

Entrepreneurial Leadership as the Driving Force to Successfully Establish a Corporate Identity

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Management plays a key role in the establishment and maintenance of a corporate identity, including paying specific attention and analyzing the internal influenceable requirements of the process. Extant research, however, provides only little knowledge, which requirements have to be considered to successfully accomplish the process of a corporate identity. Thus, this paper will present the key requirements *Motivation, Trust, Employee Satisfaction, Mental Overload, Growth, Identity with the Company* and *Relationship to the Customer*, which have to be carefully analyzed and considered to successfully establish a corporate identity and how they are effectively used to develop a unique corporate identity. Those requirements evolved from the qualitative research analysis, representing the opinions of 76 interviewed (entrepreneurial) leaders, on the effect on employee commitment and on economic performance when leading in an entrepreneurial way. Corporate identity may effect their overall organizational direction in building a unique corporate identity and gaining competitive advantages within the context of a global business environment. The study acknowledges the increase in the awareness of the benefits of an entrepreneurial leader, who can be characterized by the entrepreneurial Big Five personality traits, by his or her affects on the encouragement of entrepreneurial behavior in the employees, a unique appearance with shared beliefs and values can be the result. However, there is a need for organizations to understand the underlying requirements to develop a unique corporate identity in a global business environment and make use of this competitive advantage. Therefore the study contributes to the corporate identity literature in providing key requirements, which have to be understand, considered and evolving issues addressed and amended.

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Keywords

Corporate Identity, Entrepreneurial Leadership, Big Five Personality Traits, Commitment, Entrepreneurial Behavior, Economic Performance

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1. INTRODUCTION

For many years entrepreneurs have enjoyed the focus of attention due to their achievement of economic goals. New ventures have been successfully implemented in this highly competitive environment. Contemporary organizations of different industries, sizes and various geographical location realize the need of the personality traits of those entrepreneurs in their leadership styles in order to improve the economic performance by influencing every employee towards an entrepreneurial behavior.

That certainly implies that theories of leadership are currently adapting to the changing market situation. In regard of the increasing competition for critical resources (Santora et al., 1999) in a complex and fluctuating environment, it is vital to distinguish the company from its competitors and attract stakeholders by a unique performance. One way to successfully achieve this, is a clear perception and responsible application of a corporate identity (CI), applied in workforce- and company-related activities and externally relations, which are constantly shaped by attitudes, norms, consciousness, and explicit and implicit values and ways of thinking (Sackmann, 2006). These are anchored in the cultural context and expressed in strategic processes as well as in communication patterns. Thus, CI can be seen as an intangible valuable asset, which can influence strategy, structure and the vision of every organization (Olins, 1978) and therefore can become a competitive advantage.

This is where entrepreneurial leadership (EL) falls into place: Whilst EL has become an important feature in the management of a company in the last decades, little attention has been given to the leader and his impact for the realization of a CI. However, in recent literature the ineffectiveness of traditional managerial behavior and a common trend towards the necessity of an entrepreneurial behavior for the establishment of a CI, is given. The interest for entrepreneurial behaviors and its influence on the day-to-day business activities in organizations is believed to be the most significant economic development within the last decades in the economical history (Zimmerer & Scarborough, 2001). A large number of researchers focused on the analysis of entrepreneurial personality traits (i.e. Goldberg, 1993, McCrae & Costa, 1987) to trace back the source of entrepreneurial behavior. According to common literature, entrepreneurial leaders are often inclined to risk-taking behavior, to prefer innovative-driven changes to attain competitive advantage and to proactively compete with other firms (Covin & Slevin, 1988). The broad Big Five entrepreneurial personality traits, of high extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and low agreeableness and neuroticism can help to understand the driving force for those behaviors.

Remarkably, entrepreneurial behavior is recently high on the agenda of organizations and researchers as it is often seen as a vehicle to increase organizational growth and profitability by applying CI, and is therefore one of the main challenges managers have to face, since mainly entrepreneurial leaders realize to hold the essential balance for effective leadership: considering business risks while striving after innovation is vital to be sustainably successful. Simultaneously, a manager's proactive behavior towards competitiveness may miss an attractive collaboration to accelerate the commercialization of innovations. Hence, for the establishment of a CI, entrepreneurial personality traits are essential, since they encourage the right application of ownership, risk-taking and growth in employees of the company and therefore create a competitive advantage in today's continuously changing environment.

Therefore the research question is *“What are the key requirements to successfully establish a corporate identity, in order to positively influence the economic performance of an organization?”*

This paper will provide knowledge and further insights to entrepreneurial leaders and managers, who intend to realize the process of CI within their organization.

The structure of this article is as follows: Firstly, a literature review will define and build the construct between a CI, entrepreneurial leadership and the Big Five entrepreneurial personality traits. Findings of scientific articles provide knowledge to analyze the connection of the personality traits and a CI, which will be illustrated. The methodology, with proposition, qualitative research design, participants and procedures of the qualitative research, will be presented. This will clarify the conduction of the qualitative research where a diversified portfolio of (entrepreneurial) leaders with different positions and industries were openly interviewed. Then, empirical findings of the interviews will be analyzed, summarized and presented, followed by a discussion and conclusion of the findings. This article outlines which factors have to be considered to develop a CI and how entrepreneurial behavior among the employees influences sustainable competitive advantage.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Corporate Identity

The day-to-day business activities of every company are enormous, increasing with the size and complexity of the organization: purchase, supply, production and marketing, as well as the continuously aspiration to attract new customer and sustainably retain the existing ones, are a few activities which represent the organization externally. The total exterior appearance could be labeled corporate identity, often also referred to as corporate culture or image (i.g. Fombrun, 1996; Abratt, 1989).

Corporate Identity refers to the unique appearance (internal and external), which is anchored in the behavior of members of a company that distinguishes it from its competitors. (i.g.; Henderson et al. 2003; Van Riel & Balmer, 1997). It is usually developed through a shared history of experience whereby assumptions excogitate the process of dealing with challenges of the organization (Schein, 2009). These assumptions are endorsed by shared beliefs and values (Schroeder & Salzer-Mörling, 2006) and revealed to new members of the company (Schein, 2009, Flynn & Chatman, 2001). CI comprises workforce- and company-related activities and externally relations, which are constantly shaped by attitudes, norms, consciousness, and explicit and implicit values and ways of thinking (Sackmann, 2006), these are entrenched in the cultural context and expressed in strategic processes as well as communication patterns (Lippincott & Margulies, 1957). Therefore, CI can be seen as an intangible valuable asset and can influence strategy, structure and vision of every organization (Olins, 1978). More precisely, it finds expression through the selected location, the offered goods and services, the behavior and communication towards the stakeholder and commercial marketing. Those factors are seldom in the correct ratio, and during the process of CI, one of the key challenges is to evaluate, for the respective organization, the specific weight of each attribute. Thus, the underlying culture and the characteristics of the business activities are the base for the process of CI, and entrepreneurial leadership can actively and consciously guide these (Schein, 2009) in an organization.

