A cultural extension of familiness
- A case study on Spendrups Bryggeri AB

Bachelor Thesis in Business Administration

Authors: Anders Erikson
         Jonatan Ovall
         Arvid Scheller

Tutor: Anders Melander

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Abstract

The interest of family businesses and the research within the topic is gaining momentum. A relatively new concept “familiness” elaborates on how the owning family affects the firm. Previous studies within the field have put emphasis on the family and top management, leaving a void of research in other levels of the organisation.

The problem addressed in this thesis is how the unique characteristics of family firms can be captured and how to take advantage of them. This is examined through an elaboration of existing research and an investigation of familiness in three different hierarchical levels at Spendrups. By interpreting the quantitative tool F-PEC and apply a qualitative approach, where actual values are investigated, the extent of family influence at different hierarchical levels as well as limitations to existing theories are examined.

This thesis indicates that culture is a vital part of familiness that should be emphasised more. In order to capture familiness and to assimilate the family firm’s unique characteristics, culture alignment appears to be of importance. As an organisation grows, it becomes harder for the family’s core values to permeate the organisation, hence highlighting the aspects of culture alignment and unification of the organisation.

This thesis contributes to the research field of family firms and familiness. Based on Spendrups it also presents a concrete case of how familiness is perceived throughout the organisation.
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1 Introduction

This section provides an introduction of the thesis through a discussion related to the topics’ background and relevance. A definition of the problem, the research questions and the purpose, together with relevant definitions, provide the tools needed for further reading of this thesis.

1.1 Background

The research of family business has experienced an increased interest during the last decade (Zellweger, Eddleston, and Kellermanns, 2010), partly influenced by family businesses numerical dominance in the majority of the economies around the world (Irava and Moores, 2010; Frank, Lueger, Nose, & Suchy, 2010).

Denison, Leif and Ward (2004) argue that family firms have a possibility to obtain an advantage through creation of a positive culture compared to non-family firms. Research also emphasize that the culture in family firms is more entrepreneurial, which could compose an advantage (Zahra, Hayton and Salvato, 2004). To acquire this advantage, the sub-cultures within the organisation have to align and values, vision and goals must incorporate the whole organisation (Schein, 1988). Research therefore identifies a need for a different set of leadership skills focused on the act of alignment (Lee, 2011). Alignment incorporates a perspective of a firm as a set of core competences that must align (Porter, 1996). Research argues that this enhances a company’s performance and an important aspect of alignment is organizational culture (Harvard Business Essentials, 2005).

Emerged from the research of family business and in relation to organisational culture, Habbershon and Williams (1999) introduced a concept called familiness. The concept describes the bundle of resources and capabilities that interacts and relates to the owner family and their business (See 1.2 Definitions, p. 3). Research declares that familiness could create a competitive advantage through the idea that: “family identity is unique and therefore impossible to completely copy” (Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008, p. 416). Earlier studies examine the owning family and top managements relation to the organisation (Rutherford, Kuratko and Holt, 2008). They also concerns to what extent the aspect of being a family business contributes to success (Irava and Moores, 2010; Simron and Hitt, 2003) and Irava and Moores (2010) emphasize that further empirical research is desired within the field due to the concept’s early stage of development.

To be able to elaborate within this concept, the authors conducted a case study on Spendrups Bryggeri AB. Spendrups is one of the largest family owned businesses in Sweden, with an annual turnover of approximately 3 billion SEK (Spendrups Bryggeri AB, 2012). The owning family believes that Spendrups possess a strong corporate culture were the families values permeates the organisation (Ulf Spendrup, personal communication, 2013-02-25). This together with their exiting journey during the last four decades (Wigstrand, 2003) makes Spendrups an interesting case.
1.2 Problem discussion

There is limited research exploring the more specific influence of family involvement (Frank et al., 2010). Moreover, the markets rapidly changing characteristics reveals a need for companies to be flexible (Lee, 2011; Porter, 1996). Alignment “...among many activities is fundamental not only to competitive advantage but also to the sustainability of that advantage” (Porter, 1996, p. 73). With alignment as a vital element for firm success (Lee, 2011), and corporate culture as an important part of alignment (Schein, 1988; Harvard Business Essentials 2005) it is interesting to see how these elements are related to familiness.

Still, there are concerns of how to measure the extent of familiness and to what extent the concept can contribute to an advantage for the firm. Earlier research seems to fail giving the concept familiness a conceptual clarity, hence hindering its’ progress and development (Irava and Moores, 2010).

Habbershon, Williams and Macmillan (2003) state: “achieving strategic competitiveness is difficult in today’s turbulent and complex marketplace”. They also declare that these difficulties are aggravated when firms lack a clear understanding on what affects their performance. Owning families in family firms have an opportunity to differentiate and gain a competitive advantage through their unique characteristics. However, the firms must be able to find these characteristics in order to gain the possible advantage.

1.2.1 Problem statement

Unique characteristics of family firms exist, but capturing and take advantage of these appears problematic.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to examine familiness at different hierarchical levels in Spendrups and by using a qualitative approach, investigate possible improvements of existing theories.

1.4 Research questions

The following research questions have been formulated to successfully complete the purpose and will be used as the basis of this thesis:

- To what extent does the owning family influence the different hierarchical levels of Spendrups?
- Is there a need for supplementary theories when doing a qualitative examination of familiness?
1.5 Definitions

**Family business or family firm** – Numerous definitions of a family firm could be found but in this thesis the following definition of a family firm is used: “one in which a family has enough ownership to determine the composition of the board, where the CEO and at least one other executive is a family member, and where the intent is to pass the firm on to the next generation” (Miller & Le Breton-Miller, 2003, p. 127). This one is used due to its prominent position within the field and its simplicity to understand and capture.

**Non-family firms** – a non-family firm is any firm excluded from the definition of a family firm used in this thesis.

**Familiness** – “Familiness has been identified and defined as resources and capabilities that are unique to the family’s involvement and interactions in the business” (Pearson, Carr and Shaw, 2008, p. 949). Researchers use familiness to describe the strategic advantage that a family firm could hold because of the unique bundle of resources the owning and managing family could create (Zellweger, Eddleston, & Kellermanns, 2010; Habbershon & Williams, 1999). The authors of this thesis provide a further examination of the concept on page 14 in the frame of reference.

**Organizational culture** – The concept of organizational culture has evolved to something embedded in most managers’ vocabulary and mind (Flamholtz, 2001). Culture is a pattern of basic assumptions and beliefs, created or developed by a given group (Schein, 1990). Organisational culture is thereby referred to as group-norms, organizational climate and organizational social psychology (Schein, 1990).

**Alignment** – Alignment refers to practices and structures that are coherent and reinforce the targets and goals of the business (Harvard Business Essentials, 2005). Alignment requires that managers at different levels and within different parts of the organisational hierarchy share a collective understanding of the goals and objectives of the organisation (Porter, 1996).

**Culture alignment** – To create an appropriate culture within an organisation Denison (1990), argues that the organisation must find an effective balance between the cultural elements by coordinating relative trade-offs and align them with the organisations values and strategy.
2 Method and Methodology

The following section provides the reader with all necessary information in terms of how the research was carried out. Research approach, data collection process and the quality of the study will be explained in order to give the reader a thorough understanding of the process.

2.1 Methodology

One can separate methodology from method. Methodology is defined as a wider set of underlying principles, which later determine what methods that are to be used. Methods on the other hand are usually described as the practical way of gather and arrange data (Svenning, 2003).

Within methodology, the term epistemology is discussed concerning opinions about knowledge (Bakker, 2010). Epistemology literally means “the study of knowledge” and relates to the nature of knowledge by question what it is and how it can be acquired (Bakker, 2010; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). Epistemological considerations are essential for a sophisticated understanding of any research results since it can distinguish information as scientifically true or not (Bakker, 2010).

Epistemology consists of two main stances (1) positivism and (2) interpretivism (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). The ones believing in the positivistic philosophy argues that only scientific knowledge can provide you with valid information. A positivistic philosophy is able to present the results as facts and truths, generally by testing a hypothesis. This normally generates a view on the research as measurable and objective. However, there is no philosophy without deficiencies and an obvious counter argument to the positivist approach is that truth is not, and can never be, absolute. Moreover, positivistic research will never explain why things are as they are and even though controlled, the experiments are not immune to human contamination (Taylor, Wilkie and Baser, 2006).

The other end of the spectra is interpretivism, emphasizing interpretation and understanding as the right way of gathering information (McLaughlin, 2007). This stance argues that; “the world is interpreted by those engaged with it” (Taylor, Wilkie and Baser, 2006, p. 4). In contrast to a positivistic philosophy, interpretive research typically uses qualitative methods to understand individuals’ different perceptions of the world. The interpretive philosophy understands that no single objective reality exists and accepts several versions of the same event. An interpretive research develops the theory after the actual research has begun, differencing from positivism where theory develops after a predetermined hypothesis.

In this paper, an interpretive philosophy has been used as a basis for choosing an appropriate method. Capturing the essence of familiness requires an in-depth understanding of the organisation and the authors consider a purely positivistic approach to not com-
pletely capture the essence of family involvement. An interpretive philosophy includes the examination of unique social life features, such as emotions and values (McLaughlin, 2007) and therefore considered most appropriate.

2.1.1 Research approach

When conducting research there are two main options of how to acquire knowledge; (1) induction, where the researcher aims at looking for patterns derived from observations, or, (2) deduction, where evidence are used to test a theoretically based hypothesis (Richie and Lewis, 2003). In deductive research one starts by looking at existing theory to formulate a hypothesis and then use the empirical data for testing the truth or falsity of the hypothesis. Thereby this approach can solely test existing theories but not challenge or develop new ideas or perspectives. On the contrary, an inductive approach starts with an open mind from the researcher with as few preconceptions as possible and then theory emerge from the data collection (O’Reilly, 2009). Hence, evidence is used as a beginning of a conclusion in inductive research whereas deductive processes use evidence to support a conclusion (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003).

A third option to acquire knowledge is an abductive approach, which may be described as a combination of deductive and inductive research (Suddaby, 2006). When using this approach the researcher uses a constant comparative method and moves between induction and deduction. This gives the researchers a greater flexibility to design an adapted research approach to a unique event. Hence, explaining a case through theories that are later confirmed with new observations (Suddaby, 2006).

All three approaches have their benefits and shortcomings but most importantly the approach chosen must fit the research question (Svenning, 2003). This thesis starts of with the problem of how owning families in family firms influence and affect the organisation in different levels. Later, acknowledged limitations of how to capture family involvement and how to measure familiness where realized. An inductive method may be seen as simplistic and problematic where it has been associated with a naive form of realism and the idea that the world is waiting to be captured if just the researchers are persistent (O’Reilly, 2009). Due to this, the authors consider the inductive approach to not fully fit this research. Since no testing of a hypothesis will be used the deductive method does not fully fit either.

Both established theories and new observations with theory testing have been applied in the completion of this study. To answer how the family influence the organisation and how familiness is captured, an abductive approach is considered the most appropriate. Existing theories are used in the definition of family firms, the formulation of questions and in the identification of familiness. However, the authors move between induction and deduction where the empirical data form the criteria for theories within related topics.
2.1.2 Qualitative versus quantitative strategies

The most obvious difference between quantitative and qualitative strategies is the fact that quantitative research measures different phenomena and quantifies the data while qualitative does not. Quantitative research aims at testing theories therefore differing from qualitative studies that put more emphasis on words and a generalization of theories (Bryman, 2008).

From the interpretive philosophy and the abductive research approach, the authors chose a qualitative research strategy. This strategy was considered the most suitable since the research questions cover “why” and “how” rather than “who” and “how many”, which is more closely connected to quantitative studies (Yin 2009). Furthermore, quantitative strategies are set up by standardized sets of analysis tools, which may limit the type of information gathered (Svenning, 2003).

One can divide a qualitative study in three broad categories: descriptive, explanatory and exploratory, which could be combined to better fit the research questions or purpose. Explanatory research aims at identifying and describing the meaning of a certain phenomenon in a specific context. Exploratory research on the other hand aims at understanding why a certain phenomenon occurs and what factors influence it (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). Our research may be classified as both exploratory and explanatory since it describes the familiness in the specific context of alignment but also explore the concept familiness by investigate its impact on different hierarchical levels.

A major advantage with qualitative studies is its capability to examine subjects in depth and hence investigate the underlying reasons for attitudes, behaviours and motivations (Richie & Lewis 2003). Criticism though exists and must be taken into consideration. Bryman (2008) lists four common negative features; (1) qualitative research is too subjective, (2) difficulties to replicate a study, (3) problem with generalization and, (4) lack of transparency. Subjective since the researcher considers the subject interesting and meaningful, hence a qualitative study is dependent on the researcher and influenced by the researcher’s interest and background. Moreover, since no statistical data is gathered, a use of the study in other situations may be difficult and it could be problematic to generalize to a population (Bryman, 2008). Yin (2009) define this as analytical generalization where the generalization is not done to any specific population but to the theory studied, which might have a much wider usability than one single case studied. Hence, this does not compose a disadvantage for this study where an exploration of familiness and a use of it in a specific context take place and a generalization to the theory could occur.

2.2 Method

Regardless of what strategy you choose there are numerous potential methods when conducting research. As stated above, the interpretive philosophy corresponds to emotions and values rather then right or wrong. People have different opinions and ideas,
they perceive information in different ways and to find answer to the research questions it is a matter of why and how they understand certain things (McLaughlin, 2007). In this thesis the authors chose a qualitative strategy and conducted a case study.

