scale can be assumed to be reliable and valid (Men and Stacks, 2014; Men, 2015; Men and Jiang, 2016; Jiang and Men, 2017).

Table 3: Survey Items

Item	Theoretical foundation for measurement items	Measurement Scale
<i>(Q1) My leader clearly states what he/she means. (relational transparency)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q2) My leader shows consistency between his/her beliefs and actions. (internalized and moral perspective)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q3) My leader asks for ideas that challenge his/her core beliefs. (balanced processing)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)

	Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	
<i>(Q4) My leader describes accurately the way that others view his/her abilities. (self-awareness)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q5) My leader uses his/her core beliefs to make decisions. (internalized and moral perspective)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q6) My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion. (balanced processing)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q7) My leader shows that he/she understands his/her strengths and weaknesses. (self-awareness)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q8) My leader openly shares information with others. (relational transparency)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q9) My leader resists pressures on him/her to do things contrary to his/her beliefs. (internalized and moral perspective)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)

	Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	
<i>(Q10) My leader objectively analyzes relevant data before making a decision. (balanced processing)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q11) My leader is clearly aware of the impact he/she has on others. (self-awareness)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q12) My leader expresses his/her ideas and thoughts clearly to others. (relational transparency)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q13) My leader is guided in his/her actions by internal moral standards. (internalized and moral perspective)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q14) My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view. (balanced processing)</i>	derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), based on the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) by Walumbwa et al. (2008)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q15) I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.</i>	derived from the scale by Dozier, Grunig and Gruning (1995)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)

<i>(Q16) Most communication between management and employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.</i>	derived from the scale by Dozier, Grunig and Gruning (1995)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q17) This company encourages difference of opinion.</i>	derived from the scale by Dozier, Grunig and Gruning (1995)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q18) The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.</i>	derived from the scale by Dozier, Grunig and Gruning (1995)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q19) I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.</i>	derived from the scale by Dozier, Grunig and Gruning (1995)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)
<i>(Q20) I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.</i>	derived from the scale by Dozier, Grunig and Gruning (1995)	7-point Likert scale (strongly disagree – strongly agree)

Source: Own table

Survey Distribution

The distribution of the online survey has been done by sending a link to the founder after the qualitative interview. The interviewed founder previously agreed to sharing the survey with their employees. However, since the survey contains questions about the leadership style of the respective women, all founders aimed to only give the survey to employees who can answer the questions, hence work closely with them. Therefore, it is to say that the distribution of the survey was not in control of the researcher and can therefore be potentially restricted or biased.

Ethical Considerations

Ethically, using a software tool, such as SurveyMonkey can be considered more acceptable than attaching a questionnaire to an email. However, a few ethical considerations remain. The online survey was anonymous, and the participants were told in the introduction that their contribution is voluntary and for academic purposes only. Further, the introduction mentioned that the participants could contact the researcher via email if they have any further questions or if anything is unclear. Moreover, the demographic question regarding the item “gender” gave the option to not be answered or self-described. However, it should be considered that the control over the access and engagement with the survey was very limited and therefore no guarantee can be given that the responses to the online survey are equal to responses that could have been gained through another form of survey. Further, since the questions aim to gain information about the founder of the company and their leadership styles, it also needs to be considered that some respondents could feel reluctant about openly stating their opinion because it is linked to their leader and workplace. Even though the introduction clearly stated that their responses will be anonymous and confidential, this aspect could lead to major limitations of the research.

Nevertheless, considering these potential limitations, the researcher still chose to maintain the collection of this data to not only provide indicators of validation of the self-perception of the respective founder, but also to test the previously established proposition that *“Authentic leadership encourages two-way symmetrical internal communication.”*

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Qualitative Methods

The interviews were all transcribed verbatim. For an easier process, the researcher used the software otter.ai. However, the detection of words was not always correct, which required the researcher to proof-transcribe each interview another time. Depending on the length of the interview, fluency of speaking and clarity of pronunciation, this process took about two to three hours per interview. Since the interviews were conducted in English, which is not the mother tongue of the interview participants, it occurred that some of them used specific

German terms, which the researcher then marked and translated in the transcription process. The transcribing of the raw data enabled the researcher to get familiar with the content and to already highlight sections that are especially valuable for the analysis. To analyze the raw data, the researcher used the method of coding. According to Creswell (2009), the process of coding provides a more in-depth and rational understanding of the qualitative data and can be done in multiple ways. As recommended by Creswell (2009), the researcher reads every interview transcript line by line and looked for emerging codes. However, given the previously outlined theories, especially on Authentic Leadership and Two-Way Symmetrical Communication, a combination of predetermined and emerging codes was used based on the information learned during the raw data analysis. The coding process was supported by using the software Atlas.ti. The usage of programs like Atlas.ti is especially helpful for “storing and locating qualitative data. Although the researcher still needs to go through each line of text and assign codes, this process may be faster and more efficient than hand coding” (Creswell, 2009, p. 188).

For the first transcript of Participant 1 (in the following, all participants are referred to P1, P2, P3 and P4), the researcher followed an open, inductive coding approach through highlighting paragraphs and looking for buzzwords, including those that align with predetermined codes from the theories. This technique was used with all other interviews. The more data was analyzed, the easier it was for the researcher to cluster the content into already existing codes and themes from previously analyzed transcripts. This then resulted in a total of 39 codes. This analysis systematically allowed a thinning of the raw data into emerging themes and classification. These codes were classified into code groups in order to gain a deeper understanding of the main themes and potential correlations. The created code groups are (1) Authentic Leadership, (2) Leadership Style Development, (3) Previously Perceived Leadership Styles, (4) Two-Way Symmetrical Communication, (5) Internal Communication, and (6) Definitions. Some codes were moved into several groups, while others can only be found in one group. However, not all of the listed groups were classified as main themes. All the codes and the code groups can be found in Table 4.

The analysis of the raw data including the coding process resulted in the identification of the main themes and the code occurrence in the interviews. Aligning with the previously discussed theory, the classified main themes of this dissertation are (1) Authentic Leadership, (2) Leadership Style Development, (3) Previously Perceived Leadership Styles, and (4) Two-Way Symmetrical Communication.

Table 4: Code-groups and codes

Name	Foundation	Groups
Authentic Leadership		
Self-Awareness	17	Authentic Leadership
Transparency	16	Authentic Leadership, Two-Way Symmetrical Communication
Encouragement / Empowerment Emotions	14	Authentic Leadership
Trust	12	Authentic Leadership
Values / Moral Perspective	11	Authentic Leadership
Balanced Processing	10	Authentic Leadership
Vision	6	Authentic Leadership
Leadership Style Development / Constant Development	12	Authentic Leadership Leadership Style Development
Leadership Style Development		
Leadership Style Development / Intuition	16	Leadership Style Development

Leadership Style Development / Constant Development	12	Authentic Leadership Leadership Style Development
Leadership Style Development / Recognized Change	4	Leadership Style Development
Leadership Style Development / Referral to Role Models / No	3	Leadership Style Development
Leadership Style Development / Referral to Role Models / Yes	2	Leadership Style Development
Wanted To Be a Certain Leader / No	3	Leadership Style Development
Wanted To Be a Certain Leader / Yes	1	Leadership Style Development

Previously Perceived Leadership Styles

Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Negative	8	Previously Perceived Leadership Styles
Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Limited (less than 3)	7	Previously Perceived Leadership Styles
Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / M	6	Previously Perceived Leadership Styles
Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Positive	3	Previously Perceived Leadership Styles
Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / F	3	Previously Perceived Leadership Styles
Directly founded after University	2	Previously Perceived Leadership Styles

Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender	2	Previously Perceived Leadership Styles
Two-Way Symmetrical Communication		
Open / Transparent Communication	24	Two-Way Symmetrical Communication
Listening to Employees	18	Two-Way Symmetrical Communication
Transparency	16	Authentic Leadership, Two-Way Symmetrical Communication
Feedback	16	Two-Way Symmetrical Communication
Face-To-Face Communication	9	Two-Way Symmetrical Communication
Internal Communication		
Flat Hierarchies	4	Internal Communication
Internal Communication / Frequency	10	Internal Communication
Internal Communication / Number of People	9	Internal Communication
Internal Communication / Tools	5	Internal Communication
Remote	2	Internal Communication
Definition		
Definition Authenticity	5	Definition
Definition Leadership	3	Definition

Source: Own table

After the development of the main themes, the researcher studied the single codes of each theme repeatedly, in order to categorize them and place them appropriately. Further, throughout the intense analysis of the transcripts, the researcher became increasingly familiar with the content of each interview and gained an in-depth overview of which quote was stated by the participants at what time of the conversation. The used software for coding enabled the researcher to create networks that show the connection of each emerged theme with the respective codes. Throughout the following passages, the main themes and the respectively found data aligning with the codes will be outlined. Throughout the analysis of the separate code-groups, the researcher focuses on the most dominant codes from each code-group and provides quotes of each participant regarding the specific code. However, to maintain a coherent line of reasoning, not all codes of each code-group will be analyzed. The choice of codes to focus on per code-group was based on the number of occurrence.

To begin with, in order to gain an insight about the interview participant's views on authenticity and leadership, they were asked to provide their definitions of both terms. The proposed definitions can be taken from Table 5 and Table 6.

Table 5: Leadership Definitions

P	Quote
1	<i>“Well, at Wildling, we’ve defined leadership. We still like... we have flat hierarchies, we do have hierarchies, but like, we have, like, we have specialists, and we have teamleads. So the team leads, kind of there's like three pillars that go into leadership. One is the team building, which is also like a very personal, has a personal aspect, an individual aspect of helping people to work within what they perceive as their strengths, to kind of develop also a career like in horizontal ways within the company, to structure the team in a way that it's good for the team to work together to be responsible for atmosphere for the values that are being lived and the team commitment. And there is also the aspect of structure and giving the whole thing a frame, which would be more like the structure and processes. And then there's the probably the most important pillar is vision and strategy. So to develop with the team like to develop a vision for the area that kind of pays into the purpose of the company. And also to envision a way in which you know, bit by bit, you can get closer to that vision. So also to kind of put it in a strategy that can be acted upon. And, of course, that is never to be done like as as like an isolated, whatever leader who is just, you know, coming up with all these ideas, and then imposing them on the team. But of course, it's a teamwork, and there's a lot of like, our leaders are supposed to make space for ideas, and decisions. And yeah, for everything that comes from within the team. So basically, they're more of a facilitator than a, you know, somebody kind of thinking up all these things, and then imposing them onto the team. So it's a co-creation process, but it's like, we still feel that the coordinating role within leadership is still important. I think it's also a question of maturity of the individuals and of the organisation as a whole, to dissolve that structure even more. But at the moment, also, within our remote setup, also within the very dynamic environment that we're in, we're kind of still growing very quickly as a team. So this is still important to have, you know, kind of the coordinating function that is within our leadership roles.” (P1, 01:55)</i>
2	<i>“I would define it, like empowering others to on one hand, empowering others to like find their mission and their place to unfold their full potential. Leadership, for me also means giving guidance and direction like kind of making clear, we all follow the same Northstar and like we are all aligned on our mission. And it can also mean like to to inspire. And also like lead by example, I think to share like to yeah, to role model of what you want to see within the organization as well.” (P2, 01:43)</i>
3	<i>“For me, leadership has a lot to do with inspiration. So as I see leadership it is about going your way towards the vision. Kind of no matter what, and yeah, not telling others what to do, but kind of inspiring them. So they kind of feel for</i>

	<i>themselves if it's the right way for them or not. So it's all about inspiring through actions, I always say.” (P3, 02:08)</i>
4	<i>“I think the main objective of leadership should be to guide people in a way that supports them in developing their full potential, feeling safe and protected and at the same time, challenged enough to be creative on their own. For sure, leadership is not about dictating, but about maybe guiding or directing into a certain direction, but not about being stiff. And it's really much about also being... an important part of leading a group or a team successfully is also being responsive to them and understanding their needs. Yeah, as I said, to support them in developing their full potential, which also includes reflecting on yourself and being ready for critique and open for exchange, because I'm sure it cannot be a one way road, it needs to be mutual. So that everybody feels listened to and yeah gets some more motivation out of that. Never thought about that question though. This is my spontaneous take on it.” (P4, 1:12)</i>

Source: Own table

Table 6: Authenticity Definitions

P	Quote
1	<i>“Um, I guess you're authentic, when you don't need to think about how you're going to do something, when where, in which way, I mean, if you don't need to, like step into a role, like that professional role that you have, like you opening the Office Store, and you're a different person. I think authenticity means like, being very true to yourself, like not having to "taktieren" (German for maneuver), I don't know another word. Yeah. You know, not not having to differentiate. Yeah, yeah. Or to think about what you're going to say, when you're going to say is how you're going to say it because maybe, you know, that's your goal, and you're here and you're trying to get that other person to, you know, to push the person to that goal without the person noticing, or, or to Yeah, to put on a dress, like, in a way that it will change who you are, it will make you less vulnerable, or it will make you appear stronger, appear taller, or appear, you know, whatever. Because you think that you need those qualities at work. So I think, just to come in there, and yeah, not to have to put a filter in what you let in and what comes out. I think that would be authenticity for me. To be true to yourself, also to be true to your own values to be true to your own principles like not to have to bend over in a way that doesn't feel right, but you need to do it because otherwise you can't continue in your position or something.” (P1,17:59)</i>

2	<i>"Being truly yourself, in short. I think. I mean, yeah, I think so. Being truly yourself." (P2, 22:51)</i>
3	<i>"That's a good one. I never thought about it. I think that if someone or a situation or whatever work environment is authentic, then you're kind of.... you're feeling it because you never will feel uncomfortable. You know, because if no one is playing a role, you don't have to play a role and then you don't have to feel uncomfortable. If something's authentic, you're comfortable to be yourself as well. And I think, of course, it's not a definition because it's more kind of a feeling. But you know what I, it's like you feel good. You feel like safe. You're feeling... Yeah." (P3, 19:27)</i>
4	<i>"Authenticity my god! Authenticity, what is authenticity? Because we are so many beings in one, right? I mean I feel it's very... I feel it a lot that whatever person I'm in contact with I am a different person. Like, not that I change on purpose, but we are all in relation with others and we don't exist... Like communication can only be in relation to others and it's always... you need to be responsive to the other person to to have a proper communication with them so you feel... It's a difficult question what is authenticity? I think it's being true to yourself, knowing your values and ideals and morals and stick to them too. Yeah, maybe it's about being being true and honest to yourself into the other and then you can be authentic in many different ways I guess. Must not be that you're behaving the same way with everybody, you can be a bit more funny, more strict more I don't know ironic, probably. Depending on the person you're communicating with." (P4, 16:09)</i>

Source: Own table

4.1.1 Theme 1: Authentic Leadership

The purpose of this study was to identify in which way the perception of previously experienced leadership styles influences the authenticity of female entrepreneurs in regard to their internal communication. In line with this research objective, one of the main themes that occurred during the conduction and analysis of the semi-structured interviews is the field of Authentic Leadership. In order to assess the level of authenticity within their leadership styles, the interviews were examined for indicators for Authentic Leadership. Based on previously outlined theory of Authentic Leadership and in addition with emerging related keywords, the codes "Authentic Behavior", "Balanced Processing", "Encouragement / Empowerment", "Self-Awareness", "Transparency", "Trust", "Values / Moral

Perspective”, “Leadership Style Development / Constant Development” and “Vision” were developed as demonstrated in Figure 9.

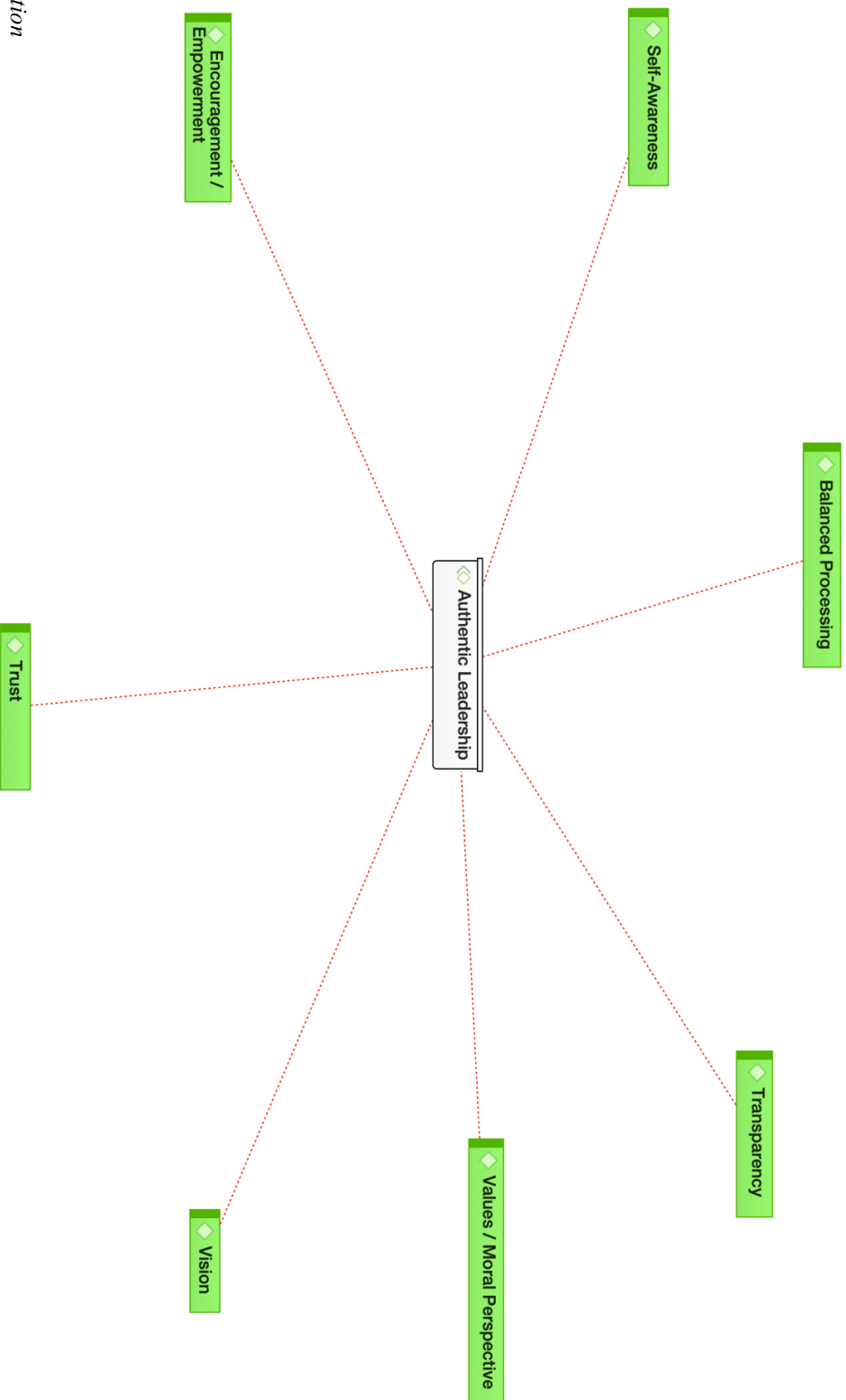
As previously outlined, the key components of Authentic Leadership as originally defined by Walumbwa et al. (2008) and developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011) can be divided in the dimensions of self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective. Therefore, these are the codes that will be analysed in more depth in the following part. Further, the aspect of trust not only organically emerged in the coding process, but also is also a fundamental part of the Authentic Leadership understanding of Avolio, et al. (2004), and will therefore also be analyzed in more detail.

The most occurred code of the Authentic Leadership code group is “Self-Awareness” with 17 references. All the participants made statements that showed a high level of self-awareness, especially regarding their self-perception of strengths and weaknesses.

P1 for instance stated: “I know that I am impulsive. I know that I am emotional, or maybe more emotional than, you know, the most reflective, analytic, whatever rational leader. I know I have a lot of work to do also in that area.” (P1, 1:30) Further, she demonstrated self-awareness through stating potential limits of her own strengths:

“And I'm not saying that we always do this very well. Like, I think I'm quite perfectionist in many ways. And it's like, I think, (...) what I draw from this must be that then I shouldn't be involved in the first place. Like, if I can't shut my mouth, if something you know, it's not perfect, and I should rather not hear about it in the first place and just let people do.” (P1, 1:27)

Figure 9: Authentic Leadership Code-Group Network



Source: Own illustration

P2 reported that she is reflective of her mistakes and shares them with her team when it happens: “Because I didn't like, led by example. And, of course, yeah, things like that. So, I try to admit mistakes, if I do them, and also feel that it is appreciated by the team” (P2, 2:35).

Further, P3 pointed out the importance of self-awareness in order to grow in her own leadership style:

“And of course, there were things especially at the beginning, where I was like “Oh my god, I don't want to be that kind of person”. And I still have it sometimes now, when I'm in a very stressful situation, or there's an issue in the company. And I'm kind of stressed, I still have it, that I enter the office and I'm like, you know, I'm just pissed with everybody. But what helps with the whole work and also realizing what you don't want to adapt from different kinds of leaders, is that there's just awareness” (P3, 11:22).

Also P4 demonstrated the awareness of her own strengths and limitations of those:

“For me, from the beginning it was very important to have very flat hierarchies and to communicate openly that I'm not the wise person who has internal knowledge and knows about everything because I really think I have not” (P4, 5:17).

Next, the code “Trust” has been mentioned very often throughout the interviews. While it scored a high number of referrals, it is to say that P4 is the only participant who not directly mentioned it. Especially P1 referred to trust many times within the interview, she for instance stated: “I have a lot of trust in people. So quite naturally, I just believe that they will, you know, give their best and can do things better than I could do them” (P1, 7:16). Further, she highlighted the importance of trust in more statements like:

“So I think it was always easy for me to hand over, you know, tasks or areas with like, full trust and just, you know, to also leave it there like not to, you know, come back like two days later and kind of start picking and start controlling and start like micromanaging.” (P1, 7:16)

“But yeah, I think I've managed to stay authentic and true to myself and opening about, you know, weaknesses and mistakes that I made. And still very trustful, like towards people.” (P1, 7:16)

“Like a lot of like, I think that feeling of you can trust people and people will be there if you need them or like you're not alone. And also that kind of like that being together kind of gives me more energy than you know, it would take from me. So I think I just brought that with me and into the company and it kind of you know, it did something but it wasn't intentional.” (P1, 12:28)

Also P2 referred to trust during the interview:

“And I hope that I can give the team the space that they need to kind of build trust in themselves and like to yeah, not being like controlling something or really, really give them the space and hold the space for whatever can flourish there.”(P2, 9:00)

P3 also expressed the importance of trust multiple times:

“So, it is this kind of family spirit towards something because within a family there also can be a fight of course. And you know, there also can be some tough times from time to time, but the base is always good. You always know that it's trustful and nothing can happen. You know and this is what I tried to achieve within the company.” (P3, 16:11)

“But they know that I'm trusting them, so it's kind of they feel comfortable to do so you know. And also, it's my risk. So, if then sometimes I'm maybe not 100% happy about it, then I always first going towards myself thinking: "okay, what can I do?" And it's not about "Okay, this I don't like because they kind of had trust from me". So I can't say you didn't do a good job at the end.” (P3, 27:41)

The code “Transparency” also emerged several times throughout all the interviews. P1 and P4 express the importance of transparency in terms of organizational structures. So P1 for instance points out that: *“But we're one big team that needs to work together quite seamlessly, for our, you know, for our project to work. So it needed structure and transparency and clarity” (P1, 14:49)*. Further, she expresses the following: *“And it creates transparency also over, you know, how's the company doing, and we also share financial data and those kinds of things.” (P1, 23:45)*

P4 also refers to the importance of transparency in regard to organizational structures:

“And sometimes, of course, there is some confidential issues that we try to solve first, and then include everybody, but it's very important that all the team members always know, (...) what the co-founders are doing. So that they get a sense of where we are heading towards. And if we have new ideas, new strategies, and to follow that we we get them on board right from the beginning. So that they have a sense of being part of the whole thing and not only working on their specific task.”(P4, 21:35)

P2 and P3 mostly refer to transparency within communication. Thus, P2 for example states:

“I hope that everyone like kind of feels that ownership is possible to take. So like a like an open one. A very like transparent one, I would say and, and also honest with like, yeah, expressing thoughts and feelings” (P2, 09:00).

P3 points out the importance of transparency in order to find solutions:

“So, if they did something wrong or they don't know, they should know that they always can come towards me and that I would never freak out. Just you know, it's more like we will find

solutions together and even though you're making a mistake from time to time, it's normal. I do mistakes all the time.” (P3, 16:11)

All participants made statements regarding their “Moral Perspective” and the importance of a shared vision. So P1 for instance expresses the meaningful purpose of their work since the beginning and that having a why is very important in all processes:

“So yeah, I think I think that sense of like freedom, flexibility, and also let's work on something meaningful, like that has never changed, like it was from the beginning” (P1, 14:49)

“So, I think it's always very important to like to be strict on the few things that you need to be kind of strict about to say, okay, like, we always need to have an answer to the why, like, if there's no answer to the why, it's, that idea won't work.” (P1, 26:59)

Also, P2 and P3 point out that an aligned vision is necessary:

“Leadership, for me also means giving guidance and direction like kind of making clear, we all follow the same Northstar and like we are all aligned on our mission.” (P2, 1:43)

“It's about they have the feeling they are part of something bigger.” (P3, 6:47)

“There's this vision and I go for it and I kind of also I believe in attracting the right people when you're busy with the right topic, you know what I mean? Because automatically, they're people who want to work for the company. They are people who kind of share the same values and share the same yeah goals for their life.” (P3, 6:47)

P4 refers to her morals and values by stating:

“I think it's being true to yourself, knowing your values and ideals and morals and stick to them too.” (P4, 16:09)

The code for “Balanced Processing” also emerged several times in the interviews. However, only in the interview with P3, this did not occur. P1, P2 and P4 all stated that they actively involve their employees in many processes and be critical about them:

“So basically, they're more of a facilitator than a, you know, somebody kind of thinking up all these things, and then imposing them onto the team.”(P1, 1:55)

“I'm having feedback meetings, vice versa with people and also like, ask them, like: Is there something that you can help me in improving?” (P2, 21:05)

“We really are open for their feedback and for them to really become part of the process.” (P4, 05:17)

“But I feel that people really appreciate that, and they feel more involved and motivated if, yeah, we asked him to also be critical about processes.” (P4, 23:06)

Additionally, to these predetermined codes, all interviews showed a high number of statements regarding “Encouragement / Empowerment”.

“But of course, it's a teamwork, and there's a lot of like, our leaders are supposed to make space for ideas, and decisions.” (P1, 01:55).

“Like, I think I, I hope I'm empowering. I hope I'm inspiring. And I hope that I can give the team the space that they need to kind of build trust in themselves.” (P2, 09:00).

“It's like to encourage other people also to take a leading role in not only in like leadership in terms of practically taking projects on and sensing certain things, but also to realize they also can be leaders for others. And like someone else can be a leader for me, as well as at certain things and like to just give this thought, a bit more space and encourage more about that.” (P2, 23:15)

“I think for me it's very important to inspire. This is something which is very important to me.” (P3, 16:11)

“(…) to support them in developing their full potential, which also includes reflecting on yourself and being ready for critique and open for exchange, because I'm sure it cannot be a one-way road, it needs to be mutual. So that everybody feels listened to and yeah gets some more motivation out of that.” (P4, 1:12)

Since the code “Leadership Style Development / Constant Development” is in both code-groups (“Authentic Leadership” and “Leadership Style Development”), the analysis of it can be found in the next sub chapter.

Additionally, one of the questions in the interview directly asked the participants whether they feel like they are authentic at work. While all of them argued that they show authentic behavior at work, some of them also pointed out that authenticity does not mean that they always show the same behavior in every situation. Moreover, the participants also stated some concerns whether their authentic behavior could also lead to negative consequences. The full answers to the question can be taken from Table 7.

