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Master's Thesis

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GROWTH HACKING AND
ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN LARGE FINNISH ORGANIZATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between organizational culture and growth hacking in large Finnish organizations. Growth hacking is a relatively new field in marketing which aims to accelerate a company's growth exponentially via agile, iterative experimenting and growth focused strategies. While the concept was born in startup world, the interest among large organizations has been increasing in the last years, as well. However, implementing the growth hacking mindset to large organizations can be challenging due to a significantly different organizational culture that they possess. This qualitative research focuses on analyzing what kind of culture exists among the large organizations which have implemented growth hacking, what kind of challenges it has caused and how the culture has been managed in order to make it more favorable for growth hacking.

Based on the previous research on the subject, Competing Values Framework (CVF) was chosen as the central theory for the organizational culture. CVF presents four different types of organizational culture and allows the comparison between them via validated research tool, Organizational Cultural Assessment Instrument (OCAI). As the literature concerning growth hacking is in nascent state, the previous literature about relationship between organizational culture, innovativeness and agile methods was applied as a secondary data source. Qualitative primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews (n=7) and the use of OCAI.

The research identified cultural characteristics which potentially facilitate and impede implementation and execution of growth hacking. The findings suggest that the suitable CVF organizational culture types for growth hacking are adhocracy, market and clan cultures, although one specific culture type that best supports the process could not be identified. The study concludes that growth hacking can be applied into large organizations' marketing beneficially, thus managers should adapt the organizational culture to support it e.g. by lowering hierarchy, increasing agility and strengthening open communication.

TIIVISTELMÄ

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Tämän tutkielman tarkoituksena on tutkia kasvuhakkeroinnin ja organisaatiokulttuurin välistä suhdetta suomalaisissa suuryrityksissä. Kasvuhakkerointi on suhteellisen uusi markkinoinnin ala, jonka tavoitteena on kiihdyttää yrityksen kasvua eksponentiaalisesti ketterän ja iteroivan testauksen, sekä kasvuun keskittyneen strategian kautta. Vaikka käsite on syntynyt kasvuyritysmaailmassa, kiinnostus siihen on kasvanut myös suuryritysten puolella viimeisten vuosien aikana. Kasvuhakkeroinnin ajattelutavan implementointi suuryrityksiin saattaa kuitenkin olla haastavaa niiden merkittävästi erilaisen organisaatiokulttuuri vuoksi. Tämä laadullinen tutkielma keskittyy analysoimaan millainen organisaatiokulttuuri vallitsee niissä suuryrityksissä, jotka ovat implementoineet kasvuhakkeroinnin osaksi markkinointia, minkälaisia haasteita se on aiheuttanut ja kuinka kulttuuria on johdettu, jotta se tukisi kasvuhakkerointia.

Aikaisempaan tutkimukseen perustuen kilpailevien arvojen teoria (CVF) valittiin organisaatiokulttuuriin keskeiseksi teoriaksi. CVF esittelee neljä eri organisaatiokulttuurin tyyppiä ja mahdollistaa niiden keskinäisen vertailun validoidun tutkimustyökalun, OCA:n avulla. Koska kasvuhakkeroinnin tutkimus on erittäin varhaisessa vaiheessa, aikaisempaa kirjallisuutta organisaatiokulttuurin, innovatiivisuuden ja ketterien menetelmien suhteen välillä käytettiin sekundaarisena datana. Laadullinen primaaridata kerättiin käyttäen puolisuutrukturoituja haastatteluja (n=7) ja OCA:ta.

Tutkimuksessa identifioitiin kulttuurin piirteitä, jotka edistävät ja vaikeuttavat kasvuhakkeroinnin implementointia ja toteutusta. Tulokset esittävät, että CVF-teorian mukaisista kulttuurityypeistä adhocracy-, market-, ja clan-kulttuurit tukevat kasvuhakkerointia, vaikka yhtä tiettyä kulttuurityyppiä joka tukisi prosessia ei pystytty identifioimaan. Tutkielma todentaa, että kasvuhakkerointi voidaan ottaa tuloksellisesti osaksi suuryritysten markkinointia, joten kasvujohdajien tulisi sovittaa organisaatiokulttuuri sitä tukevaksi mm. madaltamalla hierarkiaa, lisäämällä ketteryyttä ja vahvistamalla avointa kommunikaatiota.

