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Bachelor Thesis

Sharing Knowledge is Sharing Power

A case study on inter-organizational knowledge
transfer within a destination



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Abstract

The key to an organization's long-term success is a sustainable competitive advantage. In a global market characterized by fierce competition, organizations differentiate themselves no longer through their competitive position or technological or human resources but through knowledge. Such a decisive economic resource needs to be managed, giving rise to the theory of Knowledge Management (KM). Because knowledge is created and shared through social interactions, knowledge transfer is the most critical part of KM. Especially in tourist destinations, the diversity of stakeholders, each with unique skills and knowledge, represents great opportunities for innovation and the sustainable development of destinations but also great challenges. Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) are responsible to maintain the attractiveness of a destination by encouraging competing and complementary organizations to collaborate to exchange knowledge. Ultimately, the tourist experience and image of a destination are created interdependently by the tourism stakeholders. By conducting a case study in the destination of Kalmar, this paper aimed to explain to what extent a DMO manages inter-organizational knowledge transfer within a tourist destination. An explanatory sequence was used to gather primary data in three steps. First, a survey was conducted with local tourism stakeholders. Then, the local DMO and the university were interviewed. The data collected from 32 local tourism stakeholders suggest that tourism stakeholders, primarily SMEs, are lacking the resources to engage in knowledge transfer and overlook the value of external sources of knowledge. The findings of the interviews point to that there is a need to support tourism stakeholders with digitalization, to encourage tourism stakeholders to join a destination network and to close the knowledge gap through research produced by universities. This study contributes to gaining a broader understanding of the opportunities and challenges of inter-organizational knowledge transfer within the destination of Kalmar.

Keywords: Knowledge management (KM); Inter-organizational knowledge transfer; Destination management organization (DMO); Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's); Destination development; Tourism stakeholders; Sustainable competitive advantage; Kalmar



Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 The Background of Knowledge Management.....	1
1.2 The Crux of Transferring Knowledge	3
1.3 Research Question and Purpose of Study	4
1.4 Demarcation.....	5
1.5 Disposition.....	5
2. Methodology	6
2.1 Study Approach	6
2.2 Study Design.....	6
2.3 Data Collection	7
2.3.1 Secondary Data	7
2.3.2 Primary Data	8
2.4 Data Analysis.....	9
2.5 Quality of Method	10
2.6 Ethical Considerations	11
3. Literature Review	12
3.1 Managing Knowledge.....	12
3.1.1 The dynamic Nature of Knowledge	12
3.1.2 Knowledge Management (KM)	14
3.2 Managing Knowledge within Tourist Destinations.....	16
3.2.1 The Destination Network	16
3.2.2 Knowledge Management in Tourism.....	19
3.2.3 Destination Management Organizations (DMOs).....	21
3.3 Transferring Knowledge within Tourist Destinations	23
3.3.1 The Process of Inter-Organizational Knowledge Transfer	24
3.3.2 Organizational Characteristics influencing Knowledge Transfer	25
3.3.3 Inter-organizational Dynamics influencing Knowledge Transfer.....	27
4. The Case of Destination Kalmar	30
4.1 The Destination of Kalmar	30
4.2 The local DMO Destination Kalmar AB	31
4.3 The Tourism Stakeholders within the Destination of Kalmar	32
5. Results and Analysis.....	35
5.1 Web-based Survey with Local Tourism Stakeholders	35
5.2 Interview with the Tourism Manager at Destination Kalmar AB	44
5.3 Interview with a Senior Lecturer in Tourism at Linnæus University	50
5.4 The Extent of Inter-Organizational Knowledge Transfer within Kalmar	54
6. Conclusion.....	57
6.1 Reflection.....	57
6.2 Limitations of our Study	58
6.3 Suggestions for Future Research	59
References	60
Figures	76
Appendix	77



1. Introduction

In this chapter, we introduce you to the phenomenon of inter-organizational knowledge transfer within the discourse of Knowledge Management. We aim to give you an understanding of the relevance and importance of managing knowledge as the key resource for obtaining a sustainable competitive advantage. We take the stance that knowledge is particularly beneficial for managing tourist destinations which are complex systems of a wide network of stakeholders.

1.1 The Background of Knowledge Management

The phrase *scientia potentia est* means "knowledge is power" (Vickers, 1992, p. 512) and was coined by the English philosopher Sir Francis Bacon in 1597, who had very progressive views on the theory of knowledge for his time. He recognized that the whole society benefits from access to knowledge and thus, knowledge is a valuable resource that must be organized.

However, it is a difficult task to integrate academic research into the field even if theories of the market and the firm have driven economic paradigms (Shaw & Williams, 2009; Hudson, 2013; Cooper, 2018). During industrialization, economists emphasized a competitive position in the market (Porter, 1980). But resources based on efficient means of production are easy to imitate, shifting the market- to the resource-based view whereby organizations as bundles of resources are key for differentiation (Hart, 1995). The different economic paradigms show that there are several resources providing some competitive advantage, but no single resource ensures sustained, sustainable competitiveness. With increased globalization and consumer power, businesses worldwide had to reinvent themselves (Gareth & Williams, 2009; Blackman et al., 2011). The market, once driven by the supply side, is now driven by the demand side. The production has shifted from products to services towards experiences (Rowley, 1999; van der Zee et al., 2017). In a fast-changing and unpredictable environment with increased global competition, low-market entry barriers, and shorter product life cycles, organizations had to come up with a more sustainable competitive advantage (Baggio & Cooper, 2010; Zehrer, 2011).

“In an economy where the only certainty is uncertainty, the one sure source of lasting competitive advantage is knowledge” (Nonaka, 1991, p. 96). Knowledge is valuable, unique, and irreplaceable, and can be used at different locations at the same time (Valeri & Baggio, 2021). It is not exhausted with increased usage but becomes even more valuable when it is used and shared (Takeuchi, 2001). Thus, organizational performance and competitiveness are based on knowledge and innovation which is facilitated by ongoing knowledge sharing (Schumpeter, 1934; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008; Hallin & Marnburg, 2008; Gareth & Williams, 2009; Cooper, 2018; Chong et al., 2011; Valeri & Baggio, 2021). Such a decisive economic resource needs to be managed, giving rise to Knowledge Management (KM) as an organizational theory



and a strategic management perspective (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Davenport & Prusak, 1998).

It has been recognized that technologies assist the management of knowledge, but people are more influential than technologies, generating knowledge through social interactions as well as sharing it through formal and informal networks (McInerney, 2002; Back et al., 2007; Varra et al., 2012). The service sector and the experience economy have shifted the focus back to the human element since the personal interaction between employee and customer co-creates the experience (Rowley, 1999). To satisfy guests, the host must know something about them (Hallin & Marnburg, 2008). Thus, possessing relevant knowledge makes stakeholders powerful (Mitchell et al., 1997; Sheehan & Brent Ritchie, 2005). But transferring knowledge is rather difficult due to the nature of knowledge (Hall & Adriani, 2002). Tacit knowledge offers the greatest value but must be made explicit by the donor to share it. The recipient in turn must be able to disseminate the piece of knowledge in the right way so that it becomes meaningful and useful (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Thus, possessing knowledge might empower stakeholders, but the ability to share and absorb knowledge makes them powerful (Argote & Ingram, 2000).

This change in the paradigm from “Knowledge is power” to “Knowledge sharing is power” is also reflected throughout the literature (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). After Nonaka published “The Knowledge-Creating Company” in 1991, the focus of KM was on intra-organizational KM to increase organizational performance. This is reflected in Drucker's work (1993) arguing that knowledge is the only meaningful resource today. However, in a highly globalized world connected through information technologies, network thinking has become important to understand the increasingly complex systems (Raisi et al., 2020). The diffusion of innovation and new technologies occurred so fast that only some years later the focus shifted to more holistic views on knowledge and KM (McElroy, 2003). Because the ultimate competitive advantage is rooted in the ability to learn, to transfer this learning and to act on it immediately (Welch et al., 2001). Thus, concepts of networks, organizational learning, absorptive capacity, and knowledge transfer have emerged as individual issues within KM (Raisi et al., 2020). Networks in particular can be helpful platforms to exchange knowledge effectively (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008).

Due to the complexity of tourism and destinations, particular tourism research organizations have shown an interest in applying KM practices and network thinking to tourism (Raisi et al., 2020). But despite some appreciation shown by destination-based planning and management organizations, recognizing the potential of KM for improved destination performance, the wide range of actors involved in tourism challenges the actual implementation because there are no universal KM practices (Chong et al., 2011). Furthermore, national governments have hardly invested in tourism research, but with the rising importance of tourism for economic growth, more and more funding is granted (Ruhanen & Cooper, 2004). This might be because the key concepts in tourism research, namely economic sustainability and tourism development, fit the vision of national governments. The connection of these two concepts highlights the potential of tourism to contribute to the long-term profitability of destinations as well as the well-being



of its communities (UNWTO, 2022). In short, tourism is a source of competitive advantage for destinations, if it is managed sustainably (UNWTO, 2020), but generating, sharing, and absorbing knowledge in tourism is the key to a sustained, sustainable competitive advantage.

1.2 The Crux of Transferring Knowledge

A sustainable competitive advantage is based on some innovation made possible through some new knowledge which might be revealed by scientists or is the result of novelty, simply combining existing knowledge in new ways (Blackman, 2011). In the context of tourism, innovations have been packaged tours, eco-tourism, e-tourism, and low-cost airlines amongst others (Gareth & Williams, 2009). The possibility for innovations in hospitality and tourism seems inexhaustible. The various actors and components involved in the customer journey allow one to simply add some feature at some touchpoint or to create a totally new experience (Voss & Zomerdijs, 2007). In a destination, private and public stakeholders might combine their products and services as integrated offers, making the journey more exciting, pleasant, or convenient. Thus, the experience is sustained in the memory of the visitor, creating positive emotions towards the whole destination (Wessblad, 2010). Satisfied customers tend to repeat their visit and recommend the destination to friends (Abubakar & Mavondo, 2014). This example makes it clear that collaboration and networking between stakeholders of a destination benefit not only the individual tourism organizations but the entire brand of the destination.

The tourist experience, consisting of the entire customer journey, is the result of the collaboration between all stakeholders at a destination who have jointly developed an integrated tourism product (Voss & Zomerdijs, 2007). From a destination perspective, this means that different destinations compete, not individual tourism stakeholders. A destination is a complex adaptive system and constitutes a wide network of stakeholders who are directly and indirectly related to tourism (Raisi et al., 2020). Due to fierce competition, the survival of destinations depends on more than successful marketing. Knowledge can be the source of a sustainable competitive advantage for destinations (Pyo, 2005). Thus, the traditional marketing function of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) extends to broader tasks such as product development, coordination, research, and leadership (Blackman et al., 2011). DMOs can be viewed as a hub in the destination system and have the resources to act as a boundary spanner (Gareth & Williams, 2009). Therefore, we argue that these institutions are responsible for managing collaboration and networking within a destination through inter-organizational knowledge transfer activities.

Destinations are mainly comprised of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), such as restaurants and accommodations, representing the primary stakeholders (Chong et al., 2011). SMEs are not only important for tourism, but for the national economy due to their contribution to employment and the gross domestic product (UNWTO, 2022). But the nature of tourism and the nature of knowledge are difficult to reconcile (Keller, 2006; Cooper, 2018). Tourism industries are generally research-averse and characterized by diversity in supply and ownership, market fragmentation, high labor turnover and lacking trust and collaboration (Czernek, 2017).



However, due to their resource limitations and prior need to know about current demands and customer preferences, they depend on external sources to acquire this much-needed knowledge (Yang, 2007; Hallin & Marburg, 2008; Wellton & Lainpelto, 2021). In the end, the destination system is only as strong as its weakest link, implying the need for DMOs to foster networks which facilitate collaboration and knowledge transfer within the destination.

While the concepts of networks and organizational learning have become popular issues in tourism research since 2011, the actual challenges of KM, rooted in knowledge transfer and absorptive capacity are still underexplored (Raisi et al., 2020). Tourism and knowledge are both highly complex and ambiguous phenomena. This might be the reason for several gaps observed in the literature on KM. First, research on KM often takes a theoretical perspective since there is a level of uncertainty about what it means, what it consists of and what role it plays in the economy and society (McInerney, 2002; Cooper, 2018). Second, KM is mostly covered within the context of large organizations (Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Chen et al., 2006). Third, as opposed to other disciplines, KM is hardly addressed by tourism studies (Hjalager, 2002; Grizelj, 2003; Yun, 2004; Beesley & Cooper, 2008). Lastly, tourism studies on KM focus on international organizations such as large hotel chains or national DMOs only (Ingram & Baum, 1997; Yang & Wan, 2004; Zehrer, 2011). But findings within larger businesses cannot simply be scaled down (Sparrow, 2001). While multinational companies succeed primarily due to their ability to transfer knowledge internally (Valeri & Baggio, 2021), SMEs depend on external knowledge acquired through inter-organizational knowledge transfer (Chen et al., 2006; Chong et al., 2011).

1.3 Research Question and Purpose of Study

In an attempt to fill current research gaps, we address KM on the destination level, including the wide network of local tourism stakeholders. The KM practice of inter-organizational knowledge transfer is the key to long-term destination competitiveness and DMOs are responsible for destination management. Therefore, the question guiding our study asks:

*To what extent does a DMO manage inter-organizational
knowledge transfer within a tourist destination?*

We address the question at hand by conducting a case study in the destination of Kalmar. This case study aims to explain how well the DMO Destination Kalmar AB manages knowledge transfer within Kalmar by analyzing the extent to which local tourism stakeholders cooperate and collaborate to share information and transfer knowledge as well as factors impacting the degree to which they engage in knowledge transfer and networks within the destination.

The study results can possibly be of help to the local stakeholders and Destination Kalmar AB, in developing an understanding of the importance of knowledge and its potential, when exchanged, to not only improve organizational performance but to develop a sustainable tourist destination.



1.4 Demarcation

The destination system comprises not only stakeholders directly related to tourism but many other, indirectly related stakeholders, who are important to acknowledge in decision-making (Mitchell et al., 1997; Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). Due to time and resource constraints, we focus on interactions with local stakeholders operating within the boundaries of the city and who are considered to be on the supply side of tourism. These include both private and public actors. We cover not only the traditional components of tourism such as F&Bs, accommodations, attractions, transportation, tour operators and travel agencies but also stakeholders that fulfill some other vital functions in a tourist destination such as public organizations, associations and retail shops. To address the question at hand, the university is also of interest in this study.

Other stakeholders supplying the infrastructure of a destination as well as entrepreneurs are also important for the functioning and development of a city, but there is hardly any direct contact with tourists. Therefore, such organizations are only recognized in our study but not included as tourism stakeholders. However, we are aware that we exclude some important tourism stakeholders such as tourists themselves, the provincial DMO Destination Småland and the residents of Kalmar. But several studies on the stakeholders of a destination emphasize the important role of hotels, attractions, governments and local tourism departments (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005; van der Zee et al., 2017). As proximity facilitates the creation of networks, it is appropriate to focus on the local level, the city limits, acting as a clear boundary for our case study (Daskalopoulou & Petrou, 2009; Gareth & Williams, 2009; Valeri & Baggio, 2021).

1.5 Disposition

To familiarize you with the design of our study, the second chapter starts by describing the methodology applied to our case study whereby a sequential approach was adopted to gather empirical data. The third chapter introduces you to our topic by reviewing relevant literature on the phenomenon and practice of inter-organizational knowledge transfer within the discourse of KM. We cover the nature of knowledge, KM in general and in tourism, the concept of networks and stakeholders in a destination system, as well as the crux of sharing and absorbing knowledge. The fourth chapter presents our case, the destination of Kalmar, the local DMO Kalmar Destination AB, and the local tourism stakeholders who are part of our empirical study. The fifth chapter contains an analysis of the empirical results, presenting the main findings of the survey and the interviews. In the sixth chapter, we conclude our paper with a brief reflection, point to the limitations of our study and make suggestions for future studies.



2. Methodology

In this chapter, we present the procedures and tools we have used to collect and analyze primary and secondary data. The purpose as well as the type of study determine the approach and the method which are suitable as well as the data which is required to address the research question at hand.

2.1 Study Approach

To explain the extent to which the DMO manages knowledge transfer throughout a destination, we used a deductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Bergin, 2018). This means that we based our study on existing theories and models of inter-organizational knowledge transfer which is described as a vital practice for sustainable organizations within the discourse of KM. Because there is hardly any research done on KM and knowledge transfer at the destination level, we applied theories of KM and knowledge transfer to a destination, the case of Kalmar (Zehrer, 2011; Cooper, 2018). Because DMOs are responsible for sustainable destination development, they also need to manage inter-organizational knowledge transfer within a destination.

Even though a Social Network Analysis (SNA) is commonly used to map a destination, its network of actors and their relationships, it does not explain the meaning behind the network structure, its configuration, and its relationships (Samarra, & Biggiero, 2008; Baggio, & Cooper, 2010; Raisi et al., 2020). Because our case study aims to explain the extent to which tourism stakeholders engage in knowledge transfer, a SNA did not fit the purpose of our study. Instead, we needed to gain an understanding of the kind of relationships, the perceived need for external collaboration as well as knowledge transfer activities used among local tourism stakeholders. This means that we followed an idealistic ontology (Bergin, 2018). The notion of a destination system consisting of a network of stakeholders indicates that we cannot understand the individual components without understanding the whole (Smith, 2017). Thus, to attain our research objectives, we took on the perspective of hermeneutics (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Because there is not a single objective reality, we had to get inside the social field to understand the perspective and views of different stakeholders (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Bergin, 2018). As empiricists with an emic epistemology, we then interpreted the results based on the existing theory of KM which was our primary reference. Before we started to collect data, we were aware that we will be integral parts of this process. But we needed a better understanding and personal insights from the DMO which are the key to a case study telling a good story (Smith, 2017).

2.2 Study Design

The research question at hand is addressed best through conducting a case study. By contributing empirical evidence the case study itself fills some gaps in the literature on KM and knowledge transfer, mainly consisting of theories (Cooper, 2018). A single case study examines



one particular, contemporary phenomenon which might be observed in similar contexts in real-life (Yin, 2003). The practice of knowledge transfer is apparent in various disciplines but dominates management literature in economics (Rowley, 1999). To obtain rich data, case studies are based on multiple methods and data sources (Yin, 2003). The process of assessing multiple sources of different types of information developed our case study. Combining these different insights created the bigger picture, consisting of multiple assumptions, realities, and meanings which we integrated (Smith, 2017). The different perspectives of each stakeholder allowed us to make informed judgements about the relationships in the destination and the degree of engagement in the knowledge transfer of different stakeholders within the destination. It further increased our awareness of how complex the context is, in which the DMO operates.

A case study, using multiple methods and data sources, showcases that the terms qualitative and quantitative methods are rather meaningless. There are different study designs of so-called mixed methods, combining the collection of quantitative and qualitative data which is gathered by using different tools (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Because of the nature of our research question, we needed to collect both quantitative data to provide an overview of the extent of knowledge exchange as well as qualitative data to understand the extent to which stakeholders engage in knowledge exchange. The explanatory design suited our relational research question best. In this sequence, quantitative data is gathered and analyzed first and then qualitative data is collected (Edmons & Kennedy, 2017). First, quantitative data was collected by surveying local stakeholders through a web-based questionnaire. Second, qualitative data were obtained by interviewing a representative of the Destination Kalmar AB and Linnaeus University. Thereby, we first got an overview of the extent to which different tourism stakeholders engage in knowledge transfer. And then, we obtained further insights by interviewing Destination Kalmar AB and Linnaeus University to get to know their view of collaboration and knowledge exchange within Kalmar.

