Exploring the relationship between Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy

A Study in For-Profit and Non-profit Organizations
Master Thesis in Business Administration

Title: Exploring the relationship between Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy: A Study in For-Profit and Non-profit Organizations

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Abstract

Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy are well developed concepts within the academic fields of Knowledge Management and Social Cognitive Theory. The purpose of the study was to investigate the antecedents and the relationship between the two concepts in for-profit and non-profit organisations. The study employed Ipe’s model of knowledge sharing to Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Albert Bandura’s contribution to Self-Efficacy. A qualitative study was conducted and the authors collected data through semi-structured interviews which were later analysed through a process of content analysis. The findings show that sources of information for self-efficacy judgements can be influenced by the occurrence of Tacit Knowledge Sharing. Organisations can benefit from these findings by incorporating opportunities to share tacit knowledge into their working routines, helping their employees circulate knowledge and increase their sense of self-efficacy.
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1. Introduction

In the following section, the authors will provide a background for the study, the research gap and its subsequent purpose.

Ikujiro Nonaka, a renowned researcher in the field of Knowledge Management, once stated that “In an economy where the only certainty is uncertainty, the one sure source of lasting competitive advantage is knowledge” (Dalkir & Liebowitz, 2011, p.48). The importance of knowledge is a recognised fact in organisational theory. Testimony to that is the prominence of the Knowledge-based view (KBV) of the company which maintains that knowledge is the most valuable organisational resource through which an organisation can achieve competitive advantage (Grant, 1996). Nonaka (1994) classified knowledge in two distinct categories, tacit and explicit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is a personal type of knowledge constituted of insights, know-how and hunches often gained through experience which makes it hard to communicate and share with others (Endres, Endres, Chowdhury, & Alam, 2007). Explicit knowledge on the other hand, is one that can be communicated easily though written manuals or documents (Nonaka, Takeuchi, & Umemoto, 1996). The current study will focus on the first type of knowledge, namely tacit knowledge, and its sharing within an organisation. The transmission of tacit knowledge is laden with difficulties as its content is intrinsically nonverbal and thus, its expression is hindered and limited (Ipe, 2003). The field of Tacit Knowledge Sharing is covered extensively with scholars having investigated different factors that can act as enablers of Tacit Knowledge Sharing such as an engaging environment and HRM practices (Nakano, Muniz, & Dias Batista, 2013) and social ties (Lin, 2007).

Knowledge is as important for an individual within an organisation to succeed at their respective work as it is for an organisation to succeed with its chosen goals. Nevertheless, as central as knowledge of a task can be for its completion, it alone is not sufficient for individuals to succeed (Bandura, 1997). Here, the concept of self-efficacy, the belief of adequacy an individual ascribes to themselves in certain tasks, is of paramount importance. Self-efficacy constitutes a belief in oneself of having the required knowledge, attitude and behaviour in order to successfully complete a task. Self-efficacy is influenced and formed by different factors, either by actual practice, by cognitive modelling, by the feedback that others give or by an individual’s physiological states (M. E. Gist & Mitchell, 1992). However, all of these four sources of information for self-efficacy rely on one or another type of knowledge,
whether it is about a skill, a task or even oneself (Bandura, 1997). Having employees that are self-efficacious can make a difference for an organisation as individuals who consider themselves efficacious would persevere in difficult and challenging situations whereas individuals with low self-efficacy are likely to spend less effort and time on such challenging tasks (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Furthermore, Boyd and Vozikis (1994) stated that the relationship of self-efficacy and performance of an individual has some implication for the development of entrepreneurial actions and intentions within an organisation.

The KBV has been developed with the private sector in mind, dealing with organisations that compete for limited resources and economic viability; subsequently the practices it endorses, although not directly mentioned, are suited to an organisation in a market economy. Nevertheless, knowledge permeates organisations as a valuable resource indifferent of their aims, whether economic or not. Thus, for-profit organisations (FPO) are organisations that have the economic purpose of furthering the economic wellbeing of its members (Bolagsverket, 2016) One could argue that for an organisation in the third sector, non-profit organisations (NPO) knowledge constitutes an even more valuable asset due to their intrinsic needs and aims (Ragsdell, 2013). A non-profit organisation, according to the Swedish authority of Companies Registration Office (Bolagsverket, 2012) is an organisation which exists to further an ideal rather than profit; these organisations can be religiously, politically or socially incentivised to exist. Limited budgets and a high turnover of voluntary workforce are two of the main constraints. NPOs, while not being subject to market forces, are delimited by other organisational constraints. Despite such differences, the role knowledge plays in NPOs can be said to be as valuable or even more so than in for-profit organisations; volunteers, even if temporary, have to be properly equipped to handle a variety of situations (Ragsdell, 2013).

Since knowledge is an intrinsic part of self-efficacy, a conceptual link between them can be traced. Except for isolated articles, there has been found no academic effort in linking the two concepts in an explicit manner. Thus, the aim of the following study is to zoom in and look at the interplay between tacit knowledge sharing and its effects on self-efficacy within organisational members in for-profit and non-profit organisations.
1.1 Academic and practical relevance

The concepts of Self-Efficacy and Tacit Knowledge Sharing were jointly investigated in a study by Endres et al. (2007), where the researchers treated Self-Efficacy as an antecedent to Tacit Knowledge Sharing finding that a belief in one’s own capability of sharing knowledge will raise the propensity of engaging in knowledge sharing behaviour. However, throughout the authors’ study, no other academic research has sought to understand the relationship between the aforementioned concepts. Due to a lack of conceptual integration between Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy, the following study could further the understanding of the relationship between the two, providing an academic insight into their relationship.

Another academic relevance stems from the fact that NPOs are generally underrepresented in organisational studies, thus the study could validate the applicability of current knowledge sharing models in NPOs and elucidate how such organisations transmit knowledge between their employees. As mentioned by Ragsdell (2013), due to the extreme organisational factors faced by NPOs particularly volunteer organisations, such as high volunteer turnover and limited budget flexibility, they can be sources of lessons for other types of organisations on how to deal with similar phenomena.

The practical relevance of the study for NPOs and the third sector would be to gain an insight into how members of such organisations transmit knowledge and self-efficacy. In environments where there is a high employee or volunteer turnover, the effective transmission of certain skills can be considered a key factor in an organisation’s success. On the one hand, it reduces the time an employee or volunteer needs to “get up to speed” with the rest of the organisation and on the other hand, the stable employees can also learn from instances of knowledge sharing for future events where they will be tasked to instruct new volunteers or employees. FPOs can also find practical relevance in the aforementioned scenarios given the fact that employee turnover becomes a pressing concern even for such organisations. If initiatives of maintaining current employees do not succeed, then the next best thing is an efficient and timely transfer of required knowledge between employees of longer tenure and newly employed individuals.
1.2 Problem statement and research gap

Until recently, NPOs have not garnered much attention by academic practitioners in the field of knowledge management and thus represent an underdeveloped theoretical segment. The field of tacit knowledge sharing has been developed predominantly with the private sector in mind, later being applied with success to the public sector; while there are certain similarities between the public and third sector, the unique and extreme features of the latter warrants a deeper investigation (Ragsdell, 2013). The concept of Self-efficacy, on the other hand, originating from social cognitive theory of psychology has been applied in varying sectors but predominantly in public sector settings, leaving the third sector underexplored.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of the study, stemming from the problem statement and research gap, is to expand the academic knowledge on Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy in an FPO and NPO setting. Since Tacit Knowledge Sharing has not been investigated extensively in an NPO setting, it would lead to an expansion of the concept to a different organisational environment. Furthermore, by investigating the relationship between Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy, the authors would contribute to a deeper understanding of the two, hopeful to expand the existing knowledge on the aforementioned concepts.

1.4 Research question

In order to achieve the study’s purpose, the authors have developed two interlinked research questions.

1. What are the sources of Tacit Knowledge sharing and Self-efficacy in FPOs and NPOs?
2. What is the relationship between Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy in FPOs and NPOs?
2. Literature Review

In the following section, the authors are going to elaborate on the theoretical underpinnings of the study. A detailed view of the employed concepts is going to be given.

2.1 Knowledge management

Knowledge is a multidimensional construct (Nonaka, 1994) including ideas, expertise and information which is related or required by organizations, work units, teams, and individuals to perform their tasks (Bartol & Srivastava, 2002). This gives rise to knowledge management, and Dalkir and Liebowitz (2011, p.3) comprehensively define knowledge management as a “deliberate and systematic coordination of an organization’s people, technology, processes, and organizational structure in order to add value through reuse and innovation.” Such a coordination, Dalkir & Liebowitz (2011) argue is achieved through the creation, sharing and application of knowledge.

In comparison to information, knowledge is considered to be richer and more in-depth, offering greater instrumental value (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). The terms of information and knowledge are sometime considered to be interchangeable (Ipe, 2003) but Nonaka et al. (1996) are one of the authors that highlighted some key differences between information and knowledge. Nonaka et al. (1996) state that information is a medium that helps construct the knowledge with information being a flow that results in knowledge. Furthermore, both information and knowledge are relational and context specific meaning that both are depending on the social interaction among people and situation.

Knowledge management (KM) plays a key role in the achievement of organizational effectiveness (Anand et al., 1998). The survival of companies in these modern times is associated with the management and development of knowledge (Wolfe & Loraas, 2008), as it enhances the innovation and efficiency of production (Chen & Edgington, 2005).

Knowledge management has been shown to have a positive impact on performance (Zack, McKeen, & Singh, 2009) and plays an important role in enhancing innovativeness (Plessis, 2007). Barnes (2002, p17) stated that knowledge is something personal in nature, the author goes on to give a definition of knowledge management as “a system and organizationally specified process for acquiring, organizing and communicating both tacit and explicit knowledge of employees so that others employees may make use of it to be more effective and
productive in their work”. In order to make knowledge useful for others it is necessary to convey it in proper ways that is accessible and interpretable to other people. The information that people have in their minds which they processed through learning, enlightenment and reflection has a certain value, on the other hand, hoards of unprocessed information have little value (Barnes, 2002).

There are mainly three aims of knowledge management. First, is to make knowledge prominent and show its role and use in the organization. Second, it is to develop an infrastructure for knowledge which supports the connections of people in a given time, space and offers tools to assist collaboration. Lastly, it aims to develop a culture which supports a knowledge sharing behaviour or in which people are proactively looking and offering knowledge, in other words, building a knowledge-intensive culture (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). The literature on knowledge management highlights two different streams of thought. One stream of Knowledge Management stresses that knowledge cannot be detached from actions and it is rooted in relationships. Whereas the second stream considers knowledge as an asset that can be stored, combined and circulated (Nakano et al., 2013).

2.2 Knowledge sharing

Cabrera and Cabrera (2002) stated that knowledge sharing among employees is a key for companies to leverage their most important assets. Knowledge sharing is defined study as "the exchange of explicit and tacit knowledge relevant to the team task" (Lee et al., 2010, p.474). Personality traits, autonomy and rewards systems play their role for the stimulation of knowledge sharing (Cabrera et al., 2006). In the preceding study, authors also found that openness to experiences, self-efficacy, and perceived support from supervisor & co-workers enhance knowledge sharing behaviour more than reward systems and autonomy in decision making. The intention of people towards sharing of knowledge is also very important for knowledge sharing behaviours, Bock et al. (2005) being some of the authors that examined the formation of intention towards knowledge sharing by considering the social psychological forces, organizational climate and extrinsic motivators. Their findings pointed that monetary rewards, which are an economic aspect, negatively influenced the intention of knowledge sharing.

Nakano et al. (2013) stated that organizational practices are also important for the sharing of knowledge. The cross functional relationships, the development of ad hoc relationships and promoting cooperation, as well as developing a less hierarchical structure than traditional organizations are factors that promote knowledge sharing. These practices also synergize the
knowledge sharing by creating a common language, shared understanding and sense of membership. Nakano et al. (2013) on the other hand stated that these practices are not considered to be very important and are not frequently adopted because they do not further knowledge sharing in unpredictable situations.

The reason to share knowledge from an individual perspective might not be as obvious as from an organisational standpoint, due to possible negative outcomes that may offset the individual’s benefits from sharing of knowledge. Cabrera and Cabrera (2002) offer possible solutions to resolve this dilemma. Firstly, they suggest developing a new pay-off structure so that the exchanges will focus on enhancing the benefits of knowledge sharing or decrease the cost of sharing knowledge. Secondly, the authors suggest enhancing the perception of efficacy, namely by making organisational members aware of the importance of knowledge sharing on the performance of others. Lastly, the authors argue that augmenting the employees’ sense of personal responsibility and group identity helps promote a cooperative climate.

**Ipe (2003) Knowledge sharing Model:**

![Diagram of Ipe's Knowledge Sharing Model](image)

_Ipe’s Model of Factors that influence knowledge sharing between individuals in organizations (2003)_

Ipe (2003) presented a model of Knowledge sharing at individual level on the basis of research and theory which was related to the knowledge sharing. He mentioned four factors that affect the sharing of knowledge: the nature of knowledge, motivation to share, opportunities to share and culture of work environment.
2.2.1 Nature of knowledge

The sharing of knowledge is influenced by its nature, meaning whether it is *tacit* or *explicit*. Tacit knowledge cannot be communicated without the person that possesses it, making its sharing difficult. Whereas on the other side explicit knowledge can be easily codified and transferred, making it more open to share. But there are two types of explicit knowledge: Rationalized knowledge and embedded knowledge. The first one, Rationalized knowledge is general, standardized, context independent and public that makes the sharing easy. The Embedded knowledge is personal, narrowly applicable, context dependent and professionally or personally sensitive which make it difficult to share because it embedded in nature.

The *values of the knowledge* also influence the knowledge sharing. The individuals keep distance themselves from sharing activities in those organizations where their knowledge becomes the only thing that is valuable to the organization and sharing of this will reduce their value.