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Essi Kykyri

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B2B	Business-to-business
B2C	Business-to-consumer
CTA	Call to Action
CVF	Competing Values Framework
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MVP	Minimum Viable Product
PMF	Product Market Fit
OCAI	Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument
SaaS	Software as a Service
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The world of marketing has changed rapidly in the last couple of decades. Nowadays, marketing has shifted from traditional to digital, and offline channels have lost a big part of their footage to their online versions. Television has been changed to YouTube, radio to Spotify, billboards to display ads, magazines to blogs, and word of mouth to social media. Marketing has entered a “post digital” phase, where the siloed thinking that divided marketing into “digital” and “traditional” is being replaced by simply placing them both under the same term; “marketing” (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). In the past, marketing has been considered as profession, where results could not be counted or quantified (Grossberg, 2016). The new digital tools, electronic data sources and advanced analytics, however, have made measuring of marketing’s value easier than ever. With digital marketing, practically all the marketing actions are measurable and quantified. Big data, emerging visualization techniques and enhanced computing power deliver customer insight, which can be used for firms’ strategic decision-making. (Quinn, Dibb, Simkin, Canhoto & Analogbei, 2016) However, while the power of technology, digitalization, and use of data are enabling marketing effectiveness and efficiency, the field is challenged by fewer resources, increased dispersion of marketing activities, subsequent loss of influence and growing demand of accountability (Biegel, 2009; Quinn et al., 2016).

Growth hacking, a new move that raised from startup world, is utilizing the trend of digitalization and power of technology, challenging the definition of marketing again. Growth hacking as a term was created over a decade ago, and means strategy that focuses solely on accelerating a company’s growth, thus essentially expanding the meaning of marketing from traditional customer acquisition to anything and everything that grows the business (Holiday, 2013). For startups, growth is practically the only way to achieve sustainable profitability, so the motivation to choose growth focused strategy is rather obvious. Startups are

lacking money, resources, and experience, which makes traditional marketing unachievable (Holiday, 2012). Growth hackers utilize digital tools in a cost-efficient manner and use iterative experimentation and optimization to uncover which methods, tactics and actions work in their target market. While the concept has been and still is strongly associated with startups, the proven, quantified results have started to spark interest towards this method in large organizations as well.

Growth hacking serves startups' needs, and it can be assumed that the methods carry peculiarities that make them harder to fit in large organizations' culture and marketing processes. Analyzing the relationship between growth hacking and organizational culture in large organizations can bring these cultural characteristics that support growth hacking into daylight. As there are growing number of large organizations using growth hacking, it is worth to study, whether growth hacking is deliberately forced, or something that fits naturally into the large organizations' culture. In addition, it is worth to analyze the motivations behind growth hacking in large organizations. Large organizations are usually already profitable, they have an established place in the market and have much less disruptive potential than startups, in addition to having money to run costly campaigns and outsource the work to agencies, hence the motivation that drives them to apply this method is unclear.

According to non-scholarly literature, growth hacking is usable in all companies regardless the size or industry, but the authors neither address their specific needs nor the challenges that large organizations might face on their journey to adopt growth hacking methods. It is relevant to ask how large organizations' common cultural characteristics – siloed knowledge, hierarchy, and lack of agility – affect growth hacking process. Furthermore, understanding the relationship between growth hacking and organizational culture opens new opportunities for marketers in large organizations to explore the benefits of this method and offers a starting point for conversation whether it is feasible in their organization.

1.2 Preliminary Literature Review

Growth Hacking

The term “growth hacking” was born in 2010s to describe marketing strategies that solely focus on enabling a company’s growth using agile, low cost, and data-based practices. Although many new digital marketing concepts, such as inbound marketing, viral marketing, and marketing automation, have gained interest among scholars, there is a noticeable gap in academic research regarding growth hacking.

