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Reinventing Organizations: Model of Self-Organized Process Organization (SOPO)

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Background and Purpose: Self-organization in teams and Business Process Orientation have been subjects of many separate researches, yet there is lack of research actually joining it within a common research. The purpose of our research is to define a research model for new type of service organization - called SOPO (Self-Organised Process Organization). This model sets research base to determine SOPO's maturity level and a self-assessment tool, helping new emergence or transitions of existing organization toward SOPO.
Methodology: We conducted a case researches in three ICT service companies, which were undergoing a transition process towards SOPO. We conducted several in-depth, un-structured and structured part of interviews with employees holding three different positions in each organization. Hereby we present the researched organisation with most explicit case.
Results: We defined the key elements of the model and tested it in a case research. Key elements are Self-Organised Work Teams (SOWT) and Business Process Orientation (BPO). Both SOWT and BPO are positively affecting level of SOPO. Level of SOPO is positively related to both, enthusiasm of personnel to work in self-organised environment and perceived Quality of Service (QS).
Conclusion: SOPO model can be used: (1) in existing companies as a blueprint for SOPO implementation, (2) to assess the maturity level of companies reinventing their organizational structure, and (3) helping SOPO organizations to structure changes toward higher service quality. SOPO model is a viable starting point in further research. Further verification of the SOPO model by a quantitative research is needed.

Keywords: *self-organization, business process orientation, service quality, SOPO, reinventing organizations*

1 Introduction

Nowadays, an increasing number of organizations are trying to organise their hierarchical management structure towards more horizontal one, as an answer to employees' requests for a more flexible and cooperative working environment, allowing for work to be done more effectively and with better care. In the last decades, the most commonly used practice has been that of teams or work groups (Yang & Guy, 2010). Even the most recent work teams innovations are "team-buildings" and self-management.

In the age of globalisation, organizations are facing a competitive market and an increasingly more demanding customer base. The need for shorter response and production times, coupled with the demands of their own employees, push towards new approaches and tools. E-business is often forcing out classical "business as usual" practices, making prices and availability more transparent – as a result, customers are getting less loyal to brands. Usual consumer behaviours, popular in the last decades, are van-

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ishing rapidly. Organizations tend reply to the challenges of changed consumer behaviour, by being faster, more adaptable, more cooperative, custom-oriented and they manage time and processes (McCormack, 2001). "Teams will become the primary unit of performance in high-performance organizations and indeed, working in teams has become more frequent in a variety of sectors and settings" (Ruch et. all, 2018, p. 3).

The purpose of our research was to thoroughly and extensively study the areas of self-organization, the integration of the individuals into teams and the methods of managing groups, teams and organizations and the field of process organizations and IT process management. We were searching for cultural and other socio-technological characteristics of ICT companies to define organizational model that could more fully meet the today's needs of key stakeholders, among which a special emphasis is placed on employees. In our research, we were looking for answers to the following research questions:

(1) Is it possible to create effective, prosperous and sustainable business organizations using new self-organization approaches?

(2) Is organization based on self-organized teams more effective business model for all stakeholders?

(3) Are there any interests to co-create new and more creative working environments,

(4) How to apply process models and how to combine it with self-organization and intuition?

(5) What sociological and cultural factors should be taken into account?

(6) What obstacles and reservations can we expect in the emergence of new forms of organization?

Our research does not aim toward replication and was not designed to do so. We used qualitative method case study research to gain a deeper understanding of the emergence of a new type of organization and its underlying causality. We designed theoretical model and verified its use in our case research. We gained insights in several phenomena, that can help us understand the underlying forces driving organizations toward new forms of organization, which make the satisfaction of the true needs of their key stakeholders.

2 Theoretical framework

Self-organization in work environment (toward self-organised work teams - SOWT)

Yang & Guy (2010) are defining self-managed work teams (SMWT) as relatively independent work teams whose members share responsibilities and leadership activities to perform independent tasks. The basic characteristics of SMWT can be described as: (1) independent tasks (Kirkman and Shapiro, 1997), (2) independent decision making (Wellins, 1992; Magpili & Pazos, 2017), (3) sharing common responsibilities (Wall et al., 1986), and (4) shared leadership (Hackman 2002; Nahavandi and Malekzadeh 1999).

In theory, there are two main reasons that make SMWT so successful (Ziek and Smulowitz, 2014): (1) self-management allows a higher levels of autonomy within the decision making process, organising, control, employees involvement and monitoring, and (2) team work: team spirit accelerates cooperation and at the same time, sense for shared responsibility allows efficiency to be measured at a team level, rather than on a personal one; leaders are thereby seen more as a moderators or facilitators, rather than classical supervisors. Various team members may emerge as leaders in self-organized, as well as virtual teams.

Various researches experimented with different models to best define organizational effectiveness, but we can essentially divide them into three areas: (1) stakeholder's satisfaction, with focus on employees, (2) goal attainment, in relation to the organization's processes, and (3) system resources (adopted from Yang and Guy, 2010).

Stakeholder satisfaction

With this approach we try to define the extent to which the organizations are able to satisfy their stakeholder needs. We can see the organization as a contact point of many similar or different interests of various individuals - stakeholders. Among them, the key roles are taken by the employees. The similarity of purpose and interest between an individual and organization is what makes an organization to move towards a shared set of goals more smoothly, compared with the ones dealing with many opposing needs. When the stakeholders needs are similar to the organizational ones, the organization can meet them much more efficiently and in the circular way contributes to diminish the number of conflicts, increasing job satisfaction at the same time (Cohen et al., 1997; Yang and Guy, 2010). The key element of every organization are the individuals who carry different needs, desires, feelings and who implement different strategies, to reach goals and satisfy their needs. If the organizations' purpose, goals and strategies are aligned with the individual ones (on the level of true needs and not artificially created ones), synergies can emerge on a different level of consciousness (Laloux, 2014).

