Trust in Agile teams - a study about how trust is built and what challenges team members in agile teams face when building trust

Master’s Thesis 30 credits
Department of Business Studies
Uppsala University
Spring Semester of 2018
Date of Submission: 2018-05-29

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ABSTRACT

Title: Trust in Agile teams - a study about how trust is built and what challenges team members in agile teams face when building trust

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Date: 29th of May 2018

Purpose: The purpose is to investigate how team members in agile teams build trust. Furthermore, it also wants to investigate what challenges the team members in agile teams face during the process of building trust.

Research question:

RQ1: How do the team members in agile teams build trust?

RQ2: What challenges do the team members in agile teams face during the process of building trust?

Methodology: Qualitative method with Semi-structured interviews. 12 Interviewees from 5 organisations were interviewed.

Findings: When it comes to how the team members build trust three themes were found; knowledge sharing, expectations and shared values and relationship building. Further on when it comes to the challenges five bigger themes were found which are; distance, culture decisions from above, knowledge and other challenges. Furthermore, the study also explored how difficult it is to build trust due to its complexity as several challenges were identified. Some suggestions have been made on how to face these challenges and it has been concluded that you need to take into account many different aspects when it comes to building trust in agile teams.

Keywords: Trust, Agile Management, Trust between teams, Agile teams, Building trust, Relationship building
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would first like to thank our thesis advisor Gunilla Myreterg at Uppsala University. She consistently helped us throughout the paper through giving direction and gave helpful advice.

We would also like to thank the team members and leaders who participated in our interviews and contributed with their knowledge about the topic. Without their participation and input, the study could not have been successfully conducted.

Further on we also want to give a warm thanks to Björn Hesse that has been proofreading our paper and giving us constructive feedback as well as Lubna Irfan who has also proofread the paper and helped with the language and grammar.
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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Today’s organizations are active in a global economy that is continuously influenced by a changing and complex environment. New technologies, competitors and markets are emerging at a very quick pace. The future is hard to predict, but we know that these changes will continuously occur as our world is a living entity. A method that is built around change and is able to respond to these quick changes is the agile management method as its flexibility is well equipped to adjust to this changing world (Matarelli, 2018). The definition of an agile company is an organization that succeeds to respond to the ever-changing conditions through managing both stakeholders and technical complexities (Joiner and Josephs, 2007). Agile has for a long time been connected to software development, but today it has spread to all parts and types of organizations (Denning, 2016). The agile method enables companies to master the everlasting changes that are continuously happening around them. It also has the benefit of inspiring the organization's employees to be innovative (Denning, 2016). ING which is a global finance and insurance company is one example of how powerful agile management can be, as it has incorporated agile methods in its organization with positive results. ING has through agile management succeeded to improve its web and mobile sites by releasing new software features every two and three weeks instead of five to six times per year (Comella-Dorda et al., 2017).

A prominent belief of agile management is that people play a more important role than different processes and tools. Therefore, it is important that the members of the team are motivated and that they receive the support and trust they need to succeed (Rigby, Sutherland and Takeuchi, 2016). Even if you would have a team full of A-players, the team would not succeed if the players could not work together. With this in mind, Google launched a study that lasted for several years, where they wanted to find out what makes a successful team. What they found out was that what matters the most is trust (Bariso, 2018). The Great Place to Work Institute has investigated this and produced a list of the 100 most popular companies to work for. They have also come up with a Trust Index where these companies are ranked in accordance to this index. What they found is that the top 100 trust companies generated twice as much revenue growth as the ones that were placed in the 101-200th position. They also saw that they created four times as much trust as the average S&P 500 companies (Lyman 2009 cited in Pixton, Gibson and Nickolaisen 2014, p. 60).
Trust creates motivation among the team members and makes them give all they have, which in turn, makes them committed. Trust is very important within agile management as the agile method is built on teams working together (Ledalla, 2016). Therefore, with changes happening in organizations at a quick pace, trusting each other is becoming more and more important. It is impossible for one person to both know and do everything, when things are constantly changing and becoming different (Pixton, Gibson and Nickolaisen, 2014).

1.2 Problem statement

There exist earlier studies about agile management and trust within Software Development. One of these studies has been investigating how trust is developed among team members as a result of utilizing an agile method, through focusing on three agile practices that were; iteration planning, daily stand-up meetings and iteration retrospectives. What they could see was that all the three agile practices had a positive effect on trust. They could also conclude that these practices not only had an impact on individual trust but also contributed to a greater amount of trust within a team (McHugh, Conboy and Lang, 2012).

Even though agile methods have shown a positive impact on trust, until now, no concrete definition of trust has been accepted. There is a lack of research that actually defines what the concept trust actually encompasses. However, some definitions of trust have been found and the concept of trust that will be used in this paper is; releasing the control to someone else and relying on that person's competence and willingness to act in your favour (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p.17). However, we trust one another with the expectation that the other part will respond with kindness. Trusting someone does often also include a risk that is sometimes based on limited evidence (Peterson and Kaplan, 2016).

Working together often involves some form of interdependence. This means that people need to become dependent on each other in different ways to be able to reach both their individual and team goals (Mayer, Davis and Schoorman, 1995). The more we care about others, the more probable it is that they will do the same thing back and care for us. When trust exists in a team, people start to collaborate and people start to care about each other and act in accordance to the wishes of other team members and the team can be predicted to perform on a higher level (Peterson and Kaplan, 2016). However, trust is complex to establish as it is both a multidimensional and a dynamic phenomenon (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Maintaining trust can be tough as trust is a fragile thing. One little mistake and trust can be broken. A single actor can
damage the trust and reputation of being a trustworthy company by themselves (Peterson and Kaplan, 2016). People don't trust what you say, they trust your actions (Walter, 2015). The fact that companies today become more and more global and also more diversified both culturally and demographically, combined with the fact that competition is increasing, makes it of even greater importance to understand how trust is established (Peterson and Kaplan, 2016).

Going back to agile management and the fact that people play a more important role than different processes and tools (Rigby, Sutherland, Takeuchi, 2016), and as seen in the Google study, one of the most important factors to create a successful team is trust (Bariso, 2018). It becomes even more important to study both the factors trust and agile management and how they can be developed side by side. When it comes to building trust in agile teams it is also important to note that trust takes time to build (Peterson and Kaplan, 2016) but on the other hand the agile management method requires flexibility and being well equipped to adapt to this changing world (Matarelli, 2018).

Therefore, this paper wants to investigate how team members in agile teams build trust. Due to the increasing globalisation and complexity of the working environment, this paper wants to also develop a deeper understanding of what challenges team members in agile teams face during the process of building trust.

### 1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate how the team members in agile teams build trust. The concept trust is multifaceted and can be interpreted in various ways and all working environments are affected to varying degrees by globalisation and a complex working environment. Therefore, this study wants to see what challenges team members in agile teams face during the process of building trust too. The study will be conducted by interviewing employees at different companies and organizations that all work with agile methods in agile teams. Furthermore, the problem will be studied from the perspective of both leaders and team members in agile teams. The interviews will be held with both agile team members and leaders of agile teams. Through investigating this we want to contribute with a deeper understanding of the subject trust and agile management in relation to the two research questions.
1.4 Research Questions

Based on the purpose objectives, the research questions for the study were defined as follows:

RQ1: How do the team members in agile teams build trust?

RQ2: What challenges do the team members in agile teams face during the process of building trust?
2.0 Theoretical Background

2.1 Structure of the Chapter

The following model describes the structure of the chapter:

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 1**: A model portraying the 5 sections that this chapter is comprised of

The theory chapter has been divided into five different sections as seen in the model (Figure 1). The chapter will start by defining what a leader and team member in an agile team is. After that a chapter about agile management will follow. As the paper wants to investigate how team members in agile teams build trust and the challenges that they encounter, the purpose of having a section about agile management is to provide the reader with a better understanding of agile management as a fundamental component of a trust-building process. Since agile management is the base of this paper we have decided to present these theories at the beginning of the chapter. After that a short section on earlier studies about trust and agile management will
follow. The fourth chapter is about trust. Since the main focus of this paper is how team members in agile teams build trust and what challenges they face, the main part of the theory chapter is the one about trust which consists of theories about trust and theories connected to trust. Due to the complexity of trust, several theories, both practical and academic, have been added. The theory chapter will end with a theoretical framework.

2.2 Definition of Leader and Team Member in Agile Teams

2.2.1 Leader
From an agile perspective, an agile leader is someone that exhibits a leadership style that prioritizes a team spirit and has an empowering effect on team members to commit to a project (Hazzan and Dubinsky, 2014, p. 21). Furthermore, leaders have the ability to gain power from sharing information and this is due to the fact that the agile process is transparent where everyone can access information (Hazzan and Dubinsky, 2014, p. 24). This transparency could also be seen as a way of increasing trust.

2.2.2 Team Member
From an agile perspective, an agile team member is someone that has the chance to communicate with practitioners that do not only belong to their own team. Due to this, teams can gain an advantage of other team’s insights and knowledge. This exchange of communication has the ability to create a base of knowledge in the entire team that all teams can profit from (Hazzan and Dubinsky, 2014, p. 24) and could also be seen as a way of increasing trust.

2.3 Agile Management

2.3.1 What is agile?
The word “‘agile’” is the most up-to-the-minute word in organizations today, as everyone strives to be “‘agile’”. However, it is not completely clear what the term encompasses and it is often the case that a lot of people don’t really understand the dynamics of how to act in an agile manner (Cobb, 2011, p. 3). It is also important that organizations don’t believe in common misconceptions related to agile management. An example of a misconception is that “‘agile’” is an undisciplined process with no structure or method. However, “‘agile’” processes require a
lot of discipline, a different discipline in the sense that it is not authoritarian but collaborative, with a focus on both practice and expertise (Cobb, 2011, p.1). Some definitions of what ‘‘agile’’ means are, for example, the capacity to produce and reciprocate change with the aim of gaining a profit in an uncertain environment, the capacity to change the use of resources when factors like requirements, knowledge or technology change (Cobb, 2011, p. 4). Among the descriptions of agile attributes that have been studied, one poses that agility is a skill that can be reached through competences like; integration, skilled and educated members as well as modern technology (Kidd 1994 cited in Nejati et al. 2018).

