Fostering Innovative Organisations for Sustainability

A case study on a Swedish packaging and paper material company

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Abstract

The Swedish pulp and paper industry is affected by increased sustainable development pressures such as climate impact and resource efficiency, which makes sustainability a strategic priority in this sector. At the level of individual firms, implementing a corporate sustainability strategy must involve all parts of the organisation. In such instances, management plays an important role to practically link all parts of the organisation with the development of more sustainable ways of conducting business. Indeed, developing new ways of conducting business must involve the creation of innovative organisations (IO); that is a business organised to produce innovative outcomes. However, a key management challenge when creating IO for sustainability is to engage employees in all parts of the organisation. Therefore, the aim of this study is to contribute to the understanding of management practices of engaging employees in fostering more IO for sustainability.

To address the aim, previous literature on IO, management practices and employee engagement are combined with empirical data from a case study firm. Qualitative research methods were used, such as semi-structured interviews, focus groups and questionnaires. The empirical result shows that the firm deploys several different management practices to foster a more IO. The study also shows that employees' perceptions and engagement regarding these practices can vary depending on the individual and in what way the management practice is performed. However, this study identifies that the fostering of IO for sustainability is widely dependent on its context and relies on the dynamic structure between employees and managers. Nevertheless, this study makes an important contribution to the area of corporate sustainability management literature. Specifically, it makes an analytical link between corporate strategy making and the role of managers in fostering IO for sustainability. By conceptualising management practices as context dependent and as a dynamic interplay between managers and employees, the study offers a better way of understanding the links between management practices and employee engagement in fostering IO for sustainability.

While the insights from the case study are context dependent, the conceptual framework and methods deployed in this study for investigating management practices can be implemented by others, such as researchers, consultants or managers for the purpose of fostering more IO for sustainability in other contexts and further exploring the dynamics between people at all levels of the firm. Therefore, as this study shows the importance of investigating management practice in the setting where it occurs, future studies are needed to examine the management practices in other industry contexts and further explore the dynamic interplay between all levels of the firm.

Keywords: Innovation, employee engagement, business management, management practices, corporate strategy, innovative organisations, sustainable development

Sammanfattning

Den globala hållbara utvecklingen har lett till ett ökat tryck på organisationer att strategiskt integrera hållbarhet i sina verksamheter. Den svenska massa- och pappersindustrin är en av de branscher som påverkas och som har behövt göra hållbarhet till strategisk prioritet. När man implementerar en hållbarhetsstrategi på organisationsnivå är det viktigt att hitta sätt att inkludera alla delar i organisationen. Här spelar organisationens ledning en stor roll, eftersom de på ett tydligt sätt kan skapa förutsättningarna för att i praktiken koppla ihop hållbarhetsmålen med nya sätt att bedriva verksamheten. En utmaning är dock hur man ska engagera de anställda.

Syftet med den här studien är därför att bidra till förståelsen hur chef-aktiviteter engagerar anställda att främja en mer innovativ organisation för hållbarhet. Tidigare litteratur om innovativa organisationer, chef-aktiviteter och medarbetarengagemang tillsammans med empiriska data från ett fallstudieföretag kommer användas för att möta detta syfte. De kvalitativa forskningsmetoderna semistrukturerade intervjuer, fokusgrupper och frågeformulär användes i denna forskning. Det empiriska resultatet visar att fallstudieföretaget använder sig av flera olika aktiviteter, utförda av chefer, för att fostra en mer innovativ organisation. Studien visar också att medarbetarnas uppfattningar och engagemang för dessa aktiviteter kan variera beroende på individ och på vilket sätt aktiviteten utförs. Denna studie identifierar även att främjandet av innovativa organisationer för hållbarhet är i hög grad beroende av sammanhanget och påverkas mycket av dynamiska strukturen mellan anställda och chefer. Studien ger också ett viktigt bidrag till litteraturen, och framtida studier, om hållbar företagsstyrning genom att göra en analytisk koppling mellan företagsstrategi och chefers roll i arbetet för att främja innovativa organisationer för hållbarhet. Dessutom uppmärksammar studien vikten av att undersöka chef-aktiviteter och dynamiken mellan anställda och chefer i den kontext det äger rum. Trots att insikterna från fallstudien påverkas av sin kontext, så kan det konceptuella ramverket och den kombinationen av datainsamlingsmetoder som används i studien, användas av andra, så som forskare, konsulter eller chefer, i syfte att främja mer innovativa organisationer för hållbarhet i andra sammanhang. Men även för att utforska dynamiken mellan människor på alla nivåer i företaget. Följaktligen, denna studie demonstrerar vikten av att fortsätta undersöka chef-aktiviteter i den miljö där den förekommer. Således behövs framtida studier för att undersöka ledningspraxis i andra branschsammanhang och ytterligare utforska de dynamiska förhållandena mellan alla nivåer i företaget

Nyckelord: Innovation, medarbetarengagemang, företagsledning, ledningsmetoder, innovativa organisationer, hållbar utveckling

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Abbreviations

UN	United Nations
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
P&P	Pulp and paper
IO	Innovative organisations

Introduction

The following chapter will present a general background to the research topic followed by a problem statement. Furthermore, the chapter presents the reader with an abbreviation of the research's aim and research questions, as well as some deduced theoretical- and empirical delimitations and contributions.

1.1 Background

The global emphasis on sustainable development has led to an increased pressure on organisations to strategically integrate sustainability in their business models. The report "Our Common Future" (Brundtland 1987) states that

> "Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundtland 1987:16).

Brundtland (1987) continues by arguing that the limitations related to sustainable development often come from technology and social organisations. Ultimately, organisations today need to take their responsibility and support society with products, services, and resources to achieve sustainable development (ibid.). In 2015, all United Nations (UN) member states adopted a blueprint measure towards sustainable development, commonly known as the 2030 Agenda and the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). However, implementing these goals in already existing and well-established organisational structures can be a potential challenge for businesses and requires strong commitment by all stakeholders to implement the global goals (UN 2022).

Sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda are vital issues and topics on a global level. This has an impact on the industry level as it creates a change in the business environments, and steers firms to establish business development strategies to align with the global sustainability objectives. The pulp and paper (P&P) industry is one of the industries that is affected, presenting both opportunities and challenges for development. Furthermore, Johansson et al. (2021) state that the P&P industry has played, and is still playing, a key role for Sweden and its economic growth. Sweden is the second largest exporter in the world of P&P and, apart from contributing to Sweden's financial status, the industry also provides job opportunities and contributes to the development towards a more sustainable society through their use of renewable materials and innovative solutions (SkogsSverige 2021). Like other industries, it is challenged by climate impact, environmental considerations, resource efficiency, higher energy prices etc. (Johansson et al. 2021). Alongside these challenges, there has also been a decline in demand for paper products in traditional print (ibid.) and graphic paper (Berg & Lingqvist 2019). Thus, as the environment and society has developed, the raw material in P&P is increasingly contributing to multiple opportunities for utilising renewable materials in new ways. Moreover, the declining demand of traditional print and graphic paper is offset by the increased demand and production of packaging materials. Consequently, the P&P industry has in recent years gone from mainly focusing on paper products to creating innovative and renewable materials and packaging solutions (Johansson et al. 2021; Berg & Lingqvist 2019).

Since sustainability objectives have become a corporate imperative, more sustainability-oriented innovation is needed in firms to maintain their competitiveness on the market. Innovation is seen as a successful way for companies to gain competitive advantage as well as having a positive impact on the organisations' performance and reputation (Szutowski & Ratajczak 2016; Chutivongse & Gerdsri 2019). Implementing a corporate sustainability strategy requires innovation at the organisational level in terms of management practices and organisational structures (Mitra 2017). This calls for more innovative organisations (IO) that can align business developments with sustainability strategies. In such instances, organisations need the management ability to impact and encourage their employees to contribute to sustainability-oriented innovation processes (Pellegrini 2018). This is especially important for industries that are disrupted by external factors such as changes in technology and sustainability pressures (Onufrey & Bergek 2021), such as the Swedish P&P industry (Johansson et al. 2021).

In the development of new strategies, business managers often play a significant role. However, in the implementation phase all levels within the organisation are equally important. Additionally, business management is essential in the adoption of new innovative practices and making the employees feel motivated to engage in solving problems and be innovative (Shaar et al. 2015). Consequently, the external factors of changing business environments have intensified the pressure on managers to find ways to communicate, engage and interact with their employees in this new context. Additionally, according to Singh et al. (2021), engaged employees work dedicatedly and efficiently to improve organisational performance and effectiveness. Due to the external factors causing changes in the business environment, engaged employees are a prerequisite for fully integrating corporate strategies across all levels in the organisation. Thus, the role of management practices is key to fostering more IO that can align business developments with sustainability objectives. In such instances, engaging employees is necessary (ibid.).

1.2 Problem Statement

Innovation is an uncertain and complex process that needs to be carefully managed and business management is often considered to be the driver of innovation on the sectoral level (Saari et al. 2015). However, management efforts to create more IO are not without challenges. Therefore, an identified important task for business management is to explore ways to encourage all employees within the organisation to be a part of strategic execution. Organisational innovations are most often strategically implemented as a top-down activity managed by the corporate leadership team and frequently include all levels and departments of an organisation (ibid.).

The problem pinpointed in this research is the need for corporate adoption towards external drivers resulting in rapidly changing industries. In these rapidly changing industries engaging employees to be a part of these changes is a key challenge. The Swedish P&P industry faces challenges such as the change of demand for its products as well as environmental impacts caused by global sustainability issues. These changes in the business environment have caused strategic priorities in the organisational setting, such as communicating and implementing corporate sustainability strategies. To align with these strategic priorities, innovation is needed in the industry. Consequently, at the level of the firm, it is important to foster more IO. Here, managers are considered to play an important role in fostering IO to enable employee engagement throughout the entire organisation. Thus, the scope of this thesis is to understand how and what business management practices foster more IO for sustainability and hence understand how these practices impact the employees' engagement to foster IO. This will be further discussed in section 2.5.

1.3 Research Gap

Previous research on IO tends to focus on essential factors that can be applied to create IO, such as effective teamwork, learning and training opportunities or a creative climate etc. (Chutivongse & Gerdsri 2019; Mitra 2017; Rao 2016; Tidd & Bessant 2021). However, these studies focus on managers as individuals and their ability to make people and organisations more innovative. This could, for example, be restructuring the office into an open workspace, selecting innovative representatives from each department, or letting people have internships at other departments to increase their creativity (Mitra 2017). Nevertheless, these studies focus very little on actual management practices and what occurs in empirical settings. Here, the researchers have identified a gap in knowledge.

According to Chutivongse and Gerdsri (2019), IO encompass all levels within the organisation, and having engaged employees is important to achieve strategic priorities. Hence, understanding how the dynamic interplay between management practices and employees works when fostering IO is an important area for business administration research. Indeed, the interplay between management practices and employees and how that generates more IO is highly dependent on the context. This implies that industries might foster IO in different ways, suggesting that an understanding of different types of industry and context is important in understanding how management practices foster IO.

1.4 Aim and Research Questions

To succeed with sustainable objectives, management practices need to engage and motivate employees to be a part of the process. Therefore, the aim of this study is to contribute to the understanding of how business management fosters more innovative organisations for sustainability. Consequently, to achieve the aim of this research, the authors will conduct a case study on a packaging and paper firm in the Swedish P&P industry that seeks to align business development with sustainability. The research will examine specifically how business managers in the case study firm motivate and engage their employees to foster more IO. This leads to the following research questions:

1. What practices are deployed by managers at the case study firm to foster innovative organisation?
2. What impact do such practices have on employees to engage with innovative organisations?
3. How do management practices foster innovative organisations?

1.5 Contribution and Delimitations

The authors of this study have a strategic focus on management within IO, predominantly internal forces of employee engagement and the role of managerial practices. Any other internal or external stakeholders who may be applicable within the research field are not studied further. The study is based upon the role of managers engaging employees specifically towards corporate sustainability strategy and does not research the correlation to any other corporate business strategies. Moreover, this study aims to explore the Swedish P&P industry, characterised as an industry aligning to global pressures, such as sustainable development.

The empirical delimitations include this research case-study format, specifically co-working with a Swedish packaging and paper firm. The second empirical delimitation is the focus on employees and their perception of being engaged in corporate sustainability strategies. The third empirical delimitation is that the authors have chosen to collect data from top-level managers as opposed to a middle- or lower-level management. This is to avoid confusion and make a clear distinction and empirical example of the different perceptions between employees and top-level business managers.

Through these applied delimitations, this study can contribute increased understanding and insights into business management at organisations in a changing business environment. By understanding how management practices engage employees to enable IO, the authors can contribute knowledge and insights that help managers to develop more IO and understand how sustainability strategies can be integrated within an IO. Moreover, this research contributes to the academic field of business administration with knowledge and research on how organisations, through innovation, management, and employee engagement, can sustain competitiveness in a continuously dynamically changing industry. Finally, it contributes an understanding of how management practices engage employees to foster more IO for sustainability.

1.6 Thesis Outline

This thesis outline (see figure 1) will help the researchers to frame the main principles that will be used throughout the study to answer the research question and pinpoint the research problem. It will guide the reader through the structure of the research process (Bell et al. 2019). The research will follow a standard thesis outline and will begin with an introduction to the study.

