



OVERCOMING ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGES

A qualitative study about a changing environment and
conflict potential in an industrial company

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Purpose

The purpose of the study is to identify and explore the employees' perspectives on the root causes of existing conflicts and conflict potential in an industrial organisation due to increased customer demand at Company X. By exploring these issues this study will provide recommendations for conflict resolution practices that can improve communication, help allocate resources more effectively and enhance employee competency to improve the overall organisational performance.

Theory

The theoretical part consists of Galtung's ABC-model and Jordan's (2014,2015) categorization of conflict issues in the workplace. Galtung's ABC-model focuses on the underlying causes, behaviours, and consequences of conflicts, while Jordan's categorization provides a classification system for different types of conflicts that can occur in a workplace. The ABC-model is composed of three parts: Attitude, Behaviour, and Contradiction. Jordan's categorization includes distribution, position, structure, behavioural norms, and conviction issues. These theoretical approaches will be used to analyse how an organisational challenge such as increased customer demands can impact work culture and conflict potential within an organisation.

Method

This study follows a qualitative approach and a stratified sampling method to investigate how employees and managers in the sales and service departments perceive conflicts and

frustration and its impact on organisational changes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of 14 interviews from the sales and service department to gather rich data on employees' perceptions of frustrating conditions, company values and preferred approaches to conflict resolution.

Results

The analysis revealed themes of poor communication, limited resources, collaboration issues and skill gaps between departments as the root causes of conflicts within the organisation. Employees expect to develop trust towards management and access resources for conflict resolution. The study also found that the values of Company X are not common knowledge, resulting in employees not using them in their daily work. This research suggests that HR should establish a structured approach for communication and onboarding, including communicating the company's values to create a sense of belonging. Continued workshops and team-building activities, along with conflict resolution procedures are also beneficial to implement.

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1. Introduction

The world of work is constantly evolving, and companies are frequently faced with the challenge of adjusting to changing circumstances. Organisational changes, according to Dahl (2011), can have major impacts on employees, e.g. generating anxiety and tensions among them. Growth is one substantial organisational change that companies may face, which can put pressure and stress on employees who are expected to work harder and faster to keep up with increased demands. This kind of environment may result in longer working hours, tighter schedules and greater workloads (Dahl, 2011). When resources are limited and communication is insufficient, this, in turn, can lead to disputes and misunderstandings (Nicoson, 1997). According to Jordan (2014, 2015) it is important to address the disputes and consider the potential for conflicts that might arise from challenges that organisations are facing. They need to be addressed and understood in order to be resolved. Therefore, Jordan (2014, 2015) highlights the usefulness of conflict theories which are valuable tools to use when wanting to understand the root causes of conflicts that may have emerged by changes such as company growth caused by increased demand.

Furthermore, according to Dahl (2011), growth can be unpleasant for employees considering the ambiguity and unpredictability that it might cause. Changes in the structure, operations, and visions of an organisation might leave workers confused about their positions, duties and expectations. This can lead to emotions of uncertainty and worry, which can impact employees' stress levels even more (Dahl, 2011). It can also strain a company's resources, resulting in a lack of support, training, and resources for them. As a result of this, employees may feel overwhelmed and unsupported, which can trigger stress or even burnout (Nicoson, 1997). However, company growth can be positive financially for an organisation but it can also be a difficult challenge for employees who are expected to provide outcomes without adequate resources or efficient communication. Employees may lack clarity and direction as a result of this, causing them to disregard the company's values as they battle to keep up with the speed of work and fulfil deadlines (Nicoson, 1997). They also may feel that their work is not connected with the organisation's goals and visions when values are ignored, which in turn can lead to a lack of engagement and reduced motivation. There is also a risk that

employees sense a lack of support from managers, who may value performance above anything else (Nicoson, 1997).

Furthermore, this study aims to explore organisational challenges caused by increased customer demands which were highlighted during interviews with Company X employees. Through a review of existing literature, theoretical models and analysis of a company that has recently faced challenges with conflicts among employees which may be influenced by the growth and increased demand, this thesis aims to provide insights into the factors that influence conflict potential in the context of organisational change. By understanding the roots of issues such as increased frustration and conflicts among employees and dissatisfaction regarding the working environment, organisations can develop strategies to manage their workforce more effectively. Furthermore, this study may also be useful for HR research because it addresses the issues of organisational challenges, as well as understanding how certain challenges may affect the perceptions of workplace culture within an organisation. This can be critical to understand and consider when wanting to produce and sustain a healthy and productive work environment to develop into a competitive company in today's labour market.

1.1 The company

This research focuses on one main business area of Company X - a worldwide, industrial company headquartered in Sweden. The corporation has customers in over 180 countries and around 50 000 employees. The whole organisation is centred on the notion of decentralised responsibilities and powers, and it has four primary business areas, each with its own different divisions. This research will concentrate on one of these divisions which has its focus on the Nordic area and has a total of around 80 employees. The goal of this research is to investigate the challenges faced by the organisation and how the employees at the departments within this division understand and perceive their workplace culture and how it may be enhanced. After initial contact with the management, it emerged that there has been frustration and conflict potential between two specific departments in the organisation. To help the company address existing conflicts, this study focuses therefore on examining the first-hand experiences of employees working at company X.

2. Purpose of the study

2.1 Problem statement

Company X has experienced increased demands from customers in a short period of time and this has increased the pressure on employees to deliver. As the demand has grown rapidly, the company has not been able to adapt to the new pace, which has increased tensions and frustration in the workplace. Two departments, sales and service in particular have experienced disagreements and the management believes that this may affect the willingness to comply with the organisation's values.

The purpose of the study is to identify and explore the employees' perspectives on the root causes of existing conflicts and conflict potential in the organisation. The study aspires to provide recommendations for conflict resolution practices that can improve communication, allocate resources more effectively, and enhance employee competency to enhance overall organisational performance. Based on employee interviews the study will further explore factors such as inadequate communication between managers and employees and between employees within the different departments. Other factors that have been identified are limited resources due to increased demands, skill gaps that are causing a stressful work environment, conflicts and collaboration issues, as well as the commitment to organisational values.

Furthermore, the thesis will discuss how conflict management practices can be improved. By providing recommendations for organisational managers and managers, the study aims to address the root causes of the issues and improve the work environment at Company X as well as contribute to the broader field of HR research. The findings of this study can be valuable for organisations facing similar challenges and for HR professionals seeking to enhance their understanding of these issues. To achieve this, the study will utilise qualitative research methods, such as in-depth semi-structured interviews to gain insights and perspectives on conflicts and frustration among employees. The findings of the study will be used to identify conflict potential and inform recommendations for organisational managers and managers to improve their conflict resolution practises, which can contribute to the overall success of the organisation.

2.2 Research questions

- What do employees perceive as sources of frustration and conflict in particular in relation to the growth of the company?
- What are the employees' expectations of the leadership towards resolving undesirable conditions and conflicts?
- How do unresolved sources of frustrations among the employees influence their willingness and ability to comply with the company's espoused organisational values?

3. Previous research

3.1 Communication's effect on organisational performance

The business environment has become highly competitive, and organisations are experiencing constant changes (Yue, Men and Ferguson, 2019). The authors argue that adaptability is crucial for organisations to survive and thrive in such an environment. In 2019, the authors conducted a study that explored how transformational leadership and transparent communication can cultivate trust among employees during organisational changes (Yue, Men and Ferguson, 2019). The study aimed to investigate how employee trust develops during organisational changes and how transparent communication can positively influence employees' willingness to embrace change. The authors found that transparent communication is a critical factor in fostering openness to change among employees. When employees have access to information about organisational changes, they feel more engaged and valued, which helps them to adapt more quickly to new circumstances (Yue, Men & Ferguson, 2019).

Furthermore, the authors identified transformational leadership as another important factor in building trust during organisational changes. Transformational managers inspire and motivate employees to embrace change and work towards a shared vision. These types of managers foster a sense of teamwork and collaboration, which promotes a positive work environment (Yue, Men & Ferguson, 2019).