2.3.2 The Agile Manifesto
The Agile Manifesto was produced by the Agile Alliance in 2001. The manifesto was produced in order to combine the philosophies that they support together and that have the potential to develop improved software. The manifesto includes a number of principles as shown below (Hunt, 2006, p.10).

• Individuals and interactions over processes and tools
• Working software over comprehensive documentation
• Customer collaboration over contract negotiation
• Responding to change over following a plan
(Beck et al., 2001)

2.3.3 Agile Methods
In this section, the agile methods that the interviewees of this study most commonly use will briefly be introduced. This is in order to create a familiarity with them as they will later on be brought up in the methodology chapter and further on be used in the findings and analysis chapter. The agile methods that will be described here are Scrum and Kanban.

2.3.3.1 Scrum
Scrum is a commonly used method within agile management. It is a framework that comprises of a cross-functional team with different resources. The product owner leads the team and guides and conveys the vision of the project throughout its process (Bhatnagar, 2015). Further on the main focus for the product owner is that he or she owns the product. Another important actor is the Scrum master and his or her role involves managing the process (Maximini, 2015). Furthermore, every project is built upon one or several sprints. A sprint is one iteration within
the process of the agile project (Bhatnagar, 2015) and it often lasts over a period of 3-4 weeks. When you are done with one sprint, you start on the next one. (Ries and Summers, 2016). During the sprints, the agile team has a daily stand-up meeting every morning to discuss how the process is going and shares information with one another. The purpose of the meeting is to sum up activities from the past and activities for the future (Saddington, 2013). Every sprint should end with a Retrospective, which is a meeting with the aim of evaluating the sprint that has been ended recently. Through evaluating the previous sprint, it aims to find out how to improve or make a later sprint more productive (Saddington, 2013).

2.3.3.2 Kanban
Kanban is characterized as step by step change. Each step is characterized by change and gives an individual the chance to improve and learn new things along the way. Therefore, Kanban practices can be portrayed as a ladder (Leopold and Kaltenecker, 2015). The biggest difference between Scrum and Kanban is that Scrums development follows a set of timed increments that terminate with a meeting and a sprint review. Due to this Scrum records speed whilst Kanban records the flow of elements in a work process. Furthermore, in Scrum, this process belongs to the master whilst in Kanban the process belongs to the team (Saddington, 2013).

2.3.4 Agile and People
The modern manager must embrace a new mind-set in order to deal with the development of agile teams. Even though it is crucial that a team delivers results and meets requirements, when it comes to using agile methods, the focus is more on an informal aspect of management. Therefore, more focus on aspects of flexibility, communication and transparency amongst team members and managers should be emphasized. This is necessary as it develops an environment with less control and more collaboration from managers. A new psychological layer is added to the managerial role that involves eliminating barriers and facilitating an open mind and communication as well as following change in the environment to make sure that what the organization produces meets its objectives. The modern manager needs a set of social skills as well as the right combination of personality types in order to develop efficiently (Crowder and Friess, 2015, p. 9).
Another social aspect of agile management is giving a personal role to team members. Granting such roles to team members has the potential to enhance involvement, communication and commitment to the agile transformation process as well to the overall team. Furthermore, obtaining a role leads to an escalation in their influence and involvement in project management (Hazzan and Dubinsky, 2014). Every team member will view the project from a different perspective, they can solely focus on that perspective without diverting their attention to other parts of the process. Through that, every team member can increase their understanding about that perspective, which also has the potential to develop knowledge distribution as each member is specialized in their role and can communicate that knowledge to other members. Furthermore, obtaining roles enhances a team member’s professional development as they gain expertise in their specific field. After some time, when members feel they have utilized their expertise in a field to a certain degree, they can exchange roles, which can further increase knowledge sharing (Hazzan and Dubinsky, 2014).

2.4 Earlier Studies about Trust in Agile Management

Doiraraj, Noble and Malik (2010) wanted to understand the importance of trust in agile teams. What they found out was that trust is one of the most important factors in building a successful agile team. What they also found was that what best generates trust is effective communication and to have an understanding of cultural differences. Agile management relies a lot on the interaction between the people and in this study, it became quite clear how important it is that the team members meet face to face continuously throughout the project to generate trust within the team. Many misunderstandings within agile teams arise because of cultural differences. To understand the intercultural relationships in a team will help to build trust and reach success with the agile project (Doiraraj, Noble and Malik, 2010).

McHugh, Conboy and Lang (2012) studied the development of trust in agile teams through the use of three agile practices which were; iteration planning, daily stand-up meetings, and iteration retrospectives. They found a positive effect on trust from all three practices. They also found that using agile methods resulted in an increase in trust, that comes from an increase in transparency, communication, knowledge sharing, accountability and feedback. The agile practices also increased the transparency and visibility of the project as they continuously during the project had to show each other how they were doing which made it easier to get an understanding how everyone else was doing on the project and to find obstacles that could be overcome together. What they found out as a key factor to developing trust was that compared
to a normal project where you only communicate when needed, in agile practices the communication is frequent and not purely need-based which makes it much easier to create trust between each other. Team members weren't afraid of asking for help either when communicating more frequently and spontaneously with each other (McHugh, Conboy and Lang, 2012).

2.5 Trust

2.5.1 What is trust?
The most important factor that makes a team successful is trust. Trust could also be described as psychological safety, which means how willing someone is to take a risk and how his or her teammates will respond if he or she takes the risk. In a team where you have a high level of psychological safety, the teammates feel confident to take on risks. They know that no one in the team will ever punish them for making a mistake or coming up with a new idea, but it is not an easy task to build trust and psychological safety in a team. Even if a team only exists of four members all of them might have different ideas, backgrounds and working styles which does not make it an easy task to build trust (Bariso, 2018).

Trust is found in situations where we need to rely on the competence of another part and their willingness to do something that is of importance to us. Because we need to release the control of things that we cherish to others, the other person is put in a position where they can destroy the thing that is of great value for us (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p.17). Trust has the greatest value when one of the parties is at a risk towards the other one. As trust is something that both the leader and the follower create together, both of them also need to put in an effort to sustain the trust (Bligh 2015).

Trust helps to connect the leader to the followers. It also supports communication and could improve the efficiency within the team when the team members are confident and believe in each other’s words (Tschannen-Moran M., 2014, p.18). To include a more practical viewpoint of trust, Walter (2015), who is an author and editor of business articles about leadership and business culture has come up with 12 Leadership Behaviours that could help to build team trust. We have chosen to bring up some of them. One is that you should lead by example, which means that you need to lead your team in the right direction and act according to how you want
your team members to act. You can't walk the talk. The next one is over-communication, meaning that a good leader is transparent and honest towards the team and does not hide any secrets. You should further on share your mistakes and talk about your limitations. Don't try to do everything yourself and tell your team when you have done something wrong or when it didn't go according to a plan. Nobody's perfect and everyone makes mistakes. Another important behaviour is to keep what you promise and stay to your commitments. No one will trust a person that doesn't stay to what he or she has said earlier. Therefore, it is of prime importance that you stick to your promises and commitments. You should also treat everyone fairly and set up expectations, team rules and values together with your team. By doing this everyone knows their roles and what to deliver. Further on something that is of big importance for a great leader is to act with consistency. Inconsistency hinders the creation of trust and leads to uncertainty. Therefore, try to be consistent in your behaviour, communication, expectations and more. Last but not least you should make sure to hire the best ones and trust them. Because if you don't trust your teammates they will never trust you back (Walter, 2015).

If trust is absent, frictions between the team members could arise and the work becomes less efficient. Trust is never something that just exist, but is dependent on a conscious human effort to create trust (Solomon and Flores 2001 cited in Tschannen-Moran 2014, p.18). It takes time to build trust and it is something that is earned. It also creates cohesion between the employees in an organization and its customers and suppliers, which further on makes it much easier for all parties to deliver what they have promised. The more we trust others the more they will trust us back. When we have trust in a team people collaborate with each other in an effective way and altruism grows which is beneficial for everyone (Peterson and Kaplan, 2016).

It is hard to define trust because the judgment we make when we decide to either trust or not trust someone is often complex. It is also a multifaceted concept, existing of many different elements that need to operate together in order to build trust. Trust is a dynamic concept with an appearance that can change over time as the relationship between two parts develops (Tschannen-Moran, 2014). Some definitions on trust have been found and the concept of trust that will be used in this paper is: releasing the control to someone else and relying on that person's competence and willingness to act in your favour (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p.17). However, we trust each other with the expectation that the other part will respond with kindness. Trusting someone often includes a risk (Peterson and Kaplan, 2016).
2.5.2 The five Facets of trust

According to the theory by Tschannen-Moran (2014), there are five facets of trust. This theory shows the different facets of trust which people depend on when they are making trust judgments. These facets are; honesty, benevolence, openness, reliability and competence. However, this study will focus on three of these facts and they will be described in detail below:

**Honesty**

When you trust someone, you trust his or her words and believe in what he or she is telling you. You feel confident that you can rely on that person and what he or she is telling you is true. If you agree on any commitment between each other you believe that he or she is telling you the truth about their side of it. People earn their own reputation for being honest by always saying the truth and completing what they promise. If you say one thing and do another, you will lose the trust of others (Dasgupta 1988 cited in Tschannen-Moran 2014, p.25-26).

**Openness**

The definition of openness is that it is a process that makes people accessible to others through sharing information and control with others (Zand 1997 cited in Tschannen-Moran 2014, p. 28).

**Competence**

Even if a person is caring and reliable, if that person does not have the competence that is needed, it becomes harder to trust him or her (Baier 1994; Mishra 1996 cited in Tschannen-Moran 2014, p. 35). Competence is the ability to perform according to existing expectations and standards (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p. 35).

2.5.3 The Trust-Ownership model

This model has been retrieved from the book written by Pixton, Gibson and Nickolaisen (2014) *The Agile culture, Leading through Trust and Ownership*. This source will be used throughout section 2.5.3 The Trust-Ownership model.

The key to success in today’s quickly changing and fluctuating environments is to create a culture that can handle changes and is open to innovation, a culture that can respond quickly when the demand is changing. In short, one that is agile.
This is what a culture that has these abilities looks like:

- Embraces an ongoing definition of what the customers find as valuable and what delights them, this involves both the customers and the whole organisation.
- Delivers the right thing, at the right time
- Accepts continuous innovation is the norm, not as the exception
- Possesses the prerequisites that are needed to succeed on a team level
- Mediates a clear shared vision including the goals that are aligned with the organization's business goals

To attain this culture the team needs to have the ownership of the solutions and the leader needs to trust the team by giving them advice and supporting the processes that will help them reach their goals.

