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The Employee Experience in a Healthy High-Performing Workplace

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ABSTRACT

This study examines management and organizational models, specifically the Healthy Organization and High-Performing Workplace (HPW) models. Because a HPW can also be a Healthy Organization, the models are joined to create the Healthy High-Performing Workplace (HHPW) model. The experience of members within a particular organization, known herein as Company X, is examined. The study addresses the questions: *does Company X display HHPW qualities? If Company X does display HHPW qualities, does it always exercise HHPW practices? Finally, what does this mean in terms of the workforce?* Organizational culture theory is used to explain how expectations, norms, behaviours, and values are constructed and transmitted, and how organizational structures influence the environment and the employee experience. Data consists of interviews (n=12) and secondary sources. The findings support that Company X displays HHPW characteristics. However, when project deadlines are near or overdue and profit is at risk, certain HHPW practices are ignored.

INTRODUCTION

Companies like Google have received and continue to receive substantial praise for their unique company culture and workplace design, which is often linked to the organization's high-performance and financial success. Consequently, multiple sources (predominantly media sources) advocate for organizational and management models like the Healthy Organization or High-Performance Workplace (HPW). However, it is important to recognize that these companies are part of an extremely lucrative industry in a post-industrial knowledge-based economy. This means the work is conducive to a particular type of privileged (well-educated) individual. Therefore, seeing that these workplace models, known herein as the Healthy High-Performing Workplace (HHPW), are trendy and that the industry draws a specific type of person, the interest of this study lies in the people. More specifically, this study stems from the question *what does having HHPW qualities mean to the organization's members?* Although the models are known for promoting the interests of the people in order to benefit the organization, this study argues that the interests of the organization (profit) always trump the interest of the people.

As mentioned, two frameworks – the Healthy Organization and High-Performance Workplace (HPW) models – create the HHPW. These two models are combined due to their overarching similarities and due to the fact that a Healthy Organization can also be a HPW. The Healthy Organization model is defined by Cooper and Cartwright (1994:462-463) as

“...an organization characterized by both financial success (i.e. profitability) and a physically and psychologically healthy workforce, which is able to maintain over time a healthy and satisfying work environment and organizational culture particularly through periods of market turbulence and change.”

The model outlines the building blocks necessary to foster a productive and engaged work environment, which include: 1) a vibrant workplace, 2) inspired employees, 3) a positive

culture, and 4) inclusive leadership. In order for these building blocks to materialize, many overlapping tools found within the HPW model are used.

The HPW model is defined as work systems that “are designed to enhance organizational performance by improving employee capability, commitment, and productivity” (Posthuma et al. 2013:1184). In order to design a work environment that supports employee “capability, commitment, and productivity”, specific practices are adopted that relate to the following areas: 1) compensation and benefits, 2) job and work design, 3) training and development, 4) recruiting and selection, 5) employee relations, 6) communication, 7) performance management and appraisal, 8) promotions, and 9) peripheral (i.e. retention and exit management). According to the model, by implementing practices that fall within these nine categories, employees are able to complete their work in a timely manner while feeling a sense of connection to their work and the workplace occurs.

Seeing that a Healthy Organization can be a HPW (Lowe 2010a) and seeing that many overlapping principles exist between the two models, this study combines the models for a comprehensive understanding. The HHPW model shares a similar definition with the Healthy Organization and HPW whereby a focus on sustainable success of the organization and a physical and psychologically healthy workforce are emphasized. This study is less interested, however, in the organization’s “financial success” portion of the model. Instead, it is interested in what the implementation of the model means in terms of the workforce, referring here to the people who work within the organization, and their experience.

Theoretically, the HHPW model is a promising method to structure and manage the workplace, as the approach equally considers organizational interests (i.e. financial success) and employee interests (i.e. good working conditions). These connecting interests are said to influence the organization’s structure and culture. Organizational structure is the formal configuration within the organization between individuals and groups concerning the distribution of tasks, responsibilities, and authority. While an organization’s culture is the method of communication within an organization based on norms, artifacts, and

behaviours. Although agency is an important aspect of the workplace, I am not exploring agency in this study. Structure and culture are used to explore what it is like for (past, present, and prospective) employees to work within an organization that exhibits HHPW qualities because the structure of the workplace shapes the experience of its members as does the culture. This study argues, that in practice, organizational and employee interests cannot consistently be achieved concurrently. In other words, the ability to meet organizational and employee interests unfailingly and simultaneously is impossible. Due to capitalism, profit will always come before employee needs. Therefore, profit (or organizational interests) ultimately trumps employee interests.

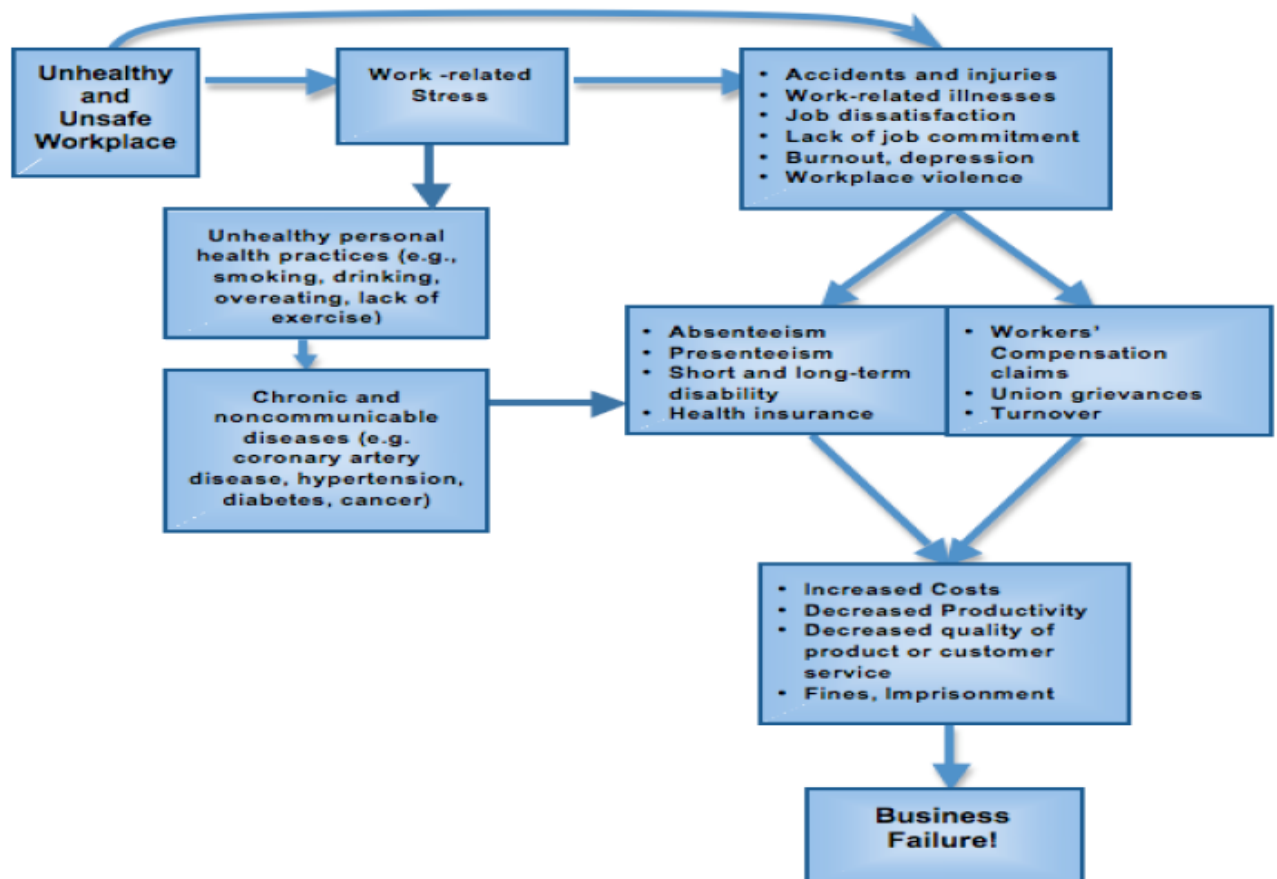
The HHPW model is sociologically relevant for three reasons. The model is relevant because of:

1. The prevalence of work-related health issues including stress, burnout, and work overload in workplaces today. HHPWs address employee health issues as the model is "characterized by a physically and psychologically healthy workforce" (Cooper and Cartwright 1994:462-463),
2. The changes to the North American economy from an industrial to Knowledge-Based Economy (KBE). In the past, mass-production was emphasized but now knowledge, innovation and creativity are emphasized in industries like the high-tech industry. HHPWs support training, development, and innovation.
3. The interests of the workforce and the composition of the workforce are different today from those in the 19th and 20th century (i.e. more women returning to the workforce, more young adults with university level education, etc.; Duxbury 2006)). HHPWs consider the interests of the workforce as demonstrated by the Google example on page 41-44.

The majority of literature on the subject focuses on the "business case" for adopting models like the HPW (Figure 1, page 5). However, this study flips the focus from the "business case" to the "human case" meaning the people involved – the workforce. Therefore, a key area of interest to the research is to explore what it means to work in an environment that displays HHPW characteristics. Recognizing that the wording of the

“human case” may suggest support for the model, it is important to note the support is theoretical in the initial stages of the research process and is critically evaluated throughout the thesis. Moreover, the “human case” here is not advocating for the HHPW model. Rather it refers to the theoretical approach undertaken in the study, shifting the interest in HHPWs from business to sociological implications.

Figure 1: The Business Case in a Nutshell



Source: Burton (2010:6)

A company that adopts HHPW principles (based on a preliminary assessment of the organization), known herein as Company X, is examined. Company X was selected due to the overwhelming praise and attention the company receives from the media for its successes, workplace design, and positive organizational culture. Therefore, Company X is an instrumental case. In order to explore the question *what does having HHPW qualities*

mean to the organization's members? the assumption is made that Company X is a HHPW. To clarify, the term “members” or “employees” is used synonymously throughout the study when referring to Company X.

The study begins by addressing the question *does Company X in fact display HHPW qualities? If Company X demonstrates HHPW characteristics; does it always practice HHPW principles? Finally, if Company X is a HHPW, what does this mean in terms of the Company X workforce.* In other words, who are the people of Company X? Who are they in terms of age, academic background, parental status, gender?

The HHPW model and the link between the Healthy Organization and HPW models (as well as the models themselves) will be discussed in detail in chapter one. However, first the literature on positive organizational scholarship (POS), which reverses the negative angle often adopted in organizational studies (i.e. focusing on absenteeism, alienation, attrition, employee theft, workplace violence, etc.), will be discussed followed by a brief history of work. These sections are included in order to provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of where these new management and organizational models have emerged, as well as how they shape and influence work.

THE TENSION BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The field of positive organizational scholarship (POS) is expanding and greater attention to the field has emerged since its commencement approximately ten years ago. According to Cameron and Spreitzer (2011:1)

“[positive] organizational scholarship focuses attention on the generative dynamics in organizations that lead to the development of human strength, foster resiliency in employees, enable healing and restoration, and cultivate extraordinary individual and organizational performance”.

POS is an umbrella concept that encompasses a multitude of organizational studies (Cameron and Spreitzer 2011). Human resource professionals and workplace health

experts, as well as sociologists, have expressed interest in this domain, although the sociological literature on the topic is sparse. Nonetheless, POS indicates that engaged employees are more productive than *disengaged* or *actively disengaged* employees (Lowe 2010a). The difference between the two being that *disengaged* employees do not vocalize or act out against their work or organization, as do *actively disengaged* employees.

Companies are also increasingly interested in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. This growth in interest is likely attributed to the escalating importance that the public is placing on ethical business practices (and the Canadian public is arguably coming to expect these types of socially responsible practices from companies). According to Lowe (2010a:441), “it is not unrealistic to imagine a future in which boundaries have dissolved between employee wellness, performance, and corporate social responsibility and where these goals are central to every manager’s job”. This suggests that employee wellness, performance, and social responsibility are (or are soon to be) an innate feature of what sociologists call a Healthy Organization. These work related trends are indicative of the increased interest and relevance of studying organizational models especially in relation to work.

North America, in comparison to Japan, Germany and many other European countries, is behind when it comes to the advancement of work systems (Grint 1998). One specific example of how Canada in particular can improve its organizations is by investing in, and encouraging employers to provide, lifelong training and skill development programs. Investing in human capital is critical for productivity, innovation, and economic growth, especially in a knowledge-based global economy (Jackson 2010). Andrew Jackson, former Chief Economist with the Canadian Labour Congress, (2010:57), says “[i]nvestment in worker training, in conjunction with changes in work organization that take full advantage of those higher skills, has been found in numerous Canadian and international studies to have positive, even if hard to quantify, impacts on firm-level productivity and profitability”. This suggests that changes to the work environment (i.e. through investing in employee development) can positively impact a company’s performance (i.e. financially). Although numerous studies support this claim (Arnal and Torres 2001; Betcherman et al. 1998; Lowe

2010b), Canadian companies “underinvest in on-the-job training” nonetheless (Jackson 2010:57). This is because companies are capitalist entities whose goal is to generate and maximize profit. Often companies do not see the long-term benefits in investing in employees even if the benefits reduce costs in the future. Training and development is one feature of a HPW known to increase employee capabilities and commitment to the organization. This increase in capability and commitment is of interest because these tools (and others) contribute to how employees feel about their work and workplace. Despite these findings and the documented and associated benefits, training and development is often ignored or underutilized. Therefore, there is tension between what research proves and what employers do.

The explanation for the tension is widespread. For example, Canadian history plays a role. Jackson (2010) explains that in the 1990s, Canada was suffering from high unemployment rates due partially to a mismatch between skill levels required to perform tasks and industry needs. This void in qualified workers lead to the justification of opening up immigration to Canada, specifically to highly skilled workers. This meant that companies did not need to take on the responsibility of providing necessary training. In addition, due to the associated high cost, many organizations are not prepared to invest in skill development. Many organizations fear that skilled employees whom the company may have invested in will at some point leave the organization. This means that rather than invest in their people – their workforce – many enterprises put the responsibility on the individual to acquire necessary skills or knowledge (Jackson 2010). By placing responsibility on the individual, the connection between workplace and workforce is jeopardized.

In summary, there is a widespread assumption embedded within the Canadian labour market that “[i]t is often easier to pursue a cost-cutting strategy than it is to fundamentally rethink how production is organized” (Jackson 2010:58). “[C]ost-cutting strategies” can consist of cutting training programs or omitting the programs altogether. However, they may also consist of cutting workplace benefits, employees (downsizing), and so on. Although the strategy to cut costs appears as a mathematically sound solution on paper, in actuality it can be more damaging than good. In fact, Lowe (2010b:123) states,

“[t]he irony is that in the longer term, developing human resources inside firms will likely do more to reduce costs and improve efficiency than will the downsizer’s blunt axe”.

Therefore, although spending money on employees (i.e. training and development) may seem counterintuitive in order for a company to increase revenue, the research does suggest that the investment in human capital (meaning employees) is in fact beneficial for an organization long-term and for the employees therein, as life-long learning is supported and employees foster a connection with their work.

The reason tension between research and practice is discussed is to show how history affects change and how reminiscences of history live on. To better understand the tension, a look into influential historical figures and their approach to structuring work is required. Among these influential characters are Adam Smith, Max Weber, Frederick Taylor, and Henry Ford. These individuals, through their involvement with the organization or management of work, have shaped how Canadians perceive work and how work systems are structured. Therefore, they play a paramount role. After a brief history of work and key contributors is discussed, a thorough understanding of the HHPW framework is provided. Social and historical circumstances that explain the emergence and significance of such a model will first be discussed by reviewing the literature. Then new management approaches and related criticisms will be addressed followed by an examination of demographic changes to the workforce and the emergence of the contingent worker. Now that a summary of the chapter is outlined, a look is taken at influential figures that shaped today’s Canadian workforce and work systems.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WORK

A pivotal contributor to the field of economics was Adam Smith. Smith’s approach to work, which was developed in the 18th century, was concerned with efficiency. According to Richard Sennett (2006: 28),

“The Smithian model explored how a complex task had to be broken up into parts...The measure of efficiency crudely lay in how much of a thing could be

produced quickly...– could you more quickly than your competitor produce lots of things other people wanted to buy?”

Each task played a role in the manufacturing process and rewards and punishment were used to insure order. Smith’s work on efficiency would later influence other key figures.

In the 19th century, the organization and management of work entailed bureaucratic hierarchy, which accompanied capitalist industrialization (Krahn and Lowe 2002; Sennett 2006). During this time, bureaucratic organizations structured around an increase in formality, rules, and regulations within the workplace and these formalities were normalized. Max Weber, the popular German sociologist and political economist, wrote about capitalism and bureaucracy. Weber analyzed the “militarization of civil society” explaining that corporations were structured like armies in the sense that individuals were assigned specific roles or tasks, which were undertaken in a defined space (Sennett 2006:20). Weberian thinking is rooted in competition and survival of the organization. In this model, the office structure, similar to the military, is shaped like a pyramid whereby there are few people in ‘command’ or at the top, and the majority of workers or ‘soldiers’ are on the ‘front-line’. According to Weber, people who are committed to a lifelong career within this type of militarized bureaucratic organizational structure live in an “iron cage”. These workers are constrained to the structural design of the institution rather than living life by their own design. Weber’s analysis of capitalist society would later influence other theorists and capitalists like Taylor (theorist) and Ford (capitalist).

However, the bureaucratic system was not always the sole organizational model practiced. In the pre-industrialization era when mass-production was nonexistent, craftwork was a commonly known concept and mode of production. Rather than workers performing a specific routine task (as done in an assembly line), “*Craft work* was the degree to which one individual was involved in all aspects of the creation of some product” (Krahn and Lowe 2002:21). Sennett (2009:8-9) refers to craftsmanship as “the skill of doing things well...Craftsmanship names an enduring, basic human impulse, the desire to do a job well for its own sake”. These authors mention several important points. Firstly, a craftsman sees

the creation through to completion. Secondly, a craftsman is committed to producing a high-quality product that requires skill to create. And finally, a craftsman also gains a sense of personal satisfaction and is thus intrinsically motivated. In other words, craftwork is about more than the creation of the craft itself. A great deal of pride and knowledge derives from creating a craft that consequently impacts how craftsmen perceive themselves. This desire to do things ‘well’ and with ‘pride’, according to Sennett (2009), is present within all humans allowing virtually anyone to become a skilled craftsman. For these reasons, craftwork is often “idealized” as the ultimate, most desirable, form of work (Krahn and Lowe 2002; Sennett 2009). It is idealized because a bond is formed between the worker and the work. In a sense, a reciprocal relationship derives – the worker receives personal gratification, growth, knowledge, and pride from the creative process and the creation is manipulated into existence.

Interestingly, this approach to conducting work and the relationship that is fostered between the craftsman and the craft – or more commonly referred to today as the ‘employee’ and the ‘work’ – is reemerging as a tool to promote workplace productivity. By reconnecting tasks that were divided and specialized during the Industrial Age and providing greater involvement, responsibility, and learning opportunities to the worker (as was the case with the traditional craftsman), a greater connection to work derives. This leads to theoretical gains in productivity and employee commitment. Here, the connection between new workplace theories like the Healthy Organization and HPW models, and the traditional craftsman overlap. Evidently, the structure of *work*, meaning its management and organizational framework, has changed over time and place. This is noticeable when comparing work practices used pre, during, and post industrialization. Through this exploration into the history of work, it is evident that some work environments are reverting, in a sense, to the day of the craftsman where greater autonomy, skill, and involvement in projects are central features. Here juxtaposition with the bureaucratic organizational methods of the industrial period that breed order, precision, speed, efficiency, supervision, control, and regulation appear. Key features from the industrial period remain as central features in many work models such as speed and efficiency.

However, functional features from the *craftsman* era as well as the Industrial age unite to create what is often referred to as a 'new management approach'. An approach whereby the fundamental needs and motivational tools for workers are (theoretically) considered and incorporated into the work system. These motivational tools are now known to extend far beyond money, as Taylor once believed.

Frederick Taylor, an engineer and "efficiency expert" in the 1880s, built his success using the 'scientific' management philosophy, which is heavily focused on cost reduction strategies (Thompson 2003). For industrial growth to transpire, technology and organizational efficiency are key concepts. According to scientific management (Thompson 2003), strict managerial control, a narrow range of tasks, as well as clear and specific procedures are the primary strategies used to boost productivity. When Taylor's management beliefs – such as the one that money is the sole motivator of people – joined "the mass-production assembly line technology pioneered by Henry Ford, a work system was created that defined human progress in terms of rising output, efficiency, and profits" (Lowe 2010b:124). This definition of "human progress" is hard to eradicate. In fact, Lowe (2010b:124) states that

"[d]espite the growing expertise of human-resource professionals in countering the most dehumanizing and alienating effects of this work system, it has been difficult to break free of the principles set down by Taylor and Ford...the idea that workers are the key to achieving all business goals remains a very hard sell".

The reason why Ford and Taylor are mentioned is to uncover how the notion of work has been approached traditionally focusing heavily on 'the bottom line' – money – rather than the people – the workforce. Moreover, this quote relates to the earlier discussion pertaining to the tension between what research proves and what managers do. Now that key figures in the development of work theories and practices have been discussed along with their influence, new management approaches are considered. This is done in order for

the reader to comprehend the links and distinction between how work environments are intentionally created and managed today versus in the past.

NEW MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

The traditional bureaucratic and industrial management methods practiced prior to the emergence of the ‘new management approaches’ are deemed inefficient and lacking. Managerial theorists, Frederick Herzberg and Douglas McGregor, believe traditional managerial methods “undermine workers’ efforts to derive a sense of creativity and fulfillment at work” (Finlay et al. 2009: 301). At a time when creativity and innovation are a proven critical component to knowledge-based jobs (Coote and Hogan 2014; Pupo and Thomas 2010), managerial methods that inhibit creativity are inappropriate. Traditional approaches to organizational management also limit the achievement of organizational goals and success (Applebaum and Batt 1993). Noting the effects of the rigid and highly specialized managerial systems and recognizing the changing times and beliefs regarding best management and organizational practices is important. The following section briefly outlines some of the management approaches post industrialization, which include: participative management, lean production, team production, and HPWSs.

New management approaches have surfaced over the past thirty years, many of which share overlapping principles. Common overarching principles include “some potential for skill upgrading, increasing workers participation in decision making, and reducing bureaucracy” (Krahn and Lowe 2002:309). Among these new management methods are “*participative management* and employee empowerment” (Krahn and Lowe 2002:308). According to Finlay, Vallas, and Wharton (2009:301), the reason for the change towards a participative managerial approach is multifaceted, however contributing factors include:

“...the growth of sharp international competition (most notably from Japan), the demands of new technologies, and the growing sense that more

participative and flexible forms of work organizations were needed if firms were to respond quickly and effectively to rapidly changing consumer tastes”.

For these reasons, the United States and Canada began to research, and adopt, international managerial methods and new ways to organize and think about work. The Japanese model of management, which includes quality circles and employee participation, was noted (Applebaum and Batt 1993).

Another key feature used in the Japanese system includes lean production. Lean production eliminates unproductive positions (or ‘layers’) within an organization, which often consists of management employed to oversee production and quality. In order for the ‘thinning-out’ of the work structure to be effective, responsibility (i.e. for quality) and commitment is placed on the front-line workers, and is thus essential. “The idea is that by winning full commitment to the firm, companies and other organizations can more fully take advantage of the knowledge and expertise that only the front-line employees typically command” state Finlay et al. (2009:303). The expertise of these workers is used to improve production and the work environment, as employees are directly involved and feel more engaged in the work they do. Theoretically, lean production appears as a practical solution to the organization of work. However, in actuality this model was harmful to workers as it subsequently created grounds to hire contingent workers meaning contracted workers without job security.

According to Applebaum and Batt (1993), research and experimentation on the Japanese lean production system led to the development of the American version of lean production. This American version is one of two distinct models within the High-Performance Work System (HPWS). The second model is the American version of team production. These models share numerous similarities “because they rely on similar applications of information technology and similar quality tools and techniques to improve performance” (Applebaum and Batt 1993:16). Where the models differ is in the degree to which front-line workers are attributed responsibility to constantly improve the production process and participate in the decision-making process at all levels (Applebaum and Batt

1993).

In summary, the belief shared by many management theorists and employers is that in order to compete on a global scale and to meet the demands set forth by the economy, companies need employees who are fully committed to the mission of the organization. When a strong sense of employee involvement, engagement, and connection to the work and organization is fostered, high levels of commitment are established and subsequently high levels of performance result – all of which are principles shared by the HPW and Healthy Organization models (as will be discussed in detail in chapter one). In theory, these new management approaches appear effective. However, critics of these approaches must also be considered.

CRITICISMS OF THE NEW MANAGEMENT APPROACHES

Although many researchers advocate for the new management practices, critics claim there is little research focusing specifically on why these practices and increased performance are positively associated (Finlay et al. 2009). In other words, what exactly motivates high-commitment and high-performance is unclear. Is it the fear of losing one's job, the pressure to perform, or some other perhaps more positive incentive(s) such as the craft of creating? Another area of concern arises when attempting to pinpoint precisely which work practices to incorporate or to "bundle" into a work system. Bundling is an issue because there is no set system outlining the tools, practices, and incentives necessary. Practices must fit the organization in question (Delery 1998). In other words, simply because a set of practices works at Company X, there is no guarantee that other companies will benefit from the same "bundle" and benefit in the same way. Furthermore, a local office and head office of a company may require unique bundles as well (Finlay et al. 2009). This is due to different compositions of company culture within each space – each work environment – and different needs. Another criticism revolves around finances. New work practices come at a price and often the (initial) cost is high. Costs may include: "management consulting fees, the salaries of human resource managers and facilitators (needed to introduce and support the new systems), as well as the pay that must go to

support workers during extensive training in team principles” and competitive wages (Finlay et al. 2009:306-307). This costly initial investment may deter companies from adopting a new management approach, despite the potential long-term benefits. Moreover as mentioned (on page 3), spending money on investing in human capital is often counterintuitive to making money. Furthermore, when it comes to measuring the presence of new management approaches difficulties arise in how to calculate the occurrence. No clear-cut method of measurement exists as organizations are continually evolving and growing.

Although the outlined criticisms are valid, general principles and practices to achieve new management approaches including a Healthy Organization and HPWS are known (and will be discussed in greater detail in chapter one). One thing is evident, new management approaches require work. Deep thought into the (desired) values, goals, and culture of each organization and workplace is necessary. Uniquely tailored principles and practices are also needed to achieve outstanding workplaces. This means ‘no one size fits all’ model exists, making the implementation of such a system intricate. If a simple mechanical solution were possible, organizations would quickly and easily divert from traditional tendencies. To summarize, the reality is that organizations today need to adopt abnormal (thoughtful) ways to see abnormal (high-performing) results.

A key reason for new management approaches is the economy. The traditional economy, which Adam Smith defines as production that encompasses land, labour, and capital, is dated. Instead, the knowledge economy – an economy that focuses on ideas and experiences – has emerged and therefore requires consideration in order to understand the shifts in the organization and management of contemporary workplaces.

THE KNOWLEDGE BASED ECONOMY (KBE)

According to Finlay et al. (2009: 292), the fastest growing jobs are those that focus “...less and less on *physical* inputs (such as manual labor or material resources) than on the *intellectual* capacities a given firm, region, or nation can command”. This view embodies the “new, science-based “knowledge economy”” (Finlay et al. 2009:292), meaning many

contemporary work systems are heavily connected to knowledge and subsequently education. For these reasons, education, training, learning, skill development, and so forth are regarded as fundamental tools for a successful career (Pupo and Thomas 2010).

According to Pupo and Thomas (2010), the knowledge economy is marked by three main characteristics. These characteristics include, first off, that education is viewed as an individual endeavor. Secondly, conflict between individually acquired education and the knowledge requirements that correspond to the labour market can clash. This is often due to rapidly growing and evolving labour market demands, as well as a lack of communication between the labour market and academic institutions. A third characteristic of a knowledge economy is inequalities. Unequal access to skill-developing and knowledge-enhancing programs foster social deviations among groups.

An examination of the 'new economy' explains why university enrollment is at an all-time high, with Canada having the highest rate of post-secondary graduates among all the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development* (OECD) countries (Beaujot 2004). In an Information Technology (IT) driven economy, knowledge is a critical asset as innovation is a primary goal spread across all industries. Therefore, this knowledge-based era is in part responsible for the increase in post-secondary education enrollment, as well as formal forms of training in general (post-secondary or not (i.e. Trade school)).

In addition, the emergence of advanced technology and global connectivity has stimulated economic change. These changes have wide spread effects on society, including on the organizational structure of work (Brown and Hesketh 2004). Although acquiring knowledge suitable and satisfactory for the labour market is argued to be an individual's concern (Pupo and Thomas 2010), some organizational theorists argue that once individuals enter the organization a shift in responsibility occurs. According to Mainiero and Sullivan (2006), more and more companies are reorganizing the workplace and taking on responsibility in terms of employee welfare. Responsibility may include skill upgrading through skill development programs, revamped benefit plans (i.e. full health insurance), childcare services, and so forth. The idea behind extensive company perks and benefits, and skill-upgrading programs, according to the popular technology company Google, is to

provide the 'best possible work environment' (Levy 2011). This type of workplace works to reduce distraction all while promoting creativity, innovation, and performance through, for example, communal team-based workspaces. In return, HPW and Healthy Organization theorists suggest that high commitment to the organization and high performance by employees is established.