2.2.1 Motivation to share

There are some internal and external motivational factors that can influence knowledge sharing. Internal factors are Power and Reciprocity, and external factors are the Relationship with recipient and reward for sharing. When individuals are considering the knowledge as a *source of power* then they try to avoid sharing and hoard the knowledge. *Reciprocity*, is a mutual give and take, that facilitate the knowledge sharing when individual think that sharing of knowledge with others adds more value to them. Nevertheless, it has drawbacks in the form of fear of exploitation, meaning people feel extreme anxiety when they have to share their most valuable knowledge in the return of small or no benefit. *Relationship with recipient*, includes the two important element (1) trust and (2) recipient’s status and power. The relationship that is based on trust aids the knowledge exchange decisions, and learning. *Reward for sharing*, the knowledge sharing process is also influence by the real and perceived reward and penalties. There are different types of reward system for different types of knowledge sharing mechanism. There are four mechanisms that stated (1) knowledge sharing by means of informal interaction (2) knowledge sharing across work unit (3) formal interaction within and between the teams (4) individual contribution to databases. For the first mechanism reward would be intangible incentives whereas for last three mechanisms monetary reward could be used to encourage knowledge sharing.
2.2.2 Opportunities to share

Opportunities to share knowledge can be formal such as training programs, technology base systems that aid knowledge sharing or structured work team and informal such as social networks and personal relationship, they are referred as “purposive learning channels” and “relational learning channels” respectively. The purposive learning channels facilitate the knowledge sharing by providing a structured environment. However, the knowledge that is shared through these channels is mainly explicit in nature. On the other hand, relational learning channels enhance the face to face interaction or communication and build a trusting environment which is key for knowledge sharing.

2.2.3 Culture of the Work environment

All factors mentioned above are influenced by the culture of the work environment. It is the culture that governs the relations between different levels of knowledge (individual, group and organizational), it makes assumption about which knowledge has importance or not, and it construct environment for social interaction. It is the one that tell which knowledge should be or not to be process and communicate.

2.2.4 Relationship between the Factors That Influence Knowledge Sharing

These four factors that explained above could not influence the knowledge sharing in isolation because all of these are interconnected, and each of these influencing other in nonlinear manners. And three factors that are affecting the sharing of knowledge (i.e. nature of knowledge, motivation to share and opportunity to share) surrounded within the culture of work environment.

2.3 Tacit Knowledge Sharing

Tacit knowledge also related to the knowledge based view (KBV) of the firm as it has some common characteristic of KBV of the firm such as it is rare, its imitation is difficult, can be used to improve process, products, capabilities and competencies, as well as its not having any substitutes that comes out of tacit knowledge of an individual (Droege & Hoobler, 2003). According to Polanyi (1983, p.4), tacit knowledge is knowing “more than we can tell”. Furthermore, the author argued that tacit knowledge could be achieved by “indwelling”, (Polanyi, 1983, p.17) meaning that we can understand something only when we personally have identified it. Droege and Hoobler (2003) explain the concept of tacit knowledge
sharing by taking the example of a woman apprentice with one of the best maker of bread in an area of Japan. The bakery process of production allowed the women to scrutinize the process, but it was not so open or clean that allowed the apprentice to take notes with messy tables, greased and floury hands. So, the knowledge or ‘‘know how’’ is shared through observation and practice but not in the form of written instruction. Droge & Hoobler (2003, p.53) summaries the tacit knowledge as ‘‘It is the information about work process and products that individuals hold above and beyond what the organization has documented’’. The authors termed them as ‘‘tricks of trade’’ which encourages the overall know how, organization’s smooth functioning and competitive advantage. In Nonaka's (1994) point of view tacit knowledge is based on experience, involvement and actions that one had in a specific context. It is a mix of technical and cognitive elements. In which technical part contains crafts, skills and a precise know-how that is applicable to specific contexts. On other hand, the cognitive part consists of viewpoints, paradigms, beliefs and mental maps (Nonaka, 1994). As tacit knowledge being partly cognitive in nature that is the reason why organizations are unable to capture fully what their employees know (Pawlowski & Robey, 2004). For the improvement of organizational performance and creation of knowledge management, the transfer of the tacit knowledge is critical (Small & Sage, 2005). Thus, sharing of tacit knowledge is difficult because of its cognitive and personalized nature as well as it is also very important for organizations to share because they are ‘‘tricks of trade’’.

Tacit knowledge is also rooted in people’s reaction to different conditions and settings, even though it has its bases within individuals (Polanyi, 1983). Nonaka et al. (1996) state that ‘‘ba’’ or ‘‘the place of knowledge making’’ is the cause of emergence of tacit knowledge that can be develop through the link between virtual /physical space, ideas and people. That is the reason why it is always evolving and disappearing with relation to ideas, people, experiences and places, and shows its dynamic nature. Further, Yang and Farn (2009) stated that the behaviour of the knower could be determined from the tacit knowledge like as riding of bicycle, skills of fixing computer program and being an expert baseball player are some common examples of tacit knowledge.

Nakano et al. (2013) found that engaging environments facilitate the sharing of tacit knowledge. Engaging environments are created with the support of shared knowledge and language, which on their turn arise due to communication, a social climate and a strong sense of collegiality. Along with those managerial practices there are some HRM practices, in the shape provision of incentives, formal training and on job training that also contribute in the
development of an engaging environment. Nakano et al. (2013) said that these factors contribute to the tacit knowledge sharing because they enhance personal interaction and involvement. In addition to this, if companies have some structure practices that result in shape of encoding and explicit knowledge storing then by internalising those practices organization contribute to the tacit knowledge sharing (Nonaka et al., 1996). Furthermore, (Nonaka, 1994) argues that the strength of social ties and levels of competitiveness can result in reciprocity and interpersonal trust that can on their turn contribute to employee’s willingness to share knowledge. There is another interesting thing mentioned by Hau et al., (2012) namely that in order to earn some monetary as well as non-monetary reward the employees who are ready to share their tacit knowledge are also expected to be ready to share their explicit knowledge.

The organizational justice also plays their part for knowledge sharing. Tacit knowledge sharing is influenced by procedural justice, distributive justice and cooperativeness indirectly through organizational commitment. Further, tacit knowledge sharing is also affected by instrumental ties, expressive ties as well as distributed justice through an indirect way of trust in co-workers (Lin, 2007). He recommended an organizational ethical policy to the management which deal with organizational justice (i.e. procedural and distributed), that enhance the tacit knowledge sharing by strengthening their trust in co-workers and organizational commitment. In addition to this, an organizational training also play role to stimulate cooperativeness that affect the tacit knowledge sharing through strengthening the organizational commitment (Lin, 2007).

The sharing practices are people driven or technology driven. Riege (2005) stated that sharing of knowledge is more towards social dynamics of organization or workplace and people. Boeing, 3M, HP and BP Amoco are one of those companies which Knowledge Management system or strategies revolve around the development of knowledge sharing culture. Further, technology role could not be ignored as it plays a supportive function to make sharing of knowledge more effective and to apply those sharing practices in timely (Riege, 2005). The main reason of why many companies’ knowledge sharing practices fail is because of companies trying to adjust their culture and try to make it fit for knowledge sharing goals, instead of implemented those knowledge sharing strategies or goals in a way that fit the culture (Riege, 2005). IBM, Ford and PWC are one of those companies that integrated their knowledge sharing activities into their organizational culture. In addition to this, many companies face a failure because
they missing an inter-link between their Knowledge Management strategy and overall organizations’ goals (Riege, 2005).

According to the Riege (2005), knowledge sharing culture and synergy of following three factors are the base of successful sharing of goals and strategies:

Firstly, the employees should be encouraged and motivated to capture, transfer and apply existing and as well as newly created knowledge, more specifically a tacit knowledge. Secondly, the structure of the company should be open and flat that helps the flow of knowledge, resources, and process that create a learning culture in the company. Furthermore, this structure helps the companies to communicate their goals and strategies in a way that are linking to the practices of knowledge sharing and helping them, and this structure also helps those leaders who lead by example and give a clear directions and feedback process. Thirdly, a modern technology that provides a good platform for sharing of knowledge from which employees can access to needed knowledge.

2.3.1 Nonaka’s SECI Process

The SECI process is the modes of knowledge creation that was well explained by (Nonaka, 1994). There are four steps in the knowledge conversion process – socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization. Socialization is sharing of tacit knowledge between individuals, by spending time, activities, and actively working together on solving problems. Externalization involves the expression of tacit knowledge into comprehensible form. Combination is the conversion of explicit knowledge into a complex set of knowledge. Internalization results from the conversion of explicit knowledge into the organization’s tacit knowledge (Nonaka, 1994).

![Figure 1. Nonaka et al. (1996) SECI Model](image-url)
The socialization is based on social interactions, face to face and natural way of sharing of knowledge (Dalkir & Liebowitz, 2011). The authors stated that brainstorming to come up with new ideas, getting a mutual understanding by sharing your views and mentoring interface are involved in socialization. Desouza & Awazu, (2006) stated it is one of the most dominant processes that transfer the knowledge between employees, when compared with the rest of the three steps. This transfer happens through formal and informal ways of socialization. Whereas, externalization is more about articulate the tacit knowledge (Dalkir & Liebowitz, 2011). In the past tacit knowledge could be converted into tangible forms like taped, writing it down, to make it explicit (Dalkir & Liebowitz, 2011). Both socialization and externalization involve the transfer of tacit knowledge but in this study the authors focus only on socialization because both companies investigated are small and have limited resources, making it difficult for them to convert tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge.

2.4 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy, as described by Bandura (1997) is a self-judgement of one’s skill adequacy that highly influences behaviour, thought patterns and emotional responses in every-day life and work settings. Self-Efficacy being a belief of one’s own capabilities is not an objective measurement; rather it is a subjective valuation of one’s capabilities applied to certain tasks. Self-efficacy is gradually attained by the development of complex cognitive, linguistic, social and physical skills that one can acquire through experience (Gist, 1987). Succinctly put by Bandura (1997, p.3) as “If people believe they have no power to produce results, they will not attempt to make things happen”. Furthermore, as described by Schwarzer & Hallum (2008) a person’s level of self-efficacy can increase or inhibit the motivation. The self-efficacy beliefs of a person aspiring to become a musician rest on her/his musical capabilities which come as the fruit of hard work and education, but are also influenced by her/his beliefs of the musical piece s/he is required to perform and the way s/he behaves relating to the task. Thus, one can argue that knowledge is the basis of Self-Efficacy, an external systematic knowledge of how to complete required tasks in the form of capabilities and knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses in the form of personal knowledge and beliefs. Beliefs of self-efficacy, or what a person believes she is capable of accomplishing with her skills, are at the base of human agency. Human agency as presented in social cognitive theory exists within a triadic structure of interdependent factors of Behaviour, Personal factors and External Environment.
In social cognitive theory, personal factors such as cognition and beliefs, a person’s behaviour and her environment actively shape human agency. There are bidirectional forces between each of the factors but their strengths, temporality and intensity may vary.

Due to theoretical proximity and clarity in research, it is important to distinguish between the concept of self-efficacy and other reflective concepts such as self-esteem. According to Gist and Mitchell (1992), self-esteem is a concept often confused with self-efficacy, nevertheless, the former deals primarily with an individual’s affective evaluation of the self and includes feelings of self-worth and self-acceptance. Whereas self-efficacy, is a more task related and instrumental evaluation of the self in face of certain work related circumstances. Despite the differences, these two concepts are not mutually exclusive, given that a person might have low self-esteem in a peculiar social situation such as dancing, but due to a technical job with low social interaction, that person might possess high self-efficacy (M. E. Gist & Mitchell, 1992). The hallmark of self-efficacy is that it is a construct related to task-specific capability, meaning that it does not seek to cover the entirety of human psychological field, but it restricts itself to task-specific judgements of self-efficacy.

The four sources of information on self-efficacy are not diagnostic of an individual’s self-efficacy, namely if a person believes themselves incapable at a challenging task that does not necessarily signify inability to succeed. Self-efficacy, as stated before, is a reflective judgement of what one could accomplish with their current possessed skills but does not dictate an objective diagnostic of their capabilities.

Figure 2. Triadic factor model of agency. Adapted from Bandura (1997)
2.4.1 Determinants of self-efficacy

According to Bandura (1997), there are four sources of information from which individuals develop their sense of personal efficacy. They are: enactive mastery, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion and physiological arousal. Each of these sources is going to be treated extensively in the following pages. For individuals to develop a judgement of their personal efficacy, information from the four aforementioned sources is not enough. An active cognitive and reflective action over the gathered information is required in order to establish a decent judgement over personal efficacy. The individual’s cognitive processing of direct and socially gathered information is influenced by a constellation of personal, social and circumstantial factors. The cognitive process on its turn is influenced by the type of information source available to the individual, each having distinctive efficacy indicators and by the heuristics individuals use to assess and integrate efficacy information from different information sources.

2.4.2 Enactive mastery

The experience of mastery, according to Bandura (1997) is the most influential of the four information sources, as it provides authentic feedback to the individual regarding her skill at conducting a task. In this information source, the correlation between success and personal efficiency is positive, an increase in success leading to an increase in perceived self-efficacy; the vice-versa holds true as well, as repeated failures lead to a decrease in perceived self-efficacy. Issues in self-efficacy may arise when an individual is encountered by a string of easy successes, which build an expectation of positive results but it may also lead to greater disappointments in the face of failure. Early failures, when an individual’s sense of self-efficacy is not firmly grounded, hinder its development. To counteract the undermining of self-efficacy by failure, Bandura (1997) suggests that an individual builds up resilience in the face of adversity. In order to instil resilience, difficulties ought to be considered as opportunities to learn and hone one’s abilities and thereby exercise better control over one’s situation.

Building a sense of self-efficacy through enactive mastery is a process involving the acquisition of cognitive, behavioural and self-regulatory tools in order to create and execute effective courses of action to manage everyday tasks. Bandura (1997) argues that such development of self-efficacy is best achieved by organising experiences in ways that are conducive to the acquisition of generative skills. The deconstruction of complex skills into
constituent parts and organising them into a hierarchy facilitates the development of the cognitive part of self-efficacy. However, mere knowledge of strategies and tools on how to handle complex tasks is not enough for individuals to increase their self-efficacy as they need to be persuaded of their effectiveness through their consistent and persistent application. In that respect, social validation is an important factor in the persuasion of an individual’s adequacy relating to a task, having been shown that feedback and the transmission of a certain skill did not contribute to raising self-efficacy judgements of individuals (Bandura, 1997).

Given the fact that the formation of self-efficacy is an active cognitive task, people develop a repertoire of mental schemas that influences their interpretation, perception and organisation of information gathered from the four sources of self-efficacy. Thus, efficacy beliefs of an individual are at the same time products and constructs of past experiences. Both positive and negative biases may arise from such pre-existing schemas that contribute to the maintenance of current levels of self-efficacy. Experiences that are consistent with an individual’s judgement of self-efficacy become reaffirmations of one’s self-efficacy whereas inconsistent experiences tend to be minimised and discounted. Thus people that have low self-efficacy judgements attribute successes to hard work rather than own capabilities and people that have high self-efficacy judgements tend to strengthen their belief in their own capabilities.