2.3 Data Collection

The theory presented in the literature review, the secondary data, guided our data collection and analysis of the primary data (Bergin, 2018). First, we present the collection of secondary data, and thereafter the primary data which was collected in an explanatory sequence.

2.3.1 Secondary Data

The collection of secondary data was the first step to getting an overview of current theories and models within the field of KM and tourism (Smith, 2017). We reviewed mainly scientific articles and academic literature on the topic of KM, KM in tourism, knowledge transfer and destination management. These topics were the keywords which we used as search terms. To find relevant research publications, different combinations of these terms were put into the search engines Google Scholar and One Search, which were used because they are the most comprehensive archives we could access. The material is mainly a composition of scientific articles accessed through Academia, Elsevier, Emerald Insight and Routledge. The most relevant articles were found in the Journal of Knowledge Management, the Journal of Tourism



Management, and the Journal of Destination Marketing & Management. But additional relevant articles were found in other journals and used to enrich our data and avoid unintended bias (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The publication of Nonaka's "The Knowledge-Creating Company" (1991) has given rise to KM. Thus, our sources date back to the 1990s. While KM in tourism has been explored first in the 2000s, network approaches to KM have been explored for only ten years (Raisi et al., 2020).

2.3.2 Primary Data

Primary data is collected first-hand by the researcher for the purpose of the study (Smith, 2017). The case destination of Kalmar was chosen because it is a popular tourist destination and similar to other coastal destinations in southern Sweden. Additionally, the city is not too small and not too big for conducting a case study (Yin, 2003), Kalmar is *lagom*-sized. In this case study, the primary data consists of both quantitative and qualitative data which was collected in three steps.

Step 1: Web-based Survey with Local Tourism Stakeholders

The quantitative data was collected through a web-based survey. Surveys are the most common source of primary data in tourism research in which questionnaires are used to collect information from a group of people (Smith, 2017). This group of people can be narrowed down from an entire population to those sharing certain characteristics (Bergin, 2018). The respondents of this questionnaire were local stakeholders within the destination of Kalmar. 104 organizations were selected through a stakeholder analysis that was carried out to identify relevant stakeholders and was further narrowed down to one representative from each of the organizations. A web-based survey means that the questionnaire is distributed online. To collect the data in an efficient way, Google Forms was used as the online survey software and a link to the questionnaire was attached in an email sent out to the respondents who were given ten days in total to fill in the questionnaire, with two reminders in addition to the first email. Some advantage of this approach, according to Smith (2017), is that respondents can answer the questionnaire when it suits them, which increases the chance of responding and gives them time to reflect on their answers. Upon the deadline, 32 organizations had completed the survey, meaning that every third stakeholder took part in the survey.

Our objectives guiding the survey were the study of local stakeholders' actual involvement in relevant knowledge transfer activities, their perception of the importance of activities and tools in helping them to acquire knowledge, perceived constraints and their actual effectiveness in using acquired external knowledge. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions only and was designed according to the model presented by Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) which presents factors impacting inter-organizational knowledge transfer. Each element was addressed by asking a related question. To be able to interpret and relate the results back to a stakeholder group, some initial questions dealt with the stakeholder profile and knowledge within the company. Research and surveys conducted by Chen et al. (2006) and Chong et al. (2011) guided the formulation of our survey questions about knowledge transfer activities.



Step 2: Personal Interview with the Tourism Manager at Destination Kalmar AB

The results of the web-based survey formed the basis for the second step of the primary data collection: a personal semi-structured interview with the tourism manager of Destination Kalmar AB, Stefan Johnsson. A personal interview delivers qualitative data since it is a subjective approach which is used to get deeper insights into the feelings, thoughts and experiences of the interviewee (Smith, 2017). The purpose of this interview was to dig deeper into the common themes or highlights from the results of the web-based survey and understand the DMOs view of knowledge transfer within the destination. Semi-structured means that the interview is guided by one or a few topics with a set of predetermined questions, yet it is open to follow-up questions to the interviewee's answers (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The interviewee was the tourism manager at Destination Kalmar who is an experienced representative of the organization.

Step 3: Personal Interview with a Senior Lecturer in Tourism at Linnaeus University

The third step was another personal semi-structured interview with Per Pettersson Löfquist who is a senior lecturer in tourism science and responsible for the degree program in Tourism Studies at Linnaeus University (Linnaeus University, 2021). The purpose of this interview was to understand what role Linnaeus University plays in generating and transferring knowledge within the destination as well as future opportunities for more effective knowledge transfer.

2.4 Data Analysis

Our reality is socially constructed. Thus, reality does not exist without meaning and cannot be explained without interpreting its elements (Fassinger, 2005). To analyze primary data about knowledge transfer, we had to take an insight perspective to understand the context, motives, opinions, behaviors, and attitudes of individual stakeholders (Smith, 2017). Knowledge transfer is the social practice of sharing and absorbing knowledge (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Thus, the fundamental theory for knowledge transfer is hermeneutics, the art of understanding and communicating (Edmons & Kennedy, 2017). Interpretivism believes that reality is created in the minds of individuals who have their own interpretations. Different individuals have different experiences, attitudes, and values, which determine how they look at the world, meaning that multiple realities exist at the same time (Smith, 2017). This explains why our study results might be analyzed and interpreted differently by other researchers. Additionally, stakeholders' attitudes and experiences dictate the relationship they have and the organizational culture determines the degree of engagement in knowledge exchange (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008).

Both the quantitative and qualitative data were categorized according to the models and theories discussed in the Literature Review. The model of Easterby-Smith et al. (2008) guided the coding of the survey. The interviews were coded according to common themes that evolved.



The quantitative data of the survey was coded automatically by the software Google Forms (Smith, 2017). We could access the questionnaire and its pre-packaged results in real-time which allowed us to analyze emerging patterns efficiently. Histograms provided by Google Forms were an effective tool to grasp the results better so that we could observe patterns in the responses given by the stakeholders. The personal interviews, on the other hand, required more time to code, but the recording of the interviews allowed us to re-listen and pause the conversation (Smith, 2017). Thus, we had time to compare the responses of the interviews with the categories of the survey. The new emergent categories of the interviews in turn were a great help to analyze and understand the responses of the survey. Both data sets complemented each other so that we could make sense of the results.

2.5 Quality of Method

To begin with, the data collection for this study is based on relevant, well-proven, and well-cited existing literature to make the evaluation of data as objective as possible (Bergin, 2018). Using multiple sources of evidence led us to logical and sound conclusions, ensuring construct validity (Yin, 2003). To avoid confirmation error and the error of narrative fallacy, the face-to-face interview with the DMO was conducted to validate key findings drawn from the survey. Questioning established models and presenting alternative explanations which our findings revealed make our work internally valid (Smith, 2017). However, external validity is not the primary goal of a case study and must be looked at cautiously because it is not possible to simply generalize our findings to a broader context (Edmons & Kennedy, 2017). Furthermore, the methods used have both their unique advantages and disadvantages (Smith, 2017; Bergin, 2018).

Step 1 - Web-based Survey with Local Tourism Stakeholders

When conducting the survey with local tourism organizations, our greatest concern was low response rates which were the greatest issue faced by similar studies (Chen et al., 2006; Chong et al., 2011). First, our respondents had five days to fill in the survey and after three days we sent a reminder email. The reminder helped increase the number of responses from 13 to 20. A response rate of 30% can be considered a representative result if the sample is a rather homogenous group (Chen et al., 2006; Chong et al., 2011; Smith, 2017). As we analyzed about 100 local tourism stakeholders, we aimed for 30 responses. Some stakeholders got in touch, asking for more time to respond to the survey due to Black Week and the upcoming Christmas. Therefore, an additional email was sent out to inform respondents of an extended deadline of five more days. A response rate of 30,8 % made all efforts worthwhile in the end.

Due to the complexity of knowledge transfer, the questionnaire consisted only of close-ended questions which also simplified data coding and secured higher response rates. But these pre-written answer categories might have biased the answers presented to respondents who could not state their own opinion. This can potentially mean that we might have missed other important aspects (Smith, 2017). However, during the pilot test of the questionnaire in the



organizations of family and friends, it became apparent that hardly anyone knows the concept of KM. We formulated questions as simply as possible and replaced all terms which posed difficulties during the pilot tests. We preferred pre-written answer options as we realized that these give a better understanding of the topic, providing only the data we sought and could be better compared (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Step 2 - Personal Interview with the Tourism Manager at Destination Kalmar AB

The quality of a personal interview is highly timely and situational, depending on the dynamic relationship between the researcher and the respondent (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Unfortunately, our interviewee got sick so the interview was conducted via video call instead of face-to-face. This might have influenced the understanding and flow of the conversation negatively. Nevertheless, we achieved our goal as we got explanations of our survey results as well as additional clarifications and insights which helped to understand knowledge transfer in Kalmar.

Step 3 - Personal Interview with a Senior Lecturer in Tourism at Linnaeus University

Because we are students at Linnaeus University ourselves and the interviewee was a former lecturer of ours, we might have influenced or biased the direction and the results of this face-to-face interview. But to remain as objective and neutral as possible, we avoided talking about our own experiences and focused on the topics which were common themes in the previous interview.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical research does not only benefit our respondents, but it ensures that our work obtains legitimacy (Bryman & Bell, 2015). By following ethical norms and guidelines we gain the trust of our respondents and readers. To gain the informed consent of all stakeholders required, we communicated the nature and the purpose of our research (Smith, 2017). The organizations relevant to our study were treated equally, regardless of their sector, stage in lifecycle or size, being included as stakeholders and receiving an email so that they had the chance to take a stance. Because our respondents were local stakeholders who often know each other, we showed respect for their choice to not participate, but we informed them about the potential benefits of our study (Smith, 2017). We were aware that we might ask for confidential information. To ensure honest answers and to increase response rates, respondents of the survey answered anonymously. From the respondents of the interviews, we acquired their permission. All respondents had the option to answer neutral and no questions were mandatory (Smith, 2017). We assured our respondents that the data collected was used only for the purpose of our study.



3. Literature Review

In this chapter we review existing literature on knowledge and its management within organizations and destinations, building the foundation for our case study. The linkage between knowledge and tourism is provided by Destination Management Organizations which aim to develop sustainable tourist destinations. The key to long-term destination competitiveness lies in the ability of DMOs to establish a network for inter-organizational knowledge transfer.

3.1 Managing Knowledge

To be able to understand the concept of Knowledge Management (KM) and the practice of knowledge transfer, we first clarify what knowledge actually means. Thereafter, we explain how an organization manages knowledge effectively. Thereby it is important to understand that knowledge is created through the interplay of explicit and tacit knowledge at different levels.

3.1.1 The dynamic Nature of Knowledge

Knowledge is widely recognized as being the key to a sustainable competitive advantage for organizations, outweighing the importance of tangible or hard assets (Rowley, 1999). But knowledge cannot be defined in a simple, straightforward manner (Carrillo et al., 2000). Due to the complex nature of knowledge, a lot of confusion and various definitions exist (Alvesson, 1993; Rowley, 1999). Additionally, the boundaries between data, information, intellectual capital, competence, capabilities, intangibles, and knowledge are fuzzy and different terms are used inconsistently (Carrillo et al., 2000). However, without a clear understanding of knowledge, it risks meaning nothing and everything (Alvesson, 1993).

Knowledge is created in a value chain, whereby every step adds some value. It starts with data or facts being raw, unprocessed material. If data is organized, structured, and processed for a specific purpose it becomes useful and is recognized by a person as information (Buckland, 1991). Acting on information or making informed decisions validates knowledge creation (Infield, 1997; Sveiby, 1997). Only information that is processed in the mind of individuals is transformed into knowledge (Kirchner, 1997; Ash, 1998). Thus, this process is shaped by personal experiences, attitudes, and contextual factors. So, knowledge is subjective, socially constructed and organic (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Burgoyne et al., 1994). Because knowledge is a social phenomenon, situated in a unique socio-historical context, shaped through everyday life interactions, it is opposed to intellectual capital not merely an intangible asset and commodity which can be traded and capitalized on (McAdam & McCreedy, 1999; McInerney, 2002).

The most popular definition of knowledge is presented by Davenport & Prusak (1998), defining knowledge as “a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often



becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms” (p. 5). Therefore, knowledge is related to processes and actions, and not to things such as data kept in databases and information written in protocols.

The Greek term *dynamis* means power (McInerney, 2002). Dynamism implies that knowledge is constantly changing as a result of new experiences and learning. Therefore, we argue that knowledge is powerful due to its potential to initiate change such as innovation. However, its value and power unfold only when it is shared across networks of people interacting with each other (McInerney, 2002). Thus, we derive the crux of knowledge sharing which is a difficult process due to the characteristics of knowledge. Knowledge is social (Sbarcea, 2001), in the mind of individuals (Davenport & Prusak, 1998), exclusively intellectual and only obtained through personal experiences (McInerney, 2002). It is only stored in minds and cannot be coded and inventoried in technologies like data and information (Gopal & Gagnon, 1995; Gibb, 1997). The multi-dimensional, loose, messy and ambiguous nature of knowledge complicates the sharing of knowledge (Allee, 1997; Galagan, 1997).

Figure 1 - Characteristics of tacit and explicit knowledge (adopted by McInerney, p. 1011)

Implicit or tacit knowledge	Explicit knowledge
Subconscious	Formally articulated
Perceived	Elucidated
Unaware	Aware
Difficult to articulate or unspoken	Fixed
Experienced based	Codified
Transferred through conversation	Documented (written, taped, recorded, digitized, etc.)
Embedded in stories and narratives	Stored in repositories (databases, files, etc.)
Escapes observation	Can be viewed or heard
Held within self	Shared with others
Personal	Organizational
Insights and understandings	Pushed or pulled
Judgments	Reports, lessons learned
Assumptions	

“We can know more than we can tell” (Polanyi, 1983, p. 4).

To share knowledge, it must be communicated somehow. Therefore, knowledge is represented and expressed physically (Buckland, 1991). Explicit knowledge (Figure 1) is codified, documented, public, conscious, and shared or captured through tools and technologies (Polyani, 1966; Boisot, 1987; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Duffy, 2000). Its symbolic representation such as protocols or documents are called knowledge artifacts which can be merely information (McInerney, 2002). Because knowledge originates and resides in the minds, behaviors, perceptions, experiences, insights, and interactions of individuals, only implicit or tacit knowledge (Figure 1), which cannot be codified, documented, or represented, is pure knowledge (Polyani, 1966; Boisot, 1987; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Davenport & Prusak, 1998; Duffy, 2000; Petty & Guthrie, 2000). But the conversion of tacit into explicit knowledge



is the key to knowledge sharing. The value and power of knowledge increase by making it available to others who can use, interpret, combine, and share it in new ways (Weill & Broadbent, 1998). Sharing knowledge means that power is shared but great opportunities are lost if knowledge is not made explicit (Zack, 1999). This dynamic and social process can be modeled as a knowledge spiral (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Both in and outside of the workplace, individuals socialize and share internal knowledge with others who in turn internalize this knowledge. By processing this shared knowledge, people create new knowledge which is, again, shared with others. The process starts over and over, leading ultimately to some change or innovation (Hibbard, 1997).

3.1.2 Knowledge Management (KM)

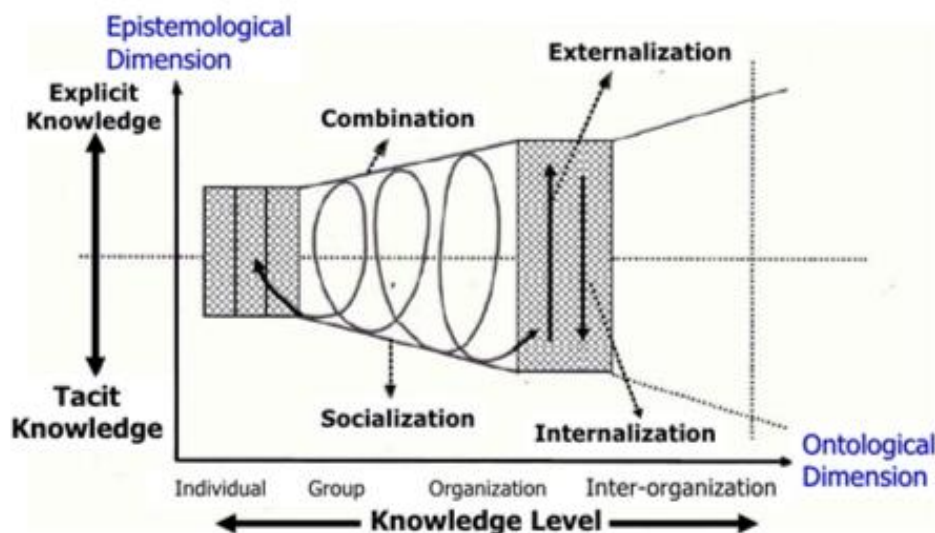
While the disciplines of philosophy, psychology, and sociology emphasize tacit knowledge, science and management literature have been mostly concerned with explicit knowledge (Richardson et al., 1987). Since explicit knowledge is not owned by an individual, it can be managed and controlled, meaning knowledge in management acts as a resource or asset. Therefore, knowledge is commonly seen being part of the concept of intellectual capital (Roos & Roos, 1997). Thus, Knowledge Management is often referred to as the management of intellectual capital (IC) controlled by a company. Examples are effective strategies and processes to manage or leverage IC and to exploit or create value of intangible and human resources (Brooking, 1997; Petty & Guthrie, 2000). While the focus of KM was initially on human capital, bearing knowledge, it shifted later to the tools and technologies used to facilitate KM (Flamholtz et al., 1985; Danwoody & Peters, 1992). Current views refocus on the social construction of knowledge as being the key to KM and call for more holistic perspectives (Gergen, 1991; Alvesson, 1996; McElroy, 2003). The knowledge spiral is a rather simplistic and mechanized representation, but it provides the whole picture of the complex process of knowledge creation.

According to the holistic perspective, the goal of KM is to make tacit knowledge explicit and to turn the knowledge of individuals into organizational knowledge. Both processes and things form the foundation of KM. Therefore, knowledge is managed as a process and object (Zack, 1999). Technologies facilitate and enable the storage and transfer of knowledge artifacts, but knowledge is created by people (Black & Synan, 1997). KM encourages inter-organizational wide sharing of knowledge adding value to products or services (Chase, 1997). Thus, a sharing culture is a prerequisite for a learning organization where everybody seeks to share knowledge for the greater benefit (McInerney, 2002). Technologies and systems support the effective usage of knowledge by helping people to sort out information that matters (Schaefer, 1998). Only relevant knowledge is valuable, providing a competitive advantage (Mårtensson, 2000). So, even if the resource-based view of the firm, constituting monetary, physical and human resources (Itami, 1987; Haanes & Lowendahl, 1997), shifted to the knowledge-based theory, people are still at the center of organizations because knowledge resides in minds and social interactions. The organization is merely coordinating and integrating the knowledge of

individuals through corresponding activities and a sharing culture (Roberts, 1998; People Management, 1998).

