Faculteit Bedrijfseconomische Wetenschappen

master in de handelswetenschappen

Masterthesis

The managerial impact on employee intrapreneurship

William Vanmol

Scriptie ingediend tot het behalen van de graad van master in de handelswetenschappen, afstudeerrichting ondernemerschap en management

PROMOTOR :

dr. Karolien HENDRIKX

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Influence of the COVID-19 pandemic

This master thesis was written during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020. This global health crisis might have had an impact on the (writing) process, the research activities and the research results that are at the basis of this thesis.

Preface

This master's thesis is situated within the master's degree in Business Administration, with a minor in Entrepreneurship and Management at the University Hasselt, faculty of Business Economics. I am pleased to take this opportunity to thank a few people who helped me completing this research.

First of all, I would like to thank my promotor Karolien Hendrikx for her continuous support and feedback during the academic year. Despite the corona pandemic, Ms. Hendrikx did not hesitate to assist me via various digital platforms. This way, I was still able to successfully accomplish my master's thesis.

Next, I would like to thank the interviewed respondents for taking their time to answer my questions via online meetings. In spite of the enormous workload, they have during these uncertain times, they still managed to take some time to help me with my research.

William Vanmol
Lommel, June 2021

Summary

Despite the wide range of academic research available within the domain of intrapreneurship, there is no extensive research that examines the impact of management on intrapreneurship in the organization. As intrapreneurship is restrained to its context, the organizational institutionalization of the novel strategy cannot be undervalued. Therefore, this master's thesis investigates the impact of the management as well as the corporate context on the individual employee behavior. This study focusses on the main aspects of leadership that foster intrapreneurial behavior and how the corporate context should be established to effectively attend the intrapreneur of the company. These intrapreneurs form the human capital of the firm and are key to the accomplishment of a sustainable competitive advantage, where innovation is crucial in order to survive.

A qualitative research has been set up and involved three cases from different industries, in which the managerial experiences of leaders was questioned. These cases involved respondents from Ernst & Young (EY), KBC Start-It and Ab InBev. As the context of intrapreneurship and the change in leadership are both considered as dynamic phenomena, the choice for a qualitative approach can be justified. Hereby, the *grounded theory* has been obtained. From here, the results from this article are derived and have, later on, been grounded by the literature study.

From this research, a few main topics came into sight. These involved the role of the leader and the HR-department in the intrapreneurial strategy, as well as the hybrid organizational structure, internal traineeships and the adaptation of the Key Performance Indicators. The leaders of the company no longer practice a delegating or demanding role, but more often operate as the coordinator of intrapreneurs of their specific department. This relates to the leaders adopting a transformational leadership style, in which they encourage creative and innovative employee behavior (Elenkov & Manev, 2005). Hereby, they delegate their responsibilities to the intrapreneurs of the company, known as employee empowerment. These empowered employees now work together with their managers to become improved business processes, as they are best placed to understand the ongoing procedures. This two-way information sharing can be beneficial for the strategic internal processes and is described as a tool to promote mutual understanding, resolve conflicts and establishes a reciprocal respect between the different stakeholders of the company.

In order to foster the intrapreneurial behavior of employees, the HR-department receives a more important role in the implementation of the new strategy. Entrepreneurial behavior is not only dependent on the stimuli of the leaders and the context these intrapreneurs operate in, but it also correlates with specific personality traits of the employees themselves. This article therefore suggests certain characteristics that imply the intrapreneurial person-organization fit, whereby the HR-department plays a major role when hiring new people. This department should be aligned with the intrapreneurial strategy, whereby the recruitment focus should be changed. Hereby, the efficiency of selecting new people to join the organization will increase and the cost of firing people on the short run will be evaded.

The collaboration of intrapreneurs and leaders of the organization asks for the right adaptation of the organizational structure. Therefore, this article suggests a more hybrid structure, whereby intrapreneurs work with rather than work for their manager. Intrapreneurs are positioned in the center of the organization, whereby the management and leading members are in for establishing the best possible environment for these employees to operate in. The classical pyramid, in which intrapreneurs work for their leaders, does not fit the intrapreneurship strategy and should therefore be adjusted. There is always the need for some form of hierarchy within a firm, as a purely horizontal structure tends to fail when it comes to implementing this new strategy. The need for hierarchy can be clarified by the complex financial decisions a company has to make. These decisions are based on the relevant experiences of managers who have been working at the company for a longer period of time.

As innovation can be considered as a cross-silo matter, internal traineeship should be implemented to improve this way of working. Via these traineeships, managers receive a better understanding of the other departments with benefits their mutual understanding and information sharing. Consequently, this cross-functional approach leads to greater innovation projects that can better the corporate performances on the long run. Implementing internal traineeships not only improves the information sharing between the departments but can also lead to better relationships between the different managers of the organization. This will, in turn, lead to greater overall cooperation and involvement in the innovational processes of the company, as well as the fostering of intrapreneurial employee behavior.

To shape and encourage these innovative projects, corporate KPI's should be changed. Employees use these KPI's as milestones when doing their day-to-day tasks. When implementing more communicative and innovative KPI's, a change in their daily behavior on the work floor will occur. In addition, the change in performance indicators will also make sure every employee of the company is aware of the new corporate strategy and the new expectations the management board has in terms of their new way of working, in order to become the possible outcomes of intrapreneurship.

This research also emphasized the important role of the HR-department of the organization, as intrapreneurship starts with hiring the right profiles. These profiles consist of a few key characteristics that correlate with the personality of an intrapreneur. Therefore, the HR-department should be aware of the new intrapreneurial strategy and should find the right people who possess the correct person-organization fit. This will facilitate the implementation of the intrapreneurial strategy, as more employees will suit the related way of working, in which proactive behavior is at the center.

This research can be of additional interest for the research domain of intrapreneurship due to its holistic approach of the organizational facilitation of the intrapreneurial strategy. Hereby, several corporate factors, such as the leadership, play a major role in the stimulation of intrapreneurial employee behavior. Employee behavior not only depends on external factors such as the stimulation of the management team, but also the personal characteristics of these employees are important to consider.

Finally, the chapter 'Limitations and Future Research" of this master's thesis will be discussed. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the limitations of this study as well as the resulting suggestions for future research. These limitations mainly consist of the rather specified management focus that the empirical part of this article involves. This perspective can form a limitation to this study, as no other corporate parties are admitted in the interviews.

During the accomplishment of this research, the researched experienced a tough search for leading figures of companies utilizing the intrapreneurship strategy. Nevertheless, the empirical research consists of companies from different industries as well as an organization that has a lot of experience with this strategy. However, to complement this study, additional interviews with managers from other companies can be set up in order to broaden the generalization of the suggested findings to all companies implementing the intrapreneurial strategy.

In addition to the expansion of the managerial perspective, future research can investigate other perspectives that relate to the concept of intrapreneurship. This involves the examination of the HR-department and their findings with the intrapreneurial strategy, as well as the individual experiences of intrapreneurs with this new way of working.

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1. Introduction

The global environment constantly changes, and companies have to therefore be pro-active, innovative and willing to take risks. These characteristics are related to the concept of intrapreneurship meaning this could indicate that organizations, who embrace intrapreneurship, are more competitive and perform better than those that do not (Raunch et al., 2009). Previous research in the intrapreneurship domain has given a better insight in the benefits of the strategy, the characteristics of an intrapreneur, the organizational support such as employee empowerment, … To date, the relationship between the leaders of a company and the intrapreneur has not been adequately studied, despite its importance for the achievement of better corporate performances. In addition, the organizational institutionalization of the intrapreneurial strategy also influences the prosperity of the initiated innovative projects by intrapreneurs of the company. Earlier studies have denoted several leadership styles that could be beneficial for the stimulation of intrapreneurs. This research is of additional interest due to its holistic view of the management team and therefore combines different theoretical topics, in which the organizational environment is considered as well. This master's thesis focusses on the most favorable leadership style, namely the transformational leadership style (Elenkov & Manev, 2005). These types of leaders tend to shape the best possible environment for intrapreneurs to operate in, due to their coordinating and directing characteristics. The traditional chief or leaders has made room for a more relationship-orientated manager who is the supporter of lower-level intrapreneurs. In addition, with transformational leadership, employee empowerment comes into play, as it positively correlates with the initiation of intrapreneurial employee behavior. These two aspects are important in the attempt to shape an intrapreneurial friendly environment for employees to operate in.

In order for leaders to optimally understand, encourage and facilitate employees to adopt a more innovative and proactive behavior, it is foremost important to identify the right characteristics of the intrapreneurial profile. In general, the leaders are not the only asset of the company that have to pay attention to the new intrapreneurial strategy of the company. This master's thesis therefore can deliver additional interests of the correct facilitation and support of the intrapreneurial employee by leaders of the organization, who operate in a fresh corporate environment. Until now, previous research has not optimally discussed the new role of the leader in its daily environment, where the behavior of employees can change due to a new corporate strategy and policies. This article will focus on the abandonment of the classic organizational structure, where leaders are at the top of the pyramid and employees work for their boss and return home, without having a meaningful impact when it comes to the initiation of innovational projects. Hereby, the following question can be asked: "**How does the intrapreneurial behavior of managers impact the intrapreneurial behavior of employees?**". As mentioned before, the leaders of the company partially depend on the institution they operate in. Therefore, to adequately place the leader in his operational context, an additional question should be formulated: "**How should the organization be organized to foster intrapreneurship?**"

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Previous research on the intrapreneurial strategy has so far focused on the possible outcomes of intrapreneurship, suggested the transformational leadership style, connected earlier formulated topics such as employee empowerment to the construct of intrapreneurship. However, the holistic coherence between the managerial impact of intrapreneurial managers and the additional corporate factors that correlate with intrapreneurial employee behavior has not been adequately examined. This research will thus place the employee and its behaviors in the center of the intrapreneurship strategy and discussed the importance of a supportive management team as well as the organizational framework that are influential to the change in this behavior.

These research questions form the common thread throughout this master's thesis. To correctly answer these questions, a thorough literature review has been formulated concerning the following core concepts: *intrapreneurship, transformational leadership, intrapreneur, employee empowerment, organizational structures, political skills, psychological safety, person-organization fit, organizational identification, HR-department, grounded theory, first- and second-order coding.*

Within the research domain, a lot of definitions of the intrapreneurship concept have been formulated. Due to its recent formulation, the literature review of this article is based on researcher Petra Neessen's description of the term intrapreneurship. Therefore, the definition is still relevant to the present context and no conditions have changed. Neessen (2019) defines intrapreneurship as: "the process whereby employee(s) recognize and exploit opportunities by being innovative, proactive and by taking risk, in order for the organization to create new products, processes and services, initiate self-renewal or venture new businesses to enhance the competitiveness and performances of the organization". In short, this definition contains the different topics that influence the intrapreneurial behavior of employees and describes the possible outcomes that result from the stimulation of intrapreneurial employee behavior.

In this master's thesis, the focus will be on the organizational institutionalization of the newly emerged strategy and which role the leaders should adopt, in order to obtain these possible outcomes. This interpretation indicates the structure of the following chapter: the literature review, in which the previously mentioned concepts are discussed grounded by the definition of Petra Neessen. In the third chapter, the used methodology of this article will be discussed. In order to successfully answer the research questions, the researcher has set up a qualitative study. As the role of the leader in an organizational context can be considered as a dynamic phenomenon, the choice for a qualitative study can be justified.

In this study, several interviews have been set up with managers from different industries. To correctly interpret these results, the grounded theory has been utilized. This theory involved two sorts of interview coding, namely first-and second-order coding. These results will be discussed in part four of this article, grounded by the academic literature available. In conclusion, the chapter 'Limitations and Future research' will be reviewed, as inter alia the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on this research. These implications can have an influence on the formulation of a literature review in future research, as it consists of a selected number of interview cases of which the findings cannot be generalized for every organization utilizing the intrapreneurship strategy.

2. Literature review

2.1. Defining Intrapreneurship

To successfully formulate a definition of the concept intrapreneurship it is important to understand the different perspectives it involves. Several researchers have tried to formulate a conceptual framework around the concept of intrapreneurship and often lost sight of the individual in the company: the employee. Many definitions are therefore formulated from an organizational point of view and describe the relationship between innovative behavior and the financial results that can possibly be achieved. This behavior is described as 'Corporate Entrepreneurship' and can be defined as 'a process of corporate renewal in established firms'. The goal of this process is to increase profitability, to enable strategic renewal and to foster innovativeness (Fisher, 2011). Corporate Entrepreneurship is thus defined at the level of organizations while intrapreneurship relates to the individual level (De Jong et al., 2008).