Table 7: Quotes Authenticity at work

P	Quote
1	<i>“You know, not having to differentiate. Yeah, yeah. Or to think about what you're going to say, when you're going to say is how you're going to say it because maybe, you know, that's your goal, and you're here and you're trying to get that other person to, you know, to push the person to that goal without the person noticing, or, or to Yeah, to put on a dress, like, in a way that it will change who you are, it will make you less vulnerable, or it will make you appear stronger, appear taller, or appear, you know, whatever. Because you think that you need those qualities at work. So I think, just to come in there, and yeah, not to have to put a filter in what you let in and what comes out. I think that would be authenticity for me. To be true to yourself, also to be true to your own values to be true to your own principles like not to have to bend over in a way that doesn't feel right, but you need to do it because otherwise you can't continue in your position or something.”</i> (P1, 17:59)
2	<i>“I would say yes, maybe it's not always 100%. But like, I definitely feel so. Sometimes, I think probably, maybe several people have that, that you still have the feeling you kind of need to hold things together. And like, even if something like is there where you feel super exhausted, or like super, there is a big tension in the room and like maybe you would react in a different way. And you think that okay, the best would be still now like, I mean, obviously, we always try to be the best versions of ourselves. And that is also kind of one version of ourselves. But sometimes maybe other feelings would be even stronger. And you try to like still kind of hold the space a bit differently. But I would not say that this is then not myself, because I decided that moment that I want to do it that way. So in that way, I guess, yes, I can be myself.”</i> (P2, 12:17)
3	<i>“Sometimes I think I'm a bit, I don't know, this is still something I need to figure out. I'm a lot like myself at work. Sometimes I don't know if it's good to be that much mess at work. But yeah, why not? This is a good question. And I just had it yesterday that I'm like, oh, maybe I should not be that open. And yeah, But, to answer your question, I feel very much myself at work.”</i> (P3, 13:05)
4	<i>“I would say that there not much discrepancy but right between my private self and my work life self. Because I'm in the lucky position of working with friends. All of our team, are all very close friends. We were at starting, or we became friends over time. And so I will say there is not much of a difference between Jeanine in private and in work life situations. Because I do believe that we are even at the workspace still human and show the</i>

same kind of interaction and care and feeling validated, than we can in private life. And I also don't think that's a good idea to to separate the private from work life too much because of course your private life influences you at work and other way around. Yeah, so I would say I'm the same. Can you remind me of the first part of the question?" (P3, 13:1)

Source: Own table

4.1.2 Theme 2: Previously Perceived Leadership Styles

In order to answer the research question, the main theme “*Previously Perceived Leadership Styles*” has been developed. The codes of this code-group have organically emerged during the process of coding. Throughout the inductive coding approach, the researcher looked line by line for indicators and keywords that are related to previously perceived leadership styles. Therefore, especially the parts of the interview regarding working experiences before founding the own company were relevant for this code-group. Further, the codes of this code-group are associated with or part of each other. Hence, the following codes have been developed: “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences” with the associated codes “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Positive” and “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Negative”; “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender” with the sub-codes “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / F” and “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / M”; and “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Limited (less than 3)” in association with “Founded directly after University” (see Figure 10).

To begin with, the codes “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Limited (less than 3)” in association with “Founded directly after University” occur in all of the interviews. Questions regarding previous working experiences of the participants and therefore previously perceived leadership styles revealed that all of them have rather limited experiences, since they have founded their companies either straight after finishing university or not long after.

For instance, to the question if she has experienced different leaders or leadership styles before founding her company, P1 states “*Yes, very few. I have to say*” (P1, 04:43). Further, she explains that these experiences happened during “*internships or in short term employments*” (P1, 04:43).

Also P2 only points out two previously perceived leadership style experiences: “*One is actually, within my family: Like we had like a traditional family business.*” (P2, 02:31) “*And then, like after my first studies, I did an internship at a large sportswear company*” (P2, 02:31).

P3 points out that her experiences prior to founding are also limited, and just mentioned one example.

“Yeah, so not directly because I founded the company out of my studies. So I never... well, no, that's not true. I worked with betterplace.org in Berlin.” (P3, 02:58)

P4 on the other hand, explained that she never worked as an employee apart from student jobs, because founded her company directly after university:

“So I started Jyoti in 2010, already four years before I started the company, and I never worked really as an employee because I started Jyoti during my bachelor studies in my first semester, so I would say I'm a bit spoiled because I've always been in the leading position. I had jobs like as a waitress and I worked for the university. And I would say that's the main experience I made during my bachelor's ” (P4, 02:57)

Further, the participants made statements about how they experienced these leaders and leadership styles and pointed out whether it was rather positive or negative experiences. While the code “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Negative” was detected 8 times throughout the interviews, the code “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Positive” only occurred 3 times.

Several statements have been made by the participants that indicate the code “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Positive”. However, while P2 and P3 uttered statements rereferring to positively perceived leadership styles, the code does not apply in the interviews with P1 and P4.

As mentioned above, one of the previously perceived leadership styles of P2 is based on the experience of her father's family business:

"One is actually, within my family: Like we had like a traditional family business. My father came from a family that were like, 300 years already carpenters and like he, like changed the business model a bit to like, restoring furniture and antiques. So we had like a wood workshop in our house and also a store and like, I, of course, saw him with his leadership style, which was a very like, familiar, it's not the English word for it, but like, like, very like "familiär" (German for familiarly). It's not the same translation of it. Yeah. And so like, yeah, I think this was something that inspired me definitely." (P2, 02:31)

Further, she recalled positive perceptions of a leadership style experienced in an internship:

"I think like, within my department, I think the leadership style was very built on trust actually, like I think for an intern, I had lots of responsibilities, lots of freedom to experiment and do things on my own. But I also had to kind of be proactive and like, initiate whatever I wanted. I think like, I really liked that style." (P2, 03:56)

P3 also recalled positive experiences:

"I worked with betterplace.org in Berlin. So I had Till as my kind of boss and he and Joana Breidenbach were kind of the leaders we worked for. And this was exactly what also I think, inspired me because they also inspired through their actions. So they kind of had this big vision and went forward no matter what obstacles were on their way. So, it was very inspiring." (P3, 02:58)

On the other hand, for the code "Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Negative", P1 for example explained:

"So, but what I did experience in internships or in short term employments was very often like a frustration with not being able to put my own ideas to work. Like I was doing the job, I could see what we could do better. And my ideas weren't heard, or, you know, I was working for like an artist, Management Agency. So I had my own ideas of what kind of project could be really, like, great at that time. And there was a lot of interest from our customers, and I wasn't allowed to let the project come to life. So that kind of usually frustrated me in a way that even you know, if I wanted to make it, even if I hadn't had the date already, that I, you know, I knew I was leaving again, I would have just terminated the job there. Because it just frustrated me not to be able to be creative." (P1, 04:43)

Recalling this experience, she stated about her perceived leader: *"I just felt like that person wasn't making space"* (P1, 06:16).

In the interview with P2, she also recalled a negatively perceived leadership style:

“I also saw like, in like larger meetings, sometimes a leadership style that I didn't really identified with where like, for example, I don't know the loudest voice always was applauded the most and like ideas were appreciated from. Yeah, that were sometimes quite empty ideas, but like, still presented in a nice way.” (P2, 03:56)

P3 did not mention that she had perceived leaders and leadership styles negatively in working experiences prior to founding her company. However, she recalled leaders that she experienced during her work, which she experienced negatively:

“So they kind of now are standing behind but still, and it's a funny thing, they are not changing the way they do business so it's still this "I'm the one", "I'm telling you, and we do it like we ever did it and that's how we do it" and they are kind of very aggressive and very loud. Even when they're talking to us as a partner it's always like the old way. And what I can experience is that yeah, it's a problem for them because they're not going forward and at one point they will have super hard issues also to get new employees, young people you know, leading those companies into the future.” (P3, 04:23)

Referring to her student jobs during university, P4 points out the following negatively connotated leadership perception:

“And there I had a very authoritarian boss, who had very clear ideas about everything and was not open for critique, or any kind of talk and might include ideas from his employees. And I really disliked that kind of style because I thought that it's also very sad because there is a lot lost on the way because one person can not know and oversee everything.” (P4, 02:57)

“And I felt that in my job at the university, my boss was really lacking on insights and was not ready to listen to the people who had these insights. And so their progress much slower than it could have been and the whole area developed slower or even in a negative direction because he was not open for any ideas from anybody apart from himself. So that's the only time I experienced that. And I think it was rather a negative experience.” (P4, 02:57)

Reflecting on their perception of experienced leadership styles and leaders, all of the participants mentioned the gender of the bespoke leader. Therefore, the direct notation of the gender has been coded with “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender”, and the sub-codes “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / F” and “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / M” have been used to categorise precise gender.

So while referring to her negatively perceived experiences, P1 points out that the leaders were both female and male, that's why both codes “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / F” and “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / M” applied:

“Um, well, it was different scenarios and different companies, different people behind the companies, but it was usually like it was the leader in place, and it wasn't only men, like there were also women.” (P1, 06:16)

Further, P1 directly mentioned the gender of previously perceived leaders in another statement:

“And it wasn't even like, in some cases, especially from the women, it was almost like there was some kind of competition. And she was rather scared of me, like becoming too, like, claiming too much space for myself.” (P1, 06:16)

Since this statement only refers to a female leader, it also applied to the sub-code “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / F”.

While describing her only work experience despite her own company, P3 refers to two leaders, of which one was female and the other one male. Therefore, both codes “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / F” and “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / M” apply again, however the indication of the genders were only revealed by the names of the bespoken person, not through mentioning the gender explicitly:

“I worked with betterplace.org in Berlin. So I had Till as my kind of boss and he and Joana Breidenbach were kind of the leaders we worked for. And this was exactly what also I think, inspired me because they also inspired through their actions. So they kind of had this big vision and went forward no matter what obstacles were on their way. So it was very inspiring.” (P3, 02:58)

All other referrals to gender throughout the interviews were coded with “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / M” and therefore directly or indirectly referred to male leaders:

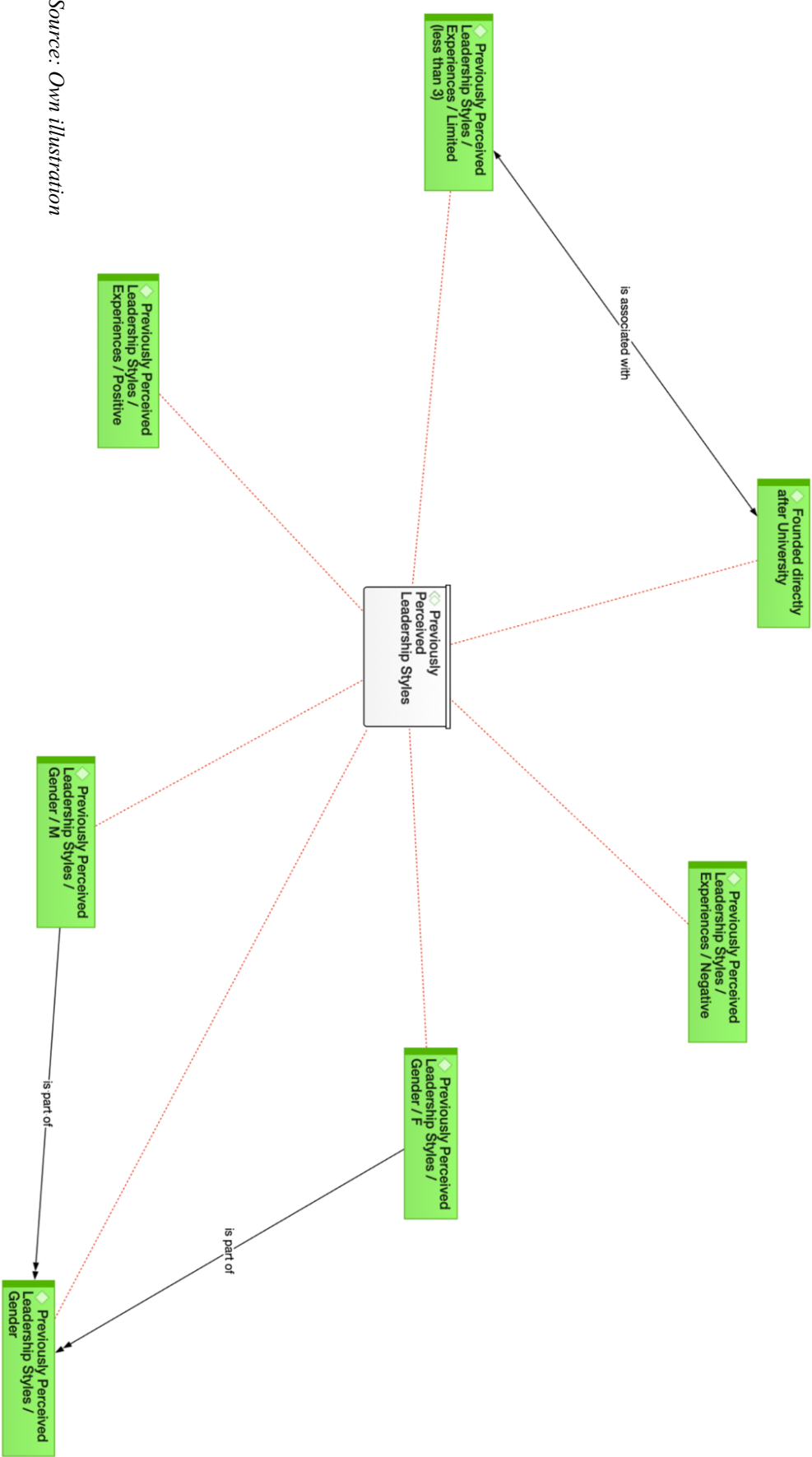
“One is actually, within my family: Like we had like a traditional family business. My father came from a family that were like, 300 years already carpenters and like he, like changed the business model a bit to like, restoring furniture and antiques.” (P2, 02:31)

“So it's very male dominated, and it's very, what's the word in English? – Hierarchies.” (P3, 04:23)

“And there I had a very authoritarian boss, who had very clear ideas about everything and was not open for critique, or any kind of talk and might include ideas from his employees.” (P4, 02:57)

“And so they progress much slower than it could have been and the whole area developed slower or even in a negative direction because he was not open for any ideas from anybody apart from himself.” (P4, 02:57)

Figure 10: Previously Perceived Leadership Styles Code-Group Network



Source: Own illustration

4.1.3 Theme 3: Leadership Style Development

Since the research objective of this dissertation is to investigate how the perception of previously experienced leadership styles influences the authenticity of female entrepreneurs, understanding the development of their own leadership styles is necessary. Thus, *“Leadership Style Development”* represents one main theme of the qualitative interview analysis. This code-group consists of the codes “Leadership Style Development / Referral to Role Models / Yes”, “Leadership Style Development / Referral to Role Models / No”, “Leadership Style Development / Recognized Change”, “Leadership Style Development / Constant Development”, “Leadership Style Development / Intuition”, “Wanted To Be a Certain Leader / Yes” and “Wanted To Be a Certain Leader / No” (see Figure 11).

To begin with, the codes “Wanted To Be a Certain Leader / Yes” and “Wanted To Be a Certain Leader / No” can be analysed. P1 did not give a clear statement about it, but P3 and P4 clearly stated that they did not consider a certain type of leader they wanted to be when they initially started their companies:

“No, not at all.” (P3, 06:47)

“No, actually not at all.” (P4, 08:50)

P2, however, mentioned that she was not sure, hence the statement was coded with both “Wanted To Be a Certain Leader / Yes” and “Wanted To Be a Certain Leader / No”:

“And I’m not so sure if this now like that the first version of practising leadership was something that I did based on like own beliefs or that came from the outside. I cannot really define that, I think.”

Additionally, the participants made statements about whether they intended to adapt certain leadership traits they have previously perceived, or not. Hence, these referrals were coded with: “Leadership Style Development / Referral to Role Models / Yes”, “Leadership Style Development / Referral to Role Models / No”.

P1 and P2 pointed out that they did not actively consider previously perceived traits to adapt to to their own leadership styles:

“No, actually, I don't think we... I know that from other people that they really consciously wanted to create a different work culture, than, you know, what they had perceived previously. So for us, it was just, we stumbled into that we never thought of, you know, we never thought this that would be a company to be.” (P1, 12:28)

“Not really conscious. I think it was more something that probably has coined me or so” (P2, 06:35)

P3, on the other hand, mentioned both, positive role models, as well as negative examples that she considered in regard of her own leadership style:

“Yes, absolutely. I had this kind of... This is what I meant with inspiration. But in both sides, of course, there were things I liked to adapt, and I worked on it to adapt it. And of course, there were things especially at the beginning, where I was like “Oh my god, I don't want to be that kind of person”. ” (P3, 11:22)

This statement hence refers to both codes “Leadership Style Development / Referral to Role Models / Yes”, “Leadership Style Development / Referral to Role Models / No”.

Moreover, when describing how the development of their own leadership style has begun, all participants pointed out that they did not consciously think about what kind of leader they wanted to embody, but explained that it was an unconscious and natural process. Therefore, the code “Leadership Style Development / Intuition” has been developed.

P1 for instance clearly states that her approach as a leader was formed intuitively:

“I didn't learn anything about it, I didn't study it, I didn't come to work with all these ideas of how it should be done, or how I wanted it to be done or hadn't read all these books that tell you what to do, how to do. So it was quite intuitive. I just kind of listened to what felt good.” (P1, 07:16)

“So for us, it was just we stumbled into that we never thought of, you know, we never thought this that would be a company to be.” (P1, 12:28)

“Like a lot of like, I think that feeling of you can trust people and people will be there if you need them or like you're not alone. And also that kind of like that being together kind of gives me more energy than you know, it would take from me. So I think I just brought that with me and into the company and it kind of you know, it did something but it wasn't intentional.” (P1, 12:28)

Also P2 explains that her leadership style emerged naturally:

“Ehm, in the very beginning, I think it was like something that was just natural to do it in a certain way, not to overthink it so much.” (P2, 05:08)

“(…) it felt right the way I did it, but it was more intuitively and without theory behind.” (P2, 05:08)

Moreover, she expressed that she only started to actively considering her leadership style later on, but was not conscious about it in the beginning:

“I mean, of course, the whole process about researching on it, and further educating myself was a very conscious one. But then, you know, like, thinking about what's my story behind? Why I also researched and why I did things like that, was not that conscious in the very beginning. I think that came a bit later.” (P2, 06:35)

P3 also mentioned the unconscious process of developing her own leadership style and refers to how young she was when founding the company:

“Sometimes I even don't know now what kind of leader I want to be and especially it's funny because it's something.... I have never seen me as a leader. I have this little team and sometimes I'm like oh my god I have to kind of lead them!” (P3, 06:47)

“I was super young also and this kind of topics were completely new to me. So at the beginning, I mean, I was so young. I didn't think about it, it was like I'm doing what I do and I was a bit more bossy I would say at this time. But also because I was a bit lost and I also of course had had my fears and the pressure was so high.” (P3, 09:04)

“(…) because I never kind of studied this or I really became the person I am in the business context by error and try.” (P3, 29:27)

Lastly, P4 also points out that her leadership style in the beginning was based on natural understanding:

“And for me, right from the beginning, not so much as a conscious decision but more as a very because of a natural understanding of how I would want to interact with people in general also on a private level, I felt that it's most important to me that we really feel like a team and I wanted very flat hierarchies.” (P4, 05:14)

“(…) and when I started the company, I never had the intention to start a company. So it just happened accidentally and we just all grew into it together.” (P4, 08:50)

Nevertheless, all participants stated that they recognized a change in their leadership style since they first founded their companies, which was coded with “Leadership Style Development / Recognized Change”:

“Well it's become more professional it has received more structure than than in the beginning of course because it's also necessary.” (P1, 14:49)

“And I think that was like a feeling that I got where I also understood that kind of as a leader of the organisation, or as an initiator of an organisation, you're also a little bit the limit to growth, to kind of understand that yourself, have also to kind of develop further yourself and make progress in personal development in order to let the whole organisation develop as well. So that was then something that I took on and read a lot about exchange a lot about. So that then helped me to kind of think further of how I actually want to do it, and also build more structures about how to do it, and how we're doing it.” (P2, 05:08)

“(…) being in this role of leadership now, I think changed also because I worked a lot on me and doing a lot reflection work, and inner work and everything. It has to do with self confidence and trust within me.” (P3, 09:04)

“I mean, yes in a way because we grew as a team. In the beginning we were just two and we founded the company together as 50/50 owner and like we shared everything on the same level. The more people you employ, the more complex it gets. And I would say that I learned a lot on how to communicate and also how you need to adapt your communication styles to different people because not everybody enjoys the same.” (P4, 10:16)

Additionally, all participants stated that they are constantly working on the development of their leadership style, hence the code “Leadership Style Development / Constant Development” emerged:

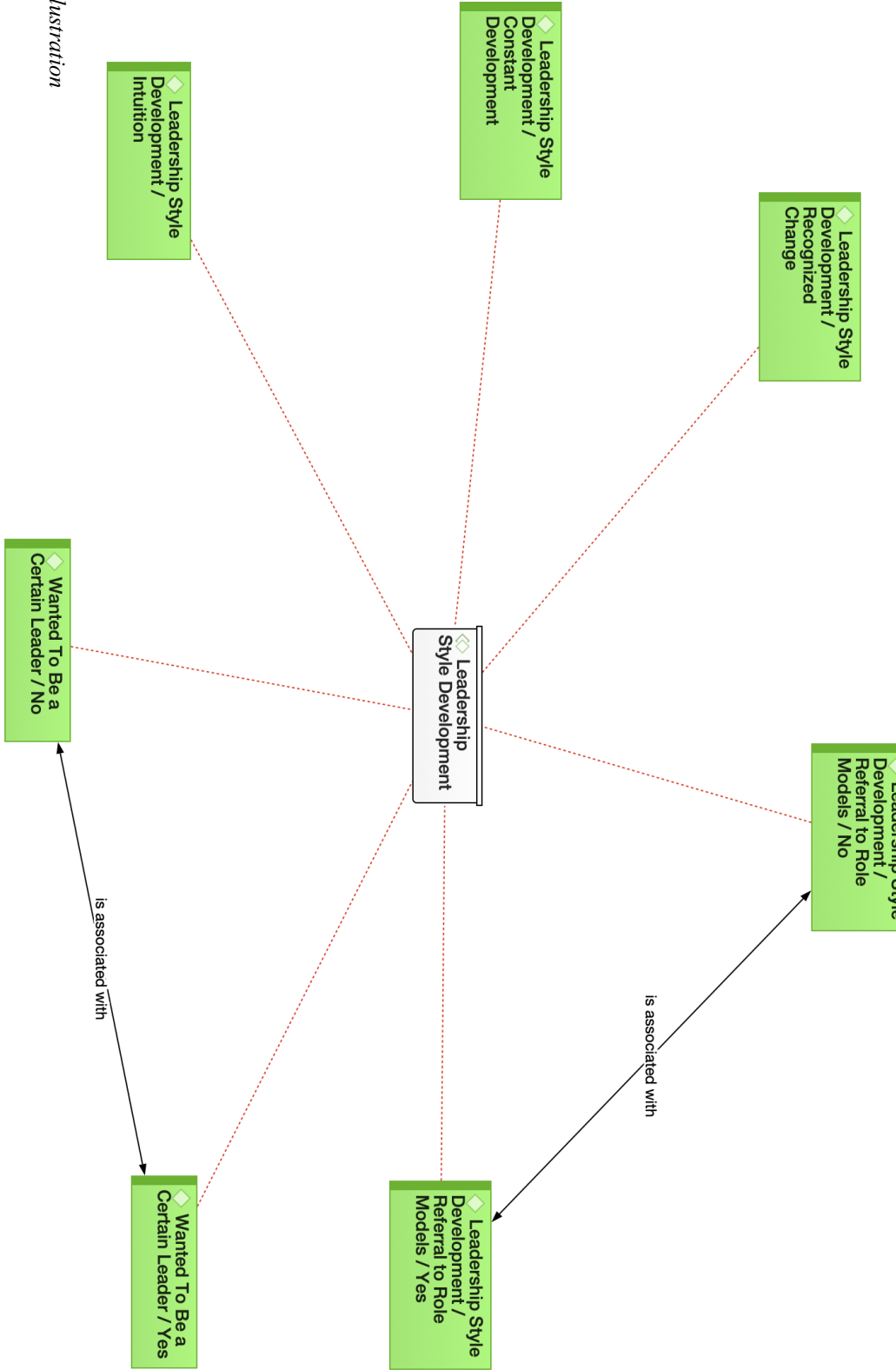
“I think that's also a thing that you just need to be aware that there is constant learning involved and especially also work on yourself and on your reflectiveness and everything.” (P1, 07:16)

“And then I think I realized that I'm missing a bit the tools to do this even better, or like that, for example, defining decision making power, defining hierarchies, based on expertise, needs lots of talk and lots of time to kind of define those structures. But once I kind of got more into theory, and like, read a lot and exchanged a lot, I think this helped me very much to define and pick pieces from here and there from different things and say, like, hey, that's kind of a really nice way of doing this. Let's try and build this here as well.” (P2, 10:08)

“(…) being in this role of leadership now, I think changed also because I worked a lot on me and doing a lot reflection work, and inner work and everything. It has to do with self confidence and trust within me.” (P3, 09:04)

“And I feel it just never ends on learning and most important thing to listen to the others.” (P4, 10:16)

Figure 11: Leadership Style Development Code-group Network



Source: Own illustration

4.1.4 Theme 4: Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication

As previously outlined in the literature review, one of the main themes of the qualitative research is “Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication”. This code-group consists of the following codes: “Open / Transparent Communication”, “Transparency”, “Listening to Employees”, “Feedback” and “Face-To-Face Communication” (see Figure 12).

Throughout the interviews, all of the participants made statements that referred to “Open / Transparent Communication”.

While P1, P2 and P4 directly use the term “open” in regard to their internal communication, P4 describes it by saying that it is very “easy going”:

“So, it's kind of it's very easy to have a direct communication. So, if somebody needs something, they can just write to me, or, you know, we have a team chat, and then you're just talking to people.” (P1, 20:01)

“I think it's a very open communication.” (P2, 17:21)

“But in general, people share how they feel like privately and like communicate, if there is something going on in their lives, where they maybe not have all the attention for a week, or also share if like workload is too high or anything like that. So, it's, I would say it's a very open communication.” (P2, 17:21)

“It's very family style. It's very easy going, it's it's always very funny. We're laughing a lot. It's family style! I would say it's like meeting for dinner at home with your family and everybody is sometimes it's a bit chaotic. Because everybody's like bla bla bla... But it's nice. I like it. I always look forward to it.” (P3, 23:56)

“Very open and friendly. And we really value trust and try to encourage people to always openly talk to us and to be... to not like have their problems sink in and chew on them for long but really to be open about their ideas.” (P4, 23:06)

Further, the participants point out the importance of listening to the ideas and thoughts and feelings of their employees. Therefore, the code “Listening to Employees” has been developed. This code can be detected in all transcripts of the interview, however, especially the interview with P4 scored a high number of this code, as she refers to “Listening to Employees” many times during the conversation.

P1 does not directly refer to listening to employees, but she points out that leaders should make space for ideas that come from employees:

“But of course, it's a teamwork, and there's a lot of like, our leaders are supposed to make space for ideas, and decisions.” (P1, 01:55)

P2, on the other hand, argues that she is updated about how her employees are, since they openly talk about it in their weekly meeting:

“And so, I'm still quite on top of things, what kind of everyone is doing and how they are feeling, at least to the extent that they're happy to share in that meeting.” (P2, 14:12)

As mentioned above, P4 actively states that it is crucial for her as a leader to listen to her employees and to encourage a mutual conversation:

“(...) an important part of leading a group or a team successfully is also being responsive to them and understanding their needs. Yeah, as I said, to support them in developing their full potential, which also includes reflecting on yourself and being ready for critique and open for exchange, because I'm sure it cannot be a one-way road, it needs to be mutual. So that everybody feels listened to and yeah gets some more motivation out of that.” (P4, 01:12)

“I feel it's very important to listen to what our employees say about the area they work in, because of course, they know much better what they're doing on a daily basis, and I have no chance to oversee that.” (P4, 02:57)

“There are loads of challenges I feel and it also really depends on what your employees want and at the moment in our team there are people who also don't want to take that responsibility because actually chose to be an employee because they do not want that responsibility. So, I feel there is probably no one solution.... it's all really about understanding what every part of every team member wants and feels comfortable with and then to find a solution that fits your team and not your ideologies.” (P4, 07:16)

“And that it's just an ongoing learning process and it is, yeah, you need to just get to know the people and listen to them I think that was my biggest learning: That it's important to listen to what the people tell you, what they need. And not to try to have your own idea what they feel good with and then put it on them. Because in our team we have people like I figured out, with very different needs of standards of communication.” (P4, 10:16)

“And I feel it just never ends on learning and most important thing to listen to the others.” (P4, 10:16)

Further, in connection to the statements regarding the importance of listening to the employees, in the interview participants also explained their feedback culture. Hence, the

code “Feedback”, as an indicator for Two-Way Symmetrical Communication, has been developed.