When it comes to the matter of who is responsible – individuals or companies – for providing the necessary skills to perform work, for example, there are conflicting arguments (i.e. Mainiero and Sullivan 2006; Pupo and Thomas 2010). Responsibility, therefore, may vary between parties depending on its nature (i.e. healthcare, childcare, skill upgrading, etc.). Regardless, the mere fact that some employers now take on 'above-average' responsibilities (meaning provide benefits that go beyond requirements outlined in labour law), like in the case of Google (which will be outlined in detail in chapter one) social repercussions ensue.

Finlay et al. (2009) describe changes in the division of labour stating "if the occupational structure does give rise to an expanding stratum of "knowledge" workers, it also generates enduring and often growing levels of demand for workers whose jobs are completely different than prestigious professional work" (Finlay et al. 2009:293). Evidentially, "knowledge" work is described in a more favourable manner ("prestigious professional work") than other ("different") jobs. The authors are insinuating that the "different" jobs play a 'supporting staff-like' role to the "professionals" creating a hierarchical divide. In addition, the term – "professionals" – is associated with power, intelligence and high quality, and therefore exasperates the labour market divide. In fact, Florida (2002) speaks of the "the rise of the creative class" claiming that "knowledge workers" who are workers such as designers and scientists – in other words those with analytic and creative skills – will flourish within the KBE. This information is important to the study as it speaks to the type of person typically hired for knowledge-based roles – the type being well-educated and creative people.

'Subordinate' groups may also be found within a given workplace. Krahn et al. (2011:281) "draw a fixed battle-line between management on one side and subordinate

employees on the other” stating this “would be to caricature the often subtle and complex give-and-take processes at work”. Krahn et al. (2011:281) use the example of the “night janitor” and the “president” of a company to demonstrate social hierarchy at work. However, Healthy Organizations and HPWs are known for flattening the traditional (pyramid-resembling) hierarchical business model seen in the industrial age. The flattening of the structure means providing greater say to employees, which includes all levels of employees in the decision making process. This raises the question - how ‘flat’ is ‘flat’? Surely, HPWs and Healthy Organizations have a ranking system to some extent (i.e. Founder versus Assistant). Therefore, perhaps some degree of hierarchy within the workplace is necessary. Understanding the role hierarchy plays within the workplace – particularly a HHPW – is critical to this study and must be considered throughout the research process. This is because a flattened hierarchy is a key feature of a HHPW and therefore must be considered at Company X.

As discussed, hierarchical divisions are present both within and across the labour market. Different types of class division and social status segmentation within the nature of work exist and this is said to contribute “further to the polarization of the labour market” (Krahn and Lowe, 2002:262). HPWs and Healthy Organizations may contribute to greater market segmentation by empowering HP workers (within the workplace and within their life outside of work), by providing competitive wages, as well as by providing benefits that are not attributed a financial value yet hold value. Contrastingly, employees outside of HHPW may fall within the lower ranks of the labour market polarization in part due to receiving fewer employer-provided benefits.

Considering the economy and the influence the KBE has on contemporary work, the workplace, and the workforce provides some background on the changing nature of work. It also demonstrates sociological relevance for the study. In order to explore these changes further, deviations to the demographics of the workforce are now considered in an effort to better understand who is affected and affecting change to how work is conducted, perceived, and organized. An exploration into the North American workforce of today provides context when considering the people who work at Company X. It is important to

mention that 'workforce' is used at different points throughout the study to refer to either the specific workforce (people) at Company X, or to refer to the workforce on a broader scale like in the context of the North American workforce.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF WORK – THE PEOPLE OF WORK

In the 1970s and early 1980s research on work focused predominantly on men in the labour market. These men were viewed as “the “traditional” employees of the industrial age” (Bailyn 2006: xiii). Today, there is an influx of highly educated young adults entering the labour market (as mentioned in the discussion on the KBE), new types of jobs are emerging, and traditional methods of executing work are transforming in order to include new technologies. These changes alter the demographic landscape, design, and practices, as well as peoples' relationship with work. The following section outlines some of the many changes to the nature of *work*, specifically from a workforce perspective. Gender, age, and the contingent worker are discussed.

THE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS - GENDER

The demographics of the workforce have changed since the 1970s, especially when considering gender. Between 1976 and 2009, the number of employed women in Canada increased by 58.3% (Ferrao 2010:5). In addition, since 1976, mothers in the workforce with children under the age of 16 increased by 72.9%, exposing drastic improvements in gender equality (Ferrao 2010). However despite women being more present within the labour market, as well as surpassing men when it comes to the completion of higher levels of education, women continue to be less likely than men to be employed, to be employed in full-time positions, and to be promoted to a management level (Ferrao 2010; Sandberg 2013). These findings come as no surprise considering that gender stereotypes encourage mothers to take on the role as the primary 'caregiver' and men to be the 'breadwinner' (Rose and Hartmann 2004; Sandberg 2013). Although gender equality in the labour market has increased, in the sense that more women (and mothers) are now working, discrepancies remain. This is evident when considering pay discrepancies between genders

– known as the “gender wage gap” – as well as the number of women working in leadership roles.

Women in management roles are under-represented in North America. In 2013, only 13.6% of all Fortune 500 Companies had a woman in an Executive Officer role and this percentage has hovered consistently around fourteen percent for the past ten years (Catalyst 2014). This indicates that little change is occurring. Moreover, on average Canadian women earn \$0.74 to each \$1.00 Canadian a man earns, which equates to a gender wage gap of 26% (Pay Equity Commission 2014). Considering the gap was at 36% in 1987, the statistics suggest that the wage difference is gradually converging.

According to the Pay Equity Commission of Ontario (2014), pay discrepancies are due to a multitude of causes. However, reasons generally include:

- “Women choosing or needing to leave and re-enter the workforce in order to meet family care-giving responsibilities, resulting in a loss of seniority, advancement opportunities and wages,
- Occupational segregation in historically undervalued and low-paying jobs, such as childcare and clerical work,
- Traditionally lower levels of education (although this is becoming less of a factor as more and more women graduate from all levels of education),
- Discrimination in hiring, promotion and compensation practices in the workplace.”

Many new management approaches including the HHPW model are in theory considerate of these gender (and non-gender related) limitations that contribute to workplace discrepancies. Once such a limitation is brought to the attention of such an organization, actions to enhance the work environment should be taken.

The following story by Sheryl Sandberg (2013) exemplifies how a HHPW deals with an internal gender issue. Sandberg is now the Chief Operating Officer (CCO) at Facebook.

However, prior to changing employers, Sandberg was working for Google running the *Online Sales and Operations* groups. During her career at Google, Sandberg got pregnant with her first child. In her book *Lean In*, she recounts having morning sickness the morning of an important meeting and struggling to make the meeting in time. The Google office was located on a multi-building campus and parking was limited recounts Sandberg (2013). Running behind schedule, and having to park at the far end of the parking lot and walk at a slower rate than when not pregnant to the building where the meeting was held did not help Sandberg's case. That evening when Sandberg returned home, she told her husband about her day. Her husband "pointed out that Yahoo, where he worked at the time, had designated parking for expectant mothers at the front of each building" (Sandberg 2013:4). The following day Sandberg marched into Page and Brin's office, the founders of Google, and requested designated parking spots for pregnant women. Brin "agreed immediately, noting that he had never thought about it before" (Sandberg 2013:4). The next day, Sandberg arrived at work to find parking spots reserved for expecting mothers. The reason Sandberg's (2013) story is included is because it exemplifies gender differences in the workplace. Moreover, it exposes how men and women's work-related problems can differ. Other examples of deviations in the workplace based on gender also exist. For example, as mentioned, few women hold executive positions (Barsh and Yee 2011; Sandberg 2013). Sandberg (2013:5) states, "the gap is even worse for women of color, who hold just 4 percent of the top corporate jobs, 3 percent of board seats, and 5 percent of congressional seats" in the United States. These statistics demonstrate the discrepancies between men and women, especially those of colour, in the workforce. Recognizing these differences is important in order for a more balanced distribution to occur and to ensure that all talented professionals feel accepted and equal within the organization – no matter their gender, race, or so forth.

According to Barsh and Yee (2011), a greater representation of women can lead to increased financial outcomes for organizations. A study conducted by "Catalyst found a 26% difference in return on invested capital (ROIC) between the top-quartile companies (with 19-44% women board representation) and bottom quartile companies (with zero woman

directors)” (Barsh and Yee 2011:20). These statistics indicate a comparable difference in performance based on the representation of women in an organization. However, proving significant correlations between gender diversity at top levels of management and corporate performance is difficult due to the extremely small sample size of women within these top executive roles. Nonetheless, a growing body of literature on the topic is slowly emerging. Findings from the limited literature indicate “that many women bring an approach to leadership well suited for the challenges that major organizations face today” (Barsh and Yee 2011). Women leaders appear to possess the necessary qualities for the effective implementation of new management approaches. For example, when a group of business executives was asked what top four leadership attributes they believed were critical for organizational success, the answer was “*intellectual stimulation, inspiration, participatory decision-making and setting expectations/rewards*”, all of which are attributes commonly found in women leaders (Barsh and Yee 2011). According to the study, “...evidence points to the need for systemic, organizational change...Management needs a powerful reason to believe such as the potential competitive and economic advantage from retaining the best talent” (Barsh and Yee 2011).

In conclusion, the demographic change to the representation of women within the workforce has changed and for a multitude of reasons. Women, especially women of colour, remain under-represented within top management roles, despite a greater number of women completing postsecondary education than men. A HHPW is cognizant of these gender issues (or at least open to explore solutions when issues arise) and the (potential) associated effects on a work environment. Next, generational changes will be discussed.

THE CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS: AGE

Linda Duxbury (2006) claims that dealing with generational differences within the workplace requires a new form of workplace management – a management platform that incorporates the needs of employees. This form of workplace design is critical for a multitude of reasons that pertain to Canadian society, as well as many other resembling societies. Duxbury (2006) lays out the societal changes explaining that young people today

are remaining in school longer and specializing. Birth rates are declining in North America and in many other countries, and many young adults are waiting until later in life to start a family. There is a growing senior citizen population, and these elders are retiring later in life. These demographic shifts mean that the landscape of the workforce is inevitably changing. With this change come shifts to the expectations of employees, employers, stakeholders, and consumers. Addressing expectations associated with work allows an organization to evolve synergistically with emerging trends. An organization's ability to change is crucial to the sustainability and financial success of an organization as the

“next several decades will depend on how you [companies] deal with the following issues: Work-life balance and workloads, reward and recognition, performance management, getting and keeping talent, developing and rewarding supportive management, and cultural change”

says Duxbury (2006:31). She goes on to say that “things that attract people to a company (i.e. pay and benefits) are not the same thing that keep them or engage them which are more intangible” (Duxbury 2006: 33). These retention and engagement criteria are what foster a successful organization and an engaged work environment. Moreover, they are critical features within the HPW and Healthy Organization models. More importantly, these criteria demonstrate generational differences in the desired structure of work. From a sociological perspective, generational differences and the influence of age when it comes to work is interesting as it raises questions pertaining to why differences emerge and what the differences mean from a social context. From a business management perspective, this information indicates a need for organizations to remain relevant in terms of workplace desirability in an age with new management models.

In summary, Duxbury's (2006) work provides information on how the management and structure of work can be applied to increase the appeal of a workplace to potential and current employees, based on age and generational differences. Other changes to the landscape of the workforce that extend beyond gender and age relate to the emergence of

contingent workers, which will now be discussed.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE CONTINGENT WORKER

For over three quarters of the twentieth century, labour markets focused on developing internal candidates for higher-level positions, leading to “promoting from within” (Doeringer and Piore 1971; Edwards 1979). Social scientists labeled this method of employee development adopted by firms as “Internal Labor Markets” (ILMs). However, ILMs started to diminish in popularity in the late 1970s due to economic conditions. According to Jeffrey Pfeffer and James Baron (1988), two organizational sociologists, “work formerly conducted within the boundaries and under the administrative control of a single enterprise is parceled out to more specialized organizational entities” (1988:269). In other words, companies began to “outsource” jobs. Instead of hiring people to fulfill needs, organizations started to “lease” services from other companies to fulfill a given function that requires less need for ILM.

Consequently, “temp”, “temporary”, or “contract” workers have also become more prevalent. These workers can either be hired by the firm or by an employment agency with the understanding that the position is for the duration of a particular timeframe or contract. The lean production model mentioned earlier also affected the emergence of contingent workers. Temporary workers “hold a position that is legally and socially distinct from permanent employees, no matter how long the situation endures” (Finlay et al. 2009:296). The distinct standing of “temp” workers contributes to hierarchical divisions within the workplace. These two forms of workers – the outsourced worker and the contractual or “temp” worker – constitute what social scientists summarize as *contingent workers* (Finlay et al. 2009:297). Contingent work is a societal imposition, not a demand from workers. With contingent workers, the stability and reliability that comes with traditional forms of work do not apply (i.e. job security, employee benefits). This leads to questions pertaining to the current quality of employment for this group of workers.

As demonstrated, employment has shifted to include standard (traditional) work (referring to full-time permanent work) and contingent work within which a multitude of

derivatives exist (i.e. contract work, temp work, freelancers, etc.). The existence of permanent and non-permanent employees alongside one another within the workplace can lead to tension within the workplace (Finlay et al. 2009). These tensions emerge due to discrepancies in pay, benefits, and feelings related to job insecurity among other factors (Finlay et al. 2009). Consequently, despite efforts to create a positive, collaborative, and participative company culture, the existence of (potential) tension between non-contingent or standard workers and contingent workers can make this challenging. Therefore, the prevalence and use of contingent workers within the workplace is an important consideration in the implementation and sustainment of new management systems and more specifically of a HHPW.

OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

The following chapter defines and exemplifies the Healthy High-Performing Workplace (HHPW). The concept of a Healthy Organization and a High-Performance Workplace (HPW) are first outlined in order to provide the reader with a comprehensive understanding of the models. In this section, particular attention is placed on the research of Graham Lowe as inspiration for this study and more specifically the HHPW model stems directly from his work. First, the parameters of a Healthy Organization are discussed and then associated with the HPW model leading to the joining of the two models. In Chapter Two, the theoretical framework known as *organizational culture* is explored and its significance to the study is discussed. The theoretical framework is used to address the experience of employees – their expectations, norms, behaviours, and values – at Company X. The literature on Healthy Organizations and HPWs is heavily based on theory. Therefore, although the theoretical framework chapter is shorter than most thesis papers, instrumental theoretical concepts are included throughout the review of the literature. Consequently, the literature review on HHPW serves as an extension of the theoretical framework. All this information comes together in the methodology chapter (Chapter Three). The information provides direction and justification for the research method

undertaken. Then findings from the data are outlined in the Results chapter (chapter four). Finally, a discussion of the results occurs in Chapter Five before the concluding remarks.

CHAPTER ONE: THE HEALTHY HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORKPLACE (HHPW) DEFINED

As mentioned in the introduction, several new management approaches and organizational approaches exist today. The Healthy Organization and High-Performance Workplace (HPW) models are new approaches of particular interest in this study. These models are summarized in Table 1. It is important to acknowledge that organizations that tend to adopt these models are companies in profitable and lucrative industries. Therefore, the company has more disposable finance to support HHPW practices. In the following chapter, the Healthy Organization is defined in detail followed by the HPW in order to expose the similarities and differences between the models. Additionally, the unification of the frameworks is justified.

1.1 THE HEALTHY ORGANIZATION MODEL DEFINED

““A healthy organization” is one that meets its mission and simultaneously enables individuals to learn, grow and develop,” states Dive (2004: 3). Additionally, sociologist Graham Lowe (2010a) explains the Healthy Organization model in detail in his book titled *Creating Healthy Organizations: How Vibrant Workplaces Encourage Employees to Achieve Sustainable Success*. Lowe (2010a) defines a Healthy Organization as a holistic, integrative, and long-term management approach. Within the approach, three common management practices are combined together. They include: 1) workplace health promotion, 2) organizational performance (management), and 3) social responsibility (Lowe 2010a: 276).

Lowe argues “when you make the connections between people, performance, and community more visible, it will be easier to make your organization sustainable into the future” (Lowe 2010a: 276). In other words, by merging these principles sustainability ensues. Lowe (2010a) also states that four *building blocks* exist within the framework. The primary building block is a vibrant workplace. A vibrant workplace is an environment that engages employees. Moreover, a vibrant workplace goes beyond health and safety from a physical, mental and emotional standpoint. A vibrant workplace incorporates: job features; the quality of relationships; the work environment; and the organization’s dedication to improve the employee experience and their performance ability (Lowe 2010a). A vibrant

workplace and engaged employees lead to the second *building block* – inspired employees.

Table 1. Characteristics of HPW and Healthy Organization Models in a Nutshell

Healthy Organization Model	HPW Model	Overlapping Principles
Organizations are seen as “human systems” (Lowe 2010a) Combines: 1. Workplace health promotion, 2. Organizational performance (management), and 3. Social responsibility (Lowe, 2010a)	Designed to enhance employee productivity, capability (i.e. learning and development), and commitment (Posthuma et al. 2013)	
Building Blocks: 1. Vibrant workplace (i.e. engaged employees, goes beyond health and safety to include relationships, job features, etc.) 2. Inspired employees (i.e. inspired to learn, share, and apply their skills) 3. Positive culture (i.e. communication of workplace values) 4. Inclusive leadership techniques (i.e. high trust culture) 5. *Social responsibility (*not essential but helps with sustainability; Lowe 2010a)	HPW practices fall within one of the nine categories below: 1. Compensation and benefits, 2. Job and work design, 3. Training and development, 4. Recruitment and selection, 5. Employee relations, 6. Communication, 7. Performance management, 8. Promotions, and 9. Peripheral (i.e. retention and exit management; Posthuma et al. (2013)	Both management approaches focus on organizational success (i.e. meeting organizational goals and its mission) as well as employee growth, learning, and development (Dive 2004).

Thirdly, the company culture is positive and finally, the organization practices inclusive leadership techniques meaning that people at all levels of the organization and its stakeholders' views and contributions are carefully considered. These *building blocks* are not accomplished independently but rather overlap. The model also advocates for social responsibility, which is not a *building block* per se but important for sustainability. The belief being that through ethical environmental and social practices, organizational sustainability is heightened.

The fundamental belief behind the Healthy Organization framework is that organizations are a 'human system'. Organizations are built by people, built of people, and built for people. Therefore, organizations should manage people in human terms (Lowe 2010a). This means a humanistic approach should be applied to the implementation, management, and renewal of organizations in order for the workplace to prosper vibrantly and engage employees. Such an approach places employee well-being at the forefront of the organization. For example, by providing flexible work hours to tend to family obligations or other non-work related obligations a humanistic approach to work is practiced. This view of the workforce as a 'human system' differs significantly from other management styles rooted in bureaucratic ways, whereby employees are foremost viewed as a marketplace commodity that is interchangeable and dispensable (Grint 1998). In theory, the model includes the interests of employees as supported by the vibrant workplace building block, suggesting that both parties (organization and workforce) are equally considered. In addition, seeing that the Healthy Organization model is rooted in the people, the model uses terms that describe healthy people, such as 'fit', 'resilient', and 'agile' to explain the Healthy Organization framework.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has also shown interest in the Healthy Organization model. The WHO defines a healthy workplace as "one in which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of workers and the sustainability of the workplace" (Burton 2010:16). Specific requirements for such a workplace, according to the WHO, include (Burton 2010:2):

- *health and safety concerns in the physical work environment;*
- *health, safety and well-being concerns in the psychosocial work environment including organization of work and workplace culture;*
- *personal health resources in the workplace; and*
- *ways of participating in the community to improve the health of workers, their families and other members of the community.*

These “healthy workplace” requirements are similar in a sense to those outlined by Lowe (Lowe 2010a; Lowe 2010b). However, when Lowe was writing for Health Canada to the WHO on the subject, he mentioned that there is a difference between the two terms – “healthy organization” and “healthy workplace”. The difference being that a healthy workplace focuses predominantly on employees’ physical and mental well-being.

Comparatively, a healthy organization holds the health and well-being of employees as an innate function of how the organization operates while working towards accomplishing strategic goals (Burton 2010:16). Despite Lowe’s distinction, the WHO states “[a] healthy workplace in the broadest sense is also a healthy organization from the point of view of how it functions and achieves its goals. Employee health and corporate health are inextricably intertwined” (Burton 2010:16). The terms “organization”, “workplace”, and “employee” in relation to the concept of “healthy”, all three categories are connected. A Healthy Organization is not achievable without having a healthy workplace, and a healthy workplace is not achievable without a healthy workforce. Therefore, according to the theory, an organization is only as “healthy” as its workforce.

For the purpose of this study, “healthy workplace” and “healthy organization” will not be used interchangeably as suggested by Lowe. “Healthy organization” herein refers to an organization achieving its goals while concurrently supporting its members to learn, improve, and live a healthy lifestyle. The term takes on a broad meaning encompassing the organization as an entirety. This means a healthy organization (referring here not to the model) can encompass one or multiple workplaces and these workplaces may vary in terms

of physical size, design, culture, number of people within the space, and so forth. Comparatively, the term “healthy workplace” is a workplace “in which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote health, safety, and well-being of workers and the sustainability of the workplace” (Burton 2010:16). The major difference between the two terms is where the emphasis is placed. In an organization the emphasis is on the enterprise and with the workplace the emphasis is on the workforce or the people who make up the work environment. Therefore, seeing that this study is interested specifically in the people – the workforce – the term ‘workplace’ rather than ‘organization’ is the most suited term when merging the HPW and Healthy Organization models to create the Healthy High-Performing model. This is important considering that the argument herein is that the interest of the workforce (employees) conflicts with the interests of the organization (Company X).

1.1.1 HEALTHY ORGANIZATION: CULTURE

Rooted in the Healthy Organization model is the importance of a “positive organizational culture” (Lowe 2010a). Culture sets the scene. It dictates how people within and across an organization will perceive content, act, and react. According to the Canada Business Network (2011) – an extension of the Government of Canada – “[o]rganizational or corporate culture is the attitude of the people who make up the organization or business, reflected in their values, behaviours and ideas”. The purpose and consequence of fostering a positive organizational culture extends beyond making the workplace enjoyable for employees. When it comes to creating a strong organizational culture, “[t]he goal is to influence employees in a positive way so that they will always strive to improve performance and productivity” (Canada Business Network 2011). Therefore, supporting the connection between organizational culture and performance.

Elements deemed important in order to create a strong culture include: vision (i.e. mission statement), values (i.e. a set of guidelines for behaviour and mindset), practices (i.e. actions that support the core values), people (i.e. employees who share the core values), narrative (i.e. an organization’s unique story), and place (i.e. open workspace is beneficial

for collaboration; Coleman 2013). Additional practices of a strong organizational culture include: 1) awareness of the top-down effect, meaning the example management sets (i.e. work-life relationship, ethics, quality of work, strength of relationships) will shape and define a workplace, 2) explicitly outlining the vision and goals of an organization (this prevents reactivity and promotes proactivity), 3) practicing equality and respect towards colleagues and their loved ones, 4) recruiting the right people for the job and the company, 5) applying and prioritizing effective communication (this should include enlisting employees' ideas in determining solutions; Canada Business Network 2011). Promoting a positive culture does not have to require a large financial commitment on behalf of an organization. Simple changes like increasing communication can have significant effects on the culture. These five practices are steps any organization can apply (regardless of industry) and with minimal cost (if any).

Now that practices on “building a healthy organizational culture” have been outlined, “unhealthy” indicators will be addressed (Canada Business Network 2011). Indicators of an unhealthy culture can include: 1) employees commencing and departing work exactly on time, 2) taking longer for lunch or breaks than allocated, 3) poor turnout at company events, 4) increases in absenteeism, turnover, and 5) recruitment difficulties (Canada Business Network 2011). Therefore, disregard for an “unhealthy” company culture can have damaging effects on a workplace and the organization.

Dive (2004) lays out causes of an “unhealthy organization”, which resemble the indicators outlined above by the Canada Business Network (2011). Causes include: 1) a defective plan, 2) an ineffective organizational design, 3) ambiguous reasoning behind policies, 4) the company culture, and 5) the quality of employees (Dive 2004). In addition, a lack of motivating variables can also contribute to an unhealthy organization, as well as lack of clear direction or knowledge to facilitate achievements (Dive 2004). These “healthy” and “unhealthy” culture indicators are outlined in Table 2 (page 34).

It is important to mention that the indicators and causes outlined pertain to organizational practices that influence the work environment and consequently culture.

However, agency also plays a role. The way individual employees act also affect the work environment and the organization’s culture, meaning leaders of organizations as

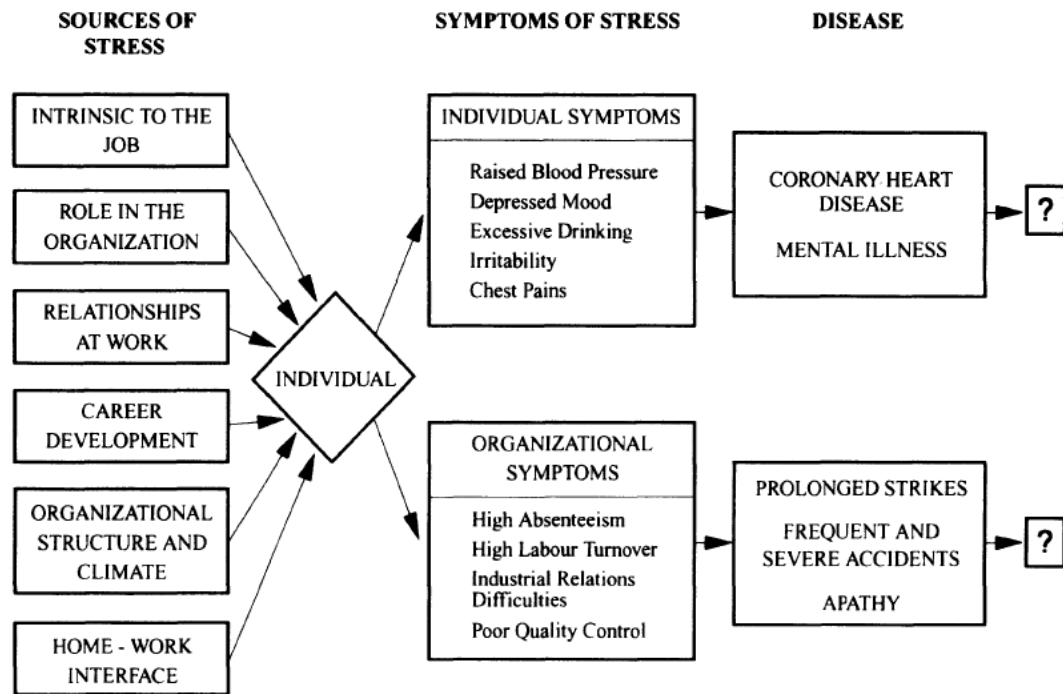
Table 2. “Healthy” versus “Unhealthy” Culture

Indicators of an organization with a “healthy” culture:	Indicators of an organization with a “unhealthy” culture
1. Aware of top-down effects 2. Explicit vision and goals 3. Practicing equality and respect 4. Employee fit 5. Practicing effective communication	1. Employees start or leave work exactly on time 2. Employees taking longer than allotted for lunch/breaks 3. Poor turnout at company events 4. High absenteeism, turnover, and presenteeism 5. Difficulties recruiting employees 6. Ambiguous reasoning behind policies

well as employees, influence organizational culture. This emphasizes the importance of hiring the right people, meaning people who share the beliefs and values of the organization. Seeing that leaders of an organization and the employees influence the organization’s culture, it is necessary to not only consider organizational factors that influence the workplace but also consider how employees influence the environment. Therefore, the influence of employees – and agency – will be discussed in the theoretical framework chapter.

To return to the discussion on “healthy” and “unhealthy” organizations, Figure 2 provides a summary of occupational stresses that relate to an unhealthy workplace. These sources of stress indicate effects on the employee and how they transcend and impact the organization. Figure 2 also suggests how investing in physical, emotional, and mental health and well-being of employees is a financially sound decision for an organization as it would diminish costs associated with high absenteeism, for example. The critical point to note from Figure 2 is that employees who are physically, mentally, or emotionally unwell impact the workplace (i.e. through absenteeism) and the organization as an entirety (i.e. cost of training new employees to cover absent members).

Figure 2: Occupational Stress – A Research Model



Source: Cooper and Cartwright (1994:456)

In summary, unhealthy workers cost money and make for a less productive workforce. This can impact the “health” of the workplace and organization. The health of the organization is affected in terms of the vibrancy of the workplace. A key factor for a vibrant workplace, as stated earlier, is engaged employees and productivity. However, when employees are not physically, emotionally, or psychologically healthy being engaged in the task at hand – the work – is difficult. Subsequently, a leaching effect occurs, potentially impacting the culture, productivity, and the success of the organization. The culture may be negatively impacted if other employees feel they have to take on more work to compensate for those who are absent from the workplace for a prolonged period due to health issues for example. The interconnectedness between healthy employees in the physical, emotional, and psychological sense and the Healthy Organization model in the

sense of a vibrant workplace, positive culture, and sustainable success is undeniable. This explains why the Healthy Organization model considers the well-being of members – employees – a priority.