'Corporate Entrepreneurship' is a top-down process in which the management strategy involves the utilization of more initiatives and/or improvement' efforts from their workforce and organization. Intrapreneurship involves a bottom-up approach related to the proactive initiatives of individual employees in order to improve work procedures or products as well as the exploitation of rising business opportunities (Amo, 2006). The notion of intrapreneurship is, according to De Jong et al. (2008), derived from the concept of entrepreneurship but involves some marginal notes. Entrepreneurship can be described as: 'the process of creating something new with value by devoting the necessary time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, psychological, and social risks, and receiving the resulting rewards of monetary and personal satisfaction and independence' (Hisrich & Peters, 2002). Intrapreneurship can therefore be seen as a special case of entrepreneurship and shares its key behavioral characteristic with this overarching concept. This characteristic involves the pursuit of opportunities without regard to presently available resources (De Jong et al., 2008). Corporate entrepreneurship can be interpreted as a top-down initiated process within the boundaries of a company whereas intrapreneurship can be seen as a bottom-up process initiated by employees (Blanka et al. 2018).

The definitions formulated above clearly describe the differences and similarities between intrapreneurship and corporate entrepreneurship. Intrapreneurs act within organizational boundaries and can therefore operate less autonomously, draw fewer financial benefits of their entrepreneurial engagement and take fewer personal risks. Hence, organizations play an important role in the shape of the social context of intrapreneurs. Although these boundaries of the firm imply clear restrictions for the entrepreneurial employees, the organization can also provide a considerable amount of security as the intrapreneur is not liable with his or her private means in case of failure (De Jong, 2008). This protection can thus lead to an increased sense of risk-taking for the intrapreneurs.

Garcia-Morales et al. (2014) defined intrapreneurship as a process by which individuals inside an organization undertake new activities and depart from routines to pursue new opportunities. The focus of the concept of intrapreneurship is therefore placed on the individual behavior of the employee leading to organizational benefits, rather than the innovative practices of the organization in

general. Intrapreneurship can influence the company as intrapreneurial behavior of employees could lead to increased performances on the organizational level (Garcia-Morales et al., 2014).

Neessen (2019) proposes a new definition that reflects this multilevel nature of intrapreneurship: "intrapreneurship is a process whereby employee(s) recognize and exploit opportunities by being innovative, proactive and by taking risk, in order for the organization to create new products, processes and services, initiate self-renewal or venture new businesses to enhance the competitiveness and performances of the organization". Intrapreneurship is therefore, according to Neessen (2019), operationalized as a process and is not merely a behavior of an individual or an organization, but is about a set of activities of an individual or an organization in order to reach a certain goal, including increased competitiveness and performance for the organization ensemble. This literature review will be based on Neessen's view on the construct of intrapreneurship due to its up-to-date formulation and relevance within the literature of this domain.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the different soft and hard skills that relate to intrapreneurship. When a company facilitates their intrapreneurs with all the aspects listed in the figure, implemented innovative projects can result in increased corporate performances. The figure gives an overview of the important aspects that are key to the possible outcome of increased corporate performances, in which intrapreneurs are empowered by their leaders in a psychological safe environment. These leaders are known to facilitate these intrapreneurs with the right tangible and intangible resources that increase the effectiveness of their initiated innovative projects.

In the next part, the importance of an intrapreneurial management will be discussed. Hereby, several important characteristics of an intrapreneurial leader will be pointed out and should lead to an increase in intrapreneurial employee behavior.
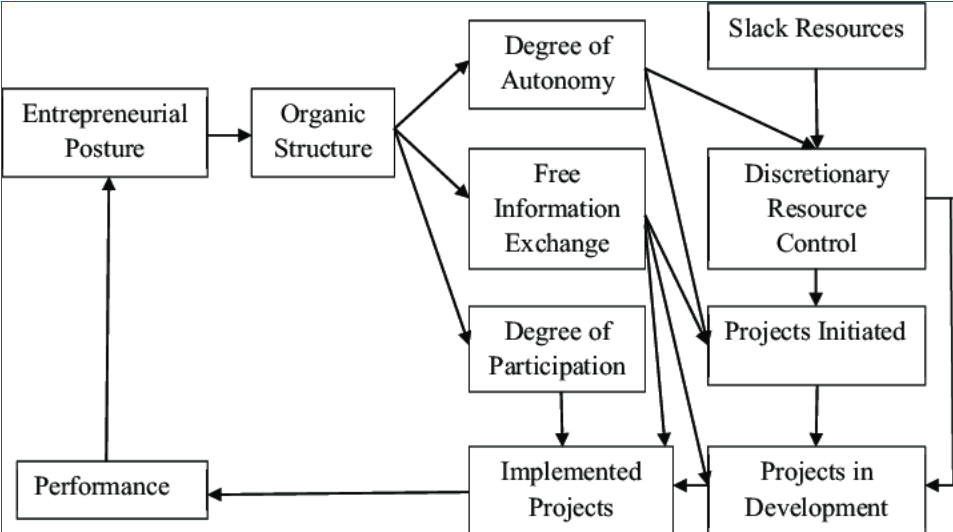
Figure 1: the structure of Intrapreneurship (Russel, 1999)

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The construct of intrapreneurship involves a leading team that clearly promotes the new way of working throughout the entire organization, whereby they provide their intrapreneurs with the right resources such as a safe environment to operate in. In this environment, they can work autonomously on projects they feel related with, whereby the transformational leaders are in support when needed. The intrapreneurial approach asks for a holistic corporate approach as well as the right management team to facilitate this new way of working. In the second part of this article, the findings from the interviews will be linked with the existing literature to examine the corporate factors that influence the success of the implementation of the intrapreneurial strategy in an organization. These factors should foster the intrapreneurial behavior of employees to become the possible outcomes of intrapreneurship.

2.2. Intrapreneurial managers and their stimulating behavior

2.2.1. The intrapreneurial leader

As mentioned above, the employee plays a crucial role in the innovation process of companies. Although it is partially in their own hands to show intrapreneurial behavior, depending on their individual characteristics, effective management of these employees can lead to yielding outputs for the organization. Managers therefore play a vital role in encouraging and supporting employee initiatives in order to explore new opportunities, develop new products or to improve work procedures for the benefit of the organization (J. A. Moriano et al, 2011).

Management support refers to the willingness of managers to facilitate and encourage intrapreneurship whereby they champion innovative ideas and provide the right resources that employees need to take intrapreneurial actions (J.A. Moriano et al., 2011). These managers each have their own style of leading and thus all have a different way of approaching individual intrapreneurs in their work context. Previous research has examined the different leadership styles of managers in which researchers investigated the relationship between the stimulation of intrapreneurial behavior and the leadership style exhibited by the manager. Studies have therefore found that the transformational leadership style has a positive effect on the emergence of intrapreneurial behavior of employees, being proactive, work innovative and organizational citizenship behaviors (Ling et al., 2008).

Transformational leaders are known to connect employee's self-concept to the interests and goals of the organization whereby the behavior of the employee becomes self-expressive (Shamir et al., 1993). These leaders, according to earlier studies, raise employee's organizational identification and therefore the employee's willingness to contribute to organization objectives (Cicero & Pierro, 2007). The transformational style of leadership is known to be stimulating employees' creativity and innovation (Elenkov & Manev, 2005).

2.2.2. Transformational leadership

Transformational leaders are known to arouse and broaden the interests of their employees (Gerards et al., 2020). Individual employees can be encouraged and supported by intrapreneurial managers when seeking new opportunities. This can lead to the development of new products and to the improvement of work procedures which is beneficial for the organization (J. A. Moriano et al., 2011). This development can lead to the achievement of a sustainable competitive advantage but asks for a reliable management team that fully supports this new way of working.

Although the increased need for an intrapreneurial strategy that could lead to a sustainable competitive advantage, organizational structures, processes and culture often hinder the implementation of such a strategy. This makes it more challenging for intrapreneurial employees to convert emerging opportunities into new products or services in their attempt to improve organizational efficiency. Hereby leaders play a vital role in the encouragement of these employees as previous research has shown the positive link between transformational leadership and employees' behaviors that are indirectly associated with characteristics of intrapreneurship such as proactiveness, work innovative and organizational citizenship behaviors (Elenkov & Manev, 2005).

Leaders of the organization are responsible for the creation of an optimal environment in support of the evolvement of intrapreneurial activities, providing them with the right resources. The most relatable leadership style for the stimulation of intrapreneurship is transformational leadership as it could stimulate employees' creativity and innovation (Jung et al., 2003).

The transformational leadership theory refers to the leader inspiring their followers to adopt the vision of the organization and thrive towards the achievement of organizational goals. They develop a clear organizational vision as well as mechanisms that may be used to discover opportunities (Eyal & Kark, 2004) and stimulate their employees to think on their own, to develop new ideas and to question the operating rules and systems that are no longer in line with the goals and mission of the organization (Jung et al., 2003). In addition, transformational leaders raise employees' confidence and skills to invent and implement innovative responses to current problems facing their organization goals (Jung et al., 2003).

Managers that do adopt a transformational leadership style are known to set the most favorable conditions for increased intrapreneurial behavior when they share a sense of mission, provide support and coaching and stimulate employees to think in new ways (J.A. Moriano et al, 2011). Later in this literature review, the importance of psychological safety will be discussed as it facilitates employees' risk taking and innovative behavior, as previous research has noted the grandness of managerial trust and confidence in intrapreneurs.

Mutual trust and obligations are formed when the relationship quality between managers and employees move towards transformational qualities (Graen & Uhlbien, 1995). These exchange relationships stimulate employees to innovate and act beyond their role prescriptions (Hughens et al. 2018). The quality of these relationships can be improved as transformational leadership involves positive social exchanges between leaders and their followers (Graen & Uhlbien, 1995). In addition, employees can be both intrinsically and extrinsically motivated by transformational leaders as these leaders carefully monitor mistakes and failures, and provide rewards when goals are reached (J.A. Moriano et al., 2014).

2.2.3. The leader as a communicator

As mentioned before, the human capital is one of an organization's most valuable assets when it comes to reaching a sustainable competitive advantage. This is often overlooked by some organizations, as they assume that employees are already a part of the organization and do not require a measured approach to foster relationship building (Park et al. 2014). This could lead to managers having a poor communication habit with their employees, which is crucial to the effective management of the human resources of a company (cf. part 4.2.3.2. of this literature review). This poor communication could lead to the dissatisfaction of employees, according to Drake et al. (2005).

In order to overcome the unpredictable conversion of employees' attitudes and behaviors, organizations should investigate more on the improvement of communication within the different levels of the organization (Park et al., 2014). As intrapreneurship is a cross-functional construct that is dispersed between the different organizational levels, this can only be beneficial when trying to reach a sustainable competitive advantage and consequently increased corporate performance. This improved communication leads to the better understanding of organizational values, mission and vision of the employees and thus makes sure all innovations implied by intrapreneurs are in line with the organizational strategy and long-term goals.

Earlier research of J.E. Grunig and Hunt (1984) has formulated a two-way symmetrical approach of communication that may be the most effective way of communicating with this 'strategic internal public'. This approach uses communication as a tool to promote mutual understanding, resolve conflicts as well as the establishment of respect between the organization and its publics by encouraging communication symmetry.

The symmetrical communication approach is based on honest and open communication in which both parties understand each other's point of view. It is focused on the building of a long-term relationship and is balanced as "it adjusts the relationship between organizations and public" (J.E. Grunig & L.A. Grunig, 1992, p. 289). This model can be described as fostering a participative culture and provides intrapreneurs opportunities for dialogue, discussion as well as discourse on issues (J.E. Grunig & L.A. Grunig, 1992). In order for organizations and employees to move in the same direction, the symmetrical communication that aims for mutual understanding is inevitable in quality relationship building (Kim & Rhee, 2011).

2.2.4. Employee empowerment

2.2.3.1. Definition

Previous research has indicated that organizations who empower their employees are more likely to get the best out of them (Falola et al., 2018). By giving them more responsibilities and authority within the company, organizations trigger innovation and commitment which will have a direct impact on job performance (Elnaga & Imran, 2014). Empowerment is defined as a level of autonomy and responsibility given to employees in taking decisions about their job without having to necessarily take approval from direct supervisors (Falola et al., 2016). It requires employees to be motivated and enthusiastic towards organizational survival (Sharma & Kaur, 2011) as it can positively influence innovation within a company by fostering creative abilities (Moses et al., 2016).