P1 one does not directly refer to feedback sessions, but explains that one of their systems includes a section which is built for the employees to utter ideas or potential changes:

“I think like, as a first step, like, the OKR system works both ways. So, like whatever people suggest and want to do is being considered, you know, by the teams, so there is space, like, it's kind of built into the system for people to say, Okay, I want to focus on this, or I think this is most important, or, actually, I feel that my strengths lie elsewhere.” (P1, 26:59)

Further, P1 made a statement about the relevance of feedback in general, in which she argues that she would wish that her employees would find more confirmation through their own work results instead of being dependent on feedback from their leader:

“I would rather they would take care of themselves, like it sounds horrible, but I mean it in a good way. So that they are, you know that they get self-esteem or “Wertschätzung” (German for appreciation), I don't even know how to say that. And that they perceive that from within, I mean, that they know, when they're doing things well. And that they know when you know, “Selbstwirksamkeit” (German for self-efficiency), “Wertschätzung” (German for appreciation), like all of these things like you get them from within your core. I think that's so much more important than to have a leader that tells you “Oh, that was really great”. And, you know, let me give you feedback on this.” (P1, 09:43)

In the case of P2, she points out that they have an extensive feedback process in the company, which also includes her employees to give feedback for her work:

“Then we also have like feedback meetings, where it's also about constructive feedback and helping people to grow.” (P2,18:43)

“Like I think if I would address something that didn't went well maybe sometimes if there were small things in the past and it would be sent via slack, I think immediately it felt really bad like the person responding to it and trying to explain or something. I mean, you know, not saying it in a negative way, but like just saying like, Hey, I think we have to do this better next time or so, then still like I think there there must be the room for like a short conversation about these things.” (P2, 18:43)

“Yes, absolutely. I mean, we have implemented a 360-degree feedback process.” (P2, 21:05)

“I'm having feedback meetings, vice versa with people and also like, ask them, like: Is there something that you can help me in improving? But I have to say that it's not that ideas I think for people. Or maybe I don't make it easy for them. I have no idea. I'm asking for feedback. But I still had the feeling that there could be more feedback for me. And yeah, so with this 360-degree feedback, I hope, since we have now a very formalized structure, there's maybe

more the security to kind of really put lots of things in there. Maybe that helps. I'm curious for that. And yeah. And of course, we have like, beside the personal feedback, we do have formats for operational, like, if we finalize the project, then we give each other feedback. And we use like the I wish/I like format. So, if there was something that people would have liked me doing differently, I think they can mention it there. And yeah, sometimes there is something.” (P2, 21:05)

P3, on the other hand explains that her employees directly come to her if they need to talk about something, but does not refer to a specific feedback process:

“But if something went wrong, they just come straight to me telling me. Or if they have an idea, always they know that I'm always open for ideas and that most of the time they also can just go ahead and then just you know, let me.... They don't always need my allowance, so they just do and then they're like, look at this and I like it. And it's yeah, it's very easygoing.” (P3, 25:50)

Also, P4 states that they have regular feedback sessions with their employees and points out that she believes that it is going well, even though she hopes that the employees openly share everything they want to say.

“And we also have regular feedback sessions like one-on-one sessions, as people might feel more comfortable one on one than in the team. And so that we really try to get together with the people early. Me or my co-founder alone suit to give them space for critique and ideas and for change. And that works pretty well so far. I mean, at least from my perspective, I don't know what they are hiding. I mean, maybe that is only my perspective, but that seems to go very well.” (P4, 23:06)

“We regularly ask them for it, we don't wait for them to come but we make sure that we regularly ask them if there is anything they would like to change, if they see there could be room for improvement, that they are unhappy with, that they are happy with also, and what they would like to do more, what they would like to do less.” (P4, 24:58)

Especially while explaining their feedback processes, the participants also pointed out the importance of personal communication. Therefore, the code “Face-To-Face Communication” has been established.

P1 explains that they used to have more in-person meetings before the COVID-19 pandemic, which now temporarily shifted to virtual meetings. Still, she highlights that they will arrange face-to-face meetings again soon:

“And then and that's a really important one, we have a monthly with everyone, which is a virtual meeting. We used to have them in person actually, before Corona and now we need

to rethink how we ought to do it if it's ever possible again. I think we'll just... we used to have like bi-monthly personal meetings.” (P1, 23:45)

Referring to sensitive conversations or feedback, P2 states that it is a given to have these meetings in a face-to-face manner:

“I mean, you know, not saying it in a negative way, but like just saying like, Hey, I think we have to do this better next time or so, then still like I think there there must be the room for like a short conversation about these things. So I think that's definitely a given that we do this more in, in a face to face meeting.” (P2, 18:43)

P3 explains that the office allows face-to-face communication:

“Monday, we have a checkup call. So, yeah, at 9.30, we all meet via zoom, or the ones who are in the office, like we all get together.” (P3, 20:44)

“Yeah, I mean, we're in an office and everybody's allowed to come in whenever they want. They all have a key, but they also can work from home.” (P3, 22:41)

Similarly to P1, P4 refers to the pandemic situation in regard of in person meetings, and also points out that the employees might sometimes feel more comfortable in one-on-one sessions during feedback sessions:

“And if Corona allows it, we do in person again, before we did it, also online, but now we're doing it in the office, and we try to be there. For sure, once a week, everybody and now more and more to try also be there – in real. And that's how I feel: We managed pretty well with these online tools, when the cameras are working, it's even better. But meeting in person it's different.” (P4, 20:27)

“And we also have regular feedback sessions like one-on-one sessions, as people might feel more comfortable one on one than in the team.” (P4, 23:06)

To receive a more in-depth understanding of the respective internal communication in each company, the participants have been asked which communication tools they are using. Their answers can be taken from Table 8.

Table 8: Communication Tools

P	Quote
1	<i>“Well, we have Asana as our... it's our virtual office, basically, where everything happens. I mean, where, you know, we talk about OKRs, we talk about like different tasks we talk about, we have the different areas of the company, that kind of, you know, they have their rooms. So that would be for anything that is related to OKRs. Or related to not immediate stuff, or like more information that needs to, that is valid for longer time. That would all happen in Asana. And then we have Slack for more immediate communication. And yeah, chats. And we do use the whole Gmail, like the whole Google universe, with emails, but that's mainly like externally that we don't do so much like internally. But we also have like interactive documents that we work on there together. And let me just think if we have anything else. We try to do as little as possible, like not to have too many tools. I know that in some in some teams where they need a different kind of documentation, like in IT and stuff, they also have something else, which I don't know what it is. But yeah, usually, I think I think that was also that's our tool landscape, basically.” (P1, 22:04)</i>
2	<i>“So, we have, on the one hand, we have our like meetings, video calls, we do have like, a project management tool where we kind of see who's on what. I mean, we also changed that a lot. So, we're kind of right now building it up newly using Monday. But we also have like for some other things, a Trello board. And then for communication, I mean, we use slack as the biggest means for communication and email rather, not internally. And we have like, I mean, we use miro a lot. And if we do, like, our kind of governance meetings or team meetings, where it's about like, an hour defining budget, defining our growth and reward framework and salary models, then like, it's a lot about using this workshop space in order to, on the one hand, communicate certain things, also, like outcomes, and but also like work together on something. Yeah, these are the tools I think we use.” (P2,15:09)</i>
3	<i>“For internal communication in the German team it's a large in person. It's very important to me that we talk in person and of course it's also online tools like Google meets, Zoom, we use Slack we use Telegram. With the team members in India, we are very dependent on WhatsApp. That's their main tool that works very well for them, that they understand well. So, I would say with that we the members in the sewing centers, so the women that are sewing for us it's mainly WhatsApp messages and voice messages and also WhatsApp calls. That's the easiest tool because they don't have computers, they work mainly with their phones. And yeah, with our Indian managers, we are having three Indian managers in place, three woman that we communicate with on a daily basis. And with them, we also use mainly Google meet and zoom or any other tool like that, providing these services.” (P3, 19:20)</i>

4

“Yes, this is a good one. And I'm not so good with it. And so we don't have tools in this way. So we always have... Monday, we have a checkup call. So, yeah, at 9.30, we all meet via zoom, or the ones who are in the office, like we all get together. And talking about how we're feeling how the weekend was, and what kind of to do's we have this week. We changed it now, we only talk about the week coming. So we kind of had this, what is next month? And what can we do and all this. But this is not what is happening on Monday. It's really about the week. So everybody has... You know, it's not too big. It's really very clear. And then on Wednesday, we have this vision meeting.” (P4, 20:44)

Source: Own table

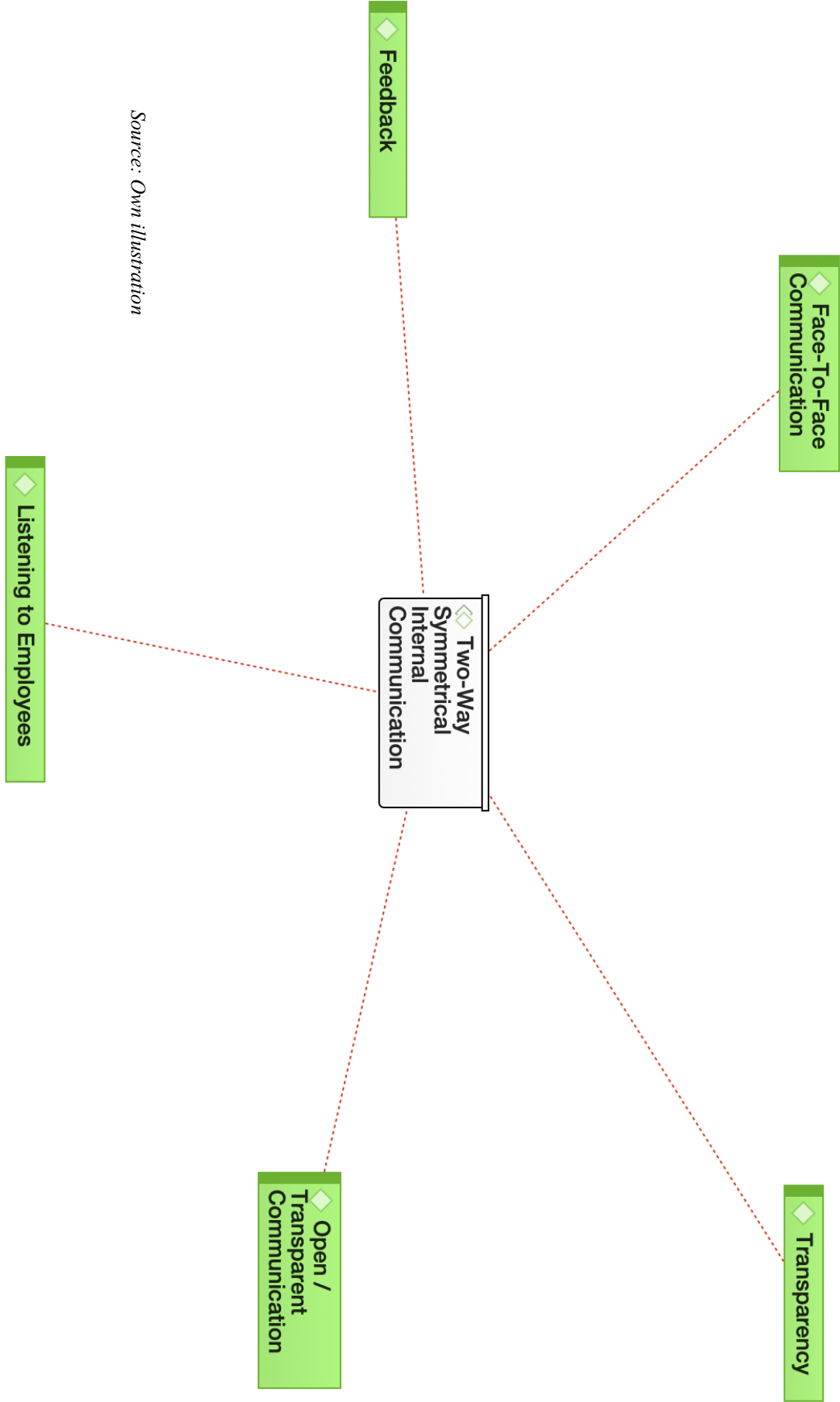
Further, to analyze the extent of their direct communication with their employees, the participants have been asked how many people they directly work with. Therefore, the total number of employees as well as the stated number of how many people the respective participant works closely with, can be taken from Table 9.

Table 9: Number of Employees per company

P	Total number of employees	Number of employees they work closely with
1	240	40 (P1, 20:01)
2	15	7 (P2, 13:57)
3	4	3 (P3, 20:31)
4	40	7 (P4, 17:55)

Source: Own table

Figure 12: Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication Code-group Network



Source: Own illustration

4.2 Quantitative Methods

The qualitative data was collected with the software “SurveyMonkey”. This tool automatically allowed a conversion into numerical data. This enabled the researcher to transfer the data to the statistics software SPSS, which is one of the most recognized programs for scientific research since it allows a precise data analysis.

In this dissertation, the quantitative measures are directly linked to each participant of the qualitative measures that were applied: As previously outlined, the online survey that was developed contains questions regarding the leadership style of each interviewed female founder. Hence, the constructed online survey has been adapted to each of the four companies, each of them including a slightly adjusted introduction for their specific employees. Therefore, the four online surveys have been distributed separately through each interview participant, and thus created four different sets of data. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the data, each data set will first be analyzed individually to draw conclusions about the respective founder of the company and her leadership style. Afterwards, in order to fully answer the research question and propositions, the datasets of all surveys will also be merged to draw conclusions about the correlation between the two variables of Authentic Leadership and two-way symmetrical internal communication.

4.2.1 Data Analysis: Online Survey Employees P1

This analysis focuses on the data of the online survey responses of the employees of P1. As mentioned previously, the distribution of the online survey has been done by the interviewed person and was therefore not in control of the researcher. In the qualitative interview, P1 stated that she works closely with 40 employees, out of the total number of 240 employees in the company. Since the questions of the survey are based on observations of P1 regarding communication and behavior, the survey respondents have to have direct working

experiences with her to be able to answer the questions. Thus, P1 decided to distribute the survey to the 40 people she works closely with.

However, on the 26th of October, a total of only 11 responses were collected, of which a total number of 9 valid responses remained after a data clean up. Even though the survey stayed open for two weeks, no further responses have been collected. Incomplete responses (2) were eliminated. From the total of 9 valid responses, 7 participants identified with the gender “female”, 1 participant with “male” and 1 participant chose the option “prefer not to say” (see Figure 13).

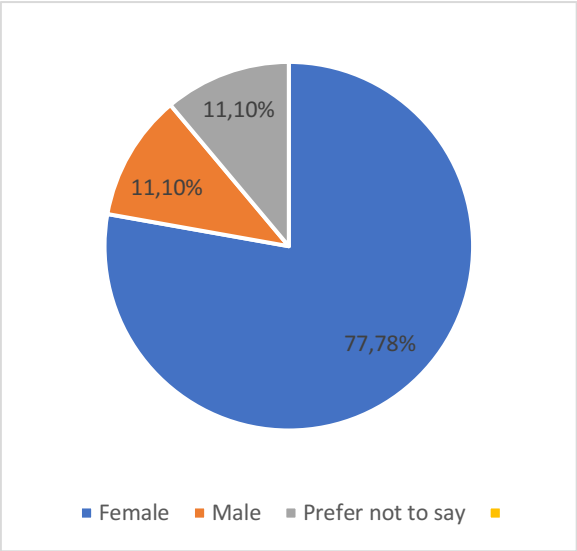


Figure 14: Total percentage of participants age by gender in % (N=9)

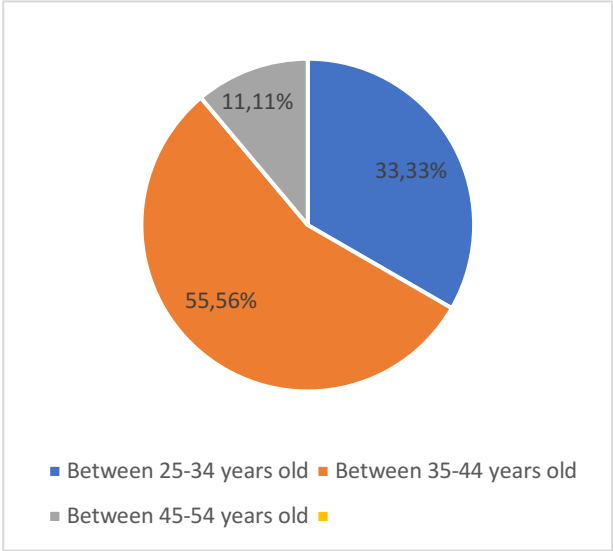


Figure 13: Total percentage of participants by group in % (N=9)

From these, 2 participants belong to the age group 25-34 years, 4 participants belong to the age group 35-44 years, and 1 participant belongs to the age group 45-54 years (see Figure 14).

2 participants have been working for more than one year in the company, 4 participants for more than 2 years, 1 participant for more than 3 years and 2 participants for more than 4

years (see Figure 15). Further, 8 out of 9 participants stated that they are familiar with the founder of the company (P1) (see Figure 16).

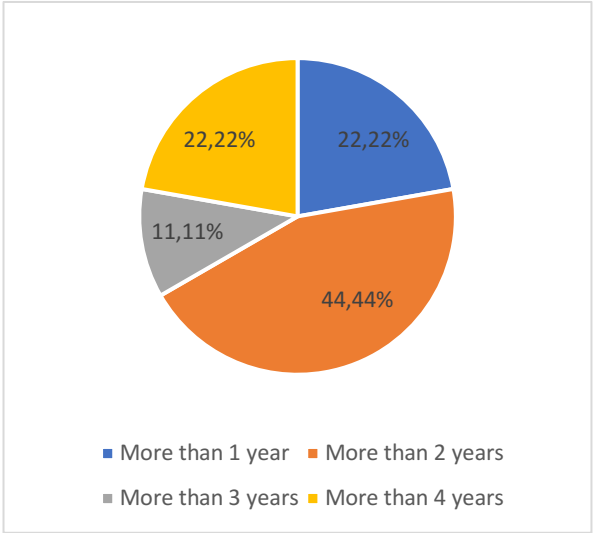


Figure 15: Total percentage of participants by duration in the company in % (N=9)

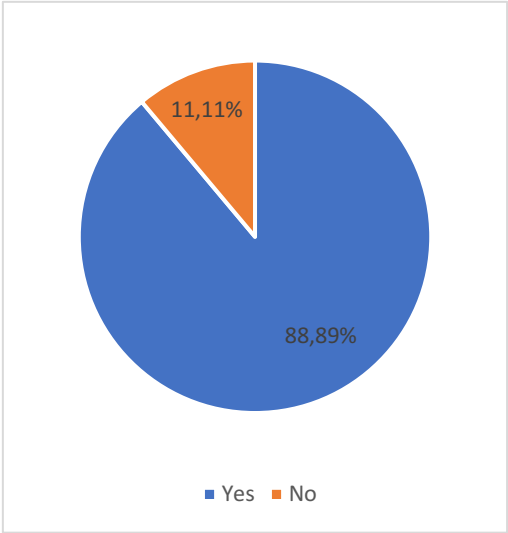


Figure 16: Total distribution of participants by familiarity with the founder in % (N=9)

Surprisingly, also 5 of the participants stated that they do not work closely with the founder of the company (see Figure 17). However, 5 of the participants still stated that they communicate with the founder on a regular basis (see Figure 18).

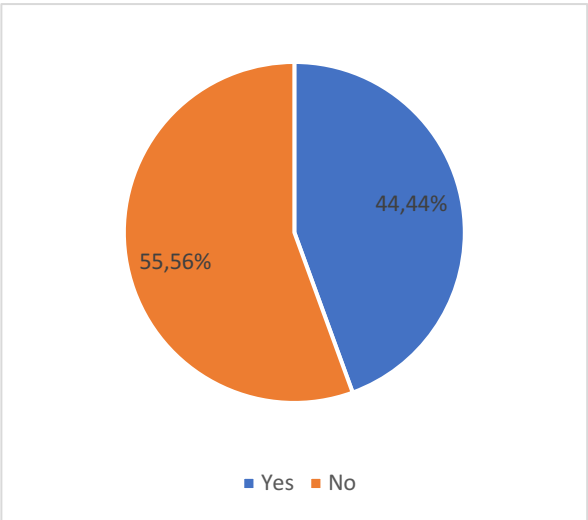


Figure 17: Total percentage of participants by working closely with the founder in % (N=9)

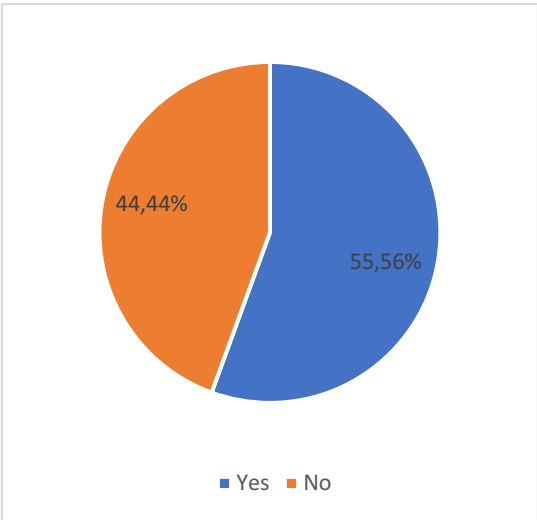


Figure 18: Total percentage of participants by communicating regularly with the founder in % (N=9)

Nevertheless, despite the result of these two questions, all 9 participants responded to all the other questions, hence the researcher still included all 9 respondents in the further analysis.

Before analyzing the results of the survey, the researcher intended to conduct a Cronbach's Alpha reliability test to test the internal consistency of the used multi-item measurement scales. However, the researcher decided to reject the Cronbach's Alpha test, since the low number of participants would not deliver sufficient conclusions. Nevertheless, according to Cronbach's Alpha scores from prior studies (Men and Stacks, 2014; Men, 2015; Men and Jiang, 2016; Jiang and Men, 2017), the used measurement scales have been assumed to be reliable.

To begin with, the 20 questions of the survey are analyzed by comparing the means. For a better overview, the question group of Authentic Leadership and two-way symmetrical internal communication are analyzed separately. Following, the means of each question group per participant will be analyzed.

By comparing the means of the questions related to Authentic Leadership, it becomes clear that the means of all questions ranges between "undecided" and "strongly agree"² (see Figure 19). However, it is to point out that Q3 "*My leader asks for ideas that challenge his/her core beliefs.*" scored the highest mean ($M_{Q3} = 6,5556$, $N=9$). Directly followed by Q8 "*My leader openly shares information with others.*" ($M_{Q8} = 6,444$, $N=9$). The mean of Q2 "*My leader shows consistency between his/her beliefs and actions.*" and Q12 "*My leader expresses his/her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.*", on the other hand, show the lowest scores ($M_{Q2} = 4,555$, $M_{Q12} = 4,555$, $N=9$)

#

² 7 Point Likert-type scale: 1 = strongly disagree; 2 = more or less disagree; 3 = disagree; 4 = undecided; 5 = more or less agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree

Authentic Leadership Questions

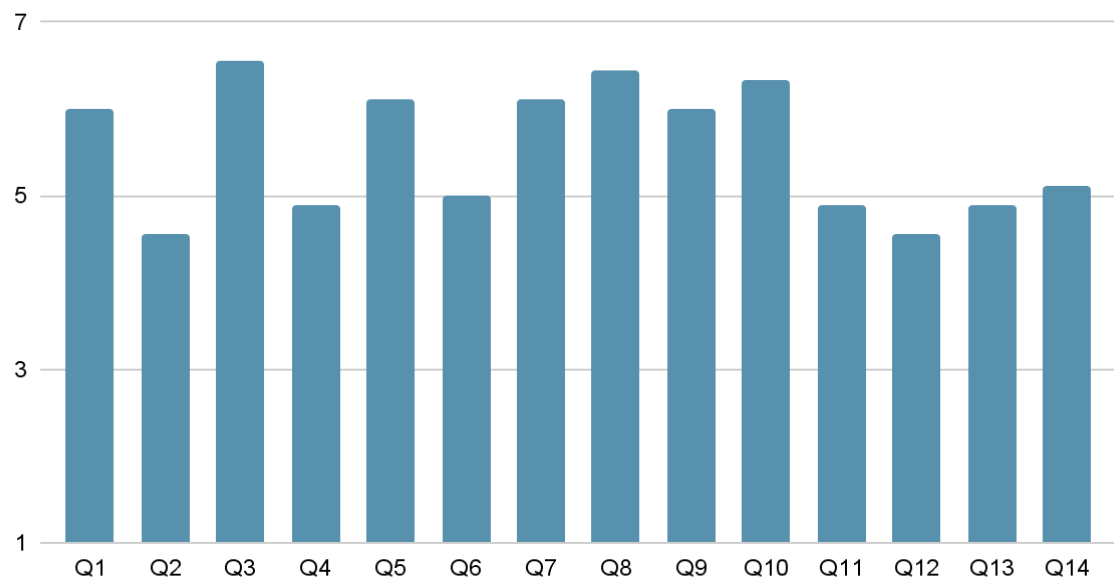


Figure 19: Evaluation of Authentic Leadership Questions (Q1-Q14), Employees of P1

Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication Questions

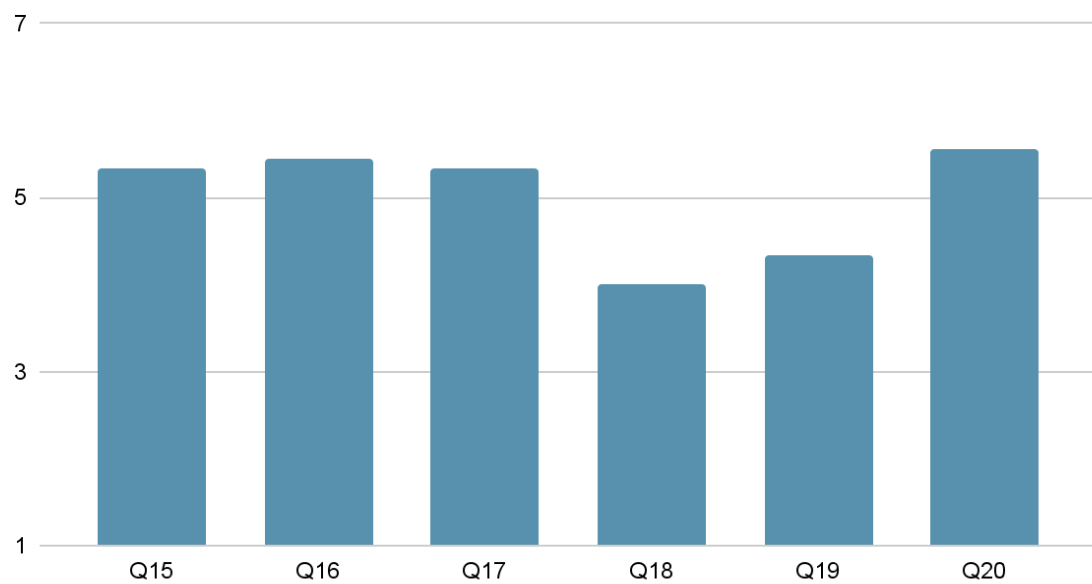


Figure 20: Evaluation of Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication Questions (Q15-Q20), Employees of P1

The means of the questions regarding two-way symmetrical internal communication showed slightly lower results and, therefore, range between “undecided” and “agree” (Figure 20). The mean of Q20 “*I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.*” showed the highest result ($M_{Q20} = 5,5556$, $N=9$). The second highest mean can be found at Q16 “*Most communication between management and employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.*” ($M_{Q16} = 5,4444$, $N=9$). However, Q18 “*The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.*” shows the overall lowest mean ($M_{Q18} = 4$, $N=9$).

Further, to analyze the overall indicators for Authentic Leadership and two-way symmetrical internal communication, the means of each survey respondent for these question categories have been analyzed. For the Authentic Leadership measurement questions, the means per respondent range from $M_{\text{Authentic Leadership}} = 4,64$ to $M_{\text{Authentic Leadership}} = 6,71$. An overall mean of $M_{\text{Authentic Leadership}} = 5,53$ ($N=9$) was detected.