2.2.1 Case study
Case studies are appropriate when the research questions aims at answering “how” and “why”, when the study do not require control of behavioural events and focuses on contemporary events (Yin, 2009). Since all these three conditions are fulfilled in this thesis a case study were interesting from the start. In a case study all relevant material is gathered about a specific case and there are different methods to be used. To mention a few, we have participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus groups (McLaughlin, 2007). A solid description about a given phenomenon or process can be provided through a mix of methods showing more subtle details and gives deeper understanding (Svenning, 2003). Three possible methods are described below including merits and limitations. This provides an explanation of what methods that have been used in this thesis and when describing the design of the study a motivation why they were chosen is presented.

2.2.2 Participant observation
Participant observation is often a very time consuming method were the researcher examine and observe the ones being in the scope of the research. The person acting as an observer can either do it in an anonymous matter, acting as a complete participant, or with the people being examined having the knowledge of it, called a “participant as an observer” (McLaughlin, 2007).

Even though this method might give a good insight and knowledge about the field of study it is important to acknowledge its implications. First of all it is the issue of time. To conduct a thorough analysis the researchers has to live and interact with the people for a long period of time. Secondly, it is the implication of how to analyze the data. Facts collected during this kind of study are referred to as soft facts; it is not a question of right or wrong, but rather the behaviour and opinions of the people finding them in a specific context. Furthermore, there is a personal pressure on the researcher in terms of building and uphold relationship with people they have almost no personal connections to. This might be especially hard in cases were the researcher act as a complete participant, not being able to reveal his/her intentions (McLaughlin, 2007).

2.2.3 Focus Groups
Focus groups are yet another method for conducting qualitative research where feelings and opinions are studied rather than behaviours (Yin, 2009). It consists of a group of people discussing a certain topic, led by a moderator. In contrast to participant observation, this method is more efficient when operating under certain time constraints. However, it can be hard to grasp a more generalized picture since a pure random selection is problematic (McLaughlin, 2007). The ideal situation would be to randomly collect peo-
ple under the assumption that everybody are willing to participate and contribute to the
discussion, but rarely this is the case. People willing to participate can be assumed to
have strong opinions and a will to express those, this is also necessary in order to gen-
erate a satisfying discussion. However, it might not give a clear idea of the general opin-
ion. McLaughlin (2007, p. 38) states that there are at least four significant advantages of
focus groups:

- They provide an opportunity to observe and collect a large amount of data and
  interaction over a short period of time.
- Discussions should provide rich data as participants present and defend their
  own views whilst challenging the views of others.
- This very process may help participants clarify their own views but also open
  them up to alternative views they would not have considered.
- Focus groups encourage theorization and elaboration.

2.2.4 Interviews

There are different opinions whether interviews are to be viewed as qualitative or qua-
titative (McLaughlin, 2007). According to McLaughlin (2007) it depends more on the
questions asked then on the research tool itself. To simplify it, one can argue that con-
ducting an interview by asking closed questions is quantitative and using open-end
questions it is qualitative. Interviews are one of the most common strategies to gather
qualitative data (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). Interviews can take shape in
many forms depending on the interests and purpose of the interviewer. DiCicco-Bloom
and Crabtree (2006) describe three main approaches of interviews: (1) structured, (2)
unstructured and, (3) semi-structured. The unstructured approach emphasises on the dia-
logue and allows the interviewee’s answers to guide the questions. The structured a-
proach is more organized and the interviewer guides the interviewee through predeter-
mined questions. The bundled approach, semi-structure interviews, also involves pre-
determined questions but the questions cultivate and reshape during the interview.

In-depth interviews require both mental and intellectual abilities of the interviewer.
Firstly, the researcher needs to actively listen to the participant’s answer. Second the
interviewer needs to quickly find the relevant points and simultaneously make judg-
ements about further questions. Third, it is often necessary to memorize what has been
said to look for further elaboration or additional clarification of interesting points
(Legend, Keegan, & Ward, 2003). Also the interviewer should not influence the re-
spondent and avoid argumentation (Svenning, 2003).

2.3 Design of the study

In the initiation of this research, contact was established with Spendrups AB and more
precisely with Ulf Spendrup, deputy CEO and board member. The abductive approach
formed the frame of reference throughout the process where theories were introduced
along the way. Early on in the theoretical data collection limitations were found in the
examination of familiness in different hierarchical levels. It appeared obvious to inves-
igate related topics and the empirical data collection strengthened this view.

The empirical data collection for this study consisted of two stages. Along with the project initiation focus was brought to the collection of secondary data where information about Spendrups was found through their own webpage and books written about Spendrups. The primary data have been gathered through interviews and focus groups on several organisational levels to identify the values, beliefs and opinions within the Spendrups’ organization. The first step in the primary data collection process consists of in-depth interviews among four people in the top management team; two family members and two non-family members (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25-mar</td>
<td>Fredrik Spendrup</td>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>1h 14min</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-mar</td>
<td>Ulf Spendrup</td>
<td>Deputy CEO</td>
<td>57 min</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
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<td>25-mar</td>
<td>Einar Bottén</td>
<td>HR Director</td>
<td>1h 3min</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-mar</td>
<td>Anette Stjernkvist</td>
<td>Sales Director</td>
<td>44 min</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-apr</td>
<td>Magnus Hedenborg</td>
<td>Production manager</td>
<td>42 min</td>
<td>NO</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-apr</td>
<td>Focusgroup</td>
<td>Operating core</td>
<td>1h 14min</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-apr</td>
<td>Jörgen Forsberg</td>
<td>Production manager</td>
<td>1h 23 min</td>
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<td>11-apr</td>
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<td>11-apr</td>
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<td>Operating core</td>
<td>1h 40 min</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Scheme of interviews and focus groups

At this first stage, interviews were chosen over focus groups and participant observations for two main reasons. First of all, there are not enough family members in the top management level to conduct a focus group. Secondly, and prominently, when identifying the family values and how the family believe they affect the organisation and what values they want to convey, those questions is not a matter for discussion at the initial stage. Participant observation on the other hand is considered to be overly time consuming and not capture the essence of the family involvement since they may not be directly observable. The authors want to have a clear picture of what those beliefs and ideas are among the key family members. Interviews were conducted starting with two family members Fredrik Spendrup (CEO) and Ulf Spendrup (Deputy CEO). Then interviews were carried out with two non-family members in the top management team; Einar Bottén (HR Director) and Anette Stjernkvist (Sales Director). The interview scheme was made up after the initial meeting with Ulf Spendrup where discussions concluded that it would be a good idea to begin with the family members in the very top of the organisation, since it is their fundamental values this case it built upon.

In the second phase, two interviews with middle managers were conducted (see Table 1). Those interviews were made to see how family values are perceived on a middle management level, as they are not in direct contact with the owning family. All interviews were carried out in a semi-structure manner since the questions asked could not be answered by “yes” or “no”. Due to the need of answers on how and why, the authors considered semi-structured interviews to be most suitable. The middle managers inter-
viewed were the production managers of Spendrups breweries in Grängesberg and Hellefors. With the breweries located far away from the HQ these middle managers were chosen to see how family involvement differs when they are not in contact with the family on a daily basis. Further on, there are interesting differences between Grängesberg and Hellefors. Grängesberg is their biggest brewery and where the history of Spendrups started. Hellefors brewery on the other hand was acquired in 2008 and to examine the effect of family involvement between these two breweries thereby appeared interesting.

The third phase consisted of three smaller focus groups at the production level of the organisation. The first one was conducted at Hellefors brewery, the second and third one in Grängesberg (see Table 1). The number of participants and who to participate was decided in collaboration with the production managers at each brewery. Due to illness, problems were encountered with the number of participants and in Grängesberg the employees had to be divided into two groups. Each group in Grängesberg consisted of three participants and the group in Hellefors consisted of four. The participants were employees working in the production, or someone responsible for a number of people in the brewery. The participants experience varied, with some working at Spendrups for as long as 41 years and some started only a year ago. The first reason for choosing focus groups over in-depth interviews or participant observation was the fact that focus groups are more time efficient. Secondly it gave a better picture of how the family values are perceived. Through extensive discussions people were able to assist each other when elaborating around certain topics and it was easier to identify a more general perception in contrast to single interviews. Even though there are certain risks accompanied, the authors considered this method to be of more use when investigating employee perception.

All the interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed in order for the researchers to easier comprehend the material and to ensure that essential parts was not missed out. All answers of the statements were assembled and compared, firstly in a table (see Table 2, p. 24) and then a calculated average of the answers in different hierarchical levels was presented in a spider graph (see Figure 4, p. 40). Through a review of the transcriptions, the core values of the Spendrups family and the organisation was identified. Main themes of Spendrups’ culture were then recognized and compared with existing theories, in an attempt to identify possible improvements.

2.4 Quality of the study

Much research exists regarding how to measure the quality of a study. Reliability and validity are terms widely used in quantitative research but discussions have occurred of how relevant this is for qualitative research (Bryman, 2008). However, Shenton (2004) addresses the quality of a qualitative study by using the term trustworthiness. By discussing four factors, he presents a view of how to measure the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. The four factors: (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability and (4) conformability, construct an alternative method to measure trustworthiness,
similar to the ones used in quantitative research.

**Credibility** examines whether the study follow its plan and if the topic that is up for scrutiny really is tested (Shenton, 2004). Numerous methods can be used in order to ensure this parts contribution to the overall trustworthiness of the study and in this thesis several approaches is used. Firstly, the line of questioning that have been conducted in a systematic manner and where the questions have been based on well recognised previous research. Triangulation is yet another approach including multiple methods to describe the same research question (Shenton, 2004), in this study both focus groups and interviews where used in order to shed credibility to the result. Additionally, the people participating where derived from all parts of the organisation, which enhance the credibility of the study. A random sample of participants would also increase the credibility. This was not possible in this study, creating a risk of receiving biased answers from the participants. However, the authors believe that this does not have a significant impact since any opinion expressed are for the benefit of the organisation and the people participating are therefore believed to express their sincere opinion. Furthermore, everyone in the focus groups are anonymous and their answers cannot be traced to a single individual, increasing the probability of receiving objective answers.

**Transferability** is widely discussed in both quantitative and qualitative research and there seems to be no unified opinion whether it is possible or not (Shenton, 2004). As argued by Erlandson (1993) it is impossible to generalise a study since they are influenced by their specific context. However, other arguments are made about the possibility to generalise since all contexts are part of a larger population and therefore at least some fractions of the study might be applicable for the greater mass (Denscombe, 1988). Yin (2009) argue that single case studies normally cannot be generalized to a population and due to this, only generalization of theories are made in this study.

**Dependability** – In quantitative studies reliability is achieved if the study can be carried out in the same manner and in the same context as before, giving more or less the same result. For qualitative studies this matter is bit more complex. As dependability is closely coupled to credibility it addresses the importance of a detailed explanation of the working process in order to give the readers a thorough understanding of the work and why it was carried out. Enabling future researchers to follow previous practices (Shenton, 2004). Through a detailed explanation of the process and the theoretical framework the authors aims to empower the dependability of the study.

**Conformability** addresses issues connected to the accuracy of the report. The researchers must make sure that it is the belief of the interviewees and the opinions of those in scope of the research that is presented and not the one of the researchers (Shenton, 2004). To empower the conformability, the researchers here again emphasise the use of more than one single method. Also the use of critical reasoning towards different theories of how to measure familiness empowers conformability, where argumentations are made of why a certain method is used.
3 Frame of reference

The following part constitutes the foundation of this study. A presentation of previous research of familiness and related subjects forms a base for further analyses. The wide range of information from relevant authors and journals will, through discussions, show different perspectives and present a general overlook of family firms, familiness and related topics. At first, there is an examination of the theoretical definitions, as well as a background in order for the reader to understand motives behind the chosen topics used in this study. Secondly, the authors introduce and describe specific complementing theories and motivates why and how they are used.

3.1 Family firms

“A family business refers to a company where the voting majority is in the hands of the controlling family; including the founder(s) who intend to pass the business on to their descendants” (International Finance Corporation, 2008, p. 12). However, there is not one exclusive definition to what constitutes a family firm. For example, Colli, Fernandez-Perez and Rose (2003, p. 30) refers to a family firm as: “a family member is chief executive, there are at least two generations of family control, (and) a minimum of 5 percent of voting stock is held by the family or trust interest associated with it”. Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2003, p. 127) on the other hand defines it as “one in which a family has enough ownership to determine the composition of the board, where the CEO and at least one other executive is a family member, and where the intent is to pass the firm on to the next generation”. Clearly, one can see that different perceptions of family firms exist and the spectra of definitions reaches further than above statements. However, this thesis will make use of the widely used definition of Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2003) due to its simplicity, clarity and position in the field. The emergence of the various definitions can be a result of cultural differences and that it is impossible to find a generic explanation to what a family firm is (Carney, 2005). Although, the above-mentioned definitions contains three fundamental attributes pertaining to: (1) ownership and control, (2) family involvement in management, and (3) the expectation, or realization, of family succession (Carney, 2005).

3.2 Familiness

The struggle to recognize and clarify the unique characteristics and qualities of family businesses has been present since the origin of family business research (Habbershon and Williams, 1999; Frank et al., 2010). Although, during the nineties firms’ internal attributes as a source of advantage received greater attention (Habbershon and Williams, 1999). Many years of research have emphasized the positive aspects of being a family firm in contrast to a non-family firm but how family involvement was related to this remained in the dark for a long time (Habbershon and Williams, 1999; Frank et al., 2010).
As stated, it has for many years been obvious that family firms have unique characteristics but there is still little known about how to assess their uniqueness and link it to advantages for the firm. Therefore, studies about family involvement in family firms continuously received response in the “So What?” category, where the unique characteristics where acknowledged but not understood (Habbershon and Williams, 1999). In 1999, Habbershon and Williams (1999) put the term “resource based view” (RBV) in relation to family involvement and a deeper understanding of family involvement took form through a new concept called “familiness”. The term familiness is used to describe the strategic advantage that the family firm could hold because of the unique bundle of resources an owning and managing family could have (Zellweger, Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2010; Habbershon, Williams and MacMillan, 2003; Pearson, Carr and Shaw, 2008).