Figure 2: Trust Ownership Model (Pixton, Gibson and Nickolaisen, 2014)
According to the model above (Figure 2) the square where everyone wants to be is in the green square, i.e. the Energy and Innovation square. However, many teams often get stuck in the Command and Control square. In order to get to the Energy and Innovation square you need to create a culture of trust and ownership. The leader needs to give the team the ownership and trust them not to control them. The model (Figure 2) is comprised of four different squares that the team can end up in, these squares have different characteristics such as Failure, Energy and Innovation, Command and Control and Conflict. However, this study will focus on the Energy and Innovation and Command and Control square. These squares are going to be described in more detail below:

**Command and Control**
This is a position where many leaders end up. When they are afraid of failure and don't trust their team, they start to control the team and their processes instead. Some characteristics of a leader that appears in the command and control zone is that: the leader finds himself more committed than the team, that the leader thinks he or she knows and can do everything, that the leader can’t trust the team. A detailed plan and description are needed for everything and the leader asks for updates on a regular basis, the leader makes the most important decisions himself and he punishes the ones that fail. This behaviour by the leader leads to poor team behaviour and it also kills the motivation and innovation within the team.

**Energy and Innovation**
It is in this square that both teams and leaders want to be and this square is characterized by an abundance of energy and innovation and things get done quickly. The team understands both the values and vision of the business and what the customers demand and they want to deliver the solutions and products as quickly and effectively as possible. Here the leader believes in his or her team and wants to support them more strategically and help them to make progress. The leader is a resource and a source of help for the team. The leaders view in this square could be characterized like this: the team is committed to achieving good results, the team knows what to do and how to do it, the leader can trust the team, the leader helps the team to take the ownership and doesn’t try to take it away from them, he or she wants to help the team to reach success and to thinks strategically. The team takes ownership and succeeds or fails together.
2.5.4 Trust and Relationships

One of the ways trust is built is through relationships. These relationships need to be maintained after they are developed on a continuous basis. There are two ways in which relationships can be formed, one is in a horizontal style (peer-to-peer) and the other is on a hierarchical level (employer-to-manager). It is not uncommon for it to be difficult to build trust that transcends one’s peers and managers in most organisations. Relationships can encompass both intra-team trust (team member to team member) as well as inter-team trust from team member to a team member belonging to another team or team member to manager. One way to build trust is to connect with anyone at work on a level that goes beyond solely work. This increases empathy and closeness with each other. Focusing on listening skills is also essential in order to prevent any sort of misunderstanding (Moreira, 2017). Therefore, processes that are both cooperative and social and that require both communication and collaboration between team members that trust each other is crucial in order for an agile method to succeed (Nerur, Mahapatra, and Mangalaraj, 2005).

2.5.5 Trust and Knowledge

Managing knowledge is extremely important in organizations. Most of the knowledge in agile development exists in the brains of the development team members. This has the potential to make the organization rely on the development teams, in turn moving the power from the management to the development team. (Nerur, Mahapatra, and Mangalaraj, 2005).

Since software development is an extremely social process, it is essential that trust on both an individual and organisational level is developed, both in a team but also between teams. The ability to trust one another leads to reliability and consequently more knowledge sharing and generation. Knowledge sharing is based on the interactions between team members that are spontaneous and not controlled or commanded by anyone above. When knowledge is transferred both externally and internally in agile methods, the knowledge transfer should be backed with communication and collaboration (Chau, Maurer and Melnik, 2003). Knowledge sharing encompasses interactions that are both individual and collective (Polanyi 1967 cited in Presbitero, Roxas and Chadee 2017). In order to promote learning amongst the developers, activities such as stand up meetings, collective ownership and pair activities are implemented. The retrospective is another way to foster learning at a continuous pace in different projects. Agile methods also develop a culture that encourages knowledge sharing and in turn mutual
trust (Chau, Maurer and Melnik, 2003). Knowledge sharing is promoted through socialisation and relationships between people that have a high level of trust. However, the relationships that affect knowledge sharing are present both within teams as well as between different teams (Ghoshal 1998 cited in Presbitero, Roxas and Chadee 2017). Due to this, it is most probable that learning is enhanced in an environment that is based on trust where organization members want and have the ability to share knowledge both within a team and between teams (Presbitero, Roxas and Chadee, 2017).

2.5.6 Trust and Decisions from above

At organizations, the focus is moving from corporate governance to customer focus, less centralization, more trust-based leadership, less detailed examinations and control and more value-based motivation, it is about moving the central decision making from the central office’s staff to the business organization’s branch heads, customer relations managers and advisors. When such a change takes place, the CEO is supposed to delegate their power and responsibility to the deputy chiefs and colleagues that are in closer contact with the organisations main markets and customers (Francke and Nilsson, 2017).

When it comes to self-organizing teams, one of the mind-set shifts involves understanding that the people with the most knowledge are the team members and that they should be the ones making the decisions regarding the technical evolution of the different business requirements, meaning that they should depend less on managers. The other shift in mind-set requires teams to be aware that they are accountable and responsible for completing their tasks. This way teams become flexible when it comes to decision making within their limited power or control (Moreira, 2017).

Agile methods involve a shift from a management characterised by command and control to leadership and collaboration. In order to make this shift, the traditional role of the project manager as a controller must change to becoming a facilitator that leads and coordinates all the collaborative work from everyone taking part in the development. Furthermore, the project manager can guarantee that everyone’s ideas are demonstrated in the decision making. However, a challenge lies in making the project manager give up the command or control that he or she is used to having (Nerur, Mahapatra, and Mangalaraj, 2005). When it comes to agile teams, aspects like working together and communication are the foundation for cooperative action. Team members have the ability to take part in decision making that is empowering and
they are not restricted to one type of role. This makes teams more diverse and creates a team that can self-organize and handle change in an environment (Nerur, Mahapatra and Mangalaraj, 2005). This diversity can further produce new knowledge and skills (Lee and Xia, 2010). According to a case study by Lee and Xia (2010) this autonomy of team members leads to more empowered decision making. In agile organizations, software developers as well as customers that are part of the development team are responsible for making most of the decisions. This leads to a pluralist environment because of the differences in team members, may it be background, culture or goals etc. Making decisions in this type of collaborative environment can prove to be more challenging and it may take an organization a longer time or a lot of patience in order to establish trust and respect and reach a healthy level of decision making (Nerur, Mahapatra, and Mangalaraj, 2005).

2.5.7 Trust in Cross Cultural Virtual Teams

To build trust in a cross-cultural team you need to be aware that communication styles vary between different cultures. How people socialize or get down to business at the beginning of a meeting can also differ. Differences also exist when it comes to how people value time, give feedback and disagree publicly. This difference could lead to friction in a team. However, if you use the upside of a diverse team right it could also lead to an advantage (Molinsky and Gundling, 2016). In a study by Oertig and Buergi (2006) about the trust-related challenges that project leaders interpret in virtual project teams or geographically distributed teams, it was found that when it comes to building trust, one of the keys was to meet face to face. In this case, this was accomplished through a team building session where the rules were agreed upon for how everyone wanted the team to work. Another thing that came up was to have lunch together. It was also reported that knowing each other is important as it leads to higher efficiency. It was mentioned that trust is something that is built over time. Another thing that came up in their study about trust was that it was harder to build trust when there was a high turnover of people in the team’s (Oertig and Buergi, 2006).

In a study by Zheng et al. (2002) they found out that the most effective way to establish trust among remote workers is to meet each other face to face. However, what was also observed was that exchanging social information via an interactive chat instead was almost as effective as meeting face to face (Zheng et al., 2002).
2.5.8 Five Counteracting Factors to the breakthrough of the Cross Cultural Virtual (CCV) Barriers

CCV stands for: Cross Cultural Virtual

Breitenöder (2009) is the source that will be used throughout the section 2.5.8. Due to the fact that we have seen earlier in this paper that communication and knowledge sharing is of importance when it comes to building trust, we have chosen to include this theory. Breitenöder (2009) brings up five counteracting factors to the breakthrough of the cross cultural virtual (CCV) barriers. To be able to share the right information and knowledge in a team the right environment must be reached first. To successfully share knowledge and information in a cross cultural virtual team the cross cultural virtual barrier needs to be overcome first. There are five factors that affect the breakthrough of the cross cultural virtual barrier in a positive or negative way.

1. **Ineffective use of the right Virtual Communication Channels**

The first of these factors is connected to using the virtual communication channels in an ineffective way. This could be due to either not knowing which tools to use or using an ineffective tool. One example of a communication tool that could be ineffective to use is email.

2. **Time differences**

The second is the impact of the different time zones which increases the more far away you are from each other. The time differences could make it hard to make an urgent call and the response time on email could be delayed due to the time difference. The time difference could also lead to meetings being held at inconvenient times for some of the people in the team, which could lead to frustrations.

3. **Insufficient foreign language skills**

The third factor is connected to a possible lack of foreign language skills among the team members. It could easily happen that all the members in the team don’t have the same native language and this could lead to some mistranslations and misunderstandings. It could also create an advantage among the native language speakers in the team.
4. Unshared perceptions of the reality
The fourth factor is further connected to the fact that people from different countries and backgrounds have different perceptions of reality. This could be due to the fact that they are surrounded by different cultures.

5. Lack of company support of CCVT (Cross Cultural Virtual Team)
The fifth and last factor has to do with how organisations and companies don’t know how to manage the new virtual situation involving communication across cultures in the best way. This lack of company support has a negative impact on the other factors too.

2.6 Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework aims to answer the research questions; how do the team members in agile teams build trust and what challenges do the team members in agile teams face during the process of building trust? The theories presented here about trust will be used more as an analysis tool that together with the empirical findings will contribute with a deeper understanding of the subject trust and agile management in relation to the two research questions. The Trust Ownership model will be used in order to gain a foundational understanding of the trust dynamics in an agile organization. The five facets of trust will also be used as a foundation for the analysis of the empirical findings. However, since the concept trust is so broad and due to the greater breadth of our two research questions, we felt that using more theories was a necessity. Therefore, the other theories will function as a complement and as a way to cover the aspects that the Trust - Ownership model and the five facets of trust does not cover.