However, while employees might leave the organization, knowledge provides the only sustainable competitive advantage. As organizations have been forced to find a solution to handle the constantly changing and complex environment (Grønhaug & Nordhaug, 1992), knowledge has become the most important resource to be managed (Roberts, 1998). Successful KM requires overcoming cultural barriers and mistrust which are the greatest hurdles to sharing knowledge (Cole-Gomolski, 1997; People Management, 1998). Communication, informing people and inclusion in decision-making across levels, units and organizational boundaries are vital for KM (Keen, 1997; Ash, 1998). Thereby, organizational strategies are aligned with KM goals, everybody works towards a common vision, and individuals are aware of the benefits of KM (Mårtensson, 2000). This is enabled by a management level that encourages sharing, learning, networking, and creativity (Tan & Kao, 1999; Mayo, 1998). An appointed knowledge manager is beneficial to KM, having the time, resources, and motivation to establish networks so that knowledge sharing becomes routine, natural, unconscious, and unquestioned (Gopal & Gagnon, 1995; Galagan, 1997; Gibb, 1997; Mayo, 1998). The person in charge of KM evaluates KM attempts, rewards people who share or use knowledge and highlights mistakes that have been made due to knowledge gaps (Mayo, 1998; Keeler, 2000).

Figure 2 - Dimensions of Knowledge Creation (adopted by Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, p. 73)



The knowledge spiral (Figure 2) explains not only the interplay of implicit and explicit knowledge but also the interplay of different levels of knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). The ontological dimension includes the individual, the group, the organization, and inter-organizational contexts (Despres & Chauvel, 1999). As knowledge moves back and forth from tacit to explicit forms through ongoing externalization and internalization, a transformation is triggered in which individual knowledge is disseminated and expanded throughout (Nonaka &



Takeuchi, 1995). Through the exchange of knowledge between individuals, groups, and people from outside the organization, new knowledge is generated within the organization (Ruhanen & Cooper, 2004). Thus, exchanging knowledge is key to organizational productivity, performance, and innovation. From a system perspective, knowledge within a destination is more than the sum of individual organizations' knowledge. The diversity of minds process knowledge differently, combines existing knowledge in new ways and creates new knowledge.

It becomes clear that knowledge sharing is the most important, but at the same time, the most critical part of KM. Former concerns about storing and accessing databases have been redressed by the fast and progressive innovations of information technologies which are part of almost every definition of KM (Mårtensson, 2000). However, the entire KM chain consists of several steps. Many different models exist, picturing different processes or elements of KM (Despres & Chauvel, 1999; Spender, 2005; Zehrer, 2011). The six steps of KM according to Grant (2005) are knowledge identification, measurement, storage and organization, replication, sharing, and integration. This model emphasizes the importance of tacit knowledge to an organization. Addressing tacit knowledge is most relevant since it presents the greatest challenges as well as opportunities for KM. Learning is ultimately based on tacit knowledge (Tuomi, 2002).

To conclude, KM aims for many outcomes, depending on the context and vision of individual organizations. It can be a tool to enhance business processes, streamline operations and access new markets (Cooper, 2018), which in turn increases productivity, performance, and innovativeness (Ostro, 1997; Bassi, 1997; Hibbard, 1997). KM can facilitate sharing, capturing and utilizing information for improved decision-making (Maglitta, 1995; People Management, 1998). Acquiring and transferring information more effectively can reduce response times, research costs or delays, and better exploit best practices (Cole-Gomolski, 1998; Allerton, 1998). Furthermore, KM can help organizations to retain employees by improving individual and organizational learning as well as capturing and securing the knowledge of employees who exit the organization (Cooper, 2018). We argue that all these benefits of KM and the wide, underexplored scope of the potentials which knowledge offers will ultimately create some sustainable competitive advantage for organizations.

3.2 Managing Knowledge within Tourist Destinations

The previously described theories on KM lay the foundation for understanding the importance of knowledge in a global, knowledge-based marketplace and its diverse benefits if managed effectively. However, traditional research on KM is mainly concerned with the management of knowledge within organizations. But in a sustainable tourist destination, knowledge transcends organizational boundaries. Thus, KM in destinations is approached from a network perspective.

3.2.1 The Destination Network

A tourist destination can be thought of both as a geographical area, consisting of various stakeholders who cater for the needs of visitors and tourists, and as a cognitive product, resulting from the customer journey, the experiences made at a destination, as well as the brand

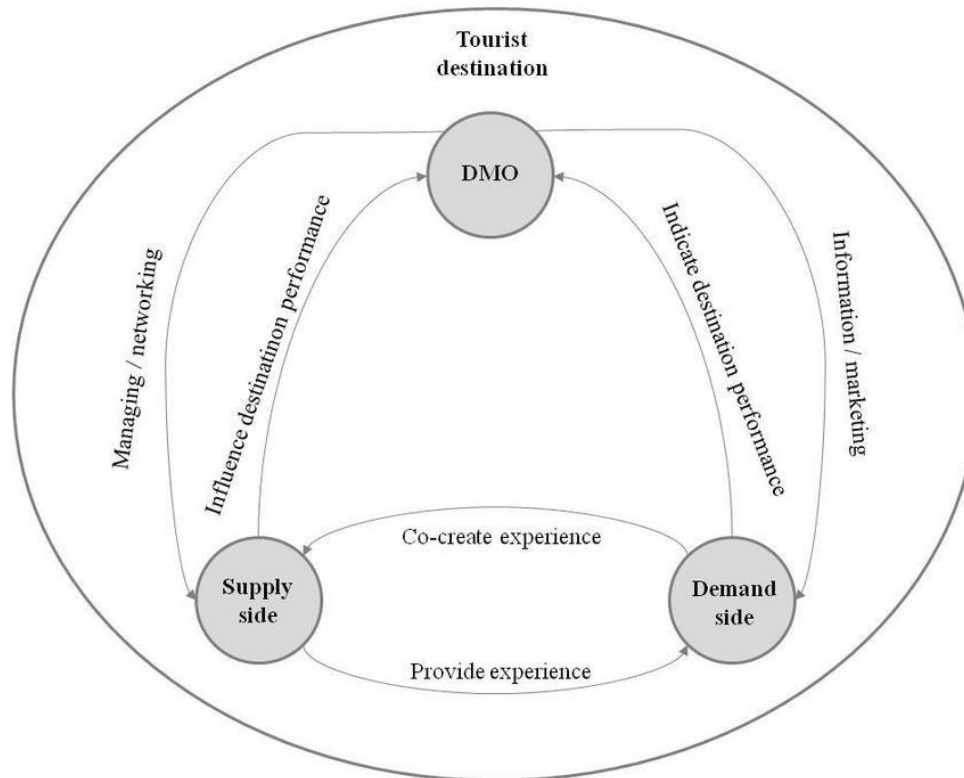


and reputation of a destination (Varra et al., 2012). According to the World Tourism Organization, a destination is a “location of a cluster of attractions and related tourist facilities and services which a tourist or tour group selects to visit, or which providers choose to promote” (UNWTO, 1993, p. 22). For the purpose of our study, we adopt a supply-side view on tourism because it better fits the perspective of a destination which constitutes a network of organizations that supply various features, vital to the functioning of a tourist destination (Leiper, 1979).

Destinations are complex, adaptive, and dynamic systems which bring together stakeholders who are directly and indirectly related to tourism (van der Zee et al., 2017). Tourism is a social phenomenon with a fundamental impact on economies, societies, and the environment, creating both positive and negative effects (Varra et al., 2012). The tourism product, consisting of both tangible and intangible elements, is the result of the interaction of various stakeholders within a destination, complementing each other to cater for the needs of tourists and visitors (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). Only the integration of different offerings into one tourist product offers a valuable and meaningful experience to customers. From a destination perspective, it is important to understand that not the individual stakeholders at a destination compete, but the destination is competing against other tourist destinations (Zehrer & Raich, 2010; Sheng et al., 2015). That is why the competitiveness of a destination is viewed as relational, using a network approach. The sustainable competitive advantage of a destination lies in its ability to capitalize on its network relations, taking advantage of complementarities and creating integrated tourist experiences through inter-organizational-wide knowledge transfer.

The tourism sector has the most inter-organizational networks due to the heterogeneous groups at a destination (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). This makes collaboration, networking, and partnerships vital elements for destination management. The interrelationships within a destination can be thought of as a triangle of network relationships (Figure 3), namely the supply side, the demand side, and government bodies such as the local municipality and the DMO (van der Zee et al., 2017). We recognize that the demand side, the tourists and visitors, is the driving force behind tourism at destinations, and their role has shifted from passive consumers to active stakeholders, but for the purpose of our study, we are only interested in the relations of the supply side and government bodies. While the municipality is mainly responsible for the residents and the wider functioning of a city, we argue that the DMO is particularly responsible for tourists and the functioning of a city as a destination. Thus, DMOs are responsible to manage and network the tourism supply side which in turn influences the performance of the destination and thus, its reputation (van der Zee et al., 2017). The demand side in turn indicates how well the destination has performed e.g., customer satisfaction, recommendations, and revisits.

Figure 3 - The Destination Triangle (adopted by van der Zee et al., 2017, p. 7)



Often, the corners of the triangle work independently from one another but influence each other and the overall performance of the destination. As the nature of their relations determines the experience made at the destination, it is beneficial for destinations to adjust the composition, strength, and intensity of stakeholders' relations. When stakeholders exchange knowledge, the "experience-creating capability of a destination" increases (van der Zee et al., 2017, p. 3). Because knowledge of a destination is not situated in the individual organizations but in the interactions of the diversity of suppliers (Zehrer, 2011). The more stakeholders take part in destination-wide interactions, the more knowledge is generated and the bigger the knowledge spiral grows (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). When the expertise of each stakeholder is combined, the destination gains unique competencies and contextual knowledge which clearly differentiates it from other destinations (Pyo, 2005; Blackman et al., 2011; Varra et al., 2012).

Once a network has been established, knowledge flows and the destination develops naturally. Due to the diversity of stakeholders and the changing environment, conflicting interests are constantly negotiated, resulting in adaptation, transformation, and innovation (Blackman et al., 2011). As the stakeholders constantly react and adapt to one another spontaneously, they form a common ground which directs the behavior of individual stakeholders (Varra et al., 2012; Valeri & Baggio, 2021). A shared way of thinking facilitates mutual learning and different kinds of networks, industry clusters and learning regions evolve (Gareth & Williams, 2009; Cooper, 2018). These are beneficial to the development of a common vision. To conclude, the diversity of stakeholders is vital for creativity and change and KM is the key to destination



competitiveness. In tourism, KM takes place in networks. To maintain an attractive and competitive destination, destination managers need to understand how knowledge is generated, shared, and used within the network of destination stakeholders (van der Zee et al., 2017).

3.2.2 Knowledge Management in Tourism

In a global, knowledge-intensive marketplace, competition is more and more driven by intellectual capital as well as commercialisation and the diffusion of research (Ruhanen & Cooper, 2004). Tourism has been relatively slow in adapting to KM thinking, but due to its great impact on national economies, contributing to growth in GDP and employment, both private organizations and governments argue for a change in this sector (Hjalager, 2002; Grizelj, 2003; Yun, 2004; Chong et al., 2011; Cooper, 2018). Because of fierce competition, the experience economy and an increase in consumer power, the service sector must use knowledge about customer preferences for example more effectively in order to remain competitive in the long run (Hallin & Marnburg, 2008). Additionally, globalization has created more complex structures and processes. The scope of existing and potentially new services and products as well as ownership and management modes present both challenges and opportunities which can be better understood and realized by inter-organizational exchange of knowledge (Cho, 2005).

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that tourism organizations are particularly sensitive to the fast-changing and unpredictable environment (Blackman et al., 2011; Cooper, 2018). The effective management of knowledge allows organizations to encounter crises proactively and to recover faster from disasters, meaning that KM increases the resilience and competitive position of learning organizations, and thus, of the destination (Nordin, 2003; European Commission, 2006; Schianetz et al., 2007). The pandemic has forced various stakeholders to acknowledge the opportunities and benefits brought by changes, forcing innovation by utilizing knowledge in new, novel ways (Blackman et al., 2011). The shutdown of international travel and daily life activities has given organizations the chance to rethink and restart their business through a more sustainable approach, ensuring a sustained competitive advantage (Valeri & Baggio, 2021). Especially during crises, humans experience an increased need for information from external sources (Blackman et al., 2011). Both social and electronic networks are important to fulfill the need for collaboration in such uncertain situations, to make informed decisions acted on immediately, and to ensure the survival of all stakeholders involved (Baggio & Cooper, 2010).

While the tourist product in destinations is the result of interactions of a network of organizations, the service product in hospitality and tourism results from the interaction between employees and customers who co-create the customer experience (Hallin & Marnburg, 2008; Shaw & Williams, 2009). The diverse touchpoints during the customer journey, influence the overall experience at the destination (Dunn & Davis, 2003; Voss & Zomerdijk, 2007). The more the employee knows about customers' preferences, the more likely the customers are satisfied. In a globalized world, tourists wish to experience uniqueness and authenticity (Pine



& Gilmore, 1999). To fulfill their constantly changing preferences, different organizations collaborate to provide competitive tourist products (Yang & Wan, 2003; Baggio & Cooper, 2010). Quality and experience-enhancing activities might be the creation of integrated offerings such as insider tips or local advice whereby a restaurant owner refers to another good restaurant as well as value-adding partnerships like restaurants who buy from a local supplier to create authentic menus (van der Zee et al., 2017). The benefits of collaboration improve the brand value of the destination, a common vision based on local identity and trust which is a prerequisite for knowledge exchange between stakeholders at a destination.

The foregoing examples made clear that meaningful tourist experiences are created through tacit, competitive knowledge and that tourist destinations offer great potential for knowledge-based innovations (Yang & Wan, 2004; OECD, 2006; Hjalager, 2010). But despite progressive technology-based processes in the service sector such as web-based marketing, e-tourism, and intranet links (Kahle, 2002; Sigala et al., 2004; Pyo, 2005; Buhalis, 2006), the characteristics of tourism organizations hamper the implementation of KM. Again, technology itself is not the solution to implementing KM. The tourism sector and many tourist destinations consist mainly of private or family-owned SMEs which do not have the resources, expertise, and management skills to generate, transfer and use knowledge effectively (Hoarau, 2014; Thomas & Wood, 2014). Furthermore, many SMEs lack the motivation to engage in networks due to the fragmented tourist product, the diversity of stakeholders at a destination, and mistrust (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). Traditional tourism organizations such as hotels and restaurants are commonly seen as research-averse (Cooper & Ruhanen, 2002; Czernek, 2017), inward-looking, using external knowledge only when their business is endangered (Durst & Edvardsson, 2012; van der Zee et al., 2017). Refusing to take risks and to invest capital in human resources further hampers that the wide potential for innovation remains unexploited (Weidenfeld et al., 2010).

Again, people and their interactions are at the heart of creative and innovative ideas which are promoted by a learning and sharing culture. But especially in hotels and restaurants, the benefits of individual learning and human capital are seldom realized due to the high labor mobility and turnover (Enz & Siguaw, 2003). It is simply not worth investing in seasonal and part-time workers such as students (Jameson, 2000; Gjelsvik, 2002; Wellton & Lainpelto, 2021). The poor management of human resources and their knowledge in tourism organizations affects the absorptive capacity of organizations and thus, destinations negatively (Baggio & Cooper, 2010; Cooper, 2018). According to a study conducted by Chong et al. (2011), only half of the SMEs believed that they are effective in leveraging knowledge for improved performance. Ineffective use of knowledge and unawareness of knowledge gaps increase the risk of making costly mistakes due to insufficient knowledge in an area (Chen et al., 2006).

On the whole, the linkage between knowledge transfer, innovation and competitiveness is hardly understood by tourism organizations (Gareth & Williams, 2009). Yet, it is necessary for this sector to understand the flow of knowledge in organizations and destinations, and the importance of capturing and utilizing knowledge of employees before they exit the organization, turning valuable tacit knowledge into useful, explicit knowledge. Especially due



to high labor turnover and human mobility (Hjalager, 2002; Blackman et al., 2011). Due to the limited resources of SMEs and their dependency on external knowledge from customers, competitors and suppliers, exchanging knowledge with external sources is particularly important to the competitiveness of SMEs (Chen et al., 2006; Yang, 2007; Hallin & Marburg, 2008).

3.2.3 Destination Management Organizations (DMOs)

The quality of a tourist destination is determined by the composition of various tourist products and services into one integrated experience for consumers (Buhalis, 2000). The growth and scope of the tourism sector offer further opportunities for the development of tourist destinations. In an ideal destination, all negative impacts of tourism are eliminated while all positive impacts are reinforced (UNWTO, 2007). The prerequisite for remaining a competitive tourist destination is to maintain an attractive cultural and natural environment based on social responsibility (Hieu & Rašovská, 2018). The sustainable development of destinations is a long-term process, sustaining destination competitiveness and ensuring a high living standard for both today's and tomorrow's communities (UNWTO, 2001). Also, this process maintains the identity or traditions of a destination to preserve the identity of the residents and the destination itself (Hieu & Rašovská, 2018).

To ensure destination competitiveness and sustainability, which is based on the interaction of destination stakeholders, the destination and its elements need to be planned, structured, coordinated, marketed, developed, and managed (Inskeep, 1991; Karmen, 2009). Destination Management (DM) is the coordinated management of all elements that make up a destination such as attractions, amenities, access, or marketing (UNWTO, 2007). Thus, a strategic approach is required to link all elements of a destination to be able to manage the destination effectively. This means to produce unforgettable experiences, to increase tourist consumption profiting future generations too, and to attain a vision shared by the entire destination (Sheldon, 2020). As the variety of destination stakeholders impact the future of tourist destinations, ensuring their support and including them in the entire planning process are prerequisite for sustainable destination development (Gunn, 1998; Sautter & Leisen, 1999; Jamal & Stronza, 2009).

Thus, the primary goal of DM is to develop tourist destinations sustainably. This means to generate manageable flows of tourists that are balanced, sustainable and sufficient to meet the economic needs of the locals involved in the destination (Franch et al., 2005). In smaller geographic areas, local DMOs are responsible for the management and marketing of tourism (UNWTO, 2004). Due to fierce competition, a more complex environment, and an increased demand for high-quality experiences, DMOs had to reinvent the letter “M”. DMOs’ task is no longer limited to “Marketing” but contains diverse aspects of “Management”. To maintain destination competitiveness, DMOs maximize the positive and minimize the negative effects of tourism (Heath & Wall, 1992; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). DMOs' external task is still Destination Marketing such as advertising and promotion, but the competitive advantage of destinations lies in the ability of DMOs to develop destinations internally. According to



Morrison et al. (1998), DMOs act both as an “economic driver”, contributing to a diverse local economy, as a “community marketer”, communicating the image or identity of a destination, as an “industry coordinator”, encouraging collaboration in the fragmented destination, as a “quasi-public representative”, legitimizing individual stakeholders, and as a “builder of community pride”, enhancing the quality of local lives.

For the purpose of our study, we view the DMO primarily as an “industry coordinator”. Since a destination with a knowledge center is more effective in coordinating a shared developmental process between destination stakeholders (Varra et al., 2012). Ultimately, the ability of the DMO to develop destinations sustainably depends on the quality and number of its relationships with destination stakeholders. Because to be able to fulfill its tasks, the DMO relies on the actions and resources of other destination stakeholders (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). Thus, DMOs are seldom utilizing their own resources but mainly coordinating the resources of other destination stakeholders. To be able to utilize the resources of a wide range of stakeholders, the DMO needs a good relationship with various organizations (Presenza et al., 2005). The potential for collaboration is great but stakeholders on which the DMO’s survival depends can threaten the DMO to achieve its vision by withholding these resources (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). Thus, all stakeholders are important to achieving the objective of the DMO. As each stakeholder has their own perspectives and goals, the ability of the DMO to connect, coordinate, negotiate and unite different interests within a destination determines the quality of the tourist experience, the destination image and long-term competitiveness (Byrd, 2007; Waligo et al., 2013).