Every company has an integrative identity that is deeply embedded in every day-to-day task, dialogue and production process. Although the company might not be able to control and steer it in all cases (Bernstein 1984), a considerable body of literature shows that companies can enhance their performance by developing a conducive CI and communicating it to customers as well as applying it as an entrepreneurial instrument within the company to provide orientation and strategic development (Olins, 1995). CI is thus a valuable strategic component, to secure success within strategic planning and management, since the sense of community and the consistency of the identity help with the execution of the strategy. Moreover, the literature gives evidence to support the perception that a recommending corporate reputation gives an organization competitive advantage (Caves & Porter, 1977; Greyser, 1996).

Upon the implementation of a beneficial identity for a company, it is crucial to realize that CI is a process and assigns importance to a mixture of elements, including corporate culture and behavior, market condition and strategies, product and services and communication and design (Schmidt, 1995), which have to be considered by the management. The process consists of four phases, which are all coordinated and interlinked with each other.

The literature gives various concepts about the CI process, however in the following the process of Wolff Olins, 1989 and 1995 are used. Generally in the first phase of the process an investigation and analysis together with strategic recommendations are conducted. Hereby the management of the company needs to objectively receive an insight how the internal and external audience perceives the company. This perception should be compared with the company's goals and if the existing identity is characterized as a fragmentary, indistinct, incoherent and outmoded, the management of the company should come to an understanding to improve the overall perception of the business. The second phase focuses on the development of the identity, depending on the outcome of the first phase, a complete replacement of the identity, including the name and visual appearance might be necessary, a changed visual presentation while retaining the name or a simply minor corrections, have to be conducted. Once the decision is made, the execution of the plan has to be conducted by the involved stakeholders and the third phase begins: the implementation of the identity and the intermediation of the vision. In order to successfully realize the CI concept, it has to be expressed with commitment and personal effort by the management, which can use this instance to present the identity as a strategic asset and to integrate it in business structure. As Galileo Galilei once said *"We cannot teach people anything; we can only help them discover it within themselves"*, underlines the importance for the management to encourage ownership, risk-taking and growth in employees. This directs the CI to the forth phase, the application of the identity. The new identity has to be codified, by vision and missions, so that it can be equally applied internally and by all relevant external suppliers. The developing CI influences the company's strategy, structure and vision.

Certainly, CI is a long lasting process, which cannot be developed easily or in a rapid manner. For an effective identity concept those responsible have to have an entrepreneurial perception of the vision and strategy for the organization, and express this vision in all actions, products and services internally and externally. Therefore a company, which applies entrepreneurial leadership, has a clear conception of the benefits and competitive advantages for the successful realization and implementation of a CI.

2.2 Entrepreneurial Leadership

In order to give a comprehensive definition of entrepreneurial leadership, this literature review develops the construct with the definition of entrepreneurship and leadership.

The term entrepreneurship has a historical development (Sharma & Chrisman, 1999) and thus meant different things to different people (Gartner, 1990; McMullan & Long, 1990). Earliest reference has been traced to Richard Cantillon's work (1734), which defines entrepreneurship as self-employment with an uncertain return (McMullan & Long, 1990). Later Schumpeter (1934) represents entrepreneurship as an innovative combination of available resources (Gartner, 1988). Other perspectives of entrepreneurship are risk-avoiding or risk minimizing behavior (Leibenstein, 1968; Smith and Miner, 1985), proactive or opportunity-seeking behavior (Miller, 1983; Stevenson, 1983), and the transformation of individual ideas into collective actions by managing the uncertainties (Chung & Gibbons, 1997). Research on the theory of entrepreneurship significantly increased over the last decades and the attention has now shifted towards entrepreneurial thinking within existing organizations (e.g. Birkinshaw, 1997; Caruana, Morris, & Vella, 1998; Drucker, 1985; Zahra, 1986, 1995, 1996).

For established organizations it is vital to sustain competitive, especially in this continuously changing environment, an "entrepreneurial mind-set" (McGrath and MacMillan, 2000) is recommended to function as a key element of modern strategic management. More generally, it is important to focus on the concept of entrepreneurial leadership. Based on former research (McGrath and MacMillan, 2000; Kuratko and Hornsby, 1998; Slevin and Covin, 1990) entrepreneurial leadership is defined as

"Leadership that creates visionary scenarios that are used to assemble and mobilize a 'supporting cast' of participants who become committed by the vision to the discovery and exploitation of strategic value creation".

This definition underlines the challenge to motivate participants and mobilize the resources, indispensable for value creation, to which the entrepreneurial leader is confronted. For the implementation the development of a vision and respectively committed supporters enabled to execute this vision are preconditioned.

The perceived effectiveness of entrepreneurial leadership attracts attention as organizations are forced to continuously redefine their markets, reorganize their operation management, and revise their business models. To acquire knowledge and skills to think and operate entrepreneurially occurred to be an important component of sustainable competitive advantage (Ireland & Webb, 2007), and thus several companies realize the value of an entrepreneurial leader as they focus on configuring and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities.

The main contribution of the successful conduction of entrepreneurial leadership lies within the leaders themselves. Their entrepreneurial mindset encourages actions, which lead to continuous innovational changes in the fields of processes, structures, technologies, administrative routines, and products (Kuratko, 2007). The leader's capability to compete proactively in the international market is relevant for organizations, independently of their size, to achieve success. The entrepreneurial leaders are challenged to develop internal commitment and exchange networks for ideas within their corporation, and further encourage the parties involved to execute the ideas accurately (Kuratko, Ireland & Hornsby, 2001). Furthermore entrepreneurial leaders are fast in the realization of innovations and comprise more resources and perspectives in difficult times. Concisely said, managers can lead their company and employees safely even through

uncertain times when they are entrepreneurially orientated (Olins, W. 1995). Now the question arises how a typical entrepreneurial leader is characterized. This will be further reviewed with the help of the Big Five Personality Traits.

2.3 Entrepreneurial Big Five Personality Traits

Considerable attention has been given in the literature to the personality traits of entrepreneurial leaders, for a better understanding of their entrepreneurial behavior. Contemporary, various personality psychologists and researchers (e.g. Smith, 1967, Goldberg, 1993, McCrae & Costa, 1987) agree that there are five personality traits, namely extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience, agreeableness, and neuroticism, which are often referred to as the “Big Five”, labeled by Goldberg (1981), these identify the broad personality traits for entrepreneurial leaders. Even though the meaning of those five personality traits is principally similar along a significant body of literature, not all researchers have an equal opinion about the label for each trait, therefore the items defining each trait cover a broad range of content, to assure a full understanding. However, the above-mentioned traits are further used and described.