1.1.2 HEALTHY ORGANIZATION: SHORTCOMINGS

Shortcomings of the Healthy Organization approach include measuring performance and effectiveness based on ratios. Dive (2004:7-8) says, “ratios are helpful but they are essentially limited...they don’t assess the softer areas of organizational performance... Volume ratios have major limitations”. He compares the use of ratios to the numerous forms of currency. He states “[n]o one currency spans the world; even purchasing power rates are controversial. There is no universal measure, which would give a reliable and valid mapping of the health of an organization...” (Dive 2004: 8). Therefore, measuring the health of an organization is problematic, which contributes to a flaw within the system.

A second issue pertains to the length of time required for such a system to result and to uphold such a system. There is “no quick fix” as said by Dive (2004: 9). The Healthy Organization model must be embraced as a long-term, continuous, and preventative approach. An additional consideration pertains to consistency. Can an organization breach its Healthy Organizational practices or even a single practice temporarily and still remain a Healthy Organization? If yes, for how long (temporary) can a breach occur? Further research on the model is required to address these questions.

A third shortcoming pertains to the notion of a flattened hierarchical structure, which is said to be a key component of the model (Burton 2010; Dive 2004; Lowe 2010a). The notion of ‘flatness’ is controversial. Essentially, “how flat is...flat?” (Dive 2004: 9-10). According to multiple sources, no unequivocal evidence on the matter of “flatness” has emerged (Johnston 1995; Peters 1988). Moreover, even if organizations were to adopt “the identical constructs, these constructs are configured differently depending on the conceptual premises of the focal framework,” state Vandenberg et al. (2002: 57). In other words, identical methods can have varying effects on organizations due to different guiding principles and purposes of each unique organization. In summary, several drawbacks exist

within the Healthy Organization framework. In order to accurately comprehend the framework, it is important to acknowledge these drawbacks.

1.2 WHAT IS A HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORKPLACE (HPW) AND WHY IS IT RELEVANT?

A HPW is a business management model used in the structuring and oversight of a workplace. According to Posthuma, Campion, Masimova, and Campion (2013), High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) “are designed to enhance organizational performance by improving employee capability, commitment, and productivity” (Posthuma et al. 2013:1184). However, the authors go on to say that “there is very little consensus about the structure of these systems and the practices therein” (Posthuma et al. 2013:1184), suggesting two things. First that high-performance (HP) practices should be tailored to the purpose and culture of the organization, and secondly that there is likely a need for further research on the matter.

Posthuma et al. (2013) attempt to address the issue of how to identify and implement a HPWS by creating a “*High Performance Work Practices (HPWPs) taxonomy*”. To do so, the authors draw from academic articles (n=163) to identify the 61 specific High-Performance (HP) practices, meaning strategies to create a HP environment. The authors synthesize the HPWPs into nine general categories. The categories used to identify a HPWS include: 1) Compensation and Benefits, 2) Job and Work Design, 3) Training and Development, 4) Recruiting and Selection, 5) Employee Relations, 6) Communication, 7) Performance Management and Appraisal, 8) Promotions, and lastly 9) Peripheral (which include employee retention and exit management solutions). These principles serve as a guide to identify organizations considered as a HPW.

1.2.1 HPW SHORTCOMINGS

HPWs can be a challenge to implement. Four main issues of realizing HPW include: 1) “The tension between two types of flexibility”: flexibility for predictability (i.e. structures or staffing policies) and flexibility for adaptability (i.e. encouraging employees to make a judgment call when a crisis arises), 2) “Problems of history, culture and social class”, 3)

“Problems of difference of interest”, and 4) “Problems of levels of understanding” (Rosborough and Watson 1996: 71). These four issues speak to the importance of company culture and listening to the culture when implementing change.

HPWPs are not universal. They must be adapted to each organization, making the implementation and documentation of a HPWS a challenge. This necessity to adapt the system to particular environments is true for the Healthy Organization model as well.

A term used in the field of HPWs is “bundling”. MacDuffie (1995: 200) coined the term “bundling” and defined it as the act of combining workplace practices. These workplace practices form the relationships between employees and employer and therefore impact the company culture. According to Boxall and Macky (2009:5), other researchers have adopted the term and believe “that productivity gains are greater when firms adopt systems of complementary practices”, meaning productivity increases with the “bundling” of firm-appropriate performance enhancing strategies. Although measuring, identifying, and bundling practices for a HPWS are complex, as with the Healthy Organization model, the associated results are, according to the literature, advantageous to the organization. Now that a general understanding of the concept of HPWs, and related criticisms, has been established, the following section addresses how the HPWs and the Healthy Organization framework differ and resemble one another.

1.3 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HPW AND HEALTHY ORGANIZATION

First off, in order to address the similarities and differences between these models, it is essential to acknowledge the synonymous nature of terms like Healthy Organization and HPW. In addition to these two terms, Rosborough and Watson (1996) note that the term *high-performance* is comparable to other terms in the field of business such as “competitive advantage” and “excellence”. These are transferable terms used to express “a strategic aspiration to achieve long-term viability in an increasingly globalized and increasingly competitive organizational world” (Rosborough and Watson 1996:71). HPWs are characterized as being sustainable and successful as are Healthy Organizations. Similarly, Boxall and Macky (2009) look to the terms “high commitment work systems”

(HCWSs) and “high commitment management” (HCM) to help conceptualize the term HPWS. The authors associate employee commitment as a characteristic of HPWSs. Commitment is also found within the Healthy Organization model as it is claimed to be a by-product of a positive culture, inclusive leadership, inspired employees, social responsibility initiatives, and a vibrant workplace. In summary, there are a multitude of words that are similar to the notion of a HPW and Healthy Organization, particularly in the realm of Business.

That being said, one main difference between a HPW and a Healthy Organization is that the latter includes Social Responsibility (SR) – a concept that is superfluous to a HPW. Social Responsibility, which when conducted by a corporation is referred to as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), is a voluntary act in a community that is beyond the obligations of an enterprise (Burton 2010). When organizations are involved in the community, benefits to the organization or corporation are said to transpire (Burton 2010). According to the literature, acts of SR can improve employee commitment, enhance the reputation of an enterprise, strengthen the community-organization relationship, and positively impact the performance and profitability of an organization (Burton 2010; Industry Canada 2011). This information supports the notion shared by Healthy Organizational theorists that an enterprise’s involvement in the community (i.e. CSR) can improve the workplace (as well as the organization) – a concept that HPWs do not necessarily include as a critical component. An additional difference lies in the origins of the terms – Healthy Organization deriving from sociology and HPW deriving from business. However, seeing that few critical differences exist between HPWs and a Healthy Organization, literature from both fields has been consulted. Before continuing further, an example of an organization, and its work environment that embodies these two models, will be discussed to further clarify the relationship between the models and also to contextualize the HHPW model.

1.3.1 GOOGLE – AN EXAMPLE OF A HPW AND HEALTHY ORGANIZATION

Healthy Organizations and HPWs have seen substantial attention and the attention focuses heavily on one particular organization – Google. Examples of this include: the book

“In the Plex” by Steven Levy (2011); the New York Times’ March 15, 2013 article titled “Looking for a Lesson in Google’s Perks” by James Stewart; the 2013 Blockbuster movie titled the “Internship” about two older sales men completing an internship at Google; attention also includes academic articles such as the one by Kathryn Dekas, Talya Bauer, Brian Welle, Jennifer Kurkoski, and Stacy Sullivan (2013) titled “Organizational Citizenship Behavior, Version 2.0: A Review and Qualitative Investigation of OCBs for Knowledge Workers at Google and Beyond”, as well as countless other articles.

Although this study does not focus specifically on Google, the abundant attention Google has received has no doubt contributed to public interest and research on similar work models to that adopted by Google. In addition, Google has set the bar for workplace practices as it has frequently been nominated as ‘the best place to work’ in both Canada and the United States. The organization exemplifies what it means to be a HHPW. For this reason the following section will elaborate on Google as well as discuss how this company is relevant to the study. However, it is important to mention that both Google and Company X are high-tech companies that are a part of a lucrative industry at the moment, meaning the financial means to offer unconventional perks and benefits, and recruit top talent are present. Therefore, this study is focusing on a privileged portion of the population.

Google provides a multitude of online Internet services. The company, which was founded in 1998 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, is devoted to innovative and productive practices, cultivated through workplace flexibility. Popular innovative products and services produced include: Google Maps, Google Drive, and Chrome OS. These influential products and services contribute to the extensive attention placed on Google. However, the company’s stimulating and unique work environment and culture has also been at the forefront of conversations.

Kim Malone, a Google employee (also known as ‘Googlers’) describes the corporation as being like a “housewife”. Ignoring the stereotypical undertone of the comparison, the overall message Malone gives is relevant. She says “Google cooks for you, picks up and delivers your dry cleaning, takes care of your lube jobs, washes your car, gives you massages, and organizes your work-outs” (Levy 2011: 135). The workplace perks

mentioned by Malone are only a fraction of the benefits offered to Googlers. Elaborate perks and benefits like this are rarely found in workplace standards today, not to mention historically.

Steven Levy, a long-time acquaintance of the founders, claims “Google also became known for its irreverent culture and its data-driven approach to business decision making, management experts rhapsodized about its unconventional methods” (2011: 3). In other words, Google’s approach to extrinsic company culture practices is observed. Its atypical and bold moves are noted. The company’s decisions are strategically made. Google’s perks are not randomly implemented out of the kindness of the corporation and for the sole benefit of its employees. The perks, benefits, workplace design – everything – is purposefully implemented in order for Google to continuously excel. Offering perks is an “aggressive effort to provide ideal conditions for employees to actually do their work” and thus “...relentless attention to removing the impediments to productive work time” is practiced states Steven Levy (2011: 136). The objective here is not to portray Google’s offerings in a utopian or insincere manner. Rather, the purpose is to highlight the reciprocal relationship between the employer (Google) and the employees and to discuss what this relationship means from a broader context.

Google has followed a HHPW approach since the beginning (be it knowingly or not). Levy (2011: 133) states “Google’s culture had informally emerged from its founders’ beliefs that a workplace should be loaded with perks and overloaded with intellectual stimulation”. The culture and workplace design is also said to derive from the Montessori School philosophy within which both Page and Brin were educated. Because of the founders’ exposure to Montessori thinking, which emphasises “discipline through liberty”, freedom to pursue personal interests and embracing independent thought were values instilled in Google’s culture from the onset. Furthermore, the notion of following rules, regulations, and processes to conform to society was not seen as sufficient cause to obey. Due to their upbringing, Page claims that they have “been trained and programmed to question authority” (Levy 2011: 122). These forms of thinking have carried over to Google. According

to Levy (2011), the need for bureaucratic hierarchies and policies are questioned and rigidity is discouraged. Data and dialectical reasoning are key components at Google.

Google has maintained this management approach, which has led to multiple nominations as “the best place to work” by *Fortune Magazine* (i.e. from 2009 to 2014), by *The Globe and Mail* Newspaper (2014) and numerous other rankings. Google’s positive company culture and vibrant workplace that inspire employees, and encourage leadership and inclusive decision-making indicate that Google is assembled using Lowe’s Healthy Organization building blocks. The company’s support and belief in providing “intellectual stimulation” to employees (i.e. through skill development); their healthy living options; their childcare service, their community involvement in educational programs for students, as well as other examples, demonstrate tools used at Google to foster a positive company culture and workplace. Google also practices CSR. According to the Google CSR website, examples include, among other philanthropy initiatives, “Google Grants”, “Supporting Earthquake Relief Efforts”, and Google camps for children and teenagers (Google 2015). Google is financially successful and continues to innovate and excel. For these reasons, Google is an example of not only a Healthy Organization but as a HPW as well.

The reason the Google example is included is to demonstrate how a workplace can be a Healthy Organization and a HPW. The workplace follows building blocks, principles, and practices outlined in both models. Due to the parallels between the frameworks, this study combines the two models together to create the Healthy High-Performing Workplace (HHPW) model thereby joining the fields of sociology and business.

As mentioned previously, workplace health promotion, organizational performance, and social responsibility are all concepts included within a Healthy Organization. The Healthy Organization model “shows how the organization’s structure, systems, and culture influence both employee well-being and business performance” (Lowe 2010a:286). This indicates that a Healthy Organization is an approach that forges strong links between people and performance. Moreover, according to Lowe (2010a:305) “...a healthy workplace also could be a higher-performing workplace”. It is for this reason that the comparable High-Performance Work System (HPWS) approach to management, also referred to as the

High-Performing Workplace (HPW), is combined with the Healthy Organization model in this study. As mentioned in the Introduction, the joining of these two models is referred to herein as the Healthy High-Performing Workplace (HHPW).

1.4 WHY IS THE HHPW IMPORTANT?

In order to comprehend the relevance of HHPWs, “unhealthy” workplaces and their effects must be reconsidered. Specifically, work overload, stress, absenteeism, burnout, and presenteeism require consideration. Therefore, to better understand the relationship between the employees, the workplace, and the organization, these problematic work-related issues will be discussed. This is important to consider, seeing that “[w]ork intensification and overload is the biggest predictor of stress, depression and of taking mental health days at work, which is totally preventable absenteeism” according to Linda Duxbury (2006). She attributes this work intensification to “anorexic” workplaces, which occurs when organizations “trim the fat” within the workplace leaving only the “bare bones” by removing jobs that are seen as superfluous (Duxbury 2006). An “anorexic” workplace can also occur if management neglects to hire new employees when workplace demands augment. This elimination or refrainment from adding positions consequently leads to (potential) work overload, stress and burnout.

In addition, productivity and performance are often perceived as directly correlated with the number of hours spent at the office. In actuality, research shows that long hours at work can actually lead to less productivity and performance due to effects such as burnout, depression, and mental fatigue (Duxbury 2006). The point is not that stress and hard work should be eliminated from the workplace. In fact, “[t]he data shows people can work 60 hours for a week, two weeks, six weeks – but they can’t work it forever. So the healthy model of work is a hill and valley model,” says Duxbury (2006). In this “hill and valley model”, there is a peak (“hill”) of intense work followed by a “valley” or less intense work. Duxbury (2006) states that “front-line manager and professional level” employees are those most at risk of being overworked and burning out as “they have taken out things that allowed people a little time for reflection and socializing”. Overall, what this means is that

“[o]rganizations are trying to do more, with less, and it’s costing us. There is high ‘mental day’ absenteeism, for example, and people who are stressed and depressed are not creative...” says Duxbury (2006). Therefore, it is no surprise that work-related stress and work overload are a major concern of organizations.

Moreover, presenteeism is another concern of workplace health professionals, especially when attempting to improve the health of an organization. Presenteeism is a growing field of study that emerged in the 1990s. It is similar to absenteeism in the sense that work-related productivity is negatively impacted. However, what differs between the two concepts is where employees are located. When considering presenteeism employees are physically present at work, whereas with absenteeism employees are elsewhere than work. However, with presenteeism employees are present but their job performance is limited to some extent due to mental, emotional, or physical health issues (Cancelliere et al. 2011). Presenteeism is said to be “highly prevalent and costly to employers” indicating a need to address this issue within the workplace (Cancelliere et al. 2011:7). In summary, the health of employees (be it physical, emotional, or psychological health) influences the work environment.

Similarly, absenteeism can be costly to an organization. In 1997, “[s]ome half a million full-time paid workers...were absent in any given week” (Lowe 2003:80). One method to reduce absenteeism in the workplace is to offer *flextime*, meaning the ability for employees to have a say in their work schedule. When organizations take charge of facilitating change that will reduce absenteeism by means of programs like *flextime*, which allows for employees to feel less stressed when it comes to work and non-work related obligations, advantageous results can ensue for both the workforce and the organization.

Cooper and Cartwright (1994) conducted a study on stress within the workplace. The premise of the study being that stress can be measured in personal and financial terms, and that stress exerts both a direct and indirect impact on the organization and the people who comprise it. The study considers a range of issues pertaining to occupational stress including: “factors intrinsic to the job, corporate culture, managerial style, style of work organization and physical layout, home/work interface, etc., which impact employee health

and well-being” (Cooper and Cartwright 1994:455). The researchers consider these specific issues because they “determine the financial health and profitability of the organization” (Cooper and Cartwright 1994:455). Although I am interested in the employees (more than the organization’s profitability), stress impacts both parties and thus is interconnected. Therefore, stress sources and “occupational stress reduction strategies” are worth noting.

Cooper and Cartwright (1994:456) identify examples of stress sources and the sources’ individualistic and organizational symptoms (Figure 3). The figure reveals the importance of addressing stress from an organizational perspective as symptoms can have an individual as well as organizational impact. Sources of stress identified in the study include: inherent job related stress, an individual’s position in the organization, relationships with others, career advancement, the structure of the organization and the environment, as well as the “home-work interface” (Cooper and Cartwright 1994:456). In summary, the study outlines how stress, employees, and the work environment are connected.

Due to the overflowing effects onto the organization, HHPWs are attentive to stress (and other employee health issues) at the individual level. Work overload, stress and burnout are a few examples of work-related health issues. The point of this discussion is twofold. First, when outlining the occurrence, as well as broad causes and effects of employee health issues, the sociological relevance of the HHPW model is supported. Secondly, the discussion exposes the interconnectivity between the health and productivity of employees and the success of the organization. For these reasons, the HHPW today is a relevant workplace model worthy of consideration when exploring new management and organizational approaches to work.

Seeing that the focus of this study is on the employees, it is appropriate to acknowledge how employees perceive and think about workplace health. The following section does exactly that.

1.5 EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION OF WORKPLACE HEALTH

The following section addresses how employees perceive their work environment. Perception is considered based on employee demographics, labour market status, and the scope of the organization. This section is critical to the thesis as the focus of the study is on how members of an organization interpret their surroundings – the workplace – in order to support or discredit Company X as being a HHPW. Therefore, the following section considers employees' perceptions based on workplace health, demographics, labour market status, organizational influences, and working conditions.

The definition of what constitutes a healthy workplace, and the elements perceived by employees as important to foster a healthy workplace, vary. This variation is because the HHPW model is exactly that – a model. The workplace elements, or ingredients, used to create this 'model' work environment are simply tools and these tools are used as guiding principles in the construction and maintenance of a healthy workplace. However, each workplace requires a unique set of tools based on the people and work in question. This is because elements that are perceived as important to members of an organization within a given workplace dictate what is truly important, connecting to the early discussion regarding agency. Therefore, an understanding of what variables (i.e. demographic factors, market status, etc.) influence peoples' satisfaction levels within the workplace is an important consideration. This information sheds light on what areas of focus are of greatest relevance, based on the size and demographics of the workforce in question, the type of work involved (i.e. manual work, full-time/part-time, seniority, teamwork, etc.), and the working conditions. The information obtained from the discussion below serves to understand and predict how Company X employees may perceive their workplace based on variables (i.e. size of organization) and findings documented in past research.

A study conducted by Lowe, Schellenberg, and Shannon (2003) used telephone interviews to poll 2,500 Canadian employees in order to assess correlates related to employees' perception of workplace health and safety. In addition, the study looked at how respondent perception related to "...job satisfaction, employee commitment, workplace

morale, absenteeism, and intent to quit” (Lowe et al. 2003:390). In the section below, results from this study are discussed and links are made with other similar studies.

1.5.1 PERCEPTION BASED ON DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic-related results were weak but statistically significant. Results indicate first that women perceive the health of their workplace in a more positive light than do men. Also, demographic findings revealed that people between the ages of 18-24 and 55 and up viewed their workplace more favorably than people between the ages of 25 and 54. Similar findings were found in Thomas Leoni’s (2010) study on perceptions of health and safety in the workplace. Leoni (2010) indicates that those aged 30 to 49 years perceive the health and safety of their workplace the least favorably. This suggests that if the majority of employees at Company X are under the age of 30 or over the age of 49, employees are likely to view the health and safety of their work environment more favourably than if the workforce were between 30 and 49 years of age.

Secondly, perception of organizational health varied by relationship status. Single participants reported working within a healthy workplace more than any other group (Lowe et al. 2003). This is supported by the findings from Leoni (2010) who also found that single individuals – those not in a relationship – are most satisfied with the health of their workplace. Participants who were separated, divorced, or widowed felt their work environment was particularly unhealthy. These relationship status findings are interesting for two reasons. First off, single individuals likely report healthier or a more positive relationship with their work because they tend to have fewer home obligations (i.e. caring for family). Secondly, the “separated, divorced, and widowed” group may be more unsatisfied with the health and safety of their work environment than single and married participants, as they may attribute work-related obligations to the change in relationship status or they may have more home obligations as these obligations are not shared with a partner. These findings suggest that if the majority of employees at Company X are single they may view the workplace more favourably than if the majority are widowed, divorced, or separated.

Interestingly, no statistical significant results were found based on level of education. In other words, employees with differing levels of education were not more or less satisfied with the health and safety of the workplace in comparison with colleagues of an opposing level of education according to Lowe et al.'s (2003) study. However, Leoni (2010) did find differences based on the level of education of workers and their satisfaction with the health and safety of the workplace. Respondents from Leoni's (2010) European study found that workers with higher levels of education (i.e. university degree versus high school diploma) were progressively less satisfied with the health and safety of their workplace. In other words, respondents with greater levels of education were the least satisfied. Therefore, conflicting findings emerge when considering education and perception of workplace health. Therefore, the level of education of employees at Company X will not be considered when it comes to satisfaction with workplace health and safety.

1.5.2 PERCEPTION BASED ON LABOUR MARKET STATUS

When considering variables related to labour market status, participants in the following categories viewed their work environment negatively in comparison to their counterparts: manual workers (versus non-manual labourers), full-time employees (versus employees who work under 30 hours a week), employees with more seniority (versus employees who have worked for the organization less than five years), and employees making over \$600 weekly (versus employees who are making less; Lowe et al 2003). In addition, self-employed individuals perceive their workplace with greater negativity than employed workers (Leoni 2010). This data suggests that labour market status affects how employees perceive the health of the workplace. Again, these findings were weak but significant.

1.5.3 PERCEPTION BASED ON ORGANIZATIONAL INFLUENCES

When considering the size of the workplace, employees in smaller organizations – meaning fewer than 10 employees – perceived their workplace better than those in larger organizations with over 100 employees (Lowe et al. 2003). The data suggests that smaller, more intimate, organizations are ideal. Furthermore, employees did not perceive team-oriented work environments or participation programs to influence the health of the work

place. This finding is interesting because it contradicts principles found in some management models that promote collaboration.

1.5.4 PERCEPTION BASED ON WORKING CONDITIONS

Findings also revealed that employees perceived the health of their workplace favourably when “reasonable demands”, “high intrinsic and extrinsic rewards from their job” are experienced, meaning the work is personally gratifying (intrinsic) and acknowledged (extrinsic). In addition, when strong “social supports” are present, when employees “can exert a high level of influence in workplace decisions, and have good resources available” they interpret their workplace more favourably than if these factors were not present (Lowe et al. 2003:394). This data indicates that recognition and employee empowerment to make work-related decisions are perceived as important variables in the assessment of a work environment’s health.

1.5.5 SUMMARY

Overall, the most significant results revealed that the majority of respondents (68%) found their work environment was safe (i.e. occupational hazards) and healthy. However, more respondents deemed their workplace to be ‘safe’ rather than ‘healthy’. This suggests employers place greater emphasis on ‘safe’ work environments than on the health and well-being of their workforce. In addition, the most important correlate found for a healthy work environment was strong communication and social support. Job demands (i.e. job stress, workload, etc.) were second. These two correlates were followed by “resources, extrinsic rewards, and autonomy, [which] were significantly related to the reported healthiness of the workplace” (Lowe et al. 2003:396). Therefore, communication, social support, job demands, resources and tools, extrinsic rewards, and autonomy are relevant variables to consider when studying or implementing HHPW practices.

In this chapter, literature on the Healthy Organization and HPW model is reviewed. The models show support for performance, productivity, engagement and commitment. Therefore, the literature makes the case for “healthy” workplaces. Because a Healthy Organization can also be a HPW, the two models are joined together to make the HHPW model. The perception of employees towards the health and safety of their work

environment is also discussed in this chapter. The purpose of this is to illustrate discrepancies and similarities based on gender, age, labour market status, organizational influence, and working conditions. This information is useful to predict, substantiate, and explain results based on demographics, industry, and the work environment. Moreover, the effects of “unhealthy” workplaces - which include absenteeism, work overload, burnout to name a few – are also outlined, further supporting the case for HHPWs. To summarize, a “humanistic” approach to work is known as the HHPW approach. Although, the HHPW model may appear to be glorified at times throughout the study this is strictly because of how literature presents the topic. The HHPW model is examined in relation to the experience of employees within this type of environment. To recall, I argue that the interest of employees (i.e. working conditions) and of the organization (i.e. profit) cannot be met simultaneously and that profit trumps people.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, organizational culture theory and its ability to address the experience of employees who work in a profitable and lucrative industry are put to the test. More specifically, employees within a workplace that is hypothesized as having HHPW qualities is examined. The main question propelling this study is *what does having HHPW qualities mean to the organization's members?* In order to address this question and gain a thorough understanding of the experience of the organization's members it is critical to understand the environment in which the members work. This is why organizational culture theory is pertinent as it incorporates the concepts of culture, structure, and individual actors (Allaire and Firsirotu 1984).

According to Coote and Hogan (2014:1609) organizational culture has been found to have a key influence on "behavior, market and financial performance... employee attitudes and organizational effectiveness". Because organizational culture relates to central concepts that pertain to this study, and because the experience of individuals is impacted by their surroundings, which are socially and culturally constructed, this framework is critical. Therefore, in order to tackle the question that fuelled this study, organizational culture theory is consulted. Moreover, the theory also helps to address the argument herein, which is that employee interests (i.e. working conditions) conflict with organizational interests (profit) even in a HHPW. Additionally, as seen in Chapter One, a positive culture is critical in fostering a HHPW. For these reasons the power of culture, specifically the theoretical framework of organizational culture, is discussed.

Organizational culture theory, meaning how values are communicated within and across an organization (or more specifically a workplace in this case), is critical because the theory provides a lens through which to examine the notion of the HHPW. Organizational culture provides a framework from which the HHPW model and the people affected by and

who affect the model can be addressed. The sociostructural¹ and culture systems that comprise organizational culture theory are used to address key questions within the study. For example, is there a flattened or hierarchical structure at Company X (a sociostructural question)? Are inclusive or exclusive leadership practices found within the workplace (a sociostructural question)? How do past, present, and prospective employees talk about Company X culture and atmosphere (a culture question)? Addressing these questions, among others, allows for an assessment of the experience of employees at Company X to occur from an organizational culture framework. Furthermore, it provides an understanding of who (what type of people) work here. This means that the workplace and its HHPW qualities (or lack of HHPW qualities) are examined from the perspective of the workplace culture and structure because these two elements shaped the experience members have.

However, the success of HHPW practices is dependent on the organizational culture and on the ‘pieces of the puzzle’ – meaning the culture and structure – fitting together. This means, for example, that if the people of the organization do not value physical activity, a ‘sport allowance’ for employees is redundant. This simplistic example highlights the importance of aligning cultural values and sociostructural issues with the people. However, alignment is not as simple as abolishing or adding workplace perks like in the sport allowance case. Fitting the ‘pieces of the puzzle’ together is a complex task that is continuously changing with the environment and the people who comprise it. My point is that organizational culture is fragile and that discrepancies in the alignment of organizational values and the structure can jeopardize or hinder the relationship employees have with their work and the workplace. Consequently, this translates to ineffective HHPW practices.

The following chapter defines organizational culture theory and its emergence from organizational and contingency theory. Key theorists are discussed and differing organizational culture models are examined. The chapter concludes by further outlining the

¹ I acknowledge that the addition of “socio” to “structure” is unnecessary as the term structure implies both the method of organizing parts as well as the relations between the parts but out of accordance with Allaire and Firsirotu’s (1984) work the term sociostructure and sociostructural are used.

link between the theory and problematic as well as by outlining critiques of organizational culture.

2.1 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE THEORY

Many theories exist about the organization and management of work, and conventional theories on this matter tend to overlap. Among them is *organizational theory*, which encompasses an assortment of perspectives used to examine the structure, functions, and dynamics of organizations. The most pertinent organizational theory related to this study is that of *organizational culture*. Organizational culture theory emerged in the 1970s but did not become widely adopted until the 1980s (Hatch 1993). The concept is prevalent particularly within literature on organizational behaviour and management. The framework derives from the field of cultural anthropology and possesses a variety of definitions depending on the particular body of literature consulted. Generally, organizational culture is defined as “the organizational values communicated through norms, artifacts, and observed in behavioral patterns” (Coote and Hogan 2014:1610). Because aspects from contingency theory influenced the development of new organizational theories, including organizational culture, contingency theory requires explanation.

2.1.1 CONTINGENCY THEORY

Contingency theory is founded on the belief that “organizational structures and processes are contingent upon the immediate problems posed by their environment” (Krahn and Lowe 2002:220). The definition insinuates that the structure and management of work is unique to each workplace – the “environment” – and is time-sensitive according to “immediate problems”. According to Ganescu (2012:1001), “Some contingency factors, either internal or external, can influence an organization's performance”. Examples of internal environmental factors may include: “organizational culture, management strategies and financial performance, and “humanistic culture”” (Ganescu 2012:1001), while external factors include: technology, economies, and so forth (Ganescu 2012). This

information suggests that in order for an organization to maximize performance it must respond to contingencies and adapt organizational structures and processes accordingly.