The theories about agile management will function more as a tool to provide the reader with more knowledge about agile management but also as a tool to analyse how trust and agile management interact with each other. Furthermore, the sections about; Trust in cross cultural virtual teams, five counteracting factors to the breakthrough of the cross cultural virtual (CCV) barriers and trust and decisions from above have been seen as better adapted to answer research question two and therefore these three sections will only be used to answer research question two.
3.0 Methodology

In this chapter, the research methodology that has been used for answering the research questions will be presented. Subsequently, the methodology will be described through presenting our choice of research design and research method. Furthermore, this chapter will also discuss the validity and reliability of the study.

3.1 Literature review

The theories and literature that have been used in the theory chapter have been found and selected through searching for keywords such as; trust, agile management, trust across borders, knowledge sharing, relationship building, agile methods, agile and people, building trust, decisions from above etc. Databases such as Uppsala University online library, Google and Google Scholar were used to find relevant resources. Due to the fact that changes are happening around us constantly and the fact that organizations do not look the same as they used to a few years back, we chose to mix both up to date sources with older and more well-reputed sources. We have also chosen to mix more academic sources with practical sources in order to gain a more broader understanding of trust. To use several theories, in contrast, to be using a few will also be more beneficial as part of our purpose is to contribute to a deeper understanding of the subject trust and agile management in relation to the two research questions. It is important to note that using a lot of theories instead of focusing on only a few can also lead to more complexity as the span of the study becomes broader instead of more niched. However, we are also aware of the fact that it makes it harder to replicate the study too. Furthermore, we see a greater value in having more theories than solely relying on a few, as this can enable us to cover many different aspects affiliated with a concept as complex as trust. Several of the theories are also made from a leader’s perspective. Since we want to investigate our research questions both from a leader’s perspective and a team members perspective we thought it was important to have theories that have their starting point of a leader. If the study had been based on other theories it would have resulted in a different result which one needs to take into account.

3.2 Research Design: Qualitative Research Design

As this study wants to investigate how the team members in agile teams build trust and what challenges they encounter when it comes to building trust, a qualitative research approach with
interviews will give the best result. This approach focuses mainly on the words compared to a quantitative approach that focuses on quantifying. The purpose of this paper is not to quantify anything, but instead to focus on a few people and their interpretation and thoughts about trust in agile teams. Furthermore, the study wants to dig deep into each individual subject in order to get a more detailed understanding of fewer participants compared to doing a quantitative research where you get more respondents but less detailed responses (Holme and Solvang, 1997). Due to this, a qualitative research method is best suited (Bryman and Bell, 2005). The study will have an interpretive view-point as it is the people within the organizations and their interpretation of the subject that will be studied (Bell and Thorpe, 2013).

As one of the purposes of the paper is to get a deeper understanding of the subject trust and agile management in relation to the two research questions, the study will have an exploratory approach. Furthermore, this means that the theories brought up in the theory chapter will be used more as a foundation and tool to analyse the empirical findings (Bryman and Bell, 2011). However, in order to contribute with a deeper understanding of the subject, we have also chosen to conduct interviews in order to combine the interpretative and practical understanding with the theoretical foundation. Since exploratory research aims to explore the research questions, this study will not provide one single conclusive finding, rather it will come up with several findings and provide room for further research (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

3.3 Research Method: Interviews

An interview is the most popular qualitative research method. The flexibility of an interview is what makes it so popular (Bryman and Bell, 2003). Even if an interview follows a specific order there is still room for improvisation as the interviewer has the opportunity to adjust the interview questions during the course of an interview, thus making it possible to receive both complete answers as well as deeper feedback about more complex or deeper issues (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Interviews provide a study with the informant’s opinions and can be seen as an ‘‘exchange of views’’ (Dalen, 2015, p.42). For us, interviews provided not only the improvisatory benefits mentioned but also a way to collect face to face data, as well as to pick up on both verbal and non-verbal cues from the interviewees.
3.4 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the method for sampling data. This method has the ability to provide depth since the interviewers have the possibility to ask and extend the interviewees answers. In this way, it will be possible to maintain some form of control when it comes to extracting information from the interviewee but also be able to get new information along the way. Also, such interviews allow conversations during the interviews that can further lead to more discussions and more information. Observations, where the researchers observe a chosen context during a certain period of time could have been chosen as the method too (Bryman and Bell, 2005). However, in order to investigate the chosen questions through observations would have been time consuming and several agile teams would have been needed to give a broader picture. Therefore, interviews have been chosen as a better method in order to get a deeper and broader understanding of the chosen topic due to the limited amount of time (Jacobsen, 2002).

Since it was only possible to interview each person from the organization once (except for one person that was interviewed twice), semi-structured interviewing was suitable for the study (Bernard, 2006). Before conducting the interviews, interview guides were sent to the people that were going to participate. These made the respondents more prepared for the questions that would come up during the interview. A disadvantage of this was that they would also have time to think through the questions and adapt them in accordance to what they wanted to say. However, we felt that it was better that they could be prepared rather than having the questions come up more spontaneously during the interviews. The questions in the interview guide were asked during the actual interviews later on. This is close to the formal structure of semi-structured interviews as they include a list of questions and topics in a specific order that is to be asked and covered during the interview (Bernard, 2006).

The interview guide has been divided into three different parts. The first part contains background questions, the second part more general questions and the third part questions regarding their latest or current project. The interview guide makes it easier for the interviewer to follow through the interview but also for the authors to be able to make changes easily if needed. The interview questions have been kept open for the interviewee to be able to interpret them and to not limit the possibility of alternative ideas. During the interviews, a fixed set of questions from the interview guide were asked. However, the questions were adapted based on the person that was interviewed in the sense that further questions were added or changes were
made to the original questions. By doing this it gave us the opportunity to either delve deeper into the original question or get access to completely new or salient information or topics. We as interviewers also had more flexibility in the sense that we could sequence and word questions differently which led to a substantially different set of responses (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

We conducted one interview with all the people except for K4 (these will further be described on next page) whom we had two interviews with. The reason for that was that a one hour interview wasn't sufficient since K4 had extensive knowledge of the topic as well as a possibility for a second interview. The second interview was conducted via Skype. Disadvantages of such interviews could be the decrease of social cues such as body language (Opdenakker, 2006) or sensory stimulation as visual face to face interviews provide (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). However, as we already have had one interview face to face with K4, we felt that we already knew him a bit, so interviewing him a second time via Skype wouldn’t become a disadvantage. As all the other interviews had already been conducted and transcribed at this point, we took the opportunity to put the focus in this interview on interesting aspects that had come up during the other interviews, therefore a second interview guide was added.

3.5 Selection of Companies
As the focus of this paper incorporates an agile perspective and more precisely agile teams, companies working with agile projects were a necessity to find for the interviews. Four different companies operating in the IT and digital field, that implement agile methods have been selected for the study. These companies are; Knowit, Ericsson, Visma and Wiraya. Knowit was contacted at Kontaktdagarna and four interviewees were found at Knowit. The authors previously knew some people at the companies and it was also known from before that all these three companies use agile methods. Therefore, these companies were contacted and four interviewees were found at Ericsson and one each at Wiraya and Visma. An author and lecturer at Uppsala University who has written the book Det agila företaget was also interviewed to get another perspective on the topic.
### 3.6 Companies and Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Interview Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ericsson</td>
<td>E1</td>
<td>Line Manager</td>
<td>2018-03-12</td>
<td>00:48</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ericsson</td>
<td>E2</td>
<td>Line Manager</td>
<td>2018-03-12</td>
<td>00:41</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ericsson</td>
<td>E3</td>
<td>Line Manager</td>
<td>2018-03-12</td>
<td>00:51</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ericsson</td>
<td>E4</td>
<td>Software Developer</td>
<td>2018-03-12</td>
<td>00:40</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowit</td>
<td>K1</td>
<td>Management Consultant</td>
<td>2018-03-13</td>
<td>01:11</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowit</td>
<td>K2</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>2018-03-19</td>
<td>00:55</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Knowit</td>
<td>K3</td>
<td>Former Management Consultant</td>
<td>2018-03-13</td>
<td>00:41</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowit</td>
<td>K4</td>
<td>Management Consultant</td>
<td>2018-03-16</td>
<td>00:57</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowit</td>
<td>K4</td>
<td>Management Consultant</td>
<td>2018-04-11</td>
<td>00:59</td>
<td>Skype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uppsala University</td>
<td>U1</td>
<td>Author and Lecturer</td>
<td>2018-03-16</td>
<td>01:03</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visma</td>
<td>V1</td>
<td>IT Architect</td>
<td>2018-03-14</td>
<td>00:51</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiraya</td>
<td>W1</td>
<td>Product Manager</td>
<td>2018-03-13</td>
<td>00:40</td>
<td>Face to face</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1:** List of the respondents and their roles as well as a description of the interviews.

The respondent’s names have been coded into one letter which is connected to the company they are working for and one number which is randomly selected. All the interviews were conducted in spring 2018. The interviews in this study were conducted in English, which along with Swedish was the official language of the organizations. Most of the interviewees were Swedish but they had no problem speaking or expressing their thoughts in English. If it was easier for someone to answer a question in Swedish, they had the opportunity to do so.

Part of our purpose was that we wanted to investigate our research questions from both a leader perspective and a team member perspective. Therefore, both leaders and team members have been interviewed. We have also chosen to include interviewees from different positions to receive a broader response to our research question and also to be able to analyse the feedback from several perspectives. The interviewees have different levels of experience which is beneficial as it helps us to gain a broader perspective and better prerequisites to achieve our purpose of getting a deeper understanding of the two subjects trust and agile management.
3.6.1 Ericsson
Ericsson has a leading position when it comes to communication technology through offering both hardware, software and other services that increase the value of connectivity (Ericsson AB, 2018). Traditionally, Ericsson has been implementing a plan-driven software process. Recently it implemented an agile approach to software development. The transformation to an agile approach started at the end of 2012 and they created an agile pilot team at the beginning of 2013 (Paasivaara et al., 2018).

3.6.1.1 E1, Ericsson, Kista
**Position:** Line manager, first level line manager.
**Most commonly used agile methods:** Most of her teams are using Scrum but some of them were also using KANBAN or Scrumban, which means a mix of both Scrum and Kanban.