In the following the common characteristics of each personality trait are given to receive an understanding what is meant by the terms. Extraversion refers to characteristics such as excitability, talkativeness, and assertiveness (John et. al, 2008). Hogan (1986) specifies two components in this trait, ambition (initiative, surgency, and impetus) and sociability (exhibitionist, expressive, and sociable). The leader presents inspirational leadership behaviors Bauer, T. N., Erdogan, B., Liden, R. C., & Wayne, S. J. (2006), Bono, J. E., & Judge, T. A. (2004). Subsequently, a certain affinity between Extraversion and a proactive personality (i.e. to exploit opportunities and to develop the existing environment towards the personal objective, while being persistent in the realization) can be drawn (Rauch and Frese, 2007). Common features of Conscientiousness, the second personality trait refers to the degree to which a person is operation- and goal-oriented, that includes a high extent of thoughtfulness, with a great impulse to control and organize (Barrick, M. R., & Mount, M. K., 1991). It is often found in literature, that conscientiousness reflects dependability by following rules and norms, planning, organizing, and prioritizing actions (John et. al, 2008). The Openness to Experience seems to assess individuals’ readiness to participate in learning experience; this trait is commonly associated with being imaginative, curious, original, artistically

sensitive, intelligent and broad-minded (McCrae & Costa, 1985; John et. al, 2008) and to prefer innovative-driven changes to attain competitive advantage. The fourth trait, Agreeableness involves a variety of interpersonal interactions. It is often related to trust, altruism, modesty, tolerance and communal orientation toward others (McCrae & Costa, 1985; John et. al, 2008). The fifth personality trait, Neuroticism is frequently associated with being anxious, depressed, angry, nervous, and emotional insecure (Borgatta, 1964; McCrae & Costa, 1985; Smith, 1967). The very reverse, Emotional Stability defined by self-efficacy, locus of control, and stress tolerance (Hartman & Betz, 2007), consummates the definition.

These relatively independent personality traits are used to explain the entrepreneurial leader and to develop a profile. Hereby it is necessary to note that every personality trait represents a range of two extremes. The profile of the entrepreneurial leader’s personality traits is mainly characterized by high extraversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience low agreeableness and neuroticism. These traits are perceived to affect the social ecology of everyday life (McCrae & Costa, 1999). Those leaders make use of their potential by continuously searching and exploiting opportunities, which in the short run, encourages their emergence of entrepreneurial behavior and, in the long-term provides them with entrepreneurial skills during their day-to-day working life (Schmitt-Rodermund, 2004, 2007).

Naturally, the leader’s entrepreneurial behavior varies with (situational) circumstances and the employees involved. Personality is a very complex and diverse phenomenon and traits might occur in a different constellation, however, in this research the typical entrepreneurial Big Five (high extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience, and low agreeableness and neuroticism), even though other constellation might be as effective as this specific profile.

However, the literature states stability of the personality traits (i.g. Conley, 1984; Costa & McCrae, 2002; Barrick and Mount), accordingly, an established personality exhibits consistencies over the course of time, independent of life changes, if a company recruited the most appropriate manager with entrepreneurial personality traits remains to be seen, in critical times.

2.4 The Relation between the Entrepreneurial Personality Traits and Corporate Identity

For purposes of this study, Figure 1 illustrates the process of CI,

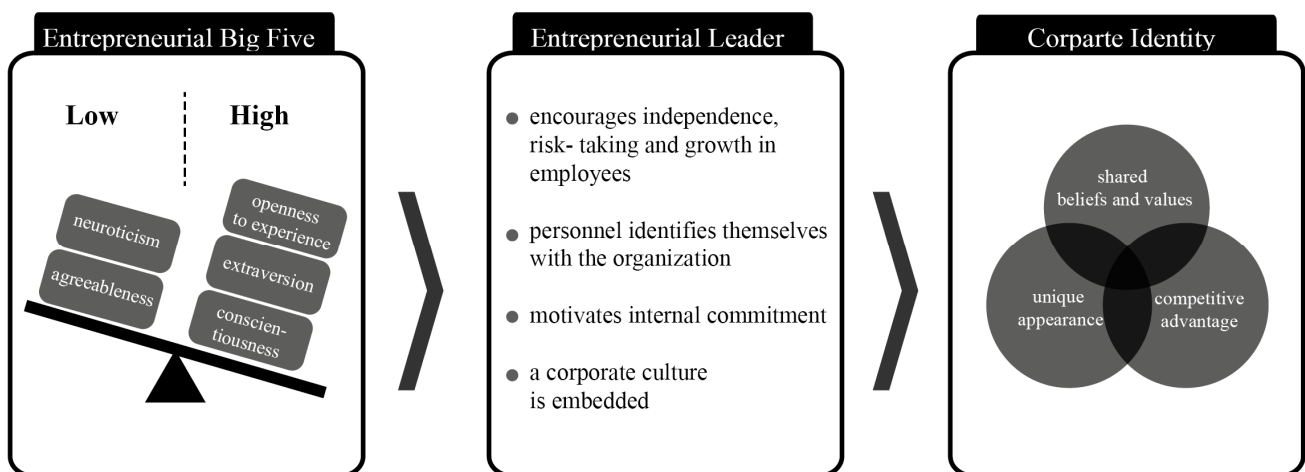


Figure 1 Process of Corporate Identity

and that the entrepreneurial Big Five personality traits (high openness to experience, extraversion and conscientiousness and low agreeableness and neuroticism) characterize an entrepreneurial leader. Considering entrepreneurial leadership as the driving force to successfully establish CI, an entrepreneurial leader is most suitable to encourage and motivate entrepreneurial behavior and attitudes in the employees. The leader further strengthens the identification of the employee with the company and embeds a corporate culture. This can positively result in an increase in the organizations economic performance, due to shared beliefs and values of all stakeholders, a unique performance and thus competitive advantage mainly resulting from the established corporate identity.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted by a group of fifteen students of the University of Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands, who write their bachelor thesis about Entrepreneurial Leadership, (more precisely, how entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors are applied by (entrepreneurial) leaders and how they can encourage these actions in employees); every student analyses an individual subtopic. However, in order to receive the most valuable outcome, all students use the same open interview template, which covers all categories of the subtopics, and the individual outcome is shared with the other students of the group. Every student has to interview a minimum of five leaders, which have to fulfill the requirements, being responsible for at least three direct employees, and which have experience in the managing position, thus as many as 75 leaders have been interviewed.

For this study qualitative research was the essential data collection practice to obtain personal opinions and behaviors and to be able to assess the individual perceptions of the interviewee appropriately. The outcome was analyzed and used to find behaviors, activities and influences, towards the encouragement of entrepreneurial behavior in the employees, developed through the values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of the (entrepreneurial) leader. Hence, the conduction of the exploratory research will help to identify the extensive theory of corporate identity and its influence on employee's behavior in day-to-day activities and long-term goals. Furthermore, the quality of the study's research was strengthened by the chosen composition of the interviewees with different experience levels and businesses, hence, biases are reduced in leader's responses, due to a personal open interview style.

3.1 Proposition

For this research it can be proposed, that an entrepreneurial leader will strengthen a unique corporate identity, which in turn will have a positive influence on the economic performance of the organization.