Donaldson (2001:2) expands on this idea of adaptability and performance as he describes contingency theory as follows:

“The essence of the contingency theory paradigm is that organizational effectiveness results from fitting characteristics of the organization, such as its structure, to contingencies that reflect the situation of the organization...Contingencies include the environment (Burns and Stalker 1961), organizational size (Childs 1975), and organizational strategy (Chandler 1962). Because the fit of organizational characteristics to contingencies leads to high performance, organizations seek to attain fit”.

Environment contingencies may include the rate of technological and market change. The organizational size contingency refers to the number of employees and affects the degree to which an organization is bureaucratic (or rule-governed) or decentralized (Donaldson 2001). Donaldson (2001) claims that larger organizations are more conducive to bureaucratic structures than smaller organizations because tasks tend to be repetitive in larger scale organizations. The term *organizational strategy* was coined by Alfred Chadler in 1962 and refers to how organizations define their product, market, and function, meaning their approach, which consequently impacts how the organizations are structured and managed. This discussion about contingencies supports the notion that particular organizational characteristics relate to high-performance and different types of contingencies are outlined.

Donaldson (2001) states that organizations benefit from adapting to changing contingencies, meaning that fit between the organization and its contingencies should be aligned. The organization’s structure consequently adapts to fit the contingencies. Donaldson (2001:2) outlines two forms of organizational structure “mechanistic (i.e. hierarchical) or organic (i.e. participatory)...The mechanistic structure fits a stable

environment, because a hierarchical approach is efficient for routine operations". This is because in routine operations management possesses sufficient knowledge to consistently execute decision-making as little variation ensues. Whereas in an organic structure, which is unstable, "a participatory approach is required for innovation. Knowledge and information required for innovation are distributed among lower hierarchical levels and so decentralized decision making fosters innovation" (Donaldson 2001:3). A problem arises when a misfit occurs. For example, a "mechanistic structure in an unstable environment is unable to innovate and so becomes ineffective" says Donaldson (2001:4). Organic (or participatory) and mechanistic (or bureaucratic) theory "are seen as being theories that are to some degree in conflict, but that may be brought together" (Donaldson 2001:5). This means that an organization can blend the bureaucratic and participatory approaches.

In summary, three forms of contingencies exist (environment, structural, strategy) and these contingencies can be internal or external environment factors. The organizational structure can be organic (participatory), mechanistic (hierarchical), or a blend. In order to better understand the links between contingency theory and organizational culture theory a more in-depth discussion of organizational culture will now occur.

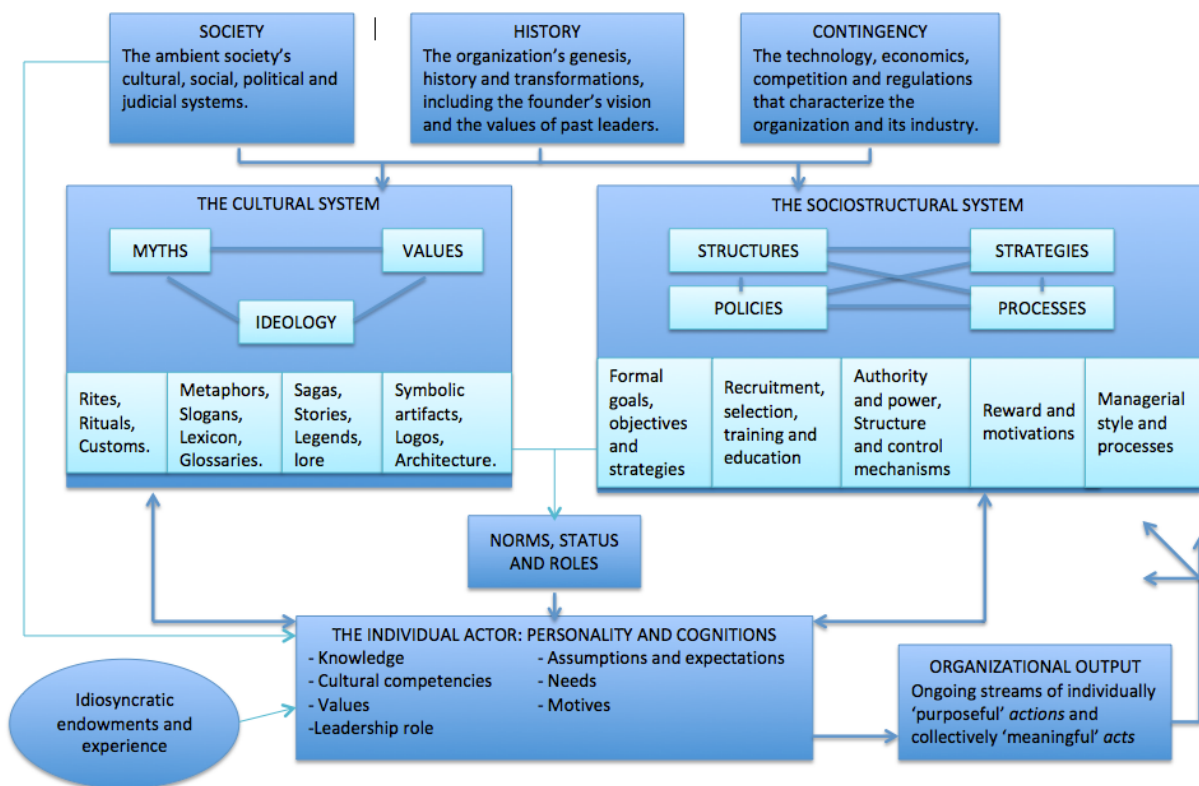
2.1.2 A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

According to Allaire and Firsirotu (1984:193), organizations are like 'little societies' because they are "social systems equipped with socialization processes, social norms and structures". Based on this metaphor, then, organizations have "distinct cultural traits" hence the concept of *organizational culture*. These cultural properties can be in the form of "values, beliefs,...legends, myths and stories, and [organizations] are festooned with rites, rituals and ceremonies" (Allaire and Firsirotu (1984:194). Additionally, organizational culture draws from three important influential factors: 1) "the organization's immediate surroundings dictated by societal characteristics"; 2) "the organization's history and past leadership"; 3) "contingency

factors such as technology, industry characteristics, etc.” (Allaire and Firsirotu 1984: 209). Therefore, contingencies are one of the critical considerations when using organizational culture theory.

Allaire and Firsirotu’s (1984) representation of *A Conceptual Framework For Organizational Culture* (on page 56 Figure 3) provides a blueprint for understanding and identifying culture within a given environment. The conceptual framework identifies three interrelated components found within organizations.

Figure 3. A Conceptual Framework for Organizational Culture



Source: Allaire and Firsirotu 1984:214

They include: 1) a sociostructural system, 2) a cultural system, and 3) the individual actors.

The sociostructural system consists of “formal structures, strategies, policies and management processes, and of all ancillary components of an organization’s reality and functioning” (Allaire and Firsirotu 1984:213). The nine HPW principles (outlined in Chapter One) resemble Allaire and Firsirotu’s “ancillary components” which include “formal goals and objectives, authority and power structure, control mechanisms, reward and motivation,

process of recruitment, selection and education, sundry management processes” (1984:213). Another component found within an organizational culture is “a cultural system”. This embodies meaningful symbols that can be interpreted by the use of myths, ideology and values. Finally, “the *individual* actors” is where the notion of agency appears. Here, personal experiences and personality come into play. Figure 3 illustrates the interconnectivity between the systems that together form organizational culture. This conceptual framework is critical to this study as relating concepts from the data will be identified and analyzed in order to understand how culture manifests at Company X. In this study, particular attention is placed specifically on the sociostructural system and cultural system at Company X. These two variables are pivotal components to explore how employees perceive the organizational culture at Company X and thus will be addressed herein. Additionally, the use of these variables provides a sense of structure that guides the research.

2.1.3 DURKHEIM AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY

Two influential and classical theorists are recognized for their works’ contribution to organizational culture theory – Emile Durkheim and George Elton Mayo. Durkheim’s well-known work originates from his concern for, and interest in, deteriorating moral consensus and social cohesion. He observed these social and political situations and associated them with the onset of modernity, which was characterized by new social institutions as well as dissolving social and religious traditions. Durkheim argued that the division of labour produces social solidarity, meaning stable social bonds through membership and that these social bonds contribute to culture creation (Durkheim 1984). Durkheim describes two forms of solidarity – mechanical and organic. These are not to be mistaken with Donaldson’s mechanistic (i.e. hierarchical) and organic (i.e. participatory) forms of organizational structure mentioned earlier in this chapter. Durkheim’s concept of mechanical solidarity pertains to traditional rural life and in mechanical solidarity bonds are formed due to shared sentiments and moral values. While organic solidarity develops

from urbanization and pertains to environments characterized by specialization and interdependence (Durkheim 1984). For Durkheim urban (organic) societies lead to more individualistic decision-making, privacy, and moral tolerance than do rural (mechanical) social settings.

Culture to Durkheim relates to an arrangement of symbols entrenched in, and reflective of, distinct social groups (Lincoln and Guillot 2004). In other words, a unique set of symbols (i.e. value, beliefs, and symbolic items) is present within a collective or social group (i.e. families and communities). Durkheim believed that “collective representations” meaning “ideas, beliefs, and values elaborated by a collectivity” (Lincoln and Guillot 2004:9) derived from social structures. Moreover, he believed that culture plays a key role in creating moral order and cohesion (Lincoln and Guillot 2004). This suggests that culture, structure, and social control are connected. In relation to this study, Durkheim’s work is interesting because it explains how culture is created through membership, social bonds, and social solidarity. When considering Durkheim’s work in relation to this study, it raises the question of how membership and solidarity manifest at Company X.

Influential connections exist between Durkheimian theory and organizational culture theory. Aspects from Durkheim’s work are present within the organizational culture. For example, the idea that people create social bonds with one another, which lead to membership and feelings of commitment to the group (“social solidarity”), is present within the organizational culture theory. Because norms, values, customs and so forth, are present within all social groups and they are transferred within the collective or group (or in this study the workplace) through socialization processes a particular culture is created. To elaborate, Durkheim’s view of culture suggests that culture is shared through cognitive representation, norms, and values. These shared connections create feelings of membership. Consequently, when a strong relationship between the culture and membership exists solidarity to the group results. Solidarity depends on deep commonalities in membership according to Durkheim (Lincoln and Guillot 2004), which explains the importance of

‘fit’ when referring to the people within a group – an important concept within the organizational culture theory and within this study. The ‘fit’ and commonalities are critical for a sense of membership to present. Durkheim’s take on membership and solidarity are helpful to understand and explain the connection between culture, organizational commitment (or solidarity), and how sentiments of membership manifest.

These notions of culture, membership and fit are paramount for organizational performance as Lincoln and Guillot (2004:6) state,

“To reach peak performance, organizations can and must develop collective purpose, motivating and directing employees, not merely with the carrot and stick of compensation and authority, but with the intrinsic rewards gleaned from immersion in an enterprise community that is bound together by informal rules, transcendent values, and consistent beliefs”

In other words, peak performance requires membership and solidarity to the “enterprise community” and this membership is “bound” by culture, which serves to communicate beliefs and values of a social group. Therefore, there is an important relationship between performance, organizational culture, and Durkheim’s classical work on culture.

Organizational culture exists in all social groups. Although Durkheim did not specifically include business enterprises as part of the social groups affected by culture, this study along with others (Dore 2000; Jacoby 1997; Lincoln and Guillot 2004) considers businesses as a social group that lends to a sense of attachment with a collective body. Therefore, this study is founded on the premise that businesses also function as a dominant social group connecting members to a community – the workplace – and consequently to society.

2.1.4 MAYO AND THE SOCIAL MAN

Durkheimian theory inspired Mayo whose work draws from multiple existing sociological theories (Dingley 1997; Grint 1998). Mayo's application of these theories in the Hawthorn Studies – from which the concept of the 'social man' originates – significantly impacted modern societies' relationship with work. The Hawthorne Studies were instrumental to the study of human relations, the workplace, and the idea of the 'social man' as mentioned. Mayo and Fritz Roethlisberger are believed to be responsible for conducting a series of studies in the 1920s at the Western Electric Company's Hawthorne plant in Chicago. Findings from the Hawthorne Studies, which took into consideration the views of 29,000 employees who manufactured telephone equipment for the company Bell, determined that social interaction was the primary motivation at work – not financial incentives as hypothesized. In other words, the desire of employees to connect with a group and be included in the decision-making process generated greater productivity than money or working conditions, among other factors. This relates back to Durkheim's notion of social solidarity as well as to organizational culture.

This pervasive form of motivation that is based on the social is well defined through Dingley's (1997:47) discussion of the "social man" who states that

"man is not just the utilitarian economic animal of classical economics and scientific management but that he has other, social, needs and that this has led to a concern with the social relationships at work as an influence on man's productive activity".

The concept of the 'social man' illustrates the important role that social interaction, membership, and relationships have on work and productivity, particularly motivation. It demonstrates how, contrary to popular beliefs, social connections are a key motivational influencer. Additionally, it demonstrates how the study of work transcends into the field of sociology. Furthermore, the concept of the 'social man' is a fundamental, driving force behind HHPW model as it brings to life the social and human aspect of work. Lastly, links between Mayo's work and the sociostructural system of the organizational culture

framework are evident as rewards and motivation (i.e. intrinsic versus extrinsic rewards, social connections as a form of motivation, etc.) are essential features for the development of workplace structures, strategies, policies, and processes.

2.1.5 WEBER AND BUREAUCRACY

Another critical consideration to this study, particularly when examining organizational structure within the workplace, is Max Weber's work on bureaucracy. Weber's interest focused on the nature of power and authority and how these notions were rationally manifested in social organizations. According to Weber, rationalization, meaning the change in the way humans thought from traditional to rational, derived from increasingly organized societies. This means that decisions were founded on "rational principles" and "common sense" rather than tradition (Grint 1998:104). Links are apparent between Weber's interest in power and authority and the sociostructural system within organizational culture as the structures, strategies, processes, and policies within the system include "authority and power structure as well as control mechanisms" (Allaire and Firsirotu 1984: 213).

Although Weber never officially defined bureaucracy, Weber did characterize the bureaucratic system based on six central principles: specialization, hierarchy of offices, rules and regulations, technical competence, impersonality, and formal written communications (Coser 1977; Weber 1978; orig. 1921). Weber recognized that bureaucracy meant greater efficiency and calculability; yet he also recognized dysfunctions within the system. Innate features of the system meant that attention to individual cases or peculiarities were withdrawn. Moreover, economic production often associated with bureaucracy stimulated the expropriation of the worker from the mode of production. Consequently, Weber has been known for admitting, "that the strongest incentive to work is individual ownership and control" (Grint 1998:105). Weber was also keenly aware that these features of bureaucracy also have the potential to depersonalize or dehumanize people from the system and the work (Coser 1977). This expropriation of the worker from the work and its dehumanizing tendencies relates to prior discussions in the introductory chapter of this study (page 9-10) when talking about craftsmanship. Overall, the important elements to take away from the

brief outline of Weber's work on power and authority are the advantages and disadvantages of such a system and the circumstantial aspects (i.e. organizational scale) that lead to implementation of a bureaucratic design. This information is pertinent to understanding Company X's position on bureaucracy.

Links between Weber and the HHPW model appear in several areas. For example, the dehumanization of the workplace is a critical component that the HHPW model is against. Additionally, Weber's take on bureaucratic inefficiency due to *red tape*, also known as *bureaucratic ritualism*, impedes performance and thus goes against the HHPW philosophy. This means that due to a preoccupation with rules and regulations, the achievement of organizational goals is hampered (Merton 1968). Therefore, resistance to bureaucratic ritualism is found within the HHPW model.

According to Grint (1998), bureaucracy is generally found in organizations of scale, meaning large organizations with many employees, while smaller organizations typically find the need for formal rules and a complex division of labour ambivalent. Therefore, at a certain point within an organization's growth, personal control or direct democracy is no longer practical from an efficiency standpoint and therefore it often leads to bureaucratization. Keeping the notion of scale (company size) in mind throughout the analysis process is thus important to structural considerations. This issue of scale, therefore, is an important consideration during the analysis process of Company X's sociostructural system and consequently to the broader analysis of Company X as a potential HHPW. In summary, consequences of the bureaucratic system have favorable and unfavorable effects. Depersonalized or dehumanized approaches are the least effective, while individual ownership and control are the most beneficial approaches to executing work. In addition, the size of a workplace impacts the degree of bureaucracy.

2.2. ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE MODELS

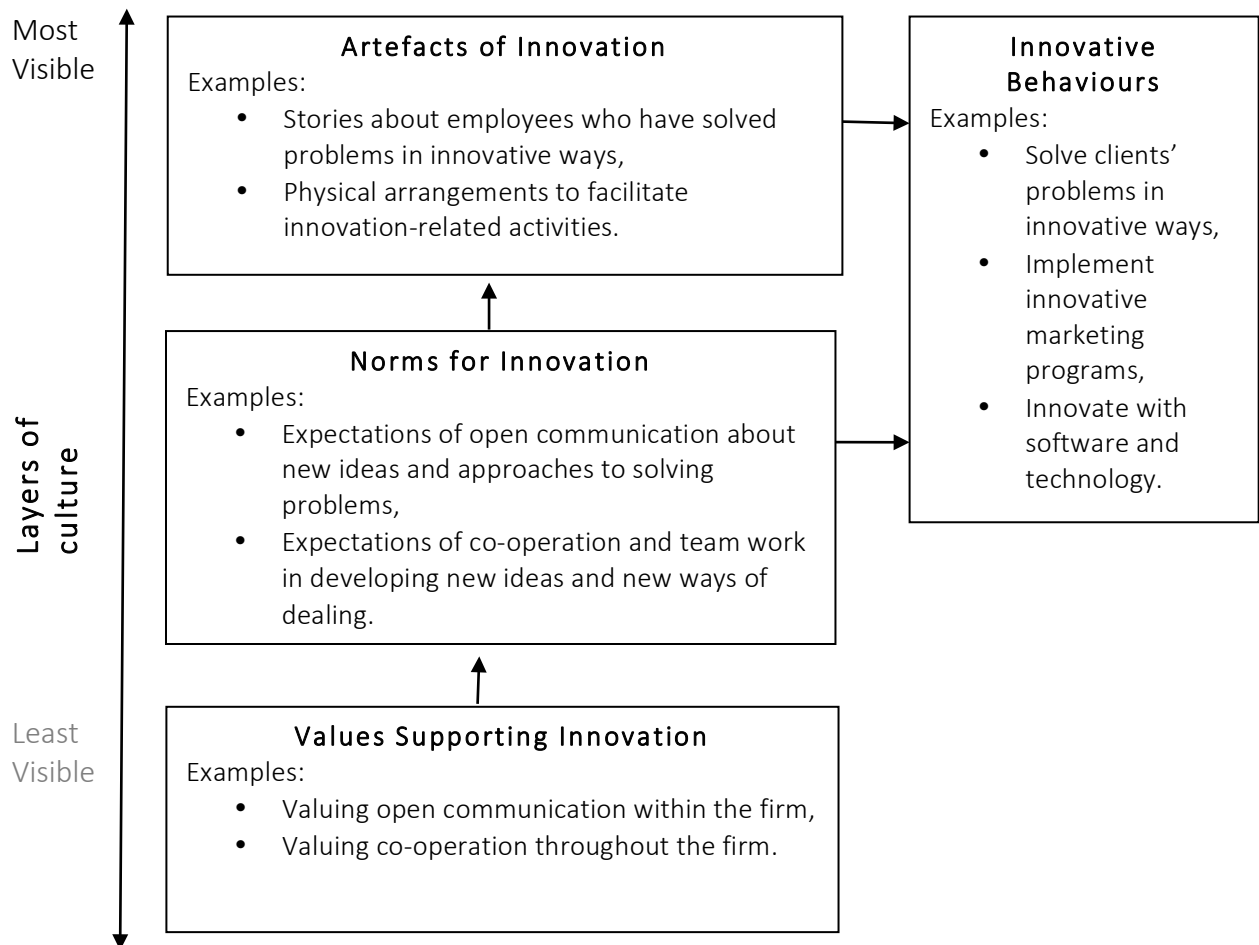
Now that organizational culture theory and key theorists including Durkheim, Mayo, and Weber have been outlined, several models created to help identify different types of organizational culture are discussed. These models are pertinent to this study on HHPWs,

and particularly Company X, as the types of organizational culture and their defining characteristics serve to pinpoint the type of culture at Company X. Organizational culture theory and the types of culture are used to understand the type of culture at Company X. For example, based on the current economy and workplace demands, and due to the constraints they impose on employees (i.e. to act quickly and independently to consumer demands) work environments with bureaucratic and hierarchical cultures are inappropriate. Therefore, they are not included in the organizational culture types below.

2.2.1 SCHEIN'S MODEL ON THE LAYERS OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Schein's (2004) research incorporates the idea that culture consists of a multitude of layers (see Figure 3). In the Schein (2004) model on organizational culture and innovation, the bottom layer of organizational culture represents the organization's values. Values serve as fundamental ideologies or philosophies that guide social behavior and roughly shape the practices of an organization. Values are also an implicit and indirect communication mechanism used by executive members to diffuse expectations among members of the organization. In other words, management uses organizational values to theoretically guide social behaviours and exercise change. Although, when it comes to the realization (or not) of company values, individuals do possess the power to resist or conform. This speaks to the influence of agency. That being said, social behaviours that are encouraged through the use of social pressure are known as norms. Norms are the middle layer of organizational culture and can appear in the form of expectations, for example the expectation to work collaboratively to find a solution to a problem. The outer, most visible layer consists of artifacts. Like norms, artifacts also stem from values, the difference being that artifacts "are manifestly evident in organizational symbols, rituals, language, and physical workplace arrangements" (Coote and Hogan 2014:1610). Therefore, this layer is the most visible layer. Schein's model of organizational culture is pertinent to this study as it provides insight into how culture is created and manifested or communicated.

Figure 4. Layers of an Organizational Culture that Supports Innovation



*Source: Coote and Hogan 2014:1610.

2.2.2 HANDY'S TYPES OF CULTURES WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS

Handy (1993) suggests that there are four types of culture: power, role, task-based, and person. Power cultures are web shaped. The center of the web is the point from which the majority of the power originates. In this culture, control resides in trusting employees – not in rules. While role culture is one where bureaucracy is present and processes, rules, rationality, and specialization are of outmost importance. Task-based culture, as suggested by its name, is a project- or task-based workplace where flexibility is present and control is

decentralized. A person culture is less relevant to the business domain and is, instead, typically found within family settings or small groups. Nonetheless, the main focus in person culture is the individual. In addition, broad characteristics are outlined based on the type of culture in question. Role culture is most predominant in larger organizations, which tend to be more predictable, routine environments and often have a greater dependency on elaborate and costly technology than do smaller organizations. However, power- and task-based cultures are typically prevalent in rapidly changing environments (i.e. quick technological change or organizational goal change). Handy's (1993) categorization of culture types outlines the four differing systems of organizational culture as well as the differing relations organizational culture types have with their surroundings. This information is helpful in order to identify the type of organizational culture adopted by Company X. Company X likely falls within the task-based culture type and role culture type, seeing that Company X is a large scale IT company that is required to frequently respond to change. However, a shortcoming with Handy's (1993) study is that he does not accept that an organization (and its subunits) may fall under multiple organizational culture types, and thus overlap.

2.2.3 CAMERON AND QUINN'S TYPES OF CULTURES WITHIN ORGANIZATIONS

Cameron and Quinn (2006) similarly outlined four types of cultures within organizations – clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy. However, they acknowledged that organizations can possess characteristics from all or several cultural types, although one type often dominates. They also developed a diagnostic questionnaire in order to identify a company's culture type. The clan culture type is similar to Handy's (1993) person culture type in that both are based in family-like environments. The difference being that clan culture is founded on mutual trust (like Handy's (1993) power culture), as well as common objectives, co-operation, consensus, participation, 'we-sense', and verbal communication. In addition, when it comes to HR, decisions are made based on the best interest of its members. Hierarchy culture is characterized by regulation, standardization, and control over employee behavior, specialization, performance-oriented, authority, impersonality,

and respect of formal roles. These characteristics and the culture as a whole have been associated with the negative financial performance of companies (Cameron and Quinn 2006). Poor performance is associated with the intense bureaucracy found within hierarchy culture because structural limitations are present that restrict the ability to address customer needs promptly. This relates to Weber's recognition of a dysfunction within the bureaucratic system. Moreover, this discussion of hierarchy culture demonstrates support for the HHPW model. Market cultures are attentive to the external environment and focus on efficiency, usefulness, and competitiveness. Generally, the more market and/or clan culture characteristics present within an organization, the less likely it is to practice hierarchical principles. Adhocracy cultures are lively, entrepreneurial-like, and creative work environments. According to Quinn and Cameron (2006:94), in this type of organizational culture "People stick their necks out and take risks. The leaders are considered to be innovators... Being a product or service leader is important. The organization encourages individual initiative and freedom". Since successful companies today capitalize on their unique company culture (Cameron and Quinn 2006), it is important to recognize which culture type applies to a specific organization and workplace and to continuously strive to ensure that the ideal and distinct company culture matches the actual culture. A final point that Cameron and Quinn (2006) address, and which is important in the examination of organizational culture, is subcultures. The researchers recognize the fact that subcultures may exist among organizations, and this is perfectly acceptable within a strong organizational culture, as long as the subcultures share the fundamental cultural characteristics of the organization.

Outlining these different types of cultures that an organization and its workplace can adopt adds to this study by providing varying frameworks to consider while analyzing the data on Company X. However, in order to address limitations and to avoid reproducing noted shortcomings when possible, it is essential – prior to analyzing the data – to consider criticisms pertaining to organizational culture theory.

2.3 CULTURE, STRUCTURE, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

As expressed earlier in this chapter, structure and culture are critical to the conceptualization of the organizational culture framework. Culture plays a pervasive role on an organization because an organization's culture establishes who are its appropriate employees, clients, dealers, and competitors and how the organization interacts with these members (Barney 1986). And structure provides a distinct platform for operations. Moreover, according to Barney (1986:656),

“[t]his conception of organizational culture blurs classical distinctions between an organization's culture and its structure and strategy (Tichy, 1983) because these attributes of a firm are direct manifestations of cultural assumptions about what business a firm is in and how it conducts that business.”

This quote highlights the interconnectivity between a firm's culture, structure and strategy – three concepts in need of consideration in this study. The strategy is the approach the organization adopts in order to achieve its goals, which in this study is argued to be the HHPW approach. This means the feasibility of Company X as being a HHPW must first and foremost be assessed. Organizational structure, meaning the “formal configuration between individuals and groups regarding the allocation of tasks, responsibilities, and authority within the organization” (Lunenburg 2012:1) also relates to organizational culture and therefore will be addressed in the study by briefly analyzing the hierarchical structure of the organization. This analysis is done to provide insight on how and with whom people, based on their position, tend to interact within the organization. Additionally, seeing that organizational culture serves as the method of communication within an organization, attention must be paid to how employees perceive the culture. To address this, particular attention is placed on how employees talk about company norms and artifacts, and how employees at Company X behave. The all-encompassing purpose is to address the question *how do employees within a workplace that practices HHPW features interpret their work?* Multiple other questions help answer the previous mentioned question: *if Company X displays HHPW features, does it always practice these HHPW features or are there*

circumstances that alter the implementation of HHPW practices? And if Company X displays HHPW features, what does this mean in terms of the Company X workforce? In other words, who are the people of Company X in terms of age, academic background, parental status, gender?

2.4 CRITIQUES

Organizational theory has been criticized for being too heavily focused on structural elements (Cameron and Quinn 2006; Coote and Hogan 2014). This study recognizes this weakness and explicitly seeks to explore the structure of the organization by taking into consideration the workplace, workforce, and company culture, meaning its members are of primary concern. By combining a structural and cultural analysis, the approach refrains from overemphasizing structure alone. Considering the opinions and stories of the people connected to organizations and the workplace is critical for two reasons. First, because “there is a tendency in the literature on workplace structures to *reify* organizations, that is, to discuss them as if they had a life of their own, independent of the actions and decisions of their members” (Krahn and Lowe 2002:221). ‘Reifying organizations’ creates oversight and is inaccurate. An organization’s members, referring here to its stakeholders, clients, and employees, heavily influence the environment.

It is often believed that management dictates the shape and actions of an organization, but that is not completely accurate. The organizational environment such as the economy, technology, and trends also shape the decisions of management. Additionally, internal factors such as the workforce influence the company culture and workplace. Therefore, this study is founded on the belief that management acquires a set of guiding principles from the environment, which jointly with the vision and desired direction of the organization (enacted through management), are used to form the organization – the organization’s product and/or services, structure, processes, strategies, ideological values and culture. However, it is essential to recognize that organizations’ members create and maintain the organization’s actual culture. They do this through their behaviour, actions and dialogue (artifact layer of organizational culture). Therefore, an organization is nothing

without its members who conceive it, create it, and re-create it. It is thus essential when studying organizations, and more specifically workplaces, to consider the people involved and the culture they uphold.