3.6.1.2 E2, Ericsson, Kista
**Position:** Line manager for three development teams.
**Most commonly used agile methods:** They have a little bit of a mix, they have teams that are using both Kanban and Scrum. However, the teams are quite free to choose the practice that fits them the best.

3.6.1.3 E3, Ericsson, Kista
**Position:** Line manager, first line manager meaning that he has managers below him.
**Most commonly used agile methods:** The most commonly used method is Scrum but they also have a number of tasks in the teams where Kanban is used.

3.6.1.4 E4, Ericsson, Kista
**Position:** Software Developer.
**Most commonly used agile methods:** What he and his team have been doing mostly is an extreme programming practice called mobile programming. In which the entire idea is that everyone who is needed for a project or for a task is sitting and working together in an agile way. They are using a mix of different agile practices within this project.
3.6.2 Knowit

Knowit is a consulting company that creates unique customer value through offering services in three different business areas; Experience, Insight and Solutions. They have the ability to combine competences in both design and communication, management consulting as well as IT, and this distinguishes them from other consulting companies. The respondents from Knowit were all working within Knowit Insight and Organizing for Speed, the latter focusing on using an agile approach with customers (Knowit AB, 2017).

3.6.2.1 K1, Knowit Insight, Organizing for Speed, Stockholm

**Position:** Management consultant working with agile transformations and change management. Right now, she is working as a scrum master/ agile coach for one of their customers. In former projects at other companies she has often had the position as a Product owner.

**Most commonly used agile methods:** Scrum

3.6.2.2 K2, Knowit Uppsala

**Position:** Project Manager.

During the last decade, he has been working as a project manager or a product owner/ scrum master. He often uses agile methods in his customer interactions.

**Most commonly used agile methods:** Scrum or Scrum based methods.

3.6.2.3 K3, Former Knowit Insight, Organizing for Speed, Stockholm

**Position:** Former management consultant at Knowit within technology.

**Most commonly used agile methods:** He has been using different agile methods such as Kanban and Scrum and has often been mixing them and using them in different ways.

3.6.2.4 K4, Knowit Insight, Organizing for Speed, Stockholm

**Position:** Management consultant and agile coach.

He has had a leading role in numerous projects and project leads for the last couple of years. He has also been working as an agile coach and as a business analyst.

**Most commonly used agile methods:** Mostly Kanban but he has also started to work with Scrum.
3.6.3 Visma
Visma delivers computer software, IT related development and operation consulting amongst other things. The organization simplifies and automates operational procedures in both the private and public sector (Visma, 2018).

3.6.3.1 V1, Visma Consulting
**Position:** IT Architect, (But also senior developer, agile coach and Scrum master).
**Most commonly used agile methods:** Mainly Scrumban, but with more of Kanban.

3.6.4 Wiraya
Wiraya designs and develops cloud services for personal and automated customer communication. Their solutions help companies to effectively activate, engage and serve their customers through individually adapting communication on a large scale (Wiraya, 2018).

3.6.4.1 W1, Wiraya
**Position:** Product manager, (has been a product owner in his last projects).
**Most commonly used agile methods:** Scrum and Kanban by the book. They also use a mix of the different methods such as Scrumban depending on what is needed for the project.

3.6.5 Uppsala University
Uppsala University was founded in 1477 and is among the top 100 universities in the world. They have around 5000 researchers that are doing world-leading research. (Kort fakta om Uppsala universitet, 2017).

3.6.5.1 U1, Uppsala University
**Position:** Author of the book *Det agila företaget* and lecturer in management control at the Department of Business studies at Uppsala University.
**The message of his book:** During the past 20 years organizations have become more transparent due to the help of developers and IT systems. However, this transparency does not necessarily lead to more knowledge sharing and it still remains a challenge for agile organizations to have a collaborative culture where the team members in agile teams can take part in most of the decision making.
3.7 Operationalization

Two interview guides were used to provide the interviewee with transparency about what questions we were going to use during the interviews. To make sure that we had the same definition of trust as the interviewees, trust was explained and defined in the interview guide that was sent out afterward to the interviewees before the interviews were conducted. One question was also added about how they would define trust to get an understanding of what trust means for them. The same interview guide was used during all the interviews except for the second interview that was conducted with K4 when a new interview guide was added. The reason why we created a second interview guide was in order to obtain more information from K4 since he had extensive knowledge about the topic. We made sure to clarify our take on certain words that have multiple meanings and could lead to interpretative misunderstandings.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

All the interviews were recorded and notes were taken during the interviews. After that, all the interviews were transcribed. The first step was to summarize and simplify the transcriptions to reduce the complexity that exists in the transcriptions. The next step was to categorize the text and also reduce it from superfluous information in order to retain the most relevant information that would answer our research questions (Jacobsen, 2002). The text was analysed again and we tried to separate it into two parts where one part would describe how trust is built and the other part would describe the challenges that are faced when building trust. After this, both the parts were analysed again. This resulted in an identification of three themes that we concluded we could use as a response to our first research question. We also found five themes that could serve the same purpose for our second research question.

3.9 Research Quality

3.9.1 Reliability

In order to increase the reliability of this study, we chose to interview different organizations, as this would give a broader perspective of the study while making it more believable and congruent. The study is also based on previous theories and concepts that further strengthen the reliability of our current study. Reliability can be described as to what degree similar results would be achieved for similar events or situations (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002; Robson 2003; Bell 2001 cited in Anderson 2004).
3.9.2 Transferability

This study looks at agile organizations limited to the geographical location Sweden and more specifically to their Stockholm offices and one office situated in Uppsala. Therefore, the results of the qualitative study should be perceived from the context of organizations in this location. In order to increase the transferability, it might have been beneficial to analyse agile organizations in different locations. More locations could have had the potential to give a broader or inclusive picture of the situation (Shenton, 2004). Due to the limited amount of time, this study has decided to limit the research to Stockholm and Uppsala in Sweden.

3.9.3 Dependability

Due to the fact that the role of the manager and the environment is changing very quickly, it is hard to conduct a study that will correspond to how the world will look in the future. In order to deal with this, we have chosen to interview people with different amounts of experience to contribute with a more dynamic understanding of this subject as this would have the possibility to enhance the consistency of the study over time (Cohen, Lawrence and Morrison, 2007).

3.9.4 Conformability

During the study, concepts like agile management and trust have been based on theoretical definitions in order for the authors to remain neutral, since conformability can be interpreted as the level of neutrality in relation to those conducting the interview (Pandey and Patnaik, 2014). Therefore, we have not allowed our own personal values to affect those definitions. However, during interviews and when analysing the answers, there does exist a possibility that the answers being interpreted might be influenced by our own personal values when analysing them in relation to the theoretical background. Due to this, it is important that both the results and ideas in the research have their roots from the case organization and the interviewees and are not based on our perceptions (Shenton, 2004).

3.10 Ethics

To make sure that the people that are participating in the interviews are treated fairly, an interview guide has been sent out to them before the interview and if there has been any question that they don't want to respond to, that question has been deleted. The emprics from the interviews that are included in this paper have also been sent and accepted by the interviewees before the thesis was handed in. This was done in order to be transparent with what we include,
hence fulfilling a prerogative for ethical research that is: No confidential papers or information from the participating companies has been used without their approval (Fisher, 2007). Furthermore, it was done in order to minimise unethical practices such as falsification, plagiarism and fabrication of data (Bell and Thorpe, 2013).

3.11 Critical Reflections/ Limitations
Quantitative researchers tend to criticize the qualitative research method as much as qualitative researchers tend to criticize the quantitative research method. Their critique of qualitative research often has to do with the fact that it is hard to replicate a qualitative study. The study will always be affected by the skills of the researchers and how they interpret the result (Bryman and Bell, 2005). If someone else would do the same study on a different group of people, they would in all likelihood not end up with the same result (Bell and Thorpe, 2013). To overcome this, an interview-guide has been used. It is also hard to draw parallels between the outcome of one qualitative study to that of another, as the number of participants that are interviewed or observed often is quite small (Bryman and Bell, 2005). However, in order to get a wider spread of the interviewees this paper has chosen to interview people from different companies but within the same segment.
4.0 Findings and Analysis

4.1 Empirical findings and Analysis
This section will present the empirical findings of the study. These findings will be woven together with an analysis of the findings. We have decided to do so to get a better flow of these sections. The theoretical framework will be used throughout the analysis as a tool to analyse the empirical findings. This chapter seeks to answer our two research questions. Therefore, this chapter has been divided into two parts. The first part will focus on research question 1; how do the team members in agile teams build trust? The second part will focus on research question 2; what are the challenges when it comes to building trust in an agile team? Both parts will start off with a model that depicts the themes that have been identified when answering the research question. Further on the two parts of this chapter have been divided into subtitles that are related to the themes shown in the models.

4.2 Building trust in agile teams

RQ1: How do the team members in agile teams build trust?

Figure 3: Model showing the different themes connected to Research question one
In this chapter research question one: how do the team members in agile teams build trust? will be answered. As seen in the model (Figure 3) when it comes to building trust, three bigger themes were found. These are: Knowledge sharing, Expectations and shared values and Relationship building. Therefore, this chapter has been divided into three different parts that go through these three themes that together answer research question one.

4.2.1 Knowledge Sharing

One way agile teams can build trust is through a culture of knowledge sharing (Chau, Maurer and Melnik, 2003). This knowledge sharing is created through socialisation and relationships based on trust. Due to this, learning is improved in trust-based organizations where the drive and ability to share knowledge exists both in teams (horizontally and vertically) and across different teams (Presbitero and Chadee, 2017). However, K4 brought up another perspective when he equated knowledge with power. He explained that when he does not share his knowledge with the team, he has power as he knows things that they do not know, hence he is safe (K4). This is in contradiction to the belief that a leader can benefit from knowledge sharing and transparency with his team (Hazzan and Dubinsky, 2014, p. 24). In this case, one could argue that knowledge has the potential to create distrust and in turn be an obstacle when it comes to building trust in some cases. According to the Trust - Ownership model, K4 would do better in keeping his knowledge to himself in order to retain power and therefore remain in the command and control position in order to feel safe (Pixton, Gibson and Nickolaisen, 2014).