As to be expected, the scores for the two-way symmetrical internal communication questions were lower. The means for these questions per survey respondent range from $M_{\text{Internal Communication}} = 3,67$ to $M_{\text{Internal Communication}} = 6,17$. An overall mean of $M_{\text{Internal Communication}} = 5,0$ ($N=9$) was detected.

4.2.2 Data Analysis: Online Survey Employees P2

This analysis focuses on the data of the online survey responses of the employees of P2. As outlined previously, the distribution of the survey has been done by the founder (P2) and was, therefore, not in control of the researcher. In the qualitative interview, P2 stated that she works closely with half of all employees (P2, 13:57), hence 7 people. Further, P2 assured to distribute the survey to all her employees. Therefore, the researcher estimated approximately 7 survey responses, according to the mentioned number of employees P2 works closely with. However, after an extended timeframe to answer the survey, as well as multiple follow-up emails to P2, only 3 survey responses have been collected. Due to

incomplete responses, one of them has been eliminated which led to a final total number of 2 valid responses. Again, based on the very low number of respondents, the researcher decided to reject the Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test.

The results of the first demographic questions of the survey were identical for both respondents. Both respondents identified with the gender “female” and indicated that they worked for “more than one year” in the company. Further, both respondents stated that they are “familiar with the founder”, “work closely with the founder” and “communicate with the founder on a regular basis”.

Even though the number of respondents for this survey is very low, the researcher decided to analyze the data in the same approach as the previously analyzed survey, in order to provide completeness in the analysis. Therefore, first, the 20 questions of the survey are analyzed by comparing the means. Then, the means of each question group per participant will be analyzed.

As Figure 21 demonstrates, the means of the results for the questions regarding Authentic Leadership range between “disagree” and “strongly agree”.

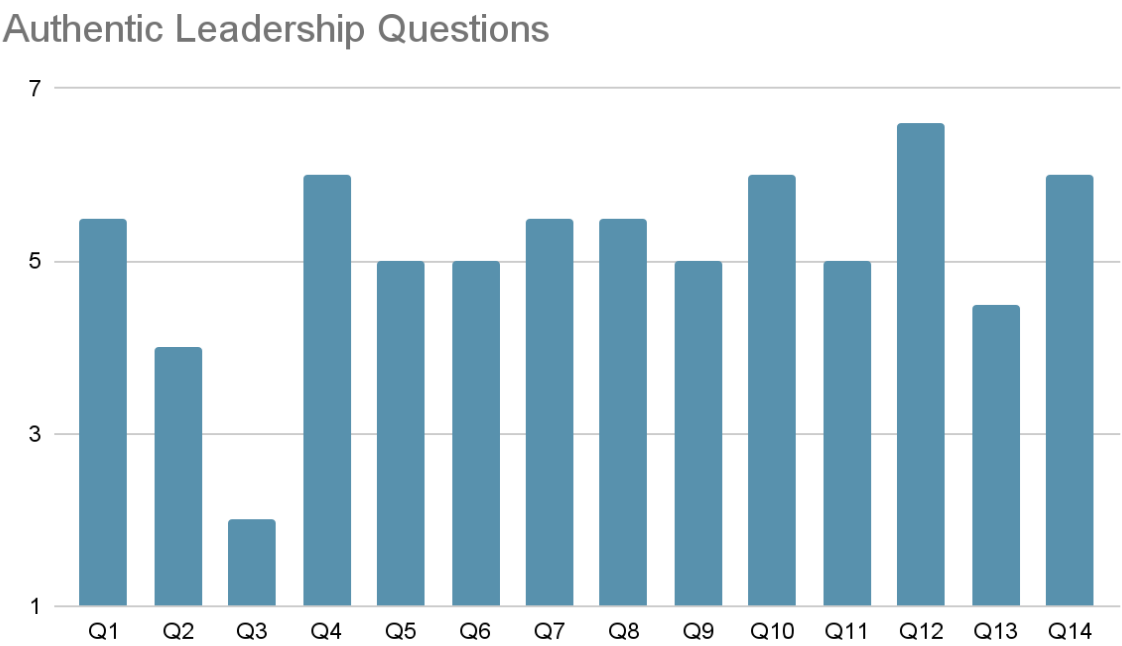


Figure 21: Evaluation of Authentic Leadership Questions (Q1-Q14), Employees of P2

The mean of Q12 “*My leader expresses his/her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.*” shows the highest value ($M_{Q12} = 6,5$, $N=2$). Q3 “*My leader asks for ideas that challenge his/her core beliefs*”, on the other hand, clearly scored the lowest mean ($M_{Q3} = 2$, $N=2$).

The means of the results of the two-way symmetrical internal communication questions can be seen in Figure 22. The means of Q17 “*This company encourages difference of opinion.*” shows the highest score ($M_{Q17} = 6$, $N=2$), while the mean of Q18 “*The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees*” indicates the lowest result ($M_{Q18} = 3$, $N=3$).

Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication Questions

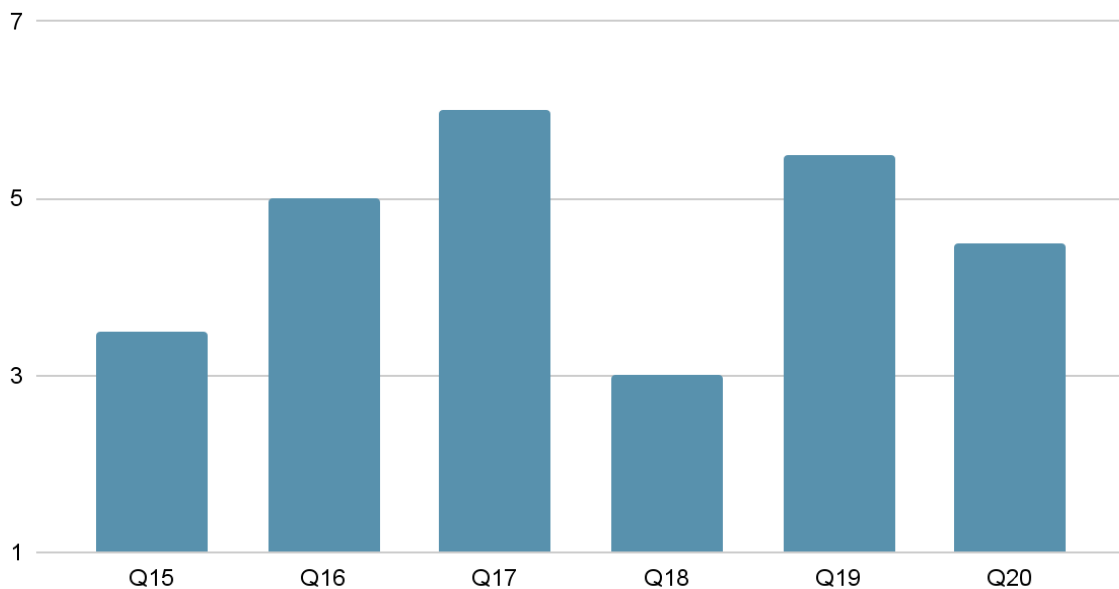


Figure 22: Evaluation of Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication Questions (Q15-Q20), Employees of P2

Further, the means per respondent for the Authentic Leadership measurement questions are $M_{\text{Authentic Leadership 1}} = 5$ and $M_{\text{Authentic Leadership 2}} = 5,21$, which results in an overall mean of $M_{\text{Authentic Leadership1, Authentic Leadership2}} = 5,1071$ ($N=2$).

The means for the two-way symmetrical internal communication questions per survey respondent are $M_{\text{Internal Communication1}} = 4,67$ and $M_{\text{Internal Communication2}} = 4,50$. Therefore, the overall mean is $M_{\text{Internal Communication1, Internal Communication2}} = 4,5833$ ($N=2$).

4.2.3 Data Analysis: Online Survey Employees P3

This analysis focuses on the data of the online survey responses of the employees of P3. The total number of employees of the company of P3 is 3 people. Therefore, the researcher expected a total number of survey responses of 3. However, only 2 survey responses have been collected. Proceeding as in the analysis of the previous surveys, also the data of this survey will be analyzed in the same scheme, despite the low number of responses.

To begin with, both respondents identified with the gender “female”. One response indicated an age range “between 18 and 24 years old”, while the other stated “between 25 and 34 years old”. Both respondents worked “less than 6 months” in the company, are “familiar with the founder of the company”, and “work closely” with her. Further, both respondents communicate with the founder “on a regular basis”.

Looking at the means of the results of both question categories, it is clear to see that they are all very high and only range between “more or less agree” and “strongly agree” (see Figures 23 and 24). Therefore, indicating the lowest means are more of interest: The lowest mean of results from the Authentic Leadership questions is Q9 “*My leader resists pressures on him/her to do things contrary to his/her beliefs.*” ($M_{Q9} = 5,5$, $N=2$). The lowest mean of the results from questions regarding two-way symmetrical internal communication shows Q19 “*I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.*” ($M_{Q19} = 5,5$, $N=2$).

Authentic Leadership Questions

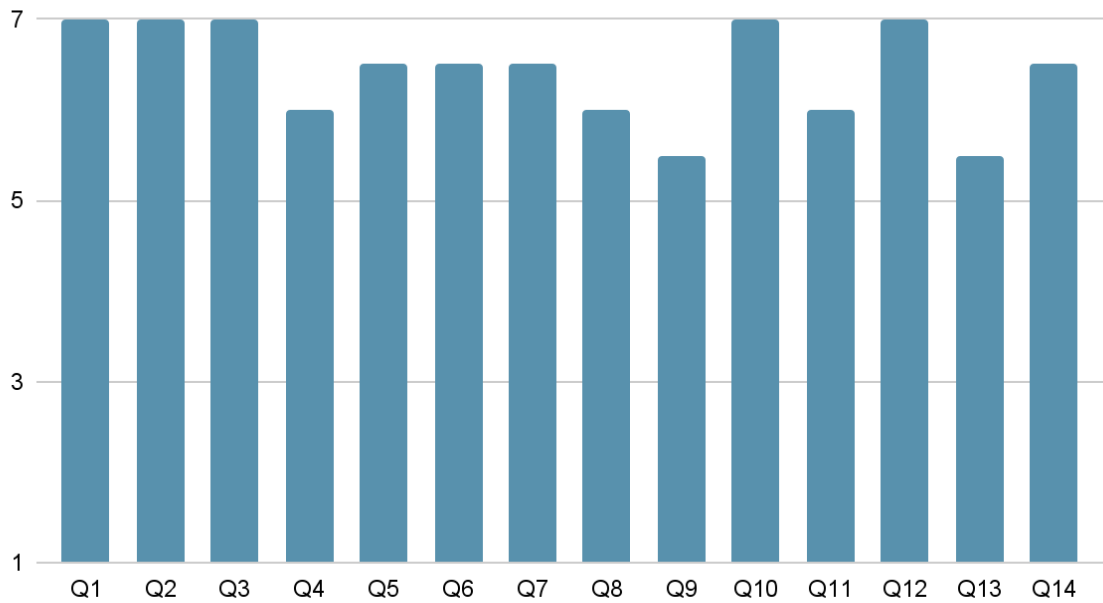


Figure 23: Evaluation of Authentic Leadership Questions (Q1-Q14), Employees of P3

Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication Questions

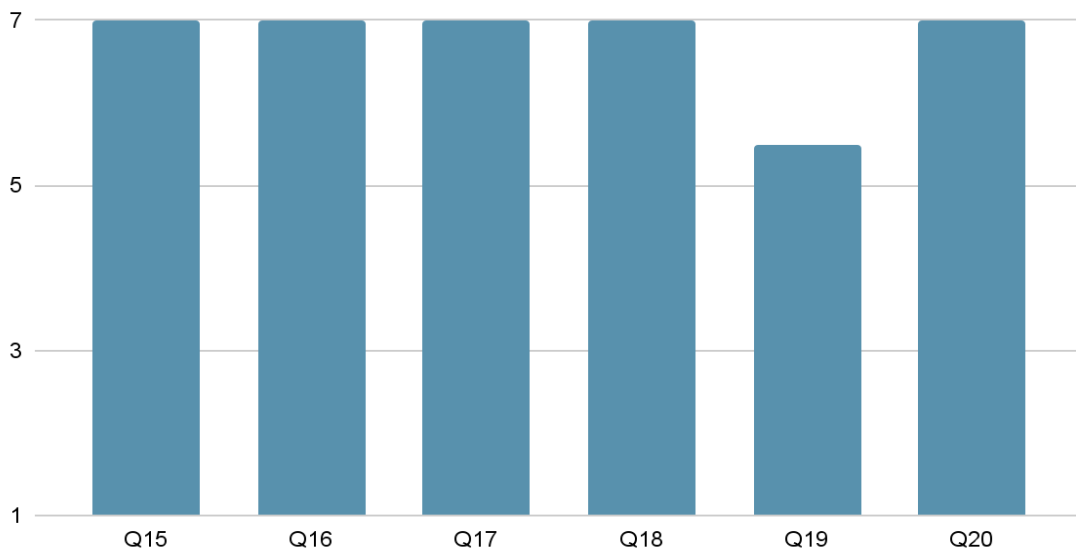


Figure 24: Evaluation of Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication (Q15-Q20), Employees of P3

For this survey data, the means per respondent for the Authentic Leadership and two-way symmetrical internal communication measurement questions are – as expected – very high.

The means per respondent for the Authentic Leadership questions are $M_{\text{Authentic Leadership 1}} = 6,57$ and $M_{\text{Authentic Leadership 2}} = 6,29$, which results in an overall mean of $M_{\text{Authentic Leadership 1, Authentic Leadership 2}} = 6,4286$ ($N=2$).

The means for the two-way symmetrical internal communication questions per survey respondent are $M_{\text{Internal Communication 1}} = 7$ and $M_{\text{Internal Communication 2}} = 6,50$. Therefore, the overall mean is $M_{\text{Internal Communication 1, Internal Communication 2}} = 6,75$ ($N=2$).

4.2.4 Data Analysis: Online Survey Employees P4

Exactly as with the other three surveys, also the online survey for the employees of P4 has been distributed by P4 herself. Unfortunately, after several emails of the researcher, P4 stated that many employees are not in the office and have a bad internet connection or are sick. She therefore recommended the researcher not to wait for survey responses (see Appendix J). However, since P4 stated in the qualitative interview that the company comprises 40 employees and considering that the survey has been available for 2 weeks and only takes approximately 5 minutes to answer, it remains unclear if it was in fact a lack of time of all employees, or a lack of survey distribution.

4.2.5 Data Analysis: Combined Surveys

As the second step of the quantitative data analysis, after individually analyzing the surveys, the data of all conducted surveys have been merged in order to gain knowledge about potential variable correlations between authentic leadership and two-way symmetrical internal communication. In order to test the previously established proposition “*Authentic Leadership encourages two-way symmetrical internal communication.*”, Authentic Leadership has therefore been identified as the independent variable and Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication as the dependent variable.

To investigate the relationship between these variables, considering that they are ordinal measures, a one-tailed Spearman Correlation Test has been applied (See Table 10).

Table 10: Spearman Correlation Test

			Authentic Leadership	Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication
Spearman's rho	Authentic Leadership	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.647**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.008
		N	13	13
	Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication	Correlation Coefficient	.647**	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.008	.
		N	13	13

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Source: Own table

The Spearman Correlation Coefficient (r) = .647 indicates that the Authentic Leadership variable has a strong positive relationship with the Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication.³ Therefore, the combined data of all survey respondents showed that Authentic Leadership behavior is positively correlating with Two-Way Symmetrical Communication.

³ Spearman correlation coefficient rates: (-)0,5 – (-)1,0 strong relationship, (-)0,3 – (-)0,5 (moderate relationship), (-)0,3 – (-)0,1 (weak relationship), > (-)0,1 (none or very weak relationship)

5. Findings and Discussion

The aim of this dissertation is to provide an answer to the previously outlined research question:

How does the perception of leadership styles influence the authenticity of female entrepreneurs and how do they communicate internally?

Therefore, as mentioned above, the following propositions have been formulated in order to support the consistent line of reasoning for the research:

1. *When founding their own companies, female entrepreneurs believe that they have to behave in a certain way to be a leader.*
2. *Previously perceived leadership styles have an impact on the leadership style of female entrepreneurs.*
3. *Female entrepreneurs show Authentic Leadership behavior.*
4. *Female entrepreneurs encourage two-way symmetrical internal communication.*
5. *Authentic leadership encourages two-way symmetrical internal communication.*

Based on the in-depth data analysis of the previous chapter, this chapter will use the collected data of both qualitative and quantitative measures to support or discard the established propositions with the final aim to answer the research question. For proposition 1 and proposition 2, only the qualitative data will be used. For the examination of proposition 3 and 4, the qualitative and quantitative data will be used in combination. Lastly, the discussion of Proposition 5 will be based on quantitative data only.

5.1 Proposition 1: *When founding their own companies, female entrepreneurs believe that they have to behave in a certain way to be a leader.*

In the conducted interviews, the four female entrepreneurs offered extensive insights about their personal leadership style development since the initial moments of founding their companies.

To begin with, 2 out of 4 interviewees clearly stated that they did not think about a special kind of leader they wanted to be when they founded the company (See Table 11). While P1 did not make a specific statement about it, P2 uttered that she is not sure whether she followed a certain belief on how to behave as a leader, when initially founding the company:

“And I’m not so sure if this now like that the first version of practicing leadership was something that I did based on like own beliefs or that came from the outside. I cannot really define that, I think.” (P2, 07:52)

Table 11: Code Results “Wanted To Be a Certain Leader”

Code	P1	P2	P3	P4	Total
<i>Wanted To Be a Certain Leader / Yes</i>	-	1	-	-	1
<i>Wanted To Be a Certain Leader / No</i>	-	1	1	1	3

Source: Own Table

In fact, all of the interviewees pointed out that they did not consciously think about what kind of leader they wanted to embody but explained that it was an unconscious and natural process. While explaining their experiences, they all referred to an intuitive way of leading the companies when they first founded them (Table 12).

Table 12: Code Results "Leadership Style Development / Intuition"

Code	P1	P2	P3	P4	Total
<i>Leadership Style Development / Intuition</i>	6	5	2	3	16

Source: Own table

In conclusion, according to the qualitative data of this dissertation, the female entrepreneurs participating in this research did not believe that they have to behave in a certain way to be a leader when founding their own companies but chose an intuitive way of becoming a leader. Therefore, the proposition *"When founding their own companies, female entrepreneurs believe that they have to behave in a certain way to be a leader."* is **not supported**.

5.2 Proposition 2: *Previously perceived leadership styles have an impact on the leadership style of female entrepreneurs.*

To begin with, it is to mention that all interview participants pointed out that they have not previously perceived a lot of different leadership styles, due to very limited working experiences prior to founding their companies (less than 3). In fact, two of the participants stated that they founded their companies directly after university and the only working experiences they had were during internships or working student positions.

Nevertheless, all participants shared their perception of previously perceived leadership styles openly with the researcher. While the questions regarding previous experiences in the interview were objective and open, the explanations of the interviewees showed that they had more negative previously perceived leadership experiences than positive. In fact, the total number of the code "Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Negative" is 8, while the code "Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Positive" is 3

(see Table 13). Further, the interviewees referred to previously perceived male leaders in total 6 times, and only 3 times to female leaders.

Table 13: Code Results “Previously Perceived Leadership Styles”

Code	P1	P2	P3	P4	Total
<i>Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Negative</i>	2	1	3	2	8
<i>Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / M</i>	1	1	2	2	6
<i>Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Experiences / Positive</i>	-	2	1	-	3
<i>Previously Perceived Leadership Styles / Gender / F</i>	2	-	1	-	3
<i>Founded directly after University</i>	-	-	1	1	2

Source: Own Table

Out of the 8 codes for negative experiences, 3 of them occurred in combination with the code for a male leader, 1 with the code for a female leader, and the other 4 did not occur in combination with gender indicators. Out of the 6 detected codes for positive experiences, 2 occurred in combination with the code for a male leader and 1 in combination with a female leader. However, these code co-occurrences do not allow to draw a conclusion about whether male or female leaders could lead to rather negative or positive leadership experiences but can rather be seen as a reflection of the previously outlined underrepresentation of female leaders, in general.

Further, the interviewees made statements about whether the previously perceived leaders functioned as role models for them when they founded their companies and whether they wanted to adapt some perceived traits or not. While P4 did not provide a suitable answer about this, the other interviewees stated that they did not aim to implement leadership traits they have perceived previously. However, P3 was undecided in her answer as she said:

“Yes, absolutely. I had this kind of... This is what I meant with inspiration. But in both sides, of course, there were things I liked to adapt, and I worked on it to adapt it. And of course, there were things especially at the beginning, where I was like "Oh my god, I don't want to be that kind of person". ” (P3, 11:22)

Hence, this statement was coded with both codes (see Table 14).

Table 14: Code Results “Leadership Style Development / Referral to Role Models”

Code	P1	P2	P3	P4	Total
<i>Leadership Style Development / Referral to Role Models / Yes</i>	-	-	1	-	1
<i>Leadership Style Development / Referral to Role Models / No</i>	1	1	1	-	3

Source: Own table

These results indicate that the previously perceived leadership styles did not have a significant impact on the leadership style development of the interviewed female entrepreneurs. Therefore, the proposition *“Previously perceived leadership styles have an impact on the leadership style of female entrepreneurs.”* is **not supported**.

Nevertheless, another finding of the research is that all interviewees refer to the importance of constant development of their leadership style (see Table 15).

Table 15: Code Results “Leadership Style Development / Constant Development”

Code	P1	P2	P3	P4	Total
<i>Leadership Style Development / Constant Development</i>	1	4	5	3	12

Source: Own table

In combination with the previously mentioned intuitive way how they started to lead their companies, this can lead to the assumption that, instead of recalling previously perceived leaders, the interviewees draw their inspiration for their leadership development from different sources and rather see leadership as an ongoing process. This perception aligns with the Authentic Leadership understanding of Luthans and Avolio (2003), who represent the opinion that leaders are not born but are in constant development.

5.3 Proposition 3: *Female entrepreneurs show Authentic Leadership behavior.*

As outlined in the literature review, Authentic Leadership can be defined as the following:

“The authentic leader is confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, transparent, moral/ethical, future-oriented, and gives priority to developing associates to be leaders. The authentic leader is true to him/herself and the exhibited behavior positively transforms or develops associates into leaders themselves. The authentic leader does not try to coerce or even rationally persuade associates, but rather the leader’s authentic values, beliefs, and behaviors serve to model the development of associates.” (Luthans and Avolio, 2003, p. 243)

Based on the theory of Authentic Leadership, the previously explained code-group “Authentic Leadership” has been developed in order to gain understanding about whether the female entrepreneurs who participated in this research show Authentic Leadership attributes. As demonstrated in Table 16, all the interviewees uttered statements that can be linked to Authentic Leadership attributes. The code “Self-Awareness” showed the highest counts, while the codes “Balanced Processing” and “Vision” were the least counted codes.

Table 16: Code Results Authentic Leadership Code-Group

Code	P1	P2	P3	P4	Total
<i>Self-Awareness</i>	4	6	3	4	17
<i>Transparency</i>	6	4	2	4	16
<i>Encouragement / Empowerment</i>	5	5	2	2	14
<i>Trust</i>	8	1	3	-	12
<i>Leadership Style Development / Constant Development</i>	1	4	5	2	12
<i>Values / Moral Perspective</i>	5	2	2	2	11
<i>Balanced Processing</i>	3	2	-	5	10
<i>Vision</i>	4	1	1	-	6
Authentic Leadership Total	29	14	13	11	60

Source: Own table

According to the qualitative data, gained through an intense analysis and coding process, P1 appears to demonstrate the most Authentic Leadership attributes, since a total of 29 counts for Authentic Leadership related codes can be found. However, considering that these findings are based on qualitative interviews and convey statements based on self-descriptions of the interviewees, this data alone cannot be evaluated as completely bias-free. Therefore, the results of the quantitative data, gained through employee surveys of the

respective companies will also be taken into consideration in order to support or decline the proposition.

The conducted online surveys contained 14 items to measure Authentic Leadership, derived from the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011). Aligning with the codes from the “Authentic Leadership” code-group of the interviews, the Authentic Leadership items of the survey were investigating the following four attributes: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing, and internalized moral perspective.

It is to mention that, since the employee survey of P4 remained without responses, no further conclusions can be drawn from the quantitative data, in this case. The data analysis of the other employee surveys, however, delivered indication that the participating employees of the respective companies are likely to perceive P1, P2 and P3 as authentic leaders, since the means of the answers to the questions regarding Authentic Leadership were all above 5⁴ (see Table 17). P3 scored the highest mean with $M_{\text{Authentic Leadership}} = 6,4286$ (N=2). However, since the number of survey responses of both P2 and P3 are very low (N=2), these results do not allow a valid conclusion.

Table 17: Authentic Leadership Mean per Participant

Code	P1	P2	P3	P4
$M_{\text{Authentic Leadership}}$	5,53 (N=9)	5,1071 (N=2)	6,4286 (N=2)	-

Source: Own table

⁴ 1= Strongly disagree, 2 = More or less disagree; 3 = Disagree, 4 = Undecided; 5 = More or less agree; 6 = Agree, 7 = Strongly agree

Since the employee survey of P1 collected the highest number of responses, more detailed statements can be made. In this case, the highest mean was scored for Q3 “*My leader asks for ideas that challenge his/her core beliefs.*” and Q8 “*My leader openly shares information with others.*”. According to the Authentic Leadership Inventory by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), Q3 indicates “balanced processing” and Q8 “relational transparency”. In comparison to the qualitative data, especially the factor of “transparency” shows consistency.

However, it is to say that due to the low number of survey responses, the quantitative data can only be seen as an indicator but does not deliver sufficient evidence to draw valid conclusions.

Nevertheless, taking into consideration the results of both qualitative and quantitative measures, it can be concluded that all female entrepreneurs who participated in this research showed Authentic Leadership attributes. Hence, the proposition “*Female entrepreneurs show Authentic Leadership behavior.*” **is supported.**

5.4 Proposition 4: *Female entrepreneurs encourage two-way symmetrical internal communication.*

Two-Way Symmetrical Communication, as outlined in the literature review, refers to communication that is equally distributed and can flow in both directions in an honest way, and is hence “more of a dialogue than a monologue” (Grunig and Hunt, 1984, p. 23). Therefore, the codes of the code-group “Two-Way Symmetrical Communication” as explained in the data analysis, focus on indicators for an open flow of communication that involves interaction and happens in a two-way manner. As demonstrated in Table 18, all interviewees made statements that included codes related to two-way symmetrical internal communication, when they described the internal communication in their companies. The code “Open / Transparent Communication” has been counted the most, directly followed by the code “Listening to Employees”, which indicates that the respective founder has two-way communication with her employees. The code “Face-to-Face Communication” scored the

lowest results, which was not surprising considering the remote set-up of the companies due to the current COVID-19 situation. Out of all four interviewees, P4 showed the highest number of two-way symmetrical internal communication codes, with 16 code counts (see Table 17).

Table 18: Code Results Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication Code-Group

Code	P1	P2	P3	P4	Total
<i>Open / Transparent Communication</i>	3	10	3	8	24
<i>Listening to Employees</i>	1	4	1	12	18
<i>Transparency</i>	6	4	2	4	16
<i>Feedback</i>	2	4	1	3	10
<i>Face-To-Face Communication</i>	1	2	4	2	9
Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication Total	11	11	7	16	45

Source: Own table

In order to provide better reasoning, the results of the quantitative measures will be taken into consideration as well. Again, due to the lack of data for P4, no further conclusions could be drawn.

The data analysis of the employee surveys of P1, P2 and P3 indicates that the mean of the answers to the questions regarding Two-Way Symmetrical Communication is highest for P3 with $M_{\text{Internal Communication}} = 6,75$ ($N=2$). The mean for P2, on the other hand, shows the lowest result with $M_{\text{Internal Communication}} = 4,5833$ ($N=2$) (see Table 19). Nevertheless, since all means

show results are above 4 (undecided), it can be assumed that the employees perceive the communication in their respective companies as being two-way symmetrical.