However, several studies have shown that the strategies of DMOs often fail due to a lack of information, communication, inclusion, and support of destination stakeholders (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005; van der Zee et al., 2017). Organizations on the supply side want to be actively encountered, informed, and involved. If they perceive to be unimportant to the DMO, to be excluded and ignored, they develop agnostic attitudes and are unlikely to promote the destination and share knowledge with other stakeholders (van der Zee et al., 2017). Only DMOs which encourage collaboration and are inclusive and open to feedback from the demand and supply side are successful in developing destinations sustainably (Yuksel et al., 1999; Hardy, 2005).

It becomes clear that managing destinations sustainably means that an exchange of resources, information and knowledge between all destination stakeholders takes place, aiming primarily for the greater good of the destination and not individual goals (Presenza et al., 2005). The greatest challenge for DMOs is to make other stakeholders understand that sharing knowledge requires sharing power but both the performance of the destination as a whole and the individual performances of local businesses and authorities benefit from a sharing culture. Therefore, a common vision and identity based on common values, trust, and social cohesion are necessary for the DMO to gain wider support for goals, plans and policies regarding destination development from which individual stakeholders benefit too (McKercher, 2003; Jamal, 2004; Timur & Getz, 2008). An ideal destination is governed by itself since individual behaviors are based on common ground, directing individualistic behaviors towards the common approach of



the community (Varra et al., 2012). Likewise, the identity of a destination and the overarching theme of a DMO ideally connect all destination stakeholders (van der Zee et al., 2017).

Following the transformation of a DMO's function, the management of knowledge within a destination has become a key task for DMOs, linking KM and tourism. Because DMOs manage diverse stakeholder groups, there are many boundaries to be overcome. But due to the central position of DMOs in a destination and their good connections to diverse stakeholders, DMOs have the potential to transfer knowledge across boundaries. Therefore, they are said to play an essential role as boundary spanners (Blackman et al., 2011). KM activities in DMOs include the evaluation of core knowledge of individual organizations and their contribution to the knowledge base of the destination as well as ensuring that important external knowledge is used in internal decision-making and that tacit knowledge is captured effectively (Pyo, 2012; Yang & Wan, 2004; Cooper, 2018). DMOs facilitate the flow of different ideas and teach individual stakeholders to translate and share their knowledge for the greater benefit. The exchange of divergent viewpoints can generate new knowledge, new perspectives on tourism and innovations needed to compete in a fragmented and fast-changing sector (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005; Blackman et al., 2011).

To conclude, DMOs link the concepts of KM and tourism. But again, it becomes clear that the nature of knowledge and tourism represent both great opportunities to be utilized as well as challenges to be overcome. The crux of Destination Management is the diversity of destination stakeholders. The fragmentation of interests, private and public organizations, formal and informal relationships, responsible and irresponsible as well as short- and long-term decisions and actions have complex, unpredictable and uncontrollable effects on the natural, socio-cultural, and economic environment of the destination (Hieu & Rašovská, 2018). The different levels of authority, power, regulation, and competition reinforce the complexity of DM (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). The self-organizing capacity of a destination has its benefits but hinders DMOs from directing destination stakeholders towards their desired vision (Blackman et al., 2011).

3.3 Transferring Knowledge within Tourist Destinations

The most critical step of KM and therefore the focus of our study is knowledge transfer, representing opportunities for a sustainable competitive advantage as well as challenges due to the complexity of this process. Transferring knowledge does not only involve the sharing but also the absorption of knowledge. In a tourist destination, knowledge is transferred through inter-organizational networks which can improve organizational learning and performance as well as the competitive position of the destination and the life quality of the local community.



3.3.1 The Process of Inter-Organizational Knowledge Transfer

In tourist destinations, knowledge is accessed, stored, and transferred within macro-level inter-organizational networks (Cooper, 2018). A destination network evolves through collaboration and geographical proximity and connects the organizations at a destination (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). Networks enable destination-wide knowledge exchange and strengthen the destination's competitive position because network members generate cumulative local knowledge, transcending organizational boundaries but remaining within the boundaries of the destination (Porter, 1990; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). By understanding the network structure and the interactions between destination stakeholders affecting knowledge transfer, DMOs can pinpoint and target critical linkages, overlooked actors, and lack of collaboration to increase the “experience-creating capability” (van der Zee et al., 2017, p. 3) of destinations.

Knowledge transfer is a complex process which is already difficult to manage within organizations. Transferring knowledge across organizational boundaries and throughout a destination becomes even more complicated. The multifaceted nature of boundaries inhibits the flow of knowledge and thus, improved organizational performance and innovation (Grant, 1996; Argote et al., 2003; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Therefore, DMOs and individual organizations need to invest in overcoming boundaries that constrain knowledge transfer to ensure the sustained competitiveness of the destination. To provide you with a better understanding of the elements involved in and factors influencing inter-organizational knowledge transfer, we introduce the model (Figure 4) provided by Easterby-Smith et al. (2008). This framework pictures a dyadic relationship between the donor and the recipient organization of knowledge. When this model is applied to destinations, it represents a network-type exchange where knowledge is diffused within the network of inter-organizational relationships (Powell et al., 1996; Spencer, 2003).

The characteristics of both organizations, the nature of the piece of knowledge being transferred, and various inter-organizational dynamics predict the amount, speed, quality, and ease or difficulty of knowledge transfer (Lane et al., 2001; van Wijk et al., 2008). To explain the degree of inter-organizational knowledge transfer at a destination, we based the questionnaire of our case study upon these antecedents of knowledge transfer. Factors inhibiting knowledge transfer are considered constraints, addressed by Question 8. Whether these factors enable or hinder the transfer of knowledge, determines the overall situation of knowledge transfer at the destination which Question 20 aimed to reveal.

Figure 4 - Factors influencing inter-organizational knowledge transfer
(adopted by Easterby-Smith et al., 2008, p. 679)

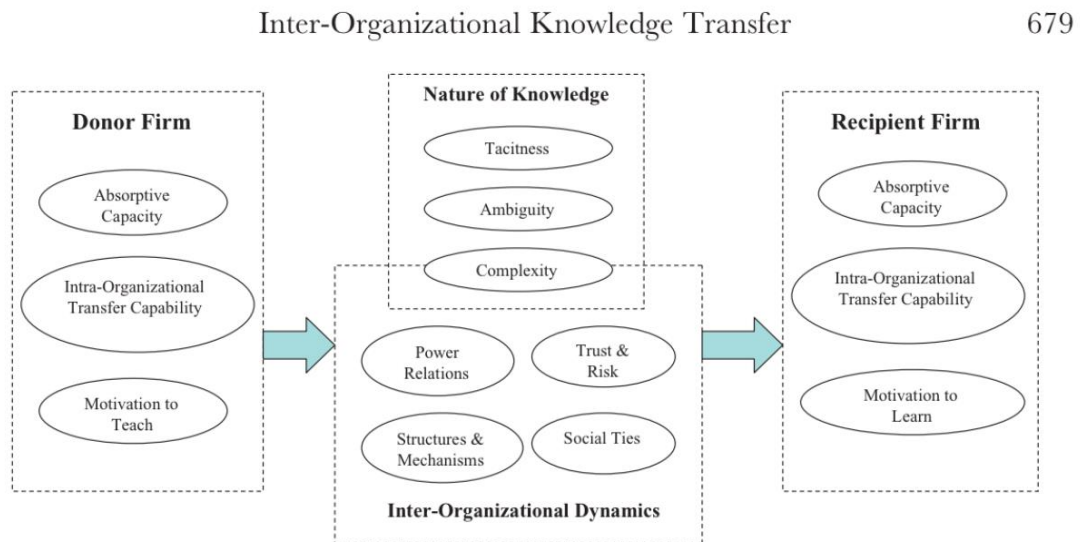


Figure 1. Factors influencing inter-organizational knowledge transfer

3.3.2 Organizational Characteristics influencing Knowledge Transfer

Generally, the degree to which an organization engages in inter-organizational knowledge transfer is influenced by the type of industry or sector in which the organization operates (Question 1), the number of employees (Question 2), the mode of ownership (Question 4) and the stage in the lifecycle or years of operation within the destination (Question 3). While bigger organizations tend to have a higher need for knowledge transfer within an organization, smaller and micro-sized businesses tend to rely on external knowledge (Chen et al., 2006). In terms of the number of employees, in the European Union, SMEs are defined as organizations with less than 250 employees, small businesses have less than 50 employees and micro-sized organizations have less than ten employees (OECD, 2005). Besides, start-ups and entrepreneurs rely on the generation of new knowledge and seek external collaboration, but old established organizations tend to rely on their existing knowledge and network (van der Zee et al., 2017). Also, tourism organizations tend to be research-averse and private or family-owned businesses which lack the resources to implement effective knowledge transfer (Cooper & Ruhanen, 2002; Czernek, 2017). By contrast, franchises and inter-/ national organizations for example are more naturally involved in inter-organizational knowledge transfer (Gareth & Williams, 2009).



Motivation to teach and to learn

The most challenging part of knowledge transfer is the conversion of tacit into explicit knowledge and back, without losing its meaning and value (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). The ability to replicate knowledge is influenced by the motivation and capabilities of an organization. While knowledge replication is desirable within organizations, it can be a perceived threat in inter-organizational transfer (Kogut & Zander, 1992). The more motivated and capable the donor organization is in making knowledge explicit and transferring it effectively, the more likely it is that the receiving organization interprets the information in the right way. The motivation to learn in turn, also greatly affects that the right meaning is put into the shared information when processed internally to be able to use that knowledge to generate a competitive advantage (Mowery et al., 1996; Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000; Lane et al., 2001; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). If the donor lacks the motivation to teach, the recipient is likely to lose the enthusiasm to learn. However, several studies have found that the motivation of the donor to share is less important than the motivation of the receiving organization to acquire new knowledge (Lane et al., 2001; Steensma et al., 2005). Above all, the recipient's motivation depends on the degree to which it is aware of internal knowledge gaps and benefits of inter-organizational knowledge transfer (Question 10) as well as its dependence on external knowledge (Question 5).

Absorptive Capacity

But merely accessing or acquiring external knowledge does not mean that an organization becomes more competitive (Powell et al., 1996). The value of knowledge transfer lies in absorbing knowledge effectively (Question 9), meaning understanding, integrating, and using external knowledge within the organization and in commercial contexts (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). The capability to absorb knowledge differs greatly between organizations, depending on prior knowledge, past experiences, cultural compatibility, adaptability, and training offered by the donor (Lane et al., 2001; Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). International organizations and hubs like DMOs are better equipped with skills to acquire and comprehend knowledge from a range of donors due to their network position, being exposed to many different sources of knowledge (Powell et al., 1996; Zahra et al., 2000).

Intra-organizational Transfer Capability

To effectively transfer acquired knowledge within the organization, it is beneficial to appoint a manager responsible for the diffusion, documentation, codification, and articulation of knowledge throughout the entire organization (Martinkenaite, 2011). Because a knowledge manager is a rather specific function in big organizations and tourism organizations tend to be SMEs, we asked stakeholders whether somebody is in charge of communicating with external actors (Question 6), responsible for integrating this knowledge too. With the help of appropriate organizational structures and mechanisms, obtained knowledge can be distributed to the right



decision-making unit, directing strategic actions of the organization. A corporate culture, shared norms and values, facilitates the integration and internal transfer of knowledge (Grant, 1996).

3.3.3 Inter-organizational Dynamics influencing Knowledge Transfer

The success of an organization lies in balancing the exploration of new external knowledge and utilization of existing internal knowledge so that the organization both diversifies its knowledge base and adapts to the dynamic environment as well as creates reliability in its organizational routines (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). While intra-organizational knowledge transfer is rather optional, increasing organizational performance, the acquisition of knowledge from external sources is vital to the operation of organizations (Chong et al., 2011).

The nature of knowledge

The nature of a piece of knowledge affects the degree to which it is transferred, retained, and diffused effectively throughout the destination (Argote et al., 2003). Knowledge embedded in an organization is mainly tacit and context-specific, being a combination of multiple distinct competencies needed for one specific organization (Kogut & Zander, 1992; Simonin, 1999; McEvily, & Chakravathy, 2002). Its characteristics being unique, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable, create a competitive advantage and make the organization an attractive partner (Menon & Pfeffer, 2003). But the complexity and ambiguity of tacit knowledge also hinder knowledge transfer (Question 8). Because when tacit knowledge is transferred to another corporate culture its meaning might be distorted, making it less useful and valuable. Even if complex knowledge is difficult for rivals to imitate, it constraints intra- and inter-organizational knowledge transfer, innovation, and competitiveness (McEvily & Chakravathy, 2002).

Power relations

The interactive dynamics between the donor and recipient are characterized through collaborative and competitive relationships and cause power asymmetries whereby the donor is in a more desirable position than the receiver (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). But the ability of the recipient to acquire knowledge fast and effectively increases its bargaining power because learning can change the dependency relation. If the recipient cannot learn anything more from the donor, power relations are reversed (Hamel, 1991). The degree of engagement in transfer activities differs between organizations with complementary relations and organizations with competitive relations (Sorensen, 2007). While different tourism industries like restaurants and hotels might be more willing to exchange knowledge as they are not directly competing, similar tourism organizations like two local restaurants are less willing to share knowledge with one another, fearing they would lose their competitive advantage (Question 12).

Overall, organizations engaging in knowledge transfer gain a competitive advantage over organizations which are not network members (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). Because outsiders miss promising opportunities such as innovations, resulting from the interaction of the network, partnerships lowering transaction costs, integrated experiences through the combination of



resources, or informal relationships based on trust and reciprocity instead of formal relations based on power and contracts (Baggio & Cooper, 2010; Valeri & Baggio, 2021). In tourist destinations, many different stakeholders with varying levels of power and resources are interdependent (Question 11). Compared to other organizations, DMOs tend to be more powerful due to their network position (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). Therefore, DMOs could utilize their power to distribute benefits of tourism evenly among stakeholders and to encourage both cooperation and competition because “coopetition” is a fertile ground for innovation and sustainable destination development (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008).

Social ties

Knowledge is socially constructed. Therefore, well-connected organizations are particularly effective in leveraging useful knowledge and generating innovations due to their ability to access the most relevant knowledge sources in the network (Powell et al., 1996; Spencer, 2003). Thus, DMOs are commonly seen as mediators of destination networks (Question 19). The process of knowledge transfer becomes faster and easier in networks with a central hub, due to its accessibility and strong ties to a range of actors. (UNWTO, 2007; Baggio & Cooper, 2010; van der Zee, 2017). The nature of social ties determines the ease, amount and value of knowledge transferred and acquired from a diverse set of stakeholders (Question 12). Stronger ties might increase knowledge exchange within a destination, but actors with weaker ties are more likely to seek new ideas from the external environment. Thus, the diversity of social ties influences organizational performance and the destination's competitiveness (van der Zee et al., 2017).

In tourist destinations, the most common source of knowledge are informal networks (Cooper, 2018). Strategic, formal ties provide organizations with an enduring, assured flow of external knowledge (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). But informal, more personal relationships evolve through sharing the same history, identity, values, or goals (van der Zee et al., 2017; Cooper, 2018). As these social ties are based on trust, reciprocity and social cohesion, individuals are more likely to engage actively in knowledge transfer (Reagans & McEvily, 2003; Cooper, 2018). Formal relationships tend to fulfill the need for knowledge transfer, the unidirectional flow of knowledge, but informal relationships based on trust tend to encourage two-way communication, meaning knowledge exchange. For a DMO to manage the destination and its knowledge base effectively, formal relationships are necessary (Question 13). Thus, the interplay of formal and informal social ties supported by social and electronic networks enables inter-organizational knowledge transfer (Spencer, 2003).

Trust & risk

Transferring knowledge comes with both benefits and risks (Hamel, 1991; Postrel, 2002). But perceived risks can be reduced by building meaningful relationships based on commitment, integrity, and trust, giving a sense of security that knowledge is not exploited. Trust in turn encourages risk-taking and knowledge transfer (Tsang et al., 2004; Becerra et al., 2008). From



the recipient's point of view, the greatest risk is source credibility, the trustworthiness of the donor. Acquired knowledge might be misinformation (Question 17), or simply of low quality, making it not useful to the recipient (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). However, high trust in network members makes organizations unwilling to acquire knowledge from other external sources so that they rely purely on the existing knowledge of the network (Martinkenaite, 2011).

From the donor's point of view, knowledge transfer is risky when the knowledge is tacit, when the recipient is eager to learn and when both organizations share similar resources (Hamel, 1991; Becerra et al., 2008). If an organization mistrusts another organization it can choose to withhold information (Question 16). But there is always the risk of unintended knowledge transfer, leading to a loss of the core knowledge of the organization, its competitive advantage (Hamel, 1991; Kale et al., 2000; Becerra et al., 2008). Once the donor has shared knowledge consciously or unconsciously, the receiving organization can use that knowledge to their private advantage (Baguio & Cooper, 2010). Thus, sensitive knowledge leaking from the donor might be misused by the recipient (Question 18). But tools preventing leakage are often a barrier to knowledge transfer (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Particularly in destination networks, the sources of knowledge are diverse, which makes it difficult to protect each network member without establishing barriers that constrain inter-organizational knowledge transfer. Successful organizations have found the right balance between transferring knowledge to partners and preventing leakage to external actors (Hamel, 1991; Zander & Kogut, 1995; Postrel, 2002).

Structures & Mechanisms

Structures and mechanisms represent the context in which knowledge is transferred. While a highly centralized structure of a destination network allows for faster knowledge transfer and action, it limits knowledge to a few local actors (Valeri & Baggio, 2021). There are many possibilities for an organization to acquire new external knowledge (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). The different types of collaboration and ownership fit different organizational strategies, affecting the frequency of interaction and ease of knowledge transfer (Zahra et al., 2000). Strategic alliances range from non-equity licensing to franchises and joint ventures (Question 4). The knowledge of an organization diversifies when employees are sent to workshops, universities, or advisors for example (Question 7). Furthermore, mechanisms facilitating inter-organizational knowledge transfer are either in person or digitally (Chen et al., 2006). Technologies such as e-mail, discussion forums, extranet, internal databases, video conferences, and social media support and complement physical activities (Question 15). However, relying purely on technological tools to transfer knowledge tends to fail (Ruhanen & Cooper, 2004).

To conclude, the most important functions of a network are inter-organizational knowledge transfer as well as mutual learning. The position of the individual organization in a network, its absorptive capacity, its learning intent, and its power relations tend to be the most influential antecedents of inter-organizational knowledge transfer (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008).



4. The Case of Destination Kalmar

In this chapter, we introduce you to our case: the destination of Kalmar. First, we give you an overview of the destination's characteristics. Then we introduce the DMO, Destination Kalmar AB, by describing its organizational structure and areas of operation. We conclude this chapter with a stakeholder analysis which was necessary to identify relevant local tourism stakeholders on the supply side, who then answered our survey and interview questions respectively.

4.1 The Destination of Kalmar

Kalmar is a city located on the southeast coast of Sweden. It is the county capital of Kalmar County which is part of the province of Småland. The number of residents in the municipality of Kalmar amounted to approximately 71 000 in December 2021 (Kalmar Municipality, 2022a) with close to 42 000 residents in the urban area in 2020 (Kalmar Municipality, 2022b). For the purpose of this study, we focus on the urban area of Kalmar.