Previous literature has notably focused on the transformation of marketing from traditional, product-centric approach to digital, customer-centric approaches (e.g., Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Quinn et al., 2016; Grossberg, 2016), and how these new tactics, methods and strategies have been adopted and executed in organizations. However, only few studies focusing on growth hacking could be found, first, by Herttua, Jakob, Nave, Gupta and Zylka (2016), in which they explored the meaning of the term and the main characters of it, in order to, successfully, differentiate it from other marketing concepts. Later, Troisi, Maione, Grimaldi and Loia (2019) studied how Big Data analysis can reshape marketing decision-making in business-to-business (B2B) context employing growth hacking model in three case companies, and concluded that B2B marketing strategies can benefit from a data-driven mindset and the synergistic management of the growth hacking model to generate multiple (economic, knowledge based and marketing) advantages. Last, Kemell et al. (2019) aimed to spark interest in growth hacking among the academia by presenting two board games as an introduction to growth hacking for students using gamification theories. Since the academic literature in growth hacking is in nascent state, the theoretical part of growth hacking is mainly collected from non-scholarly sources, such as consultative books, online articles, and best practices, which present the practical side of growth hacking and help to formalize a picture what it is, and how it is executed in organizations. According to this non-scholarly literature, the key characteristics of growth hacking are innovativeness and agility (for a more detailed review of this literature see section 2.1).

Organizational Culture

Organizational culture has been studied widely and from many different viewpoints. The concept does not enjoy a single mutually agreed definition among the scholars and is probably the most difficult of all organizational concepts to define (Hatch, 1997), one reason being that the term itself is extremely broad and inclusive in scope (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). The concept of organizational culture got serious attention only in the 1980s, when several researchers started to study the concept using liberally of over 100 years of theory and research in cultural anthropology. In the last couple of decades, writers have proposed a variety of dimensions and attributes of organizational culture. (Cunliffe, 2008) To show the variety of suggested dimensions among scholars, few examples are presented.

Schein (1984), argued for cultural strength and congruence as the main cultural dimensions of interest. According to Schein, organizational culture is formed by three layers, in which the deepest level carries basic assumptions, the intermediate level is values, and the surface level is artifacts (Schein, 2004). According to Hofstede (1980), the dimensions of organizational culture were power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity (in Hatch, 1997), while Deal and Kennedy (1982) proposed a theory, in which the organizational culture consists of four types, each different to each other by two dimensions; speed of feedback (high speed to low speed) and a degree-of-risk dimension (high risk to low risk). In 1986, Kets de Vries and Miller focused on dysfunctional dimensions of culture, including paranoid, avoidant, charismatic, bureaucratic, and politicized dimensions (in Cameron & Quinn 2006, 32). Later, Martin (1992) identified three perspectives when studying organizational culture researches: cultural integration and consensus among all members in the organization; differentiation and conflict, meaning that organizations are fractured by subcultures; and fragmentation and ambiguity, which means that culture is never consistent nor stable (Hatch, 1997; Cameron & Quinn, 2006).

Also, in the 80s, Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), discovered that firms' focus, and its structure are two underlying factors on firms' effectiveness. They proposed that

these two powers when polarized form four competing values, which construct four organizational cultural types: Human relation model (flexible structure with internal focus), Open system model (flexible structure with external focus), Internal process model (controlled structure with internal focus) and Rational goal model (controlled structure with external focus). (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; Cameron & Quinn, 2006). The research was later continued by Cameron and Quinn (1999), based on the key management theories about organizational success, approaches to organizational quality, leadership roles, and management skills. They created a framework with four organizational culture types corresponding to the main organizational forms that have developed in organizational science: hierarchy, market, clan, and adhocracy cultures. (Cameron & Quinn, 2006) This theory, Competing Values Framework (CVF) got serious attention and has been later chosen by various researchers as their tool and viewpoint to access evaluative organizational culture studies in different contexts. The framework has multiple benefits, one of the major ones being that it offers a tool to assess organizational culture profile to any company, and effectively compare the cultures between multiple companies. For this reason, the framework was chosen for this research.