K1 also touched upon not sharing all information as she mentioned that she treats information a bit differently at the initial stage. She brought up an example with a Philippine team where they at the initial stage of the project received a bit of negative feedback from the customer. If she had been working with them for a longer period then she would have shared that feedback with them directly, but now as they were at the initial stage, she filtered the feedback a bit and packaged it into something easier to deal with, and then shared it with them. The question here is if this is the right way to go, as according to the theory you should communicate (Walter, 2015), be open (Zand 1997 cited in Tschannen-Moran 2014, p.28) and be honest (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p.25-26). You shouldn’t walk the talk and act with consistency (Walter, 2015).

K1’s behaviour goes a bit against these theories even though she has a reason for why she doesn’t act in an honest and open way. This could either be a case in which it is actually good
to go against what the theory says or it could also be that it would be even better if she would be honest and open here. However, according to her, we got the impression that her approach was a successful approach. As both K4 and K1 are in leader positions, they have access to information that no one else in the team has, and they have the power to either share it or not. As long as no one else in the team knows about the fact that they are hiding information, it might not affect the trust. However, if someone finds out about this, it might affect the trust according to the theories. However, it is probable that both K1 and K4 see the risk of that happening as being very low. However, according to Walter (2015) you should be honest and transparent towards your team members, therefore it is probable that telling the team the truth could have led to success as well.

4.2.2 Expectations and shared values

Both W1 and K3 said that they have had training in talking about expectations, role expectations and trust at the start of every new project (W1 and K3). W1 also mentioned that they could do this more often (W1). Several of the respondents were following what E4 mentioned, i.e., that the team has a set of guidelines about what they should do and shouldn’t do that they have agreed upon together. This involves being open about any problems that they encounter (E4). E2 said that to ensure that trust exists from the start in the team she encourages discussions about how they want to run the team, what kind of practices they want and how they want to divide responsibilities in the team (E2). This is in line with Hazzan and Dubinsky (2014) who say that giving team members different roles can increase their involvement, communication as well as commitment to the agile team, hence leading to higher expectations of one another as well as shared values that would help to build more trust.

Expectations and shared values are among the 12 steps to build trust, according to Walter (2015). Pixton, Gibson and Nickolaisen (2014) also agree upon the importance of shared values. To agree upon these kinds of aspects is important and being open towards each other, right from the start, as E4 mentioned, is one of the five facets of trust (Zand 1997 cited in Tschannen-Moran 2014, p. 28). Accomplishing this is already a step in the right direction towards building trust. This is also in line with the new role of managers that involves an open-minded communication and shared awareness of changes in the environment to make sure that an organisation’s objectives are met (Crowder and Friess, 2015). E3 pointed out the importance of being open as he mentioned that the way he builds trust is to be a good role model himself, by being open and trusting his teammates (E3). This could be connected to the 12 Leadership
Behaviours that build trust in teams according to Walter (2015) where she talks about the importance of being consistent and mutual. If you don't trust your employees then they might not trust you back either. Creating reciprocal trust is a good first step but as trust is complex and exists of several aspects, building and maintaining trust also consists of many other aspects. The importance of communicating and deciding about shared values and expectations was put into another context when K4 was talking about why it is more important to communicate today then what it was many years ago. He mentioned that back then managers told people what to do and when to do it, and due to that, one had clear instructions about what and when to deliver (K4). However, according to the Agile Manifesto, responding to change rather than rigidly following a plan (Beck et al., 2001) is an important strategy. Therefore, it would be beneficial to be ready for changes in the expectations as well as the shared values of one another in the agile team, which can also have an effect on building trust. Due to this, we think that in order to build trust in today’s organizations it is more important to communicate rather than to just issue or follow orders or to blindly stick to a pre-made plan. E3 also raised an example about when the trust was really good in one of his teams. What was significant about that case was that they started to make sure that everyone really understood what needed to be done. The teams were then set up accordingly so that everyone in the team had clear ownership of their respective tasks and everyone knew what to do. This led to conversations in the team that were about what they wanted to achieve and to the existence of a high level of trust (E3). This could be an example of a team that has reached the trust and ownership square according to the model in (Pixton, Gibson and Nickolaisen, 2014). It is that square most teams aspire to be in in order to become successful. It is hard to reach this square as leaders need to handover their ownership to team members and to fully trust them.

4.2.3 Relationship Building

Getting to know each other was also something that came up during several interviews. K1 works frequently with activities in her teams where they get to know each other better, sometimes outside work. K3 also mentioned that having “fika” is trust building as it is about the relationship between each other. E1 lifted up similar team building strategies. She said that they had recently formed a new team at her department and when they started, they had team activities and discussed how to build a great team. Moreover, they had even discussed the five dysfunctions of a team where trust is the base (E1).
According to (Moreira, 2017) one of the ways to build trust is through relationships, but he also mentions that these relationships need to be maintained on a continuous basis throughout the project. Therefore, activities like doing things outside of work and “fika” are perfect ways to maintain relationships as these are activities that can easily be scheduled on a continuous basis, one example could be having a “fika” every Wednesday. Oertig and Buergi (2006) highlight the importance of having lunch together which can be equivalent to having a “fika” together. Having “fikas” or lunches together could also be a way of connecting to your teammates on a level that goes beyond solely working (Moreira, 2017). It is possible, however, that people have too much work to do and skip these “fikas”. Therefore, leaders would need to convince the team about the importance of having them. E2 who is working as a line manager at Ericsson mentioned that she always keeps an eye out for trust in her teams. If she recognizes that they are not showing trust towards each other in one of the teams, she encourages them to try to get to know each other better to increase the trust (E2). Therefore, a combined strategy of organising relationship building activities such as “fika”, followed by keeping an eye out for mistrust would be a better way to maintain trust. This is because you would have built a better foundation of trust first and would be able to identify and address any signs of mistrust more effectively. According to the definition of trust used in this paper which is: releasing the control to someone else and relying on that person's competence and willingness to act in your favour (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p.17), it must be easier to release the control to someone that you have a good relationship with, rather than to someone that you have a poor relationship with, as trust is about releasing the control to someone else that you feel secure about.

In U1’s book Det agila företaget he argues that to build trust in a company it is important that the board dares to trust the employees and to allow them to do their thing. Here we enter another aspect of relationships as it is no longer the relationship between two people within one team it is more of the relationship between one person in the team and another person outside the team. We go from a horizontal style (peer-to-peer) to a hierarchical level (employer-to-manager) according to (Moreira, 2017, p.73-74). This could further on be connected to the Trust ownership-model where one wants to give greater ownership to team members (Pixton, Gibson and Nickolaisen, 2014).

K2 also lifted up the relationship between the organization and the team members when he said that if there is a general lack of trust then you need to understand that the reason behind the lack of trust could be that the organization is actually hindering the employees (K2).
Another aspect that could be connected to relationship building involves learning and communication. When K3 was asked about whether he does anything actively to build trust in his agile team, he mentioned that communication is the key to everything (K3). He also mentioned that the Retrospective is primarily about learning but also about reflecting upon relations between different individuals (K3). Therefore, we think the Retrospective is a good way to build trust as it involves learning about your team members which leads to more understanding and hence more trust. K4 also thought that a lack of transparency could be one of the biggest obstacles when it comes to creating trust in an agile team. He even mentioned that if you don't understand what is really going, you start to build up your own perceptions and to misjudge how people are actually performing (K4).

K4 mentioned the importance of having good leaders who create learning organizations. Learning from each other does not depend on whether it is a junior developer or a senior manager (K4). This can be connected to Bligh (2015) who states that trust is something that a leader and team-mates create together and therefore, both need to put in an effort to sustain the trust. Since they possess a different kind of status and power, building a relationship based on mutual trust is even more important.
4.3 Challenges

RQ2: What challenges do the team members in an agile team face during the process of building trust?

**Figure 4:** Model showing the different themes connected to Research question 2

In this chapter research question two: what challenges do the team members in agile teams face during the process of building trust? will be answered. As seen in the model (Figure 4) when it comes to the challenges they face, five different themes were found. These are: Distance, Culture, Decisions coming from above, Knowledge and Other challenges. Other challenges have further on been divided into two sub-segments; Could a high level of trust be negative and not trusting the method. Therefore, this chapter has been divided into five different parts which goes through these themes that together answer research question two.
4.3.1 Distance

Several of the respondents found it easier to create trust in a team but much tougher to create trust between teams when they were working together with several teams on the same project. Both E3, E2 and E4 mention that they have had a high level of trust in their teams, but when it came to the trust between them and other teams that were situated on another site, that they were working together with, the level of trust between the teams was lower. E3 said that it felt like they didn’t always understand why people in other teams were doing what they were doing. He also felt that the trust between the teams was something that they needed to work on (E3). E2 mentioned that the trust became better during the project but it took a lot of effort to get there (E2). E4 felt that it was hard to trust the people in the other teams, he didn't have a good explanation for why he felt that (E4). K1 was touching on the same aspects as E3 when she mentioned that she thinks that it takes a long time to build trust between different teams and that it is difficult. “I think the reason why it is more difficult is because you need to learn to know each other to feel safe and to be able to build trust” (K1). K4 also said that it could be harder since you don't know the other team you don't have the same relationship to that team or the same bonding. He also mentioned that it could easily become like a “us and them” feeling between the teams (K4).

According to Moreira (2017, p. 73-74) trust could both be created in a team, which is called intra-team trust, and between teams, which is called inter-team trust. What they further mention is that one way of building trust is to connect with each other at work on a level that goes beyond solely work. If you then don’t get the same prerequisites to build this trust as you get when your team is working on the same site, it of course, becomes tougher. Agile in itself is a method that encourages frequent communication (McHugh, Conboy and Lang, 2012) and if distance makes it harder to achieve this frequent communication, it becomes more challenging to build trust. E3 also mentioned that it is sometimes harder to communicate via email, especially when the communication is in English, which is not everyone's native language (E3). E3 is in agreement with Breitenöder, (2009, p.16) who points out language as being one of the counteracting factors in their theory. It has been mentioned before that understanding each other is of prime importance when it comes to building trust. Therefore, it is obvious that if you don’t understand what the other one is saying it becomes even harder to develop an understanding for the person. The theory by Breitenöder (2009) also describes this is a hinder when it comes to building trust across teams.
E3 mentioned that one of the biggest challenges when maintaining a high level of trust is the distance, because if you don't see each other and talk to each other every day, then you start to imagine things and make up stories about what they are doing (E3). For K1, it was essential to meet face to face and to bring the teams together. She mentioned that she had been working together with an Indian team. When she visited them during the spring she realized that it took around three days to really get to know them to the point that she was able to recognize small differences in voices for. E2 spoke about how she encouraged the person that was responsible for the coordination to take a different approach to maintaining trust over distance. She also encouraged her own team to speak about what information they needed and how they wanted to interplay with the other teams to improve the trust between the teams (E2).

