



Department of Political Science and Public Policy

The relation between the social competence of employees and  
corporate culture -  
A case study of the Christoph Miethke GmbH & Co. KG.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the perception among employees of a German company regarding corporate culture and social competences. The study sought to analyze possible relations between corporate culture and employees' social competences to determine their significance for the company. For this, a quantitative study based on the application of an on-line survey to employees from the company was conducted. The survey was developed by bundling well-known measures of the variables under investigation. The self-administered survey gathered responses from employees at all company levels on a variety of topics, including their perceptions of corporate culture and social competences of both their selves and colleagues. Participation was voluntary for all employees and confidentiality of responses was ensured. The results revealed that there is a connection between the perceived social competence of colleagues and the corporate culture. It was found that the different ability dimensions of colleagues' social competences have an influence on the respective cultural dimensions. Consequently, the results of the study can be used to identify the social competencies of colleagues needed to help creating the desired culture and to illustrate the importance of social competences within a corporate culture.

**KEYWORDS:** Organizational Culture, Competing Values Framework, Social Competences, Self-Evaluation, Evaluation of Colleagues

## RESUMO

Este estudo examinou as percepções dos membros de uma empresa alemã sobre a cultura organizacional e as competências sociais dos seus trabalhadores. O estudo procurou analisar possíveis relações entre cultura organizacional e competências sociais dos trabalhadores para determinar a sua relevância para a empresa. Para tal, foi conduzido um estudo quantitativo baseado na aplicação de um inquérito on-line aos trabalhadores da empresa. O inquérito foi desenvolvido a partir de medidas reconhecidas das variáveis sob investigação e permitiu recolher respostas de trabalhadores em todos os níveis da empresa sobre uma variedade de tópicos, incluindo as suas percepções da cultura organizacional e de competências sociais, tanto do próprio como dos colegas. A participação foi voluntária para todos os trabalhadores e a confidencialidade da resposta foi assegurada. Os resultados revelaram que existe uma relação entre a percepção de competências sociais dos colegas e a cultura organizacional. Verificou-se que as diferentes dimensões das competências sociais dos colegas têm uma influência em diferentes dimensões da cultura. Consequentemente, os resultados do estudo podem ser usados para identificar as competências sociais dos colegas que são necessárias para ajudar a criar a cultura desejada e para ilustrar a importância das competências sociais para a cultura organizacional.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Cultura Empresarial, Modelo dos Valores Contrastantes, Competências Sociais, Auto-Avaliação, Avaliação de Colegas

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## **GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**CVF** – Competing Values Framework

**CVM** – Competing Values Model

**OCAI** – Organisational Culture Assessment Inventory

**smK** – sozialen und methodischen Kompetenzen



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every company has its own corporate culture. It is not simply invented or prescribed, instead it is nurtured and experienced by the employees. A culture originates when a company is founded and changes throughout the company's development. The roots of a corporate culture usually can be traced back to the company founder, whose visions, ideas, values, characteristics and interests serve as role models to organizational members. Companies are furthermore embedded in social, political and economic environments that influence the culture, the employees and ultimately the success of a company. The importance of corporate culture has been known for some time. Evidence can be found, for example, in the economic success to which a functioning corporate culture contributes or in the positive effects it has on the employees of a company (Wilderom et al., 2000). Corporate culture is, therefore, an essential component of organizational effectiveness (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Hartnell et al., 2011) and can be a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1986; Dauber et al., 2012). Furthermore, companies that have a strong corporate culture have been seen to outperform companies that do not (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Gordon & DiTomaso, 1992).

There are as many different corporate cultures as there are companies. How beneficial a culture is depends on the market, the strategies and the employees. Thus, the successful culture of one company can be destructive for another. The optimal culture does therefore not exist and there is no universally ideal culture. This is why the present study uses the Competing Value Model (Quinn & McGrath 1985) as the theoretical groundwork for the investigation of corporate culture. This model suggests that a culture is neither positive nor negative, but that there are different needs that a company and its culture must fulfil (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991). It is not a new finding that people who work together in companies develop specific customs and practices for dealing with each other and for mastering common tasks, thereby creating a specific corporate culture. Every company forms its own culture, which finds expression in common values, corporate ethics, norms and attitudes as well as in material artefacts (Schein, 1985). For a successful creation of corporate cultures in knowledge-based economies, a comprehensive organizational development approach is regarded as important, which recognizes human resources and the development of human capital as decisive competitive factors (Barney & Wright, 1998; Wolf, 2011). As Pfeffer (2005) points out, the sustainable advantage of a company is based on how it manages its employees. The organization, the employees and the way they work are the key differentiators between the companies.

The growth of a company or the constantly evolving work environment lead to changes and continuously varying tensions and thus to an always evolving corporate culture. People working in a company are faced with certain challenges, which arise partly from the specific requirements of their tasks and partly from the peculiarities of being together in the company,

in other words from its culture. Today, for example, work increasingly takes place in interdisciplinary teams, informal communication processes are becoming increasingly important and managers communicate more intensively with their employees (Rosenstiel, 2003). The ability of companies to bring new products to market and to keep their value creation processes technically and organizationally up to date depends crucially on their employees, their competences and their knowledge.

This has been accompanied in recent years by an increasing importance of soft skills in the form of social and personal competences. For example, numerous job advertisements require teamwork abilities as well as communication competences. Social qualifications and competences are considered to be highly important for the vocational success in the working environment in addition to professional qualifications (Kanning, 2002). Thus, social competences are dealt with in management literature and are subject of interests regarding the research on corporations (Kauffeld & Grote, 2002). A person's social competence is associated with special abilities that help him or her to handle social situations at work and in his or her private life more effectively, thereby creating a maximum of positive and a minimum of negative consequences for everyone involved in the interaction (Wunderer & Grunwald, 1980; Rosenstiel, 2003; Kauffeld & Grote, 2002). Various studies prove a positive relationship between social competence and vocational performance indicators which in turn indicate the achievement of a company's goals (Blickle et al., 2011; Ferris et al., 2001; Jawahar et al., 2008). If managers and executives want to use the competencies found in the corporate culture and in the employees of a company, they first have to identify their existing corporate culture and the competencies of the employees so that they can subsequently decide on which strengths they can and should build upon and which areas require further development (Armbruster, 2005).

This work tries to provide a first impression of the corporate culture at the company Christoph Miethke GmbH & Co. KG. and to examine which types of culture are of importance for the employees in this company. It is the professional experience of the author of the thesis within the company that has generated the interest to investigate the corporate culture. Prior to the study, numerous discussions took place with the founder and CEO of the company, Christoph Miethke, in which the investigated research question gradually developed. It also became clear that both, the author of the paper and the CEO, were interested in including all employees. The discussions then led to the second subject dealt with in this study, the social competence of employees. The interest in this competence is shared by the CEO and the author of the thesis. This study is the first to obtain target-oriented information on corporate culture within the company. Since social competences represents a set of skills that are relevant to all stakeholders, since it is understood that all employees, including the owner of the company, should have social competences, it was decided to include it in the study. These considerations

resulted in the topic examined in this paper on the correlation between corporate culture and social competences and the other questions that will be presented in chapter 2 of the paper.

In addition to the gathering of empirical data, there were also detailed literature review conducted during the same time. The literature review further revealed that, to the best of our knowledge, there has been no research on the subject discussed here so far. Consequently, the results of this work are based on an explorative data analysis attempting to find previously unknown connections. In order to examine the research question of this work, two instruments were selected following the literature review, providing the framework for the questionnaire in use. One is the Organisational Culture Assessment Inventory (OCAI, Cameron & Quinn, 1999; 2006) and its German version (OCAIrev, Kluge & Jänicke, 2004) and the other is the Assessment Sheet for Social and Methodical Competences (smK, Frey & Balzer, 2003; 2005).

The first section of this thesis briefly presents the objectives and the research questions. This is followed by a short presentation of the company involved before discussing the theoretical background in the literature review of the paper. After this, the methodology and therefore the process of data collection as well as the instruments for measuring the subject are presented. The penultimate part of the paper presents the study's results, which are finally interpreted and examined in the last part of the paper before briefly concluding the thesis.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

The objective of this work is to investigate the relationship between corporate culture and social competences in a company. This chapter presents the main research question and the subordinate research questions. First, the main research question is presented. This is followed by the additional subordinate research questions and the objectives of this work regarding the company involved.

The main research question under investigation in this paper is the exploration of the connection between the perceived corporate culture and the social competencies of the employees as well as its implications for the company. In order to assess this relationship, it is necessary to measure the perceived corporate culture as well as the social competencies of the employees. In this latter dimension, both the self-perception and the perceived social competences of the colleagues are assessed to reveal the specificities associated with the investigated research question. Afterwards, the results of the different data surveys will be examined with regard to their relationship and ultimately enable initial indications about a possible relationship and its implications. The research question examined in this thesis should help to fill the gap in the literature and contribute to research in this area.

There are also additional, subordinate research questions that will be investigated in this work. They arise not only from the discussed subject but also from the circumstance that the examination of the subject is based on a case study carried out in a company. Therefore, the study will examine which types of culture are perceived in the company, how strongly they are perceived and how they are related to each other. In addition, it will be examined how the subdimensions of the OCAI, as presented in the methodology part of this paper, are perceived in the company. Furthermore, it should be examined how socially competent the employees of the company consider themselves and their colleagues and whether there are discrepancies. Regarding social competence, the subdimensions respectively ability dimensions, described in the methodology part, will also be explored more closely. Another question that arises is the relationship between the two types of evaluation. Therefore, the correlation between the self-evaluation of social competences and the evaluation of colleagues will be examined here as well. However, the subordinate research questions not only contribute to the analysis of the company in the study, but to the examination of the main research question and thereby to a better understanding of the individual correlations.

One of the aims of this work regarding the company under study, is to provide a theoretical and practical foundation. The data obtained in the survey and the exploration of the research question can then be used to assist the company in the elaboration of subsequent actions. Moreover, the study not only provides an insight on the current state of the company but can in part be used for further assessments as well as for the design and development of the corporate culture inside the company.

### **3. THE COMPANY CHRISTOPH MIETHKE GMBH & CO. KG.**

#### **3.1. About the company**

The German company was founded in 1992 by Christoph Miethke with the aim of developing a new type of Hydrocephalus valve. Hydrocephalus is a disease where the outflow of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) is disturbed, potentially leading to cerebrospinal fluid congestion and dilatation of the ventricles in the brain. The CSF circulates from the brain via the spinal cord into the blood and is exchanged every eight hours. The disorder can occur prenatally due to malformations or cerebral haemorrhages as well as throughout life, e.g. due to infections, accidents or tumours. Individuals might have different symptoms of the illness, ranging from minor handicaps, performance deficits to epilepsy or severe neurological deficits. The innovative valves developed by the Christoph Miethke GmbH were designed to alleviate the symptoms of the disease and make life easier for patients. The Miethke gravitational valves

work position-dependently and adapt to the patient's body. This technology has made it possible to overcome the known shortcomings of previous valves for hydrocephalus treatment, such as over- or underdrainage. A milestone for the company was the start of a sales cooperation with B. Braun Aesculap, one of the largest pharmaceuticals and medical supplies companies in the world. The cooperation made the company into one of the five most important companies in this industry and contributed significantly to its internationalization. The partnership with B. Braun Aesculap was intensified in 2010, when the multinational company expanded from a sales partner to a minority shareholder. The Christoph Miethke GmbH has been growing continuously since its foundation. Having started with only three employees in 1992, the company now employs more than 200 people. In 2015, the company had a turnover of over 14 million euros (Budde, 2015). Today Miethke valves are being implanted in around 50 countries on all continents and the company is market leader in Germany (Christoph Miethke GmbH & Co. KG., 2018).

### **3.2. Corporate philosophy and other aspects of the corporate`s culture design**

The company has implemented a whole series of measures and arrangements that shape its day-to-day business and thereby the workplace of its employees as well as its overall corporate culture. In general, the company philosophy is an instrument to present the values and norms considered important by the founder and/or CEO. It can be understood as a central superordinate concept for the management of a company and its long-term orientation on the market. From it, the company's culture, mission statement and strategy are derived. The philosophy, therefore, significantly influences the social responsibility of the company, its strategies, plans and goals as well as the management style and leadership principles of the management. Functionally, the corporate philosophy serves the orientation of the employees and can be seen as a code of conduct for the company that sets rules for all actions (Bleicher, 1994). On an interpersonal level, the corporate philosophy can, for instance, call for and foster the open and honest handling of mistakes or a respectful and fair cooperation at eye level.

The corporate philosophy of Christoph Miethke refers to nothing less than Article 1 of the German Basic Law. It states: "Human dignity shall be inviolable" (Art. 1 Para.1 GG). For the founder and CEO Christoph Miethke, this forms the basis for working together and interacting with each other. He considers a company to be "a place where employees meet at eye level in order to work together on tasks and solve problems, taking into account the competence of each individual. The focus is not on the competence reflected on certificates, but on the willingness to put one's own abilities at the service of the cause, to get involved in respectful cooperation, to know one's limits and to act responsibly. It is not paternalism that is

the economically successful principle, but the encouragement to self-development" (Christoph Miethke GmbH & Co. KG., 2018).

Another cornerstone of the philosophy lies in the awareness of the responsibilities of everyone involved. As a manufacturer of neurosurgical implants, the company bears great responsibility for the quality of its products and mistakes can have serious consequences for patients. For the CEO Christoph Miethke, this responsibility goes beyond product quality alone. The patients affected are among the most important priorities. Not only should their life situation be improved by the development of high-quality and reliable products, but they should also receive assistance from the company regarding their questions and concerns. For him, the fundamental values mentioned are part of an overall social responsibility that does not only apply to the company, but nevertheless should influence the culture of the company and create an environment in which everyone feels good.

The corporate philosophy he developed is visible in the five corporate values: Quality, Innovation, Proximity, Responsibility and Technology Leadership. These values, as part of the corporate philosophy, have an impact on the desired corporate culture. After all, the culture is ultimately based on the corporate philosophy, thus on the entrepreneurial assumptions and ideas of the executives or, as in this case, of the founder.

