**Aalto University
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Charismatic communication style in knowledge-intensive organizations

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Lauri Louekari

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This thesis is about charismatic leadership, focusing on charismatic communication style in Finnish knowledge-intensive organizations. The topic is relevant due to increasing demand for information work in the society. Moreover, such work requires cooperation and intellectual engagement from the workforce, which require proper communication, motivation and leadership.

The theoretical framework consists of prominent theories and findings about charismatic leadership and charismatic communication style. The idea is to first paint the broader picture with basic concepts about charismatic leadership and then zoom into charismatic communication style. The literature review is made from a critical perspective.

The aim of the study was to find out how information workers perceive charismatic communication style, using concrete examples from their own work. There were ten semi-structured interviews conducted in total. The interviewees were picked in a fashion that emphasized heterogeneity and rich data. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and crucial points of the interviews, and make sense of the data.

Based on the interviewees' perceptions, their charismatic leaders communicated in a way that conveyed authority, approachability, character, aspiration, integrity and intelligence. Findings also suggest that the proper balancing of these six features (especially authority and approachability) and using situational eye is important to charismatic communication style, as well as conveying emotion. However, these are not universal conclusions about the topic, but rather an effort to understand charisma better in business context.

Table of contents

1 INTRODUCTION

It is commonly acknowledged that working life is getting more and more demanding mentally. At the same time, the problem in many organizations is that employees see their managers as a source of additional pressure and stress rather than inspiration and motivation. Thus there is a need for management style that energizes employees rather than drains them and charismatic leadership may be the answer. The idea behind charismatic leadership is that employees are happy to serve under their superiors if they see them as worthy *leaders*. The subsequent positive outcomes can be seen on e.g. work engagement and well-being (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

1.1. Background for the study

I initially became interested in the essence of charisma when working in a luxury hotel in Hong Kong as a management trainee. I was working on a project assigned by the hotel manager, who I deemed as very charismatic and influential. His personality and style of managing people generated loyalty among staff, and made work seem more meaningful. To me he is sort of an archetype of charismatic leader and I definitely learned a lot from him about influencing people in general.

This strong firsthand experience on charismatic leadership was both an advantage and disadvantage when conducting the research; it has generated genuine interest and passion to the topic, but at the same time it has likely affected my own views about charismatic leadership in a way that might have unconsciously steered the research and its results on a predefined path that is in line with my own opinions. Then again, researcher always has his own opinions and experiences about the subjects of his study in one way or another. Complete objectivity is impossible to reach, and neither is it assumed - especially in qualitative research. Nevertheless, I have tried not to let my preconceptions about the topic dominate the research process.

Besides my own experiences concerning charismatic leadership, I think it is a fascinating topic by itself. There are so many meanings attached to it particularly in western culture and it

touches people on a deep level. Actual history and fictional stories are full of charismatic leaders as main characters. There are charismatic "heroes" such as Abraham Lincoln, as well as "villains" such as Adolf Hitler. Many of my interviewees agreed that the topic is very interesting.

1.2. Research question and relevance

In this research I seek to clarify how charismatic leadership is conveyed in knowledge-intensive organizations via communication. To elaborate, the aim is to find out what kind of communication style (both verbal and non-verbal) is perceived as charismatic from subordinates' point of view. The research question derives from the idea that charisma is always something that is perceived individually; therefore when investigating charismatic leadership, the topic has to be approached from the point of view of its "receivers".

It is questionable whether objective and absolute charismatic leadership can be universally defined, but naturally there are some commonalities on how employees see it. Thus in this thesis similarities between perceptions are sought in order to form common themes, but at the same time differences in perceptions are deemed as important to underline the complex nature of charisma. On a philosophical level the research touches the question of what charisma actually is. On a more concrete level there are also practical implications as to how managers can improve their leadership abilities via communication. In a nutshell, this study aims to gain deeper understanding about how charismatic leadership is established via interaction.

Potentially charismatic leadership generates commitment, happiness and productivity in employees (Murphy & Ensher, 2008). These possible organizational and individual benefits are good to keep in mind when evaluating the importance of the topic and the implications of the results. However, when a leader has a mass of followers and he is in charge of large entities, the direct causalities between the individual leader and the organizational outcomes are difficult to measure and prove (Judge, Woolf, Hurst & Livingston, 2006). Moreover, the outcomes of charismatic leadership are not the focus of this research, but rather perceptions of its essence and communicative features.

1.3. Gap in previous literature

Books and studies about charisma have traditionally taken a psychological, mythological or religious perspective on the subject. Those that have taken the business point of view typically study the *effects* of charisma in organizations, not its distinctive qualities in interaction. The critical question of "what makes followers perceive leaders as charismatic" remains largely unanswered (Nohe et al., 2013). Bass (1999), among others, called for more explanation of the workings of charismatic leadership. Argyle and Coleman (1999) emphasize the importance of emotional bond between the charismatic leader and his followers, but call for more revealing studies about what this bond actually is.

Moreover, while there is a consensus about the importance of charismatic communication style, there has been limited research about it (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999). There is a need to clarify the most essential processes within charismatic communication (Antonakis, Fenley & Liechti, 2011).

Although some research has been conducted about charismatic communication style in business context (e.g. Antonakis, Fenley & Liechti, 2012), the area still has potential ground for academic research and interest, especially in Finland. The importance of personal charisma has been slightly neglected in theory and practice in Finnish universities and companies.

Most of the research on charismatic leadership has been quantitative, with emphasis on the input-output –model (Bryman, 2004). However, charisma is a complex concept where cause and effect are not always obvious and quantitatively measurable, so it makes sense to use employees' perceptions as tools for deeper understanding. Bryman (2004) also accurately points out that qualitative research on leadership is less cumulative than quantitative research, largely due to the common use of inductive method and less tangible variables. Thus the starting point in qualitative, inductive research is more fresh and less fixed than in quantitative and deductive research. This means that there is potential for fresh insights and big leaps in understanding the phenomenon. Moreover, qualitative approach recognizes the importance of context in leadership. Conger & Toegel (2002) also argue that leadership is dynamic and socially constructed process, where qualitative approach can add much needed depth to the analysis of the phenomenon. Quantitative tools such as questionnaires have

questionable value when looking for richness of data. Finally, it can be argued that perceptions of charisma are based on personal experiences and emotions, so quantitative and overly rationalized laboratory-type research is not suitable for the topic.

One issue seen in the research of charismatic leadership is that it has positive connotations by definition, i.e. if leadership is not influential and effective, it is not charismatic. This leads to conclusion that in the end charismatic leadership is only connected to positive results when conducting research, because of its definition. (Van Knippenberg and Sitkin, 2013.) This argument implies that the focus in the research of charismatic leadership should be changed. Numerous studies have been conducted about the effectiveness of charismatic leadership over the past decades, but rather than proving the effectiveness of a type of leadership that is by definition effective, we should be asking the more fundamental question "what is charismatic leadership"? The aim of this thesis is to understand one part of that question: how is charismatic leadership conveyed, i.e. what kind of communication style is perceived as charismatic?

It has to be noted that managers are not miracle workers and the power of charisma has its limits (Khurana, 2002). It is doubtful if any manager can single-handedly keep employees happy and productive in all situations, no matter how charismatic. The essence of charisma has been somewhat romanticized in our culture and this probably affects the research and my own presumptions as well, at least a bit. The "omnipotence" of charismatic leadership aside, it is still a relevant topic for research due to its potential effects on organizations. Although charismatic communication style is not the only tool that leaders need, it is still a crucial one (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999).

1.4. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is structured into five parts: introduction, theoretical framework, methodology, findings and discussion. In the theoretical framework I go through the most prominent theories and findings about charismatic leadership, as well as charismatic communication style. Charismatic leadership is a broader concept that includes charismatic communication style, so it makes sense to first paint the big picture. I approach the literature critically, and examine the subject from various angles. The methodology includes my philosophical

positioning, research methods and sample group. I have tried being as descriptive and open about my premises and methods as possible. The findings include the empirical part of the study. It is divided into themes, with plenty of quotes that illuminate my interviewees' thoughts. In the final part, the most important findings of the study are drawn together and conclusions made, with the deemed limitations.

2 THEORIES AND FINDINGS ABOUT CHARISMA

In this section I review some of the previous theories and findings about charismatic leadership, followers' perceptions about leadership and charismatic communication style. Charismatic leadership is the broader concept that includes charismatic communication style, so it makes sense to discuss both of them, in order to first set the frame and then zoom in. The final part of the chapter is dedicated to the critique about the paradigm. Most of the material is from distinguished academic journals. My purpose has been to examine the literature critically and focus on the research question, while looking at it from various perspectives. However, I will start with some clarifying definitions, because of the multifaceted nature of charisma.

2.1. Charisma

Charisma as a word has a lot of ideological and mythological weight in western society. Defining charisma is slightly problematic, partly because its meaning has changed over time. In modern, pragmatic sense it can be seen as person's influence and charm on others, but historically it has been related to divinity (New Oxford American Dictionary, 2010). A classic definition by Max Weber goes as follows:

> Charisma is a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader. (Weber, 1924, p. 328.)

Weber's view of charisma is not particularly fitting to this thesis (apart from the link to leadership), but it illustrates quite nicely the historical view of charisma as something innate, exceptional and even "superhuman". Some researchers have even suggested that due to the obvious ideological burden of the word, charisma should be academically replaced with the term *idealized influence* (Bass & Avolio, 1990), which will be explained in detail later on. However, the emotional and religious weight of the word and its origins are actually quite important as we start to examine charisma more closely. Moreover, Weber links charisma and

leadership together, which is at the core of this study; charisma can be a good premise for leadership.

Let us also provide a more modern and concise definition of charisma, one that fits the upcoming theoretical framework better: "A special personal quality or power of an individual making him capable of influencing or inspiring large numbers of people." (Collins English Dictionary, 2014). However, even this modern definition of charisma has some obvious ideological content; the word "special" implies that charisma is something exclusive and rare. Conger (1989, p. 161), among others, has opposed the idea that charisma is something that is limited to few special individuals. Then again, followers' perception of something "special" can be closely linked to their perception of the leader's charisma. So although that part of the definition is slightly questionable, the words "influencing" and "inspiring" are very relevant to this thesis.

Some modern definitions of charisma have also acknowledged the different social dimensions of charisma. Bradley (1987) claimed that charisma can be seen as bound to the person, to leader-follower relationship or to social structure.

It is also appropriate to define here what leadership is. Leadership is sometimes confused as management or vice versa, but leadership is actually more people-oriented. In short, management is about coordination of tasks and processes, while leadership is about *inspiration* and *motivation* of people (Murray, 2010).

As we can see, there are similarities between these short definitions of charisma and leadership. Therefore, by linking the two definitions we can arrive to a definition of charismatic leadership that is accurate enough at this point: charismatic leadership is defined here as influential and inspiring type of leadership that is bound to the person and gets employees to follow their leader. Organizationally speaking, charismatic leadership influences employees' attitudes, values, goals and intrinsic motivation, thus turning self-interests into collective interests and making work seem more meaningful (Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993).

Charismatic communication style is understood here as the means by which charismatic leadership is displayed, or in other words, how charisma is communicated in interaction. This

includes both verbal and non-verbal tools, such as body language, voice tone and use of humor, empathy, repetition and stories. It consists of all that communication that has a purpose of influencing followers and connecting to them. It does *not* include the more matter-oriented aspects of charismatic leadership, such as crisis management and taking risks (these are more things that the leader *does*, not what or how he *communicates*). However, it should be noted that making these distinctions can be difficult at times, because the parts of charismatic leadership are all connected.

