Refreshing core values at KPMG:

Understanding the organizational identity through communicating the core values

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Master's Thesis

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Abstract:

This master's thesis introduces the case company KPMG Finland's new core values and the corporate identity of the organization. The study contains four key themes: corporate identity, perception of core values, core value behavior and communication of the core values. The research investigates whether the core values, including the new values, have an impact on the corporate identity. It reveals how the employees perceive the core values and how the internal communication of the values affects the employees.

KPMG has recently launched their refreshed core values. It could be said that previous research within the company shows little evidence of whether the employees understand the core values of KPMG in a desired manner. The interviews are focusing on two generations: baby boomers and millennials. The extent of previous research on the topic is narrow when viewing two different generation's perceptions of the employer's corporate identity and core values.

The research shows that there is no substantial difference in the answers between the two generations. The perceived corporate identity of all the respondents pursue a congruent direction. The millennials and baby boomers feel that KPMG is a human-centric and conservative organization with a lot of knowledge. The respondents are not familiar with the refreshed core values in this early state of the launching process. After the values have been shown to the respondents in the interview, they have shared their reactions and feelings of the core values. Both generations can relate to the core values and can make use of them in their work. The refreshed core values are seemed as more challenging to understand compared to the old ones.

Key definitions: Corporate core values, internal communication, organizational culture, corporate identity, employer branding

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1. Introduction

It could be said that more action could be taken in managing and "living" up to the core values in organizations. This master's thesis introduces the case company KPMG Finland's new core values and the corporate identity of the organization. The research investigates whether the new core values have an impact on corporate identity, and it reveals how the employees perceive the core values.

Previous research and literature have indicated that organizational identity is key to the success of the strategic action of an organization. Organizational identity can be strategically built and improved to support the goals of the organization and to lead the members of an organization to the strategic action desired by the management. When the key components of organizational identity are congruent and in synergy, organizations can establish a strong identity. This will provide the opportunity for organizational activity and behave in a way that offers the greatest chance of success in achieving the organizational goals. (Dhalla, 2007)

According to Lencioni (2002), there is a risk when companies attempt to change or improve their existing values, as they can be empty rhetoric. If the value statements become empty, they create dispirited employees, drive a wedge between customers, and threaten the managerial credibility. Therefore, there is considerable virtue in terms of a coherent culture that underpins external brand positioning, but also a downside risk in terms of resignation and loss of credibility. (Lencioni, 2002).

According to previous research conducted by Chakraverty (2018), 74% of UK employees working in the IT sector want to be more involved in contributing to the vision and values. The research reveals that nearly half of employees cannot recite the core values. Furthermore, those aged above 45 were least likely to be able to recite their company's vision. Two case studies conducted by Balmer and Wilson (1998) show that the goal of organizations, core values shared by all employees, may be unattainable. They suggest using the term organization's corporate identities, rather than a single identity. However, it could be said that the goal is to have one identity and without behaving accordingly, it is challenging to achieve congruent perceptions and shared values by the employees.

Balmer and Wilson (1998) remark that corporate identity is a complex phenomenon, difficult to be managed. de Chernatony and Harris (2000) note that the internalization of the core values is greater among internal stakeholders when they identify with the corporate brand. This will lead to a more consistent presentation of the brand's identity. If the core values of the brand are congruent with the stakeholder's personal values, the reputation of the brand will be favorable. Chakraverty (2018) encourages companies to rethink and refresh the vision and values to make sure they are up to date. Neill (2016) observes that organizations should review their core values to find any inconsistencies in their policies and reward systems, and then make necessary changes.

This thesis will research if there is an incongruence in the answers between two different generations considering corporate core values. The generations are baby boomers, born between the years 1946 and 1964, and millennials, born between the years 1980 and 2000. The findings are conducted by interviewing employees from both generations. The brand team is also interviewed to investigate the desired core value characteristics and organizational identity.

Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) state that millennials are known to be exceedingly affected by communication, information technologies, and economics. Usually, they have a broader perspective of supervisor-subordinate relationships, cultural diversity, the performance of tasks, and ways that communication can be used to improve organizational performance and productivity. According to Myers and Sadaghiani (2010), the behavior of the millennials can be viewed as opportunities and that the key for baby boomers is to interact with millennials to learn from each other.

Baby boomers are predominant in senior positions in most organizations and most of them are retiring in the upcoming years. Baby boomers are known to be loyal to their employers and seek long-term employment. They value teamwork and they believe in success from hard work. (Jorgensen, 2003).

The case company is KPMG Finland, which is recognized by being one of the "Big 4" companies. The "Big 4" refers to the four largest accounting firms in the world. The organization provides services in audit, tax, legal, and other business advisory services.

This thesis discovers the influence of core values on organizational identity and its perception by employees. The core values introduce the base of the identity and

managers' role is to introduce them and promote the message to the employees to have congruent behavior and values.

1.1.   The importance of the topic

One could say that there is too little evidence of whether employees understand the core values of KPMG in the desired manner, especially when KPMG has recently launched its refreshed core values. The extent of previous research on the topic is narrow when viewing two different generation's perceptions of their employer's corporate identity and core values.

It is discussed in the literature, that the understanding and implementation of the core values for a corporate brand are often insufficient and unattainable. It is too naïve to say, that all employees have the same values as the organization. Today, many employees expect their employers to share their personal values. Nevertheless, the more the employees share and understand the corporate core values, the greater the outcomes are regarding job satisfaction, job engagement, perceptual congruence, and corporate success. These outcomes are introduced in the theory and literature of this thesis. According to Lievens, Hoye and Anseel (2007), previous studies have paid little attention to the particular components that define the perceived organizational identity of employees and their interpreted external image of the organizations.

1.2.   Aim and research questions

This thesis includes four research questions, which are listed below. The research will discover the answers to these questions by interviewing KPMG employees from two different generations. The central aim of this research is to observe how the change of core values impacts the corporate identity and its perception by the employees. The answers to the research questions are revealed in the discussion chapter. The research questions referring to this study are:

1. Theoretical research question: How do corporate values impact corporate identity?

2. Empirical research question: How do the new corporate values of KPMG affect its corporate identity?

3. Empirical research question: How are the new values perceived by young vs. more experienced employees?

4. Normative research question: How can companies ensure a coherent corporate identity when communicating change in corporate values?

1.3.   Terms and definitions

This thesis is supported by several key terms that form the basis for the theory and literature review. The terms are: Corporate identity, Core values, Internal communication, Organizational culture and Employer branding. The definitions of the terms are listed below. The terms are relevant and help to understand the core of the research in the thesis. The terms are briefly explained to give the reader a short examination of the forthcoming theory and literature review.

Corporate identity

The fundamental ground for the corporate culture and corporate brand is established by corporate identity. When creating the corporate identity, the identification and the policies for communication will occur. One of the main aims of corporate identity is that it creates a unique identification of the organization that is recognizable by the employees. (Balmer, 2008). Some authors observe that this definition should be called organizational identity. The definitions are used in the literature to some extent interchangeably and are seen to overlap and that is why this thesis will apply them synonymously.

Core values

Core values reveal the fundamental beliefs and principles that an organization views as centrally important. They act as cultural cornerstones and standards of behavior for

the organization. Core values clarify the identity of the organization and support differentiation from competitors. (Lencioni, 2002).

Internal communication

Organizational communication can be divided into two different categories: external and internal communication. External communication regards customer relationship management and communication with other external stakeholders. The internal aspect of this thesis involves the communication between employees and the employer. The aim of internal communication is to create a brand, culture and employee experience. There is a clear link between employer engagement and effective internal communication. Employer engagement is one of the key elements of employer branding. (Cowie, 2019).

Employer branding

Employer branding represents the efforts of an organization to cultivate a clear vision of what makes it unique and attractive as an employer, both within and outside the organization. It combines the principles of marketing and human resource management. This thesis focuses on the internal part of employer branding as the research in it regards the employees of KPMG. Employer branding is used to maintain the organizational culture and assure the employees are engaged in it. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The research in this thesis will help to find out if the new core values affect the organizational culture.

Organizational culture

Culture reflects the common beliefs and feelings that employees have in an organization. It is built by the roots, principles, and values of the organization. Organizational culture provides the context that involves employees working together and their relationships with clients and other stakeholders. (Balmer & Greyser, 2006). Griffin (2011) points out that culture is related to share understanding by the employees.

1.4.   Limitations

The academic concepts of corporate identity, communication, and core value perception are broad research areas. They can be discovered from the internal perspective and from the external point of view. This thesis focuses on organizational identity, which is the internal aspect of corporate branding. It explains how internal communication supports the launch of core values and how they are introduced to the employees.

This thesis is limiting its scope on the internal perceptions of corporate identity and core values. Further research is suggested on the external perceptions of the clients and other outside audiences. The external perceptions affect not only the corporate identity but also the image and reputation of the company. Corporate reputation is introduced briefly in this thesis and it is explained how it correlates to corporate brand identity. The relation of employer branding to corporate identity is explained at the end of the literature review.

1.5.   Structure of the thesis

This master's thesis includes six main chapters, starting with the introduction, which gives the reader an understanding of the topic and forms the background to the research. The following chapter is the literature section, which includes academic articles, books, and journals focusing on the key terms of the study. It begins by introducing corporate identity and continues with organizational culture and core values. It is followed by a chapter of corporate reputation and communication of the core values. After the last theory chapter of employer branding, the methodology of the research is introduced by revealing the research methods, and the validity and reliability of the study.

The fourth chapter includes the findings of the empirical study and is followed by a summary and a discussion of the findings. The researcher introduces suggestions for further research and acknowledgments, followed by a Swedish summary of the thesis.

2. Theory and literature review

This chapter introduces the theory that supports the empirical part of this study. The theory helps answering the research questions and gives the reader base knowledge about the topic. The theory begins by introducing corporate identity.

2.1. Building corporate identity

Every organization has an identity. It reveals the corporate values and presents a sense of individuality that helps the organization to differentiate from its competitors. (de Chernatony & Harris 2000). Organizational culture and core values are the building blocks of corporate identity. Their relation to corporate identity is introduced after the first chapter.

2.2. Corporate identity

Corporate identity needs support from all stakeholders and requires good management to build a common understanding and commitment among the organization's stakeholders. Corporate identity is defined by de Chernatony and Harris (2000) in terms of an organization's goals and values that create a sense of individuality that differentiates the brand. Organizational identity is what organization members consider to be central to the organization and what distinguishes the organization from others. It reveals what employees perceive as a continuing or enduring feature that

links the present organization with past, and preferably, to the future organization. Like individuals, organizations decide who they are by using a certain classification scheme and then locate themselves within that scheme. (Gioia, 1998)

No one today will question the strategic importance of corporate identity to modern organizations. According to Balmer (2008), corporate identity gives the fundamental platform to corporate culture and the corporate brand. Hatch and Schultz (1997) explain corporate identity as being a commonly shared understanding of the corporate core values and characteristics. Corporate identity results from shared associations, interpretations and understandings. (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). According to Balmer and Wilson (1998), corporate identity helps employees to adapt to the organizational culture and acts as a driver to motivate and acquire a greater amount of support of the employees. Organizational members develop their identity not only concerning what others say about them but also regarding who they perceive they are (Hatch & Schultz, 2002). de Chernatony and Harris (2000) mention that greater coordination and consistency between internal stakeholders are needed to present a coherent corporate brand identity.

The identification with the corporation and the communication policies will occur when creating a corporate identity. (Balmer, 2008). Top-level managers communicate the symbolic construction of corporate identity to organizational members. However, this is interpreted and approved by organizational members based on the organization's cultural patterns, work experiences, and social influences from external relations with the environment. (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). Organizational identity is built, in addition to external factors with intra-organizational factors. The factors that contribute to the construction of organizational identity internally are the board of directors, top management team, HRM practices, operations and internal communication. (Dhalla, 2007). Thus, the role of the employees in constructing the organizational identity cannot be put aside.

According to Urde (2009), every corporate brand should include three dimensions: Functional, symbolic and emotional dimensions. These dimensions should be included in the core brand identity.

"Identity is not something genetic, safe, and secure. It is shaped by history and culture: it is about group feeling; allegiance to the state: it is, too, a common sense of culture,

custom and language, to be sure, but in an open society that can be wide and inclusive. It is always in the making and never made." (Wood, 2000).

While employees' presentation of the identity of their brand will affect the perceptions of customers, the behavior of managers will affect the perceptions of employees and acceptance of the brand identity (de Chernatony & Harris, 2000). Harris and de Chernatony (2001) reveal that even though having this said, managers and employees tend to have different perceptions of their brands' identity. This thesis will investigate if the millennials in KPMG have incongruent perceptions of the brands' identity compared to baby boomers, who have more experience working for KPMG. Brand team members have a vital role in this context, since they must first surface their own perceptions and explain the intended identity of the brand. When this is done, they should collaborate with the employees to make sure that their perceptions correspond with the intended brand identity. Employees should then be encouraged to provide feedback on how they find clients perceive the brand as a further check of coherence. (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001)

Balmer (2001) has introduced five different identity types. All five identity types should be in close alignment to be supreme. The five identity types, called "Dr. Balmer's ACID Test" are the following:

1. the actual identity (internal values, organizational behavior, activities, market scope, performance and positioning);
2. the communicated identity (the various organizational messages conveyed via primary, secondary and tertiary communications: ``total corporate communication'');
3. the conceived identity (the images/representations, reputational profile held of the organization by stakeholder groups and networks);
4. the ideal identity (the optimum positioning for the organization in a given time frame); and
5. the desired identity (the vision as articulated by corporate founder and/or the chief executive and management board).