One important part of the culture at the Christoph Miethke GmbH is the Work-family balance. Consequently, working time systems or time schedules have been dispensed, giving way to trust-based working time. In addition, employees have the opportunity to work from home. There are different working time models and various types of employment contract in the company. For Christoph Miethke, values such as proximity are crucial because employees spend a large amount of their time in their working environment. In the company philosophy he writes: "An important basis for respect and respectful cooperation is the degree of proximity - resulting from interest - that we can show to ourselves and to everyone else. Feeling, creating and living proximity holds many facets of social values which have one goal in mind: a social environment in which everyone feels at home. It is all about understanding, questioning, taking different perspectives and meeting each other at eye level" (Christoph Miethke GmbH & Co. KG., 2018). To provide employees with this environment, there are other regulations and benefits that shape the company's culture. For example, certain rooms can be used by the employees for private events without charge, there are company events and one company excursion per year. Other regulations are, for example, the flexible break regulations, allowing interruptions of work that can be used, for instance, for visits to the doctor. There are also extra vacations given for family occasions, the subsidisation of childcare or the availability of internships for employees' children. The company's own resources such as cars or technical equipment can be borrowed, and employees receive a lunch subsidy. All these regulations

contribute to forming the corporate culture that the company strives for and thus reflect the general conditions for the employees. Summarizing the above, one can state that the company has taken numerous measures to create a culture that is in accordance with the fundamental principle of the founder and owner; that human dignity should be respected as the highest maxim of the company philosophy.

## **4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

In this section the main concepts adopted in the present paper are approached and explained them in more detail. The aim of this chapter is to highlight and illustrate the main agreements and overlaps of the concepts.

### **4.1. Corporate Culture**

The term corporate culture had its first broader public recognition in the 1980s. During this time, Western companies were increasingly under pressure by emerging Japanese competitors, who were constantly setting new productivity records with their new production methods and unusual corporate culture (Bachinger, 1990). Although it was already clear that a company shared a certain culture, associated research began to intensify and numerous definitions, descriptions and analyses were elaborated.

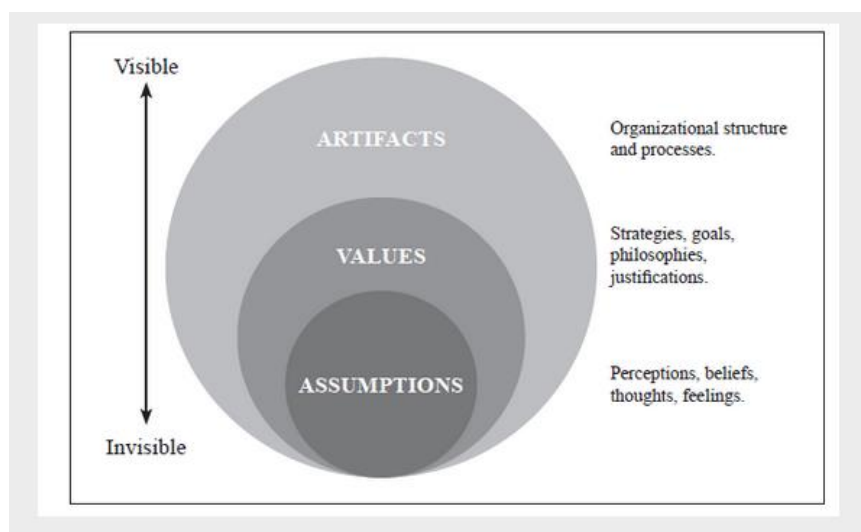
A large number of researchers regards corporate culture as a dynamic structure of values, norms and convictions that are shared by the employees, that has developed over a certain period of time and guides the behaviour of a company's employees in a certain direction (Deshpandé & Webster, 1989; Schein, 1995, 2004; Alvesson, 2002; Detert et al., 2000; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996). Especially the work of the organizational psychologist and management scientist Edgar Schein received worldwide recognition. His work is considered to be one of the theoretical foundations in the research of corporate culture and has covered numerous other approaches to cultural concepts. Schein defined corporate culture as:

"[...] a pattern of basic assumptions - invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaption and internal integration - that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems" (Schein, 1985, p. 9).

Correspondingly, he developed a three-stage model (Figure 4.1) that illustrates the different levels of corporate culture and the respective phenomena and aspects that are not always visible. On the first level, and thus on the surface, are the symbols and signs of a

corporate culture referred to by Schein as artefacts. This includes visible behaviours as well as the physical and social environment of a company. "At this level one can look at physical space, the technological output of the group, its written and spoken language, artistic productions, and the overt behaviour of its members" (Schein, 1985, p. 14.). Artefacts are therefore visible to the outside world but can nevertheless be interpreted differently by all those involved. On the second level are the collective values. This refers to standards and norms that influence the behaviour of the individual stakeholders and can vary accordingly. Here the corporate culture is only partially visible and evident (Schein, 1985). The lowest level of the model are the basic assumptions about the corporate environment, which are usually not questioned. Such assumptions are, for example, about time and space, the nature of human beings, human actions or interpersonal relationships. They are therefore invisible and are usually accepted subconsciously (Macharzina & Wolf, 2008). The cultural levels can not be viewed separately as they are different types of manifestations of the same culture, as Figure 4.1 illustrates.

Figure 4.1: Model of Organizational Culture (Schein, 2004)



As already mentioned, research on corporate culture has increased considerably in the last decades. Looking at the research conducted in this area, we repeatedly find references to Schein's model pointing towards a certain general consensus. For example, Hinterhuber (2004) defines corporate culture as the totality of the company's prevailing values, traditions, customs, myths, norms and attitudes. They provide employees at all levels with a sense of purpose and guidelines for their behaviour in their daily business life (Hinterhuber, 2004, p. 51). Bachinger (1990) also refers to corporate culture as the practised and visible value system of a company. This value system is regarded as the prerequisite for expectations, actions and behaviour within a company (Bachinger, 1990). In the literature, there is a broad consensus that divides corporate culture into three different levels of basic values, behavioural norms and visible artefacts and therefore follow the model of Schein (Homburg & Pflesser, 2000).



A term that is often encountered in connection with corporate culture is corporate identity (Bachinger, 1990; Gray & Balmer, 1998; Scheibelberger, 1989). Since the corporate culture can not be deduced from a single area of the company, but is influenced by the entire company and its organization, corporate culture is often regarded as a component of the corporate identity. Corporate identity can be seen as a superordinate concept intended to represent the entire appearance and personality of a company. Consequently, it aims internally towards the creation of a we-awareness and externally towards a closed, holistic representation of the company (Scheibelberger, 1989). Thereby the corporate culture represents only one component of the overall appearance. This further demonstrates the complexity to which companies are exposed when it comes to creating or recognizing corporate identity. According to Scheibelberger (1989), corporate identity consists of four sub-areas. First there is the Corporate Design, which refers to the symbolic identity mediation of all visual elements of the corporate appearance such as the company logo. A further sub-area is Corporate Communications. An important aspect to consider when dealing with corporate culture is the successful communication of a culture. The systematic use of all internal and external communication instruments, such as advertising, public relations or internal communication, is decisive for the promotion of a corporate culture. A further component is that of Corporate Behaviour. The term refers to the coordinated and thus coherent behaviour of individuals within the company towards each other, as well as the appearance and behaviour of company employees towards external parties. The last sub-area, the Corporate Philosophy, is also relevant to the subject of this work, as it bridges the gap to corporate culture. The corporate philosophy defines the fundamental values and goals underlying the foundation of a company and is therefore one way for companies to influence the corporate culture (Scheibelberger, 1989).

A further aspect in the discussion of the concept of corporate culture is its manifestations and what significance it has (Bachinger, 1990). Corporate culture is in principle a social matter, since it is not created by an individual, but by many or even all members of a company. Since corporate culture often unconsciously guides interpersonal relationships without the need to draw up standards or regulations, it is considered to control behaviour and thus shape interpersonal behaviour. One aspect that appears obvious at first, but nevertheless needs to be constantly considered, is the origin of a culture. Corporate culture is always man-made because it is the result of human actions, thinking and desire within a company. Moreover, a corporate culture is also always handed down, thus resulting from a historical process and transmitted in common convictions, behaviors and stories. Thus, with every momentary image, the entire past of the company is included (Bachinger, 1990, p. 13). Furthermore, corporate culture can be learned by socialization processes. As a result, every company has a specific culture. This culture is constantly and incrementally changed or

recreated through work, interaction and experience in the company. Corporate culture is therefore both a result and a process (Bachinger, 1990).

As mentioned in the introduction, the following sections of the literature review are more detailed, as they explore the role and function of corporate culture, how corporate culture can be shaped and changed, and how to measure corporate culture. These chapters are of particular interest, since their content can serve as a theoretical basis for developing possible measures in cooperation with and for the company analysed here.

#### **4.1.1. Purpose and function of corporate culture**

Several functions and meanings at all levels of a company and its organization are attached to the corporate culture. The mentioned discussion on the term corporate culture made it evident that corporate culture fulfils an important role in a company. In this context, it should be recalled, for example, that Hinterhuber (2004), like most other researchers, considers that corporate culture has a behavioural control function that provides all employees at all levels of responsibility with a sense of and guidelines for behaviour in their everyday work. This description indicates that corporate culture is primarily about the behaviour and cooperation of individuals interacting within a particular environment (Bachinger, 1990). For Schein (1991), corporate culture's function corresponds to it defining a framework that enables the interpretation of organizational events and basic assumptions about organizational processes of all involved. He writes:

“[corporate culture] provide[s] group members with a way of giving meaning to their daily lives, setting guidelines and rules for how to behave, and, most important, reducing and containing the anxiety of dealing with an unpredictable and uncertain environment” (Schein, 1991, p.15).

Accordingly, a strong corporate culture can increase the uniformity of the behavioural norms of individuals in a company. In the next sections, it will become more and more apparent why this factor can be important for a company but first, some other aspects will be examined. Corporate culture, for example, should also contribute to motivating employees, and thus has a motivating function. Motivated employees tend to be more satisfied (Baetge et al., 2007; MacKay et al., 2004; Santos et al., 2012). This satisfaction in turn has an effect on the commitment, independence and self-responsibility of the employees. Another function of corporate culture is to ensure that employees identify with the company and create a sense of community. Through a clear corporate culture, new members can be integrated more quickly, giving the culture an identification and integration function (Baetge et al., 2007; O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996). A prerequisite for this is the development and design of the communication

structures in the company (Baetge et al., 2007). A crucial factor for a clear corporate culture is a communication that not only has properly functioning channels, but also emphasises the way individuals communicate with each other. According to Delarue et al. (2008) an effective communication is linked with positive outcomes such as employee job satisfaction, motivation, lower turnover, better organizational climate and commitments, which in turn improves organizational performance (Delarue et al., 2008). Other behavioural patterns of staff members are also shaped by the existence of a corporate culture and thus explain its function for the company. In the literature, for example, the dimensions of teamwork, communication, training development and reward recognition are seen as components of corporate culture that also have a major influence on individuals' commitment to a certain behaviour (Lau & Idris, 2001; Sola et al., 2012). According to Recardo and Jolly (1997) there are eight dimensions of corporate culture, which are communication, training and development, rewards, effective decision making, risk-taking for creativity and innovation, proactive planning, teamwork, and fairness and consistency in management practices (Recardo & Jolly, 1997). Other authors use the term cooperation instead of teamwork, but the concepts refer to the same idea (Sola et al., 2012). Ultimately, teamwork is the extent to which employees within a company cooperate with each other and work together towards the overarching corporate goal (Delarue et al., 2008). According to Sackmann (2004), the corporate culture fulfils further central roles that are necessary for the existence and functioning of a company. Reducing complexity is one of them, whereby the collective patterns of thought specified by the corporate culture serve as filters and ensure that the information is rapidly pre-sorted into what is relevant and what is not.

Additionally, corporate culture enables coordinated action. As mentioned, corporate culture provides employees and managers with a common system of meaning that enables useful collaborative communication processes and coordinated actions. A culture is also responsible for continuity. It means that the collectively acquired learning history included in the corporate culture permits routine action and takes the successful approaches of the past to the present and future (Sackmann, 2004). The wide range of different concepts on the function of corporate culture is similarly numerous as with the term corporate culture. This is aggravated by the fact that although concepts differ, they often overlap in terms of content or parts of the other concepts are integrated. Nevertheless, the conflict regulation function developed by Jaeger (2004) is an additional aspect to be emphasized within the scope of this work. Since, from the perspective of institutional economics, corporate culture is an informal institution, it is also responsible for laying the foundation for dealing with and overcoming process disturbances such as conflicts (Jaeger, 2004). In this sense, culture has pervasive effects on a firm because a firm's culture not only defines who its relevant employees, customers, suppliers, and competitors are, but it also defines how a firm will interact with these key actors (Louis, 1983). The corporate culture thus optimises the behaviour of employees in

their collaboration. Teamwork occurs when group members work together in a way that makes the best use of their competencies and that facilitates interpersonal activities to achieve their goals (Schermerhorn, 2003; Colquitt et al., 2009; Sola et al., 2012). It can be said here that corporate culture is a kind of jointly accepted interpretation of reality that emerges in the exchange with the environment about daily activities and that has a lasting, but often invisible, influence on corporate events. Consequently, it can be assumed that corporate culture provides a social control mechanism for the individuals of a company that helps manage their behaviour (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996). When a company has the broadest possible agreement on the basic assumptions and values of the people involved, it also increases consistency in behaviour (Gordon & DiTomaso, 1992).

As already mentioned, corporate culture has an influence on the company that should not be underestimated especially with regard to its success. Companies that try to create a strong corporate culture together with their employees, often by concentrating on emphasizing a sense of togetherness, are usually more successful than competitors that concentrate only on the hard factors (Wilderom et al., 2000). The originally purely normative assertions about the connection between corporate culture and corporate success have thus increasingly been empirically investigated with results that point to a direct as well as an indirect connection. Some researchers, such as Kotter and Heskett (1992), found three coherent explanations for the performance advantages of strong cultures. First, broad consensus and support for corporate values and norms facilitate social control within the company. If there is broad agreement that certain behaviours are more appropriate than others, violations of behavioural standards can be detected and corrected more quickly. Corrective actions are more likely to come from other employees, regardless of their place in the formal hierarchy. Informal social control is therefore likely to be more effective and cost-effective than formal control structures (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996). Second, strong corporate cultures improve goal orientation. Clarity about corporate goals and practices makes employees less insecure about what to do in unexpected situations and allows them to respond appropriately. Goal alignment also facilitates coordination by leaving less room for discussion between different parties about the company's well-being. And thirdly, strong cultures can increase the motivation and performance of employees, since the individual behaviour can be chosen and implemented with more ease within the given framework (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). In order to verify the economic success of a company with a functioning corporate culture, Kotter and Heskett (1992) compared the economic performance of companies with that of their culture over a period of ten years. The results showed that across industries, companies with a strong corporate culture generally achieved higher average returns, net income growth and stock price changes (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Both academics and practitioners usually emphasise the advantages of strong corporate cultures over weak ones, as the former contribute to

making companies more economically successful. Accordingly, companies with strong cultures display a monocultural and socially homogeneous orientation, characterized by a shared value system that ensures loyalty, performance, and identification (Schreyögg 1989; Krell 1997). However, certain criteria need to be fulfilled to ensure that a corporate culture provides a long-term competitive advantage (Barney, 1985). A culture has to be valuable in the sense that it enables the company to do things and behave in such a way that it generates high revenues, low costs, high margins or other financial value for the company. On the other hand, the culture must be rare. Therefore, it should have characteristics and distinctions that are not encountered in most other companies. Finally, such a culture must be imperfectly imitable making it difficult for competitors to imitate it (Barney, 1985).