Agile methodology and Innovativeness

This research applies the literature about the relationship between organizational culture, agile methods, and innovativeness. Agile methods are commonly used frameworks for software development. The same ideology can be extended in other business functions, including marketing, and has many similarities with growth hacking: coordinated strategy, iterative experimentation, data-backed decisions, high autonomy among the employees and cross-functional, transparent teams (Whitehouse, 2017). On the other hand, various scholars have studied the cultural characteristics of innovativeness, discussed more briefly, which have high similarity with the characteristics of growth hacking. For these reasons, the literature around these topics is used in the literature review and as a secondary data in this research.

The earlier studies support the idea that an organizational culture can promote or inhibit agility, innovation, cooperation, openness and exchange of knowledge inside the organization (Loewe & Dominiquini, 2006; Othman, Zouaoui & Hamdoum, 2016) and be a favorable element to the development of innovative activity (Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2014). In the studies about agile methods and organizational culture, most of the literature is focusing on identifying the characteristics of an ideal organizational culture that supports agile methods, relying on the assumption that such culture exists. For example, Siakas and Siakas (2007) identified the cultural characteristics of an agile culture, which imposes a highly competitive environment with cultural, political and social implications. In the research it was shown that agile culture requires active involvement of all team members and seems to be most suitable in organizations, which have horizontal hierarchy emphasizing flexibility and spontaneity. Livari and Livari (2011) researched the relationship between organizational culture and the deployment of agile methods, and as a conclusion introduced several hypotheses based on the existing literature on the subject. They focused on the theory of Cameron & Quinn's Competing Values Framework, and, among all, proposed that agile methods are most incompatible with the hierarchical culture, while all other three culture types favor agile methods. However, the more formalized agile method becomes in the organization, the sooner it will become dysfunctional with adhocracy culture type. Othman, Zouaoui & Hamdoum (2016) discussed in their literature review that hierarchical cultures hinder the acceptance of agile methods while adhocracy and market cultures promote the acceptance of agile methodology.

In addition, Tolfo, Wazlawick, Gomes Ferreira and Forcellini (2011) studied the Schein's levels of organizational culture and their possible influence on the adoption of agile methods in software companies. In their research they present early problems that can jeopardize the adoption of agile methods by a company, and discovered that many facilitators or obstacles to the adoption of an agile method can be hidden in the lower levels of the organizational culture and that a superficial analysis of these issues can lead to problems when applying an agile

method in a software company. Furthermore, Robinson and Sharp (2005) discussed in their conference proceeding the nature of the interaction between organizational culture and agile development practice via three empirically based case studies and Tudor and Walter (2006) presented how agile approaches can be used in large, traditional organization using single case study. While the researchers have identified fitting elements of culture with agile methods, there are differences in the recommendations related to how to achieve the cultural compatibility. The concept of culture itself is complex and unique in every organization, although some researchers argue for changing the culture so that it is compatible with agile methods. (Iivari & Iivari, 2011) It can be argued whether agile approach even should be tried to fit in organizational culture models, and e.g. Siakas and Siakas (2007) argue that agile approach should be considered as a culture of its own.

Innovation is defined as a capability to create new ideas, products, and processes in a company, being one of the key factors in organization's competitiveness (Hult, Hurley & Knight, 2003; Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2014). Its compatibility with organizational culture has been addressed by many scholars lately. In many of the studies the focus has been identifying elements and determinants which make an organization more innovative, and exploring what kind of culture is demanded in order to gain high innovation capability. For example, Claver, Llopis, Garcia and Molina (1998) analyzed the most important conditions of corporate culture based on technological innovation and concluded that in order to build innovative culture certain requirements must be met. This involves six kinds of attitudes: the ability of managers to take risks; encouraged creativity; participation of all employees in building innovation-oriented culture; responsibility of both managers and employees for their actions; allowing employees to develop their interests and use their unique talents; developing the company's mission, which the employees will identify with; and, providing employees with a sense that their work is meaningful and has a positive impact on the achievement of objectives. Hult et al. (2003) studied the interrelationship between market orientation, entrepreneurial orientation, learning orientation and innovativeness, and how they link to business

performance, concluding that innovativeness is an important determinant to business performance, and, among all, that entrepreneurial orientation is an important driver of firm innovativeness. Additionally, McLean (2005) conducted an extensive literature review in the area of organizational culture, innovativeness and creativity, and summed five promoters for innovativeness, these being organizational encouragement, supervisory encouragement, workgroup encouragement, freedom and autonomy, and resources; and one, control, that impedes innovativeness.