It is important for organizations to manage their multiple types of identities to prevent possible harmful misalignment. Various identity types appear to inhabit different timeframes. Most notably, the conceived identity can lag behind the actual identity

because stakeholder groups often need time to recognize gradual changes in reality. It is a major task for managers to signal the change with communication campaigns. (Balmer & Greyser, 2002). Corporate identity can be formed by the vision of management (desired identity) and by a strategic goal of an organization that focuses on a given time period (ideal identity). Consequently, this approach is informed by the view that corporate identity should be dynamically and broadly aligned with organizational communications (communicated identity) and should be adjusted by the perceptions of stakeholders and customers. (Illia & Balmer, 2012)

Balmer's approach can be used as a new methodology for change of corporate identity. It assembles the prominent disciplinary standpoints which are important to an understanding of a business identity, business activities, culture, performance, communication, perception, strategy and leadership. (Balmer, 2001). A decade later, Balmer (2012) added two more identity types to the corporate brand constellation: the covenanted identity and the cultural identity. The ACID test has been refined, to be called: The AC4ID Test (see the two added C's). The covenanted identity stands for what the company's brand promise to be. The CEO and marketing managers are responsible for defining the covenanted identity. Cultural identity includes internal corporate brand values. The employees, with the support of the managers, are responsible for formulating the cultural corporate brand identity. (Balmer, 2012). Corporate identity has strong links to strategy and competitive advantage and is therefore seen as dynamic and influential. Corporate identity can also be informative, particularly in terms of addressing some fundamental marketing challenges, for instance, the need for corporate behaviors and performance to reflect corporate communications and corporate brand policies. (He & Balmer, 2007)

While marketing literature focuses on corporate identity, organizational literature has developed the discussion around organizational identity. (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). However, there has been a degree of convergence between the scholars of marketing and organizational behavior in association with identity studies. The definitions have been called as sister concepts due to their similarities. (He & Balmer, 2007). Compared organizational identity to corporate identity, it is traditionally, been focusing on the internal aspects and the employees. It has discussed to have a richer theoretical foundation. (Balmer, 2008). Organizational identity describes in a wide perspective how the members perceive, feel, and think about their organizations. It outlines to be

a collective, commonly shared understanding of the distinctive values of the organization. (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). The primary idea of organizational identity is that the company can have an identifiable character, which can be recognized especially by the employees. Presenting the identity of the organization can help to outline the image of the company from the employer branding point of view. It will actively present the key characteristics, image, and identity of the company by introducing its shared values as part of an employer brand value proposition. (Edwards, 2009).

According to Balmer and Greyser (2003), corporate identity is a concern of marketers and communicators, while organizational identity concerns more in particular the organizational behaviorists. From their point of view, the concepts of organizational identity and corporate identity are seemed as alter egos. They mention that this area could be conceptualized more generally speaking as identity studies. He and Balmer (2007) explain that organizational identity is the identity of the people within the organization. Many authors use these definitions effectively and interchangeably (Balmer & Greyser 2003). Having this said, the literature does not distinguish the definitions of organizational identity and corporate identity to an extent, that they could not be used interchangeably in this thesis. In addition to that, the interviewees in this thesis are both managers and other employees. Hatch and Schultz (2002), He and Balmer (2007) have examined the overlapping definitions assigned to organizational culture and identity. They noted that these two terms cannot be separated since they are so often used to describe one another. Moreover, in recent years the definitions have started to inter-penetrate and overlap (Cornelissen, Haslam & Balmer, 2007).

Organizational culture is one element of organizational identity. According to Dvorak (2016), communication, values, human capital resources, work teams, and performance are among the most significant drivers of organizational identity. They form how decisions are made, how employees behave, and how the work gets done. Managers may apply them to coordinate employees with the organizational culture and guide the organization towards its desired identity.

2.3.   Organizational culture as part of corporate identity

According to Schein (1992), culture can be seen as a platform of the social order that we live in and of the rules we abide by. Culture is persistently enacted and founded by our interactions with others and shaped by our actions. Culture indicates the stability and stiffness in the way how we are supposed to perceive, feel, and behave in each organization. Culture is not only around us but within us as well. (Schein, 1992). According to Griffin (2011), culture relates to shared meaning, shared understanding and shared sense-making.

Organizational culture implies all members of the organization, originates and evolves at all hierarchical levels. (Hatch & Schultz, 1997). According to Balmer and Greyser (2006), culture represents the collective feeling of employees being a part of a setting in an entity. The roots, values, and assumptions of the organization are building the feeling. Culture provides the context in which the employees work together and address themselves with each other and with clients and other stakeholders. (Balmer & Greyser, 2006). Thorbjørnsen and Supphellen (2011) explain that employees appear as a bridge between outside stakeholder perceptions and the internal culture of the company. Hatch and Schultz (2002) argue that when stakeholders agree with the expressions of organizational identity their attitude binds them to the organizational culture that is held in the traces of claims for identity. Processes that combine the interests and activities from all relevant stakeholder groups result in a healthy organizational identity. Dvorak (2016) argues that in many organizations, there is a gap between the desired culture and the culture employees experience. The culture that the management has envisioned and strived to be realized is not achieved. This causes inconsistency and confusion among the employees and even worse, among the customers.

The behavior of the employees needs to be coherent and aligned with the external positioning of the brand for the service brand to be perceived by customers as differentiated, attractive and consistent. (Thorbjørnsen & Supphellen, 2011). Since people will be influenced by any type of organizational communications, companies must make great effort to ensure that all activities regarding symbolism,

communication, and behavior are coherent and the fundamental influence is positive (Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006).

Hatch and Schultz (1997) suggest that in explanations of the development and maintenance of organizational identity, organizational culture must be addressed. They also claim that the cultural context affects both image-influencing managerial decisions and daily interactions between employees and outside audiences. They bring an interesting point-of-view by stating that it is increasingly difficult to distinguish between members inside and outside the organization. This is not only due to external consultants and other part-time workers working within the organization. The members of an organization interact with people outside the organization, are members of external groups, and confront organizational symbols in their lives outside the organization. It is therefore the symbols of organizational culture that become important sources of building identity and image. Organizational culture can be seen as a symbolic context in which interpretations of organizational identity are formed and in which intentions are formulated to influence the organizational image. It is focused on a broad-based history that is known in the organization's material aspects, such as names, products, buildings, and logos, including its top managers. (Hatch & Schultz, 1997).

2.4.   Core values

Core values represent the fundamental principles that guide all of a company's actions and functions as its cultural cornerstones. (Lencioni, 2002). Core values steer managers and employees in identifying which principles and behaviors are right and which are wrong. Employees should be involved in selecting the core values, and the communication of those is crucial to make them stick. (Franz, 2019). In the Oxford dictionary (2013), values are defined by "The principles or standards of behavior; one's judgment of what is important in life". The definition for a core value is therefore concluded by "A principle or belief that a person or organization views as being of central importance". Rockeach (1973) continues by emphasizing values being the concept of fundamental beliefs and unwritten standards that gives a guideline for judgments and behavior in different situations. Recognizing the importance of core

values in a corporation has a major impact on success and effectiveness. The purpose of core values is to establish a framework of standards that should underlie in the workplace, how they interact with each other and clients.

Values have served as a critical component of the organization's viewpoint recently regarding strategic direction and the foundation of corporate mission and vision. (Williams, 2002). The values within an organization answer the basic questions of who we are, how we work, and what makes us who we are as an organization. The question "who we are?" is directly related to corporate identity, which is a central aspect of this thesis. The values are created by the organizational culture with multiple sources. (McCracken, 2005). Balmer and Greyser (2003, p.33) continue by mentioning that corporate identity involves central concerns regarding "Who are we?" and "What are we?".

Core values can help companies to differentiate from their competitors by clarifying their identity and serving as an assembling point for employees. Nonetheless, 55% of all Fortune 100 organizations assert that honesty is a core value, 49% claim customer satisfaction, and 40% of all teamwork. (Lencioni, 2002).

In a research conducted in the United States, it was found that only 23% of the employees of the U.S. strongly agree that they can make use of the core values in their work every day. Not more than 27% strongly believed in the core values of their organization. (Dvorak, 2016).

To come up with strong values and being able to stick to them requires real courage. Formulating a core value statement is a painful process that companies should be ready for. According to Lencioni (2002) and Franz (2019), core values should be integrated into every employee-related process to be truly integrated into the organization. Lencioni (2002) explains that companies need to include core values to everything from hiring methods to promotions and rewards, from the first interview to the last day of work. Employees should be continuously reminded that the core values outline the basis of each decision the company makes. Lencioni (2002) points out that it takes time to integrate values in the organization by citing: "Top managers also need to understand that a good values program is like a fine wine; it's never rushed." (Lencioni, 2002)

de Chernatony and Harris (2000) suggest that workshops may be organized to increase employees' understanding of the identity of the corporate brand, the need for orientation between components and involve employees in identifying how the desired values can be translated in behavior. Employees should also be informed of behavior that does not support the desired values and ways in which inconsistencies are resolved.

Urde (2009) explains that all established corporate brands have core values that assemble the backbone of their brand track record. Track record means in this context demonstrated performance and proof that the company has lived according to its promises and values over time. (Urde, 2009). The core values are not always defined and may also vary in number. Bengley and Boyd (2000) mention that the number of core values is recommended to be three to six. It may also vary to what extent they are grounded internally and how they are perceived by the clients and other stakeholders. (Urde et al., 2007). It is vital for the management of brands to know what values the clients appreciate the company for overtime and what values the company stands for. Urde (2009) concludes by a strong statement: "A corporate brand cannot be stronger externally than it is rooted internally". This means that the values rooted in the company need to resonate with the perceived values. (Urde, 2009).

Once employees understand the core values and are aligned with them, they have a better appreciation of their positions and a greater dedication to fulfilling the promise of the brand, resulting in higher brand performance. The employees may say one thing in a given situation and do quite different altogether if the values are not internalized. It is therefore unnecessary to hope that the employees simply "live" the written values, without communicating them correctly. (Chong, 2007). The importance of how the clients appreciate them over time plays a vital role as well. The framework of brand orientation (Figure 1) introduced by Urde (2009) implicates that corporate brand building is an ongoing interaction between the organizational identity, identity of the customer, and the identity of the corporate brand core values. This thesis is not going to focus on the identity of the customer, even though it is a central part of the value foundation.

The corporate brand core values in the middle of the figure define the corporate identity and support the promise of the brand. The values have the role of guiding the

brand-building efforts internally and externally. The value foundation of a corporate brand is built together with organizational values, brand core values and perceived values. (Urde 2009).

Figure 1 The value foundation of a corporate brand

(Urde 2009).

Corporate core values form the foundation of the values on how the organization performs work and how it behaves (Chatman, 1991). Musek Lešnik in Malbašić and Brčić (2012) has discovered the relationship between organizational values as an invisible concept, and organizational behavior as a visible concept. Individuals have different beliefs, expectations, and attitudes that are invisible. He presented a values target (Figure 2), which has five concentric rings, having the core values in the center.
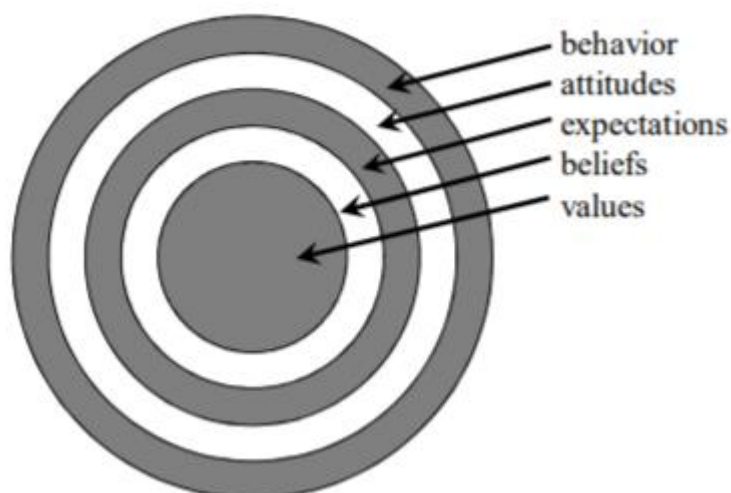
Figure 2 The Values Target

(Musek Lešnik in Malbašić & Brčić 2012).

The following ring is the beliefs of the employees which is followed by the expectations. The next ring brings us to the attitudes that ultimately, in addition to the previous ones, affect our behavior, which is the outermost ring. The behavior is visible and shown in situations inside and outside the organization. (Musek Lešnik in Malbašić & Brčić 2012). The importance of the appropriate behavior of the employees is crucial. Management has provided leadership by defining a brand's values through times. However, with the recognition of corporate branding, and therefore the important role the employees play, they need to be a part of the internal debate about defining a brand's values. (Harris & de Chernatorny, 2001).

There is no doubt of the fact that employees act as brand ambassadors and are therefore a remarkable asset for the company reputation (Hemsely, 1998). The statement of employees being the source of customer information cannot be highlighted enough. The perception clients get through the employees needs to be compatible with the senior managers' message. (Kennedy, 1977). It is therefore very important to consider if the employees' values match with the brand's desired values. (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Chong (2007) remarks that the synergy between the corporate values, the effective enactment of these values by employees and their appreciation by customers is critical to corporate brands' success.

Seeking high growth and enhanced individual performance, companies use core values as a part of a value-based management strategy (Andersson, 1997). The strategy will help the challenge that corporates face when individuals have different views and beliefs within an organization (Morgan, 2006). Blanchard and O'Connor (1997) suggest that value-based management is engaged when managers shape the values of their employees. This is supported by managers acting as an example of how they are affected by the core values and how they relate to them. (Blanchard & O'Connor, 1997). Managers must understand the organizational culture and its values since this could lead to inconsistent behavior and distract the stakeholders' perceptions of the brand. It is essential for the managers to agree on the central core values in order to present congruent perceptions. Managers also need to adapt to the changes that are made for the values and to the changing circumstances. Management needs to align the values with the promises and vice versa. The perceptions of core values take time to evolve. Core values can be seen as a mindset that over time merges the organization with its brand and customers. (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001).

Begley and Boyd (2000) remark that articulating the core values through human resource policies leads not only to a value-based culture but to a coherent vision and a clear direction and decision making. They introduce three key links to value-based culture:

1. clear articulation of the core values,
2. the influence of the values to a success-driven corporate culture and
3. reflection of the HR policies to the value-based culture.