2.2. Theories about charismatic leadership

Robert House (1977) created one of the first modern theories about charismatic leadership. In this theory charismatic leader is seen as a dominant, self-confident and influential figure with a vision. His followers share his values and identify with his vision and goals, thus creating a strong leader-follower relationship. Exemplary behavior of the leader is an important part of the theory.

House's theory focuses on the followers' desire to follow an inspiring figure with a vision. The ideal outcomes of such behavior in business are obvious; the whole organization strives for a common goal willingly and with a purpose, thus potentially leading to realization of business strategy on all levels of the organization. The model can therefore be useful when thinking about work engagement and strategy implementation. However, the theory is quite basic and has since been refined and modified numerous times, due to the growing interest in the topic.

Burns (1978) originally created the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership. Shortly put, transactional leader focuses on management and supervision, with tools like direct rewards and punishments. Transformational leader is close kin to charismatic leader, as he inspires his followers, arouses loyalty in them and gives a feeling of purpose to their work. In fact, many researchers don't see any relevant differences between transformational and charismatic leadership (Judge, Woolf, Hurst & Livingston, 2006). In this thesis the concepts are used more or less interchangeably.

Bass's (1985) theory of transformational leadership is one of the most known theories about the subject. The core of transformational leadership theory consists of four parts: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (see figure 1).
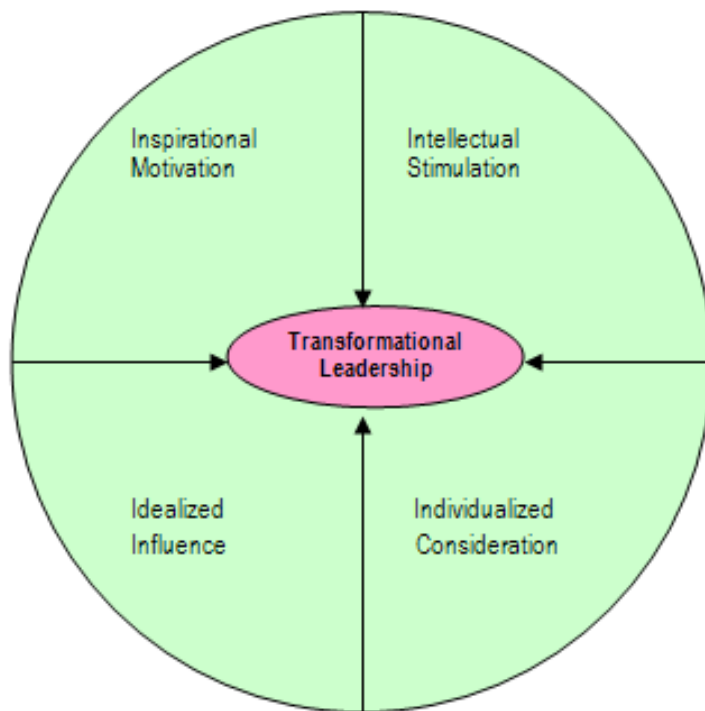
Figure 1. Bass's (1985) theory of transformational leadership

Inspirational motivation means that the leader provides an inspiring vision to his followers and makes their work feel more meaningful. This results in enhanced work engagement. Leader's communication skills (e.g. conveying optimism and enthusiasm) are important in motivating the followers. *Intellectual stimulation* means providing employees freedom to think and use their creativity. It also includes not being overly critical and being open for change. *Idealized influence* is about setting an example for others to follow. By practicing what he preaches and putting the organization first, the leader earns the respect of his followers and promotes teamwork and common goals. *Individualized concentration* means the individual attention that the leader gives his followers. It includes empathy, encouragement, and utilization of diverse talents of individuals. By letting followers use their strengths, the leader fosters intrinsic motivation among them. (Bass, 1985.)

9

Bass's model is commonly used when theorizing about leadership, perhaps because of its apparent logic and clear design. It has similarities to House's theory about charismatic leadership, but it seems to support employees more; individuals' thoughts and strengths are valued and they are being listened to. The model seems well suited for modern knowledge-intensive organizations, where autonomy and work engagement are essential. However, the theory relies on relatively few concepts, mainly on providing vision, example and individualized attention. Moreover, charismatic communication style is only covered briefly in this model; I shall elaborate on that later.

It has been suggested that the organizational need for transformational leadership is situational (Hinkin & Tracey, 1999; Shamir & Howell, 1999). Indeed, it can be argued that the need for it varies according to the nature of the business and the particular situation in the organization. As an example, transformational leadership would be particularly important when initiating and executing big changes in a company that depend on intellectual capital. In such scenario, many of the transformational leader's traits (e.g. vision, optimism and openness for change) would be useful to remove uncertainty among staff and drive the change through. Shamir and Howell (1999) found that contextual factors such as situational strength of the leader, organizational governance and linkage of organizational goals to dominant values in society are important in transformational leadership.

When focusing on transformational leadership, there is a risk for ignoring transactional leadership altogether. According to Judge and Piccolo (2004) transactional leadership has its uses; it is considered to be at least as important as transformational leadership in some cases. Indeed, when considering concepts such as monetary rewards and intrinsic rewards, it is clear that both need to be optimized. As an example, if work offers plenty of intrinsic rewards but salaries are not being paid, employees will surely grow unhappy.

Studies show that transformational leadership is closely connected to trust (Podsakoff, 1990; Bryman, 2004), as well as self-esteem and self-concept of the follower (Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993). Thus there is an important relationship between the leader and the follower. This relationship has psychological and moral implications. Transformational leader has potential power to the follower's inner self, his emotions and self-image. Moreover, the follower may trust and even admire the leader. Therefore the leader has the responsibility to be worthy of the respect of his followers, and not to misuse his power over them. Judge,

Woolf, Hurst & Livingston (2006) point out that even though charisma is typically associated with heroism, it isn't inherently good or bad; it depends on its use.

Mutual learning has also been connected to transformational leadership. Actually the term *transformational* can be seen as changing both the leader and the follower. Hence, the transformational leader can learn from his followers. (Miller, 2007.) The importance of constant learning for organizations and managers is widely recognized nowadays, and the concept of mutual learning is a good example of it. It also shows the followers that their leader respects and listens to them, which can reinforce their mutual bond. Mutual learning represents a modern approach to charismatic leadership, because it assumes that the leader and the followers are at least in some ways on the same level, and the leader is not elevated into some "superhuman" position, as Weber (1924) suggested.

Hoyt & Blascovich (2003) found an interesting result in their study about transformational leadership. Compared to transactional leadership, use of transformational leadership resulted in decrease in quantitative performance, but increase in qualitative performance, leadership satisfaction and group cohesiveness. Judge & Piccolo (2004) found that motivation, job satisfaction, satisfaction with the leader, leader effectiveness and group performance were positively affected by transformational leadership. These results resonate well with how transformational leadership has been perceived so far; a modern leadership style that emphasizes teamwork, employee well-being and quality of work. As such, transformational leadership style seems to have potential benefits for organizations that are competing with expertise rather than volume. Other organizational benefits of transformational leadership include increased commitment and organizational identification among employees (Judge, Woolf, Hurst & Livingston, 2006).

Walter and Bruch (2009) designed a model (see Figure 2) that seeks to integrate the various viewpoints of charismatic leadership research, thus providing a theory that would cover both leader- and context-specific factors, while also taking in consideration the interactive relationships in the process. According to the model, leader's attitudes, emotional intelligence, personality and contextual factors affect charismatic leadership behavior. In its ambitiousness the theory summarizes quite well the main foci of research in charismatic leadership over the past few decades. However, the "leader positive effect"-part of the model is not very clearly explained. Contextual factors remain rather obscured as well, but then

again it is hard to be specific when dealing with contextual elements. As a more general note, if context is deemed as an essential part of the charismatic leadership process, then it is difficult to draw accurate, clear and universal theories about the topic.
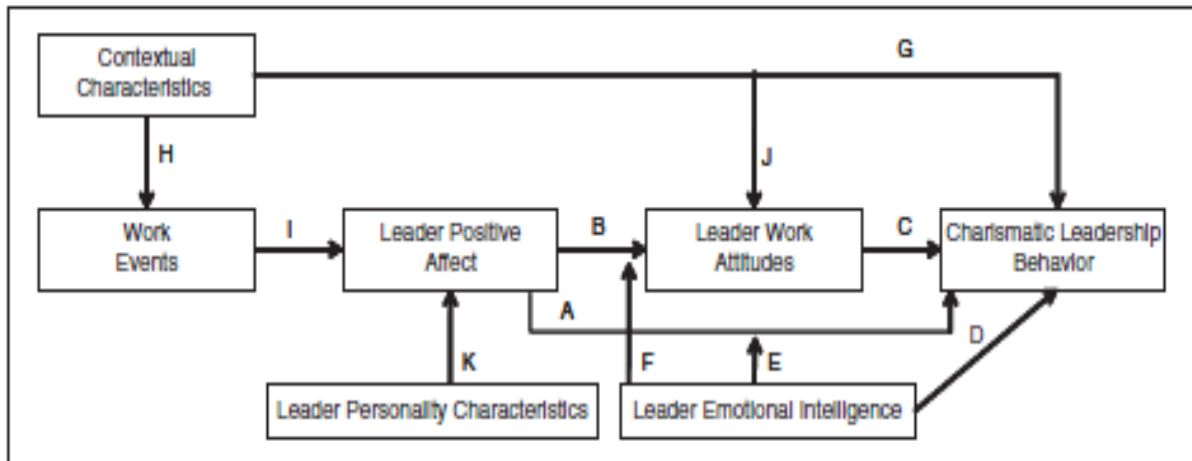
Figure 2. Walter & Bruch's (2009) Affective events model of charismatic leadership behavior emergence

There have been many other theories about charismatic leadership as well, besides ones discussed here. Noteworthy are at least Podsakoff's (1990) and Shamir's (1993) frameworks about the topic. However, within these there are a lot of similar elements to Bass's model (see figure 1), such as vision, exemplary behavior and ideological emphasis. Therefore Bass's theory can be seen in some sense as a core theory regarding the subject, representing widely accepted essentials of charismatic leadership.

2.3. Leadership attributions and perceptions

Conger & Kanungo (1998) provided a theory that aims to explain the behavioral attributes of a charismatic leader. These attributes are:

•Vision and articulation
•Sensitivity to the environment
•Sensitivity to member needs

•Personal risk taking

•Performing unconventional behavior

This theory complements Bass's theory (see figure 1) quite nicely, because while there are similarities, the focus is different. The theory is useful when considering charismatic leadership from a relative point of view, because it acknowledges the importance of context and individuals in leadership. It still offers some practical behavioral suggestions for leaders. Charismatic leader is seen here as a risk taker and a shaker of status quo. Therefore the term *transformational* leadership might be more accurate for the theory than *charismatic* leadership, because it clearly focuses on change. Thus the theory can be a helpful tool when radical changes have to be made in the organization. Change supporting behavior in leaders has been emphasized by other researchers too, for example Nohe et al. (2013) found in their study that it was perceived as charismatic by followers, and that this perceived charisma was linked to team performance and commitment. However, when things are going well, more patient approaches seem more fitting. Moreover, Conger & Kanungo's theory has been criticized for being too vague and ambiguous (Yukl, 1999).