Goal attainment

Another way to define team performance is its ability to achieve defined set of goals. Several empiric researches have confirmed the following correlation: the level of SMWT usage positively relates to the organization's efficiency (Yang and Guy, 2010. Cohen et al., 1997). We can define team performance as "acceptability of output to customers within or outside the organization who receive team products, services, information, decisions, or performance events (such as presentations or competitions)." (Yang and Guy, 2010). In terms of goal attainment, empirical findings usually show a positive effect for self-managed work teams. There are researches showing, that level of goal achievement is mainly accomplished through

self-management, which provides a highly efficient employment of human resources and, therefore, it positively affects job satisfaction as well (Cohen et al., 1997).

System resources

This approach predicts that the scarcity of resources in the environment and their balance, can affect the organization's ability to gather or utilise such resources toward achievement of a greater bargaining position. In the business environment, a good bargaining position can be translated into a competitive advantage, therefore the efficiency and systemic approach toward gathering appropriate resources, may results in greater organizational effectiveness (Yuchtman in Seashore 1967).

In their research Yang in Guy (2010) test all three approaches mentioned above on the following assumptions: (1) a greater level of (a) self-management and (b) teamwork, is positively associated with perceived employee job satisfaction, (2) estimated higher level of (a) self-management and (b) teamwork, will is positively associated to SMWT performance, (3) the level of self-management is positively associated to the perceived team performance, and (4) SMWT members' perceived resource attainment is positively associated with their perceived job satisfaction. They created a questionnaire with three sections and administered it to 56 public institutions in the US. They discovered a significant and positive correlation between the level of teamwork and job satisfaction, but correlation between self-management and job satisfaction was not significant. Nonetheless, they explained it as an indirect correlation between self-management and job satisfaction over resource attainment. In relation of teamwork toward SMWT performance, they also proved a strong positive correlation. However, comparing self-management and SMWT performance they found no significant relation. It could be explained through socio-technical systems theory, as it postulates that autonomy can improve efficiency if some preliminary criteria are met. In addition, a positive relation was discovered between self-management and team performance as well as resource attainment is positively correlated with perceived job satisfaction. They conclude that the quality of teamwork or team's spirit, also known as "esprit de corps", within the US public service sector is a much more influential factor in team effectiveness than self-management itself. Hand in hand, teamwork and self-management may be working as a well-oiled machine towards a more effective organization.

Additional research influencing our SOPO model was done by Spreitzer et al. (1999). In their research they view SMWT from two different perspectives: (1) relation of different dimensions of SMWT performance and (2) key SMWT success factors in service sector. Authors define SMWT as "teams of interdependent individuals that can self-regulate their behaviour on relatively whole tasks". Organizations use SMWT to replace whole hierarchical organizational structures by employing SMWT, to respond to the current market situation. Self-leadership is the approach that is improving team performance and innovativeness. (Eseryel, 2014). More than 52% of organizations within the Fortune 1000 service sector list in year 1993, already used SMWT. They imply that SMWT usage improves customer satisfaction by increasing service quality and rates of customer loyalty. From the perspective of employees, SMWT positively affects job satisfaction, employees' loyalty and raises incomes. Key success factors of SMWT are defined as: (1) team design, (2) team characteristics, (3) team leadership, and (4) supportive work environment for individuals. The research followed those assumptions was conducted in two service organizations with extensive SMWT usage. They have conducted two researches, involving 14 SMWT with 94 individuals in first research and 50 individuals in second research. Although the samples were not very big, they were not able to confirm any strong relation between the categories, except for customer satisfaction and productivity, which were found to be marginally related. One of the possible reasons for such findings could be that "although employee quality of work life, customer satisfaction, and team productivity did not work against each other, the dimensions didn't necessarily reinforce or support one another" (Spreitzer et al., 1999).

There seems to be several differences between a Self-Managed, Self-Directed and Self-Organised Teams. We define it as: (1) a Self-Managed Team is "a group of people working together in their own ways, toward a common goal, which is defined outside the team", (2) a Self-Directed Team as "a group of people working together in their own ways, toward a common goal, which the team defines", (3) a Self-Organised Team is "a group of motivated individuals, who decided to work together and have the ability and authority to make decisions toward a common goal, which the team defines".

*Business process orientations - **BPO*** (toward key chaos fixing SOPO ingredient)

BPO was first introduced by Michael Porter (1990) nearly three decades ago, with the use of chain value and interoperability as key challenges toward creating organizational added values. W. Edwards Deming (McCormack, 2001) continued with the idea of process management and designed, by now, well known flow diagram, directing business flow from supplier's side directly to customers, and defined them as process that can be measured and managed. Later on, researchers investigated different ap-

1 Some companies have an 'employee first' policy, with a basic premise that contented or happy employees perform better. South West Airlines is a well-known example. In such companies, serious demands are made on employees and strict selection procedures are in place, and teams are responsible for performance. It is far from a free-floating culture.