If these links are not clearly perceived, managers should consider a substantial revision of the HR policies and the process to impose them. (Bengley & Boyd, 2000).

Core values should generate feelings. The values may lack meaning if they do not generate feelings (Urde, 2009). Lencioni (2002) builds on this by stating that executives need to repeat the value message seven times until the employees believe in it. In other words, they should be constantly promoted, in every chance possible. If the company hesitates to implement the core values in such a manner, it can poison the culture of the company. (Lencioni, 2002).

Core values can be drawn in two dimensions in Figure 3 to either "Internally rooted" or "Externally perceived and appreciated". The values merge into four types: true,

aspirational, potential and hollow. The grid gives an overview of the standing of the core values and promises. The true core values are perceived and appreciated by the customers over time and internally rooted in the organization. True core values are perceived as credible and defining for the corporation by the clients. A true core value must be protected, proven constantly, and never be taken for granted. (Urde, 2009).

Aspirational core values are a part of the value foundation and rooted in the organization and in the employees' hearts, however not in the mindset of the clients. The aspirational values play a visible part inside the organization but lack external recognition. When launching new values, they start with being aspirational and evolving with time if communicated and promoted well. (Urde, 2009). According to Lencioni (2002), aspirational values are those that currently lack success but needs to be present in the future. An example of this kind of situation is when a company needs to meet the requirements of a changing market or industry or when developing a new strategy. It is important to be careful with aspirational values, ensuring they do not fade the core.
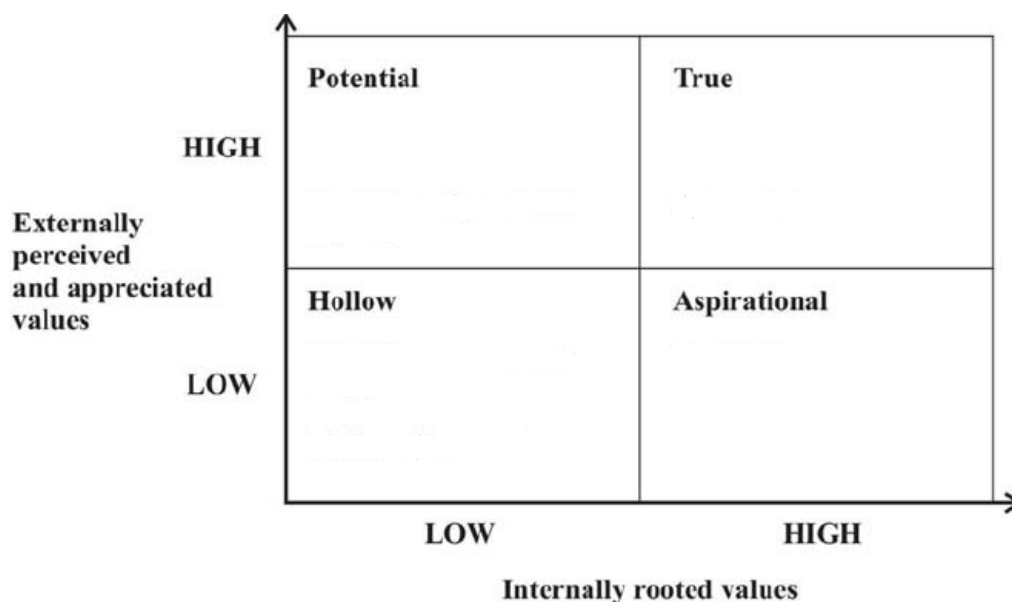

Figure 3 The core value grid

(Urde, 2009).

As the matrix shows, potential core values stand high in the external dimension, yet has a low score in the internal dimension. These values are appreciated by and in the heart of the clients. Nevertheless, they are not identified within the organization or as a part of the corporate brand identity. Thereby, there is a risk for the values being perceived in a wrong way by the clients if they are not identified internally. At the same time, potential core values may lack congruent perceptions inside the organization. (Urde, 2009)

Core values that are neither part of the corporate brand identity or appreciated by the clients is hollow core values. These values float around and have no real substance which puts the credibility of the corporation's reputation at stake. Values that fall into this category need some serious effort to evolve them become true. Hollow values should be the first ones to be taken action to, otherwise, the corporate brand promise will only stay as a slogan. Hollow values should be wedded out since they lack substance and significance both internally and externally. (Urde, 2009).

No decision should be taken lightly concerning core values, as there is always a chance of eliminating a crucial one. Corporates need to look closely at the purpose and possible future position of these values. They should be discarded if they are found to lack significant support. (Urde, 2009). According to Lencioni (2002), many companies have meaningless, toothless, and plain dishonest value statements.

Lencioni (2002) introduces additionally two value categories: permission-to-play values and accidental values. Permission-to-play values only reflect the minimum standards of behavior and social expectations of any employee. They never actually distinguish a company from its competitors, and they are usually similar among companies, especially those operating in the same region or sector. Accidental values are born spontaneously without being incubated by leadership and they remain over time. They often reflect the congruent interests or personalities of the employees and they have a positive effect when they might create an atmosphere of inclusivity. On the other hand, they might have a negative effect if preventing new opportunities. (Lencioni, 2002).

The ultimate task for companies is to build true core values. There is a challenge in building true core values from a management perspective. (Urde, 2009). This thesis

will focus on the internal aspects of the matrix and it will suggest further research to investigate the perceptions of the clients and other external stakeholders.

2.4.1. Shared values

It is out of the question that people perceive things in more similar ways when they have shared values. Companies having known and explicit values shared by the employees tend to be successful. As previously stated by Harris and de Chernatony (2011) the values of the managers shape the perceptions and interpretations of an organization, hence they might vary from the beginning. According to Urde (2009), organizations cannot own core values unless it is shared ownership with the customers, employees, and other stakeholders. Most importantly, the values need to be respected, believed in and adhered to. Shared values inside an organization give a guideline for the desired behavior. (Urde, 2009). Schein (2002, p.26) mentions social validation, meaning that beliefs and values are acknowledged only by the shared social experiences of a group. Those employees who are not willing to accept the beliefs and values run the risk of being left out of the group. (Schein, 2002)

If the shared values in an organization do not match the values of the individual, there can be conflicts resulting in wrong perceptions of the client. Thereby, the individuals in a company need to genuinely agree with the values and act according to them. Harris and de Chernatony (2001) support this notion by saying that the brand performance is better when the congruence increases between the personal values of the employees and the organizational values. They continue by stating that the performance of the brand increases when there is a bigger congruence between the values of the brand and the personal values of the employees and the personal values of the brand team. Superior brand performance and positive associations are achieved when shared organizational values are strong, appropriate and adaptive. (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001).

2.4.2. Core value behavior

The core values are established and promoted to encourage changes in behavior. Core value behavior supports the desired brand positioning and corporate culture. Core values should resonate with the value foundation of the employees and constantly explain their relevance and importance for the company. (Thorbjørnsen & Supphellen 2011). It could be said, that the notion "core value behavior" describes well the behavior of the employees when it can be linked to the core values. Hence, the notion is rarely used in the literature and it could be considered as a theoretical gap.

Change in corporate values does not occur without motivation for change. Employees should be motivated towards the core values and behave according to the new message the corporate wants to generate. The motivation might be generated in many ways. One way is to engage in the core values in order to gain respect from a supervisor. (Thorbjørnsen & Supphellen 2011). It could be said, that the greatest factor that motivates the employees is that they truly understand and respect the core values that lead to "living the values". Employees' attitudes towards the core values may differ and some might even be reluctant and skeptical about them. The personal values of the employees' do affect their attitudes towards the core values. The closer the values are, the more positive will the attitude be. Eventually, core values and the established values held by employees will not be exactly congruent. (Thorbjørnsen & Supphellen 2011). Steve Jobs, former CEO of Apple Computer, Inc. once pointed out:

"The only thing that works is management by values. Find people who are competent and bright, but more importantly, people who care exactly about the same thing you care about".

Thorbjørnsen and Supphellen (2011) advocate that there is evidence for the influence of role models in the workplace motivating employees to behave according to the core values. Employees establish their ideal self-concepts by imitating superiors and reinforce their beliefs in satisfying hopes and aspirations. Systems, procedures, and the structure of the organization may influence core value behavior. For instance, reward systems and customer relationship systems and other formal procedures such as training of employees may support the motivation of the employees. This kind of

procedural and structural support may also suppress the behavior toward the core values. (Thorbjørnsen & Supphellen 2011)

Employees having high satisfaction in their work roles performs well in their work and experience bigger congruence between organizational demands, positions in the hierarchy, and self-concept (collection of beliefs about oneself). Having this said, employees are more likely to be motivated to adhere to stated core values and be more promotion-focused compared to those under conditions of low role satisfaction. Satisfied employees have naturally greater attention to future goals, aspirations, and hopes, which usually include promotion possibilities. Employees pay more attention to this situation to the behavior of superiors, which are in a central position in promotion success. On the other hand, employees with low satisfaction on their role will be less motivated to engage in core value behavior beyond what comes naturally from their own value framework. (Thorbjørnsen & Supphellen 2011)

Managers should actively search for different solutions to involve less satisfied employees so that they would not become passive and skeptical spectators to core value behavior initiatives. By actively forming and enhancing links between stated core value and work-related behaviors, attitudes towards corporate values could be strengthened. Managers should examine their routines and patterns of action individually and look for ways to enhance their managerial behavior to better align behavior and values. According to the findings of Thorbjørnsen and Supphellen (2011), most satisfied employees are usually more successful and do a better job than the less satisfied. This group belongs to a large proportion of future managers. Less motivated employees benefit most of the core value behavior meetings and training programs. Managers should focus on promoting these events for those employees. Bad role models can not only damage the attitudes of these employees towards the core values but also weaken their general belief in core values as a tool for building corporate brands. (Thorbjørnsen & Supphellen 2011). Employees play a vital role as leading stakeholders by carrying the corporate reputation. On the contrary, corporate reputation influences employees as well (Dortok, 2006). Having this said, core value behavior influences corporate reputation.

2.5.   Assessing identity through corporate reputation

Corporate reputation contributes to constructing organizational identity (Dhalla, 2007). Favorable corporate reputation is one of the aims of corporate identity management. The goal is to obtain a positive corporate image among stakeholders. In the long run, this image may result in acquiring a positive and favorable corporate reputation. Corporate reputation influences corporate identity management programs and partly, organizational identity. (Balmer & Wilson, 1998). Corporate reputation affects the attractiveness of the organization. At a practical level, studying corporate identity and attractiveness together is important because organizations usually want to attract talent by creating an appealing employer image while at the same time ensuring that this image is congruent with the perceptions of the organizational identity of the employees. (Lievens, Hoye & Anseel, 2007)

According to Kapferer (2008), companies have become very responsive to their reputation. Reputation takes the whole of the company and it reunifies all the company's stakeholders and functions. The corporate brand is constantly present and recognizable through art funding (KPMG is the main partner of the art museum Amos Rex in Helsinki), foundations, charities and advertising. The corporate brand speaks for the company, which signals the presence of the company. Kapferer (2008) explains that because service is carried out by people, their variability is a risk for the brand. Corporate reputation has become a major concern for companies. It is a virtue, hard to achieve yet easy to lose. Employees influence the corporate reputation in a significant manner and the importance increases every day. It is impossible to have a good reputation and maintain it without the support of employees. It has become evident, that the role of employees being companies' promotors change the perceptions and behavior of other stakeholders. Employees are seeking the feeling of being proud of the company they work for and in a need of a feeling of trust for their company. (Kapferer, 2008)

Reputation is an evaluation of brand identity involving all stakeholders. To attain a favorable reputation, managers need to work with employees through consistent communication to make sure they have coherent perceptions of the intended identity. The identity needs to be understood throughout the organization in order to be

recognized by external stakeholders. The greater the congruence between the brand identity elements, the narrower the differences between the identity of the brand and its reputation and the better will the performance of the brand be. (de Chernatony & Harris, 2000). Considering that organizational members are generally aware of the perception the organization generates with external stakeholders, it is crucial for the organization to manage its interactions with external stakeholders in a way that is coherent and synergistic with the identity that it formulates internally. (Dhalla, 2007). Hatch and Schultz (2002) observe that the organizational members are not only employees but also potential organizational investors, customers and community members. The more the customers find a company's identity emotionally appealing, the more favorable image the consumers have about the organization (Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006)

According to Dortok (2006), if the company is placed among a good place to work listing, employees tend to be happier and more efficient. The company will, therefore, attract more talented employees. High reputation companies focus more on internal communication and value communication as a strategic function and associate communication with making a difference in competition and strategies in problem-solving. Dortok (2006) concludes by stating that corporate reputation cannot be separated from internal communication, which is the basic and critical component of it.

2.6.   Communication of core values

This chapter includes the internal communication of core values. It will introduce the key factors of internal communication and employer branding. Both concepts support the employee commitment and successful management of the core values. Communication supports the creation and maintaining of corporate identity.

2.6.1. Internal communication

Internal communication plays a critical part in the construction of organizational identity. Just as external communication, internal communication plays a crucial role in transferring appropriate signals to the members of the organization. Communication provides the connection between the organization, its management and its internal components. (Dhalla, 2007)

Internal communication affects the stakeholders within a company and has a clear link to job engagement. Effective communication internally is the result of strong managerial exertion. Changes in companies need to be communicated effectively. The communication of the new core values to the employees requires significant effort from the management. Nevertheless, it takes all employees to build an open culture, but the organization needs to provide the right tools that inspire the employees' interconnectivity. (Cowie, 2019)

There is little doubt about the importance of communication while building a corporate brand. According to Harris and de Chernatony (2001), incongruent perceptions will be identified and resolved by effective communication. Repeatedly communicated strategic initiatives create the desired identity of an organization. It creates a vision among organizational members when being institutionalized, leading to identifying the nature of the organization. (Dhalla, 2007).