The perceived difficulty of a task, states Bandura (1997), influences individual’s self-efficacy judgement in cases of success and failure. Success at a task deemed easy becomes redundant for an individual and will not evoke any efficacy reappraisal. It is difficult tasks that convey new information to individuals and affect their beliefs of self-efficacy.

2.4.3 Vicarious experience

A second source of information for individuals to develop self-efficacy judgements is that of vicarious experience. Since purely objective measurements of performance are limited to certain tasks, people often rely and employ other’s attainments as benchmarks of their own efficacy, thereby creating a personal model of efficacy. The information gained from modelling based on other’s performance goes beyond serving as social standards. According to Bandura (1997) people actively search for others that possess desirable competencies with the intent of emulating their behaviour. Through the expression of both behaviour and knowledge, such models are able to transmit knowledge to the observers and thereby teach relevant skills. Such socially acquired models are then further developed in an individual through a process of observational learning.
There are several factors mediating the influence of vicarious experience on appraisals of self-efficacy. Inferences gained from social comparison constitute a primary factor of vicarious experiences on self-efficacy judgements used in tasks where performance is measured to that of others. Following that line of reasoning, Bandura (1997) states that seeing individuals of similar skill succeeding at a task raises one’s beliefs of self-efficacy whereas if the benchmark individuals fail at a certain task, it leads to a decrease in one’s self-efficacy belief. Such inferences from social comparison with other’s performance are especially important to individuals who have no prior knowledge of own capabilities regarding a task.

The uncertainty about one’s personal capabilities is another mediating factor regarding vicarious experiences, the more uncertain a person being about their self-efficacy the more prone they would be to change their judgements of self-efficacy. Mixed results of successes and failures, perhaps counter-intuitively, do not lead to an increase in beliefs of self-efficacy but can instil doubts that need to be reappraised periodically. Furthermore, a change in either the environment or colleagues would lead to a re-evaluation of the inferences gained from social comparison and modelling. Nevertheless, it is shown that social modelling which transmit coping mechanisms can help increase the beliefs of self-efficacy of individuals which have received only confirmation of their self-inefficacy. Another mediating factor in the role of vicarious experiences is that of the interplay between the four different sources of information available to an individual. Given the fact that all four of them constitute cognitive processes, complete isolation between them is virtually impossible, leading to a constant interaction. As such, the influence of one particulars source of information on self-efficacy judgements depends on the prevalence and availability of the other three.

The social dimension of cognitive modelling represents yet another mediating factor of vicarious experiences. Role models, as previously touched upon, can serve as examples of desirable competencies and individuals can choose to emulate their behaviour in order to improve their beliefs of self-efficacy. They can model self-efficacy either through the use of words or actions, serving as benchmarks to which individuals can relate to. At times, the sheer perseverance of role models in spite of setbacks can be a bigger enabler of self-efficacy than the actual skills being modelled. Individuals that have obtained or are in the process of obtaining vicarious experiences and social models undergo a further step in their internalisation, that of observational learning. For an individual to learn from observations, the models perpetrated by others are subjected through a four-step process of attentional, retention, production and motivational processes.
2.4.4 Verbal persuasion

Verbal persuasion takes the form of social encouragement or criticism that can affect an individual’s belief of self-efficacy. While verbal persuasion can boost an individual’s sense of self-efficacy it is shown to have only temporary effects. Nevertheless, such verbal persuasion can mobilise an individual’s judgements of self-efficacy so that they try harder and allocate more time into a certain task. As long as an individual succeeds in a certain task after having received positive verbal persuasion, they might develop self-affirming beliefs about own capabilities, leading to an improvement of their self-efficacy. The framing of feedback is also affected by the underlying human tendency to avoid potential losses in the present rather than striving to obtain future gains.

The framing of verbal persuasion can influence an individual’s resulting beliefs in self-efficacy. Since the development of self-efficacy does not happen instantly but over a period of time, the points of reference from which assessments of an individual’s capabilities are evaluated impacts the appraisal of the individual’s self-efficacy. Bandura (1997) states that a feedback that is framed in terms of objective gains lead an individual to improve their judgements of self-efficacy; whereas feedback that focuses on shortcomings based on the same feedback will have the opposite result of lowering an individual’s sense of self-efficacy. As an example, considering a task is completed to 75%, if a feedback focuses on the completed part then the verbal persuasion will have positive effects on an individual’s sense of self-efficacy; while if the feedback would focus on the 25% that is left uncompleted, the vice-versa would apply.

A hindrance to verbal persuasion can be the fact that the majority of individuals believe themselves to be more competent assessors of their own capability than others, possibly questioning the validity of verbal persuasion they receive. Persuasion being a social tool, has a multitude of functions outside of just providing feedback on other’s capabilities, thus the credibility and knowledgeable ness of the person giving feedback become relevant when weighing their critique, whether constructive or not. Therefore the effects of verbal persuasion are linked to the confidence one has toward a persuader. Similar to the modelling of vicarious experiences, if the social distance and difference between a person that offers feedback and the one that receives it is small, then credibility is heightened and effects on an individual’s beliefs of self-efficacy are respectively stronger.

The disparity between an individual’s beliefs of self-efficacy and those presented by a feedback constitutes another mediating factor of verbal persuasion. Bandura (1997) states that
the optimal level of disparity is dependent on the temporal frame for which it is given; for example, if a feedback is markedly different from an individual’s beliefs of self-efficacy, they will be considered believable for a distant future but not in the short run. Thus, the efficacy of verbal persuasion is highest when the feedback sets goals that are moderately beyond what an individual can do in the present. In the case that feedback grossly under- or overestimates an individual’s self-efficacy, the persuader will lose credibility.

2.4.5 Physiological arousal

The fourth and last source of information of self-efficacy is that of physiological arousal. Feelings and emotions, further on referred to as “somatic indicators”, play an important role in the self-efficacy judgements of individuals that are involved in domains where physical accomplishments, personal health and stress are prevalent elements. There is a negative view upon physiological reactions in stressful or taxing situations, people generally considering them as signs of dysfunctional behaviour. Thus, the absence of such somatic indicators is taken to be a sign of success since high arousal can constitute a debilitating effect. Nevertheless, people can get locked in a vicious circle of stressful factors if they do not succeed at a task, thereby lowering their beliefs of self-efficacy, further diminishing their chances of succeeding at a task and repeating the process. Given the negative impact of stress and certain somatic reactions to stressful circumstances, equipping individuals with the tools to deal with stress and negative emotions and improve their health can lead to an advancement of their beliefs of self-efficacy.

Due to the fact that people differ in their approach to somatic reactions, everybody is going to emphasise physiological reactions differently. If a person considers themselves especially prone to psychological stress, then the level of importance they will place on somatic reactions to stress will be greater. Furthermore, the intensity of a physiological arousal is less important than how one reacts to it and subsequently interprets it to relate to their self-efficacy. A general rule is that moderate levels of physiological arousal are beneficial to an individual by temporarily heightening their senses and facilitating the implementation of skills.

On a related note, along with physiological arousal an individual’s mood affects the way in which events are interpreted, cognitively processed and retrieved from their memory. Thus, mood can affect the framing of self-efficacy beliefs. Mood can provide a bias in the present judgement of self-efficacy beliefs, as it has been shown that success while in a positive mood boosts perceived self-efficacy while failures in a negative mood will lower it. The
recollection of past memories carries with it not only past successes and failures but their respective emotional affects as well. As such, a positive mood tendentially will help recall past successes whereas a negative mood is more prone to activate past failures.

2.5 Conceptual links between Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy

Tacit knowledge as described by Nonaka (1994) consists of both cognitive and technical elements; the cognitive constituents being viewpoints, paradigms, beliefs and mental maps, whereas the technical elements being the know-how needed to perform a certain skill. Self-efficacy, on the other hand, is defined as a self-reflexive judgement which draws upon four sources of information Bandura (1997):

1. Enactive Mastery which entails primarily experience gained from active practice
2. Vicarious Experience which entails observational learning and social comparison
3. Verbal Persuasion which entails feedback from others in one’s surrounding
4. Physiological arousal which entails moods and emotional reactions

Vicarious Experiences entail a modelling of one’s own capabilities in light of social comparisons – the social side being either the direct transmission of some sort of knowledge or the performance of a skill – thereby an individual being able to learn from her colleagues in an environment whether the transmission was purposeful or not. Thus, the “content” of this source of information constitutes tacit knowledge as defined by Nonaka (1994). On this ground, Tacit knowledge can be said to be present in the other sources of information as well. Enactive Mastery, while it is heavily dependent on one’s own performance of a task, is also affected by cognitive, behavioural and self-regulatory tools that can alter an individual’s interpretation of either herself or of the environment. Such cognitive, behavioural and self-regulatory tools can be said to constitute tacit knowledge and again, provide a bridge between the two concepts.
3. Methodology

In the following section, the authors are going to provide an explanation for the choice of methodological stance, the choice of data collection method, the choice of organisations and respondents and will cover ethical concerns.

The following study is going to be conducted from a qualitative perspective. Namely, it is going to employ semi-structured interviews in two different settings, in a for-profit organisation on one hand and in a non-profit organisation on the other. The strength of qualitative studies is that they can be used to provide an in-depth understanding of complex phenomena (Sofaer, 1999). Cooper et al. (2003) further state that qualitative research favours the extraction of emotions, perceptions, feelings and motivations. Due to the fact that the concepts of Self-Efficacy and Tacit Knowledge Sharing concern themselves primarily with abstract things such as beliefs, judgements and knowledge, investigating them through a qualitative perspective will contribute to their well-rounded portrayal and analysis.

3.1 Ontology and epistemology

In order to conduct a proper research and showcase the research method, the topics of ontology and epistemology will be briefly covered. According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2015), ontology deals with the reality of nature and existence whereas epistemology is the study of the theory of knowledge. They are a gathering of assumptions about what can be studied in terms of what constitutes reality and what knowledge is and how to obtain it. Both of these concepts help the researcher craft a way to go forward with the methodological concerns of a study.

In ontological terms the following study will adopt a relativistic perspective, where a multitude of “truths” will be taken to co-exist along each other and facts are dependent of the viewpoint from which they are considered. While adopting a relativistic perspective, the researchers do not completely dismiss an objective reality but such matters as knowledge and self-efficacy fall in the social sphere and differing viewpoints can have similar validity. This approach has been taken due to the fact that knowledge and self-efficacy, although can be defined objectively, are complex concepts defined in different ways by researchers. The epistemological stance of social constructivism complements the chosen ontology by affirming that reality is a social construct uphold and established by individuals from
differing background through the use of language. Thus, for social constructivism interaction between individuals and their personal sense-making processes are important factors to analyse. The primary strength of combining ontology such as relativism and its epistemological counterpart of social constructivism is that deeper, or different, meanings of concepts can be revealed.

Easterby-Smith et al. (2015) argue that the aim and purpose of a study dictates its design and subsequent stance of researchers towards the subject investigated. Given the ontological and epistemological stances described above, the authors’ stance as researchers towards the study is going to be a detached and constructionist one. Detached, in the current study’s sense implies that while interacting with the respondents to gather data, the researchers will seek to uphold an objective assessment of it. The constructionist stance, on the other hand, implies that the researchers will treat the data and resulting findings as being the result of the respondents’ complex socio-cultural lives as part of a larger society.

3.2 Trustworthiness of the study

One can judge the quality of a study by several criteria in order to determine its academic value. For quantitative studies such criteria are meant to ensure that they are replicable, possess internal validity and that the result can be generalised to a larger audience. Given the differences in aim, scope and methods between quantitative and qualitative studies, scholars have devised a parallel framework to ensure the academic quality of qualitative studies. The authors of the following study shall use the framework provided by Given & Samure (2008) which contains the criteria of transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability. The trustworthiness of a study relies on its authors being able to showcase that they have met the aforementioned criteria and thus have lived up to established academic standards.

3.2.1 Transferability

The criterion of transferability concerns itself with the applicability of the findings to different contexts, whether broad or narrow. The two determinants of transferability are the proximity of the participants or respondents to the studied context and the contextual boundaries of the study (Given & Samure, 2008). Regarding the first point, of proximity of participants to the studied context, we believe to have achieved a satisfactory result in the given temporal limitations as we have gained access to one for-profit organisation and one non-profit organisation. Furthermore, by providing a thick description of the organisational contexts in the Analysis section, we will provide clearer boundaries to the study.
3.2.2 Credibility

The aspect of credibility permeates the entirety of the study as it is based on sound judgement and argumentation for the choices made by the researchers (Given & Samure, 2008). The authors believe to have provided a sound case for the choice of method and data collection strategy given the purpose and aim of the study. Since we are studying cognitive processes of knowledge sharing and beliefs held by people, a relativistic and social constructive perspective seems an appropriate choice insofar as they provide a methodological framework that enables the interpretation of personal accounts and the creation of new knowledge by it. Semi-structured interviews were deemed to be the method of choice in such circumstances as they provide a foundation on which discussions can flourish with the respondents, thereby possibly gaining new insight into the studied matter.

3.2.3 Dependability

Given the fact that social environments and contexts in which studies are conducted are prone to change, the dependability of a study becomes important. Researchers can enhance the dependability of a study by preparing a solid theoretical foundation on which the research is conducted (Given & Samure, 2008). That includes a thorough literature review and adequate methodological stance. We believe to have achieved both, as we have covered the most important and relevant considerations of tacit knowledge sharing, self-efficacy and organisational differences between non-profit and for-profit that might influence knowledge sharing. Regarding the methodological stances and methods employed, which are elaborated under the “Credibility” section, we believe to have achieved satisfactory results as well.

3.2.4 Confirmability

Given the fact that qualitative data often warrants an interpretative analysis, confirmability is the criterion which scrutinises the researcher’s interpretation of qualitative data in light of their provided theoretical framework. Thus, confirmability represents the degree to which the findings correspond to a study’s purpose and not to the researcher’s prior intentions and bias. In order to uphold the confirmability of the study, the authors strive to be critical of the findings and present the findings in a transparent manner.
3.3 Choice of organisations

The choice of organisations for the study has been based upon the research’s aim and purpose, thus requiring both for-profit and non-profit organisations. Easterby-Smith et al. (2015) describe such a sampling method that is based upon pre-existing categories in literature as purposive sampling, as the researchers start from the purpose of the study and seek organisations that fulfil certain criteria. Thus, the main criteria of sampling and differentiation between organisations for the study is that there should be an equal number of for-profit and non-profit organisations investigated. Maintaining the biggest difference between organisations being their form and purpose – whether profit driven or not – the authors decided to further narrow down the possible organisations. Two eligible organisations were chosen as part of the study: a non-profit organisation in Västerås and a for-profit organisation in Jönköping. Both organisations are of roughly the same size, namely 8 to 12 members and are heavily invested in the service industry – the non-profit organisation offering services to disadvantages individuals whereas the for-profit organisation offering design consultancy services to other companies.