When employees are empowered by their leaders, they are known to take initiatives, participate in decision making processes, solve problems and take charge of projects while having the freedom to get the job done (Falola et al., 2018). This requires clear effective communication and feedback (Elnaga & Imran, 2014). This will motivate employees and stimulate their mental and physical capabilities to engage in critical and creative thinking. It will also stimulate their capacities to recognize new business ideas and opportunities that the organization can venture into. Hence, they must be

trained, equipped and fairly rewarded in order keep them satisfied and keep their performances at a high standard (Molina & Callahan, 2009).

Psychological empowerment is defined as a process of heightened feeling of self-efficacy through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information (Zhang & Bartol, 2010, p. 110). Zhang & Bartol (2010) underline the relationship between this construct and the degree of employee creativity. When employees feel empowered, they value their own job to be meaningful to the organization and identify their ability to execute their work competently, devote resources and generate alternatives to solve work-related problems. In all means, this leads to the emergence of creative behavior (Zhang & Bartol, 2010).

2.2.3.2. Successful factors of empowerment

The construct of intrapreneurship can be successful within an organization when the company decentralizes authority, participation and cooperation (Azis & Amir, 2020). According to Tang (2015) there is a strong relationship between devolved management that stresses empowerment and autonomy with corporate entrepreneurship. This is supported by an organizational structure that can facilitate dispensed tasks and responsibilities between different departments and positions (Azis & Amir, 2020).

Top-level managers are known to be empowering their employees by increased trust. These employees feel some kind of comfort within the organization and therefore do not feel limited when taking risks, referring to them being psychological safe. These managers also avoid hiring new employees as the current workforce might feel threatened. This is only possible when the human resources of the company have sufficient capacity and this capacity of employees provides the right human capital. This involves that empowerment can only succeed if employees have specific competencies and understand the organizational goals on the long run (Aziz & Amir, 2020).

2.2.3.3. Psychological safety

A psychological safe environment can be defined as the atmosphere of work where managers and employees feel safe to give their opinion and take action without the fear of being punished (Baer & Frese, 2003). It can be viewed as a common belief for safety when undertaking relational risks by members of a particular team which could later on influence the team performance (Edmondson, 1999). This safe climate stimulates intrapreneurs to take risk and express themselves which in turn leads to increased innovative ideas (Baer & Frese, 2003).

A psychologically safe environment supports an open and trustful interpersonal relationship building among employees from different organizational levels. These employees are willing to make mistakes without being afraid to receive undesirable results. Companies that pay attention to the establishment of such a safe environment facilitate employees to develop new competences, openly express their opinions and experimenting with different solutions while using new operational practices. These

organizations have a better chance of succeeding even when there will be failures coming from in-novative attempts to produce new ventures or strategic renewal (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012).

In order to shape a psychological secure environment, organizations should encourage their talented intrapreneurs to share their valuable knowledge. This can be done in the form of ideas, insights, know-how as well as experiences from the past, in order to accomplish business objectives (Tiwari & Lenka, 2016). In addition, companies should facilitate a learning environment for continuous em-ployee development. Hereby employees can learn new skills and feel safe when taking calculated risks in trying new business ideas.

Top managers should provide intrapreneurs with autonomy, resources and social support. These empowered employees are then more stimulated to act proactively, maintain a positive attitude and consider occurring failures as necessary. Managers have a wide set of tools they can utilize in the attempt to create a psychological safe environment for their intrapreneurs, such as the conducting of brainstorm sessions and feedback moments, encourage employees to share their thoughts and expertise, provide the necessary infrastructure, … (Tiwari & Lenka, 2016).

2.3. Organizational structures and processes promoting intrapreneurship

2.3.1. Organizational supportive environment for intrapreneurs

Organizational support can be described as setting a suitable organizational setting where intrapreneurs have access to necessary organizational resources and conditions to develop and implement innovative ideas and projects. The importance of such an environment has been discussed before in earlier research (e.g., Rothwell, 1975) and illustrates the capacity to cope with rapidly changing marketplace conditions. Hereby intrapreneurs engage in opportunity-seeking behaviors such as the discovery of important challenges and opportunities (Jeong et al., 2006).

Previous research on the establishment of an organizational supportive environment for intrapreneurs has listed several organizational arrangement or managerial tools that are part of the establishment of a suitable internal environment for intrapreneurship. These tools include the decentralization of decision-making autonomy, the appropriate use of incentives and rewards, supporting intrapreneurs in the development of new business ideas, the allocation of free time as well as the 'tolerance for trial-and-errors or failures in cases of creative undertakings or risky project implementations' (Kuratko et al., 2005).

These tools can be summarized by the increased role of the employee and his/her behavior within the organization. This employee receives more authority and is stimulated to show intrapreneurial behavior, in which he or she receives more responsibilities. The receival of more authority and responsibilities whereby the manager adopts more of a coordination role relates to the concept of employee empowerment, in which the employee should feel psychologically safe when taking risks and seeking for new business opportunities.

2.3.2. Towards a hybrid structure

2.3.2.1. Managerial divisions: co-working

The intrapreneurial actions of both managerial as well as non-managerial employees ask for some form of collaboration or co-working between the different layers of the organization. Within this organization, there are more often different levels of managers who each have an influence on the intrapreneurial construct within the company. These levels include senior-level managers, middle-level managers and first-level managers who all have a different role in the emergence of intrapreneurial behavior and corporate entrepreneurship in general.

Senior-level managers are key in the facilitation of intrapreneurship (Gawke et al., 2019), and are defined as the inner circle of executives who collectively formulate, articulate, and execute the strategic and tactical moves of the organization (Eisenhardt et al., 1997). This management level includes top management roles such as the chief executive officer, chief operating officer, business unit heads as well as vice presidents (Kor, 2003). These functions all relate to three main functions: recognizing, ratifying and directing (Floyd & Lane, 2000).

The top-level management is responsible for the articulation of a strategic intent of the company, implying the recognizing role. They have to bring upfront the initiatives that have the most potential as well as giving lower-level employees some form of empowerment enabling them to show intrapreneurial behavior, which relates to their ratifying or signaling function within the organization. The directing role involves commonly known activities such as the planning and commanding of different lower-level tasks and processes (Belousova & Gailly, 2013).

The middle-level managers support intrapreneurship strategies coming from top-level executives and are responsible for the propagation of these ideas to first-level managers and their employees (Gawke et al., 2019). The middle-level management consists of a broad layer of employees who are directly in line with the top-management and the operating employees (Wooldridge et al., 2008). The broad selection of managers within this category includes general line managers, functional line managers and team-or project-based executives (Wooldridge et al., 2008).

Employees working at the operating-level of the company are responsible for specific functions, operations and should directly report information to their leaders. These workers produce basic products and services for the organization or directly support the production (Mintzberg, 1983). According to Floyd & Lane (2000), these employees can be distinguished from other operating employees by their experimenting, adjusting and conforming functions. This includes the initiation of new initiatives whereby they learn and improve desired assets and skills and the responding to challenges arising from entrepreneurial projects breaking the status quo. Their confirming behavior relates to their subordinate role within the company, whereby they have to share information from the operational level to their leaders (Belousova & Gailly, 2013)

The roles of first-level managers and their employees involve the operationalizing of and experimentation with resources provided by the organization with the goal to exploit opportunities that others do not or failed to effectively observe and exploit (Belousova & Gailly, 2013). The non-managerial employees or workers may spend a considerable amount of time on the emergence of intrapreneurial behavior within the organization by deviating from their formal work requirements. They spend this time to increase their work variety or to contribute to organizational goals by generating and raising innovative ideas before formally revealing them to the management board (Globocnik & Salomo, 2015).

For the organization it is thus crucial to stimulate intrapreneurial behavior on multiple levels within the organization, as every member has some kind of an input when it comes to the innovation process that is crucial for companies in order to compete. Staff-level employees are for instance very important as they have to proactively contribute to the establishing of new products (Marvel et al., 2007) by combining existing resources (Gawke et al., 2019). Hence, managerial employees such as managers from different kinds of levels, are responsible for the facilitation and implementation of entrepreneurial ideas through the corporate structure of the organization (Hornsby et al., 2009) in order to anticipate changes in key business areas (Gawke et al., 2019). These managers no longer delegate their employees but cooperate to come to new ideas. Social interaction forms a key element of the intrapreneurial process, in which managers operate together with their employees in a freely accessible open workplace (Gerards, 2020).

In order to promote co-working in the organization, it is important that the management of the organization loosens the internal hierarchy of the company, whereby empowered employees work together with higher positioned managers to improve, for example, the operational efficiency within the company. This translates into a devolved management structure which thus involves the empowerment of employees and requires the delegation of decision-making power to lower-level employees. This involves a clearer communication between employees and the management board. A devolved management style is often characterized by a less hierarchical structure, less centralized decision making and greater empowerment for the employees. If a company is structured in a way that it enhances employee empowerment, which could lead to the emergence of intrapreneurial employee behavior, it does not only depend on the organizational facilitation but also on the capabilities of its employees (Tang et al., 2015)

2.3.3. The role of HR in Intrapreneurship

The empowerment of employees and the delegation of decision-making power will only lead to increased corporate performance when the employees are capable of understanding and working towards the strategic goals of the company. Hereby, the strategy aligned HRM practices could be crucial in the improvement of employee competences in certain areas, which is required when a company obtains such a management approach (Tang et al., 2015). These practices involve recruiting, training, evaluating performance and rewarding employees appropriately.

When the human resource department of the company succeeds in the execution of these strategy-aligned practices it will lead to the enhancement of the capabilities and motivation of a company's workforce. These employees will then be able to better accept the delegated responsibilities (Wright & Nishii, 2006), which in turn could lead to rapid personal growth and strong work motivation (Tang et al., 2015). This should give managers more confidence in sharing their authority and responsibility (Hakimi et al., 2010).

The implementation of these kinds of practices relies on all managers becoming involved, communicating and delegating (Tzafrir et al., 2003). This means that strategic human resource management shapes an entire organization's management culture in which managers get encouraged to provide employees with the right resources and greater autonomy in carrying out their jobs. When the decentralization of decision-making results in improved workers' abilities and performances, they feel more confident and are more willing to delegate (Tang et al., 2015).

When employees become more motivated as a result of effective strategic human resource management, they will increase the communication with their managers and feel more empowered to make decisions, putting forth more ideas (Budhhar, 1998). This greater autonomy and confidence in solving problems will lead to them feeling more meaningful within the organization. This could lead to increased corporate entrepreneurial behavior.

2.3.3.1. HR-strategy: HC of the organization

Human capital refers to the sum of individual knowledge, skills and abilities of the organizational human resources (Alpkan et al., 2010). Effective management of the human capital plays a crucial role in the improvement of corporate performances and in the establishment of a competitive advantage for the firm, which in turns leads to higher dividends for the stakeholders (Den Hartog & Verburg, 2004). According to earlier studies on the resource-based view of the firm, the HRM policies should be based on the company's strategy. This can be seen as the strategic human resources management that involves staffing, compensation systems and employee development programs (Bae & Lawler, 2000).

Strategic human resource management can stimulate devolved management by encouraging the empowerment of employees. The HR-department should improve information flow and support the delegation of employees' decision-making power (Messersmith & Guthrie, 2010). This can lead to increased motivation and stimulated employees' abilities in support of the company's strategic goals (López-Cabrales & Valle-Cabrera, 2012). This could result in improved performance and could lead to increased managerial confidence in their subordinates (Tang et al., 2015).

Effective HRM practices try to improve the attitudes, abilities and motivation of employees and therefore support the company's strategic goals. The knowledge of employees as well as their skills and abilities are among the firm resources most difficult to imitate. This thus means that the human capital is crucial for the organization to obtain and sustain a competitive advantage, as it stems from a company's unique resources which are valuable, rare and, in this case, inimitable (Barney, 1991).

In order for the strategic human resource management to be successful, the context plays a crucial role (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). This context includes various factors such as the organizational strategy, culture and the business environment (Wei et al., 2011) and the employees need to clearly understand the firm's policies and practices. This can be achieved by good political skills from HR people as they help workers in their understanding and sway them to implement them (Tang et al., 2015).