Another criticism pertains to ambiguity concerning how culture is created. Is it by the principles (values) of the organization that are put in place by senior management or is it the practices, that is the actions and behaviours of the 'subordinates' or mid- or front-line employees? If management claims that the organization 'achieves excellence', but the employees do not perform at a rate or level to support the definition of 'excellence', then is culture created, what culture, and are the organization's claims in line with reality? I argue that culture is in fact being created through these actions (or lack of action). However, the culture that is emerging is not necessarily the desired culture (i.e. excellence). In this type of situation where the ideological culture and actual culture are out of sync, there is a disconnect between management and employees, meaning the workplace is likely unhealthy. Furthermore, the health of the workplace and subsequently productivity levels are affected, and thus a HHPW is not present. On the contrary, when the culture of an organization is carried out by means of employees sharing the values, norms, and artifacts of management fluidity within the work environment is present. According to Healthy Organization theory, tasks are being accomplished when the members of the organization are on the same trajectory in the sense that they know what they're working towards and why; they are engaged and inspired; and the actions present within the organization match the desirable organizational culture, which is ideal (Grint 1998). In summary, as stated by Grint (1998:126), "organizations work best where members' and organizations' beliefs, actions, and goals are mutually compatible".

Finally, organizational culture theory has also been criticized because of the assumption that senior management's cultural views match those of reality (Cameron and Quinn 2006; Coote and Hogan 2014). In other words, it focuses on what modern company cultures *should* look like, rather than what the culture truly *is*. This disconnect will be avoided by exploring widespread perspectives among members and including employees at all levels and departments within the workplace. However, management does control who

enters the organization, therefore to a certain extent they can manage the culture by hiring a specific type of person with particular values. Now that organizational culture theory has been defined, key theorists' contributions explored, and multiple organizational culture models outlined, as well as criticisms discussed, details into the research process – the methodology – will now be outlined.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 METHODOLOGY – THE CASE STUDY DEFINED

The method of inquiry adopted for this study is the case study approach. The case study as a methodology is controversial. Creswell (2013:73) determined that some researchers (i.e. Stake 2005) do not consider the case study to be a methodology but instead refer to it as a “choice of what is to be studied (i.e. a case within a **bounded system**)”. While other researchers view the case study “as a strategy of inquiry, a methodology, or a comprehensive research strategy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003)” (Creswell 2013:73). For the purpose of this study, the case study approach is considered a methodology and not simply a selected case to study.

A case study is defined as “a research strategy that focuses on one case (an individual, a group, an organization, and so on) within its social context at one point in time, even if that one time spans months or years” (Adler and Clark 2008:489). In this particular scenario, the focus of the research is on a specific organization (referred to herein as “Company X”) over approximately a one-year period. Creswell’s (2013:73) definition of the case study approach additionally includes the use of “multiple sources of information” in order to obtain “in-depth data”. Although this study uses interviews as the primary source of data collection, other sources of information are used. They include the organization’s website (particularly the “About Us” and career section), newspaper and magazine articles, observations obtained while touring the headquarters, content from a municipal-run workshop open to the public where a member from Company X presented on the company’s culture, and other sources brought to light during the interview process (i.e. communication tools used at the company). All of these sources together provide a comprehensive picture of the case, and subsequently on cultural and structural dynamics that exist within the organization.

More specifically, an *instrumental case study* is performed. An instrumental case study occurs when “the researcher focuses on an issue or concern, and then selects

one bounded case to illustrate this issue” (Creswell 2013:74). Company X was purposefully selected due to it being a high-tech company that is publicly recognized as having a unique and highly sought after company culture. Due to the company’s high profile, it was specifically chosen. According to Grandy (2010:474) “[i]n an instrumental case study the case itself is secondary to understanding a particular phenomenon”. This is because the case is used as a tool to explore the relevant theory. In this study, the main focus is on the employees within a workplace that displays HHPW qualities – not specifically Company X. Rather Company X is used as a point of inquiry into the employee experience.

The name, Company X, is fictional. The decision to conceal the name of the organization, location, along with the names of participants and their specific job title is implemented to protect the anonymity and privacy of the parties involved. In the case of participants, protecting them is of even greater concern in order to minimize the risk of social repercussions particularly within the organization.

Before going into detail on how the study was conducted, an overview of the selected case is outlined. Understanding the selected case is instrumental for a comprehensive examination of the culture and structure to occur. In addition, links between the case and the HHPW model are discussed in order to demonstrate relevance between the two. It is importance to demonstrate the link, as it provides justification for the use of this particular case.

3.2 THE CASE: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF COMPANY X

Company X is a North American computer software company. The organization has four offices – all located in major cities. The exact number of employees at Company X was difficult to identify. Interviewee responses varied on the matter, which may be attributed to a lack of communication or to continual company growth meaning the numbers are consistently changing. However, according to one employee at Company X, the head office houses the majority of employees (n≈425). The three other offices are newer and have anywhere from 25 to 100 employees. In total, there are 500

employees at Company X, according to a major local newspaper² article about Company X's new "creative" headquarters and "booming business". Although, the number of employees is likely growing as there have been continual job postings for all three offices posted on the company website throughout the two years since Company X has been the subject of examination. Approximately 70% of the employees are men and 30% are women, says an employee (Neil³). Again according to an employee, some staff members are specifically hired to work remotely (n≈140) either part-time (20%) or full-time (80%). These remote employees are located in North America or Europe, and work as Developers or in a Customer Service Representative capacity, meaning they answer inquiries over the phone or by e-mail or Internet chat.

The company culture is described on the organization's website as a supportive fast-paced environment that encourages innovation, creativity, risk taking, ownership of projects, learning from mistakes and growth⁴. In a Canadian entrepreneurial magazine, an interview with Company X's Chief Platform Officer (CPO), the CPO claims the organization is meritocratic explaining that merit is analyzed based on an internal tracking system composed of queries and answers. The employees who are the most "helpful" and "engaged" based on the metrics from the tracking system receive bonuses. The CPO also makes reference to how meritocratic systems are atypical within technology companies and how the company is "not top down" but rather "peer to peer", insinuating a flattened hierarchical structure. An analysis of the organization's culture and structure will be discussed in further detail in the Results and Discussion chapters.

According to multiple media sources⁵, the company has seen high levels of financial success. Financial success is defined by these sources in a variety of ways. Among these definitions and examples of financial success is the company's valuation

² The name of the local newspaper as well as other media sources are concealed in order to refrain from providing identifying characteristics pertaining to the location of the company.

³ Neil is a Team Lead. For more details see the Participant Overview in the Appendix.

⁴ A direct quote from the website is avoided intentionally to avoid compromising the company.

⁵ The names of the sources are not given to protect the anonymity of Company X.

as a \$1 billion enterprise. According to a local newspaper article, Company X is now part of the prestigious 'unicorn club'. Fortune Magazine estimates the Club includes 80 technology companies and calls it an "exclusive" club including high rolling organizations like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. The organization is also claimed to be experiencing consistent growth as the company has been doubling its employee count every year for the past four years, according to multiple newspaper and magazine articles.

Workplace health promotion is supported by the workplace perks and benefits plan offered by the organization, which extends beyond Health and Dental insurance benefits. Some of the company perks include free meals daily, a gym membership allowance plus an additional sports allowance, free yoga classes at work, house-cleaning services, share options, seventeen weeks off for maternity and parental leave, and free massage services onsite.

In summary, according to a multitude of media sources⁶, the company's website, and employees, Company X is a fitting organization for the exploration into the HHPW model and more specifically into the experience of employees within this type of workplace. Now that an overview of the case used for this study has been established, the exact method of inquiry is outlined. To do this first the sampling frame is discussed followed by the primary source of data collection – semi-structured interviews. Then additional sources of information are outlined. Finishing with a synopsis of the data analysis process.

3.3 THE SAMPLE

The study includes prospective, present, and past employees at Company X in the sampling frame. *Prospective employees*, for the purpose of this study, are defined as individuals who have applied to the organization and participated in a minimum of one

⁶ In order to protect the name and anonymity of Company X, the name of the media sources are not disclosed. Eight media sources were consulted and the type of media sources included: newspaper articles, news segments, magazine articles, and weblogs from third party companies within the industry.

interview but were not selected for the position. *Present employees* are defined as employees who work full time at the organization. This group consists of members from a variety of departments and a variety of positions and ranks. Thus, the sample includes employee perspectives from a range of positions such as Support Staff roles to Co-founder. *Past employees* consist of employees who no longer work for the organization. The view of past employees is a critical consideration as it exposes reasons for leaving the company and how the parting was handled by the organization. In addition, contract employees are included although they can fall within a subcategory of current or past employees depending on their current work activity. *Contract employees* are those who are not permanent employees of the organization and therefore, can also be referred to as *Contingent Employees*. All three perspectives are important, seeing that the perception of present employees alone may be tainted by their current relationship with the organization (i.e. they may have a more positive perception than a past employee). In addition, the perspective of prospective employees is critical as it provides insight into the hiring process exposing structural elements of the organization, while past employees shed light on the termination process in addition to what it is like to work there. The recruitment method used will be discussed in detail in the “Recruitment of Interviewees” section.

In this study, the sample consists of twelve participants total ($n=12$). According to Mongeau (2011), the average is seven to twelve interview participants for a Master’s level qualitative research project. The sample consists of six present employees ($n=6$); two contract employees ($n=2$), two past employees ($n=2$), and two prospective employees ($n=2$). It is important to mention that one contract employee interviewed continues to work for the company on a weekly basis. This means that this interviewee classifies as a contract employee within the present employee category. The other contract employee has held multiple contracts in the past but has not done any contract work for the company in the past year. Therefore, the latter contract employee can be considered as a past employee as well as a contract employee. However, for simplicity sake neither contractor is included in the respective present or past employee sample numbers.

The gender distribution includes four women (n=4) and eight men (n=8). Among the current employees interviewed, two are women and four are men. An equal proportion of contract employees were men and women. Both past employees are men, while both prospective employees interviewed are women.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION - PRIMARY SOURCE: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews were conducted as the primary source of data. This qualitative approach is the most appropriate method as it allows in-depth exploratory research into the work atmosphere and design. In semi-structured interviews, the interviewer may use a list of questions or an interview guide to provide some structure and to help ensure that all discussion topics are covered (Adler and Clark 2008). Yet this method also provides flexibility to pursue pertinent conversation in a natural and more fluid manner than structured interviews. Thereby, semi-structured interviews allow for deep conversation, which is crucial for a thorough understanding of the structure of the organization.

Listening to the respondent's verbal and nonverbal cues is critical for effective interviewing (Adler and Clark 2008). Therefore, particular care and attention was placed on the manner in which the interviews were conducted. An audio recorder was used during the interviews to allow the interviewer to focus on the interview and to develop coherent and fluid follow-up questions. All efforts were made to make interviewees feel comfortable and at ease. This was done in order to create a positive environment whereby interviewees felt comfortable to openly share information.

3.4.1 RECRUITMENT OF INTERVIEWEES

Two forms of participant recruitment strategies were adopted. The first was to recruit, specifically prospective employees, through snowball sampling. The researcher recognizes that social pressures are a risk with snowball sampling. Therefore, all efforts to minimize this risk and to respect the decisions of individuals were practiced. The researcher simply mentioned to present employee participants (known here as the "Informant") that if

he or she knew of anyone who has participated in the application process (known here as the “Applicant”) and who may be interested in participating in the study to please share the research project with the prospective Applicant, if the Informant feels comfortable. This allows Informants to make introductions if desired. During this time, the Informants shared the researcher’s contact information with the Applicant. This allows for the Applicant to privately contact the researcher only if the Applicant wishes to do so. This approach to snowball sampling ensures that everyone involved feels comfortable and unpressured.

The second method of recruitment applies to present and past employees. An online public database for professionals, called LinkedIn, was used. According to the LinkedIn website, “LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking service” whereby the public willingly creates a professional profile. This tool for participant recruitment was ideal as it is a voluntary and public site. Furthermore, a large proportion of Company X employees have a LinkedIn profile. When searching the company on the LinkedIn website, 456 results were found under “people who work at [Company X]”. The company had approximately 500 employees at the time the research project commenced. This means that a large proportion of Company X employees were reachable using this recruitment technique. When recruiting past employees, 172 results were generated for “people who used to work at Company X”. Therefore, LinkedIn serves as a comprehensive database. For this reason, an “InMail” message, meaning a private message, was sent to these two groups requesting their participation (see Appendix C).

3.4.2 INTERVIEW LOCATION

The location of the interview is important in order for the interviewee to feel at ease. In order to find a comfortable location for each participant, the locations varied. Some interviews were conducted in a café (n=6). Two interviews took place at the university (n=2). One interview took place over Skype (n=1), and some interviews were conducted at the company headquarters (n=3). It is important to mention that when interviewees requested that the interview take place at their office, interviewees were advised prior to the interview that conducting it on premise might jeopardize their anonymity in the study.

Despite risking exposing their anonymity, several participants insisted the interview take place onsite.

3.4.3 INTERVIEW DURATION

The semi-structured interviews varied substantially in duration, which is typical according to Adler and Clark (2008). The longest interview was 74 minutes, while the shortest lasted 15 minutes. The average interview lasted 45 minutes.

3.4.4 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Before each interview, a tentative list of interview questions was created. The interview guide was tailored to the interviewee based on the interviewees' connection to the organization (i.e. past, present, or prospective employee; see Appendix). The structure of the interview started with general background information about the individual and then transitioned into how the individual got involved with Company X. The midsection of the interview elaborated on the interviewee's perception of the organization with particular attention placed on company structure, culture, and processes. For prospective employees, particular attention was placed on the hiring process. For present employees the questions were more widespread. Questions pertained to the individuals' experience joining the company, their role within the company, the company culture, their work-life relationship, and the company in relation to community involvement. For past employees, questions were similar to those asked of current employees. Although, additional questions were posed such as "Why did you leave? What is your relationship with Company X like now?" and "What are you currently doing for work?"

3.5 DATA COLLECTION: SECONDARY SOURCES

As mentioned earlier, additional sources of information were consulted in the study. These other sources include the organization's website (particularly the "About Us" and "Career" sections), newspaper and magazine articles, researcher observations obtained while touring the headquarters on three separate occasions, content from a public

workshop where a member of Company X presented on the company's culture, attendance to a Company X-run event that was open to the public, and other sources brought to light through the interview process (i.e. consulting communication tools used by company X). These sources speak to the company culture and structure. They provide insight into how the company sees itself (i.e. published company values on the company website) and how the company is perceived in the community by the media, the company's clients, and other organizations such as the City (i.e. municipally held workshop). When combined, these sources provide a comprehensive picture of the case, and subsequently on existing structural and cultural dynamics.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Based on the review of the literature, based on conducting interviews, as well as on the objective of the study, I knew that certain variables in particular needed to be analyzed from the onset. These variables included: a) general demographic information (i.e. age, gender, etc.) in order to know who are the people in the study and more importantly at Company X, b) sociostructural variables, specifically hierarchy within the workplace, policies (i.e. rules and regulation, employee handbook, etc.), and processes (i.e. hiring, firing, recruitment, etc.), and c) the culture and values within the workplace (i.e. innovation, ownership, timeliness, performance, etc.). The demographic analysis speaks to the type of person the company hires. The information answers the question *if Company X displays HHPW features, what does this mean in terms of the Company X workforce?* The sociostructural analysis reveals information regarding the formal organization of the company. While, the cultural analysis uncovers values, norms, and behaviours within the organization, which extend beyond those published on the company website. The values that are uncovered through discussions with Company X members are more accurate and telling than those the organization publishes about what it is truly like to work at a company that exemplifies HHPW characteristics. This is because they are current, detailed, and not an ideology of who or what the company thinks it is but rather are an accurate reflection of the workplace, based on its members. These demographic, sociostructural, and cultural

variables provide insight on what it means to work for a company that exemplifies HHPW characteristics. It is important to acknowledge that I maintain throughout this study that sociostructural and cultural features are symbiotic, meaning the two issues are distinct but exist side-by-side within the workplace. Before starting to explore these variables the question *does Company X in fact practice HHPW characteristics?* requires consideration. Therefore, the HHPW principles and practices were consulted and during the data accumulation process particular attention was placed on practices that helped to address this question. Once an examination of Company X as a HHPW is conducted, the following question is addressed: *if Company X displays HHPW qualities, does it always practice HHPW principles or are there circumstances that alter the implementation of HHPW practices?* Any noted exceptions or circumstances to HHPW practices were coded.

3.6.1 CODING INTERVIEWS

The data analysis was conducted using the computer software program NVivo. First, all the electronic data sources were uploaded to NVivo. For sources that were not in electronic format such as books and objects, a note about these external sources was made in NVivo to ensure they were not overlooked while coding. Then the actual coding process began. All the documents were read in detail and I coded relevant words and sentences based on themes. Each interview transcript was read-over and coded in detail and analytic notes were written throughout this process as connections between the material emerged. Alternative codes were used. For example, one principle of HHPWs is inclusive leadership. So indicators of inclusivity, as well as exclusivity (the opposite code), were coded. An example of inclusivity is when Neil reported that he was consulted due to his experience working nights when the company was seeking ways to relieve stress for shift workers. Additionally, exclusive leadership indicators were coded as such. An example of this is when Karl expressed his frustration about how he was never asked what he thought about a new member of the team before the member received full-time status.

3.6.2 OPERATIONALIZING VARIABLES

Based on the review of the literature, general concepts or themes were known prior to the analysis process. These themes are used as a starting point for the analysis process. However, new themes constantly emerge and themes that were initially perceived as important can, in hindsight, be deemed irrelevant to this specific study. One concept that is heavily considered throughout the analysis process is healthy organizational principles, which according to Lowe (2010a) include: *a vibrant workplace, inspired employees, a positive culture, and inclusive leadership*. A *vibrant workplace* extends beyond health and safety and includes aspects that promote a physical, psychological, and emotional healthy environment. Here, relationships and the quality of relationships are noted. Company support to improve the employee experience and the ability of employees to perform their job is important. Other aspects included within a vibrant workplace are elements such as respect, autonomy, feedback and overall communication, recognition, goals and accomplishments, and engagement. In addition, *inspired employees* are a main theme. Examples of this relate to stories of employees feeling inspired – inspired to learn, collaborate, teach others, and apply what they know. These stories can pertain to co-workers, customers, or community members. Inspired employees also feel they have a purpose within the company – a sense of commitment or a stake in the overall organization. Indicators of a *positive culture* include trust, respect, fairness, integrity, strong communication, sense of community at work, and so on. While *inclusive leadership* means that employees are encouraged to take the lead and have the resources and permission to implement change. Inclusive leadership also means that employees have the ability to improve the workplace and that the values of the organization are shared, or lived, by the employees. These employees have the ability to act in what they believe to be the best interest of clients, insinuating there is a high level of trust present. Other themes include *social responsibility* displayed by the organization. For example, this can include any type of community involvement – philanthropy work, volunteering, financial contributions to a charity, etc.

Organizational structure is an overarching concept throughout this study. James and Jones (1976:76) define organizational structure as “the enduring characteristics of an organization reflected by the distribution of units and positions within the organization and their systematic relationships to each other”. In other words, the concept relates to how organizations are constructed and how subsystems or “units” within the organization are methodologically connected to the fundamental goal of the organization. Ultimately, the purpose of organizational structure is for action or transformation to ensue and this transformation occurs when “energetic inputs” are present resulting in “energetic outputs” (James and Jones 1976). These “inputs” and “outputs” can appear in a multitude of forms such as events, technology, social roles, and objectives. Organizational structure is dependent on and connected to these elements thus making the structure dynamic. In addition, cooperation among subsystems or organizational units is a key principle for an effective organizational structure and each subsystem requires a set of functions (Katz and Kahn 1966). The function or purpose of each subsystem is what dictates the necessary structural processes, and specific mechanisms execute the processes. Therefore, each subsystem or department is unique. Subsystems emerge as organizations evolve. According to James and Jones (1976:83), initially an organizations structure is “primitive”, meaning people with similar needs interact in order to accomplish tasks. Then the organization evolves into a maintainable and stable managerial structure. While the final evolutionary stage of an organization occurs when “the development of supportive structures for interaction with the environment and adaptive structures for long term change and survival” are formed. These evolutionary stages expose the importance of the size of the organization (and its subsystems) when studying structure. In their review of the literature on the matter, James and Jones (1976) outline six other relevant dimensions of structure. According to the authors, another structural measure to consider other than size is the configuration of the organization, which includes the shape (hierarchy), the prevalence and form of control, and the communication structure. A third dimension is how decisions are made, meaning is it a centralized or decentralized process (this relates to the four different culture types outlined in the theoretical framework). Fourthly, formalization, meaning how

jobs and processes are defined, is outlined as an important consideration of structure. Fifthly, specialization is a dimension of structure worth reflection. Specialization relates to the division of labour in order to promote organizational functionality. Standardization, meaning how tasks are normalized with specific processes and procedures, is the sixth dimension outlined and the final proposed factor to consider while exploring the notion of structure is interdependence. By interdependence James and Jones (1976:82) are referring to the “degree of task interdependence (Indik, 1968) and autonomy with respect to intraorganizational functions (Sells, 1963)”. As the employees talked about their experience, these seven dimensions and their effects on members were kept in mind.

Performance is a key structural issue. In this study, the interest in the concept of performance pertains to employees, meaning the emphasis is on employee performance (rather than organizational performance). Examples of employee performance can include performance reviews or other performance metrics, which serve to evaluate an employee’s productivity levels.

The *design* of the workplace is another consideration, as it reveals information about the cultural system. For example, the physical layout of the workplace may impede or improve productivity. It may affect the relationship between senior management and other employees if management has a private office, while other employees do not, contributing to whether people feel valued within the organization. Subsequently, it may affect the culture or team atmosphere.

The *work-life relationship* is another concept of interest while coding data. This is operationalized based on each interviewee’s perception because every individual may have a different idea of what constitutes “work”, what constitutes “life”, and where the divide is drawn between the two (if any). Some people may see these two concepts as completely separate (i.e. someone who does not socialize at all with people from work outside of work). Others may see no difference between the two (i.e. their work is their life). Therefore, how employees talk about this concept depends on their interpretation of the meaning. This is of interest to the study because it provides insights on the work-life intersect and how issues (i.e. stress, burnout, work overload, etc.) are handled and

interpreted. This reveals information pertaining to the culture as well as to the sociostructural system.

When answers to these themes emerge, an understanding of the relationship, meaning, that is, how these elements interact and shape the experience of employees within the workplace, unfold. This reveals structural and cultural issues within the workplace, which serve to address the question *what does working for an organization that displays HHPW qualities mean to its members?* Now, the results from the data will be discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

To review, the focus of this study is to address the question *what does working for a company that displays HHPW qualities mean to its members?* Organizational culture, meaning the cultural and sociostructural systems, are key features that help in the exploration of this question. The cultural system at Company X provides meaning for social actions and standards for social behaviours (social norms; Allaire and Firsirotu 1984) whereas the sociostructural system exposes social roles and processes within the workplace. To recall, in this study I argue that a reciprocal relationship between culture and sociostructure exists and that the two features exist side by side in an organization and a workplace.

This chapter starts by outlining findings pertaining to the question *does Company X display HHPW qualities?* In order to answer this question, HHPW principles and practices as well as findings from the data analysis process are outlined. Exemplifying the HHPW practices at Company X reveals HHPW qualities. After addressing the HHPW principles, practices, and examples provided by employees, the chapter is then divided into two sections. The first examines the sociostructural system through the perspective of Company X members, meaning the structure (i.e. hierarchy and positions), policies (i.e. rules and regulations), processes (hiring, firing, selection), and strategies (i.e. recruitment). The second section examines the cultural system at Company X as outlined by employees (i.e. innovation, respect, failure). These two sections together help to address the question *does Company X always practice HHPW principles or are there circumstances that alter the implementation of HHPW practices?* To finalize, the information obtained as a whole in this chapter is used to answer the question *what does working for an organization that displays HHPW qualities mean to its members?*

4.1 DOES COMPANY X DISPLAY HHPW QUALITIES?

In order to address the question *does Company X display HHPW qualities?* examples of HHPW characteristics from the data are outlined. Posthuma et al.'s (2013) list on high-

performance work practices was consulted and served as a key resource for categorizing examples of principles found at Company X that support the HHPW model. Interviewees from Company X indirectly spoke about eight of the HHPW categories. The categories spoken about include: 1) Compensation and Benefits, 2) Job and Work Design, 3) Training and Development, 4) Recruiting and Selection, 5) Employee Relations, 6) Communication, 7) Performance Management and Appraisal, and 8) Promotions.

Tables 3 through 10 below each outline one of the eight HHPW principles. Underneath the principle, several HHPW practices are noted. To the right of the principle and practices are related examples drawn from the data. The tables provide the reader with a concise perspective of what members of the organization have to say about the subject matter. After the examination of the principles, practices, and related examples, which display HHPW qualities at Company X, the cultural and sociostructural systems at Company X are discussed through the perception of its members.

Table 3. Examples of Compensation and Benefits Practices at Company X

Compensation and Benefits	
Practices	Examples
Comprehensive Benefits	Perks and Benefits include: Health, Vision and Dental Insurance, house cleaning services, free catered meals, sports allowance, free laptops, etc.
Bonuses or Cash for Performance	Bonuses are awarded based on merit. There is a “unique bonus structure, wherein literally every staffer is eligible for monthly bonuses based not on rank or job title but on how helpful they are to customers, partners and fellow workers”. The company uses “an internal, Twitter-like communication platform...that allows employees to talk to one another about their projects,

triumphs and tribulations. Data from [the platform] is tabulated monthly, and bonuses are distributed to those who've been the most engaged and helpful" (as stated by a Company X employee in a media source⁷).

Employee stock option –
ownership

Interviewees had this to say about Stock Options: "everyone gets stock options" (Craig). "I own Options. So once they [the company] go public, I get to buy that many stocks" (Neil). "I'm worth about a half a million in terms of stocks" (Karl).

Table 3 above outlines compensation and benefits practices and examples from the data. Specifically, examples pertaining to the comprehensive benefits, bonuses or cash for performance, and stock option are outlined. This information serves two purposes. First off, it is included to display HHPW qualities noted at Company X. Secondly, it provides the reader with a more comprehensive understanding regarding how employees within the organization are treated. Now a look at the job and work design is considered.

Table 4. Examples of Job and Work Design Practices at Company X

Job and Work Design	
Practices	Examples
Project or Other Temporary Work Teams/Job Rotation/Cross Functional Utilization	According to a quote from an employee, Company X does not have a rigid hierarchy, which allows for all employees to participate in, lead, or contribute to a project as much they want (company website).

⁷ The media source details are not referenced in order to protect the anonymity of Company X.

When an interviewee was asked about the size of his team, he explained there was an abnormality in the size because some of his colleagues “They’re on loan to another team” (Bobby).

Self-Managed Work
Teams (Quality
Circles)

An interviewee describes the design of the office space as being comprised of Pods, which are “rooms that typically have 6 to 10 people... it’s usually one product team that is working from one of these Pods. The team is comprised of a product manager, a developers, designers, and so on. [They] All work on the same project” (Craig).

The culture is described as “a culture of peers giving each other that feedback” (Craig).

When mistakes occur the team works together to rectify the issue and the team learns from the experience as a group (Karl).

Greater Discretion and
Autonomy

“People in their product team work more or less autonomously, on their own...” (Craig)

“If there wasn’t a high level of trust then nobody would get anything done. You wouldn’t have access to everything you need” (Bobby).

“There’s a lot of autonomy in our employees” (Robin)

“I started a conference this year...I organized a team and got Company X to support it. We have 15 female technologists – people who came in to speak, run workshops and sit on a panel about what they know best and it was a real success.

Company X gave me full autonomy to roll with that” (Robin).

A Contract Employee doing manual labour talks about being issued keys to the building saying “he [the boss] trusted us”. He then talks about the verbal agreement between the company and the contractor saying he would quote the number of hours required to complete the requested work and “They [Company X] never questioned us”. “They’re looking for somebody who can think outside the box and be autonomous” (Patricia).

Flexible Work Schedule

“I got in around 11:00am and then leave around 6:00pm or so depending on what time I get in sometimes 7:00pm...I work Monday to Friday. Weekends...sometimes...When I have to get work done, I’m obviously at the office but...generally, over the year the average work week is about 35 hours a week sometimes it’s 60 hours other times it’s 20 hours. So, it varies. You balance it out over the year. Keeping in mind that at the end of the year you’re going to be hit pretty hard the last 3 months just because that’s our busiest time” (Bobby).

“my schedule is all over the place. My job is unique at Company X...So, I’m usually in the office from 11:00am to 5:00pm and before bed I’m online for a couple hours just to be with my team” (Neil).

“Every day is really really different...I worked out this

morning... 'til 10:00am...because it works best for my day today and I'll stay later today". She goes on to say, "some weeks I work really hard. Some weeks I work a lot a lot of hours and then others, that gives me the flexibility to take vacation whenever I need it. And so, it's really individual. Like I, I'm really sometimes into the projects that I'm on. So, like I'll stay for 12 hours, and then other weeks I have everything under control, and I'll have a busy social life and I'll leave when I have to leave" (Robin).

A Past Employee said this about his schedule "it was a fairly good balance but there was also voluntary overtime. People just, sometimes just because they felt like doing it. But other times because they had to meet a project deadline" (Karl).

"...We all expect someone not to sit in traffic for 45 minutes. Avoid that and then just stay 45 minutes...we're pretty flexible in that sense" (Ryan).

"[A]ll we can ask... employees is that they give us their most productive hours whether that's five really productive hours or three really productive hours whatever (Robin).

According to interview participants' claims summarized in Table 4, the emphasis at Company X is on collaboration. There is support for flexible and temporary work projects. The Pod design of the office space supports self-management by having teammates and a Team Lead who have all the necessary skillsets together in a defined space. Moreover, the quotes express the need for employees to be autonomous and "think outside the box",

meaning be self-sufficient, creative and innovative. Additionally, interviewees from a multitude of departments (i.e. Customer support team and the recruitment team) described their work schedule in a flexible manner. However, their schedule is dependent on their workload. When “they had to meet project deadlines”, the workload dictated their schedule and sometimes meant “volunteer overtime” (Karl). These findings speak to the job and work design at Company X. Now training and development practices at Company X are considered.