Conger & Kanungo's (1998) theory also recognizes the importance of followers' attribution in establishing charismatic leadership. In other words, the theory is in tune with one of the basic assumptions of this thesis; charisma gains its power from being perceived by followers. And since the followers are individuals, charisma is perceived individually. In a way, attributions are people's way of making sense of the world and finding cause-effect relations. Hence, followers can link certain qualities in leaders to their leadership abilities.

Lord and Maher (1991) also underlined the importance of leadership perceptions. They claim that people naturally build leader prototypes mentally by perceiving leader traits and behaviors from their own cognitive premises, and thus form intuitive opinions about who has the qualities of a leader and who doesn't. Therefore the importance of proper *leader image* is emphasized, i.e. leaders should acknowledge that leadership depends on perceptions. Gardner & Avolio (1998) claim that leaders should strive for an image that conveys trust-worthiness, integrity, power, esteem and innovativeness.

Certain personality traits in leaders support charismatic leadership. Especially extrovert, proactive and open people are likely to become charismatic leaders (Judge, Woolf, Hurst &

Livingston, 2006). Other important features of charismatic leaders include goal-orientation, willingness to take risks, self-confidence, social sensitivity and trust (House & Howell, 1992). Attitude-wise, positivity is perhaps the most important quality in leaders (Walter & Bruch, 2009).

Charismatic leader makes his followers believe in him. This belief is the key to his influence. Emphasizing the personhood and the traits of the charismatic leader is one way to establish such credibility. Hence the leader wants to appear in such a way that impresses the employees and make them want to follow him. (Miller, 2007.) Moreover, the leader needs to make his followers identify with them in order to establish charismatic leadership.

Follower can base his perception of the leader's charisma on the relationship that he has with him (Campbell, Ward, Sonnenfeld & Agle, 2008). If follower's relationship to the leader is indeed an essential factor in perceived charisma, then laboratory tests and superficial research about charisma on a general level would not reveal anything too valuable about the topic. Instead, information that would have actual value would be related to followers' personal experiences and emotions.

Gardner & Avolio (1998) suggest that the interaction between leaders and followers construct both their identities. Similarly, Howell and Shamir (2005) emphasize the active role of the followers in charismatic leadership process, suggesting that the followers' self-concepts affect their relationships with the leader, thus establishing or prohibiting charismatic leadership. In this view, charismatic leadership can be seen as co-created in the relationship between the leader and his followers. Two types of such relationships are identified: personalized and socialized. Personalized charismatic relationship means that the follower links positive qualities to the leader, identifies with him and admires him. Therefore the relationship with the leader becomes relevant for the follower's identity and self-concept. Socialized charismatic leadership is about the follower identifying with the group (e.g. colleagues in the organization). Since the followers' personal identities play a crucial role in this theory, it can be concluded that according to it, charismatic leadership is perceived individually. Therefore it implies that the generalizability and universality of charismatic leadership theories is questionable and instead emphasizes context.

Shamir, House & Arthur (1993) have also made a link between followers' self-concepts and motivation, emphasizing the followers' need to maintain their self-esteem, role-identity and faith, while expressing themselves. These motivational mechanisms can be influenced via leader behavior, thus leading to desired effects of charismatic leadership (e.g. commitment, task meaningfulness, identification with vision). In other words, the leader increases the followers' intrinsic motivation by linking organizational tasks and goals to the followers' self-concepts.

As noted before, one of the goals of charismatic leadership is to enhance the meaningfulness of work tasks and enhance employees' intrinsic motivation. However, the nature of work can make it easier or more difficult to achieve. Very mechanical and routinized type of work with low level of autonomy and self-expressiveness (e.g. cleaning) can be difficult to "glorify", whereas specialized expert work with high level of autonomy (e.g. professor) has more obvious intrinsic rewards. Moreover, in this kind of expert work the leader's role can be more about coordination than motivation; work itself can then be the prime source of motivation.

2.4. Charismatic communication style

Charismatic communication style is an essential part of charisma, and it is linked to followers' satisfaction and performance (Howell & Frost, 1989). As an example, all of the four primary areas in Bass's prominent theory (see figure 1) are related to charismatic communication in one way or another. Qualitative research on charismatic leadership has also emphasized the importance of communication (Bryman, 2004; De Vries, Bakker-Pieper & Oostenveld, 2010). Strong delivery in communication is perceived as charismatic and effective, and also inspiring the followers and committing them into the leader's vision (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999; Den Hartog & Venburg, 1997). Poor communication on the other hand can lead to decreased morale and motivation among employees (Spaulding, 1997).

Judge, Woolf, Hurst & Livingston (2006) identify charismatic communication style as a distinctive part of charismatic leadership, as opposed to treating both concepts under the term "charisma". Similarly, Van Knippenberg & Sitkin (2013) see the concept of charismatic leadership as too vague, and call for more precise focus for the research about the topic, suggesting inspiring communication as an example. Therefore it is time to narrow down the

scope and elaborate more on the communicational dimension of charisma: how is charismatic leadership conveyed and what is essential in charismatic leaders' communication style?

Antonakis, Fenley & Liechti (2012) studied charismatic communication as a learnable skill set. They brought up nine verbal and three non-verbal elements. The verbal skills consist of inserting metaphors, stories, contrasts, rhetorical questions, three-part lists, integrity, collective emotions, high expectations and confidence into the communication. One of the main purposes of these tactics is to influence the followers' beliefs and intrinsic motivation. The three-part lists calls for a little explanation; it is about summarizing a message into three key points, creating a memorable pattern for the audience. The non-verbal skills include the use of facial expressions, gestures and animated voice tone. Leaders can display a wide variety of emotions by using non-verbal tools, such as pauses in speech (conveying control), whispering and speaking loudly (creating contrast), smiling (conveying happiness), showing fist (conveying determination) and making eye contact (engaging with the audience). Shortly put, leaders should connect, compare, contrast, engage and distill, while showing integrity, authority and passion. The goal is to establish an emotional connection to the followers, and to make the leader perceived as powerful, competent and respected.

It is a known fact that *actual* communication is mostly non-verbal. Changing body language and voice tone can change the whole meaning of a message. Interestingly, in our everyday lives more effort and thought is still put into the content of the messages than on their delivery style. What makes the matter even more important is the fact that not all people are even aware of the non-verbal messages that they are sending. Therefore it is essential for leaders to be aware of these things and practice self-monitoring (Gardner & Avolio, 1998).

Displaying confidence, dynamic presence, eye contact, gestures, fluency and voice tone variety are important in non-verbal communication (Holladay & Coombs, 1994; Howell & Frost, 1989). Charismatic leader's body language should exude confidence and assuredness for appearing authoritative, while displaying warmth and friendliness to make him more approachable and easier to connect to. An upright posture and a firm handshake represent the authoritative side (DuBrin & Dalgish, 2003). Leaning forward, animated facial expressions and captivating voice tone can be used to make the leader more approachable and the interaction more engaging (Howell & Frost, 1989).

Displaying positive emotions in communication is contagious. Leader's facial expressions such as smiling can reflect on the follower, thus affecting the follower's mood, emotions and perception of leader charisma. However, the genuineness of the displayed emotions is important. (Cherulnik, Donley, Wiewel, & Miller, 2001.) The link between leader's positive emotions and followers' moods is also related to perceived leader effectiveness and attractiveness. Overall expressing positive emotions enhances perceptions of charismatic leadership. (Bono & Ilies, 2006.) This goes into very basics of human interaction and group behavior; contagiousness of positive and negative emotions. Leaders should be very aware of this kind of non-verbal communication, as it is a relevant part of charismatic communication style, and affects the atmosphere in the work environment in general.

Charismatic leaders seem to be at ease with their environment and the situation. Things like relaxed posture and controlled voice convey this (Gardner & Avolio, 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Their movements also tend to be deliberate and non-hesitant. All of this assures the followers that the leader knows what he's doing and that he has a purpose. Moreover, the calm and purposeful non-verbal messages can catch on the followers via contagiousness of displayed emotions.

Expressive and enthusiastic delivery of leader's speech has been found more important than its content, and such an inspiring leader is considered charismatic and effective (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999). Use of speech imagery (i.e. conveying images in words) has also been perceived as charismatic in leaders (Naidoo & Lord, 2008; Emrich, Brower, Feldman & Garland, 2001). Indeed the ability to build meanings around concepts is important for perceived charisma (Conger, 1989). These kinds of features make speeches more colorful, interesting, engaging and personal, while reducing monotony.

Clarity of speech and pronunciation is important for perceived charisma and influential delivery. Arguably, quickness of speech is also a charismatic feature in communication. (Kouzes & Posner, 2003.) However, quick speech does not seem to be necessary for the charismatic effect. Calm, relaxed and dominant communication style has been mentioned in other research as charismatic (e.g. Holladay & Coombs, 1994). As an example of this, charismatic U.S. presidents such as Bill Clinton or Barack Obama put a lot of weight in their words and use pauses in their speeches, instead of fast pace.

De Vries, Bakker-Pieper & Oostenveld (2010, p. 376) concluded in their study that "charismatic leaders are characterized by an assured, supportive, argumentative, precise, and verbally non-aggressive communication style". Use of non-aggressive communication indicates that charismatic leaders do not need to resort to their hierarchical power and direct orders in order to get employees to follow them. Rather, they use tools of persuasion, such as vivid speech and argumentation.

Assuredness and precision in communication reinforce the conception of a strong leader. However, while the leader's assuredness can give clear direction to his followers, it can also hinder knowledge sharing (De Vries, Bakker-Pieper & Oostenveld, 2010). It seems that traditional leader traits such as giving clear direction and being dominant can be harmful for employee initiatives and innovation, which are considered very important in modern knowledge-intensive organizations. On the other hand, other parts of charismatic communication style can alleviate this affect.

Several researchers (Conger, 1989; Shamir, 1993; Hartog & Verburg, 1997) suggest that communicating in a way that appears equal to the followers can be an effective method for leaders with a high status. An example of this could be a CEO that talks to a factory worker in a friendly manner and establishing rapport, e.g. using football metaphors. Indeed, this kind of approach has many potential advantages. It signals to the follower that the leader has genuine interest in him, making him more likeable and less distant, and creates a connection between the leader and the follower that feels personal. This can affect the follower's emotions and identity in a way that strengthens the leader-follower-relationship considerably. However, it could be argued that this technique loses some of its value when the leader in question is not a CEO, but rather the worker's immediate supervisor who interacts with him on a daily basis. In such scenario this kind of friendly manner could create authority issues, if the worker would start seeing his supervisor more as a friend than as a boss.

According to Conger (1991) the language of charismatic leadership can be divided into two parts: framing and rhetorical crafting. Framing means that the leader communicates visions and organizational goals in a meaningful way, typically by inserting values and beliefs into the message. Rhetorical crafting includes the use of metaphors and stories, as well as displaying emotions and customizing the message for the specific audience. It also includes lots of other speech techniques, such as confident, direct and clear style of speech, and

making use of repetition and rhythm. The key in this theory is that organizational values, goals and messages should be communicated in a way that appeals to followers' emotions, not just their rationality. These tools still seem generally underutilized in the business world, even as the interest in charismatic leadership has risen considerably. One plausible reason is that the managers in companies are more task-oriented, emphasizing facts rather than rhetoric. Furthermore, the language of charismatic leadership can take some time to master, and it requires leaders to open up emotionally and engage with their staff full-heartedly. This can feel uncomfortable and risky for leaders, especially in cultures like Finland that are more matters-of-fact oriented when it comes to leadership, and where the social atmosphere does not exactly encourage being open and emotional. Nevertheless, these language techniques have been used successfully by politicians for quite some time. Apparently business leaders see their employees quite differently than politicians see their potential voters when it comes to using tools of persuasion.