According to Ferris et al. (2005), political skill can be defined as "the ability to effectively understand others at work and to use such knowledge to influence others to act in ways that enhance one's personal and/or organizational objectives". It will influence how effectively the human resource policies are implemented within the company. A politically skillful personnel department staff are more capable of making a favorable impression and build high-quality relationships with employees (Wei et al., 2011). They can achieve higher employee performance as they encourage managers to devolve more power to their subordinates. Therefore, the political skills of HRM staff of the company can be a moderator in the relationship between strategic human resource management practices and the implementation of a devolved management style and thus the decentralization of decision-making power (Tang et al., 2015).

As mentioned earlier, the different aspects of personality and individual capacities are crucial. However, practices such as recruitment, development, and compensation should also be evaluated when implementing intrapreneurship in an organization. The management of human resources is therefore another determining factor in the success of intrapreneurship as the characteristics or employee behavior that the organization needs, demands a specific recruitment strategy (Aziz & Amir, 2020).

In relation to the construct of intrapreneurship, companies need employees who are creative and innovative. They are willing to take risks and are known to think on the long run, focusing on results. These talents are flexible to change, able to work well together, are independent and responsible and have the ability to share the organization's intrapreneurship knowledge (Montoro-Sanchez & Ribeiro Soriano, 2011). Hiring new employees can often be required to be entrepreneurial as it should be flexible and not rigid with conventional silo-based rules (Aziz & Amir, 2020).

2.3.3.2. The intrapreneurial profile

Intrapreneurs can be described as proactive individuals with a strong desire for action. They are known to show behaviors that revolve around the creation of new ventures and strategic renewal, a characteristic that distinguishes them from other innovative and proactive employees (Gerards et al., 2020). New venture behavior involves the employees' agentic and anticipatory conducts with the goal to create new business or organizations (Gawke et al., 2019). In addition, strategic renewal involves the refreshment or replacement of processes, content and outcomes of attributes of an organization and has the specific aim to react to internal and external developments (Gawke et al., 2019)

Intrapreneurs are 'self-starters' who do not have to be asked to take initiative, often taking actions without asking permission (De Jong, 2008). These employees do not hesitate to take risk, even on the work floor itself. They often take actions ignoring disapproval from their managers and neglect negative reactions from their environment about their ideas (De Jong et al., 2008). Their proactive behavior is focused on the pursuit of an opportunity without regard to the resources they currently control. This separates intrapreneurs from other people, as they do not depend on the available resources and always seem to find a way insisting a certain problem-solving skillset (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990). These intrapreneurs should be clearly identified when selecting new people in benefit of the intrapreneurial strategy.

Not every employee will show intrapreneurial behavior in a similar environment and there are several attitudes that determine individual intrapreneurship. The definition incorporates the behaviors, attitudes and characteristics that results in the intrapreneurial behavior of workers, which means that every employee is different and interprets stimulated intrapreneurial efforts from the organization in a different way (Neessen, 2019). Intrapreneurship can solely refer to employee initiatives in organizations to undertake something new, without being asked to do so (De Jong et al., 2008). These behaviors and characteristics help the human resource department with the formulation of the intrapreneurial profile and makes sure new people joining the company have the right person-organization fit or organizational identification.

2.3.3.3. Organizational identification

Organizational identification can be defined as "the perception of oneness with or belongingness to the organization" (Ashforth & Mael, 1989, p. 34). It has been argued that OID, or organizational identification, is a form of social identity whereby this identity is associated with membership of a given organization (Haslam, 2001). Organizational identification involves that employees link their membership of the organization to their self-concepts. This can include a cognitive bond in which they internalize organizational values or an emotional bond which means that the employee is proud about being part of the organization (J. A. Moriano et al., 2011).

Employees with a high organizational identification are more likely to adopt converging goals and to sacrifice individual interests in order to achieve collective, long-term goals (J. A. Moriano et al., 2011). This could in turn increase work motivation and could even involve extra-role performance. Employees with a high OID therefore are motivated to go beyond their designated role and are willing to be involved in intrapreneurial activities within the boundaries of the company. (J.A. Moriano et al., 2011).

It is important for the success of the intrapreneurial strategy to select employees with the right OID. This can be done by aligning the HR department with the new strategy of the company whereby they have to select the right profile when hiring new people (Weidong, 2007). These HR people should consider the characteristics of an intrapreneur to make sure they find the right candidates that fit the organization's way working, known as OID or person-organization fit. The HR department again receives a more important role in the company as the supporter of the intrapreneurial strategy (Ping et al., 2010).

The second part of this literature review identifies the overall organizational context that should be optimally facilitated by the management board. In this context, there is an important role for the HR-department of the company in the selection of the right profiles that support the new intrapreneurship strategy of the company. Within this strategy, the human capital forms the most important asset of the organization and should consist of employees that possess the characteristics that positively correlate with the construct of intrapreneurship. The organizational factors that can influence the overall success will be examined in the empirical research of this article, whereby leading figures of different organizations will be interviewed. This will result in a holistic view of the managerial impact of leaders on the intrapreneurship concept in an organization and will suggest the most favorable organizational factors that can be beneficial for the success of this new strategy.

3. Methodology

Previous research has investigated the concept of intrapreneurship and its differences with entrepreneurship, the characteristics of an intrapreneur, the impact on the corporate performances as well as the possible outcomes of the intrapreneurial strategy. However, a study on the relationship between the intrapreneur and the leaders of the company, and the impact of this leadership on their behavior, can be of additional interest for this research domain. This qualitative research will therefore consist of insight on the operating field of intrapreneurial managers and their experiences with this new emerging strategy, relying on a literature review.

In this master's thesis, a qualitative research is formulated to better understand the managerial behaviors of leaders. These leaders operate in a dynamic environment that thus can best understand by analyzing data from semi-structured interviews, as qualitative research can be based on meanings expressed in words (Saunders et al., 2009). This analysis can be performed using conceptualization to better understand certain descriptions in their context, namely the company they work for.

3.1. Research design

To clearly understand the construct of intrapreneurship and how intrapreneurial managers influence and empower subordinates, it was foremost important to formulate a clear understanding of the concept of intrapreneurship as well as describing the intrapreneurial manager. In addition, the term empowerment was used to give an explanation about the devolvement of authority and managerial responsibilities. This qualitative study therefore built further on a literature review and consists of several case studies in order to correctly understand what the theoretical framework involves in practice.

In order to correctly comprehend the managerial impact of leaders and the intrapreneurial-friendly environment they try to shape, the second part of this paper consists of three case studies that examine the formulated literature in its practical area. These case studies include in-depth interviews with multiple higher-level managers of local industry companies who tend to be stimulating intrapreneurial employee behavior.

The findings from the literature review will be compared with the information gathered from the five in-depth interviews, which results in the formulation of a cause-related overview in which is stated how managers can effectively foster intrapreneurial behavior from team members in the search for innovative products, service, technologies, ... and therefore an overall increase in corporate performances.

3.2. Case selection

To get a broad view on the managerial impact of leaders on their employees, it was foremost important to select respondents from different industries. Due to COVID-19, contacting leaders in dynamic environments, who have an enormous workload, was not ideal. Respondents A1, A2, A3, B1 and C1 each stem from the network of the researcher and showed more willingness to participate in this questionnaire, despite their emerging workload in the corona pandemic. All of the interviews were held via online meeting platforms such as Google Meet and Microsoft Teams.

The five selected cases consist of higher-level managers that each have their experiences with the intrapreneurial strategy and operate in different sectors. This gives a broader view on the practical application of this strategy whereby different business processes and industries are involved. Some of the cases have had a role as an intrapreneur within the company, as they started at a lower level of the company and simultaneously made promotion to become a manager that has to stimulate and facilitate intrapreneurial behavior.

3.3. Data collection

When a qualitative research is carried out, it is often done through interviews. Saunders et al. (2007) distinguish two different types of interviews, namely structured interviews or in-depth interviews. According to Saunders et al. (2009), in-depth interviews can be further divided into semi-structured interviews or unstructured interviews

For this qualitative study, the researcher has opted for a semi-structured interview as this is the best way to investigate strategic changes, and open-ended questions offer the opportunity to allow the interview to be flexible and informal. Each interview started with a broad question where the respondent was encouraged to talk more about their managerial actions in terms of intrapreneurship and how they try to stimulate intrapreneurs of the organization. After this opening question, the interview guide formed guide of topics that the researcher wanted to explore further to make sure that the most relevant topics were discussed. These topics were formulated based on the literature review on the managerial impact on intrapreneurs and the importance of employee empowerment in this process. This way of interviewing is in line with the grounded theory approach, as the formulated questions are "open-ended yet directed, shaped yet emergent, and paced yet unrestricted" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 28). Appendix A presents the in-depth interview with the semi-structured questions.

In a semi-structured interview, the researcher has a list of topics and questions to be addressed during the interview, although the hierarchy and/or focus may differ from interview to interview. In certain interviews, questions are omitted, or the order of the questions may vary, depending on the course of the conversation. In addition, additional questions may be necessary to answer the research question, as different events take place in certain organizations (Saunders et al., 2009).

The data was collected in the months March and April 2021. As mentioned before, all of the interviews were held via online platforms. The average interview time was 50 minutes, with the longest interview turning out to last about 75 minutes. As many repetitions arose during the interview, whereby the respondents of different industries repeated each other on important topics, there was no need to set up additional interviews. Afterwards, the interviews were transcribed and coded.

Table 1 summarizes the participants of the interview. Since anonymous result processing was chosen, the respondents were assigned a letter. This letter refers to the industry the respondent operates in. In addition, the table below provides information about age, position and other personal information provided during the interview.

Table 1: selection of respondents

Case	Company	Sector	Industry	Managerial level
A1	EY	Financial	Financial services	Top
A2	EY	Financial	Financial services	Top
A3	EY	Financial	Financial services	Top
B1	KBC Start-It	Multiple	Multiple	Top
C1	AB InBev	Consumer goods	Breweries	Middle

The first three respondents are partners from Ernst & Young (EY) and form the first case of this empirical research. Due to their experiences at EY, where they started as a junior and become a partner after several years working in Belgium as well as other parts of the world, they have a broad knowledge of the managerial influences from the management team. They started at the bottom of the ladder and simultaneously covered several managerial ranks within EY, whereby they each have their own relationship with the incentives of intrapreneurship. They know what the impact of the leading members on the lower level intrapreneurs involves and how a manager should stimulate and facilitate the intrapreneurial behavior of employees.

These partners at EY have the experience as a junior and senior, as well as a higher managerial rank within the company. This means they understand the impact of intrapreneurship on all levels of the firm and can therefore give a broad view of their current impact on the intrapreneurs at EY. Despite their experiences in the financial services domain, where higher educated might better understand the concept of intrapreneurship, this case study is limited to a more complex and knowledge-intense industry. This means that, to get a broader view on the managerial impact of managers on their employees, more cases are required. This is why respondent B1 and C1 are contacted, as they can give an insight in the consumer goods sector, where more blue-collar workers are employed. These blue-collar workers might ask for more stimulations to become more intrapreneurial-minded.

The fourth respondent is working at Start-IT X KBC, a subsidiary of KBC Bank. Start-It X coaches entrepreneurs and employers to integrate intrapreneurship as a strategy of an organization. This respondent knows best how intrapreneurship should be handled in firms of all sizes and gave a in depth analysis on his experiences with the concept. This respondent is thus active in different industries as their clients include different companies of all scales.

The last respondent is a process engineer within the brewery of AB InBev in Valkeswaard. He is responsible for the packaging department of the company and has therefore several operational workers underneath him. This interview therefore offers another point of view of the implementation of intrapreneurship within a company and has to coordinate and stimulate blue-collar workers. These workers are traditionally known to not have a huge voice within the company and had to do band work during their shift. In order to become intrapreneurs, the management have to severely stimulate these workers to act proactively.

3.4. Data analysis

3.4.1. Grounded theory

The grounded theory approach is an inductive methodology that offers systematic guidelines for gathering, synthesizing, analyzing, and conceptualizing qualitative data in order to form a theoretic foundation (Jørgensen U., 2001). Since a major part of business consist of people's management and behavior, this approach can be used to explore a wide variety of business and management issues, as well as the strategic change in the culture of the company when intrapreneurship is being implemented.