proaches to business process. One of them was Michael Hammer (1990, 1996) who set one of the milestones in organizational reengineering in business process organizations. Process orientation or the process method of management can be defined as assigning each manager incharge of a whole set of activities that produce a valuable product or service for current or future customers. It is also considered as the horizontal method of management based on end-to-end processes, and contrasts with the traditional hierarchical approach (Hammer, 1996; Khosravi, 2016). Hammer (1990) defined process as cross-functional and out of organization aimed operation. To establish process way of thinking within organization, he defined four views: (1) business processes, (2) work places and structure, (3) management and measurement systems, and (4) values and believes. Despite all these base references for business process orientations (BPO), and wide usage in practice, it was not easy to clearly define BPO. Jasper (2014), sees BPO as a firm decision to use Business Process Management (BPM) in the structure. According to Palmer (2010) the definition of BPM, two different movements are identified: (1) focusing on the management and improvement of single processes is "A structured systematic approach to analyse and continually improve the process" (Palmberg, 2010, p. 95) and (2) more holistic view on BPM with the view on whole organization can be defined as "A more holistic manner to manage all aspects of the business and as a valuable perspective to adopt in determining organizational effectiveness" (Palmberg, 2010, p.95). Strong base of BPM related researches and excessive use of BPM in practice, were a good starting point for McCormack (2001), to define various variables and connect them into meaningful groups. He completed the BPM model by allowing organizations to measure BPO level. BPO model is divided into three groups (McCormack, 2001): (1) process management and measurements: including measurements as output quality, production time, process cost and variability, etc, (2) process workplaces: for example, role of process owner replacing role of development manager, (3) process view: complete and clear documentation to be understood from bottom to up and from beginning to end. As a tool McCormack (2001) designed a set of questions, to use with factor analysis. His final questionnaire is consisted by 11 questions, which fall under the three above mentioned categories. The model verification and questionnaire was administered in over 100 international companies. In the research BPO was also compared against four different indicators: (1) overall business performance, (2) inter-functional conflict, (3) inter-functional connectedness and (4) team spirit or "esprit de corps". The basic proposition was that BPO improves overall business performance, helps reducing inter-functional conflict and improves inter-functional connectedness and "esprit de corps" (McCormack, 2001). Research results confirmed a strong and positive correlation between BPO and the overall business performance (Bronzo et al., 2013, McCormack, 2001), "esprit de corps", better inter-functional connectedness and lower inter-functional conflict levels. BPO also showed strong relations to organizational variables. On the other hand, process view did not show significant correlation to other variables. The facts were explained, as most likely to be the result of improper, or lack of proper documentations. The Effects of Process Orientation on Customer Satisfaction research in an empirical study done by Kohlbacher (2009), BPO positively relates to customer satisfaction, product quality, delivery speed, and time-to-market speed. The results of a research among 127 Croatian companies (Glavan and Vukšič, 2017), suggests, that BPO practice is positively related to nonfinancial performance and that there is an impact of non-financial performance on financial performance. This effect on financial performance is indirectly caused by non-financial factors, suggesting that companies should view performance in both, financial and non-financial ways. Cleven et al. (2016), in their research suggests, that process orientation significantly contributes to organization's overall productivity and improvement of its service quality.

Self-Organization

We could define self-organization as "a spontaneous process where some form of global order or coordination, arises out of the local interactions between the components of an initially disordered or not naturally organised system" (Serugendo et al., 2005:168). Normally the process it is not directed or controlled by anyone from inside or outside of the system, but the start of the process may be controlled or initiated. The resulting organization is wholly decentralised or distributed over all the elements of the system. As such it is typically very robust and able to survive and self-repair substantial damage or infections. Self-organization occurs in a variety of physical, chemical, biological, social and cognitive systems. Self-organization is also relevant in chemistry, where it has often been taken as being synonymous with self-assembly (Camazine et. al., 2003).

Since the dawn of civilization, humans have always employed self-organization: our cities, villages and most of counties begun as self-organized structures. Yet, somewhere along the way, we lost the sense of our true needs and have gained the ability to control and direct Mother nature. And if we don't correct those mistakes in the very near future it may well cost us our existence on this planet (Laloux, 2014).

3 Research model

We based our research on the assumption that some organizations are reinventing their work structure, based on values stemming from two approaches: (1) self-organization principles: to unleash unlimited creative and innovative possibilities in each individual merging with true global and meaningful purpose of organization, and (2) business process orientation approach: to enable structured

and dynamic flow among members, supporting higher service quality and service value.

Although there are many researches that fall within those categories, there seems to be a lack of scientific research covering both aspects. In an attempt to present a more holistic approach, the present research builds on some of the aforementioned researches and other relevant theoretical material to create a model that could define and measure the organizational levels of what we called Self-Organised Process Organizations - SOPO.

At this stage, the scope of the research was limited to service sector organizations. We defined four main categories from our research questions: (1) maturity level of SOWT - Self-Organised Work Teams (xSOWT), (2) maturity level of BPO - Business Process Orientation (xBPO), joined into (3) maturity level Self-Organised Process Organizations (xSOPO) - SOPO, affecting (4) SQ - Service Quality and being in mutual relation (xWA&JS) with (5) levels of employee Affection to work in SOPO & perceived job satisfaction. We identified the following categories based on several existing models: (1) Yang and Guy, (2010), (2) McCormack, (2001) and (3) Cohen et.al., (1997). In our model the levels of all categories are affecting the next level (S1-3 affecting the level of SOWT, P1-4 affecting the level of BPO, and C1-2 affecting SQ). The categories and key indicators are shown in Figure 1.

SOWT - Self-Organised Work Teams at various maturity levels use different teamwork and self-organization or self-management elements. Different approaches and intensity of SOWT implementation can be used in organizations business models. We have identified 3 key categories defining SOWT: (1) Self- Organization, (2) Workgroup team spirit or „esprit de corps “, and (3) Team leadership style.