In conclusion, Yue, Men, and Ferguson's (2019) study highlights the importance of transparent communication and transformational leadership in cultivating employee trust. The findings suggest that organisations should prioritise open and honest communication with their employees and develop transformational managers who can inspire and motivate employees to embrace change. By doing so, organisations can create a culture of trust, collaboration, and adaptability that is essential for success in the current work environment.

James Stephon (2016) conducted a study to examine how employees' commitment to their organisation was influenced by the communication strategies employed by their managers and the support provided by the organisation. The study highlights the crucial role that

communication plays in building trust between managers and employees, which in turn leads to improved performance, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organisation. When managers communicate clearly and openly with their employees, they create an environment where employees feel valued, respected, and heard. This, according to James Stephon (2016) leads to greater trust and collaboration among team members, which can improve the overall performance.

Both studies highlight the importance of effective communication in promoting positive outcomes in the workplace. In Yue, Men, and Ferguson's (2019) study, transparent communication was found to positively influence employees' openness to change, while in James Stephon (2016) study, effective communication was identified as a key factor in building trust between managers and employees, which in turn led to improved performance, job satisfaction, and commitment to the organisation.

These findings are particularly relevant to the topic of the impact of poor communication between managers and colleagues on organisational performance. This can lead to misunderstandings, mistrust, and a lack of engagement among employees. Furthermore, it can ultimately have a negative impact on the performance, including decreased productivity, increased employee turnover, and lower job satisfaction. Companies must prioritise clear and open communication between managers and colleagues to foster trust, collaboration, and a positive work environment.

3.1.1 The impact of onboarding on organisational performance

The process of supporting newly recruited employees in adjusting to their new role is referred to as onboarding. Meyers (2023) has examined the influence of different levels of onboarding on work attitudes such as organisational performance, commitment, and job satisfaction. The author underlines the importance of effective onboarding in assisting newly hired employees in understanding an organisation's structure, goals and values. Meyers's (2023) study discovered that employees who got a higher level of onboarding experienced better organisational support and were more satisfied with their jobs. However, regardless of their level of onboarding, employees who were integrated into the company early on had higher levels of engagement and commitment than those who were not.

3.2 Growth as an organisational challenge

In their book, Penrose (1995) discusses the theory of the growth of the firm. The author argues that having a clear and well-constructed strategy is critical for a company's effective and sustainable growth. A company does not expand on its own, therefore, it is critical to manage the resources that will assist the organisation in evolving and reaching its expansion goals. Without planning, there is a possibility that the company could either waste resources or make poor decisions, making the growth ineffective. Furthermore, the author emphasises the importance of teamwork as well as effective management. When a company grows rapidly, the workload increases. That could make them want to employ people rapidly. However, that might be unfavourable to the company's growth as it is difficult for new employees to get the necessary experience quickly. Penrose (1995) also emphasises the importance of retaining employees and internally promoting them to help the company grow, but this requires a management team that is willing to encourage teamwork and collaboration to make the growth as efficient as possible, whilst also developing a healthy and safe work environment for its employees.

3.2.1 Lack of resources due to increased demands

When a company faces an organisational change such as growth, it can result in a change of the work structure for the entire organisation, particularly in terms of the amount of work. Hong et al. (2022) have in a quantitative study, researched how extended working hours affect employee well-being in a Chinese company. The authors emphasise that long working hours are a major cause of poor mental health and are linked to burnout and depression in the workforce. The study's findings suggest that shorter working hours could help reduce occupational stress, resulting in healthier employees and a healthier work environment. Furthermore, in a growing company, managing workload is critical for enhancing employee well-being (Hong et al, 2022).

3.3 Skill gaps causing occupational stress

According to Alkhalaf, Zabarello and Alzahmi (2015) one of the major challenges faced by organisations in the workplace is the shortage of skilled and experienced workers. The

authors highlight that many organisations have seen a sharp decline in qualified staff due to an increase in demand caused by global expansion. The study conducted by Alkhalaf, Zaballero, and Alzahmi (2015) is focusing on the energy sector in particular and has found that the reasons for this issue were a deficient supply of people with necessary skills and an ageing demographic with a high rate of retirees. To address these challenges, the authors suggest implementing a talent management strategy that utilises a competency-based approach. This approach can help organisations fast-track talented individuals into high-demand positions and develop the necessary capabilities for sustaining the talent pipeline. By identifying the right competencies, firms can effectively recruit and manage talent, thus addressing competency gaps and reducing stress in the workplace.

A study conducted by Thasi & van der Walt (2020) has looked into how employees within the mining industry in South Africa have been affected by skill shortages and how it has impacted their stress levels. Employees have been experiencing stress related to an overload of work caused by a shortage of skills within the industry. The authors stress that in occupational categories where there are higher levels of skill gaps, employees tend to do more work than they should without being rewarded for the work that they have done. This in turn causes a stressful environment for the employees. Thasi et al (2020) suggest that there needs to be an increased focus on employees well-being to be able to prevent skill gaps in the future.

Both of these studies are examples of how skill gaps within an industry or organisation can cause stress among employees. They show the importance of implementing strategies that focus on both well-being in the workplace but also talent management to help close skill gaps and to be able to develop a strong workforce.

3.4 Collaboration and conflict resolution in the workplace

To remain competitive in an ever-changing business environment, one of the most pressing challenges for organisations is to ensure the satisfaction of their employees. This can lead to increased efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, and job commitment (Raziq & Maulabaksh, 2015). To explore the correlation between job satisfaction and the working environment, the authors conducted a study which found a positive relationship between these factors. The

study concludes that businesses must recognize the importance of providing a good working environment in order to maximise employee job satisfaction. This has implications not only for organisational success but also for individual growth and development, as satisfied employees are more likely to contribute to their jobs.

Martono et al (2020) conducted a study that aimed to investigate the relationship between leadership style, organisational commitment, and organisational effectiveness. The study was conducted in Indonesia and included 207 participants from various divisions of an undergraduate program. The findings suggest that adopting a collaborative approach to conflict resolution can improve teamwork by accommodating variations in the tasks performed, and lead to a better working relationship between members of a company. Additionally, the study found that using collaborative resolution has a positive impact on affective commitment, which indicates that the more collaborative resolution is applied, the greater the improvement in affective commitment.

Both studies discussed have significant implications for managing conflicts and frustrations in the workplace. Raziq and Maulabaksh (2015) found that providing a good working environment can increase job satisfaction, which can in turn increase productivity, effectiveness, and job commitment. This suggests that organisations that want to manage conflicts and frustrations should focus on creating a positive working environment for their employees. Similarly, Martono et al. (2020) found that using a collaborative approach to conflict resolution can improve teamwork and lead to a better working relationship between members of a company. They also found that collaborative resolution has a positive effect on affective commitment, which means that the more collaborative resolution is applied, the more effective commitment will be improved. These findings suggest that organisations that want to manage conflicts and frustrations should prioritise a collaborative approach to conflict resolution.

3.5 The impact of company values on employee engagement

According to Osborne and Hammoud (2017), the bond between managers and employees is an essential element for engaging employees, which in turn increases organisational profitability. A case study conducted by the authors explored communication strategies that

can be used by the management to engage their employees. Based on the findings from this research, organisations attract employees who are willing to be engaged, which leads to an increase in employee engagement that results in high profitability. The findings indicated that implementing successful employee engagement strategies is critical to organisational success and managers who embark on an employee engagement strategy must develop good listening techniques, be fair, have and demonstrate respect, build trust, and understand the employees' concerns. By applying effective employee engagement strategies, managers could achieve improved employee performance and gain a greater organisational profitability.

Lastly, Chandani et al. (2016) explore the factors that influence employee engagement inside organisations. The authors address the significance of company values. They highlight the value of properly communicating company values. Employees who understand and adhere to a company's principles are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and commitment to the organisation, which in turn makes them more engaged and committed to the company's organisational values.