Chapter two provides a literature review', where the authors present what previous research about the studied area exists. Within this chapter there will also be a theoretical framework providing the reader with information on what theories and concepts will be used throughout the conduct of the study. The method is illustrated in chapter three and describes the key knowledge required to conduct and assess this research. These three chapters will be followed by a description of the empirical data findings in chapter four. Chapter five will analyse and discuss the results and in chapter six the reader will be presented with a summary and conclusion of the research findings and suggestions for future research.

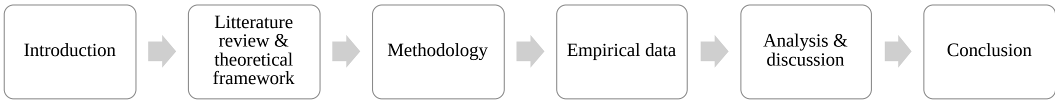

Figure 1. The thesis outline.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The following chapter will present a literature review conducted within the field of innovative organisations (IO), management practices and employee engagement and how the words correspond to each other as well as the identified research gap. The thorough investigation of previous research will result in a self-made theoretical framework that the research will be based upon.

2.1 Innovative Organisations

The global evidence and urgency regarding sustainability matters is extensive and sustainable development is the key driver of business transformations. The link between innovation and sustainability is clear. Change is needed, and thus innovation is the key for businesses to change (Benz 2022; Kemper et al. 2019; Long et al. 2018; Müller & Pfleger 2014; Waddock 2021).

The ever-increasing sustainability pressures oblige management to take action to tackle the challenges, and opportunities, that sustainability implies for organisations (Seebode et al. 2012). Innovation can be defined as:

> "Practical application of new inventions into marketable products and services" (Arshi & Rao 2019:178).

According to Rao (2016), without innovation in organisations, the world would not be able to create the conditions needed to develop sustainable growth. Rao (2016) continues by arguing that being innovative occasionally is not something that will lead to success. Instead, actively supporting innovative work within all levels of the organisations is seen to not only generate sustainable solutions but also organisational effectiveness. Moreover, to manage innovations successfully, the activities related to the innovation process constantly need to be developed and adjusted (ibid.).

IO are companies who constantly and proactively aim to develop and are not afraid of making changes to progress (Mitra 2017). IO are also known for being adoptive and entrepreneurial and integrating these innovative traits throughout the organisation and towards stakeholders (ibid.). The published research provided by

Mitra (2017) establishes a difference between an IO and one which is not. In summary, Mitra describes adaptability, agility, and ambidexterity as crucial components dependent on each other to create organisations that are innovative (ibid.).

Adaptability covers the undeniable necessity of flexible structures and management skills in the operating and future processes of organisational innovation (Mitra 2017). The much-desired competency to adapt and alter strategies alongside environmental dynamics that occur in business landscapes and society drives a reconstruction and development of existing business, especially in terms of external market demands, behaviour amongst buyers and other factors in the business environment. Arguably, a high level of external uncertainty allows for greater opportunities for developing business restructuring. Notably, this requires a firm to be highly flexible, and thus agile, to ever-changing processes in organisations (ibid.). Furthermore, agility implies the responsiveness a business possesses to be quick on its feet and attentive to movements in a fast-changing climate.

Ambidexterity refers to an organisation’s ability to both develop and nurture existing organisational structures, while also establishing new ones (Mitra 2017). A key feature that differs an IO from one which is not is the necessity to manage the operating organisation while also developing new lines of activity which in the longer run will become the focus of the current operations (ibid.). Organisations are indeed challenged by the management of innovation in the “steady state” of current operations. But beyond the steady state of business, organisations who are regarded as innovative also exploit and thrive on the fluid conditions of fast-moving, agile risk-taking and failure (Tidd & Bessant 2021). Arguably, a massive challenge for company management is to acquire and maintain the ambidextrous skills required in an IO (ibid.).

The key feature of establishing a shared vision, leadership, and the will to innovate is the level of support from the management team (Tidd & Bessant 2021). Appropriate structure in the organisation is an ambidextrous challenge and key individuals are actors of risk-taking. The emphasis of cross-functional collaboration is a key feature for enabling effective team working and purposive perspective training is crucial for continuous individual development. It is important to have channels within the IO for the flow of unorthodox ideas and extensive communication. High involvement in innovation is the harness for entrepreneurial energy. Extensive networking is key for capacitate external focus and a creative climate is dependent upon intrapreneurship development. A learning organisation is one which emphasises learning across all organisational boundaries (ibid.). Moreover, to successfully implement strategies to foster IO, management activities are important, and will be discussed in the next section.

2.2 Management Practices to Foster Innovative Organisations

When implementing a strategic process, the managers have the responsibility to lead and formulate strategies that will lead to the processes being successfully implemented (Hill et al. 2015). When creating an environment where creative decisions and creation of new ideas and knowledge are supported, the top-level management plays an important role (Shaar et al. 2015). Additionally, top-level managers are also seen as key players when the aim is to implement innovations (Elenkov & Manev 2005).

When an organisation aims to become innovative, it is important that all dimensions within the organisation are included to manage the innovation activities effectively (Chutivongse & Gerdsri 2019). Additionally, adjusting the organisational structure so it fits and supports innovative behaviours and activities is something that previous researchers have recommended. However, it is important to remember that there is not a "one size fits all" solution to how IO should be structured or managed. Instead, qualities such as cross-functional teams, flexible working processes and a culture that supports creativity is seen to lead to organisational competitive advantage (ibid.). Hence, according to Chutivongse and Gerdsri (2019), motivating employees to develop new ideas is more effective than commanding and controlling when creating an IO. Moreover, Seebode et al. (2012) argues that there is a potential risk for well-established organisations that have developed well-functioning and effective routines to search for new alternatives and think outside the box.

Management practices can benefit from including the concept of management innovation in various departments within the organisation. A challenge that business management may experience due to the hierarchical structures in the top-down implementation of new innovations and processes is to include all levels within the organisation. However, the integration of management innovation could avoid the risk of employees underrating the role of active innovators that top-level managers possess and spark confidence in the management's innovation ability (Zhang et al. 2019). One definition of management innovation is as follows:

> "Management innovation refers to the introduction of management practices, processes and structures that are intended to further organizational goals." (Volberda et al. 2013:1)

In other words, management innovation is related to how and what managers in an organisation take decisions, motivate employees, manage processes, and set the direction for the future. Hence, these processes can look very different depending on the organisation. This further suggests that successful management innovation is often unique and can only be adopted to a certain setting, resulting in a competitive advantage in the business environment (ibid.). Change is one of the characteristics related to innovation, hence why change itself can lead to management innovation. However, a manager cannot implement a change on their own but requires employee engagement, which will be presented in the next section.

2.3 Employee Engagement within Innovative Organisations

Employee engagement can be defined as:

> "The harnessing of organisation members selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performance."(Kahn 1990:694)

The employee's beliefs concerning the organisation, the working conditions and the leader can be connected to the cognitive aspect. Meanwhile, the employee's positive or negative attitudes towards the organisation can be linked with the emotional aspect (Little & Little 2006). Lastly, the physical aspect is related to the employee's ability and willingness to perform its role (Kahn 1990). However, other researchers have defined employee engagement as the employee's ability to emotionally and intellectually engage with the organisation (Richman et al. 2008) or simply as the employee's passion for work (Truss et al. 2013). However, employee engagement can be defined as a mix of cognitive, emotional and behaviour components that are linked to individual role performance (Rao 2016). Engaged employees are also key when improving the creative performance within the organisation and can attract more talented people to the organisation. This further implies the new knowledge and experience can be shared and, in this way, lead the company further (ibid.).

Both employee engagement and innovation are areas that have been widely studied and in the last couple of years a relationship between the two concepts has been established (Arshi & Rao 2019). According to Rao (2016), innovation could be described as an intrinsic part of human activities, which indicates that innovation is not only about products, but also about human nature and relationships. Moreover, separating innovation from humans creates a risk of missing out on the most important part of the innovation process (ibid.). Rao (2016) further argues that organisation innovation depends on the degree of creativity among the employees, hence this creativity can only be created by the individual. Employee engagement is a core resource in promoting innovation activity, which indicates a clear relationship between engaged employees and innovation (ibid.). Birkinshaw (1997) demonstrates that innovation and engagement support each other and argues that employees who are engaged are more likely to be innovative. Previous research also suggests that employee engagement leads to innovative behaviour, since the individual goes the extra mile to collaborate with colleagues. This further leads to improvement within the organisation, as well as strengthening the organisation's external profile (Rao 2016; Kassa & Tsigu 2021).

2.4 Summary of and Reflection on Literature

In this rapidly changing business environment, organisations need to successfully implement innovations to stay competitive in an industry disrupted by external factors (Siyal et al. 2021). Additionally, the increased awareness in society puts external pressure on organisations to implement innovation strategies to improve their business model's sustainability impact (Lieshout et al. 2021). These changes and external pressures can be viewed as both challenges and opportunities, depending on how the organisation interacts with and adjusts to these tensions (Onufrey & Bergek 2021). An organisation might experience challenges regarding time resources and structural updates, but also experience opportunities in terms of ability to reach new markets, develop new product segments and update existing strategies (ibid.).

According to Artusi and Bellini (2021), innovation within organisations often comes from the business management level, aiming to generate a new strategy. However, to implement innovation, it is important that all levels within the organisation feel motivated and commit to be a part of the change (Siyal et al. 2021). In relation to this, the concept of management innovation has been researched to understand how management practices can be used to create an effective innovation process (Pertuz & Pérez 2021). Moreover, unique innovation strategies need to be implemented for each company (ibid.). Therefore, researching different types of organisations is important to acquire a broadened understanding of the topic. Additionally, the importance of addressing and identifying internal resources such as employees when achieving and sustaining competitive advantage is researched by Kassa and Tsigu (2021). Ultimately, without engaged employees, organisations will face challenges when trying to achieve competitive advantage. Moreover, previous studies show clear links between employee engagement and innovation (Singh et al. 2021). Employees that have high levels of engagement often show a larger willingness to be a part of making the organisation more effective (ibid.).

There is a lack of research when it comes to understanding how managers in a changing industry environment should engage their employees to foster more IO for sustainability. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the understanding of how business management fosters more IO for sustainability. Thus, a scope of study and a theoretical framework has been developed and is presented in the next section.

2.5 Scope of Study

The scope of the study is illustrated below, see figure 2. Business sustainability strategy notes the strategic priorities of firms seeking to align business development with sustainability. Innovative organisations (IO) refer to the organisational level recognising a need to engage employees to achieve strategic priorities through innovation. Management practices refers to the role of management to align strategy with business development on the ground by fostering IO. As such, to account for the contextual nature of management practices to foster IO, this study frames such management practices as an iterative process where management practices are deployed to align business developments with sustainability objectives by fostering IO.

Figure 2. Scope of the study

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The changing business environment this research is based upon is a unique case and a general theoretical framework is not applicable. Nevertheless, it is still important to create an understanding of the phenomena of an IO and how it should be managed on a generic basis to engage employees in the process of fostering IO further. Thus, figure 3 is essential for this study and provides background knowledge that helps the authors to answer the research questions. In essence, the theoretical framework developed in this study presents six key ingredients that are found to effectively summarise an outline that can be applied by business management practices to engage employees in fostering more IO for sustainability.

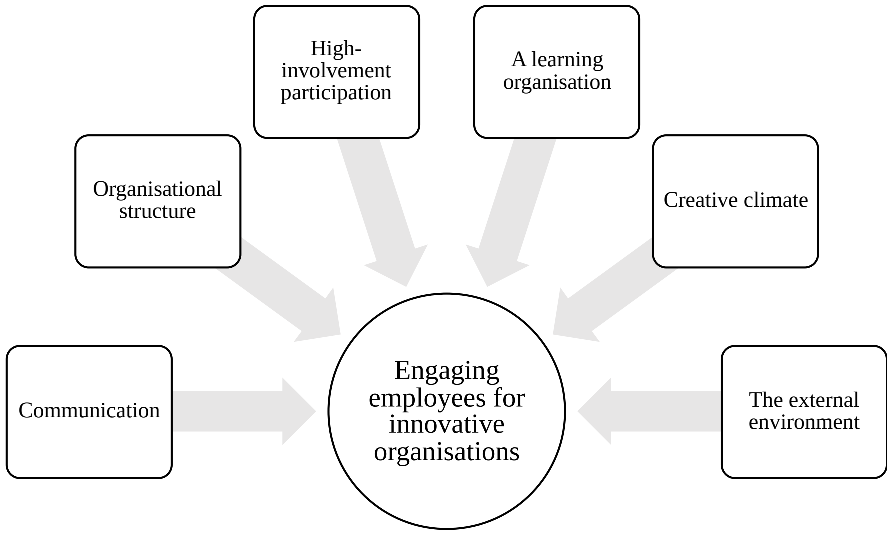

Figure 3. A theoretical framing of management practices to foster IO.

2.6.1 Communication

The risky and uncertain innovative strategies in an organisation, management and leadership are dependent on risk acceptance, or in other words, allowing and accepting failure as well as success. An IO is therefore one which establishes a shared vision throughout the organisational levels and incorporates leadership as a driver for individual will to innovate on behalf of the employers (Tidd & Bessant 2021). The organisational journey to question the status quo and become innovative could face several barriers amongst individuals in the firm. A key component is therefore to articulate a shared vision and aim to motivate individuals to proceed with innovative ideas on their own behalf for overall organisational gain. According to Chutivongse and Gerdsri (2019), a successful leader within an IO should aim to motivate, encourage, and create opportunities for the employees to develop innovation. Another important characteristic for leaders within IO is their ability to manage people rather than tasks and, in this way, encourage the employee to enable innovative behaviour. A leader within an organisation must also recognise the employees' activities and encourage them to identify new ideas or development opportunities, both internally and externally (Alblooshi et al. 2020). Fostering IO also requires the managerial ability to communicate extensively within a firm to incorporate all levels and employees. Communication is characterised in an IO as multidirectional, meaning communicating through various channels, up, down, and laterally. Highly beneficial ways to do so are by using multiple media, job rotations, cross-functional projects, and deployments of policies into the overall structure of the organisation (Tidd & Bessant 2021).