When it comes to individual sampling, the tenure of members was considered to be a category that the researchers could use. With time spent in the organisation, an individual can be expected to have interacted with fellow organisational members and thereby have partaken in tacit knowledge sharing. On the other hand, organisational members with shorter tenure can be said to be as valuable due to the necessity of integrating in an organisation early on; integration bringing with it at least some tacit knowledge sharing between members. Regarding the position held in an organisation, the researchers chose not to discriminate based on hierarchical positions as it is seen unnecessary, even counterproductive, in the given research question – whether an individual is a middle manager or employee, one can say that they will be exposed to tacit knowledge sharing either way.

3.4 Collection of primary data

The authors have chosen to use interviews as the data collection method of choice. Interviews provide a platform upon which topics can be discussed, giving the opportunity for the respondents to elaborate and present their viewpoints (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Semi-structured interviews were deemed to be the most appropriate form of interviews and the authors will elaborate further on that in the following section.
3.5 Semi-structured interviews

The interviews are chosen to be semi-structured, namely they are going to revolve around a certain set of topics extracted from the literature but in the same time respondents are going to be given liberty to elaborate on topics deemed interesting by the researchers. Given the fact that the research question’s main concepts, tacit knowledge sharing and self-efficacy, are covered by existing literature, highly structured as well as unstructured interviews are considered inappropriate due to their pin-point precision in the former and lax nature in the latter. The researchers chose to go forward with semi-structured interviews since previous frameworks found in literature can be employed and the respondents are not hindered, giving the opportunity for emergent themes and thereby new knowledge. In order to maintain the organisations’ and participants’ integrity, the authors will offer full anonymity to both. Thus, in the Results and Analysis section, when referring to the organisations the authors will use the terms “FPO” or “NPO” and the respondents will be assigned a number.

3.6 Topic guide

A topic guide, according to Easterby-Smith et al. (2015), is an informal list of the topics and questions designed to be approached during an interview. The aforementioned authors emphasise that interviews ought to be conducted as discussions rather than pure data collection attempts, since the former gives the respondents freedom to elaborate on topics important to them and perhaps contribute with new insights to the researchers. Taking into consideration the suggestions given by Easterby-Smith et al. (2015), the questions are going to be worded in such a way as to avoid the usage of theoretical concepts. Furthermore, special care is taken to word the questions open ended as to avoid leading questions and their resulting biases.

The interview topics are going to be based upon the literature covered concerning Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy. However, the abstract nature of the two concepts impose a difficulty regarding: first, the formulation of interview topics and questions and second, the interpretation and analysis of the interviews later on in the study. In order to maintain as much objectivity as possible and not bias respondents to give sought-after responses, the interviews were formulated in such a way as to draw out descriptive accounts on which the authors were able to ask follow up questions relevant to the study. Due to the fact that in the current study Self-Efficacy is regarded in a work-related environment, the
authors began with general inquiries into the nature of the respondents’ work and after having received their description, theoretically relevant follow-up questions were asked. A set of general questions were devised to ease the respondents into a conversationalist mood, with the aim of providing a welcoming atmosphere to stimulate discussion. Despite their seemingly unrelated topic, general questions can provide a good spring board into the topics the researchers are curious about. A question such as “How was your day?” offers a lot of freedom not only to the respondent to emphasise what she believes is worth mentioning but gives an opportunity for the interviewees to progress the interview in a natural fashion by concentrating on certain topics only. Thus, each interview in part has a funnel approach where in the beginning the respondents have the freedom to emphasise what they feel is important and afterwards, with relevantly placed follow-up questions, the authors can narrow down the discussion upon the theoretical concepts in the respondent’s context.

An introductory question regarding Self-Efficacy would be “How would you define a challenging situation?” By asking a respondent to elaborate on what she believes is a challenging task or situation the interviewees gain an insight into the respondent’s view of the world and can infer the respondent’s self-efficacy beliefs from their answers. The same line of reasoning can be used when inquiring about a possible failure. The way in which a respondent would define failure would give clues to the beliefs of self-efficacy by analysing the way in which a person frames her capabilities in the light of failure.

The entirety of the topic guide can be found in the Appendix section of the study.

3.7 Analysis of collected data

The way in which a study analyses and interprets the collected data is framed by the purpose of the study and by the chosen methodology. Due to the purpose of the current study, that is to investigate how organisational members of NPOs and FPOs view tacit knowledge sharing and self-efficacy, content analysis was chosen as the preferred data analysis method. When researchers are interested in the cognitive side of phenomena, more objective criteria such as frequency of words used becomes a secondary concern. Instead, the way in which respondents structure their cognitive phenomena and what they think about them are the centre of analysis.

3.7.1 Content analysis

Content analysis, according to Easterby-Smith et al. (2015) is a method of analysis that is based upon systematic inferences from qualitative data structured by a set of ideas or
concepts. It is an analysis method open for both deductive and inductive approaches; the researchers being able to “interrogate” gathered data according to pre-set categories derived from literature or to let themes and categories emerge from data through a process of open coding.

Given the aim and purpose of the study, one could argue that a grounded approach to the analysis of data could have been more fruitful for the current study. Grounded analysis does have it merits in providing a closer stance to the respondents and thereby showcasing their worldview by allowing categories and themes to emerge from the interviews (Easterby-Smith et al., 2015). Nevertheless, neglecting the significant amount of research done on the two concepts studied, that of Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy, would have been counterproductive to the study at hand due to the fact that the concepts are well elaborated and provide a solid foundation for further research. The aim of the study is not to create a new theory combining the two concepts but to showcase the relationship between the two in two separate organisational contexts.

In order to accommodate the aim of extending the literature and finding relationships between the two concepts, the authors have decided to use a combined method of deductive and inductive analysis regarding the interviews. The authors are going to follow Bengtsson's (2016) procedure of content analysis that consists of four distinct steps:

1. Decontextualisation

In this initial step the researchers have to familiarise themselves with the transcriptions of the interviews in order to obtain a holistic understanding of them. The researchers have to identify the meaning units, which represent the smallest unit containing insights sought by the researchers that answer the study’s aim (Bengtsson, 2016).
There are separate procedures if the analysis is to be conducted deductively or inductively. In the case of a deductive analysis, the researchers have to extract categories from literature and create a coding list prior to engaging in the coding process. In the case of an inductive analysis, the coding list is created in the process of analysis. Generally, Bengtsson (2016) argues that codes arrived at from theory in a deductive fashion pose a greater reliability than purely inductive ones. The coding process is then applied to the various meaning units identified in the data so as each meaning unit is assigned a code.

2. Recontextualisation

In the following step, after having identified the meaning units the researchers are required to check whether the entirety of the text has been covered with respect to the aim of the study. A revision of the text with the final list of meaning units is advised by Bengtsson (2016). After having gone through the text and identified relevant meaning units, the remainder of the text should be investigated to see whether it helps further the study’s aim; in the case that the remaining “dross” does not, the author advises to discard it.

3. Categorisation

Before the creation of categories, Bengtsson (2016) states that it necessary to condense extended meaning units in such a way as not to lose their original meanings. Such a process of condensation is needed when dealing with interview transcripts in order to facilitate their categorisation. Bengtsson (2016) suggests the basis of division of the condensed meaning units into categories can be taken to be the theoretical grounds on which questions were asked or a similarly unifying factor such as the questions used during an interview. It is important that the themes and categories identified as such should be internally homogenous and externally heterogeneous, meaning that data should not fall between two groups or in more than one group at a time.

4. Compilation

The last stage of compilation concerns itself with the presentation of the data and their analysis. The way in which the data has been collected determines the level of analysis the researchers are able to achieve. A manifest analysis of data lends itself to a close reading of the interviews focusing on what has been said whereas a latent analysis interests itself with a
deeper reading of the transcriptions, focusing on what has been intended to be said by the respondents. Bengtsson (2016) emphasises that in either analysis level chosen, the researchers have to maintain an objective and a neutral perspective to their gathered data.
4. Results

In the following section, a description of the codes used is going to be given and linked to the interviews. First, the deductive codes are going to be presented followed by the inductive codes. The section is intended to be primarily descriptive of the organisations and categories therein, laying the foundation for their analysis in the upcoming chapter of the same name.

4.1 Description of the coding process

In line with Bengtsson's (2016) four step process of conducting content analysis, the researchers will present the coding procedure for one of the deductive categories, that of Vicarious Experience.

1. Decontextualisation

In the case of the deductive categories, the main category stems from literature as do the codes: within Vicarious Experience social comparison, observational learning and mentorship being important concepts. The authors engaged in the first round of coding separately, identifying meaning units that were linked to Vicarious Experience through either social comparison, observational learning or mentorship.

2. Recontextualisation

After the first round of coding was concluded, the authors have went through the remainder of the un-coded text in the transcriptions that at first did not seem to include relevant meaning units and scrutinised those. Furthermore, a higher scrutiny has been applied to the existing instances of Vicarious Experience in order to concentrate the codes.

3. Categorisation

It is in this step that the authors have cross-checked their coding results and discarded duplicate entries. After the authors have unified the coding schemes, they have gone through the transcriptions one last time.

The entirety of the coding scheme can be found in Appendix D.
4.2 Description of studied organisations and interview summaries

Description of the FPO

The for-profit organisation in Jönköping is a design consulting agency focusing on industrial design that incorporates an ecological focus, applying it to a range of services and products. The organisation consists of four different departments: IT, Design, Marketing and Engineering that work together on various projects. The organisation comprises the owner that acts as the manager and interns tasked with various projects within the four departments. The interns are part of the organisation during the span of certain projects in the different departments. The work environment consists of an open office with shared workspaces for the different departments. The employees and interns working there come from a multicultural background, comprising several nationalities as some of them come from an international background.

Each morning, the employees present have a morning meeting in which they discuss the individual tasks they are working on and what might come up during the day. Besides the order of the day and technicalities, the people present also have the opportunity to socialise and discuss about non-related things. In addition to morning meetings, the interns have to prepare a weekly report in which they are tasked with reflecting on what they have accomplished in the past week, to identify areas of improvement and how they believe they can implement those in the upcoming week.

Description of the NPO

The non-profit organisation in Västerås is an organisation that offers social help in the form of temporary shelter, clothing and food to people in precarious situations such as homelessness or drug addiction. Besides helping people with basic necessities, the organisation also offers specialised help to women and underage individuals in the form of support groups and counselling.

Since the target audience of the non-profit organisation comprises individuals in precarious situations, conflicts may arise sometimes between the guests that can spill over to include the staff. Thus, besides tasks involving the day to day tasks to accommodate the guests, the staff is also tasked with conflict management in an unpredictable and quickly changing environment. The environment is described as a
“Very challenging environment which makes it very hard to work in such an environment because you never know what you are going to face under a day instead you have to be ready all the time for what can happen in a day” – NPO Respondent 3

The non-profit organisation’s staff maintains both morning and afternoon meetings with a similar purpose to the for-profit organisation but with slight differences. In the morning meetings the employees have the chance to discuss the events of the previous day, be updated on the situation of guests and thereby have an estimation of how the day will look like. While the morning meetings serve as an introductory session for the day for those present, the afternoon meetings serve as conclusions where the employees summarise the events of the day and can have the chance to reflect upon them.

4.3 Tacit Knowledge sharing

Tacit Knowledge, as explained in the reviewed literature, is a personal knowledge someone possesses. In the current study the authors attempt to understand the relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and the self-efficacy judgements of employees in FPOs and NPOs. In order to conduct the investigation of the interviews, a series of codes were developed from literature on knowledge sharing and tacit knowledge sharing from Ipe's (2003) model of knowledge sharing. The following list of categories was extracted from the literature in order to provide the codes to analyse the interviews:

1. Purposive learning channels
2. Relational Learning channels
3. Modern Technology
4. Structure of the Company

4.3.1 Purposive Learning channels

Purposive learning channels are composed by formal meetings and trainings. Formal meetings, training and a structured teamwork dynamic play a dominant role in tacit knowledge sharing in both FPO and NPO contexts.

“Then from there you do workshops so then you discuss with your colleagues with other team members like okay which one should we choose why and what could be the
feedback what could we improve from this and then from there you start doing a mock-up and then or doing a 3d modelling” – NPO Respondent 2

In the above excerpt, the respondent explains the role that workshops have in the organisation, which is to exchange perspectives on how to accomplish one’s tasks efficiently by receiving personalised knowledge from others.

Structured teamwork is also present in the FPO given the following respondent’s statements:

“I asked J and employees that were there at that time what how did they see how should potential customers look like what he should do how old is he and so on or what is his values and that’s how I didn’t do it from my own perspective. I just collected the ideas that I saw because in the end they are the ones that developed those products so they must have some idea of what type of people they want to attract” – FPO Respondent 4

In the above presented example, the respondent was working on a branding project for the organisation and by gathering staff from different departments she was able to extract relevant tacit knowledge for her branding related tasks, showcasing the transmission of tacit knowledge through structured teamwork.

The codes related to Purposive Learning Channels are present in the NPO as well fulfilling a similarly important aspect, as one can see in the following example:

“Let’s say we've been working all day and afterwards are sitting at meeting in the afternoon, then one can pick up things ah, what you have done well during the day what you have done less well, what can be learned and taken with you the next day, there are always new things to learn always something new all the time” – NPO Respondent 4

Respondent 4 gives an example of what is being taken up and discussed during the afternoon meetings; as the nature of the work in the NPO is diverse due to the fact that they work closely with the clients, the meetings cover a wide range of subjects and can be a source of tacit knowledge sharing where the staff reflect collectively on day to day events.
Another example involving structured teamwork and thereby tacit knowledge sharing in the case of the NPO can be seen in Respondent 2’s account of how they approach unruly clients:

“Our newest approach is that one or at tops two people talk with the guests in the confrontation so they don’t get confused the best is when its only one person that speaks and we back up whatever that person says and we have a discussion afterward if we don’t think the same but in the moment we back it up we stand united team” – NPO Respondent 2

In the previous excerpt, the respondent describes how the staff collectively approaches and deals with clients and afterwards have a discussion if individuals have different ideas on how an event should have been handled. Nevertheless, the fact that in the moment the staff acts as a team highlights the presence of a thought out and structured method of working in teams.