Shamir, House & Arthur (1993) propose that the messages of charismatic leaders emphasize collective identity, values, morals and high expectations, while boosting the followers' self-esteem. These kinds of messages appeal to the followers' personal *and* collective identities, enabling value internalization. The crucial components here are quite consistent with the other theories about the subject. However, the most unique part is the focus on follower self-esteem. Indeed, the ability to make the followers believe in themselves is very important, because it can support their identification with the leader and building an emotional bond to him, thus enhancing his level of influence. Moreover, the increased self-esteem can lead to better work engagement and organizational performance. However, followers' self-esteem shouldn't depend excessively on the leader and his charisma, as it can lead to "blind faith" (Gardner & Avolio, 1998), which can be harmful in the long run.

Holladay & Coombs (1994) concluded that charismatic communication style should be friendly, attentive, dominant and relaxed. Friendliness and attentiveness increase the leader's social likeability, while dominance and relaxedness signal high status and being in control. At first sight these features appear to be mixed and not quite coherent; energetic and enthusiastic style seems slightly contradictory to a dominant and relaxed style. However, rather than integrating all these features to one's communication style, the more natural way would be for leaders to adapt them into their own personalities. For instance, if a leader is naturally expressive and energetic, it makes sense for him to build his charismatic communication style

around that, and not concentrate too much on being calm and cool. Gardner & Avolio (1998) also emphasize conveying personality in charismatic leadership. This could be called the X-factor of charismatic leadership; a leader who lets his personality show can make the interactions feel more genuine, engaging and memorable for the followers. It can also make the leader seem more special and unique in the eyes of the followers, although as was mentioned before, not everyone relates those words to the modern definition of charisma.

2.5. Critique against the charismatic leadership paradigm

It seems appropriate to also present the main points of academic critique against the charismatic leadership paradigm, as examining the subject from various points of view can help in its understanding. Van Knippenberg and Sitkin (2013) concluded in their extensive assessment about the topic that the basic concepts of transformational and charismatic leadership are vaguely defined, and that they have not been properly distinguished from leadership in general. The label of charismatic leadership is seen as too all-encompassing and obscured, with no sufficient links in theories and empirical evidence. Moreover, the mediators used in the research of charismatic leadership (e.g. trust, empowerment) are seen as too numerous and insufficiently connected. They also state that the commonly used measurement tools and causal models are invalid, and even suggest that the current approaches to the topic should be abandoned in favor of more accurate ones. They particularly propose a more integrated and lean theoretical framework.

Khurana (2002) among others blames the halo effect around the concept of charisma in business context, stating that the importance of charisma and an individual leader for an organization has been overestimated. Moreover, he claims that a charismatic leader can actually be harmful and destabilizing for business in some occasions. The charismatic leadership paradigms have also been accused of downplaying the importance of external factors and oversimplifying complex organizational processes by putting too much weight on charisma (Meindl, Ehrlich & Dukerich, 1985).

These critical views about charismatic leadership have a similar root; they complain that the all-powerful concept of charisma is still seen in an almost religious fashion, without assessing it critically and seeing its flaws, limits and obscurity. This fundamental criticism shouldn't be

overlooked. However, these views also represent a counter-trend to the ever-growing interest in charismatic leadership. As such, they tend to make quite radical suggestions, like abandoning the charismatic leadership -approach altogether. Similarly, statements about charismatic leadership being poorly defined and empirical evidence being insufficient don't seem entirely justified. There is a consensus about the concept of charismatic leadership, but as a popular area of research, it has developed over the years and there have been several approaches to it. From qualitative researcher's point of view, these approaches are not a source of ambiguity, but rather allow us to study the phenomenon more thoroughly. Moreover, nullifying decades of research, advancement and evidence about the topic due to issues mentioned earlier seems rather questionable. Finally, even if the halo effect around charismatic leadership has led to overestimations of its merit, its importance for modern organizations has nevertheless been widely accepted and proven from many angles (DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman & Humphrey, 2011; Judge & Piccolo 2004; Judge, Woolf, Hurst & Livingston, 2006; Hoyt & Blascovich, 2003).

Critical reviews such as ones mentioned above are important for the evolution of charismatic leadership, because the questioning of prominent theories and methods can inspire fresh insights and approaches to the topic, thus advancing the field of study and increasing our understanding. Although the concept of charisma is old, the academic interest around it is relatively new, so there is surely room for improvement in the area.

2.6. Summary of theoretical framework

The prominent theories and findings about charismatic leadership emphasize setting an example, providing a vision, promoting change, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration and sensitivity to environment and context. Moreover, the active role of the follower in the leader-follower relationship is seen as relevant, because charisma can be seen as co-created in this relationship. The followers' perceptions, attributions and identification with the leader all affect the process. Finally, the transactional and transformational leadership styles should not be seen as opposites, but rather as complimenting each other.

By distilling the key points from the academic literature about charismatic communication style, the conclusion would be that balancing authority and warmth is essential. Dynamic and

confident presence (including posture, eye contact, voice tone, rhythm and clarity of speech) raises the credibility of the leader, and makes him seem worthy in the eyes of the followers. Social engagement (e.g. facial expressions, gestures, stories), friendliness and individualized concentration make the leader easier to relate to, which is important for identification with the leader, emotional connection and strong leader-follower relationship. Moreover, leaders should emphasize collectivity, high expectations, empowerment and positivity via communication, in order to maximize employees' self-esteem and work engagement. Ideally all of this would result in a powerful, appealing, inspiring and charismatic communication style.

The critique against the charismatic leadership paradigm has mainly revolved around its omnipotent reputation and vague terminology. With a lot of recent academic interest in the topic, the critics have questioned whether charismatic leadership is as essential for modern organizations as the paradigm lets us to believe.

3 METHODOLOGY

In this section I explain my own philosophical premises for the study, the research method that was used and the interviewees' backgrounds. Thus this chapter provides the background for the findings of the thesis.

3.1. Philosophical positioning

Researcher's philosophical stance is important in qualitative research, as it guides the process in a very fundamental way. Moreover, reflexivity demonstrates critical thinking, which is one of the criteria for research validity. My epistemological view here is *substantialism*. According to substantialism, there is a material reality that is objective, but people see reality from their own viewpoints and interpretations, thus emphasizing the contextual and subjective nature of "truths". Substantialism is close kin to *critical realism*, which acknowledges both the real objective world and the way that the knowledge about it is socially constructed. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008.)

These approaches to reality and knowledge make sense to me. The physical world is out there as an independent entity, as well as in our heads as our own interpretations. This philosophical stance also fits well to my research question. Charismatic leadership is seen here as something that can have some universal qualities, but at the same time it is noted that charisma is in the eye of the beholder and gains its power from being perceived, making it also contextual. Moreover, the possibility for different types of charismatic communication style is acknowledged.

My epistemologies and the research approach are well suited for *inductive research method*. Empirical data and findings guide the research process in inductive research, instead of predefined theories and hypotheses (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Relevant previous research about the topic was reviewed, as well as some of the most important theories about charismatic leadership and charismatic communication style, but no predefined hypotheses were used. This made the research process more free, while improving the potential to reveal new insights about the topic and discover how charismatic leadership is conveyed in interaction. When discussing how people perceive charismatic communication style it is important not to narrow the frames too much, so the descriptions can be as rich as possible.

However, theoretical framework can still be used to reflect and relate the results to previous findings in the literature (Bryman, 2004). The goal was to strike a balance between open-ended research method and the connection to existing literature, which is admittedly quite a delicate balance.

One of the underlying questions regarding the approach and implications of the study is whether charisma is something that can be learned. Personally I believe that although there are some people that are more "natural" leaders, charismatic communication style can be learned, at least to an extent. There is also evidence that supports that, such as research by Dvir et al. (2002). At the same time I emphasize the importance of individual perceptions and the subjectivity of charisma. These two views may initially seem incompatible: if charisma is seen as "in the eye of the beholder" and therefore means different things to different employees, how can anyone learn it universally? I place my research on a philosophical stance that while people experience things individually from their own points of view and are influenced by different things, there are still many commonalities on the ways they are effectively influenced. When it comes to charisma, some of these common factors are biological (e.g. certain body language) and some are cultural. The commonalities paint the broad picture of charismatic leadership, while the individual perceptions bring in the details and nuances. Perhaps while managers can learn some fundamentals of charismatic leadership that are universally applicable, the final touch requires attention to the specific individual, organization and culture. Moreover, within these "universal" charismatic qualities there may be numerous combinations that establish charismatic leadership via communication. Learning more about the nature of charisma and what qualities employees attach to it is central in order to increase understanding of the topic.

3.2. Research method

The empirical phase of the research consists of qualitative interviews about perceptions of charismatic communication style. With emphasis on perceptions of charisma it is noted that different people may find different qualities charismatic. Moreover, leaders play their strengths when conveying charisma, and these strengths may vary. With these factors taken in consideration, we can assume that there can be many types of charismatic leaders. In the interviews the aim was to reveal various communicational qualities that employees find

influential in their leaders, in order to reveal new insights into how charismatic leadership is constructed in interaction.

Qualitative method and interviews were used, because they allow deep exploration of the subject. They also have some practical benefits, such as asking elaborative questions from the interviewees. All of this was needed because of the complex and personal nature of the subject; charisma gains its power from being *perceived*. To demonstrate the point, let us consider quantitative method and basic questionnaires as an alternative approach. They probably would not have worked as well, because they would have made the empirical phase of the research too rigid, simple and pre-defined when considering the research question.

Interviews were semi-structured. This type of interviewing allows both "what" and "how" type of questions (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The use of the method was justified mainly by its suitability to the research question, as well as its flexibility and familiarity to me personally. The research question is *how* charismatic leadership is conveyed via communication, so the method seems appropriate. Flexibility of semi-structured interviews is very useful, because since the question format is not too rigid, the interviews can evolve to directions that are most fruitful within the main topic. Finally, since semi-structured interviews were at least a bit familiar to me, the choice seemed like the most natural one.

There were ten interviews conducted in total. It seemed like a sufficient amount, because it provided enough material to make the research valid, while not being so large that drawing conclusions and themes would become too difficult. Moreover, after ten interviews it felt like coherent themes could be formed.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Moreover, remarks were made about non-verbal communication during interviews (e.g. facial expressions), as through them interpretation of meanings became more accurate. For the same reason it was important to note what was *not* being said.

Length of the interviews varied between 31 and 60 minutes, averaging at around 46 minutes. The length of the interview is not entirely up to the researcher, because some interviewees provide shorter answers than others. Interviewees' own time limits also had to be considered. Moreover, the degree of fruitfulness of the interviews guided their length a bit. Each

interviewee was only interviewed once, because there were no foreseeable insights to be revealed in conducting additional interviews with the same people in this case.