Table 19: Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication Mean per Participant

Code	P1	P2	P3	P4
M _{Internal Communication}	5,0 (N=9)	4,5833 (N=2)	6,75 (N=2)	-

Source: Own table

Based on the extensive information provided through the qualitative surveys, and taking into consideration the positive indicating results of the employee surveys, it can therefore be assumed that all participating female entrepreneurs encourage two-way symmetrical internal communication in their companies. Thus, the proposition “*Female entrepreneurs encourage two-way symmetrical internal communication.*” **is supported.**

5.5 Proposition 5: *Authentic leadership encourages two-way symmetrical internal communication.*

In order to investigate if Authentic Leadership encourages two-way symmetrical internal communication, a one-tailed Spearman Correlation Test has been applied to the quantitative data as demonstrated in the data analysis (see Table 10).

The Spearman Correlation Coefficient Test resulted in $(r) = .647$, which indicates a strong relationship between the two variables.⁵ Therefore, aligning with the results of prior studies (Men and Stacks, 2014; Men, 2015; Men and Jiang, 2016; Jiang and Men, 2017), it can be assumed that Authentic Leadership is positively related to Two-Way Symmetrical Communication.

⁵ Spearman correlation coefficient rates: (-)0,5 – (-)1,0 strong relationship, (-)0,3 – (-)0,5 (moderate relationship), (-)0,3 – (-)0,1 (weak relationship), > (-)0,1 (none or very weak relationship)

Considering that the sample size of the quantitative measurements is low (N=9), it is to say that these results cannot be considered representative. They can, however, be considered as an indication for the relation between the two variables. Hence, the proposition “*Authentic leadership encourages two-way symmetrical internal communication.*” **is supported.**

6. Conclusions

This final chapter will provide an interpretative conclusion based on the central findings of the empirical research in relation to the theoretical frameworks and current state of literature to answer the overall research question that this dissertation is focusing on. Subsequently, the conducted research is critically reflected upon and its limitations are outlined. Lastly, an outlook on possible future research is given.

6.1 Summary of the Findings

The findings outlined above, based on the examination of the established research propositions, enable the researcher to provide an answer to the research question posed in the beginning of the dissertation: *How does the perception of leadership styles influence the authenticity of female entrepreneurs and how do they communicate internally?*

First, the findings demonstrated that the female entrepreneurs – as opposed to the previously set assumption⁶ - do not believe that they have to behave in a certain way to be a leader, but rather began their personal leadership journey intuitively. The fact that all interviewees referred to this natural way of becoming a leader, based on their own beliefs and intuitive actions demonstrates, not only a high level of self-confidence, but also that all interviewees did not perceive socially constructed norms and expectations about how to be a leader or, at least, did not feel the urge to fulfill those. Considering the innovative nature of entrepreneurship with the aim to create novelty through either constructing completely new systems or putting parts of already existing systems together in a different way (Venkataraman, 2000), the demonstrated rejection of acting upon a belief of having to

⁶ See: Chapter 3.1 Research question and proposition

behave in a certain manner, appears to be coherent. However, it is to mention that the aspect of “intuition”, as a main driver for initial leadership execution, that all of the interviewees directly or indirectly referred to, is neither part of already existing entrepreneurial attitude and behavior, nor Authentic Leadership theories, at least to the researcher's knowledge extent.

Further, the investigation of previously perceived leadership styles and the impact of these experiences on the leadership style of female entrepreneurs delivered interesting findings: To begin with, even though the collected experiences of all interviewees with other leaders during work experiences prior to founding their own companies were rather limited, it can be detected that most of all perceived leaders were male. Aligning with the fact that men are still more likely to start businesses than women (GEM, 2020/2021) and only 31% of all leadership positions are held by women (Women in Business 2021 Report, 2021), the low number of perceived female leaders can be seen as a depiction of the overall underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. Also, it is to point out that the gathered data of the interviews shows that the interviewed female entrepreneurs had more negative experiences with previously perceived leadership styles than positive ones. A correlation with negative or positive experiences and gender, however, could not be detected. Nevertheless, these perceptions did not seem to have a strong impact on the development of their own leadership styles as previously expected by the researcher. In fact, the research showed that the interviewees did not recall role models for leadership styles when they founded their companies. Aligning with the findings that they did not hold the belief that they have to behave in a certain way to be a leader, but rather built their leadership style based on intuition, the lack of role models can be seen as another indicator for the autonomous way in which these female entrepreneurs began their leadership journey. Overall, based on the findings of this research, it can be said that the impact of previously perceived leadership styles on the leadership style of female entrepreneurs appears to be rather low or even non-existent.

Nevertheless, another finding of this research was that all interviewees referred to the importance of a constant development of their leadership style. Contrarily to the old-fashioned belief that leaders are “born this way”, this finding supports the foundation of the

Authentic Leadership model of Luthans and Avolio (2003), that is based on the understanding that authentic leaders are in constant development of their leadership style.

Since one of the cornerstones of this dissertation was to examine the authenticity of female entrepreneurs considering the impact of previously perceived leadership styles, the level of Authentic Leadership behavior of the participants has been measured. Based on the Authentic Leadership model of Luthans and Avolio (2003), the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) of Walumbwa et al. (2008), and the further development of the latter, namely the Authentic Leadership Inventory (ALI) developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011), the Authentic Leadership behavior of the participating female entrepreneurs has been examined extensively through both qualitative and quantitative measures. While all participants showed Authentic Leadership behavior, one of them indicated the highest results, especially in the qualitative part. This participant was also the oldest and her company was the one that had, by far, more employees. However, the examination of the Authentic Leadership behavior could not proceed to the extent the researcher initially intended due to insufficient respondents to the online survey. In fact, the examination of one participant could only be done through the qualitative measures due to the absence of quantitative data, caused by a poor distribution of the survey by the participant herself. Taking into consideration that the online survey contained questions that can be considered sensitive, based on their in-depth evaluation of leadership behavior, the poor distribution could also be interpreted as insecurity of the participant herself. Nevertheless, the researcher decided to still proceed with the intended research methodology in order to provide as much insights as possible – even with much smaller data than expected.

In conclusion, the overall analysis demonstrated that all participants showed Authentic Leadership behavior. Taking the lack of role models, the low impact of previously perceived leadership styles, the aim of constant development, and the intuitive nature of their leadership style into consideration, this finding is not surprising. The high level of self-awareness that has been indicated in the findings, also underlines that the female entrepreneurs who participated in this study can be assumed to be authentic leaders.

Therefore, the answer to the first part of the research question “*How does the perception of leadership styles influence the authenticity of female entrepreneurs and how do they communicate internally?*” can be given: The conducted research showed that the perception of leadership styles did not influence the authenticity of the interviewed female entrepreneurs. In fact, regardless of previously perceived leaders and their leadership styles, all participants indicated a high level of Authentic Leadership behavior.

In order to answer the second part of the research question, thus “how they communicate internally”, measures of the internal communication have been conducted through both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Multiple prior studies have indicated a correlation between Authentic Leadership and Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication (Men and Stacks, 2014; Men, 2015; Men and Jiang, 2016; Jiang and Men, 2017). Hence, the indicators for Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication have been examined. The concept of Symmetrical Internal Communication is based on the idea that the communication functions in a two-way manner based on aspects such as openness, feedback, and reciprocity (Gruning, 1992). The thorough data analysis showed that all interview participants mentioned Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication indicators.

One participant, in particular, showed the highest results for two-way symmetrical internal communication, with special remarks on the importance of listening to employees. In general, these findings indicated that their internal communication is mostly referred to as “open communication”. However, since the internal communication of an organization can hardly only be measured through the description of the founder, the findings of the employee surveys have been taken into consideration to provide a more reliable understanding. Taking the previously outlined low number of survey respondents into account, both measurements delivered indicators of the practice of Two-Way Symmetrical Communication, so that a symmetrical internal communication system can be assumed in all four companies of the participants, but not clearly confirmed.

Concluding these findings, the second part of the research question “*How does the perception of leadership styles influence the authenticity of female entrepreneurs and how*

do they communicate internally?” can be answered: The conducted research showed that the participating female entrepreneurs most likely practice Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication within their companies. However, a certain answer cannot be provided based on this data, since the employee perspectives could not fully be examined due to the low number of survey participants. Nevertheless, indicators for a positive relationship between Authentic Leadership and Two-Way Symmetrical Communication have been detected through the analysis of the quantitative data, which aligns with the existing body of literature on the correlation between the two concepts (Men and Stacks, 2014; Men, 2015; Men and Jiang, 2016; Jiang and Men, 2017).

Therefore, to fully answer the research question “*How does the perception of leadership styles influence the authenticity of female entrepreneurs and how do they communicate internally?*”, it can be said that previously perceived leadership styles was not detected as having had influence on the authenticity of the female entrepreneurs that were studied. In fact, the female founders all demonstrated Authentic Leadership behavior, which positively relates to the qualitative data detected about Two-Way Symmetrical Internal Communication structures within their companies.

6.2 Research Limitations

In order to be able to assess the findings of this dissertation more precisely, weaknesses of the study and empirical limitations have to be considered.

The main limitation of the dissertation can be seen in the low number of survey respondents concerning the validation of the qualitative data: The researcher aimed to validate the statements by the interviewees about their leadership behavior and regarding their internal communication through quantitative data provided by their employees. However, due to the survey distribution process through the respective founder and the low answer rate - the first survey only collected 9 responses instead of expected 40, the second only 2 responses instead of 7, the third only 2 instead of 3 and the last one 0 responses – it proved to be very difficult and even inappropriate to draw sound conclusions from the quantitative data of the research. Moreover, due to the low number of participants no further reliability tests, such as

Cronbach's Alpha, could be conducted. Therefore, all quantitative measures can be interpreted as an indicator, but not as representative data. Nevertheless, the researcher decided to maintain the presentation of the quantitative data that could be collected in order to support, validate or decline the qualitative findings, assuming that this was done based on indicators, and not on reliable and representative data.

Further, it is to say that the analysis of the qualitative data and the in-depth coding process cannot be assumed as being completely bias-free, due to the interpretative approach that was used. Further, no intercoder reliability agreement has been made.

Moreover, it must be pointed out that the interviewed female entrepreneurs do not reflect all female entrepreneurs. The use of a convenient sample supported the interpretative approach of this research, which provides valuable insights without aiming to be representative. Considering the sensitivity of this research, namely the examination of the personal leadership style, in combination with authenticity, and with the practice of internal communication and an additional survey for their employees about the same topics, the women who agreed to participate in this study had to be already relatively confident with their own leadership style and open to disclose information about it. Hence, they might already show a higher level of self-awareness than other female entrepreneurs, which generates a bias, since the onset of the research. To avoid this, a broader sample size, including female entrepreneurs from different sectors and backgrounds could have been chosen. Moreover, the sensitivity of the topics can also be a reason why one of the surveys has not been answered by the employees. Consequently, the results are not applicable for female entrepreneurs in general and cannot, therefore, be generalized. Nevertheless, they provide relevant insights that not only add to body of literature on female entrepreneurs but also provide an understanding about how individual each leadership style development can be.

6.3 Conclusion and Future Research

This dissertation examined how female entrepreneurs perceive leadership styles they have been exposed to and whether these perceptions had an impact on their own leadership style

development in regard to their authenticity and the way they communicate internally in their organizations. Considering the still existing underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, the research further focused on leadership role models and whether female entrepreneurs aim to become a certain kind of leader, or if they feel the urge to fulfil a specific leadership stereotype. In order to gain thorough information about their (1) perceptions of previously perceived leadership styles, (2) leadership style development, (3) Authentic Leadership behavior, and (4) internal communication, the mixed methods approach used - including in-depth interviews with four female founders and quantitative online surveys with the respective employees - has provided data that contributes to the growing body of research about female entrepreneurial leadership, Authentic Leadership and two-way symmetrical internal communication. Further, the conclusions of the study offer valuable insights and knowledge for emerging (female) entrepreneurs, as well as for any leader who considers a shift towards Authentic Leadership or wants to establish a two-way symmetrical internal communication approach within his or her organization. Taking the fast-paced developments, especially in terms of technology, into consideration transparency and authenticity become more and more inevitable, since inconsistency between actions and words becomes increasingly obvious – especially for leaders.

Future studies could replicate the research with a broader sample size in order to provide more comparable data and results. Further, the exact same research could be conducted with male participants in order to examine whether their perception of leadership differs or whether they feel a different obligation to fulfil a specific kind of leadership image. In any case, all future studies should be done with a representative sample size to be able to draw more reliable conclusions.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Guideline

Introduction:

Do you agree that I am recording the interview and take some notes, so I can focus on the conversation? The data material will only be used for my analysis, of course I will keep the outcomes confidentially (and anonymously if wished). The interview will take about 30 minutes. Do you have further questions?

A. Contextualization

1. Which gender do you identify with?
2. What is the sector that your company operates in?
3. When did you found the company?
4. What is the role that you currently perform?
5. What is the core business of your company?

B. Leadership

6. How would you define leadership?
7. Before founding your company, did you experience different leaders and leadership styles?
8. How would you describe their leadership style?
9. When you decided to start your own business, did you think about what kind of leader you want to be?
10. Has your way of leading the company changed over the years? If so, how?

C. Authenticity

11. How would you describe authenticity?
12. Do you feel like you can be yourself when you are at work?

C. Internal Communication

13. How many people are within your company?
14. How many people do you work closely with?
15. What tools do you use for internal communication?
16. When and how do you share information with the entire team?

Appendix B: Transcript of Zoom Interview with Anna Yona, Co-founder of Wildling

Tue, 9/21 12:39PM

Duration: 33:32 minutes

Speakers

Anna Yona, Frauke Oedekoven

Frauke Oedekoven 00:00

Do you agree that I'm recording the interview and take some notes so I can focus on the conversation?

Anna Yona 00:00

Yes.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:00

And the data material will of course be only used for my analysis. And I will keep the outcomes are conveyed confidentially if you wish so. And yeah, the interview will only take about 30 to 40 minutes.

Anna Yona 00:00

All right, perfect.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:00

So first of all, which gender do you identify with just to...

Anna Yona 00:00

Female.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:00

What is the sector that your company operates in?

Anna Yona 00:00

Well, we are an e-commerce company, but we also design and... like, design our own and develop our own products. We don't produce them, but we design and develop them.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:51

And when did you found the company?

Anna Yona 00:55

Officially, the company was founded in 2015. We had like two years prior to that, just working on the business plan and prototyping and this kind of stuff.

Frauke Oedekoven 01:08

What is the role that you currently perform in the company?

Anna Yona 01:12

Well I'm still... I'm co-founder, and also co-company lead. So yeah, I'm heading the team together with my colleague, Sebastian. I mean, he joined the company two years ago, three years ago, almost. And we're dissolving that kind of leadership structure right now. So it's actually just probably the last time I'm going to say that I'm company lead. I won't be any longer, like for a while.

Frauke Oedekoven 01:31

Okay. So how would you define leadership then?

Anna Yona 01:55

Well, at Wildling, we've defined leadership. We still like... we have flat hierarchies, we do have hierarchies, but like, we have, like, we have specialists, and we have teamleads. So the team leads, kind of there's like three pillars that go into leadership. One is the team building, which is also like a very personal, has a personal aspect, an individual aspect of helping people to work within what they perceive as their strengths, to kind of develop also a career like in horizontal ways within the company, to structure the team in a way that it's good for the team to work together to be responsible for atmosphere for the values that are being lived and the team commitment. And there is also the aspect of structure and giving the whole

thing a frame, which would be more like the structure and processes. And then there's the probably the most important pillar is vision and strategy. So to develop with the team like to develop a vision for the area that kind of pays into the purpose of the company. And also to envision a way in which you know, bit by bit, you can get closer to that vision. So also to kind of put it in a strategy that can be acted upon. And, of course, that is never to be done like as as like an isolated, whatever leader who is just, you know, coming up with all these ideas, and then imposing them on the team. But of course, it's a teamwork, and there's a lot of like, our leaders are supposed to make space for ideas, and decisions. And yeah, for everything that comes from within the team. So basically, they're more of a facilitator than a, you know, somebody kind of thinking up all these things, and then imposing them onto the team. So it's a co-creation process, but it's like, we still feel that the coordinating role within leadership is still important. I think it's also a question of maturity of the individuals and of the organisation as a whole, to dissolve that structure even more. But at the moment, also, within our remote setup, also within the very dynamic environment that we're in, we're kind of still growing very quickly as a team. So this is still important to have, you know, kind of the coordinating function that is within our leadership roles.

Frauke Oedekoven 04:32

Thank you. Before founding your company, did you experience different leaders and leadership styles in previous working environments?

Anna Yona 04:43

Yes, very few. I have to say. I kind of worked as an intern or in temporary jobs. I kind of travelled through that before I started studying. And so I always came back, worked a bit, made some money and went travelling again. So, but what I did experience in internships or in short term employments was very often like a frustration with not being able to put my own ideas to work. Like I was doing the job, I could see what we could do better. And my ideas weren't heard, or, you know, I was working for like an artist, Management Agency. So I had my own ideas of what kind of project could be really, like, great at that time. And there was a lot of interest from our customers, and I wasn't allowed to let the project come to life. So that kind of usually frustrated me in a way that even you know, if I wanted to make it, even if I hadn't had the date already, that I, you know, I knew I was leaving again, I would

have just terminated the job there. Because it just frustrated me not to be able to be creative.

Frauke Oedekoven 05:59

Do you think that was, was more lack of like, internal communication? Or like, a specific, like, the way these leaders were behaving? That was, yeah, not listening to your ideas?

Anna Yona 06:16

Um, well, it was different scenarios and different companies, different people behind the companies, but it was usually like it was the leader in place, and it wasn't only men, like there were also women. And, yeah, it was just that it wasn't big companies, usually also. So I was communicating directly with my boss. Yeah, and I just felt like that person wasn't making space. And it wasn't even like, in some cases, especially from the women, it was almost like there was some kind of competition. And she was rather scared of me, like becoming too, like, claiming too much space for myself. So yeah, I think that also had to do with that.

Frauke Oedekoven 07:03

And how would you describe your own leadership style? I mean, you kind of already did this in the first question. But more yeah... maybe more personally, if that's possible.

Anna Yona 07:16

Yeah. Well, I think I'm, like I'm a newbie in leadership, I didn't learn anything about it, I didn't study it, I didn't come to work with all these ideas of how it should be done, or how I wanted it to be done or hadn't read all these books that tell you what to do, how to do. So it was quite intuitive. I just kind of listened to what felt good. And what I needed for myself, for example, to be able to be authentic at work to be myself to bring in, you know, whoever I am with all the facets that there are with my strengths with my weaknesses, with my emotions with my you know, impulsiveness, like all of that kind of, to bring it with me and to kind of create a team that would be open or you know, that we would all kind of embrace also the perceived weaknesses of the others to create a space where everybody can be themselves. I think that was really important. And I'm, I think I'm, I have a lot of trust in people. So quite naturally, I just believe that they will, you know, give their best and can do

things better than I could do them. So I think it was always easy for me to hand over, you know, tasks or areas with like, full trust and just, you know, to also leave it there like not to, you know, come back like two days later and kind of start picking and start controlling and start like micromanaging. So I think that kind of created also a lot of space for people around me. I know that I am impulsive. I know that I am emotional, or maybe more emotional than, you know, the most reflective, analytic, whatever rational leader. I know have a lot of work to do also in that area. I think that's also a thing that you just need to be aware that there is constant learning involved and especially also work on yourself and on your reflectiveness and everything. But yeah, I think I've managed to stay authentic and true to myself and opening about, you know, weaknesses and mistakes that I made. And still very trustful, like towards people.

Anna Yona 09:43

But also, like, I think I've hit my limits of how much I can still put into teamwork, like those two pillars that we talked about before, like the team building and the structure, – I am totally tired of that. So I'm going to hand that over or make space for the others to fill that with a lot more self, yeah, self-management. Because I think it's also important that, you know, when you're not giving or doing your best anymore, because you've just done too much of it, or maybe it's not, you know, I think in that way, it means that it's not your strength, like something that is your strength, you can do that endlessly, it will always give you more energy than you need to put into it. Because it's just really fun. And to kind of accompany people in that kind of a very close way to be responsible for you know, also in a way for what they do, like, it just doesn't come that naturally to me. I would rather they would take care of themselves, like it sounds horrible, but I mean it in a good way. So that they are, you know that they get self-esteem or "Wertschätzung" (German for appreciation), I don't even know how to say that. And that they perceive that from within, I mean, that they know, when they're doing things well. And that they know when you know, "Selbstwirksamkeit" (German for self-efficacy), "Wertschätzung" (German for appreciation), like all of these things like you get them from within your core. I think that's so much more important than to have a leader that tells you "Oh, that was really great". And, you know, let me give you feedback on this. So that is really tiring for me to do that. And at the moment, it's still kind of belongs to our leadership role. So I would love to, but I know that it also needs a different

kind of maturity, I would love for people to just get that from like, the way I perceive it, like I get it from my work, and from seeing that things are moving. And I wish that we can get to a point where this just comes naturally to everyone. But I know it's very, very difficult. But I see that it just tires me to be that person. And I don't want to do it anymore.

Frauke Oedekoven 11:57

Super interesting. Okay, so coming a bit back to when you started the company. You said already that you already put a little bit of thought into what kind of leader you want to be. But was there also something that you thought okay, I, like, this is some experience I had, I would like to take this over or this I didn't really like for example. And it was this, like a conscious thought that you had about who you want to be?

Anna Yona 12:28

No, actually, I don't think I don't think we I know that from other people that they really consciously wanted to create a different work culture, than, you know, what they had pursued previously. So for us, it was just we stumbled into that we never thought of, you know, we never thought this that would be a company to be. So, I think at some point, I said, okay, no more than 10 people because I don't think we can handle that. And no, I wasn't very, very aware of what we're doing and what we were creating, and where this was going to, like, we were kind of for the first two years, we were just running behind development. So like, running behind everything, like just employing people like quickly quickly, producing more products. And then kind of, you know, reacting when something went off. So yeah, so no, it wasn't, I mean, I think might take a lot of strength from how I was brought up. Like a lot of like, I think that feeling of you can trust people and people will be there if you need them or like you're not alone. And also that kind of like that being together kind of gives me more energy than you know, it would take from me. So I think I just brought that with me and into the company and it kind of you know, it did something but it wasn't intentional. And it was also more Who are the people that we bring in? Like, you know, you look them in the eye and you say yes, I want to work with that person and that was it. We never looked at their CV or anything like we didn't even we didn't have roles in the beginning we didn't really know it was like "Oh, I like you like can we work together?" and like "okay, what what exactly should I do?". "I don't know, like what what would you like to do?" So, yeah, of

course we've changed a lot of that also with a company like becoming bigger and getting more professional but I think that spirit is still there somewhere.

Frauke Oedekoven 14:34

So you were just already saying that it changed a little bit over the years. Do you feel like that the way of how you are leading the company has changed over the years as well and if so, how?

Anna Yona 14:49

Well it's become more professional it has received more structure than than in the beginning of course because it's also necessary. We are working on one thing all together, so it's not that we, let's say that we're a service provider, and you can always you can have these tiny, you know, teams that are more or less autonomous. And then, you know, they all work, and they all, you know, whatever, acquire their own projects and stuff, and they all have these specific roles. But we're one big team that needs to work together quite seamlessly, for our, you know, for our project to work. So it needed structure and transparency and clarity. And, and also, because of our remote setup, it kind of needed that from a very early point on I guess, if we had set together somewhere in an office building, and we could have coped for a longer time with not having the most clear structure. So we kind of, we did that pretty early on, I think, from when we were 30 to 40 people we started, like defining the vision, defining the values, and also introducing the system, like a management system OKRs as a management system that would help us prioritise that will help us get transparency over, you know, what does the company? Where does the company want to go? What are our goals all together? And who is working on that, from which side kind of? Like to have alignment, to have transparency, and also to be able to look at the outcome and not at the time that people are putting in or, you know, otherwise, you start like worrying, okay, where are they? Are they working? Are they not working? So that kind of was never, never the question, because we could always look at the results and just say, okay, like, are we making progress together? Or not? So, but I do think that we only, like brought in the structures that were absolutely necessary. And also, in order to not to have a structure or processes in place, but to offer the biggest flexibility and freedom within those structures. Like for example, saying, okay, I don't care how long you work, or when you work, or where from? That's all fine. So yeah, I

think I think that sense of like freedom, flexibility, and also let's work on something meaningful, like that has never changed, like it was from the beginning. And it kind of, even though the company grew, like, that's still our mutual understanding of how we want to work together, and we also have a really, really cool people and culture team, who were completely like aligned with, like, their vision of the organisation is our vision of the organisation, there is no difference. So yeah, they are creating the organisation in exactly that way and with the same values.

Frauke Oedekoven 17:44

You've been mentioning before that you feel really authentic. Also, when you like, as a leader, and when you are at work. How would you describe authenticity.

Anna Yona 17:59

Um, I guess you're authentic, when you don't need to think about how you're going to do something, when where, in which way, I mean, if you don't need to, like step into a role, like that professional role that you have, like you opening the Office Store, and you're a different person. I think authenticity means like, being very true to yourself, like not having to "taktieren" (German for maneuver), I don't know another word. Yeah. You know, not not having to differentiate. Yeah, yeah. Or to think about what you're going to say, when you're going to say is how you're going to say it because maybe, you know, that's your goal, and you're here and you're trying to get that other person to, you know, to push the person to that goal without the person noticing, or, or to Yeah, to put on a dress, like, in a way that it will change who you are, it will make you less vulnerable, or it will make you appear stronger, appear taller, or appear, you know, whatever. Because you think that you need those qualities at work. So I think, just to come in there, and yeah, not to have to put a filter in what you let in and what comes out. I think that would be authenticity for me. To be true to yourself, also to be true to your own values to be true to your own principles like not to have to bend over in a way that doesn't feel right, but you need to do it because otherwise you can't continue in your position or something.

Frauke Oedekoven 19:42

Coming a little bit more towards internal communication: How many people are you in your

company?

Anna Yona 19:49

240

Frauke Oedekoven 19:52

And how many people do you work closely with?

Anna Yona 20:01

It kind of varies because, of course, we have the teammates, that are people that I talk to every week, also on a personal basis. But we've just enlarged that circle, like in our attempt to kind of lower the hierarchies and make it more permeable. So we kind of want to work together on extend space. So that you know, whenever it's, it's just the smart thing to do to talk to that person directly, then to do that, instead of, you know, going via teamleads. So, that team has recently become like a group of, I think, almost 30 people. So that would be also people that I work with on a weekly basis. Plus, of course, all the people that are working on special projects that I'm also somehow involved in. And also, it's a bit difficult to tell, because in our virtual way of communication, we have a very direct interchange or exchange. You know, it's not like we have certain rooms and they are closed, or we have a certain whatever floor and there are only certain people that are you always go to for lunch with a certain person. So it's kind of it's very easy to have a direct communication. So if somebody needs something, they can just write to me, or, you know, we have a team chat, and then you're just talking to people. So that wouldn't be working closely together. But it's still like a direct exchange of ideas and of, you know, opinion and whatever. So I would say that actually, you know, that circle of people then kind of makes it makes it even more, so I would say it's like 40 people maybe like that. So I do work with like, frequently, in some way. Which is also I think, why it's exhausting.

Frauke Oedekoven 21:54

Yeah, it's a lot. And what tools do you use for internal communication?

Anna Yona 22:03

What tools?

Anna Yona 22:04

Well, we have Asana as our... it's our virtual office, basically, where everything happens. I mean, where, you know, we talk about OKRs, we talk about like different tasks we talk about, we have the different areas of the company, that kind of, you know, they have their rooms. So that would be for anything that is related to OKRs. Or related to not immediate stuff, or like more information that needs to, that is valid for longer time. That would all happen in Asana. And then we have Slack for more immediate communication. And yeah, chats. And we do use the whole Gmail, like the whole Google universe, with emails, but that's mainly like externally that we don't do so much like internally. But we also have like interactive documents that we work on there together. And let me just think if we have anything else. We try to do as little as possible, like not to have too many tools. I know that in some in some teams where they need a different kind of documentation, like in IT and stuff, they also have something else, which I don't know what it is. But yeah, usually, I think I think that was also that's our tool landscape, basically.

Frauke Oedekoven 22:05

Yes.

Frauke Oedekoven 23:38

And when and how do you share information with the entire team? Like, is that something that happens a lot?