The grounded theory starts with collecting data without first forming a theoretical framework. The first step in this is to obtain a set of observations that are developed from data. Subsequently, these data lead to predictions that are tested in further observations, which will then show whether the predictions are confirmed or not. The constant reference to the data to develop and test the theory is called an inductive or deductive approach, according to Collis and Hussey (2003). In this paper, a combination of the two approaches is obtained as there is there is already some theoretical evidence of the concept of intrapreneurship. However, there is still room for additional research on the managerial impact of leaders on intrapreneurs of the organization, based on empirical research.

According to Holton (2010), two types of coding are possible in the grounded theory, namely content and theoretical coding. With content coding, the researcher directly works with the data, breaking and analyzing it by means of open coding to create a core category and related concepts, to then achieve a theoretical saturation by means of selective coding. Theoretical saturation is achieved by a constant comparison of indicators in the data to elicit the properties and dimensions of each category or code (Holton, 2007).

3.4.2. Open or first-order coding

In the first step, the data that has been collected is broken down into conceptual units and provided with a label. Similar data will be given the same label or name. The emphasis in this grounded theory approach lies on the derivation of a conceptual meaning from the subjects and situations covered in the research. In this grounded theory, the analysis will be performed by looking at smaller units from the data, as the correct understanding of certain intentions and the generation of categories is required to give a meaningful interpretation of the collected interview data. This is why the resulting mass of codes must be compared and placed in a broader, related group or category (Saunders et al., 2009). In this research paper, the first order codes are based on theoretical constructs of intrapreneurship that are discussed in the literature review.

In open or first-order coding, the researcher uses line-by-line coding. This method forces the researcher to verify and saturate categories, minimizes the chance of missing an important category and ensures relevance by generating *emergent-fit* codes for the substantive research area (Holton, 2007). In addition, this method of coding also ensures relevance to emerging theory by enabling the researcher which direction to take. This prevents the researcher from becoming too selective and focusing too much on a specific problem. However, it is in this first phase of open coding that the inexperienced researcher can feel particularly challenged and insecure (Holton, 2007), and it can sometimes be quite difficult to depict the right theoretical categories as the literature of intrapreneurship consists of a lot of intertwined topics.

3.4.3. Second-order coding

Strauss and Corbin (2008) suggest that after a long period of data collection, a number of main categories and related subcategories are being developed (Saunders et al., 2009). This is also confirmed by Holton, as he claims that the constant comparison reveals a core category (Holton, 2007). These core categories are based on important intentions that are characteristics of the intrapreneurial strategy and can thus be viewed as building bricks of the implementation of this newly emerged management concept.

The subsequent phase is called selective or second-order coding. This phase is intended to identify main categories (the core category) and connect the other categories in order to develop the grounded theory. In this phase, the emphasis lies in recognizing and developing the relationships between the main categories that have emerged from this grounded theory, in order to develop an explanatory theory (Saunders et al., 2009). Appendix B illustrates the open as well as the second-order coding of the collected interview data.

4. Empirical results

How can managers within an organization create a stimulating environment for intrapreneurs in the search for innovative ideas, that could lead to greater corporate performances? The analysis of the interviews of five leaders or managers from different sectors indicate a crucial role for the leaders in the cultivation and stimulation of intrapreneurship under employees. Throughout the years, many companies adopt the intrapreneurial strategy in order to shape more innovative ideas and create a competitive advantage in a dynamic environment.

The initiation of innovative projects, supported by intrapreneurs, can lead to corporate renewal and might form the key to new business successes. As innovation can be quite costly for an organization, it is important for the leading team to make sure these innovative projects increase the corporate performances of the organization. This way, innovation costs can be covered up, and might success-ful projects lead to an increase in profit margins. In one interview, a respondent indicated that this won't be able without intrapreneurship. It is important to proactively communicate with clients so you can understand and serve them better.

A2: "Intrapreneurial profiles are really important for the creation of new subservices that makes it possible to better understand the client. The better you understand your clients, the better we can serve their needs. People who tend to lean back and wait for their leaders to delegate them reach a ceiling at a certain point in time. Those people, in most cases, won't make it to a leading role in our company."

A3: "If we don't proactively communicate with our clients, follow the most recent news articles, we lack behind on our competitors. Our brand slowly disappears. We have to constantly be in the spot-light with the latest changes, so clients keep on contacting us with certain questions."

4.1. New role for the leader

Leaders or managers with a leading role can adopt different styles when directing their employees. In the past, in a more classical model, leaders tend to command and delegate their workers to do certain tasks or assignments. These workers then worked for their boss and there was some form of distance between the two. This distance often led to situations of discouragement under the lower-level employees, who just did their job and returned home without having a meaningful impact in terms of innovation.

A2: "Our people receive a lot of autonomy. You still see some people leaning back and waiting for their leaders to tell them what to do. After a certain period of time, those who won't take initiative leave the company as they don't feel comfortable with the way we work."

A3: "It is still a mentality that we should change. There are still some employees that passively wait for tasks and work to come to them, to then accomplish them and say: I am done, you can give me a new job."

When implementing an intrapreneurial strategy, leaders move from a delegating role to a more coordinating and directing role. They work more closely with their employees, limiting the distance between employees and leaders, which can lead to better performances. In an optimal scenario, managers won't have an active input in the day-to-day tasks of employees and are more or less on the sideline, where they can intervene when needed. This gives intrapreneurs the freedom to proactively work on projects they like, leading to a surplus in innovative ideas. Intrapreneurs are thus self-determined individuals who value their job.

This new way of working for the leaders refers to the transformational leadership style (Eyal & Kark, 2004), as discussed in the literature part earlier in this article. Leaders should optimally inspire and encourage their intrapreneurs, meaning that is not only about the product or service. "The success of intrapreneurship depends on the leaders, as they should foster and cultivate the change in strategy and give the right example. If this is not the case, change is not going to occur.", according to respondent A1 from EY.

In order to shape innovative ideas coming from intrapreneurs, managers should keep a clear overview on on-going projects. To create innovation on the long run, many small innovative projects take place. These minor steps happen in different departments and lead to cross-silo innovation. "This can only be achieved when leaders clearly communicate with their own employees within their specific department, but also with managers form other silos at the company", according to our respondent from AB InBev.

4.1.1. Communication of the leaders

As indicated in the literature review of this study, communication is crucial when implementing intrapreneurship as the internal strategy of the company. When intrapreneurs of the company get the chance to proactively work on projects they feel related to, managers have to absorb a lot of information coming from them. This information involves innovative ideas, operational points of improvement as well as feedback about their feelings working on a certain job. This is only possible when intrapreneurs feel comfortable, which asks for leaders having a good relationship with their employees. These leaders have to shorten the distance between them and their intrapreneurs and should work together in a two-way communication approach, in order to become innovative solutions.

A3: "I think intrapreneurs in my environment trust me, but is something you have to constantly work on, and communicate quite often. If there is something important coming from higher levels within the organization, we have to clearly communicate this throughout our department, to make sure everyone feels involved".

Next to the importance of a good internal communication for the information flow in and between different departments, communication is crucial in order to evade conflicts. The leader should clearly declare the intrapreneurial intentions of some employees, as these could ensure that some other traditional tasks are not done in time. These intrapreneurs are also the voice within the department, as they should promote intrapreneurship and the proactive behavior that comes with it.

B1: "Communication is really important in the attempt to avoid conflicts. For the major part, you should communicate innovative intentions. Imagine that you have a team working on an innovative project, you need a use-case and an example function. You should use the intranet of the company to clarify what person X and person Y is doing, and why they are not doing their regular job. By doing this, you can avoid jealous people. Intrapreneurs should operate as the example function within a department and promote intrapreneurship. This internal communication should start at the highest rank, where the CEO stimulates intrapreneurship. This way other managers won't step in the way of intrapreneurial activities, which increases the chance of the arise of innovative projects.

4.1.2. Stimulation of risk-taking that leads to innovation

In the literature review part of this article, the political skills of managers were discussed. These refer to the ability of a manager to read and understand people, the ability to act on that knowledge in influential ways, the ability to interconnect and cooperate with others and the ability to influence and network properly (Ferris et al., 2005). These skills are necessary to correctly stimulate intrapreneurs in in their risk-taking, as every employee is different which ask for the adjustment of the managerial intentions. To stimulate a higher level of risk-taking, leaders should ensure a trusty environment where employees feel confident and safe when operating. This refers to intrapreneurs feeling psychological safe, which positively correlates with taking more risks within the organization (Baer & Frese, 2003).

A1: "From the beginning of someone's career, I tell them that there are no 'dumb' questions: asking questions is a form of critical thinking, and they should feel confident to ask them despite the hierarchy in our company."

The stimulation of risk-taking can lead to a surge in generated ideas. Despite their positive possible outcomes on the long, the elaboration of innovative ideas can be quite costly on the short run and has thus a negative effect on the financial performances of the company in the first place.

A3: "Innovation is costly for the organization, as innovative projects involve intrapreneurs working on certain topics that have nothing to do with their traditional job. This is an opportunity cost as you don't know if these projects will result in something useful. That is some form of financial risk."

B1: "Innovation is a cost for the company, and the leaders should evaluate whether it is a risk worth taking. For stock market listed companies, this is even more difficult as they, in the short term, depend on cash flows that have an influence on the financial result of the company. Innovation is costly, mainly in the first stadium, but you have to sow before you can harvest."

According to respondent B1 from KBC Start-It X, leaders should provide their intrapreneurs a VISA-card to improve the efficiency of innovative projects. Hereby, intrapreneurs don't have to ask for sponsorship of their managers and can operate more time-effectively. In many companies, intrapreneurs still see their leaders as sponsors, whereby the company's policy and procurement limit their intrapreneurial activities. Giving them the freedom to invest in innovative projects is again a risk,

but worth giving as it also increases their involvement and autonomy within the company. By giving them more responsibilities and freedom to operate, leaders empower their workers. Employee empowerment positively correlates with the intrapreneurial strategy and should thus be one of the main topic's leaders should keep in mind when implementing this form of strategy change.

At the end of every project, it should be beneficial for the company. This is not only in the financial service industry, like indicated in the previous two quotes. When producing customer goods such as beer, like in the case of AB InBev, the efficiency of operational processes can be increased thanks to new ways of working initiate by proactive behavior of employees. This can lead to increased productivity and in the end result in better profit margins, which means innovation can be important in the achievement of a competitive advantage. If you, as a company, don't foster innovative behavior and keep on working in the same way, your competitors will gain market share as their internal processes keep on improving.

C1: We achieve better results as our employees know the ins and outs of our machinery. They provide us with a lot of information and are best placed when it comes to providing us with ideas in order to improve our operational processes. Working together with your boss is our new policy, rather than working for a boss, in order to come to innovative solutions".

The innovational projects of intrapreneurs can be guided and facilitated by leaders of the company, who are at the end responsible for the performances of the organization. These performances are important for not only the position of the leader, but also for external stakeholders of the company. These stakeholders are thus benefited by an improved competitive advantage of the organization they invested in and rely on the managerial behaviors of leaders. This advantage can thus be achieved by giving operational employees a more important role and let them work proactively on topics they like and feel satisfied by, referring to the empowerment of employees.

B1: "You should let people work on a certain topic they fully support. This topic might come from an idea they generated themselves, so for them it is really self-enriching and instructive."

4.2. Organizational institutionalization of intrapreneurship

4.2.1. Recruitment strategy

Not only the management of a company has an impact on the intrapreneurial behavior of employees. The new strategy of the company should be correctly cultivated, and every sublevel should be aware of it. The utilization of the intrapreneurial strategy starts when hiring new people. Hereby, it is important to find the right people who have the characteristics of an intrapreneur, as described in the literature part of this article (Elenkov & Manev, 2005). As mentioned before, intrapreneurs have a proactive way of working, are willing to take risks and speak up even if they are just present at the company. Potential employees should be aware of the intrapreneurial way of working at the company, and their soft skills should be in line with the new strategy of the company. In some cases, where a certain diploma is required, the hard skills are already present. The personality of a candidate plays a major role when hiring new intrapreneurs. This refers to the person-organization fit, and thus should be correctly identified by the HR-department of the company or by the outsourced recruiting company.

A3: People who apply for a vacancy of our company already have the right knowledge. Otherwise, they won't make it through the first round of the selection procedure. But then there should be a fit with our organization and its way of working. However, some people need more time to find their seat in the company, but for some it results in a failure. These people, unfortunately, leave the company after a few years. We ask a lot from our employees, but we give them a lot back in return.