2.6.2 Organisational Structure

A well-placed fit of management would map the most appropriate organisational structure and design (Tidd & Bessant 2021). Nevertheless, there is a distinct need of care to ensure that a structure does not become too restrictive and hierarchical and hinder the innovative and creative behaviours of employees (Mitra 2017). A key feature that differs an IO from one which is not is the necessity to manage the operating organisation while also developing new lines of activity (ibid.). According to Kanter (1983), IO are often characterised by layers that reduce the hierarchy mind-set and encourage employees from all levels within the company to interact. Management should adjust and adapt the organisational structure in a way that promotes and enables opportunities for innovative activities (Chutivongse & Gerdsri 2019). Higher levels of teamwork in cross functional structures and dilemmas increases the ability for adaptive firms to perform. Working in teams with individuals across several functions of the organisation is a well-known mechanism to enable relationship building between differing agendas and enhances engagement in fostering IO (Tidd & Bessant 2021). Furthermore, effective teamwork loosens the hierarchical control that organisations traditionally apply and creates an innovative and solution-orientated working environment, achieving corporate success to be adaptable, agile, and ambidextrous (Mitra 2017). Implementation of new ideas and innovation cannot be achieved by one individual. Instead, teamwork, insights, and knowledge from actors from different parts of the organisation are needed to successfully implement new innovations.

2.6.3 High-involvement Participation

The innovation process often starts with an individual employee who has an idea which is later developed. However, organisations need to be aware that these individuals could be actors from all parts of the organisation (Arshi & Rao 2019). A common problem within innovative activities is that ideas are often lost before making it out to market operations. This problem could be avoided by identifying key individuals, or a smaller group, to yield with passion and energy throughout organisational systems. The individual employee responsible for the innovation would likely carry the deep knowledge and ability to see an activity through all its stages. Additionally, individual facilitators of innovation spark inspiration and motivation through problems and commitments (Tidd & Bessant 2021). Furthermore, these key individuals would also be more likely to have the influential power to fight to see the idea through to external outcomes. Thus, to engage employees in fostering a more IO, key individuals have an increasingly important role as it unravels the effectiveness of communication and knowledge sharing (ibid.).

IO are not able to perform if the involvement of innovation does not occur across the entire firm and requires high-involvement participation amongst employees.

Continuous underpinning of involvement in innovation is proven to play a significant role in the overall development of organisational structure (Tidd & Bessant 2021). Ultimately, without high-involvement participation, organisations will face challenges to achieve competitive advantage and previous studies show clear links between engaged employees and innovation (Singh et al. 2021). The organisation's ability to provide the employees with training programmes encouraging them to participate in innovation processes will develop human skills and participation towards IO (Chutivongse & Gerdsri 2019). This is also acknowledged by Roffe (1999) who argues that it is important that managers encourage new ideas and innovations by applying a reward system to encourage the employees' innovative behaviour.

2.6.4 A Learning Organisation

Inevitably, regardless of whether there is an optimal and most appropriate organisational structure, there will be no one to operate and understand the designs if employees are not equipped with the necessary training. Through the inclusion of individuals to acquire new skills and training, they automatically feel more valued and a vital part of the organisation (Mitra 2017). Furthermore, knowledgeable, and trained employees harness creativity and give the confidence and encouragement to deploy business strategies. Even providing access to activities and hobbies outside of their organisational role could enhance the overall and long-term motivation amongst employees. A modern conceptualisation of the necessity of training and development has come to be known as the learning organisation. The learning organisation portrays innovation as a life-long learning cycle which will be successful if managed well and effectively (Tidd & Bessant 2021). Chutivongse and Gerdsri (2019) argue that knowledge management is an important managerial task when generating new ideas and implementing innovation. Capturing, analysing, and using data to provide new knowledge and sharing it in the organisation could both lead to new innovations and increase the general competence level within the organisation (ibid.). This is supported by Kmieciak (2020), who argues that knowledge sharing enhances innovation at both an individual and an organisational level.

2.6.5 Creative Climate

A creative climate in an organisation is a major contributing factor towards engagement in innovation if creativity is properly managed so that the conditional settings are optimal to enhance creative thinking (Tidd & Bessant 2021). One way to enhance creativity is to design reward systems to celebrate and encourage creative behaviour amongst employees. Plausibly, fostering IO requires the component of having an overall creative organisational climate and thus further its successful strategic measures. Moreover, Rao (2016) argues that organisation innovation depends on the degree of creativity among the employees, and engagement is a core resource in promoting innovation activity. When creating an environment where creative decisions and creation of new ideas and knowledge are supported, managerial practices are key (Shaar et al. 2015). An innovative culture creates a clear vision and strategy and support mechanisms that encourage employees to share their ideas (Chutivongse & Gerdsri 2019). This is supported by Al-Khatib et al. (2021) who argue that in an IO culture, the organisation's members adapt to innovation as well as having the willingness and ability to work towards innovation, ultimately giving the organisation’s employees the ability to adapt and respond to fast changing environmental factors and influencing behaviour that supports and engages employees to include innovation in their work (ibid.).

2.6.6 External Awareness

The much-desired competency to adapt and alter strategies alongside environmental dynamics that occur in business landscapes and society drives a reconstruction and development of existing businesses. Adaptability becomes the introductory preparation of fostering IO to open the notion and acceptance of change, especially in terms of external market demands, behaviour amongst buyers, and other factors pertaining to the business environment (Mitra 2017). The external, fast growing sustainability objectives oblige management practices to tackle the challenges and opportunities that sustainability implies for organisations (Seebode et al. 2012). A challenge for organisations in a rapidly changing business environment is the need to constantly develop and identify new ideas to adapt to these challenges. Further, doing this as a single actor can be limiting for organisations. Hence, a strategic alliance is a potential solution (Chutivongse & Gerdsri 2019). In a strategic alliance, it is possible to share both tangible and intangible resources that can be used to help both the organisations and the industry to adapt to the external factors that impact their business environment (Salisu & Bakar 2018). The importance of external knowledge sharing, and collaboration is also discussed by Ritala et al. (2018), who argue that it can both lead to improvement within the industry and increase the internal innovation performance. Essentially, engaged employees are key when improving the creative performance within the organisation and can attract more talented people to the organisation (Rao 2016).

2.7 Critical Reflection of the Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework (see figure 3) is a summary of nouns found in previous research that explain what management practices can be used to fostering a more

IO. However, the concepts are not specifically researched to explain how management practices can foster IO for sustainability. Instead, these concepts are used as general and descriptive examples of what management could do to further engage employees towards IO for sustainability.

Nevertheless, the theoretical framework will be used as a guide for the authors when exploring the aim of the study. The concepts presented by previous research help shape a general understanding about the links between management practices, employee engagement and IO. Hence, the empirical findings from the study, in combination with the theoretical framing of previous research, will contribute to the main conclusion and result of this study.

Methodology

The following chapter will present the reader with the adapted methodology this research was based upon. It will include the research's philosophy and design as well as the data collection and analysis methods. The chapter will end with a reflective discussion on the quality criteria and the ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Philosophy and Paradigm

Research philosophy is an important part of all studies, and it helps the researcher define the research purpose and analyse the data (Bell et al. 2019). The research philosophy of social science consists of two assumptions that the author needs to take into consideration before beginning a research study. The first assumption is ontology and the second one is epistemology (ibid.).

Ontology refers to how the authors view reality and how it can be observed and epistemology to how the authors view and generate theory. The selected assumption will later guide the authors when selecting research methods (Bell et al. 2019). Moreover, within ontology the authors can have two positions: objectivism and constructionism. The objective position suggests that social phenomena will exist whether we as individuals are aware of them or not and can't be influenced by the observer (Saunders et al. 2009). Thus, an objectivist believes that social and physical phenomena should be studied in the same way as natural scientists study nature. The reason for this reasoning is that objectivists believe that these phenomena exist independently and are universal (ibid.). Consequently, since this study aimed to examine how management practices can foster the social phenomena of innovative organisation (IO), this was not a suitable position. On the other hand, constructionism argues that social phenomena are impacted, changed, and updated by social actors (Bell et al. 2019). This suggested that constructionism was the most suitable position for this study.

The epistemological philosophy refers to:

> "Theories about what is known, or what we can know" (Bell et al. 2019:18)

One question that has been discussed by researchers within the field of epistemological philosophy is whether the social world can and should be studied in the same way as natural science. Positivism is an epistemological position that supports this argument. When research uses a positivist position it means that the research aim is often related to experiment testing hypotheses and in this way explains the social phenomena. However, as this study aimed to understand the human behaviour that impacts the social phenomena, this suggested that the positivism position was not the correct choice. Moreover, understanding human behaviour and the "why" and "how" of social actions are instead some of the characteristics of the second epistemological position, interpretivism (ibid.). The interpretivism approach was therefore chosen for this study.

3.1.1 Interpretivist Approach

Interpretivism aims to use research to create new and richer understandings of and insights into the social world and its contexts (Saunders et al. 2019). The interpretivist approach comes from the epistemological philosophy and has a critical approach to using scientific models to study the social world (Bell et al. 2019). Moreover, researchers within this approach believe that it is important to understand and make a difference between social and natural science (ibid.). Interpretivism argues that there is a difference between human and natural phenomena since humans create a meaning, and that that is what interpretivism wants to study (Saunders et al. 2019). The interpretivists argue that all humans are different due to their different cultural backgrounds and different contexts and therefore experience different social realities. Researchers who apply interpretivism are critical towards the positivist approach since it generalises the complexity of humanity, so important insights are lost (ibid.). This research aims to examine the complex context of IO, suggesting that a general approach would make it difficult to understand how management practices in this context engage employees to foster more IO. Nevertheless, the focus for interpretivist researchers is to understand human behaviours (Bell et al. 2019). This suggests that the interpretivist research philosophy approach was a good fit with the research aim, as it emphasises how and why social actions occur. The researchers needed to be aware that this study was based on humans that have different experiences, backgrounds, and roles, so thoughts and perceptions that the researcher may not have expected or agreed with might have been shared. The interpretivist approach also supported the authors in this research as it aims to look at the circumstances and interactions that occur when management in an IO interacts with employees to engage them to foster IO for sustainability.

3.1.2 Abductive Approach

Deciding how to emphasise and include theory in a research study is another important decision the authors of an academic paper need to consider. There are three main ways used in research when building theory. The deductive approach focuses on moving from theory to data, thus creating a research strategy that is used to test the hypotheses of the theory (Bell et al, 2019). The inductive approach uses observation of the empirical background to develop new theories. Lastly, the abductive approach includes characteristics from both other two approaches and is often referred to as a way to avoid the weaknesses that are associated with the deductive and inductive approaches. The adoption of an abductive approach enables researchers to benefit from the deductive approach characteristics of studying previous theory (Dudovskiy 2021). Moreover, it is possible that not all answers can be found in previous literature, which means that, when using an abductive approach, it is possible to modify and enable the existing theories (Saunders et al. 2019). Additionally, the abductive approach also makes it possible to benefit from the inductive approach and to study newly collected data and reflect upon types of new theory (ibid.). The inductive approach argues that new theory can be developed from empirical observations, with the aim of seeking patterns (Hussey & Collis 2014). This approach gave the authors the possibility to use previous literature and theory as well as qualitative data collection from semi-structured interviews and focus groups to answer the research question. The research design, data collection and sampling strategy is discussed further in the upcoming sections.

3.2 Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research is often linked with the interpretivist philosophy, which was the selected research method for this study. Qualitative research aims to understand and gain insights about participants' meanings and the relationships between them with support from data collection and analytical process (Bell et al. 2019). One of the most distinct features of qualitative research is that the author aims to develop contextualised understanding about the participants' behaviours, beliefs, and motivations (Hennink et al. 2020). Furthermore, the researcher using a qualitative method aims to answer questions such as "why?", "how?" and "what influences this context?". In this research, the aim was to contribute to the understanding of how business management fosters more IO for sustainability. To achieve this aim, an increased understanding of both business managers and employees' motivations and beliefs was needed. Therefore, a qualitative research method was used.

Quantitative research is another research methodology that often is used within the business and management field (Bell et al. 2019). This research methodology aims to find information about quantities and numbers. The results of quantitative research are often related to statistical trends, correlations and patterns that help understand a large sample size (Hennink et al 2020). A researcher who uses quantitative research design thus focuses on the outcome, prediction, and generalisation (Yilmaz 2013), whereas a researcher who uses qualitative research design focuses on the process, the context, or the understanding of the studied phenomenon (ibid.). This research aims to understand human behaviours, beliefs and attitudes, so qualitative research design is an appropriate method.

3.2.1 Case Study Design

A single case study research design was adopted by the authors when conducting the study. The chosen design is also known as an intensive case study research, theorising and generalising the studied phenomena (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). Furthermore, case studies are commonly used in interpretivist research approaches and are highly influenced by epistemological philosophy (Bell et al. 2019). A case study research design was specifically favourable for this study, as it investigated occurring events in contemporary settings. In other words:

> "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." (Farquhar 2012:5).