Table 5. Examples of Training and Development Practices at Company X

Training and Development	
Practices	Examples
Training Extensiveness	“We really want to invest in our talent and think of the long term” (Craig). Company X provides a yearly “Professional Development Budget” that is used to attend conferences, enroll in classes, etc. (Ryan).
Use of Training to Improve Performance	Company X requires that employees develop or acquire skills while creating new products or services during what is called Creative Days⁸. This 48-hour event occurs “every three months...[and] at the end of the Creative Days, we present our projects in front of the whole company” (Bobby) The company has “a collaboration with Google...[whereby] our engineers will work with some of theirs...They’re very useful to see what’s coming out and like what new tools they’re

⁸ The actual name has been changed to protect the anonymity of the company.

developing for Developers” (Bobby)

Management and Executives receive special training from executive coaches who “coach Management to become better managers” (Neil). There is also monthly training for Management that is “with all the Managers, and their off site...and they’ll work on...long-term strategies” (Robin). For example, a seminar on “how to have those tough conversations” was offered (Neil).

New Employee Training and Orientation

Company X has a game-like application that is comprised of challenges and serves as a tool to help new employees socialize, learn about the company culture, and essentially helps to familiarize employees with the company (Bobby). Seasoned employees act as mentors and train incoming employees (Andrea). “Everyone that’s come after me, I help to train and get up to speed” (Robin).

Table 5 outlines training and development opportunities for employees. The company is said to invest in their employees by providing funding for training and development initiatives. Training and development programs consist of Creative Days, collaborations with other high-tech companies, conferences, and classes. These events require employees to be smart, creative and fast workers, especially in the case of Creative Days where employees have 48 hours to develop an idea. Additionally, mentorship opportunities among employees exist. Now recruitment and selection practices will be mentioned in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Examples of Recruiting and Selection Practices at Company X

Recruiting and Selection	
Practices	Examples
Hiring Selectivity or Low Selection Ratio	Company X gets “thousands and thousands of applicants” (Andrea). About 1% of applicants are hired (Craig).
Multiple Tools Used to Screen Applicants	Typically, the hiring process starts with an initial screening interview, which takes place over the phone. Then candidates go through multiple interviews (approximately eight). In the first on-site interview, candidates are given a tour of the office. They are asked to teach the interviewer(s) something related to the position. Candidates shadow employees, answer questionnaires, and may be given “homework” (Andrea). Towards the end, “...they bring you through this whole day at Company X and kind of throw you to the wolves” (Andrea). This process can last around “2 months” (Andrea, Robin). The interview process is “intense and very long” (Andrea).
Planning Selection Processes and Staffing	“It [the procedures] depends what role we are looking for. There is quite a bit of process” (Craig). A tracking system called Lever is used to share, substantiate, and justify a Company X Recruiter’s ratings of candidates in order to transform the interaction into measurable variables (Robin). Talent Scouts are “gate keepers” (Robin).

*The hiring process for contract employees is informal
– no contract (see page 89-99).

Matching Candidates to
Firm Strategy

A Current Employee says, “they make sure you’re doing the job that’s right for you...So the eight interviews can sure let people say, “okay this isn’t for me”. If you can’t get through the interviews, you’re not right for the job...They want me to be in the best role for me so that the company strives...” (Andrea)

Innovative Recruiting
Practices

A current job posting on the company website says “Tweet us”, “Send us a video”. Another posting states, “Send us a unique cover letter. No doubt we'll fall asleep at the sight of, "To whom it may concern" as would our customers”. “Be creative – make us a video, write us a blog post, or send us a carrier pigeon”.

Company X is also working on an application process entitled “Throw Out Your Resume”, which is a process tailored towards new graduates (Neil).

Based on the response from interviewees, the recruiting and selection process is laborious, elaborate, and demanding. It is taxing in terms of time requirements (eight interviews over a two-month period) as well as mentally (shadow employees, answer questionnaires, do homework, teach someone something). Therefore, the recruitment and selection of employees is not taken lightly and considerable thought and assessment goes into the hiring process. However, this is not the case for contract employees.

Table 7. Examples of Employee Relations Practices at Company X

Employee Relations	
Practices	Examples
Job Security/Emphasis on Permanent Jobs	The probation period is going to be eliminated (Neil). “People leave the company are often personal. Rarely are they fired” (Craig).
Low Status Differentials	“Everyone was very equal...There wasn’t a lot of hierarchy in terms of attitudes in their workplace in their offices in, the way they dressed, in the way they moved around, the way they talked to you” (Curtis).
Social and Family Events and Policies	“We paid for the vacation for everyone to go ski there with their spouses,” (Craig). “There's a great parental leave credit...for every kid under the age of five you get a bonus each year” (Robin). The allowance for perks (i.e. the sports allowance) increases if an employee is married, and with child/ren.

Table 7 outlines information about employee relations at Company X. Interviewees report feelings of equality at work. In addition, perks and benefits extend beyond the employees to their loved ones also as demonstrated by the free ski trip and the increase in sporting benefits to family members. It was also noted that employees generally leave the company for personal reasons, insinuating that job security is prevalent. The company is in the process of making job security more secure in the sense that the initial probation period is going to be revoked. However, employees are still put on probation when performance is lacking. Now, communication practices are outlined in Table 8.

Table 8. Examples of Communication Practices at Company X

Communication	
Practices	Examples
Employees Receive Market, Firm Performance, or Strategic Information	"I'm not sure what numbers I'm allowed to share" (Karl, Ryan) or disclose for example when talking about the company evaluation or number of clients.
Employee Input and Suggestion Processes	An internal Application is used where employee's "vote-up" topics of interest that are later discussed at <i>Ask Me Anything</i> sessions (AMAs; Neil). Employees are consulted for their opinion on future events and hiring (i.e. "What do you think of him?" (Mika)). The consultation does not guarantee the suggestion of employees will be followed (i.e. Karl gave negative reviews of a new hire, the new hire remained with the company following his probation period "because he had essential skills that were difficult to find" (Karl). "They've [management] gotten really good at listening to their staff". I was asked "as a person that used to work overnights, how do you think we can make this better for the people who are doing it now?" (Mika).
Frequent/Regular Meetings with Employees	"The Executive Team is excellent at sharing. They make that a priority. They're working on how they see things rolling out and they're communicating that

openly to the company. They share what's going on by holding weekly AMAs...that are streamed online to our other offices and remote staff" (Ryan).

One-on-Ones: Meetings between the Team Lead and a Team member. The frequency varies depending on each employee's needs (i.e. the amount of time with the company – newer employees meet more regularly (i.e. once a week) with Team Leads, while employees who have been with the company for several years may only meet once or twice a month (Neil, Craig).

Friday afternoon sessions include: *Demo and Talks* where new products and services or those in development are demonstrated, *AMAs* are like "Micro-Conferences each week" where questions are posed and short and long-term goals are clarified (Karl), *Round Table Discussions* described as employees "get to see how other departments are handling things" (Karl). *Lightning Talks* when "someone takes a random project they've been doing on their own time and just presents it to the company...like TedTalks" (Neil).

Annual Summit: Includes all employees (remote employees also) and focuses on the past year(s) and the future of Company X.

The communication process is extensive as demonstrated by the frequent gatherings that come in a multitude of forms (i.e. AMAs, One-On-Ones, Demo & Talks, the Annual Summit, etc.). Some gatherings are aimed at learning about new technologies or

developments in the industry (Demo & Talks); others are for company updates (AMAs), while other gatherings are for personal development purposes or performance reviews (One-on-Ones). Interviewees talk about providing input during decision-making processes. However, their views are not always respected like in Karl's case. Karl's story also conflicts with the notion of hiring selectively. As Karl says the new hire was still hired after his probation period despite multiple negative reviews from colleagues "because he had essential skills that were difficult to find". Additionally, there is a high level of trust as revealed by the private information shared by management with employees.

Table 9. Examples of Performance Management and Appraisal Practices at Company X

Performance Management and Appraisal	
Practices	Examples
Appraisals Based on Objective Results/Behaviours	An executive member is quoted in an online media source as stating that the performance appraisal system is merit based. Employees who get the most bonuses are not necessarily those at the top of the company. It can be "peer to peer" or "up and down", which he says is a rarity within the industry particularly within companies the size of Company X or larger. During a follow-up telephone conversation with a current employee, the interviewee said the company is "100% merit based" (Robin).
Appraisals for Development/Potential	"[W]hen we are looking for candidates we are looking for potential...Potential is the most important thing to look at from the people" (Craig)

Frequent Performance
Appraisal Meetings

Performance discussions occur during One-on-One meetings. “For different teams, there’s obviously different metrics” (Ryan).

The “Support Team is very closely monitored on public interactions with customers” (Ryan).

“The score system is based on the positivity of the interaction. So at the end of a call, a chat or an email, the client or the customer gets to rate us. So it’s either a green smiley, a yellow neutral, or a red frowny” (Andrea). The opportunity is given to employees to correct negative interaction with customers by following up).

“For the developers, we have what’s called a code depository and whenever you inject or change, modify, edit a code, it goes into a repository and you can track the number of instances that an individual interacts with this depository. So you can see how much they’re doing, changed. Other areas, it’s more about establishing goals with managers and achieving those goals” (Ryan).

Employees Involved in
Setting Appraisal
Objectives/
Multisource
Feedback and Peer
Appraisal

The Support Staff rating system is “public so that I can see that my friend here is doing poorly and why is that? So I click on her frowns and see that interaction and say, you know, “just a heads up, you know, in my experience this might have worked for next time” (Andrea).

Appraisal Based on Strategic or Team Goals	Each team has specific performance metrics depending on the team's needs and task requirements (Ryan, Robin, Craig).
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The performance management and appraisal of employees is tailored to meet the requirements from teams, meaning no one performance measure is used across all departments. Instead performance metrics are adopted based on the work requirements of each division. However, one commonality exists in the way performance metrics are used. The metrics noted by interviewees are all open and visible to all employees (i.e. Support Staff rating is public, Developers code repository can be used to track the changes of others). Employees are able to provide feedback to their colleagues based on performance metrics. Furthermore, employees are attentively monitored based on their performance. Now promotion practices will be considered.

Table 10. Examples of Promotion Practices at Company X

Promotions	
Practices	Examples
Promotions From Within	Many interviewees talked about working in numerous positions within the company (Neil, Karl, Bobby, Alfy). Neil started as a night Support Staff member and is now a Team Lead. Robin started as an intern in 2011. By 2012 she worked in Business Development at Company X, and she is now a Head Recruiter. "I started in Level 1 Support, moved up to Level 2. And then I was [a] Level 2 Team Lead for 3 months" (Bobby).

Career Planning

Executive Coaches meet with Executives and Management to discuss and plan both personal and work-related goals. Team Leads meet with team members to plan a trajectory with employees.

Opportunities for advancement are present within Company X as multiple respondents shared their trajectory within the company from the time they started to the time of interview outlining the different positions held throughout. Employees also made reference to goal setting and planning, which extended beyond work and onto life outside of work.

In summary, the findings outlined in Table 3 through 10 above demonstrate the HHPW qualities practiced at Company X. At Company X, many practices were identified in support of HHPW practices. This means that Company X does in fact display HHPW qualities. The findings also provide the reader with a preliminary understanding of the experience of Company X members. However, the experience will be explored further in the sociostructural and cultural analysis that follows and this information will answer the question *does Company X always practice HHPW practices or are there circumstances that alter the implementation of HHPW practices?* Furthermore, the findings provide insight into what type of person works at Company X.

4.2 THE SOCIOSTRUCTURAL SYSTEM

As seen in the first section of this chapter on HHPW practices, many features of the sociostructural system at Company X emerge. To review, sociostructural systems include processes, policies, structure, and strategy. However, some contributions to the system do not fit within the discussion pertaining to HHPW practices. Therefore, in the following section, the sociostructural features are listed – indicating some which have been previously mentioned (but not categorized as sociostructural) and others that have not yet been disclosed. The last section of this chapter outlines the cultural system at Company X. The purpose of outlining the two systems is to accurately understand the interplay between structure and culture, and how these dimensions play into the experience of employees.

Previously outlined practices that are sociostructural in nature are now presented. One aspect about the system is that it is meritocratic, meaning rewards (i.e. cash bonuses) are based on demonstrated performance achievements in the field. Additionally, according to participants, the system offers comprehensive compensation and benefits, which extend beyond the classical health, dental, and vision plans and include unconventional features such as free house cleaning services. Each team works in an open workspace (called a “Pod”). The exact number of people per team varies. An Executive interviewee (Craig) said teams contain 6 to 10 people while a Team Lead (Neil) interviewed said his team has approximately 25 members. The formation of teams is flexible with members moving amongst teams based on needs (i.e. projects). Numerous training and development processes and strategies exist. The recruitment and selection process is strategically structured and elaborate (or “intense”). Communication is also strategic and elaborate to support productivity. The performance appraisal techniques are structured to closely monitor employees. Finally, strategies are used to develop and promote employees, and few employees leave the organization due to lack of a challenge. These aspects contribute to the sociostructural system, as does the hierarchical structure, which will be discussed following an examination of the demographics of workers at Company X.

The average age of employees at Company X is between 26 and 34 years with the youngest employee being 18 years of age and the oldest being 62 years. Moreover, the workforce is predominantly comprised of men. As mentioned in the brief overview of Company X (on page 73) approximately 70% of the employees are men and 30% are women (Neil). Furthermore, often employees are recruited directly out of school (Alfy), and one interviewee even describes the work environment as being “...sort of like high school, except everyone there is a very good student” (Curtis). Curtis’ comment also insinuates that intelligence is an essential prerequisite to getting hired. A co-founder interviewed explains, “There’s not many people that can do...the work hours of a startup” (Alfy), which according to Alf is why young people in particular are targeted to work at Company X. Alf says,

“...it [the workplace] works so well with young people. If you’re like 25 you know like, if you go to Company X, it’s its own kind of social kind of circle. Your friends are people at Company X, you hang out with people at Company. You do Company X events. You know, people really drink the Kool-Aid right” (Alfy).

The reason these demographic characteristics are of interest is because this demographic group typically has fewer non-work related obligations such as children. Furthermore, this information serves to address the question *if Company X does display HHPW qualities, what does this mean in terms of the workforce?*

4.2.1 Hierarchical Structure

This section outlines the four main vertical (rank) structures within the organization – the Executive Team, Directors, Team Leads, Teams. An additional group that does not have a set positioning within the vertical structure is discussed (Contractors). The purpose of this information is to provide context to the reader pertaining to the structure within the workplace. These findings reveal information about the structure, in addition to the flexible design of positions, the communication process, the specialization of teams, the size of teams and how this relates to stress and work overload.

4.2.1.1 The Executive Team

Company X’s Executive Team consists of eleven members⁹ – a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), a Chief Culture Officer (CCO) who is also the Chief Design Officer (CDO), a Chief Technology Officer (CTO), Chief Platform Officer (CPO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Expansion Pack¹⁰. The Vice-President (VP) roles are also included as part of the Executive team. There is a VP for Engineering, HR, Marketing, General Council (legal team), and Customer Support.

⁹ This number is based on information obtained from an interviewee at the time of the interview.

¹⁰ This Executive position was discovered during the editing phase of writing the thesis while reviewing new job postings on Company X’s website.

According to an interviewee who is an executive team member, the Executive Team is responsible for the future of the company. He states, “my job is to think long term” (Craig). Furthermore, this team must lead by example. According to the same interviewee

“it’s very important for the leadership team to set an example. I can guarantee you that if none of the executives take vacation then their Directs would not take vacations and so on... we take enough vacation that it shows it’s perfectly fine. You don’t have to feel guilty about taking time off” – Craig

This quote also touches on culture creation (i.e. norms regarding time off), which will be discussed in The Cultural System section. The data also reveals that the Executive Team at Company X is not complacent. In fact, when one interviewee was asked if he thinks the company’s momentum will subside he was optimistic the momentum will continue, stating, “They’re [the Executives are] still hungry, which is excellent” (Ryan). Reiterating the importance of leading by example. To summarize, the role of these members is to: 1) plan for the future, 2) lead by example, and 3) keep the company in motion.

4.2.1.2 Directors

Directors can oversee anywhere from “one to three or four teams” (Robin). Directors report to a designated member of the Executive Team, and Team Leads report to the Directors. The exact number of Directors was unknown to interviewees. However, there are more than ten Directors (Robin). For example, there is a Director of Public Relations and Communications, and Directors of Design and so forth (Robin). Some office locations have a department specific Director, while other Directors may oversee teams within a given department at multiple locations (offices; Robin). Interviewees knew little about this group.

4.2.1.3 “Team Leads” – Managers

Team Leads are the managers of a specific team and each team is created based on task-specific needs. According to one Team Lead, his role is to manage a team of 25

employees (Neil). He says, "...my job is to make sure that they're [his team] answering phone calls and chats and what not" (Neil). Team Leads are also responsible for compiling, analyzing, and reporting team-related metrics to their superiors (Director, Executive member). In addition, Team Leads typically attend many meetings. This finding is supported by comments such as "our Team Lead also spends most of his time in meetings" (Bobby). Moreover, Team Leads are responsible for "checking-in" with team members in what are called One-on-Ones, which – as the name suggests – consists of a private conversation between a Team Lead and individual team members. Often, the One-on-One meetings last 10 to 30 minutes. The frequency of One-on-Ones seems to vary depending on the need (i.e. newer hires meet with Team Leads more regularly than more experienced employees, meaning those who have been with the company longer. However, if an employee is on "probation", meaning their performance does not meet the standards in place, they are to meet with the Team Lead more often than an employee who is not on probation).

To clarify, *probation period* has dual meanings. The term refers to the status given to new employees when joining an organization, which I am told is in the process of being discarded at Company X. During probation, new employees are closely monitored by superiors (i.e. Team Leads). Superiors ensure that specific qualities or traits (performance, reliability, honesty, etc.) are present, and the position for the new employee is not secure. This period lasts three months. After this time employees either secure their position within the company or leave the company. Additionally, employees who are not new to an organization and who have job security can be placed on probation. When this occurs it is due to performance issues and probation serves as a warning before potentially terminating employees.

To summarize, the role of management is to oversee the team, compile reports, ensure performance metrics are met, build a rapport with team members, and attend meetings. The role of management impacts and affects their experience within the company and thus was addressed. Now, the role of teams is outlined.

4.2.1.4 Teams

According to interviewees the workplace consists of teams of anywhere from 6 to 25 people. As teams grow, they are separated into smaller, more specialized, groups. One interviewee said,

“We had to split up the Ops [Operations] department. We had to split it in two. People who were working on day-to-day operations versus people who were working on longer term software” – Karl

This is indicative of specialization (“day-to-day operations versus...longer term”). The interviewee goes on to say “they’ve split it [the Operations Team] up even more”. Therefore, the refinement of groups is always a possibility and occurs as necessary, supporting the notion of flexibility.

In addition, some teams are comprised of different levels while others are a flat structure. For example one interviewee said, “I started in Level 1 Support, moved up to Level 2. And then I was [a] Level 2 Team Lead for 3 months” (Bobby). The difference between these two levels is Level 1 Support filters inquiries and provides basic support, while Level 2 Support deals with more complex inquiries or problems.

The size of each team is dependent on the amount of work required from that specific team. Therefore, size is contingent on work. As the demands of a team increase, the team may grow or be divided into specialized teams. In terms of employees, this means they must be flexible and able to adapt and learn quickly. Team expansion can consist of contracting employees if the duration of the work involved is short-lived, or hiring employees if a long-term need is envisioned. For example, in an interview with a contract worker, the contractor touches on the expanding size of the team that contracted him. When talking about the man who hired him to do the contract work, the interviewee says,

“He has one superior who is, kind of manages him. But he deals with the day-to-day of what needs to be done...he started out without any extra help... So that’s why he was hiring us and it still wasn’t enough” – Curtis

Based on this comment, this particular team is at a pivotal stage where the full-time employee is being stretched to his maximum capacity, as “it [hiring contractors] still wasn’t enough”. Maxing out employees may hinder retention, seeing that a past employee commented that

“...the biggest problem I think was that the company expanded fast but our team didn’t expand very fast and we were overworked. And we were too much dealing with crisis non-stop than actually having time to correct these things from happening... But that was kind of a too little too late kind of situation for me” – Karl

For this employee, the inaction or insufficient speed at which a solution was undertaken contributed to the interviewee’s departure from Company X. Therefore, suggesting timeliness is key. In terms of the experience of employees, these quotes demonstrate how the work can be stressful when appropriate measures are not in place to support employees. This information is important to consider when studying a workplace that displays HHPW practices like Company X because these issues of timeliness relate to the psychological and emotional health of employees (i.e. stress, work overload). However, the health of employees is jeopardized when they are overworked due to inefficient help.

Another interviewee who also shows signs of being overworked was on “Stress Leave” at the time of the interview. This interviewee was recently promoted to Team Lead from Team Member. Rather than needing his team to expand as mentioned by the previous interviewee, Karl, this Team Lead interviewed expresses the need for a reduction in team size. The interviewee had this to say about his work situation “...I’m looking forward to the smaller teams but it’ll be probably another month before that gets going. When things

slowdown it it'll happen" (Neil). This quote insinuates that the duration of the stressful time is short lived ("another month") and he seems somewhat optimistic ("looking forward") for change rather than in Karl's situation where the timeliness in dealing with the size of the team was "too late". One interviewee describes the timeliness of hiring stating "It's a step-hiring process right. When the job loads up. It gets busy busy busy. Then you bring someone else in. It's always a step" (Ryan). However, it is included here as it is important to recognize that these findings imply that timeline in the "step-hiring process" is sensitive.

4.2.1.5 Contractors – Executive Coaches

Executive Coaches are "third party contracted employees" (Neil), meaning they are an independent body that provides specific services to Company X. The Coaches work approximately three days a week at Company X and are provided their own section within the office (Neil). The Executive Coaches' role is summarized by an interviewee who says, "[b]asically, they coach management to become better managers as well as life coaching and career paving and what not" (Neil). Another interviewee describes the Coaches as,

"they [the Executive Coaches] help you take a step back and evaluate how your team dynamic is working and how your personal dynamic is working. They do anagram tests and personality testing and then there's the analysis of your whole team's personality to see how well you balance each other out" – Bobby

Therefore, the purpose of a Coach is to spend one-on-one time with management in order to develop strategies to improve situations, establish goals, and facilitate work and personal accomplishments. A personal account of how a coach assisted a Company X employee with his transition into a leadership role is recounted.

"When I first started they [Executive Coaches] helped me at becoming a better manager because I had never been a manager before. So that took some work

organizing myself but now we're trying like where am I going to be in three years with the company. So, we're paving that along. What are the steps we need to take to get at that goal? And the last thing, they made me call my grandparents. There's always one thing that he makes me tell that I haven't done yet, that he makes me, forces me, to do. So he's also a kick in the ass too" – Neil

In short, Executive Coaches help facilitate employees to reach their work and non-work related goals and takes on a counseling-like role. The experience for Executive Coaches is somewhat like an "outsider" seeing that they are involved but not fully committed, in the sense that they work three days a week at Company X but they still have their own private practice. Therefore, their investment in the company differs from that of non-contract employees. This data addresses the experience of both employees within an Executive Coaching role and the experience of employees who interact with the coaches, meaning management.

4.2.1.6 Contractors – Manual Labourer

Manual labourers are similar to Executive Coaches in the sense that each is employed on a contractual basis. The duration and frequency of contracts for the manual labourers varied based on company needs. They were hired when carpentry jobs were required within the workspace and when small construction jobs surfaced. The manual labour interviewee talks about doing "finishing touches" for Company X after a larger construction company left, and about making alterations to the workspace based on changes to the size of teams. Their experience is thus similar to Executive Coaches in that neither group is fully committed to the organization. They do the "finishing touches" then leave.

Seeing that reduced hierarchy (decentralization) is said to be a critical component of the HHPW model but that the issue of "flatness", meaning how 'flat' is 'flat' (as discussed in chapter one), is unclear, an illustration of the Company X hierarchy is provided. Figure 5

shows the general hierarchical structure of the organization and general characteristics about each level.

Figure 5. Overview of Hierarchical Structure



In summary, the experience of employees varies based on their role (hierarchy) within the organization. This is because their responsibilities as well as expectations of them differ. For example, executives feel the need to “lead by example” which can invoke high levels of stress or pressure, while the role of Team Leads is to oversee their team and ensure the team is reaching their goals, which can also be stressful but the root cause of the stress is different because of their own unique set of experiences. For these reasons, an understanding of the hierarchy, and the roles of members within the sociostructural system, is important. Now that an overview of the hierarchical structure at Company X and how the structure is considered by its members, findings pertaining to policies, and rules and regulations will be outlined.

4.2.2 Policies

Although, according to interviewees (Bobby, Karl, Alf), the term “policy” itself is not used within Company X examples of rules were observed. In other words, policies do exist

within Company X but are not labeled as such. Company X refrains from using the term 'policy'. This is likely due to the stigma associated with the word "policy" as it is often associated with rules and regulations. It's important to mention, that terminology used within an organization contributes to the culture of the organization (the cultural system); however, the policies or rules themselves are sociostructural features. Therefore, the interplay between culture and sociostructure is not easy to separate; they are heavily connected but are, nonetheless, two separate issues. Below Company X policies obtained from the data are outlined.

4.2.2.1 Rules, Regulations, and "Red Tape"

"Red tape" or rigid rules are said to be at a minimum at Company X. An executive interviewed said "[t]hey [employees] really appreciate the fact that we don't have red-tape and things are getting done" (Craig). This quote is interesting as it suggests that "red tape" or regulations hamper productivity. However, more importantly, it also suggests that for employees this non-existence of "red tape" makes their work easier. In addition, although this executive states the company doesn't "have red tape", it would appear that some regulations do exist (but they are always up for review). For example, the same Executive talks about Company X currently having a probation period (implying red tape) but says that,

"[t]here won't be one [a probation period] by next year...One day my head of HR came to me and she said, "Why do we need a probation period?" and I didn't have a good answer. So we figured we should remove it...Because it is so rare that having a probation period had benefited us in any way – that having no probation period is a big plus. I mean I'm thinking about how lately we have people coming from all over the world from Europe or even from other cities...if you're coming from [one North American city to another] and then you have to be afraid for 3 months that you hopefully make it through that

probation period. That's a big burden. We figure a probation period doesn't make much sense in the way that we think" - Craig

This quote establishes the company's viewpoint regarding "red tape" or formal policies. Additionally, in terms of the experience of the employees, it means that work is made easier by not having to deal with strict rules.

4.2.2.2 The Repository

Company X policies and processes are outlined in an electronic document entitled herein as *The Repository*¹¹. This document contains information about "[a]nything from upcoming move details, to where to go to find your payroll details, to HR resources, etc." says a current employee in an email (Andrea). She goes on to say, "It [the Repository] is kind of an everything tool. You can use it on the first day, and everyday... And yes code of conduct is in there" (Andrea). The Repository serves two purposes. First, it has a sociostructural purpose insofar as it outlines processes and policies. However, it also plays a cultural purpose because it serves as a tactic to disseminate the values of the organization (i.e. by publishing what behaviours are acceptable and which ones aren't). Therefore, the Repository affects the culture and sociostructure of the organization, and subsequently impacts the employees and their behaviour (i.e. code of conduct).

In addition, another interviewee mentioned the Repository when asked if there were any rules and regulations that are clearly acceptable and unacceptable at Company X. The interviewee replied,

"...The old school approach would be the employee handbook. Realizing how young the company is you can't have one static hard drive. It's just going to become outdated so quickly. So the Repository is an online depository for cultural knowledge and awareness and it has just that, legislated rules and

¹¹ A pseudonym was given to the electronic employee handbook.

regulations about health and safety. There's all our values and what not.

Expectations" – Ryan

The Repository, therefore, serves as key document outlining information pertaining to the culture of the organization, processes, and values. The flexibility of the policies in place is emphasized by the fact that a "static" "employee handbook" would not suffice and by the re-examination of policies such as the probation period policy. Therefore, the company's approach to using policies is to be flexible, and to resist "red tape" and formalities if no measurable and beneficial outcome emerges from any given policy (like in the case of the probation period example).

In summary, the existence of this document confirms the presence of policies at Company X despite the fact that the word "policy" rarely (if ever) surfaces. More importantly, the interplay between sociostructural and cultural issues is evident. To be clear, I am by no means saying that the sociostructural and cultural issues are the same. The point here is that the two concepts have a reciprocal relationship. This idea will be explored further by examining the cultural system at Company X through the lens of its members.

4.3 THE CULTURAL SYSTEM

Cultural issues appear in the first section of this chapter when outlining HHPW practices. Cultural issues that are raised pertain to the expectation that employees will work 'on-demand', meaning whenever needed. In addition, interviewees report experiencing selectivity, meaning only a certain type of person is allowed in the company. This consequently creates a divide and fosters 'otherness' whereby some people are included (present employees) while others are not (prospective and past employees, as well as people who work for companies other than Company X). Employees are taught that particular qualities are valued at Company X including: creativity, equality, and trustworthiness and these values manifest in the way interviewees talk about the work environment. Now additional cultural components that did not fit into the HHPW principles

and practices tables are outlined. They include: ownership, innovation and timeliness, performance, failure, and respect and equality. Some of these values are discussed together (i.e. respect and equality) due to their interconnectivity.