Misunderstandings can be reduced among heterogeneous teams since they are expected to have more congruent perceptions. Organizations should make sure the brand team is heterogeneous to be effective. Moreover, employees with stable membership in the brand team will be able to communicate more frequently and informally which increases the congruent perceptions. Employees' own experiences of the brand and brand advertisements are also affecting their perceptions towards the brand identity. When all members of the organization recognize the identity of their brand, they are better able to act in a coherent way, increasing the likelihood of their actions to promote the desired identity. The communications of the brand should be coherent in order to be linked to the brand identity. (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001)

Chong (2007) observes that internal communication in building corporate brands has received less attention in the literature when compared to the focus on external communication. According to Kalla (2005), internal communication becomes more complex when companies grow. The communication should be exchanged directly from one manager to another and from supervisor to employee. It is therefore important to focus on the development of knowledge sharing skills among the managers. The importance of the balance of sources employees receive information from is also crucial. The information comes from different sources, for instance, corporate communication, management communication, and various other sources. (Kalla, 2005)

When employees understand the brand's identity, they are more likely to act in a coherent manner that supports the right perceptions of the desired identity. The importance of the frequency and the nature of communication is essential between the brand team and the employees. Communication affects perceptual congruity. (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001).

Vijayalakshmi and Uthayasuriyan (2015) remark that employers should aim to generate consistency throughout their communication material using the right words and images. When employees are systematically exposed to the value proposition of the employer brand, the culture is shaped around the corporate goals that help the company to accomplish a unique culture focused on operating in its own way (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004).

Maier (1967) reveals that when the frequency in communication among the team members is high, they are more likely to gain their perceptions regarding the brand's identity and they are more able to appreciate other members' perceptions. Bidirectional communication provides the answer to the question if the communication has been understood accurately or not (Robbins, 1991).

According to Thorbjørnsen and Supphellen (2011), if employees cannot make sense of the core values or relate to them, they can perceive internal communication strategies designed to boost core value behavior as empty rhetoric. Core value behavior is characterized as the degree to which employee behavior is in line with the brands' strategically specified core values. Harris and de Chernatony (2001) conclude that the greater the bidirectional communication is between the corporate brand team and the

employees, the more congruent will their perceptions of the brand be. It is essential to ensure that the brand team presents a coherent brand identity. The employees perceive the brand by their own experiences and based on the brand teams' message. (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). Neill (2016) reveals that internal communication promotes values and ethics among existing and potential employees under the umbrella of employer branding. Internal communication managers are aware of and embrace the movement of employer branding.

2.6.2. Employer branding as a form of communication

Recently, employer branding has gained a lot of attention as a particular form of corporate identity management by creating an image of the organization as a distinct and attractive employer, both inside and outside the organization. (Ambler & Barrow, 1996; Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The aim of employer branding is to develop employees that are committed to the core values and organizational goals created by the organization. Internal branding helps to build a workforce that is difficult for other companies to imitate. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004).

According to Backhaus and Tikoo (2004), employer branding reflects a company's efforts to promote a clear view of what makes it distinctive and attractive as an employer, both inside and outside the organization.

In this thesis employer branding is discussed in relation to corporate marketing and HR activities. Edwards (2009) supports this by explaining employer branding to be an activity where the fundamentals of marketing are applied to HR activities in relation to employees. It is extended to an HR environment, where the branded product is seen as unique and special work experience. Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) point out that while organizations commonly focus their branding efforts on developing product and corporate brands, branding can also be used in the area of human resource management and therefore aimed to differentiate people and firms. Employer branding is used to assure that current employees are engaged in the organizational culture and strategy. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004). Vijayalakshmi and Uthayasuriyan (2015) continue by explaining that an employer brand indicates the corporate identity to its current and

prospective employees, headhunters, and other stakeholders who get connected with the people side of the company. (Vijayalakshmi & Uthayasuriyan 2015). When the employment experience is clarified and carefully managed, it would support to create value and influence. The core characteristics are expected to be presented when clarifying and presenting the employer brand. (Edwards, 2009)

The concept "Employer Brand" is explained by Ambler and Barrow (1996) as "the functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment, and identified with the employing company". The proceeding employee/company relationship comes with a series of exchanges of mutual benefit and is an essential part of the company's total business network. The benefits a product brand offers to consumers, employer brand equally offers to employees. The employer brand has a personality and may be positioned in a similar manner as a product brand. Employer brand users are the employees who benefit from the work experience itself (functional), financial rewards, and other economic benefits as well as social and other psychological incomes from the workplace. (Ambler & Barrow 1996). Employer branding identifies the unique employment experience by including the sum of tangible and intangible reward features that an organization provides to its employees (Edwards, 2009). The set of reward features (advantages and benefits for the employees) is the introduction of core values and the organizational characteristics that will support to clarify the value proposition of the employer brand. It will naturally differ what employees experience and enjoy when working for an organization, but the main idea of employer branding is that it is possible to gather the totality of a common or shared employment experience. (Ambler & Barrow 1996)

Building an employer brand requires perceptual congruity by the brand team members. It is considered that there are three key factors affecting perceptual congruity: the similarity of brand team members, shared values and communication. (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001)

Communication of employer branding plays a crucial role as communication campaigns support the identified "offering" from the company by clarifying and managing the tangible and intangible features. The communication will also support organizational identity. (Edwards, 2009). The organization's focus on HRM practices

such as development programs, compensation and reward systems for employees will contribute to identity building of the organization (Dhalla, 2007)

Figure 4 from Backhaus and Tikoo (2004) provides a conceptual framework for grasping employer branding, combining principles of marketing and human resources. It shows that employer branding creates brand associations and brand loyalty as main assets. Employer brand associations form the employer image, which in turn affects the organization's attractiveness towards potential employees.
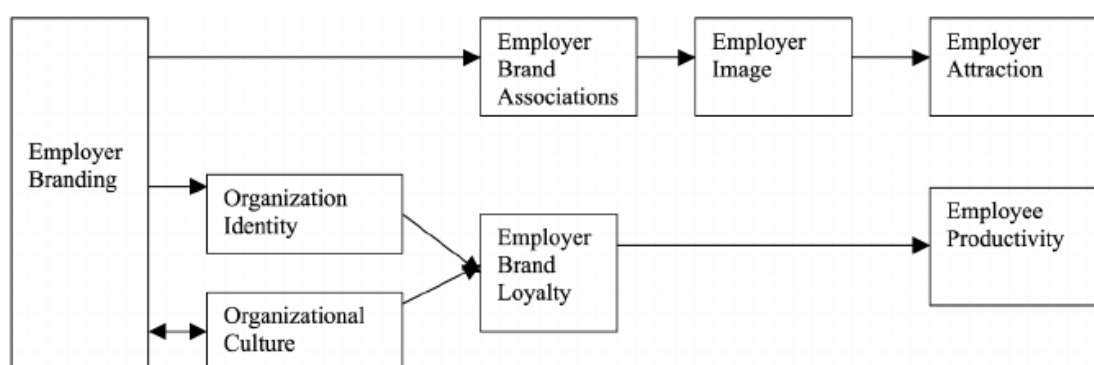
Figure 4 Employer branding framework

(Backhaus & Tikoo 2004).

As shown in figure 4 employer branding affects the organizational culture and the identity of the organization, which in turn contributes to employer brand loyalty. Organizational culture responses to the employer brand as well as employer brand loyalty help increase employee productivity. (Backhaus & Tikoo 2004)

Employees' role in the brand-building process is crucial and managers can extend their brand potential by trying to reach greater congruence among members of the brand team and between the team and other employees. (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). It is commonly cheaper to keep an existing customer than getting a new one. It could be said that this rule is equally important when referring to employees. According to Vijayalakshmi and Uthayasuriyan (2015), the employer brand will improve the loyalty of the employees towards their employers which will directly influence the work efficiency and satisfaction. In the meantime, the employee turnover rate will diminish. (Vijayalakshmi & Uthayasuriyan, 2015)

The organization needs to be aware of the brand teams' strengths and weaknesses to achieve congruent perceptions. It is also said, that organizations need to be careful when having new members in the brand team taking to account their ability to work together. (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001)

Foster et al., (2010) argue that there is an inter-relationship between the concepts corporate branding, employer branding and internal branding. Internal branding and employer branding need to be lined up to make sure that effective corporate brand management is achieved. Furthermore, since a corporate brand promise is obtained from the identity and culture of the organization, the corporate brand values should act as a guide for both internal branding and employer branding. In theory, connecting internal branding with employer branding would result in a stronger working relationship between HR and marketing functions and eventually improve organizational success and strengthen the corporate brand. (Foster et al., 2010). The desired outcome of employer branding is employer brand equity. Employer brand equity refers to the impact of brand recognition on potential and current employees. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004)

Ambler and Barrow (1996) point out that companies with greater employee individuality focus more on employer branding than the companies operating in the industrial and manufacturing sector. Employer branding is more visible when high individual skills and development are crucial, such as in consulting companies like KPMG. (Ambler & Barrow, 1996). Companies showing support for employees, open communication, and those which show evidence of fairness as part of their branded employment experience tend to attract significant identification from employees (Edwards, 2009). The employer brand provides vital information, such as elements of the working environment and retaining the employees, that leads to a psychological relationship being formed between the employer and employee. (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004). The employer brand's goal is to distinguish from its competitors and establish an interrelationship with organizational members. (Balmer, 2012; Foster et al., 2010). The brand act as a promise between the organization and the clients (and potential ones). It is therefore important that the promise is understood internally and that everyone inside the organization is committed to deliver on it. This concerns not only the customer-facing employees but also the staff in back-office. (Foster et al., 2010). Customers and other shareholders either accept or rejects the brand agreement. They

might also be indecisive or adapt to the agreement. (Balmer, 2012). Chong (2007) remarks that when brand-supporting activities are consistently performed it ensures that clients get the most personal and memorable experience of the company and its promise.

3. Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research methodology and strategy of the study. It will work as a guide for the research conducted in this thesis. It will also include the trustworthiness of this study in terms of validity and reliability.

The research data are collected by interviewing the employees of KPMG Finland. The qualitative research approach is therefore the empirical method in the research. In addition to the interviews, the collected data include perceptions and attitudes from the employees in KPMG. The interviewees (10-20 persons) have been selected randomly from different service lines around Finland.

The case company is one of the biggest companies in the field of audit, tax, legal and advisory services. As already mentioned in the introduction, KPMG is a "Big 4" company among three of its rivals (Earnst & Young, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu and PricewaterhouseCoopers). KPMG Finland has over 1400 employees in 22 locations around Finland. It is a member firm of KPMG International, which is a wide member firm network in 153 countries around the world. KPMG has acted and refreshed its global corporate values, and this research will examine more closely how they impact the corporate identity and how the values are perceived by the employees and communicated by the brand team.

3.1.   Qualitative research

Case studies are most often conducted by qualitative research methods (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Qualitative research includes collection of comprehensive data in a natural and real situation to give meaning to certain issues (Hirsjärvi et al., 1997). Usually, qualitative data are information represented as words, not numbers (Guthrie, 2010). The words are the perceptions of the core values gathered from the employees in the interviews. The information is also gathered from interviewing the brand team's desired corporate identity and the desired perceptions of the core values. The reporting is clear and analytical, and the data are recorded in interviews and generated by the support of the literature review.

3.2.   Data collection sources

The researcher is responsible for the reliability and validity of available data in the research (Guthrie, 2010). According to Silverman (2014), it is important to focus on authenticity rather than the size of the sample in qualitative research. When collecting data in both qualitative and quantitative research, interviews are the most common source. (Daymon & Holloway, 2011)

Research is characterized by the sources for the research. The data are collected from primary and secondary sources. According to Hirsjärvi, Remes and Sajavaara (1997), the material the researcher collects himself is called primary data. Interviews and personal reports from participants are usually sources for primary data (Guthrie, 2010). The primary data are derived from the interviews in this research. The primary data consist of documentation and recordings of the interviews and are carefully analyzed.

The researcher must apply and adapt the content to suit his research objectives in order to use secondary sources. These sources should be reviewed critically since they contain material collected by another researcher for a different aim. (Hirsjärvi et al., 1997). Secondary data are derived from other's accounts (Guthrie, 2010). The secondary data in this research cover a wide range of different academic journals,

websites, encyclopedias, articles, and other reference books. In this research, both primary and secondary data are used to attain enough material for the study.

3.3.   Semi-structured interview

The research interviews, one of the most important methods for the collection of qualitative data, have commonly been used in field studies. (Sandy & Dumay, 2011). The advantages of interviews are their flexibility and ability to receive insights of the respondent's mindset (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). Interviews are the most popular method of attaining knowledge for qualitative research (Hirsjärvi et al., 1997) and semi-structure interviews are the most common ones (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000). The interviews in this study are conducted in a semi-structured manner.

The interviewer should guide and give the direction for the interview, thus give the respondent time to answer as freely as possible. By doing so, the answers will be as genuine and accurate as possible. One reason for the popularity of semi-structured interviews is that they are flexible, accessible, intelligible, and, more importantly, able to reveal important and often hidden facets of employee and organizational behavior. (Sandy & Dumay, 2011).

Semi-structured interviews have standard introductions and conclusions that are called as interview guides. The guides help to compare the information from different interviews. Semi-structured interviews allow a natural flow in the discussion by flexibility in the order of the interview questions. In addition, they are looking for open-ended query questions ("why?") in order to the interviewer to understand the interviewee's views more in-depth and to elicit more elaborate responses. (Guthrie, 2010; Sandy & Dumay, 2011)

Interviews are typically performed individually but group interviews are also possible. Focus groups are the most common type, which is a technique derived from marketing and advertising. In this semi-structured technique, the interviewer gathers an appropriate location and a group of people, where the interviewer asks the group questions. Usually, focus groups have a non-random composition but should represent key targets and have a balance in gender and age. In order to attain the name and title

of group members to identify them in an appendix, a list of attendance can be circulated. Guthrie, 2010). When cross-checking viewpoints from respondents, it will help investigate different perceptions from different respondents.