Based on the empirical studies currently available, it can be stated that there are probably direct, indirect and mutually reinforcing influences between corporate culture and a company's performance factors. Companies that are more people-oriented are often more successful than their competitors. A well-functioning corporate culture has its advantages when it comes to strengthening the loyalty, motivation and performance of its employees, resulting in increased productivity. A corporate culture based on mutual trust and respect favours the attractiveness of the company as an employer, increases job satisfaction and identification with the company and thereby improves profitability. Consequently, employees are considered the valuable core of any company while the corporate culture is regarded as an integral part of their perceived working environment that in turn influences their behaviour and performance.

#### **4.1.2. Shaping and changing corporate culture**

This chapter aims to provide an initial overview regarding the role of employees and management and their impact on shaping the corporate culture. This might facilitate the identification of possible targets for change and the use of appropriate tools for the company involved. Whether cultural strength is linked to the reliability of performance and thus to the success of a company depends to a large extent on how companies learn from and react to the experience and changes in their environment. Companies are constantly faced with challenges and changes. Such challenges generally include any changes in the company's environment and often pose a double threat to its performance. First, changes in the environment can cause internal problems by increasing the likelihood of errors in communication, coordination and control. And secondly, an environmental change can make existing organizational processes inappropriate or unsuitable (Sackmann, 2006). Changes in the environment require learning and modifications in organizational processes in order to respond appropriately to the new conditions. Companies that fail to identify the required

measures quickly will act arbitrarily and risk damaging their own culture. In the worst-case scenario, this turns a culture of trust into a culture of mistrust (Matthäi, 2005). Another reason for the change of culture can be, for example, a corporate restructuring during which traditional career and promotion paths of highly qualified people are threatened by hierarchy reduction and lean management (Matthäi, 2005). In addition, employees who, for a variety of reasons, influence the working atmosphere through persistent behaviour or blockades can change the corporate culture (Matthäi, 2005). If changes in a company should be implemented successfully and not trigger resistance, resignation or refusal among employees, they must be transparent and communicated properly (Kadritzke, 1997).

As mentioned previously, a corporate culture consists of many different elements that are not always controllable but only form a culture collectively. One of the most powerful tools for companies, managers or owners to influence the corporate culture involves the corporate philosophy. The philosophy of a company can be easily defined and articulated by decision makers. It is worth remembering the role of corporate philosophy as a guideline for the fundamental values and goals (Scheibelberger, 1989). The philosophy of a company is usually created when a company is founded but can always be changed. Values can also be formulated in the form of a mission statement. Values in a company can be perceived but not necessarily have to be acknowledged, thus they are often lived, but not always perceived. Therefore, a company's mission statement provides an awareness vehicle (Rosenstiel, 2003). Another tool are the company principles. Bachinger (1990) understands corporate principles as a written, generally accessible, intellectual set of company-specific action and decision-making principles that formulate the framework for a cooperation between all those involved. Corporate principles have the advantage of combining the principles of corporate values and decision-making (Bachinger, 1990). They also serve to help concretise commonalities and set a conceptual course for the company's future without establishing specific routines. Companies are historically shaped and partly reflect the special circumstances of their foundation (Pettigrew, 1979), the unique personalities of their founders (Schein, 1983) and the special circumstances of their growth (Kadritzke, 1997). Often these unique experiences of a company are reflected in the corporate culture. Rare experiences can therefore lead to a rare culture. Schein (1991) further argues that corporate cultures are strongly influenced by shared experiences in the early days of the company and that once established and taken for granted, the basic assumptions of a company are difficult to change (Schein, 1991; Stinchcombe, 1965). For Hinterhuber (2004), corporate culture is something that has grown and developed over time but can be destroyed in a short period of time. Similar to the other authors, he considers corporate culture to be shaped to a large extent by the vision and leadership principles of the company.

It is generally acknowledged that the management of a company is not only a key factor in developing and influencing the corporate culture but that it is also one of the management's core tasks (Schein, 1985). Thus, the behaviour of its management or the use of specific management instruments is in fact already part of its corporate culture (Hinterhuber, 2004). Hinterhuber further explains that the more management succeeds in aligning strategy and culture or adapting culture to strategy, the better the results will be. Ideally, culture and strategy support each other and thus create a strong and competitive firm (Hinterhuber, 2004). There is a large consensus in the research about the important influence of managers on corporate culture. Consequently, corporate culture develops largely on the basis of the management and leadership culture predominant in the company (Bass & Avolio, 1993) and is therefore strongly influenced by the behaviour of managers (Ray & Goppelt, 2011). One important element of leadership behaviour that has a major influence on corporate culture, work climate and the way people work together is communication (van Vuuren et al., 2007; Sackmann, 2002). Regardless a person's position, the way in which employees communicate with each other is partly determined by soft skills such as a person's general communication behaviour. The social competences examined in this study, such as communication behaviour, influence each individual's behaviour and thus form the general behavior of employees as well as managers. However, there are instruments and possibilities to improve communication and thus contribute to the corporate culture that are more independent of the individual behaviour of managers. One of the most important communication instruments between manager and employee is the dialogue between manager and employee. Feedback sessions or other forms of feedback are not only important as they provide employees with the feeling of being taken seriously and give them the opportunity to reflect on their past, but the way of communication during these meetings also influences the following communication behaviour of the employees (van Vuuren et al., 2007). Communication with the supervisor can also strengthen an employee's commitment by using it to clarify the company's values and goals (van Vuuren et al., 2007). Instruments like these require a sense of belonging to the organization in order to work. An important aspect is to ensure an open, consistent and thus culture-enhancing communication between the hierarchical levels and the use of existing communication systems (van der Post et al., 1998). An open communication creates a positive atmosphere and establishes a connection between a person and a company. In addition, good communication and a high degree of transparency, as part of a corporate culture, lead to a high level of employee commitment.

The influence of a company's management is also reflected in cultural change processes. Matthäi (2005) writes:

"Cultural changes are either induced purposefully by management in top-down processes through the introduction of new corporate guidelines, new leadership and

management concepts, new control and steering instruments or organisational concepts, or are vice-versa an unplanned and accidental result of extensive and far-reaching restructuring and business re-engineering processes" (Matthäi, 2005, p. 9).

Several studies in particular have shown that the type of leadership has a decisive influence on the commitment of employees and their identification with a company and thus indirectly acts as enabler or disabler for employees' behaviour, commitment and identification with the company (Sackmann, 2002). The points mentioned illustrate that the type of leadership enables or hinders the use of employee potential and thus the use of valuable resources. For this reason, managers should always represent the corporate culture, behave in line with it and be aware of their role as role models. Companies that consciously deal with their corporate culture select managers according to whether they fit in with the corporate culture and act accordingly (Sackmann, 2006). Since the management is one of the main drivers of corporate culture and managers the change agents and carrier of the culture, human resource (HR) management is assigned a fundamental importance for cultural change, especially by developing, structuring and recruiting the management (Matthäi, 2005; Bertelsmann-Stiftung & Hans-Böckler-Stiftung, 2001). A companies HR department should therefore bear in mind its own corporate culture and its special features within its human resources management. This is why the values and norms laid down in the corporate philosophy or in the guiding principles should be taken into account when selecting employees and in particular managers (Matthäi, 2005; Sackmann, 2006). One possibility, for example, consists of combining the values of a company with the desired behaviors, making them accessible to all participants and considering them when selecting personnel. In their work, Kotter and Heskett (1992) came to the conclusion that corporate culture can be changed primarily through the first level, the behavioural norms of those involved. Norms are generally recognised as collective rules or regulations that are binding on people living together. Like values, norms regulate the decision-making and activities of the group (Heinen, 1985). The shared values, on the other hand, are difficult to change (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). The behaviour of a person always has something to do with his or her competences and the individual characteristics of a person. Culture, however, is decisive in determining how well an employee fits into the organizational context. The need for a good match between an employee and the company is crucial for the functioning of a company (O'Reilly et al., 1991). Consequently, during the recruitment process, tools can and should be used to provide a first insight into a candidate's basic behaviour and values. Often, recruitment interviews focus on technical or methodological competencies, whereas other competencies, such as social competence for instance, play a less significant role even though they can be easily assessed using short questionnaires or by taking them into consideration in interviews (Achouri, 2010). The points mentioned previously already emphasize the importance of employees in creating



and changing corporate culture. According to the literature, companies are independent social inventions that reflect the unique personalities and experiences of those who work there (Barley, 1983; Schein, 1985). Simultaneously, the culture of the company is often either the glue that binds employees to the company or the reason that causes them to leave (Saasongu Nongo et al. 2012). Employees are more willing to act consistent with corporate goals and values if they understand and agree with them (Levinthal, 1991). However, if, for example, employees lack a clear understanding of the company's goals, collaboration becomes more difficult since they more likely find themselves in conflict with other parts of the company (Cremer, 1993). If employees differ in their understanding of their environment, they either spend more time arguing and discussing alternatives or behave inconsistently and are therefore more at risk of performing routine tasks inadequately (Cremer, 1993). This is consistent with Katz and Kahn (1978) and their theory of organizational behaviour, in which they demonstrate the importance of culture, in particular its values and embedded norms, regarding the behaviour of an organization's members (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

The presence of individuals with beliefs that contradict the dominant beliefs of the organization can also be a source of exploratory learning in the organization. In order to learn from these individuals, a company must enable them to maintain their differing beliefs and be willing to incorporate constructive and substantiated insights into the way the organization works (March, 1991). In simulation studies, March (1991) found that organizations that are willing to learn from their members and have weak socialisation pressures have the clearest understanding of the changing environmental reality. A company has a number of components at its disposal in order to respond to change or adapt and transform the culture. In his work, Matthäi (2005) has compiled a whole series of modules of corporate culture from literature. Among other things, goals and objectives should be discussed, problems should be named clearly and conflicts should be solved properly. The collaborative development of a corporate mission statement can be a valuable instrument as well (Matthäi, 2005), since the stakeholders not only have the opportunity to work on a shared framework and formulate their own expectations, thereby assuring a greater awareness of the jointly developed values and behaviors. Companies should also proactively provide employees with information and communicate comprehensively with them (Matthäi, 2005). Cooperative leadership and collaborative partnership between management and employees is as important as new, transparent forms of participation, product and work types or profit and capital sharing. The company must create an awareness for problems and a willingness for change among all participants. This requires trust and acceptance which can only be created through credibility, reliability, commitment and sustainability (Matthäi, 2005). However, all of this can only be used successfully if the desired culture is exemplified by the management and creates a synthesis between proclaimed and existing culture. A proactive, integrated and comprehensive human

resources policy that anticipates changes and seeks to promote the long-term development of human resources can become a reflective mediator between the company's goals and values and those of its employees (Bertelsmann Foundation & Hans Böckler Foundation, 2001). A future-oriented corporate culture is characterized by the fact that the general basic consensus supports even difficult decisions, that the desired goals are widely discussed among those involved, and that there are transparent procedures and effective institutions for resolving conflicts. There are also a number of outwardly visible elements, such as the architecture of a company headquarters, the company logo, the style of company events, conferences and meetings, or the marketing instruments utilized. Each of these elements already expresses the things that were important and valuable to the decision-makers, often owners or founders in the company's past (Jochmann, 2007). It is widely agreed that the intended change of corporate cultures is a protracted, difficult and long-term undertaking, since cultural changes elude the complexity and the existing interrelationships of cause-effect correlations and can only be controlled to a limited extent (Matthäi, 2005; Bertelsman-Foundation & Hans-Böckler-Foundation, 2001). Nevertheless, the above described functions of corporate culture have shown why it is important for companies to deal with their culture. A corporate culture is omnipresent and influential because it either promotes or hampers changes in the organization. In this context, two of the most important functions of corporate culture should be recalled. Firstly, it should integrate the members of a company and thus transmit the desired behaviour and manners within the company. And secondly, it serves to adapt a company to its external environment (Daft, 2007).

#### **4.1.3. Diagnosing and measuring corporate culture**

While some researchers consider the attempt to measure organizational cultures and their impact on organizations to be rather difficult (Alvesson, 2002), most researchers argue that culture is in fact a measurable characteristic of organizations (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1996). Numerous studies exist in the literature using qualitative methods to identify and describe corporate cultures. The more qualitative methods include case studies, group discussions, in-depth interviews and observations. Qualitative studies can usually collect more detailed information and therefore sometimes provide a clearer picture of the investigated company (Sackmann, 1991). A major disadvantage, however, is that the results obtained are generally very specific and cannot be used to draw general conclusions (Denison & Spreitzer, 1991). Comparing the results with other investigations or companies is also impossible or only to a very limited extent (Delobbe et al., 2002). A further important aspect is the role of the researcher in the quality of the findings. In certain procedures, like interviews and discussions,

a researcher can have a decisive influence on the behaviour of the respondents and thus considerably reduce the objectivity of the study (Denison & Spreitzer, 1991).