The interviews started with questions about the interviewee's background. Age, education and work history were covered briefly, as well as relation to the current superior. After that, the conversation turned to the interviewee's superior. Questions were asked about how he sees him as a leader and how the superior communicates with his subordinates and the interviewee. Elaborations, examples and stories were encouraged. Then the interviewee was asked about any superior that he had had during his career that he perceived as particularly charismatic and inspiring. This charismatic leader was then discussed in detail, with a purpose to elaborate on his communication style and thus discover the root of his charisma. The intention behind talking about both current superior and a very charismatic superior from the past was to get a solid idea about the interviewee's perceptions on the topic by creating such a contrast. For the same purpose I asked some questions that highlighted the superiors' strengths and weaknesses.

Careful preparation for the interviews is critical with semi-structured interviews. The questions have to enable deep exploration of the topic, while being easily approachable to the interviewees. A degree of open questions was used, with a purpose of encouraging more talk and insights.

In the interview situation it was important to establish a connection with the interviewee and create trust, in order to get the interviewees to open up. Initially some rapport was usually established, such as small talk at the beginning of the interview. Being encouraging to long answers and conveying listening and interest was also crucial. Eye contact, approving tone and not interrupting the interviewee are some ways to achieve this. Indeed, in many cases the final questions of the interviews were the most rewarding, because once there was some trust and familiarity established, the answers tended to become longer and deeper towards the end, really carving into the interviewees' own experiences and perceptions.

It was important to avoid asking questions that are too leading, otherwise the material might have ended up just reflecting my own opinions and ideas. If the researcher's own stance on the topic is too dominant, the results of the interviews will be pre-determined and no new insights will be revealed. That is why I tried to avoid assumptions and "yes or no" questions.

Instead I sought to design interview questions that draw from the interviewees' experiences and understanding, providing elaborate and descriptive answers.

I discovered soon that doing all of the things mentioned above can be quite challenging in practice. After the very first interview I received comments from the interviewee that I was too leading with my questions and that I didn't always give him enough time to think and elaborate. Moreover, some of my interviewees commented that some questions were difficult to answer. I also realized that the things the interviewees' liked to talk about were not always relevant at all to my research question. Therefore I had to keep the discussions on the right course, while still encouraging the interviewees to open up and share their experiences and thoughts in a deep and meaningful way. I think this is the most difficult task in conducting semi-structured interviews, perhaps alongside with asking the right questions.

It was important to warm the interviewees up and establish rapport with them in order to get them to open up.

Thematic analysis was used in analyzing the data from the interviews, as it fits well to the nature of research questions and the philosophical approach. Thematic analysis is used in order to find themes and patterns within empirical data, emphasizing rich description of data, subjectivity of human experiences and participants' perceptions. First steps are familiarization with the data (e.g. re-reading) and consistency of transcriptions. (Guest, Macqueen & Namey, 2012.) The idea of the analysis was to sort the raw data and identify the crucial points, as well as interpret the meanings within the data. Through these points, themes could be established and their relevance evaluated. Final part was writing down the research results in a clear and meaningful form.

The links between different perceptions of charismatic communication style can help in understanding what it is actually about. An important part of thematic analysis was searching for these links and similarities between the interviews. Throughout the empirical research process it was interesting to see what kinds of patterns emerged and how they could contribute to explaining charisma. In the end these links and patterns produced via thematic analysis formed a coherent whole that is basically the main contribution of the thesis.

In qualitative research it is typical to follow the empirical data and findings, allowing the research problem and questions to change in the process (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Indeed, during the research process my focus shifted within the broader concept of charismatic leadership a few times, while I was pondering about the most fruitful and interesting approach to the topic. My initial idea was to find out the "archetype" of charismatic leader and conduct all the interviews in one organization, focusing on one leader that would have a strong reputation as being charismatic. From there the approach refined based on my instructors' advices, my own thoughts and the process itself. As a researcher, one has to always keep in mind what is realistic, sensible and serves a purpose, while keeping in mind the academic value of the final product. I hope I have succeeded in following these basic principles.

3.3. Sample group

There were ten interviews in total, conducted between December 2014 and February 2015. The interviewees consisted of seven males and three females. Age spread was 25-46 years old, the average being at around 35 years old. Most of the interviewees had at least a master's level diploma or equivalent. Two of the interviewees had a Ph.D., one had a bachelor's degree and there were also some engineers. Two of the interviewees were completing their master's degree at the time of the study, while they were working.

The interviewees were picked in a fashion that emphasized heterogeneity, i.e. both genders and people of various ages were included. This was due to the need to discover several viewpoints to the topic and provide various kinds of insights and outtakes to charismatic communication style. In keeping the group of interviewees heterogenic, there was potentially more to discover, as the points of view presumably differed more. The approach definitely had its risks, because with a heterogeneous sample group the data may become scattered, and common themes could have become more difficult to spot. However, potential rewards in form of richer data and more angles to the phenomenon justified the choice.

Interviewees and their backgrounds played an important role in determining what kind of data was produced. How to influence an elderly male subordinate may differ considerably from how to influence a younger female subordinate. Added to these generic demographic

differences, there are also individual differences in how people build meanings. For some people a leader can be a heroic figure to follow, whereas others may view leadership as something more practical and mundane.

Three of the interviewees worked in IT companies, three in governmental agencies and four in banks. All ten interviewees worked in Helsinki. There were business and service consultants, credit analysts, researchers, program developers and a couple of mid-level managers in the group. The common theme in their jobs was the knowledge-intensive nature of the work that they do.

Reasoning behind picking such a sample group was that leadership really counts in knowledge-intensive work, as employees are the source of competitiveness in such organizations. Moreover, it is expected that their line of work will become even more common in the future, as technology develops and patterns of knowledge management and communication become ever more complex. Besides their line of work, an important criterion for the sample group was that they were regularly contact with their superior (e.g. team leader, supervisor, department head, general manager). This was important for having fresh first-hand experience in being "led", and thus being able to provide material and insights about charismatic communication style.

Acquiring interviewees for the study was not easy at first. After a lot of suitable companies had rejected my proposal I started using my own contacts. Therefore I know some of the interviewees personally, and I also received some help from my friends in introducing me to suitable people for the interviews. This is quite common in qualitative research, since familiarity to the interviewees can be beneficial for the research process, e.g. by easing the access to useful material (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Indeed, the familiarity to the interviewees was helpful in gaining some of their trust and getting them to share their thoughts and experiences openly. Naturally there are some issues as well in knowing your interviewees personally (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). As an example, pre-assumptions and previous experiences about the person can potentially influence the direction of the interviews. However, I think that the interviews with familiar people served their purpose and I remained objective enough during the process. In the end, the suitability of the sample group for the study is more important than relations to the interviewer.

Time constraints provided another challenge for the research. Most of the interviewees worked in companies that are trying to make profit, and virtually all of them had busy schedules and their work was quite hectic at times. Therefore it was understandable that scheduling interviews and reserving time for them had to be done based on the needs and constraints of the interviewees. Flexibility and patience was needed throughout this process.

3.3.1. Interviewees' profiles

Interviewee 1 is a 37 year old male. He has studied mathematics at a university and has a master's degree in science. He has been working in information technology for over 7 years and before that he was a teacher for 4 years. His current title is business consultant. He spends most of his time in his client's office doing service management. He is regularly in contact with his team leader via telephone and internet, and sees her face-to-face about once per week.

Interviewee 2 is a 45 year old male and has a doctoral degree in natural sciences. He has worked in governmental agencies for around 20 years. Currently he is a chief engineer and has some managerial duties, including strategic management. His superior is over 50 years old and works as a director in the organization. They see each other often, partly because their offices are near to each other.

Interviewee 3 is a 36 years old male with a diploma in industrial engineering. He has worked in financing and investment for about 12 years. Currently he is a financial advisor in a distinguished bank in Helsinki. His work includes a lot of sales and consulting with private customers. He interacts with his unit leader on a daily basis.

Interviewee 4 is 26 years old. She has studied humanistic sciences, and studies currently economics in Helsinki. She has worked in customer service for some years, and currently she works as a credit monitor in a bank. Her work includes consulting customers with credit problems and monitoring misuse of credit cards. Her unit leader oversees the credit monitoring teams, and she sees her daily.

Interviewee 5 is a 32 years old bachelor of finance. He has worked in investment banking for about 8 years, including some of the international top-tier companies in the business. He has done equity research and is currently an equity and credit analyst. He has studied and worked in England for several years. He interacts with his unit head approximately once per day.

Interviewee 6 is a 25 year old female, working in a bank as a service consultant. Her work includes contacting customers and taking care of their needs. She has a high school diploma, and is currently studying in a master's program in Helsinki.

Interviewee 7 is a 44 year old male. He has studied master's degree in governmental sciences and has a Ph.D. He has worked in an environmental agency for about 15 years. Currently he is a special researcher, undertaking various projects. He works under a group manager and is in touch with her several times per week.

Interviewee 8 is a 46 year old male. He is a master of science in engineering. He has worked in Belgium for 3 years doing environment assessments, and about 18 years in Finnish environmental agencies. His current title is negotiating officer; it includes negotiations with various bodies, EU business, various projects and collaboration with other agencies. His current supervisor is a senior manager in the agency.

Interviewee 9 is a 32 year old male. His education is IT engineer. He has worked in IT related companies for about 8 years. Currently he works as a program developer, making customized programs for customers. He is often in touch with his customers. His superior is the department manager.

Interviewee 10 is a 30 year old female. She has a master's degree in economics. She has worked in HR related tasks for about 10 years. Currently she is working in an IT company as the HR manager. She has worked in her current position for about 2 years.

4 PERCEIVED CHARISMATIC QUALITIES

The findings of the study are arranged into six themes, representing qualities that the interviewees perceived as charismatic. These qualities are conveyed via communication, both verbal and non-verbal. The qualities are: authority, approachability, character, aspiration, authenticity and intelligence. These were the combining themes in the study that tied the interviewees' perceptions together to a complete whole. Within the main themes, sub-themes emerged (i.e. communicative features within the theme).

It should be noted that some of the themes were more common than others; approachability was the most prominent theme, followed by authority, aspiration and character. Authenticity was a less prominent theme and intelligence was the least common one out of the six. Moreover, between the interviews the emphasis between the themes varied; as an example, one interviewee focused more on character and aspiration, another focused more on authenticity and intelligence.

4.1. Authority

> "When she enters the meeting room where everybody's chatting, she immediately owns the room and everyone turns around and listens to her. She doesn't have to say anything like 'please quiet down', she's just very calm and assumes that it is obvious that everyone stops talking then and pays attention." (Interviewee 6)

Authority is commonly associated with leadership. It represents a traditional leader image of a strong and dominant leader, perceived as being convincing and in control. Authority is a typical prominent feature in military leaders, as it is essential for controlling large groups of people. The interviewees of the research emphasized such authoritative traits as confidence, clarity, calmness and being firm. A lot of the communication within this theme is non-verbal, such as firm eye contact and relaxed posture.

> "Sometimes he does his CEO thing, talks with a serious face like 'now we've got to do this like this because of this, and definitely not like you suggested'.