Anna Yona 23:45

Yeah, I mean, we have our like, we have a team channel in Asana; we have a team channel in Slack. So like a lot of stuff is shared on Slack also in the birthdays, and like anything that is, you know, important for everyone. And then and that's a really important one, we have a monthly with everyone, which is a virtual meeting. We used to have them in person actually, before Corona and now we need to rethink how we ought to do it if it's ever possible again. I think we'll just... we used to have like bi-monthly personal meetings. So a lot of people came from everywhere and like we met up in one place. But since we're even more people

now, I think we'll just do it twice a year and then kind of focus on really just getting to know each other. So it used to be work meetings and it was kind of a lot to try and combine all of that like the social and the work and you know, the travelling and the back and forth. So now they are virtual meetings and once a month and it's usually about progress along our OKR track with and that's really beautiful like with the show and tells from the team so whoever is working on a certain goal and wants to, you know, present something to the rest of the team, they that's their space and time to do so. So usually, it's really beautiful because you get an overview over, like what is being done in all these different areas of the company, and what are they working on, and who are these people behind it and stuff. Like, the bigger we get, the more it's also, it's nice to see people there and to get to know them a bit more. And also to create understanding for the different areas of the company for the kind of work that goes into it. Like a lot of people, work kind of behind the scenes, and we don't really know, they don't really work in the limelight. So it's nice to give them a stage also to show what they've been working on. And it creates transparency also over, you know, how's the company doing, and we also share financial data and those kinds of things. And those meetings, like not all the time, but you know, whenever there is something important to share. And also all kinds of things I like these are not meetings that we say "Oh wow, look, we had a launch or sale and this is the turnover that we made". But if we present financial data, then it's also about costs and whatever is behind it, and like to give people like a more thorough understanding of our financials and what the money is being used for, and all of this kind of stuff. And do we have anything else? I mean, the OKRs in themselves are like they're all open, they're all transparent, like everybody can look into the company, OKR set and see, you know, what I put in there as progress or questions or whatever, or reached the goal or didn't reach the goal, like.... Yeah, like this is open to all directions, and everybody can just have a look.

Frauke Oedekoven 26:43

And one more question. Because in the beginning, you said that you like in your previous work experiences, you felt sometimes that you could not speak up? Or like your ideas were not heard? I believe you probably prevent this in your own company? And if so, how do you do it?

Anna Yona 26:59

Yeah, that's a really, really important question. And I don't think it's something that we, let's say that we tackle yet on a structural basis, or that we have, like, you know, taken into focus to see, does this actually happen somewhere? And how does it happen? If it does? I think like, as a first step, like, the OKR system works both ways. So like, whatever people suggest and want to do, is being considered, you know, by the teams, so there is space, like, it's kind of built into the system for people to say, Okay, I want to focus on this, or I think this is most important, or, actually, I feel that my strengths lie elsewhere. And I would like to, you know, change my accountability, like within the company, or I would like to change teams or something. So I think there's, there is like, built-in options to bring yourself in, like, in a way. And yet, I think also, like, I think that we can stand in the way of people's ideas, like, especially if you feel like they don't align with the overall purpose or something. So I think it's always very important to like to be strict on the few things that you need to be kind of strict about to say, okay, like, we always need to have an answer to the why, like, if there's no answer to the why, it's, that idea won't work. So I think it's more like you should more focus on a discussion of have you found an answer to the why? Like, why do you want to do this? And then please go ahead. Instead of like, you know, starting to criticise, like on, like, the actual idea or something, because you feel like it doesn't correspond with what the company wants to do. But then it kind of just feels that you're taking down the idea. So I think that's also an important thing. And it's also an important thing to say, Okay, as you know, company lead, for example, where do I want to be involved? Like, what are the really important moments that we should come together and kind of have a kick off or decide like the general direction? And what kind of details should I just stay out of? Because in the moment, you get involved in the details that stand in the way of people's own ideas, and also their own mistakes, and I think that's really important also, to let people make their own mistakes. And I'm not saying that we always do this very well. Like I think we're like I'm quite perfectionist in many ways. And it's like, I think, like my, like, what I draw from this must be that then I shouldn't be involved in the first place. Like, if I can't shut my mouth, if something you know, it's not perfect, and I should rather not hear about it in the first place and just let people do. You know, like, it's very hard to know when is the right time to bring in an impulse? When is the right time to bring in, you know, your view? And when is and that's most of the time is the right time to just step back and let people do. I think it's

something that as I said, like leadership is a lot about learning. So that's my current learning journey, like, how much can I take myself out of the company? Without the company getting hurt? And how much do I have to take myself out of the company so that the company won't get hurt? So that's kind of like tricky balance.

Frauke Oedekoven 30:34

Thank you for sharing so much.

Anna Yona 30:37

You're welcome.

Frauke Oedekoven 30:40

That's all of my questions, for now, do you have anything else you would like to share?

Anna Yona 30:53

I mean, they're, they're these things about, you know, health and resilience at work and family, you know, different models of how do you... What does work mean, actually, today? Like, does it dominate our lives? Or is it a part of our lives? And if so, how much of a part of our lives? I think these are things that we're really also dealing with at the moment that we're trying to get to a situation that people work less like still with a full time salary, but work less than 40 hours a week. And it's a tricky way, I think, to get there because you want to have at least some level of productivity without putting too much pressure on people of having to be productive all the time. So I think it's a lot of things that we're trying or that we want. And it's it's not that easy. But yeah, but I think we'll be able to say more about that next year or something when we have some experience with it.

Frauke Oedekoven 31:59

Yeah, no, that's true. Especially what you were saying about the time, I think that's a very, very, very interesting aspect. That is now so like dominant as well through working from home working remotely. I think it just puts us in such a different context. So it's very interesting to look into it.

Anna Yona 32:18

And it's so hard to unlearn.

Frauke Oedekoven 32:20

Yeah.

Anna Yona 32:21

Thinking about time all the time, even if we want to tell people what we're trying to do. You can't do it without putting like saying something like a 30 hour week or something so that people will understand that it's not about 30 hours a week It's about working less, but working better. And not to have to look at the clock and to just drop the pen or the keyboard when you say okay, well, I'm done for today. And also to understand when you're done for the day, because we're all so busy all the time. And I mean, that work never stops here in this hamster wheel of like, Okay, another message another this another that, like, when do you actually say in that digital way of working I'm done? Yeah. interesting questions. But yeah, let's see how we can all find answers.

Frauke Oedekoven 33:14

In other terms, do you want to keep this anonymously? Like it would definitely be confidential, but yeah,

Anna Yona 33:22

You don't have to.

Frauke Oedekoven 33:24

Okay. Thank you.

Appendix C: Transcript of Zoom Interview with Ina Budde, Founder of circular.wear

Tue, 9/21 4:38PM

Duration: 25:25 minutes

Speakers

Frauke Oedekoven, Ina Budde

Frauke Oedekoven 00:09

So do you agree that I'm recording the interview and take some notes?

Ina Budde 00:14

Yes, absolutely.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:16

The data material will only be used for my analysis. And of course, I will keep the outcomes confidential and anonymously if you wish so and it will only take about 30 to 40 minutes. Okay, so the first questions are, but like broader, um, first of all, which gender? Do you identify with? Just to go forward?

Ina Budde 00:35

Female

Frauke Oedekoven 00:37

What is the sector that your company operates in?

Ina Budde 00:41

Sustainability and textiles and fashion.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:45

And when did you found the company?

Ina Budde 00:48

Officially, we founded in 2018. But I was like preparing the company already. I think since like, 2013. Yeah.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:58

Do you have a co founder?

Ina Budde 01:00

Ah, yes, he joined 2018 when we officially started the company,

Frauke Oedekoven 01:06

What is the role that you currently perform?

Ina Budde 01:10

I'm officially like, I'm CEO there. But like we organise ourselves with like, holacracy inspired. So like that many different other roles as well. Yeah, I can elaborate more in detail, but it has all to do with like, organisational development, but also like some content related roles, like as we do consulting on the circular design. But yeah, different things. Yeah.

Frauke Oedekoven 01:39

How would you define leadership?

Ina Budde 01:43

I would define it, like empowering others to on one hand, empowering others to like find their mission and their place to unfold their full potential. Leadership, for me also means giving guidance and direction like kind of making clear, we all follow the same Northstar and like we are all aligned on our mission. And it can also mean like to to inspire. And also like lead by example, I think to share like to yeah, to role model of what you want to see within the organisation as well.

Frauke Oedekoven 02:23

Before founding the company, did you have the chance to experience other leaders and leadership styles.

Ina Budde 02:31

Ehm, I would name two examples. One is actually, within my family: Like we had like a traditional family business. My father came from a family that were like, 300 years already carpenters and like he, like changed the business model a bit to like, restoring furniture and antiques. So we had like a wood workshop in our house and also a store and like, I, of course, saw him with his leadership style, which was a very like, familiar, it's not the English word for it, but like, like, very like "familiär" (German for familiarly). It's not the same translation of it. Yeah. And so like, yeah, I think this was something that inspired me definitely. And then I like after my first studies, I did an internship at a large sportswear company, where there was, of course, it was like, very different. Still, like, I think I saw different people doing things differently, like, on the one hand, like my direct manager, so to say, and also like other people. So I think yeah, these were different experiences that I made.

Frauke Oedekoven 03:44

And he already explained a little bit now how you saw, for example, your father acting in a leadership position. Could you also describe the leadership styles like broadly that you

experienced from the other ones?

Ina Budde 03:56

Yes. I think like, within my department, I think the leadership style was very built on trust actually, like I think for an intern, I had lots of responsibilities, lots of freedom to experiment and do things on my own. But I also had to kind of be proactive and like, initiate whatever I wanted. I think like, I really liked that style. However, I also saw like, in like larger meetings, sometimes a leadership style that I didn't really identified with where like, for example, I don't know the loudest voice always was applauded the most and like ideas were appreciated from. Yeah, that were sometimes quite empty ideas, but like, still presented in a nice way. So like, I think, and some things where they just didn't believe in because a person wasn't that trained to do well presentations. And I think so like, yeah, different leaders in that organisation that had a different style.

Frauke Oedekoven 04:46

And when you then decided to start your own business, did you previously think about what kind of leader you would want to be?

Ina Budde 05:08

Ehm, in the very beginning, I think it was like something that was just natural to do it in a certain way, not to overthink it so much. But I think the more and more like our team grew, etc, I had the feeling that I need to spend more time thinking about it, how to actually do it. So I, at some point, I felt a little bit a lack of thinking about how to do things, just, you know, like it felt right the way I did it, but it was more intuitively and without theory behind. And I think that was like a feeling that I got where I also understood that kind of as a leader of the organisation, or as an initiator of an organisation, you're also a little bit the limit to growth, to kind of understand that yourself, have also to kind of develop further yourself and make progress in personal development in order to let the whole organisation develop as well. So that was then something that I took on and read a lot about exchange a lot about. So that then helped me to kind of think further of how I actually want to do it, and also build more structures about how to do it, and how we're doing it.

Frauke Oedekoven 06:24

And in these thoughts, did you recall the perception of leaders that you experienced in the past, and maybe what you would like to adapt from this, and maybe what you didn't want to adapt?

Ina Budde 06:35

And not in a very.... more subtle... yeah, not really conscious. I think it was more something that probably has coined me or so I think I actually had, I think, a year ago or something, the first presentation about, like, you know, how to like, like values in the organisation like how to do things. And this was the first time where I really like thought about, okay, what were

actually the cornerstones that led me where I am now? Like, I mean, of course, the whole process about researching on it, and further educating myself was a very conscious one. But then, you know, like, thinking about what's my story behind? Why I also researched and why I did things like that, was not that conscious in the very beginning. I think that came a bit later.

Frauke Oedekoven 07:29

And did you feel like you have to behave in a certain way to be a leader?

Ina Budde 07:38

Do you mean, the needs like from from which direction from the team or society? Or?

Frauke Oedekoven 07:46

Both.

Ina Budde 07:52

I mean, of course, there are like expectations from the team, but I think I didn't feel... That's a good question. Maybe let me put it the other way around. Like I realised that maybe I had some things in mind how maybe to behave. But then like once questioning a little bit more of how to do things and also research more about it and doing things differently, and then seeing the result of it... That showed me that maybe, okay, there were some beliefs or intuitive things that maybe did in a way that was also not bad, but like, I definitely can have a different effect by doing things differently. And I'm not so sure if this now like that the first version of practising leadership was something that I did based on like own beliefs or that came from the outside. I cannot really define that, I think.

Frauke Oedekoven 08:54

And how would you describe your own personal leadership style now?

Ina Budde 09:00

That's also a very nice question. Um, I think like, it depends on like, it is very close to how I would define leadership in general. Like, I think I, I hope I'm empowering. I hope I'm inspiring. And I hope that I can give the team the space that they need to kind of build trust in themselves and like to yeah, not being like controlling something or really, really give them the space and hold the space for whatever can flourish there. I hope that everyone like kind of feels that ownership is possible to take. So like a like an open one. A very like transparent one, I would say and, and also honest with like, yeah, expressing thoughts and feelings. Yeah, maybe these are the first thoughts that come to my mind.

Frauke Oedekoven 10:01

And you already mentioned this a little bit, but has your way of leading the company changed over the years? What do you feel?

Ina Budde 10:08

Yes, it did. Yeah, I think, if I should describe it a bit, I think in the beginning, it was already quite clear for me that I didn't want to have it in the like hierarchal way; that I wanted to have like quite flat hierarchies. Like we were, like, earning everyone was earning the same like things like that, like really having very, like radical ideas about how to do it differently. And then I think I realised that I'm missing a bit the tools to do this even better, or like that, for example, defining decision making power, defining hierarchies, based on expertise, needs lots of talk and lots of time to kind of define those structures. But once I kind of got more into theory, and like, read a lot and exchanged a lot, I think this helped me very much to define and pick pieces from here and there from different things and say, like, hey, that's kind of a really nice way of doing this. Let's try and build this here as well. Yeah, for example, holacracy; for example like other things... and kind of define a little bit our way of doing things. And that definitely changed, I think, and also like I had some really nice readings. Were also like, obviously, like Lisa's book was one of that. And also, like many other interesting books that just embrace the power of vulnerability and like to just try this out myself and like sharing openly some thoughts in situations where I did feel very insecure. And then just sharing that with the team and experiencing like, how much like a magic moment this can bring and how things change afterwards. I think that was very, super, super nice for me, that also like, yeah, to try these things out, and then find find own ways.

Frauke Oedekoven 12:09

That connects with my next questions: So do you feel like you can be truly yourself when you are at work?

Ina Budde 12:17

I would say yes, maybe it's not always 100%. But like, I definitely feel so. Sometimes, I think probably, maybe several people have that, that you still have the feeling you kind of need to hold things together. And like, even if something like is there where you feel super exhausted, or like super, there is a big tension in the room and like maybe you would react in a different way. And you think that okay, the best would be still now like, I mean, obviously, we always try to be the best versions of ourselves. And that is also kind of one version of ourselves. But sometimes maybe other feelings would be even stronger. And you try to like still kind of hold the space a bit differently. But I would not say that this is then not myself, because I decided that moment that I want to do it that way. So in that way, I guess, yes, I can be myself.

Frauke Oedekoven 13:18

And is it important for you to be perceived in a certain way? By your employees?

Ina Budde 13:27

I guess it's hard to say that I wouldn't care about how I would be perceived by them. Yeah,

definitely. There is, I guess, a component in there. If I'm honest, yeah.

Frauke Oedekoven 13:42

Okay. How many people are within your company?

Ina Budde 13:48

We're a team around 15 at the moment.

Frauke Oedekoven 13:52

And how many people do you work closely with?

Ina Budde 13:57

I would say minimum half of it.

Frauke Oedekoven 14:03

And how, with both halves, how does your communication look like? Like with the ones that you work closely with? And with the other ones?

Ina Budde 14:12

Yeah. So like, we organise our companies with circles. And so the active work that I have is within the circles that I'm in and have an active role in. So it's around products that are also like closer to my expertise, where I'm like joining for weekly zooms and things like that. But also with the ones that I don't have such an active work relation, we have like a weekly meeting where we all do like a check-in about how we feel, how the week looks like, what do we look forward to? Is there any issue? And so I'm still quite on top of things, what kind of everyone is doing and how they are feeling, at least to the extent that they're happy to share in that meeting. And yeah, so I think that's a little bit a description. Yeah.

Frauke Oedekoven 15:03

And which tools do you use for internal communication?

Ina Budde 15:09

So we have, on the one hand, we have our like meetings, video calls, we do have like, a project management tool where we kind of see who's who's on what. I mean, we also changed that a lot. So we're kind of right now building it up newly using Monday. But we also have like for some other things, a Trello board. And then for communication, I mean, we use slack as the biggest means for for communication and email rather, not internally. And we have like, I mean, we use miro a lot. And if we do, like, our kind of governance meetings or team meetings, where it's about like, an hour defining budget, defining our growth and reward framework and salary models, then like, it's a lot about using this workshop space in order to, on the one hand, communicate certain things, also, like outcomes, and but also like work together on something. Yeah, these are the tools I think we use.

Frauke Oedekoven 16:10

And when and how do you share information with the entire team?

Ina Budde 16:13

I think that's, I mean, if it's like organisational, then it's in our kind of weekly meeting, I would say, if it's more like on meta level, and if we would kind of prepare something that we want to change that is more like on organisational matters, then we have like governance meetings that are minimum quarterly. Or we also have like, bi-weekly, like a little version of a governance meeting where we have to call it continuous improvement processes. And that's like, every second week, two hours where we actually work on tasks that we want like to work on the organisation. And that's also a space where everyone is there. And like, if there will be something to share, that is yeah, more outside of the usual work, then this would be the space.

Frauke Oedekoven 17:07

So how would you describe the internal communication in your company in general, like, in terms of... Do you feel like it's a very open communication? Do you feel like it's... What comes to mind?

Ina Budde 17:21

I think it's a very open communication, we just last week, we had, we expanded our team, and we had a conversation with someone who will join our team, and we invited more people to join. And she afterwards gave us the feedback that she was very happy and very surprised how openly everyone talked also about, like, the challenges that we have. Because the new role will also be, of course, working with us and also working with us on the challenges that we have. And, so that was quite nice to kind of hear that from an outside person that she feels, okay, no one was, like shy saying that to an external person, while we are in the room or something like that. So I found this really nice, as an example. But in general, people share how they feel like privately and like communicate, if there is something going on in their lives, where they maybe not have all the attention for a week, or also share if like workload is too high or anything like that. So it's, I would say it's a very open communication.

Frauke Oedekoven 18:26

And is there a difference between how you communicate success or when something is going wrong? Like when you talk to employees?

Ina Budde 18:38

You mean in the style or the format or?

Frauke Oedekoven 18:42

Both, actually.

Ina Budde 18:43

Okay, I think about successes: we communicate on many different levels. So like we have, in our Slack channel, we have a channel called celebrating successes and we kind of communicate nice things happening there or like, someone has finalised something, it's posted there and everyone is cheering to that person. So that's kind of happening often. And also like in meetings, of course. Then we also have like feedback meetings, where it's also about constructive feedback and helping people to grow. I think that's always in person. Like I think if I would address something that didn't went well maybe sometimes if there were small things in the past and it would be sent via slack I think immediately it felt really bad like the person responding to it and trying to explain or something. I mean, you know, not saying it in a negative way, but like just saying like, Hey, I think we have to do this better next time or so, then still like I think there there must be the room for like a short conversation about these things. So I think that's definitely a given that we do this more in, in a face to face meeting.

Frauke Oedekoven 19:59

And in moments where you feel yourself could have done something better?

Ina Budde 20:05

I think that's, yeah, that's something that I also mention in meetings. Like to give an example: I think, for us, like, we once defined our decision making processes. But the more like, I mean, some at some point that came some tensions up where it was unclear. And then I realised, okay, I haven't actually role modelled that in a nice way. Like I, you know, I haven't really followed our rules myself. And so I found this important to share this also with the team that I think that the tension that we have right now also like, depends a lot.... Because I didn't like lead by example. And, of course, yeah, things like that. So I try to admit mistakes, if I do them, and also feel that it is appreciated by the team.

Frauke Oedekoven 20:56

And for your employees, do you want them to reach out to you with ideas, critiques and comments?

Ina Budde 21:05

Yes, absolutely. I mean, we have implemented a 360 degree feedback process. But we haven't fully rolled it out. It's like we have the document and the process in place, but we still need to kind of arrange all the meetings. So it's like this year, the first time before we did it always that, you know, I'm having feedback meetings, vice versa with people and also like, ask them, like: Is there something that you can help me in improving? But I have to say that it's not that eas I think for people. Or maybe I don't make it easy for them. I have no idea. I'm asking for feedback. But I still had the feeling that there could be more feedback

for me. And yeah, so with this 360 degree feedback, I hope, since we have now a very formalised structure, there's maybe more the security to kind of really put lots of things in there. Maybe that helps. I'm curious for that. And yeah. And of course, we have like, beside the personal feedback, we do have formats for operational, like, if we finalise the project, then we give each other feedback. And we use like the I wish/I like format. So if there was something that people would have liked me doing differently, I think they can mention it there. And yeah, sometimes there there is something.

Frauke Oedekoven 22:28

Basically you already answered my other question, but I wanted to ask, how do you encourage them to do so? But I feel like you, you said that you encourage them personally, right? Like in face to face?

Ina Budde 22:39

Yes.

Frauke Oedekoven 22:41

Okay, and one question I skipped before, so I will ask it now: How would you define authenticity?

Ina Budde 22:51

Being truly yourself, in short. I think. I mean, yeah, I think so. Being truly yourself.

Frauke Oedekoven 23:04

Yeah. Nice. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Ina Budde 23:15

Good Question. Maybe just a thought that like, for us on the whole journey, what I think is, like an important next step, it's like to encourage other people also to take a leading role in not only in like leadership in terms of practically taking projects on and sensing certain things, but also to realise they also can be leaders for others. And like someone else can be a leader for me, as well as at certain things and like to just give this thought, a bit more space and encourage more about that. I think that that would be like a next step for us at least. And also that maybe one point was very important for us as an organisation to understand that, tensions on the way of like, defining our organisation how leadership should be there and intentions there, is like something always very positive. And that everyone also like... I'm very happy that we arrived at the point where people say, like, I have a tension and they kind of understand the concept of it, and everyone knows, okay, so I heard the word now, this is something that will help us to become better and perceive it in a different way than saying like "Hey, guys, there is a big issue and whatever". But like it's, yeah, I think that was a very important part for us to get better.

Frauke Oedekoven 24:49

Amazing. I think that's all my questions. So thank you so much. The last question would be, do you want this to stay anonymously?

Ina Budde 25:02

Not necessarily I think. Maybe if I have the chance to to read over a little bit of like how, how it's framed and how it's put. I would be super curious to maybe do that before it's published. And yeah, but I think it must not stay anonymous.

Frauke Oedekoven 25:20

Thank you.

Appendix D: Transcript of Zoom Interview with Jeanine Glöyer, Founder of Jyoti Fair Works

Tue, 10/12 10:42AM

Duration: 27:30

SPEAKERS

Jeanine Glöyer, Frauke Oedekoven

Frauke Oedekoven 00:04

Do you agree that I'm recording the interview and take some notes so I can focus on the conversation?

Jeanine Glöyer 00:10

Yes, sure.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:12

The data material will only be used for my analysis. And of course, I will keep the outcomes confidentially and anonymously if you wish so. The interview will take about 30 minutes. And do you have any further questions?

Jeanine Glöyer 00:25

No.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:26

Okay. First of all, which gender do you identify with?

Jeanine Glöyer 00:31

Female.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:33

What is the sector that your company operates in?

Jeanine Glöyer 00:37

We are working in the fair fashion industry.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:42

When did you found the company?

Jeanine Glöyer 00:45

2014

Frauke Oedekoven 00:47

And what is the role that you're currently performing?

Jeanine Glöyer 00:50

I'm the CEO.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:53

And what is the core business of your company?

Jeanine Glöyer 00:57

We are producing environmentally and socially sustainable fashion produced in India and parts of it in Peru.

Frauke Oedekoven 01:06

Thank you.

Frauke Oedekoven 01:08

How would you define leadership?

Jeanine Glöyer 01:12

Wow. I think the main objective of leadership should be to guide people in a way that supports them in developing their full potential, feeling safe and protected and at the same time, challenged enough to be creative on their own. For sure, leadership is not about dictating, but about maybe guiding or directing into a certain direction, but not about being stiff. And it's really much about also being... an important part of leading a group or a team successfully is also being responsive to them and understanding their needs. Yeah, as I said, to support them in developing their full potential, which also includes reflecting on yourself and being ready for critique and open for exchange, because I'm sure it cannot be a one way road, it needs to be mutual. So that everybody feels listened to and yeah gets some more motivation out of that. Never thought about that question though. This is my spontaneous take on it.

Frauke Oedekoven 02:47

Before founding your company, did you experience different leaders and leadership styles in previous experiences?

Jeanine Glöyer 02:57

So I started Jyoti in 2010, already four years before I started the company, and I never worked really as an employee because I started Jyoti during my bachelor studies in my first semester, so I would say I'm a bit spoiled because I've always been in the leading position. I had jobs like as a waitress and I worked for the university. And I would say that's the main

experience I made during my bachelor's working as a "Werkstudentin" (German for working student) I think it was called, whatever I forgot. And there I had a very authoritarian boss, who had very clear ideas about everything and was not open for critique, or any kind of talk and might include ideas from his employees. And I really disliked that kind of style because I thought that it's also very sad because there is a lot lost on the way because one person can not know and oversee everything. And now in Jyoti I feel it's very important to listen to what our employees say about the area they work in, because of course, they know much better what they're doing on a daily basis, and I have no chance to oversee that. And I felt that in my job at the university, my boss was really lacking on insights and was not ready to listen to the people who had these insights. And so their progress much slower than it could have been and the whole area developed slower or even in a negative direction because he was not open for any ideas from anybody apart from himself. So that's the only time I experienced that. And I think it was rather a negative experience.

Frauke Oedekoven 04:58

Thank you for sharing So the next question would have been: How would you describe their leadership style, but you already answered it so thank you. When you decided to start your own business, did you think about what kind of leader you would want to be?

Jeanine Glöyer 05:17

Not so much when I started. At least in the German side of the company, I was alone then of course in India we already had a bigger team. And for me, right from the beginning, not so much as a conscious decision but more as a very because of a natural understanding of how I would want to interact with people in general also on a private level, I felt that it's most important to me that we really feel like a team and I wanted very flat hierarchies. And yeah everybody to feel as a full member of the team and feels engaged and nobody feels that there is that one dictator that decides everything because I feel it's also very important for motivation and for actual like success of a company that everybody is motivated to work for it and yeah. For me from the beginning was very important to have very flat hierarchies and to communicate openly that I'm not the wise person who has internal knowledge and knows about everything because I really think I have not. I yeah, that was from the beginning and now that we're a good team in Germany as well, we reflected lots and I read the book of Lisa which I liked a lot and yeah, that's what we try to integrate into our daily work and also communicate openly with our employees about it. We really are open for their feedback and for them to really become part of the process. Of course sometimes you have to take decisions by yourself because you're financially responsible for the company but as whenever possible we're trying to avoid it.

Frauke Oedekoven 07:03

And have you ever recalled your perception of leaders for example you experience that you mentioned before and thought about what you would like to adapt and what you didn't like to adapt for example?

Jeanine Glöyer 07:16

I'm very inspired by I don't know like the approach or at least how they're portrayed for example Einhorn: Where they really tried to distribute differently and I'm really much more open and much less hierarchical than normally. And I think it was betterplace.org where the CEO even drawback and really distributed tasks and made sure she's not needed anymore. And I think that's something I find very inspiring and I would like to get closer to it in the future. We are not yet. There is loads of challenges I feel and it also really depends on what your employees want and at the moment in our team there are people who also don't want to take that responsibility because actually chose to be an employee because they do not want that responsibility. So I feel there is probably no one solution.... it's all really about understanding what every part of every team member wants and feels comfortable with and then to find a solution that fits your team and not your ideologies. But I find these ideas very inspiring and I think it's just an ongoing process and whenever there's also a new team member or the team grows or shrinks or whatever, it always needs to be tested I guess.

Frauke Oedekoven 08:42

And when you founded the company, did you feel like you have to behave in a certain way to be a leader?