4.3.1 Ownership

Three quotes from current and past employees interviewed show support for the notion of *ownership*. One employee when describing what the company looks for in prospective employees says,

“...the dynamic [here] is to succeed or fail. So the ownership is really on you. We have a couple, I don’t know they’re like tenants or things that we look for in our employees and in the people that we hire...Acting like an owner. So making sure you’re, even if it’s not your job description, taking things on and making sure things are done really well” (Robin)

Robin is defining ownership based on a central criteria here – responsibility. Based on her description, the conceptualization of ownership is centered on responsibility, accountability, and commitment. Therefore, employees are expected to take on an ownership mentality in the sense that they are responsible, accountable, and committed to aspects of the company.

Another interviewee describes one of the company values as follows, “act like an owner; in terms of dollars; in terms of owning a problem” (Ryan). Again an undertone for employee responsibility emerges from the quote.

A third interviewee who is a past employee at Company X said,

“...[T]here was always this sense of ownership...one of our core values at the company was you know every part of the company should at least have somebody who considers themselves the owner of that part...personal investment in that thing” (Karl).

By “personal investment” the connotation of holding responsibility ensues. Based on these comments, ownership over a project or a piece of a project is a fundamental value shared by the company and employees alike. This value fosters an environment whereby members feel a sense of drive, commitment, purpose, or financial responsibility towards a project that that individual is responsible for or “owns”. Therefore, ownership is a core value expressed by members that impacts their experience at work because it affects how they act.

4.3.2 Innovation and Timeliness

A second core value that emerges from the interviews is innovation. A current employee states “Our ethos is kind of never just sit down and ride something out. It’s always “Change it up. Move. Explore for new things”” (Ryan). Not only is the notion of innovation – the idea of “explor[ing] for new things” – raised in this quote but so too is the idea of punctuality or in a timely fashion (“never just sit and ride something out”). The interviewee continues to say,

“There’s another value about Craftsmanship. So, although there’s this notion to ship fast, to be at the forefront of your craft. Really owning it. Having passion for it and aspiring for a level of mastery where your 80% will beat anyone’s 100%” (Ryan).

This quote links multiple company values including: 1) timeliness or punctuality (“ship fast”), 2) ownership (“really owning it. Having passion for it...”), and 3) innovation (“be[ing] at the forefront”). It also presents contradicting messages (i.e. craftsmanship versus “ship fast”). Furthermore, it dictates how employees are expected to behave at work shaping the employee experience. In addition, the idea of innovation and timeliness is further discussed by an interviewee who describes “[t]hriving with change” (Robin) as a critical ability of employees, specifically successful employees at Company X. Therefore, employees are

subjected to social pressures, which are created and communicated through the workplace, to perform quickly, take on responsibilities, and innovate.

4.3.3 Performance

Performance also heavily impacts the experience of employees, as their job is dependent on their performance. But not only is how much they perform important so too is the way in which they perform. An interviewee said, employees are told to “Do things [and] tell people” (Bobby). This directive contains two guidelines. The first requires action (“do things”) and the second requires sharing or communicating the act with others (“Tell people”). Therefore, not only is action or performance required but communicating the activity is also expected. These core values impact employees because employees embody them. If they don’t embody them, they don’t fit in and, as demonstrated by Karl’s case, not fitting in can jeopardize one’s position with the company. To recall, Karl did not want to work overtime during a busy work period but it was expected of him and eventually Karl was fired. Karl’s performance (or lack of) exemplifies how employees are expected to act and what happens when employees don’t conform (and perform).

Additionally, a Prospective Employee stated that during the interview process for a position at Company X, a company representative told her “...we want somebody that gets shit done” (Patricia). Not only does the quote express the need for employees to be productive workers, it also demonstrates an informal side of the organization. The informality appears because using words like “shit” in a work setting is atypical.

Furthermore, interviewees express that the way in which work is conducted does come with (vague) guidelines. Completing tasks (or performing) is to be done self-sufficiently. One interviewee said ‘be resourceful’ and described it saying

“...[W]hat that means is if you give people higher level directions, they have to be able to interpret those directions and follow through. We don’t hire people

that we need to show what to do. Ya know? Get shit done...[be] fucking
[resourceful¹²]” (Ryan)

Therefore, ‘be resourceful’ relates to one’s ability to perform a task with little guidance – without handholding. Additionally, indications of an informal work environment are again displayed by the words used (i.e. “get shit done”, “[be] fucking [resourceful]”).

In summary, performance is expected. But not only is the act of performing expected so too is the method in which the act is conducted. In other words, members are expected to complete tasks (“get shit done”) and do it self-sufficiently, autonomously, and thus ‘be resourceful’.

4.3.4 Failure

How to deal with mistakes or failure is addressed both on the website and in interviews. The website states, “If you make a mistake? That's cool – learn from it, and share your experience with the team. We expect you to learn and grow”. Similarly, the process is described by an interviewee as “failing gracefully” (Ryan). He states, “[i]f you do fail, don’t be ashamed. Own-up. Say “Yeah I failed”. Learn how not to do it again” (Ryan). What this means is failing is perceived as acceptable in so far as it doesn’t occur again and as long as appropriate action is taken. Based on the data, there is an underlying process employees are to follow when they fail. Employees are to acknowledge their mistake, make it known to others, and learn how to prevent the mistake from recurring. In terms of the employee experience, this means that they are free to try new things but there is protocol to follow if they mess up. Furthermore, this implicit method of dealing with failure demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between culture (the acceptance of failure) and structure (the process of dealing with failure).

¹² The wording is altered slightly but similar meaning prevails. The actual words used by the interviewee pertain to a company catch phrase that would expose the organizations.

4.3.5 Respect and Equality

Respect is part of the employee experience and the presence of respect is said to allow employees to focus their attention on work. One interviewee said,

“...they don’t need to spend half their day thinking about office politics and worry about someone throwing them under the bus because it doesn’t exist here. Someone told me that what they think is remarkable with Company X is that we don’t have any bullies and I think that is also really fascinating because you know you don’t have to be everyone’s best friend but everyone respects each other” - Craig

Additionally, other interviewees indirectly touched on the notion of respect in the workplace by the following comments: “Don’t be an asshole” (Bobby), “Don’t hire dicks” (Alfy) and “no office politicking” (Bobby). Again the informal or ‘unprofessional’ side of the work environment is exposed based on the use of words (i.e. “asshole” and “dick”). However, these values also relate to the idea of respect within the workplace. In summary, respect surfaces as a central feature within the workplace and a rule that employees live by. Moreover, there is a belief that by minimizing distractions at work (such as “bullying”) and by promoting respect within the workplace employee performance is facilitated.

When considering the perspective of a contracted employee who has completed several contracts at Company X, sentiments of equality and appreciation surface. Equality is exemplified by Curtis’ comment pertaining to his time spent doing manual labour at Company X. The interviewee said,

“Everyone was very equal as a people...There wasn’t a lot of hierarchy in terms of attitudes in their workplace in their offices, in the way they dressed, in the way they moved around, the way they talked to you. I mean I worked there a few times where these two gentlemen would walk by and stop and to talk to

us, or stop to talk to Bob¹³ and I – the guy who hired me – and then they’d leave and then Bob would say, “well that’s the guy that owns the company”. And he’s a multi-millionaire and he’s talking about, whatever, pizza for lunch, or going snowboarding, or the show they went to. And they were very approachable, very very approachable and it was just really nice that way” – Curtis

This interviewee’s comment suggests that equality within the workplace is complex in the sense that multiple elements (i.e. attitudes, office design, attire, open communication form all levels, etc.) foster a sentiment of equality within the workplace. Yet, the comment also suggests that equality can be simple if people (at all levels) genuinely embrace equality. The quote suggests another important element, which is that the ‘right’ people – people who “fit in” and thus share similar values – should be hired regardless of whether they’re being hired full-time or on a contract basis. This is expressed and further supported by the following contract interviewee who said, “Bob said he wanted to hire us, and me in particular, he said “because I know you’re not going to be rude, you know, ignorant in the workplace. You’re not on a construction site. You know, you have to fit in with the people”” (Curtis). Therefore, employees practice, and thus experience, equality and respect at work.

Furthermore, according to another contractor interviewed, “They really take care of you even for someone who’s stepping in and not being a fulltime employee. There’s no lack of treatment or respect there...” (Jean) again exemplifying respect within the workplace. However, this quote also highlights the interplay between the (hierarchical) structures (contract employee “stepping in”) and cultural values (respect). Therefore, the feeling of being valued and respected is widespread.

The information outlined in the Results Chapter (Chapter Four) answers the questions this study set out to address, which include *does Company X display HHPW qualities? If Company X does display HHPW qualities, does it always practice HHPW practices or are there circumstances that alter the implementation of HHPW practices?*

¹³ Bob is a pseudonym for the man who contracted the interviewee.

Finally, if Company X does display HHPW characteristics, what does this mean in terms of the workforce, meaning the people of Company X?

Tables 1 through 8 display the HHPW principles and practices found at Company X showing support for the use of the HHPW model by the company. Furthermore, the data reveals that there are circumstances in which Company X omits HHPW practices, which are normally in place. Four exceptions are eminent. One exception to HHPW practices occurs during busy work periods. Typically, employees have the ability to work flexible hours (Table 2). However, during busy periods of the year employees are expected to work overtime and as long as needed. A second exception pertains to job security (Table 5). This feature is present until an employee's performance and productivity is not up to par then the employee is put on probation before finally being terminated. A third exception pertains to the HHPW practice of hiring selectively. This practice occurs when there is a large pool of applicants with the required skills. However, when the skills are rare and the necessity for the skill is high, hiring for selectivity disappears. A fourth and final exception relates to the HHPW practice of using multiple tools to screen applicants (Table 4). Exceptions are made in the case of contract employees. The contract employees interviewed actually went through no formal hiring process (i.e. no contract was signed). This may be attributed to the immediate need for workers, which relates to the notion of hiring selectively.

In summary, getting work done promptly and self-sufficiently with a creative and innovative mindset all while being respectful, autonomous, learning, growing, and owning-up to responsibilities are fundamental qualities for Company X employees to possess. This addresses the question *if Company X does display HHPW characteristics, what does this mean in terms of the workforce?* Specific qualities like those just mentioned as well as being a quick learner, smart, and able to adapt easily to change are all essential qualities in order to thrive within the Company X workplace. Moreover, the Company X workforce is comprised of predominately young men between the ages of 26 and 34 years old and they are typically recruited straight out of school.

The following chapter critically assesses the findings and discusses their pertinence. The chapter focuses on two main structural and cultural concepts – flexibility and control/surveillance – that emerge from the results. However, other interesting findings pertaining to the following topics are analyzed and discussed: 1) work overload and the work-life relationship, 2) hierarchy in the workplace, and 3) perks and benefits.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter results from the data that support the argument that organizational interests (meaning profit) trump employee interests (i.e. working conditions) even in a workplace, like Company X, that displays HHPW qualities are discussed. Specifically, the concept of flexibility at Company X is proven to be a tool in place to support organizational interests. Furthermore, flexibility in relation to flextime and whom this structural tool benefits is discussed. Afterwards, the problematic performance metrics are argued. Another important matter for discussion pertains to the demographics of the workforce and the relationship between whom the company hires and how it affects the experience of employees. Furthermore, control mechanisms associated with the cultural system at Company X are examined. Specifically, the use of “culture police” to maintain corporate culture and the creation of “otherness” to reinforce social bonds and membership within the organization are discussed. Additionally, this section addresses the influence of the “core group” on the organizational culture, followed by an analysis of surveillance mechanisms practiced. Then a sociostructural factor, more specifically hierarchy, is addressed in relation to the workforce. Finally the implicit significance of the ‘perks and benefits’ is discussed. The purpose of all of this is to support the argument that Company X puts profit before people, and that the HHPW practices (when they are utilized) are intentionally and strategically constructed to propel organizational interests.

5.1 Flexibility

The examples of practices outlined in Table 3 through 10 unveil a fundamental competency at Company X – flexibility. The concept of flexibility appears continuously throughout the sociostructural system that is, in its structure, strategies, policies and processes. Flexibility is exemplified by the performance metrics that are adapted to each team or department. Flexibility is also exemplified by the configuration and structure of teams or departments, as well as in the physical design of the workspace that is altered in relation to team (i.e. size of team) working within it. In addition, flexibility is a skill

understood and adopted in the use, development, and reassessment of processes, as well as in the perks and benefits plan (i.e. in accordance with family size). Flexibility is also seen in an employee's work schedule. Although there is unequivocal evidence that flexibility is highly prevalent within Company X, when stepping back and considering the overarching relationship that flexibility (in its multitude of roles) has on the workplace from a critical perspective, interesting considerations are exposed. Specifically in relation to the implicit effects on the employee experience.

The notion of flexibility within the workplace is often glorified and seen as a positive attribute of the work environment as flexibility is often thought of in relation to 'flextime' or flexible work schedules and this allows employees to have a sense of control over their work. As demonstrated in the literature, control and ownership are "the strongest incentives to work" (Grint 1998:105; page 61). However, there are consequences for employees, and expectations from employers, that are associated with flexibility. A former employee expresses his frustration during a "very tense period" at work (Karl). He says, "...everybody was suddenly expected to work like extra hours..." (Karl). Flexibility is an expectation and feature innate to Company X. The expectation that employees will work overtime to rectify an issue was implied and likely viewed as normal (or a social norm) on behalf of the executives and perhaps on behalf of the employees also. However, as displayed by Karl's comment, the expectation was not well received (by him at least). This example demonstrates the give-and-take relationship among employees and employers that is intertwined with the notion of flexibility. In other words, flexibility (as with many other work-related features) comes with dual meanings and expectations. Flexibility may be practiced to make the employees' life easier (i.e. by facilitating the process of responding to non-work related obligations through flexible schedules; Table 4 page 89). However, flexibility is ultimately offered to benefit the organization (i.e. maintain performance and productivity through timely responses). This is not to say that flexibility does not also create value within the workforce. In fact, it likely does contribute value because employees appear to value the ability to tailor their work schedule according to their needs (Table 4). Nonetheless, conflicting responses to workplace flexibility can derive due to the complexity

of the concept (i.e. its overlapping and differing effects on associated parties (i.e. executives versus team members). In more simplistic terms, employees like Karl feel conflicted when it comes to flexibility and its twofold nature.

Furthermore, the expectation to work more during the “tense period” is a feature of the flexible work environment. Although Karl has flexibility when it comes to the creation of his work schedule, Company X also expects him to rearrange his schedule when work-related issues arise (i.e. when “tension periods” emerge). This relates to the notion of working ‘on-demand’ (page 112). The same applies for other employees who talk about having busy periods at work and needing to work “60 hours” some weeks due to being “hit pretty hard” especially “the last three months [of the year] just because that’s our busiest time” (Bobby). Flexibility is thus a workplace feature that is like a “double-edged sword” in the sense that both advantageous and disadvantageous consequences derive.

Additionally, guidelines for flexibility are not established and this leads to confusion among employees – a problem that is innate to the term *flexibility* as flexibility is in itself the ability to be fluid and not firm or secure. This dichotomy exposes flexibility and the conflicting messages employees’ experience.

5.1.1 Flextime and Work Demands

In addition, although employees at Company X are said to be able to create their own schedule (for the most part) so long as they get their work done, it is important to note that the versatility of flextime across departments varies. This topic relates to a quote where Craig talks about the difference in work ‘flexibility’ between the receptionists and other employees like Developers and Engineers, thus recognizing that the construct of flextime is sensitive to the nature of the work involved meaning the employee’s position within the organization. Therefore, the adoptability of flextime is work specific.

5.1.2 Performance Metrics

The performance-based design of the workplace requires that employees be autonomous and take responsibility for completing the work required of them. The idea

being that employees can construct their own work schedule and take control over how they complete their work. This is a sign of workplace flexibility. Additionally, the fact that employees have control relates to Weber and his claim, “that the strongest incentive to work is individual ownership and control”. However, this flexibility and control comes with certain requirements, implicit rules, and expectations. These features are provided to members as long as work is executed and performed within specific parameters (i.e. timeframe, quality, etc.). This idea is supported by Robin’s claim that all Company X asks is that employees give them (the company) their most productive hours in a day (Table 4). A performance-based design requires that measurements be in place in order to substantiate what constitutes work and how much work. This means that work is performance-based and measurable by means of productivity (i.e. performance metrics). Therefore, work is visible within the metrics.

Furthermore, the publically-displayed performance metrics of employees within the team creates peer-to-peer surveillance. As referenced by Andrea (page 99), “I can see that my friend here is doing poorly and why is that?”. Therefore, employees can examine and watch their colleagues, which in Andrea’s case allows her to step-in and say “just a heads up, you know, in my experience this might have worked” (Andrea). It can create a competitive environment, and this peer-to-peer surveillance may be beneficial as it removes pressure from management to rectify issues and fosters collaboration and learning opportunities between colleagues. However, this approach to surveillance should be used with caution as it may lead to employees feeling inadequate or ridiculed.

Concerns arise pertaining to the practicality of performance-based systems and how accurate performance measures are to reality. For example, an interviewee talks about how when he was on probation he received negative reviews from management who stated that he wasn’t performing up to par. In the mind of the interviewee, Karl, he was working very hard, except not on issues that were being measured. He found himself helping colleagues who would approach him for help. According to Karl, this took time away from his measurable performance leading to negative performance reviews. As a result, Karl was asked to “consider putting in more hours” in order to get his (measured) work completed.

To Karl, this request seemed unfair as he felt that he was contributing, and working an acceptable amount of hours already. Consequently, conflict surfaced between the parties due to the workload, expectations, and performance measures. Karl's story illustrates potential issues with performance metrics. In addition, Karl's experience relates to a shortcoming within the organizational model – the shortcoming being that the system does not assess “softer”, less easily measurable variables such as helping fellow employees (as discussed on pages 124, and 143-144). Therefore, problematic issues exist within performance metrics. Furthermore, this example suggests potential problematic issues between employee responsibility and workplace flexibility. If the onus is on the employee to get work done – no matter the amount of time required – the result could be beneficial to the employee if the employee is able to complete a lot of (measurable) work in a short period of time. However, the result can be negative for the employee, if the employee requires longer than expected to complete (measurable) tasks as this can lead to working overtime, and potentially stress and burnout (if it persists long-term as Duxbury's (2006) research indicates on page 145) – a topic addressed in the following section. To summarize, these findings pertaining to performance metrics and the effects on members describes what it is like to work within this type of high-performing environment.

Returning to the assessment (or lack) of “softer” variables, Company X does attempt to address this with the development and use of their Twitter-like internal tool used to identify the most helpful employees (Table 5). However, based on the findings the system, or use of the system, requires attention. Why might employees feel conflicted when it comes to performance? Are these two systems – the Twitter-like merit-based system and the performance metrics system – being considered jointly or independently? These are two different methods of evaluating employees. A closer look at how they differ and intersect and how the approaches are executed within a given workplace is a topic worthy of future research.

5.2 Work Overload and Work-Life Relationship

Work overload, burnout, and stress are issues raised during the research process. Several interviewees made reference to these issues. Other interviewees did not directly mention them; however, their schedules and workload suggest that burnout could be on the horizon, particularly among management. For example, a Team Lead interviewed was on stress-leave at the time of interview due to personal and work demands. In addition to managing his team, the interviewee was also working with a group of employees from diverse departments who have all experienced some form of work-related stress, burnout, or feelings of work overload, in order to create awareness on these issues. The group provides resources for employees who experience high levels of stress and tools to identify symptoms of burnout. The prevalence of such issues seems to be severe as Neil states, “Everyone’s gonna go through it [work overload]. If you don’t go through it there’s something wrong with you... you’re not working hard, or you’re not getting enough work”. Neil’s comment suggests that heavy workloads are an innate feature of Company X’s environment.

Another Team Lead interviewed laid out his daily work schedule stating that he typically arrives at work around 9:00am and leaves between 6:00pm and 7:00pm (Ryan), meaning he is working on average between nine and ten hours a day. This translates to 45 to 50 hours a week. His workweek exceeds the average Canadian’s workweek by 8.4 to 13.4 hours, seeing that the average workweek among Canadians in 2012 was 36.6 hours (HRSDC, 2015). This is important because the number of hours worked weekly has been associated with well-being (HRSDC, 2015). The interviewee continued to say, “there was a lot of overtime” especially in the first year or two of working for the company and this did cause an issue in his romantic relationship. He had this to say on the matter, “There was actually someone in the beginning when we were smaller. There was some friction there between work-life balance and the relationship...” (Ryan). Ryan’s situation reveals that the workload may be particularly heavy in the first few years when the learning curve is high and at particular periods of the year (Ryan, Karl, Bobby). The structure of work (i.e. schedules) can thus impact the work-life relationship, despite efforts within a HHPW to create and

maintain a balance between the two. In addition, when considering Ryan's typical workload is 45 to 50 hours a week and his "busy periods" amount to more than 45 to 50 hours, burnout is a very plausible result. As mentioned in chapter one when discussing Duxbury's (2006) research on work overload, stress, and burnout, the duration and frequency of stressful and heavy workload periods in the work cycle is a critical consideration. Stressful periods are manageable if they are exactly that: *periods* and not long-lasting, which Duxbury (2006) describes as the "hill and valley model". Therefore, issues that can create work-related stress, such as workloads, are manageable forms of stress so long as the duration of the stress is not consistent and long lasting. However, this raises questions pertaining to how to measure stress and its duration meaning how can an employer (or employee) identify *long lasting* stress? How long is too long?

5.2.1 Demographics

In addition, the discussion about work schedules in relation to work overload, stress, and burnout leads to considerations pertaining to the demographics of the workforce. As mentioned, the average age of employees at Company X is between 26 and 34 years with the youngest employee being 18 years of age and the oldest being 62 years. Moreover, the workforce is predominantly comprised of men. In promotional material created by Company X for employee recruitment purposes, the number of babies "born into the [Company X] families" is outlined. This number calculates to be less than 10% of the workforce, meaning the statistic is not as auspicious as the company likely thinks. Considering the average age of employees, the birthrate is not surprising. This information is interesting because it indicates that very few employees at Company X are parents, meaning they likely have fewer non-work related obligations than parents. Furthermore, often employees are recruited directly out of school (Alfy), which may contribute to why an interviewee described the work environment as being "...sort of like high school" (Curtis). A co-founder interviewed explains, "There's not many people that can do...the work hours of a startup" (Alfy), which according to Alf is why young people in particular are targeted to work at Company X. Alf says,

“...it [the workplace] works so well with young people. If you’re like 25 ...you go to Company X it’s its own kind of social kind of circle. Your friends are people at Company X, you hang out with people at Company. You do Company X events. You know, people really drink the Kool-Aid right” (Alfy).

The reason these demographic characteristics are of interest is because this demographic group typically has fewer non-work related obligations such as children. Therefore, they tend to be able to devote more time and be more flexible than people who do have children. However, what happens when the majority of employees at Company X have children? How will this impact the work environment? Will employees be inclined to leave Company X or is the work environment conducive to employees with a family? Is this form of work environment sustainable for employees in the long run? How will Company X change or respond? In order to address these questions a longitudinal study is required. Evidently, there is room for greater research on HHPWs particularly in the areas of work-life relationships and stress.

5.3 Control

Alfy’s comment about how employees at Company X “really drink the Kool-Aid” – referring to how they embrace the work and culture – raises the question: do organizational culture and structure serve as a method of control over employees? Here, control refers to mechanisms (or practices such as the HHPW practices discussed throughout the study) adopted to encourage a particular set of behaviors, actions, or beliefs. The answer is ‘yes, an organization’s culture and its structure do serve as a form of control. But is this a bad thing? Alfy would likely argue it is not bad, as he goes on to say, “They’re just totally into it right and why not? Like it takes care of literally every need that you have”. Moreover, is an organization exercising control over employees if the employees are willingly embracing the mechanisms of control? Do the company’s practices that are perceived positively “makeup” for its shortcomings such as potential high rates of stress

and burnout? Based on the interviews conducted, employees do not appear to mind working overtime or to take on new supplementary projects (with the exception of Karl). Further research on the matter of HHPW practices as a form of employee control is required in order to grasp an accurate understanding of the issue at hand.

5.3.1 Culture Team/"Culture Police" and Hiring for Fit

While on the topic of control, a discussion pertaining to the role of the Culture Team at Company X is necessary. An interviewee used the term “culture police” to refer to this group (Alfy). While talking about the importance of hiring the right people for the job, Alfy says,

“the problem with people who are dicks is they suck so much energy out of everyone else...It’s toxic and it’s toxic in a very confined area, right. And that’s why it’s so important at the very beginning to get like a core group of people and...once you have that core group of people anyone else that comes in you have to be very careful with right because you can throw off the balance and that’s like why they have culture police at Company X basically...” (Alfy).

Alfy implies, along with several other interviewees (Robin, Neil, Craig), that prospective employees at Company X and Company X’s values must *fit* together in order to uphold the culture. In order for this to occur, the Culture Team is responsible for reinforcing the desired culture and for cultural preservation. This means the use of culture translates into a form of workplace control. In order to facilitate control, a selective hiring process is applied (Table 6). Hiring the right people for the job – those who have similar values and beliefs to the company – is important in order to maintain and promote the desired culture. Otherwise, people who do not *fit* with the company culture can be “toxic” in the sense that they can derail the workplace culture. This suggests that the hiring process is a fundamental process associated with organizational culture and may explain why Company X’s hiring process entails (generally) eight interviews. It also demonstrates the connection between

structure and culture, and the importance of organizational culture theory in order to investigate what it is like for members within a workplace that displays HHPW practices.

However, the hiring practices are not always extensive. The hiring process for contractual employees is much more informal and less cumbersome according to the Contract Employees interviewed – both of which expressed never having signed a contract nor going through much of an application process. Instead, both contracted interviewees were hired based on word of mouth. A contractor interviewed said that although she was fortunate to be exempted from the formal application process, “I also don’t have the stability of people who went through that whole process and actually signed a contract...” (Mika). This quote highlights an advantage and disadvantage with the contractual process. Furthermore, it indicates that HHPWs also have contingent workers (page 17 to 19). Similar features, related to having contingent and standard employees side by side, exist. This information raises questions such as why are contract employees exempt from an elaborate hiring process? Is it a matter of expediting the process? Or is the elaborate hiring process a newer process that was not in place when these contract workers commenced with Company X? Or is it because the work of contractual employees is viewed as less important and shorter in duration than standard employees?

5.3.2 Otherness

The selectivity involved in the hiring process (Table 6) shows signs of otherness by allowing only 1% of applicants to work at Company X. In addition, the notion of a proper fit was raised frequently throughout the interview process. Interviewees (like Alfie) tend to use the contrasting term “dick” to refer to individuals who do not fit the Company X mold, potentially creating a sense of *otherness* between Company X members and non-members. Forms of “otherness” appear from comments such as “It’s [Company X is] not just another faceless company that people put down on their resume” (Craig). Here, there is a sense of a humanistic approach to work. Furthermore, interviewees said “there wasn’t this normal typical sense of corporate stuffiness that can happen...There’s just something really unique happening there” (Jean), “I was like “Wow” these guys are something else” (Curtis), “I tried

to...gear my cover page. Basically...gear it more towards their cool-type atmosphere” (Patricia). These quotes illustrate how Company X is perceived as atypical, signifying a form of otherness between the Company X workforce and other workforces that do not adopt a similar approach. This notion of otherness may solidify the internal bond amongst employees, reinforcing a sense of community and contributing a sense of membership – critical features for social solidarity.

5.3.3 Influence of “Core Group”

Moreover, Alfie makes reference to the importance of the “core group of people”. When considering the values of the “core group” at Company X, it is obvious through the interviews that their personal values transcend into the workplace and contributed to the values of Company X. As illustrated on page 35, in a “healthy” culture executives are aware of the “top-down effects”, which is supported by Craig’s claim “I can guarantee you that if none of the executives take vacation then their directs would not take vacations and so on”. Additionally, when asking a co-founder about why they chose to design the physical and organizational structure of the workplace (meaning the sociostructural system) the way they did, he replied “it wasn’t a decision really ‘cuz we’ve always been like this” (Craig). Similar reasoning was noted in the Google example when Levy (2011) talked about Google’s values. Levy (2011) stated they were beliefs important to the founders. Similarly, values like simplicity and the laid-back atmosphere originate and transcend from the founders of Company X. For example, the laid-back vibe is demonstrated when talking about the early days of Company X and peoples’ reaction to the business people would say things along the lines of “You want to go against Microsoft? Are you nuts?” (Alfie). Alfie says their reply was “ah, ya know, whatever”, indicating their nonchalant attitude. Other examples of the company’s relaxed, informal and nonchalant attitude have surfaced throughout the analytic section (i.e. employees using terms like “shit” and “dick”).

In addition, the urban location of the office is a longstanding tradition and important to the founders. Despite being offered substantial funding from investors on condition that Company X relocate, the founders remained true to their beliefs and claim that they valued

the city and country in which Company X originates. Therefore, they declined the funding and remain in the city where Company X was founded. In addition, remaining in the city center was of importance to the founders because of the type of lifestyle it provides (i.e. employees are able to walk/bike to work (Alfy), go out to a nearby bar after work (Bobby, Karl), which was appealing to the founders from the onset. So although the company headquarters has relocated five times in the past nine years due to growth in employment, Company X has remained in the city center.