According to a study by Zheng et al. (2002) the most effective way to build trust is through meeting face to face but building it through interactive media is almost as effective. What we could see here is that according to the theories and the respondents, it is of importance and easier to build trust if you are able to meet face to face and thereby to overcome some of the counteracting factors. If you are able to meet face to face for some days you also reach almost the same prerequisites for some days as you have when it comes to building trust in a team. However, since agile management relies a lot on the interaction between the team members, as found in a study by Doiraraj, Noble and Malik (2010), it is of importance to meet face to face to build trust. Meeting face to face should therefore be highly valued by companies and implemented whenever it is possible. However, some of the respondents felt that it was a big challenge to build trust between several teams even though there are many different tools that can be used to overcome this challenge, such as, email and Skype. E3 explained that it was very seldom that they met face to face with the people from the other teams. Skype was not used to a great extent either, whereas email was a commonly used communication channel. K4 mentioned that sometimes when they work in Gothenburg with people in Lyon, the technology and the connection is not always that good, meaning that the people in Lyon do not understand a 100 % of what the people in Gothenburg understand. This means that the people in Lyon lose some information. Therefore, the bandwidth needs to be adjusted from either end. Some of the respondents had thought a great deal about how to overcome the challenges that exist when you work with teams in other countries, for example K1 and K4 that had to work with teams abroad. However, it seemed tougher for E3, because even though they have Skype, the communication was happening through email most of the time. K4 had problems with bad technology but it seemed like he knew how to overcome this problem. One of the aspects of the theory by
Breitenöder (2009) is to use the virtual communications channel in the right way. E3 did mention that the different technologies that exist for communication could possibly be utilized in a better way. K1 mentioned that she always tries to be more personal when having meetings on the computer and to create a team spirit. K1 also tries to be a good listener and not to be too quick in her opinions (K1, Knowit). This could be seen as an example of how to utilize digital tools and overcome the disadvantages that exist when it comes to communicating via digital tools instead of face to face.

4.3.2 Culture

K1 also mentioned the cultural aspect when working with distributed teams as she had been doing with both a Philippine and an Indian team, and thereby with two very different cultures. She said that it is really important to understand the culture that you are dealing with because the smallest mistake can lead to trust being lost directly (K1). E2 mentioned that you don't really know the others when you are working with teams that are positioned in different countries (E2). “So, learning to know each other is always a good idea but the cultural aspect feels like an additional thing that you at least need to have as a parameter” (K1).

K4 brought up the cultural differences that exist between Sweden and France. He said that Swedes are more reserved and the French people are better at socializing then we are. That could make it easier for French people to build trust within their teams. On the other hand, K4 mentioned that the French way of management is not very sociable, it is way more top-down, where the bosses or managers are God. On the other hand, if you would have them on the same level he thought that the French people would have an easier time to build trust as Swedes are quite reserved (K4). The fourth factor in the theory by Breitenöder (2009, p. 16) is connected to culture and as mentioned by both K1 and K4, the culture could be vastly different in different countries and could therefore be a challenge. This can be connected to Doiraraj, Noble and Malik (2010) who state that many misunderstandings occur due to cultural differences and that understanding intercultural relationships in a team can help to build trust in an agile team. Such an understanding would have the potential to prevent misunderstandings between for example a French and a Swedish team. However, if you get to know the culture since you need to know the people that you are working with, you can overcome these challenges, as agile management relies on the interaction between people (Doiraraj, Noble and Malik, 2010). The distance involved when meeting each other is an obstacle as it might be easier to get an understanding about the culture by actually experiencing the culture compared to hearing about the culture but
not getting the chance to experience it. To be able to utilise the advantages of having a diversified team (Molinsky Gundling, 2016) with people from different cultures we first need to get an understanding of different cultures and improve our knowledge in those areas.

4.3.3 Decisions Coming from Above

As the new managerial role encompasses a new and more open mind-set that encourages communication and collaboration in order to create an environment with less control (Crowder and Friess, 2015), this is in line with what K4 mentioned that it is necessary to flatten the organization so the manager moves from telling people what to do and how to do it to actually help them to succeed (K4). Due to less control, it is possible that the team members in agile teams have more ability to take part in decision-making and not be restricted to one type of role which has an empowering effect on them (Nerur, Mahapatra and Mangalaraj, 2005) as they can gain more responsibility. Therefore, the decision-making procedure must encompass a shift in mind-set, that means understanding that team members have the most knowledge and should depend less on their managers (Moreira, 2017).

E4 says that every team at the organization is characterized by some form of autonomy meaning that it is up to every team to decide themselves how they want to be agile and that only some rules come from above. One could assume that this level of autonomy with minimal say from people higher up in the organization would lead to the majority of knowledge created in the teams to stem from the agile team itself and not come from higher sources. He also explains that in the agile team they share a keyboard and everyone sits around it and works on the same task. E4 stresses that it is not the speed that matters when working in an agile team but what is important is that the team solves problems together utilizing everybody’s knowledge (E4). This utilization of everyone’s knowledge could also be seen as contributing to a pluralist environment as different people with different knowledge contribute to the team, differences being background, culture or goals (Nerur, Mahapatra, and Mangalaraj, 2005). As such a collaborative culture can make the decision-making procedure as well as the process of building trust more time consuming and challenging (Nerur, Mahapatra, and Mangalaraj, 2005) within the team, in addition to that, due to the fact that knowledge is formed and shared so closely in a team, one could argue that it is challenging to accept decisions from people above since they are not directly part of the team.
K4 says his main objective is to ‘‘make myself redundant’’ meaning that after he teaches them he withdraws and it is up to them to move forward and improve with the knowledge they obtained (K4). One could argue that while agile team members create more knowledge and improve their existing knowledge independently it could also make it harder to accept or trust decisions coming from above, since they don’t have direct contact with them. This autonomy in team members could also have the potential to generate new knowledge and skills in teams and consequently more empowered decision making (Lee and Xia, 2010) as they trust their own decisions more.

According to the Agile Manifesto, one of the points it incorporates is customer collaboration over contract negotiation (Beck et al., 2001), this is in agreement with what U1 identified as a problem, that organizations today are too focused on ownership instead of being customer focused. According to U1’s book Det agila företaget, during the past 20 years a top down approach as well as a more detail-oriented approach has been on the rise combination with the fact that one can follow the development of an organization more due to the help of developers and IT systems (Francke and Nilsson, 2017). Due to this it makes it harder to hide things from another, and even if transparency leads to more knowledge shared by everyone, there is still a risk that people higher above like chiefs take advantage of this transparency and can manipulate their authority (U1), hence it still remains a challenge in agile organizations to completely have a collaborative culture where decision making is more in the hands of the agile team members.

4.3.4 Knowledge

U1 said that if someone that has a much lower level of competence than everyone else in the teams joins your team, it could easily be straining for the team to have this person. However, it is not only a lower level of knowledge that could lead to complications. According to U1 if you get someone in your team that is much more bureaucratic and likes to be on the top board then that could also destroy the team or the department (U1). The importance of competence can be connected to how important it is for team members to possess the right type of knowledge (Baier 1994; Mishra 1996 cited in Tschannen-Moran 2014, p. 35) and (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p. 35). According to the definition of trust that has been used which is: releasing the control to someone else and relying on that person's competence and willingness to act in your favour Tschannen-Moran, (2014 p.17), you could understand how important the competence is as you wouldn’t release the control of something you cherish to someone that you know don’t possesses the right competence or knowledge.
According to (Ghoshal 1998 cited in Presbitero and Chadee 2017) knowledge sharing is also promoted through trust which means that if you don't have the trust in any direction it will be hard to both build trust and improve the knowledge or competence for a person. The question is also if they had a high level of trust between each other because if they had it, it would have been easier to overcome a lack of competence. However, sometimes the level of competence that one possesses could be so low that you can't do anything to improve it because it would take too long time. As Pixton, Gibson and Nickolaisen (2014) mention one of the aspects of a culture of trust is that the team members possess the right prerequisites, and due to that knowledge could be included here. V1 mentioned that he had a Senior developer within one of his teams that was really experienced but V1 had a low level of trust toward this person because this person had a low level of deliveries. This person got two tasks that he was doing for 5 days and then when V1 checked the code and it was a really trivial task that would normally take one hour to make. He found out that he was actually cheating (V1). The reason here why he needed to control his teammate could be connected to competence according to (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p.35). Even though V1 started to give out the ownership to his teammate he was almost forced to control him later on as he realised that his competence wasn't high. This makes it possible to realize how complex trust is to build and the importance of competence. Even though we sometimes believe that it is possible to increase someone's competence, we can also see that it is possible to do so to some extent, otherwise it can have a negative influence on trust as we could see in the example mentioned above. Therefore, as according to Walter (2015) you should make sure to hire the best people.

4.3.5 Other Challenges

4.3.5.1 Could a high level of trust be negative?

E3 pointed on something really interesting as he had an experience where one team reached a high level of trust and the people in the team become a bit too complacent. He said that you could sense that they really thought that they were good, in a positive way. However, he also mentioned that was a tendency for overconfidence. This could be a destabilising factor as a small setback could lead to a hard fall for them (E3). Here we got a different perspective and what could be a disadvantage of trust, which was interesting. This is something that hasn’t been mentioned in earlier studies or in any theory. Even the Google survey says that trust is important
but doesn't mention anything about any possible disadvantage with trust (Bariso, 2018). Therefore, this is something to bear in mind for a realistic understanding of trust and its effects.