C1: "When you apply for a vacancy of our company, our recruiting offices look for a proactive mentality. We are not looking for people who just do their job and return home, that is not how our company wants to work anymore. We want candidates that want to climb the ladder, have some kind of goal in their career, even if this is at the operational level of the company.

It is thus really important for the company to find the right characters that can evolve into an intrapreneur and encourage the way of working at the company. If the HR department isn't correctly aligned with the intrapreneurial strategy, the wrong people might start working at the company. These people will, after some extend, not feel comfortable at the organization which can lead to unnecessary dismissals, which can be a cost for the company.

C1: "When you enter our company, when applying, HR is looking for proactive people. There are still people working at the company who only to their tasks and leave after completing their shift. We don't want that anymore; we foster and encourage training our employees"

To find the right people for the company, it is important to identify which characteristics relate to the intrapreneurial character. To ensure HR finds the right people with the correct person-organization fit, it is important to identify which soft skills relate to intrapreneurs. As mentioned before, intrapreneurs are proactive individuals who don't wait for their boss to tell them what to do but take initiative as they can work on things they like. Next to a proactive behavior, intrapreneurs tend to be very

flexible individuals as they operate in a dynamic environment in which innovation leads to uncertain times. They should be able to adapt to certain changes in the status quo. As mentioned in the interviews, intrapreneurs tend to not just do a 9-5 job.
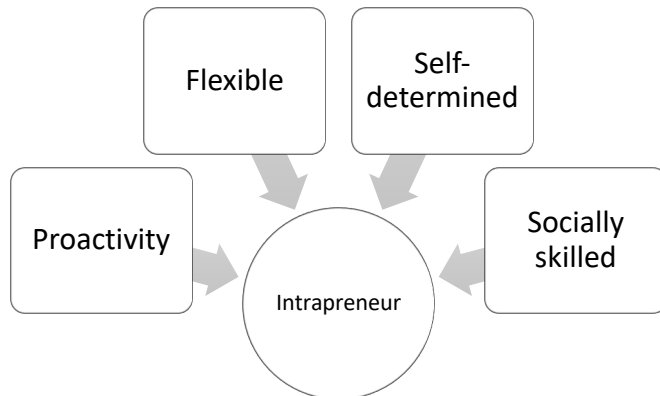

Figure 2: Essential characteristics of an intrapreneur

In addition to the proactive and flexible characters of intrapreneurs, they should be social individuals that can effectively interact with other people at the company. In contrast with classical entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs operate within the boundaries of the company. This means they have to deal with a lot of people involved and have to effectively manage all stakeholders. In some companies, intrapreneurs have to break through a lot of walls in order to become their intended innovative outcomes. Intrapreneurs have to 'fight' the internal politics of the company, which can be quite frustrating. Although they do not have the financial insecurity of the classical entrepreneurs, they have to do more stakeholder management, according to respondent B1 from KBC Start-It X.

4.2.1.1. The intrapreneurial HR-department

In many large organizations, where the HR-department takes part of the organizational structure, HR employees are active for quite a lot of time. This means that they can be quite conservative and resistant against the change of the organizational strategy. It is therefore crucial for the board to proactively communicate with this department and clarify the strategy when needed. This department is thus not innovative, and intrapreneurs should even organize coaching sessions to stimulate HR people to jump abroad, according to respondent B1 who has a lot of experience with different organizations implementing the intrapreneurial strategy.

B1: "HR departments, not in every company so I cannot generalize them, consist of really conservative people. HR employees are mostly active for a long period of time and are not afraid to be fired due to their seniority. This means they are not going to do more than they did before, which makes it difficult to innovate. Although, some companies tend to understand the importance of aligning HR with the intrapreneurial strategy, but there is still some room for improvement. Intrapreneurs could even give coaching sessions to these HR people, to explain the strategy and the positive outcomes it can bring."

A3: You need people with the right hard skills, that's for sure. But you need also creative people that support intrapreneurship within the organization and support this way of working, who can join a team and do not need a lot of adaptation time. That's where HR plays an important role, as they should operate in line with the business. They have to identify the candidates fit with the organization and search for the right soft skills."

4.2.2. Organizational structure

Referring to the internal politics of the company, the company can often have way too much hierarchy. The respondents of the interview all opt for a rather hybrid structure, whereby there is still some hierarchy, but leaders work together with their intrapreneurs. These intrapreneurs feel more involved which increases their intrinsic motivation. In many large companies, there is still a pure vertical structure. This involves a lot of sublevels which hinder the intrapreneurial strategy. Therefore, a more hybrid structure is favorable. This means that there is still some hierarchy, which in large companies is needed because of, for example, complex financial decisions that have to be made. This hierarchy also makes sure there is room for ambition among the employees, which means that the participating companies in this research facilitate personal development and growth. Intrapreneurs can, in other words, still pursue a certain career path, which is also beneficial for the company as a whole.

B1: "In most companies, the decision power should be still in the hands of the management board. But underneath, the structure should be mainly horizontal. It is important to find the right balance, like in a hybrid structure. I am convinced that a lot of organizations have a way to vertical structure and should evolve towards a more hybrid structure with horizontal characteristics."

Making a certain career is still very present for young graduates who start working for a large company. The additional benefits as well as the room for ambition can be very attractive for a lot of people, but typical Multinational Enterprises (MNE's) often find it difficult to innovate. According to respondent B1 from KBC Start-It. Their enormous size makes it much more difficult to change and ensures they often fall back on traditional ways of working. In addition, these companies are typically stock listed and thus rely on cash flows that have an influence on the result of the company. This makes it hard for them to innovate, as these related projects have a negative impact on the cash flow of a company and are thus in contrast with the benefits of the shareholders.

Due to the characteristics of these MNE's, smaller companies, such as start and scale ups, now have more impact on the economy than ten years ago. They find it much easier to initiate innovative projects and make costs on the long run. These projects, however, are crucial for these companies to gain market share by serving a new product or service.

B1: "Typical mastodonts have now, more than ever, a problem. Nobody had ever thought that they would get in trouble. Small companies are much more flexible, and you see larger companies dividing themselves into smaller organizations. You have to be really innovative these days, and that isn't possible for larger companies as they can't adopt fast enough to the changing environment they operate in."

Multinational Enterprises are characterized by a rather vertical and hierarchic structure, as they consist of a lot of managerial ranks. Although the need for some kind of hierarchy within the company, a more horizontal approach within the different departments is recommended. This involves department managers working together with their intrapreneurs, which can lead to greater benefits and innovative projects for the company. The department manager can operate as some kind of a coordinator and facilitates its intrapreneurs with every possible resource needed to elaborate innovative projects. As mentioned before, this can involve financial instruments such as a VISA card, but also other resources that improve the operational efficiency within the department. Respondent A3 mentioned the open office spaces they introduced a few years ago, which consist of one room full of office tables.

A3: "Team members can always approach us with questions. We moved to a new office a few years ago, where we work in open spaces. Managers of all levels work in this office, and there are no separate offices for the partners of our company. This shortens the distance between the intrapreneurs and their leaders, which makes it possible for those leaders to closely monitor the innovative projects intrapreneurs work on. To give frequent feedback and help them when they ask for it, that is how you create confidence."
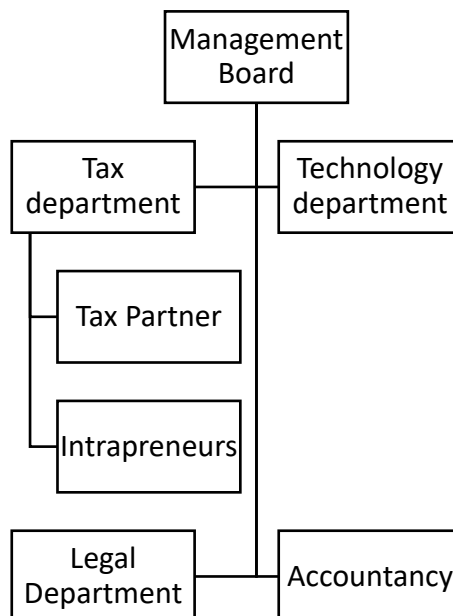

Figure 3: Example of a hybrid structure at EY

The anticipated hybrid structures facilitate the bottom-up approach that comes with intrapreneurial innovation. This means that intrapreneurs push innovation up the ladder of the company, but this culture should be fostered by the leaders of the organization, like mentioned earlier. The respondent of KBC Start-It X (B1) even mentioned that they offer platforms that make it possible for leaders to capture innovative ideas coming from lower-level intrapreneurs, which improves the internal communication of the firm.

In some interviews, respondents even mentioned turning around the classical pyramid within a company. This means that intrapreneurs are at the top of the organizational chart and the CEO is at the lowest level. This can improve the facilitation of the intrapreneurial strategy, which involves the stimulation of operational employees to initiate intrapreneurial behavior. As mentioned by our respondent from AB InBev (C1), intrapreneurship starts with the executers of the operational processes. This involves corporate renewal and asks for the stimulation of innovative behavior. This turnaround of the classical approach is also supported by one of our respondents of EY:

A1: "We stem from a classic matrix organization. We should turn around that pyramid and form a new dimension. But this transition doesn't happen from one day to another. You can see an evolution within our company, but we aren't there yet. At one moment, you reach a stage where you can leave the old model and step into the new one. In addition, if different departments work cross-functional, new products or services could be initiated. Innovation is not something that comes and goes, but I truly believe in organizational change."
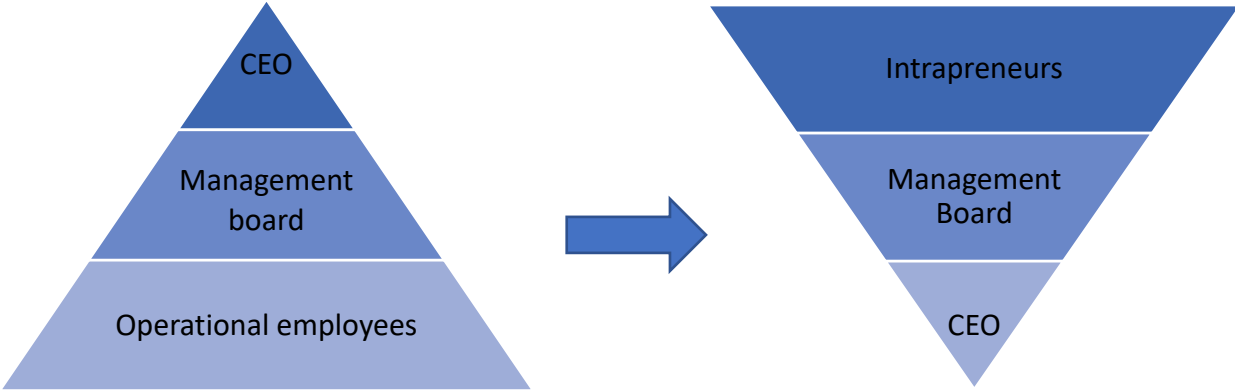
Figure 4: Intended pyramid turnaround

In most of the interviews, the intrapreneurs of the company stepped out to be the main asset of the company. This refers to the Human Capital of the organization, like was mentioned in the literature review (Alpkan et al., 2010). The HC or the intrapreneurs of the company now form the key asset in the attempt to reach a sustainable competitive advantage, due to their innovative behaviors. They are in most cases best placed to share important information about business processes and should be supported and facilitated by the management board to effectively work on innovation projects, whereby the internal structure of the company should change to facilitate this new way of working. The upside-down flip of the classic pyramid then facilitates the intrapreneurial strategy of the company, as the management board is in charge of the intrapreneurs.

4.2.3. Change in KPI's

As the classic pyramid turns around and we move towards a more intrapreneurial friendly structure, the operational intrapreneurs should still have some goals in foresight to make sure improved performances are a result of all the innovative intentions. This could be done by changing the performance indicators of the company. This means KPI's, Key Performance Indicators, should be changed in order to support the intrapreneurial strategy. Without a change in the performance indicators, change isn't going to occur. According to one of the respondents at EY (A1), these indicators should move towards a more innovative and communicative goalsetting, that undocks the silo approach and evolve towards a cross-silo way of working.

A1: "It starts with the leading board of the company. They have to change the KPI's of the firm, because if this doesn't happen, employees keep working in the traditional way and won't change their behavior. Everyone who wants to innovate, is then being punished by KPI's that don't support innovation. I believe in the structural change of performance indicators to support innovational processes from intrapreneurs."