One important measure or indicator of a specific corporate culture is the extent to which normative expectations are in line with actual behavior (Sackmann, 2006). This requires, however, that the preferred or targeted culture is one that supports the strategic objectives of the company and was elected after a critical review of the relevant business environment. The greater the discrepancy, the greater are the existing problems in the company (Sackmann 2006). It is also possible to use existing statistics to obtain initial indications of specific characteristics within a company. This includes, for example, the fluctuation rate, absenteeism or sickness absence, which can be objectively measured and are external indicators that show if one is using the employee potential (Sackmann, 2006). Indications for the existence of a particular leadership behavior and the corresponding communication can be drawn primarily from direct observation. This enables one to study, for example, how openly or formally employees behave towards their superiors and vice versa. Other indicators can be the extent and consistency of assigned and exercised responsibility and thus the degree of the actual delegation of tasks, competencies and responsibilities. Further indicators include the number and frequency of staff appraisals, the type and extent of written and formal communication, the frequency of contacts between superiors and employees, and the extent of formal communication (Sackmann, 2006). Along with the qualitative methods and indicators presented, there were several researchers who focused on quantitative approaches. Kilmann and Saxton (1983), for example, developed their own instrument called the "Culture Gap Survey" to measure corporate culture in the format of written questionnaires (Kilmann & Saxton, 1983). The use of quantitative methods is usually based on a functionalistic view of culture (Sackman, 1991), which generally focuses on values and norms (Delobbe et al., 2002). Sackmann (2006) provides a good overview of some of the methods available for measuring corporate culture and has described, compared and evaluated 25 of them in an extensive study. Depending on the method used, different components and levels of corporate culture are captured with dimensions that have either been identified as relevant internally in a specific company or introduced externally, for example using existing questionnaires.

The instrument used in this study to measure corporate culture and described in the methods section, was also examined by Sackmann (2006) and derives from the theoretical work of numerous researchers (Cameron & Quinn, 1999, 2011; Cameron et al., 2006; Kalliath et al., 1999; Walton & Dawson, 2001). Throughout the literature, the underlying theoretical approach, the Competing Value Model (CVM), is considered to be one of the most appropriate methods for evaluating a culture in a relatively neutral way. This approach is based on the assumption that there is no right or wrong corporate culture, since each company is constantly exposed to different interests and influences. Consequently, a company has different degrees

of cultural diversity and a multitude of subcultures, collectively creating a suitable culture for its environment. With regard to the methods for identifying and describing culture, research tends to coincide on the assumption that the competing influences of internal versus external and control versus flexibility are of central importance within companies (Parker & Bradley, 2000). The internal or external orientation shows whether the company focuses on its internal dynamics or on the requirements of its external environment. The dimension flexibility versus control expresses the organizational preferences for structuring, coordination and control on the one hand and the flexibility and dynamics of a company on the other (Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010). The mentioned dimensions of this framework are based on two opposite poles in which an internal orientation tends to be more person-oriented and an external orientation tends to be more organization-oriented (Livari & Huisman, 2007). Like all other culture models, the CVM additionally serves as an indicator of the company's effectiveness as it assesses the requirements of the company both internally and externally (Cameron & Quinn, 2006).

In this context, it is important to note that there are no ideal types of cultures. In practice, it is unlikely that an organization has only one type of culture. Rather, a mixture of different types of culture emerges, some more dominant than others (Livari & Huisman, 2007).

## **4.2. Social Competences**

### **4.2.1. Competences**

This section deals with research on social competence and its components. One of the first researchers working on the concept of competence was the American behavioural and social psychologist David McClelland in the early 1970s. In his article, he stated that behavioural patterns and characteristics are more efficient in predicting performance at work than capability and proficiency tests (McClelland, 1973). He was therefore one of the first researchers in the field of human resource management who highlighted the importance of other competences beyond intelligence within the context of work. In his article he urged that instead of intelligence, competences should be considered. He regarded competences as knowledge structures, abilities, skills and individual personality patterns and as internal, unobservable prerequisites of a person, only visible through the performing, applying and using of competence by the individual. He further assumed that competences are directly related to behaviour and important life events (McClelland, 1973). Eberl (2009) defines competences as a bundle of resources generated by complex social interactions. Authors like Volmerg (1990) regard competence as the individual ability of a person to acquire and apply qualifications, including the ability to behave purposefully within the work context. The concept of competence can be distinguished from the concept of qualification, which has been most commonly used

to date, since qualifications are the documentation of the scope of knowledge, skills and abilities recorded in a curriculum and often the result of training courses and examinations. Usually, they are additionally accompanied by certifications. Consequently, qualifications are purely knowledge and skill dispositions (Erpenbeck & von Rosenstiel, 2003; Kauffeld, 2002). In the context of job-related competences, one also speaks of vocational action competence. Sonntag (1996) defines vocational action competence as the ability of an employee "to understand the increasing complexity of his professional environment and to shape it through goal-oriented, self-confident, reflected and responsible behaviour" (Sonntag, 1996, p. 56). Pietrzyk (2001) identified numerous examples of relevant professional competencies in the literature on competence management and competence models. Besides characteristics such as personal responsibility and perseverance, they also include the ability to work in a team, the specialized knowledge, the analytical skills or the ability to cooperate (Pietrzyk, 2001). According to Pietrzyk (2001), all approaches agree on the fact that the development of competences not only involves cognitive content, but also sensual-experiential, social-interactive and emotional-motivational content. Weinert (2001) additionally considers moral-ethical components such as values, norms and attitudes to be essential.

The most common differentiation distinguishes competences as professional competence, methodological competence, social competence and personnel competence (Erpenbeck & Heyse, 1999; Bergmann, 2003). Professional competence is reflected in all the knowledge and skills that enable people to carry out their professional activities. This includes, for example, knowledge of processes, machines, procedures and opportunities for action, but also the ability to understand, link and evaluate knowledge, and the manner in which problems are identified, analysed and solved (Kauffeld, 2002). Methodological competence encompasses the cognitive ability to independently acquire new expertise or new working methods that can be used in all situations. This includes, for example, problem structuring and decision-making, as well as abilities required for complex, self-organized tasks (Erpenbeck & Heyse, 1999). The personal or self-competence manifests itself through personality-related attitudes, values and motives that influence work behaviour. It also shows itself in the capability to reflect on one's own abilities and to organise oneself (Bergmann, 1999). Furthermore, this competence dimension overlaps with the final competence dimension, social competence, and is partly examined in the survey that was conducted for this work.

#### **4.2.2 Social Competences**

Although the concept of social competence has recently experienced widespread popularity, researchers agree that there is no single and binding definition. Even the term is not necessarily explicit. Terms such as soft skills or social skills, transversal competences, generic

competences and sometimes basic or life skills might also occur in this context (Rychen & Salganik, 2003). This can lead to a misunderstanding regarding the possible overlap of the two terms. In fact, "skill" and "competence" are often used interchangeably but are not necessarily synonymous. The difference between skills and competences was highlighted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the DeSeCo project (Rychen & Salganik, 2003). While the term competence refers to the ability to meet highly complex requirements and implies complex systems of action, the term skill is used to describe the ability to use one's own knowledge comparatively easily when performing relatively simple tasks (Rychen & Salganik, 2003). Even if the boundary between competence and skills is somewhat blurred, the conceptual difference between these terms does exist.

In recent years, the importance of soft competences in the form of social and personal competences has increased. Social competence in particular receives special attention in management literature (Kauffeld & Grote, 2002). Von Rosenstiel (2003) even regards social competence as the aspect with the greatest need for action. In his opinion, communication and information requirements are becoming more and more important as the labour environment changes. Work is increasingly being carried out in interdisciplinary teams, informal communication processes are becoming increasingly important and managers are communicating more intensively with their employees (von Rosenstiel, 2003). This requires a high level of social competence from everyone involved. A person's social competence is associated with special abilities that help him or her to handle social situations at work and in his or her private life more effectively, thereby creating a maximum of positive and a minimum of negative consequences for everyone involved in the interaction (Wunderer & Grunwald, 1980; von Rosenstiel, 2003; Kauffeld & Grote, 2002). Fydrich and Bürgener (2005) distinguish between three main characteristics with regard to the definition of social competence: "1. the ability to adequately assess social situations, 2. the availability of a behavioural repertoire of social competences and 3. the ability to show socially competent behaviour" (Fydrich & Bürgener, 2005, p. 87). Wilsdorf (1991) defines social competence in more detail and writes: "Social competence is the ability and willingness to deal with others rationally and responsibly, regardless of age, gender, origin, education, and to behave in a group- and relationship-oriented manner" (Wilsdorf, 1991, p.43). For him and other authors, this behavior includes, among other things, the willingness to cooperate, the ability to work in a team, an environmental awareness or the ability to resolve conflicts" (Wilsdorf, 1991; Eiff, 1992).

As can be seen from the previous explanations, some authors distinguish between socially competent behaviour and social competence. The terms differ to the extent that socially competent behaviour is the "behaviour of a person which, in a specific situation, contributes to achieving one's own goals while at the same time maintaining social acceptance of the behaviour" (Kanning, 2002, p. 155). Social competence, on the other hand, is "the totality

of the knowledge, abilities and skills of a person that promotes the quality of their own social behaviour" (Kanning, 2002, p. 155). Consequently, social competence includes the knowledge and ability to cope with situations in which social interaction takes place. There are elements of social competence that are directly related to behaviour such as the ability to communicate, the ability to deal with conflicts or the ability to work in a team (Schuler & Barthelme, 1995). However, other components of social competence are rather difficult to identify as they are part of the personality of a person. This includes, for example, empathy, sensitivity or interpersonal flexibility (Schuler & Barthelme, 1995). Since social competence is always context dependent, an ability that is considered socially competent in one culture can be considered socially incompetent in another culture (Schuler & Barthelme, 1995). Nevertheless, in the literature there is a common understanding about the social competences that are considered as such for a large part of society. The skills mentioned by Schuler and Barthelme (1995) are also recognised by other authors as part of social competences. If one looks at the literature, one can find certain characteristics repeatedly. These include communication abilities (Fittkau, 1995; Dietzen, 1999; Haselberger et al., 2012), teamwork and cooperation abilities (Brandstätter, 1994; Herbert, 1999; Haselberger et al., 2012) or conflict resolution abilities (Asendorpf & Neyer, 2013; Berkel, 2013; Haselberger et al., 2012).

A further point that coincides with the already mentioned self-competence (Bergmann, 1999) is empathy (Crisand, 2002; Cherniss, 2000). The more deeply reaching components of empathy are abilities such as sensitivity, openness, positive charisma, willingness to take responsibility, the ability to reach a consensus, the ability to make contacts, fairness, collegiality or the ability to compromise. These abilities can be sorted and ranked respectively. For example, the ability to work in a team includes most of the abilities listed above, including conflict resolution and communication skills. In other words, those who are able to work in a team are usually also equipped with the other competencies. A clear differentiation between the different aspects is therefore not possible. Many of the abilities and competencies are interconnected or presuppose each other. When surveyed, employers routinely list teamwork, collaboration, and oral communication skills as among the most valuable yet hard to find qualities of workers (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006)

The concept of social competence with its various individual components aims at different dimensions within a company. First of all, and as already described, there is the personal function, which is the importance of social competence for the employee. Social competence should enable the employee to behave in a goal-, relation- and group-oriented manner and to communicate and interact with other people within a work context, regulating these interactions in a task-related manner on the basis of desired internalized social behaviour (Wunderer & Klimecki, 1990). Furthermore, it serves to guide the employee socially with respect to the individual scope for action within the framework of given status, task and role

distributions inside the existing organizational structures and with respect to external requirements, such as customers or business partners. Social competence has a slightly different significance for the company. In organisational terms, the concept of social competence serves as an instrument for controlling the social relations of the members of the organisation, with the aim of establishing basic values of prosociality and participation at all levels of the organisation, thereby ensuring the fulfilment of needs and an optimal effectiveness of performance (Wunderer & Klimecki, 1990). The previously mentioned skills, such as communication, cooperation, and conflict management, are regarded as instruments of control available to the company (Wunderer & Klimecki, 1990). These instruments are important since companies represent a differentiated relationship structure in an organizational context, in which the individual partners interact with each other and have different intentions and abilities (Hoets, 1993). The concept of social competence can thus serve as a specifically targeted instrument for shaping vertical, diagonal and, in particular, lateral cooperative relationships (Hoets, 1993).

Social competence is viewed as an organizational construct, there is a risk that the person will be functionalized and manipulated by instrumentalizing and reducing social competence to formal, socially adapted behaviour. Nonetheless, the concept of social competence contains ideal-typical, desirable human cognitive attitudes, qualities, behaviours and virtues that correspond to the idea of an ideal type of person who, as an "entrepreneur in a company", performs optimally and productively (Bergmann, 2000). Von Rosenstiel (2004) estimates that only 20 percent of what is required today in the workplace can be acquired through institutionalized explicit learning. By contrast, 80 percent of learning takes place implicitly in the process of work and in the social environment. Competence development thus takes place to a large extent in the process of work through the dealing with tasks (Bergmann, 2000). Another point to be considered in this context is the different need for competences. After all, it is not always necessary to be as socially competent as possible. Due to different job areas and work environments, there can also be different demands towards employees within a company. However, the number of interactions with colleagues promotes the employee's social competence and is therefore of great importance (Bergmann, 2000). For the promotion and development of the social competencies of employees, a climate of mutual trust is generally required in which the individual biography, the ability of people to learn and make mistakes are respected and the dependence on communication and cooperative work processes is not perverted by the construction of dependency relationships (Bergmann, 2000).



### 4.2.3 Measuring Social Competences

Numerous methods are used in research to record and diagnose competence. Erpenbeck and von Rosenstiel (2003) have examined the range of instruments in their work. Among the most frequently used instruments are interviews and questionnaires for self-assessment, external assessment and group assessment. In addition, teaching samples, assessment centers, the completion of development tasks or development portfolios, social intelligence tests, image tests and projective methods can be used to record social competencies (Erpenbeck & von Rosenstiel, 2003). Hagerty et al. (2001) collect further instruments in their work, including self-assessments or self-assessments of behaviour, values and motivations, direct observations of behaviour in natural situations or under experimental conditions, behavioural evaluation scales to be filled in by the employer or the employees themselves, convincing tasks and role plays, hypothetical scenarios, interpretation of video clips, social network analyses, sociometric approaches or computer simulations (Hagerty et al., 2001). However, there is no general consensus regarding the most appropriate instrument (Hagerty et al., 2001). Erpenbeck and von Rosenstiel (2003) recommend that a more objective approach should be taken to measuring technical and methodological competences and a more subjective approach when measuring other competences. In recent years, the use of subjective self-assessments has increased, largely as a result of their practicability and their cross-industry and cross-occupational applications (Lang-von Wins, 2003). The subjective approach is based on the assumption that employees as experts in their field can also analyse their professional competence (Amelang & Bartussek, 2001). According to Bergmann (2003), empirical studies and meta-analyses came to the conclusion that self-assessments of competencies are valid if the anonymity of the data is guaranteed and if concrete behaviour patterns and not personality traits are questioned. From a methodological perspective, self-evaluations have the advantage that they can be carried out on many people within a very short time. The evaluation of competence presupposes, however, that the respective person can observe and evaluate himself realistically in retrospect, does not consciously want to judge himself better or worse and does not subconsciously judge himself in terms of social desirability or acquiescence (Amelang & Bartussek, 2001). Self-assessments are often combined with external and/or group assessments in order to relativize errors of assessment on the one hand and to diagnose and evaluate competence values in a comprehensive, thus multi-perspective way on the other (Frey & Balzer, 2005). However, the entire recording of an employee's competencies seems difficult due to its complexity and multidimensionality. Bernien (1997) suggests that it is precisely the multi-dimensionality and complexity that makes them quantitatively accessible through a system of parameters and indicators and therefore proposes a reduction in complexity. According to him, one possibility is the splitting of complexity into its individual components (Bernien, 1997).