This discussion regarding the “core group’s” influence on the workplace indicates the group’s substantial control and influence over the structure and culture. Furthermore, this discussion highlights the close relationship between structure (i.e. purposefully selecting an urban setting) and culture (i.e. active (i.e. cycle to work), laid-back, nonchalant), features that drastically impact the employee experience.

5.3.4 Monitoring Employees - Surveillance

Although Company X has a laid-back and laissez faire attitude, the company does seem to be very regimented concerning particular issues, especially performance. Performance is heavily monitored through performance metrics as mentioned. On this topic, a Team Lead says,

“Even our Investors, they need us to answer those six calls an hour. Like if we don’t meet those, we get dinged for that. So, we have our own service level daily that we have to meet. We have to answer 90% of phone calls, 95% of chats, send out 80 emails per person and if we don’t then we get a lot of questions coming our way. We just try to avoid that as much as possible”
(Neil).

This quote outlines the metrics in place for this particular team and exemplifies one way, in which the surveillance of employees is executed at Company X. Evidently, employees are

attentively monitored based on performance and this naturally produces a high-pressure environment.

Monitoring employees also unfolds in the form of “frequent/regular meetings with employees” (Table 8). These meetings (i.e. One-on-Ones, Friday afternoon sessions, etc.) serve as a communication tool between parties of the same rank (i.e. fellow employees) or parties of varying ranks (i.e. Team member and Team Lead), and subsequently as a manner to monitor what employees are working on and where they are at with their work. Therefore, although Company X is laid-back in some respects it is heavily regulated and strict in others.

The saying “choose your battles” seems fitting in this case, as Company X does just that – it is strict in areas heavily related to performance (i.e. customer query response rates) and lax in areas that have less impact on performance (i.e. dress codes). However, other areas are hazy such as the informal hiring process of contract employees. This information demonstrates what it is like for members of Company X to work in this type of environment – regulated and strict in some areas and laid-back in others. Therefore, learning (i.e. through socialization processes) is key to fitting in and to knowing how and when to behave in a particular fashion.

Clearly performance is a strict and rigid issue at Company X exemplified by the performance or task-oriented approach taken by the organization. However, *how* things get done is irrelevant so long as they get done. This notion is exemplified by an interviewee’s comment ‘be fucking resourceful’ (Ryan) and the associated connotation of this catch phrase. The connotation translates to the employee’s ability to take basic instructions and see the task through to completion. ‘Be resourceful’ as well as ‘get shit done’ insinuate this laid-back yet fast-paced approach to completing tasks. However, at the same time, *how* to complete tasks is dictated via the company policies such as ‘ship fast’. This means a) employees are expected to complete a task with only “lower-level” or basic instructions, b) they are to do it autonomously (“be resourceful”) in the sense that they must seek out the appropriate people for help if required, c) employees should ‘own’ the project or task, and d) employees must also work quickly (‘ship fast’). All this while taking pride in the work they

do. This method of doing work is in fact not laid-back. Processes exist. Furthermore, *how* the task is to be completed is not completely open. Although some form of direction is critical to see a project through to completion, interview respondents reported that the method outlined by Company X is confusing. For example, ‘ship fast’ and be a ‘craftsman’ simultaneously are conflicting directives because part of being a craftsman is taking pride and often time to perfect the craft. Therefore, confliction is present. For employees, this confusion requires careful navigation. Karl’s discussion about his experience being on probation is a prime example of this conflicting paradigm between rigidity and flexibility, between a laid-back atmosphere and a formal atmosphere.

Furthermore, this discussion between rigidity and informality highlights the interconnectedness between culture (demonstrated through the slogan ‘be resourceful’) and structure (the implied process to execute work). Therefore, a symbiotic relationship is supported.

5.4 Hierarchy

5.4.1 Hierarchy across Teams

In terms of hierarchical differences across teams, minimal difference appears among teams for the exception of remote employees. The overall non-existence of hierarchical differences across standard employees (“in-house”) is likely attributed to the fact that teams are comprised of people with varying skillsets (i.e. a team may be comprised of a Developer, a Designer, etc.). The only structural differences noted amongst teams who worked within the Company X headquarters had to do with the nature of the work involved. The difference related to variations in terms of ‘flexible’ work schedules. Employees from some departments were able to have more flexible schedules than others. For example, the two women working at the front desk had less flexibility with their schedules – work hours – than the Computer Engineers or HR team. An Executive interviewee explained that,

“There are certain jobs in the organization that require that you be here during certain hours. So, I mean if the receptionist said she doesn’t want to be here before noon then we would have a problem because there’s no one there...But overall, they are very liberal, open with when you want to start working and when you want to go home and also in this case if she [the receptionist] did want to take off early there is always someone jumping in and taking over. It’s fine. There’s no punch cards, no tracking of time” – Craig

There may be no tracking of time but there is definitely tracking of performance as discussed earlier.

5.4.2 Hierarchy between Remote and “In-House” Employees

However, based on the data, differences within teams did emerge when comparing employees who worked “in-house” versus those who were also full-time permanent employees but worked remotely. Although no remote staff members themselves were interviewed, a Team Lead for a group of remote employees did make reference to the remote team feeling “left out” and “alienated” (Neil). The Team Lead says,

“...the current remote group are feeling a little alienated and a little left out because they just don’t get as much, ‘cuz they just see us at the office all day drinking all the free Red Bull and what not that they don’t necessarily have access to. You see the odd Facebook post sometimes with like a little sad face commenting on a picture of us in the office. But yeah, they’re always more than happy though. They get a bunch of free perks. We send them a bunch of stuff all the time just keep them happy” (Neil).

Similarly to the case with the receptionists, the difference pertains to the specific role employees are hired to complete. Company X does attempt to minimize the sentiments of inequality or “alienation” by sending gifts and streaming events to

remote staff in order to make them feel involved. Company X should pay particular attention to this matter in order to reinforce and prevent damage to the company culture. In summary, differences across teams were noted. These differences are attributed to the nature of the work involved, meaning the specific role. Lastly, the lack of perspective from remote employees in this study is unfortunate seeing that they make up between 20% and 28% of the Company X workforce.

5.4.3 Hierarchy between Contingent and Standard Workers

Company X is comprised of contingent and non-contingent workers. Although the literature on contingent workers suggests that tension between these two groups can occur when working alongside one another, mixed evidence of tension surfaces from the study's findings. Indications of equity are expressed by contractors like Curtis who talks about the sense of equality within the work environment both amongst non-contingent employees as well as between non-contingent employees and contingent employees. Moreover, based on the way employees spoke about Executive Coaches (who are contracted), Executive Coaches appear to be highly regarded within the organization. Interviews with coaches would have benefited the study.

Additionally, sentiments of potential tension amongst contingent and non-contingent workers surfaced from an interviewee who works in the hospitality sector and is contracted. The contractor, Mika, commented about her position with Company X suggesting that her role is insecure as no contract or formal hiring procedure was followed. The way she spoke about the issue suggests that having 'job security' like other employees is desired, which may lead to (or cause) tension. However, additional data from contingent workers at Company X is required in order for a clear representation of the situation to appear.

5.4.4 Re-Structuring, Specialization, and Bureaucracy

The hierarchical structure laid out in the results chapter is a general overview of the hierarchical structure of the organization. It is important to note that the structure (or

aspects of the structure) may change at any time. For example, one current employee who was in his fourth year working with the company said, "...there's been a huge re-structuring...There was an entirely different structure to what there is now" (Bobby). Another interviewee, who is no longer working for Company X but had been working there for four years up until 6 months from the time of interview, had this to say about the changes in structure

"I'm kind of punk anti-authoritarian but I do tend to treat everyone on the same level and that worked more back when we were very flat kind of structure. As things got more hierarchy or ranked, I would have no problem like speaking my mind about something or just arguing with my boss and that kind of stuff and it got to be a problem" – Karl

This quote suggests an increase in hierarchical formation. It also suggests that organizational growth and employee fit may have polarizing or differentiating effects. In other words, with company growth structural changes (i.e. operational processes (i.e. more bureaucratic)) occur and some employees may be resistant to the change or simply prefer a smaller work-atmosphere. This concept is supported in the literature on the "perception of the workplace based on organizational influences" particularly size (on page 50). Therefore, structural change may contribute to why an employee may leave the company either voluntarily or involuntarily.

In addition, an interviewee who is a founding member of Company X and who worked for the company for four years said,

"It's different now because there's different teams that are working on a single tab, right. So, it's like "Oh, you got to get the credit card tab people involved" right. But in those days, it's like everybody. And that worked really well I think until they got to the bigger office and then that's when people started getting split up into teams" – Alf

This quote demonstrates how the company has changed structurally due to the increase in scale. In addition, the quote touches on the notion of specialization when talking about having “to get the credit card tab people involved”. These findings are important because they highlight the evolving nature of the workplace – continuously changing to achieve profit margins. Moreover, it insinuates that Company X’s growth is connected to its increasingly complex structure shaped by increasingly specialized teams – a notion supported by the literature (see page 80-82) when looking at organizational growth and the consequential need for specialization. To review, specialization is a consequence of larger, bureaucratic systems, and can lead to employees feeling disconnected from their work. However, smaller working groups have been reported to support employee relations and interaction contributing to positive connections for employees. This discussion brings to light contingency factors such as the scale of the workplace in the sense that the size fluctuates based on needs. In summary, the exact structure is dependent on the scale (size) of departments and the nature and quantity of the work involved. The structure is an evolving framework that is redefined and re-structured as needed – not stagnant and rigid. In terms of the employees, the risk within an increasingly specialized work environment is that employees lose a sense of connection to their work. Environments characterized by specialization are interdependent on others.

5.5 Perks and Benefits

In addition, the “Perks and Benefits” plan and the monthly bonuses create an implicit contract between employee and employer. The features – the compensation, perks and benefits, and bonuses – appear to be offered in order to create or maintain a specific and deliberate desire, which in the HHPW model is to foster an environment that betters the employees and (subsequently) betters the organization. The belief being that employee well-being contributes to organizational well-being. However, I argue that although workplace features may seemingly appear to be “perks” or privileges, underlying purposeful reasons for these features exist. They are not privileges but rather a technical feature of the

organization's structure. They are purposeful. The features may not be communicated or even known outright by the people executing them or the people affected by them.

Nonetheless, underlying effects do exist similar to the concept of flextime. The effect is the establishment of a specific (and deliberate or non-deliberate) organizational culture. In the case of Company X, the organization's culture is deliberately constructed as demonstrated by the existence of a Culture Team and a Chief Culture Officer. Perks and benefits are offered for a multitude of reasons. Although these perks and benefits are costly to offer, the company sees value in it – or else they wouldn't provide it. Evidently, organizational culture is a topic valued and managed at Company X.

In summary, the interview data reveals important information regarding the experience of Company X members. In other words, the experience of members of a workplace that display HHPW qualities are discussed. These experiences touch on the notion of workplace flexibility and its dual meaning and purpose as well as the dual purpose of the perks and benefits. This duality in the case of flexibility relates to the problematic and confusing issue surrounding performance metrics and merit. The interviewees' experiences talk about stress and this is associated with work overload and the demographics of the workforce. Control practices are outlined based on the data, and multiple control mechanisms are documented. Control practices manifest in the form of "culture police", in the influence of the core group, and in the monitoring of employees (surveillance). The hierarchy (within and across teams) is also outlined in relation to how this affects members. Additionally, the re-structuring of the workplace and how employees perceive this is outlined followed by a discussion of the perks and benefits, which play an implicit and deliberate role. Now that an examination of what working within an environment that displays HHPW qualities means to its members has been addressed, concluding remarks are made.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the focus of this study was to address the question *what does working for a company that displays HHPW qualities mean to its members?* This topic is important because companies like Google and Company X have been and continue to receive substantial praise for their impressive and unique company culture, which is often said to contribute to the organization's extreme financial success. Consequently, multiple sources (predominantly media sources) advocate for this type of HHPW-like workplace model. However, the true value and implications of these types of models is often overlooked. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that these companies are part of an extremely lucrative industry at the moment and that the workplace perks come at a cost to its employees. Therefore, considering how employees within this type of environment cope is relevant.

The HHPW model unites the Healthy Organization model and the HPW model. The amalgamation of the two models was necessary because of their striking resemblance. The only major difference being the field from which the model originates – one being Sociology and the other Business Management. This study joined the models together for an interdisciplinary approach. A HHPW is characterized as a workplace that is successful (in terms of profit and achieving organizational goals) and that has a physically and psychologically healthy workforce, which is able to sustain overtime a satisfying work environment and culture (Cooper and Cartwright 1994). HHPW qualities includes practices within the following areas: 1) compensation and benefits, 2) job and work design, 3) training and development, 4) recruiting and selection, 5) employee relations, 6) communication, 7) performance management and appraisal, and 8) promotions.

In order to explore the experience of members within this type of HHPW environment, the study addresses the following question *does Company X display HHPW qualities?* And *if Company X does display HHPW qualities, does it always practice HHPW principles, meaning do circumstances exists that alter the implementation or practice of HHPW qualities?* Finally, *if Company X does display HHPW qualities, what does this mean in*

terms of the workforce, meaning the people of Company X? In other words, who are the people of Company X. Who are they in terms of age, academic background, parental status, gender?

Organizational culture theory is consulted in order to explore the role of culture and structure within the workplace, which are two paramount features in the investigation of the member experience. I maintain that a synergetic or cooperative relation between culture and structure exists in that the workplace structure contributes to the culture, and the culture contributes to the structure. That being said, the two concepts are separate and distinct matters that are often found side by side. The theoretical framework provides background on key concepts to the study including membership, the social man, social bonds, social norms, and social roles and processes. Additionally, it outlines and discusses key theorists.

The case study approach is used to explore the experience of members at Company X. Interviews are conducted with past, present, and prospective employees in order for a holistic understanding of the experience from start to finish to occur.

HHPW principles and practices are outlined, and examples of HHPW practices from the data are noted to illustrate the HHPW qualities at Company X. This is done to address the questions *does Company X display HHPW qualities?* HHPW qualities found at Company X include its use of comprehensive perks and benefits such as health, vision, and dental insurance as well as house cleaning services, free laptops, and free meals, as well as bonuses, and employees stock options. They include aspects of the job and work design such as participative decision-making and problem solving, temporary work teams and self-managed work teams, as well as autonomy over work and control over one's work schedule (which is controversial because project deadlines supersede a flexible work schedule and emotional health (i.e. burnout)). Company X HHPW qualities also include training and development initiatives. Examples of these initiatives include: a Professional Development Budget, Creative Days, coaching and mentoring programs, as well as a game-like web application that helps new employees socialize and learn about the company culture. Company X HHPW qualities also include recruitment and selection practices such as

requiring prospective employees to undergo eight interviews prior to being hired and only hiring 1% of applicants. HHPW qualities at Company X touch on employee relations specifically job security, low status differentials, as well as practices that pertain to social events. However, job security is present in so far as employees are productive. Additionally, HHPW characteristics relate to communication practices such as intentionally divulging sensitive information to its members and staying in constant communication with colleagues by scheduling regular meetings. The last two HHPW qualities demonstrated at Company X pertain to performance management and appraisal (i.e. performance metrics, performance reviews) and lastly promotions (i.e. hiring from within and planning for career advancement). All of the HHPW characteristics noted above and throughout the results chapter contribute to the experience of the company's members.

Findings pertaining to the following question were noted; *does Company X always practice HHPW principles, meaning do circumstances exist that alter the implementation or practice of HHPW qualities?* The findings reveal that circumstances exist whereby the implementation of HHPW practices is ignored. Four exceptions are noted. The first is during busy work periods and for project deadlines. During this time practices like flexible work schedules are ignored and employees are expected to spend as many hours as needed to see the project through to completion, even if this means "voluntary overtime", burnout, or stress.

A second exception pertains to job security. Job security exists for standard full-time employees. However, contract employees like manual labourers and hospitality contractors do not have job security. Furthermore, job security for standard employees only exists if employees are productive.

A third scenario whereby HHPW practices may be ignored is during the hiring processes. Hiring selectively was a HHPW practice found at Company X. However, selectivity only occurs when there is a large pool of applicants to select from with the required skills. Hiring selectively disappears when the skill is rare and desirable.

The third scenario relates to the fourth and final exception to HHPW practices, which pertains to multiple tools used to screen applicants. This practice is ignored in the

case of contract employees. The contract employees interviewed expressed that there was no formal interview process or contract. Instead they were hired based on 'word of mouth' and the contract was a verbal contract – no formal agreement was signed. This information touches on the experience of contract employees.

Finally, *if Company X does display HHPW qualities, what does this mean in terms of the workforce?* In order to understand the experience, it is critical to understand who these employees are, which is why demographic information is important. The demographic data revealed that the majority of employees at Company X are male (70%) and between the age of 26 and 34 years. In addition, these young men are typically hired straight out of school. Considering the average age of employees and the fact that they are typically recruited right "out of school", these workers likely underwent extensive formal education. Moreover, less than 10% of employees at Company X are parents, meaning they likely have fewer non-work related obligations. Furthermore, the workforce at Company X tends to possess a particular set of qualities. These qualities include: autonomy, creative, respectful, innovative, easily adaptable to change, smart, trustworthy, resourceful, and a quick learner.

Working within an environment that displays HHPW qualities, specifically Company X, means several things for its members and their experience at work. First off, it can be stressful due to insufficient help and extreme expectations. In fact, one employee interviewed was on stress leave at the time of interview. Other employees interviewed were sometimes working 60 hours a week in order to complete tasks, which is not sustainable and will likely lead to burning out if continued long term. Company X has high expectations of employees to innovate, create, and act quickly (or "ship fast"). Moreover, the experience of employees varies depending on their role within the company. Some roles are more stressful than others (i.e. management versus contract labourer) or the cause of the stress differs (i.e. executive versus management). This is one reason why consulting organizational culture theory is appropriate, as the interplay between the organization, structure, culture, and employees is considered and understood. Work at Company X is made easier for its members because it has minimal "red tape" or formal policies. Furthermore, employees work 'on-demand', meaning as needed and for as long as

needed. Certain expectations also exist in regards to how employees behave within the workplace (i.e. self-sufficient, autonomous, like an owner).

A major limitation in the execution of the study pertains to the inability to gain permission from Company X to conduct research internally. In order to divert the issue research participants were approached independently from the organization. Having had internal access would have allowed for more observations to take place and likely would have simplified the participant recruitment process. In addition, having Company X's permission may have allowed accessibility to internal documents and tools such as "The Repository". Greater accessibility would have made the documentation of the hierarchical and architectural structure easier and perhaps more precise. For example, the process could have been easier with permission because the researcher would have been able to consult the internal directory. Instead the analysis of the structure relied on interview participants who (understandably) were unaware of the exact structure. Although, discussing the hierarchical structure with interviewees did generate useful conversations pertaining to their opinion on the matter and pertaining to the historical context of the structure that may not have been evident had the researcher solely consulted the directory for example. Despite this limitation, a general overview of the structures was obtained successfully.

An additional limitation pertains to the academic research process and specifically the associated timeline. Seeing that the research timeframe is a variable that must be incorporated into the construction of a study (i.e. in order to graduate), longitudinal results are not feasible. Longitudinal findings would be helpful, seeing that Company X is a fairly new organization having been founded in 2006. It would be interesting to see how the organization – the employees' and the work environment – evolves as the needs of employees change (i.e. more employees have families), and as the size and scope (i.e. more and more offices) of the organization change. This longitudinal information would contribute further to the knowledge on Company X as a healthy high-performing organization – information that may be of interest particularly to other organizations looking to implement such a model. Therefore, room exists for further research on healthy

high-performing organizations (be it longitudinal research or other) like in the areas of work-life relationships, and versatility of the model across industry. In addition, the sample of the case study is too small to obtain any generalizable results or comparative findings between what the literature says about demographics and healthy organizational perception, and the perceptions of interviewees and their demographic traits.

Work affects an extensive portion of the population and the nature of work is changing. Krahn et al. (2011:281) state, “...the challenges of workplace reform...are very much alive. How they are addressed by employees, managers, and unions will shape the workplace of the future”. Evidently, many parties have a vested interest in the organization and management of work. Because work affects a vast number of people, many can relate to the concept of making work better for employees and employers alike. Although the reality is that profit will always come before people.

Academics from a multitude of disciplines may find the topic of organizational structure and organizational culture in relation to the HHPW model of interest. These disciplines may include: organizational studies, sociology, psychology, business management, and human resources, among others. According to Posthuma et al. (2013:1210) “[r]esearch in this field is likely to continue as scholars around the globe see the usefulness of HPWPs for organizations”. Therefore, the models associated to this study on work may have value for members in a multitude of fields and disciplines. In addition, this study contributes to the research on concepts including control, hierarchy, power and authority, surveillance, and flexibility within the workplace.

The study proposes several areas worthy of future research. One area pertains to the type of performance metrics an organization embraces and if multiple forms can and should be practiced. The two systems at Company X – the Twitter-like merit-based system and the performance-based metrics – caused confusion amongst employees and did not accurately reflect the contributions of employees to the workplace. These are two different methods of evaluating employees and a closer look at how they differ and intersect and how the approaches are executed within a given workplace is a topic worthy of future research. Another area requiring further research pertains to work-related stress. Stress,

according to Duxbury (2006) is manageable as long as the duration of the stress is not consistent and long-lasting. However, this raises questions pertaining to how to measure stress and its duration, meaning how can an employer (or employee) identify *long-lasting* stress? How long is too long?

APPENDIX
PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

PAST EMPLOYEES

Alfy	
Status: Co-founder	Gender: Male
Years with Company X: 4 years (2004 - 2008)	Age: 40-45 years
Education: Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	Marital Status: Married with Children

Karl	
Status: Developer	Gender: Male
Years with Company X: 4 years (2010 - 2014)	Age: 36-40 years
Education: High School	Marital Status: Single

PRESENT EMPLOYEES

Bobby	
Status: Developer	Gender: Male
Years with Company X: 3 years	Age: 26-30 years
Education: Bachelors (incomplete)	Marital Status: Single

Neil	
Status: Customer Support (Team Lead)	Gender: Male
Years with Company X: 2 years (2012-current)	Age: 21-25 years
Education: College	Marital Status: In a relationship

Robin	
Status: Recruiter	Gender: Female
Years with Company X: 3 ½ years	Age: 26-30 years
Education: Bachelors	Marital Status: Single

Craig	
Status: Co-founder/CCO/CDO	Gender: Male
Years with Company X: 9 years	Age: 31-35 years
Education: Bachelors	Marital Status: Married

Ryan	
Status: Controller (Finance)	Gender: Male
Years with Company X: 4 years (April 2011 – on)	Age: 31-35 years
Education: Bachelors	Marital Status: Single

Andrea	
Status: Customer Support	Gender: Female
Years with Company X: 1.5 years	Age: 26-30 years
Education: Bachelors	Marital Status: Single

CONTRACT EMPLOYEES

Curtis	
Status: Manual Labourer	Gender: Male
Years with Company X: 1 year (4-6 contracts)	Age: 56-60 years
Education: High School	Marital Status: Single

Mika	
Status: Hospitality	Gender: Female
Years with Company X: 1 year (ongoing)	Age: 26-30 years
Education: High School	Marital Status: In a relationship

PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES

Jean	
Status: General Applicant	Gender: Female
Years with Company X: 0 year	Age: 26-30 years
Education: Bachelors	Marital Status: Single

Patricia	
Status: Human Resource Applicant	Gender: Female
Years with Company X: 0 year	Age: 26-30 years
Education: Bachelors	Marital Status: In a relationship

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT TEMPLATE: LINKED IN “INMAIL” MESSAGE

Hi,

You are invited to participate in academic research on High-Performance Workplaces (HPW) conducted by Allison Hale, MA Candidate, School of Sociological and Anthropological Studies, University of Ottawa.

The study focuses on the experience of employees within healthy high-performing workplaces in order to identify and analyze the structure of healthy high-performing settings. [Company X] exemplifies the type of healthy high-performing organization required for this study. It is for this reason that your input regarding what it is like to work for this type of organization is of valuable interest.

Participation consists of a one-time interview of approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Interview questions are noninvasive. Questions pertain to your work-related experiences. Participation is strictly confidential and anonymous. Participants will be selected on a "first come/first served" basis. Your participation in the study will help advance academic knowledge and is greatly appreciated.

Are you interested in being interviewed for the study?

To setup an interview, please contact Allison Hale at (email address) or (phone number).

Look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Allison Hale

INTERVIEW GUIDE EXAMPLE FOR PAST EMPLOYEES

Interviewee:

Position:

Date:

Location:

General Overview: Quality of Work Life/Work-Life Relationship

- How long have you worked for the company?
- Describe a regular workday.
- Do you have a family? Are you married? Do you have children?
- What did your typical weekend look like? What do you do? What are your hobbies?
- Did you ever work from home or outside the office? How often and why?
- How did you prioritize your time?
- How would your significant other describe your work-life relationship?
- How did your work (paid work) fit in to what you do outside of the workplace (looking for information about work-life balance)?
- How often did you stay after work or participate in events outside regular work hours (each month) with colleagues?
- How did your work relate to the mission of the organization?
- Did you feel a sense of purpose in what you do? Was your work meaningful to you? How so?

Time off

- What did you do when you have a non-work related obligation (i.e. doctor's appointment)? Tell me about the process of "taking time off". How did you organize your work?

Stress

- How often did you feel stressed?
- How did you cope with the stress?
- Were there resources offered to help deal with these issues?

Measuring Structural Elements

- How was your performance measured?
- Do you think it was an accurate representation of your time, energy, and effort? How so?

Physical workplace design

- Describe the layout of the office?
- Is this the original layout and design of the workspace?

Intrinsic Rewards

- What do you find most interesting about your job? How committed are you to your job and what factors influence your commitment? Do you feel a sense of accomplishment from your work? If yes, how so?

Extrinsic Rewards - “Benefits & Perks”

- Tell me about the Employee Benefit Plan. What perks and benefits did you use the most?

Relationships

- How would you describe working for the company?
- Tell me about your relationship with others at the company?

Hiring process

- Tell me about how you got hired at Company X? What was the process like?

Absenteeism, Presenteeism

- How many days have you been absent from work in the past 12 months and why? What were the reasons for being absent (i.e. Family obligations, health issues, job interview, etc.)?
- Have you been looking for a job with another employer within the past 12 months? Why? What motivates to look elsewhere?
- How many days in the past month have you been at work physically but not mentally? And in the past 12 months? This might be due to the inability to focus because of pain, stress, etc.

Departure from Company X

- Why did you leave the company?
- How long ago did you leave?
- What lead up to your departure?
- How did your colleagues react to you leaving the company?
- What is your relationship like now with Company X and the people who work there (i.e. Have you stayed in contact with anyone from there?)?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRESENT EMPLOYEES

Interviewee:

Position:

Date:

Location:

General Overview: Quality of Work Life/Work-Life Relationship

- How long have you worked for the company?
- What do you do at Company X? What is the name of your position?
- Tell me about a regular workweek for you?
- Describe a regular workday.
- Tell me about your family. Are you married? Do you have children?
- What does your typical weekend look like? What do you do? What are your hobbies?
- Do you ever work from home or outside the office? How often and why?
- How do you prioritize your time?
- How would your wife/girlfriend/significant other describe your work-life relationship?
- How does your work (paid work) fit in to what you do outside of the workplace (looking for information about work-life balance)?
- How often do you stay after work or participate in events outside regular work hours (each month) with colleagues?
- How does your work relate to the mission of the organization? In other words, how is you're the tasks you oversee and execute connected to the daily functions of the organization?
- Do you feel a sense of purpose in what you do? Is your work meaningful to you? How so?

Time off

- What do you do when you have a non-work related obligation (i.e. doctors appointment)? Tell me about the process of "taking time off". How do you organize your work?

Stress

- How often do you feel stressed?
- How do you cope with the stress?

Measuring Structural Elements

- How is your performance at work evaluated or measured?
- Do you think it is a fair representation of the work you do and your contribution to the workplace?

Physical workplace design

- Describe the layout of the office.

Intrinsic Rewards

- What do you find most interesting about your job?
- How committed are you to your job and what factors influence your commitment?
- Do you feel a sense of accomplishment from your work? If yes, how so?

Extrinsic Rewards - “Benefits & Perks”

- Tell me about the Employee Benefit Plan.
- Do you use them? Which ones?

Relationship with colleagues

- How would you describe working for this company?
- List five words that you think best describe the work environment?
- Tell me about your relationship with others here at the company?
- Who is your superior at work?

Hiring process

- What was the hiring process like when you applied to Company X?

Absenteeism, Presenteeism

- How many days have you been absent from work in the past 12 months and why? What were the reasons for being absent (i.e. Family obligations, health issues, job interview, etc.)?
- Have you been looking for a job with another employer within the past 12 months? Why? What motivates to look elsewhere?
- How many days in the past month have you been at work physically but not mentally? And in the past 12 months? This might be due to the inability to focus because of pain, stress, etc.

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES

Interviewee:

Position:

Date:

Location:

General Overview:

- How did you hear about Company X?
- What inspired you to apply for a job with the company?
- What position(s) did you apply for?
- What was the application process like?
- What was the hiring (interview) process like?
- What were your initial impressions of the company when you applied and after you started the interview process? Did your perception change? Why?
- How long did the interview process from start to finish – from your application to your final interview – last?
- How did the company communicate with you? Did the communication process change throughout the process?
- Did you go for a tour? What did you think of the space?
- What is your relationship like now with the company? Are you still applying or looking at job postings at Company X?
- Do you know anyone who works for the company?

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