The drawback of interviews is that they require time. The interviewer needs time to prepare the interview and the interviewee must give his own time to the interview as well. (Hirsjärvi et al., 1997).

The empirical part of this study is conducted through interviews in a semi-structured manner. In order to conduct a successful semi-structured interview, the interviewer should prepare certain topics in advance. The upside of this is the possibility to adapt the questions while carry out the interview. It supports receiving profound results. One of the biggest obstacles might be ensuring that all themes are covered in the available time (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The interviews held for this study were conducted in the time frame and all the interviews included every question listed in the interview guide (see appendix). The interviews followed a semi-structured theme and the discussions were open and relaxed. The questions were mainly asked in the same sequence, but some exceptions were made in order to have a natural flow in the discussion.

3.4.   Sampling

The interviewees in the research are brand managers (interviewed as a focus group), employees in generation Y (millennials), and partner- level workers (baby boomers). The first interview included five questions to the brand team. The interview of the brand team was conducted as a semi-structured interview of two brand managers.

The interview guide includes questions regarding the corporate identity, core values and internal communication of KPMG. The interviews reveal thoughts and perceptions of the millennials and baby boomers working in different service lines (audit, tax & legal and advisory) in KPMG. The interviewees are listed in the table 1 by generation and service line.

Baby boomers	
JOB TITLE	**Service line**
Partner	Advisory
Partner	Advisory
Partner	Advisory
Partner	Tax & Legal
Partner	Tax & Legal
Partner	Audit
Millennials	
JOB TITLE	**Service line**
Junior	Tax & Legal
Assistant Manager	Tax & Legal
Senior	Advisory
Assistant manager	Advisory
Assistant Manager	Audit
Senior	Audit

Table 1 List of the interviewees

The research findings are analyzed with qualitative data. As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, the interviewees are from two different generations: millennials and baby boomers. The reason for this is to attain valuable information if the younger employees have different and incongruent perceptions of the corporate values compared to the elder ones. It has been found in a previous research that baby boomers tend to least likely cite the corporate values (Chakraverty, 2018)

The interviews were conducted in spring 2020. Spring is commonly a busy season for employees in an audit company. Thus, reaching the interviewees did not cause problems for the researcher. There was more trust towards the interviewer, since I had a common background with the respondents. The interviews were scheduled by phone calls and all interviews were conducted in Microsoft Teams. The reason for not having face-to-face interviews was the ongoing Coronavirus regulations.

3.5.   Qualitative Content analysis

There are several approaches for analyzing qualitative data. Content analysis is used in many studies and it has a long history. The data are presented with content analysis and by discussion of the material in relation to earlier research and to the theory in this thesis. Qualitative data used for doing qualitative content analysis can be texts from interviews and meetings, or audiovisual data from video recordings. One aim of qualitative content analysis is to gather a holistic and factual description, which represents the larger view about the phenomenon under study. The second aim is to gain a detailed and rich interpretation of the contextual meaning of the data. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016)

The researcher relies on memo writing and recordings in order to interpret the data. The procedure reveals the role of the researcher as a subjective and self-reflective interpreter of the data. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2016).

Each interview was followed by an immediate translation of its recording. Ultimately, after finishing all interviews, the data were classified to different themes. The themes are corporate identity, perception of core values, core value behavior and communication of the core values. They refer to the key elements of the theory in this master's thesis. The main aim of clustering the data was to find the crucial issues of the study. After clustering and analyzing the raw data, responses were examined multiple times, to detect novel findings. The researcher replayed the recordings in order to grasp on all the data.

3.6.   Validity and Reliability

When determining and evaluating the authenticity and trustworthiness of a research, validity and reliability are regarded as two standard concepts. The concepts measure the quality of the research. (Daymon & Holloway, 2011).

Validity ensures the results accuracy and if the research successfully measures what it was initially aiming for (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). For this reason, validity is found as an important principle for analyzing qualitative research (Daymon & Holloway, 2011).

The term validity can be further distinguished in internal and external validity (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). Internal validity refers to the interrelationship between the issue of the study and the respondent's social environment (Daymon & Holloway, 2011).

External validity aims for generalizing the results in such a manner that those could be used in different discourses as well as for a more advanced research (Daymon & Holloway, 2011). KPMG had a change in corporate values and that is why they fitted in the research focus.

Assessing the validity of the research at hand offers reason to believe that previous research is only endorsing the finding of this study in a limited way. Nevertheless, multiple similarities can be drawn to support the findings of this research and, therefore, enable the triangulation of data.

Member checking was done to some extent during the interviews. The researcher made sure he had understood the answers correctly and translated the answers in the right words. Data saturation was achieved in the research. Data saturation reveals the point in the study when no new information is found in analyzing the data. Saturation explains that the researcher can be confident that further collection of data will yield similar findings and help to establish emerging conclusions. (Faulkner & Trotter, 2017)

Reliability points out the trustworthiness of research. The interview guide must not include bias and the questions can be asked by anyone. (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Interviews are a useful way for researchers to learn about others, yet real understanding may sometimes be elusive. The interviewer and the respondent might even speak the same language, but their words may have a completely different meaning. (Sandy & Dumay, 2011). However, as the interviewer works in the same workplace as the interviewees, they have a shared organizational culture. This strengthens the reliability of the research since the interviewer can interpret the cultural factors in a congruent context.

The researcher has a prior relation with the case company and several of the interviewees which is valuable to keep in mind when assessing this study's reliability. Nevertheless, the researcher had no personal relationships with the interviewees or previous experience of the subject, which could have created a wider hypothesis about the topic.

4. Empirical findings

The core values of KPMG are introduced in the Figure 5. They represent what KPMG is and what the company believes in. *"Everything we do is underpinned by a shared set of values that define how we work together, with our clients and communities. Our Values are our core beliefs, guiding and unifying our actions and behaviors. We were one of the first professional services organizations to define a global set of Values and they have remained core to our culture and who we are ever since."* (KPMG, 2020). The old values are listed as short sentences and the refreshed ones are explained by one word. The reason for this was to make the value statement simpler.

Figure 5 KPMG core values

(KPMG, 2020).

The definitions of the refreshed core values are listed below as they are stated in the company website. The aim for listing the definitions is to give the reader a better understanding of the values.

Bengley and Boyd (2000) reveals that the amount of core values is recommended to be three to six. The previous seven core values have been refreshed, resulting in five core values: *integrity, excellence, courage, together* and *for better.*

Integrity is explained in KPMG's intranet as following: *"**Integrity** means we are honest, fair and consistent in our words, actions and decisions – both inside and outside work. We take responsibility and accountability for our day-to-day behavior*

and we hold ourselves to the highest moral and ethical standards at all times – even when under pressure. We keep our promises and set an example for others to follow."

*"**Excellence** means relentlessly delivering quality work to the highest professional standards. We do this by staying curious and taking personal responsibility for our learning. We constantly look to improve our work through data and insight, and are open to new challenges and feedback because that is how we develop and improve"*

*"**Courage** is about being open to new ideas and being honest about the limits of our own knowledge and experience. It's about applying professional skepticism to what we see and asking questions where we have doubts. We speak up if we see something we believe is wrong and we support those who have the courage to speak up themselves. Courage is being bold enough to step outside of your comfort zone, to do what is right and meaningful for all our stakeholders."*

*"We do our best work when we do it **together**: in teams, across teams, and by working with others outside our organization. Working together is important because we know it is collaboration that shapes opinions and drives creativity. We embrace people with diverse backgrounds, skills, perspectives and life experiences and ensure different voices are heard. We show care and consideration for others and strive to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels they belong"*

*"**For better** means taking a long-term view, even in our day-to-day choices, because we want to build a stronger KPMG for future. We never lose sight of the importance of our role in building trust in the capital markets and in business. We make sustainable, positive change in our local communities and in society at large, striving to make the world a better place".*

4.1.   Interview of the brand team

The empirical part of this study began with an interview of the brand team. The aim of the interview was to gain knowledge about the desired core value behavior, corporate culture and corporate identity. The interview examined an internal view of how the core values are integrated into the company operations and how they are

communicated to the employees. At the time of this interview, the refreshed values had yet to be integrated into all the company operations, since they had been launched one week before the interview. The answers reflect hereby partly the old values.

Lencioni (2002) and Franz (2019) reveal that core values should be integrated into every employee-related situation in order to be truly integrated into the organization. According to the brand team, the values are integrated into the daily duties and decision making. Working together is a highly visible value and it shows every day. Employees work naturally in teams with integrity, which is also one of the core values. The core values can be seen in the client documents, such as marketing materials and offers and in internal documents such as risk management communication and CEO letters, says the brand managers.

"It is important that every employee thinks about the values referring to their own work and what they mean to the employee and how the values are present in their job".

According to the brand team, the top management is committed to the core values. The communication from the top management is done systematically according to the core values. Lencioni (2002) points out that companies need to include core values in their HR activities, to everything from hiring methods to promotions and rewards, from the first interview to the last day of work. The brand team explains that the values are integrated into the HR activities in KPMG. All new employees must participate in a "welcome to KPMG" day, where they are introduced to the core values, strategy and vision. During the day, several discussions and assignments are held about the values. Basic topics in the discussions are what the values mean to the employee and which one is the most important one for oneself. The KPMG story is also presented during the day (see KPMG, 2016).

The brand team mentions that the KPMG story reveals what the company stands for and what the company strives to be. The company´s promise for the customers is also included in the story. The story of KPMG answers the following questions: why we are here? what do we believe in? what do we want to be? how do we get there? how do we want the world to see us? The purpose of the story is that when KPMG unifies behind its story it performs at its best.

The brand managers explain that the employees are part of a performance development program. In the program, the individual goals are set, and it communicates the desired core value behavior in cooperation with the performance manager (supervisor).

"The fundamental base of the program is an ongoing discussion and feedback giving regarding the goals and to make sure they are clear and that the number of goals is small enough."

The employees are on a certain level of the hierarchy. The career path training guides and supports the employees achieve a higher position. In addition to measuring numbers and customer satisfaction, the career path training also measures the core value behavior of the employee. A score is given after viewing all the factors. The score is better when an employee has been behaving according to the core values. The brand managers reveal that if the employee fails to behave according to the core values, for example, does not share information (which is against the together value) the supervisor will have a discussion with the employee and it will affect the score negatively. According to the brand team, the training is a part of a culture of discussion and of giving continuous feedback.

As Chong (2007) mentions in the literature review, it is worthless to hope that the employees simply "live" the written values, without communicating them correctly. The importance of how the clients appreciate them over time plays a crucial role. Selected members of the brand team integrated the new values in the communication materials. The aim of the external communication is to be "the clear choice" for the customers supported by all the employees. The brand managers remark that the communication of the values needs to be done through various channels such as in emails, messages in the intranet, internal materials and in meetings. A brand manager explains: *"It does not help if the values are just listed on the company website with a flourish"*. The brand manager used the Finnish word: korulause.

Gioia (1998) states that corporate identity is what employees consider to be central to the organization and what distinguishes the organization from others. The brand team describes that the KPMG story forms the corporate identity (KPMG, 2016). *"It is difficult to explain with a few words. Instead, it is easy to explain it through the corporate values and vision"*. According to the brand team, the identity is recognizable in other countries as well and it is coherent across borders.

It is important to study if the employees' values match with the brand's desired values (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). The brand managers reveal that when the personal values of an employee are coherent with the values of KPMG, the employee tends to be satisfied to work for KPMG and remain with the company. According to the brand managers, it is challenging and stressful to work in a company that has dissimilar values than its own values. *"I believe that our employees would not have applied for KPMG if their values would conflict with the values of the company"*.

It is unnecessary to remind the employees of the values because everything KPMG does is done according to the core values. The brand managers point out that if you need to remind the employees of the core values, they have yet to be thoroughly integrated into the company´s operations.

4.2.   Interviews of the millennials and baby boomers

This chapter includes the findings from the interviews with the millennials and baby boomers and a summary of how they correlate with each other. The baby boomers refer to the more experienced employees and the millennials are the younger employees. The findings are divided in to the key themes: corporate identity, perceptions of the core values, core value behavior and communication of the core values.

4.2.1. Corporate identity

Millennials: The overall feeling the millennials have for KPMG is positive. The respondents feel that KPMG is a loyal employer with many talented professionals. *"KPMG is a fair employer that takes care of us employees".* According to millennials, the atmosphere in the workplace is good.

"The working environment is casual and upfront. If I would be the customer, I would rather work with KPMG compared to other Big 4 companies".

"I work with many other millennials, which creates a good working environment".

As KPMG is an international company with over 200 000 employees worldwide, it generates positive associations among the millennials. They perceive the organization to be open and reliable. The organizational identity is described by the millennials as following:

"Big, international organization with great career opportunities and talented people who are always eager to help".

"We are a big team that brings opportunities to learn from many other people".

"Big, international company with a great network. The mass brings strength".

Baby boomers: As already mentioned, the baby boomers in KPMG are mostly partners. That means they own shares of KPMG Finland. All the baby boomers in the study were partners from different service lines (audit, advisory and tax & legal).

One of the partners observes that the corporate identity has changed during the last few decades. It has evolved from being an audit firm to a multidisciplinary expert organization. *"We are nowadays a broad branched advisory community, that exists to help the clients' problems".*

According to several partners, KPMG is a friendly audit firm that respects the individual and the decisions are not made in a hurry. "Respect the individual" is one of the old values of KPMG. *"Even though the current Corona virus-situation is upon us, we don't have to be scared to lose our jobs".* Several respondents reveal that the organizational hierarchy is low. *"We don't have a hierarchy. We don't have a "sir" culture".*

"We have a low hierarchy with a tolerance of failure. Even in the hard times, the firm takes care of us".

A partner reveals that in order to avoid offending anyone, KPMG does not have an identity, but the individual and hard work is highly respected. The partner explains that KPMG must be careful and avoid building a strong identity and value statement since otherwise, it might insult some people.