Kalmar is known for its historical and political importance during medieval times, and over the course of hundreds of years, events that have shaped Sweden's history have taken place in Kalmar. One such event was when Sweden, Denmark and Norway united in a common regent and foreign policy named the Kalmar Union, after a meeting held at Kalmar Castle in 1397. From the 15th century to the mid-17th century Kalmar Castle was used as a defense castle to protect the city (Kalmar Castle n.d.). Today, Kalmar Castle is a cultural heritage monument and one of Sweden's most famous historical buildings. It is a landmark of the city, located within walking distance from the city center. The castle has consistently been an engine and central part of the development of the city and region (Kalmar Municipality et al., 2019).

The city center of Kalmar is located on an island called Kvarnholmen and consists of many well-preserved buildings and landmarks, several of them dating back to the 17th century (Destination Kalmar AB, 2022c). Modern shops and restaurants blend into the old city environment and make the city center a shopping and meeting place in a historic atmosphere (Kalmar City Samverkan AB, n.d.-b). An organization named Kalmar City Samverkan AB has the purpose of fostering development and collaboration among business actors and property owners in the city center through their established network of members. The corporation is funded partly by the municipality and partly by service fees from its members (Kalmar City Samverkan AB, n.d.-a).

Kalmar has become known as a popular summer destination. The city is situated on several islands with the city center close to the sea and a variety of different activities. A guest harbor, pitches for motorhomes and camping are also within walking distance from the city center (Destination Kalmar AB, 2022b). Kalmar has even been awarded the title “Summer city of the year” in Sweden four times in a row, from 2015 to 2018. It is an award based on public voting, arranged by the travel comparison site Reseguiden.se (Nilsson, 2018). Preliminary numbers regarding the summer of 2022 show that Kalmar municipality had 212 617 guest nights between



the 1st of May and the 31st of July, out of which 34 342 were international guest nights. Between 2020 and 2021, Kalmar County saw the second-biggest increase in international guest nights among all counties in Sweden, with an increase of over 100% (Tillväxtverket, 2022, p. 34). At the other end of the Covid-19 pandemic, Kalmar has regained its visitors and even surpassed the numbers from previous years. (Olofsson, 2022).

Sports events have come to play an important role in the range of activities in Kalmar (Nordström, 2016) The local soccer team, Kalmar FF, plays in the highest football division in Sweden and finished in fourth place in this year's series (Allsvenskan, n.d.). Several national tournaments and competitions are organized annually, Ironman Kalmar is one example of a recurring event that attracts large numbers of visitors (Frykfeldt, 2022).

From the city, the Öland Bridge connects the mainland to the island of Öland; Sweden's second-largest island and one of Sweden's most popular tourist destinations (Gunnarsson, 2021). Kalmar's proximity to Öland is characteristic for the destination as Kalmar is a gateway to the island and the two destinations are often marketed as complementary (Visit Småland, n.d.; Destination Kalmar AB, 2022a, p.18). When it comes to transportation, there is a centrally located railway and bus station as well as an airport within five kilometers from the city (Destination Kalmar AB, 2021).

Last but not least, Kalmar has become increasingly popular as a place to study for both national and international students (Linnaeus University, n.d.). Linnaeus University offers over 1.500 courses in a wide range of disciplines and has around 44 000 students distributed between the two campuses Kalmar and Växjö (Linnaeus University, 2022). In 2021, the opening of the new university campus took place. This meant the university moved all disciplines in Kalmar to the same place in the harbor located next to the city center (Kalmar Municipality, 2023). Because collaboration is considered key to sustainable societal development, the study environment encourages diversity, curiosity, creativity, companionship, utility and entrepreneurialism. The two pillars of collaboration are teaching and research, addressing both challenges and opportunities to create innovative sustainable solutions (Linnaeus University, 2022).

4.2 The local DMO Destination Kalmar AB

The mission of Destination Kalmar AB is to sustainably develop, profile and market Kalmar as a destination in collaboration with the business sector and the municipality (Destination Kalmar AB, n.d.-d). The organization is fully owned by Kalmar Municipality and the board consists of politicians chosen by the municipality as well as representatives from the business sector (Destination Kalmar AB, n.d.-c). The business is divided into three business areas: events and meetings, Kalmar Castle, and communication and hosting. Strategic work and development of sports tourism is one focus within events and meetings. (Destination Kalmar AB, 2022a). Destination Kalmar AB has 29 full-time employees that work all year round. In addition, seasonal and part-time employees amount to approximately 70 per year. Around 60 of these



employees work at the castle and 10 employees work for the other two departments (S. Johnsson, personal communication, December 6, 2022).

It is stated on their website that “cooperation has always been an essential way of working” for the organization (Destination Kalmar AB, n.d.-b). This cooperation with the business sector and associations takes place through a network called Partnership by Kalmar. The network was established in 2008 and today, approximately 140 organizations are members (S. Johnsson, personal communication, 2022). Members of the Partnership by Kalmar contribute to the financing of events and marketing of Kalmar as a destination, making it an attractive region to visit, live and invest in. Member meetings with information about trends and future plans, lectures and access to an internal calendar used as a planning tool for synchronizing events are some benefits of being a member (Destination Kalmar AB, n.d.-a).

Destination Kalmar AB's operations are partly financed by direct income from commercial activities such as the sale of entrance tickets to the castle, souvenir sales, and income from the guest harbor and motorhome pitches. The remaining funding is through contributions from Kalmar municipality and membership fees from organizations and associations that are part of Partnership by Kalmar (Destination Kalmar AB, n.d.-d).

4.3 The Tourism Stakeholders within the Destination of Kalmar

For a DMO to develop a destination sustainably and transfer knowledge effectively across organizational boundaries, destination managers direct their attention to a range of stakeholders. In management contexts, Freeman's stakeholder theory (1984) dominates the literature. Based on his definition, stakeholders of a destination are defined as any individual or group that influences or is influenced by the achievement of the goals of a destination (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005; Waligo et al., 2013). Destinations consist of a network of relationships between organizations with different interests and levels or types of power and resources (Sautter & Leisen, 1999; Byrd, 2007). As every stakeholder plays a site-specific role, it is important for DMOs to involve them in destination development for the greater goal of the destination. Multiple sectors of private, public and hybrid organizations create primary and secondary tourist products (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). Despite being directly and indirectly involved in tourism, they collaborate to create one integrated tourist experience (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). Therefore, a variety of complementary and competing organizations affect the future of a destination (Jamiseon, 2006).

Stakeholders of a destination can be categorized according to their characteristics and position in the network. The notion of primary and secondary stakeholders dominates the literature (Clarkson, 1995; Baggio & Cooper, 2010). Primary stakeholders have a formal, official, or contractual relationship with an organization and impact its survival directly. Secondary stakeholders are all other organizations influencing the organization, but their power is legitimacy-based (Savage et al., 1991). Stakeholders can also be classified as internal or external players (Mitchell et al., 1997). While internal stakeholders work within an organization



such as employees, external stakeholders operate outside the organization but are affected by its goal-achievement such as customers, suppliers, competitors, governments, education institutions, and residents. Additionally, the environment can be conceptualized as two-layered. The task environment consists of sectors an organization has direct transactions with such as customers and suppliers (Chen et al., 2006). The general environment constitutes economic, legal, and social sectors, affecting organizations indirectly. On the whole, different types of stakeholders influence or are affected by a DMO's operation and the sustainable development of destinations.

The perceptions of DMOs of "who or what really counts" (Mitchell et al., 1997, p. 853) influence the operation of DMOs, recognising, evaluating, and involving important stakeholders of the destination. The framework of stakeholder salience developed by Mitchell et al. (1997) is an effective tool to evaluate how much attention a DMO should devote to individual stakeholders. Based on the three attributes of power, legitimacy, and urgency, DMOs can identify the degree to which different organizations can affect their goal achievement. To be considered a stakeholder, an organization must possess at least one of these attributes. Stakeholder salience is high when an organization possesses all three attributes, and low when it possesses only one attribute. However, stakeholder salience is mainly based on perception. Sectors in the task environment tend to generate greater uncertainty than sectors in the general environment (Daft et al., 1988). When making decisions internally, organizations take external knowledge, existing outside the boundaries of an organization, into consideration. Therefore, customers, competitors and suppliers tend to be perceived as most important to an organization.

Our research question addresses inter-organizational knowledge transfer and thus the relationships of an organization with external stakeholders. To be able to explain the degree to which an organization is engaged in collaboration and knowledge transfer across organizational boundaries, our survey and interview questions were directed to an internal stakeholder, representing the organization. For sustainable destination development, tourists, residents, entrepreneurs, and local governments are said to play important roles (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003). Our case study only focuses on two corners of the destination triangle, the DMO and the supply side, excluding the demand side stakeholders. Of course, providers of infrastructure, security and other essentials are vital to the functioning of a city, but our study is limited to local stakeholders with a direct relation to tourists. According to a study conducted by Sheehan & Ritchie (2005), there are 32 tourism stakeholders. The most important ones are hotels, governments, attractions, DMOs, residents and universities. Therefore, we expanded stakeholders of commercial activities, producing products and services mainly for tourist consumption, to local governments and educational institutions (Weaver & Lawton, 2014).

To identify destination stakeholders in Kalmar, organizations named on the official website of Destination Kalmar and Kalmar City guided our stakeholder analysis. Additionally, we searched on Google Maps for organizations in Kalmar that represent a building block of tourism, a tourism organization (Leiper, 1979). We identified 15 organizations providing accommodation, 35 organizations providing food and beverages, 15 organizations providing



attractions or entertainment, three organizations in the transport sector, and five tour operators or travel agencies. Besides, we included stakeholders associated with shopping and sports, attracting day visitors and tourists. While some enjoy shopping in one of the three shopping centers or 15 most popular retail stores in the city center, others visit Kalmar to watch soccer, compete in sailing races, play Padel, rent a canoe or engage in one of the other 10 most relevant associations. Shopping tourism and sports clubs contribute to the local economy, generating revenue for other organizations which add value to the customer journey by selling for example food and beverages (Deery et al., 2004; Choi et al., 2018; Silva et al., 2020).

In terms of stakeholder salience, our study takes on the perspective of the DMO, representing the interests of a destination (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003). Due to the variety of stakeholders, there are a variety of interests, challenging DMOs in achieving the greater goal of the destination (van der Zee et al., 2017). In destinations, the power, legitimacy, and urgency of individual stakeholder claims vary greatly and change rapidly. But destination stakeholders are highly dependent on each other (van der Zee et al., 2017). DMOs seem to possess high stakeholder salience due to their role in a destination, but without the tourism organizations, creating the tourist experience collaboratively, a DMO has nothing left as it depends upon the support and resources of tourism organizations. Therefore, this study does not analyze the salience of each tourism stakeholder more in depth. Instead, we argue that the success of a destination lies in the ability of a DMO to recognize the value provided by each stakeholder, to include stakeholders, and to prioritize individual organizations, depending on need and situation as the environment is fast-changing.

Based on the model of stakeholder salience, the most important stakeholder for a DMO is the municipality, possessing both the power, legitimacy, and urgent claims to influence the DMO's goal achievement. Tourism contributes to jobs, income, and development of the city, influencing the life quality of the local community. Therefore, the three public sector organizations identified are responsible for managing the dynamic environment in which the DMO operates (UNWTO, 1993). Furthermore, the knowledge economy pressures governments to protect knowledge like copyrights, to encourage knowledge transfer through digitalization, and to invest in knowledge because tourism organizations cannot afford heavy, uncertain investments in research (OECD, 2001; Cooper, 2018). Above all, policies secure knowledge generation through education, and fundings granted to universities support early seeds of innovation. In return, governments demand value from research and direct research in a preferable direction (Cooper, 2018).

The responsibility for generating new and spreading existing knowledge is attributed to education and research institutions (Blackman et al., 2011). Through the initiative of public organizations, research and research users can be brought together, putting theory into practice. Especially research-averse tourism organizations need to adopt knowledge transfer activities, transforming knowledge into competitive capabilities (Ruhanen & Cooper, 2004). Because of its tourism programme, Linnaeus University could assist tourism organizations with inter-organizational knowledge transfer. To conclude, the motto of Linnaeus University is "We set



knowledge in motion for sustainable societal development” (Aronsson, 2022). This makes the local university an important stakeholder in the sustainable development of the destination.

5. Results and Analysis

In this chapter, we present the results of our case study in Kalmar, addressing the degree to which Destination Kalmar AB manages inter-organizational knowledge transfer within the destination. First, the results of the survey conducted with local tourism stakeholders are analyzed and interpreted by connecting findings to the model of inter-organizational knowledge transfer. Then, we present our findings from the interview with Destination Kalmar AB and Linnæus University by linking common themes to the theory presented in the literature review.

5.1 Web-based Survey with Local Tourism Stakeholders

The analysis and interpretation of the survey focuses on local tourism stakeholders, primarily SMEs, because the destination of Kalmar consists mainly of micro-sized tourism organizations. Roughly 60% of the stakeholders taking part in the survey have 1-10 employees. Out of a total of 32 respondents (Table 1), F&Bs such as restaurants, cafés, and bars (37,5%) and accommodations such as hotels, hostels, and camping sites (15,6%) make up half of the tourism stakeholders represented in the results. Attractions such as historical and cultural attractions, museums and entertainment make up (9,4%) and travel agencies and tour operators (3,1%). The remaining distribution of the responding organizations are retail stores (15,6%), shopping centers (3,1%), and various types of associations, such as sports associations, and events (9,4%). One important sector in the customer journey, transportation, is excluded from our analysis because no representative of Kalmar’s transport sector responded to the survey. However, as transportation is a more separated function in the customer journey, to and from the destination, the focus on the inter-organizational knowledge transfer between organizations within the destination remains.

Table 1 - Tourism Stakeholders receiving the questionnaire vs Tourism Stakeholders responding to the questionnaire

Sector	Stakeholders	Respondents	Response rate
Public Sector	3	2	66,70%
Transportation	3	0	0%
Restaurant/Bar/Café	35	12	34,30%
Accommodation	15	5	33,30%
Attraction/Culture/Entertainment	15	3	20%
Shopping Center	3	1	33,30%
Tour operator/Travel agency	5	1	20%
Retail/Store	15	5	33,30%
Association	10	3	30%
Total	104	32	30,80%



The motivation to teach and to learn

The motivation of tourism stakeholders in Kalmar is closely related to their organizational characteristics, being SMEs. SMEs are said to lack the motivation to engage in knowledge transfer due to the high labor turnover and fragmentation of stakeholders at a destination (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). While 43,3% of the stakeholders do not lack the motivation or commitment to transfer knowledge, 20% of the stakeholders agree that demotivation hinders knowledge transfer. Kalmar is a small town and the city center is concentrated on one island. 86,7% of the tourism stakeholders have operated in the city for more than ten years, which suggests that the organizations are well-established and know their neighborhood. Thus, the supply side at the destination might not be perceived as fragmented but familiar and the stakeholders might be more motivated to engage in networking (Raisi et al., 2020). Also, the staff is more likely to have worked in the organization for a long time, reducing the risk of high labor turnover (Hjalager, 2002). However, these organizations have arrived at a mature stage in the life cycle, indicating that they rely on their existing practices and knowledge rather than seeking knowledge from external stakeholders which could be reflected in the few activities used to acquire new knowledge (Martinkenaite, 2011). In Kalmar, 80% of the stakeholders do not send their employees to universities or research centers to educate them further. The reasons behind the low involvement with the university were not explored further in the survey but the results are in line with previous research claiming that tourism SMEs are generally research-averse (Cooper & Ruhanen, 2002). So, Kalmar's tourism stakeholders potentially miss opportunities for acquiring new competitive capabilities, increasing organizational and thus destination performance (van der Zee et al., 2017).

The importance of different external knowledge areas and tourism organizations' awareness of their internal knowledge gaps are said to impact the motivation to learn from external sources of knowledge (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). The findings confirm that the process of knowledge creation in tourism organizations in Kalmar tends to be inward-looking and self-referencing (Wellton & Lainpelto, 2021). The internal knowledge areas of own products or services (80%), own capabilities or competencies (90%), and organizational goals and vision (90%) are more important to local organizations than external knowledge areas such as market trends (56,6%) and competitors (30%). While 16,7% do not have a need for exchanging information with other organizations, 56,7% of the stakeholders recognize that external knowledge is more important to organizational success than internal (Chen et al., 2006). Customer knowledge is most important to the stakeholders (96,7%), which reflects the fierce competition and increased consumer power in the tourism sector, meaning customer knowledge is vital to remain competitive (Hallin & Marnburg, 2008). However, tourism organizations need to prioritize other external sources of knowledge too such as emerging market trends and competitors as these also reflect customer demands (Chong et al., 2011). We asked whether insufficient knowledge in an area had caused the organizations to make the wrong decision in a situation and 20% of the stakeholders answered yes. Whether this could have been avoided by increased inter-organizational knowledge exchange remains unclear.



To conclude, the Covid-19 pandemic did not hit Kalmar as hard as other destinations (Olofsson, 2022) but still, it was a crisis that might have acted as a catalyst for network development. The pandemic encouraged 51,7% of Kalmar's tourism stakeholders to increase collaboration with other external stakeholders to exchange knowledge. This confirms that the need for external information increases during crises (Blackman et al., 2011) and that tourism organizations in general only use external knowledge when the survival of their business is at risk (Durst & Edvardsson, 2012; van der Zee et al., 2017). But we do not know whether this increased motivation to gain external knowledge is still present after the crisis.

Absorptive capacity

Only 56,1% of the stakeholders believe that they are effective in absorbing knowledge acquired from an external organization. The focus on customer knowledge among the stakeholders could mean that few resources are left for obtaining knowledge from other organizations in the destination (Cooper & Ruhanen, 2002; Czernek, 2017). Tourism organizations that are effective in leveraging knowledge from customers are not necessarily effective in absorbing knowledge from other stakeholders (Hallin & Marburg, 2008). One reason behind the 56,1% might be that only 53,3% of the stakeholders have an organizational culture allowing for effective knowledge transfer. Furthermore, only 60% of the stakeholders have supporting information technologies. In 70% of the organizations, there is a person responsible for communication with external actors, meaning that there is time and thus the motivation to translate and make use of knowledge obtained from others (Gopal & Gagnon, 1995). However, 23,3% do not have a person specifically in charge of communication and 6,9% of the organizations lack the ability or experience to translate and utilize acquired knowledge. Thus, these organizations lose opportunities to transform external knowledge into their own capabilities, a private advantage (Raisi et al., 2020). Therefore, they could be more likely to make costly mistakes (Chong et al., 2011) due to a lack of information about market trends or competitors for example. Ultimately, the performance of the entire destination of Kalmar is affected negatively if one weak linkage in the customer journey fails to absorb and interpret important information from another stakeholder (van der Zee et al., 2017).

Intra-organizational transfer capability

If organizations overlook internal knowledge gaps and do not close internal knowledge gaps by acquiring external knowledge, the organization is constrained from increasing organizational performance (Gareth & Williams, 2009). In the case of Kalmar, 60% of the stakeholders do not know whether insufficient knowledge has caused an organizational failure. This could mean that the respondent was either unaware of internal knowledge gaps or organizational errors. So overall, the collaboration and knowledge exchange within the organization, the intra-organizational knowledge transfer is rather poor, which constraints organizational learning too (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). In 10% of the organizations, the organizational culture does not encourage employees to learn through knowledge transfer. Similarly, 38% of the stakeholders answered neutrally about the effectiveness of absorbing external knowledge which could mean



some organizations do not have strategies in place to measure organizational effectiveness (Hjalagar, 2002).