Self-Organization variable defines the level of self-organization. Workgroup team spirit or „esprit de corps“ can also be described as level of teamwork. It describes connection between individual needs entering team work and

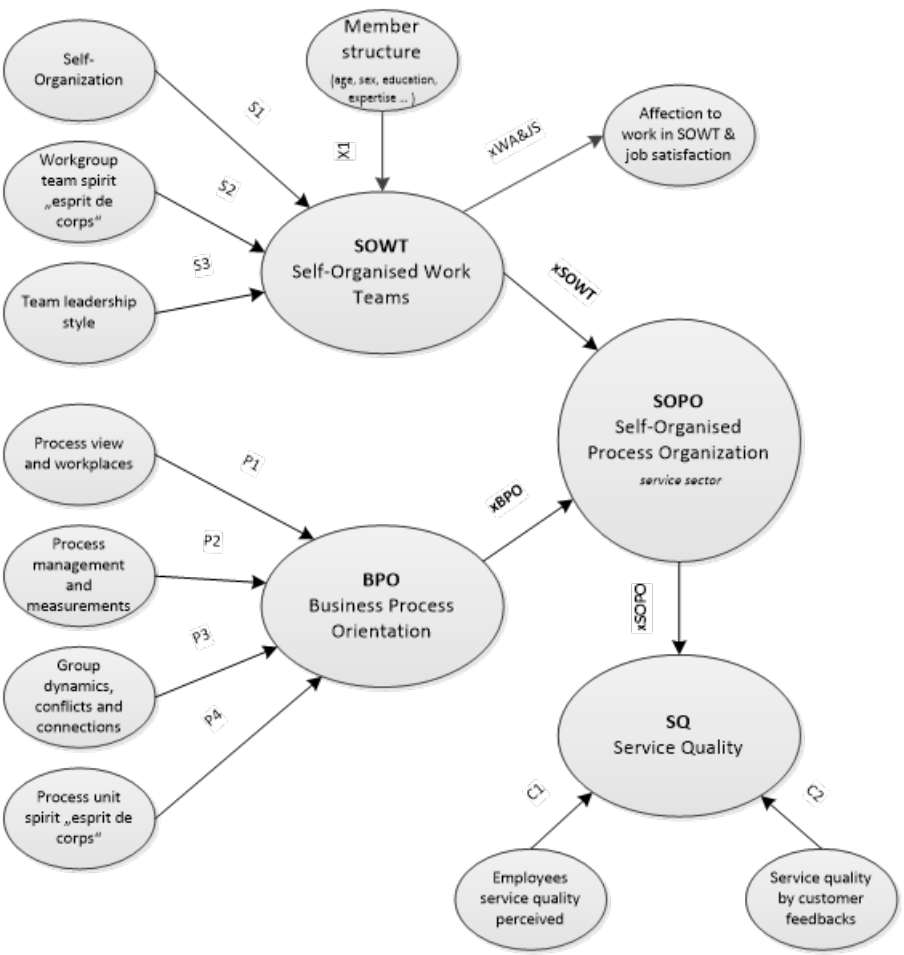

Figure 1: SOPO model of organization

how team can manage to satisfy individual needs in the path of efficiently following team's strategies, goals and tasks (Yang in Guy 2010, Campion et al., 1993; Kirkman in Shapiro, 2001). Team leadership style was added to the model as there can be many different leadership styles connected to different maturity levels of the SOWT. So far, the most advanced and appropriate leadership style for SOWT would be shared leadership (Cahill, 2011; Cashman, 2008; Cox et.al., 2003; Kantabutra in Suriyankietkaew, 2012). Team leadership alone is also a subject of many researches. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire - MLQ - is one of the most commonly used methods of determining a leadership style, yet it was found to be too detailed to be put to use. A slightly more appropriate approach was offered by the Team Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire - TMLQ (Avolio et al., 2003. Avolio in Bass, 2004). Based on TMLQ model, we predicted that higher level of shared leadership will have positive effect on SOWT performance. Anyway, we concluded, that our main goal is to determine maturity level only, so such an extensive questioner may be overwhelming. The decision also based in (Cox et al., 2003. Pearce and Conger, 2003), stating, that the use of qualitative research methodology, may be more appropriate. By their opinion, classical quantitative questionnaires tend to present a more polarized, black and white results without being able to reveal the "grey" areas of group dynamics and leadership styles and fail to reveal the complexities of team processes. A separate categorization of leadership styles has also been forgone and incorporated under the SOWT level category. Member Structure is well-researched team category and due to its vastness, we believed the model would not be complete without it. At the same time, it is over extensive to be fully covered as just one part of the research, so we decided, to keep it in the model, yet not to touch it more in depth than necessary to cower the requested holism.

BPO - Business Process Orientation maturity levels are defined by the use of 4 key categories: (1) Process view and workplaces, (2) Process management and measurements, (3) Group dynamics, conflicts and connections, and (4) Process unit spirit „esprit de corps".

Process view and workplaces is an employee mostly indicator. We could have called the indicator employee process view, as it joins two different yet so similar categories into a new, more holistic one. Process management and measurements is an indicator entirely based on McCormack's (2001) survey questions. Group dynamics, conflicts and connections defines joint several originally separate categories. We found important to keep all statements and let us decide which one will describe it more accurately when we complete our research. Some statements are more or less just negative aspects of quite similar positive ones, so it is nevertheless a bit more difficult to combine them anyway. Ending up with so many statements under one indicator was a bit uncomfortable, although we believe, they belong in the same category. Anyway, we let this option open, to find out if some of them may show less relevant, or even to disjoin the merged indicators if necessary after the research completed. Process unit spirit „esprit de corps" is similar indicator as in teams category, with a bit modified statements, as research subject here is process unit.

Affection to work in SOWT & job satisfaction is hereby joined by two sub categories, that on the first site might not belong together, although we believe they do. Anyway, to be on the safe side, we designed research separately for each sub-category still left it open checking it after the research.

SQ - Service Quality measurements are multilayer research activity. Most of today's service organization are more or less persistent trying to determine user perception of their service quality. Most commonly used are user surveys, but users are quite reluctant in giving real and valuable feedbacks with surveys.. Combined of employees perceived service quality and feedbacks from customers can be quite reliable and uses less resources to get results. So we combined both sub-categories, (A) Employees service quality perceived and (B) Employees service quality perceived into one set of statements based on SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al.,1988; Spreitzer et al., 1999).
In detail, categories, questions and references of the whole SOPO model are presented in Table1.