The use of a single case study is typical of an inductive approach in research philosophy (Bell et al. 2019). However, as this research had an abductive research approach, the case study would involve both theory testing and theory generation, ultimately, enabling the authors to refine and refute existing theories rather than fully establishing novel explanatory frameworks. Additionally, the justification for this research being a singular case study design and not longitudinal or multiple case study research was to be able to conduct an intensive examination of the theoretical basis of the research (ibid.). Due to time constraints, this research did not have the aim of participating in case study research over an extensive period or conducting the research across multiple different organisations.

There are great advantages to conducting case study research design in qualitative research, especially when exploring a contemporary phenomenon where the authors have little or no control of the events. However, there are also some important limitations of the design to consider. A comparative research design would arguably further enhance the generalisability of organisational theories (Bell et al. 2019). Furthermore, an adoption of longitudinal research design would map change and give qualitative content analysis across different time spaces. However, the limitations of a case study research design are offset by the benefit that a study of a single case would create deeper understanding (Farquhar 2012). This would not be as applicable in a longitudinal or cross-sectional design. Also, using an experimental design would limit the study to merely testing the theory against reality, while a case study would further emphasise the understanding of applying theory to practice.

This study was therefore based upon case study research design, so that the study did not become too descriptive of previous theoretical research and applied it in a real-life business with actual contemporary phenomena.

3.3 Literature Search and Review

The point of departure for the authors of this study was the literature review. The researchers used a narrative literature review as a foundation for the thesis to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the research field, thus arriving at an aim and formulation of a research question. An alternative method to review literature is to apply a systematic review, which is a more extensive systematised method compared with the narrative approach and tends to be more unbiased in its approach. However, the narrative review focuses on the critical reflection and deepened awareness of theories and concepts within certain subject areas (Bell et al. 2019). Additionally, the authors were adopting an interpretivist approach in their research philosophy, which is more associated with a narrative literature review approach (ibid.).

Since the authors were adopting an abductive research approach, it was recognised that the study of previous literature in correlation with newly collected data was highly beneficial (ibid.). The main literature was sourced from peer reviewed articles which were accessed through the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences library's Primo database. Additionally, some of the literature was found via Google and Google Scholar, mostly to collect information from organisational sites and secondary data. Throughout the literature review, a snowball method was used as search words were expected to develop and expand during the construction of the review.

The search words used in this study (in different constellations), were innovation, innovative organisations, organisation strategy, organisation structure, organisation culture, business management, top-level management, sustainable development, and employee engagement.

3.4 Data Collection

The authors used four qualitative methods to collect data. First, two top-level managers were approached with semi-structured interviews. Secondly, employees were interviewed in focus groups. Thirdly, self-completion questionnaires were sent digitally to employees at the case study company. Finally, secondary data was collected. The combination of methods gave the research the data required to conduct analysis and draw conclusions.

3.4.1 Interview Guide

Before starting the data collection, Bell et al. (2019) suggest that the authors develop an interview guide to ensure that the questions asked during the data collection process will answer the research questions presented. This research used three types of qualitative data collection methods, meaning that two interview guides and one self-completion questionnaire were developed. The detailed guides and questionnaire are found in Appendix 1, Appendix 2 and Appendix 3. The topics discussed using the three data collection methods were based on the research aim and research questions.

In the interview guides, the authors have created an outline of these themes and related questions to ensure that the structure of the data collection remains the same. However, both semi-structured interviews and the focus group are highly dependent on the participants thoughts, knowledge, and answers (Bell et al. 2019). This indicates that even if the authors use the same structure for all data collection opportunities, the data might be different.

In addition to developing the interview guide on the research aim and questions, the guide was developed with support from “The nine suggested questions” presented by Kvale (1996). The guide by Kvale consists of nine types of questions for example follow up questions, direct questions, or structured questions (ibid.) that supported and gave the authors a good understanding of the respondent’s views and thoughts concerning the research topic. Both the semi-structured interviews and focus groups began with a general discussion about the main topics of this research: IO, management practices and employee engagement. Next, the authors went through the identified themes and asked follow-up questions that gave the participants opportunities to elaborate their answers (Bell et al. 2019). Additionally, indirect questions were also used to identify general viewpoints as well as understand individuals' views on the topics (ibid.). The semi-structured interviews and the focus groups finished with the authors asking the participants if they had anything else they wanted to share or if there was a question, they hadn't had an opportunity to answer. By including these types of questions in the interview guides, it was feasible for the authors to identify perspectives, insights or perceptions that weren't revealed in the other questions (ibid.).

3.4.2 Semi-structured Interviews

The authors chose to conduct semi-structured interviews with two top-level business managers from the case study company. The interviews had a list of prepared initial questions to guide the researchers, but the questions were adjusted slightly and updated depending on the participant, thus following the technique of semi-structured interviewing. Qualitative semi-structured interviewing was advantageous in this research as it allowed for flexibility in the interviews, as there was a lot of emphasis on each interviewee’s point of view. A structured quantified interview method would arguably further maximise the validity and reliability of measured key concepts. However, for this research, semi-structured qualitative interviews were chosen to give greater knowledge of and insight into interviewees' own perspectives (Bell et al. 2019).

The interviews were conducted digitally due to the different locations of work sites, travel restrictions and time constraints. However, the digital online solutions still allowed the participants to see and hear each other using webcams and microphones. In qualitative studies, researchers investigate how interviewees answer questions as much as what they say. Notably, a lot of body language and social contexts are lost in digital meetings. However, being aware of these risks enabled the authors to critically reflect upon this, and though there are issues with digital interviews, there is also great potential. Arguably, a digital meeting has potentially enabled a setting with a heightened sense of freedom, control, and security for the interviewees.

3.4.3 Focus Groups

Focus groups is the second data collection technique used within this study. There were several reasons why the authors choose to use focus groups instead of semi-structured interviews when talking to the employees. Firstly, focus groups are seen as more open, relaxed and less intimidating than an interview. Secondly, having a focus group opens up the opportunity for employees to support each other to resonate and develop insights and solutions together as a group (Bell et al. 2019). As with the semi-structured interviews, the focus group was conducted online using Zoom due to the different locations of work sites, travel restrictions and time constraints. However, the focus groups were conducted in a way that enabled the participants and the authors to see each other. Consequently, the risk of missing important non-verbal communication was avoided. Moreover, conducting the focus groups online created an opportunity for the authors to record, both audio and video, the groups, which was highly beneficial in the data analysis.

3.4.4 Self-completion Questionnaire

According to Bell et al. (2019) using a self-completion questionnaire means that the respondents respond to the questions on their own and then give the answers to the researcher. Questionnaires were selected as a method because the authors wanted a method that could complement the focus group with general and background insight about the research aim from a larger quantity of participants. The employees at the case study firm are often stationed in front of a computer, which made digital self-completion questionnaires an easy way to reach employees and receive replies.

When conducting a self-completion questionnaire, (found in Appendix 3), there are some aspects that the authors needed to be aware of. Firstly, since the respondents were answering the self-completion questionnaire on their own, it meant there was no one to ask if the respondents were having difficulties answering a question (Bell et al. 2019). To overcome this challenge, the authors asked both their seminar colleagues to review the questionnaire before sending as well as going through it themselves several times to make sure that everything was clear.

3.4.5 Secondary Data Collection

To conduct this research, the authors required secondary data through access to resources from the case study company. As this research used an intensive case study research design, organisational documents were essential to provide the research with relevant and valuable information regarding the organisational background and history (Bell et al. 2019). The case study company had a readily accessible website with reports, press releases, speeches etc. that was fully open to the public domain. The researchers have adopted a meta-ethnography approach to secondary data, meaning that:

> “Rather than analysing data collected by others, this approach involves synthesising the interpretations and explanations offered in other studies.” (Bell et al. 2019:535).

The secondary data from organisational documents provided the study with timelines and thus provided insights into the company’s managerial decision making and actions over time and organisational strategy information. Furthermore, Bell et al. (2019) emphasises the importance of collecting secondary data when conducting case studies with qualitative interviewing to further complement the semi-structured interviews with an understanding of the organisation’s historical background.

3.5 Unit of Analysis and Observation

The unit of analysis of this research was IO in changing business environments. In today's rapidly changing business environment, organisations need to identify new ways to retain their competitive position as well as adapt to the external factors that push organisations to be innovative. This suggested that IO, as a phenomenon, was interesting to study both from a theoretical and an empirical perspective. From a theoretical perspective, more knowledge about this phenomenon can increase understanding and lead to further research within the area. Additionally, innovations have been seen as having the key role when working towards a more sustainable planet (Chutivongse & Gerdsri 2019). Moreover, from an empirical perspective, gaining knowledge and understanding of how IO behave can support other organisations when adapting to these changing environments. The aim of this study was to contribute to the understanding on how management practices engage employees to foster more IO for sustainability. Hence why, the unit of observation in this study was both managers and employees.

3.6 Sampling Strategy

When sampling participants for the data collection methods, a purposive strategy was used. This sampling strategy is often used when the researchers aim to strategically ensure that the sampled participants can provide a variety of insights as well as answer the research question (Bell et al. 2019). Since this research used a case study research design, meaning that the researchers focused the study on one case, a purposive strategy was deemed appropriate. The authors were the creators and developers of the sampling strategy, while the single case study company was the actor who implemented the strategy.

3.6.1 The Case Study Firm

The chosen case study firm has not been referred to by its name and will remain anonymous in this study. It was selected mainly since it is part of the Swedish P&P industry, described in section 1.1 as a disruptive industry driving companies to innovate due to external drivers. The case study firm is also a widely recognised company within the Swedish P&P industry, generating 23 884 million SEK in net sales revenue in the financial year 2020. A key part of its business is to provide its customers with packaging solutions and materials that challenge the typical packaging solutions in the market today as they work towards a sustainable future.

Moreover, the organisation is fully certified by the ISO 14001:2015 standards (SIS 2015). The company has also been ranked as one of the most sustainable companies three years in a row based on its high score in the Global S&P ESG (environmental, social, and governmental) ratings (S&P Global 2022). Arguably, the case study firm encapsulates the key attribute defining an IO, which makes it a perfect fit for this study.

3.6.2 Semi-structured Interviews

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with two top-level business managers at the Swedish packaging and paper company which this case study was built upon. The top-level business managers were selected based on the case company's organisational structure, which will be discussed in section 4.1. According to the organisational structure, the top-level management team has the power to both develop and implement strategies that foster more organisations for sustainability, which was well linked to this study’s research aim and goal.

3.6.3 Focus Group and Questionnaire

The focus group was composed of employees from different departments at the case study firm. Thus, no department or role was required or requested when sampling the participants for the focus group. The focus group participants were sampled and organised by the company itself. They were chosen in a way that would allow the employees to take the time to meet the authors digitally without impacting their working days. The aim was to have three focus groups with five employees in each group to gain insight and understand how they view the research topic. However, due to challenges related to the daily production activities, it was difficult to spare employees for the focus groups. This meant that the authors conducted one focus group of five employees and not three, which had been the aim. This research used a qualitative method and therefore focused more on providing richness and deep understanding of a certain phenomenon, than having as many participants and respondents as possible. Thus, explaining the relatively small sample size for the focus groups. However, to secure the adequacy of the sample size, the saturation principle was used. The saturation principle suggests that when collecting data, there will be a point where the answers begin to repeat themselves and no new ideas, issues or understanding are provided (Hennink et al. 2020).

After conducting the focus groups, the authors felt the need to investigate whether the data that was collected during the interviews was sufficient, and whether the authors had reached the point of saturation or new issues, ideas or insights regarding the studied phenomena could be shared by the employees in the case study. Therefore, the data from the focus group was complemented by data from the self-completion questionnaire that was sent to 60 employees, randomly selected from different departments and roles by the case study firm. Consequently, after collecting the data from the self-completion questionnaire, the authors reached the point in their collection process where no new information, insights or ideas were shared. Consequently, the combination of in-depth answers and thoughts from the focus group with the replies from the self-completion questionnaires, gave the authors sufficient data to analyse and draw conclusions from the research.

3.7 Data Analysis

The authors used coding to understand and analyse the transcript data collected during the qualitative data collection. Ultimately.

> "Coding means naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data" (Charmaz 2006:43).

The coding process of this research began after the first data collection opportunity, and it remained an ongoing process throughout the whole analysis process.

3.7.1 Coding

Both authors were present during both the semi-structured interviews and the focus group. One of the authors led the semi-structured interviews and focus group while the other took notes. However, as both the semi-structured interviews and the focus group were recorded, the focus when taking notes was on how the participants said things and other types of non-verbal communication. The coding began directly after an interview or focus group was conducted by using open coding. Open coding, according to Bell et al. (2019), is the first level of coding and is when the researchers break down, compare, conceptualise, and categorise the collected data. After each data collection opportunity, the authors, individually, transcribed the recorded interviews and identified key concepts. According to Bell at al. (2019), starting the coding as soon as possible is important, especially when collecting qualitative data, since it gives the authors a greater understanding of the collected data and prevents the authors being swamped by all the information. Additionally, transcribing the data directly makes it possible for the authors to avoid the risk of missing important insights from the data collection (Saunders et al. 2019). Individually transcribing the data increases the credibility of the collected data, since the transcriptions can then be compared to better secure the result as it incorporates triangulation (Bell et al. 2019).

When everything had been transcribed and the key concepts and key points from all interviews and focus groups identified and compared, the relationships between these concepts and points were identified. In this step of the analysis, the authors also could identify how much data belonged to each category and identify whether some categories should be combined into a broader one or others should have sub-categories (Williamson 2002). In this process, it was also possible to identify categories that the authors, or previous research did not expect to find (Stuckey 2015).