Nevertheless, there are also concerns about the consistency and reliability of self-assessments and the distortions in reporting (Hagerty et al., 2001). The measurements of individual factors are attractive, but according to Hagerty et al. (2001) are only suitable for assessing simple and unambiguous constructs. They offer only one way to capture a complex concept, may overlook individual differences between individuals, and may be contaminated by the context in which they are collected. For Hagerty et al. (2001) it therefore makes sense to use or develop short multi-item scales for specific competences.

A final point to note is the fact that the absence of a corresponding behaviour alone does not allow to draw clear conclusions about corresponding deficits in competences. Conversely, competences do not guarantee competent behaviour. Competences increase only the probability for the occurrence of competent behavior. Whether and to what extent competences are actually translated into behaviour depends on many factors which might originate in the environment or the person himself (Kanning, 2002).

### **4.3. Relationship between both theoretical constructs**

During an extensive review of the existing literature it has become clear that there is substantial academic research on both of the concepts of corporate culture and social competences. There is, however, a lack of literature and thus a knowledge gap on how these two concepts are intertwined. It is this knowledge gap that this master thesis aims to fill by conducting sound empirical research. First, however, a look at how the so far conducted literature review points to possible connections and similarities between corporate culture and social competence is given.

As discussed earlier, a corporate culture creates certainty of action and expectation for employees and managers by stabilizing everyday life with well-known elements. In this way, a shared culture promotes the ability to work in a team and creates a feeling of togetherness within the company. It can, for example, help in overcoming conflicts or crises and assist in the integration of new employees. Through its system of values, its guidelines the behaviour and the organisation of work, and provides basic rules and patterns for acting and solving problems. A strong, system-compatible and thus functional corporate culture makes it possible to find a sustainable basic consensus and a shared basic understanding of fundamental organizational issues. Associated to a functional culture is, for example, the potential for communication, which can help solving social conflict situations as well as in finding and developing forms of cooperation and possible solutions for dealing with current problems (Dill, 1986; Ulrich, 1991). A corporate culture is strongly influenced by employee values, attitudes and convictions. In addition, values are often associated with ethics or morals, because they determine what

people think is right or wrong and thus influence their behaviour (Schein, 1985). Positive behaviour can therefore have a corresponding influence on the company. The literature review indicates that social competence plays a key role here. This is supported by the findings of Jabornegg Altenfels (2007) who found that a high level of social competence by employees is regarded as central to improving the working atmosphere. For the individual employee, solidarity, trust, common norms and goals are a decisive motivator with regard to involvement in cooperation processes. A strong culture of social interaction enables the development of network structures, which in turn encourages the motivation to participate in mutually beneficial exchanges and the ability to provide the resources or competences needed by other actors. In such an environment, the individual not only feels part of the whole, but is also willing to contribute his or her own competences (Sumilo & Baumann, 2007). A number of studies suggest that the actual use of the existing skills, abilities and potential of employees and managers is a key success factor. The studies by Ouchi and Jaeger (1978) and later confirmed by Storey (2007) showed positive correlations between humanistic values and the success of a company. Let us recall Barney (1991) and his statement on the imitation of corporate culture. Socially complex resources, such as people, are considered more durable and less susceptible to imitation than other types of assets (Barney, 1991). In addition, people strengthen their relationships on a professional level by developing a greater awareness of the skills and expertise of others (Cross & Parker, 2004). One can therefore argue that corporate culture begins with the individual and seeks to find a system as an aggregated result of individual action. Subjectively meaningful individual action is treated as a central force of organizational behavior and thus of culture (Astley, 1983).

When developing competencies in a company, however, not only the individual is of importance, but also the company who can influence them through training and personnel development measures. The company thus contributes to the development in the form of work and organizational design (Bergmann, 2003). In organisational terms, the concept of social competence serves as an instrument for controlling social relations such as communication, interaction, cooperation or conflict management among members of an organisation. They exist in order to implement basic values of prosociality and participation at all levels of the organisation, with the aim of ensuring the fulfilment of needs and optimum effectiveness (Wunderer, 1990). The concept of social competence focuses on standardized, organizationally desired cognitive attitudes and behavioral expectations. It has the function of controlling and regulating the relational partners and the differentiated relationships within an organisation by setting a social framework for action (Stiefel, 2015). Social competence is needed in order to be able to cope with unforeseeable, non-standardizable situations that can only be solved within the framework of collaborative work and therefore require a rational shaping of social relationships in working life. Therefore, social competence does not only

address a purely individual perspective, but also affects the company as a social system (Schreyögg & Kliesch, 2003).

Studies also show that the congruence between individual and organizational culture contributes to a higher level of performance (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Teamwork, cooperation and helpfulness between employees can be of great value for a company. Employees with complementary abilities can improve performance and productivity by supporting each other in individual tasks. Communication and the exchange of relevant information between different employees or teams can also significantly improve production efficiency (Kosfeld & von Siemens, 2011). Empathy, as already mentioned, is important as well. Only those who, for example, can empathize with other people and adapt their own behavior to the situational requirements will achieve good results as managers, in teams or in customer contact (Kanning, 2006). Many activities require interaction with other people like team members or customers. To meet the social requirements, employees need social competence. At the same time, social competence also has a positive effect on voluntary work (Jawahar et al., 2008). Socially competent people are more likely to show consideration for others by behaving in a way that counteracts the emergence of problems with others and are open-minded about changes in the organisation. This makes sense, since the individual person is not isolated in the organisation but is integrated into a structure of informal norms that determine the desired and allowed social behaviour (Rosenstiel, 2004). One of the few authors who tries to establish the connection between the different dimensions of corporate culture that also includes competences, is the American organization theorist Richard Boyatzis. In his view, the following aspects of the organizational environment are likely to have a significant influence on the display of competencies and/or the design of workplaces (Figure 4.2.): culture and climate; structure and systems; maturity of industry and strategic positioning in it; as well as aspects of the economic, political, social, ecological and religious environment of the organization (Boyatzis, 2008).

Figure 4.2: Theory of action and job performance (Boyatzis, 2008, p. 7)



The model developed by Boyatzis (2008) shows where culture and competences intersect. Social competencies appear more than ever as the key to the professional success of the individual and equally as a necessary prerequisite for the success of a company as a whole (Witt & Hochwarter, 2001; Walter & Kanning, 2003). The aforementioned sub-areas of corporate culture and social competence also indicate intersections. Teamwork and communication, for example, are among the dimensions of corporate culture (Lau & Idris, 2001; Sola et al., 2012) while the ability to work in a team and the ability to cooperate are part of social competence (Pietrzyk, 2001).

All the mentioned aspects demonstrate that a corporate culture is largely shaped by the behaviour of its members and arises from the cooperation of employees within their working environment. An employee's social competence in turn has an impact on their behaviour and the way they deal with their colleagues and other people in the working environment. Ultimately, this influences what culture a company has and thus what climate prevails in a company.

## 5. METHOD

The following chapter explains the methodological approach of the empirical study. The main purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the basic research design and methodology that was used to carry out the study. Therefore, the procedure of data collecting will be

explained, followed by a short description of the sample and the description of the instruments used to capture corporate culture and social competence.

## **5.1 Procedure and Data Collection**

The initial work on the subject began in autumn of 2018. Various literature and Internet researches as well as preliminary discussions with the supervisor of this work followed. Subsequently, the study and the related subject were discussed with the CEO of the company and the relevant head of department. This resulted in the elaboration of the research question, the identification of the research instruments and the development of the method. Since the optimal culture does not exist and there is no universally ideal culture, this thesis uses the Competing Value Model (Quinn & McGrath, 1985) as the theoretical groundwork for the investigation of corporate culture. As mentioned before, this model suggests that a culture is neither positive nor negative, but that there are different needs that a company and its culture must fulfil (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991). Since the topic discussed in this thesis aimed to obtain not just a first but also a broad overall picture of the company and its employees, a quantitative approach was predetermined. Quantitative research methods involve the measurement of concepts using scales that provide numerical data (Zikmund et al., 2010). Subsequently, these numerical data can be analysed using statistical methods. Such methods can be rather simple or more complicated, ranging from percentages to statistical models or hypothesis tests with the corresponding software. Most importantly, quantitative research methods provide a way of determining the generalizability of the data collected from the sample (Zikmund et al., 2010).

Since the present study and the associated data collection were developed within the framework of a master's thesis with a company, consultation with the company played an important role, particularly regarding data collection. The relevant parts for the study, Corporate Culture and Social Competences, were only two parts of the survey since the company wanted to use the rare opportunity to gain further data. Nevertheless, this data was not used for this study. However, it quickly became clear that data could only be collected anonymously, as the topics are rather sensitive and the truthful evaluation of the participants is of importance. The participants and the company had to be certain that no data would be passed on to unrelated parties and that the data would not reveal any personal information. The software used, LimeSurvey, is configured not to store IP addresses. Although this comes with the disadvantage that multiple participation of a person in the survey is possible, it is tolerated in favour of improved anonymity. The use of the software was requested by the company, where it is already used as a survey tool and therefore complies with the company's data protection guidelines. Due to the general settings made by the company in the software used, the survey pre-sets the option to not answer the question. Thus, in addition to the answer

options used by the researcher, there was a fifth option, namely "no answer". However, for the evaluation of the data these participants were excluded, meaning that the data used for this study consist only of valid answers.

The data of the study was then collected in the form of an online questionnaire, which was created via LimeSurvey. Online surveys usually follow the same rules regarding item and questionnaire construction as offline surveys (Jackob et al., 2008). As recommended by Burns et al. (2008), the number of items and thus the number of questions in each field needed to be narrowed down in order to minimize the workload on employees. Since online surveys do not involve personal data collection, direct interactions with the participants are not possible and may lead to errors in the collection of answers (Treiblmaier, 2011). Nevertheless, the method can also ensure the objectivity of the data collected and has the advantage of being easily accessible and widely applicable (Jackob et al., 2009). As this method lacks personal contact, importance was given to the comprehensibility of the questionnaire during its development in order to avoid the risk of possible misinterpretations. Both the validity and the reliability of the data had to be considered in order to ensure the quality of the research and its credibility. For this purpose, the questionnaires were sent to the researcher's supervisor and to a small selection of the company's staff for preliminary testing. Finally, the questionnaire was subjected to a pre-test in order to identify possible flaws and to test the comprehensibility and functionality of the questionnaire (Burns et al., 2008).

The actual survey took place in June 2019. For this purpose, the employees received an email with the link to the survey and were informed about the pending topic. The starting page of the online questionnaire contained a short instruction on how to answer the questions, the reference to voluntary participation and the assurance of anonymity. After one week, the survey was closed, and the collected data was transferred from LimeSurvey to IBM SPSS Statistics in order to analyse it.

## **5.2. Sample Description**

During the measurement period (June 2019), 106 employees of the company participated in the survey. Out of these 106 participants, 65 completed the Corporate Culture and Social Competence sections of the questionnaire and thereby those parts of the survey that are relevant to this work. Demographic data were surveyed as well, but due to the desired anonymity of the persons, the survey only included broader ranges. The data collected in the demographic section can be summarized as follows:

Not all the 65 participants who provided data on corporate culture and social competences completed the demographic section. From the 65 participants, 19 participants

(29.2%) have reported to be under 31 years. 32 participants (49.3%) reported their age between 31 and 49 years. 5 participants (7.7%) stated that they were over 50 years of age. 9 participants (13.8%) did not provide age information.

In addition to the previously presented demographic data, two further factors were queried that were used to examine and investigate the research question. The participants were asked about their seniority. Here, too, 9 participants (13.8%) gave no answers. 15 participants (23%) replied that they had been working for the company for less than three years. 33 persons (50.7%) and thus slightly over half of the participants reported that they had worked for the company for more than three but less than ten years. The remaining 8 participants (12.3%) stated that they had worked for the company for more than ten years.

The participants were also asked about their employment status. A clear picture emerged here. Only 6 participants (9.2%) stated that they had a temporary contract (this group also included students or interns) while 49 (75.4%) stated that they had a permanent contract. 10 participants (15.4%) did not answer. The coherence between these variables and the perceived culture is explored in chapter 7.3.

### **5.3 Instruments and Variables**

Through literature research, existing instruments for measuring corporate culture and social competences were reviewed regarding their suitability for the present study. The questionnaire used for this paper consists of items from the instruments presented below. The selection of the items was based on the subjects investigated in the study and whether they are relevant to achieving the objectives of this study. This explains, for example, why the items for assessing the organizational leadership performance of a company were not included in the survey. Regarding the instrument used to measure competence, only the social competence items were queried in the questionnaire, while the second dimension, method competence, was not. In total, the survey contained 75 questions. Out of these, 16 were for the investigation of corporate culture and 48 for the assessment of social competence including 24 items for the self-evaluation and 24 items for the evaluation of the colleagues. Additionally, four demographic questions were asked. The remaining seven questions were the company's additional questions and remain separate from the study.