3.2 Qualitative Research Design

The open interview template was categorized into four main categories: respondent's background, main interview question, contingency factors and outcomes. All students utilized the same template; their analysis will respectively focus on the specific subtopic, where the data is generated through the developed template. For a better understanding, the first section of the interview entails personal information of every interviewed manager, including name, age, gender, name of the organization, kind of industry, position of manager, experience

in this specific position, total experience in a leading position, number of leading employees and their main tasks.

The second category focused on the main interview question, where the managers were asked to give an example when they led the employees in an entrepreneurial way, by multiple examples the most current incident. Before the manager considered an example, the term entrepreneurial leadership was clearly defined based on the reviewed literature characterized by risk-taking, pro-activeness, innovativeness, autonomy, ownership and growth and the encouragement of these attributes in employees. Here, a complete description of the situation was questioned, including the specific behaviors deployed, how they were applied, and why. In contrast the responding behaviors of the employees in this example was asked.

The next segment concentrated on contingency factors. The managers were asked to give an approximate percentage representing how often they lead their employees in an entrepreneurial way, and under which circumstances they perceive it to be beneficial or in contrast harmful. Their perception of the importance of social intelligence, marked by empathy, motivation, social awareness and skills, in order to lead entrepreneurial was detected. Further questions were related to their past experience and if it influenced the manager to lead their employees in an entrepreneurial way. Furthermore, according to the interviewee if their behavior changed over time, and if they are able to present an example when they did not applied entrepreneurial behavior towards their employees and why. Ultimately, a personal description about their own leadership style was asked.

To finalize the interview, questions about the outcomes were placed: their opinion about the effect of leading the employees in an entrepreneurial way on employee commitment, and the influence on the economic and social performance of the firm.

3.3 Participants and Procedure

Companies were contacted personally or via mail or telephone to recruit one leader, which fulfills the requirements to have minimally three direct reports and preferably possesses experience in a leading position. In total 76 leaders from very diverse industries (e.g. education, energy services, fashion, financial services, gastronomy, government, health care, hotel, insurance, telecom, i.a.), have been interviewed for a successful accomplishment of the open interviews and thus the data acquisition. Therefrom 17% are women and 83% are men. The age range is between 25 and 64 years, with an average rounded to 43 years. Their years of experience vary between six months and 25 years, with an average of almost seven years. Another factor was their direct reports, which were the most distinct difference: from three direct employees up to 800. Here, a fair average was drawn, by excluding four outliers (300, 400, 450 and 800), measuring 25 direct reports on average.

As many as 76 leaders from a diversified portfolio of industries and positions were interviewed which gives a valuable insight and sufficient data to analyze the subtopics, due to the deliberately variation in regard to the interviewee's specific leadership know-how and perspectives, these outcomes are used to analyze and evaluate empirical findings for their studies.

4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1 Categories

The research of this subtopic, Corporate Identity, focused mainly on the contingency factor questions. Opinions from the leaders interviewed about the effect of leading the employee in an entrepreneurial way on his or her commitment and on the economic performance of the organization are collected, analyzed and summarized. Eight categories evolved: *Motivation, Trust, Employee Satisfaction and Development and Mental Overload* from the question of the effect on employee's commitment and *Growth, Identification with the Company, Relationship to Customer and Corporate Identity*, from the question of the effect on the economic performance, respectively. Various aspects are presented, which give a valuable insight into the opinions and behaviors of the leaders interviewed.

4.2 Commitment of Employees through EL

The findings of the research analysis of the effect of entrepreneurial leaders on the commitment of their employees will embody the requirements to successfully establish a CI.

4.2.1 Motivation

In this research one of the main effects of entrepreneurial behavior on employee's commitment was motivation. Almost all leaders, who described themselves to be entrepreneurial, stated they attempt to be an example with their personality or behavior and to encourage these attitudes and behaviors of entrepreneurial thinking and working in their employees. From the perspective of the employee, being led in an entrepreneurial way motivates in the first place those employees that seek for chances to increase their work portfolio and to develop and adapt skills.

It encourages the employees to venture into new tasks, which they are not familiar with and will further have an impact on the work of the fellow colleagues: he or she might be inspired by the development of new ideas of their coworkers in a way that the motivation arises in their own creativity path, due to their recognition others are led comprehensibly and successfully through the process of learning and ideas are taken seriously. The Head of the Media and Communication Department of a big German Sports Club also indicated that this *"further motivates them to accept challenges themselves, which are more sophisticated and to successfully accomplish them"*. Generally this can lead to more intensive work and dedication to the current tasks, henceforth better work outputs of the whole team. As far as the leaders interviewed were able to assess the employee's feelings, those who are led entrepreneurially, felt they belonged to the company. They were respected and part of the whole organization, which led to more commitment and effort by propositions and discussion respectively. The Head of the Customer Operation department, of a huge telecom company with more than 800 employees said, *"the employees have to know that they are valuable for our organization: this fosters their motivation and engagement."* Moreover, this facilitates the employee's identification with the firm, as he or she has a direct impact on the work conducted and the decisions made. This certainly is a motivation factor since their work visually contributes to the success of the company.

It is always important to motivate the employees to reach their work-related goals, depending on the employee, company and industry different methods have to be applied. In a very broad manner there are two ways to reward the employees: by financial or materialistic bonuses or by non-monetary premiums. The underlying circumstances play naturally an

essential role, which methods are simply enforceable and congruent with the company's vision, mission and underlying values. Some employees can be motivated if the chances to receive a financial bonus or for instance a company car are involved (materialism). Others are encouraged to achieve their goals when the leader esteems and respects their work and gives positive feedback. Again others are motivated by more flexibility in their time schedule or chances to receive more responsibilities and are able to adopt new skills. Depending on the employee, the leader has to evaluate which method increases the employee's commitment, to reach the common goals and which is the most appropriate one in order to avoid agency problems.

A company that employs personnel, which are deeply bond to the company and highly motivated enjoys more impulses for the optimization of processes as more competences and resources of the employees are used. However, not every employee can be motivated when he is led in an entrepreneurial way. For some employees, those methods do not influence their motivation. Hereby it is essential to focus on those employees, which are impressionable and accept that some employees do not appreciate these behaviors, most likely as they are over challenged. The main message by motivating the employees is to make them realize that the company they work for only retains due to their input of work. It enhances the motivation for the employee's personal development and they can identify themselves more easily with "their" company.