4.3.2 Relational learning channels

Relational learning channels are more informal in nature comprising social networks, relationships and communications that are present in the organisations. Relational learning channels occur in both organisations, occupying an important role in their respective tacit knowledge sharing.

“*We have like the little fika you could say so we eat tea cookies or toast or whatever and we talk about or discuss about what our tasks during the day are or how we are performing and then I keep working*” – FPO Respondent 2

Respondent 2 presents that relational learning channels do come up during lunch time or during a coffee break, where the staff can discuss relevant events for the day and their tasks, tacit knowledge sharing being a possibility in such circumstances.

Informal networks and relationships also appeared as important source for tacit knowledge in both organisations.
“You are always in like yeah always socialising and working with your team members that are internationals so i think that’s like a very good input that all of us there are not just well now we have P that he is from Sweden but we also have people from almost every continent which is like oh that’s cool cause you learn from the members by their different way of performing things” – FPO Respondent 2

The respondent explains how she is receiving insights on performing tasks from her co-workers through their informal network and relationship with them

These informal networks and relationships are also present in the NPO, having a central role in the sharing of tacit knowledge in the organisation:

“Then it became like a negative thing instead of that I was too forward and I ah want to go forward all the time, though I might have needed to cool down a bit. So I got a lot of feedback at the beginning that it was great that I wanted to do things and be everywhere, but I have to calm me down” – NPO Respondent 4

The respondent describes how it was for her in the beginning in the NPO, having been ambitious and that leading to personal exertion. Through the feedback that she has received from her co-workers in what can be said an informal setting, she reflected and realised that she needed to calm down and ration her ambition and expectations of herself in order to be able to cope with the work environment. Thus, even showing how tacit knowledge sharing through feedback has influenced her self-efficacy judgements of herself.

4.3.3 Culture of the work environment

The culture of work environment in FPO is very open and flexible, and respondents are explaining the openness and flexibility in their own way.

Example:

“You know as well as flexibility and you know we have to be punctual as well as flexibility i mean uh it doesn’t mean that by flexibility you can do everything that you want you have to be organised its good” – FPO Respondent 3
Whereas another respondent explained the flexibility of work environment as a very relaxed and creative environment by arguing that:

“Well i think it's a uh sort of a mixture between relaxed and creative” – FPO Respondent 1

The NPO’s work environment, on the other hand, is constituted by the clients that frequent the organisation and the employees that work there. Thus, there is a dynamic relationship between the two groups of client and employees. Nevertheless, the focus of the study accounts primarily the employees’ side of the work environment, Respondent 1 stating that

“It is good that you still have your colleagues with which you can bounce around ideas – but I think like this, how do you think in this situation?” – NPO Respondent 1

The previous excerpt shows that the team of employees strive to be open and lead internal discussions with each other.

4.3.4 Modern technology

Modern technology also plays a role when it comes to tacit knowledge sharing. We consider internet, social media and Apps, as a modern technological tools of tacit knowledge sharing.

Example:

“You can chat online or with SMS. you can have connection with colleagues or J and they will help you, its good” – FPO Respondent 3

Here the respondents using some social media to get help from other and this help is consist of an individual personal knowledge which he or share through use of modern technology(i.e social media).

Example:

“Yeah i did it well i think and after that i write it on the Assana so that everybody that doesn’t know anything about how they can do it right now they know” – FPO Respondent 3
Here in above example the respondent using an App “Assana” to share a solution of a problem that he/she got. App are also consider in the usage of modern technology. Modern technology is one of those code that we only found in the case of FPO and its not present as much it shows its presence in FPO.

4.4 Self-Efficacy

Self-Efficacy as described by Bandura (1997) is a self-judgement of one’s skill adequacy that highly influences behaviour, thought patterns and emotional responses in every-day life and work settings. People draw information to construct their self-judgement from four sources of information:

1. Enactive Mastery
2. Vicarious Experience
3. Verbal Persuasion
4. Physiological Arousal.

The four sources of information are going to be treated as separate codes and thus constitute the basis for our coding process of Self-Efficacy.

4.4.1 Enactive Mastery

Enactive Mastery is primarily constituted by the experience of an individual from either her past successes or failures. Mentions of past experiences, positive, negative as well as mentions of cognitive, behavioural and self-regulatory tools used to manage everyday tasks are treated as codes that relate to Enactive Mastery.

“I learn from doing I don’t learn a lot from looking then you need that as well of course but I have to be able to do something and if it turns out wrong then I want my colleagues to tell me that” – NPO Respondent 1

In the case of Respondent 1 from the NPO learning and by extension experience come from actively engaging in a task, a classic example of what constitutes Enactive Mastery. Furthermore, being open for constructive criticism suggests that the respondent is confident in her ability to learn and underpins her willingness to do so.
“But then it’s just about you and yourself seeing the good side of it not just seeing the negative which is like up to you” – FPO Respondent 1

When elaborating on her work experience, Respondent 1 from the FPO touches upon the topic of reflexivity regarding experiences and that that is within an individual’s agency to interpret them.

4.4.2 Vicarious Experience

Vicarious Experience constitutes a source of information that draws upon an individual’s social comparison to her colleagues through which she can develop an own model of performance. The social modelling does not end only at appraising one’s performance but it extends to the emulation and assimilation of observed competencies in others (Bandura, 1997). It is within the source of information of “Vicarious Experience”. Thus, passages in the interviews that dealt with observational learning, social comparison and mentorship fall under the code of Vicarious Experience.

Examples:

"Then I said that we can sit together and I joined so I didn’t leave the person alone (in a professional counselling) but if it’s alright so all three of us can work it out together and that is to mean both me and the other volunteer” – NPO Respondent 4

In the previous segment, Respondent 4 from the NPO was the person offering help to a volunteer that was facing difficulties in a counselling session with a guest. By being present in the counselling session with the volunteer, the respondent by physically participating was offering her knowledge of how to navigate such a complex situation. Thus, she was acting as a mentor and offering the volunteer tacit knowledge on how to deal with emotionally taxing situations.

“Me and J talk a lot about it, how I... when I have a conversation or a professional conversation with our guests how do I do it, what do we talk about, how do I approach the conversation and how can I go deeper and how I can make it be deep without sounding deep and then I just go and try it out” – NPO Respondent 3
In the previous excerpt, Respondent 3 from the NPO explained her way of seeking knowledge from J, the manager of the organisation, which she considered a knowledgeable person with respect to counselling. This is an example of mentorship where the respondent put in action the knowledge gained.

“They help you or they kind of like no it’s like this way so they lead you to what it was but then you didn’t have knowledge of it so it’s good because you get from others way of learning or thinking and you apply it into your own so you start kind of building up your own way of performing things” – FPO Respondent 1

Respondent 1 from the FPO showcases how Vicarious Experience intermingles with other sources of information for self-efficacy. In the previous excerpt, Verbal Persuasion can be said to be present as well due to the feedback she receives from colleagues so there is no clear cut boundary between the four sources of information for self-efficacy judgements. Nevertheless, out of her social interactions with her colleagues, the respondent states that she has learned either new ways of learning or thinking helping to build her own way of “performing things” which is a hallmark trait of Vicarious Experience.

“You know, you can learn something and you can keep it in your short term memory but what happens with the long term memory, what happens if you don’t put it in action … To link it to html in html if you delete one sentence or one code then everything changes so it’s important for somebody who knows everything to be around and sit beside you and he observes at what happens“ – FPO Respondent 3

Respondent 3 from the FPO, on the other hand, emphasises the utility of someone more knowledgeable than oneself when learning new things and the act of practising what one has learned as well. In her case, the mentor would provide necessary corrections when dealing with programming – an activity that the respondent is still learning.

4.4.3 Verbal Persuasion

Verbal Persuasion entails social encouragement or criticism that an individual may receive in the form of feedback. Bandura (1997) showcased that the way in which feedback is formulated, emphasising either negative or positive aspects and the perceived social distance between the receiver and the persuader influences the effect the received feedback has on an
individual’s self-efficacy judgements. In that respect, passages that deal with feedback are going to fall under the code of Verbal Persuasion.

Examples:

“It’s always uncomfortable to ask how did you think there but I absolutely feel that I can do that if I feel a need to ask what is happening there so I do it and ask with a bit of forethought so that it wouldn’t come out wrong from my end ... How can I formally say it in a good way and in a professional way to my colleague because it’s not her personality ... it’s not her personality that I question but I question her behaviour and actions.” – NPO Respondent 1

Respondent 1 from the NPO showcases how the formulation of feedback or its request can affect its reception and influence others in the workplace, a fact recognised by Bandura (1997). Furthermore, she argues that through a formal or professional way of giving feedback one limits the ambiguities of communication and can target topics related to work and not questioning one’s personality.

“You learn from the members by their different way of performing things or by saying you the task.” – FPO Respondent 1

In the case of Respondent 1 from the FPO an overlap between Verbal Persuasion and Vicarious Experience can be noticed again since she learns from how others either perform various tasks or by how others explain her various tasks.

4.4.4 Physiological Arousal

Physiological Arousal is a source of information that comprises feelings and emotions that may arise when conducting a certain task. In environments where physical accomplishment, personal health and stress are prevalent elements Physiological Arousal plays a larger than usual role in the self-efficacy judgements of individuals.

Codes extracted from the information source of Physiological Arousal are: “stress” and “mood” due to the prevalence of these two elements in literature.

Examples:
“If let’s say I’m having a good day and someone is nagging me about this or that then I have more patience with that person” – NPO Respondent 1

“I think it can be a very big difference if you go to work because you have to even though you don’t want to be here and you think to yourself ugh… I have to work again, obviously it’s going to affect how your day goes… the guests pick it up and your colleagues pick it up too and it influences how you go about your work as well. You maybe won’t give 110% if you’re only waiting for the weekend and want to go home” – NPO Respondent 6

In both of the cases from the NPO presented above, “mood” or how one is feeling is linked to one’s performance throughout the day. Both respondents argue that mood can influence their patience but also effort invested in social interactions in the work environment. The respondent’s sentiments are reflected in literature, being in accordance with what Bandura (1997) stated regarding positive moods and their positive correlation to energy invested in work tasks.

“I think it depends on your mood because your feelings affect your tasks or your performance yeah when I was stressed the previous week I was really stressed about an exam I was here physically but not mentally” – FPO Respondent 3

In the previous excerpt, Respondent 3 from the FPO further presents how a negative mood, such as stress, can affect one’s work performance.

“Whenever you literally lose a whole day or one hour in just in one single thing just because you were not, I don’t know, not in the mood or not creative enough” – FPO Respondent 1

The previous excerpt is Respondent 1’s answer on what she considers as a source of frustration and when she considers that she didn’t live up to her own standards. In her case “mood” or the lack thereof, is considered not as an effect but as a cause for poor work performance.

4.5 Inductive codes

In the following section, the inductive codes that were extracted from the interviews are going to be presented. These codes represent recurring patterns found within the two types of organisations that do not directly fit in the given categories and warranted the creation of new
codes; relationships between the newly found codes and categories may arise due to reasons explained later.

“Self-learning”
A recurring theme in the FPO is that of supplementing one’s knowledge with self-study, which also gave rise to the code’s name. As the name implies, self-study is an activity which the respondents deem to do individually without the involvement of colleagues, both at work if it is deemed urgent or during their private life. While the code of “Self-study” can be said to be closely linked to activities done included in Vicarious Experience, such as social comparison and observational learning, the main difference arises due to the asocial nature of “self-learning”.

The reasons why the respondents engaged in “self-study” and how they did so were varied, as shown in the examples:

“Most of the time I have to do it by myself and I mean it’s a kind of self-study and I like it because it pushes me to you know do something that I like and when I say goodbye each day I know that I learned something new, its good, I like it” – FPO Respondent 3

In the case of Respondent 3, her intrinsic motivations of learning something new and accomplishing activities she likes are the basis of her work tasks, which she considers as “self-study”.

“As long as you have Google then there’s no challenge, I mean we were creating a gif yesterday or something, I’ve never done that before but it’s just one Google away” – FPO Respondent 1

In the case of Respondent 1, the act of “self-study” came in the form of doing a Google search when in need of unavailable information. The role of the internet as a source of knowledge, both tacit and explicit, is going to be explored more in-depth in the Analysis section.

“I’m still kind of trying to keep up even when I’m not studying branding anymore, that’s kind of what I’m interested in, and I try to keep up from blogs, different books and whatever but that’s basically learning by doing and learning from written things. I unfortunately haven’t had a mentor or someone who could say that this is how we do it in reality; it’s basically my own kind of way.” – FPO Respondent 4

In the case of Respondent 4, beside the intrinsic motivations to continue learning, the lack of a knowledgeable person in the form of a mentor constitute the main motives of searching for
knowledge in the form of blogs and books, showcasing the importance of having a “mentor” that could instruct one in a specific skill. Since the respondent links the gaining of new knowledge to “learning by doing”, which is one way to describe tacit knowledge, it can be stated that what she is learning is tacit knowledge from various sources.

“Structure”

The idea of “structure” is encountered repeatedly in the interviews with the NPO, warranting a code of its own. “Structure” in the context of the NPO studied means both an organised way of going about one’s work tasks, but also a more personal way of organising one’s expectations and social interaction with guests at work, thus representing a mental model of cognition and behaviour. The reason why structure, both in an organisational and personal sense, is important for the NPO is due to the unstructured and uncertain working environment that results from working with a target audience that live in a precarious situation themselves.

Example:

"I think that structure at the organisation is when everybody knows what their purpose is with going to work; that this is our purpose, these are our goals and this is what we are going to do, these are the guests and they are the focus of our work” – NPO Respondent 3

In the above excerpt the respondent equates the idea of “structure” to the mission statement of the organisation which provides a purpose to the employees in their dealings with guests. A more personal take on “structures” can be seen in the following excerpt where it is explained as:

“To set clear boundaries for yourself because you need good boundaries so that you don’t become worn out and burned out in a tough environment but you also have to set boundaries with those that come there” – NPO Respondent 3

“It can get tough certain days but you have to really try to keep the job at the job and have ones private life with their private life ... One does try to set boundaries between work and private life but of course if something happened back home or if I have slept badly or just have a bad day in general, of course it affects my work and uh... that
The previous excerpt from Respondent 3 sheds light on the personal nature of “structure” which includes “good boundaries” to prevent work related burnout. Boundaries in this respect are interpreted to be of two kinds: (i) towards oneself, of limiting the responsibilities one takes on at work, and (ii) towards others, interpreted as limiting the responsibilities one takes on for others. Respondent 4 echoes a similar sentiment, stating the importance of boundaries between work and personal responsibilities, but in her opinion such boundaries are more porous and malleable. Due to the fact that the role of “structure” is primarily to prevent and ameliorate stressors in the work environment, one can link it to the information source of Physiological Arousal; within that context, “structure” can be interpreted as a set of coping mechanisms devised to strengthen one’s psyche. Thus, “structure” is linked to Physiological Arousal and can be interpreted as a form of coping mechanism to prevent burnout and reduce stress in stressful situations.
5. Analysis

In the following section the authors will analyse the interview, having the study’s purpose and research question in focus. Thus, what the relationship between Tacit knowledge sharing and Self-efficacy may be and how it might differ between the two organisational contexts.