The partners observe that KPMG is an organization filled with strong and deep knowledge. A few partners observe that the firm is conservative and rule-abiding,

which refers to the value "integrity". *"We consider deeply before we act, which is at the same time a slow, but a safe way of doing things"*. According to the baby boomers, the firm is human-centric as an employer. *"The organization cares genuinely about us and supports our well-being"*.

"Everyone of us knows very much of our own field".

"Our goal is to be the employer of choice, which creates the core of our identity".

"The legislation forms partly our identity, meaning that we have to be an independent firm. We are a trustworthy employer and partner".

The perceived corporate identity of all the respondents follows a congruent path. The millennials and baby boomers feel that KPMG is a human-centric organization with a lot of knowledge. The millennials feel they are in an environment that courage them to learn. Having this said, the value "excellence" is visible in the corporate culture, since it refers to high professional standards and constant learning and improving. The baby boomers perceive the organization as conservative in its actions and the millennials think in a similar way by observing that changes are made carefully. Being conservative is perceived as a positive thing since it generates a feeling of trust and security.

4.2.2. Perceptions of the core values

Millennials: The millennials struggle to list the core values of KPMG. They can barely list any of the values. One of the millennials can mention two of the values: "integrity" and "together". It can be said that without a proper launching campaign, the values might not be familiar to the millennials. The millennials observe that:

"The most important thing is not to know what the values are, but how you act".

"Many of the values seems just like listed words, but you strive to work according to them".

The millennials understand and believe in the values in general. They feel that they can make use of the core values in their work. One of the respondent's remarks that

internal cooperation works well. The value "together" seems as the most common value millennials can "live" up to, even though some respondents argue that the teams are occasionally working in "silos", that can be explained as: working in small teams and not using the full potential of the firm in order to maximize the utilization rate of the team.

The value "courage" is harder for the millennials to understand. They perceive the value as having the courage to try new ways of doing things, challenge the customer, and having the courage to say no.

One of the respondents observes that they work together regardless of the title and position in the firm. The "together" value is defined by that the firm embraces people with diverse backgrounds, skills, perspectives, and life experiences and ensure different voices are heard.

After showing the core values and their meanings to the millennials, they understand them well and can attach most of them to a real-life context.

"We need to have the courage to bring our own genuine opinions for the customer".

"Everything we do is made with integrity and excellence". Another respondent observes that: "Even though we do a great job the result cannot always be brilliant, but it is always at least good enough".

The value "for better" is commonly understood as making a positive impact on something. The millennials have understood the value as desired, which is described as making sustainable, positive change in local communities and in society, striving to make the world a better place.

"The value "for better" is more visible for the customers, as we make their life better".

"When you live according to the values, they are visible for the outside world as well".

More actions could be done in order to make the value "for better" stronger, as one millennial states: *"The value "for better" would be stronger if KPMG increased the charity work and other pro bono activities".*

The millennials emphasize that the values of KPMG are not hollow. Some respondents would like to have a better understanding of the value "courage", since they cannot tell any examples referring to this value.

Thus, a few of the respondents explain that the old values are easier to understand. *"The refreshed values seem hollower compared to the old ones and I can grasp on the old ones better since they are listed by sentences"*. Some of the respondents argue that it is easier to remember the new values since they are not as many as the old ones.

The millennials think the number of values is good. One millennial would add a value referring to equal treatment. Bengley and Boyd (2000) mentioned earlier that the number of core values is recommended to be three to six. According to the millennials, the number of values is sufficient, and most of them would not add anything to the list. One millennial would desire to keep two of the old values: "lead by example" and "respect the individual".

Baby boomers: The baby boomers can relate to the core values and feel that they share their own values with the corporate values, even though they are unable to list the values by heart. They feel that the values guide all actions in the firm. As one of the partners observes, the values are like a compass in a ship. *"The essential thing is that you go in the right direction. Achieving completely all the values is not the main thing"*.

The baby boomers observe that the first value "integrity" is the base of everything they do in their work. They explain that things get done openly and, in a way, that they can always stand behind their actions. *"We do our work in an honest way and we do not pick our side"*.

According to the partners, the work environment in KPMG supports working together. One of the partners observes that all the projects are made in teams and together with people from different service lines. They reveal that in order to keep the organization in function, we need to be able to work with other people and respect each other. The following quotes from the partners are related to the "together" value:

"It does not matter if the employee works in Turku, Helsinki, or London. The point is to gather the best team for a certain customer project. No one knows everything".

"Together, of course! Thus, some people are more eager to work together than others and it is totally natural".

"We encourage the quieter people to open up and be part of the team".

One of the respondents points out that when the goals are been set, the values should be more present. *"It is important that our goals give us enough space to fully live up to the values"*. As a millennial pointed out, a few partners explain that the teams are occasionally in silos. *"We should work more together outside our own service lines"*.

The goal is to provide quality to the customers. According to the respondents, it is important that excellence in the work is visible both internally and externally. *"The set of values strives to highlight the cooperative culture and everything we do is made with integrity and excellence. We keep our clients one step ahead"*.

"It is essential that we do our very best, always. We never offer rubbish to our clients nor get claims for our work".

"Our goal is to exceed clients' expectations and maintain being the trusted advisor".

According to some respondents, the time limits in some of the projects can be very tight. There is a risk that the quality of the work is compromised. Some respondents state that value excellence is then hard to achieve. Building trust is crucial in customer relationship management.

According to a respondent, KPMG operates in a sensitive field of business. It is important to follow the core value behavior to avoid mistakes. Mistakes occur sometimes and it is crucial to deal with the mistakes fast.

"It takes time to gain trust and it is easy to lose it. Getting it back might even be impossible. A big four company gets easily to the news. That is why it is important to offer excellence to our clients".

The refreshed values were supposed to be simpler. One of the partners observes that the old ones were easier to understand at a glance and especially the value courage needs particular focus in the launching process. Lencioni (2002) observes that executives need to repeat the value message seven times until the employees believe in it. In other words, the values should be constantly promoted whenever possible.

"There is a risk that the employees understand the value courage in a sense that we should be adventurous, which is wrong". According to a partner, the value "courage" represents our ability to react to our client's problems and if they are doing something wrong. Another partner describes that *"the clients expect viewpoints form us and we have to boldly say own opinion"*.

The number of values is good, say the partners. *"They should not be as many as the items in the Easter shopping list"*. According to a partner, it would be good to unite the values together and for better.

"The old list of values was simply too long, and the best ones remained to the new list. It is easier to behave according to the values when they are fewer".

Some of the partners mention that the old values were described better. Even if the goal was to make them simpler, the old ones were easier to understand when listed as sentences. Nevertheless, one of the partners explains that the main point is not how the values are listed. It is more important the recognize them, especially in one's work.

"The values have to be recognizable and when we see the values we can say yes, we have behaved according to them. It is not necessary to learn the values by heart but to understand the meaning behind them. That is when we have learned the values".

Only one partner would like to add values to the list. *"I would appreciate equal treatment, sustainability, innovativeness, and curiosity to be added somehow to the core values"*.

There is no significant difference in the answers between the two generations. Neither the millennials nor the baby boomers can list the core values. They understand the values similarly, as they are described in the brand material. Both generations feel they can make use of the core values in their work and they believe in the values. That being said, KPMG has accomplished a work environment, where the values can be "lived" up to. This is not usual in companies since Dvorak (2016) remarked that in the United States only 23 % of the employees of the U.S. strongly agree that they can make use of the core values in their work every day. Only 27 % strongly believed in the core values of their organization.

The respondents suggest that the values should be described well in the launching process since they are listed only by simple words. However, the value "courage" needs to be explained more in-depth. The respondents are happy with the number of values and only a couple of respondents would add something to the listing. It came out clear, that working together is the main value of all the employees and might be one of the most important assets in the organization.

4.2.3. Core value behavior

Millennials: The millennials feel that the people working for KPMG behave according to the core values. Core value behavior is recognized especially in the results of the work and in the daily routines.

Thus, some exceptions are observed in this study. One millennial explains that the younger employees are afraid to admit if they do not understand something. That kind of behavior is against the value "courage", which stands for being honest and bold enough to ask questions when having doubts. One respondent explains that some people work more together with someone they are used to working with.

According to a respondent, some millennials feel that they should always be ready to work over the regular hours. It could be said that the managers are responsible for the atmosphere among the team and the work load they share. One millennial observes that: *"Core value behavior shapes the organizational culture".*

One of the millennials explains that in crisis situations such as the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, it is especially desired to behave according to the core values.

Baby boomers: Generally, the baby boomers feel the employees are behaving according to the core values. One of the partners find it impossible to behave against the core values in KPMG, because of the neutral tone of the values.

Nevertheless, some partners reveal there are occasions where exceptions are made in the behavior, for example, when gathering a team for a project.

"Sometimes, some of us focus only on their own team and oneself in order to optimize the team's utilization rate. Those choices are not always the best for KPMG nor the client".

Another partner describes that: *"Not all of us are transparent when it comes to sharing information of new customer leads".*

They remark that the top management should act to prevent this kind of behavior, even though it happens quite rarely.

All the respondents emphasize that the employees behave according to the core values in general. They can relate to the core values and discover the core values in their own work and teams. Despite this, both generations find some misbehavior in the workplace. The misbehavior refers to the values "together" and "excellence". Some respondents reveal that these two values are not present in every occasion. Respondents from both generations explain that people are sometimes working "silos". It means they fail to use the full potential of the people in the firm, outside their own team. This type of behavior is against the "together" value since its characteristics include working across teams. It could be said, that the current structure of the organization forbids employees from living up to the "together" value and using its full potential. It could be said that the full potential would be reached if the employees' goals would support working across service lines.

The respondents remark that KPMG is leading by its values especially in difficult times and the core values are easily recognizable in the work environment.

4.2.4. Communication of the core values

Millennials: The millennials state that they can remember few emails and messages in the intranet from the top management. *"The values are mostly communicated in the intranet and through messages from the top management"*. A few millennials recall that the values have been communicated in team building events and in the welcoming events for new employees.

The communication of the core values could reach the millennials better by promoting them more. According to the millennials, the communication of the values could be more frequent. *"When we have a list of values, it is important to remind of them and of their meaning in order to really understand them"*.

"It would be good to insert the values every now and then in the internal communication messages".

According to the millennials, the communication channels that reach them best are different team meetings, meetings with the whole office and web-based channels, such as the intranet and information televisions in the office.

"The communication of the values would reach me best through the televisions in our office and through group meetings".

"Messages in intranet reach me well and team meetings, because everyone participates in them".

"When everybody is home at the moment, I would desire video messages referring to the values from the top management".

One of the millennials suggests that KPMG could send a letter home to the employees, that includes a bookmark with the values on it. *"It could even contain examples of core values behavior".*

Baby boomers: According to several respondents, the communication of the values should most importantly be done orally, through discussions and exchange of thoughts and ideas. One partner suggest that the values could be communicated through video messages from the top management. *"The fact that we look at some slides on the screen does not stick in our mind. Team meetings, trainings and workshops would be the best way of communicating those values".*

A partner remarks that a Finnish company should have values listed both in Finnish and English in order to avoid misunderstandings.

As stated by a respondent, it is important to communicate the values in multiple channels such as in the intranet and in emails and remind of the values after a year to check if the employees have been behaving according to them.

"The communication of the values reaches me best with personal discussions and workshops".

"The value discussion should be held in partner meetings and other team meetings. Value promise messages could be shared in the intranet and we could have theme weeks with external speakers of the values".

It could be said, that the communication and promotion of the core values could be stronger. The communication channels that reach the respondents best, does not vary

between the generations. The respondents reveal that the best way to promote and communicate the values is by discussions in smaller and larger team meetings. Using various channels in the core value communication is crucial. The importance of core value related communication in messages in the intranet should not be put aside.

4.2.5. Summary of employees' perceptions of corporate identity

This is a summary of the findings from the interviews. The following figure shows how employees perceive the corporate identity of KPMG. It includes citations from the baby boomers (BB) on the right, and from the millennials (MN) on the left. The answers follow a coherent trend, which can be considered as positive. Harris and de Chernatony (2001) revealed that when all members in the organization recognize the identity of their brand, they are more likely acting in a coherent way. It will increase the likelihood of their actions to promote the desired identity. They remind that the communication should be coherent in order to be attached to the brand identity.
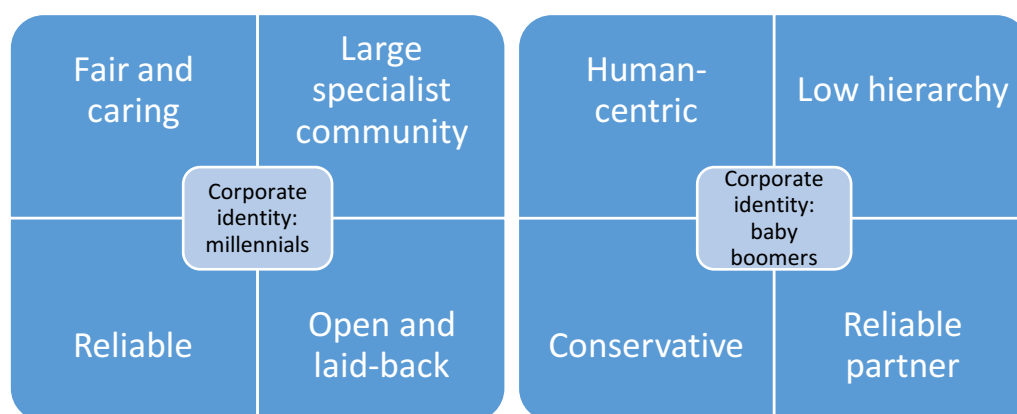

Figure 6 Corporate identity perceived of the respondents

The brand managers revealed that the desired corporate identity is derived from the KPMG story. (KPMG, 2016). It could be said that the employees' perceptions of the

identity are coherent with the desired identity, which means that the communication have reached the employees successfully. The employees are motivated in working together with each other and they are relying on the employer and their co-workers. The millennials feel that they work in a learning environment where it is easy to get help from the team. The baby boomers feel that the hierarchy is low, which supports the previous statement and it builds an open and caring atmosphere.