The instruments used to develop the questionnaire are presented below. The corporate culture was measured by the Organisational Culture Assessment Inventory (OCAI) according to Cameron and Quinn (1999, 2006), which was translated using the OCAIrev (Kluge & Jänicke, 2004), the German version of the OCAI. In order to measure the social competences, parts of the Assessment Sheet for Social and Methodical Competences (smK) developed by



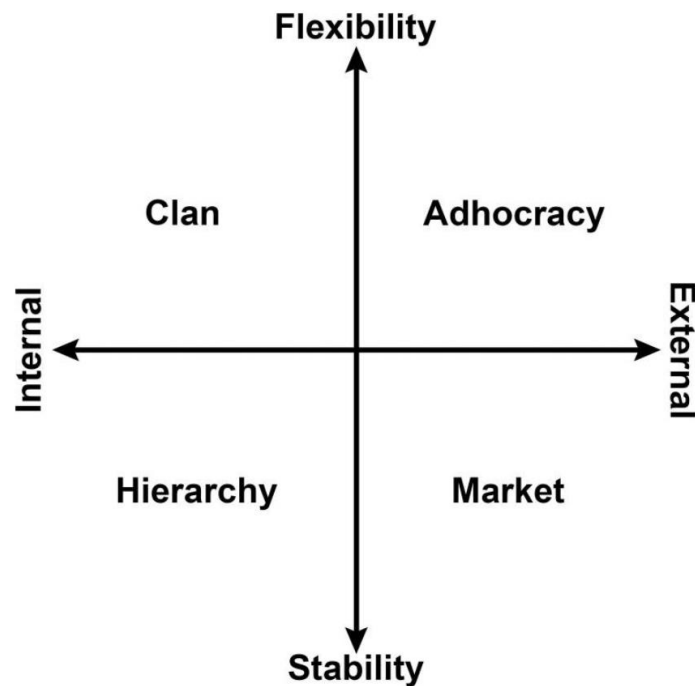
Frey and Balzer (2003; 2005) were used. This instrument was published in German and translated for this work by the author. The detailed version of the questionnaire can be found in the appendix.

### **5.3.1 Measuring Corporate Culture**

The OCAI is an easy-to-administer quantitative method for measuring perceived values in organizations on the basis of the Competing Values Model. The CVM is based on the model of Quinn and McGrath (1985), who first differentiated corporate culture between the four types of market, adhocracy, clan and hierarchy. The questionnaire developed by Cameron and Quinn addresses six cultural dimensions and asks for the following information for each type of culture: dominant characteristics, organizational leadership, management of employees, organization glue, strategic emphases and criteria of success (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). Their instrument is also subdivided by the two dimensions of corporate orientation. Accordingly, the first dimension compares whether the processes are more organic or mechanistic. The second dimension examines if the culture has a more internal or an external orientation. The internal or external orientation shows whether the company focuses on its internal dynamics or on the requirements of its external environment. The dimension flexibility (organic) versus control (mechanistic) expresses the organizational preferences for structuring, coordination and control on the one hand and the flexibility and dynamics of a company on the other (Linnenluecke & Griffiths, 2010).

As can be seen in figure 5.1, the CVM forms four quadrants along the two dimensions, whereby each represents a distinct set of organizational factors that define an organization's type of culture. The four core values constitute opposite or competing assumptions at the ends of a continuum, generating a typology of organizational culture. The subcultures are often described as Clan, Adhocracy, Hierarchy and Market (Quinn & McGrath 1985; Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983, Kalliath et al., 1999; Walton & Dawson, 2001; Cameron et al., 2006; Livari & Huisman, 2007).

Figure 5.1: Competing Value Model (Cameron & Quinn, 2006).



Cultures that are described as market-driven consider competition, goal achievement and productivity to be very important. They react to market activities and their leadership is decisive and performance oriented.

The market culture, also known as Rational Goal Model, focuses on control and external processes. Planning and goal setting are the two most important principles in this type of culture, which is designed to promote productivity and effectiveness (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983).

Adhocracy cultures, on the other hand, focus on entrepreneurship, creativity and adaptivity. Flexibility and tolerance are encouraged, new markets and new sources of development are important. The adhocracy culture is also characterized by a high degree of flexibility, although its focus is on external processes. This culture is also called Open Systems Model aiming to promote growth and resource procurement of a company based on the most important standards, flexibility and commitment (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983). Clan cultures emphasize group cohesion, participation and teamwork. Commitment and personal satisfaction are more important than financial goals. Clan cultures are characterized by high flexibility and a focus on internal processes. One speaks also of the Human relation Model in this context since cohesion and morality are regarded to be the two most important factors for personnel development (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983).

The last type is called Hierarchy cultures. Here, people work strictly in accordance with order and regulations. The management style is administrative, and the pursuit of goals and control are regarded as a priority (Strack, 2004). The hierarchy culture is characterized by control and internal processes. Described by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983) as the Internal

Process Model, information management and internal communication are the most important standards, intended to promote stability and control within a company.

The CVM is also the theoretical base of the OCAI. The OCAI normally uses an ipsative response format where participants divide 100 points between 4 statements to indicate its organizational relevance. However, in accordance with previous analyses made by Kalliath et al. (1999) and Helfrich et al. (2007), this survey used a 4-level Likert Scale as its response format. This response format is used since Likert Scales are more suitable to measure personal attitudes. The original version of this instrument has been used in a wide variety of organizations around the world and the validity of the OCAI has been further established through a number of studies (Cameron, 2008; Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1991). The reliability of the scale for each of the four culture types was proven to be sufficient. Cronbach's alpha for the four types of culture lies between  $\alpha = 0.67$  and  $0.83$  (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). The survey that was conducted as part of this work uses the OCAIrev (Kluge & Jänicke, 2004). The OCAIrev is a translation of the OCAI for the German-speaking area and is otherwise identical to the instrument developed by Cameron and Quinn. The scales of the single types of culture in the OCAIrev proved to be internally consistent with Cronbach's Alpha between  $0.81$  and  $0.90$  (Kluge, 2004).

The questionnaire used for the study consisted of a series of statements from the OCAI using a 4-point Likert scale to answer the questions. On this Likert scale, participants could decide between Totally Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). An example of the wording of the statements being evaluated was the following: "The company has a very personal character. It is like a large family."

### **5.3.2 Measuring Social Competences**

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the assessment sheet smK provides the base for measuring social competence in the survey of this paper. The questionnaire developed by Frey and Balzer serves as an evaluation instrument for the self-assessment of social and methodical competences. The questionnaire can be applied modularly, thus allowing the use of only those parts of the questionnaire that are of interest (Frey & Balzer, 2003; 2005). Since this study only covers the area of social competences, the smK's methodological competence part was not used and is thus not further explained here. The modularity of the smK was further decisive for choosing this instrument, since the survey should be kept parsimonious.

The theoretical background of the smK can be found in the areas of vocational and economic pedagogy. A pool of 542 statements on professional, social and methodological competences was reduced to 128 items on social and methodological competences through

the categorisation of experts and assigned to the individual sub-dimensions on the basis of theoretical considerations (Frey, 1999). Using samples of more than 2,500 trainees, students and prospective teachers, the classification was checked, formulations modified and the current version of the instrument developed. The authors assume that, when assessing vocational competence, the person involved provides the best insight regarding their own abilities.

Frey (2005) defines social competence as the ability to solve an assigned task responsibly, either independently or in cooperation with others. In this instrument, social competence consists of the following dimensions: independency, the ability to cooperate, social awareness, the ability to deal with conflicts, the ability to communicate, leadership skills and the ability to behave appropriately in a given situation. The survey conducted for this paper included only the four dimensions mentioned hereafter since they are the ones that are analysed in this paper. The ability to cooperate refers to the ability of a person to work together with others. If at least two people are working towards a common goal, their working behaviour needs to be consciously and systematically coordinated. Social awareness refers to a person's ability to act independently and consciously, taking into account the anticipated effects on himself and others, as well as the consequences of his actions. Conflict ability is defined as the ability to interact with others in a conflict and to reach solutions. Elements of this dimension are, for example, an appropriate reaction to criticism and the ability to express criticism constructively. The communication ability describes the ability of a person to communicate understandable factual information to the message recipient within the communicative regulatory framework, to comply with communication rules and to cope with communication problems.

The dimensions are each operationalised by six items and assessed on a 6-level Likert Scale ("does not apply at all" to "applies entirely"). This means that this part of the questionnaire contains 48 Items. These 48 Items are divided into two identical sets of 24 questions, one set for the self-evaluation and one for the evaluation of the colleagues. In order to get the data on the self-evaluation, the participants were asked: "How important are the following aspects to you personally and do you apply them in your daily work?" (see Appendix). The question changed when asking for the evaluation of the colleagues to: "And now think of your closest colleagues and evaluate their competences in the same categories" (see Appendix). The categories were the same in both sets and contained, for example, "Addressing conflicts" or "Criticize constructively". The following reliability values are provided for the dimensions of social competence (Cronbach's Alpha): social responsibility (Awareness)  $\alpha = 0.80$ , cooperation ability  $\alpha = 0.76$ , conflict handling ability  $\alpha = 0.76$ , communication ability  $\alpha = 0.75$ . Accordingly, the coefficients indicate a satisfactory to good degree of internal consistency. These analyses are based on a sample of 784 commercial and technical

apprentices (Frey & Balzer, 2003). All in all, the authors rate the results of the test quality as satisfactory to good (Frey & Balzer, 2005). There are different values on reliability, those for social competence lie in the range between  $\alpha = .75$  and  $\alpha = .80$  (Frey & Balzer, 2003; 2005).

## **5.4 Reliability and Validity of the instruments**

Instrument reliability and validity are important for establishing confidence in the quality of the data gathered in any research study. Reliability is the ability of the measure to produce the same results under the same conditions and validity refers to whether an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Field, 2013). The reliability of the scales used in the questionnaire is tested using Cronbach's Alpha as the coefficient of reliability or consistency. The literature lists various indications regarding the values that are considered sufficient for an internally consistent scale. According to Jäger and Petermann (1995), the recommended value of a scale for Cronbach's Alpha in screening instruments is .70. This value is usually considered as the threshold by other researchers as well (Schmitt, 1996). However, there is no objectively defined limit for the use of a scale. A value of  $\alpha$  below 0.7, that cannot be increased by excluding certain items, presents no impediment for the use of the test or the scale. Schmitt argues that there are other desirable characteristics of a measure, such as the meaningful content coverage of an area of expertise or an appropriate unidimensionality of the items. A low level of reliability, he referred in this context to a value of  $\alpha = .49$ , should therefore not be a significant obstacle to its use (Schmitt, 1996). Furthermore, it should be remembered in this context that Cameron and Quinn (2006) indicated that Cronbach's Alpha for the four cultural types ranges between  $\alpha = .67$  and  $.83$ .

### **5.4.1 Corporate Culture**

The analysis of the data from the survey provided the following values for the four types of culture (Table 5.1). The Cronbach's Alpha for the Clan culture is  $\alpha = 0.83$  and thus above the mentioned threshold value of .70. The value for the Adhocratic culture is  $\alpha = 0.48$  and that for the Market culture is  $\alpha = 0.48$ . That may be due to the fact that not all subdimensions of the applied instrument were queried. Another reason could be the small sample size. Concerning the Hierarchy culture, Cronbach's Alpha is at .65 and thereby slightly below the threshold determined by Cameron and Quinn. The internal consistencies of the four culture types are on average  $\alpha = .62$ .

Table 5.1: Cronbach's Alpha for the dimensions of corporate culture

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha
Clan	.839
Adhocratic	.483
Market	.484
Hierarchy	.658

Taking the four subdimensions that were covered by the survey into consideration, one finds values that are generally adequate regarding Cronbach's Alpha (Table 5.2). The internal consistencies of the four subdimensions show an average Cronbach's Alpha of .72 and is therefore slightly above the threshold of .70. The strongest consistencies can be found in the criteria of success with  $\alpha = .79$  and in management of employees with  $\alpha = .70$ .

Table 5.2: Cronbach's Alpha for the subdimensions of corporate culture

Subdimension	Cronbach's Alpha
Dominant Characteristics	.700
Organizational Glue	.691
Management of Employees	.706
Criteria of Success	.796

#### 5.4.2 Social Competences

The internal consistencies of the self-evaluation of social competences are on average  $\alpha = .93$  and therefore very robust (Table 5.3). The internal consistencies of the evaluation of the colleagues are on average  $\alpha = .97$ , which is even higher as for the self-evaluation and indicates a great consistency of the data.

Table 5.3: Cronbach's Alpha for the social competences

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha
SelfEval	.934
ColleagueEval	.973

Correspondingly, the Cronbach's Alphas are also strong for the investigated subdimensions respectively ability concepts of social competence. Cronbach's Alpha in the self-evaluation (Table 5.4) was  $\alpha = 0.82$  for the ability to cooperate. The value of  $\alpha = 0.82$  was calculated for the dimension of social awareness. In the case of conflict handling a value of  $\alpha = 0.87$  was measured and regarding communication an of  $\alpha = .82$ .

Table 5.4: Cronbach's Alpha for the subdimension of self-evaluation on social competences

Subdimension	Cronbachs Alpha
SelfEval: Cooperation	.828
SelfEval: Social Awareness	.821
SelfEval: Conflict Handling	.873
SelfEval: Communication	.824

The values for the evaluation of the colleagues were even higher (Table 5.5). A Cronbach' s Alpha of .90 was measured for the ability to cooperate. The social awareness reached  $\alpha= 0.92$ . The conflict handling ability was measured with  $\alpha= 0.94$  and the communication ability with  $\alpha= 0.91$ .

Table 5.5: Cronbach's Alpha for the subdimension of colleagues' evaluation on social competences

Subdimenion	Cronbachs Alpha
ColleagueEval: Cooperation	.903
ColleagueEval: Social Awareness	.927
ColleagueEval: Conflict Handling	.943
ColleagueEval: Communication	.917

The deviations in the OCAI are likely due to the small sample size, but the instrument has been tested more often and has proven to be reliable. The instrument used to measure social competence, the smK, was measured as very reliable in this study as well. Although the values listed above reveal differences in their Cronbach's Alpha and thus indicate different reliabilities, they confirm that the instruments used are useful and suitable for the study.

## 6. RESULTS

This chapter provides the results of the empirical study. The survey was analysed using statistical methods and the software SPSS 25. First, the data obtained is presented in a descriptive format using the media, the standard deviation followed by the presentation of the correlations and the results of the t-test which was used to control the variation of the mean values. Finally, the findings of the context analyses are presented. The values presented in this section will be examined with regard to their meaning in the chapter Discussion in order to investigate the research questions.

## 6.1 Corporate Culture

### 6.1.1 Descriptive statistics

The dominant perceived type of corporate culture in the company investigated is the adhocratic culture with a mean of 3.30 and a standard deviation of .42. It is followed by the clan culture with a mean of 2.90 and a standard deviation of .68. Market culture, with a mean of 2.84 and a standard deviation of .51, was rated by the participants as their third type of culture. The hierarchy culture is the lowest perceived type of company culture. Here the mean was 2.69 and the standard deviation was .59 (Table 7.1).