The authors are going to analyse the interviews with respect to the theoretical linkage found between Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy and the study’s purpose and research aim. The structure of the analysis is going to be a side-by-side comparison and analysis of the FPO and NPO with the reviewed literature. Thereby, the authors hope to shed light upon the ways in which tacit knowledge interacts with judgements of self-efficacy and investigate whether different organisational contexts affect this relationship. Each theoretical aspect is going to be covered and both the findings from the FPO and NPO are going to be scrutinised simultaneously.

5.1 Tacit Knowledge Sharing as seen in the NPO and FPO

Both organisations showed the presence of tacit knowledge sharing with subtle differences. There were equally many opportunities to share in the two different organisational types, however, the organisational cultures encountered and the occupational differences lead to slightly diverging tacit knowledge sharing mechanisms. The two organisations

5.1.1 Purposive Learning channels

Purposive learning channels have been encountered in the NPO in the form of structured teamwork and daily meetings in the mornings and afternoons. The morning meetings were found to be of shorter duration than the ones occurring in the afternoon but in essence fulfilling the same purpose. While the morning meetings serve as short briefings before a day, they generally showcase an instrumental approach to what needs to be done and help raise the staff’s awareness of the upcoming day’s requirements. The afternoon meetings besides being of a longer duration also serve to cover several topics such as the events of the day and how they were handled, how was the general atmosphere between clients and in the organisation and what might be done to improve these aspects in the future. The staff is free to discuss the psychological aspects of the work and whether they feel stressed or “under the weather” due to particular events during the day. Thus, the meetings provide a platform upon which the
staff can share knowledge and reflect both on technical aspects related to their occupation but also cognitive aspects of how they feel and what they think should be a course of action with certain clients or situations.

The importance of structured teamwork in the NPO can be attributed to the varied and heterogeneous base of clients they have to deal with on a day to day basis. Verbal and physical conflicts may arise at times between the clients present at the NPO and the staff present is required to act in unison as a team in order to be effective in quenching and resolving these conflicts. Tacit knowledge can be gained through structured teamwork through witnessing how one’s colleagues address a situation and thereby seeking to understand or emulate their behaviour. Respondents 1 and 3 described how through teamwork they received a better understanding of the organisation’s code on conflict management. Furthermore, given the fact that the client base is in itself heterogeneous, the staff are able to learn from each other with regards to conflict management since each employee might have slightly diverging views on how to handle conflict. Given the challenging circumstances and the type of work conducted at the NPO, the authors conclude that structured teamwork poses a more direct avenue for tacit knowledge sharing than the daily meetings.

In the FPO, the purposive learning channels found were composed of daily meetings, workshops and structured teamwork. The daily meetings are held in the morning with the purpose of sharing ideas, showing how one is progressing with a task and how one intends to deal with them throughout the day. The meetings provide an open and flexible platform where the staff can share what is on their mind. Despite the fact that the focus remains on technical aspects of one’s work assignments, at the end of the meeting the staff are free to share any piece of information they find interesting whether related to their work or not. Thus, the daily meetings can act as a channel for tacit knowledge sharing by the participants sharing their personalised knowledge and reflecting upon work assignments.

Workshops, another form of purposive learning channels, were encountered in the FPO. Their primary purpose is to introduce a new project or discuss bigger aspects of an on-going one. Workshops share the same environment and atmosphere as the meetings, where everyone is open to contribute with anything they find relevant. The demands of the workshop are more stringent than the daily meetings as they often involve sensitive decisions for the organisation, and thus require more involvement from the staff.
The last purposive learning channel encountered in the FPO is that of structured teamwork. Due to the fact that the organisation is divided into four separate departments, they are tasked with cooperating when commencing a new project. Thus, each department is dependent on the other in order to further their tasks and therefore collaboration between departments becomes an integral aspect. The interdependency between departments stimulates a channel of tacit knowledge sharing as each can give and receive feedback on collective aspects of a project. As such projects usually span several months at a time, the authors were not able to compare how interdepartmental collaboration differs from the beginning of a project to when the staff is in the midst of working on one and thus the analysis is based on the respondents’ accounts. Nevertheless, due to the fact that after a project has been discussed and planned, each department receives their own set number of tasks and thus are focused more internally, minimising the required external collaboration with other departments.

In summary, the predominant purposive learning channels encountered in the FPO are constituted by the daily meetings and workshops. The structured teamwork, while highly important in the initial phases of a project and when discussing bigger project-related issues, is limited in time and thus one can say not as important as the other two aforementioned channels.

Thus, as one can see in both organisations, purposive learning channels set a stage for the sharing of complex knowledge and what has been found reflects Ipe's (2003) statement that formal opportunities create an environment of knowledge sharing and empower the individuals to share their personal knowledge.

5.1.2 Relational learning channel

Relational learning channels are informal in nature and in contrast to purposive learning channels, are not based upon organisational frames of interaction or guidelines. As such, they include personal relations between individuals and their social networks.

In the FPO, relational learning channels were present in the form of informal lunch breaks or coffee breaks as described by FPO Respondent 1. During the lunch, according to the respondent, it was common to combine work related matters with personal matters. Furthermore, since the departments are sharing the same office space, it opens up the opportunity for the staff to engage their colleagues at any time without having to wait for meetings or workshops. Thus, informal gatherings in the form of lunch or coffee breaks
facilitate the creation of personal relationships whereas working in the same office creates a network for the staff working at the FPO. The elements of relational learning channels found in the FPO correspond to the “the place of knowledge making” in Nonaka et al.'s (1996) perspective due to the fact that the personal relationships and networks facilitate the sharing of tacit knowledge. According to Riege (2005, p.25) the “combination of human networks often is the key to knowledge sharing”. One could argue that such a combination of human networks occurs in the FPO due to the shared and social environment which encourages informal exchanges between the staff, leading to the sharing of work related and personal knowledge.

Relational learning channels were present in the NPO as well in the form of informal communications and a larger network between the staff. The content of the relational learning channels in the NPO was diverse with work related topics taking prominence. Nevertheless, due to the nature of work at the NPO, the staff described a blurry boundary between personal and work related topics (Respondent 3, 4). Thus, the topics that the staff discusses are wide ranging, from the ethical treatment of clients to how an individual is coping with the stressors at work. Discussions of how to best approach clients in various circumstances, some that can be threatening or violent, or on how to cope with stressors at work are taken to be a sign of tacit knowledge sharing.

In both organisations the presence of purposive and relational learning channels is documented, however, the importance that is placed on either of those can differ depending on the organisation. Due to the fact that the FPO is a small organisation with a small number of interns, the need of formal structures for the diffusion and sharing of knowledge is less dire. The smaller size of the company, both in terms of workforce and office space, facilitates the creation and nurturing of personal relationships between colleagues thus the bulk of tacit knowledge being shared in personal relationships and informal settings.

The relatively small workforce and shared work environment of the NPO would suggest that this organisation shares the same predisposition to relational learning channels. While personal relationships, and by extension relational learning channels, are important for the wellbeing of the staff and knowledge sharing, the organisational setting and its mission favour purposive learning channels. The necessity of working as a team vis-à-vis the clients and having a unanimous approach toward dealing with situations places more importance on a structured teamwork. Thus, in the NPO relational learning channels are present and fulfil
similar roles to that in the FPO, but the complex nature of work and the knowledge that comes with it demands a more structured way of sharing it.

5.1.3 Culture of the work Environment

Nonaka et al. (1996) assert the importance of organisational culture when it comes to the sharing of knowledge. The authors have also covered the relationship between organisational culture and tacit knowledge sharing in the literature review. Thus, an important aspect the authors considered in the study is the organisational culture as perceived by the staff in the two organisations.

In the FPO, the respondents viewed the culture as open and flexible inasmuch as they were free to share any bits of information they considered relevant either for themselves or for others’ work; flexible, in the sense that goals and tasks could be negotiated up to a certain point in order to suit the interns’ academic schedules. In that respect, the findings in the FPO correspond to those of Nonaka et al. (1996), who argue that openness and flexibility in the work environment fosters the sharing of knowledge. One can argue that the two aforementioned cultural features contribute to the sharing of tacit knowledge due to the fact that the staff is not limited to formal channels of knowledge sharing, thereby increasing the occurrence of informal, relational learning channels. It is the culture that gives an opportunity to every employee in FPO to give advice, suggestions to others or to ask others for help by either using formal channels or informal channels.

Organisational culture is an important aspect in the sharing of tacit knowledge for the NPO as well. The NPO’s mission and value statement provide a foundation for its organisational culture, providing a framework for the staff to base their work-related decisions on. The presence of two daily meetings and an awareness of structure in their teamwork, at first sight one could argue that the NPO’s organisational structure is more rigid than the one encountered in the FPO. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the daily meetings can be tailored according to the staff’s needs, by approaching topics related to work, ethics or psychological wellbeing, it showcases a certain organisational flexibility. Furthermore, since openness is encouraged by the staff in the meetings, one can argue that the NPO strikes a balance between the organisation’s mission and value statement and their interpretation and implementation regarding organisational culture.
5.1.4 Motivation to share

Ipe’s (2003) model of knowledge sharing includes factors such as power, reciprocity, and the relationship with recipients of knowledge sharing and reward for sharing. The authors are unable to found these factors of knowledge sharing. Nevertheless, through the interviews the authors gained a glimpse at some of these factors while others were conspicuously absent. Reciprocity as a motivator for knowledge sharing was seen in the FPO, where Respondent 2 stated that because she gained tacit knowledge from her colleagues, she was willing to share with them knowledge in the future, thus reciprocity does factor in at least one respondent’s preponderance of sharing future knowledge.

The reason why a factor such as power has not been noticed in the interviews is because of the two organisations investigated were composed of a small number of employees and the power distance between them was minimal; thus, it could be said inconclusively that power does not play a major role of in the two organisation’s motivation to share knowledge. The same can be attributed to the factor of reward for sharing. Due to the small size of the organisations, it is difficult for organizations to locate some resource for incentive or reward as well. Moreover, the role of incentive and reward for knowledge sharing is debateable matter from many years (Riege, 2005).

Further, relationship with recipient is based on the trust and to get the trust of other required a long time that are missing in both company. Huemer et al., (2017) stated that trust is vital as it aids learning, as well as the decision of exchanging knowledge. If authors consider the case of FPO as well as NPO then we saw that respondents having a very short career in those company. Therefore, a short stay of employees in those companies is main reason that leads to lack of trust among employees of both companies. And this lack of trust makes process of development of relationship difficult.

5.1.5 Modern technology and tacit knowledge sharing in FPO

The employees or respondents of FPO taking the benefits of social media and apps to share their thoughts and views on different task on the companies different project. The company has a group on Facebook where anyone can share their ideas or information and then this will lead to more discussion on Facebook. Further, company is using an app “Assana” on which everyone is uploading their tasks and get the feedback not only from employer but also from their colleagues as well. Riege (2005) stated that technology make the sharing of knowledge
easy and more effective, but Ruddy (2000, p. 38) stated that a ‘‘delicate marriage of technology with a keen sense of cultural or behavioural awareness’’. Therefore, the use of modern technology were found present and play some role in tacit knowledge sharing, as the employees share their personal views and thoughts related to other’s tasks by using modern means and aware of its use and benefits.

5.2 Self-efficacy in the FPO and NPO

5.2.1 Enactive Mastery

In the case of the FPO, Enactive Mastery has been noted as the most prominent source of information for self-efficacy. The staff’s past experiences coming from either other internships or education and a certain cognitive resilience constitute a sizeable part of their Enactive Mastery. Through their past experiences, the respondents at the FPO were able to benchmark their capabilities and thereby gain a sense of what might constitute a challenge and in what areas they require development in order to judge themselves efficacious. In addition to previous experience, a recurring theme between the respondents was the usefulness of resilience in face of failures and their positive framing. According to Bandura (1997), resilience in the face of failure increases the likelihood that individuals will continue to strive in a task and not let themselves be dissuaded.

The nature of services that the NPO offers places the staff in direct contact with the clients and that offers the staff nigh immediate feedback for their actions. Since Enactive Mastery is based upon one’s successes and failures, the staff at the NPO gain a lot of input on their self-efficacy via the aforementioned source of information. According to Bandura (1997), Enactive Mastery is the most direct way to gauge one’s self-efficacy in any task, with success or failure being taken as clear indications of one’s capabilities. Thus, either successful or unsuccessful experiences with clients will partly determine the employee’s self-efficacy.

As one can see, enactive mastery appeared as the most important source of information on self-efficacy for both the FPO and NPO. That is in line with Bandura's (1997) findings, who considered Enactive Mastery as the most important source of information for self-efficacy judgements. In the FPO, past experiences as well as resilience in face of difficult tasks contribute to the intern’s Enactive mastery. On the other side in the NPO, experiences gained at the workplace are the most important contributing factor to the staff’s Enactive Mastery.
5.2.2 Verbal Persuasion

In the FPO, Verbal Persuasion was found as an influential factor for self-efficacy judgements, second after Enactive Mastery. In this organisation, the respondents considered that the feedback of their co-workers and more specially, feedback from the CEO of the company is very important when they are working on their projects and task.

Feedback, in the case of Verbal Persuasion, is not only limited to simple feedback but it consists of suggestion, diverse opinions, views and solutions. Such feedback, according to Bandura (1997) can act as motivation for the employees to handle difficult tasks. Furthermore, the validation of received feedback is an important factor for the respondents, stating that they consider feedback more valid when received from someone that is knowledgeable and has experience in their field. Therefore the background of the person who is offering feedback matters and their comments would have more influence on others’ self-efficacy as compared to another, less knowledgeable person’s feedback.