4.2.6. Summary of employees' perceptions of the core values

Figure 7 shows perceptions and quotes from the employees referring to each core value. It sums up the perceptions from each generation. It helps the reader to gain a general understanding of the findings from the interviews referring to the core value perceptions. The five core values are considered to be a suitable amount of values for KPMG and the employees can relate to the values by following comments:

Integrity	•BB: Our work is independent •MN: We do things well and with care
Excellence	•BB: We want to make right things in a right way •MN: Eventough the job is challenging, we strive for excellent outcome
Courage	•BB: We have to stand behind our own viewpoint •MN: We challenge the customer bravely
Together	•BB: We work as "one" KPMG. Nobody needs to chew on things by oneself. •MN: We maintain a good work spirit. We learn more as a big team.
For better	•BB: To make our clients' and their clients' life better •MN: Create value for our customers. We think and act according to a general benefit.

Figure 7 Employees' perceptions of the core values

Generally, the comments from the employees are coherent with the official explanations introduced in the beginning of chapter 4. When launching the new core values, it is important to focus on the parts of the explanations, that are not recognized by the employees.

It could be said, that the perceptions are congruent thus, they have small distinctions in the tone. The answers from the baby boomers have a tone of employer perspective, as they are in the top management and the millennials interpret those by their own words. The respondents can come up with real life examples mostly to the values: integrity, excellence and together. The value "courage" is not easily understood and the value "for better" is linked to external contexts. This thesis focuses on the internal communication of the values and it could be said that the values "courage" and "for better" are not yet internally rooted in the organization.

5. Discussion and implications

This final chapter of the thesis reflects the findings to the theory and answers to the research questions. It includes a discussion of the research, comments from the researcher and suggestions for further research.

5.1.   Discussion

This thesis has aimed to examine the new core values of KPMG and how they impact the corporate identity and employee perception. The literature has been a guide for the research and supporting the study. Based on the literature and the findings from the interviews, the answers to the research questions of this master's thesis have been found.

RQ1. Theoretical research question: How do corporate values impact corporate identity?

Every organization has an identity, which reveals the corporate values and presents a sense of individuality that helps the organization to differentiate from its competitors. (de Chernatony & Harris 2000). Organizational culture and core values are the building blocks of corporate identity. Hatch and Schultz (1997) explain corporate identity as being a commonly shared understanding of the corporate core values and characteristics.

Core value behavior supports the desired brand positioning and the corporate culture. Core values should resonate with the value foundation of the employees and constantly explain their relevance and importance to the company. (Thorbjørnsen & Supphellen 2011). One of the main aims of corporate identity is that it creates a unique identification of the organization that is recognizable by the employees. (Balmer, 2008). The corporate values define the corporate identity and support the promise of the brand. The values have the role of guiding the brand-building efforts internally and externally. The value foundation of a corporate brand is built together with organizational values, brand core values, and perceived values. (Urde 2009).

RQ2. How do the new corporate values of KPMG affect its corporate identity?

Previous research shows that corporate values form the base of corporate identity. While evaluating how the new core values affect the corporate identity it was observed that the old values were like the new values. The findings reveal that the new core values do not change the corporate identity since the value statement is similar compared to the old one. Having said this, when refreshing core values, they might only affect the corporate identity if they were unlike the old values and have a different value statement.

The core values affect the corporate identity. It is evident, that the culture of working together with integrity and striving for excellence is formed by the core values. It can be said, that the core values have a central effect on the firm's identity.

RQ3. How are the new values perceived by young vs. more experienced employees?

In this thesis, I researched two different generation's perception of the core values. The young employees refer to the millennials and the more experienced employees are the baby boomers, also discussed as partners in this study. There is no remarkable difference in the answers between the two generations. The respondents are unfamiliar with the new core values in this early stage of the launching process. After the values have been shown to the respondents in the interview, they have given thoughtful comments to help answer the research question. Figure 7 helps to show the answer to this question. It has been revealed, that the two generations have congruent perceptions of the core values. It has been observed, that both generations can relate to the core values and can make use of them in their work since they can attach the values to real-life and by giving examples of those situations.

According to previous research conducted by Chakraverty (2018) nearly half of the employees cannot recite the core values. Furthermore, those aged above 45 were least likely to be able to recite their company's vision. This study shows that age did not affect the ability to list the core values. Baby boomers were equally as unable to recite the core values of KPMG as the millennials.

The number of values is good and only a few respondents would add values that they appreciate to the listing. The refreshed core values are viewed as challenging to understand compared to the old ones since they are listed without sentences.

The value "together" is revealed as being central to the core value behavior and conversely, in the behavior against the core values. This is an important point of view and actions should be taken in reforming the organizational structure to ensure the core value behavior is coherent.

RQ4. How can companies ensure a coherent corporate identity when communicating change in corporate values?

The research reveals that using multiple channels in core value communication is crucial in terms of achieving awareness of the new core values. The channels are suggested to be both digital and verbal and the communication should be repeated during the year. The importance of communicating the values verbally in team meetings is observed to be vital. Companies should put much effort into the core value communication since it guides every decision made in the company. A coherent corporate identity is achieved when working together in teams, across teams, and by working with others outside our organization. Companies can ensure that they have a coherent corporate identity when every employee identifies the core values in their own work.

Balmer (2001) introduced different identity types in the literature review. He explained that all the identity types should be in close alignment to be complete. The "Dr. Balmer's ACID Test" cannot be measured completely, since the study investigates only the internal part of the corporate identity. The study reveals, that the actual identity (internal values, organizational behavior) is aligned with the communicated identity (the various organizational messages) and the desired identity (the vision as articulated by the chief executive and management board).

According to Lencioni (2002) and Franz (2019), core values should be integrated into every employee-related process to be truly integrated into the organization. Even though the new values are in an early state in the launching process, the brand team argues that the values are integrated into all the HR processes.

Bengley and Boyd (2000) introduced three key links to value-based culture:

1. clear articulation of the core values,
2. the influence of the values to a success-driven corporate culture and
3. reflection of the HR policies to the value-based culture.

The brand team needs to keep these key links in mind in the communication of the new core values when being an organization led by its values. Referring to the respondents, the value "courage" needs to be articulated in a greater focus.

It is important that the employees truly understand and respect the core values. It will result in "living the values". The personal values of the employees' do affect their attitudes towards core values. It has been discovered in this study that the personal

values of the employees are coherent with the core values of KPMG. The closer the values are, the more positive will the attitude be.

When employees understand the brand's identity, they are more likely to act in a more coherent manner that supports the right perceptions of the desired identity. This study shows that the employees understand the corporate identity of KPMG as desired. The importance of the frequency and the nature of communication is high between the brand team and the employees. Communication affects perceptual congruity. (Harris & de Chernatony, 2001). According to the findings of this study, the communication of the core values could be done more frequently, and the channels could vary to a larger extent.

5.2.   Suggestions for further research

Core values can be drawn in two dimensions in Figure 3 from Urde (2009) to either "Internally rooted" or "Externally perceived and appreciated". The values are categorized into four types: true, aspirational, potential, and hollow. The grid gives an overview of the standing of the core values and promises. The researcher suggests for further research to investigate the external perception and appreciations of the core values. Answers to the model can be found after researching the perceptions of the external audiences.

Corporate reputation is part of the corporate identity and it is, therefore, necessary to investigate how KPMG is perceived from the external perspective. The researcher suggests studying the perceptions of key clients, external partners, and other stakeholders in order to arrive at a conclusion of the overall perception of the corporate identity of the firm. By doing so, the conceived identity (the images/representations, reputational profile held of the organization by stakeholder groups and networks) is revealed.

The researcher suggests doing a similar study next year when the launch of the core values has been done and the refreshed values are internally rooted in the company operations. It would be valuable to investigate how the findings of this study have changed during the year and if the perceptions are similar. I suggest investigating if

the new values affect the corporate identity when rooted in company operations. A comparison between the findings from this study could be done to reveal if the internal communication of the values has been effective.

This study has been investigating the internal communication of the corporate values. The suggestion is to study the external communication of the values in order to achieve information about the channels, frequency, and audiences of the communication.

5.3.   Acknowledgements

6. Svensk sammanfattning

Det kan sägas att flera åtgärder kan vidtas för att hantera och "leva upp" till kärnvärdena i organisationer. Denna magisteruppsats introducerar företaget KPMG:s nya kärnvärden och organisationens företagsidentitet. Avhandlingen observerar hur de nya kärnvärdena påverkar företagets identitet och hur de anställda uppfattar dem.

Tidigare forskning och litteratur har visat att organisationens identitet är i centrum av dess framgång. Identiteten i organisationen kan byggas upp och utvecklas strategiskt

för att stöda dess målsättningar och för att leda organisationen till den handling som ledningen strategiskt önskar.

Med hjälp av kärnvärden kan organisationen skapa en stark identitet som ger möjlighet till organisationsaktivitet och som framkommer på ett sätt som ger organisationen möjlighet att uppnå sina organisatoriska mål på bästa sätt (Dhalla, 2007).

När företag försöker förändra eller förbättra sina befintliga värden finns det enligt Lencioni (2002) en risk att värden blir retoriskt tomma. Om värdemeddelandet blir tomt, skapas det oklarhet hos personalen och drivs en kil mellan kunder och hotar ledningens trovärdighet.

Enligt tidigare forskning utförd av Chakraverty (2018) vill 74% av de anställda som arbetar inom IT-tjänsten i Storbritannien vara mera delaktiga till att bidra till företagets vision och kärnvärden. Forskningen avslöjar att nästan hälften av de anställda inte kan räkna upp företagets kärnvärden.

De som är över 45 år är minst troliga att kunna förklara sitt företags vision. Två fallstudier utförda av Balmer och Wilson (1998) visar att organisationens mål, att kärnvärdena är klara för alla anställda, kan vara ouppnåeligt. Målet om att ha en gemensam identitet är svårt att uppnå om alla anställda inte beter sig enligt värderingarna. Balmer och Wilson (1998) påpekar att företagsidentitet är ett komplicerat fenomen som är svårt att hantera. de Chernatony och Harris (2000) påpekar att internaliseringen av kärnvärden är större bland interna intressenter när de identifierar sig med företagets varumärke. Om varumärkets kärnvärden överensstämmer med arbetarnas personliga värderingar kommer varumärkets rykte att vara bättre. Chakraverty (2018) uppmuntrar företag att tänka om och uppdatera visionen och värderingarna för att se till att de uppfyller nutida omständigheter.

Denna avhandling undersöker om det finns inkonsekvens i svaren mellan två olika generationer gällande KPMG:s kärnvärden. Generationerna är babyboomers, födda mellan åren 1946–1964, och generation y, personer födda mellan åren 1980 och 2000. Fallbolaget är KPMG Finland som är känt som ett av "Big Four" -företagen. Organisationen erbjuder tjänster inom revision, skatt, juridiska tjänster och andra affärsrådgivningstjänster.

Denna avhandling studerar hur förändringar i kärnvärdena påverkar organisationsidentiteten och hur de anställda uppfattar dessa. Kärnvärdena är centrumet för identiteten och förmännens roll är att introducera kärnvärdena och föra fram meddelandet till anställda för att skapa ett kongruent beteende och kongruenta värden.

Denna avhandling fokuserar på företagsidentitet som är den interna aspekten av företagets varumärke. Den förklarar hur intern kommunikation stöder lanseringen av kärnvärden och hur de introduceras för de anställda. Företagsrykte introduceras kort i denna avhandling och jag förklarar hur det korrelerar med företagets identitet.

Det kan sägas att det finns för lite bevis på om anställda förstår KPMG:s kärnvärden på ett önskat sätt, särskilt nu när KPMG nyligen har lanserat sina uppdaterade kärnvärden. Omfattningen av tidigare forskning om ämnet är liten då man observerar två olika generationers uppfattningar om arbetsgivarens företagsidentitet och kärnvärden.

I litteraturen diskuteras det att uppfattningen och implementeringen av kärnvärdena för ett organisationsvarumärke ofta är otillräcklig och svårfångad. Det är för naivt att säga att alla anställda har samma värderingar som organisationen har. Numera förväntar sig många anställda att deras arbetsgivare delar med sig av sina personliga värden. Det kan ändå konstateras att ju mer de anställda delar och förstår företagens kärnvärden, desto bättre blir resultaten när det gäller arbetstillfredsställelse, arbetsengagemang och företagets framgång. Lievens, Hoye och Anseel (2007) menar att det i tidigare studier har lagts lite uppmärksamhet på det som definierar hur de anställda uppfattar den organisatoriska identiteten och den tolkade externa bilden av organisationerna.

I denna avhandling ingår fyra forskningsfrågor. Jag kommer att undersöka dessa frågor genom att intervjua anställda från KPMG i två olika generationer. Det centrala syftet med denna undersökning är att observera hur uppdateringen av kärnvärden påverkar företagets identitet och hur de anställda uppfattar de nya värdena.

1. Teoretisk forskningsfråga: Hur påverkar kärnvärden företagsidentiteten?

2. Empirisk forskningsfråga: Hur påverkas organisationsidentiteten på KPMG av de nya kärnvärdena?

3. Empirisk forskningsfråga: Hur uppfattas de nya värdena av unga respektive mer erfarna anställda?

4. Normativ forskningsfråga: Hur kan företag säkerställa en sammanhängande företagsidentitet när de kommunicerar förändringar i kärnvärden?

Till följande introduceras teorin som stöder den empiriska delen av denna studie. Den börjar med att introducera teorins centrala begrepp. Begreppen är hörnstenar i studien och stöder den genom att ge relevant information om ämnet. Denna avhandling stöds av flera viktiga definitioner som utgör basen för teorin och litteraturöverblicken. Definitionerna är: Företagsidentitet, Kärnvärden, Intern kommunikation, Organisationskultur och Arbetsgivarvarumärke. Definitionerna är relevanta och hjälper till att förstå kärnan i den empiriska delen av avhandlingen.