4 Research approach

We used the SOPO model as a base in our case study research in an IT service oriented small enterprise organization. We conducted: (1) in-depth unstructured interviews and (2) structured interviews, based on a specific set of questions compiled by the aforementioned authors. Based on the employee's competencies, we selected a key competent person from one of the following categories: (1) key top management person, (2) key person experienced in leadership (leading a group, team or project), and (3) process group/working team/ project group key member. Interviews were conducted in May 2015. The basic structure was developed out of the SOPO model indicators and categories.
The base for interviews was designed very openly in an attempt to dive deeper and get to the core of the phenomenon

Table 1 : SOPO model categories, questions and references

Category / Question	Reference
SOWT - Self-Organised Work Teams	
SOWT: Self- Organization	
My team works independently	(Yang and Gay, 2004; Campion et al., 1993; Kirkman and Shapiro, 1997)
My team makes autonomous decisions	
My performance evaluation is related to my team's performance	
Top management in my organization trust my team	
SOWT: Workgroup team spirit or „esprit de corps	
My team members share responsibility	(Yang in Guy 2010, Campion et al., 1993; Kirkman in Shapiro, 2001)
Leadership in my team is shared among the members	
My teammates are helpful to me	
I am unhappy when my teammates perform poorly	
My team relies on consensus to get the work done	
SOWT: Team leadership style	
Self-criticism	(Manz and Sims 1997; Spreitzer et al., 1999)
Testing before implementing	
Rewards and encouragement	
High expectations	
Self-assessment	
Encouragement of intellectual activities	(Avolio et al., 2003. Avolio in Bass, 2004)
Passiveness/leadership avoidance.	
Inspirational leadership	
Conditional rewarding	
Individual approach	
BPO - Business Process Orientation	
BPO: Process view and workplaces	
View the business as series of linked processes	(McCormack, 2001)
Use of process terms in work conversation	
Processes defined to a level employees know how they work	
Multidimensional work and not just simple tasks	
Included problem solving	
Continuous learning process presence	
BPO: Process management and measurements	
Measuring process performance	(McCormack, 2001)
Defined process measurement	
Allocation of resources by process needs	
Process targets are defined	
Process outcomes are measured	
BPO: Group dynamics, conflicts and connections	

Table 1 : SOPO model categories, questions and references (continued)

Cooperation among departments	(McCormack, 2001)
Rising tension in presence of different department members	
General dislike to those from other departments	
Goals in different departments not aligned	
Protective inter-department behaviour	
Marketing objectives not being aligned with production (or services)	
Little or no inter-departmental conflict in business unit	
easy communication regardless of rank	
Presence of informal communication	
Comfortable calling different department member on an issue	
Formal communication channels thru ranks and positions exists	
Employees being accessible to those in other departments	
Routing communication between departments into proper channels, and	
Easy scheduling meeting in similar middle management ranks.	
BPO: Process unit spirit „esprit de corps“	
Genuine concern about the needs and problems of others	(McCormack, 2001)
Team spirit across all ranks,	
Fells like being in a family,	
People feel emotionally attached to each other,	
People feel like they are in it together,	
Process unit doesn’t act connected,	
People view themselves as individualist’s only tolerating other employees, because they have to	
Affection to work in SOWT & job satisfaction	
Affection to work in SOWT	
Readiness to accept responsibility and task merits	(Cohen et al., 1997; Yang and Guy, 2004)
Relation of personal performance to team performance	
Self-directed behaviour and equivalent communication	
Authority to act independently; we added additional shared leadership element)	(Cashman, 2008, Cohen et al., 1997)
Shared leadership vs. classical team management; and from knowledge management one addition	(Kim, 2000; Alberts, 2007):
Ability to assure or gather needed knowledge to successfully accomplish taken tasks	
Job satisfaction	
Valued work	Yang and Guy, (2010):
Interesting job	
Job gives sense of accomplishment	
Fair payment	
Good chance for promotion	
Meaningful job	
Challenging work	
Satisfying job	
SQ - Service Quality	

Table 1 : SOPO model categories, questions and references (continued)

Modern and up-to date equipment,	(Parasuraman et al.,1988; Spreitzer et al., 1999):
Visually attractive business place	
Appropriately dressed personnel	
Appropriate business space	
Keep deadline promises	
In case of problems employees are come and understanding	
Are reliable	
They deliver service as promised	
Transparent business books	
They believe customer does not need to know exact time of service delivery	
Not real to deliver service by customer request	
Not possible to deliver service right now	
Being busy they can reply to customer at their convenience	
Customers can trust employees of this organization	
Customers feel save to do business with this organization	
Employees are polite	
Relevant support to employees delivering service on high quality to customer	
Inability of whole organization to pay attention to each customer individually	
Inability of each employee to pay attention to each customer individually	
Not real for employees to know the needs of all customers,	
Not real that organization can always act in customer best interest	
Not possible to adjust working hours in such a manner to please all customers	

researched. Unstructured interviews (where interviewees might not be familiar with the theoretical background of the conducted research) is essential to delve deep into the underlying causes as well as the circumstances of the phenomena. The basic interview thread was divided into two main streams, investigating two different levels: (A) on a team and individual level and (B) on the organizational level. We researched the following areas: (1) operation and changes, (2) form and style of management, (3) organization and processes, (4) methods and forms of communication, (4) design methodologies and knowledge transfer, (5) satisfaction and preference for different forms of work, (6) integration and conflict between members of the team and between teams within the organization, and (7) related questions and sub-questions. We occasionally allowed ourselves to go beyond research area to provide better understanding and assure required holism.