Since this study used an abductive approach, Saunders et al. (2019) suggests that going back and forth between data and theory is important when coding. Therefore, the next step of the process included reviewing, updating, and removing codes to identify relationships that would lead to general theoretical ideas and how they relate to existing research. After this, the authors developed a link between the collected data and previous literature.

Finally, the authors evaluated and looked through all material related to the data collection one more time to ensure that no information, insights, or perceptions had been overlooked.

3.8 Quality Criteria

In quantitative research, quality is often measured against the criteria of validity, replicability, and reliability, as they are tools concerning adequacy. However, in qualitative research methods, Bell et al. (2019) propose that other criteria are essential for measuring quality. As this research was a qualitative study, the four criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability were adopted to evaluate the level of trustworthiness in the research. A summarised table of quality criteria for trustworthiness in this research is found in Appendix 4.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility maps out the plausibility of the findings and how believable they are (Bell et al. 2019). The strategies employed to increase the research credibility were that both the authors attended when collecting the data and that respondent validation was employed to make sure that the interviewer's interpretation of the respondent’s answer was in line with their intention. Also, triangulation was key for this research for heightening its credibility and ensured that, alongside the provided interview results, the data was compared with previous research and the case study firm's internal material, forming a triangulation across sources of data to enhance credibility (ibid.).

When collecting data through digital self-completion questionnaires, all participation was voluntary and anonymous to enhance the credibility. Additionally, the secondary data collection from the case study firm’s website were public organisational documents. However, it was important for the researchers to keep in mind that the organisation's shared documentation is published to provide stakeholders with a favourable view of the business (Bell et al. 2019). This, on the other hand, was a credibility problem which was avoided by actively consulting alternative resources with greater credibility, such as reports from reputable newspapers and websites.

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability covers whether research is applicable to other contexts than the phenomena studied (Bell et al. 2019). As the authors conducted the focus group and semi-structured interviews digitally, the sessions were recorded on both video and audio to help with the transferability quality across contexts. Also, the emphasis on triangulation across secondary data, literature review and data collection helped to strengthen the transferability criteria. Additionally, the research engaged thoroughly in the methodology chapter of this research, describing the data selection in detail to provide the reader with understanding applicable elsewhere, thus further strengthening the transferability of the research. Moreover, in the sampling, the self-conducted questionnaires were randomly sent out to 60 employees across the case study firm. Great emphasis from the authors was put on the case study firm to send the digital questionnaire link to a random sample to enhance the transferability of the study.

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability is the quality criteria which aims to investigate whether the results are applicable if they were to be carried out at another time, i.e., if the results are the same as if the same study was carried out again, with the same participants, context, and method (Bell et al. 2019). Again, emphasis was put on triangulation, deeply detailed method description and the strategy of audio and video recording interviews. All participants in the data collection process were offered a copy of the interview guide before the interviews or focus groups were conducted. According to Bell et al. (2019), a copy of the interview guide is a good way to strengthen the dependability of the thesis. Additionally, the authors were attentive to the coherence between the pinpointed problem statement and the use of appropriate research design. The authors also gave the readers a full exposition of the theories and concepts used throughout the research. Lastly, when the authors collected data from the self-conducted digital questionnaires, the participants were clearly introduced to the subject and intention of the study. This to make sure that the answers were appropriately answered in the context of the study. The random sampling and voluntary participation were also factors contributing to the dependability of this study.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability measures the level of objectivity maintained by the authors throughout the research. This consequently emphasises the accuracy of data reporting and analysis and supports the confirmability of the conducted research (Bell et al. 2019). However, the authors recognised that achieving complete objectivity would be an impossible task and requirement. However, personal opinions needed to be as minor as possible and were managed by applying reflexivity. Thus, the authors stepped into a state of consciousness where they actively heightened their ability to understand others and recognised that it is inevitable in all research to not analyse data in alternative ways. When constructing the digital questionnaires, the authors put great emphasis on making sure that the questions were not asked in a misleading or deceptive way. The reason for this was to not in any way favour the aim of this research or the result for the case study firm.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

When conducting any research, it is vital to reflect on and be attentive to the ethical considerations that arise through the process of the study (Bell et al. 2019). Since this research applied a qualitative methodology, it insinuated that the authors worked with real people in real settings throughout the thesis timeline (ibid.). Thus, the first ethical consideration in this study was that the authors needed to be aware of the cultural and social setting that might impact the participants during the primary data collection. The authors addressed this by making sure that all participants had read and agreed upon the final draft of the transcribed material.

Additionally, the thesis was written in English, but the data collection was conducted in Swedish. This may have caused an ethical consequence, as important viewpoints or opinions could be lost in translation (Bell et al. 2019). However, the dilemma was avoided by giving the participants the opportunity to read the translated transcript and clearly discuss the potential risk when translating transcription in the paper.

A third ethical consideration was the challenge of selecting the participants for the semi-structured interviews and focus groups, as it was the case study firm that managed the selection process. Nevertheless, the authors were attentive to this and put active effort into highlighting the importance of random selection to the case study firm and highlighting that properly conducted data collection would result in the most accurate result for the firm. Additionally, because the thesis was conducted in collaboration with a case study firm, it was important that the authors openly reflected upon how the data was collected, what types of questions were asked and what role the firm had in the process. Lastly, it was crucial to note that all corporate data related to the case study firm was proofread and approved by the company before publishing.

Empirical Data

The following chapter will first provide the reader with background information on the case study firm. Thereafter, the empirical data will be presented in three main categories: business sustainability strategy, management practices and employee engagement. The basis for coding and the abbreviations used to refer to the data and citations can be found in Appendix 5. The top-level managers will be presented as TLM1 and TLM2, meanwhile the employees participating in the focus group will be presented as EM1-5.

4.1 Introduction to the Case Study Firm

The firm has been producing packaging and paper material for both Swedish and international customers since the end of the 19th century. The company has ten production sites worldwide and over 6 000 employees. The core business of the company is within the pulp and paper (P&P) industry and has over the last couple of years transitioned from more traditional P&P production to also providing their customers with innovative solutions within packaging and services aimed at sustainable development. Moreover, they also provide brand owners with innovative solutions and services throughout the value chain to increase consumer loyalty, reduce waste and create customer value in a sustainable way. Each customer is provided with a uniquely customised collaboration process and their mission statement is to challenge the traditional packaging and paper material system to create a more sustainable future.

The organisational structure and flow are built upon three responsibility areas: commercial, operations and wood supply. The underpinning wood supply section of the business flow covers the core raw material that the business is built upon, wood from growing forests. The long-term business strategy is based on the company’s partnerships and deep relationships with its stakeholders in the fast-changing business environment. They express clearly on their website that they take an active stance in the industry transitioning to a more sustainable production.

The operations area includes the production sites and their efficiency-focused manufacturing. Much of the focus within this area is to ensure that the facilities are optimally located near the raw material, and that they are modern with work improvement targets. The third and final pillar in the organisational structure is the commercial sector, where the aim is to create new applications for their products and increase their customers' competitive advantage. The sustainability resources are gathered with the resources for innovation and strategy in a common function called Sustainability and Strategic Development.

The top-level management team at the company is responsible for the strategic process that leads to sustainable strategies and policies that aim to develop the organisation and its offering to maintain its competitive advantage. The foundations of the sustainability strategy are community engagement, engaging workplaces, resource efficient production, responsible business, and sustainable wood supply. Upon these, three cornerstones are presented as the core features of its sustainability work (see figure 4). Safety first entails the focus on providing and ensuring a safe work environment for all employees, aiming for a zero-injury operations result. The climate impact focus area sets climate targets for environmental sustainability, specifically targeting goals 9.4 and 13.1 in the UN SDGs (see Appendix 6). Materials for the future encapsulates the sustainability level of a product as well as innovative thinking about novel ways of utilising fibres in the products supplied.

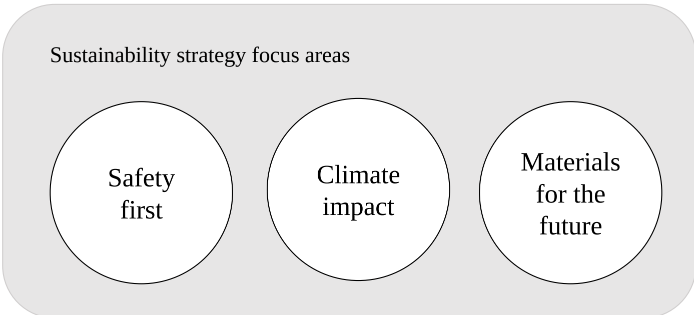

Figure 4. The case study company's sustainability strategy focus areas.

4.2 Business Sustainability Strategy

According to TLM1, the sustainability strategy is one of the strengths of the case study firm:

> "The majority of our employees are proud to work at the firm due to our strategic priority to work with sustainable development, as well as our vision to create a better world. That we constantly work to create a better world, from a sustainability perspective, correlates well with people's engagement to work at the company and contributes to us becoming even better, I believe."

This opinion is shared by TLM2 and EM4. Moreover, this is further expressed by EM3 as:

> "I looked at the firm's sustainability strategy even before I applied for my position. I read about their values, how they work with their code of conduct and what type of working environment they aim to have, just to mention some examples. I had a good job that I enjoyed, but it was the sustainability strategy that made me apply to this company."

Additionally, 81% of the questionnaire respondents answered that they have a positive attitude towards the company's sustainability strategy and 77% of the respondents answered that the sustainability strategy either has a large or pretty large impact on their attitude and feelings towards the organisation.

4.2.1 Inclusive Development Process

Although it is the case study firm's top-level management team that implements and develops the sustainability strategy, the organisation strives to include employees from all levels and departments in the process (TLM1). The participants in the focus group agreed that it is the managers who are responsible for creating a stable working environment and clearly show which direction the company is going in and why. However, when employees from the organisation discussed the sustainability strategy, it was clear that the employee's role and department impacted their views on the strategy and how they can influence it. EM3 argued that they have a role that includes a lot of responsibilities and the authority to make decisions, which inspires and motivates them. They continue by highlighting how important it is to have clear directions and an open mindset when implementing a strategy. However, EM2 has a role that can be described as quite rigid which makes them feel that it can sometimes be challenging to have any influence on new strategies. Moreover, answers from the questionnaire showed that 93% of the respondents' state that they feel engaged at their workplace.

> "An ability for us employees to impact and be involved in developing the strategy"

> "If the strategy feels achievable and changes something that needs to be changed. And doesn't just change things just because one should/wants to"

The citations above are examples of how employees describe in the questionnaires what engages them to participate in an organisational strategy.

All participants were aware of the company sustainability strategy, but not everyone felt that it was applied in their daily work. It became apparent to the interviewers that the sense of engagement and involvement in the sustainability strategy was dependent on the employee's role and workplace. EM2 highlighted that a potential challenge when including all roles and departments in the strategy is that the focus is only on the product and not the other parts of the organisation. In other words, departments that work closely with the product, such as product development and supply chain, have clearer guidance on how they should work with the strategy. Meanwhile, departments in other parts of the company have fewer clear guidelines on how to apply the strategy in their daily work. This was also expressed by EM4, who was eager to emphasise that a sustainability strategy can be implemented both at organisational top-level and the individual bottom-level.

4.2.2 Communication Channels

A challenge brought up by EM4 is the inconsistent internal language. This makes it difficult for the employees to understand what each department is doing and why they are important to create a more successful and sustainable company, thus creating a feeling that there are many different organisations instead of just one large one. Furthermore, one employee answering the questionnaire stated that:

> "Often a new organisational strategy is presented in a big meeting where nobody had the possibility to give input during the implementation process".

A potential risk identified by TLM1 when having such a broad and established strategy such as the sustainability strategy is that sometimes the employees can feel overwhelmed by everything, they need to be good at. That is why they today focus a lot on breaking down the goals and priorities into smaller segments, and in this way makes it easier for the employees to engage in the organisation's strategies. This was also discussed by TLM2, who highlighted the importance of breaking down goals into smaller pieces to make the strategy more concrete.

4.2.3 Sustainable Focus Areas

During the semi-structured interviews, TLM1 recognised that the employees are often engaged in questions related to the environmental parts of the sustainability strategy. This was also brought up in the focus group as EM4 expressed:

> "I focus a lot on the environmental aspect when I think about sustainability. There are many other aspects as well, which I am aware of. But I think of sustainability from an environmental aspect"

A potential reason for this, according to TLM1, could be that processes and strategies related to environmental factors are often controlled by regulations and authorities. Therefore, the organisation has several teams that work with these questions, which has created great engagement among the employees in this regard. However, the organisation does experience social sustainability such as equality, diversity, and inclusion as a larger challenge according to TLM1. This was supported by TLM2, who argued that including inclusion and diversity more clearly in the organisational culture and strategies would be a key measure in finding the tools that will lead the organisation further, as having an organisation with a diverse, equal and inclusive workforce generates new viewpoints, ideas and perspectives that will help reach its goals.