As the tourism stakeholders consist of 59,3% micro-sized and 29,6% small enterprises, the reason for a lack of intra-organizational transfer strategies could be that they do not perceive a need for internal KM, having too few employees (Zehrer, 2011). Additionally, 60% of the stakeholders are privately or family-owned businesses and 23,3% of the organizations have voluntary workers, transferring knowledge rather in informal contexts or outside of the organization. Still, SMEs are said to lack a sufficient understanding of KM and are slow in adapting to the knowledge economy (Cooper, 2006). On the other hand, the few organizations which are franchises (3,3%), part of a national company (6,7%) or publicly owned (10%) have more effective, formal intra-organizational activities in place such as a knowledge manager which is in line with previous research (Zehrer, 2011). We acknowledge that a knowledge manager is an unlikely function for micro-sized enterprises where the manager is likely to take on several roles at the same time (Wellton & Lainpelto, 2021). But as 53,3% of the stakeholders lack the time or financial resources to manage knowledge, a person with the specific responsibility for KM would be more motivated to diffuse relevant knowledge within the organization.

The nature of knowledge

For 40 % of the stakeholders one of the most challenging parts of knowledge transfer is the replication of knowledge, transforming tacit into explicit knowledge and transferring this piece effectively so that the recipient can make use of the information (Kogut & Zander, 1992). Thus, not only do the individual organizations miss out on the advantages of knowledge transfer, but they also constrain other stakeholders from developing new capabilities and innovating (van der Zee et al., 2017). In contrast, for 50% of the organizations, the nature of knowledge is not an obstacle to transferring knowledge. So, half of the destination stakeholders have strategies, activities, or information technologies in place, supporting the knowledge translation and transfer process (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Besides, similar organizational cultures might facilitate knowledge transfer since more than half of Kalmar's tourism stakeholders are F&Bs and accommodations as well as privately and family-owned businesses. However, every single organization has its unique and context-specific knowledge (McInerney, 2002).

Power relations

The most influential stakeholders of an organization are said to be competitors, affecting the market behavior of SMEs (Deakins, 1999). However, other organizations operating in the same sector or industry are perceived to be influential by only 26,7% of Kalmar's tourism stakeholders. Just as the stakeholders answered mainly neutrally about the importance of competitors as a knowledge area (56,7%), most of the stakeholders (40%) answered neutrally when asking about the influence competitors have on their organization. Again, this notion might verify the assumption that tourism organizations are rather preoccupied with their own



businesses, instead of looking outside organizational boundaries for exchanging knowledge with other stakeholders (Wellton & Lainpelto, 2021). But SMEs are said to rely on diverse external knowledge sources to remain competitive due to their lack of resources to generate new knowledge internally (Cooper & Ruhanen, 2002; Czernek, 2017).

The most influential organizations of the task environment are suppliers or distributors (53,3%) and customers or members (43,3%). Thus, Kalmar's tourism stakeholders are most dependent on their suppliers or distributors because their operation is directly affected by these stakeholders. Only 16,7% of the stakeholders, mostly associations, perceive to be unaffected by suppliers or distributors since these organizations tend to rely more on their members and sponsors. While customers or members are the most important knowledge area to Kalmar's tourism stakeholders (96,7%), they are not perceived to be equally influential (43,3%). Instead, customers have hardly any influence on 30% of the tourism stakeholders. So, one-third of the tourism stakeholders might underestimate the power of customer demands, driving the economy. Not only gathering knowledge about customers but interacting with customers, and co-creating knowledge, is vital to organizations, operating in the tourism and hospitality sector (Muniz et al., 2021).

The most influential organizations of the general environment are Kalmar Municipality and Destination Kalmar AB (53,3%), possessing the power, legitimacy, and urgent claims to affect the tourism stakeholders (Mitchell et al., 1997). While 23,3% of the stakeholders answered that the municipality does not affect their organization, there are more stakeholders (36,7%) who perceive not to be influenced by the DMO. Therefore, we can assume that Kalmar Municipality is even more influential than Destination Kalmar AB. Also, the DMO depends on the resources of the tourism stakeholders, especially the municipality (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005), which further supports the more influential position of Kalmar Municipality. The stakeholders who perceive the DMO to be more influential, tend to have a formal relationship with Destination Kalmar AB (41,4%). Furthermore, industry or sector-specific knowledge is important to 86,7% of the stakeholders, but only 26,6% are affected by trade associations. The reason might be that Destination Kalmar AB has a closer relation to such industry clusters. So, tourism stakeholders might be indirectly influenced by trade associations through the intermediary of the DMO (Cooper, 2006). Moreover, membership in such industry networks is voluntary and often based on voluntary codes of conduct, which means that companies are legally not forced to obey the association (Silverman et al., 2005).

Social ties

The perceived importance of a stakeholder to an organization affects the degree to which an organization exchanges knowledge with this external stakeholder (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). Therefore, power relations are reflected in social interactions. Kalmar Municipality, Destination Kalmar AB and suppliers or distributors are important to 53,3% of the tourism stakeholders. Therefore, 53,3% of the tourism stakeholders also exchange knowledge with these organizations, making them the most frequent partners of knowledge exchange. A frequent



collaboration indicates that Kalmar's tourism organizations proactively develop their relationships with the municipality, the DMO and suppliers (Lally et al., 2013). Suppliers are most important to tourism stakeholders as 50% of the organizations learn through partnerships with their suppliers. A close relationship with suppliers and distributors is vital for tourism stakeholders since they are an essential part of the creation and delivery of the tourist experience (van der Zee et al., 2017). All stakeholders who perceive Destination Kalmar AB to be somewhat influential and who exchange knowledge with the DMO have a formal relationship with Destination Kalmar AB. 41,4% of the organizations are members of the network Partnership by Kalmar or have another form of collaboration with the DMO. However, 44,8% of the tourism stakeholders do not have a formal relationship with Destination Kalmar AB and thus might not be able to benefit from this network. Nevertheless, they could be part of other networks such as Kalmar City Samverkan.

While trade associations have a weak impact on the tourism stakeholders (26,6%), such industry networks are an important partner for knowledge exchange (40%). Because trade associations provide tourism stakeholders with industry or sector specific knowledge which is an important knowledge area to 86,7% of the organizations. However, only 16,7% of Kalmar's tourism stakeholders exchange knowledge with other organizations, operating in the same industry or sector which might be considered competitors. Similar to the importance of knowledge about competitors and their influence, 53,3% of the stakeholders answered neutrally to the question if they exchange knowledge with other similar organizations. However, the fear of losing power or a competitive advantage is not perceived to be a constraint for transferring knowledge by 63,4% of the stakeholders. The reason might be simply that tourism stakeholders are inward-looking (Wellton & Lainpelto, 2021), not interested in knowledge from competitors and therefore there is hardly any knowledge exchanged. Furthermore, tourism stakeholders exchange even less knowledge with organizations operating in other industries or sectors. So, in Kalmar, knowledge exchange between complementary organizations (3,3%) tends to be even weaker than between similar, competing organizations (16,7%). This notion reinforces the fact that competitors do not perceive to be a constraint for inter-organizational knowledge transfer. Nevertheless, based on previous research (Cooper, 2018), we notice that Kalmar's tourism stakeholders miss opportunities for increased organizational performance and destination competitiveness because knowledge exchange with other organizations, disciplinary and interdisciplinary, is rather poor.

This observation becomes even clearer, considering that only 15% of the tourism stakeholders exchange knowledge with Linnaeus University. As 53,3% of the organizations do not perceive the university to be influential, 53,3% of the stakeholders do not exchange knowledge with this institution. Instead of seeking new knowledge generated by external actors, Kalmar's tourism organizations tend to be research-averse, rather relying on their own competencies (Cooper & Ruhanen, 2002). Most of the organizations are privately and family-owned, indicating that the diversity of ideas and expertise in different areas is limited (Valeri & Baggio, 2021) and confirming that knowledge in tourism is primarily transferred through informal networks (Cooper, 2018). But the collaboration with another organization could widen the range of



viewpoints and expertise, encouraging the exchange of knowledge. The increased flow of knowledge might lead to innovation (McInerney, 2002).

Trust & Risk

For the sustained transfer of knowledge, strong social ties based on trust and reciprocity are important to long-term partnerships (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). This sense of security is reflected by 40% of the stakeholders who have not withheld information from another organization due to mistrust. However, 36,7% of the stakeholder did withhold information from another organization at some point in time because they did not trust the other organization. Thus, we can observe a level of mistrust among organizations in the destination which could be an obstacle to sharing knowledge with other organizations (Cooper, 2018). Based on the result that losing a competitive advantage is not perceived as a constraint to knowledge transfer, we acknowledge that organizations do not necessarily have to mistrust their competitors based on that they are competing. While competition might be prevalent among organizations, tourism stakeholders need to engage both in competition and collaboration because coopetition is a fertile ground for innovation and sustainable destination development (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008).

Generally, it is vital for organizations to be rather too cautious with sensitive information than too hasty because there is always the risk to leak core knowledge, the competitive advantage of an organization (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Kalmar's tourism stakeholders have experienced source incredibility which might have discouraged them from engaging in knowledge transfer. 16,7% of the organizations have experienced that another organization has intentionally spread misinformation about their organization. And 10% have been involved in a situation where another organization has misused information to disfavor their organization. Thus, also in Kalmar, knowledge transfer comes with risks but its benefits dominate most of the cases. However, half of the stakeholders answered that they do not know whether they have been exposed to such situations. This might indicate that these organizations lack activities monitoring external stakeholders and leakage (Varra et al., 2012). As a result, they might miss opportunities to learn from mistakes and who to trust or mistrust (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008) which could increase the resilience of the organization and Kalmar as a destination.

Structures & Mechanisms

Managing inter- and intra-organizational knowledge transfer effectively requires various activities and tools which the mainly micro-sized, privately and family-owned businesses often do not possess (Czernek, 2017). For 53,3% of the tourism stakeholders, the greatest constraint of knowledge transfer is the lack of time or financial resources which is in line with previous research (Cooper, 2018). Therefore, the tourism stakeholders might utilize only a few of the activities, enabling the acquisition of new competencies and knowledge. Due to the importance of the knowledge areas of customers and suppliers, customer-supplier partnerships are most popular among the tourism stakeholders to obtain new information (50%). Besides, 46,6% of



the organizations send their employees to exhibitions, congresses, or training to educate them further since human resources play a decisive role, particularly in the hospitality sector. Yet, most of the tourism stakeholders stick to these rather traditional activities, ignoring the wide range of possibilities for acquiring external knowledge. Only 26,6% of the tourism stakeholders purchase licenses to acquire new knowledge, and only 13,4% of the stakeholders send their employees to universities or research centers to increase individual and thus, organizational learning. The least of the organizations (13,3%) use the opportunity to acquire new skills by hiring know-how from advisors or consultants. Thus, we can confirm that SMEs prefer to collaborate with stakeholders doing the same (Friedman & Miles, 2002).

The fact that 56,7% of the tourism stakeholders do need external knowledge, but less than half of the stakeholders (43,3%) have their own strategies in place to obtain information from other organizations indicates that especially small and micro-sized tourism organizations, which are dominant in Kalmar, lack resources to establish mechanisms to transfer external knowledge (Chen et al., 2006; Chong et al., 2011). However, engaging in knowledge transfer and networks could help organizations which have complementary skills and technologies to learn from each other (Ruhanen & Cooper, 2004).

On the one hand, the lack of resources to manage knowledge effectively throughout Kalmar is reflected in the primarily traditional activities used to store knowledge within the organizations and transfer it across organizational boundaries (Wellton & Lainpelto, 2021). E-mails as a rather traditional tool are most popular within Kalmar, important to 76,6% of the tourism stakeholders and used frequently by 83,3% of the organizations. Modern technologies are the most important facilitator to store and transfer knowledge (Zack, 1999) but only half of the tourism stakeholders in Kalmar perceive an internal database, customer management systems and discussion forums to be important. While larger organizations tend to have an increased need for internal KM and supporting information technologies, smaller organizations are likely to rely on external KM and simple practices to acquire knowledge (Garreth & Williams, 2009). Based on the results we can see that the internal database and management systems are more important to larger, public, and nationally owned organizations, while smaller tourism organizations underestimate their usefulness. But the reason is probably that SMEs lack the resources (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005).

So, tourism organizations might prefer traditional ways rather than new means of KM due to their attitude being rather internally focused and research-averse (Cooper & Ruhanen, 2002). Additionally, they might not perceive to have a need for such activities because knowledge about internal processes is one of the least important knowledge areas among tourism stakeholders. Therefore, it is not surprising that 60% of the stakeholders perceive open webpages to be unimportant and do not use this tool to share information with another organization. The least popular technology, important to only 13,3% of the stakeholders and used by 6,7% of the stakeholders, is the extranet, allowing another organization to access the intranet of an organization. Only 6,6% of the stakeholders agree that they lack information technologies facilitating knowledge transfer but most of the stakeholders use only traditional



tools to transfer knowledge such as emails. This might reinforce our observation that the organizations do not perceive a need for implementing further knowledge transfer activities.

On the other hand, Kalmar's tourism stakeholders do not overemphasize technology-centric approaches to KM over people-centric approaches but are good at balancing both approaches due to refraining from many technologies. This is in line with previous research saying that organizations rely on social interactions and knowledge transfer, not on technology only (McInerney, 2002). Physical meetings and phone or video conferences are an important knowledge transfer activity for half of the tourism stakeholders. However, physical meetings which are considered important by 53,4% of the stakeholders are used by 93,3% of the organizations. This connects to the claim that people are at the heart of hospitality and knowledge is created through social interactions (Enz & Siguaw, 2003). Also, phone or video conferencing and discussion forums are used more than they are considered important. Thus, most of the organizations might conduct meetings and conferences primarily out of routine (Galagan, 1997). But these do not seem to deliver any results as they are considered less important. Instead of spending time and effort on activities with low effectiveness, Kalmar's tourism stakeholders could change their focus, putting resources into activities which are considered important and more effective. But Kalmar's stakeholders cannot agree about the importance of informal contexts for knowledge transfer. This could be because in informal contexts information is exchanged rather unconsciously and its effects remain hard to identify (Varra et al., 2012). However, 43,3% of the tourism stakeholders, especially tourism organizations, exchange knowledge in informal contexts. Thus, these findings confirm that in tourism, knowledge is transferred in informal networks (Cooper, 2018).

Nevertheless, social networks accelerate the process of knowledge transfer due to their reach, density, and connectivity in real-time, overcoming traditional communication limitations (Powell et al., 1996; Spencer, 2003). In Kalmar, the most common tool for transferring knowledge is social media which is used by 76,7% of the stakeholders. It is also seen as the most important tool by 80% of the stakeholders. For SMEs lacking resources, social media might also be a rather familiar and inexpensive tool. Thus, Kalmar's tourism stakeholders take advantage of the opportunities provided by social media. However, social media might be so popular because Kalmar's organizations perceive customers to be the most important knowledge area. In the 21st century, social media is said to be the main source of customer knowledge (Muniz et al., 2021).

The bottom line of inter-organizational knowledge transfer within Kalmar

Overall, 63,3% of the tourism stakeholders are positive towards the statement that Destination Kalmar AB is responsible for establishing a network for inter-organizational knowledge transfer within Kalmar. Over 30% of the tourism stakeholders, mainly organizations that do not have a formal relationship with the DMO, do not take a stance or disagree with the role of Destination Kalmar AB, which could mean that these organizations are not aware of the tasks performed by a DMO. In addition, the reason why 20% of the stakeholders perceive



communication between organizations in Kalmar to be insufficient, might be that they are not members of a formal network in Kalmar. However, 20% of the tourism stakeholders perceive the communication between Kalmar's organizations to work well and 60% of the stakeholders agree partly, adding only that there is some room for improving communication. This shows that Destination Kalmar AB has successfully built a fundament for inter-organizational knowledge transfer in Kalmar on which they can further develop the destination for its sustained attractiveness.

5.2 Interview with the Tourism Manager at Destination Kalmar AB

The following results were gathered through the interview with Stefan Johnsson, Tourism Manager at Destination Kalmar AB (S. Johnsson, personal communication, December 6, 2022). For ease of reading, he will be referred to as Stefan for the remaining text. The purpose of this interview was to understand the DMO's view on inter-organizational knowledge transfer within the destination. The results of the interview are categorized according to the main themes that developed throughout the interview in connection with existing literature and previous research.

Industry Coordination and its Challenges

Mårtensson (2000) highlights that only relevant knowledge is valuable as a competitive advantage. In the interview, Stefan talks about the importance of having relevant information. He does this in the context of digitalization of the destination and says there is a lack of interest in digitalization among actors in the tourism sector in Kalmar. He says it is a challenge for him to convince these organizations of the importance of being visible in the digital world and updating their information. They are communicators of their own organization and play a just as important role as Destination Kalmar AB in hosting visitors. If they are not visible in the digital world or provide misinformation, it can impact the whole destination negatively Stefan (2022) says. He experiences a lack of cooperation and understanding of this.

Destination Kalmar AB's role in this, according to Stefan, is to contribute with the knowledge of why digital presence is important and how to implement it. The information available on their own channels such as their website Kalmar.com and social media is their responsibility to keep relevant and updated, but information regarding specific organizations on Kalmar.com is described by Stefan as brief. To gain more detailed information regarding different attractions, hotels and cafés, Destination Kalmar AB provides links to the different organizations' own websites. Therefore, he emphasizes it is important that organizations provide relevant information on their digital channels. Destination Kalmar AB cannot know if that information is correct or not, but they must rely on that since they can only keep an eye on the digital channels of other organizations, but they cannot control them (Stefan 2022). This is an indication of how Destination Kalmar AB, as the DMO, relies on the actions and resources of other destination stakeholders to fulfill their tasks and develop the destination sustainably, as stated by (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005). Something that is further emphasized when considering



DMOs as “industry coordinators” (Morrison et al., 1998) that mainly coordinate resources of other destination stakeholders.

Coordination can also be seen in the shared event calendar Destination Kalmar AB has on its website. The purpose of it is to gather all events in one calendar for visitors and residents to get an overview of what's happening in the city and surrounding area. Stefan (2022) says there are different opinions on who is responsible for adding events and information about them. Many event organizers expect Destination Kalmar AB and the tourist center to update this, they see it as their responsibility. But Stefan means that the shared calendar is a tool where the event organizers themselves are expected to add their events. They have the information about their events and own that information. Destination Kalmar AB does not know those things unless the organizations tell them (Stefan, 2022).

Regarding digitalization and the event calendar, Destination Kalmar as the donor firm of knowledge has the intra-organizational transfer capability as well as the motivation to teach (Easterby-Smith et al. 2008). However, the receiving organizations' motivation to acquire new knowledge is said to be of greater importance (Lane et al., 2001; Steensma et al., 2005), which seems to be lacking. The reason Stefan experiences difficulties getting organizations on board could also be due to inter-organizational dynamics between the donor and recipient or the nature of the knowledge being transferred.

The Network Partnership by Kalmar

Partnership by Kalmar is the networking function between Destination Kalmar AB and the business sector (Destination Kalmar AB, n.d.-b). Stefan (2022) says that since they started the partnership in 2008, they have come a long way with around 140 members today. It was a tough start, trying to make people understand the purpose and it took a long time to build it up. Roughly ten years later 2017-2018 they could start to show the positive outcomes of the partnership to their members. He says they have proven to develop the destination, increasing the number of visitors and inhabitants among other things. They have 7-8 meetings per year where they invite members of the network. However, the participation is low, out of approximately 140 invitations, usually, 75-80 people attend. Stefan would like to see numbers of 200 (two from each organization) to know that everyone is listening.