The motivation for a new concept was that no existing conclusive model successfully explained and analyzed family firm performance. Habbershon and Williams (1999) introduced the concept of familiness with a belief that it could bring the unique qualities of a family firm to light. They tried to answer the question “ How are family businesses different from other types of businesses (e.g. Non-family businesses)?” and familiness has now become a key concept in the understanding of family business research (Frank et al., 2010).

The term Resource Based View (RBV) of the firm emphasize the heterogeneousness of a firm and that an opportunity for competitive advantage lay in its’ idiosyncratic, immobile, inimitable and sometimes intangible bundle of resources (Barney, 1991). Habbershon and Williams said that due to the examination of the links between a firm’s internal characteristics and performance, RBV “provides the opportunity to more fully delineate the competitive capabilities of family companies” (1999, p. 9). They held that earlier generic approaches failed in specifying categorizations and were imprecise in their definitions. In contrast they believed that the RBV could indentify certain family firm resources and match them to the firm’s capabilities.

Nevertheless, different opinions exist on what theory that is most suitable as the foundation of familiness. Some attempts have been done where the social capital theory has been used as the base. Social capital may be defined as “…the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit” (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 243). Pearson, Carr and Shaw (2008) as well as Lester and Cannella (2006) used the social capital theory as a base when discussing familiness. Lester and Cannella (2006) were the ones first discussing how different dimensions and variables could be used in the description and explanation of familiness. They focus on community-level social capital, thus differing from Pearson, Carr and Shaw (2006) who use the social capital theory in order to distinguish limitations with the RBV when related with familiness. The limitations with RBV as the theoretical base of familiness, recognized by Pearson, Carr and Shaw (2008), highlight the necessity of supplementary theory for the further development and conceptualization of the concept. They believed that a different ap-
proach as foundation would complement earlier research concerning familiness and help bringing it forward.

With the limitations acknowledged, RBV is still the most frequently used theory as the foundation of familiness (Frank et al., 2010). Since RBV is the most recognized foundation and used in the majority of the studies about familiness this is the one used in this study.

### 3.3 Measurement of familiness

The most recognized instrument introduced regarding the measurements of family influence is the F-PEC scale (Figure 1), introduced by Astrachan, Klein and Smyrnios (2002). This scale looks at the dimensions (1) power, (2) experience, and (3) culture, which combined can lead to valuable resources for the firm, such as knowledge and skills. Therefore, the scale is not bound to any definition of family firm, but provides an overall measure of the extent of family involvement (Astrachan et al., 2002; Klein et al., 2005).

The first dimension, “power”, examines what influence the owning family has on governance and management of the firm, whereas “Experience” measures information assembled over generations, such as knowledge, judgement and intuition. Finally, “culture”, measures the overlapping values between the family the organisation as well as family commitment.

![The F-PEC Scale](image)

**Figure 1.** The F-PEC Scale (Astrachan, Klein, & Smyrnios, 2002, p. 52)
When introduced, the F-PEC scale was a first step towards a multidimensional approach to measure family influence and the validity and reliability receives support by empirical studies (Klein et al., 2005). Astrachan et al. (2002) looked at how family involvement influence the business and proposed that this relation determines the family firm character. Klein et al. (2005) continued by stating that the F-PEC scale provides an opportunity to examine firms along a spectrum with intensive family involvement on one side and no family involvement at the other.

Evidence shows that the F-PEC scale successfully could measure the familiness or lack of familiness in any firm, not solely family firms (Rutherford, Kuratko and Holt, 2008; Klein et al., 2005). However, criticism suggests that there is a need for a theoretically solid development of the measurement familiness to adequately capture the essence of the firm (Rutherford, Kuratko and Holt, 2008; Holt, Rutherford and Kuratko, 2010). Due to this, the data collection builds upon different theoretical approaches to capture familiness in a more adequate way.

When introducing the F-PEC scale, Astrachan et al. (2002) developed a questionnaire for measuring familiness (Appendix 1). The questionnaire consists of three different subscales with questions regarding involvement and experience under the two first ones. The third one, culture, on the other hand uses statements where the participant should rate to what extent he or she agrees with the statement on a scale from 1 to 5. This questionnaire forms the groundwork for the questions in this research. The statements are included for an easier comparison and identification of familiness at the different hierarchical levels. However, since the F-PEC scale was created for a quantitative study a need for supplementary questions after each statement is needed for a deeper discussion and understanding of the family involvement. These supplementary questions as well as additional questions based on theories brought up next are needed for the qualitative approach and will support the identification of familiness.

3.4 What forms familiness

For the identification of familiness it is important to understand what forms familiness. Irava and Moores (2010) used the RBV as the foundation for familiness aiming at answering the question “What forms familiness?”. By using already existing resource categories, they identified different dimensions of the unique family firm resources. They presented evidence that familiness comprises of six different dimensions, (1) reputation, (2) experience, (3) decision-making, (4) learning, (5) relationships, and (6) networks, divided within three already existing resource categories (Human-, organisational- and process resources). The two first dimensions are included in human resources, number three and four are organisational and the last two are process resources. All these dimensions are strongly family influenced and provide a theoretical base for measuring the impact of familiness. It is highlighted that due to their complexity, these six familiness resources does not per se compose a performance advantage for the firm but could also impose a disadvantage. Irava and Moores (2010) differ from previous research since they focus on the management of the resources instead of the actual re-
sources. They conclude that the familiness of the resources is not predetermined, but depends on the capability to manage their complexity over time.

These dimensions are important since it enables a measurement of the impact of familiness in the data collection process. Through these resource categories and with the data collection executed at different hierarchical levels, a broad view of the different dimensions is given. Hence, a more accurate measurement of familiness is possible. This theory forms a supporting tool for the formulation of question and supports the identification of familiness.

3.5 Who forms familiness

It is also of great importance to examine the owning family and what makes them different when managing an organisation. Building on Habbershon and Williams (1999) work, Zellweger, Eddleston and Kellermanns (2010) tried to answer the question “How does the family contribute to firm success?” by investigating the “Who”; which families that are most likely to build familiness. They developed a model that gives researchers an opportunity to identify seven different types of family firms and owning families (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Dimensions of familiness (Zellweger, Eddleston, & Kellermanns, 2010, p. 59).](image)

This model describes familiness by distinguish three different dimensions illustrated as overlapping circles in a three-circle model. The first dimension, “the components approach” aims of capturing the presence of the family in the firm concentrating on family ownership, management and control. The second dimension, “the essence approach”, captures the behaviour of the family member in the firm and the final dimension, “organizational identity”, should define how the organisation operates as a whole reflecting on how the family defines the firm (Zellweger, Eddleston and Kellermanns, 2010).

While the first dimension measuring hard facts such as ownership, management and who is in control, the second dimension focuses more on behaviours of the family,
which might be harder to measure. Zellweger, Eddleston and Kellermanns (2010) built much of the second approach on the work by Chrisman, Chua and Sharma (2005) where a family is believed to contribute to behaviours and synergistic resources and capabilities to the business. Chrisman, Chua and Sharma (2005) state that the involvement is necessary but family involvement itself will not automatically shape the organisation. It is the intention, vision, familiness and/or behaviour of the family that actually compose a difference, referred to as the essence approach. The third approach acts as a complementary extension of the two first dimensions by distinguishing if the family is an essential part of the organisation not only symbolic or supportive.

Further, Zellweger, Eddleston and Kellermanns (2010) state that family firm identity does not only have internally generated benefits but also have externally effects and influences on for example customers’ perception. A firm’s ability to create familiness does differ; depending on in what sector of the model it is located. Those families who are able to combine the three different components (Sector 7 in Figure 1) are those most likely to create familiness.

Throughout the data-collection process the presence and behaviours of the owning family is examined at all organisational levels. Moreover, this developed model will through the dimension “organisational identity”, be of use when investigating how familiness could support the act of alignment. Looking at how the organisation operates as a whole is important and supports the purpose of this thesis.

3.6 Additional concepts

3.6.1 Alignment

One of the oldest ideas in strategy is the value of fit or alignment between different functions of the company. Alignment is more important than most people realize as a component of competitive advantage, where the company is not viewed as a whole, but rather as a set of core competences that must align (Porter, 1996). Alignment might be perceived differently but is referred to as practices and structures that are coherent and reinforce the targets and goals of the business (Harvard Business Essentials 2005). Kathuria, Joshi and Porth (2007) discuss the researchers emphasis on the importance of fitting or aligning the strategy of an organisation with internal and external factors. The importance of implementation is also debated where key systems, processes and decisions within the firm must be aligned for the implementation to be successful.

Further on, Porter (1996) believes that alignment requires that managers at different levels and within different parts of the organisational hierarchy share a collective understanding of the goals and objectives of the organisation. Due to a well-referred and prominent position, Porter’s (1996) theory regarding alignment will constitute the definition of alignment in this thesis.
3.6.2 Organisational culture

Organisational culture is an important aspect of the concepts familiness and constitutes an essential part of the F-PEC model (Astrachan et al., 2002; Klein et al., 2005). Hence, the authors consider organisational culture as important for this study.

The concept of organizational culture has been referred to group-norms, organizational climate and organizational social psychology by researchers for a long time (Schein, 1990). Today the concept of organizational culture has evolved to something that is embedded in most managers’ vocabulary and mind (Flamholtz, 2001). According to researchers, culture is formed within an organisation through a given set of people with a common history and continuity (Schein, 1990; Green 1988). Schein (1990) further on states that the culture of an organization is what the employees learn over time and how they come to interact with external and internal issues. Culture is often referred to as a pattern of basic assumptions and beliefs, created or developed by a given group. The assumptions and beliefs that have worked well enough to be considered as valid are therefore passed on to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to the organization (Schein, 1990; 1996).

Several researchers agree that organizational culture has a strong influence over the performance and long-term achievement of a company. However, to what extent it is possible to shape and manage an organizational culture is not completely defined (Meek, 1988; Green, 1988; Schein, 1984; Zahra, Hayton and Salvato, 2004).

In relation to familiness and family firms, there are studies that indicate that the culture in family firms is different from non-family firms and that they have a more positive culture (Denison, Lief, and Ward, 2004; Zahra, Hayton, Salvato, 2004). According to Denison, Lief and Ward (2004), the characteristics of family firms contribute to success through their culture. Their research indicated that a part of family firms cultural advantage lies in their shared history and identity where the founder’s core values exist as a foundation over time. Furthermore, the history of the family firms enhances loyalty and sympathy (Denison, Lief, and Ward, 2004).

3.6.3 Cultural alignment

Organisations need to align its culture to external and internal factors, but also to short- and long-term factors. Denison (1990), argues that an organisation has to coordinate relative trade-offs to find an effective balance between the cultural elements in order to create an appropriate culture. This must then be aligned with the company’s values and strategy and could be referred to as cultural alignment. One factor discussed by Denison (1990) is “adaptability” which addresses the organizations ability to acclimatize to external change, the customers demand and customer learning. Another factor is the perspective of “mission” that refers to long-term aspects such as vision, goals, objectives and strategic direction. To have a successful mission, the organization should have a clear sense of purpose and direction. Thirdly, a “consistency” factor consider goal achievements, problem resolution and internal meaning, as well as measure them in core
values, agreement, coordination and integration. Lastly, the factor of “involvement” addresses the empowerment and teamwork needed to handle unsettled challenges in order to create a strong culture.

Moreover, Schein (1990) emphasise that an organisation must unify its culture toward common values, norms and beliefs. An organisation may not only posses one specific culture, but also, sub-cultures related to occupational roles, location or hierarchy levels. Schein (1996), approaches culture and the subcultures within an organization and stresses the importance of alignment between executives, engineers and operators in relation to the groups’ individual culture. Culture alignment unifies the organization down to the “bottom line” and has a positive impact on the overall performance of the organisation (Flamholtz, 2001, and Schein, 1996). According to Green (1988), organizational culture must align with the strategy in order to reach long-term success. If these two components oppose each other, the culture will break the strategy.

Poor unification between occupational groups contributes to misalignment of organisational culture. Bezrukova, Jehn, Thatcher and Spell (2012) argue that poor cultural alignment between groups and hierarchical levels, affects performance negatively. Therefore, it is an important managerial practice to increase the extent of how to see and manage culture in order to create alignment within the organisational culture and between the subcultures throughout the whole organization (Flamholtz, 2001). Managers have a big challenge of shaping the culture into balance with the other parts of the organization and the external environment. By being aware of how to communicate the strategy through symbolism and procedures, managers can develop a better strategic management, thereby contributing to long-term success (Green, 1988). Furthermore, Egner (2009), and Harvard Business Essentials (2005), argues that organisational culture itself is an essential part of alignment.
4  Findings

The following section presents the primary and secondary data collected during this research. First presented is a description of Spendrups and their history. Later the primary data from the interviews and focus groups is given. The scale of the statements from the F-PEC framework works as the starting point for discussion, where additional and supplementary questions are further examined.

4.1  Spendrups Bryggeri AB

The history of Spendrups began year 1735 in Copenhagen, where Mads Pedersen Spendrup together with his son Peter Mathias Spendrup became distillers and made a schnapps called “Spendrups Akvavit” popular in Copenhagen. Distiller was the family occupation for generations and continued being so for centuries (Hellström, 1996).