4.2.2 Trust

Many leaders emphasized to establish trust, where both parties, the manager and the employee, are equally involved. Trust has a social value. An employee who is trustworthy is expected to perform in a beneficial or at least not in a suspicious way. Leaders focused on a good collaboration based on trust, due to less necessity of controlling mechanism. As a result, the employees felt more comfortable, since they were respected and valued by the leader. When confidence is given in the work and personality of the employee, he or she will believe in his or her competences, as well. This in return encourages him or her to have a more entrepreneurial behavior in the day-to-day tasks. Almost 20% of the leaders explicitly mentioned that they gave a credit of trust to their employees to intensify the relationship between them. The employees are taken serious and thus feel more responsible for their tasks, and can identify themselves better with it, as they are the one chosen to accomplish it. Those leaders further strengthened their arguments, that the employees are intended to be involved in the development of strategies, so they are aware of the risks involved. When the employees are well informed, the commitment to the company and the specific task is lifted. Moreover has the leading in an entrepreneurial way a positive impact on the socially interaction and establishes a good network based on trust in the employees. Other leaders expressed their causality that for an effective entrepreneurial behavior of the employees, the leader has to be able to trust the person conducting the work. Only then further allocations of competences can be given and more responsibility is devolved to the employee. This clearly illustrates the different opinions about inspiring confidence, whether the leader wants to ray out confidence, to encourage the employees to develop an entrepreneurial behavior, or if the leaders expect the employees to convince the management that they are trustworthy.

However, 67% of the interviewed leaders agree that from the moment the employee felt that his or her opinion was asked, it will have a very positive influence on the personal development of the employee and they appear more self-assured, more firm

with their decisions during the complex implementation and are less risk averse.

4.2.3 Employee Satisfaction and Development

The wellbeing of the employee is an important factor for every company. More than 40% of the leaders specifically predicated, that employees who were satisfied with the work and the environment implemented a well-balanced harmony among colleagues, a good network and assisting attitudes to each other, is the positive result. A leader in the service industry, leading as many as 80 employees stated, based on his experience *“the entrepreneurial leadership behavior leads to satisfaction, meaning less days of illness, and thus more commitment and productivity of the employees. Truly a positive effect of EL”* The employees are able to work more independently. They receive scope for development and can create their own working path. If led in an entrepreneurial way, they have a huge flexibility and can include their ideas, thoughts and impressions in their work. Leaders emphasized to understand the employee from their personal perspective. That means, every person, irrelevant if in private or working situations, wants to be able to make their own decisions at least in personal related issues. If it is even possible to go beyond this field and to decide how their work should be conducted, the employee is much more satisfied as he or she to some extent can control his or her work him- or herself. In the long-term, their personal influence on the working environment revises the tasks conducted as the employee does it indeed in his or her appraisal, however most certainly flawless and without decreasing the quality. The result of this experience was in many cases that the employees, led in an entrepreneurial way, were happier compared to those who had to follow strict instructions and rules with less cooperation, explanation and given feedback. Naturally, the satisfaction of the employee has a huge impact of his or her commitment to work. The creativity is pushed; employees contribute valuable ideas to the process of strategies and decisions and are part of it.

For the personal development of the employees, some are delighted to be led in an entrepreneurial way, and to work independently as there is more space for creativity and the leader listens carefully to proposed suggestions or ideas. The more committed an employee is, the more intense is the drive to successfully accomplish the tasks in a beneficial manner. It seems that there is a direct link between more room for creativity and independent work and an improvement in their work performance. This leads to the following: the more satisfied the employee is, by conducting the work in an individual's pleasant way, the more independent he or she will work in future projects. And therefore more responsibility is delegated, which has an enormous positive impact on their career chances if they seek to be promoted internally or employed by other firms.

4.2.4 Mental Overload

Even though the majority of the employees are encouraged to work independently and it prospers their ideas and competences by challenges when leading them in an entrepreneurial way, some employees are overwhelmed and apprehend to take the full responsibility for their tasks and decisions. The CEO of a fashion company with further franchise businesses, explains that *“it motivates in the first place those employees, who seek for career chances and want to prove themselves to be seen by the management: to take responsibility, show entrepreneurial behavior and to contribute creativity, increases their chances significantly”*. However, leaders continuously affirm the

importance that creativity, self-reliance and personal responsibility cannot be enforced and that employees still have to be treated equally fair. He further argues, *“Employees that prefer to be guided in a more autocratic leadership style need to be led differently, respectively”*, because more than 80% leaders declares it is certainly advantageously to have employees who are open minded to new tasks and challenges, however, those working reliable in the organizations routine works are the sustainable foundation and should not be undervalued. And those who entrench themselves to be perceived by the management may not be in basic day-to-day situations the best choice. For those reasons, respectively 18% of the interviewees agreed to generalize that entrepreneurial behavior motivates the one, and discouraged the other employee, depending on the situation, the task and the person. The most appropriate leading style has to be found. The overall aim is to avoid internal competition, so a positive unique appearance is still the overall objective of all employees within the company.

4.3 Effects on Economic Performance

The next section will expose the findings of the research analysis in regard to the effect of the entrepreneurial leaders on the economic performance of the organization.

4.3.1 Growth

Among other effects of encouraging entrepreneurial behavior in employees a significant increasing growth has been measured internally and externally which lead to competitive advantage.

Those leaders, which describe themselves to be an entrepreneurial leader, mainly characterized by being cooperative, open-minded, faithful, demanding, leading by example, open for new ideas, enthusiastic and calm, reveal comparable statements as the head of the internal communications of one of the market leaders in the healthcare and consumer products industry, as he states: *“Higher level of engagement have been achieved by evolving entrepreneurial behavior in employees, the result is visible in the whole organization in terms of growth. They show more commitment, because they realize they contributed to this growth”*. More than 40 of the 76 interviewed leaders specifically expressed their encouragement towards entrepreneurial behavior among the employees to make use of their resources, creativity and competences. Hereby, processes and procedures can continuously be optimized, new ideas are outspoken and better quality of products or services are the results. Hence an entrepreneurial attitude among the employees is helpful to cover the innovation field to be able to include knowledge and aspects of little sequences of the process, as the employees are directly confronted with the issues of day-to-day tasks. However, findings present, that not only the organization benefits from growth, also the individual employee him- or herself. A CEO of a logistic company argues that if he gives people more independence they can grow as individuals and are more motivated to work. From his experience he exemplified the negative influence of rules and autocratic instructions towards their motivation. He further states, that the more the employees realize they benefit from this growth themselves, and their desired chances to develop him or herself in this company arise and possibly career chances evolve. The more he or she is bonded to the company, the more beneficial results are shared beliefs and values, therefore a win-win situation.

However, besides those positive effects, some leaders also demonstrate how time consuming and thus costly it can be to lead mainly in an entrepreneurial way and that sometimes the

time and capacity for those long-term developments are missing. Another aspect is the increasing complexity in the structure of an organization, which might be even more chaotic the more entrepreneurial the employees think and behave, and the more unintended growth the company noticed. Sometimes, leaders recalled, there is no clear range of functions and responsibilities given.

4.3.2 Identification with the Company

Various entrepreneurial acting leaders further explicitly explained that leading the employees in an entrepreneurial way, made the employees felt taken serious and realize their important role within the organization. Every individual feels as being part of the company.