Today, one person works full-time with relations and Partnership by Kalmar, communicating to organizations and associations what Destination Kalmar AB is and what they do (Stefan, 2022). Their message is that everything they do is for the good of Kalmar and for increasing the attractiveness of the destination. The aim is that everyone should be a member, although that is not the case today. For example, out of around 60 hotels and restaurants in the city center, only 20-25 are members today, he says. Therefore, Stefan must take on another perspective, representing the destination of Kalmar as a place. From this perspective, he cannot exclude those who are not members of the partnership since everyone that is part of the destination is welcome to start a dialogue. For example, regarding general destination- and place development



projects. Therefore, bigger meetings are also held where stakeholders outside of the partnership are invited.

According to (Keen, 1997; Ash, 1998) communication, information about and inclusion in decision-making across levels, units and organizational boundaries are vital for KM. A management level that encourages sharing, learning, networking, and creativity is therefore important (Tan & Kao, 1999; Mayo, 1998). In the case of Destination Kalmar AB, working for the inclusion of and communication with stakeholders throughout the destination is something they strive for which coincides with above-mentioned claims. Furthermore, (Baggio & Cooper, 2010). claims that in tourism especially, collaboration, networking, and partnerships are vital elements of destination management due to the nature of tourist destinations. Destination Kalmar AB has an established network and they do have a formal relationship with roughly 140 organizations through Partnership by Kalmar. Formal relationships are one form of social ties argued to enable an endured flow of external knowledge to organizations in the destination (Baggio & Cooper, 2010).

When asked about what Stefan thinks the reason is for not having more members in the partnership, he says they may not have succeeded in getting the message across regarding the positive outcomes of paying money to a “shared wallet”, a common cause. In many cases, there is a struggle to convince business owners of the benefits for the destination of Kalmar rather than them only considering “what’s in it for me?” because the money that is paid for the membership will not go directly back to the company in that sense but is used to improve the destination (Stefan, 2022).

Managing destinations sustainably means that an exchange of resources, information and knowledge between all destination stakeholders takes place, aiming primarily for the greater good of the destination and not individual goals (Presenza et al., 2005). However, McKercher et. al (2008) states that the greatest challenge for DMOs is to make stakeholders of the destination understand that sharing knowledge requires sharing power and that it’s something that benefits the performance of the destination as well as individual local businesses. The findings suggest that getting stakeholders to cooperate and exchange knowledge for the greater good of Kalmar is an obstacle to managing the destination of Kalmar sustainably. It further strengthens previous research that shows that the linkage between knowledge transfer, innovation and competitiveness is hardly understood by tourism organizations (Gareth & Williams, 2009).

To improve the partnership, Stefan thinks they can become better at building relationships. New organizations are started, and managers of current members of the partnership are being replaced, which means that relationship-building and also the retaining of partners is a continuous process.



“Maybe we have relied too much on one person having the job of building these relationships, when the whole management team and the board could be part of that process too” (Stefan, 2022).

Keeping current members and recruiting new ones he says is built on transferring the knowledge they have gained through the work and operational development they have done over the years. Communicating how their work has led to a positive development for the destination of Kalmar is key, Stefan says.

Having an appointed person responsible for KM, like Destination Kalmar has, is argued to be beneficial for KM in terms of the capability to transfer knowledge (Gopal & Gagnon, 1995; Galagan, 1997; Gibb, 1997; Mayo, 1998). In the case of Destination Kalmar AB, with an inter-organizational perspective rather than an intra-organizational one, findings suggest it could be beneficial to have a more holistic approach where the whole management team of Destination Kalmar AB and the board are involved in building relationships and KM. This emphasizes the complexity of a tourist destination and its vast network of stakeholders. The findings show that Destination Kalmar AB values building relationships and that they look for ways to improve its already established network. Having good relationships with stakeholders is important since a DMOs ability to connect, coordinate, negotiate and unite different interests within the destination will impact the tourist experience, destination image and competitiveness of the destination (Byrd, 2007; Waligo et al., 2013).

The Network of Kalmar City Samverkan AB

Kalmar City Samverkan is another network of businesses and property owners in the city center (Kalmar City Samverkan AB n.d.-a). We asked Stefan what the difference is between this network and Partnership by Kalmar, and he explained that Partnership by Kalmar is a network directed towards the entire municipality, while Kalmar City Samverkan is only responsible for the city center. They both utilize the city center and have an interest in its development (Stefan, 2022).

“We continuously try to mirror each other’s work and make sure it is synchronized so it does not clash” (Stefan, 2022).

When asked about how they synchronize their work, Stefan said one employee at Destination Kalmar AB is a member of the board of Kalmar City Samverkan AB to have a close communication and reconciliations. Stefan also has contact with the person in charge of the city center development. It is discussed if there should be even clearer cooperation between Kalmar City Samverkan AB and Destination Kalmar AB. However, at the time of the interview, this had been put on hold because of the focus to implement a new strategy for the entire tourism sector in Kalmar. In this new strategy, shopping will be included in the development of the destination.



This shows that Destination Kalmar AB has a knowledge exchange with Kalmar City Samverkan AB and that there is a connection between the two networks in terms of working towards common goals. The interaction between the two networks means that there is also a connection between the members of both networks. Having a shared vision and working towards common goals is according to Sheldon (2020) important for creating a sustainable destination. Furthermore, knowledge management in destinations takes place in networks between the stakeholders of the destination (Zerher, 2011). Since knowledge is socially constructed, being well-connected through strong social ties means that knowledge transfer can become more efficient by being able to access the most relevant knowledge sources in the network (Powell et al., 1996; Spencer, 2003). Destination Kalmar AB as the hub of the network Partnership by Kalmar, with its connection to Kalmar City Samverkan, has the possibility to reach a variety of stakeholders in the destination.

The Main Challenge: Two-Way Communication

The biggest struggle according to Stefan (2022) is to achieve two-way communication within the destination. Often it is a one-way communication where Destination Kalmar AB is the active part, trying to get their point of view across. He would like to see communication where more stakeholders play active parts in exchanging knowledge on a deeper level than today. He says many participants at their meetings listen but do not voice their opinion. It could be more dynamic. Stefan believes this is not sustainable long-term and says that the new strategy for the tourism sector in Kalmar that is currently under development will shape the process of the destination for the next ten years. Part of this will also be to reconsider and decide the future of Partnership by Kalmar. All parts of the organization should be included in this strategy.

According to previous research, strategies of DMOs often fail due to a lack of information, communication, inclusion, and support of destination stakeholders (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005; van der Zee et al., 2017). Destination Kalmar AB gives stakeholders a chance to participate and works for inclusion, but a lack of two-way communication is an obstacle to the knowledge transfer between Destination Kalmar AB and local stakeholders. Several factors could be the reason for this. For example, stakeholders' lack of awareness of their own knowledge gaps could mean they lack the motivation to engage in knowledge transfer (Lane et al., 2001; Steensma et al., 2005). Lack of resources, such as time or money or a limited ability to absorb knowledge are two other possible factors (Cooper & Ruhanen, 2002; Czernek, 2017). Power relations or the level of trust and risk stakeholders perceive by engaging in knowledge transfer could also have an impact (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008).

One possibility to enhance knowledge exchange according to Stefan (2022) could be to create clusters of smaller networks within the destination. This could be smaller meetings where they only gather those in the same sector, café owners for example, as opposed to the big meetings. Destination Kalmar AB could also have a more operational approach and more on-site involvement. It would, however, require a lot more resources, he says. Stefan's suggestion to create smaller networks would create a new context which could change the degree to which



stakeholders engage in knowledge transfer as structures and mechanisms, meaning the contexts in which knowledge is transferred influence the degree to which knowledge is successfully transferred (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008).

Communicating The Benefits of having a Destination Perspective

Stefan (2022) says he has worked for a while with hostmanship communication, meaning that he communicates to tourism organizations the importance of being good hosts that represent the destination. He says he finds it difficult. In Stefan's opinion, summer staff that meet visitors should know about what the destination has to offer, not just staff at the tourist center. It is a challenge to convince for example hotel and restaurant owners and their summer staff why their staff also should know what Kalmar has to offer. Stefan says he has not been able to make them understand why it is important for them to be ambassadors for Kalmar. He thinks information about the destination should be a mandatory part of the training of summer staff in for example hotels and restaurants, since good hostmanship contributes to creating a positive brand for Kalmar. Whether this can be achieved digitally or by other means he does not know yet. Stefan says some see the greater benefits of hostmanship from a destination perspective, but many businesses are not prepared to spend their money or time on such training. Overlooking the hostmanship communication is an important part for the future development of the destination according to Stefan.

The difficulties that Stefan experiences are in line with previous research saying that the benefits of individual learning and human capital are seldom realized by tourism organizations, especially hotels and restaurants, due to the high labor mobility and turnover (Enz & Siguaw, 2003). It is simply not worth investing in seasonal and part-time workers such as students (Jameson, 2000; Gjelsvik, 2002; Wellton & Lainpelto, 2021). Furthermore, tourist destinations often consist mainly of private or family-owned SMEs which do not have the resources, expertise, and management skills to generate, transfer and use knowledge effectively (Hoarau, 2014; Thomas & Wood, 2014). These could be factors that influence the degree to which Destination Kalmar AB is successful in convincing the local tourism stakeholders of the benefits of hostmanship from a destination perspective. It could also be an indication that the tourism organizations in Kalmar mind their own business rather than the bigger picture.

Customer Knowledge

Stefan (2022) emphasizes the need to listen more to other stakeholders; the tourists, or visitors e.g. the demand side. Even more knowledge exchange with customers is something he sees as key, gaining deeper knowledge and insights about their opinions. Although the demand side was excluded from this study, findings show that knowledge exchange with customers is regarded as important for Destination Kalmar AB.



Covid-19

We asked Stefan if he believes communication and knowledge KM contributed to why Kalmar as a destination did quite well through the Covid-19 pandemic. He believes the key factors why tourists chose Kalmar even through the pandemic were their long-term investments in building the brand of Kalmar and the content of the destination. Many coastal cities experienced the same trend (Stefan 2022). Thereby, Stefan states other factors than KM as reasons for the performance of the destinations through the pandemic.

Collaboration With Linnaeus University

Stefan says there is no formal relationship between Destination Kalmar AB and Linnaeus University. However, Kalmar Municipality has a university strategist that works as a link between the municipality, university and business sector. Through this link, Destination Kalmar AB has a communication regarding how they can assist with internships and jobs for graduates. Destination Kalmar AB can also collaborate in terms of supporting research projects which is something Stefan regards as important as it can benefit the destination. He says he has good relations with the people responsible for the tourism program at the university (Stefan, 2022).

5.3 Interview with a Senior Lecturer in Tourism at Linnaeus University

The following results are the empirical data collected through the interview with Per Pettersson Löfquist, senior lecturer in tourism science at Linnaeus University in Kalmar (P. Pettersson-Löfquist, personal communication, December 7, 2022). For ease of reading, he will be referred to as Per for the remaining text. The purpose of this interview was to understand Linnaeus University's view on inter-organizational knowledge transfer within the destination. The subheadings are based on the main themes that evolved during the interview.

Students Transfer Knowledge

When the topic of this study was introduced at the start of the interview, Per began by saying that students stand for the main knowledge transfer taking place between the university, Destination Kalmar AB and other organizations in the destination since they carry the knowledge with them as they join the workforce. This highlights that Linnaeus University has different premises for knowledge transfer within the destination stakeholders in the business sector.

Collaboration with Destination Kalmar AB

When asked about whether there is a formal relationship between Linnaeus University and Destination Kalmar AB Per says no, and that it is not possible either since the university is a state university and Destination Kalmar AB is a municipal corporation. We cannot have that kind of contract. However, the collaboration is project-based. Destination Kalmar AB is often involved in various projects together with the university. He continues saying the collaboration



has improved and is easier since the university moved to the harbor, meaning they are in the same building as Destination Kalmar AB (Per, 2022). Both Per and Stefan seem to have the same view on the relationship and collaboration between Destination Kalmar AB and the university and they do continuously collaborate.

The Nature of Knowledge and its Effect on Knowledge Transfer

Per says there is a difference between research and the operational activities in an organization. Oftentimes Linnaeus University and Destination Kalmar AB are interested in different things. This also applies to other organizations and Per gives an example of restaurant owners that he has contact with in the city. For them, the biggest interest regarding knowledge is to have educated chefs rather than knowledge about tourism in general. Another example of this is knowledge deficiency among small tourism organizations in how to use social media and direct marketing through those platforms. That could be a topic for a bachelor thesis, however, that would not be of help to the organizations because what they need is practical tools and knowledge hands-on. This problem could be solved by having students who help the businesses on site, funded by the university (Per, 2022).

Previous research on KM has shown that the nature of a piece of knowledge affects the degree to which it is transferred, retained, and diffused effectively throughout the destination (Argote et al., 2003). Knowledge within an organization can be specific to that context and when transferred to another context e.g., organization, its meaning might be distorted, making it less useful and valuable (McEvily & Chakravarthy, 2002). What Per says strengthens these claims as the knowledge generated through research is not necessarily the knowledge that can be used in a commercial setting. Therefore, an obstacle to the inter-organizational knowledge transfer between Linnaeus University and other organizations in Kalmar is the different needs among them. However, the diversity of stakeholders and mix of private and public organizations could also be an opportunity as the exchange of divergent viewpoints can generate new knowledge, new perspectives on tourism and innovations needed to compete in a fragmented and fast-changing sector (Sheehan & Ritchie, 2005; Blackman et al., 2011).

Common Vision

Per (2022) thinks the collaboration among stakeholders within the destination of Kalmar has improved, partly due to the work Destination Kalmar AB has been doing for a long time, but also due to that the politicians of Kalmar Municipality have set out a goal to make Kalmar more attractive, both for tourists and residents. This means that this is something everyone must consider Per says. Sheldon (2020) argues that destination competitiveness and sustainability is affected by the degree to which stakeholders in the destination share a common vision. In the case of Kalmar, having the overarching goal for tourism development set by the municipality is an advantage for Destination Kalmar AB as it provides an incentive for collaboration among tourism stakeholders. Strategic long-term investments are a prerequisite for sustainable



destination competitiveness (Sheldon, 2020; UNWTO, 2001) which can also be seen in the destination of Kalmar.

Support for Projects

Project-based collaborations between Linnaeus University and Destination Kalmar AB are common as mentioned previously. Per says that when the university needs support from the business sector in their research, Destination Kalmar AB can write a letter of intent to support it if they consider that research project to be of interest to them too. However, if Destination Kalmar AB or other organizations in Kalmar are looking to do a study or gather information about a topic, it is not always that they turn to the university for support as there are other types of research institutes too. Per emphasizes that Destination Kalmar AB or other organizations should not feel obligated to turn to the university (Per, 2022). The fact that there are other research institutes means that the exchange of knowledge happens through other collaborations and in different networks than those mentioned in this study, which indicates a limitation to the study and the understanding of to what extent Destination Kalmar AB manages inter-organizational knowledge transfer. However, this study's focus remains on the collaboration between actors within the destination

Covid-19

Due to the tourism sector's vulnerability during the Covid-19 pandemic, a labor market measure in the form of subsidiaries from the state was used to put together courses for actors in the tourism sector (Per, 2022). Around 30 hotels and restaurants in the local business sector attended these courses held by Linnaeus University. These were three-week courses at half-speed including topics such as “How does the pandemic affect tourism?”. The courses in combination with the participants' working experience gave rise to discussions and led to business developments made by some of them afterwards, says Per. Thus, the pandemic resulted in a knowledge transfer between the university and the business sector that might not have occurred otherwise. According to previous research, the knowledge of an organization diversifies when employees are sent to workshops, universities, or advisors (Chen et al., 2006). Furthermore, KM increases the resilience and competitive position of learning organizations, and thus, of the destination (Nordin, 2003; European Commission, 2006; Schianetz et al., 2007). The measures taken in Kalmar during the pandemic could possibly have mitigated negative impacts and increased the resilience of the destination. The hotels and restaurants that attended the courses contradict previous research saying that hotels and restaurants generally are research-averse (Cooper & Ruhanen, 2002; Czernek, 2017). However, the need for external information is said to increase during crises (Blackman et al., 2011) and (Durst & Edvardsson, 2012; van der Zee et al., 2017) argue that tourism organizations generally only turn to external knowledge when their business is endangered.



Linnaeus University's Impact on The Destination

We asked whether Per thinks the university with its tourism education has impacted the way the destination of Kalmar has developed compared to similar destinations that do not have the same asset. He brings up Karlskrona and Kristianstad as examples and says that although similar, those cities are not as developed as Kalmar from a destination perspective. Per thinks that the university and tourism education being in Kalmar for many years is a reason for this (Per, 2022). Based on Per's statement it is likely that Destination Kalmar AB gains a competitive advantage through the knowledge transferred via students and the project-based collaborations with the university.

Structures and Mechanisms

Structures and mechanisms represent the context in which knowledge is transferred (Zahra et al., 2000). Per says research is often published in forums directed to and read by other researchers. This means that this knowledge often stays in that "bubble" since there is no obligation to publish research to the public (Per, 2022). The gap between knowledge generated through research and the knowledge used in commercial settings of organizations (Shaw & Williams, 2009; Hudson, 2013; Cooper, 2018) is natural because on the one hand, there are researchers and on the other hand there are the practitioner's using knowledge in different ways. However, if new mechanisms were established to spread knowledge from research, it could increase the inter-organizational knowledge transfer between Linnaeus University and tourism stakeholders.

Per says the number of network activities that connect students to the business sector through study visits or exhibitions has become less over the years. Students used to take part and attend exhibitions locally, in Stockholm, Malmö and in Germany provided by the university but now there is no money for such activities. Per would like to see more networking and study visit opportunities for students again but there is an issue that it cannot cost anything for the students. If it is mandatory in the course, it has to be financed by the university. Money should also be evenly distributed between programs which means tourism students cannot get extra benefits. (Per, 2022). What Per says, highlights some constraints to the possibilities of knowledge exchange happening between the university and other organizations. Collaboration with the business sector has decreased regarding the mentioned activities due to a lack of resources and priorities.

Opportunities for Future Knowledge Transfer

Many students of the International Tourism Management Program come from other regions and other countries (Per, 2022). Therefore, Per suggests that Destination Kalmar AB could invite students for a study visit to present the organization and how they work. This would benefit the students in getting a better picture of how DMOs work and they present themselves as potential future employers. A collaboration like this could enhance the inter-organizational knowledge transfer within the destination and give new perspectives for both students and Destination



Kalmar AB, enabling a knowledge exchange between the two. This suggestion emphasizes Per's viewpoint that students stand for the main knowledge transfer from the university out to the destination.

5.4 The Extent of Inter-Organizational Knowledge Transfer within Kalmar

To summarize, Destination Kalmar AB manages inter-organizational knowledge transfer within Kalmar well for the most part. However, according to Stefan and Per there are still obstacles to inter-organizational knowledge transfer and collaboration within the destination. This is in line with the results of our survey and confirmed by the majority of Kalmar's tourism stakeholders who perceive knowledge exchange in the destination to be good, but with room for improvement. In the following, we summarize our most important findings which we could draw from the survey and the interviews and highlight implications for the destination of Kalmar.

(1) Optimizing the effects of tourism by collaborating throughout the destination triangle

As a popular summer destination, Kalmar has experienced positive effects of tourism, contributing to the local economy and popularity of the city. The positive externalities of a network, which are a shared knowledge base and collective power amongst others, could offer solutions to further improve the comprised destination offering to strengthen Kalmar's competitive advantage by making Kalmar known more as an all year around destination than it is today. In addition, engaging in networks and knowledge exchange might help to distribute the benefits of tourism more equally among the local tourism stakeholders. All stakeholders will benefit from empowering tourist attractions in particular. Destination Kalmar AB and Kalmar Municipality collaborate closely to optimize the effects of tourism and increase the experience-creating capability of the destination as well as the life quality of Kalmar's residents. But the DMO and municipality represent only one corner of the destination triangle and depend on the supply side corner, providing the resources which combined create the tourist experience and the image of Kalmar. Besides, the supply side corner focuses primarily on the demand side corner, the customer knowledge, overlooking the importance of knowledge from other supply-side stakeholders. But for the sustainable development of Kalmar, all organizations in the different corners of the destination triangle need to collaborate with one another to exchange knowledge (van der Zee et al., 2017).