Both of these studies emphasise the importance of clearly communicating company values in order to make employees commit to them. A shared understanding of an organisation's core values will aid in the development of a healthy work environment while also enhancing engagement and performance among employees.

4. Theory

4.1 Theoretical approach

There has been limited research on how employees perceive and are impacted by organisational changes such as rapid growth in companies. To look into this, two conflict theories will therefore serve as a theoretical framework to delve further into these issues and analyse how employees view and perceive their work environment. Galtung's ABC-model (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015) and Jordan's (2014) types of conflict issue categorization provide different but complementary perspectives on the nature and dynamics of conflicts. Galtung's ABC-model focuses on the underlying causes, behaviours, and consequences of conflicts, while Jordan's (2014) types of conflict issues provide a classification system for different types of conflicts that can occur in the workplace. The choice of using these theories stems from their ability to dig deeper into conflicts that arise within organisations. Using the theories together, it allows for complementary perspectives on the nature of conflicts.

4.1.1 Definition of conflict

According to Jordan (2015), conflict can be defined as something that arises when one or more parties have strong desires that they are unwilling to compromise on, and they feel that these desires are being hindered by someone else. The obstruction causes frustration in at least one of the parties, which prompts them to take action against the other party. The frustration creates a driving force that propels the conflict to continue.

4.1.2 The ABC-model

The ABC-model, also known as the conflict triangle, was developed by the Norwegian peace scholar Johan Galtung (1969) and is used to analyse different elements of conflicts in order to find their core causes and potential remedies (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015). The model is composed of three parts: *A) Attitude, B) Behaviour, and C) Contradiction.*

Contradiction refers to opposing interests and demands between parties. According to Galtung (1969) and Jordan (2015), it is most productive to begin resolving a disagreement

by recognizing and addressing the substantive concerns. These are the unacknowledged desires or needs that are blocked by the conflict. The author points out that these fundamental difficulties may not be immediately apparent or recognized by all those concerned. Furthermore, the C-corner is used to represent the beginning point for resolving these substantive concerns in a disagreement (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015).

Another facet of the triangle that plays a crucial role in the formation of conflicts is *behaviour*, and how parties act and communicate can have an influence on the conflict. This involves how the parties connect with one another using various ways such as dialogues, talks, and processes. Behaviour problems, such as not listening and blaming, can contribute to conflict escalation. The idea is to transform these dysfunctional tendencies into more productive ones to effectively manage the conflict (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015).

The third component of the concept is *attitude*, which focuses on the narratives and identities of those participating in a conflict. It consists of three internal components: cognition, feelings, and motivation. It is possible to understand how distinct and often contradictory interpretations of a disagreement might emerge by analysing the attitudes of the persons involved (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015).

4.1.3 Types of conflicts issues categorization

Jordan (2014, 2015) explains that conflicts are an inherent part of organisational life and that conflicts can arise when the desires of individuals or groups are hindered by others. Therefore, he has outlined a set of themes that organisations can use as a guideline to get an overview of the existing conflicts, to be able to effectively and constructively manage the issues within their organisation.

The first category of conflict issues that Jordan (2014, 2015) argues for are *distribution issues*. These issues, including individuals' differing preferences for how resources should be allocated, exist in every workplace. People may have different opinions on how budgets should be structured and how resources should be distributed and that is one component of distribution that entails money. The same applies to workload distribution and time management. It is crucial to evaluate how evenly the work is distributed and whether there is enough time for tasks to be completed. Different perspectives on how to use time and how

much time to set aside can have an impact on those who aim to do high-quality work but are constrained by time.

The second category is *position issues*, which pertain to conflicts over certain roles, positions and tasks within the organisation. These are similar to distribution issues but have a bigger focus on things that cannot be divided and have a more distinct approach to distribution. This can apply to personal issues like deciding who should be given priority, who is entitled to carry out particular tasks, and who should have certain roles. It may also involve informal position issues, such as conflicts of interest related to the informal management or a lack of established structures among working groups.

The first two themes concern the distribution of various elements within an existing structure. The third theme, which is *structure issues*, addresses deeper issues that determine the overall organisation of the workplace. This can be disputes over organisational routines, regulations, methods, roles and responsibilities, as well as issues related to delegation of authority and strategic orientation. It is related to the type of work that needs to be done, how roles and duties are assigned or delegated, or how routines or regulations are to be interpreted.

The fourth category, *behavioural issues*, is usually the most challenging and requires utmost care in creating a good work environment or handling conflicts. It concerns workplace behaviour, norms, and what is acceptable and not in terms of treatment and performance. It also involves interaction and expectations of each other between colleagues and managers. As the author describes it, behavioural issues can go in different directions, both between colleagues but also between employees and managers. He further emphasises that the behavioural norm issues can be divided into two subsections. The first one that he discusses is treatment. It relates to how people behave towards each other, how they communicate and what languages are acceptable in the workplace, and how people show emotions or how they act when they give or receive criticism. These all have to do with wishes and thoughts on how others should behave in the workplace.

The second subsection that is being discussed in regard to *behavioural norms* is the views and opinions on how other people manage and do their work. People can have opinions on how others work without it even having an impact on their own work. This can involve having personal opinions or values about how certain things should be done and if someone

does the opposite of what one expected it could lead to frustration or cause reactions. Jordan (2014, 2015) explains that these types of questions are important to pay attention to since they are very difficult to talk about and harder to solve. They have to do with subjective experience or opinions, which means that they are more personal and people can see the viewpoint of others, everyone can just see things from their own perspective which can affect the atmosphere in the workplace if they are not talked about.

Conviction issues, which are usually uncommon in the workplace, are the focus of the last issue that Jordan (2014, 2015) discusses. Such issues are special because they involve people's deeply rooted values or views regarding particular things. A person might, for instance, have a personal value or belief about what approach is best used for completing a task in the most effective way. These questions have the potential to lead to serious dilemmas since it can lead to questions like: Can you, for instance, continue to work at a company where you violate your moral principles or with someone that has a different viewpoint on things than you? Given that different people will hold different values and opinions, it is crucial to use caution when making decisions. Collegial respect must always be upheld, especially while working with individuals who are highly competent and committed (Jordan 2014, 2015).

5. Method

5.1 Choice of method

This study has aimed to identify and explore the root causes of the challenges faced by employees and the organisation as a whole due to increased growth at Company X. A qualitative approach and a stratified sampling method have therefore been used in this research. According to Ritchie and Lewis et al. (2014) qualitative research is viewed as a natural and interpretive approach that focuses on looking at things "from the inside" and is based on the perspectives of the study subjects. This kind of approach has been utilised to understand how the participants interpret and experience their work environment in order to get a more thorough and in-depth understanding of their cultural surroundings (Ritchie and Lewis et al. 2014). Stratified sampling is a form of random sampling which involves breaking up the population into smaller subgroups and choosing a sample from each group (Creswell, 2014). In this case, the sales and service departments have been the subgroups. The study has aimed to compare the experiences of the employees to be able to spot any discrepancies or similarities. This is crucial because it gives a general perspective of the larger employee populations within each department, and the aim of stratified sampling, according to author Trochim (2006), is to guarantee that each group is sufficiently represented in the sample so that the findings of the study are more indicative of the population as a whole.

5.2 Research setting

Company X is a global industrial company that designs, manufactures, and sells a wide range of industrial tools and products. The division that has been in focus for this study has experienced increased demand from customers leading to growth. The study has therefore focused on the experiences and perceptions of the employees' work environment and the potential for conflicts. Furthermore, one of the employees with whom the authors of this study have close contact with has provided necessary information about the company as well as other relevant internal data e.g. organisation chart and the organisational structure.