And he's just so confident and so… expert-like, like he knows his stuff. He can present it in a very convincing way. It sounds very sensible because he presents it so confidently. Maybe why he seems so confident is that he just looks you in the eyes, talks calmly and presents the facts naturally and fluently, without having to think about them. As if he is an expert on the subject so he can just say them just like that. He consciously takes a more masculine voice when needed, to calm the situation down for example. He paces his speech so that it's easy to follow his line of thought. He switches his tone a lot, depending on what he's saying. He also has a clear structure and argumentation and he explains the reasons behind things." (Interviewee 6)

Clarity in communication was one of the most common individual themes in the interviews. One interviewee described such communication style as "being able to present things in a simple common sense way, like there is nothing scientific about it". It seems natural that clarity is one of the fundamental communicative tools of charismatic leaders, because in order to influence their subordinates, they first have to make clear what they are saying. The interviews revealed some ways to enhance the clarity of the message, including fluency in speech, speaking loudly enough, being concise, structuring speech and using concrete examples.

"I have noticed that if the speech is difficult to hear or understand due to a thick accent for example, it somehow distracts the listening. Another thing is that you have to use concrete examples. Those things are very important for me as a listener." (Interviewee 9)

Calmness was also a very common feature in the leaders that the interviewees perceived as charismatic. It was communicated through things like relaxed posture and laid-back attitude, i.e. not stressing too much about little things. However, this kind of lack of stress shouldn't be seen as an isolated feature, because then it could be associated with laziness. Rather, it should be seen as linked to optimistic and positive attitude that will be covered in the later themes. When talking about non-verbal communication, calmness is also close kin to confidence, because the ways they are conveyed have a lot of similarities. One interviewee illuminated this quite nicely by describing his leader as "very relaxed, because his self-confidence is on a good level".

"I think that in talented people there is this certain calmness, when they know that they are good at something. On the other hand, people who haven't found the thing they are good at can be a bit anxious, insecure and reserved. But if you are talented and, say, really charismatic, you have that certain calmness and assertiveness. You speak clearly and everything you say makes people go like 'oh my god, I totally agree'." (Interviewee 10)

Additional ways to display confidence non-verbally included speaking in a non-hesitant voice tone, keeping a good posture and taking up a prominent spot in the room. Many interviewees found it easier to describe bad examples of such non-verbal communication, rather than good ones. One interviewee found it distracting when her manager just sat in the corner with her laptop during meetings, because it displayed lack of leadership. Another interviewee commented on his otherwise charismatic leader's weak posture by saying that "it didn't look that masculine or impactful".

Keeping the eye contact was generally considered a positive thing among interviewees, as it engages in the interaction and shows that the person is listening. However, a couple of interviewees found too intensive eye contact slightly uncomfortable. One interviewee also pointed out that if the other person is not looking straight at you, it might just be that he is concentrating on what you are saying very intensely, and doesn't want any distractions that the eye contact could potentially cause. Perceptions about this are naturally bound to the culture as well; deep eye contact in communication is slightly less common in Finland than in most other countries. Nevertheless, some interviewees found it rude when a supervisor was e.g. working with a laptop while listening to them.

As an interesting side note to body language and confidence, one interviewee mentioned that when she first met her boss, she didn't even notice how physically small her boss was, because of her presence and confidence.

Being firm is definitely one of the qualities of a traditional leader, who is decisive and in control. It is also seemingly in slight contradiction to some of the softer qualities of a modern leader that came up in the interviews, such as being flexible and willing to negotiate. However, it could be argued that a good leader applies these tools situationally, using

judgment as to what approach is the most suitable. Indeed, several interviewees appreciated leaders who took a firm hand in a situation when there was a minor crisis or an atmosphere of undecidedness.

> "If something is not right, not enough sales for example, then his delivery is a bit more assertive and he's like 'now we have to take care of this, this can't go on'. And that's good; he handles that in a civilized manner, but still in a way that everyone understands the gravity of the situation." (Interviewee 3)

It should be noted that a couple of the interviewees saw firmness as a critical part of a charismatic communication style. In some cases the interviewees simultaneously appreciated the polite and cooperative style of their leader, but at the same time saw the lack of strictness and determination as prohibiting charismatic leadership.

> "He is an excellent supervisor, good listener and great at facilitating projects and creating team spirit, but he lacks the determination and will-power to be considered truly charismatic. He is not a strong, determined leader." (Interviewee 8)

4.2. Approachability

> "He creates his influence through being such that appeals to people. He has good people skills. He's the kind of a guy that everybody likes. Not because he pleases everybody but because he's very… it feels good to be around him. When you get to his presence you feel good." (Interviewee 1)

Approachability was perhaps the most prominent theme in the study. Each interviewee linked approachability to charisma, and in several occasions it was the most important theme. When talking about charismatic leadership, approachability is basically about the leader-follower relationship where the follower identifies himself with the leader. It is an important part of charisma, and is all about one-on-one interaction; it brings the leader and the follower closer to each other, while building trust and connection. The interviews showed that approachability as a part of charismatic communication style was mostly conveyed via being

informal, positive, open, talkative and a good listener, as well as showing interest and appreciation for subordinates.

Informality was commonly mentioned in the communication style of the charismatically perceived leaders. It means that the interviewees deemed the charismatic leaders to treat them as their equals, and basically communicating on the same level with them, without implications of hierarchy and formality. Lack of arrogance was also mentioned. Moreover, a few interviewees said that expert organizations are often quite flat, and a more formal communication style where hierarchy is present could be a bit alienating in such workplaces. It should be mentioned, however, that several interviewees saw that their leaders could also be a bit more formal when the situation required it (e.g. in official meetings with clients).

Many leaders who were perceived as charismatic engaged their subordinates with small talk and showed interest in them. Leadership style that was fact-driven and focusing on matters was on some occasions seen as a demonstration of poor people management skills. However, the other extreme was equally frustrating; one interviewee mentioned that he preferred a more direct style of communication, because with some people "it took almost half an hour before actually getting to the point". Nevertheless, generally the interviewees appreciated talkative leaders and said it felt good when they were being treated as people, not just as a source of labor.

> "She's easy-going, easy to approach. She's quite talkative, asks people questions like 'how was your weekend' and so on. She shows interest and remembers stuff about her subordinates. She also tries to create team spirit, like for example she got people to get a communal gift for my colleague's baby." (Interviewee 6)

The charismatic leaders also displayed a lot of positive emotions, e.g. by smiling and laughing. Moreover, negative emotions were rarely showed; almost none of the charismatic leaders ever got aggressive or angry with their subordinates. Rather, when something was wrong, they explained clearly that it was not acceptable. Similarly, several of the leaders who were considered as uncharismatic got aggressive occasionally.

Good listening skills were perceived as a crucial communicative factor for leaders. They were brought up by 8 out of 10 interviewees. Communication was perceived as more personal

when the leader listened carefully, and the interviewees appreciated when the leaders cared for their opinions and listened to their problems.

> "He is very present and listens very carefully and is humble about what the other person is saying. A good leader really listens and thinks about what you have said, and doesn't just dominate interactions." (Interviewee 10)

There were also some examples of poor listening skills; the interviewees deemed that as distancing and demoralizing, because to them it seemed that their opinions didn't matter to the leader and that things didn't change. Moreover, many leaders only listened superficially, not really reflecting or giving weight to the subordinates' words.

> "His delivery is not fitting for an expert organization… people management is his weakness. His basic communication is quite poor, as well as flexibility and arbitration skills. I can't communicate with him and discuss things with him, everything is always given from his side and he dominates procedures. Things are always done his way. He does listen to subordinates seemingly, but the decision is always made before and it doesn't change." (Interviewee 3)

Good listening skills are related to the next sub-theme: showing appreciation for subordinates. Interviewees mentioned that the leaders who did so made them feel valued and they were pleased when leaders recognized their skills. Moreover, it showed that the leader was not petty or afraid of other people's talents. One interviewee even found this to be the defining factor of his leader's charisma:

> "I think it's because he's interested in you. He marks what you are like and he talks good about you in the sense that he recognizes you as a kind of a person that you are, with the kind of competencies, abilities, and character that you have, and recognizes... when he talks about you, there's *no doubt* that there's value in you." (Interviewee 1)

On a more fundamental level, it was important for the interviewees that their leaders seemed to respect them and treated them without contempt, as the following quote demonstrates:

> "If the manager goes like 'you guys aren't smart enough to understand this, but I'm going to explain it to you anyway'… When something is brought up with this kind of attitude, my ears just shut down. I lose interest." (Interviewee 9)

Three interviewees mentioned a feeling of similarity when talking about their charismatic leaders. The perceived connection with the leader was strengthened by shared interests and commonalities. Interviewees who felt this way mentioned that the conversations with the leader felt natural and enjoyable, e.g. due to common topics. For one interviewee this was the most crucial defining factor about the perceived charisma of the leader. This is a clear sign of identifying with the leader, which is said to be essential for leader-follower relationship (as mentioned in the literature review).

4.3. Character

> "Is she charismatic? I wouldn't go that far. I would say that I have strong admiration for her capabilities. But to me charismatic would require more distinctive character… she's quite normal." (Interviewee 1)

When talking about charismatic communication style from academic perspective, this theme is a bit less typical than the previous two. However, in this research it was deemed as very important. Character is defined in this context as conveying personality, and communicating in an interesting, memorable and captivating fashion. This includes humor, stories and non-verbal tools such as varying voice tone and lively gestures.

Interviewees reported quite consistently that their charismatic leaders used humor in interactions. Many types of humor were mentioned, including situational jokes, fooling around, making fun of oneself, sarcasm, double-minded humor, imitations and playfulness. In a way, this sub-theme is very connected to the informality of the charismatic leaders that was mentioned in the previous theme.

Many of the leaders who were perceived as charismatic told stories, e.g. about their families or own experiences. Sometimes they were humorous and sometimes there was an important point behind them.

Lively body language was also mentioned on several occasions. Using a lot of gestures is a good example of animated body language. This communication style is not very common in Finland, as there is a cultural tendency to be a bit more static when talking. Nevertheless, the vivid body language was seen positively among interviewees. Many thought that it made the communication more engaging.

> "He was very animated, but in a good way. You really listened to him when he started to speak, because you wanted to see the show and also understand what he was saying." (Interviewee 5)

Voice can be used in many ways to enhance the effect of the message. Interviewees mentioned variable and lively voice tone as an example of this. Many of the charismatic leaders actively changed the pitch, tone, tempo and volume of their voice, as well as adding emphasis on certain words and using pauses in speech.

> "He used lots of different pitches of voice and changed the tone, exactly at the right moment. He spoke louder when he had to, putting emphasis on certain words, for example. If there's a flat tone, the message is very hard to believe when it comes without any emotion or 'punching'. When you also focus on *how* you get the message across, it makes it so much more impactful and engaging." (Interviewee 5)

Within this theme, sensitivity to the situation was seen as crucial. It is important to know when it is appropriate to use humor and when it is not. In a similar vein, it is important to know when to raise the volume of the voice and when to take a dramatic pause in speech, for example.

> "The best kind of charisma in my opinion is one where you have that toolbox where you can use all kinds of gestures, voice and stuff, but then in the right situation you take the right amount of them." (Interviewee 5)

4.4. Aspiration

> "He was like this crazy visionaire, excited about everything, a true people leader. It's fun to watch someone like that because he's genuinely excited about what he does and wants to succeed. Even if in practice his solutions were not always the best. But he was ambitious and had goals, like 'hey, we could achieve that, and now we are doing it like this'. He was always talking about his plans, and he had an excited and positive attitude." (Interviewee 10)

This theme has two dimensions. First of all, it includes communicating an appealing vision; perhaps a common goal that the leader and the subordinates can all strive for. Secondly, it includes being enthusiastic and optimistic about reaching that goal.