(2) The characteristics of tourism stakeholders constrain the transfer of knowledge

The fact that Kalmar's tourism stakeholders consist primarily of micro-sized businesses that have operated in Kalmar for more than ten years might affect the extent of their engagement in inter-organizational knowledge transfer. The organizations tend to be experienced and well-established in the destination but might be unwilling to break their traditions, adopting new KM activities and integrating external knowledge. In addition, business seems to continue to go well for Kalmar's tourism stakeholders despite the mature stage in the life cycle, the Covid-19



pandemic and being SMEs. Therefore, many tourism stakeholders might not perceive a need for implementing further technologies or activities facilitating knowledge transfer. At the moment, the tourism stakeholders might have a competitive advantage without engaging in knowledge transfer but in the future external knowledge is likely to become vital to these organizations, considering the fierce global competition and increased power of customer demands. Nevertheless, our findings show that even if tourism stakeholders perceive a need for inter-organizational knowledge transfer, they lack important resources such as time and money to implement supporting knowledge transfer activities and technologies.

(3) The knowledge gap between scientific research and the field

Despite that SMEs are considered research averse (Ruhanen & Cooper, 2002), knowledge generated by universities is often not useful for organizations with an operational focus and unique contextual management issues. Because the nature of knowledge is rather context-specific and therefore hard to translate into day-to-day business operations. As a result, there is still a gap between the research and the field, meaning the knowledge from scientific research to the organizations that interact with tourists. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that most of the organizations are rather unaware of how much better their organization could perform in the long term if they would collaborate with other external actors. While Linnaeus University can address problems and offer solutions, Destination Kalmar AB can act as a link between research and the tourism sector. But also, through the initiative of public organizations, in this case Kalmar Municipality, research and research users can be brought together (Blackman et al., 2011).

(4) Encouraging tourism stakeholders to take part in networking

The local DMO can act as an important link between KM, the theory, and the practitioners, the local tourism stakeholders. Destination Kalmar AB has established ways to manage knowledge transfer and have been working with relationship building through their network Partnership by Kalmar for the last 15 years. But despite attempts by Destination Kalmar AB to encourage two-way communication with stakeholders, it seems to be difficult to reach out and get the stakeholders to actively participate in the exchange of knowledge. From Stefan's point of view, it is rather a one-way communication from Destination Kalmar today. This finding reinforces the notion that the stakeholders might not perceive a need for knowledge transfer and have therefore no interest in collaborating with external stakeholders. However, based on previous research and our findings, tourism stakeholders might acquire external knowledge mainly from informal relationships and other sources of which we are not aware. Formal networks such as Partnership by Kalmar and Kalmar City Samverkan are still vital platforms for knowledge exchange, meaning that tourism stakeholders need to engage in both formal and informal networks. Furthermore, Linnaeus University might help to educate organizations lacking theoretical skills about the destination network, the customer journey, and the integrated tourist experience. Thus, more tourism stakeholders might become aware of their own role in the destination and the role of other stakeholders. As a result, they might recognize that they need



to collaborate with other external stakeholders to exchange knowledge and enhance the tourist experience.

(5) The need for digitalization to facilitate inter-organizational knowledge transfer

With an increased need for inter-organizational knowledge transfer, organizations might also perceive an increased need for information technologies, supporting the transfer of knowledge across organizational boundaries. Then, Kalmar Municipality, Destination Kalmar AB, and especially students at Linnæus University could support tourism stakeholders with digitalization. At the moment, the tourism stakeholders might have implemented both physical and digital social networks but lack complementing electronic networks which support inter-organizational knowledge transfer and might increase organizational performance. In turn, also other stakeholders benefit from a partner to exchange knowledge.



6. Conclusion

In this chapter, we summarize and reflect upon the most important notions of this study, including the literature review as well as the findings of our case study. We conclude our work by pointing out the limitations of our study and suggesting issues for future research.

6.1 Reflection

We conclude this paper by reflecting on the title of our case study "Sharing knowledge is sharing power". The starting point of this study was the original notion of the power of knowledge itself. It was seen as the only source of sustained differentiation between organizations, operating in a global marketplace characterized by fierce competition. Therefore, the need to strategically manage knowledge rose. However, knowledge is unique and cannot be managed as any other resource. KM is a complex practice and attempts to control knowledge often fail due to the social construction of knowledge. Thus, the perspective shifted to "Sharing knowledge is power". Organizations started to realize that technology is not the solution but only a tool for KM because knowledge resides in the minds of people and is created in social interactions. Therefore, we based our case study on the belief that sharing knowledge is the key to a sustainable competitive advantage. In the context of destinations, the unique combination of tourism stakeholders' individual knowledge provides the destination with a sustainable competitive advantage. As DMOs are responsible for developing destinations sustainably, it is their responsibility to encourage tourism stakeholders to exchange knowledge across organizational boundaries. For this reason, we addressed the extent to which DMOs manage inter-organizational knowledge transfer within a destination.

The bottom line of our study is "Sharing knowledge is Sharing Power". Because within a destination, there are diverse complementary and competing organizations with unique skills and knowledge. So, when organizations share knowledge, the source of a competitive advantage, they also share the power of this competitive advantage. The findings of this case study showed that it is primarily the individual organization competing against other organizations within the destination. But from the perspective of Destination Kalmar AB, it is primarily the destination competing against other destinations. Because the destination is powered by the unique skills and local knowledge of the individual tourism stakeholders. So, the competitive advantage of a destination lies in the combined knowledge that transcends organizational boundaries but not the boundaries of the destination. In short, for the tourism stakeholders, the challenge is to find the right balance of sharing not too little and not too much knowledge with other organizations. For Destination Kalmar AB, the challenge is to encourage both collaboration and competition between the organizations within a destination to maintain innovation and the sustainable development of Kalmar. Even though knowledge sharing requires power sharing, the tourism stakeholders are interdependent, relying on each other's knowledge, power and attractiveness. Ultimately, they shape the customer journey, the tourist experience and the image of the destination in a mutually dependent way, and in turn, all benefit



together from increased satisfaction and visitation. Thus, inter-organizational knowledge transfer can sustain the development of Kalmar as a tourist destination.

Based on the results of our case study, we believe that the willingness to share power and thus the sharing of knowledge is increased when knowledge is transferred in two directions. This means that organizations need to take on both the role of the donor and the recipient. So, not just sharing knowledge but exchanging knowledge is the key to sustaining the competitive advantage of knowledge transfer. Because sharing knowledge does not mean that power is shared equally. In turn, exchanging knowledge means that both organizations benefit from knowledge transfer. These benefits are based on a relationship based on trust and reciprocity, a shared knowledge base as well as collective power.

Our case study showcased that tourism stakeholders are primarily SMEs with lacking resources. Therefore, we recognized that professional KM practices such as the specific role of a knowledge manager might not fit these organizations. However, SMEs rely on having some practice in place to acquire knowledge from external sources. Therefore, simply networking and collaborating with external stakeholders are important practices to sustain the success of Kalmar's micro-sized tourism organizations and the image of the destination. On one hand, the successful development of Kalmar is the result of a close collaboration between Destination Kalmar AB, Kalmar Municipality, and Linnaeus University with its tourism program. On the other hand, there is room left for improving the degree of inter-organizational knowledge transfer within Kalmar. Because when considering the theory of KM, the more stakeholders take part in knowledge transfer, the more sustainable the competitive position of the destination becomes. Above all, this case study has shown that there are still obstacles to the knowledge exchange between Kalmar's tourism stakeholders which need to be overcome for the sustainable development of the destination.

6.2 Limitations of our Study

Above all, there seem to be other forces than the theoretical framework of inter-organizational knowledge transfer that steer the flow of knowledge between organizations within the destination of Kalmar. Forces that we are unable to bring to the surface with this study. In addition, the data collected through the survey and interviews just allow for making assumptions and vague interpretations which are based on a rather small number of tourism stakeholders. The framework of KM is highly theoretical and might be used under different terms or represented in other organizational practices which we overlooked. Since the individual tourism stakeholders have survived for a long time, they might have other well-working practices to acquire important information from other stakeholders that we are not aware of. This could be informal day-to-day conversations as well as other formal networks than Partnership by Kalmar or Kalmar City Samverkan. Despite that we could reveal some of the subjective aspects with our approach such as motivation, a social network analysis might have provided us with the bigger picture of the degree to which stakeholders exchange knowledge within the destination. In the region of Kalmar, there are many other organizations



located that are not directly related to tourism but still drive visitors with other interests to the destination such as through international business.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

Due to the chosen approach, the results of our case study are rather subjective so a social network analysis of the inter-organizational knowledge transfer in Kalmar would complement our study with objective and more comprehensive results. Furthermore, due to the nature of a case study, with the unique context of a destination and its composition of stakeholders, we cannot generalize our findings to a broader context. How well conceptual insights, related models and the evidence can be compared with other cases is highly dependent on the context in which the case is situated. Because the period of our study was short, about two months, the results represent only a snapshot in time. Both knowledge and tourism are highly complex and dynamic phenomena which are in constant change. Therefore, we suggest conducting additional case studies like our study at different places and other points in time. It would be interesting to study how knowledge is managed at similar destinations such as Västervik, Oskarshamn and Karlskrona as well as to what extent the degree of inter-organizational knowledge transfer will evolve in the destination of Kalmar in the future.



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Figures

Figure 1: McInerney, C. (2002). Knowledge Management and the Dynamic Nature of Knowledge. *Journal of the American Society for information science and technology*, 53:12, 1009-1018.

Figure 2: Nonaka, I., & Takeuchi, H. (1995). The Knowledge-Creating Company. *New York*, 304.

Figure 3: van der Zee, E., van der Borg, J., Vanneste, D. (2017). The Destination Triangle: Towards Relational Management. Knowledge Transfer To and Within Tourism. Academic, Industry and Government Bridges. *Bridging Tourism Theory and Practice*, 8:11, 167-188.

Figure 4: Easterby-Smith, M., Lyles, M. A., Tsang, E. W. K. (2008). Inter-Organizational Knowledge Transfer: Current Themes and Future Prospects. *Journal of Management Studies*, 45:4.



Appendix: Questionnaire from survey with local stakeholders

Kunskapsutbyte i Kalmar

Kunskap anses idag vara en av de viktigaste resurserna för att organisationer ska förbli konkurrenskraftiga på lång sikt och det pratas om att vi lever i ett kunskapssamhälle. Att kommunicera information och kunskap mellan enskilda företag och organisationer är därför grunden för en hållbar destination.

Vi vill påminna om att du som respondent förblir anonym. Är det någon fråga som inte är relevant för ditt företag/organisation, vänligen välj svarsalternativet "varken eller".

Kontakta oss gärna om det är något som känns oklart.

Mariele Pahlow & Cajsa Svensson

1. Vilken sektor tillhör ert företag/organisation huvudsakligen?

- ☐ Offentlig verksamhet
- ☐ Transport
- ☐ Restaurang/Café/Bar
- ☐ Hotell/Vandrarhem/Camping
- ☐ Turistattraktion/Kultur/Underhållning
- ☐ Shoppingcenter
- ☐ Resebyrå/Researrangör
- ☐ Detaljhandel/Butik
- ☐ Förening/Klubb/Ideell organisation
- ☐ Media

2. a) Har ni anställda medarbetare?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nej

2. b) Om ja, hur många anställda? (just nu)

- ☐ 1-10 anställda
- ☐ 11-25 anställda
- ☐ 26-40 anställda
- ☐ 41-60 anställda
- ☐ Mer än 60 anställda

2. c) Hur många är ideellt arbetande?

- ☐ 0 ideellt arbetande
- ☐ 1-10 ideellt arbetande
- ☐ 11-25 ideellt arbetande
- ☐ 26-40 ideellt arbetande
- ☐ 41-60 ideellt arbetande
- ☐ Mer än 60 ideellt arbetande



3. Hur många år har företaget/organisationen varit i drift i Kalmar?

- ☐ Mindre än 1 år
- ☐ 1-3 år
- ☐ 3-5 år
- ☐ 5-10 år
- ☐ Mer än 10 år

4. Hur ser ägarbilden ut i företaget/organisationen

- ☐ Privat/familjeägt
- ☐ Franchise
- ☐ Del av nationell organisation
- ☐ Del av multinationell organisation
- ☐ Offentlig sektor
- ☐ Förening
- ☐ Annan

5. Hur viktigt anser du att kunskap och information är inom följande områden för ert företags/organisations framgång? Gradera ditt svar från 1-5

1 - oviktigt, 2 - ganska oviktigt, 3 - varken eller, 4 - ganska viktigt, 5 - mycket viktigt

	1	2	3	4	5
Kundsegment/kundnöjdhet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Egna produkter/tjänster	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Egna kompetenser/ förmågor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Branschkännedom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marknadstrender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interna system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisationens mål och vision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Konkurrenter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Finns det någon person på företaget/organisationen som är specifikt ansvarig för utbyte av kunskap/information med externa intressenter, t.ex. partnerskap, kommunikation eller PR?

- ☐ Ja
- ☐ Nej
- ☐ Vet ej



7. Vilka aktiviteter använder ni er av i företaget/organisationen för att tillägna er ny kunskap, kompetens och information?

1 - stämmer inte alls, 2 - stämmer till viss del, 3 - varken eller, 4 - stämmer till stor del, 5 - stämmer helt

	1	2	3	4	5
Deltagande på mässor, utställningar eller utbildningar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vi har utbyte med universitet och eller forskningscentrum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vi har strategier för att inhämta information från andra intressenter såsom leverantörer eller konkurrenter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vi anlitar sak-kunniga rådgivare eller konsulter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vi lär oss genom partnerskap/nätverk mellan kund och leverantör	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vi köper licenser/rättigheter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Vilka hinder/begränsningar finns för att ert företag ska utbyta kunskap och information med andra organisationer?

Gradera på en skala från 1 till 5 hur väl följande begränsningar stämmer in på ert företag/organisation.

1 - stämmer inte alls, 2 - stämmer till viss del, 3 - varken eller, 4 - stämmer till stor del, 5 - stämmer helt

	1	2	3	4	5
Brist på motivation eller engagemang	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rädsla för att förlora konkurrensfördel eller makt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisationskulturen stödjer inte kunskapsutbyte med andra organisationer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bristande tillgång till informationsteknik (IT)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tidsbrist eller brist på ekonomiska resurser	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tvetydighet och komplexitet i informationen som utbyts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Det finns inget behov av att utbyta kunskap med andra organisationer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



9. Till vilken grad stämmer följande påstående in på ert företag/organisation?

Det är väldigt svårt för vårt företag/organisation att tolka kunskapen/informationen vi har tagit emot från andra företag/organisationer och att veta hur vi ska använda oss av den. Ringa in det alternativ som stämmer bäst in.

1 - stämmer inte alls, 2 - stämmer till viss del, 3 - varken eller, 4 - stämmer till stor del, 5 - stämmer helt

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

10. Finns det tillfällen då företaget/organisationen har fattat felaktiga beslut/begått misstag på grund av bristande kunskap inom området som beslutet gällde?

- ☐ Ja
☐ Nej
☐ Vet ej

11. Till vilken grad påverkar följande intressenter er verksamhet överlag?

Gradera på en skala från 1-5.

1 - inte alls, 2 - till viss del, 3 - varken eller, 4 - till stor del, 5 - mycket

	1	2	3	4	5
Destination Kalmar AB	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kalmar Kommun	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Linnéuniversitetet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Företag/ Organisationer inom samma sektor som er i Kalmar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Företag/ Organisationer inom andra sektorer i Kalmar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Branschorganisationer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kunder/Medlemmar i förening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leverantörer/Distributörer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



12. Vårt företag/ vår organisation utbyter kunskap och information med nedanstående företag och organisationer. Gradera på en skala från 1-5.

1 - stämmer inte alls, 2 - stämmer till viss del, 3 - varken eller, 4 - stämmer till stor del, 5 - stämmer helt

	1	2	3	4	5
Destination Kalmar AB	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kalmar Kommun	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Linnéuniversitetet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Företag/ Organisationer inom samma sektor som er i Kalmar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Företag/ Organisationer inom andra sektorer i Kalmar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Branschorganisationer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kunder/Medlemmar i förening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leverantörer/Distributörer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Har ert företag/organisation ett formellt samarbete med Destination Kalmar AB?

- ☐ Ja
☐ Nej
☐ Vet ej

14. Till vilken grad stämmer följande påstående för ert företag/organisation?

Under Corona-Pandemin ökade vårt behov av att samarbeta och utbyta information/kunskap med andra företag/organisationer.

1 - stämmer inte alls, 2 - stämmer till viss del, 3 - varken eller, 4 - stämmer till stor del, 5 - stämmer helt

1	<input type="radio"/>	2	<input type="radio"/>	3	<input type="radio"/>	4	<input type="radio"/>	5	<input type="radio"/>
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15. a) Hur viktiga anser du att följande verktyg/aktiviteter är för ert kunskapsutbyte med andra företag/organisationer?

1 - stämmer inte alls, 2 - stämmer till viss del, 3 - varken eller, 4 - stämmer till stor del, 5 - stämmer helt

	1	2	3	4	5
E-post	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diskussionsforum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisationens interna informationsdatabas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intranät som kan nås av utomstående organisationer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Öppen hemsida med information som kräver inloggning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video/Telefonkonferenser	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fysiska möten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kundhanteringssystem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sociala medier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informella kontexter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. b) Ange också om ni faktiskt använder något av nedanstående alternativ för att utbyta information eller kunskap med andra organisationer.

	Ja	Nej	Vet ej
E-post	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diskussionsforum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisationens interna informationsdatabaser	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intranät som kan nås av utomstående organisationer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Öppen hemsida med information som kräver inloggning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Video/Telefonkonferenser	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fysiska möten	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kundhanteringssystem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sociala medier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Informella kontexter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



16. Har ert företag/organisation någon gång undanhållit information från ett annat företag eller organisation för att ni inte litat på dem?

- ☐ Ja
☐ Nej
☐ Vet ej

17. Har något annat företag eller organisation medvetet spridit felaktig information om ert företag/organisation?

- ☐ Ja
☐ Nej
☐ Vet ej

18. Har något annat företag eller organisation missbrukat information i syfte att missgynna er?

- ☐ Ja
☐ Nej
☐ Vet ej

19. Hur negativt eller positivt ställer ni er till följande påstående:

Det är Destination Kalmar AB:s uppdrag att etablera nätverk för informations- och kunskapsutbyte mellan destinationens intressenter.

1 - mycket negativt, 2 - ganska negativt, 3 - varken eller, 4 - ganska positivt, 5 - mycket positivt

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

20. Ringa in det alternativ som stämmer bäst. Överlag uppfattar jag att ...

- ☐ Kommunikationen mellan företag och organisationer i Kalmar fungerar bra
☐ Kommunikationen mellan företag och organisationer i Kalmar fungerar bra, men det finns utrymme för förbättring
☐ Kommunikationen mellan företag och organisationer i Kalmar är bristfällig
☐ Kommunikationen mellan företag och organisationer i Kalmar är mycket dålig
☐ Ingen åsikt