In the case of the NPO, Verbal Persuasion constituted an active part in the respondents’ judgements of their capabilities, being the second major source of information for self-efficacy. The respondents were found to be very open to receiving feedback from their colleagues. According to the respondents, feedback is valuable for them as they work with helping a heterogeneous and diverse base of clients. By giving and receiving feedback either during the morning or afternoon meetings, it offers them a sense of motivation and reinforces their self-efficacy in case of a successful turn of events or provides them alternative ways in which they can tackle a situation in the future.

Thus, Verbal Persuasion appeared as the second most important source of information for self-efficacy judgements in both organisations, feedback being an important aspect of both organisations despite their differences in the nature of work.

5.2.3 Vicarious Experience

In the case of the FPO, Vicarious Experience in the form of social comparison and observational learning was less present due to the reduced number of employees and the
fragmented responsibilities each respondent had. Since the interviewed respondents were part of each of the four departments and had different job specifications and tasks, social comparison for them did not provide much information about their own capabilities. Bandura (1997) states that the value of information gained from social comparison is affected by the perceived social distance between an individual and the others with which they compare themselves; the higher the perceived social distance, the less reliable social comparison and Vicarious Experience becomes as a source of information for one’s self-efficacy judgements. That can be said to have been noted in the case of the FPO, the social distance being provided by the differences between the departments’ tasks.

Vicarious Experience was encountered in the NPO as well in the forms of social comparison, observational learning and mentorship. Observational learning and mentorship proved to be the predominant forms of Vicarious Experience. Due to the fact that the employees at the NPO had the same general work tasks to accomplish, the social distance between them was negligent. Thus, social comparison was a viable way in which the staff could gauge their own capabilities. By observing how others dealt with challenging situations, a respondent was able to assess her own self-efficacy on the one hand, and learn how others faced stressful encounters on the other.

An intriguing find for the authors is the presence of mentorship in the NPO and its lack from the FPO. In the NPO, mentorship was present along the lines described by Bandura (1997) where individuals, either consciously or not, sought out individuals possessing skills they aspired to gain and employed their help or emulated their behaviour. A respondent described such an interaction with a mentor where sought the council of a more knowledgeable person relating to how she could improve the quality of professional conversations with clients. Another instance came in the form of a respondent being the mentor helping others to overcome struggles in such professional conversations by being present with the parties involved and guiding them. Swap et al. (2001) concluded that tacit knowledge is sent through the ways of socialization and internalization, story-telling and mentoring playing a vital role behind those processes.

Whereas in the FPO, the staff gained information from Vicarious Experience sparingly due to the fact that the social difference between each respondent was relatively big, each of them working in separate departments. Nevertheless, the lack of knowledgeable individuals to act
as mentors when it comes to certain work tasks has lead the staff to look for other ways in which they could learn themselves and reinforce their judgements of self-efficacy.

This alternative way to gain knowledge has been termed “Self-learning” by the authors for the reason that it is done individually and generally outside of the work context. The respondents who engaged in “self-learning” did so because of several reasons. The lack of a knowledgeable person in one’s field has been named as the primary cause of this phenomenon, but respondents stated other reasons as well such as not wanting to disturb others’ work or the accessibility of knowledge through the internet. One could argue that the nature and field of work lends itself more or less prone to be acquired by “self-learning”, the respondents favouring this channel of gaining knowledge and self-efficacy were working primarily with IT.

5.2.4 Physiological Arousal

Physiological Arousal also appeared as a source of information for self-efficacy judgements in the case of FPO, but not in the same degree as the other sources such as enactive mastery and verbal persuasion. Bandura (1997) states that Physiological Arousal is an important source of information for self-efficacy judgements in work environments that require either physical work or that entail various stressors. That can explain the lack of dependency of the NPO staff on Physiological Arousal, as the organisation’s work does not entail physical labour nor external stressors. Thus, Physiological arousal ranked as 3rd major source of information for self-efficacy in the FPO.

In the case of the NPO, on the other hand, Physiological Arousal was a valuable source of information on one’s capabilities, as the staff has to face stressing situations on a daily basis. The respondents, by working closely with clients that have drug addictions and are socially excluded, undergo psychological stressors that can impact their mood and working capabilities. As Bandura (1997) states, stress and mood can affect several aspects of one’s working ability such as the time and effort one invests in a task, with positive mood leading to an increased resilience in face of failures and difficulties and a negative mood having the opposite effect. This correlation between stress, mood and one’s working ability has been noticed by all of the respondents at the NPO, considering it an important part of their work. In the NPO, Physiological Arousal alongside Vicarious Experience was the most prominent sources of information for self-efficacy judgements second only to Enactive Mastery.
The inductive code of “structure”, which is different from structured teamwork, was found to be linked to Physiological Arousal. “Structure” is described as setting boundaries towards oneself and towards others; the first set of personal boundaries are meant to define what an individual could and should do in the workplace whereas the second set of boundaries are meant to delimit the extent of the clients’ emotional influence. The need of cognitive and emotional structure result from the NPO’s emotionally taxing work environment, described earlier. In the respondent’s view, one can extract these boundaries from the organisation’s mission and values, whereby according to the respondent, an employee would interpret their responsibilities and tasks. Thus, “structure” is part of a system of knowledge that the staff of the NPO have access to, Endres et al. (2007) describing such knowledge as being complex and difficult to transmit.

To sum up, in the case of the FPO Enactive Mastery and Verbal Persuasion constituted the most dominant sources of information for self-efficacy judgements, whereas Vicarious Experience and Physiological Arousal were found to be present in the respondents’ self-efficacy judgements but in a less prominent role. For the respondents at the NPO, on the other hand, all four sources of information for self-efficacy were present and the respondents used information gained from them to judge their own self-efficacy.

5.3 Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Verbal Persuasion in the FPO

The relationship between two concepts is found to be present in the FPO. Behind this relationship, purposive and relational learning channels and verbal persuasion play a major role. Purposive learning channels that were found are Meetings, workshops and structure teamwork. Relations learning channels that was found in FPO are informal relationship and communication and informal network

Example:

“Here I could relate the way of saying the things like of telling you the feedback or of telling you a task you should perform or giving you a task yeah i mean something that i need help on is very different and interesting like hearing it from a swedish person hearing it from an american hearing it from an iranian they all have their own way to tell you so from that you get like oh i like how this guy told me or i like how this girl like really put the task organised and then you start like getting the good things from
everybody so the next time you get to like you know that you can do this” – FPO

Respondent 2

In the above example, respondent said that when he/she got a feedback from their colleague then in future he/she can do this task very easily. This shows that the feedback from colleague act as source a of his/her motivation (self-efficacy) to do a this task if he/she get it in the future. Therefore, there is existence self-efficacy that comes from purposive leaning channels, because the feedback is given in the formal meeting that is a purposive learning channel of knowledge sharing. So, it means the respondent drive self-efficacy from sharing of tacit knowledge.

Example:

“Absolutely cause it kind of gives you a wider perspective of how the things work or how could you solve things how could you attack also i think its a lot about the culture such as like ah cause its very different culture in mexico than in iran or than here in sweden so everyone has their own way of doing things or their own way of yeah of basically performing some basic or specific stuff which then makes you like okay i didnt think about that or no like in my place that’s very like never but then you kindof start combining and its like oh okay so you get inspired to perform a task by what others say or propose” FPO – Respondent 2

The second example illustrates how relational learning channel plays their role for self-efficacy. The respondent clearly stated that he/she get inspiration or motivation from what others suggest or recommended. On the one hand side recommendation or suggestion act as source tacit knowledge sharing and on the other side of the coin it also act as source for self-efficacy. Therefore, this also shows the relationship between tacit knowledge sharing and self-efficacy. But this time relational learning channels contribute to self-efficacy, because in that example there are some involvements of informal networks that act a way of tacit knowledge sharing. Thus, tacit knowledge sharing has a relationship with self-efficacy, where relational learning channels and purposive learning channels give motivation to respondents in the shape of feedback (i.e. verbal persuasion).
5.4 Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Vicarious Experience in the NPO

Vicarious Experience is another prominent source of information for self-efficacy judgements encountered in the NPO. Vicarious Experience is gained in a number of ways, which are social comparison, through a mentor and through observational learning. The account of Respondent 1 describes how she engaged in observational learning when she started working at the NPO:

“To begin with, like I’ve said so I am very withdrawn, then I am not the same as I am now. Then there is a lot of observing of okay, now comes that person and says this, how does that other person react then, or okay now that person did like this – why is that. Meanwhile I might have some questions of why did you do like this, because of this and this, okay now I understand better why that person does it like she does.”

By observing how others have responded to certain situations, the respondent is able to first formulate a mental model for herself on how certain situations can be dealt with and secondly formulate a self-efficacy judgement of her own capabilities. She supplements observational learning with actual questions to the person she observed, thereby engaging in an active transfer of knowledge. The source of her tacit knowledge comes from a relational learning channel – an informal discussion between colleagues on the motivations for a course of action.

Another example of Vicarious Experience, this time from a person that is offering it, comes from Respondent 3, who was asked by a volunteer for assistance in a grief counselling session. The excerpt showcases how mentorship, a form of Vicarious Experience, can contain tacit knowledge. She describes the event, a volunteer offering grief counselling to an individual when the volunteer:

“Came out and told me I don’t know what to do, I went in and sat down on the floor and just was myself... and I left this person (the guest) finish crying without doing anything and I was just myself in the room. It took maybe ten minutes for the guest to be done crying and the volunteer just sat there and I saw from the beginning how the volunteer was twisting around being uncomfortable and was looking at me thinking why don’t I do anything. So I thought that this person is not ready and she must first be done crying. Later when the person finished crying she told the volunteer I can see
this is though for you but we can try to go to the bottom of this together. That’s when I saw how the volunteer let out a sigh and calmed down, finding a steady breathing and could continue the counselling session, that’s when I’ve left them to have their conversation.”

The channel through which Respondent 3 was transmitting her knowledge can be said to have been a relational learning channel – while the setting might have been that of a counselling session, there were no guidelines or frames in place on how to teach another individual. The tacit knowledge being transmitted in the previous example is that of how to confront a difficult conversation with a grieving individual – the volunteer clearly feeling unprepared for it. As shown in the previous examples, tacit knowledge sharing does contribute to an increase in the knowledge store of individuals and by extension to their Vicarious Experience.

5.5 Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Physiological Arousal in the NPO

Physiological Arousal has been identified as an important source of information for the employees’ self-efficacy due to the surrounding environment’s chaotic and ever-changing nature. Respondent 3 describes the environment as being a:

“Very challenging environment which makes it very hard to work in such an environment because you never know what you are going to face under a day instead you have to be ready all the time for what can happen in a day”

When asked to elaborate on how she believes one can prepare for such a work environment, the respondent continued:

“I believe that you can’t prepare yourself entirely for everything that happens but you have to be confident in yourself, I believe that is the important bit.”

Given the fact that one cannot mentally prepare themselves for everything that might happen during a day, the importance shifts from psychological readiness to self-confidence and a certain emotional resilience.

One could argue that the morning and afternoon meetings provide such an avenue through which the staff is able to discuss and confront common psychological stressors.
Tacit knowledge sharing has been seen as being part of the purposive learning channels of morning and afternoon meetings where the staff discusses relevant issues and have the opportunity to distance themselves psychologically from the day's events. Respondents 1 and 4 express their opinions on the daily meetings in the following excerpts:

“I believe it is that you can sit down and we can talk to each other because we cannot discuss things outside of work and then you can ventilate or let off steam with each other that I experienced it like this and this felt tough to do, so it becomes a type of group therapy for the day” – NPO Respondent 1

“I think that they are very good just because that you can sit down a short while in the mornings before the day begins and then even later in the day, since if there has been something difficult during the day or after the day so you can always talk about it during the afternoon“ – NPO Respondent 4

Due to the fact that the employees at the NPO are required to maintain confidentiality with their dealings, the afternoon meetings become the only avenue of meaningful discussion of relevant events and provide a time for reflection. In the reflexive part of the meetings, where employees can ventilate and talk about their feelings whether negative or positive, by seeing how others reason and justify certain beliefs they learn from each other to identify and cope with stressors. Through the participation in a relational learning channel such as the afternoon meeting, the staff engages in a collective reflection on how to cope with the stressors encountered at work.
6. Conclusion

In the following section the authors will summarise the findings and analysis, answering the research questions set out in the beginning.

At the beginning of the paper, the authors set out to answer two related Research Questions:

1. What are the factors of Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy in FPOs and NPOs?
2. The relationship between Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy in FPOs and NPOs

Through the empirical data gathered in the interviews conducted at an FPO and NPO in Sweden and by analysing them using content analysis as described by Bengtsson (2016), the authors are confident to have answered the two aforementioned research questions.

Regarding the first research question, the authors have noted that differences tacit knowledge was being shared through purposive and relational learning channels in both organisations, with small differences in means and importance. Purposive learning channels composed of meetings, structured teamwork and workshops facilitated the sharing of knowledge in both contexts. Relational learning channels were found to constitute an important role for tacit knowledge sharing in the organisations due to their limited size and the prevalence of informal relationships between the staffs at both organisations. The flexibility and openness of the work environments of both organisations appeared as catalyst for others sources of tacit knowledge sharing by enabling the purposive and relational learning channels. It is the work environment that allowed people to share their views, thoughts suggestion, solutions and feedback openly with each other either by using the formal or informal ways. The use of modern technology can also facilitate the knowledge sharing activities and if this knowledge is based on someone personal views, solutions then it facilitating the tacit knowledge sharing. The profitable or commercial companies are started to relying more on modern technologies to make their process more effective but the NPOs are still lacking it or ignoring its importance.
The four sources of information for self-efficacy mentioned Bandura (1997) were found to be present in the FPO and NPO, again with slight differences. From the four sources of information, Enactive Mastery and Verbal Persuasion were present and integral to both organisations staffs’ judgements of their own capabilities. In the FPO, Enactive Mastery was a valuable source of assessment of own skills for the staff due to the fact that all of them were beginning their career in their chosen domain and thus had no previous experience with which to compare their work. In the NPO, on the other hand, Enactive Mastery was a prominent source due to the nature of service and client base they are working with, experience dealing with other people being a crucial component of working in such an environment. Verbal Persuasion in the form of both formal and informal feedback was present in both of the organisations.

Vicarious Experience was one source of information that was more present in the NPO than the FPO, that fact can be attributed to the following causes. The FPO, albeit being a small organisation, consists of four different departments that have separate work tasks and cooperate occasionally leading to a certain degree of social distance between the staff and thereby reducing the value of information gained from social comparison. Due to the transitory nature of internship positions at the company, except the CEO there are no longer tenure employees leading to a lack of mentors and knowledgeable individuals in the departments. The issue of social distance for Vicarious Experience in the NPO is less dire, due to the fact that all of the employees, minus the manager of the centre, are tasked with the same tasks of meeting clients and working close to them. Thus, the employees were able to not only compare individual capabilities to that of others, but also learn how to improve upon them through observational learning.