C1: We have to pursue our employees to think in a more entrepreneurial way. They still focus on Key Performance Indicators as these are their goals when operating on the work floor. They have to think more about how processes work and can be improved. That takes time and limits the production for some extend, but this can improve corporate performances in the long run."

The implementation of Key Performance Indicators that facilitate intrapreneurial behavior was not studied yet. This suggestion is a result of the semi-structured interviews in which respondents advocate the need for the adjustment of KPI's in order to become a change in employee behavior. As this is not examined in the past, there are no specific suggestions or examples of performance indicators that foster a surge in innovative ideas and better the overall internal communication in the company.

4.2.4. Internal traineeships

To benefit the cross-functional way of working, there should be internal traineeships available that support the communication between different departments. Hereby, the manager of one department follows a traineeship in a different department to better understand the way of working of that specific silo. In many companies, it happens that you start within one silo as a junior and you never leave this department:

A3: "If you start at EY, you start in a certain silo. You operate within this department and can make certain steps up the ladder, but until the end of your career, you remain in the same silo. This is something we should think about more often. We could, for example, offer our managers the chance to follow traineeships within the company, to support the cross-functional way of working."

A2: "I think we should care more about what other departments within our organization do. This way, we get to know each other even more. We should evolve towards a more or less sector approach. Hereby, you start from the perspective of the client. The more we work together, the better we can understand and serve our clients."

As with the introduction of intrapreneurial KPI's, internal traineeships across different departments of the company have not been examined in previous studies. This is a result of one of the suggestions made in the interviews, in which the respondent stated the rather silo way of working in his company. Due to its cross-silo character, innovation will be stimulated with the implementation of internal traineeships. This will better the understanding of internal processes of the managers as well as the collaboration between the different departments. In addition, the relational bonds between the department managers will improve as they now work more together than before.

5. Discussion

With the implementation of the intrapreneurial strategy, the management team of the company fulfills a crucial role. Despite the need for a supportive leading team, the new way of working in intrapreneurship demands a holistic approach in which other corporate factors play a part the success of this new strategy. Hereby, the leaders of the company should be in full support of the intrapreneurs and rely on a change in the organizational structure. Intrapreneurs are at the top of the organization and receive more autonomy and responsibilities in their day-to-day tasks, referring to the concept of employee empowerment. These empowered intrapreneurs obtain support of their managers, who operate as coordinators and stay at the sideline, intervening when needed.

The change in the internal corporate structure asks for a clear communication of the leading members. These members work together with their intrapreneurs as well as with the other departments within the company. This fosters the creation of innovative ideas and projects that intrapreneurs can work on. In addition, the management team of the firm should clearly communicate the change in the internal policies and strategy when implementing the intrapreneurship strategy. Due to its holistic characteristic, the success of the intrapreneurship implementation relies on correct alignment of all corporate institutions.

As seen in the literature review as well as in the empirical results, the profile of an intrapreneur correlates with certain personal traits such as proactiveness, flexibility, ... This profile should therefore be in mind when hiring new people. The intrapreneurship strategy asks for a proactive attitude, meaning that not every employee will fit this way of working. The management team should thus clearly align the human resource department to avoid short term costs such as firing new employees who do not possess the right organizational identification or person-organization fit.

In order to change the day-to-day behaviors of the employees, there should be a change in the performance indicators of the company. As mentioned in the interviews, these indicators can foster an alternation in the proactiveness of employees as well as in the internal communication between intrapreneurs and their managers. In addition, these collaborations can be improved with the implementation of internal traineeships where managers operate in a different department for a certain period. This betters their knowledge of internal processes as well as the mutual relationships between the department managers of the organization. The change in KPI's and the invention of internal traineeships are additional corporate factors that can be beneficial for the initiation of innovative ideas and projects.

The holistic approach that comes with the intrapreneurial strategy, as well as some corporate factors that can improve the exertion of the new way of working, were not studied yet in previous research. This approach is fitted in a summarizing model, which is presented in figure 5
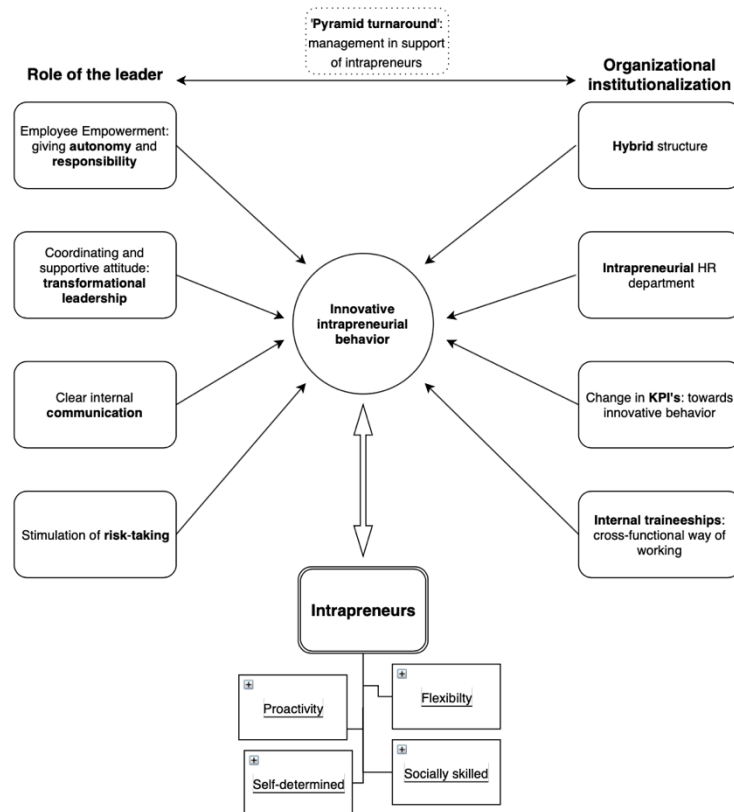
Figure 5: Model for the organizational institutionalization of intrapreneurship and the role of the leaders of the company.

The figure answers the two research questions of this article: *How* does the intrapreneurial behavior of managers impact the intrapreneurial behavior of employees and *how* should the company be institutionalized to foster intrapreneurship? To answer these questions, figure 5 provides an overview of the creation of an optimal corporate environment where intrapreneurs feel safe, stimulated and supported by their leaders. In order to become innovative intrapreneurial behavior, the role of the leader as well as the organizational institutionalization of intrapreneurship play a major role. In addition, there are some key characteristics that positively correlate with the profile of an intrapreneurs and should therefore be correctly identified by the HR-department, as this newly emerged strategy starts when hiring new employees.

First, the leaders of the company play a major role in the support and facilitation of intrapreneurs. These leaders should adopt a new leadership style, namely transformational leadership (Eyal & Kark, 2004), and step away from the classic view of a leader. These transformational leaders are known to develop a clear organizational vision and stimulate their employees to think on their own, to develop new ideas and to question the operating rules and systems that are no longer in line with the goals and mission of the organization (Jung et al., 2003), namely the change in the Key Performance Indicators as suggested in the discussion part of this article. This style of leading is thus best suited to support intrapreneurs to initiate innovative ideas and facilitate them to work on projects they are passionate about, as stated by the respondents of the interviews. These managers associate

themselves with the transformational leadership style, in which they take on the role as a coordinator of the intrapreneurs.

In addition to the suggested transformational leadership style, these leaders can foster intrapreneurial behavior by empowering their employees, in which these intrapreneurs receive more authority and responsibility to work on projects they feel satisfied by, without having to necessarily take approval from direct supervisors (Falola et al., 2016). The empowerment of employees ensures that they feel save when working on innovational projects, which in turn improves the risk-taking of these intrapreneurs, which could lead to generating new ideas. Intrapreneurs are now in the spotlight of the organization, whereby the leaders are on the sideline and can intervene when needed. In most companies, the intrapreneurs are best placed to understand internal business processes and can therefore give a meaningful input when it comes to improving these processes.

To effectively captivate the process related information coming from intrapreneurs, it is foremost important that leaders have a good communication with their employees. According to Park et al. (2014), organizations should investigate more on the improvement of communication within the different levels of the organization (Park et al., 2014). This involves shortening the distance between the leaders and the employees as well as providing them feedback on a frequent basis. Employees no longer work for a boss, as was the case for many years, but they work together with their leaders to become to new ideas, products and/or services. This refers to the two-way symmetrical approach, as described by J.E. Grunig and Hunt (1984), which is the most effective way of communicating with 'strategic internal public'. This approach uses communication as a tool to promote mutual understanding, resolve conflicts as well as the establishment of respect between the organization and its publics by encouraging communication symmetry. This is in line with the findings of the interview, where one of the respondents opts for a bidirectional communication between leaders and intrapreneurs.

As mentioned before, an intrapreneur relies on certain characteristics such as proactivity. Together with these characteristics, intrapreneurial employees are willing to take more risk as a result of their proactive attitude. This risk-taking should be encouraged by the leaders of the company, as it can lead to new business opportunities. Risk-taking is furthermore a characteristic of an intrapreneurship, as described by researcher Petra Neessen (2019). In a dynamic environment, where the needs of customers constantly change and depend on the globalization of new technologies, companies are obliged in order to survive and to guard or improve their competitive position. The risk-taking aspect of intrapreneurship can be fostered by ensuring the psychological safety of employees, as a safe climate stimulates intrapreneurs to take risk and express themselves which in turn lead to increased innovative ideas (Baer & Frese, 2003)

The characteristics of an intrapreneur refer to a correct identification of the right profiles by the HR-department. Not only the leaders of the company are responsible for the overall support and facilitation of intrapreneurs; the entire company should be aware of the intrapreneurial strategy. As such, the rather traditional Human Resources department should be aware of the intrapreneurial profiles the company needs, to support the intrapreneurial environment the company operates in.

To shape and foster intrapreneurial employee behavior, HR as a department should be part of the hybrid structure of the company. This involves a mixture of both the vertical and horizontal structures, where there is still room for some hierarchy but intrapreneurs work with rather than for their leaders. This ensures that there is a good relationship between them, leading to increased corporate performances due to the surge in initiated innovative projects. In addition to this hybrid outlet of the company's structure, respondents from the interview stated a 'pyramid turnaround' from the classical corporate system. The turnaround of the classic CEO to laborer-pyramid optimally facilitates the intrapreneurs of the organization, as the managerial board is now in charge of the intrapreneurs. Hereby, leaders become more encouraged to facilitate and support their intrapreneurs.

The suggested hybrid structure of the organization also facilitates the cross-functional way of working between the different departments. As indicated by previous researchers, as well as the respondents of the interview, innovation is cross-silo phenomenon that demands clear communication and a broader view of the whole picture. The information exchange between the multiple departments also makes sure the entire company is on the same level in terms of innovation. In addition, internal traineeship should be implemented to improve the cross-functional understanding of the departments.

Lastly, the organization should change their Key Performances Indicators towards a more innovation friendly goal setting. In a traditional business, employees strive towards certain goals or KPI's. In case the organization is not willing to change these milestones, employees won't change their behaviors. The change in employee behavior is at the end the main goal of the company when implementing a new strategy in intrapreneurship. Therefore, Key Performance Indicators have to support the cross-functional way of working and should consist of more communicative and innovative milestones. Consequently, the employees will become more motivated to works towards the achievement of these KPI's, whereby more innovative projects will be initiated by these intrapreneurs.

The existing literature on the intrapreneurship has, so far, examined several topics that have an impact on the success of this new strategy. This research contains more information on topics such as employee empowerment, psychological safety, transformational leadership, co-working, … Despite its relevancy within the intrapreneurship domain, these topics were not yet placed in a holistic approach that summarizes the corporate factors that positively correlate with the success of the intrapreneurial strategy and therefore increase the intrapreneurial behavior of employees. In addition, the empirical part of this article suggests new insights that foster the intrapreneurial behavior of employees and encourage a change in the way these intrapreneurs think and behave.

When companies implement intrapreneurship as a strategy of the company, this model can be utilized to improve the implementation efficiency and shorten the time period that this strategy change involves. As seen in the empirical research of this article, this time period can often take years as it can involve a lot of trial and error in the form of internal discussions and brainstorm sessions that concern the implementation process of the new strategy. As stated in this article, the management team is at the end responsible for the adequate change in the corporate internal strategy.