5.3 Selection of participants

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with employees that represented different departments within the division, in order to gather data regarding their perceptions of the work environment (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2015). A total of 14 interviews have been conducted to get as much rich data as feasible and to be able to achieve saturation. According to Charmaz (2006), theoretical saturation is attained by modifying the pattern's attributes up until no new ones appear. The interviewees were employees working in the sales and service department whose roles are service technician and salesperson. These interviewees were chosen to be investigated as the most interference between these departments has been identified by the management. Interviews were conducted with seven respondents from each department. As it is a more male-dominated industry, more men than women were interviewed. The sample consisted of a mixed seniority level, with some respondents having worked for a few months to over 15 years in the company. The age of the respondents varied between 30-50+.

5.4 Data collection

To gather the data that was needed for this study, 14 interviews in total have been conducted for approximately 1 hour each. The interview guide has included both open-ended and closed-ended questions, with a focus on topics such as employees' perceptions of frustrating conditions within the company, how committed they are to their communicated values and values as well as what expectations employees might have of preferred approaches to conflict resolutions in the workplace (See Appendix 2). The purpose of this interview guide was, among other things, to capture the respondents' experiences of what may have been sources of conflict, but by asking open-ended questions they were allowed to speak freely without being influenced by interviewers. The interviews were held in Swedish and the citations were translated to English in order to be used in the results of the thesis. The interview guide was organised in a way where it was first divided into background questions such as asking how long the employee worked in the organisation and about the daily work tasks, this can be argued to give the interviewee a comfortable start. Then the interview guide was chosen to divide the rest of the interview into three different themes which were *Impact of changes in the Company*, *Company Culture and Values* and *Conflict and Frustration*. Under these themes, open-ended questions were asked which led to the respondents being able to speak freely without being influenced in any specific direction. At the end of the interview guide,

there was a summary section which allowed the respondents to ask a question if something was unclear during the interview or to highlight something else important to discuss, this reduced the risk of confusion and the opportunity for respondents to be able to share reflections. The interviews were held both in person but also digitally through Microsoft Teams in order to be time efficient since some of the interviewees and interviewers had a distance difference. Lastly, the interviews have been recorded, transcribed and analysed which has helped to assure consistency and reduce biases (Kvale, 1996). The secondary data was collected through scientific articles and previous research within the topic. In order to find relevant studies and articles the authors keyword for searching was in relation to the subject of conflicts and organisational changes. The keywords used were for example, conflicts in an international company, conflict potential and increased demands, organisational changes, ABC-model, conflict resolution. Furthermore, peer reviewed articles were used. Using both semi-structured interviews and previous research as data collection strategy might lead to a deeper understanding of the subject (Lewis & McNaughton, 2014).

5.5 Data analysis

In this study, a thematic analysis strategy has been employed. Thematic analysis, according to Charmaz (2006), entails identifying and classifying themes from the gathered data and can be used to spot correlations and patterns that might not be immediately obvious. Instead of focusing on what is happening, it enables researchers to concentrate on the significance and meaning of the facts. Therefore, the interview transcriptions have been coded using Charmaz's (2006) coding example. The transcription was partially made from the app Microsoft Teams, where the interviews were recorded. In order to check misspellings and to add correct or missed sentences the authors transcribed the material by listening to the recordings after the interviews. After the interviews and the notes were done the analysis of creating codes, themes and subthemes started. The five codes that were found after doing the analysis were *Ineffective communication*, *Commitment to company values*, *Collaboration issues*, *Skill gaps causing occupational stress* and *Company growth (increased demand) leading to a lack of resources*. Furthermore, when analysing the themes that were discovered in the data, the ABC model of Galtung (Jordan, 2015) was used, along with the complementary theories that are included in the theory section. Due to the sensitivity of the topic, codes for the individual interviewees have not been included to minimise the risk of

linking the quotes to the person and to act in accordance with anonymity and confidentiality (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). The answers from the respondents have not been specified from what department the employee is from in the result, this is due to increase the anonymity and to create a confidential environment.

5.6 Trustworthiness

Since first-hand data through interviews with employees have been conducted, it indicates a high level of reliability. However, to gain an additional perspective on the situation which could be to incorporate a management perspective on the work environment, it could be beneficial to consider doing a comparative study in the future, where employees' and managers' perceptions are compared to each other. This would give a deeper understanding of the challenges that the company has gone through. Moreover, the absence of personal connections or biases most likely helped to create a safe environment for the employees to share their experiences. Additionally, due to the trusting environment created by this, all participants provided sensitive and personal information, something they might not have done if the study had been conducted by a company employee. This, in turn, has strengthened the validity of the study. However, the topic of discussing conflicts and frustration can be sensitive and it can therefore be argued that employees do not mention all of their concerns and inputs as it is a sensitive topic. Nevertheless, the authors of this study still received answers from the interviewees that are consistent which shows common dissatisfaction.

This study employed the Levels of Action theory of Jordan (2015) to explore the many levels of action in conflict. The ABC-model by Johan Galtung (Jordan. 2015) was used to address the relational dimensions of conflict. The ABC-model helped to clarify what the disagreements were about and what their potential causes might have been.

5.7 Ethical considerations

According to the Swedish Research Council, Vetenskapsrådet (2017), it is important to follow good research practices. One such factor is obtaining informed consent, which entails getting the interviewees' agreement to participate in the interview and making sure they fully understand its nature and purpose. Informed consent has been informed as a fundamental

ethical standard while conducting interviews. Another crucial and ethical factor we have taken into account when conducting the interviews has been confidentiality. Unless the respondent expressly consents for the material to be disclosed, the American Psychological Association (APA, 2017) recommends researchers protect the confidentiality of the information gathered during interviews. This means that any information provided to third parties during an interview should only be done with the interviewee's consent. The issue of anonymity while interviewing is another ethical dilemma that has been considered. By allowing interviewees to remain anonymous, openness and honesty have been promoted while also shielding them from any possible negative outcomes (Vetenskapsrådet, 2017). Finally, it has been important to be mindful of the potential for harm to the interviewee or others when conducting interviews, so there has been an understanding of potential risks and necessary precautions have been taken into consideration in order to reduce them.

5.8 Limitations

The study has included a sample of 14 employees within the division, this might not be fully representative of the larger population so that could be considered a limitation of the study. Additionally, the study has mainly focused on two departments, and there is a possibility that there are other factors that have contributed to the challenges faced by the organisation. The study could have benefited if a larger population was interviewed, both from different departments but also interviewing Company X subcontractors since they were mentioned by the employees during the interviews, this would have led to more perspectives to the study. Another limitation is therefore that the issue has not been investigated from a broader perspective. Furthermore, the study could benefit from interviewing the management as well to get their perspective on the conflict potential and their own ideas on solution practices to gain better insights on their daily challenges and also investigate how the HR management is handling the conflicts today. Since there is only one HR person at the department that was not possible due to anonymity issues.

The theory of Galtung's ABC-model (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015) was used because the model covers varying levels of conflict in relational aspects, it was critical in understanding the results. Since there were indications that existing conflicts were potentially causing employee dissatisfaction this model was used to assist in revealing what the conflicts were

about, how different actors felt and thought, and how it caused them to act. Although not all components of the theory were matched to the issues, the contradiction level in the ABC-model was not the primary component of the conflicts, it was mainly the attitudes and behaviours that were appropriate in the analysis. This, however, is consistent with Jordan's (2015) rationale for how the model should be used, which is that the model may be used to determine which of the three components contains the majority of the conflict.

6. Results & Analysis

The three questions this study has aimed to answer are: What do employees perceive as sources of frustration and conflict in particular in relation to the growth of the company? What are the employees' expectations of the leadership towards resolving undesired conditions and conflicts? And, How do unresolved sources of frustrations among the employees influence their willingness and ability to comply with the company's espoused organisational values? The results of these questions will be addressed in the following section based on the 14 interviews that have been conducted with employees.