Most interviewees considered their charismatic leaders to be visionary, and for three interviewees this seemed to be the most important single factor that made the leader charismatic in their eyes. These leaders basically promoted positive change, or as one interviewee elegantly put it, "painting a picture of a better future". The appealing visions were communicated clearly and concretely. Even more importantly, they were delivered with passion; it seemed that the leaders truly believed in what they were promoting.

> "His vision was a key part of his charisma. He would tell these stories and paint these pictures, like 'take a seat'. Then he would draw and describe situations in the future and his ambitions concretely, what we could achieve. That's the best way to engage, when you understand the bigger picture and why you are doing it. It may be something daunting at first, but then you can have a better outcome in the future and it could lead to something even bigger… There are so many tasks and jobs where you're really not sure if it's going to mean anything to anyone, but you still do it. And that can be very demoralizing." (Interviewee 5)

The visions were described by one interviewee as "an end result that would bring good to everybody". Many leaders communicated them both formally (e.g. in meetings) and informally (e.g. coffee breaks). Moreover, they were ambitious and sometimes groundbreaking, shaking the status quo:

"He is charismatic because he represents new leadership type in governmental organizations... it's more leadership than management. He argues a lot about things we have done differently and what we could change. There are no limits in his thoughts, everything can be changed. Before him everyone thought that old ways were the best." (Interviewee 2)

Majority of the charismatic leaders were described as enthusiastic. One interviewee perceived the enthusiasm to be the root of his leader's charisma. Enthusiasm basically includes high energy level and getting excited about things. The enthusiasm of the charismatic leaders was seen as contagious by the interviewees, and it helped to get them on board with the leader's vision. Thus, enthusiasm can be seen as a supporting communicative feature for being visionary.

"When he had to motivate and inspire he had a great toolkit for that. He really lived every moment alongside the other person; he listened very carefully and really inspired you and was shaking you a bit and was like 'hey, hey, think about it'. Good energy level and very present." (Interviewee 5)

When communicating the high aspirations to subordinates, optimism is also important. Interviewees reported that the charismatic leaders displayed a constructive and encouraging approach to problems. They focused on finding solutions and were optimistic about it, and didn't get stuck on details.

"The inspiring thing was his laid back attitude about *everything*. I stress about things, but he was the opposite. He believed in finding a solution to whatever situation." (Interviewee 1)

The main idea behind this whole theme is that subordinates need to see the passion in their leaders in order to fully identify with the common goals of the organization. It is about leaders spreading their visions and excitement among staff, so that they in turn engage with their work full-heartedly. The next quote illuminates this point quite vividly, by describing a scenario where that spark is missing:

"If certain members of the management really got excited about all this… there are a lot of people who have worked here for 20 years and have seen the ups and downs… it numbs them a bit. Then again, you can't be a kid, full of energy for everything, right? But something in between, that we had that hunger… driven by management, like management coming in really excited, like: (claps his hands) 'Guys, now we're starting this and doing this. Who's in and who's not?' That's something that we would need." (Interviewee 5)

4.5. Integrity

"I like it when a person feels genuine to me... That he doesn't keep his true self separate from his work. For me charismatic person is someone who is being himself." (Interviewee 8)

While being one of the minor themes in the study, integrity was still too relevant to ignore when discussing the findings of the research. Integrity is seen here as being honest, sincere, straightforward and consistent in communication. It is also about being genuine, natural and "being yourself". Admittedly, there are similarities between this theme and the first one, authority. Clarity, self-confidence and firmness (features mentioned under Authority) are all close kin to the features mentioned above.

Interviewees seemed to respect honesty a great deal in their leaders, and it was also connected to charisma. Interviewees appreciated when leaders were not trying to hide things from them or make situations seem prettier than they actually were. Moreover, two-facedness was really frowned upon, e.g. when a leader told something and did something else, or if the content of the message changed according to whom it was told.

"He's a very straightforward and honest guy. He doesn't go behind words, rather he explains very clearly what the situation is, and why we are going to that direction. That's his strength, that he's very honest with things. He doesn't speak like politicians, like for example being very careful what can be used against him." (Interviewee 2)

Genuineness was also deemed as important. Charismatic leaders were performing and communicating in a way that seemed natural, like they were just being themselves. It didn't look practiced; rather, there was a natural flow and ease in their communication style. One interviewee talked about this topic quite a bit, and broke it down to consistency in the leader's thoughts, words and body language:

> "I follow people's body language quite a lot, because it reveals if a person's words are in synch with his thoughts. For example if a person is completely stiff, or especially if his body language contradicts his words, that's an instant no-no. Like if someone is emphasizing how important something is, but at the same time his gestures suggest that he doesn't quite believe in it himself, or even that he's lying." (Interviewee 8)

Consistency was an interesting sub-theme, because although it was fairly prominent in the study, adaptability was also mentioned a few times. It seems that the charismatic leaders were consistent in the sense that their messages or priorities did not change whimsically, but adaptable in a way that they were still flexible and listened to their subordinates, and were not too stubborn.

> "Only time I was disappointed in him was perhaps when his opinion changed suddenly. First he was very excited about something and he would use his toolkit (of charisma) that he had to get everybody onboard with that and get the energy up. But then on the next day the priorities could have changed, maybe told to him by someone else or he changed his mind, and then he would be equally energized by something else and made us forget about that previous thing. But then again that's life and priorities change. But still, he could have explained those decisions better." (Interviewee 5)

Within this theme it seemed that it was easier for some interviewees to describe cautionary examples, i.e. leaders who did *not* seem genuine. A lot of these perceptions were connected to communicative features that were discussed in other themes, such as relaxedness, engagement with audience and displaying positive emotions.

> "His speeches aren't very convincing or sincere… He is seemingly trying to motivate staff, put on an act, but the speeches seem practiced. His presentation style is confident, but not natural. He's focusing on matters and the content, not the audience. He doesn't seem relaxed, maybe slightly nervous. His voice is monotonous, not warm. Overall he's a bit serious and seems slightly distant." (Interviewee 4)

4.6. Intelligence

> "He is an *undeniably* charismatic person... He is very *convincing* in all of his demeanor, without even trying. I don't know what's behind it… I think the assertiveness in his case comes from being exceptionally intelligent. He's exceptional at perceiving things." (Interviewee 8)

This theme was the most surprising to me personally, as it is not as commonly associated with charismatic leadership and communication style as for example authority and aspiration. Perhaps it is distinctive to expert organizations and knowledge-intensive work. The theme was mostly brought up by the older interviewees and ones who worked in governmental agencies. Intelligence as a term is quite vague, so it is crucial to narrow it down to the context of charismatic communication style. Intelligence was displayed in many ways, such as presenting things from fresh angles, reading situations well, demonstrating critical thinking, having plenty of thoughts and giving the impression that one has thought things through.

Many of the charismatic leaders demonstrated creative and quick thinking, such as the ability to approach things from many angles, combine things in an interesting manner and coming up with new points to stalled discussions. This kind of intelligence shows that the leader can "think outside the box" and seems to fit naturally to the image of a revolutionary leader who can change things for the better.

Couple of interviewees brought up that the convincingness of charismatic leaders sometimes comes from having thought things through. It is an interesting point, because in a way it connects the authoritative and intellectual sides of charismatic communication style in a very clear form; essentially, that reflections and deep thinking can be a source of confidence.

> "I have noticed that everything these charismatic people say seems so pre-meditated… but not like saying it how it is supposed sound like, but rather like they truly believe in what they say. It's hard to explain… but they have an aura of calmness that comes from having thought about these things before."
> (Interviewee 10)

Intelligence was mainly seen as a proof of expertise, which is something that the interviewees valued highly. The charismatic leaders showed good people skills, but on many occasions the interviewees linked their charisma to their intellectual abilities as well. This seems quite logical, as expertise and intelligence are definitely needed in knowledge-intensive work. Therefore to earn the respect of their subordinates, the charismatic leaders in such occupations must demonstrate that they can match the expertise and knowledge of their followers. In a way, this is leading by example.

4.7. Summary of findings

Based on the interviews, charismatic communication style in knowledge intensive organizations consists of six elements: authority, approachability, character, aspiration, integrity and intelligence. Charismatic leadership is thus established via conveying authority and expertise, building trust and bond between the leader and the follower, captivating attention and providing direction.

The table below summarizes the findings of the interviews. Themes are the attributes that were perceived as charismatic by the interviewees, conveyed via charismatic communication style. Features describe the theme in question, and imply the prominent communicative ways that the interviewees were influenced within that theme. Purpose describes the meaning behind the theme, i.e. why it is essential to charismatic communication style.

CHARISMATIC COMMUNICATION STYLE		
Theme	**Features**	**Purpose**
Authority	confidence, calmness, clarity, firmness	Convey leadership
Approachability	informality, positivity, openness, listening, interest, appreciation	Form a bond between leader and follower
Character	humor, stories, lively gestures and voice tone	Captivate followers' attention
Aspiration	vision, enthusiasm, optimism	Provide direction, motivate followers
Integrity	honesty, genuineness, consistency	Establish trust
Intelligence	perception, creative and critical thinking	Convey expertise

Table 1. Charismatic communication style

5 DISCUSSION

In this section the findings of the study are discussed and their implications evaluated. Deemed limitations of the study are also provided. At the end the chapters and the whole process is drawn together and conclusions are made.

5.1. Reflections on the study process

It became clear throughout the empirical phase of the study that pinpointing the source of charismatic communication style can be difficult. Many times when the interviewees tried to explain the perceived charisma or break it down concretely, they ended up with vague answers, such as "it's the overall package", "it's something that you just sense" or "it's in his presence". Therefore it became crucial to go around these obstacles when needed, e.g. by using less direct questions.

A couple of the interviewees pointed out that they don't actively observe people in interactions in the sense of communication style and its details. As one interviewee put it, "When these things are done right, you don't really think about it... it just feels natural." Indeed, many communicational features and tools are hard to detect consciously if one is not focusing specifically on them. As an example, many questions about the leaders' body language were quite difficult for the interviewees to answer. It is possible that since the charismatic leaders are appealing primarily on the followers' emotions (e.g. sense of purpose, belonging, happiness, admiration, amusement), the rational part of the follower's mind is less active during communication. Thus, it would be difficult to describe and analyze the source of charisma afterwards, because of this "mesmerizing" effect that the charismatic leaders can have.

Asking interviewees about both their current leaders and any charismatic leaders they had worked with during their careers proved useful. In some cases the interviewees' descriptions and perceptions about the "uncharismatic" leaders were actually more illuminating than their descriptions about the charismatic ones. One interviewee mentioned that while it was hard to pinpoint exactly what the charismatic leaders did right in interactions, it was obvious what

some of the uncharismatic ones did wrong, as it was more memorable and conspicuous. Sometimes bad examples can teach more than the good ones.

Even if all the other pieces of charisma are in place, one critical thing that is missing can turn the perception of charisma around completely. One of the interviewees illustrated this quite well. His current leader had a lot of generally charismatic qualities in his communication style (e.g. good eye contact, good presence, animated and clear body language and clarity in communication), but because of his poor conciliatory abilities he was actually presented as an example "anti-charismatic leader". In a similar vein, the study implicates that charismatic communication style is not just some single magical thing that leaders do right, but rather a *combination* of many things.