Jeanine Glöyer 08:50

No, actually not at all. I think maybe up to because we never looked for investors or external funding because that's what I hear a lot from other founders. That when trying to get investments you're very much looked at from the outside and people have certain expectations towards how you lead your company and how you're doing things. But as we never did that, I think I always felt pretty free of all this. Yeah, from like things from outside and I think maybe my life was... and when I started the company, I never had the intention to start a company. So it just happened accidentally and we just all grew into it together. And right from the beginning, the moment when I started to look for team members, I didn't look for people that I could hire, I looked for people that I could be a team with because my main aim was not to be alone in it anymore. And I was very willing to share the responsibility because I felt it is too much to carry alone and I made sure to look for someone who is who's up to take at least 50% of the responsibility and decision making power so yeah, so I never had that feeling much.

Frauke Oedekoven 10:12

Would you say that your way of leading the company has changed over the years?

Jeanine Glöyer 10:16

I mean, yes in a way because we grew as a team. In the beginning we were just two and we founded the company together as 50/50 owner and like we shared everything on the same level. The more people you employ, the more complex it gets. And I would say that I learned

a lot on how to communicate and also how you need to adapt your communication styles to different people because not everybody enjoys the same. And that it's just an ongoing learning process and it is, yeah, you need to just get to know the people and listen to them I think that was my biggest learning: That it's important to listen to what the people tell you, what they need. And not to try to have your own idea what they feel good with and then put it on them. Because in our team we have people like I figured out, with very different needs of standards of communication. Like some need a very, very clear style of communication otherwise they get confused. Others are very sensitive and need a bit more to be a bit more like emotional and caring and supportive, like it really differs. And I feel it just never ends on learning and most important thing to listen to the others.

Frauke Oedekoven 11:45

How would you describe your own personal leadership style?

Jeanine Glöyer 11:51

I would say I'm very... I am sometimes too emotional, in a sense that I find it very difficult to... if there is an idea I really want to get through with, and the team does not agree, I'm sometimes too easily convinced of them because I want to comfort them maybe. And I don't want to cause anybody trouble, so I guess I could be a bit more straightforward sometimes to have things more clear. But I think that's also one of my strengths that I'm empathetic and I can understand people's situations and yeah try to understand their position and I guess that's one of my strengths. But at the same time, it can also be a bit troublesome if you understand them too much but still want to get somewhere if that answered the question, I'm not sure.

Frauke Oedekoven 12:58

Thank you. Which characteristics do you bring out at work like in a work setting and how do they compare to your authentic self?

Jeanine Glöyer 13:11

I would say that there is not much discrepancy but right between my private self and my work life self. Because I'm in the lucky position of working with friends. All of our team, are all very close friends. We were at starting, or we became friends over time. And so I will say there is not much of a difference between Jeanine in private and in work life situations. Because I do believe that we are even at the workspace still human and show the same kind of interaction and care and feeling validated, than we can in private life. And I also don't think that's a good idea to separate the private from work life too much because of course your private life influences you at work and other way around. Yeah, so I would say I'm the same. Can you remind me of the first part of the question?

Frauke Oedekoven 14:13

Which characteristics do you bring out in a work setting? And how do they compare to your authentic self?

Jeanine Glöyer 14:20

I would say like I said in the question before, that I'm more the softer part who.... I think in our company, we are two CEOs, my co-founder and me and she is the more direct person about the numbers. And I'm a bit more of a creative person who takes care of all the social interactions and communications in the team so I'm a bit more maybe the softer parent if that makes sense.

Frauke Oedekoven 14:58

And how would you like to be received by your employees?

Jeanine Glöyer 15:03

I would like to be perceived as empathetic and open to their needs and feelings and at the same time to be someone reliable, who is able to take good decisions that are beneficial for the whole team and not only for myself.

Frauke Oedekoven 15:22

And how important is it to you for them to see you this way?

Jeanine Glöyer 15:29

I mean it's pretty important, because if they don't see me that way something's going wrong. Because that would mean that they don't feel probably appreciated and that would hurt me because it's important to me that they do feel appreciated in the heart and if they don't see that then something is going wrong in the way of communicating it. So I do think it's important that they feel that I value them and I care about what they are at work. Yep, sorry. So I would say it's important that they see me like that but I'm open to them.

Frauke Oedekoven 16:05

And how would you define authenticity?

Jeanine Glöyer 16:09

Authenticity my god! Authenticity, what is authenticity? Because we are so many beings in one, right? I mean I feel it's very... I feel it a lot that whatever person I'm in contact with I am a different person. Like, not that I change on purpose, but we are all in relation with others and we don't exist... Like communication can only be in relation to others and it's always... you need to be responsive to the other person to have a proper communication with them so you feel... It's a difficult question what is authenticity? I think it's being true to yourself, knowing your values and ideals and morals and stick to them too. Yeah, maybe it's about being being true and honest to yourself into the other and then you can be authentic in many different ways I guess. Must not be that you're behaving the same way with everybody, you can be a bit more funny, more strict more I don't know ironic, probably. Depending on the person you're communicating with.

Frauke Oedekoven 17:33

How many people are within your company?

Jeanine Glöyer 17:37

Altogether we are 40.

Frauke Oedekoven 17:39

How many? I'm sorry.

Jeanine Glöyer 17:41

40

Frauke Oedekoven 17:42

Thank you.

Jeanine Glöyer 17:42

Including the Indian team. I want me to include them into the team and not have them only as a production site.

Frauke Oedekoven 17:51

And how many people do you work closely with?

Jeanine Glöyer 17:55

On a daily basis I'm in contact with, I would say, seven people. But then the women that are working in sewing centres, I would say at least every second day I'm in contact with them as well. Of course not with every single of them. There's the spokesperson of every group that I'm in contact with more. Yeah, but at least seven people on a daily basis.

Frauke Oedekoven 18:21

My next question would have been about the other people, like not the seven but the other ones: How does the communication look like with them? But you almost already answered this.

Jeanine Glöyer 18:32

Yeah, yeah. As I said, for the the sewing teams there is a spokesperson. That developed automatically, we didn't appoint them but they are the ones who feel most comfortable in English. And we talk very regularly to them and due to COVID, and due to the geographical distance we're not in regular contact with everybody because we cannot be in place and India is far. It's difficult to be in contact with everybody but we at least get to talk to the different teams basically, I would say at least every second day.

Frauke Oedekoven 19:15

And which tools do you use for internal communication?

Jeanine Glöyer 19:20

For internal communication in the German team it's a large in person. It's very important to me that we talk in person and of course it's also online tools like Google meets, Zoom, we use Slack we use Telegram. With the team members in India, we are very dependent on WhatsApp. That's their main tool that works very well for them, that they understand well. So I would say with that we the members in the sewing centres, so the women that are sewing for us it's mainly WhatsApp messages and voice messages and also WhatsApp calls. That's the easiest tool because they don't have computers, they work mainly with their phones. And yeah, with our Indian managers, we have three Indian managers in place, three women that we communicate with on a daily basis. And with them, we also use mainly Google meet and zoom or any other tool like that, providing these services.

Frauke Oedekoven 20:24

And the German team, you have an office and you...

Jeanine Glöyer 20:27

Yes, we have an office and we make sure that at least once a week, we're all there and have normally Monday, like little check in session where we, like try to also understand how everybody feels. Also on a private level, if people want to share, if they don't want to share, of course, they don't have to share. But just to understand, like, how are people doing? Do they want to, or they're overwhelmed with their task at the moment, do they have a space to support others in the team with their tasks? And if Corona allows it, we do in person again, before we did it, also online, but now we're doing it in the office, and we try to be there. For sure, once a week, everybody and now more and more to try also be there – in real. And that's how I feel: We managed pretty well with these online tools, when the cameras are working, it's even better. But meeting in person it's different.

Frauke Oedekoven 21:32

When and how do you share information with the entire team?

Jeanine Glöyer 21:35

We use these Monday check in sessions for that. So we make sure that there is the first at least 20 minutes safe for a more personal check in, where it's not about work, but about how people are and how they feel and how they would want to work in that week. So it's a bit about work, but the focus is on the people. And then we use the second half of that meeting to yeah, exchange about what is going on. Because we feel of course, we want feedback from our team members about what is going on in their area of responsibility. And we update them on important things that are changing for Jyoti or actually almost strategical level, we involve them a lot. And sometimes, of course, there is some confidential issues that we try

to solve first, and then include everybody, but it's very important that all the team members always know, what me and my mean also what the co founder are doing. So that they get a sense of where we are heading towards. And if we have new ideas, new strategies, and to follow that we we get them on board right from the beginning. So that they have a sense of being part of the whole thing and not only working on their specific task.

Frauke Oedekoven 23:02

And how would you describe the internal communication in your company?

Jeanine Glöyer 23:06

Very open and friendly. And we really value trust and try to encourage people to always openly talk to us and to be... to not like have their problems sink in and chew on them for long but but really to be open about their ideas. And that's what we also make sure that Monday meet up to always ask them about how they feel about their working structures at the moment. And we also have regular feedback sessions like one on one sessions, as people might feel more comfortable one on one than in the team. And so that we really try to get together with the people early. Me or my co founder alone suit to give them space for critique and ideas and for change. And that works pretty well so far. I mean, at least from my perspective, I don't know what they are hiding. I mean, maybe that is only my perspective, but but that seems to go very well. And I felt over the time when we employ new people that it takes a while sometimes to get them used to that kind of structure because we also had people who were a bit overwhelmed by us wanting them to to share feelings and thoughts because people also were sometimes used to just fulfil the tasks they are given and not to question them too much. But I feel that people really appreciate that and they feel more involved and motivated if, yeah, we asked him to also be critical about processes.

Frauke Oedekoven 24:47

That is really linking to my next question, which would have been: In what ways can employees reach out to you with ideas, critique or comments?

Jeanine Glöyer 24:58

Yeah, I feel they do that pretty well because they feel we're listening to them and we encourage them also. We regularly ask them for it, we don't wait for them to come but we make sure that we regularly ask them if there is anything they would like to change, if they see there could be room for improvement, that they are unhappy with, that they are happy with also, and what they would like to do more, what they would like to do less. And that has been proven to be super super helpful because as I said before, I propose people doing a certain task know the task and the problems of the field much better than we could ever do. Because we're not... I believe we'd be very arrogant to assume that we know better. Yeah, so I would say they, at the moment our team, we have very outspoken people on the team who make use of that.

Frauke Oedekoven 25:54

And is there a difference between how you communicate success or when something goes wrong with your employees?

Jeanine Glöyer 26:02

Of course in the tone if something good happened, we communicated very happily! I would say it depends, like when we have of course, some thing that goes wrong and that can only be solved by me and my co founder, we make sure not to worry them too much. They don't need to know every thing right from the beginning when there is a problem, because it also might cause them stress. We do make sure to involve them about how things are going generally like also financially, like we have regular meetings and as we're updating them and how things are going that they feel on board and it's not just going somewhere but they don't know how it's going. But we really try to also make sure to involve them when things are going well so that they get that feedback to say that they are working and we are happy about what's coming up but to to remember that and also check with them because they played a big role in reaching it. Yeah.

Frauke Oedekoven 27:10

Is there anything else you would like to share? Because that's it with my questions actually.

Jeanine Glöyer 27:16

I don't know. No. That's good to me.

Frauke Oedekoven 27:20

Okay, nice. So thank you so much for taking the time!

Appendix E: Transcription of Zoom Interview with Guya Merkle, Founder of VIERI

Fri, 10/1 12:51PM

Duration: 30:55 minutes

SPEAKERS

Frauke Oedekoven, Guya Merkle

Frauke Oedekoven 00:06

Okay, so first of all, do you agree that I'm recording this interview and take notes? So I can focus on the conversation.

Guya Merkle 00:14

Of course.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:16

And the data material will only be used for my analysis. And of course I will the out I will keep the outcomes confidentially and anonymously if you wish so. And it will only take about 30 minutes. Do you have any further questions?

Guya Merkle 00:31

No, go ahead.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:34

So to begin with, what gender do you identify with just to know.

Guya Merkle 00:40

Female

Frauke Oedekoven 00:42

What is the sector that your company operates in?

Guya Merkle 00:45

In the jewellery, accessories business.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:50

And when did you found the company?

Guya Merkle 00:53

Like it operates now, I founded it in 2015.

Frauke Oedekoven 00:59

Okay, what do you mean exactly?

Guya Merkle 01:02

With the topic and with the jewellery business, I'm already working since 2012. And but really, as it is now it's founded 2015 as a GmbH in Germany.

Frauke Oedekoven 01:17

And what is the role that you currently perform?

Guya Merkle 01:22

Kind of everything. So, I'm the founder and kind of the CEO, but I don't like the the naming, because we're all working together as a team. But I'm yeah, I'm the founder and in German, you would say the "Mädchen für alles" (German term for "girl for everything"). So I'm doing everything.

Frauke Oedekoven 01:42

And what's the core business of your company?

Guya Merkle 01:45

So the core business is designing and selling ethical Fine Jewellery. This is what we do to make money. And yeah, that's the purposes.

Frauke Oedekoven 02:01

Okay, in regard of leadership, how would you define leadership?

Guya Merkle 02:08

For me, leadership has a lot to do with inspiration. So as I see leadership it is about going your way towards the vision. Kind of no matter what, and yeah, not telling others what to do, but kind of inspiring them. So they kind of feel for themselves if it's the right way for them or not. So it's all about inspiring through actions, I always say.

Frauke Oedekoven 02:45

And before founding your company, did you experience other kinds of leaders? And if so, what kind of leaders have you experienced and leadership styles?

Guya Merkle 02:58

Yeah, so not directly because I founded the company out of my studies. So I never... well, no, that's not true. I worked with betterplace.org in Berlin. So I had Till as my kind of boss and he and Joana Breidenbach were kind of the leaders we worked for. And this was exactly what also I think, inspired me because they also inspired through their actions. So they kind of had this big vision and went forward no matter what obstacles were on their way. So it

was very inspiring, I guess, to see so. But also, of course, in in my....I meet a lot of leaders in the business context, because we're working with a lot of partners and of course, designing and selling jewellery is the core business, but there's a lot more which the company tries to achieve. So we meet a lot of other leaders, of course, and it's not always leadership as I would like to see it. So um, but also this of course, helps to inspire to do it the other way.

Frauke Oedekoven 04:15

And could you describe a little bit more how you saw these kind of leadership styles?

Guya Merkle 04:23

Yeah, I would say especially in the jewellery business, that I'm working with, it's very old fashioned. So it's very male dominated, and it's very, what's the word in English? – Hierarchies, Yeah. So, and the problem you can see it in the business itself is that they don't grow. But not in a way of growing money and figures, but they kind of have super hard obstacles to go with the time. So the jewellery industry is facing really hard times because they didn't get the online business they didn't get the whole topic of ethical sustainable ways of working with with all the materials. So they kind of now are standing behind but still, and it's a funny thing, they are not changing the way they do business so it's still this "I'm the one", "I'm telling you, and we do it like we ever did it and that's how we do it" and they are kind of very aggressive and very loud. Even when they're talking to us as a partner it's always like the old way. And what I can experience is that yeah, it's a problem for them because they're not going forward and at one point they will have super hard issues also to get new employees, young people you know, leading those companies into the future. I mean, nobody wants to work for them especially of course you have the super big names where everybody's kind of, young people are kind of wanting to work there because it's this very yeah crazy high name but yeah. I really I mean it's especially for our our industry and it's a very small industry but they really have big, big issues when it comes to changing the way leadership works.

Frauke Oedekoven 06:38

Thank you. And when you decided to start your own business, did you think about what kind of leader you want to be?

Guya Merkle 06:47

No, not at all. Sometimes I even don't know now what kind of leader I want to be and especially it's funny because it's something.... I have never seen me as a leader. I have this little team and sometimes I'm like oh my god I have to kind of lead them! Because it's for me it's all, it's like partners. But of course sometimes I feel that they need some leading because they're like okay, what's next? What should we do with issue A,B,C? I don't know. So this sometimes hits me like from above. Like okay, you have to do something because for me it's more kind of a team than leading, but still I have to say when I have conversations with the team, it's always like they're so happy to work in this environment and not because

I'm a great leader or a great chef or I don't know. I think it's really about... Maybe that's the leadership I do. It's about they have the feeling they are part of something bigger. So it's extremely motivational to work for a company where maybe there are no... yeah there's no boss like in their old jobs. They're all coming – funny thing – from very old fashioned structures. That's why they also left their companies. So, I do something okay! Because they're all quite happy but I never thought about.... no, it's nothing I really think about! There's this vision and I go for it and I kind of also I believe in attracting the right people when you're busy with the right topic, you know what I mean? Because automatically, they're people who want to work for the company. They are people who kind of share the same values and share the same yeah goals for their life. So this makes it of course a bit easier for me.

Frauke Oedekoven 08:51

Okay, and so when you found that the company, how did you perceive the role of the leader at that time? Does it differ to how you perceive it now?

Frauke Oedekoven 09:04

Yes, absolutely. I was super young also and this kind of topics were completely new to me. So at the beginning, I mean, I was so young. I didn't think about it, it was like I'm doing what I do and I was a bit more bossy I would say at this time. But also because I was a bit lost and I also of course had had my fears and the pressure was so high. So sometimes, when I was very lost, I was kind of very bossy. And being the – I still have difficulties to say that I'm a leader –, but being in this role of leadership now, I think changed also because I worked a lot on me and doing a lot reflection work, and inner work and everything. It has to do with self confidence and trust within me. So I'm kind of more relaxed, and I don't know, see it more as a fluent organisation, than... I think fear is a big a big driver of wrong leadership. I think when people feel fear, they're kind of you know... and most of them don't want to show it, or they dislike the feeling they have. So they kind of get very bossy and old pattern style. So this is something I experienced myself that it has a lot to do with fear. And yeah, doing the work helps, of course, always.

Frauke Oedekoven 10:55

So in your process, like your own leadership development how I understood it now, did you recall the perception of other leaders you experienced in the past?

Guya Merkle 11:12

Yes.

Frauke Oedekoven 11:17

And did you think about like, what you would like to adapt? And what you, for example, didn't want to adapt?

Guya Merkle 11:22

Yes, absolutely. I had this kind of... This is what I meant with inspiration. But in both sides, of course, there were things I liked to adapt, and I worked on it to adapt it. And of course, there were things especially at the beginning, where I was like "Oh my god, I don't want to be that kind of person". And I still have it sometimes now, when I'm in a very stressful situation, or there's an issue in the company. And I'm kind of stressed, I still have it that, I enter the office and I'm like, you know, I'm just pissed with everybody. But what helps with the whole work and also realising what you don't want to adapt from different kind of leaders, is that there's just awareness. So sometimes it's like "oh, hi. okay, you're like the shitty kind of person now" and just realising that there is something and to just, yeah, concentrate on what's going on inside of you helps then on the outside. But that, of course, is kind of a process you're you're doing with all the work. But absolutely, in theory, there's a lot of things I would even love to adapt, and I'm still not there. From other leaders I'm following or that I have experienced or something. Yeah.

Frauke Oedekoven 12:50

Thank you. I will now shift towards a different part of sections. Do you feel like you can be yourself when you are at work?

Guya Merkle 13:05

Sometimes I think I'm a bit, I don't know, this is still something I need to figure out. I'm a lot like myself at work. Sometimes I don't know if it's good to be that much mess at work. But yeah, why not? This is a good question. And I just had it yesterday that I'm like, oh, maybe I should not be that open. And yeah, But to answer your question, I feel very much myself at work.

Frauke Oedekoven 13:35

And which characteristics do you bring out in a work setting? And how do they compare to your authentic self?

Guya Merkle 13:49

I think I'm quite creative and I have like, tonnes of ideas in my head. And this kind of creates a spirit which helps, I think, the team to to have this high energy towards the vision we're trying to achieve. But sometimes it's, of course, also in the other direction a bit, you know. That it's like, I'm just very emotional, although I'm an Aquarius, and they don't seem to be that emotional. I'm very emotional. And yeah, sometimes I think it's good. Sometimes these emotions are good, because they're kind of motivating. And sometimes it's maybe a bit too too much. Because then the team is like: Okay, what can we do? I really can feel that I don't know how to handle it now. So this is something. But I'm kind of a very positive person, and I think this really helps in the work environment. And that's why people like to work with me I guess. Because I'm like, even though we don't know how it goes further, or sometimes.... yesterday was a good example because I didn't know where.... we produced

jewellery, and it was gone and it was for a client and it was quite worthy and I was like okay it's gone. But I always stay very calm and the team was getting nervous and I was like very calm and you know, I was like okay we will find a solution. And we go through every step and I kind of directed this panic which was going on into a... breathing, we will find a solution kind of way. When everybody stayed calm and then at the end we found it. So everybody was like oh my god, how did you manage to stay that calm? We were like freaking out! But I think this is my quality I bring into it. I'm not another panic little rabbit flying around.

Frauke Oedekoven 16:00

And how would you like to be perceived by your employees?

Guya Merkle 16:11

I think for me it's very important to inspire. This is something which is very important to me. To inspire other people but of course also the team. I want to be perceived not not like a boss but as a team member of course. But of course I also would like to have – but not as a boss – but some respect. Everybody should have within a team the same respect I give to my employees, I also want to of course perceive myself. Which I think sometimes, I need to watch out that they don't see me just as a friend but we're still in a working environment you know - but I'm kind of. I want a bit to be seen as a mother. Not as, you know, not like with my child. But there should be no fear. So if they did something wrong or they don't know, they should know that they always can come towards me and that I would never freak out. Just you know, it's more like we will find solutions together and even though you're making a mistake from time to time, it's normal. I do mistakes all the time. So, it's kind of it, maybe sounds weird, but these mother qualities. You know, that a child always knows you you can come to your mom and there will always be a solution. And this is what I would like to to be in a team. And also to grow the business as a family. So, it is this kind of family spirit towards something because within a family there also can be a fight of course. And you know, there also can be some tough times from time to time, but the base is always good. You always know that it's trustful and nothing can happen. You know and this is what I tried to to achieve within the company. And I don't have employees right now who have children or are pregnant, but I always said when it will start at one point, (it will start because we're only working with women). I also would love to have the children around, you know, I always tell them we can we can manage it! You just bring them in maybe we hire somebody who takes care of the children and then we can work and so like... family style! I think family style is good because it's something which sticks together and which kind of creates a good environment for the future. Because I would love to have my employees like there for a long time. You know, it's I don't like to have it like... Yeah.

Frauke Oedekoven 18:58

And how important is it for you? Is it to you for them to see you that way?

Guya Merkle 19:07

how important it is for me that they see me this way? Yeah, of course it's important for me because if they don't see me that way, I didn't transport the feelings.

Frauke Oedekoven 19:21

And how would you define authenticity.

Guya Merkle 19:27

That's a good one. I never thought about it. I think that if someone or a situation or whatever work environment is authentic, then you're kind of.... you're feeling it because you never will feel uncomfortable. You know, because if no one is playing a role, you don't have to play a role and then you don't have to feel uncomfortable. If something's authentic, you're comfortable to be yourself as well. And I think, of course, it's not a definition because it's more kind of a feeling. But you know what I, it's like you feel good. You feel like safe. You're feeling... Yeah.

Frauke Oedekoven 20:15

Thank you. How many people are within your company?

Guya Merkle 20:20

So we're a team of four. And then we have some freelancers. Yeah.

Frauke Oedekoven 20:28

And how many people do you work closely with?

Guya Merkle 20:31

All I believe, or yeah, three. It's me, I'm within the four so three other people. Yeah.

Frauke Oedekoven 20:40

And what, what tools to use for internal communications?

Guya Merkle 20:44

Yes, this is a good one. And I'm not so good with it. And so we don't have tools in this way. So we always have... Monday, we have a checkup call. So, yeah, at 9.30, we all meet via zoom, or the ones who are in the office, like we all get together. And talking about how we're feeling how the weekend was, and what kind of to do's we have this week. We changed it now, we only talk about the week coming. So we kind of had this, what is next month? And what can we do and all this. But this is not what is happening on Monday. It's really about the week. So everybody has... You know, it's not too big. It's really very clear. And then on Wednesday, we have this vision meeting. So it's really about what do we want to achieve next year? What kind of projects do we have in mind? Where are really the milestone goals? But we kind of changed it because I felt there was too much energy going around. So

everybody was losing their topics, you know, for the week, because it was always very visionary on Monday. Yeah, so this is what we do. And then, actually, I mean, with four people, we're constantly talking, so this is okay, but definitely – I just thought about it yesterday – I would like to do also more kind of, you know, to motivate them to maybe do a dinner once a month or... to really creating a bit more this family feeling I was talking about.

Frauke Oedekoven 22:32

And you just said like, normally you talk like together a lot. Does that mean you you're in an office? I didn't ask this before

Guya Merkle 22:41

Yeah, I mean, we're in an office and everybody's allowed to come in whenever they want. They all have a key, but they also can work from home. But they have to... this is also on Mondays. It I don't like if it's too spontaneous. Of course, there always can be something and then it's always fine. But they kind of need to think on Mondays, how they would like to create their week.

Frauke Oedekoven 23:08

So most of the communication from what I understand is face to face.

Guya Merkle 23:12

Yes. We have a nice office. So everybody is coming very often.

Frauke Oedekoven 23:21

Okay, and when and how do you share information with the entire team?

Guya Merkle 23:26

Monday and Wednesday, during our calls or get together. That's when we share information with them?

Frauke Oedekoven 23:37

And how would you describe the way you communicate and your team? Like the internal communication all together?

Guya Merkle 23:48

Do you mean like the vibe or?

Frauke Oedekoven 23:52

For example.

Guya Merkle 23:56

It's very family style. It's very easy going, it's it's always very funny. We're laughing a lot. It's family style! I would say it's like meeting for dinner at home with your family and everybody is sometimes it's a bit chaotic. Because everybody's like bla bla bla... But it's nice. I like it. I always look forward to it.

Frauke Oedekoven 24:24

And is there a difference between how you communicate success or when something goes wrong within your company?

Guya Merkle 24:38

Yes, I think automatically. Because it's a bit another vibe you're kind of transporting. But it's not like successes "yay" and something wrong is like... you know. It's always solution driven. Also success is solution driven because if we achieved great success, of course we need we celebrate and we do so, but it's always like "Okay, why did this happen? What can we do to kind of...", you know. And this is a bit the same like when we're talking about if something went wrong it's also like "Okay, why did this happen? How can we avoid this? What do you need to avoid it?", these kind of thoughts. Always very solution driven, but of course there's a difference. The one thing is "yay" and the other thing is like "okay, just didn't went so good, let's talk about it". So. it's of course a bit... it would be a lie to say it's completely the same way.

Frauke Oedekoven 25:43

And what ways can you employees reach out to you with ideas, critique or comments?

Guya Merkle 25:50

Always sometimes I have a feeling they're kind of not always "sich trauen" (German word for to dare) what's the word in English? Yeah, you know what I mean, to criticize, which I don't know why because I'm always telling them: If there's anything, please just let me know. But sometimes, I don't know. Sometimes they then say it like, a bit hidden. But normally they just can.... They don't.... and it's more about critique which they're not really so open about it, I have the feeling. But if something went wrong, they just come straight to me telling me. Or if they have an idea, always they know that I'm always open for ideas and that most of the time they also can just go ahead and then just you know, let me.... They don't always need my allowance, so they just do and then they're like, look at this and I like it. And it's yeah, it's very easygoing.

Frauke Oedekoven 27:03

And how do you encourage them to do so?

Guya Merkle 27:08

I think I'm doing it automatically because I'm a person who really also needs a lot of time for myself when it's about working. So I really like to work on Fridays, because on Fridays

nobody's at the office just me and myself here. So automatically when people when, I have – sorry I'm so tired today – when I have the "Gespräche" (German term for conversations) here the?

Frauke Oedekoven 27:40

Conversations?

Guya Merkle 27:41

conversations! Thank you! Right at the beginning, I always let them know that it's only working, if they're willing and also kind of types to to work a lot by themselves and trust themselves, because I'm not the kind of boss who's always there. I mean, I'm always there if they need me, that's for sure. But I really like to work by myself a lot. So they kind of know it right from the beginning, that they... it's not just a nice-to-have, it's kind of obligatory that they need to work by themselves and also trust themselves enough to know if they are working here, it's because I know that they can do it. And so they should do it, because otherwise it's not working. So it's something they know right from the beginning and I'm not there that much. So they kind of have to be by themselves. But they know that I'm trusting them, so it's kind of they feel comfortable to do so you know. And also it's my risk. So if then sometimes I'm maybe not 100% happy about it, then I always first going towards myself thinking: "okay, what can I do?" And it's not about "Okay, this I don't like because they kind of had trust from me". So I can't say you didn't do a good job at the end. So it's kind of then we're going through a process what what I can do for them to maybe, yeah, see, better what really is or yeah, kind of a process then.