6.1 Employee interviews

The analysis of the interviews has revealed clear themes of what the conflicts are based on. The themes that have been identified are poor communication between managers and colleagues, a rapidly growing company leading to a lack of resources in a short period of time, a lack of the right skills in the company leading to a more stressful environment, conflicts and collaboration issues and lastly the commitment of following the company's core values. To ensure that the research questions are clearly addressed, the questions will serve as the foundation for the results section. The section will be divided into three main categories based on the research questions. Each category will consist of subsections containing the identified themes that are connected to each question. Furthermore, Jordans (2015) type of conflict issues will be addressed in the analysis as well using the ABC-model as a tool for the analysis. In the table below the codes and their analytical connection to the ABC-model is stated along with the frequency which shows how many times the issues were raised during the interviews.

Codes	Analytical connection - themes	Frequency
Commitment to company values	Structure Behavioural norm	14
Ineffective communication	Structure Behavioural norm	13
Collaboration issues	Position Structure Behavioural norm	10
Skill gaps causing occupational stress		9
Company growth (increased need and demand) leading to lack of resources	Distribution Structure Behavioural norm Conviction	5

Figure 1. Connection between theory and code analysis made from the employee interviews. *Note: The frequency is based on the number of times the subject has come up in the interviews.*

6.2 Sources of frustration and conflict

6.2.1 Ineffective communication

Throughout the majority of the interviews, it was revealed that a major source of conflict has been the lack of communication not only between managers and employees but also between employees. One reason given for this was that the company was growing, which had a negative impact on the leadership and it has appeared in the interviews that managers haven't had time to prioritise the employees' thoughts or problems and lacked in giving them the support that they have felt that they needed. In addition, the communication between the departments is lacking because of different ways of working. This has created a crack in the

communication between both employees and managers within the company and that can be seen in the following examples:

So we were passed back and forth between the managers, so then we took it directly with the top management and that was when they took it seriously. (Employee 5)

I think it is taken seriously up to one or two levels above me, then the question is how much information goes all the way to the top. I could imagine that a lot of it is being filtered. (Employee 11)

The issue in the example is a *structure* and *behaviour* issue since there seems to be no routine or method for how to handle information, complaints or other concerns left by the employees in a strategic way. This in turn has affected the trust for the management to deal with concerns which in turn can lead to decreased trust in the management leading to employees not raising concerns to the extent that is needed. This is exemplified by the following quotes.

Everyone is just frustrated. I don't think that the management has understood what we want, despite all the emails we've sent and the meetings we have had. We have even brought managers here and asked them what they think about the situation, but nothing. But now we will see, there are some new managers in the works as well, but I am still worried that they will continue to have us make lists of the problems, instead of gathering information from those who have quit. (Employee 5)

So the clarity and structure is lacking. You are afraid of stepping on someone's toes, but there will always be someone who gets angry and that's how it is with things. I can be angry too. (Employee 7)

The boss was like a crocodile, they had very small ears - they didn't listen. And when someone said something they pretty much made sure to shut them up. (Employee 8)

The experience of communication with managers seems to be divided today, with some saying that it works and others saying that it does not work optimally. A lot of information

that is communicated disappears along the way and this in turn leads to not wanting to raise all problems but rather certain problems, but then some fall between the stools. This can lead to the *attitude* towards solving conflicts being affected as it is not felt that any changes will be made if the problem is raised. This issue can also be interpreted as *behavioural norm* conflict. In this instance, it was obvious that many employees had problems with management's communication. The problem could also be directly linked to the managers' methods of working, which would point to a problem with time allocation in terms of how much time managers spent on communication and other duties. Employees have expectations of how a manager should behave and speak with them. Furthermore, another communication issue is raised with the subcontractors, which has been an ongoing problem in the company but nothing has changed in the ways of working despite complaints made to the management which is stated in the following quote.

It is something that is incredibly disturbing and destroys a lot for us. And this is an old problem, this has been going on for probably 6 years. We have a completely wrong relationship with them and we flag it, but nothing happens. (Employee 5)

In this instance, this need or want was not satisfied, and the outcomes created a clear conflict. Although the majority of the conflicts in this analysis centred on the ABC model's *Contradiction* component and *Attitude* Given that the circumstances gave rise to intense emotions in certain employees, which Galtung (1969) and Jordan (2015) describes as affect, they felt as though there was no point in even bringing up the problem anymore. This was a classic case of an attitude contributing to a quarrel. One factor that suggested that this particular conflict would have been harder to resolve than some of the other conflicts that were of a more minor nature was Galtung (1969) and Jordan's (2015) assertions that conflicts that also entail strong attitudes are not as easily resolved.

Furthermore some employees also believe that what increases dissatisfaction is that there are no clearly communicated goals and how to work towards them. Rather, a goal is stated, but it is not followed up and it is not clear how it is to be achieved in concrete terms; you have to take your own responsibility for the goal to be met without clear instructions on how to reach them. To exemplify this following quotes are illustrative:

Sometimes it is a bit unclear what the set goals are. There might be numbers, but how we reach them and what resources we need to get there can be quite diffuse. After all, there is no one that tells you that it is like this, or you should do this or that. It's really up to yourself. (Employee 2)

If there is too much freedom under responsibility, it becomes very unfocused on what you have to do. You have to keep track of all the rules yourself. It's not very effective. If you have someone who makes it clear that this is your area and this is your area, that would be better, of course. (Employee 3)

It can be argued that unclear goals or unclear communication on how to reach the goals can cause miscommunication if no one takes the lead since it is crucial to be able to adjust to having a clear strategy when companies are growing (Penrose, 1995). In the meantime, some employees also state that they appreciate that they have freedom with responsibility because it enables them to make their own decisions and work effectively in some cases.

A lot of freedom also means that you can do what you feel is right in the moment and actually get away with and invent new things. So it is also quite important to have. But a lot of freedom can turn bad because then everyone does what suits their interest more. (Employee 9)

There is therefore a need to be able to continue working with freedom under responsibility but to a certain extent in order to keep a structure.

6.2.2 Company growth leading to a lack of resources

Several interviews show that employees are experiencing a lack of support as well as a shortage of resources as a result of the increased workload over the last few years. There is a sense of frustration that there is limited support throughout the organisation, which puts an extra burden on all employees. This pressure might create an uncomfortable and unsafe environment for employees, but it could also have a negative impact on their well-being. Two such situations are exemplified in the citations below.

But it would be easier if there was someone next to you who could support you and see how it works and say perhaps “you should do this instead” or explain how to do something, but nobody has time for that, so you just have to do it on your own. (Employee 13)

As Jordan (2014, 2015) suggests, this may be viewed as a distribution issue. In this case, the employee expresses more support, which could be both in terms of managers or even colleagues that are more experienced. Gaining more support it would allow them to complete their work tasks more efficiently, but the lack of support could be explained by the lack of management's attention to their employees or that the workload is not distributed correctly. However, since the employee expresses that “nobody has time for that”, it could also be interpreted as a behavioural norm issue. By having expectations on colleagues or even the management about them having to act in a certain way, which in this case means that they should provide more support, it could also be seen as an expectation on how the support should be provided or how their time should be managed. This could fall into the behavioural norm perspective since there are expectations from the employee on how others should act (Jordan 2014, 2015).

Additionally, this conflict would fall into the C-corner of Galtung’s ABC-model (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015). Mainly because the issue involves opposing demands between managers and employees, as well as between colleagues. In this case, the employees are in need of support and resources to effectively complete their tasks but the counterpart is not providing it, which can be viewed as a *contradiction* (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015). Thus, this conflict could also fall under the A-corner of the conflict triangle since the employees are expressing frustration as a result of the lack of support and that shows a sort of negative *attitude* towards the other parties within the organisation. To resolve issues that are contradiction conflicts, Galtung (1969) and Jordan (2015) state that it is important to address the root causes of the issue, which in this case is the need for support. But looking at the attitude component of the conflict, for an issue like this to be resolved, it needs recognition from counterparts, for instance, managers or the other colleagues.