Indeed, charismatic communication style seems to be a delicate balance of many things. For example, balancing authority and approachability is a challenge that many leaders fail. A very concrete example of this is that many interviewees appreciated firmness and flexibility in their leaders, traits that seem to be at odds with each other. Then again, if combined with situational eye (also something that a few interviewees emphasized) the paradox is alleviated.

It seems that emotion is a big part of charismatic communication style. It was perhaps the biggest individual dividing factor between the leaders who were perceived as charismatic and the ones who were not. The charismatic leaders engaged things and people full-heartedly and stirred up emotions in their followers as well. Many of the interviewees' faces lit up and they got excited when they were describing their charismatic leaders, which is a clear sign that the leaders influenced them on an emotional level. This is particularly important, because all of the interviewees were Finnish. In Finnish culture there is a tendency to refrain from showing too many emotions in communication, perhaps even more so in workplaces. However, the results of this study show that the leaders who deviate from this norm are received very positively.

5.2. Comparing theory and findings

Overall the theory and findings supported each other quite well. Balancing authority and warmth was one of the key points in both the theoretical framework and the findings. Indeed,

combining these two elements seems to be essential for charismatic communication style. It signals the followers that the leader is worthy and respectable, but also a likeable person who is genuinely interested in them as people. It is a vital combination of establishing leadership and building a bond that makes it seem more personal.

The demand for leadership can be different in expert work when compared to more traditional hierarchical work. For instance, sometimes experts need less direct guidance on what to do, because they know more about their area of work than their superiors. This can create a need for coordination rather than direct control and orders. Indeed, authority was a bit less prominent in the empirical part of the study than in the theoretical framework. Another unique feature to the knowledge-intensive organizations was the emergence of the last theme, *intelligence*. Although the idea that charismatic leaders are intelligent is not entirely new, it was not prominent in the previous literature about the topic. Then again, intelligence is a very wide concept, and can be linked to many things, such as vision and clear argumentation. Moreover, when talking about *social* intelligence, it is connected to virtually all aspects of charismatic communication style.

Character was a very interesting theme to discover. In the theoretical framework some of its elements were mentioned (e.g. humor), but its role seemed to be bigger in the empirical part. The literature about charisma saw most of the sub-themes within *character* as something that charismatic leaders can do in some occasions, whereas many interviewees seemed to deem them as essential to charisma. Character in this context is basically about being interesting; something that is not commonly considered as essential to leadership. However, it is in line with the traditional view of charisma as something special and unique, because the leaders with character are definitely memorable. As mentioned in the empirical part, one interviewee thought his leader was so captivating that nobody wanted to miss his "show". In this sense, character builds a sort of "star status" around the leader.

Integrity is quite commonly associated with natural leaders. However, while the interviewees found it to be relevant to charisma, it wasn't a very prominent concept in the theoretical framework (although it was mentioned in Antonakis, Fenley & Liechti's (2012) quite comprehensive list of charismatic features). Integrity may be emphasized a bit more in Finnish society, because traditionally Finns are considered to be valuing honesty and genuineness a lot.

Approachability was perhaps the most important theme of the interviews. It is usually defined a bit more narrowly (typically as "friendliness") in the literature, and with less sub-themes. The prominence of this theme can be (at least partly) explained by the flat hierarchies of Finnish expert organizations, and Finnish society in general. Finnish workplaces generally have quite an informal atmosphere, so it seems natural that leaders who are too pompous are not received well. Indeed, virtually all of the leaders who were considered to be charismatic by the interviewees were informal in their communication style. However, informality was only briefly mentioned in the common theories about the topic.

Aspiration is obviously one of the cornerstones of charismatic leadership. Many of the historically famous charismatic leaders are known particularly about this trait. The interviewees of the study considered it important as well; in some cases it was perceived to be at the core of the leader's charisma. However, considering that the ability to inspire and motivate followers is so essential to charismatic leadership, it is actually a bit surprising that this theme wasn't even more fundamental to the interviewees.

5.3. Limitations and ethical concerns

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the research methodology and approach, as well as be aware of the possible presumptions. It is assumed here that individual perceptions about charismatic communication style are worthy of describing in some detail, potentially sheading some light on how employees are influenced in organizations. Opposing point of view would be to not focus on rich explanations and rather emphasize statistical data, or assume that charismatic communication is straightforward and universal, making deep interviews rather futile. Essentially these are ontological and epistemological questions, and I approached the subject as I saw fit. Subjectivity is assumed when looking at the empirical data, i.e. interviews with the subordinates. Therefore hard facts were not sought in this research, although some implications emerged.

Ethical questions have to be considered in all stages of the research process. In writing literature review, plagiarism is an obvious vice to avoid. It is also important to write respectfully about other authors and their work, and be honest about what they have written.

In the empirical stage it is essential to be honest about one's intentions when dealing with organizations and individuals, provide anonymity to the interviewees and make sure that the research doesn't cause anyone any harm within the organizations. (Katila, 2014.) I have kept these guidelines in mind and followed them as well as I can.

A few words about research evaluation are in order, as it should be considered throughout the research process. Some of the most important criteria for academic research are reliability, validity and generalizability. However, since the approach in this research highlights people's own perceptions and acknowledges subjectivity when it comes to epistemology, it is more appropriate to use the criteria of "trustworthiness". Trustworthiness consists of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Coherence, consistency, plausibility and usefulness are among other criteria that can be applied. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008.) These criteria guided the research process from beginning until the end, so they will be discussed briefly here. Trustworthiness is mostly achieved by being honest, thorough and consistent, while gaining familiarity to the subject and paying attention to detail (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). Coherence can be challenging in inductive research, since empirical data drives the process and thus the structure and content are not as clear (at least in the beginning) as with deductive method. The critical stage in achieving the coherence is during the thematic analysis, since that is where the patterns are spotted. The patterns can be seen as the common thread of the research. Usefulness of the thesis is potentially high, as understanding charismatic communication style can contribute to the quality of leadership in organizations, and through it improve productivity, employee well-being, trust and relations in workplaces, among other things.

Although the research question focuses specifically on charismatic communication style, the topic is examined as a part of larger entity: charismatic leadership. I found this umbrella term necessary in the research in order to understand the phenomenon from a correct perspective and frame it in the bigger picture. Thus some readers may find that the scope of the thesis is not narrow enough, and too vague. Moreover, in the empirical section the data is seemingly sorted into personal qualities (e.g. approachability) rather than strictly communication styles. My explanation for this is that through these concepts the themes are easier to grasp, and that the actual data and findings do focus on communication style.

My limited experience in conducting interviews showed. Especially the first interviews were rather clumsy from my part; I was too leading with my questions and at times I was going too quickly, not giving the interviewees enough time to elaborate on their comments. However, I was lucky because despite of my shortcomings, the interviewees still provided deep insights about the topic. Moreover, I improved a bit as an interviewer throughout the process, gaining some idea about which questions were actually fruitful. One can still speculate that with an experienced interviewer the gathered material would have been even richer.

The research objectives required the interviewees to be open and sincere when talking about their managers. It is not certain whether this was achieved with all interviewees, although it seemed like it in most cases. A certain amount of trust is definitely required when one talks about his superiors from work.

Admittedly, some communicative features are rather difficult to fit into the six themes used in this study. As an example, eye contact was discussed under the first theme, *authority*, although it could have just as easily been attached to *approachability*. Same goes for some other sub-themes as well; their categorization was tricky at times and there are some that practically overlap between several themes. Therefore the themes could have been defined differently. One option would have been to divide them into verbal and non-verbal themes, and then create sub-themes within them. However, based on the interviews I noticed that the interviewees did not make such thematic divide; rather, they discussed concepts and feelings that were less about verbal and non-verbal communication and more about communication that reflected attitudes and attributes. Thus, the chosen thematic arrangement seemed justified.

One could also argue that there are a lot of direct quotes from the interviewees in the findings of the research. However, this is intentional. To me, the advantage of conducting face to face interviews (rather than e.g. questionnaires) is the richness and the vividness of the answers. When interviewees open up, they start to ponder about the subject out loud and tell fascinating stories that can be very illuminating to the topic and the very research question. Rather than always try to squeeze their stories into my own colorless summaries, I found that the direct quotes are more interesting to the reader and serve their purpose as unspoiled perceptions and deep reflections of this complex topic that we are trying to understand. Without them some of the nuances and subtle meanings might have been lost in translation and interpretation.

Finally, it should be noted that the findings of the thesis are by no means universal truths about charismatic communication style, or guidelines on how leaders should communicate. There were only ten interviews conducted, so overarching conclusions about the topic are not possible. Moreover, as all of the interviewees were Finnish, the findings are very much bound to the culture.

5.4. Suggestions for future research and conclusions

It seems like the research in charismatic leadership is quite mature. It has been "fashionable" for quite some time now, and it has gone through a typical cycle of a paradigm: ground theories have been formed, refined and questioned. However, research focusing on charismatic communication style is not quite as mature, especially on the qualitative side of research. With an area so rich with discoveries, it feels a bit surprising.

More qualitative research is definitely needed on charismatic communication style, for several reasons. First of all, most of the research about the topic has so far been overly mathematic, trying to rationalize charisma beyond its distinctive nature. As the literature review suggested, human interaction and the relationship between leader and the follower are at the core of charisma; the tools for studying charisma should reflect that. Secondly, charismatic leadership is typically studied on a more general level, not focusing on communication style. This seems negligent, since communication style is undeniably a huge part of charisma, as this quote from an interviewee demonstrates:

> "Even in this type of work that "officially" tries to rely on expertise, the guys who have good communication skills stand out more easily. The good points out don't sell themselves."

Charismatic leadership is a vast topic. It has links to various disciplines, such as history, psychology, sociology, business and management. Moreover, leadership and communication are complex concepts, as they are not exact sciences such as physics. They have many dimensions, and are tightly connected to people's morals, values and identities. This is only one viewpoint to the phenomenon, an effort to try to understand one side of it.

Taylorist managers could argue that charismatic communication style is not essential for organizations and that employees are motivated via more basic methods of "stick and carrot", i.e. direct rewards and punishments. More realistic point of view would be to argue that while the Taylorist approach to people management might still be relevant in some areas of work (e.g. rational factory-type of physical labor), a more complex approach is required in a typical modern job (e.g. service/information-intensive work) in order to gain desired results. This is due to the different sources of motivation and pressures in today's work. Knowledge-intensive work generally requires strong mental engagement to the tasks at hand, as well as ability to solve problems and being creative. People management methods such as direct punishments and monetary rewards have limited effect in this kind of modern work; sometimes the effects can even be adverse on employee output and motivation (Stenius, 2013). Charismatic communication style can be a part of an alternative solution for such modern, knowledge-intensive organizations.

The findings of this thesis provide viewpoints on how subordinates in knowledge-intensive organizations are influenced on an emotional level and what kind of communication style they perceive as charismatic. This can help to understand the phenomenon better, at least on a local level. I do think there is a lot to learn about what the interviewees said; at least my own views about the topic changed quite a bit during the process.

Several interviewees found this topic interesting but difficult, and I agree completely. It is fascinating to study charisma and trying to make sense of it. Especially hearing people's own perceptions about these things has been very rewarding. At the same time, it is challenging to form definitive theories or arrive at comprehensive conclusions about topics that revolve around human interactions. As one interviewee put it, "understanding people is a difficult task".

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