4.1 Case research data in ICT service company

Top manager

The interviewee is a CEO (therefore, one of two key leaders, responsible for issues concerning organization, finances, management and operations). The company positioned itself as a strategically driven, into future and customer-oriented company, having clear objectives. Its main range of services is sufficiently narrowed and specialized, although many customers in a wide field of ICT service areas may find it useful. They have a numerically smaller set of clients - typically larger companies. The company that has no fixed organizational structure and is somehow divided into two sections based on two types of ICT technologies they use. Mostly, they organise their work aligned with projects and they always work with key focus to fulfilling the customer needs. The “official project manager” is usually one of two top leaders of the company, but the “real” project management work is usually delegated to the technical project leader, chosen among a pool of employees (almost all employees are in the pool). The size of the team is entirely dependent on the individual case, and may include

external partners. Employees are very familiar with the "informal" organizational processes. This knowledge of internal processes, work amazingly and shows great result in completed projects or process for clients. Within the organization there are only few formal processes set out, and the smallness of the company represents an advantage in dealing with all the informal processes. However, this does not mean that they are not process oriented.

Dynamic functions of the jobs require a lot of adjustments, as required by the dynamic work and tasks. Within a team the communication flows very openly: people like to contribute with new ideas which are welcomed and accepted. Errors, although not encouraged, are resolved in the (informal) processes of monitoring and correcting. Such approach is greatly accelerating time to correct errors and provide valuable knowledge by "lessons learned", shared within team and whole organization. Errors are regarded as learning opportunities and at the same time there are much less chances to be replicated. They have somehow specific, personal, strait forward and very correct attitude towards their clients, who can thereby always know what to expect from them. Quite often even the mistakes (errors) are communicated with the customer, spreading the »lessons learned" knowledge beyond borders of organization. Without their unique working methods (based on a type of self-organization), they would certainly not be able to reach the volume of successfully completed ICT services they currently accomplish, let alone the quality they offer. As a provider of highly specialized services, primarily targeting limited number of larger companies, they create a special "organic" relationship with customers, based on trust and cooperation. "Our internal self-organization and flexibility are gratefully accepted by our customers. Those aspects give them (the customers) an insight into our work and they can influence the process of service creation step by step ", pointed out the CEO. The company has five owners, of which four are employed by the company. Possible barriers in agency relationship were already settled by clear communication and clearly separating ownership roles, rights and privileges, from the roles of employees.

Project/process manager

As most of the employees in the company are holding a leadership role, it was not simple to choose the most competent ones. We discovered that most of the development work in the company is project-based, and most of the operational tasks are process-oriented. Assigning the project members and deciding on their particular roles in the project is not difficult. There is a limited number of employees in each of two technical areas that are incompatible and work load is also quite transparent. Most of the decisions are based on the person's availability and their load capacity. The formal "leader" is almost always one of two top managers, and the role of the actual "technical lead" resembles that of a project coordinator or project manager. The person selected has usually performed similar task in the past, but less experienced may »step-in" for less complex projects. In this manner, a leadership experience can be obtained by a wider range of employees keen on taking leadership roles. Their formal roles notwithstanding, all the team members have their own specific tasks to perform and report to any stakeholder concerned. The technical "lead" is usually the person responsible for the technical development of the products or services. Mistakes and successes in accomplishing the established tasks are transparently communicated and the team follows the 'spirit' of professionalism with informal conversations, although communication in times of crisis remains subdued and correct. Inter-departmental conflicts are kept to a minimum. Awareness of personal responsibility is very high and contributes to lowering error rates. Proper communication with the customers was identified as a weak point in the past, therefore additional training has been provided. "I believe the unique team spirit we create in each of our projects and design is somehow "infecting" our customers and it invites them to contribute to the co-creation of final solution. I strongly believe that our way of doing things contributes to the quality of our services. In addition, our specific service is really designed and delivered in accordance to the customer's real needs, rather than by their initial request."

Employees are encouraged to acquire additional knowledge at their own discretion, mostly on-line, but formal courses are also available, although less popular. Knowledge sharing within the company is excellent. The method of work and (self-)organization influence the quality of the service provided, and the company is constantly striving to maintain a high quality level. The employees have a lot of ideas and promote innovation, but often the lack of time prevents their implementation and development.

Technical expert

Selecting a "technical person" without any leadership experience who could provide the required insight and knowledge was almost impossible, so we selected a key person having few leadership tasks to perform. He explained that creating "ad-hoc" teams and team management in this company is a dynamic task. The company sets up and modifies the project organically and in communication with the client), where and when it is need. They can change or modify the project's team structure even within an ongoing project by changing its members or even changing the leader without disrupting the project which usually remains on track or can even get improved. "It really relaxes me to work in such flexible teams. And I always know I can trust anyone, even when the deadlines are tight or when something goes wrong", stated one of the interviewees. Teams are therefore dynamic structures as well as their functions and processes. Working in teams is relaxed, but usually less professional and more fun. By the opinion of this person, the team's results were attributable to the knowledge and experience of its member, rather than to the form of (self-)organization. Major projects are

usually quite challenging, but smaller ones are more routine and less attractive. Due to the somehow changeable role of the leaders, performing the tasks can sometimes get unclear, which do not necessarily contribute to a quick problem resolution. The interviewed person sees solutions toward greater clarity of tasks in more formalized process for task management. Communication (within the teams as well as external) is accurate and professional, he believes. Knowledge upgrade and further education is encouraged and desirable, but mostly their own responsibility. The work is extremely targeted. Internal processes are mainly informal, but there are some results which are measured. According to the interviewee, the processes which take place within companies, don't have significant impact on the quality of service, or at least not as much as expertise, experience, commitment and dedication to the goal does. He sees that the main purpose of organization lies within larger, more technically demanding projects, where employees can really prove their value as experts.