Varje organisation har en identitet som avslöjar företagets värden och ger en känsla av individualitet som hjälper organisationen att skilja sig från sina konkurrenter. (de Chernatony & Harris 2000). Organisationskulturen och kärnvärdena är byggstenarna i företagets identitet.

Företagsidentiteten behöver stöd från alla intressenter och måste hanteras väl för att skapa gemensamma åtaganden bland organisationens intressenter. Företagsidentitet definieras av de Chernatony och Harris (2000) som organisationens mål och värderingar som skapar en känsla av individualitet som urskiljer varumärket. Organisationsidentitet är alltså vad organisationens medlemmar anser vara centralt för organisationen och vad som skiljer organisationen från andra. Den avslöjar vad de anställda upplever som en fortsatt funktion som kopplar samman den nuvarande organisationen med tidigare och sannolikt framtida händelser. Precis om individer bestämmer också organisationer vad de är genom att använda vissa klassificeringsprinciper och lokaliserar sig sedan inom dessa. (Gioia, 1998).

Organisationskultur är en del av organisationsidentiteten. Enligt Dvorak (2016) är kommunikation, värderingar, mänskliga resurser, arbetsteam och prestanda bland de viktigaste drivkrafterna för organisatorisk identitet. De bestämmer hur beslut fattas, hur anställda beter sig och hur arbetet görs. Chefer kan tillämpa dem för att samordna anställda med organisationskulturen och vägleda organisationen mot dess önskade identitet.

Enligt Schein (1992) kan kultur ses som en plattform för den sociala ordningen som vi lever i och för de regler vi följer. Kultur grundar sig på våra interaktioner med andra och formas av våra egna handlingar. Kulturen indikerar stabiliteten och styvheten på det som man skall förstå, känna och hur man skall bete sig i varje organisation. Kultur finns inte bara omkring oss utan också i oss. Enligt Griffin (2011) avser kultur gemensam mening och gemensam förståelse.

Kärnvärden representerar de grundläggande principerna som styr alla företagets handlingar och funktioner och som bildar företagets kulturella hörnstenar. (Lencioni, 2002). Kärnvärden styr chefer och anställda när de identifierar vilka principer och beteenden som är de rätta och vilka som är fel. Anställda bör vara involverade i att bestämma vilka kärnvärden organisationen har. Kommunikationen av värdena är avgörande för att få dem stanna kvar. (Franz, 2019). I Oxford-ordboken (2013) definieras värden som: "principer eller normer för beteende; man bedömer vad som är viktigt i livet". Definitionen för ett kärnvärde avslutas därför som: "En princip eller övertygelse som en person eller organisation anser vara av central betydelse". Rockeach (1973) fortsätter med att betona att värden är grundläggande övertygelser och oskrivna standarder som ger en riktlinje för bedömningar och beteenden i olika situationer. Att känna vikten av kärnvärdena i ett företag har en stor inverkan på organisationens framgång och effektivitet. Syftet med kärnvärden är att skapa en ram för standarder som bör ligga till grund för hur alla inom organisationen interagerar med varandra och med kunder.

Värderingar har fungerat genom tiderna som en viktig komponent i organisationer när det gäller företagets strategi, mission och vision. (Williams, 2002). Värden i en organisation svarar på de grundläggande frågorna om vilka vi är, hur vi arbetar och vad som gör oss till de vi är som en organisation. Frågan om "vilka vi är?" är direkt relaterad till företagsidentitet, vilket är en central aspekt som behandlas i denna magistersavhandling. (McCracken, 2005).

Till följande kommer jag att presentera den empiriska delen av denna upphandling. Den kommer att vägleda läsaren in i undersökningen. Data har samlats in genom att intervjua de anställda. Den empiriska metoden i undersökningen är kvalitativ. I samband med fallstudier är det vanligaste att använda kvalitativa metoder. (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Kvalitativ forskning inkluderar insamling av omfattande data i en naturlig

och verklig situation för att skapa förståelse för fenomenet. (Hirsjärvi et al., 1997). Vanligtvis är kvalitativa data sådan information som presenteras i ord, inte som siffror (Guthrie, 2010).

Förutom intervjuerna kommer jag att delta i workshoppar där KPMG:s varumärkesteam kommer att brainstorma om hur kärnvärdena kommuniceras. Mina insamlade data inkluderar uppfattningar och attityder från de anställda vid KPMG. Intervjuerna kommer att väljas slumpmässigt och från olika nivåer i hierarkin (10–20 personer).

Bolaget i min undersökning är ett av de största företagen inom revision, skatt, juridiska tjänster och rådgivning. Som redan nämnts i inledningen är KPMG känt som ett "Big 4" -företag bland tre av sina konkurrenter (Earnst & Young, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu och PricewaterhouseCoopers). KPMG Finland har över 1400 anställda som arbetar från 22 kontor runt om i Finland. KPMG är medlem i KPMG International som har medlemsföretag i 153 länder runt om i världen. KPMG har uppdaterat sina globala kärnvärden och denna avhandling kommer att se närmare på hur de påverkar företagets identitet, organisationskultur och hur värdena uppfattas av de anställda.

Forskare skall tillämpa innehållet så att det passar deras forskningsmål i användningen av sekundära källor. Dessa källor bör granskas kritiskt, eftersom de innehåller material som samlats in av en annan forskare för ett annat syfte. (Hirsjärvi et al., 1997). Sekundära data kommer från andras konton (Guthrie, 2010). De sekundära data i denna undersökning täcker ett brett underlag av olika akademiska tidskrifter, webbplatser, uppslagsverk, artiklar och andra referensböcker. I denna avhandling används både primära och sekundära data för att få tillräckligt med material för studien.

Till följande visas resultaten från intervjuerna. De intervjuade i forskningen är brand managers (intervjuade som en fokusgrupp), anställda i generation Y och partnernivåarbetare (babyboomers). Den första intervjun inkluderade fem frågor till varumärkesteamet. Intervjun med varumärkesteamet genomfördes som en semistrukturerad intervju med två brand managers.

Den empiriska delen i denna studie inleddes med en intervju med varumärkesteamet. Syftet med intervjun var att få kunskap om organisationens önskade kärnvärdesbeteende, företagskultur och företagsidentitet. Intervjun gav en insyn i hur kärnvärdena integreras i företagets verksamhet och hur de kommuniceras till de

anställda. I skrivande stund har de uppdaterade värdena ännu inte integrerats i hela företagets verksamhet, eftersom de lanserades en vecka efter intervjun. Svaren återspeglar härmed delvis med de gamla värdena.

Enligt varumärkesteamet är toppledningen engagerad i kärnvärdena. Kommunikationen från toppledningen sker systematiskt enligt kärnvärdena. Lencioni (2002) påpekar att företag måste inkludera kärnvärden i sina HR-aktiviteter, i allt från anställningsmetoder till kampanjer och belöningar, från den första intervjun till den sista arbetsdagen. Varumärkesteamet förklarar att värdena är integrerade i HR-aktiviteterna i KPMG. Alla de nya medarbetarna deltar i en "välkommen till KPMG"-dag, där de blir introducerade till kärnvärdena, strategin och visionen. Under dagen hålls diskussioner och övningar om värdena. Grundläggande ämnen i diskussionerna är: Vad betyder värdena för den anställda och vilket värde är det viktigaste för en själv? "KPMG-story" presenteras också under dagen, vilken som fungerar som en vägledare för företagsidentiteten.

I intervjun ställs frågor gällande företagsidentitet, kärnvärden och om den interna kommunikationen i KPMG. Intervjuerna som genomfördes våren 2020 avslöjar tankar och uppfattningar om generation Y som arbetar i olika avdelningar (revision, skatt och juridik och övrig rådgivning) vid KPMG.

Den övergripande känslan som generation Y har för KPMG är positiv. Respondenterna anser att KPMG är en lojal arbetsgivare med många begåvade experter. "KPMG är en rättvis arbetsgivare som tar hand om oss anställda". Enligt generation Y är stämningen på arbetsplatsen bra.

Generation Y förstår och tror på värdena i allmänhet. De känner att de kan utnyttja kärnvärdena i sitt arbete. Värdet "together" verkade vara det vanligaste värdet som generation Y kan "leva" upp till. Efter att jag har visat kärnvärdena och deras betydelse för respondenterna, förstår de dem väl och kan koppla de flesta av dem i vardagen.

Citaten i denna upphandling är översatta från intervjuerna. Forskaren har översatt dem själv från finska till svenska.

"Jag tror att kärnvärdebeteendet spelar en stor roll i den interna kommunikationen och hur vi arbetar med varandra".

"Allt vi gör är skapat med integritet och spetskompetens".

Kommunikationen av kärnvärdena kunde nå generation Y bättre. Enligt generation Y kunde kommunikationen av värdena vara mer frekvent. *"När vi en gång har en lista med värden är det viktigt att påminna om dem och om deras betydelse för att verkligen förstå dem"*.

Som redan nämnts, arbetar baby boomers på KPMG mestadels på partnernivå. Det betyder att de äger en andel av KPMG Finland. Alla baby boomers i studien är partners från olika servicelinjer (revision, skatt och affärsrådgivning).

En av partnerna observerar att företagets identitet har förändrats under de senaste decennierna. Identiteten har utvecklats från att anses vara ett revisionsföretag till en tvärvetenskaplig expertorganisation. *"Vi är en rådgivare med bred expertis som finns till för att lösa kundernas problem"*.

Enligt en partner är KPMG ett vänligt revisionsföretag som respekterar individen. Respektera individen är ett av de gamla värdena för KPMG. *"Vi har en låg hierarki med en tolerans för misslyckande. Även i de svåra tiderna tar företaget hand om oss"*.

Partnerna konstaterar att KPMG är en organisation fylld med stark och djup kunskap. Företaget är har människan i centrumet. *"Vi alla vet mycket om vårt eget område"*.

Det var meningen att de uppdaterade värdena skulle vara enklare. En av partnerna observerar att de gamla värdena är lättare att förstå och ger en klarare överblick jämfört med de nya värden och särskilt värdet *"courage"* behöver särskild fokus i lanseringen. *"Det finns en risk att de anställda förstår värdet "courage" i en mening att vi ska vara äventyrliga, vilket är fel"*.

Enligt en partner representerar värdet "courage" företagets förmåga att reagera på klientens problem och om man ser att klienten håller på att göra ett fel.

Antalet värden är bra, säger en av partnerna. *"De borde inte vara lika många som artiklarna på handelslistan för påsken"*.

Enligt några få svarande bör kommunikationen av värdena främst göras muntligt genom diskussioner och genom utbyte av tankar och idéer. *"Det faktum att vi tittar på några bilder på skärmen sticker inte i vårt minne. Gruppmöten, utbildningar och workshops skulle vara det bästa sättet att kommunicera dessa värden"*.

Det kan sägas att kommunikationen av kärnvärdena kunde vara starkare. Kommunikationskanalerna som når respondenterna bäst varierar inte mellan generationerna. Respondenterna avslöjar att det bästa sättet att kommunicera värdena är genom diskussioner i mindre och större gruppmöten. Det är viktigt att använda olika kanaler i kärnvärdeskommunikationen. Betydelsen av kärnvärdesrelaterad kommunikation i meddelanden på intranätet är också stor.

Till följande kommer ja att sammanfatta resultaten av den empiriska undersökningen. Företagsidentiteten anses vara sammanhängande mellan alla respondenter. Generation y och baby boomers upplever att KPMG är en individcentrerad organisation med mycket kunskap. Generation y känner att de befinner sig i en lärorik miljö. Baby boomers anser att organisationen är konservativ i sina handlingar. Generation y tänker liknande genom att observera att förändringar genomförs försiktigt. Det uppfattas som en positivt att vara konservativ, eftersom det skapar en känsla av förtroende och trygghet.

Det finns ingen märkbar skillnad i svaren mellan de två generationerna. Svararna känner inte till kärnvärdena i detta tidiga skede i lanseringsprocessen. Efter att värdena har visats för respondenterna i intervjun har de svarat med åtanke på frågorna. Det har visat sig att de två generationerna har sammanhängande uppfattningar om kärnvärdena. Det visas att båda generationerna kan relatera till kärnvärdena och kan använda sig av dem i sitt arbete. Antalet av värden är passlig och bara några respondenter skulle lägga till värden på listan. De uppdaterade kärnvärdena anses mera utmanande att förstå jämfört med de gamla, eftersom de är listade endast med enskilda ord.

Undersökningen visar att användning av flera kanaler i kärnvärdeskommunikation är avgörande för att uppnå medvetenhet om de nya kärnvärdena. Det föreslås att man använde både digitala och muntliga kommunikationskanaler och kommunikationen bör upprepas under året. Det anses som viktigt att kommunicera värden i gruppmöten och genom meddelanden i intranätet. Enligt resultaten från denna studie kunde kommunikationen av kärnvärdena vara mera frekvent och användandet av kanaler mångsidigare.

Forskaren är nöjd med forskningsprocessen samt resultaten och är tillfreds med att lämna in denna avhandling till användningen av KPMG:s varumärkesteam.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Interview guide for the brand team

1. How are the values integrated in the company operations?

2. How do KPMG inform about behaviors that do not support the desired values?

3. How would you describe the corporate identity of KPMG?

4. How often are employees reminded of the values?

Appendix 2 - Interview guide for the millennials and baby boomers.

1. What do you think and feel KPMG is?

2. Can you list the core values of KPMG?

3. How do you understand the values?

4. Do you believe in the values?

5. How can you make use of the core values in your work?

6. In what context can you identify behavior according to the core values? have you identified behavior that is not done according to the core values?

7. In what context would you desire to identify the core values?

8. Is there a value that according to you is not relevant or recognizable, why? (Is there a value that is hollow?)

9. What values would you appreciate that are not included in the corporate values?

10. How do you learn about the values of the company?

11. What communication messages can you recall in relation to corporate values?

12. What communication channels reach you best?