4.3 Management Practices to Foster an Innovative Organisation

To engage employees to foster more innovative organisations (IO), the top-level managers discussed meaningfulness and being listened to as important management practices. The sense of meaningfulness at work was emphasised by TLM1. The manager has an important role when engaging the employees to participate in fostering IO. Furthermore, TLM1 highlighted leaders as being empathic and modifying discussions, for example about strategic priorities and innovation, to the group's different qualities and personalities. This was supported by TLM2, who highlighted the importance of clearly explaining the purpose and the "why" behind a new strategy or process. Also, from the employee perspective, trust, and the feeling of being listened to were mentioned as better examples of management activities. EM5 said that they felt welcome and inspired to go and present an idea to the top-level managers within the company. This feeling was sparked when a manager from the top-level team visited the department to meet the staff and learn about their work and made it very clear that if anyone in the team had a good idea backed up by some numbers and thoughts, the top-level manager would be eager to listen and proceed. All the participants in the focus group agreed that a humble attitude and trustworthiness are important characteristics for managers to have when implementing a new strategy.

4.3.1 Awards and Awareness Activities

Internal communication was mentioned by TLM1 as one main management activity from management teams to encourage employees to foster more IO. Another example was the sustainability challenge conducted a couple of years ago, where the employees were invited to nominate a colleague that they thought contributed to making the company more sustainable. However, employees from the focus group explained how they experienced a more top-down hierarchy, where the highest level of manager is not believed to listen to what the employee thinks and believes. This could create some frustration among the employees. However, all participants stated that this is mainly a problem related to top-level managers and not the team managers. The discussion continued, and EM3 said that everyone understands that some decisions and strategies need to be decided at the top-level, but EM3 believed that the top-level team would benefit greatly if they were more transparent and used more visible and inclusive communication. This would, according to EM3, lead to more employees being willing to engage. They also highlighted the importance for everyone, not only managers, to never have too much pride about having the right answers to successfully implement new strategies in an innovative environment that is constantly changing.

4.3.2 Communication and Knowledge Opportunities

During the focus group, the participants discussed management practices they experienced as important to foster IO, but also what type of activities they felt they were missing from their managers. EM3 explained that they have a one-to-one meeting every second week with their manager. This was described as an opportunity for both the employee and the manager to highlight what is working and what needs to be improved. Another activity brought up during the focus group was the opportunity to take courses, participate in workshops and other types of competence development for the employee. EM2 explained that within their role there is 20% of the time set aside for the employee to spend on tasks and activities that lead to new knowledge and development. Knowledge was also a focal point in the interview with TLM1, who stated the importance of recognising the great advantages of creating a working climate which facilitates education and encourages learning every single day.

4.3.3 Innovative Organisational Culture

EM3 emphasised the need to create a working environment where the employees feel safe to share both good and less good ideas. This they believed to be especially important when it comes to questions regarding sustainability that require new ideas and create a mindset to move forward and develop. This was also brought up by TLM2, who believed that it is important to genuinely create an organisation where the employees feel that it is acceptable to make a mistake. According to them, it can be easy to say, but quite difficult to implement that type of environment in practice, and they believe that the manager has a large responsibility and needs to lead by example and be a good role model for their team. One respondent answered on the questionnaire that they would like to see:

> "More clarity from managers about the importance of working with new ideas in order to create a dynamic culture and continue to be successful in the future".

Team building activities outside the office were also brought up by the participants in the focus groups as a management activity that can lead to increased engagement and motivation. EM5 highlighted how important it is to not only focus on work all the time, but also focus on creating an environment where the employees can meet each other over coffee, at a summer party or at the Go-Kart arena. By doing this, EM5 believed that it would also be easier as an employee to find motivation to go that extra mile and be innovative for the organisation and stated that:

> "It is the small details that make so much difference".

During the interview, the focus group discussed the importance of setting goals and then rewarding when goals are met. EM4 said that:

> "It could for example be that the manager sets goals for the entire group and when the goals are met, there is an activity to celebrate. Then we work harder.".

Besides rewarding achieved goals, they emphasised the need to constantly work towards the next goal, always striving for targeting and improving on the previously set goal.

4.3.4 Inclusive Processes

According to TLM1 and TLM2, local content and internal communication are important management activities for reaching all departments and production units. TLM1 explained that many of the employees that have worked within the organisation for a long time often feel very connected and proud of their history at the company. Therefore, it is important for managers that aim to implement new strategies within this type of team to be careful and responsive and to clearly state the reason why this strategy is needed, and then be open to feedback and expertise from the team. One challenge for the top-level management team has been that employees at the local offices are unaware and insufficiently interested in what is happening within the organisation. They are much more engaged and very proud of what is happening at their local office. Therefore, TLM1 claimed that the firm aims to share more local stories within the organisation, both to make the local employees proud and enthusiastic about the internal communication, but also to inform employees about what's going on within the rest of the organisation. This was also discussed by TLM2, who highlighted the internal communication through newsletters, internal platforms etc. Or as EM4 put it in the focus group interview:

> "Being a big, small company, that is our strength"

Further emphasising the ambidexterity needed to combine local strategies, interests, and knowledge with the overall top-level managerial business strategy process.

Now, a lot of work is being done to increase organisational diversity and inclusion for all. TLM1 illustrated this with the example of the diversity ambassadors assigned throughout the firm to ensure that the message of inclusion and diversity is not lost at any level.

4.3.5 Communication Challenges

TLM2 argued that managers play an important role when it comes to successfully implementing a strategy, both in terms of searching for and disseminating information in communicating it to the employees in ways that feel inspiring and real for the team. Today, TLM2 works closely with managers in all parts of the organisation and runs workshops and seminars for them to learn more about the corporate strategy and how they can break it down to become interesting and inspirational for their team to work with. However, a challenge that TLM1 identified in relation to the above example of engaging employees is that people quickly lose interest and constantly want new types of communication. TLM1 explained that the company is trying to overcome communication challenges by constantly striving to develop new ideas and to make the communication relevant for the responder. They recognised that this is a difficult challenge to solve, but to do so, an innovative mindset is important. EM3 expressed that:

> "Some things need to be decided by top-level management. Things that we do not understand. But I think a lot would be gained if the top-level management team was a bit more transparent and clearer in its decision making. *This is being done because of this.* That motivates you."

They continued by emphasising flexibility and the ability to adapt the communication from managers, depending on who the manager is talking to. TLM1 also discussed the fact that people are different and need to be approached in different ways to communicate and create engagement.

4.4 Employee Engagement within Innovative Organisations

As a step towards fostering a more IO, TLM1 mentioned the importance of being brave and daring to be inventive as a strategic decision to foster an innovative mindset, they said that:

> "Earlier we only used the word *innovative* in our strategy. But now we have clarified it to *dare to be innovative*."

TLM1 explained that this decision was made to actively demonstrate to strive forward as opposed to acting passively. This hindered the creative and innovative business environment, hence "dare to be innovative" came into being. Developing a culture where the employees feel that it is safe to take risks, try new things and come up with ideas, even if they are not always successful, was in TLM1's view very important for the firm to keep their competitive advantage and continue to grow as an organisation. Culture was something that TLM1, TLM2, the focus group and the questionnaires highlighted as extremely important for enabling innovative behaviour and mindsets. According to TLM1, an organisational culture to aim for is a culture where the employees feel included, have power to influence and can make a difference regardless of their role. This culture would then also create a feeling of pride in what one is doing as well as commitment to contribute.

The questionnaire showed that 64% of the respondents believed that the case study firm is an IO. Moreover, respondents described an IO as flexible, curious, and an organisation that trusts the employees and includes them in the development of new ideas. Additionally, sustainability, care about the world around them and creating profitable solutions were other characteristics mentioned in relation to IO. Creating a working environment that makes it easy for employees to learn new things stimulates the will to learn and develop something new every day and is important when fostering an IO, according to TLM1. However, learning in the sense of participating in courses, workshops or similar types of activity is not the key to creating a learning organisation. Instead, TLM1 explained that it is more about creating a curious environment where employees are eager to learn new things, and in this type of environment it is also easy to make changes and be innovative. Further explained by TLM1 as:

> "If you have an attitude and a culture where you constantly learn and question your knowledge a little bit every day, then it doesn't feel as scary when changes happen."

4.4.1 Learning and Development

Today, the organisation focuses on learning and development practices to foster a more IO. TLM2 explained that they have an academy, where leaders are provided with tools and knowledge to help them create a good working environment and identify and unleash the potential in all employees. Another example they brought up was the digital training platform used to provide the employees with digital courses related to their business. Additionally, to create a learning working environment, TLM1 mentioned the building of a collective learning and development platform. Nevertheless, both top-level managers expressed concern regarding engagement when it comes to encouraging the employees to be a part of the learning process. The reason for this, according to TLM1, is that employees tend to believe that training means taking a course, which often implies that they will miss valuable hours at work. However, TLM1 further described how they are trying to change that mindset and perception of training, and the organisation is instead highlighting all the other ways to learn.

Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, the empirical findings from chapter four are analysed based on the summary of literature and theory presented in chapter two. Each research question will be answered, and the results are presented in a table to capture the summary of analysis and discussion.

5.1 What Practices are Deployed by Managers in the Case Study Firm to Foster Innovative Organisation?

Within this study the case study firm have deployed several different management practices performed with the aim to foster an innovative organisation (IO).

5.1.1 Leadership Training

The focus group and questionnaire participants often highlighted culture as highly important to enable innovative behaviour and the creation of IO. What the company is doing today to create this culture was touched upon as they discussed the sense of meaningfulness at work. TLM1 explained that the company is building a leadership platform with an academy to purposely establish a working culture and climate where managers are provided with the appropriate tools and education to create a motivational culture to spark innovative behaviour. Tidd and Bessant (2021) also showed in their research that a creative climate is a major contributing factor for fostering IO. However, they clearly emphasised the need to properly manage creativity to optimise its full potential.

Another employee in the focus group brought up the much-appreciated activity his team manager had put in place which motivated them and their colleagues to work even harder. This illustrates the importance of setting goals, rewarding achieved goals and new goal setting. Furthermore, goal setting was also highly emphasised by Tidd and Bessant (2021) as a popular and effective area to enhance creativity amongst employees.

5.1.2 Working in Teams

Another management practice in place today at the case study company to foster a more IO is teambuilding. In the focus group interview, EM3 explained how their team had out-of-office gatherings where they combined workshops and leisure time. They appreciated this activity which their manager had arranged to spark the employees’ motivation to think outside the box.

The recognition of conducting activities which are not only focused on work, but also enhance team building and collaboration, was also noted by Mitra (2017). Mitra (2017) portrayed effective teamwork as a practice to create innovative and solution-orientated working environments. Teamwork has the power to effectively loosen tight hierarchical structures and controls and guide organisations towards adaptability, agility, and ambidexterity (ibid.).

During the focus group session, EM5 described how their department had recently set up a cross-functional team with the intention of having participants from various departments in the organisation give input and shed insights on activities. As this has been a success so far, they are in the midst of establishing more such teams to be up and running shortly.

Previous research shows that the fostering of IO requires the managerial ability to communicate extensively within a firm. Communication is further defined as multidirectional, or in other words, the ability to communicate through various channels, up, down, and laterally. To do so, deploying cross-functional projects into the overall structure of the organisation will further managerial ability and thus the fostering of IO (Tidd & Bessant 2021).

5.1.3 Creating a Shared Vision

One management activity put in place to blur the lines between the top-level management teams and the local production unit sites is the effort put into communication on the intranet. There, the company regularly publishes portraits and interviews where they present the good stories from the local areas which are often unnoticed by other sites/offices in the rest of the organisation. TLM1 described it as management practices to highlight good stories from the local business areas. A lot of emphasis is actively put on articles that showcase local employees to present the organisation with role-models to inspire and motivate.

The newly launched leadership portal also has the potential to loosen structures by teaching managers how best to communicate and spread information to their staff. A key managerial communication practice that all five participants in the focus group talked about is that every other week they have a one-on-one meeting with their managers. Since, according to Arshi and Rao (2019), the innovation process often commences with key individuals' ideas fostering transformation and development, these one-to-one meetings are optimal management opportunities to find these individuals across the organisation and spark innovation.

However, Tidd and Bessant (2021) presented a common problem when identifying these individuals, namely that ideas are often lost before making it out to market operations. This problem was apparent in several of the questionnaire responses, where respondents expressed the difficulty of ideas reaching the top-level management team at the headquarters. For example, one respondent wrote:

> “There are far too many managers in between who filtrate”

This illustrates a frustration amongst the employees that the organisational structure is too long and strict for it to be able to stimulate the desired innovative behaviour.

5.1.4 Competence Development

An ongoing theme throughout the data collection and previous research is the need and desire for education. Training, development, and knowledge are key characteristics for fostering IO (Tidd & Bessant 2021). Within this area, there are many managerial practices in place at the organisation. Repeatedly, the intranet, with its internal courses, was highlighted by both the top-level managers and the employees in the focus groups and on the questionnaires. However, the focus, according to TLM1, is seemingly on the flexibility regarding time for training, so that workforce hours or days are not lost, hence the great emphasis the firm puts on its intranet.

In previous research, Rao (2016) clearly showed the dissemination and sharing of knowledge and experience across the entire organisation to be key managerial strategies to further spark innovativeness. Again, this was something brought up in the focus group. The majority of EM1’s learning had been derived from the experience and knowledge of their managers and colleagues. TLM1 also highlighted that the organisation always aims for the knowledge amongst employees to be spread across the organisation to ensure that important skills and experience within the firm are not lost. Moreover, both top-level managers who were interviewed mentioned the “Yearly Sustainability Hero” competition as an example of a practice to engage employees in organisational strategies, in this case the sustainability strategy. This practice was not mentioned by employees in the questionnaire responses or in the focus groups.