6. Research limitations and Future Research

This paper could involve some limitations. First, the corona pandemic has had an impact on the scope of this project, as it is only possible to communicate via online tools such as Zoom. This means little to no interviews with blue and white-collar workers could be set up. This paper is therefore limited to the managerial perspective from managers working for private companies, which indicates that it cannot be generalized to all companies implementing the intrapreneurial strategy. Nevertheless, this perspective will give a clearer view on how managers try to implement an intrapreneurial strategy within the boundaries of the company and how their intrapreneurial actions influence the individual employee and his or her behavior. Despite, no additional input from intrapreneurs themselves could be gathered.

Second, this research involved some implications when organizing the empirical research. This relates to the fact that it was really hard to arrange interviews with leading figures of large companies, which limits the number of interviews that could be set up. The stimulation of intrapreneurial employee behavior as described in this article relies on some corporate factors as well as the adequate leading figures of the companies but can be expand by organizing additional empirical research with companies from different industries.

This article is thus limited by the singular point of view from the leaders of a company. Therefore, future research can give an additional point of view by examining the intrapreneurs of the company. In the case of for example AB InBev, which is a classical consumer good provider, these intrapreneurs are operational employees that work with the machinery to produce these products. They are used to fulfill their job and return home, without having a meaningful innovative impact. Those blue-collar workers are now forced to step out of their comfort zone, and proactively participate in the company. Their findings were not discussed in this article and could potentially be a valuable addition.

Furthermore, the HR-department has received an even more important role within the hybrid structure of the company. Their opinion on the selection procedure as well as on the intrapreneurial strategy in general was not discussed in this article. In addition, outsourced recruitment companies are even more distanced which makes it extra difficult for them to understand every corporate strategy of their clientele. HR-departments, even as the recruitment offices, could form another research subject within the research domain of intrapreneurship.

Appendix

Appendix A: Interview guide

Goal of the interview

The main goal of this interview is to better understand the practical implications that evolve around the construct of intrapreneurship. As we have seen in the literature review, managers play a major role in the support and coordination of intrapreneurs. These innovative employees are a valuable asset of the organization and are a crucial factor in the attempt to reach a sustainable competitive advantage and consequently an increased corporate performance. This improvement in welfare for the company can, on the long run, be very interesting for external stakeholders such as investors.

First of all, I would like to give you a brief definition of the concept of Intrapreneurship, to make sure we are on the same level. In in the literature of this research domain, many different definitions are obtained. I mainly based my literature review around the definition formulated by Neessen, who describes intrapreneurship as follows:

"Intrapreneurship is a process whereby employee(s) recognize and exploit opportunities by being innovative, proactive and by taking risk, in order for the organization to create new products, processes and services, initiate self-renewal or venture new businesses to enhance the competitiveness and performances of the organization".

General questions:
- Can you introduce yourself and declare your function within your company?
- How do you describe yourself as a manager?
- Can you give a brief explanation of your past experiences as a manager?
- What does your function as a manager involve? (Specific tasks?)

Open question

How do you as a manager try to support intrapreneurship and encourage employees to undertake initiative within the organization? What has already changed within the organization?

RQ 1: How does the intrapreneurial behavior of managers impact the intrapreneurial behavior of employees?

- How would you describe the concept 'Intrapreneurship'?
  What is, according to your experience, the difference between an intrapreneur and an innovative employee?
- Are these intrapreneurs more valuable to the company? (cf. human capital)
- Do you think that intrapreneurial employee behavior leads to increased corporate performance?
- How do you try to stimulate employees to take risks? (
  - o Do they feel comfortable doing so? How do you try to make them feel comfortable?
- How do you, and other managers of the company, try to champion innovative ideas and proposals from intrapreneurs?
  - o Are these employees even allowed to show initiative?
- How do you try to provide intrapreneurs with the right resources?
  - o What are the most important resources according to your experiences?

Definition transformational leadership:

Transformational leadership is a leadership style in which leaders encourage, inspire and motivate employees to innovate and create change that will help grow and shape the future success of the company.

- Do you see yourself as such a manager?
- How do you try to raise the confidence of your employees?
- How do you extrinsically reward intrapreneurs?

- How important is a good person-organization fit for you?
  - o Do you think this links with intrapreneurial behavior of employee?
- Do employees have to sacrifice personal goals for the overall benefit of the company?

RQ 2: How does active empowerment of employees impact their intrapreneurial behavior?

Definition:

Human capital refers to the sum of individual knowledge, skills and abilities of the organizational human resources. Effective management of the human capital plays a crucial role in the improvement of corporate performances and in the establishment of a competitive advantage for the firm, which in turns leads to higher dividends for the stakeholders. This relates to the organizational support within a company, that refers to the establishment of a comfortable climate and context for intrapreneurs to operate in.

- How important is the human capital for your company and its attempt to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage?
- How would you describe organizational support for intrapreneurs?
- What are, according to your experiences, the main tools for managers to create a supportive organizational environment?

- How would you describe the concept of employee empowerment?
- How do you empower you employees?
  - By giving them more responsibilities, authority…?
  - Do you feel comfortable when giving more authority to subordinates?
- Do you think that employees who are empowerment by their leaders perform better?
  - Do they provide more innovative ideas?
  - Does empowerment lead to increased personal development for the employees?
- What are the main success factors for employee empowerment according to your experiences? (cf. clear communication, P-O-fit…)

- How do you try to create a psychological safe environment for your employees?
  - Brainstorm sessions, feedback moments, encourage them to speak up,..

- How would you describe the organizational structure of your company?
  - Rather flat (horizontal) or more traditionally and hierarchic (vertically)
  - Do you think this structure enhances the stimulation of intrapreneurs?
  - Should you change something about the structure that could improve the implementation process of an intrapreneurial strategy?
- How can the HR-department play a role in the strategic implementation of an intrapreneurial strategy?
- Referring to the organizational structure of the company you described earlier; what is your position in the management board?
  - Which managers are placed above/below you?
  - (Depending on the answer) What are your responsibilities and to what extend are you free to operate (cf. empowerment within the management board)
  - How should middle-level managers 'propagate' lower-level ideas?
- How important is the information coming from operating level employees?
  - How can they communicate this information?

- ▪ Via an online platform, WhatsApp?

- How can the HR-department play a role in the strategic implementation of an intrapreneurial strategy?
    - o Does HR understand the strategy and how do they try to play a role in its implementation?
        - ▪ Finding people that suit the company for example (P-O fit, creative individuals…)
    - o How does HRM try to support the organizational goals?
    - o How important is the HR-department for your company?

- How important is a good communication between the different operational levels (cf. dispersed characteristic of intrapreneurship)
    - o How do you try to improve the communication process within the company?
        - ▪ Do you think it should be improved?
    - o How well do employees understand the vision, mission and organizational values of the company?
        - ▪ How do you (visually) communicate these three?

- Which recommendations, proposals, tips,.. would you give your company to improve the current intrapreneurial strategy (and the implementation of it)?

Appendix B: First-order and second-order coding of the collected interview data

Case	First-order codes and illustrative evidence (open coding)	Theoretical observations (second-order codes)	Theoretical construct
A2	I try to stimulate intrapreneurs by letting them do the job, without actively having an input in their way of working		
A1	I try to constantly challenge my employees by asking them about the meanings of their formulations, in order to foster innovation	New role for the leader when implementing intrapreneurship	
C1	Day-to-day, I try to help my people to search for problems and bottlenecks in the production processes, and try to stimulate them to think in a new problem-solving way		
A1	Innovation can often be that big for the company, that is is foremost important to often take a step back as a leader and hold the right overview		Coordinating leadership style
A3	Throughout the years, the top-down approach has simultaneously made room for initiative of more operational employees, who have to proactively work rather than just sitting back.		
C1	We are turning around the pyramid with the CEO at the top, so we can facilitate operational	New way of working for both the leaders and employees	

Case		
	employees who are key to our processes. They also have to help us, so it is more or less a two-way information flow		
A2	It is important to let our juniors and seniors work on their jobs and involve them in the assignments they have to fulfill. We as the leaders are on the sideline and can interfere when needed.		
C1	We try to change the traditional way of working for our employees and stimulate them to make a certain career within the company, to let them think out-of-the box rather than just doing their tasks.		
A3	I do think that I try to give people the space to come up with ideas themselves, to develop their own plans, to challenge them and also try to pull the cart themselves.	Transformational leadership	
A1	Leaders should give the right example and inspire intrapreneurs to come up with ideas. If leaders don't foster this, there is not going be a change of the traditional way of working.		

Case	First-order codes and illustrative evidence	Theoretical observations (second-order codes)	Theoretical construct
A2	People who apply for a job at our company normally have the right hard skills, otherwise they won't make it through the first round. It is important that they fit within the organization and support our way of working.		

Case	First-order codes and illustrative evidence	Theoretical observations (second-order codes)	Theoretical construct
C1	When HR searches for new employees: they search people who act proactively and do not just traditionally work from 9-5	Organizational identification of intrapreneurs	The importance of HR in the strategy of intrapreneurship
A1	It is important that employees want to proactively come up with new ideas, rather than just let the workflow come to them. They have to be flexible and that has to be one of the topics recorded in the recruitment processes.		
A3	To become an intrapreneur, employees should feel well within the organization. Aspects of HR also involve making sure that every facilitation aspect is in order, such as the IT infrastructure in times of COVID-19.		
B1	In most companies, the HR-department is the most conservative of all. They involve people who are active within the company for many years. HR is often the least innovative department. Leaders should therefore align HR with the concept of intrapreneurship	Soft skills identification as the key to finding intrapreneurs	
A2	HR should hire people with the concept of intrapreneurship in mind: they should find people who support entrepreneurship within the organization. The softs skills of candidates are really important.		

Case	First-order codes and illustrative evidence	Theoretical observations (second-order codes)	Theoretical construct
A2	We try to give our juniors and seniors confidence by lowering the threshold to our offices. We constantly hold dialogues in open office spaces to make sure they do not hesitate to ask something		

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A3	We as leaders should cultivate an environment of confidence by involving all our employees and holding frequent feedback moments	The importance of giving intrapreneurs a certain level of confidence.	Relational characteristics of intrapreneurship
A1	From the beginning of someone's career, I tell them that there are no 'dumb' questions: asking questions is a form of critical thinking, and they should feel confident to ask them despite the hierarchy in our company.		
C1	Having a good relationship with your workers ensures that they feel confident and want to work proactively.		
A3	We stimulate risk-taking by letting them take initiative.		
A1	Taking risks include many aspects, such as personal risk: people should learn how to fail in order to learn new things and create innovative ideas.	Taking risks leads to learning opportunities, opportunities that might result in innovation	
B1	Increased risk-taking leads to increased financial costs. For some companies this can be a problem, but innovation has, in the first place, a negative effect on the financial performances of a company.		
C1	Risk-taking is allowed, but to a limited extend. They have to adopt a problem-solving way of working and this leads to taking risks as well as initiative.		
A3	We try to give our juniors a certain level of responsibility right		

Case	First-order codes and illustrative evidence	Theoretical observations (second-order codes)	Theoretical construct
	when they join the company. Even those ex-students can come up with ideas and show initiative.	Empowering intrapreneurs to foster innovation	
B1	Empowering employees means that they can work on things they like and want to learn more about. This will increase their proactive way of working and lead to innovative ideas.		
B1	Employees often get motivated by employee empowerment, which can lead to behavior that we never saw in them in the past.		

Case	First-order codes and illustrative evidence	Theoretical observations (second-order codes)	Theoretical construct
A3	Within a big company, there is naturally a form of hierarchy. Despite, we try to work as horizontally as possible, because a high level of hierarchy leads to leaders operating in an ivory tower.	Hybrid structure to foster intrapreneurship	Organizational institutionalization of intrapreneurship
A1	It is important to find the right balance, and there should be some kind of top-down approach. When there is an innovative idea in France, we should be aware of it, otherwise we could end up with the same idea and that is a waste of time.		
B1	Innovation can perfectly be bottom-up, but the leaders should cultivate and foster innovation. Innovate should, for instance, be bottom-up and coming from operational employees who know what they are doing.		
C1	Hierarchy is still needed. Collaboration is becoming more		

	important, and they no longer work for a boss, but for the company as a whole. This is how we want to improve the brewery together.		
A3	I feel really comfortable giving juniors and seniors more authority. Although, there should be a balance, because otherwise lonesome cowboys can do whatever they want.	Devolved management structure	
C1	I would like to be even more on the same line with my employees, so we can work together rather than them doing a job and me evaluating it.		

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