### 4.3.5.2 Not Trusting the Method

K4 mentioned that he has a team, which he feels doesn’t trust him. He mentioned that the reason is that they see him as a threat. He explained further that they saw the agile method as a threat as it is new and they don't believe in the method. Overall, however, K4 thought that the agile method helps to improve trust, and not only in the team but also in the whole organisation. The reason behind why he thinks that the agile method helps to build trust is that he felt that it encourages transparency, communication and collaboration (K4). However, if the team doesn’t trust the method it might be hard to build trust between the leader and the members. “Trust is found in situations where we need to rely on the competence of another part and their willingness to do something that is of importance for us” (Tschannen-Moran, 2014, p.17). However, in this case the competence lies in the method, and one could wonder if the reason behind why a team would not trust the method could be because they lack knowledge about the method, or because they are not convinced that the method has the right fit for achieving their mission. This might be something that K4 needs to dig deeper into and get an understanding of in order to be able to build up trust with these team members.
5.0 Discussion

Organizations today require more collaboration and different people skills. This is due to factors like cross-cultural virtual teams, distance as well as globalization. Due to this, trust plays a crucial role in agile teams and is even more challenging to build. What could be seen in this paper is that trust is a complex subject and is comprised of many factors. Themes such as shared values, knowledge sharing and relationship building became evident as important aspects when it comes to building trust. This provided us with an understanding of the complexity of trust and how hard it is to build and maintain due to its multi-layered nature.

Since trust is at stake when one of the parties are at risk towards the other one, it is possible to argue that it becomes even more important to study how team members in agile teams build trust. This is due to the fact that agile means being able to both produce and reciprocate change in an uncertain environment, and it is in such environments that trust plays an even more critical role. A common theme found throughout this study is the importance of actually getting to know each other and get an understanding how your teammates function in order to trust them. Occasions like “fika” and having lunch together can be more valuable than what people think. Therefore, people should realize the value of participating in such activities. These factors together with agreeing upon shared values and expectations are increasingly important at the start of a project in order to create the possibility for team members to build trust.

When it comes to the challenges, not trusting the method could lead your teammates to not trust you if you are the agile coach. Small things could decrease the level of trust which makes it an even more complex and fragile subject. Factors such as not possessing the right competence could lead people to distrust each other. Also, in addition to hiring people with the right competence, it is important to take the concept agile into consideration and how agility in contrast to trust requires completely different prerequisites, which involve flexibility and the ability to respond quickly to changes. These factors could have the potential to interfere with the process of building trust as agility requires speed whereas trust takes time to build. On the other hand, what trust and agility have in common is that they both need to be maintained on a continuous basis as they both require the right mind-set. We also deduced that too much trust could be interpreted as negative as people can tend to become overly self-confident and thereby
more susceptible to crumble in the face of tough challenges. This adds yet another level of complexity to the subject.

It is important to note that even though factors like increased digitalization and globalization have the potential to increase communication between the team members, this does not always equate to increased trust. It could, on the other hand, actually lead to more challenges as we take communication for granted. However, the tools could help us to communicate and to build trust, with people across the borders if used in the right way. If they didn’t exist, it would become even harder to get an understanding of your teammates in another country. The agile method in itself could also be of good help here as it encourages communication. However, we also need to value the importance of face to face meetings and if one does not do that it could have a negative effect on trust. The question is what will happen in the future when the digital communication tools have become even better than what they are today. Will it be easier to build trust through the digital tools or do we still need to consider the importance of actually meeting face to face to get a decent understanding of each other in order to build trust?
6.0 Conclusion

This study wanted to answer the research questions: How do team members in agile teams build trust? and what challenges do team members in agile teams face during the process of building trust? Furthermore, the study wanted to contribute with a deeper understanding of the subject trust and agile management in relation to the two research questions.

When it comes to how team members in agile teams build trust our conclusion is that trust is hard to build and that a lot of different aspects can affect trust. The themes that came up regarding how team members in agile teams build trust were; agreeing upon shared values and expectations, knowledge sharing and relationship building. Agreeing upon shared values and expectations could be seen as a great start of the processes of building trust. However, the other two themes could be seen as aspects that need to be nurtured and developed on a continuous basis especially in an agile context as agility requires responding to change as the Agile Manifesto states. Further on when it comes to the challenges it was explored that a lot of challenges exist when it comes to building trust in an agile team but five themes were found; distance, culture, decisions coming from above, knowledge and other challenges. All of these challenges need to be emphasized but what was further explored was how small things can decrease the level of trust. Furthermore, factors like digitalization and globalization can be both beneficial or detrimental for trust building and either increase or decrease the challenges associated with trust building depending on how one communicates and uses the tools. Therefore, instilling an awareness of the importance of real-life interactions and aiming to understand one another would be beneficial.

Trust just like the agile method needs continuous maintaining since both require the right mindset. According to this study, we have come up with some suggestions on factors that should be included in the trust mind-set. These are the factors that we identified as important when it comes to building trust and overcoming the challenges associated with building trust. The following factors were identified; the importance of understanding and building a relationship with each other, agreeing upon expectations and shared values, knowledge sharing, hiring people with the right competence, acknowledging the value of meeting face to face, learning about cultures, delegating the ownership and not becoming overconfident and these factors should be included in the trust mind-set.
6.1 Practical Contribution
When it comes to building trust, this paper can contribute with practical recommendations on what agile teams should do both at the beginning of an agile project but also continuously throughout the process. The three themes that have been explored when it comes to building trust are; agreeing upon shared values and expectations, knowledge sharing and relationship building. The five themes that came up when it comes to the challenges are; distance, culture, decisions coming from above, knowledge and other challenges. Together, all these eight themes will serve as a guide and framework regarding how to build trust and what challenges team members in agile teams can face when it comes to building trust. Furthermore, some suggestions on how to overcome these challenges have also been brought up. However, in order to acquire a more rigid guide further research would be needed.

6.2 Theoretical Contribution
As trust is such a complex subject there might not exist one particular answer about how you should build trust in an agile team, instead, many aspects need to be included on both a short-term basis, for instance when starting a new agile project but also on a long-term and continuous basis. Furthermore, relying solely on one theory about how you build trust in agile teams is not enough, as from this study one can see that building trust is comprised of so many different aspects and also involves different challenges. Therefore, several theories would need to be merged in order to provide a better guidance to successfully build trust in an agile team.

6.3 Limitations
Due to time limitations and the challenge of finding interviewees the research has been limited to four companies and one university and in total 12 interviewees. To get a broader picture of the research topic more interviews would have been needed. The research is also limited to interviewees having Sweden and more specifically Stockholm and Uppsala as their home base which makes it hard to conclude that the result would be the same if the study would have been done with companies from other parts of Sweden or the world.
6.4 Future research

At the beginning of this research we had a hypothesis that trust in an agile team can help to use more of System 2 thinking (Kahneman, 2013, p. 16). According to Kahneman’s book *Thinking fast and slow* there exist two systems of thinking, System 1 and System 2. System 1 thinking is related to our intuition and can be described as quick, automatic and emotional. System 2 thinking aims to answer what one needs to know before forming an assumption about something (Kepner-Tregoe, 2014). Due to time limitation and the complexity of this kind of research it was impossible to conduct a study about this as well. However, it is a topic that would be of great interest for future research.

During one of the interviews, one respondent mentioned that he did not feel that a lower level of trust between teams affected trust in his own team. However, if the teams are working on the same project it could be interesting to research further whether this holds true or not.

Throughout the course of this research we have realised that extensive research has been done on agile management and trust. However, organisations in the future will look different due to digitalization. Therefore, research regarding new behaviours and the new role of managers and leaders should be conducted in relation to trust.
Reference list

Books


**Articles**


Appendix

Interview-guide

**Definition of trust:** trust means, releasing the control to someone else, it could either be an organization, team or person without connecting any type of safety tools as for example a binding contract or other types of coercion. But we trust one another with the expectation that the other part will respond with kindness. Trusting someone does often also include a risk that sometimes is based on limited evidence. When we will be asking about trust and the focus will lie on the trust that exist between the members in an agile team.

**Definition of feedback:** Feedback could be defined as the information about how we are performing in the effort to reach a certain goal. The focus will lie on giving and receiving feedback between the members in the agile team.

**Background questions:**
- What position do you have at the company?
- What position do you have or have had in your present or former agile project?
- How is the organisation working with agile? (is it a common used method?)
- In your former or present agile project which agile method did you use as for example Scrum, KANBAN, SAFE etc.?
- Do you always have a daily stand-up meeting? (this meeting could have other names depending on which agile method you use)

**General questions:**
- What is trust for you?
- How do you interpret trust in your agile team?
• Do you do anything actively to build trust in your agile team?

• How important do you believe it is that trust exist between the team members in an agile team?

• What effect do you believe the level of trust has on the feedback given to your team members in the agile team during the daily stand-up meeting?

• Do you believe a higher level of trust helps to change more efficiently?

Description: In this study, efficient means quick but not too intuitive decisions, so that you don’t feel that the decision was made too quickly afterwards. And also has it been made without any disputes?

• As the project develops and might take on a new direction, how is trust affected?

• In what way do you re-establish lost or less trust when a project takes on a new direction?

• Is the level of trust affected by what type of project you are working on?

Questions regarding your latest or current project:
Here we will be focusing on your latest or present agile project depending on if you work with one right now and how far you have come in the process with that one. So we will focus on the one that you believe fits the best to this interview.

• If you think about your latest agile project or the one that you are working with right now, do you believe that you have had or have a high level of trust between each other in this project?

• Can you describe this trust?

• Can you describe how the culture within this team has been or is?
• Have you felt that the culture has been signified by a culture where everyone has the ownership of the process or a more controlling culture, where the leader is controlling what everyone does?
Interview Guide - Second Interview with K4 (agile coach)

- How do you overcome the challenge of everyone not trusting you in an agile team?

- Does knowledge make it easier or harder for people to in an agile team to interpret trust?

- Do you think the agile method has an effect on trust? Does it help to improve the trust or does the opposite?

- Is it easier to build trust/safety in a homogenous team or in a team where you have different personalities?

- What can an organization do in order to have less knowledge gaps, so that an agile team can trust any form of knowledge coming from higher up for example? Do you think it is industry specific or can all organizations come up with some way to have less of these knowledge gaps if it is coming from someone higher above in the organization?

- What methods can agile teams implement in order to create more trust when they are working with teams in different locations?

- What do you see as the biggest obstacles when it comes to create trust in an agile team?

- Have you sometimes felt that it has been harder to create trust between several teams that are working on the same project then it has been to create trust within your own project?

- If you have felt a lower level of trust between the teams has this affected the trust within your own team?