Furthermore, during the interviews, employees also stated that even though more people are being hired, there is still a high workload which causes stress and puts additional pressure on them. This is also an example of time and attention not being allocated properly because if it

was, there would be a lesser burden on the employees and that can be seen in the example below:

It is a high workload, it's manageable now but it can lead to burnouts if it continues for a long time. We have started to hire more people so the problem should already have been solved, but it is not. (Employee 14)

This is also a clear example of a distribution issue since the workload is high and not managed properly and that causes stress amongst the employees. The employee explains that more staff is being hired which can be seen as a step towards resolving an issue like this, however, there is still a high pressure on the employees which explains that the root cause of the issue isn't fully addressed (Jordan 2014, 2015). This situation also falls under the *contradiction* component of the conflict triangle since the workload is the main issue, and there is a desired need from the employees to have it fixed (Jordan 2014, 2015).

When interviewing the employees, one concern that was mentioned when talking about the growth of the company and stressful situations was the onboarding. Many employees have felt that the onboarding for new employees in the company has been lacking. The example below displays the issue:

The onboarding was kind of non-existent. When I got hired I had an introduction where they explained how the organisation was structured, but then it was just straight out to work really, so it was kind of messy. (Employee 1)

In this case, it is clear that the situation falls under structure issues since there is a lack of structure and guidance when it comes to the onboarding or the introduction to the organisation (Jordan 2014, 2015). Furthermore, an issue like this would, according to Jordan (2015), fall into the *behaviour* component of the conflict triangle. This explains the behaviour from the organisation and shows their way of communicating and connecting with their employees. To address issues placed in the B-corner, it is important to improve the communication between the parties in order to understand and change the behaviour (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015).

Furthermore, there were employees who during the interviews mentioned their concerns with the decision-making within the company. They stressed that decisions were made slowly and not really communicated clearly which causes confusion and stress among employees and below are two examples of this.

So it's great. Good quality and satisfied customers, and we still have a lot of freedom. The negative part is that we don't really have a structure. There is a bit of disarray and we lack decision-making. We're not really good at making decisions. (Employee 4)

According to Jordan (2014, 2015), a structure issue may be identified when there are unclear instructions, a lack of clear communication, and ineffective decision-making processes. As the employees express that the instructions from their management is unclear and that it is not being communicated properly it can also relate to the *behaviour* component of the conflict triangle. The communication and decision-making are lacking which is confusing and frustrating for the employees. There is a need for a clearer structure and communication from the management's part for the conflict to be resolved according to the behaviour component of Galtung's conflict triangle (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015).

Additionally, employees have expressed that there is a lack of knowledge across the organisation. Some of the interviews show that it could be a cause of the growth of the company and hiring staff that might now have the right experience. Below are two examples of this.

It is getting worse, it has not gotten better. And this company has also grown tremendously. It is like they have brought in a lot of other people that don't know what they are doing either. (Employee 12)

It could be that they think that it is going great because the numbers are very good, even if we sometimes have dissatisfied customers. I don't think they know or notice that things are starting to go bad until it's too late. What they could have done is to ask those who are closer to the field, how everything is going. (Employee 10)

According to Jordan (2014, 2015), these issues could be seen as behaviour norm issues, since there is a concern regarding the behaviour and performance of other parties. There is an expectation of how the work should be performed which is a main factor that the behaviour norm issues concern. However, this situation could partially fall into the category of conviction issue since there is an issue with how the work is being performed and that people have another way of doing things than what they might desire. Since there are opposing desires in this matter, this can be seen as a contradiction issue (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015). Employees may believe that the organisation as a whole lacks skills and expertise in some areas, but if the company is doing well and figures are high, it is possible that other parties are satisfied with the degree of knowledge and experience. So it would be vital to address the issues and communicate the concerns with the persons concerned in order to resolve a situation like this (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015).

6.3 Leadership expectations

6.3.1 Conflict management and collaboration issues

There has been a division between two departments when it comes to departmental cooperation, which has resulted in different working styles and exacerbated tensions. This in turn has affected the collaboration between the departments which increases the risk of conflict. The following quote illustrates this problem.

Sales and service have split up and the collaboration has gotten worse since then. Even though our work is connected in a way, we don't talk to each other on a daily basis. The problem is also that the sales people don't know what we do in service and vice versa. (Employee 7)

In this case the problem is related to the contradiction spectrum because the service and sales department have different needs and skills which make them communicate in different ways. There are no best practices on how to solve the conflicts which in turn can affect the attitudes the department has towards each other. The following quotes illustrate the attitude.

We all depend on each other, if someone doesn't behave, everyone gets punished and gets into trouble. (Employee 8)

We feel uncomfortable in the organisation because they think that we complain all the time. It's almost like you've reached a point where you don't even want to put your opinion forward. (Employee 14)

This highlights the issue of negative feedback and its impact on individual behaviour. It suggests that individuals in the organisation are uncomfortable expressing their opinions due to the fear of being perceived as complainers.

When asked about how they would like conflicts to be resolved, most respond that they want the management and the colleagues in different departments to work as a team together rather than working too individually. This would lead to the feeling of working as a unit towards the same goals.

My expectations are that we will become one team. I talked about it a lot when I started eight years ago, and it was a completely different atmosphere. But we'll get back to that. (Employee 7)

I think you have to tackle the problem at the root at once and talk to those who might be a problem to the source. It would be good to have group activities because it could strengthen the trust among the colleagues. So I think it's more about merging the group that you have so that it becomes a base that isn't divided. (Employee 12)

This indicates that the employees' attitudes are willing to see a change in the way of working with conflicts today. Where they feel that there is a need to come together to be able to work as a team.

6.3.2 Skill gaps causing occupational stress

Furthermore, another recurring problem that was talked about during interviews was that the employees feel that since the organisation's needs have increased, the competence within the company has not kept up with this development which causes stress to deliver on time and with quality. The following quotes illustrate the lack of competency issue.

Perhaps it is not a lack of competence, but that they do not have the right experience in management, or they do not have the right knowledge of daily work (Employee 13)

In the past, you could manage much more easily by yourself, but now you are more in need of a team in one way or another and a lot of knowledge is required. (Employee 2)

We cannot have staff who are there for two or three years and then leave. Being able to have competent staff who want to remain for a long time, who get to know the customers and know how they work - that is a huge success when you can succeed with that. (Employee 11)

In this case, the attitude component would relate to the perception that the employees have of the organisation's competence, specifically that it has not kept up with the increasing needs of the organisation. This negative attitude could lead to frustration, resentment, and feelings of dissatisfaction among employees. The behaviour component of the conflict could relate to the stress that employees experience when trying to deliver on time and with quality. This stress could manifest in a number of ways, such as decreased productivity and conflicts between colleagues. The contradiction component of the conflict could relate to the discrepancy between the organisation's increasing needs and the perceived lack of competence among employees. This contradiction could lead to a sense of helplessness or powerlessness among employees, as they may feel unable to meet the demands placed upon them.

6.4 Influence on compliance with organisational values

6.4.1 Commitment to company values

The way the company conducts itself, both internally and externally, is reflected by its values and is crucial for creating a positive work environment. In the interviews, the employees were asked about the company culture, the importance of its values, and their dedication to them. Several employee interviews revealed that the company's core values are important to them. Many of them, however, found it difficult to mention the company's core values when asked which can be seen in the examples below.

I believe that the core values that we have in the company - we work with them without even thinking of it. (Employee 1)

I have read them a couple of times but no, I cannot mention any of them. (Employee 4)

Additionally, it was expressed during the interviews that although employees feel that the company's values are important, they are not always top of mind or actively carried out in their daily work. Some employees held the opinion that adhering to the core values should come naturally and not always require a conscious effort, and others mentioned that it is hard to follow it actively because there are other important factors to prioritise when being such a big company.