4.2 Case study research results in ICT service company

Results from unstructured part of interview

ICT service company from the case study research is a small business enterprise with 14 employees and approx. EUR 0.7 million in annual turnover. The company was established 10 years ago. By watching them in work process, one can easily spot a lot of power and speed in handling difficult tasks. It is a company where the ownership is largely in the hands of five individuals, four of which are also employed by the company.

The owners are clearly aware and show clear interest in growth, development and the existence of the company. Owners are also aware, that in the long run company existence and success is considerable depending on innovation ability and empowering employees. It seems, they are aware of the Agency theory trap: conflict of interest between greater personal benefits as employees (increasing company's labour costs), and increase of profits from the owners perspective. Despite this duality, we didn't observe any conflicts related.

The highest level of management is divided between two of the owners, one responsible for the sales and marketing department, while the other handles the technical, operational and financial side of the operations. Although we refer to them as top managers, this is purely because of the absence of a more appropriate term. One imagining classical top manager stereotype, a person sitting in a glass corner office, not connected to everyday work, might get a wrong idea in this case. Watching the "managers" in our case study, shows that they are just a person, among equals, performing their tasks and process roles.

Most of the work is arranged into projects and carried out by team members that are usually different persons. The company has very smartly introduced the role of "technical project lead", who actually overlook and manage all of the tasks from technical perspective. This approach usually works great on majority of the projects. Coordination with customers and other significant communication activities are mostly done by the formal project manager. The project lead (technical), the formal project manager and the team members are very flexible and can easily take or switch between different roles or tasks. The distribution of the tasks and the delegation of responsibilities are, to some extent, already quite divided between team members. The exceptions are the technical tasks, which require certain specific skills. Otherwise, we could easily argue, that the team creation process is very creative and collaborative. By our estimation, the largest part of the work in teams is self-organized. Despite the minimal formal structure of the organization, a large organizational "chaos" between people can be felt on every step. At the same time closer look shows, that there are so many underlying organic processes going on, not being formalised in any documentation. Employees of the company are familiar with the business processes, as a large part of their activity consists of providing their customers business-oriented ICT solutions and services, largely based on processes management. Many of the provided services or solutions include automation of business and/or administrative processes. Being in touch with their own processes, they can also deliver highest quality of customer service. During the IEEE certification process, the company got very good reviews on management effectiveness, project implementation of projects and business processes ("Project and Process Efficiency" - PPE). The company does not have many internal formal processes, although they show high levels of process orientation. Informal processes are subject to continuous and organic changes. Processes in observed organization are quite different from the ones in ITIL recommendations (Pereira and De Silva, 2011). We could summarise that there is a certain set of informal processes and they work very well. The CEO explained that »PPE, as the Business Process Orientation framework serve us better than ITIL would, and we tried ITIL first. Being structurally flat and dynamic we would not achieve such performance, as we can be holding to BPO. At the same time, not being so self-organised and co-operating in a relaxed way with customers, our services would not reach the current quality and could not match the customers' expectations."

From the interview data we extracted the following key success factors: (1) the choice of selecting the members of the team, (2) identifying and executing tasks, as well as (3) the entire implementation process, from the first idea to the final realization. All processes are designed in a "natural" way, to satisfy the customer, even if the entire project team changes during its implementation.

Most of the employees of the company favour self-organization, with the exception of one person that came across as slightly more sceptical than the others. It is only log-

ical to assume that a person who prefers to perform routine work and clearly defined tasks would have such an attitude. While the majority of the employees wants more creative work and accept the responsibility that this form of work brings. However, there will always be some individuals who prefer to work in more structured working environments. Normally, the various processes also feature tasks that require less innovation and accountability and these individuals are invaluable for such tasks. Self-organized forms of work seem like the norm in this company, although no one is specifically tasked with designing it. We have easily concluded, that affection toward Self-organized forms of work is perceived very positively. Less encouraging is the atmosphere, which is very professional, yet little less relaxed.

The company, which is the subject of our case study research, is committed to providing a high quality service, a goal reached not only in theory, but also in practice. Covering a relatively technically demanding niche and a small set of clients does not allow much space for a large number of errors and the consequent poor quality service. However, customers still expect innovative solutions. "To be able to fill the gap in the knowledge of a person necessary for the successful delivery on forthcoming projects or development, there is always either exchange of knowledge within a company, or if needed in any kind of formal or informal courses available," says the CEO. Designing and delivering their ICT services requires knowledge on processes and process orientation. The company is therefore engaged to verification of reliability, process readiness and achieved of high results. We can easily say that the business process orientation contribute to the quality of service. What about self-organization? When we compare the operational performance and the effectiveness, of the case-study company, with other similar-sized enterprises, we can see them performing significantly better. Also, the estimated degree of self-organization is noticeably higher. Nonetheless, it is difficult to claim if the relation behind it is related to a more diversified ownership. In any case, the spirit of co-creation is deeply rooted in culture of this company, as in any other we have seen in other researches. The degree of self-organization, by our judgement, is in general quite high, regardless of the doubt expressed by the technical person. The company has at least some partial form of shared leadership and medium to high level of self-organization. There are clear signs, that self-organization is positively influencing quality of services in this case study research. As the "technical lead" person says: "the way we self-organise and design the informal processes accordingly, give us great flexibility. Maintaining a good and relaxed working environment is enabling us to keep high quality in the optimal way. We put a lot of trust in our common commitment and shared responsibility, so sometimes we can take time to grab a coffee or tell some jokes, even when we are trying to catch some punishing deadlines or fix some deeply rooted errors. Sharing management and tasks, without a formal leader, is usually helping us accomplish things, that might have looked impossible at first."

Results from structured part of interview

In the structured part of interviews, indicators of self-organization, on average all, with the exception of two, are estimated very high. Much lower estimations were identified in: (1) working independently of the control, and (2) use of consensus decision-making in the team. Our interpretation is, that the level of SOWT in this company is quite high, but some elements of self-organization of the company are not used, or used only to a very limited extent, which reduces the total results.