5.1.5 Diversity and Inclusion

A core strategic work within the organisation, according to TLM1, is to recruit and include more diversity in their workforce. There is an ongoing training for managers where they are educated on the importance of diversity and inclusion for all. Not only within gender and ethnicity, but the fact that everyone is different and deserves to be treated with respect. This is involved in the central strategy but is also, according to TLM1, actively practised across all departments. For example, they described the workshops provided specifically on diversity and that they have exclusive diversity ambassadors across the organisation whose aim it is to ensure and spread the work. However, the diversity ambassadors across the organisation that TLM1 mentioned were never acknowledged by the employees even though the discussion was steered towards diversity and inclusion. This made the authors wonder whether all the management practices put in place by the top of the hierarchy, are effectively communicated throughout the organisation.

EM5 presented an example where a top-level leader within their area of work took the time and effort to go out to the different offices and sit down with the employees to ask for their input and expertise. EM5 described this activity as a very welcoming and inspirational meeting which allowed local creative ideas to take form.

5.2 What Impact Do Such Practices Have on Engaging Employees with Innovative Organisations?

According to Singh et al. (2021), engaged employees are often more motivated to contribute and support organisational effectiveness, compared with unmotivated employees. Moreover, engaged employees often have more energy, positive attitudes, and a will to learn new things (ibid.). The data from the questionnaires showed that 93% of the employee respondents at the case study firm feel engaged at their workplace. Moreover, according to Tidd and Bessant (2021), managers within an IO should work to create a shared vision for the employees within the organisation and in this way engage them to be innovative on behalf of the organisation.

According to the empirical findings, several of the employees argued that there was a clear link between the manager's way of implementing a strategic practice and the result it had on their willingness to engage with the strategic practice. Several employees claimed that when their managers clearly explained the purpose of the practice, how it would impact the team's work and listened to feedback, it increased their engagement and motivation. Furthermore, this suggests that “how” the management activity is communicated and presented has a larger impact on the employees’ engagement than “what” that practice is (Volberda et al. 2013).

5.2.1 Trust and Belongingness

Communication is a management practice that was frequently presented by the two top-level managers as a practice to engage the employees with the corporate sustainability strategy. According to Tidd and Bessant (2021), communication within an IO is characterised as multidirectional. Hence, according to the empirical findings, this is something the organisation struggles with and several employees state that information is often shared top-down rather than bottom up. This type of communication flow was a challenge, identified by both the top-level managers and the employees in the empirical data collection. One reason for this, suggested by EM4, is because the different departments do not speak the same internal language, which makes it difficult for communication to flow between departments and to foster a shared vision within the organisation to create engagement among the employees.

The empirical data showed that the intranet platform was more widely recognised and appreciated by the top-level management team than what it was valued by the employees. Moreover, the interviews with TLM1 and TLM2 portrayed the intranet as the focal platform for internal communication. The employees, on the other hand, barely mentioned the intranet when discussing communication channels, but highlighted the need and desire for their team managers to provide new and important information in the way most suitable for them to enable better discussion and understanding when it stemmed from their closest manager. TLM1 also recognised the need to break down informational communication and strategy implementation into smaller pieces to make it understandable for each department, but continuously promoted the intranet as their essential means for information spreading.

5.2.2 Hierarchical Organisational Structures

Management practices that lead to less hierarchical organisational structures were named by the employees in the empirical data as factors that increase engagement for IO. Reducing the distance between the top-level team and employees increases the employees' feeling of being important and listened to, according to empirical findings. To overcome this challenge, the cross-functional teams presented by EM5 as a management practice example to further impact employee engagement within IO, as they felt an increased ability to communicate with new departments and colleagues. Moreover, it was also perceived as impacting interest and engagement towards the whole organisation, as well as providing a lot of new knowledge and insights for the employee.

The questionnaires showed a tendency towards a feeling of hierarchical control when two of the respondents stated the difficulty of reaching the company's headquarters with their ideas and insights. They described a perception of distance to the top-level management team and expressed that there were too many middle-managers and steps to go through. Ultimately, ideas were perceived to become almost nothing after being filtered so many times. The negative feeling towards strict hierarchical control was also noted by TLM1 in the semi-structured interview. They talked about the impression they had got from employees across the organisation that there tends to be a sense of "us and them". Tidd and Bessant (2021) stated that a common problem, related to communication between different hierarchical structures, is that ideas and thoughts are lost before making it out to the market operations. This problem was apparent from several of the questionnaire responses, where employees described the difficulty to reach the top-level management team at the headquarters.

5.2.3 Locally Adopted and Implemented Strategies

According to the empirical findings, identifying ways to communicate organisational strategies to the employees is a challenge that the top-level managers are aware of. One of practices performed in the organisation today is to break down the strategy into smaller parts and make it easier to localise the strategy to the setting where it is to be implemented. These further impacts employee engagement according to TLM2. Moreover, according to the empirical findings, the employees believed that new strategies should be presented and shared by the team's closest manager. Since the team manager often has more insight and understanding about the team’s work, culture and knowledge, attitudes towards the new strategy tend to be more positive than if the communication comes from the top-level management team. This view was shared by both interviewed managers and all employees participating in the focus group. However, this gives the team manager a large responsibility to both look for new information and knowledge and to communicate it in a way that makes it attractive and engaging for the employees.

A potential risk when relying too much on a team manager is that the individual does not have the time or interest to focus on the strategy. This is supported by the empirical findings, which show that employees tend to feel that their manager's time, as well as their own time, is not sufficient for them to focus on other tasks than their main work task. TLM1 also stressed the importance of remembering that managers are just regular people and it's not possible for them to always be the best version of themselves.

A key managerial practice, working with key individuals within the organisation to communicate the strategy more effectively, has been identified by previous research (Tidd & Bessant 2021). A key individual is characterised as a person that has great interest in a certain topic and has the energy and desire to share it throughout the organisational system (ibid.). Moreover, the key individual can also be a support resource for the manager when it comes to explaining to co-workers how the strategy should be implemented in their local setting. Additionally, their enthusiasm and motivation can also help the team overcome problems related to the strategy and instead encourage engagement among the employees. Several of the employees in the study argued that the one-to-one meetings give the employee and the manager an opportunity to discuss new ideas, talk about challenges and plan. This confirms the importance of management practices being personal, inclusive, and humble to impact employee engagement for IO.

5.2.4 Team Activities and Rewards

Effective teamwork is named by Tidd and Bessant (2021) as one of the key characteristics to foster IO. The empirical findings showed that team building activities can act as a starting point for creating effective teamwork. In the empirical findings, EM5 highlighted how important it is to meet one's colleagues in another environment than just in the workplace. Apart from getting to know the people one is working with, it can also increase creativity in the team, according to the empirical findings. This shows a need for organisations to be open to the idea that innovation and engagement can be built in all kinds of situations, as well as highlighting how important team activities that focus on socialising and the individual are to create employee engagement. Related to team building activities, the empirical findings presented goal setting and rewards as other management practices that impact engagement amongst employees.

5.2.5 Inclusion for All

TLM1 described management practices that build meaningfulness and make employees feel listened to as important. This is also discussed by Singh et al. (2021), who argue that employees who feel engaged and have a positive experience often perform better and are prepared to go the extra mile for the company. Moreover, management activities that lead to managers being inclusive and humble was something that most of the employees agreed created engagement. Managers visiting local production units and being curious about their work and ideas sparks engagement, according to the employees in the focus group. Additionally, a positive, innovative, and brave organisational culture was pinpointed by both top-level managers and employees in the study as being effective management practices to further engage employees. In the empirical findings, TLM1 highlighted that the company actively works to recruit employees who share the organisation's values and to create a diverse workforce. This is a management activity that is appreciated by the employees, according to the empirical findings, since new ideas, thoughts and experiences promote a creative and innovative environment.

The diversity ambassadors across the organisation that TLM1 mentioned in the empirical data were never acknowledged by the employees, even though the discussion was steered towards diversity and inclusion. Notably, these good intentional practices put in place by the top management at the case study firm are not effectively communicated throughout the organisation to reach recognition.

5.3 How Do Management Practices Foster Innovative Organisations?

The following section will present a discussion on how management practices in the case study firm foster IO by using the analytical findings from section 5.1 and 5.2.

5.3.1 High-involvement Participation

According to the empirical findings, management practices that lead to an innovative organisational culture is important to foster IO. According to the empirical findings, in an innovative culture, both top-level managers and employees' participation involvement are very important. An innovative culture was highlighted in the as involving management practices that provide the employees with the ability to be creative, innovative, and brave. The top-level managers also agreed on the importance of having an environment where the employees feel that it is okay to take risks and be accepted. According to TLM2, the managers have a great responsibility when it comes to implementing strategies, since their actions and practices are often replicated by the rest of the organisation.

5.3.2 Creative Climate

Team building activities gives the employees opportunities to get to know each other as individuals, not only as colleagues. This builds greater trust amongst team members to share ideas with each other, both spontaneous and more well-developed thoughts. Moreover, providing the employees with opportunities and time to be creative and innovative, was another factor highlighted in the empirical findings in why team building was a management practice that fosters IO. However, one key management practice this research has identified as desired by the employees but not met by management is allocation of time. If they were given time to be innovative in their working hours, employees stated, there would be higher engagement and motivation for contributing to fostering an IO.

5.3.3 Educated and Skilled Employees

Management practices that aim to create learning and knowledge opportunities are found to foster IO. According to the empirical findings, both top-level managers and the employees stressed the importance of competence development to be innovative. TLM1 highlighted the importance of being a learning organisation, with a culture where learning is an integral part of the organisation's daily routines. Furthermore, several employees stated that to be innovative and creative, knowledge is one of the key factors, suggesting that when aiming to foster an IO, management practices that lead to increased employee knowledge are important.

The interviewed managers emphasised the learning opportunities provided on the intranet as highly valuable, which was something only briefly touched upon by the employees. The focus groups also recognised learning to be a key, but rather emphasised the knowledge spread amongst colleagues and the possibility to take external courses.

5.3.4 Multi Directional Communication Channels

The practices performed by managers that lead to one-to-one conversations and meetings are, according to the empirical data, seen as important to foster more IO. Since both employees and managers set the time aside to share thoughts and ideas and to ask questions. Moreover, how managers communicate and what is communicated was another aspect that came up in the empirical findings. The employees gave examples of situations where the practice itself doesn’t engage them, but how the manager communicated the practice to the employee sparked their engagement. This suggests that it is not the practice itself that fosters an IO, but rather how the practice is communicated.

The empirical findings show that managers at the organisation communicate with the employees through newsletters, the intranet and other internal communication channels. This was also noted by the employees, but whether the practice leads to fostering a more IO is not possible to argue based on the findings.

The employees in the focus group found practices related to “creating an internal language” important when fostering an IO. The employees argued that an internal corporate language would further increase the general understanding of the organisation's strategies and aims and how the different departments contribute to them.

5.3.5 Increased External Awareness

Management practices that increase the employees’ interest and awareness about the external factors that impact the organisation were also identified in the empirical findings to foster IO. Having employees that are interested in and engaged with the factors that impact the organisation is important to be open-minded, flexible, and curious. Being part of a fast-changing industry entails trends, regulations and other external factors are under constant change. This means that management practices that include and inspire employees to be updated regarding these factors would foster a more IO. High involvement participation is another factor that can be difficult to implement in a fast-changing business environment because the employees don't have sufficient time to set aside for it. This could create frustration among employees if they are expected to focus too much on activities that don't lead to any improvement for their role. This was highlighted in the empirical findings as one of the reasons why the employees at the firm today face challenges to contribute to fostering an IO. Ultimately, it is important that managers listen, and identify creative ways to make the employees feel involved, but without increasing their workload.

5.4 Analytical Summary

Following the answers to the three research questions, table 1 is used to organise an analytical summary. The first column presents the identified management practices deployed today at the case study firm to foster IO. These practices are then sorted into the three columns: what, impact and how. The first column effectively answers what management practices are deployed by managers at the case study firm to foster IO. The second column addresses what impact these practices have on employees to engage with IO. The third column presents an answer to how management practices foster IO. The analytical summary will be followed by a conclusion in the next chapter.

Table 1. Summary of analysis and discussion

Management Practices	**1. What practices are deployed by the case study firm today?**	**2. What impact do the practices have on employees?**	**3. How do the practices foster innovative organisations?**
Leadership Training	Platforms for leaders and rewarding goals	Locally adopted and implemented strategies	Provides a creative climate
Working in teams	Cross-functional teams and team building activities	Increased trust and belongingness	High- involvement participation
Creating a shared vision	Extensive information spread	Less hierarchical structures	Multi directional communication channels
Competence development	Daily knowledge and experience sharing	Team activities and rewards	Educated and skilled workers
Diversity and inclusion	Purposeful recruitment and diversity ambassadors	Inclusion for all	Increased external awareness

Based on the data presented in table 1, it is evident that to understand how management practices foster IO, it is also important to look at what practices are deployed today and what impact these practices have on the employees. The practices and impacts presented in table 1 are based on the specifically researched case study firm. Furthermore, the following chapter six will present and discuss the academic and empirical contributions of this study and provide recommendations for future research.

Conclusion

There is a paucity of research and knowledge that considers the contingent nature of management practices to foster innovative organisations (IO) which are needed to achieve sustainability objectives. The aim of this study is therefore to contribute to the understanding of how business management fosters more IO for sustainability. The aim was addressed by combining previous literature on IO, management practices and employee engagement, together with empirical data from a case study firm. To conclude, this study has found that the fostering of IO is a dynamic interplay between managers and employees. This demonstrates the importance of understanding how the interaction between management practices and employee engagement works when fostering IO for sustainability. Moreover, the interplay between management practices and employees and how that generates more IO for sustainability is shown by this study to be highly dependent on the context.