Frauke Oedekoven 29:22

Thank you. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Guya Merkle 29:27

No, I think I always have the feeling, because I never kind of studied this or I really became the person I am in the business context by error and try. And I really think that it helps to, to create this kind of motivation also towards the business vision. Because I think I have a quiet happy team, but it's not just about you. Me doing a good job with them. You know what I mean? It's also because the company environment is doing a good job because it wants to achieve something and they have the feeling they are part of it. So I think of course this helps. And I'm always saying that I think every company who is newly founded should have a vision like this. Because this would help also to motivate people and teams and create nice working environments where people are happy to work for.

Frauke Oedekoven 30:35

Nice. So that's, that's the end of my questions. Ah, one last question. Would you like to keep this or do you want me to keep this conversation anonymously?

Guya Merkle 30:51

No, you don't have to.

Frauke Oedekoven 30:53

Thank you.

Appendix F: Employee Survey: Wildling

Employee Survey: Wildling

Hello & thank you for taking the time!

My name is Frauke Oedekoven and I am a Master student of Communication, Organization and Leadership at Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

The following survey intends to collect data with the final purpose to finish my Master Thesis and contribute to the growing body of research on leadership and internal communications.

I had the great opportunity to have an interview with Anna Yona previously, so this questionnaire contains questions regarding her leadership style.

Please note that all your answers are anonymously and strictly confidential, – your contribution is voluntary and has purely academic purposes.

The survey will take about 5 minutes to respond to.

If you have any further questions, feel free to reach out to me via: frauqueoedekoven@gmail.com

Thank you so much for your contribution and all the best!

Let's start!

Employee Survey: Wildling

1. Which gender do you identify with?

- ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Male ☐ Prefer to self-describe, below
- ☐ Non-binary

Self-describe

2. Age Range

- ☐ Between 18 and 24 years old ☐ Between 45 and 54 years old
- ☐ Between 25 and 34 years old ☐ Over 55 years old
- ☐ Between 35 and 44 years old

3. How long have you been working for this company?

- ☐ less than 6 months ☐ More than 4 years
- ☐ Between 6 months and 1 year ☐ More than 5 years
- ☐ More than 1 year ☐ More than 6 years
- ☐ More than 2 years ☐ More than 7 years
- ☐ More than 3 years

4. Are you familiar with the founder of the company?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. Do you work closely with the founder of the company?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

In the following questions "leader" refers to Anna Yona.

7. My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.

[illegible]

8. My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

[illegible]

9. My leader clearly states what she means.

Strongly Agree Agree More or less agree Undecided More or less disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. My leader openly shares information with others.

[illegible]

11. My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ More or less agree ☐ Undecided ☐ More or less disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

12. My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

[illegible]

13. My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **More or less agree** **Undecided** **More or less disagree** **Disagree** **Strongly Disagree**

14. My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **More or less agree** **Undecided** **More or less disagree** **Disagree** **Strongly Disagree**

☐ ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

15. My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ More or less agree ☐ Undecided ☐ More or less disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

16. My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

[illegible]

17. My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

[illegible]

18. My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

[illegible]

19. My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ More or less agree ☐ Undecided ☐ More or less disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

20. My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ More or less agree ☐ Undecided ☐ More or less disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Employee Survey: Wildling

21. I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. This company encourages difference of opinions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

24. The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

25. I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

26. I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

That's it! Thank you so much for your contribution!

Appendix G: Employee Survey: circular.fashion

Employee Survey: circular.fashion

Hello & thank you for taking the time!

My name is Frauke Oedekoven and I am a Master student of Communication, Organization and Leadership at Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

The following survey intends to collect data with the final purpose to finish my Master Thesis and contribute to the growing body of research on leadership and internal communications.

I had the great opportunity to have an interview with Ina Budde previously, so this questionnaire contains questions regarding her leadership style.

Please note that all your answers are anonymously and strictly confidential, – your contribution is voluntary and has purely academic purposes.

The survey will take about 5 minutes to respond to.

If you have any further questions, feel free to reach out to me via: fraukeoedekoven@gmail.com

Thank you so much for your contribution and all the best!

Let's start!

Employee Survey: circular.fashion

1. Which gender do you identify with?

- ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Male ☐ Prefer to self-describe, below
- ☐ Non-binary

Self-describe

2. Age Range

- ☐ Between 18 and 24 years old ☐ Between 45 and 54 years old
- ☐ Between 25 and 34 years old ☐ Over 55 years old
- ☐ Between 35 and 44 years old

3. How long have you been working for this company?

- ☐ less than 6 months ☐ More than 2 years
- ☐ Between 6 months and 1 year ☐ More than 3 years
- ☐ More than 1 year ☐ More than 4 years

4. Are you familiar with the founder of the company?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. Do you work closely with the founder of the company?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

14. My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

Strongly Agree **Agree** More or less agree Undecided More or less disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

☐ ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

15. My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

Strongly Agree **Agree** More or less agree Undecided More or less disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

16. My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ More or less agree ☐ Undecided ☐ More or less disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

17. My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

[illegible]

18. My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

[illegible]

19. My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

Strongly Agree Agree More or less agree Undecided More or less disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

20. My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

Employee Survey: circular.fashion

In the following questions "leader" refers to Ina Budde.

7. My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.

[illegible]

8. My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

[illegible]

9. My leader clearly states what she means.

[illegible]

10. My leader openly shares information with others.

[illegible]

11. My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

Strongly Agree Agree More or less agree Undecided More or less disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

12. My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

[illegible]

13. My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ More or less agree ☐ Undecided ☐ More or less disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Employee Survey: circular.fashion

21. I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. This company encourages difference of opinions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

24. The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

25. I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

26. I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

That's it! Thank you so much for your contribution!

Appendix H: Employee Survey: VIERI

Employee Survey: VIERI

Hello & thank you for taking the time!

My name is Frauke Oedekoven and I am a Master student of Communication, Organization and Leadership at Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

The following survey intends to collect data with the final purpose to finish my Master Thesis and contribute to the growing body of research on leadership and internal communications.

I had the great opportunity to have an interview with Guya Merkle previously, so this questionnaire contains questions regarding her leadership style.

Please note that all your answers are anonymously and strictly confidential, – your contribution is voluntary and has purely academic purposes.

The survey will take about 5 minutes to respond to.

If you have any further questions, feel free to reach out to me via: fraukeoedekoven@gmail.com

Thank you so much for your contribution and all the best!

Let's start!

Employee Survey: VIERI

1. Which gender do you identify with?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary

- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Prefer to self-describe, below

Self-describe

2. Age Range

- ☐ Between 18 and 24 years old
- ☐ Between 25 and 34 years old
- ☐ Between 35 and 44 years old
- ☐ Between 45 and 54 years old
- ☐ Over 55 years old

3. How long have you been working for this company?

- ☐ less than 6 months
- ☐ Between 6 months and 1 year
- ☐ More than 1 year
- ☐ More than 2 years
- ☐ More than 3 years
- ☐ More than 4 years
- ☐ More than 5 years
- ☐ More than 6 years
- ☐ More than 7 years

4. Are you familiar with the founder of the company?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. Do you work closely with the founder of the company?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Employee Survey: VIERI

In the following questions "leader" refers to Guya Merkle.

7. My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.

[illegible]

8. My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ More or less agree ☐ Undecided ☐ More or less disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

9. My leader clearly states what she means.

Strongly Agree **Agree** More or less agree Undecided More or less disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

☐ ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

10. My leader openly shares information with others.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ More or less agree ☐ Undecided ☐ More or less disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

11. My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

Likert scale

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **More or less agree** **Undecided** **More or less disagree** **Disagree** **Strongly Disagree**

13. My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

Strongly Agree Agree More or less agree Undecided More or less disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

14. My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

[illegible]

15. My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

Strongly Agree **Agree** More or less agree Undecided More or less disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐

16. My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ More or less agree ☐ Undecided ☐ More or less disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

17. My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

[illegible]

18. My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

[illegible]

19. My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

[illegible]

20. My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree More or less agree Undecided More or less disagree Disagree ☒ Strongly Disagree

Employee Survey: VIERI

21. I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. This company encourages difference of opinions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

24. The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

25. I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

26. I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

That's it! Thank you so much for your contribution!

Appendix I: Employee Survey: Jyoti Fair Works

Employee Survey: Jyoti - Fair Works

Hello & thank you for taking the time!

My name is Frauke Oedekoven and I am a Master student of Communication, Organization and Leadership at Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

The following survey intends to collect data with the final purpose to finish my Master Thesis and contribute to the growing body of research on leadership and internal communications.

I had the great opportunity to have an interview with Jeanine Glöyer previously, so this questionnaire contains questions regarding her leadership style.

Please note that all your answers are anonymously and strictly confidential, – your contribution is voluntary and has purely academic purposes.

The survey will take about 5 minutes to respond to.

If you have any further questions, feel free to reach out to me via: fraukeoedekoven@gmail.com

Thank you so much for your contribution and all the best!

Let's start!

Employee Survey: Jyoti - Fair Works

1. Which gender do you identify with?

- ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Male ☐ Prefer to self-describe, below
- ☐ Non-binary

Self-describe

2. Age Range

- ☐ Between 18 and 24 years old ☐ Between 45 and 54 years old
- ☐ Between 25 and 34 years old ☐ Over 55 years old
- ☐ Between 35 and 44 years old

3. How long have you been working for this company?

- ☐ less than 6 months ☐ More than 4 years
- ☐ Between 6 months and 1 year ☐ More than 5 years
- ☐ More than 1 year ☐ More than 6 years
- ☐ More than 2 years ☐ More than 7 years
- ☐ More than 3 years ☐ More than 8 years

4. Are you familiar with the founder of the company?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. Do you work closely with the founder of the company?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

In the following questions "leader" refers to Jeanine Glöyer.

7. My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.

[illegible]

8. My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

[illegible]

9. My leader clearly states what she means.

[illegible]

10. My leader openly shares information with others.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ More or less agree ☐ Undecided ☐ More or less disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

11. My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **More or less agree** **Undecided** **More or less disagree** **Disagree** **Strongly Disagree**

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

12. My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

[illegible]

13. My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

Strongly Agree Agree More or less agree Undecided More or less disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

14. My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **More or less agree** **Undecided** **More or less disagree** **Disagree** **Strongly Disagree**

☐ ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

15. My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

[illegible]

16. My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **More or less agree** **Undecided** **More or less disagree** **Disagree** **Strongly Disagree**

17. My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

[illegible]

18. My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

[illegible]

19. My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

A horizontal scale with seven points labeled: Strongly Agree, Agree, More or less agree, Undecided, More or less disagree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Below each label is a small circle.

20. My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

Strongly Agree **Agree** **More or less agree** **Undecided** **More or less disagree** **Disagree** **Strongly Disagree**

☐ ☐ ☒ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Employee Survey: Jyoti - Fair Works

21. I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

23. This company encourages difference of opinions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

24. The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

25. I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

26. I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

Strongly Agree	Agree	More or less agree	Undecided	More or less disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

That's it! Thank you so much for your contribution!

Appendix J: Screenshot Email Response Jeanine Glöyer (P4)



jeanine Glöyer

3 November 2021 at 09:33

Re: Kleine Bitte <3

To: Frauke Oedekoven

Hallo liebe Frauke,

bitt entschuldige. Die Hälfte unseres Team ist gerade in Indien und hat wahnsinnig schlechte Internetverbindung und die andere Hälfte (außer mir) liegt in Berlin im Bett =/.
Warte also besser nicht.

Frauke Oedekoven <fraukeoedekoven@gmail.com> hat am 02.11.2021 12:24 geschrieben:

Liebe Jeanine,

Sorry, dass ich noch einmal nachhake! Ich hoffe es geht Dir gut. Glaubst du, ich kann noch mit Antworten für den Survey rechnen? Nur, damit ich weiß ob ich nach warten soll.

Danke und liebe Grüße
Frauke

On 27 Oct 2021, at 12:20, Frauke Oedekoven <fraukeoedekoven@gmail.com> wrote:

Hey liebe Jeanine,

Ich noch einmal! :) Wollte nur kurz nachfragen, ob meine E-Mail angekommen ist. Da der Survey eigentlich nur bis Ende der Woche zu beantworten ist, wäre es super super toll, wenn Du mir vielleicht eine kurze Rückmeldung dazu geben könntest.

Dankeschön für Deine Hilfe, Sorry für die Belagerung, aber vor allem: ganz liebe Grüße nach Berlin!
Frauke

On 25 Oct 2021, at 13:30, Frauke Oedekoven <fraukeoedekoven@gmail.com> wrote:

Liebe Jeanine,

Ich hoffe es geht Dir gut. Nochmals vielen Dank für das tolle Interview, ich habe mich wirklich sehr gefreut, mit Dir sprechen zu dürfen!

Wie angekündigt, kommt jetzt noch ein Employee-Fragebogen hinterher, welcher bis Ende der Woche ausgefüllt werden kann. Es wäre fantastisch, wenn Du diesen an deine Mitarbeiter*innen weiterleiten könntest.

Die Beantwortung dauert auch nur 5 Minuten (Multiple Choice) und ist selbstverständlich komplett anonym und ausschließlich für akademische Zwecke.

Hier der Link zum Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/jyotiFairWorks>

Vielen, vielen Dank und hab einen schönen Wochenstart!

Herzliche Grüße
Frauke

Appendix K: Employee Survey Responses

#1

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:21:03 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:24:19 AM
Time Spent: 00:03:15
IP Address: 80.136.95.21

Page 2

Q1	Female
Which gender do you identify with?	
Q2	Between 25 and 34 years old
Age Range	
Q3	More than 2 years
How long have you been working for this company?	
Q4	Yes
Are you familiar with the founder of the company?	
Q5	No
Do you work closely with the founder of the company?	
Q6	No
Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?	

Page 3

Q7
My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.
(no label)
Agree

Q8

My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q9

My leader clearly states what she means.

(no label)

Agree

Q10

My leader openly shares information with others.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q11

My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

(no label)

Agree

Q12

My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

(no label)

Undecided

Q13

My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

(no label)

Agree

Q14

My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

(no label)

Agree

Q15

My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

(no label)

Agree

Q16

My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q17

My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q18

My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

(no label)

Agree

Q19

My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

(no label)

Agree

Q20

My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

(no label)

More or less agree

Page 4

Q21

I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

(no label)

Undecided

Q22

Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q23

This company encourages difference of opinions.

(no label)

Undecided

Q24

The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

(no label)

Undecided

Q25

I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q26

I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

(no label)

Agree

#2

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:45:18 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:51:06 AM
Time Spent: 00:05:48
IP Address: 80.245.77.119

Page 2

Q1	Female
Which gender do you identify with?	
Q2	Between 35 and 44 years old
Age Range	
Q3	More than 3 years
How long have you been working for this company?	
Q4	Yes
Are you familiar with the founder of the company?	
Q5	Yes
Do you work closely with the founder of the company?	
Q6	Yes
Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?	

Page 3

Q7	
My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.	
(no label)	Strongly Agree

Q8

My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q9

My leader clearly states what she means.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q10

My leader openly shares information with others.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q11

My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

(no label)

Agree

Q12

My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

(no label)

Undecided

Q13

My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

(no label)

Agree

Q14

My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q15

My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

(no label)

Agree

Q16

My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q17

My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q18

My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q19

My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

(no label)

Disagree

Q20

My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

(no label)

Agree

Page 4

Q21

I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q22

Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

(no label)

Agree

Q23

This company encourages difference of opinions.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q24

The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q25

I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q26

I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

(no label)

Agree

#3

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:45:15 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:52:44 AM
Time Spent: 00:07:29
IP Address: 95.91.230.166

Page 2

Q1	Female
Which gender do you identify with?	
Q2	Between 35 and 44 years old
Age Range	
Q3	More than 2 years
How long have you been working for this company?	
Q4	Yes
Are you familiar with the founder of the company?	
Q5	No
Do you work closely with the founder of the company?	
Q6	No
Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?	

Page 3

Q7	
My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.	
(no label)	More or less agree

Q8

My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

(no label)

Agree

Q9

My leader clearly states what she means.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q10

My leader openly shares information with others.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q11

My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q12

My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

(no label)

Undecided

Q13

My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q14

My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q15

My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q16

My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q17

My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

(no label)

Agree

Q18

My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q19

My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q20

My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

(no label)

More or less agree

Page 4

Q21

I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

(no label)

Undecided

Q22

Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q23

This company encourages difference of opinions.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q24

The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

(no label)

Undecided

Q25

I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q26

I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

(no label)

More or less disagree

#4

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:53:58 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:56:10 AM
Time Spent: 00:02:12
IP Address: 46.82.254.81

Page 2

Q1	Female
Which gender do you identify with?	
Q2	Between 25 and 34 years old
Age Range	
Q3	More than 1 year
How long have you been working for this company?	
Q4	Yes
Are you familiar with the founder of the company?	
Q5	No
Do you work closely with the founder of the company?	
Q6	No
Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?	

Page 3

Q7
My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.
(no label)
Agree

Q8

My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

(no label)

Agree

Q9

My leader clearly states what she means.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q10

My leader openly shares information with others.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q11

My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q12

My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

(no label)

Agree

Q13

My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q14

My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

(no label)

Agree

Q15

My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

(no label)

Agree

Q16

My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

(no label)

Agree

Q17

My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q18

My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

(no label)

Agree

Q19

My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q20

My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

(no label)

Agree

Page 4

Q21

I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

(no label)

Agree

Q22

Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q23

This company encourages difference of opinions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q24

The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

(no label)

Agree

Q25

I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q26

I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

(no label)

Agree

#5

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 10:04:07 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 10:08:05 AM
Time Spent: 00:03:57
IP Address: 2.205.45.11

Page 2

Q1	Female
Which gender do you identify with?	
Q2	Between 35 and 44 years old
Age Range	
Q3	More than 4 years
How long have you been working for this company?	
Q4	Yes
Are you familiar with the founder of the company?	
Q5	Yes
Do you work closely with the founder of the company?	
Q6	Yes
Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?	

Page 3

Q7	
My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.	
(no label)	Agree

Q8

My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q9

My leader clearly states what she means.

(no label)

Agree

Q10

My leader openly shares information with others.

(no label)

Undecided

Q11

My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

(no label)

Agree

Q12

My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

(no label)

Agree

Q13

My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q14

My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q15

My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

(no label)

Agree

Q16

My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q17

My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q18

My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

(no label)

Undecided

Q19

My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

(no label)

Disagree

Q20

My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

(no label)

Undecided

Page 4

Q21

I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

(no label)

Agree

Q22

Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

(no label)

Agree

Q23

This company encourages difference of opinions.

(no label)

Undecided

Q24

The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q25

I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

(no label)

Disagree

Q26

I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

(no label)

More or less agree

#6

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 10:10:59 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 10:14:20 AM
Time Spent: 00:03:21
IP Address: 92.210.52.123

Page 2

Q1**Prefer not to say**

Which gender do you identify with?

Q2**Between 35 and 44 years old**

Age Range

Q3**More than 4 years**

How long have you been working for this company?

Q4**Yes**

Are you familiar with the founder of the company?

Q5**Yes**

Do you work closely with the founder of the company?

Q6**Yes**

Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?

Page 3

Q7

My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.

(no label)

Agree

Q8

My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q9

My leader clearly states what she means.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q10

My leader openly shares information with others.

(no label)

Undecided

Q11

My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q12

My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q13

My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q14

My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q15

My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

(no label)

Agree

Q16

My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q17

My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q18

My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q19

My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

(no label)

Undecided

Q20

My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

(no label)

Agree

Page 4

Q21

I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

(no label)

Agree

Q22

Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

(no label)

Undecided

Q23

This company encourages difference of opinions.

(no label)

Agree

Q24

The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

(no label)

Undecided

Q25

I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q26

I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

(no label)

Agree

#7

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 11:58:55 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 1:04:25 PM
Time Spent: 01:05:29
IP Address: 91.66.108.8

Page 2

Q1	Female
Which gender do you identify with?	
Q2	Between 35 and 44 years old
Age Range	
Q3	More than 2 years
How long have you been working for this company?	
Q4	Yes
Are you familiar with the founder of the company?	
Q5	No
Do you work closely with the founder of the company?	
Q6	Yes
Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?	

Page 3

Q7	
My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.	
(no label)	More or less agree

Q8

My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q9

My leader clearly states what she means.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q10

My leader openly shares information with others.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q11

My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q12

My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

(no label)

Undecided

Q13

My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q14

My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q15

My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q16

My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q17

My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

(no label)

Disagree

Q18

My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

(no label)

Disagree

Q19

My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

(no label)

Agree

Q20

My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Page 4

Q21

I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

(no label)

Undecided

Q22

Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

(no label)

Undecided

Q23

This company encourages difference of opinions.

(no label)

Undecided

Q24

The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q25

I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q26

I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

(no label)

Agree

#8

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:29:00 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 3:11:09 PM
Time Spent: 05:42:09
IP Address: 87.79.70.184

Page 2

Q1	Male
Which gender do you identify with?	
Q2	Between 45 and 54 years old
Age Range	
Q3	More than 1 year
How long have you been working for this company?	
Q4	Yes
Are you familiar with the founder of the company?	
Q5	Yes
Do you work closely with the founder of the company?	
Q6	Yes
Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?	

Page 3

Q7	
My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.	
(no label)	Strongly Agree

Q8

My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q9

My leader clearly states what she means.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q10

My leader openly shares information with others.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q11

My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q12

My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

(no label)

Agree

Q13

My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q14

My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q15

My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q16

My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q17

My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q18

My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

(no label)

Agree

Q19

My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

(no label)

Agree

Q20

My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

(no label)

Agree

Page 4

Q21

I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

(no label)

Agree

Q22

Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

(no label)

Agree

Q23

This company encourages difference of opinions.

(no label)

Agree

Q24

The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q25

I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

(no label)

Agree

Q26

I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

(no label)

Agree

#9

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 3:28:46 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 3:37:05 PM
Time Spent: 00:08:18
IP Address: 95.223.228.68

Page 2

Q1	Female
Which gender do you identify with?	
Q2	Between 25 and 34 years old
Age Range	
Q3	More than 2 years
How long have you been working for this company?	
Q4	No
Are you familiar with the founder of the company?	
Q5	No
Do you work closely with the founder of the company?	
Q6	No
Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?	

Page 3

Q7
My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.
(no label)
Agree

Q8

My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

(no label)

Agree

Q9

My leader clearly states what she means.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q10

My leader openly shares information with others.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q11

My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

(no label)

Agree

Q12

My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

(no label)

Agree

Q13

My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q14

My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

(no label)

Undecided

Q15

My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

(no label)

Disagree

Q16

My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

(no label)

Undecided

Q17

My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

(no label)

Undecided

Q18

My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q19

My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

(no label)

Agree

Q20

My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

(no label)

Agree

Page 4

Q21

I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q22

Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

(no label)

Agree

Q23

This company encourages difference of opinions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q24

The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

(no label)

Undecided

Q25

I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

(no label)

Agree

Q26

I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

#1

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, October 27, 2021 2:46:39 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, October 27, 2021 2:51:56 PM
Time Spent: 00:05:16
IP Address: 176.126.217.70

Page 2

Q1	Female
Which gender do you identify with?	
Q2	Between 25 and 34 years old
Age Range	
Q3	More than 1 year
How long have you been working for this company?	
Q4	Yes
Are you familiar with the founder of the company?	
Q5	Yes
Do you work closely with the founder of the company?	
Q6	Yes
Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?	

Page 3

Q7	
My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.	
(no label)	Agree

Q8

My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

(no label)

Undecided

Q9

My leader clearly states what she means.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q10

My leader openly shares information with others.

(no label)

Agree

Q11

My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

(no label)

Agree

Q12

My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

(no label)

Undecided

Q13

My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

(no label)

Agree

Q14

My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q15

My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

(no label)

Undecided

Q16

My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

(no label)

Agree

Q17

My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

(no label)

Undecided

Q18

My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q19

My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

(no label)

Undecided

Q20

My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

(no label)

Agree

Page 4

Q21

I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q22

Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

(no label)

Undecided

Q23

This company encourages difference of opinions.

(no label)

Agree

Q24

The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

(no label)

Undecided

Q25

I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

(no label)

Agree

Q26

I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

(no label)

More or less agree

#2

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 7:18:59 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, November 03, 2021 8:12:28 AM
Time Spent: Over a week
IP Address: 80.132.235.17

Page 2

Q1	Female
Which gender do you identify with?	
Q2	Between 25 and 34 years old
Age Range	
Q3	More than 1 year
How long have you been working for this company?	
Q4	Yes
Are you familiar with the founder of the company?	
Q5	Yes
Do you work closely with the founder of the company?	
Q6	Yes
Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?	

Page 3

Q7	
My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.	
(no label)	More or less agree

Q8

My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

(no label)

Undecided

Q9

My leader clearly states what she means.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q10

My leader openly shares information with others.

(no label)

Agree

Q11

My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

(no label)

Undecided

Q12

My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

(no label)

Agree

Q13

My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q14

My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

(no label)

Agree

Q15

My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

(no label)

Agree

Q16

My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

(no label)

Agree

Q17

My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

(no label)

Agree

Q18

My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

(no label)

Agree

Q19

My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q20

My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

(no label)

Agree

Page 4

Q21

I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q22

Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

(no label)

Agree

Q23

This company encourages difference of opinions.

(no label)

Agree

Q24

The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

(no label)

More or less disagree

Q25

I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q26

I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

(no label)

Undecided

#1

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, November 02, 2021 9:41:59 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, November 02, 2021 9:45:35 PM
Time Spent: 00:03:36
IP Address: 46.87.100.39

Page 2

Q1	Female
Which gender do you identify with?	
Q2	Between 25 and 34 years old
Age Range	
Q3	less than 6 months
How long have you been working for this company?	
Q4	Yes
Are you familiar with the founder of the company?	
Q5	Yes
Do you work closely with the founder of the company?	
Q6	Yes
Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?	

Page 3

Q7	
My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.	
(no label)	Strongly Agree

Q8

My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q9

My leader clearly states what she means.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q10

My leader openly shares information with others.

(no label)

Agree

Q11

My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q12

My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q13

My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

(no label)

Agree

Q14

My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

(no label)

Agree

Q15

My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

(no label)

Undecided

Q16

My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q17

My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

(no label)

Agree

Q18

My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q19

My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

(no label)

More or less agree

Q20

My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

(no label)

Agree

Page 4

Q21

I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q22

Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q23

This company encourages difference of opinions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q24

The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q25

I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

(no label)

Undecided

Q26

I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

#2

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, November 03, 2021 10:20:08 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, November 03, 2021 10:26:01 AM
Time Spent: 00:05:53
IP Address: 82.194.120.70

Page 2

Q1 **Female**

Which gender do you identify with?

Q2 **Between 18 and 24 years old**

Age Range

Q3 **less than 6 months**

How long have you been working for this company?

Q4 **Yes**

Are you familiar with the founder of the company?

Q5 **Yes**

Do you work closely with the founder of the company?

Q6 **Yes**

Do you communicate with the founder of the company on a regular basis?

Page 3

Q7

My leader shows that she understands her strengths and weaknesses.

(no label) **Strongly Agree**

Q8

My leader is clearly aware of the impact she has on others.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q9

My leader clearly states what she means.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q10

My leader openly shares information with others.

(no label)

Agree

Q11

My leader expresses her ideas and thoughts clearly to others.

(no label)

Agree

Q12

My leader describes accurately the way others view his/her abilities.

(no label)

Agree

Q13

My leader shows consistency between her beliefs and actions.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q14

My leader uses her core beliefs to make decisions.

(no label)

Agree

Q15

My leader resists pressures on her to do things contrary to her beliefs.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q16

My leader is guided in her actions by internal moral standards.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q17

My leader asks for ideas that challenge her core beliefs.

(no label)

Agree

Q18

My leader carefully listens to alternative perspectives before reaching a conclusion.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q19

My leader objectively analytes relevant data before making a decision.

(no label)

Agree

Q20

My leader encourages others to voice opposing points of view.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Page 4

Q21

I am comfortable talking to my leader about my performance.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q22

Most communication between management and other employees in this organization can be said to be two-way communication.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q23

This company encourages difference of opinions.

(no label)

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The purpose of communication in this organization is to help management be responsive to problems of other employees.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q25

I am usually informed about major changes in policy that affect my job before they take place.

(no label)

Strongly Agree

Q26

I am comfortable talking to my leader when things are going wrong.

(no label)

Strongly Agree