In the mid 19th century the Spendrup family moved to Sweden and in 1923, Luis Herbert Spendrup bought a small brewery in Grängesberg, becoming the first master brewer of beer in the Spendrup family. This was the first sign of Spendrups as we see it today but the great expansion did not occur until Luis Herbert’s son, Jens Fredrik, took over the brewery in the 1950’s. The brewery expanded massively until the early 1970’s, partly through the acquisition of Mariestads Bryggeri in 1967. Due to some changes in the legislation of alcoholic beverages in the early 1970’s bigger breweries started to expand and small, local breweries, such as Grängesberg, experienced problems in keeping up with their bigger counterparts (Hellström, 1996). During the 1970’s, sales continued going down for Grängesberg Brewery and in 1976, Jens Fredrik died in cancer only 59 years old (personal communication Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25). His sons, Jens and Ulf, now took over a company fighting for its survival and with Jens as CEO and Ulf as Deputy CEO and marketing manager they saved the company within only a few years (personal communication, Ulf Spendrups, 2012-03-04).

With successes such as Löwenbräu and Spendrups Premium II the production in Grängesberg increased with over 100 % between 1978-79 and Grängesberg brewery became Sweden’s third largest brewery and the only big privately owned brewery. Following the successes they decided to take advantage of their history and family name and in 1983 changed the name to Spendrups Bryggeri AB (Hellström, 1996).

In conjunction with this, Spendrups conducted their IPO on the Stockholm stock exchange, with the aim to expand more rapidly and to increase their market share. At first, the listing became a great success but in the beginning of the financial crises of the 1990th, the Spendrup brothers experienced trouble with finding venture capital. Following the economic upturn in the late 1990th early 2000th all attention was given to the IT-era and Spendrups still struggled to find investors (Öqvist, 2011). The decision to leave the stock exchange was made in 2001 and the brothers bought back the outstanding shares for 300 million SEK. This turned out to be a rewarding investment and the fol-
Following year Spendrups made a profit of almost one third of the initial payment (Pineus, 2003).

Until a few years ago it have been the brothers Jens and Ulf Spendrup who was in charge of the company with Jens as CEO and Ulf as Deputy CEO. Jens’ son took over the role as CEO in 2011 and Jens became chairman of the board of Spendrups. Today Spendrups is the largest brewery in Sweden in terms of volume, producing everything from own brands to EMV products (products manufactured by Spendrups but sold under another brand). Well-recognized brands such as Mariestad’s, Loka and Norrlands Guld are now part of the Spendrups product portfolio, which today consists of not solely beer but also soft drinks, cider and wine (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup 2013-03-04). Their main market has been, and is Sweden. However, steps have been taken to establish a solid customer base outside of Sweden. In accordance with their excessive growth, Spendrups have been investing approximately 1.4 billion SEK in their brewery in Grängesberg by streamlining their production and increasing the storage capacity. As a result, the brewery in Vårby will close during 2013 and the only remaining breweries will be the ones in Hellefors and Grängesberg. A decision was made to focus on the brewery in Grängesberg where the company has its origin. However, Hellefors brewery will remain for the purpose of their water and soft drink products (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

There are few closed doors at Spendrups and more or less everyone have access to the owning family on a daily basis. The company strives to create a friendly atmosphere were everyone’s work is appreciated and good performance is highlighted (Wigstrand, 2003). There are no strict rules; clear guidelines and own initiatives are embraced and also necessary for an individual to fit in the organisation (Wigstrand, 2003). As Jens states "My philosophy is to lead through values. I do not want to be a boss that gives orders and directives in concrete issues" (Wigstrand, 2003, p. 137). It is a humanistic company and the employees are valued, which is showed by the open office space at the head quarters and also emphasised by two trips to the beer festival in Munich for the company’s employees. When arriving at Spendrups’ headquarters, there is no doubt about their field of business. Products are presented clearly around the facility and a big bar is disclosed in the entrance, instantly creating an awareness of the brands and products.

Presented below is an organisational chart over the top divisions over Spendrups Bryggeri AB. The interviews have been made with the CEO, Deputy CEO, HR-director, Sales director as well as the production managers in Grängesberg and Hellefors. The focus groups were conducted in Grängesberg and Hellefors respectively.
4.2 Interviews and focus groups

The collection of empirical data was gathered through personal interviews and focus groups. In the following section, the findings are presented in order to establish a fundamental groundwork to the analysis. Separations will be made between family members, top management, middle management and the operating core in order for the reader to easier comprehend the results. Initially, the F-PEC scale is presented, including hard facts about the family’s power and experience as well as the answers on the ranking statements.

4.2.1 Power

With the intent to always pass the firm on to the next generation, one problem for many family firms is the actual shift from one generation to another (Astrachan et al., 2002). To manage the shifts in Spendrups in an easier way, the family has decided to assign the ownership of the company to a foundation instead of owning it themselves. An external board, chosen by the family, manage the foundation that has the complete ownership and responsibility for choosing the board of Spendrups (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

However, the foundation must follow statues, formulated by the family. E.g. the foundation needs to consult the family when a new board member is to be appointed. Conse-
quently, even though the complete ownership of Spendrups actually lies outside the family, they nevertheless have full control over the company.

Another part of power in the firm is the family’s presence at high positions of the firm (Astrachan et al., 2002). In Spendrups, 7 out of 15 board members are family members and the top management include one family member; the CEO, Fredrik Spendrup. The Deputy CEO, Ulf Spendrup, does not consider himself as part of the top management since he is no longer operative within the daily operations.

4.2.2 Experience

As stated, Spendrups is in this thesis defined as family owned through the full control of the foundation. Due to the fact that the foundation must consult the family in major decisions and the statues to follow are decided by the family, Spendrups is considered as owned by the third and fourth generation Spendrup. The third generation consists of Jens and Ulf Spendrup whereas the fourth generation consists of their children including Fredrik, Anna, Johan, Axel and Sebastian. The same generations are also active on the board (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

Managing the company is also the third and fourth generation through Fredrik Spendrup as the CEO (fourth generation) and Ulf Spendrup as Deputy CEO (third generation). The number of family members active in the organisation is seven with positions as e.g. CEO, Deputy CEO, chairman, CEO of subsidiary and event manager. There are also four adult family members that are not active within the organisation (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

Worth to mention is that the whole family have what they call a family council meeting every year where the whole family, including young children, gather to discuss the family firm. This is more of an informal meeting but the direction and future of the organisation is discussed. The opportunity to pass on the interest and to incorporate the family’s values in the firm makes this meeting an important yearly event (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25; personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

4.2.3 Statements

*The presented ranking questions are based on the F-PEC scale (Astrachan et al., 2002) and modified to fit respondents outside the owning family in various hierarchical levels as well to the family. The table illustrates to what extent the respondents concur or not concur to a specific statement.*

1. The family has influence on the business
2. The whole organisation share similar values
3. The family members feel loyalty to the business
4. The employees feel loyalty to the business
5. The employees agree with the family business goals, plans and policies
6. The family members really care about the fate of the family business
7. The family members are willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help the family business be successful

8. The family members agree with the family business goals plans and policies

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Table 2. Ranking statements

4.2.4 The family’s perspective

The interviews with the family were performed with Ulf and Fredrik Spendrup. Ulf Spendrup is a strong character of the Spendrups family and constitutes a big part of the company and its history. As mentioned earlier, Ulf and his brother Jens lead the company to its present success and Ulf has been active in the company much of his whole life. He is now the Deputy CEO and a member of the board of Spendrups. Although Ulf is still active, he is regarded as a part of the older generation and he is forwarding much of the daily operation to the younger generation. A large part of the corporate culture in Spendrups has been formed by Ulf’s values and actions. Fredrik who are Jens’ son and Ulf’s nephew belongs to the younger generation and has been the CEO for the last two years. Fredrik has been active within the organisation for many years but has now taken the utmost responsibility to maintain and develop the company’s success.

When asking what a family firm is, Ulf defines a family firm as a company where the owning family is active in the board or in the daily operations. Moreover, he highlight that it has to be more than one family member active in the organisation. There are many organisations where the family are just owners but not active in the organisation, and according to Ulf, those does not qualify as a family firms (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25). Fredrik share the same definition and underline that most families sell their business after the first or second generational shift, but the Spendrups family retained the control even after the fourth shift. He also outlines some advantages with being a family firm; “A positive aspect of family firms is the clarity of the culture bearers, it is easy to identify the owner” (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

The owning family’s values have formed the organization in concerns to the strategy, products and how the organization as a whole should be managed and do business (per-
Moreover, the decentralized organization where managers have a lot of responsibility can be seen as a product of the Spendrups family values (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25). Ulf and Fredrik also believe that the various family members values are homogenous and that they share a common foundation. Even though their values are not printed or directly communicated, Ulf believes that the common foundation is based on transparency, honesty, uprightness, hard work and commitment (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25). Fredrik underline that every family member represent transparency and honesty, but where some are more principled and others more pragmatic. E.g. in relation to Systembolaget; the members of the older generation have a very critical view towards government interference compared to the younger generation whom are more open minded toward government regulations (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

Ulf further on highlights that it is difficult to know whether Spendrups organisation and the family has the same values. However, he believes that the family values has permeated the organisation and affect the employees to think accordingly to their values. He also believes that the market orientation, brand management, product development and consumer insight are indicators that their values are aligned. Moreover, in order to be the best actor in the market, every corporate division needs to strive for continuous improvement and apply such mind-set, which is the case in Spendrups (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

Ulf emphasize the importance of goals and visions in the organization; “if the employees believe that every goal is achieved, they will relax and the company will be in a very dangerous position” (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25). Fredrik is also uncertain to what extent it is possible to know if the organisation shares his values. He believes that the recruitment of executives and managers are an important aspect in order to transfer the family’s values within the organisation. Fredrik has instated a leadership-forum where issues and questions are discussed between managers, which in turn contribute to the spread of the family’s values throughout the organisation (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

In relation to loyalty, Ulf perceive every family member as very committed and loyal toward the firm. He can see the commitment through their everyday work and how they are following the family’s code of conduct. “During the family meetings, the commitment to the company has been evident and the family cherish the company and its future to a very high degree” (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25). Fredrik believes that having experienced both the struggles and the good times of Spendrups existence, a strong emotional connection has evolved that enhance loyalty and commitment (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25). The family is prepared to put more effort and hours of work into the company if necessary, than what is seen as normal. “Being a leader of a family business is not a normal day-job where you work nine to five” (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25).
In regard to the loyalty of the employees, Ulf believes that being a family firm strongly contribute to the commitment. The fact that the family is active in the daily operations and interact with other employees facilitates the ability for the employees to identify and relate with their employer. Ulf also believes that it is important to lead by example “if you want your employees to work hard, you need to work hard yourself” (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25). Some employees feel loyalty and some do not, there are employees that stay for a very long time and are as loyal as the family members (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25). “It is important to find those people who share the same foundation of values as Spendrups, in order to create loyalty” (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

Ulf believes that there is a strong correlation between the company’s vision, the employees’ vision, and where the Spendrups organisation wish to be in a few years. However, Ulf believes that the unified perception of goals and values gradually decrease further down in the organisation. One of the challenges is to maintain employee commitment as the company grows (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25). In relation to other companies, Fredrik believes that Spendrups has a strong commitment and loyalty due to their organisation’s characteristics (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

In relation to what extent the family understand the company’s goals, visions and policies, Ulf believes that every family member grasp the overall picture. However, Ulf does not believe that every family member can identify and formulate each specific goal since they are relatively vague. The goal of long-term commitment and long-term survival is something that permeates every family member. The fact that the family transferred the ownership of the company to a foundation is a good indicator of long-term thinking and commitment (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25). “We value the fact that the company remains in the family over generations” (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

Furthermore, Ulf believes that the employees of Spendrups are aware of the company’s goals, visions and policies even though they are vague. Ulf perceive the fact that they have a high degree of loyalty and a low degree employee-turnover as an indicator that the employees understand the company’s goals and visions (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25). Fredrik believes that the employees understand the company’s short-term goals “It is easy for the employees to understand why we close down Vårby and invest in Grängesberg: We cannot have two mediocre breweries, we need one really modern” (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25). However, to what extent the employees understand the next goals and visions are uncertain, the leadership forum is here as well seen as medium to communicate the goals and vision throughout the organisation (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

In regards to Spendrups corporate culture, Ulf says that they do not work directly to shape and form the culture of the company. Ulf perceive the corporate culture in Spen-
drups to be very strong due to their history and former challenges. He does not see a specific need for elaborating the company’s corporate culture, since it is perceived as very strong. The corporate culture in Spendrups embraces freedom and the employees’ ability to make decisions. The liberty of actions and their motivating products contribute to a healthy and creative organisation (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25). Fredrik posses the view that culture is built every day in small steps in everything they do. Moreover, Fredrik believes that the so-called “road show”, (a tour where the family and top management go out and give lectures to the staff), contributes to the shaping of the corporate culture. However, the content of the road show is being revised and should aim more toward a dialog rather than the previous monolog (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

When asking Ulf if there is a typical stereotype for a Spendrup family member, he believes that everyone has their own personality with its individual traits. However, the loyalty toward the company and some common traits are visible in every Spendrup family member; “A Spendrup is someone who is entrepreneurial, activates on possibilities and gets bored when things get too monotonic” (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25). Value statements that capture the family’s mentality according to Ulf are long-term commitment, consumer orientation and careful risk management when it comes to long-term investments. Fredrik also emphasise the values that Ulf mentioned earlier, transparency, honesty, uprightness and entrepreneurship.

As for the ideal employee of Spendrups, Ulf believes that except of the fit to the occupation, they have to be enterprising and embrace responsibility. Fredrik highlight that a common foundation of values is needed which correlates to Ulf’s view, “Employees that do not understand the fundamental values of quality and consumer orientation will not last very long in Spendrups” (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

Historically, the introduction for new employees consisted of giving out a book about Spendrups, describing its history (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25). Nowadays, according to Fredrik, the HR department initiate an introduction to new employees in order to get acquainted with the Spendrups-organisation and culture. However, the interviews are appointed as an important aspect in order to get a culture fit (personal communication, Fredrik Spendrup, 2013-03-25).