Table 6.1: Perceived corporate culture in the company

Dimension	Mean	SD
Adhocratic	3.30	.42
Clan	2.90	.68
Market	2.84	.51
Hierarchy	2.69	.59

N= 65; Scale: 4= Totally Agree, 1= Strongly Disagree

To further examine the differences between mean values, a paired t-test was used. A significance level of 5 % was selected, so  $p < .05$  was required. The results of the t-test can be found in table 6.2. They show that there are significance differences between the mean values of dimensions of corporate culture, except for market and clan comparison. This confirms that there is no significant correlation between the two cultures. The t-test also shows a low value between the culture types Market and Hierarchy and between Clan and Hierarchy. Thus, the values confirm the different significances of the correlations described above.

Table 6.2: T-test for the dimensions of corporate culture

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
adhocratic - market	0.46	0.48	7.69	64	0.00
adhocratic - clan	0.40	0.62	5.22	64	0,00
adhocratic - hierarchy	0.61	0.58	8.42	64	0,00
market - clan	-0.06	0.91	-0.54	64	0.59
market - hierarchy	0.15	0.61	1.99	64	0.05
clan - hierarchy	0.21	0.68	2.49	64	0.02



In sum, the employees perceive the corporate culture at Miethke as primarily adhocratic, followed by clan, market and hierarchy.

In addition, the subdimensions Dominant Characteristics, Organizational Glue, Management of Employees and Criteria of success, that are part of the OCAI, were examined (Table 6.3). Among the dominant characteristics of the company, the cultural type of Adhocracy dominates too with a mean of 3.06 and a standard deviation of .71. The cultural type Clan follows directly with a mean of 2.97 and a standard deviation of .637. The Market culture ranks third among the dominant characteristics with a mean of 2.75 and a standard deviation of .73. The cultural type Hierarchy was rated the weakest with a mean of 2.38 and a standard deviation of .84.

The second subdimension examined is the organizational glue of the company. Here, too, the Adhocratic culture took the lead with a mean of 3.42 and a standard deviation of .61. However, the next position differs from the first subdimension. Here, the Market culture was ranked second with a mean of 3.02 and a standard deviation of .68.

The third subdimension examined in this paper was that of the Management of Employees. Here, again, differences to the previous dimensions can be found, as the Hierarchy culture was given the highest values by the participants. The mean was at 3.32 and the standard deviation at .67. The Adhocracy culture comes second, with a mean of 3.06 and a standard deviation of .76. The Clan culture ranked third with a mean of 2.80 and a standard deviation of .858. Market culture ranked last with a mean of 2.48 and a standard deviation of 1.04.

The final subdimension included in the study was that of success criteria. Here, the Adhocracy culture ranked first again with a mean of 3.67 and a standard deviation of .61. Second was Market culture with a mean of 3.11 and a standard deviation of .82. Third was Clan culture with a mean of 2.87 and a standard deviation of .87. The last position is held by the Hierarchy culture with a mean of 2.69 and a standard deviation of .90.

Table 6.3: Subdimensions of perceived corporate culture in the company

Subdimensions	Clan		Adhocracy		Market		Hierarchy	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Dominant Characteristics	2.97	.637	3.06	.710	2.75	.735	2.38	.840
Organizational Glue	2.95	.926	3.42	.610	3.02	.689	2.34	.930
Management of Employees	2.80	.858	3.06	.768	2.48	1.045	3.32	.672
Criteria of success	2.87	.871	3.67	.619	3.11	.825	2.69	.906

N= 65; Scale: 4= Totally Agree, 1= Strongly Disagree

### 6.1.2 Correlations

In the following is a description of the correlations of the culture types. The correlation coefficient is used to describe the relationship between two variables. There are different values suggested by researchers for evaluating the strength of a correlation. This thesis follows the guidelines of Cohen (1988) for interpreting the strength of correlation. He recommends that a value from .10 to .29 points to a weak correlation, a value from .30 to .49 to a moderate correlation, and a value from .50 to 1.0 to a strong correlation. With exception of market and clan, all dimensions are positively related (Table 6.4). It appears that the participants mostly regard the corporate culture as adhocratic and that this culture is connected to both clan and market, whereby market ( $r = .477, p < .001$ ) shows a slightly stronger correlation with adhocracy than clan ( $r = .440, p < .001$ ). The lowest correlation exists between Adhocratic and values associated with the hierarchical culture ( $r = .380, p < .001$ ).

Table 6.4: Correlations between the dimension of culture

<b>Correlations (N=65)</b>				
	Clan	Adhocratic	Market	Hierarchy
Clan	1			
Adhocratic	,440**	1		
Market	-0,131	,477**	1	
Hierarchy	,439**	,380**	,414**	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The data obtained from the survey produced an additional finding regarding the culture types. There was also a correlation between two items of the demographic data and one of the types of culture. It became apparent that tenure and status of employment correlate significantly and negatively with the perception of the Clan culture in the company (Table 6.5). This means, that employees who have been with the company for a longer period of time consider the company to have fewer Clan values.

The same applies to the employment status. In the survey, full-time employees tended to perceive fewer Clan values than those who only work part-time or in another employment relationship with the company.

Table 6.5: Correlation between corporate culture, tenure and employment status

<b>Correlations (N= 65)</b>
-----------------------------

		Clan	Adhocratic	Market	Hierarchy	Tenure	Status (employment relationship)
Spearman's rho	Clan	1,000					
	Adhocratic	,445**	1,000				
	Market	-0,174	,418**	1,000			
	Hierarchy	,457**	,388**	,383**	1,000		
	tenure	-,383**	-0,157	-0,050	-0,201	1,000	
	status (employment relationship)	-,361**	-0,045	0,056	-0,083	,285*	1,000
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

## 6.2 Social Competences

### 6.2.1 Descriptive statistics

The survey part on social competence revealed the following picture for the employees at the investigated company. Both the self-assessment and the colleague assessment have a high mean as can be seen in table 6.6. This means that the participants consider both themselves and their colleagues to possess a high level of social competence.

Table 6.6: Perceived social competences in the company

Dimension	Mean	SD
SelfEval	5,19	.49
ColleagueEval	4,55	.79

N= 65; Scale: 6= Applies entirely, 1= Does not apply at all

The self-evaluation is slightly stronger with a mean of 5.19 compared to the evaluation of the colleagues with a mean of 4.55. There is also a difference in the standard deviation, whereby the self-evaluation of the social competence deviated by .49, while the evaluation of the colleagues deviated by .79.

The survey on social competences examined subdimensions in regard to concepts of ability as well (Table 6.7). This comprises the dimensions of cooperation, social awareness, conflicting handling and communication that were examined in the study.

In the self-evaluation, social awareness received the highest rating in the self-evaluation with a mean of 5.26. The ability to communicate followed with a mean of 5.21 at a minimal distance. The ability to cooperate was placed in third position with a mean of 5.17 and

the ability to deal with conflicts was ranked fourth with a mean of 5.11. The standard deviations ranged between .53 for cooperation abilities and .64 for conflict handling abilities as shown in table 6.7.

Table 6.7: Self-evaluation of the ability dimensions

Dimension	M	SD
SelfEval: Social Awareness	5.26	.58
SelfEval: Communication	5.21	.56
SelfEval: Cooperation	5.17	.53
SelfEval: Conflict Handling	5.11	.64

N= 65; Scale: 6= Applies entirely, 1=Does not apply at all

The evaluation of the colleagues shows a somewhat different picture (Table 6.8). Here, the ability to cooperate was rated as the strongest with a mean of 4.66. Next, social awareness was valued with a mean of 4.63. Third in the ranking was the ability to communicate, with a mean of 4.56, and, lastly, the conflict handling abilities with a mean of 4.34. The standard deviation is considerably wider in this case than in self-evaluation. The widest deviation has conflict handling with .90 and the lowest the cooperation abilities with .74.

Table 6.8: Evaluation of colleagues on the ability dimensions

Dimension	M	SD
ColleagueEval: Cooperation	4.66	.74
ColleagueEval: Social Awareness	4.63	.85
ColleagueEval: Communication	4.56	.90
ColleagueEval: Conflict handling	4.34	.93

N= 65; Scale: 6= Applies entirely, 1=Does not apply at all

## 6.2.2 Correlations

When comparing the association of the two evaluation methods, a moderate to low positive correlation can be observed between them (Table 6.9). This means that a higher self-evaluation is associated with a higher assessment of the colleagues ( $r = .366$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 6.9: Correlations of evaluation methods

Correlations (N= 65)		
	SelfEval	ColleagueEval
SelfEval	1	
ColleagueEval	,366**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Looking at the individual evaluation methods and the corresponding ability dimensions, other correlations can be identified. In the case of the self-evaluation (Table 6.10), the correlation between social responsibility and cooperation is the strongest ( $r = .732$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The second highest correlation is between social responsibility and conflict handling ( $r = .647$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The weakest correlation is between cooperation and communication ( $r = .492$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 6.10: Correlations of self-evaluation on the ability dimensions

<b>Correlations (N= 65)</b>				
	SelfEval_Coo peration	SelfEval_SocialA wareness	SelfEval_Conflict Handling	SelfEval_Comm unication
SelfEval_Coo peration	1			
SelfEval_SocialA wareness	,732**	1		
SelfEval_Conflict Handling	,590**	,647**	1	
SelfEval_Comm unication	,492**	,580**	,642**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between social responsibility and cooperation is likewise the strongest in the evaluation of colleagues ( $r = .850$ ,  $p < .001$ ). However, the second strongest correlation is between conflict handling abilities and communication ( $r = .814$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The weakest connection is between cooperation and conflict handling ( $r = .734$ ,  $p < .001$ ). All in all, it can be said that there are positive correlations in both evaluation methods. Nevertheless, the correlations in the evaluation of the colleagues were stronger than in the self-evaluation (Table 6.11).

Table 6.11: Correlations of evaluation of colleagues on the ability dimensions

<b>Correlations (N= 65)</b>				
	ColleagueEval _Cooperation	ColleagueEval_S ocialAwareness	ColleagueEval_C onflictHandling	ColleagueEval_ Communication
ColleagueEval_C ooperation	1			
ColleagueEval_S ocialAwareness	,850**	1		
ColleagueEval_C onflictHandling	,734**	,780**	1	
ColleagueEval_C ommunication	,747**	,805**	,814**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The paired sample t-test was used, as with the corporate culture, to examine the significance of difference between mean values of social competences evaluations. The self-evaluation and the evaluation of colleagues' social competence are statistically different, which indicates that respondents' have a more positive picture of their competences than of their colleagues (Table 6.12).

Table 6.12: T-test for self-evaluation and evaluation of the colleagues on social competences

	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
SelfEval - ColleagueEval	0.64	0.76	6.81	64	0.00

### 6.3 Correlation between Corporate Culture and Social Competences

This section presents the results of the data regarding the main research question. In order to investigate the relationship between the corporate culture and the social competencies of the employees or if the employees link these two subjects to each other, it is necessary to examine the correlation between the two constructs.

The results of the context analysis indicate that there is no significant correlation between the self-evaluation of social competence and the different types of corporate culture (all p values are non-significant; Table 6.13).

Nevertheless, there are some correlations between the evaluation of the colleagues and two types of cultures. The correlations reveal that the different social competences that are perceived among colleagues positively correlate with clan and adhocracy, but not with the market. There is at least a low correlation with Hierarchy ( $r = .295$ ,  $p < .005$ ), which can be explained by looking at the investigated subdimensions of social competence.

Table 6.13: Correlation of corporate culture and evaluation of social competences

Correlations (N=65)							
		Clan	Adhocratic	Market	Hierarchy	SelfEval	ColleagueEval
Spearman's rho	Clan	1,000					
	Adhocratic	,445**	1,000				
	Market	-0,174	,418**	1,000			
	Hierarchy	,457**	,388**	,383**	1,000		
	SelfEval	0,092	0,243	0,065	0,069	1,000	
	ColleagueEval	,544**	,519**	-0,040	,295*	,477**	1,000

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

There is only a slight correlation between the self-assessment of social competence and Adhocracy. However, the results show that this correlation is not significant and therefore of limited use. Since the self-evaluation of social competence has no significant influence on the cultures, it was excluded from further analysis. This section compares the subdimensions or ability dimensions of social competence based on the evaluation of the colleagues with the four different dimensions of the corporate culture. As a result, one can gain an initial understanding of the different types of culture and the related abilities of social competence. Once the relationship between the two concepts is evident, a company can focus on fostering and seeking the competencies that match the targeted type of culture.

The first assessment compared the subdimensions of social competences with the Clan culture (Table 6.14). The results reveal a significant correlation between all subdimensions of social competence perceived by the colleagues and the Clan culture. The strongest correlation was between Clan and Conflict Handling ( $r = .528, p < .001$ ) and between Clan and Communication ( $r = .514, p < .001$ ). Clan and Social Awareness ( $r = .492, p < .001$ ) ranked third and Clan and Cooperation ( $r = .405, p < .001$ ) last.

Table 6.14: Correlations between Clan and colleague evaluation of social competences

<b>Correlations (N=65)</b>					
	Clan	ColleagueEval_Cooperation	ColleagueEval_SocialAwareness	ColleagueEval_ConflictHandling	ColleagueEval_Communication
Clan	1				
ColleagueEval_Cooperation	,405**	1			
ColleagueEval_SocialAwareness	,492**	,850**	1		
ColleagueEval_ConflictHandling	,528**	,734**	,780**	1	
ColleagueEval_Communication	,514**	,747**	,805**	,814**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There was likewise a significant correlation between the cultural type of Adhocracy and all the dimensions of social competence of the colleagues (Table 6.15). As in the case of Clan, the correlation is most significant in respect to Conflict Handling ( $r = .536, p < .001$ ). The second strongest correlation is between Adhocracy and Communication ( $r = .469, p < .001$ ). The difference to the last two subdimensions is relatively small, with Social Awareness ( $r = .455, p < .001$ ) in third and Cooperation ( $r = .448, p < .001$ ) in fourth place.

Table 6.15: Correlations between Adhocracy and colleague evaluation of social competences

<b>Correlations (N= 65)</b>					
	adhocratic	ColleagueEval_Cooperation	ColleagueEval_SocialAwareness	ColleagueEval_ConflictHandling	ColleagueEval_Communication
adhocratic	1				
ColleagueEval_Cooperation	,448**	1			
ColleagueEval_SocialAwareness	,455**	,850**	1		
ColleagueEval_ConflictHandling	,536**	,734**	,780**	1	
ColleagueEval_Communication	,469**	,747**	,805**	,814**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As described above, there was no correlation identified between Market and the evaluation of the colleagues and their social competences. However, there is a slight correlation between Hierarchy and Cooperation ( $r = .270$ ,  $p < .005$ ) as can be seen in table 6.16.