A chief representative in the financial sector, with more than 25 leading employees, states: *“Employees which are led in an entrepreneurial way, conceive themselves to be part of the whole. They feature participation in discussions and are more open-minded to contribute their ideas and propositions to the leader and the whole team. This encourages the identification with the company and internal potential can be adapted and enhanced. Our corporate identity is strengthened by this contribution of the employees.”* Additionally, various leaders state, that it is important to explain the task and not only how it can be correctly conducted but also why it is necessary to do it and sometimes even explain why in a certain way. Once the employee understands the reason behind the task, project or behavior and stands behind the decision of the leader or developed it oneself, the work will be completed accurately and usually further steps are accomplished in an entrepreneurial way, too. Since the employees are integrated in the procedures and strategic developments, they are more willing to directly contribute to the success of the company. Moreover, entrepreneurial leaders, those who confirm they apply this leadership style regularly, specifically include their employees within strategy development so they are aware of the risks involved. They feel responsible for the success of the strategy, and more information is shared among this network of employees, which develops more commitment. Generally spoken of the leaders, better decisions are obtained, because even in the shop floor the employees are involved in the circumstances and can act correspondingly, with a good estimation of the risks and benefits involved.

Even though it is very difficult to measure the impact of leading the employees in an entrepreneurial way, leaders applying permanently entrepreneurial behaviors towards their employees, can measure a decrease in days of illness, and an increase in the work shift flexibility among the employees and their willingness to cooperate to help out others, and their general attitude changes towards professional trainings, and further education, due to personal increasing aspirations. Those employees, which can identify themselves with the company they work for, are more likely to stay and a sustainable relationship can be developed, this is truly as positive economic performance, as the employees think in the interest of the company and independently, they feel responsible for their operational tasks. This also helps to develop a positive attitude towards innovational changes to act in a faster manner by adjustments of the market and better decisions are made.

Naturally, many leaders agree that the performance is influenced by the method applied by the leader and the corporate culture, employees, which are happy and satisfied with their work and working environment, express this feeling even at the customer and a word-of-mouth recommendation is the result.

4.3.3 Relationship to the Customer

To lead the employees in an entrepreneurial way has another effect: the customer satisfaction level increases, because an entrepreneurial behavior in an employee features that certain decisions fall into the competencies of the employees and this simplifies the bureaucratic, time-consuming process of all kinds of customer services. The head of the economic, service and purchasing department in a healthcare organization, with more than 200 employees, further emphasized, *“it has a positive effect, because the employees think for themselves and feel more responsible within their own tasks, and thus towards their customer”* More than 65% of the interviewed leaders applying EL within their companies, recognized the more flexibility and authority the employees receive while consulting a customer, irrelevant of the industry, or position, the more they worked independent and felt responsible for their tasks and the more can the company adapt to the individual demands and desires of the customer and therefore their satisfaction rises. A positive image is the simple result.

Supplementary, among many different opinions of the most suitable appearance of the employees towards the customers, various leaders agree that an entrepreneurial attitude given forward to the employee's behavior has a direct, positive effect on the output of the company, irrelevant whether it is products or service commercialization.

4.4 Results

Almost all leaders, who described their leadership style as entrepreneurially, wanted to be an example for their employees, to motivate them to think and behave entrepreneurially themselves. They argued it has an effect on the employees commitment as it motivated them to accept new tasks and challenges, which in turn, had an impact on the fellow colleagues as they see how their coworker are taken serious and guided through the process of new operations. The result was that the employees worked more intense and were dedicated to their current tasks. They feel that they belong to the company. Since every individual employee has a direct impact on the work conducted and the decision made, which makes them realize their unique value and the employees are deeply bonded to the company. Although, it is important for the leader to realize that every employee is different, and not all can simply be motivated by leading them entrepreneurially.

Another finding was trust, which is the base for a good collaboration, because the employees feel more comfortable the less controlling mechanism are applied. This gives them confidence and the employee will believe in his or her competences to a considerable amount more, which, according to more than 44% of the leaders interviewed, leads to more entrepreneurial behavior of the employees. Furthermore 20% reveal a credit of trust to their employees, to enhance the relationship, and to include the employees in the strategic developments so they are aware of the risks the company faces and act accordingly. Leaders argued, that it had a significant positive impact on the personal development of an employee, when they were trusted and thus respected by the management.

Employee satisfaction and development was the next finding in the analysis of the effect on employee's commitment by leading them in an entrepreneurial way. More than 40% of the leaders interviewed stated, those employees who were satisfied with their work and environment helped to establish a good, assisting network among the employees. The employees were encouraged to develop their own working path, and included their ideas, thoughts and impressions into their work. More

engagement and dedication to the task and company are the results, also illustrated in the decreasing days of illness of the employees. The employees are further strengthened in their personal development by leading them in an entrepreneurial way, due to more space for creativity and the leader listens carefully to the proposed suggestions.

It is important to realize, that to a large extent leading in an entrepreneurial way prospers ideas and competences of those employees which seek for career chances, however, some employees are over challenged and may not desire those including responsibilities. Creativity, self-reliance and personal responsibility cannot be enforced and employees still have to be treated equally fair. This is mainly of importance due to routine tasks, where certain employees are the reliable foundation and should not be undervalued solely due to their mental overload caused by the force to behave entrepreneurially.

One effect on the economic performance by leading the employee in an entrepreneurial way is a significant increase in growth of the company and the employee respectively. About 50% of the entrepreneurial leaders claimed they made use of the resources, creativity and competences of the employees, they further add valuable insights of the issues of day-to-day tasks and therefore processes and procedures can continuously be optimized, new ideas are outspoken and better quality of products or services are the results. The more the employees realize they benefit from this growth individually, the more he or she is bonded to the company and the overall beneficial results are shared beliefs and values of both sides. However, growth is a long lasting process of the company and the employee and some leaders gave utterance to the time consuming and hence costly approach of EL styles, and that sometimes the resources and capacities are missing.

The identification with the company was another repeatedly finding of the analysis. According to those leaders, who describe themselves to be entrepreneurial, the employees led by them conceive themselves to be a valuable part of the whole organization. They featured participation in discussions and are more open-minded to present their ideas and suggestions to the leader and the whole team. Furthermore is it the leaders task to illustrate the underlying reason of the tasks the employees are asked to conduct. Since once the employees understands the reason behind it, and internalized it, continuing operations are most likely fulfilled with an entrepreneurial behavior of the employee. The corporate identity is strengthened by this kind of contribution of the employees. Those employees, who can identify themselves with the company they work for, are more likely to stay and a sustainable relationship can be developed. This is truly a positive economic performance, as the employees think in the interest of the company and independently, they feel responsible for their operational tasks.

Another common finding in the answers of the interviewed leaders is the increase of the customer satisfaction level. The relation to the customer increased. More than 65% of the interviewed leaders, recognized the more flexibility and authority the employees receive while consulting a customer, irrelevant of the industry, or position, the more they worked independent and felt responsible for their tasks and the more can the company adapt to the individual demands and desires of the customer and therefore their satisfaction rises. A positive image is the simple result.

5. DISCUSSION

The primary contribution to the literature is the focus on the coherence between an entrepreneurial leader and a CI. Until

now, there has been little research on the requirements to successfully establish a CI and the impacts of the leading manager. The analysis of this research presents seven requirements, which have an effect on the commitment of the employee and the economic performance of an organization, when employees are led in an entrepreneurial way. Prior research has not examined how these requirements to affect the employee's behavior and to develop an entrepreneurial attitude and behavior of the employees.