We have a good book that could guide us and that we should follow, and on paper, that is great. But I feel like we are too few people to be able to live by that book, so to speak. We are a global company that has to make money, so it is clearly a pressure on everything and everyone which makes it hard to follow. (Employee 6)

Since the employee mentions the pressure and that it is hard to follow or actively commit to the company values it can be seen as a behavioural norm issue (Jordan 2014, 2015). However, there could also be some structure issues in regard to how committed people are to the company values and how certain routines are being interpreted by the different parties within the company (Jordan 2014, 2015). The commitment to company values could be placed under the attitude corner in Galtung's conflict triangle. Since the company is large and there is a lot of pressure which makes them prioritise factors like money, it is challenging to uphold and be committed to the values, as the employee mentioned. Employees absence of prioritising to commit to the company's core values could indicate a poor attitude towards it.

When talking about the commitment to the company, some employees perceived the company culture as fun and having a good work environment, but that there are some issues that are going on in the company and particularly when it comes to the decision-making which makes their attitude towards the company culture somewhat negative.

It's amazing if you look at all the colleagues who create this culture then really and all the people that we work closely with, they're great, they're great fun to work with. So, in that way, the culture is great. Then it fails a little, because we are bad at making decisions. (Employee 9)

Furthermore, this shows that the company culture is perceived as good but that there are certain issues that make employees feel like there need to be improvements and actions have to be taken to make the work culture better. Poor decision-making is something that can be seen as a structure issue since it is related to how decisions are being made and how tasks are assigned (Jordan 2014, 2015). On the other hand this issue can be seen from the *contradiction corner* in Galtung's conflict triangle (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015). Since the poor decision-making is affecting employees' perceptions of the company culture, it can be seen as blocked desires for a better culture. However, the behaviour component could also be applied to this issue since it can be perceived as a lack of communication between the parties and in this case employees and decision-makers which could involve managers (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015).

6.5 Comparison to previous research

When exploring a topic such as increasing needs and demands causing organisational challenges, it has been effective to use conflict theories (Jordan 2014, 2015) to explore these issues, since it helps digging deeper into the conflicts and struggles that might arise during challenges as the ones that have been identified in this research, which are; ineffective communication, limited resources due to increased demands, skill gaps that contribute to a more stressful work environment, conflict and collaboration issues and commitment to company values. To analyse these issues it has been effective to use interviews with employees since it has given a good insight into the issues and conflicts that the company has faced during the past years.

When investigating ineffective communication and its effect on organisations, previous studies have looked at the relationship between communication, management and trust. A study conducted by Yue, Men and Ferguson (2019) investigated how transparent communication and management could influence employees' openness to change during

organisational changes. The study by James Stephon (2016), on the other hand, focused more on how effective communication could build trust between managers and employees in order to enhance organisational performance and employees' commitment to the company. While the previous studies look at specific aspects of communication and how it may affect employees, this research has a wider view of communication and focuses on how ineffective communication has caused challenges within an organisation and how that in turn can lead to mistrust and conflicts.

The author Penrose (1995) argued about the importance of effective management in achieving company growth. It is crucial to have a clear strategy and plan since it can cause a waste of resources and ineffective growth. Furthermore, Hong et al (2022) found that long working hours are major causes of stress and burnout among employees. In relation to a lack of resources due to increased demands, this study found that employees were experiencing a lack of support and resources, and the amount of workload also caused stress and pressure on them. This study, as well as the previous research, all argue for the need of effective management.

Issues related to skill gaps have been explored in previous research. A study by Alkhalaf, Zaballero, and Alzahmi (2015) found that the reason for skill gaps is a lack of supply of experienced people within their geographical area, as well as having an ageing workforce. A study by Thasi et al (2020) found that in occupational categories where there are higher levels of skill gaps, employees tend to do more work than they should which causes a stressful environment for the employees. The results from this study similarly found that while there has been an increased demand the competency among employees has not kept up with that development, which in turn has caused stress to deliver high-quality work.

Regarding conflicts and collaboration issues within organisations, a previous study by Raziq & Maulabaksh (2015) explored the correlation between job satisfaction and the work environment, the findings displayed that there was a positive relationship between the two. Another study conducted by Martono et al (2020) aimed to investigate the relationship between management style, organisational commitment and organisational effectiveness, the results found that adopting a collaborative approach to conflict resolution could improve teamwork and lead to a better relationship between employees. The results of this study

showed that tensions and a lack of communication between departments have been caused by having different working styles.

Lastly, in reference to organisational values, one study in regard to this topic looked into employee engagement. Osborne and Hammond (2017) found that implementing successful engagement strategies could be critical for the company's success. Another study conducted by Chandani et al. (2016) explored the factors that influence employee engagement inside organisations and it showed that it is important for management to properly communicate their values because employees who understand and adhere to a company's principles are more likely to feel a sense of belonging and commitment to the organisation. This study has also shown that there is a need for management to build up trust among the workforce and clearly address and communicate in order to make employees comply with the values.

7. Discussion

What do employees perceive as sources of frustration and conflict in particular in relation to the growth of the company?

One of the main causes of conflict within the organisation is the lack of communication between employees and between employees and managers. The findings revealed that managers don't seem to have enough time to prioritise employees on matters such as offering the needed support which has left workers feeling dissatisfied and unsupported. Additionally, it indicates that the organisation has structural problems and that there are gaps in the procedures for dealing with complaints and information. Employees have become reluctant to express their opinions or raise their difficulties and concerns due to the amount of mistrust that has developed towards the management. In terms of ineffective communication within the organisation, the results additionally suggested that the management needs to be more structured and clear on how to achieve their common goals and what needs to be done to do so. Addressing these problems can help employees feel more supported, which would increase their engagement, trust in the management and reduce the risk of conflicts occurring within the company.

What are the employees' expectations of the leadership towards resolving undesired conditions and conflicts?

Regarding the topic of what employees expect from the management in terms of resolving undesirable conditions and conflicts, there have been two primary themes recognized. Collaboration in the organisation, in particular between departments is one of them. Departments have been divided, which resulted in different ways of working and caused clashes between them. The lack of knowledge of each other's roles and responsibilities has been a major contributing factor to the conflicts. The findings highlight the significance of having a strong management that has the ability to unite employees and foster a more positive work environment. Furthermore, the desire for increasing competency across the organisation has been recognised as another issue from the results. Getting the management

to deal with these problems could improve the working environment and employee performance, both of which could contribute to the organisation's success.

How do unresolved sources of frustrations among the employees influence their willingness and ability to comply with the company's espoused organisational values?

Complying with organisational values can be beneficial in creating a positive environment at work, however, the findings indicate that it has become difficult for employees to uphold and comply with the stated values. It has been found that factors like pressure to prioritise money and a lack of decision-making within the business can affect employees' willingness to commit to them. Additionally, the results have demonstrated that while organisational values are significant to employees, they aren't actively promoted. This emphasises the need of developing a work environment that is aligned with the established values as well as raising employee awareness of them, it is also important for the organisation to improve their communication channels to ensure that everyone is aware of the values in order to increase employee commitment to them.

7.1 Recommendations to company X

The following recommendations to Company X are based on Galtung's ABC-model where solutions linked to the spectrum of Attitude, Behaviour and Contradiction are examined (Galtung 1969; Jordan 2015).

7.1.2 Communication and conflict solutions

The lack of communication between managers and employees, as well as between employees, was the analysis's primary source of *contradiction*. Establishing clear lines of communication and developing a system for how information is handled within the business are crucial steps in resolving this paradox. This can be done by implementing: Regular meetings between managers and staff, as well as across various departments, which can be part of this process of discussing issues and sharing information. In this case, specifically the sales and service department in order to create an exchange of information and share knowledge to decrease risks of miscommunication. Company X may also entail setting up a framework for

employees to submit issues or grievances and ensuring that they are promptly and effectively resolved. Moreover, it would also be useful to implement strategies that address the spectrum of contradictions between the sales and service departments in order to handle the challenges with conflict management and teamwork. This can entail fostering cross-departmental training and development opportunities as well as communication and collaboration between the departments through team-building exercises.