4.2.5 Top management’s perspective

After finishing the initial interviews with the owning family, the authors conducted interviews with the top management. Asking them what constitutes a family firm as well as its advantages and setbacks, similar perspective were given. “To own the firm is not enough, the family has to work actively and participate in its daily operations” (personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2012-03-25). Einar adds “The family has to put their mark on the business and connect the family values to the ones of the firm” (personal communication, Einar Botten, 2012-03-25). Intuitively stating that owning the firm is not enough to name it a family business, it also has to be actively managed by the owners.
Positive characteristics of being a family firm have been highlighted and the most prominent aspects are long-term thinking and sustainable ownership. “Focusing on long-term ownership and not driven by short term incentives” (personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2012-03-25). Einar concur with the positive characteristic, the long-term perspective, but also adds that it gives more credibility when the CEO and owner is the same person and it is more certain that the person and the business has the same agenda (personal communication, Einar Botten, 2012-03-25). A risk identified for family firms, related to the recruitment process, is that “a family member does not necessarily live up to the requirements when compared to an external recruitment to top management positions” (personal communication, Einar Botten, 2012-03-25). There is a risk of focusing too much on family recruitment resulting in a lack of all competencies needed (personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2012-03-25). However, this negative aspect is nothing either Einar or Annette have experienced in Spendrups.

As for a family firm the values of the owning family has a natural impact on the organisation both on a long and a short-term basis. The root causes to the organisational culture has its origin in Jens and Ulf’s leadership, “they have been breathing and living the Spendrups culture” (personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2012-03-25) However, it is also argued that these values and the organisational culture that has been built over the years will dilute if not managed properly. Firstly because of the size of the corporation and secondly because of the change of CEO, which could result in an absence of cultural bearers when Ulf and Jens steps down (personal communication, Einar Botten, 2012-03-25). It is perceived that the family to a large extent share similar values at least from a theoretical perspective. However, their values are reflected by their personalities and even though they talk about the same thing, the idea and perception of a certain matters might differ. According to the shift of the CEO Jens and Fredrik differs in their leadership styles, which intuitively will have an effect on how the culture is transmitted throughout the organisation (personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2012-03-25).

Identifying the values of the Spendrups family and organisation, focus has been brought to long-term perspective, entrepreneurship, creativity, transparency, freedom under responsibility and courage. Spendrups is embracing the idea that “it is better to do something and fail, then to do nothing at all” (personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2012-03-25). However, sometimes focus is targeted more toward freedom than responsibility, which might imply a risk. The same goes for responsibility and courage and there is no clear borderline between the two (personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2012-03-25). Another aspect characterising the Spendrups organisation and family is the philanthropic approach to the employees, where cultural heritage of being proud of what they do and the quality of their products are emphasized. This is to a large extent seen as a positive aspect, however their philanthropic approach can be seen as “an older brother taking care of you” (personal communication, Einar Botten, 2012-03-25). Einar believes that for e.g. a career driven graduate, that wants clear goals to strive for,
this might not be the most suitable approach and the company might forfeit valuable knowledge.

Yet another aspect to scrutinize is if the whole organisation share similar values. According to Anette and Einar this is hard to answer but from the theoretical perspective they are believed to be basically the same. However Anette finds today’s leadership focusing more on “managing the company and its excessive growth rather then focusing on the entrepreneurial trait that is embraced”, which intuitively leads to some extent of confusion (personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2012-03-25). Furthermore the size of the corporation will have an impact on values and culture transmitted through the organisation, “making it harder to gather the whole corporation around the same values” (personal communication, Einar Botten, 2012-03-25).

Spendrups vision, goals and policies is also an indicator of how strong the unification is among different people and departments within the organisation. A reoccurring word has been long-term survival, which seems to be the main focus for the organisation. However, a developed strategy plan has not been conducted in the past, even though it is about to change (personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2012-03-25). As mentioned earlier effort has been given to freedom under responsibility but no clear guidelines of were to go have been provided. The daily work has to a large extent being conducted with a “trail and error approach” (personal communication, Einar Botten, 2012-03-25). This is not necessarily a bad thing, but Anette and Einar believe Spendrups is lacking clarity both among the family and the employees.

An active work in order to shape the organisational culture and unification around certain terms that are to describe the Spendrups culture among the management team is something that Anette perceive is lacking (personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2012-03-25). However, preliminary actions have been taken by the management team to define a set of values that are to be communicated throughout the organisation as the ground pillars of the culture. Yet, to decide is though from what angle and how to communicate it to all levels within the organisation. This is something that has to permeate every part of the organisation and to be incorporated into the recruitment profile. Today there is no communication strategy or plan of how to communicate fundamental values and guidance to the corporate culture. In the past this was not as important as it is today since “Jens and Ulf has earlier been transmitting the culture through their presence” (personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2012-03-25).

According to Einar the “culture is shaped continuously through the everyday work” (personal communication, Einar Botten, 2012-03-25), and there are also leadership principles that exists in order to form the culture. Although, he believes that numerous subcultures exists and there is a need to work more actively in order to “empower the unified Spendrups culture” (personal communication, Einar Botten, 2012-03-25). Furthermore this will most likely have an impact on the employees’ loyalty towards the firm.
The loyalty is considered very high according to employee surveys, the employee turnover and the fact that most of Spendrups employees tend to stay within the company for a very long period of time. Although one might find a risk in terms of loyalty towards the whole organisation as it grows bigger and the cultural work is lacking behind (personal communication, Einar Botten, 2012-03-25). As Spendrups has grown bigger acquiring Hellefors and shutting down Vårby this might have an impact on the loyalty towards the firm and there is a chance that the employees are more loyal to their subculture then Spendrups as a whole (personal communication, Einar Botten, 2012-03-25). He is also not sure to what extent loyalty is established in Hellefors and believes that “they might feel a bit excluded from the rest of the organisation” (personal communication, Einar Botten, 2012-03-25).

4.2.6 Middle management perspective

In the interviews with the middle managers there are some themes that crystallizes regarding the values of Spendrups and how they have changed over the years. The first theme is the importance of values within the organisation; “Jens and Ulf have throughout the years pointed out that they want to lead more through values than through rules, [...] they though have trouble understanding how big of a company they actually have created and the values are not as well-spread as before” (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). Jörgen continues: “Fredrik have started a forum for the managers, where the managers have a chance to lift up their opinions and Fredrik has a chance to communicate his values”. The forum did not exist with Jens as CEO and Jörgen believes that the values of the family can be spread more easily through this. The values were though spread easier before when the organisation was smaller and the presence of the family was more obvious. The meetings with everyone at the breweries are also considered as a good way of spreading the values but these meetings are perceived to occur not as often as before (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11).

When asked to define a family firm both managers had some trouble pinpointing exactly how to characterize a family firm or find any specific characteristics. Highlighted is the different generations and that the family put the company in focus (personal communication, Magnus Hedborg, 2013-04-10; personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). The importance of having active family members is emphasized where a family firm is defined as a firm “…where several generations are active in the organisation and the children are expected to take over” (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11).

Being a family firm “it is clear that Spendrups focus on long-term sustainability” (personal communication, Magnus Hedborg, 2013-04-10). This is seen as an advantage and the long-term thinking shows through the fact that; “The boss stays the boss for many years”, this could be put in relation to their non-family owned competitor Pripps, who changed CEOs fifteen times during Jens Spendrup’s time as CEO (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). It is also believed that the advantages outweighs
the disadvantages, at least when being a manager where there are values instead of rules to follow, the structures are a bit fuzzier and you can affect your working situation more. This could though be a challenge for an individual employee who might need more routines and structures (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). Another possible challenge with being a family firm is complex relations within the family but this is nothing that ever have occurred at Spendrups as far as Magnus know (personal communication, Magnus Hedborg, 2013-04-10).

When trying to identify what values the middle managers associate with Spendrups the term “freedom with responsibility” is one of the terms widely discussed and returned to throughout the interviews. “You have responsibilities but no one tells you exactly how to get there and you can choose your own working methods freely” (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). Magnus Hedborg (personal communication, 2013-04-10) continues by stating that: “I have a lot of freedom, I believe that I have this position since my values are correlated with the values of the family and it is appreciated that I make decisions without always asking my boss first”.

Regarding the employees and “freedom with responsibility” there are some differences that could be pointed out. “The operations managers at Hellefors brewery demand more guidance and ask more questions, which result in more guidance and more questions among the operating core as well” (Personal communication, Magnus Hedborg, 2013-04-10). Jörgen Forsberg (personal communication, 2013-04-11) though states that; “even though not all employees of the operating core recognize themselves with all values that the managers do, everyone feels that they have a great freedom with responsibility and an opportunity to influence how to do their work”.

Another term discussed is the drive and commitment among employees and family at Spendrups. “Since there is a lot of freedom, there is a need for a drive and an ability to act among the employees at Spendrups” (personal communication, Magnus Hedborg, 2013-04-10). Among the middle managers it is discussed that the employees cannot be passive and must dare to take actions for the company to move forward (personal communication, Magnus Hedborg, 2013-04-10; personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). This is also true among the family members where a drive and an entrepreneurship spirit is evident and have always been important, also in the recruitment of new employees. “The personalities of the family members are very different but they are all entrepreneurs” (Personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). Further on, Jörgen states that “the values of the family members differ since the business cycle, and the position of the firm at the market is different now when Fredrik has taken over compared to when Ulf and Jens did. Fredrik has yet to experience setbacks and will probably never experience the same journey as Jens and Ulf, which means that his values are different and also that the company is in need of different values” (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). Emphasized by him is that the entrepreneurship spirit within Spendrups as an organisation is not as high today as it was some years ago. This is due to the size of the company where more structures, rules and policies are necessary for the functioning of the firm. “The space for entrepreneurs is not as
big today” and the company is in a completely different situation (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11).

Still apparent of the entrepreneurship spirit is though that “it is better to do something and fail, than do nothing at all” (Personal communication, Magnus Hedborg, 2013-04-10) and “dare to do mistakes” (Personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). This is of course connected with some restrictions and for example within the production there are numerous of routines that cannot be ignored or changed but the managers believes that ideas and initiatives are always encouraged.

Another theme widely discussed is whether or not there is cohesion among the employees and their loyalty. “The most obvious evidence of differences in cohesion between the breweries is that the employees truly help each other in Grängesberg whereas it is more a every-man-for-himself-mentality in Hellefors” (personal communication, Magnus Hedborg, 2013-04-10). With experience from both Grängesberg and Hellefors brewery, this surprised Magnus since Hellefors is significantly smaller and cohesion among fewer employees should be easier. “In rough times the employees in Grängesberg gather together like a family and reach an extra level of productivity and engagement” (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). Jörgen believes that this comes from when Jens and Ulf themselves stood in the breweries and everyone could see their commitment and engagement. However, even though this is still true and is notably more evident in Grängesberg compared to the other breweries this feeling has decreased over the years when the family has moved further away from the breweries (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). “It is more of a we-thinking in Grängesberg compared to Hellefors” (personal communication, Magnus Hedborg, 2013-04-10).

The values of the family affect the organisation less when the employees do not have as much personal contact with the family. Earlier, when the HQ was located closer or when Johan was master brewer in Grängesberg the family was more visible, thus affecting the employees more (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). Today the family visit the brewery only a couple times per year, which makes it harder to affect through their values. It is though understandable since the company grows larger and the number of family members is limited (personal communication, Magnus Hedborg, 2013-04-10).

The loyalty towards the company among the employees is considered as high, but more evident when the HQ was located closer to the brewery in Grängesberg (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). Highlighted is the closures of the breweries in Vårby and earlier in Örebro where almost all employees where loyal and stayed till the end. The financial stimulus from the HQ is off course considered as supportive reason of this but Jörgen believes it is also because they felt loyalty towards the company. He believes that employees at Spendrups quickly know if they fit in to the Spendrups culture and if they do, they stay many years within the organisation (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11).
Moreover, the presence not only from family members, but also from everyone at the HQ came up for discussion. “Today there is a need for bringing the knowledge of how it works at a brewery closer to the HQ” (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). It is experienced by Jörgen that people at the HQ does not have enough knowledge of the work in the breweries resulting in time wasted at explaining this. This is though acknowledged and some actions have been taken to increase the understanding. He would also appreciate a more thorough introduction for new employees to the culture of Spendrups where the special characteristics of a brewery are showed and the spirit of Spendrups can be passed on. Jörgen Forsberg (personal communication, 2013-04-11) is not aware of any specific introduction to Spendrups’ culture. However, this should be spread through word-of-mouth but does not entirely work.

In relation to the company’s goals and vision Magnus believes that there are clear stated goals for the organisation but he has some trouble formulating them. He believes that Spendrups are aiming of being the biggest brewery in Sweden and having the most satisfied customers. The operating core is not believed to be aware of Spendrups goals and vision where Spendrups is their place of work and they go there focusing on their work and to socialize with colleagues (personal communication, Magnus Hedborg, 2013-04-10). Jörgen shares this view where “the employees in Grängesberg focus on what they are doing and reaching smaller milestones” (personal communication, Jörgen Forsberg, 2013-04-11). The goals and vision of Spendrups as a whole was more obvious before when the aim was to win over Pripps and everyone could see Jens and Ulf fighting for it (personal communication, Magnus Hedborg, 2013-04-10).