The results provide substantial support for the *Process of CI* illustrated in the theoretical framework, as proposed, an entrepreneurial leader will strengthen a unique CI, which in turn will have a positive influence on the employees and the economic performance of the organization. In the following the connection between the seven findings and a CI will be drawn.

5.1 Coherence to Corporate Identity

An increase in employee's satisfaction level certainly has a positive impact on their commitment to work and the behavior towards the leader and the whole team. In order to work more independently the entrepreneurial leader must have previously embedded shared beliefs and values among the employees, so every employee makes use of their scope for the development of creativity, ideas and a good evaluation of risk-taking behavior in a beneficial way for the company. This is further important, as many leaders emphasized they want to give the employees more flexibility to decide, which is the best way to conduct their tasks. The result is happier employees, compared to those led with strict rules and instructions rather than shared beliefs and values. These anchored behaviors of the stakeholder distinguish them from their competitors. Furthermore the positive relation between more space for creativity and flexibility, and an improvement in their work performance, represents the valuable personal development of the employee, who is led in an entrepreneurial way and can be seen as an intangible asset of the company, which in the long-term is a competitive advantage. For that reason the employee satisfaction was most frequently mentioned in the interviews, which illustrates the significant importance of this requirement in order to establish a CI.

The second requirement for a successful establishment of CI is motivation. An entrepreneurial leader attempts to be an example for the employees with his or her personality and behavior. This is supposed to motivate the employee to act and think alike by the conduction of their operations, and to receive positive feedback. Employees who have the chance to be rewarded, either by materialistic, financial or by non-monetary bonuses, are more motivated to work intensively and are more dedicated to their current tasks. Therefore the whole company benefits of better contribution of the whole staff. Hereby it is vital to realize sometimes the non-monetary rewards have more impacts than the monetary ones. This is simply because an employee can be rewarded by delegated responsibility and thus be encouraged to accept challenges by the entrepreneurial leader, and he or she might prosper personally from this commitment. This further has a positive effect on the fellow colleagues, as they may see their opportunities more obvious. Generally an organization that employs personnel, which is highly motivated and deeply bonded to the company benefits from more impulses by the optimization of processes. Those minor influences on the strategy development can result in the desired competitive advantage. Those are mainly the factors why motivation is perceived as a valuable approach to establish a CI.

Corporate identity comprises workforce- and company-related activities and external relations. An employee who can identify

him- or herself with the company indicates a positive image of the organization internally and externally. Employees who are taken serious by the leader, who might express this with social acceptance or simply listens carefully and involves them in sophisticated tasks, realize their importance in the company and feel indispensable. They feel responsible for the success of the company, and are more likely to remain in the organization, which is truly advantageous in this continuously changing environment.

An entrepreneurial attitude among the employees, encouraged by their visible contribution in the growth of the company, is further required to successfully form a CI, because since it generates commitment. This helps continuously to cover the innovation field by including knowledge and aspects of little sequences of the processes of day-to-day tasks. The more the employees realize they benefit from this growth themselves, due to desired chances arising in the company, the more they are bonded to the company. External parties recognize the entrepreneurial behavior of the employees within this growth process and a unique appearance is the result, which is one of the three main contributions of a successful CI.

To be a leader, where the employees are frightened to make a mistake or have inordinate respect for the manager, both the leader and the employee cannot act in the best possible manner for the company. The leader does not have the essential insights in the tasks of the employees and cannot give feedback to improve the tasks. The employee on the other side is unwilling to ask for help as it is perceived to be not appropriate. The end of the story is, that somehow the leader is excluded in the operations and cannot analyze risks and the employee will not improve his or her work nor will he or she experience a personal development. Here, the underlying issue is the lack of trust - a considerable requirement for a competitive CI, since the employee needs to take all possibilities into account in order to distribute the best possible outcome, including asking for feedback by an entrepreneurial leader.

Although some leaders perceive entrepreneurial leadership as a requirement to act future orientated, other realize they over challenge their employees when forcing them to think and behave entrepreneurial. They are overwhelmed and apprehend to take the entire responsibility for their tasks and decisions. On account of this, it truly only motivates those employees, which seek for chances to make a career. However, a good entrepreneurial leader recognizes the difference and is not undervaluing the employees which are not encouraged by entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors, because mainly creativity and self-reliance cannot be enforced and furthermore those employees build the reliable foundation for every company and are by no means less valuable.

Especially in rough times the leadership style is determining whether the company will sustain competitive and successful or not, since in this case the relationship to the customer is the crucial determinant factor. Employees, who act entrepreneurial, seek to enhance their competences and area of responsibility, as they feel personally responsible for their tasks and the assigned customer, and their satisfaction. Therefore more flexibility and

authority in their positions has a positive effect on the service they accomplish.

5.2 Correlation between Findings

In the previous section the relation between the key findings of the analysis and CI have been presented. In the following their correlation and connection is interpreted to receive a full understanding how those requirements interact with each other and how they are influenced.