Table 6.16: Correlations between Hierarchy and colleague evaluation of social competences

<b>Correlations (N= 65)</b>					
	hierarchy	ColleagueEval_Cooperation	ColleagueEval_SocialAwareness	ColleagueEval_ConflictHandling	ColleagueEval_Communication
hierarchy	1				
ColleagueEval_Cooperation	,270*	1			
ColleagueEval_SocialAwareness	0,208	,850**	1		
ColleagueEval_ConflictHandling	0,160	,734**	,780**	1	
ColleagueEval_Communication	0,239	,747**	,805**	,814**	1

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
 \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



The results presented in this section will be summarized and interpreted in the next chapter, the concluding part of the paper. Furthermore, they should assist in formulating implications and pointing out further potential research directions.

## **7. DISCUSSION**

This chapter discusses the presented results in order to address the main research question as well as the additional subordinate questions and to explore their implications for the investigated subject and the company. Finally, the limitations of the study will be discussed.

### **7.1 Analysis and Implications**

After having presented the results of the statistical analysis in the previous section, this chapter provides the interpretation and implications of the results regarding the research question and the company involved. First, the subordinate questions will be addressed, since they provide an understanding of the investigated case and are related to the interpretation of the results. The study aimed to identify the types of culture of the Competing Value Model that are perceived in the company and to examine how strongly each is represented. The most important aspect in this context is the desired culture by the company and its employees and the respective weighting of the individual culture types. Since this survey was the first to examine culture in this company using the Competing Value Model, there are no predefined or targeted values and weightings. Nevertheless, the chapter in this thesis that introduces the company under study provides some indications about the corporate culture that the company's founder and CEO is striving for. The company's corporate philosophy is based on the values of quality, innovation, proximity, responsibility and technological leadership (Christoph Miethke GmbH, 2018). The presented corporate vision also underlines that human dignity and cooperation based on mutual respect are considered to be integral components of corporate culture. Moreover, by choosing the subject in question, the social competence of the employees, which was selected in cooperation with the CEO, it becomes increasingly evident that the importance of the employees and the way they interact are considered to be important in the company and not merely economic success. In this context, it is worth recalling the findings of Barney and Wrigth (1998) and the work of Wolf (2011), who identified that the development of human capital and the importance of people as a resource can be decisive competitive factors.

Comparing the results on corporate culture with the characteristics of the different types of culture enables a better understanding of the prevailing culture in the company and its

implications. As mentioned previously, the Adhocratic culture is perceived as the dominant culture followed by Clan culture on the second position. The standard deviation was also the lowest in Adhocracy, meaning that the consensus was the greatest. This points towards the fact that this type of culture is found predominantly in the company.

Clan, Market and Hierarchy were rated almost equally. Even though there is a significant difference between Clan and the two other culture types, they were perceived in almost similar frequency. This could mean that the employees of the company have a very heterogeneous picture of the corporate culture. In other words, the similarly weighting of the different types of culture suggests that the employees have different perceptions of the culture and no uniform picture evolves, resulting in very different perceptions of the corporate culture. However, and this is why the Competing Values Model was used, a company is always exposed to a variety of influences as mentioned in the literature review (Cameron et al., 2006; Kalliath et al., 1999; Walton & Dawson, 2001; Parker & Bradley, 2000). Usually a culture consists of the four different types of culture, which are weighted differently depending on the company and industry. Nevertheless, these cultural types are in tension with each other and generate different, competing demands on corporate culture, such as group culture versus hierarchical culture and development culture versus rational culture (Livari & Huisman, 2007).

A general finding is that Adhocratic culture is the form of organization most capable of responding to rapidly changing environments. Here, it is assumed that innovative and visionary projects lead to success and that companies are mainly active in developing new products and services as well as preparing for the future. The main task of management involves promoting entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation activities. Unlike Market or Hierarchy, Adhocratic cultures do not have centralised power or authority relationships. Instead, power flows from individual to individual or from team to team, depending on the issue under consideration. The focus is primarily on individuality, willingness to take risks and future orientation (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). If one compares this information with the values of the corporate philosophy, one can certainly speak of a culture matching the company, since innovation and technology leadership are part of the desired corporate culture.

The type of culture that was rated as the second strongest was the Clan, which is named after the family-like organization of a company that looks more like a large family than an economic entity. The Clan type is characterized by common values and goals, cohesion, participation, individuality and a sense of togetherness. One of the basic assumptions of a Clan culture is that the environment can best be managed through teamwork and employee development, and that customers are regarded as partners. The main task of management is to support and strengthen the employees and their cooperation, commitment and loyalty. The company is held together by loyalty and tradition. Employee commitment is high and success

is defined by the internal climate and concern for people. The company values teamwork, participation and consensus (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). As with Adhocracy, the company's philosophy is based on values that are reflected in the characteristics of the Clan culture. Thus the values of proximity and responsibility and the desired form of cooperation based on respect and eye level are reflected above all in the Clan culture. The two types of culture are also associated with greater job satisfaction, while Market and Hierarchy correlate negatively with employee satisfaction (Goodman et al., 2001; Lund, 2003). Clan cultures are also more effective in internal communication and employee support, while adhocracy cultures are more effective in innovation and adaptation (Cameron & Quinn, 2006).

Considering now the relationship between corporate culture and social competence examined in this thesis, one can first look at the results of the literature review. According to the findings, the behaviour of a company's employees is strongly influenced by the social competence of those involved. Social competence thereby influences the ability and willingness to deal rationally and responsibly with others and to act in a group- and relationship-oriented manner (Wilsdorf, 1991). The mentioned dimensions of social competence, such as cooperation (Wilsdorf, 1991) or the conflict handling abilities (Eiff, 1992), shape the behavior of employees and consequently the perceived corporate culture. Literature research has shown that corporate culture affects the active and passive behaviour of employees (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). At the same time, employees are one of an organization's most important resources (Wolf, 2011). The findings and research mentioned in this paper also demonstrate that the role of the individual employee is of great importance for corporate culture. The employee's behaviour in the workplace is mainly influenced by other colleagues and the behaviour recognised or rejected by the Group (Kieser, 2002). The corporate culture offers unwritten and unspoken rules for interaction within the organization and gives employees a sense of identity (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). This culture is made up of values, convictions, attitudes and behaviour (Hofstede, 1993; Schein, 1996). By taking these different aspects into account, it is possible to create a culture that fits the company, supports the employees involved, improves social interaction and promotes social behaviour among those involved.

Behavioural characteristics in the form of social competences and thus social behaviour and their relation to the respective types of culture were explored through the survey and data collection. First of all, it can be generally summarised that the employees of the company participating in the survey consider themselves and their colleagues to be socially competent. However, the data analysis also showed that the employees assess themselves slightly better than their colleagues. In addition, the standard deviation in the colleagues' assessment was much greater, so opinions about the colleagues differ widely within the company. The self-evaluation of the individual subdimensions of social competencies shows that the employees assess their social awareness and communication very strongly. In the case of colleagues,

however, the ability to cooperate and social awareness were rated more highly. Correlation analysis has shown the strength of the connections between these dimensions. This analysis revealed that there is no correlation between the self-evaluation of social competences and the culture types.

Nevertheless, the result supports the mentioned assumption that the perceived behaviour of the colleagues and the cultural features of the company decisively influence the corporate culture. It was possible to identify a significant correlation between the social competencies perceived by the colleagues and the individual types of culture of the Competing Value Model. The strongest correlation was with Clan and Adhocracy. There was also a significant correlation with Hierarchy, although to a lesser extent. This indicates that the three types of culture are each associated with certain social competences, which in turn influence the creation of the desired culture. In this context, the data of the study show that the Clan culture has the strongest correlation with conflict handling abilities and communication. The other examined social competences can also be linked to Clan. In Adhocracy, the strongest correlation was identified with conflict handling abilities. The results of the study further indicate that the other social competences are also important in this context but not as much as in the case of Clan. If they were ranked, communication competences would be in second place, social awareness in third and cooperation in fourth place. Between the social competences of the colleagues and the Hierarchy culture, however, there was only a measurable connection to the social competence of cooperation abilities.

## **7.2 Limitations and suggestion for further research**

Since this work has an explorative character and tries to reveal new connections, there are also limitations that have to be considered. This means that the conclusions of this work are subject to the general weaknesses of correlational studies. Nevertheless, correlations were found that match the expectations of the subject. By selecting certain items and dimensions, not all components of the instruments applied were used. If all of those would be integrated, however, the questionnaire would include more than 100 items and thus would be difficult to use in a company. The selection and reduction of the items can also be responsible for the weak values of the Cronbach Alpha for the culture types Adhocracy and Market. Another reason could be the small sample size. In future surveys that will check the company's current situation, this circumstance should be examined more closely. Because of the small sample size, it is also not possible to carry out further tests for general validity, meaning that the results obtained must be viewed with a certain degree of caution. Despite these limitations, we believe that this work is relevant to research and practice and provides valuable findings on the subject in question. To further investigate the subject of this thesis, it would be useful to use a larger

sample in future research studies to discover further relations and have more details. Another approach for the future could be to use qualitative methods, such as interviews, to improve the understanding, the functioning and the connection between the two concepts.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

This paper aims to explore the relationship between corporate culture and social competence. In order to limit the scope of the work to some extent and enable the collection of data on the subject, it was decided to focus on the Competing Value Model and the assessment of social competences through self-assessment and the assessment of colleagues. The instruments used and their theoretical background provide material for the examination of certain aspects of corporate culture and social competences and associated implications. Since this work involved a case company and included the collection of relevant empirical data, it was always necessary to consider the interests of all people involved.

In order to investigate the topic, it was first conducted an intensive literature search and many discussions with the CEO followed. The review of the literature indicated that apparently no research had been done on this subject so far. This work tries to contribute somewhat to fill this gap and to illustrate the significance of relationship between the two constructs corporate culture and social competences. Apart from that, it was intended to obtain a subject-related assessment of the employees of the participating company. A questionnaire was created to work on the constructs investigated and to obtain data on them.

The literature review showed that corporate culture and social competences are somehow related and that both theoretical constructs are important for companies and their success. In this context, the model of Boyatzis (2008), for example, provided a good illustration of how these two constructs are connected. Furthermore, the theoretical framework on corporate culture showed that the Competing Values approach is a suitable model for examining a company's corporate culture. This approach is supported by the data captured with the OCAI instrument, which reveals a distribution of perceived cultural types and thereby supports the view that there are different perceptions within a company which are not necessarily contradictory. In regard to the context analysis between the two constructs, it also became clear that the division into individual cultural types makes it possible to examine the relationships between the two constructs in more detail. The literature review on social competences demonstrates their importance for organizations and the way they can be measured. It was also shown that the abilities associated with social competence, such as cooperation or communication abilities, have an influence on the corporate culture since they shape the behaviour patterns that are central to all interaction at work. However, the data on

the social competence of employees, collected on the basis of the smK, revealed insufficient correlation between the self-assigned competences and the perceived corporate culture. The results therefore indicate that the employees' own social competences are not considered with regard to the perception of the culture. Nevertheless, the results of the study revealed a connection between the competences noticed among colleagues and the different types of culture.

In summary, it can be concluded that this study has identified a connection between corporate culture and social competences. The social competences of colleagues that are perceived by the other employees have an influence on the different types of cultural. The results indicate that certain social competences have a stronger influence on the corporate culture and the relevant types of culture. The results of the work help to identify the social competences needed to create the desired culture in order to promote and incorporate them if necessary. In this way, the study provides an empirically tested contribution indicating that the development and active shaping of corporate culture is related to the social competencies examined here.

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## 10. ANNEX

The questionnaire displayed contains the questions related to the data collection. They were presented in this order and contain all dimensions used in the study.

### A) Corporate Culture

Please select for each statement below a number that applies most to your company. Now, there are four options, of which only one should be marked.

The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The organization is a dynamic and entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick their necks out and take risks.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The organization is very results oriented. A major concern is with getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement oriented.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

□	□	□	□
---	---	---	---

The glue that holds the organization together is an emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
□	□	□	□

The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
□	□	□	□

The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
□	□	□	□

The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
□	□	□	□

The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
□	□	□	□

The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control and smooth operations are important.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
□	□	□	□

The organization defines success on the basis of development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concern for people.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
□	□	□	□

The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
□	□	□	□

The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
□	□	□	□

The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling and low-cost production are critical.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
□	□	□	□

## B) Social competences of employees

In the following you will be asked to evaluate your social competence. Please rate the degree to which the statements apply to you in person at the present time.

	<b>Does not apply at all</b>	<b>Does not apply</b>	<b>Does rather not apply</b>	<b>Applies more likely</b>	<b>Applie s likely</b>	<b>Applie s entirely</b>
<b>I apply these behaviors in professional situations:</b>						

Define a common goal when working with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respect rules when dealing with other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working productively in groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awareness and application of rules for good group behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Determine how an objective should be achieved when you work with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work with others depending on the situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respect the interests of all actors involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Search for solutions that are acceptable for all people involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing responsibly with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solving conflicts responsibly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acknowledge other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acting with responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addressing conflicts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criticize constructively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seek a compromise in the case of disagreement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respond appropriately to criticism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accept constructive criticism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deal with criticism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Express yourself clearly and precisely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listen to others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hear others out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involve others in a conversation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss different views in a factual way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Present complicated facts in an understandable way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

And now think of your closest colleagues and evaluate their skills in the same categories.

	Does not apply at all	Does not apply	Does rather not apply	Applies more likely	Applie s likely	Applie s entirely
<b>My closest colleagues show these behaviors in work situations:</b>						
Define a common goal when working with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respect rules when dealing with other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working productively in groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awareness and application of rules for good group behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Determine how an objective should be achieved when you work with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work with others depending on the situation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respect the interests of all actors involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Search for solutions that are acceptable for all people involved	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dealing responsibly with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solving conflicts responsibly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acknowledge other people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acting with responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Addressing conflicts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Criticize constructively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seek a compromise in the case of disagreement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respond appropriately to criticism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accept constructive criticism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deal with criticism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Express yourself clearly and precisely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listen to others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hear others out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involve others in a conversation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discuss different views in a factual way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Present complicated facts in an understandable way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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**C) Demographic Data**

Age:

- 16-20    21-30             31-39    40-49    50-59    60-69

Period of employment: How long do you work for the company?

- Less than one year
- More than one year
- More than three years
- More than five years
- More than ten years
- More than fifteen years

Employment status:

- Temporary                       Unlimited

Leadership responsibility:

- Yes                       No