4.2.7 The perspective of the operating core

The focus groups were performed with employees from the operating core in Spendrups’ two breweries, Hellefors and Grängesberg. As mentioned earlier, the brewery in Grängesberg has been in the Spendrups possession for several generations whereas Hellefors brewery was acquired in 2008. Spendrups is one of the main employers in Grängesberg and most of the inhabitants have a relation to the company (personal communication, A1, 2013-04-10). The brewery in Hellefors is half the size of the one in Grängesberg in regards to employees and was previously owned by another family (personal communication, A3, 2013-04-10). Spendrups has as mentioned invested vastly in the Grängesberg brewery but still intend to integrate Hellefors fully into the organisation. The focus groups where assembled in three occasions, two in Grängesberg and one in Hellefors. The employees in the focus groups were either working on the floor or had a direct connection to the lower hierarchical levels. The members of the focus groups will in this thesis be anonymous and will therefore be referred in accordance to table below.
Table 3. Focus groups

The connection to the Spendrup family varies within the groups, some employees has been within the company for decades and has worked with several family members (A1, A3, B2,), while others has only seen them during the so-called road shows. In general, the members of the groups have a strong connection to Jens and Ulf, since they have been seen often walking around in the factories (personal communication, A1-4, 2013-04-10; personal communication B1-3; C1-3, 2013-04-11). The employees that has been with the company for decades demonstrates a much stronger relation and affection to the family, which is clearly related to when Spendrups was a smaller and more intimate organisation; “we have seen Jens and Ulf walking around in the breweries and talking to employees, making them feel appreciated” (personal communication, B2, 2013-04-11). However, as the company has grown, and Jens and Ulf have stepped back, the presence of the family has decreased according to the members in every focus group (personal communication, A1-4, 2013-04-10; personal communication B1-3; C1-3, 2013-04-11). B2, who has been working in Spendrups for many years, agrees with the other members in the groups, that the family culture has decreased, but also believes that the feeling of community is something that will grow stronger over time as the new organisation takes form (personal communication, B2, 2013-04-11).

The members of group A are uncertain whether the Spendrup family’ values affect the employees in the factories or not; “Since we do not consider Spendrups as a family business it is hard to know if it is the family’s values, however, the company’s values influence the employees significantly” (personal communication, A3, 2013-04-10). According to B2, the family has contributed to the “we thinking” through an attendant and distinct leadership from the family in the past (personal communication, B2, 2013-04-11). B3 underline that the employees embrace sustainability and long-term commitment, which is also perceived as values that origin from the family “one benefit of being a family owned corporation is the focus on sustainability and long-term commitment” (personal communication, A4, 2013-04-10). How the employees perceive the shift of CEO, all focus groups have the same view; “There has not been any distinct difference, except that the presence of the family in the factories has decreased” (personal communication, A1-4, 2013-04-10; personal communication B1-3; C1-3, 2013-04-11). A2 expresses a wish for a more present management, which is believed to support the culture and coherency in the company (personal communication, A2, 2013-04-10).

When asking the focus groups what value statements that identifies the Spendrups organisation, the three groups have similar perceptions, “world class beverages, sustainability and freedom with responsibility’ (personal communication, A1-4, 2013-04-10),
“110% service, open for change, quality, fellowship, team spirit, freedom with responsibility, self activation, and courage to act” (personal communication, B1-3, 2013-04-11), and “quality and sustainability” (personal communication, B1-3, 2013-04-11). However, to what extent these values permeate the organisation and to what extent every employee commits to them is uncertain (personal communication, B1-3, 2013-04-11). Moreover, the members of focus group C believe that the values connected to the fighting spirit of Spendrups, which has existed in the past, have decreased or even vanished during the last years (personal communication, C1-3, 2013-04-11).

The focus groups have trouble identifying specific characteristics that describe the Spendrups organisation as a whole, but group A perceives the culture to cultivate freedom and be candid, meaning that it is an open and sincere climate. Responsibility and thrift is something that is recurrent in their discussion, “Freedom with responsibility is something that pervades the organisation, things should be done, but how you do them is up to you” (personal communication, A1, 2013-04-10). According to B3, the culture is very positive “it is possible to influence a lot as an employee, the management are responsive and the distance to the management is small” (personal communication, B3, 2013-04-11). The fact that it is possible to influence the organisation and the individual employee’s situation is seen as positive. The organisation Spendrups is perceived as a very drifty organisation with a high pace and quick decision-making (personal communication, B1-3, 2013-04-11).

When investigating the loyalty of the employees, every member of all the groups feels loyal to the company Spendrups (personal communication, A1-4, 2013-04-10; personal communication B1-3; C1-3, 2013-04-11). However, whether it is due to the family or to the co-worker, the perception varies “it does not matter that Spendrups is a family business, the important thing is that you thrive at work, we feel loyalty to our co-workers” (personal communication, A3, 2013-04-10). On the other hand, in focus group B, one employee demonstrates a strong loyalty and commitment to the Spendrups and family “the company Spendrups is unique and the focus on responsibility and freedom makes it rewarding to be here, I have never thought about leaving Spendrups”, continuing “I appreciate that it is a family business, and I think that Ulf and Jens are great, I value that they invest in Grängesberg where it once all began, they cherish the Spendrups organisation” (personal communication, B2, 2013-04-11). According to focus group C, there is a strong loyalty due to the common history and influence of Spendrups in the Grängesberg community (personal communication, C1-3, 2013-04-11).

However, both groups in Grängesberg describe a noticeable difference in the younger generations in the factories, “the connection and loyalty to the family is missing in the younger generations, it is not the same drive among employees as it once were” (personal communication, C1, 2013-04-11), and “everyone who has been in Spendrups for a while have an affection to the organisation, but the younger employees does not relate to Spendrups the same way” (personal communication, B2, 2013-04-11). B2 has perceived a decrease in the core values that have been emphasised over the years, “we have always emphasised quality to the customer, doing our best and put down extra effort,
but it is difficult to manage the younger employees when they do not share the same values” (personal communication, B2, 2013-04-11). The mentality that “I do my job as if I was the owner myself” (personal communication, B3, 2013-04-11) has decreased during the last years. What is recurrent in every focus group, is the belief that the presence of the family and top management will strengthen the loyalty, commitment and understanding of the employees (personal communication, A1-4, 2013-04-10; personal communication B1-3; C1-3, 2013-04-11).

Another aspect of loyalty is fellowship within the organisation. The statement regarding if the whole organisation share similar values scored low, “the relation to the products are different, the headquarter thinks in terms of theory while the breweries thinks in terms of practicality” (personal communication, B3, 2013-04-11). All focus groups express a need for a better understanding between the divisions, in both ways (personal communication, A1-4, 2013-04-10; personal communication B1-3; C1-3, 2013-04-11), and B3 state: “I believe that personnel working with product development should visit the factories more often, so they can understand us but also so we can understand them better” (personal communication, B3, 2013-04-11). According to A4 there are some issues with the communication between the divisions “Sometimes the communication between the headquarter and the brewery is vague, employees quit and new employees arrive and we do not get the information, this affect our daily operation negatively when we need to get in touch with the right personnel” (personal communication, A4, 2013-04-10). Moreover, discussed in group A, the brewery is not as much involved in the other divisions “it could be tests of new products, information on the intranet and other small stuff that makes us feel sidelined” (personal communication, A2, 2013-04-10). However, in overall the core values such as long-term commitment and quality pervade through all divisions (personal communication, A1-4, 2013-04-10; personal communication B1-3; C1-3, 2013-04-11). The differences are not only seen as a weakness “we probably strive for the same goal, but clearly we think different because we do different things, that is probably the way it should be” (personal communication, A1, 2013-04-11).

To what extent the employees in the breweries understand the company’s goals, vision and policies the view differs between the focus groups. According to group B, the employees are aware of the goals regarding the investment in the Grängesberg brewery (personal communication, B1-3, 2013-04-11). The focus group discusses quality to be the goal and discuss the internal processes; “it is clear that we prioritize the products, Spendrups also care about the employees, so we understand what they want” (personal communication, B2, 2013-04-11). In contrast, group A and C focuses more on the external perspective and how the company should develop the upcoming years. Group C understands that the company wants better margins on every product, but except that, there is no clear communicated goal or vision (personal communication, C2, 2013-04-11). “Before we knew that we were underdogs, who were going to conquer Pripps and then Carlsberg, but now when we are the largest brewery, what is next?” (personal communication, C3, 2013-04-11). Group A describes the goals and vision as vague
“there are plans and goals for the executives, but not anything that every employee can take note of”. When asking if there is a need for improved communicated goals, the focus groups believe so (personal communication, C1-3, 2013-04-11; personal communication, A1-4, 2013-04-10). However, group A believes that actions speaks louder than words “When they said that they were going to invest and care for Hellefors no one were confident until we actually saw the investments and reconstructions of the factory” (personal communication, A4, 2013-04-10). Every focus group is questioning the current lead word -One modern brewery. “they say one brewery, but what about Hellefors?” (personal communication, A3, 2013-04-10) and “the goal one brewery is confusing since we have two, maybe they should say one brewery and one water factory” (personal communication, C2, 2013-04-11).

When examine the employees’ introduction to the Spendrups history and culture, it varies between the focus groups. According to group B, there is an official introduction where the information about the history, intranet and work tasks is presented (personal communication, B1-3, 2013-04-11). However, they express a need for a forum where the values and vision can be transferred to the staff “we need meetings or something where we can communicate our values and vision better” (personal communication, B2, 2013-04-11). In Hellefors it has existed material that should be given to every new employee with information about Spendrups, but to what extent this is used is unclear “we were given a USB device, but it is put to use sporadic, I have not seen it for a while” (personal communication, A1, 2013-04-10). According to group B, there is an introduction for the middle managers and up in the hierarchical levels but not for everyone (personal communication, B1-3, 2013-04-11). Moreover, information from the top management is perceived to decrease “before, the family came out to the factories a couple of times per year and presented new products, not yet released commercials and explained why they did certain things, but those happenings has decreased” (personal communication, C1, 2013-04-11) and express that “maybe they do not understand how much we value those things” (personal communication, C3, 2013-04-11).
5 Analysis

This section presents an analysis over the findings related to the theoretical framework. The first part shortly discusses family firm definitions and includes an analysis of the F-PEC frameworks’ three components: (1) power, (2) experience and (3) culture. Thereafter, supplementary theories related to familiness are used in order to develop the analysis and elaborate the culture aspect of family involvement.

Stated earlier, numerous definitions of what constitutes a family firm exist. The authors have chosen the well used definition by Miller and Le Breton-Miller where a family firms is defined as: “one in which a family has enough ownership to determine the composition of the board, where the CEO and at least one other executive is a family member, and where the intent is to pass the firm on to the next generation” (2003, p. 127). In further examination, this definition align with the Spendrups organisation where the importance of having active family members is emphasised and that owning the firm is not enough. With the intention to pass the firm on to the next generation, both the authors and the organisational members consider Spendrups a family firm in all possible aspects.

5.1 F-PEC

The analysis of the F-PEC scale will first consist of an examination of the scale as introduced. Since the construction of the F-PEC scale fit a quantitative research, carried out solely among the top levels of an organisation, there are some adjustments in the questions, statements and structure. By firstly describing what the F-PEC scale illustrates, then introducing the identification of what values that exists provides a clear picture of the differences between this and earlier studies. This later culminates in a development of the F-PEC scale where greater focus lays on the culture subscale.

5.1.1 Power

In the power subscale, the first question asked is how the composition of the owner structure looks like and whether it is direct or indirect. Supported by Klein et al. (2005) the authors of this thesis consider Spendrups as completely indirect owned by the family. This is due to their full control over the owning foundation. They do have the control even though they are not the ones taking the actual decisions when selecting new board members. The authors consider the indirect ownership strong and the only thing the Spendrups family cannot do is to sell the company to a third party.

To further examine the power structure we can see that in the board of Spendrups Bryggeri AB 7 out of 15 members (46.67%) are family members. Whether to consider this amount of family members as high or not is problematic without a comparison with other firms. However, since the composition of the board must include several external parties, the seven family members compose a major part of the spaces that are actually available. Furthermore, a firm having a high degree of family involvement does not
automatically mean that they will perform well. Involvement is necessary but it is the essence of the involvement that will make a difference, including the intention, vision, familiness, and/or behaviour (Chrisman, Chua, Sharma, 2005).

The third aspect of the power subscale corresponds to the top management. The top management of Spendrups consists of 11 individuals including one member of the family, namely the CEO, Fredrik Spendrup. The Deputy CEO, Ulf Spendrup, is not included in the top management according to Spendrups themselves since he is no longer operative. Since only one out of 11 executives is a family member, the authors of this thesis consider the family involvement in the top management as low.

5.1.2 Experience

As stated, Spendrups is in this thesis defined as indirect family owned through the full control of the foundation and held by the third and fourth generation Spendrup. Astrachan et al. (2002) highlight the difficulties of generational shifts and the experience in Spendrups is due to these successful shifts considered as high.

The experience among the management is also high where Fredrik Spendrup as the CEO (fourth generation) and Ulf Spendrup as Deputy CEO (third generation) are the ones with the highest positions. Moreover, the chairman is part of the fourth generation and the presence of the third generation through the CEO of one of the subsidiaries as well as an event manager increases the experience throughout the company.

5.1.3 Culture

According to the culture subscale of F-PEC, the investigation of overlapping values and family commitment captures the familiness of a firm (Astrachan et al., 2002).

To present the findings in terms of the culture subscale, the authors plotted a spider-graph (Figure 4) in order for the reader to easier comprehend the data analysis. As stated in the graph below, eight statements were discussed where each statement illustrates a specific corner in the octagon. Each colour represents a calculated average from each group of respondents to the statements explained below. All statements are based on the F-PEC framework and some of them have a high variance but the reasons for the variance is not elaborated in this section where the authors’ only looks at overlapping values and commitment.
Figure 4. Spider graph over the result in the ranking statements

Statements

1. **The family has influence on the business**
   We can see from the spider graph that the respondents have ranked this statement between 4 and 5 no matter of hierarchical level. From this we can clearly state that there is an overlap between the values among the owning family and the organisation.