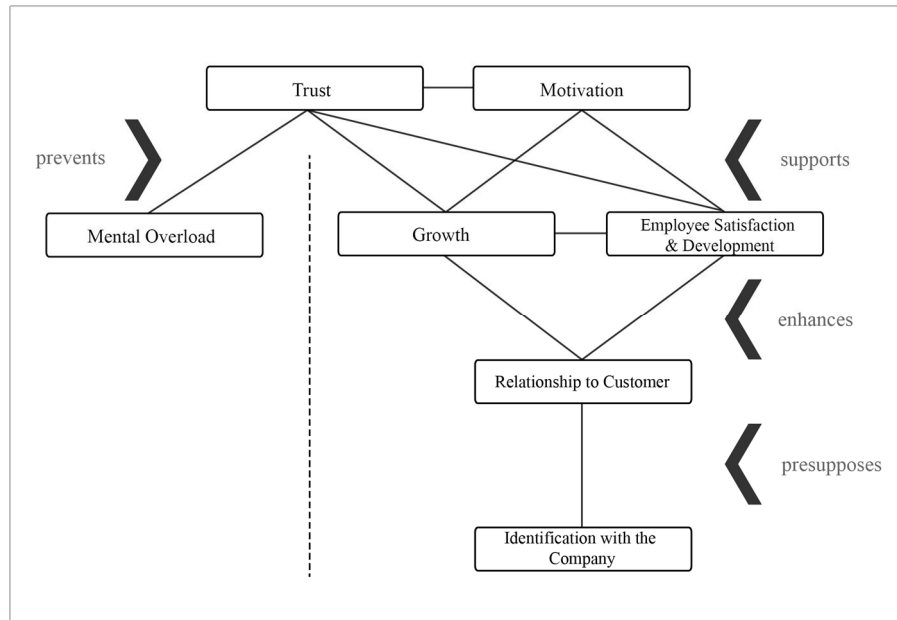


Figure 2 Correlation between the Requirements

Trust and motivation are perceived as the underlying foundation for CI. Trust is presumed to be the base for a good collaboration and enhances the relationship between the leader and the employee. Collateral, the employees may take the attitudes and behaviors of the leader as a good example and might be motivated to accept new tasks from this example. The results are previously presented: the employee feels dedicated to the task and conducts more intense work. Most likely the entrepreneurial leader trusts the employee evermore and includes the employee in the strategic development, so he or she is aware of the risks involved and operates accordingly. Here is obviously an interaction between those two requirements: *trust* and *motivation*. However, they have more influencing factors: Leaders are constantly faced with internal issues; an overwhelmed employee might be one of those. Hereby trust is the key to success. It is important that the employee is not frightened to confess the overextension and trusts the leader that the rejection of more responsibility will not have a negative impact on future activities or the occupational career. This is mainly important to prevent a mental overload of the employees, which is of high importance to avoid days of illness or a negative reputation. Trust and motivation support furthermore two other requirements to successfully establish CI: *Growth* and *Employee Satisfaction and Development*.

The company or the employee him or herself will make use of the resources, i.e. creativity, competences, self-assessment and self-responsibility, due to the enhanced relationship. In addition, it motivates the employee to use his or her flexibility and be more creative. This can not only contribute to the growth of the organization, but also to the personal development. Meaning, here another connection between growth and

employee development can be drawn. The organization's achievement of this growth was only possible with the contribution of the employees. It is the leaders task to further motivate and give confidence to the employee to strengthen their commitment. Moreover a good assisting network is based on trust developed, due to shared beliefs and values of the employees. This continuously helps to optimize the processes, since more employees are involved. Thus the employees analyze the risks more independently and are not too risk-averse as they trust in their competences and are motivated by the entrepreneurial leader to act in this manner. This happens certainly after a sufficient analysis. Thereby, for employees who are attracted by challenges and more responsible, his or her satisfaction will increase. They are motivated to develop their own way to conduct the tasks they are responsible for; the commitment rises significantly, and again, less days of illness are the profitable result.

The next connection illustrated is between *growth and employee satisfaction and development* and their enhancement of the *relationship to the customer*. The underlying assumption here is the employee makes use of his or her flexibility, independence and competences and due to their personal affiliation with the tasks and thus to the customer, respectively, long lasting bureaucratic processes are prevented by simply letting the employee evaluate what will be the best decision. The customers realize that they are taken seriously, as they do not have to deal with an administrative staff with no competence in decision making. The positive result is an increase in the customer satisfaction level, this is especially a competitive advantage in critical times, and hence, always a valuable approach to focus on.

In order to consult a customer in the best possible manner, the employee is presupposed to identify him- or herself with the company, otherwise the employee would not be able to fully represent the shared values and beliefs to the stakeholders. Once they do, they are more open-minded and authentic, while presenting the products or services and thus the customers are more likely to believe in the product or service themselves.

Next to a positive image on the external reputation, the employees are also more interested in the participation in discussions and may better understand the reasons behind particular decisions and stand behind it, even if it has not been their initial opinion. Those employees, who identify themselves with the organization, are more likely to stay and grow together with the company.

All those interacting requirements contribute to the successful establishment of a CI and further to an increase in the economic performance and can be summarized with a unique appearance, with shared beliefs and values, resulting in a competitive advantage, certainly a positive outcome. However, the entrepreneurial leader plays a key role in encouraging an entrepreneurial attitude and behavior in the employees. Always depending on the employed staff and the industry the leader is operating in, e.g. health care, accounting office, banks, only limited entrepreneurial behavior might be possible.

5.3 Implications for Research and Practice

Several entrepreneurial implications evolve from this research. A key contention is that the mentioned key requirements to develop a CI can be managed internally and that there are strategic and tactical benefits associated with doing so, as it contributes to the articulation of the business philosophy to employees. More specifically, this includes the systematic implementation and influence of a range of factors that affect

the organization's appearance and thus the perception of the business. A CI requires attention, including organizations' conveying values to employees. The management has to assign a meaning to the visual aspects of identity, and personifying and embed corporate shared values and beliefs.

An organization with an entrepreneurial leader who embedded the entrepreneurial attitudes and behavior within his or her employees may often receive more or better opportunities. Since, the information, competences and responsibilities become available to the employees who rapidly can take chances, without asking for permission at the management. So opportunities will not be missed due to strict econometric approaches and a long bureaucratic process, which could postpone the decisions. Moreover, a greater deal of risk-taking and growth in the employees may be particularly beneficial in implementing specific decisions and persuading others to be enthusiastic about the results, too (Russo & Schoemaker, 1989).

Additionally, this study offers potentially interesting implications for researcher, in regard to the links between EL and the economic performance of the company. Having explored the role of the entrepreneurial leader for contributing to an organizational CI, it may offer a new accession to better understand how EL impacts organizational performance. Although, it is widely acknowledged that an EL does contribute to organizational effectiveness, however, there is a lack in the literature on how this takes place (Avolio, 2007). In this study, EL practices among the employees seemed to play a key role in enhancing shared values and beliefs, and thus receiving and unique appearance, which contributes to the competitive advantage of the company.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

The findings and interpretations of the qualitative research contribution with open interviews and a sample size of 76 that were amenable to participate in this study may not generalizable and should be treated with caution, since all answers have been self-reported, until additional larger samples of entrepreneurial leaders are examined to ensure the generalizability of the findings presented here.

Additionally, this research primarily examines the outcomes of the application of EL on the employee's commitment and on the economic performance, based on the opinions of the interviewed entrepreneurial leaders. The evolved requirements to consider, in order to successfully establish a CI, are therefore specified on those two impacts. Future research will need to examine additional requirements, which have an influence on the process of CI. In addition, refinement of the analysis of the findings will be necessary, to examine not only if these are the key requirements, but also the extent to which they vary among individuals and organizations. Furthermore the correlation between the findings is fully interpreted and may not be generalizable.

Given the research outcome of the open interviews, no perfect procedure to establish a CI can be drawn, only requirements which should be analyzed and considered for the process of a CI. Therefore it certainly would be interesting to further investigate their relationship, including the directions.

This study may give rise to interesting implication for entrepreneurial leadership, introduction in organizations' management and practices and is supposed to stimulate leader to consider the evolving requirements for the establishment of a CI, however, more knowledge from other sources will be necessary.

6. CONCLUSION

The empirical findings of the research analysis highlight the key requirements that have an impact on the establishment of a corporate identity. The deep connections and interdependencies between the requirements reflect the complexity of the corporate identity process. Organizations that realize the competitive advantage of a corporate identity should seek for a leader who possesses the entrepreneurial Big Five personality traits, to encourage an entrepreneurial attitude and behavior in the employees. Shared values and behaviors and a unique appearance can positively influence the economic performance of an organization. Hence, an entrepreneurial leadership style is the driving force to successfully establish a corporate identity.

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