Lastly, Physiological Arousal was another source of information for Self-efficacy judgements that was present in the NPO but less so in the FPO. The reason behind that, as stated by Bandura (1997) can be the fact that Physiological Arousal is more prominent in physically demanding and stressful occupations, the FPO’s work tasks not fulfilling any of these criteria. On the contrary, the NPO’s occupation places the staff in psychologically demanding circumstances and thus they are required to know how to identify and respond to personal stress reactions.
Regarding the second research question, the authors believe to have found a relationship between some of the sources of information of Self-Efficacy and Tacit Knowledge Sharing. Three instances were found of such a relationship:

1. Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Verbal Persuasion in the FPO

In the FPO, Verbal Persuasion was accompanied by a form of feedback containing alternatives to how one could complete or think about a certain task. Such occurrences happened predominantly through relational learning channels, so through informal conversations between the staff working there.

2. Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Vicarious Experience in the NPO

In the NPO, since the majority of the staff were dealing with similar work tasks, they were able to observe and learn from each other throughout a normal workday. The social distance between the staff was minimal and thus information gained from social comparison was a valuable way of comparing one’s self-efficacy to that of others and receive insights into how others approached various situations. Furthermore, the knowledgeable employees were ready to share their knowledge pertaining to their occupation and thus act as mentors to the staff. The tacit knowledge sharing happened predominantly through relational learning channels, since the NPO was relatively small in organisational terms and the organisational members developed personal relations between them.

3. Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Physiological Arousal in the NPO

Physiological Arousal was an important and distinctive source of information for the NPO. As part of the daily meetings, the staff discussed their personal moods and sought to resolve differences in the team in order to diffuse stressful or frustrating situations. By discussing such topics in a structured context, the staff was able to not only actively work against stressors present at work but also to increase their own personal coping skills in face of stressful situations.
7. Discussion

In the following section we will discuss the implications of our findings on the academic field, what could have been done differently and whether that would have affected the study.

7.1 Academic contributions

The current study contributes to the fields of Knowledge Management and Motivation theory by validating the sources of Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy in two different contexts, especially for Tacit Knowledge Sharing in the non-profit sector. Since the non-profit sector has seen a lack of academic coverage regarding Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Knowledge Management in a wider context (Ragsdell, 2013), the authors believe to have achieved a reasonable portrayal of one such Non-profit organisation and furthered the understanding of Tacit Knowledge Sharing in such an organisational environment.

Furthermore, the authors of the study provide a mechanism through which Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy are interconnected, expanding upon theory in the domains of Knowledge Management and Motivation theory. By gaining knowledge from others, the respondents seemed to have gained a heightened sense of Self-Efficacy as well. In cases where certain channels of knowledge transmission were unavailable the Self-Efficacy associated with it, such as the case of lack of Mentorship in the FPO, resulted in a need for the respondents to seek out knowledge from elsewhere. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Physiological Arousal played an important role as a source of information for Self-Efficacy in the NPO and the respondents from the organisations had an awareness of it. The idea of “structure” is linked to Physiological Arousal inasmuch as it is interpreted as a set of coping mechanisms for the individuals working at the NPO. Endres et al. (2007) would describe such type of knowledge as being complex, non-technical and dependent on the context of the workplace.

7.2 Practical implications

The practical implications that can be extracted from the study are useful for both FPOs and NPOs alike, especially smaller organisations that have limited resources at their disposal. The study showcases how through Tacit Knowledge Sharing employees can increase their Self-Efficacy in certain circumstances. The authors believe that with such knowledge,
organisations can take steps in order to increase the knowledge sharing happening in their workplace environments. By stimulating the dissemination of tacit knowledge and facilitating discussions of such themes, organisations are also working towards empowering their employees through increasing their self-efficacy. Self-Efficacy being important insofar as it can contribute to entrepreneurial leanings of the employees (Boyd & Vozikis, 1994) and in a larger context, to the increase of an organisation’s performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

7.3 Ethical implications

By showing a relationship between the concepts of Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy the authors hope to emphasise the role and value of the human individual in a theoretical and instrumentally focused research field such as Knowledge Management. Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) argue that human labour is being gradually replaced by machinery and artificial intelligence in the pursuit of organisations to maximise their performance while minimising costs. Thus, artificial intelligence being valued more over “actual” intelligence of human beings. The authors argue that a negative discourse in the study of motivational theory, one that focuses on the shortcomings and pitfalls of humans in the workplace contributes to the larger organisational trend. Stajkovic and Luthans (1998) instead favour a positive approach, positive in the sense of showcasing the constructive qualities, to studying motivational theory.

While it has not been explicitly stated by the authors that this study takes a “positive” approach to Self-Efficacy and Tacit Knowledge Sharing, the authors nevertheless hope that through the findings they will contribute to a discourse seeking to place importance on the human being in the organisation.

7.4 Limitations

The generalizability of the findings can be limited due to the fact that the authors have gained access to only one organisation from an NPO and respectively FPO context. While the delimitation of considering only service providers does increase the study’s applicability to such organisations, whether profit driven or not, a larger number of organisations and respondents would have certainly helped cement the generalizability of the findings. While a larger sample size of respondents to interview would have elevated the generalizability of the study, one has to take in consideration the time constraints placed upon the study. Given such
conflicting factors, the authors believe to have achieved a fair compromise between access to data and thus generalizability and the limiting factor of time.

The theoretical and abstract nature of the investigated concepts poses a limitation with respect to the conducted interviews. The authors having immersed themselves in relevant literature on Self-Efficacy and Tacit Knowledge Sharing can be said to have acquired a confidence and understanding of the two. Nevertheless, such understanding is still subject to the authors’ interpretation of the concepts. In light of such an interpretive hindrance to objectivity, the authors strove to curtail their own preconception of the studied concepts and sought to maintain an impartial attitude towards them.

Due to the fact that the interviews at the NPO were conducted in Swedish, the authors took precautions beforehand to properly translate the topic guide in Swedish by using the help of native speakers. During the interviews, the author conducting them strove to use colloquial language, using theoretical terms only when needed to further the discussion. The same author transcribed and subsequently translated the interviews. In the translation, he strove to give a verbatim account of the interviews while retaining the substance of what has been said. Nevertheless, the limitation arising from the translation of texts and the transportation of meanings between languages has been taken in account by the authors. Despite having taken precautions regarding the linguistic shift between English and Swedish, a loss in context and connotations could have happened during the translation phases. The fact that the interviews were recorded could have affected the respondents’ propensity to express themselves, by making them uncomfortable knowing that the interviews are stored for analysis (Flick, 2004). Even though the authors looked for consent from the respondents and ensured that their identity will remain anonymous and undisclosed, there is still the possibility that respondents did not give entirely truthful accounts or complete answers.

7.5 Further Research

The authors advise further research upon the topic of Tacit Knowledge Sharing and Self-Efficacy in a larger context, with more organisations being investigated in order to enhance the generalizability of the findings. To that end, a quantitative research design would prove more suitable in order to further cement the relationship between the two concepts and investigate a larger number of organisations in a timely fashion. The authors believe that
expanding the criteria of organisations investigated would prove to be fruitful, as the concepts of Tacit Knowledge Sharing prove to be more suitable towards larger organisations.

Moreover, since the current research considers organisations situated only in Sweden, a certain cultural and geographical delimitation of the findings exists. Conducting a similar research in other countries or cultural environments would be interesting inasmuch as that would shed more light unto the relationship between the concepts in different cultures.
# 8. Appendix

## A. Topic Guide – Zain Al Ubedeen and Tamas Tazlo

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<th>Tacit knowledge sharing</th>
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<td>• Short <strong>description</strong> of the respondent</td>
<td>• Could you shortly describe <strong>what you work with?</strong></td>
<td>• <strong>Daily meetings</strong> – what do you think of them?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Usual day</strong> at work</td>
<td>• What <strong>attracts</strong> you in your activity?</td>
<td>• <strong>Weekly reports</strong> – what do you think of them?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Unusual workday?</td>
<td>• How much or little do you have to <strong>cooperate with others</strong> in what you do?</td>
<td>• How do you receive <strong>feedback</strong> on your work?</td>
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<td>• Work <strong>environment</strong></td>
<td>• Define a <strong>challenging situation</strong></td>
<td>• What motivates you to learn new things?</td>
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<td>• Work <strong>culture</strong></td>
<td>• Could you tell me an event or a day where you feel that you <strong>succeeded</strong> with your work?</td>
<td>• How do you <strong>learn</strong> best? What do you think is your <strong>learning style</strong>?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How do you feel as an <strong>employee</strong> at this company?</td>
<td>• What do you think <strong>contributes to a successful day?</strong></td>
<td>• What do you think are the <strong>skills needed to work</strong> in this field/environment?</td>
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<td>• Could you shortly describe your <strong>relationship with your colleagues</strong>?</td>
<td>• Do you share <strong>success stories</strong> with your colleagues?</td>
<td>• Do you believe you have had the chance to practice what you wanted in this workplace?</td>
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<td>• Could you tell me an event where you haven’t lived up to your <strong>own expectations</strong>?</td>
<td>• How do you see your time in this company with regards to knowledge? Have you learned during your time here?</td>
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<td>• How did it go by?</td>
<td>• <strong>How do you initiate newcomers</strong> into the company?</td>
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<td>• What do you think were the reasons for that?</td>
<td>• How do you personally look upon <strong>failure</strong>?</td>
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<td>• How do you receive <strong>feedback</strong> on your work?</td>
<td>• How do you judge a task being <strong>successful</strong>?</td>
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<td>• Does it depend <strong>who</strong> is giving the feedback?</td>
<td>• <strong>How do you go about solving</strong> a difficult task or situation? Could you tell me such an occasion?</td>
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<td>• Could you share a story where you had to work with your colleagues? How did it work out? Did you learn anything new from it?</td>
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<td>• What are your main <strong>motivations</strong> to continue to work?</td>
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<td>• <strong>Enactive mastery:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How would you judge your skills since you have started working at this organisation?</td>
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<td>• <strong>Vicarious experience</strong></td>
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<td>• Could you tell me a time when you were faced with a <strong>challenging situation</strong> and you had to <strong>work together</strong> with your <strong>colleagues</strong>?</td>
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<td>• <strong>Verbal persuasion</strong></td>
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<td>• Feedback – Do you find yourself giving feedback to people?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Physiological arousal</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Interview briefing

We are Zain Al Ubedeen and Tamas Tazlo, master students in the programs of Strategic Entrepreneurship and Managing in a Global Context respectively, at Jönköping’s International Business School.

We are conducting a study on the relationship between learning from colleagues and one’s belief of competency in performing work-related tasks.

Your anonymity as a respondent is going to be maintained throughout the entire process of writing the thesis and afterwards. The interview is going to be recorded in order for the interviewees to have the opportunity to analyse and use the material in the study.

A transcription is going to be made of the interview to facilitate the analysis. After the interviews are analysed, both the recording and transcription are going to be deleted.

You are free to leave the interview at your own choice with no repercussions.

You are also free to ask for more information on the thesis or some of the topics after the interview. You are free to contact us for the finished thesis or find it on the thesis database DiVA in early June, after the authors have defended it.

For more information and possible questions, contact us at:
Tamas Tazlo – tata1518@student.ju.se
Zain Ul Abedeen – ulza1515@student.ju.se

Thank you for your participation!
Zain and Tamas
C. Consent form – Interview

Hereby I agree to partake in an interview for a Master Thesis by Zain Al Ubedeen and Tamas Tazlo, wherein I am going to answer truthfully and to the best of my knowledge.

I am aware that:

1. I have full anonymity throughout the process of the study and after its completion.
2. I am able to leave the interview at any time without repercussions.
3. The answers I have given are used for the sole purpose of the study.
4. The interview is going to be voice recorded and later transcribed.
5. The materials, both audio-recorded and transcribed, are going to be deleted at the end of the study.
6. I am able to contact the authors for the finished study in the beginning of June.

Date:

Respondent’s signature
## D. Coding process – Vicarious Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Instance</th>
<th>Meaning unit</th>
<th>Condensed meaning unit</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NPO - 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>I want to see what it is that they are doing so it is a lot of analysing from my part so I am a bit introspective the first weeks</td>
<td>I want to see what it is that they are doing</td>
<td>Observational learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I am very straightforward that I am like this to begin with but I am going to open up because I am very introspective because I want to see what it is that they are doing in the first weeks and then I show more of myself when I feel more secure</td>
<td>I am very introspective because I want to see what it is that they are doing</td>
<td>Observational learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>We trust each other because even if I wasn’t part of a situation before so perhaps one of my colleagues was and s/he can handle it better than I so maybe then I should just take a step back even though I think in a different way and after the situation is solved or whatever so you can have a discussion and ask why did you do like that if there is something I’m wondering about why did you do like this what were your reasons and perhaps s/he can explain</td>
<td>Perhaps one of my colleagues was and s/he can handle it better than I... After the situation is solved ... You can have a discussion and ask why did you do like this if there is something I’m wondering about why did you do like this what were your reasons and perhaps s/he can explain</td>
<td>Observational learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPO - 2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Me and J talk a lot about it, how I... when I have a conversation or a professional conversation with our guests how do I do it, what do we talk about, how do I approach the conversation and how can I go deeper and how can I make it be deep without sounding deep and then I just go and try it out</td>
<td>I just go and try it out</td>
<td>Mentorship</td>
<td>Vicarious Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPO - 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Then I said that we can sit together and I joined so I didn’t leave the person alone (in a professional counselling) but if it’s alright so all three of us can work it out together and that is to mean both me and the other volunteer</td>
<td>So all three of us can work it out together</td>
<td>Mentorship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPO - 1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>They help you or they kind of like no it’s like this way so they lead you to what it was but then you didn’t have knowledge of it so it’s good because you get from others way of learning or thinking</td>
<td>They lead you to what it was</td>
<td>Observational learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPO - 3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>I realised that I have to be careful about my environment, you know just observer it and if I learn something new I can say in the daily meeting and share it with other people</td>
<td>Just observe it and if I learn something new</td>
<td>Observational learning</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>I have some experience with my friends ... they are very good at English just by self-study so it stuck in my mind and I said that okay I can do it when somebody else can do it also so I push myself to do it</td>
<td>I can do it when somebody else can do it also</td>
<td>Social Comparison</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. References