Furthermore, due to a lack of efficient communication and assistance, some employees have negative *attitudes* toward the management and to their employees. It's critical to show that employees are willing to hear what their co-workers have to say and to take their issues seriously in order to handle the issues. There is also a sense of needing to develop skills as the organisation is developing and expanding. To assist employees in doing their duties well, managers should implement: Actively connect with them and offer regular feedback and support, suggesting the establishment of a mentoring scheme for new employees. This can lead to fostering an honest and open communication style which can lead to creating a culture of trust for the management (Yue, Men & Ferguson, 2019). Providing employees with opportunities for training and development can also assist them grow their skills and expertise which in turn leads to having the right and updated skills in the company.

The lack of clear goals and how to achieve them has led to misunderstandings and poor communication within Company X. To solve this, it's critical to Set clear expectations for employees and provide them with the tools and support they need to succeed. This can be implemented by having a structured onboarding where goals and values are presented. This leads to increased organisational performance, commitment, and job satisfaction according to Meyers (2023). To assist staff in staying on task and enhancing their performance, this may entail giving regular feedback and performance reviews. To prevent misunderstandings and conflicts, it may also entail defining clearly defined roles and duties inside the organisation.

7.1.3 Culture management

There are both attitude and structural issues that need to be addressed to improve the company's culture and ensure that employees are committed to Company X espoused communicated values in order to use them in their daily work. This can be done by: In order

for employees to actively contribute to the company's core values, it is vital for them to know and comprehend them. Company X may consider holding frequent training sessions or seminars on the basic principles and coming up with incentive strategies to increase their visibility and to maintain them in the workplace. Encourage and reward staff members who uphold the company's fundamental values. This can be done by emphasising the significance of the core values, Company X may think about rewarding staff members who uphold them in their work. This could be accomplished through a formal reward program or just by giving them informal praise and appreciation.

8. Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to explore challenges faced by employees in the context of organisational growth or increased demands. Through in-depth semi-structured interviews, the study has explored frustration and conflict in the workplace, expectations of leadership in resolving conflicts and how unresolved sources of frustrations can impact employees' willingness and ability to comply with the company's organisational values. The findings have suggested that communication, limited resources, skill gaps and collaboration issues have been the main sources of frustrations among employees in the workplace. It has been found that adequate support from managers has been missing which has left employees frustrated, it has also been noted that there are structural issues that the company has to work on. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations for managers have been established. Some of these include developing effective communication strategies and establishing clearer procedures for dealing with conflicts at the workplace. Lastly, this research can be useful for HR researchers who are interested in exploring the relationship between organisational values, employee engagement, and motivation.

8.1 Contributions

The contributions of this study indicate different conflict resolution strategies that can be beneficial for Company X to implement in order to create better conflict management and solutions to conflict potential. The recommendations can be implemented by organisations facing similar challenges, leading to improved conflict management. This study indicated that it is possible to use Galtung's ABC-model (Jordan, 2015) and Jordan's (2014) types of conflict issue categorization to analyse the conflict potential at Company X.

8.2 Future research

For future research it could be beneficial to involve conducting a longitudinal study to track changes in conflict management over time and comparing the effectiveness of different conflict resolution strategies and its effect on the employee well-being at Company X.

Moreover, it could be valuable for Company X to investigate this topic further and continue with employee surveys to track frustration and conflict potential in the long term.

Furthermore, future studies in this field could benefit from analysing the different conflict *potentials* between companies *that* are growing start-up companies and companies that have experienced increased demand. Furthermore, the study can offer a more comprehensive understanding if it is combined with qualitative and quantitative methods examining the complex interplay between variables related to conflict potential, resolution practices and its outcome on organisational performance. This approach can provide a more holistic view and generate deeper insights into the topic. By building upon the contributions of this study and addressing the gaps and possibilities for further exploration, future research can advance the field of conflict management and contribute to the development of effective strategies for enhancing organisational communication, resource allocation, and employee competency in conflict resolution.

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10. Appendix

Appendix 1: Consent form

Information to participants about the student master project

Our names are Sonya Khan and Azra Delic. We are students in the Master's programme of Strategic Human Resource and Labour Relations at the University of Gothenburg. Our master thesis project is intended to give us the opportunity to explore specific subjects in the area of Human resource management and improve our skills of scientific research. The aim of our research is to explore and understand the perceptions of the existing work culture, as well as the desired culture within the organisation in order to give recommendations for continued work.

The responsible teacher of the master thesis course is Thomas Jordan, doctor in economic geography & docent in cultural geography at the Department of Sociology and Work Science at the University of Gothenburg.

Data Collection

The data collection consists of recorded qualitative interviews if the participant allows which will be held both online and at the office. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes.

Voluntary participation and non-disclosure

Participation is voluntary and confidential. Participation is voluntary and anonymous according to the Swedish secrecy act. All involved in the project are covered by professional secrecy. Personal names are not registered or will be exchanged for fake names when field notes/interviews are transcribed/questionnaires are encoded. This also applies to city names, etc. Participation takes place on the research participants' terms. The participant can choose to change the terms of her/his participation or to cancel the participation (e.g., an interview) without giving reasons if he/ she so wishes.

Handling of collected material

Tape recordings and notes are kept locked away and are only available to authorised researchers. All interviews and notes will be transcribed to the computer. The transcribed documents are named and sorted by number or fake names. The collected material and transcription of interviews will not be used for any purpose other than the academia research and give an overview of the essential skills to the organisation. The interview file will be deleted after the course has been completed.

Results and publication

The results of the study will be published in the form of a Master thesis that is planned to be completed on 2/6-2023. Participants will be able to download the essay from GUPEA <https://gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/785>. In addition, the results will be presented to the University and to the management of The Organization. It is important to mention that no employee will be exposed or evaluated individually in this process.

**For questions and further information, please contact:
sonya.khan@xxxx.com or azra.delic@xxxx.com**

Responsible Supervisor

Thomas Jordan: doctor in economic geography and docent in cultural geography
Thomas.Jordan@gu.se

Consent to participate

I have read and fully understood the scope and implications of participating in this student MA project. Any questions I had were answered satisfactorily.

I agree to participate, and that the interview can be digitally recorded and agree

I agree to my personal details being handled as described above.

Date and place	Name and Signature (participant)
Date and place	Name and Signature (student)

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Interview guide to employees

Background Questions

- How long have you worked for this organisation?
- What position do you currently hold and have you held any other positions in the past?
- What are your main responsibilities and tasks in your current role?
- Can you describe your overall experience working in this industrial company?

Impact of changes in the Company

- Can you tell us about your onboarding experience at the company?
- What changes do you see in the organisation since you started?
- Can you describe your feelings about these changes?

- How have the changes within the organisation influenced your work as a whole?
 - How have these changes impacted your workload?
 - How have the changes affected your relationships with new subordinates and colleagues?
 - How have methodologies, organisational structures, and job positions been impacted by the changes?

Company Culture and Values

- How do you experience the current company culture?
- Can you name the company's communicated core values?
- How do you believe the company is meeting its core values in its daily work?
- How have cultural values been implemented in your team
 - How important are the company's values in your daily work and decision-making?
- Do you feel that there are any problematic conditions in the company that make it more difficult to realise the company's stated values?

Conflict and Frustration

- Are there any conditions in the company that you feel are problematic and are therefore sources of frustration or even conflict for you in your present role?
- How was this frustration handled by you and your manager and/or colleague
 - How do you want it to be handled?
 - How has this frustration affected your willingness to comply with the company's organisational values?
- How do you think the company could better support individuals in embodying its values, and what changes do you think would be necessary at the organisational level to enable this?
- What role do your managers play in addressing and resolving sources of frustration among employees?

Concluding Questions

- What are your thoughts and expectations for the future in the company?
- Is there anything else you would like to add or anything that we didn't cover in the interview that you would like to mention?