An average grade level of process orientation was lover by low assessment, provided by one individual, which could be explained by the fact, that he might not know the company and its processes that well. High probability, that estimated values by two other individuals are more accurate, could be underpinned by the fact, that both gave quite similar arguments and similar individual answers. Communication and diversity indicator is also quite dominated here; even allocation of resources and good cooperation between divisions were also estimated as high valued. Measurement of processes and processing language are given a lower grade. We would state, that the company is fairly well process oriented, although the results are not so high, mainly due to lower assessment given by one of the employees.

The company's preference to work in a self-regulated environment is very strong. Highest rated statements are related to the possibility of honest communication, as well as a desire for greater accountability, and lower grades were given to work where the tasks are less precisely defined. Despite a very high overall assessment we can conclude that, within this company, the preference to work on SOWT principles is very high. The service quality assessment in the researched company is also quite high. Two individuals assessed the quality as very high, but one of the respondents decided to assign it a much lower value. As this person also assessed other areas with slightly lower scores, the overall perception of quality (and all other areas) was also lowered. The lowest rates were estimated for the category Time and due dates of service delivery; all the others were rated quite high. Generally, we can highlight: (1) the willingness of employees to pay attention to each individual customer, (2) the value of costumers' trust, (3) appropriate equipment and suitable premises. It was quite obvious from the results that the company has had a long-term orientation and builds special, organic relationship with each client. This is a very effective approach, because the company operates in a fairly specific niche market, where the number of potential customers in relatively geographically limited. Fair overall assessment would be, that the company provides a fairly high quality of ICT services.

5 Discussion

SOWT

Self-organized working teams are an essential element in new forms of organizations, both, within emergence of newly established organizations, as well as within those, who undergo a process of transitioning. The concept of self-organization of teams is not new, since SOWT had many different names and has been used quite extensively within the organizations in the past decades, even though self-organization has mainly been utilised on a team level. The forms and the frequency of use are increasing and in the same time, SOWT has been given new dimensions, going beyond the boundaries of self-organised teams into a truly self-organised organization with the organic growth.

BPO

Not to fall in the traps of self-organization becoming disorganization and chaos, organizations can balance it with somehow structured self-driven processes, to enable dynamic environment and rapid changes to occur. It is also important not to lose focus which could lead to a systemic collapse. Suddenly, we realised that business orientation approach becomes very useful even in self-organized teams and organizations. Comparing some of the processes toward good practices like ITIL lead to a conclusion that most of the processes in our researched case were significantly different. Overall we identified smaller amount of formal processes and many more informal ones. We didn't do a thorough analysis, but it was evident, that most of the "classical" controlling and budgeting processes were entirely absent. What remained was pure and so natural, that we called them 'organic processes' as they rise and fall based on the organizational needs and mostly not as a result of mindful awareness, but based on intuition and trust. Surprisingly, well-functioning processes enable great performance and high quality services, yet no one even calls them processes. They just follow their instinct to do things organically. One of the key findings of our research was the existence of not typical business processes. Such "natural" or "organic« processes are enabling creation of environment, that foster personal growth and allow people to communicate their needs freely. It is based on win-win strategy and is eliminated potential for many conflicts. We also identified one other key processes and this is true empowerment. It means every individual is enabled by having the power to decide on every subject coming his way. Process was still under development and under some limits, but already made enormous positive effect on employees.

SOPO

One of the key findings of the research was, that top management and ownership structure were supporting transformation into SOPO. In our research this was one of the key prepositions allowing SOPO to emerge. The second key factor was the support and dedication of the top management to the company and its employees. One additional key elements of SOPO is the presence of a true and meaningful global purpose based on true needs and not artificially created ones. True purpose pushes and organization to become a "learning organization" that can anticipate and embrace changes at any time (Senge, 2014). A true meaningful, purpose should be based on the following elements: (1) true purpose; within the meaning of "because of our doing, world is a better place", (2) no artificially (marketing) created needs, but connected and satisfying to a real human needs, (3) being sustainable, takes into account organic growth and is based solely on the use of renewable energy resources, (4) is not an end in itself, because it meets the needs of individuals and groups (stakeholders) outside the boundaries of the organization, (5) understands his organic conception (launch, operation and end) and do not claim to self-preserve at any cost, (6) is well balanced, and (7) respects the natural diversity and the diversity of the individual in the environment.

When we first designed the research, there were no scientific evidence of the existence of SOPO. In the last few years, some reliable information is emerging about the SOPO's or similar approaches, organisation tend to use (Laloux, 2014). We guess, that most of the SOPO's are not being researched, as they do not market their SOPO orientation. Hopefully this will change in time and set ground for many new researches.

We based our research on preposition, that "SOPO way of organizing" may be good for some social enterprises, narrow market niches, or in some new social order supporting many new values. What we unexpectedly found out was, that SOPO's can be very successful even in the current business environment of today.

6 Conclusion

SOPO's are thereby one of the attempts, to reinvent organizational behaviour following the path of natural processes.

The usefulness of the SOPO model, as we see it, lies in: (1) guidelines toward SOPO for start-ups, (2) reinventing/transition companies to determine the maturity level and increase usage of SOPO principles in reinventing organizational structures, and (3) helping established SOPO organizations in structuring changes toward higher service quality. The SOPO model can be a viable starting point for further research.

The applicative use however, might require more clarity on specific factors and their interactions. This model can serve as a base start for further research, but could also be applied in practice, bearing in mind that all content should be open for further improvements. We suggest that additionally, more specific guidelines should be developed in the near future. We are looking forward to improving the model gathering further information from existing SOPOs

with even higher maturity levels. The analysis of the qualitative results can shed the light on research questions and in the same time verification of the SPO model a quantitative research is needed to reach wider applicability.

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