2. **The whole organisation share similar values**
   This is the statement where the answers differ at the most and the calculated average is reaching from 1.7 to 4.5. We conclude that the overlap here is vague at first sight and the answers might seem a bit illogic since the middle management perceive that the family and the organisation have more similar values then the family itself.

3. **The family members feel loyalty to the business**
   In terms of commitment towards the business we received a unanimously answer were all the respondents completely agreed on the extent of the family loyalty and commitment towards the firm, 5.0.

4. **The employees feel loyalty to the business**
   Compared to statement 3 we can see that the commitment to the firm here is still relatively high and that all respondent groups are clustered closed to each other. However, the highest ranking on this statement is 4, in contrast to the statement above, which is 5. So we conclude the overlap is almost the same as in statement three, but the loyalty and commitment of the employees is less in comparison to the owning family.
5. **The employees agree with the family business goals, plans and policies**
   This statement indicates an interesting point where all the respondents’ average score are the same except for the family. This indicates that the family seem to think that their employees understand goals, vision and policies better than they actually do.

6. **The family members really care about the fate of the family business**
   Here again the answer is unanimously and the overlap and commitment is as high as possible according to the ranking.

7. **The family members are willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help the family business be successful**
   Again the opinions have a relatively strong correlation. However, what is important to comment is that it was difficult for the respondents to decide what is considered normal.

8. **The family members agree with the family business goals plans and policies**
   In this question, it is found a great variance between the answers among the respondents. This indicates a clear absence of knowledge of what the companies’ goals actually are. Interesting is however to see that the operating core and the family completely agree and the top management have the most deviant view.

Statement two in the spider graph indicates that Spendrups does not have clear overlapping values in all parts of the organisation. Statement five and eight also shows that there are differences in the perception of values within the organisation, hence pointing at a low degree of overlapping values. The commitment to the family business however shows another view where especially statement three and six points at a high degree of commitment among the family and relatively high degree of commitment among the employees. High commitment and a high degree of overlapping values should give you a high degree of familiness (Astrachan et al., 2002). The contradictory views with low degree of overlapping values and high commitment therefore results in a problematic analyse of familiness in the culture subscale of the F-PEC framework.

5.2 **Cultural extension**

According to the statements above, it is possible to identify a gap between values of the family and the ones of the organisation. The F-PEC scale does not identify any specific values in the various hierarchical levels and how they correlate to the family. As mentioned, this report aims at examine the F-PEC statements further through a qualitative approach, rather than the quantitative earlier used with F-PEC. The qualitative approach, with the F-PEC questions as a foundation, will focus on the corporate culture in terms of values and different perceptions of values within the organisation. In addition to the statements included in the F-PEC framework, the authors have chosen to use the
concepts of “what” and “who” forms familiness, in order to easier grasp and make use of the familiness concept.

When using the F-P EC scale, the authors found a weak overlap between values within the organisation. With questions based on the “what” and “who” frameworks, it was though possible to identify a need for revision of the F-P EC scale, e.g. the authors identified several values, origin from the family, that actually were deeply rooted within the organisation.

The most prominent values in the investigated levels did correspond to the family’s core-values such as, long-term commitment, freedom with responsibility, product quality and entrepreneurship. The employees identified long-term commitment as an evident and positive characteristic in every level. This relates to Denison (1990) who highlights that consistency and purpose is an important aspect when building a strong culture. The employees generally perceived freedom with responsibility as a positive aspect of the Spendrups culture. However, the top management noticed that focus was sometime set more on freedom rather than responsibility, which could indicate different interpretations of values. It is important to share the same values within an organisation in order to create a strong culture (Schein, 1990). Therefore, it cannot be desirable to have different perceptions of the same value since it may cause fragmentations of the culture. Furthermore, the employees addressed the importance of product quality, especially in the breweries, which indicates that this value has successfully permeated the organisation. Entrepreneurship is an overlapping value in most parts of the organisation, but not entirely. The decrease in entrepreneurial spirit relates to the growth of the company and the focus has shifted toward managing a big corporation rather than promoting the entrepreneurial spirit.

As one can see from Table 2 (p. 24), values where never identified when using the F-P EC framework. The F-P EC scale also showed a low degree of overlapping values. For those reasons, the authors have motives to believe that there are some limitations to the F-P EC model in its quantitative approach, since most respondents understands and acknowledge several of the family’s core values.

5.2.1 Culture Alignment

As mentioned, the findings indicated deficiencies in the F-P EC when using a qualitative approach. During the interviews, the authors revealed several other issues, which was not included in the F-P EC framework.

5.2.1.1 Vision and goals

According to Denison’s, (1990) dimension “Mission”, he states that a strong culture within an organisation should include a company’s long-term aspects such as vision, goals, objectives and strategic direction. He also states that to be successful, the organization must have a clear sense of purpose and direction. Based on the findings, the authors argue that there is a lack of mutual understanding of vision and goals in the
Spendrups organisation. This is important since Denison (1990) argue that it might contribute to implications to the firms’ future progress if not managed properly.

When examining the opinion of how well the owning family understands their vision, goals and policies, they present a clear image of what they want and where they want to be in the future (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup, 2013-03-25). When asking people further down in the hierarchy the perceptions does not overlap. The top management argues that the family members’ perception of vision, goals and policies differ (personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2013-04-25), whereas the operating core perceives their values to be homogenous (personal communication, B1-3, 2013-04-11). Interesting is that the top management has the most divergent opinion but also the ones having the most contact with the family. However, a small amount of contact may also be the reason for the operating core to believe that the family have a clear homogenous picture of their vision, goals and policies. While people in the top management, working with the family on a daily basis has a better insight in the strategic work and therefore realises what is missing.

Employees’ awareness of the organisation’s vision, goals and policies is lacking. This indicates that the company is in need of a clear vision that permeates the organisation as a whole. Green (1988) discusses the importance of organisational culture and that it has to align with the companies’ strategy, otherwise the culture will break the strategy. This implies that Spendrups need to make employees aware of their vision, goals and policies in order to shape a unified culture. Even though the values and the culture seem to align relatively well in Spendrups, the lack of understanding the vision and goals could generate obstacles for the firm. Another fact that supports the argument of misalignment, not captured by the F-PEC, is that all respondents in the operating core has different perceptions of Spendrups’ short- and long-term goals and vision. This identifies an absence of unified vision and goals, where some employees in the operating core emphasise internal processes as goals and others address external challenges. In the past Spendrups had a clear vision, to beat Pripps and later on Carlsberg, but today the employees have difficulties to identify the vision and long-term objectives. This relates to Denison, Leif and Ward’s (2004) theory that a common foundation of history and values strengthen the organisations culture and unifies the organisation. In Spendrups’ case, Pripps and Carlsberg may have severed as common enemies for the employees, which has unified the employees toward a common goal and vision, thereby enhancing culture alignment.

Ulf Spendrup highlights the importance of communicating clear goals and vision to the employees. He also states the importance of never reaching ones vision since it will lower the motivation and put the company in a dangerous position. When reaching ones vision, another should be in place. Through this idea, the authors argue that Spendrups is facing a prominent issue regarding goals and vision of the firm.
5.2.1.2 Family presence

Another interesting aspect that is not included in the F-PEC framework is the involvement and presence of the family. Jens and Ulf are no longer operative within the organisation in the same way as they once were, which implies a loss of the two most significant cultural bearers. Since a lack of cultural bearers could lead to misalignment of the organisational culture (Flamholtz, 2001), the authors consider this as an important aspect when capturing familiness.

Even though the CEO is still a member of the family, the respondents interpret differences in leadership styles between Fredrik and Jens. Several interviews indicate that the position and size of the firm impose changes in the role as CEO. Consequently making the work as a cultural bearer more difficult (personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2013-03-25; personal communication, A1-2, 2013-04-10; personal communication, B1-2, 2013-04-11). It is also possible to identify among the top management, middle management and the operating core, that the presence of the family has decreased during the last years and that there is no active work to compensate the lack of cultural bearers (personal communication, A1-4, 2013-04-10; personal communication, B1-3, C1-3, 2013-04-11; personal communication, Einar Botten, 2013-03-25). A common wish identified in the focus groups, was an increased presence of the family. All focus groups believed that an increased presence would work as a motivational factor for the employees in both breweries (personal communication, A1-4, 2013-04-10; personal communication, B1-3, C1-3, 2013-04-11). This relates to Chrisman, Chua and Sharma (2005), who states that the family needs to expose their vision, intention and behaviour by being actively involved in different operations in order to spread the culture. This suggest that Spendrups face a risk of creating strong subcultures, which could harm the unified culture, leading to negative effects on the performance (Bezrukova, et al., 2012).

The recognized demand for a more active cultural management (personal communication, Einar Botten, 2013-03-15; personal communication, Anette Stjernkvist, 2013-03-25) indicates that Spendrups’ culture might not be as homogenous as expected by the owning family. Flamholtz (2010), theory of an active work to create alignment between subcultures is according to the authors therefore relevant for the examination of familiness.

5.2.1.3 Communication and unification

Another aspect identified through the qualitative approach was that the breweries expressed a lack of communication between the breweries and the headquarters. In relation to the F-PEC questions, the focus groups ranked very low when asking if the whole organisation share similar values. When investigating the core values, as above, it might be possible to neglect the diversion since many of the core values seems to have permeated the investigated levels. However, the low ranking may present a lack of understanding and communication between the breweries and the headquarters, and not the core values. The focus groups expressed a need for better understanding from both
This phenomenon can be related to Dennison’s (1990) coordination and integration theory, where focus is put on how the employees understand others work, but also to understand how their work affect others. He states that focus should be set on how the actions of the employees benefit the organisation as a whole. Supported by Schein (1996) and the examination of familiness in Spendrups, the authors argue the importance of understanding and unification between different divisions. In Spendrups case, a lack of understanding and unification between different divisions may lead to misalignment and creation of strong sub-cultures, which according to Schein (1996) affect the performance negatively.

It is also possible to detect a lower sense of unification in the Hellefors brewery, both externally and internally. Externally, it is possible to identify a weaker connection to the whole organisation, as they feel somewhat sidelined from the other divisions (personal communication, A2, 2013-04-10). Internally, Magnus Hedborg (personal communication, 2013-04-10) described a lower sense of community and team spirit within Hellefors compared to the other divisions. A logic reason for this is that Hellefors has not been included in the organisation for as long as Grängesberg. This relates to Schein (1990)’s and Green (1988), who argues that shared history and experience leads to a stronger unified culture. Denison (1990) address team orientation as an important section of involvement, in order to create a positive culture. This indicates that Spendrups needs to work actively to create team spirit, especially since it is possible to identify a decrease in unification of the organisation. Moreover, it is also important to actively support and intensify the Spendrups culture through cultural bearers and symbols. This would decrease the distance between Hellefors and the other divisions in terms of culture and values, as mentioned above. This relates to the essence theory, where focus is set on involvement, vision and behaviour in order for the family to actively shape and align the organisation’s culture (Chua, Chrisman, & Sharma, 1999).

Impossible to ignore is the size of Spendrups, they have grown from being a small family business where everyone knew the owners, to one of Sweden’s largest brewery in only 30 years (personal communication, Ulf Spendrup 2013-03-04). Porter (1996) as well as Schein (1996) discusses the importance of alignment between different hierarchical levels and if not managed properly Schein (1996) and Flamholtz (2001) state that this will have a negative impact on the overall performance. Due to this expansion, the alignment logically becomes harder and the authors identify a need of working more actively in order to align the organisation since some groups feel a bit sidelined (personal communication, A2, 2013-04-10). The top management’s discussions about the existence of subcultures and their expressed wishes to work more actively with the culture confirms this but also shows that parts of the organisation are aware of the problem. Stressing the importance of actively managing the culture and the need of incorporating the younger generation in a unified Spendrups spirit (personal communication, C1, 2013-04-11). If not, Spendrups faces a risk of loosing the overlapping values and create stronger sub-cultures in the coming years.
6 Discussion

This part of the thesis provides a discussion about the subject and process of the thesis. The first section discusses the authors’ perception of the case study and related topics. Furthermore, limitations, future research and suggestions for Spendrups are presented.

Family businesses have been a self-evident part of the business world since many firms’ starts out by being just that. Through growth and generational shifts, many families let go of their ownership and power, thus transforming into a non-family firm. However, some family firms retain their ownership through generations. The interest towards long-lasting and successful family firms with their unique characteristics is gaining momentum. Due to this, as well as Spendrups family history and evident success, the authors consider Spendrups to be an interesting case.

The relatively new concept “familiness” is interesting, being the actual variable capturing the essence of family involvement. Previous research in the field of familiness focused on capturing familiness through investigations among the owning family and the top management. Surprised by the lack of examination in lower levels of the organisation, the authors decided to examine family involvement in different hierarchical levels. Earlier research also emphasized a need for developing an adequate measurement tool of familiness to capture the essence of the firm. This absence made concepts such as values, culture and culture alignment important in this investigation. The abductive approach also made it possible to customize the study along the way and more accurately describe the nature of the concept.

During the interviews, it became apparent that the Spendrup family had a vast commitment and emotional attachment toward their organisation, as it was a part of their everyday life and identity. Convinced of their influence in the whole organisation, but without any examination, the Spendrup family expressed an interest to explore their influence throughout the organisation. Their curiosity made this study even more interesting for exploring the concept familiness further. The familiness framework, including F-PEC scale, appeared insufficient for investigating familiness in different levels through a qualitative approach. Therefore, the authors gave greater emphasis to culture with the belief to capture familiness in a more suitable way.

6.1 Limitations

The authors strived to make this thesis of use for as many as possible through objectivity and an in-depth data collection. However, research always includes limitations. This study is constrained to one single case and a more extensive data collection with greater diversity is possible. Despite time constraints, from both the researchers and Spendrups, the authors consider the collection of data to be reliable since gathered from numerous people throughout the hierarchical levels. Furthermore, the time constraints affected the number of participants and may affect the result of the study. A higher number of family members could result in a more accurate picture of their values but by
interviewing the two generations active in the organisation, the authors believe that this study have captured the family values adequately.