The following sections in this chapter present the findings that this study has contributed, as well as recommendations for future research and a methodological reflection.

6.1 Contribution of the study

The findings of this research have resulted in several contributions to both the academic field and the empirical setting that will foster more IO for sustainability. The contributions are presented as three key findings under individual headings, namely 6.1.1, 6.1.2 and 6.1.3.

6.1.1 Managers Role within Innovative Organisations

To align with new strategic priorities and foster more IO for sustainability, the empirical findings and literature review showed that managers play an important role when engaging all employees within the organisation. The study also indicates that employees' perceptions of, and engagement towards these practices can vary depending on the individual, as well as to how the management practice is performed. Therefore, this study makes an important contribution to the area of corporate sustainability management literature. Specifically, it contributes an analytical link between corporate strategy making and the role of managers in fostering IO for sustainability.

6.1.2 Innovative Organisations Depend on Dynamic Relationships in Context

The findings of the study have shown that management practices are important, but also very dynamic. To understand how, the research has studied how people themselves view their roles as managers, which also affects the practices that are developed in the firm. The study has also contributed to the industry research area with knowledge of the dynamic interplay between employees and business managers, as well as the importance of continuing to develop the understanding of that relationship to further foster IO for sustainability.

While the insights from the case study are context dependent, the conceptual framework and methods deployed in this study for investigating management practices can be implemented by others. Researchers, consultants, or managers for interested in fostering more IO for sustainability in other contexts can benefit from the conceptual framework and methods used in this study and further explore the dynamics between people at all levels of the firm.

6.1.3 An Innovative Organisational Culture

This study has shown that only focusing on implementing management practices is not enough to foster an IO for sustainability. The empirical findings demonstrate the importance of having an organisational culture that encourages and provides the employees opportunities to be brave and present new ideas. This study contributes with insights to the case study firm, as well as the academic research field of business administration, regarding the importance for managers to include practices that strengthen the organisational culture when implementing new strategic priorities. This is because the organisational culture cannot be achieved by only implementing practices, but also requires the stimulation of attitudes, norms and characteristics that enable the employees to become innovative. This knowledge is also found to be applicable to other contexts, such as other industry settings and company business models.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

As this study indicates that there is a dynamic interplay between the different management practices and how these should be combined to foster IO for sustainability, the authors recommend future studies to further explore the dynamics between the various management practices to increase their effectiveness. Moreover, the results of the study also show the importance of investigating management practice in the setting where it occurs. Therefore, future studies are needed to examine the management practices in other industry contexts and further explore the dynamic interplay between all levels of the firm.

The findings demonstrate the importance of having an organisational culture which further suggests that an increased knowledge of how innovative company culture can engage employees to foster IO for sustainability is needed and the authors recommend further research in this field. Additionally, the empirical data presented insights that managers' practices can also hinder the fostering of IO. Their role as sender of information both top-down and bottom-up may create an organisational culture where new ideas and innovation are not spread and shared effectively. This is an area the authors identify as important for future research to be conducted, since that would help to further understand the role of managers when fostering IO for sustainability.

6.3 Methodological Reflection

The conclusion of this study is based on a single case study during a limited period. Since the industry within which the case study firm operates is in constant change due to external factors, it is possible to argue that longitude case study research would be more beneficial. However, the aim of this study was to contribute to the understanding of how business management fosters more IO for sustainability, meaning that it did not aim to explore any patterns or behaviours that develop overtime, but instead to increase in-depth understanding of how management practices foster IO. The in-depth study of a single case during a certain period gave the authors the opportunity to intensively study management practices of fostering IO its context and identify practices that are characteristic to the organisation. This research shows that it is the context in which the management practices operate that impacts how the management practice fosters IO for sustainability. The results can therefore be used effectively by organisations with similar characteristics as a starting point and inspiration to use management practices to engage employees to foster an IO. The methodological reflection indicates that this case study also contributes to the academic field of business administration.

Moreover, the mixed method applied in this research enabled empirical data gathering from managers as well as the employees, both in-depth interview formats and questionnaires. The authors believe that the mixed method used in this research is another aspect of the study which will be applicable for future studies to adopt when exploring the dynamic interplay between managers and employees, regardless of the industry context.

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Popular science summary

The identified problem this paper has found is the notable challenge for organisations to engage employees across all levels of the firm, to align their business strategies with sustainability objectives. Therefore, the aim of this study is to contribute to the understanding of management practices to engage employees to foster innovative organisations (IO) for sustainability. To address this aim, the authors have applied previous literature on the concepts of IO, management practices and employee engagement, in combination with empirical data from a case study firm. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and questionnaires, with both manager and employee participants. The result from the data collection showed that the case study firm deploys several different management practices to foster more IO for sustainability. Some of these practices are for example cross-functional teams and internal trainings. The study also displayed that the employees' perceptions of and engagement with these practices can vary depending on the individual and how the management practice is performed.

Moreover, this study concluded that the fostering of IO for sustainability is highly dependent on the context and relies on the relationship dynamic between employees and managers. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate the importance of having an organisational culture. Hence why the authors suggest that an increased knowledge of how innovative company culture can engage employees to foster IO for sustainability, is an important area of research that needs to be further studied.

Additionally, even if the insights from the case study is context dependent, the way this study have been conducted, through a combination of the concepts IO, sustainable development, and management practices, can be used for other researchers, consultants, or managers when the purpose of fostering more IO for sustainability.

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Appendix 1

The interview guide for the semi-structured interviews with top-level business managers.

Part 1: Introduction
A presentation stage where the participant describes their role and how long they have worked within the company. The authors then present themselves and explain the background to the study, Reminding and clarifying for the participant that this is an open discussion and that there are no right or wrong answers. Receive consent to record the interview.

Part 2: General Discussion
Introduction of the concepts: innovative organisations, employee engagement and sustainability strategy.

- What is the first thing you think of when you hear these terms?

Part 3: Discussion
Innovative organisations:

- In the role of manager, how do you view innovative organisations?
  - Why do you think that?
- What activities do you do today to create an innovative organisation?
  - Why do you work in that way?
- What would you say are good or bad examples of management activities when the goal is to create an innovative organisation?

Employee engagement:

- What do you see as important factors in engaging employees to be involved in creating a more innovative organisation?
  - Why are these factors important?
- How do you work today to engage employees to be involved in creating a more innovative organisation?
  - Why do you work like this?
- What opportunities and challenges can you identify in the work to engage employees to create a more innovative organisation?

Sustainability strategy:

- How do you see the connection between the sustainability strategy and innovative organisations?
  - How do you work to create a connection between them?
- How do you see the connection between employee engagement and the sustainability strategy?
  - Can you give an example?
- How do you work today to engage employees to contribute to the sustainability strategy?
  - Do you wish it looked different?
- What are good and bad examples of how managers at management level can engage employees to contribute to the sustainability strategy?

Part 4: Closing
Inform the participant that they will be able to read through the transcript before publication and are welcome to contact the authors with any questions or concerns.

- Is there anything you want to add regarding any of the questions?
- Do you feel that you have been given the opportunity to say what you think?
- Do you want to add something that you feel would be of value to our study?

Figure 5. Interview guide for the semi-structured interviews with top-level managers

Appendix 2

The interview guide for the focus group with five employees.

Part 1: Introduction
A presentation stage where the participants describe their roles and how long they have worked within the company. The authors then present themselves and explain the background to the study. Remind and clarify for the participants that this is an open discussion and that there are no right or wrong answers. Receive consent from the participants to record the interview.

Part 2: Discussion
Introduction of the concepts: innovative organisations, employee engagement and sustainability strategy.
Innovative organisations:

- What do you think of when you hear the term innovative organisations?
- What do you think that the firm does today to create an innovative organisation?
  - Do you have any examples?
- What do you feel your manager does today to create a more innovative organisation?
  - Do you think that is a good way?
- Do you experience any challenges in how your manager works to create an innovative organisation?

Employee engagement

- What do you see as important factors for you to engage in contributing to creating an innovative organisation?
  - Do you have any examples?
- What does your manager do to engage you in the work to create a more innovative organisation?

Sustainability strategy

- What is your opinion of the company's sustainability strategy? Are you involved in the sustainability strategy today?
  - Yes/No: why?
- How does the sustainability strategy affect your feelings / attitude towards the organisation?
- How do your manager’s actions and activities affect your engagement to get involved in the sustainability strategy?
  - Would you like things to look different?
- What factors are important for you to get involved in the sustainability strategy?
  - Why are these important?
- Is there any type of activity or process that makes you or more/ less committed to participating in the strategy?

Part 3: Closing
Inform the participant
That they will have an opportunity to read through the transcript before publication and that they are welcome to contact the authors with any questions or concerns.

- Is there anything you want to add regarding any of the questions?
- Do you feel that you have been given the opportunity to say what you think?

Figure 6. Interview guide for the focus group with employees.

Appendix 3

The self-completion questionnaire sent out to 60 employees at the case study firm.

Part 1: Introduction
We are writing a master's thesis where the purpose is to understand and gain more knowledge about what engages employees to contribute to the work of creating innovative organisations. One of the strategies within an organisation that contributes to creating innovation is its sustainability strategy. The external pressure on organisations to adapt their business models to the global sustainability goals is great and important both for preserving the planet and for continuing to be a competitive organisation. But in order to successfully implement the new sustainable processes and strategies, it is necessary that all parts and all employees within the organisation are involved and participate in the work. We are therefore curious about what your attitude is regarding innovative organisations, what engages you in your role and what your thoughts are about the company's sustainability strategy.
Time: 5-8 minutes
Remember: There are no right or wrong answers and any answers you give will be anonymous
Questions marked with * are compulsory.

Part 2: Background
I work at: *
1. Production unit
2. The head office in Solna
3. Other, specify here:
4. Other, specify here:

I have worked at the company for: *
1. 0-12 months
2. 1-5 years
3. 6-10 years
4. Longer than 10 years

Part 3: Sustainability Strategy
What is your general opinion of the company's sustainability strategy? *
1. Positive
2. Neutral
3. Negative
4. I don't know

How does the sustainability strategy affect your feelings/attitude towards the organisation? *
1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Quit a lot
4. Very much

What factors are important for you to get involved in the sustainability strategy? *

How clearly do you think the firm presents its sustainability strategy internally? *
1. Not at all
2. Not very clearly
3. Pretty clearly
4. Very clearly

How much support do you get from your employer to get involved in the sustainability strategy?*
1. None
2. A little
3. Quita a lot
4. Very much

Figure 7. Self-completion questionnaire sent to employees, page 1.

What do you need from the company to be able to get involved in the sustainability strategy?*

What changes could the organisation make at management level to get you involved in contributing to the sustainability strategy? *

Part 4: Engagement
Do you feel involved in your workplace? *
1. Yes
2. No
3. I don't know

What makes you committed to participating in a new organisational strategy in your workplace?*

Do you find that your manager appreciates and encourages commitment? *
1. Yes
2. No
3. I don't know

What changes could the organisation make at management level to increase your commitment? *

Part 5: Innovative Organisations
Do you think that the company is an innovative organisation? *
1. Yes
2. No
3. I don't know

How would you describe an innovative organisation? *
What is your perception of top-level management's work to create an innovative organisation? *
1. Positive
2. Negative
3. I don't know
4. Other, specify here:

How great are the opportunities to be innovative in your workplace? *
1. No at all
2. Not very big
3. Pretty big
4. Very big

What do you need in order to be innovative in your role? *

Figure 8. Self-completion questionnaire sent to employees, page 2.

Appendix 4

The employed strategies to ensure a qualitative research trustworthiness criterion.

Table 2. Employed strategies for quality criteria

Criterion	**Employed Strategy**
Credibility	- Both authors attending interviews - Respondent validation - Triangulation - Anonymous answers - Voluntary participation
Transferability	- Recording of interviews - Triangulation - Detailed methodology chapter - Random sampling for questionnaires - Anonymous and voluntary participation
Reliability	- Triangulation - Detailed methodology chapter - Audio & video recording - Coherence of research design - Full disposition of theories and concepts - Clear introduction of research aims to participants
Confirmability	- Recognition of subjectivity - State of consciousness - External review of evidence - Range of multiple choices in questionnaire - Open questions in questionnaire

Appendix 5

Table 3. Data collection methods and participants

Data Collection Method	**Interviewee**	**Title/place of work**	**Date of interview**
Semi-structured interview	TLM1	Top-level manager	5 April 2022
Semi-structured interview	TLM2	Top-level manager	12 April 2022
Focus group	EM1, EM2, EM3, EM4, EM5	Employees	11 April 2022
Self-completion questionnaires	Anonymous	Employees	13-29 April 2022

Appendix 6

Table 4. SDG targets in the case firm sustainability strategy

SDG Goal	**Targets**	**Sustainability Strategy**
8 - Decent Work & Economic Growth	8 - Providing safe working environments for all workers	Safety First
9 - Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure	4 - Sustainable industries with resource-use efficiency 5 - Developing research & development and innovation capabilities	Mitigating carbon footprints through paper production Novel ways of utilising fibres in packaging
12 - Responsible Consumption & Production	2 - Sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources 3 - Reduce food losses along production and supply chains	Manufacturer of safe and fresh food packaging throughout the distribution of food supply
13 - Climate Action	1 - Strengthen global resilience capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters	Positive climate effect of 5.4 million tonnes of fossil carbon dioxide per year (numbers from 2019)

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