Generalization of this study can imply implications since the empirical data is collected from one company, active within one industry, resulting in unique features only concerning Spendrups. Nevertheless, familiness is still a vast topic with complex concepts and generalizations of theories are possible. The authors consider Spendrups being a suitable case when investigating familiness and culture since they have completed several generational shifts, possess a strong corporate culture and is defined as a family firm in various aspects. The time constraint also made it difficult to investigate culture and cultural alignment. However, values and habits are difficult to measure by nature and a limitations connected to this is not solely influenced by limited time.

Moreover, when discussing values, habits and general perceptions, the interpretation can be difficult. Some respondents may say one thing but mean another, and sometimes the fact that top management has told them to participate might influence the participants. Therefore, errors or misinterpretations may occur and jeopardize parts of the result. In this thesis, the data collection was in Swedish and then translated it into English, which also enhance the risk of misinterpretation. This risk was taken into consideration and minimized through the use of open-end and systematically asked follow up questions.

Another possible limitation is the inexperience of the researchers that might influence the empirical data collection. To overcome this limitation the authors did extensive research about method and methodology, as well as consulting their supervisor regarding the formulation of the questions.

6.2 Future research

Existing research of the concept familiness is relatively limited and does not include sufficient measurements. Emerged during the authors’ research was an absence of concrete tools when investigating a family’s influence over the firm. The aspect of culture also appeared very important since much of the family involvement include values and symbols. The cultural focus in familiness should according to the authors be extended since it might benefit the identification of the unique traits possessed by family firms. This extension must though be further examined and tested more extensively to create a generalized framework.

Moreover, the choice of cultural theories and models could be examined further and other theories might be appropriate to include in further research related to familiness. Familiness in different hierarchical levels must also be investigated further to capture the effects of family involvement.

6.3 Suggestions for Spendrups

With a culture relatively well spread throughout the organisation, one might believe that Spendrups is in no need for working with cultural management. Historically, an active
work with the culture has received little attention, but recently some have expressed a need for increasing this aspect. The authors state that the findings of this thesis confirm this view and a more active work with culture would benefit Spendrups.

The authors suggest that Spendrups should assemble one or more cultural-workgroups consisting of employees from several hierarchical levels and different parts of the organisation. The forum should include discussions about positive and negative aspects of the organisational culture and how the existing employees believe that Spendrups can retain its unification and pass it on to new employees. By including different parts of the organisation, employees will feel included and listened to. This will also spread to their co-workers who can forward their ideas to the people in the workgroups. Furthermore, it could also strengthen the understanding between different divisions as they get a new forum to discuss different perspectives. The cultural-workgroups’ discussions should be centred on the family’s core values and how these values should be interpreted and communicated. The authors also believe that Fredrik Spendrup constitute a large part of the cultural-workgroup process, in order to strengthen the symbolic and cultural bearer aspect. Since Ulf and Jens have been very strong symbols for many years, it is important to shift the focus toward Fredrik, if the family aspect of Spendrups is perceived as important.

The outcome from these cultural-workgroups could be used as a foundation when creating an introduction for new employees. Furthermore, the firm possess an interesting history and culture that should be of use when elaborating the unification of the Spendrups’ organisation. The story of the family and its origin from Grängesberg could be used as a starting point to enhance history awareness of the employees. However, core values, beliefs, principles and vision are aspects of the introduction that is not to be neglected.

To solve the lack of understanding between breweries and HQ, the authors believe that more frequent visits between divisions could be a solution. The communication between HQ and the breweries is frequent for some divisions, such as logistic, production and product development. Although, a need for enhanced understanding of various work roles is necessary to make it more efficient. Another way of improving communication is a more adequate use of the intranet, where focus should be on the organisation as a whole and not only HQ. Some employees implied that most of the events and news circled around the HQ and would like the intranet to informing about activities in all parts of the organisation. This could reduce the feeling of being sidelined and work as motivational factor.

The authors believe that an increased presence and enhanced communication would work as a motivational factor as well as increase the connection and dedication among younger employees. This work is of importance since younger employees forms the future of Spendrups and the authors therefore hope that these aspects will be considered.
7 Conclusion

Through this thesis, the authors intend to enhance the knowledge of familiness by investigate how to measure and grasp this relatively new concept. According to the authors, it is possible to capture familiness more adequately if one examines the culture aspect more thoroughly. It is possible to conclude that a quantitative approach of the F-PEC scale is not a sufficient tool for examining the essence of how family involvement influence the firm. By putting more emphasis on the culture subscale of the F-PEC framework and include culture alignment between different hierarchical levels, the examination of family involvement at Spendrups became satisfactory.

The authors conclude that the owning family at Spendrups have a considerable affect on the organisation. The family’s values permeate the organisation and their influence is evident in all hierarchical levels. Several core values that origins from the family can be identified in every hierarchical level investigated. Moreover, family involvement has resulted in a special commitment toward the family and the firm. However, much of the family influence in the breweries remains from when Ulf and Jens were more visible. Today, the younger generation has experienced a decreased presence from the family, leading to limited personal experience of working closely with family members. As a result, the family does not influence the younger generation to the same extent and with no active or specific effort for introducing and managing the culture, new employees may not establish the same connection towards the family or the firm. Therefore, Spendrups unified culture might fade if they do not include cultural management in the daily work of the family and managers.

As for now, Spendrups has a strong unified culture where many values and beliefs origins from the family. However, there are several indicators of a decrease in cultural bearers and unification of the organisational culture, but also a lack of distinct goals and vision. This study state that existing measurement tools of familiness does not capture these aspects effectively and identified limitations regarding the culture aspect of familiness. The authors conclude that cultural alignment is an important aspect when it comes to enhance and capture familiness, hence stating that familiness research would develop through the inclusion of cultural alignment. Furthermore, in order to create culture alignment, communication and integration between divisions appears to be of importance. In Spendrups case, incentives for an increased dialogue and understanding between different divisions would be appropriate.

Without the extended measurements of familiness applied in this thesis, the authors would not have identified the related issues and the result would have been different. Therefore, the author’s state that; organisational culture and culture alignment constitutes a significant role in the concept familiness and as a result, these concepts should receive greater attention in research regarding family involvement.
8 Reflecting on the writing process

Writing this thesis was interesting and rewarding in many aspects but we also faced several issues and setbacks that emerged during the process. To our advantage we had a well functioning group dynamic were the work was properly divided and everyone contributed to the finalisation of the thesis. Although disagreements occurred at several occasions, constructive criticism were given and brought the process forward resulting in improved solutions to certain matters. This is also something we see as one of the most crucial aspects in order to generate a good result. Therefore, we recommend students to carefully consider who to work with in order to create a dynamic group. Work with someone that will complement your skills and who will put effort into the process.

As a group we had similar working methods where the discussions and disagreements lead to solving he problem. The work was at first divided up to a great extent where each authors wrote their part. The results of the different parts often worked out perfectly fine and the writing language among us was similar. However, later in the process we experienced some trouble with e.g. the analysis. Since the theory was divided, each author became “expert” on their part and the others were not sufficiently well informed to analyse all parts of the theory. The time spent on understanding the theoretical framework this late in the process could have been better utilized.

The next recommendation is to start early, it might sound as a cliché but it is not. Try to begin your work by deciding a subject before the semester started. Do research in advance in order to make sure that the idea you have will also work in reality. This is even more important if you want to write your thesis towards a company. Writing towards an active business is also something we strongly recommend, it will make the process far more interesting and you have an excellent source of both primary and secondary data. Furthermore, you will have the possibility to make impact not only in the academic world but also in the company you are working with.

Make use of your contacts; do not only focus on businesses that have advertised thesis work. We consider ourselves very lucky when we got the possibility to work with Spendrups on a very short notice. After one week into the semester we asked them if there were any possibility for us to work with them, luckily we got a response in 7 hours and the answer was yes.

In terms of setbacks one of the major issues we faced during the process was the problem off setting up focus groups. We did not receive replies from some of the people at the breweries at Spendrups and here again the limited time was problematic. Luckily we had a very good mentor at Spendrups that helped us solve those problems.

Finally, never except your thesis to be finished, it never will be. There are always room for improvements and you will probably produce twice as much text as what will be included in the paper. Do not be afraid to give criticism to each other, if you cannot do that you do not have a well functioning group, although you should not forget the positive feedback either.
References


Appendix 1

The F-PEC Scale of Family Influence (Klein, Astrachan, & Smyrnios, 2005, p. 338-339)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1: The Power Subscale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Please indicate the proportion of share ownership held by family and nonfamily members:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Family .......................... %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Nonfamily .......................... %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are shares held in a holding company or similar entity (e.g., trust)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes 2. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If YES, please indicate the proportion of ownership:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Main company owned by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) direct family ownership: .......................... %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) direct nonfamily: .......................... % ownership: .......................... %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) holding company: .......................... %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Holding company owned by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) family ownership: .......................... %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) nonfamily ownership: .......................... %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(iii) 2nd holding company: .......................... %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) 2nd holding company owned by:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) family ownership: .......................... %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does the business have a governance Board?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes 2. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If YES:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) How many Board members does it comprise? .......................... members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) How many Board members is family? .......................... family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) How many nonfamily (external) members nominated by the family are on the Board? .......................... nonfamily members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does the business have a management Board?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Yes 2. No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If YES:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) How many persons does it comprise? .......................... members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) How many management Board members is family? .......................... family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) How many nonfamily Board members are chosen through them? .......................... nonfamily member</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 2: The Experience Subscale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Which generation owns the company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Which generation(s) manage(s) the company?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What generation is active on the governance Board?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How many family members participate actively in the business?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How many family members do not participate actively in the business but are interested?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How many family members are not (yet) interested at all?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 3: The Culture Subscale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please rate the extent to which:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your family has influence on your business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your family members share similar values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your family and business share similar values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members support the family business in discussions with friends, employees, and other family members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members feel loyalty to the family business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members are proud to tell others that we are part of the family business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is so much to be gained by participating with the family business on a long-term basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members agree with the family business goals, plans, and policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members really care about the fate of the family business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciding to be involved with the family business has a positive influence on my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand and support my family's decisions regarding the future of the family business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family members are willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help the family business be successful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Please rate the extent to which: |
| Not at all | To a large extent |
| Not at all | To a large extent |
| Strongly disagree | Strongly Agree |
| Strongly disagree | Strongly Agree |
| Strongly disagree | Strongly Agree |
| Strongly disagree | Strongly Agree |
| Strongly disagree | Strongly Agree |
| Strongly disagree | Strongly Agree |
| Strongly disagree | Strongly Agree |
| Strongly disagree | Strongly Agree |
| Strongly disagree | Strongly Agree |
Appendix 2

Translated interview scheme for family, top management and middle management

**F-PEC Power**

- What is the proportion of ownership held by family members?
- What is the proportion of family members/non-family members in the board?
- What is the proportion of family members in the top management?

**F-PEC Experience**

- Which generation owns the company?
- Which generation manage the company?
- What generation is active on the board?
- How many family members participate actively in the organisation?
- How many family members do not participate actively in the organisation?
- How many family members are not yet interested in the business?

**F-PEC Culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Agree (5)</th>
<th>Do not agree (1)</th>
<th>Supplementary questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The family has influence on the business</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td></td>
<td>How is the organisation affected by the family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The whole organisation share similar values</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td></td>
<td>What are the business’ values?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family members feel loyalty to the business</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td></td>
<td>How is this shown?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employees feel loyalty to the business</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td></td>
<td>How is this shown?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employees agree with the family business goals plans and policies</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td></td>
<td>How is this shown?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family really care about the fate of the family business</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td></td>
<td>How is this shown?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family members are willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help the family business be successful</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td></td>
<td>How is this shown? / Are the employees willing to do the same?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family members agree with the family business goals, plans and policies?</td>
<td>1….2….3….4….5</td>
<td></td>
<td>What are the goals, plans and policies?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Family business

• What defines a family business according to you?
• Do you see any advantages with being a family business?
• Do you see any challenges with being a family business?

Familiness

• How would you define a typical Spendrup stereotype? (part of the family)
• How would you define a typical Spendrups employee?
• Could you mention a few value statements for the Spendrups family?
• Could you mention a few value statements for the Spendrups organisation?
• Do the decisions of family members outweigh those of non-family members?
• Is the tolerance against family members higher?
• Do the relations between family members differ compared to those between non-family members?
• Do you actively work with creating and shaping the corporate culture?
• How are new employees introduced to the Spendrup culture?
Appendix 3

Translated statements and discussion themes for the operating core

F-PEC Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Agree (5)</th>
<th>Supplementary questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The family has influence on the business</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>How is the organisation affected by the family?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The whole organisation share similar values</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>What are the business’ values?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family members feel loyalty to the business</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>How is this shown?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employees feel loyalty to the business</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>How is this shown?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The employees agree with the family business goals plans and policies</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>How is this shown?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family really care about the fate of the family business</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>How is this shown?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family members are willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help the family business be successful</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>How is this shown? / Are the employees willing to do the same?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The family members agree with the family business goals, plans and policies?</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5</td>
<td>What are the goals, plans and policies?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family business

- What defines a family business according to you?
- Do you see any advantages with being a family business?
- Do you see any challenges with being a family business?

Familiness

- How do you experience the Spendrups culture?
- How are you a part of this culture?
- How were you introduced to the culture?
- What do you associate with Spendrups?
- Is there a typical Spendrups employee?
- What are typical values of the Spendrup family members?
• What are typical values of the Spendrups business?
• Do you have any type of staff activities?

**Experience**

• What generation owns the business?
• What generation manage the business?
• How many family members are active within the business?