Loewe and Dominiquini (2006) studied the obstacles to innovation in large companies and concluded four keys to effective innovation capability: leadership and organization; culture and values; people and skills; and processes and tools. Maier, Brad, Fulea, Nicoară, and Maier (2012), proposed a framework for innovation management, with the aim to help managers in every sector of the organization to implement systematic innovation processes in their team. Losane (2013) conducted a literature review to explore the determinants of innovation culture and concluded that such culture is mainly characterized by creativity, autonomy and flexibility, ability to take risks, future orientation, collaboration, openness, and tolerance for mistakes. Maher (2014) identified seven key dimensions of organizational culture that distinguish highly innovative organizations, these being ability to *risk taking* with the help of emotional support, balanced assessment and learning rather than punishing from failure; *resources* such as funding, time and authority to act; free-flowing, uncensored and wide scope *knowledge*; *goals* which should be decided together, but the way how they are achieved left free for the team to decide; *rewards* which are aligned with the organizational goals and leading to individual recognition; tools such as training, and deliberate, flexible processes; and finally, relationships which includes diversity, team based work, open environment and honoring everyone's input.

1.3 Definitions of the Key Concepts

Growth Hacking is an umbrella term for marketing strategies that focus on the company's growth via iterative chain of hypotheses, experiments, analyses, and

optimization. It combines marketing, product development and technology, and usually demands a cross functional team of professionals (“growth hackers”) who understand all these aspects. Rather than being a specific method or process, it includes the strategic, cultural and operational side: it is a strategy to focus all marketing efforts for growth; process of working and executing that strategy, marketing tactics and technology used in it; and finally, a culture or mindset of growth that the organization needs in order to achieve those goals.

In this thesis, growth hacking is considered as a mindset, which is characterized with innovativeness and agility. This mindset should be maintained and flourished by the whole team in order to work according to the growth hacking methods and to achieve the growth goals.

Organizational Culture is a complex set of values, beliefs, assumptions, and symbols that define the way how a company conducts its business (Barney 1986). It determines how employees do their jobs, behave, and interact with people inside and outside of the company. Although every organization has a culture, the depth may vary, and the same culture is not necessarily shared among the whole organization. It is common that different subunits have their own organizational cultures. (Hult et al., 2003; Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Cunliffe, 2008)

1.4 Research Questions and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to increase the understanding of growing, although not academically studied phenomenon of growth hacking and its relationship with organizational culture in the context of large Finnish organizations. The research examines why and how large Finnish organizations implement growth hacking into their marketing, by analyzing the organizational culture in place and what kind of facilitators and impediments these cultures present while implementing and doing growth hacking. Furthermore, the research seeks to present ideas how these obstacles were resolved in the organizations. To achieve this goal, the research clarifies the concept of growth hacking, describes the implementation and

prosecution process in selected case companies and examines the state of organizational culture in these companies.

The scientific goal of this study is to find whether there is a relationship between growth hacking and specific organizational culture type or characteristics in large Finnish organizations, and how these cultural characteristics either promote or hinder growth hacking processes. On the other hand, there is also a managerial goal in the research; to help large organizations and their managers understand how growth hacking supports their goals and whether it is something they could adopt into their marketing strategy; and, what kind of challenges they might face and how to overcome them while doing growth hacking.

Hence, the main research question is defined as follows:

What is the relationship between growth hacking and organizational culture in large Finnish organizations?

To get the answer to the main research question, four sub-questions were defined:

RQ1. What is growth hacking?

RQ2. Why has it been implemented and executed in large organizations' marketing?

RQ3. What kind of organizational culture supports growth hacking in large organizations?

RQ4. What kind of challenges the organizational culture brings to the growth hacking process and how are they managed in large organizations?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is presented in this subchapter and in Figure 1. It describes the theoretical perspectives, context and focus area used in this research.

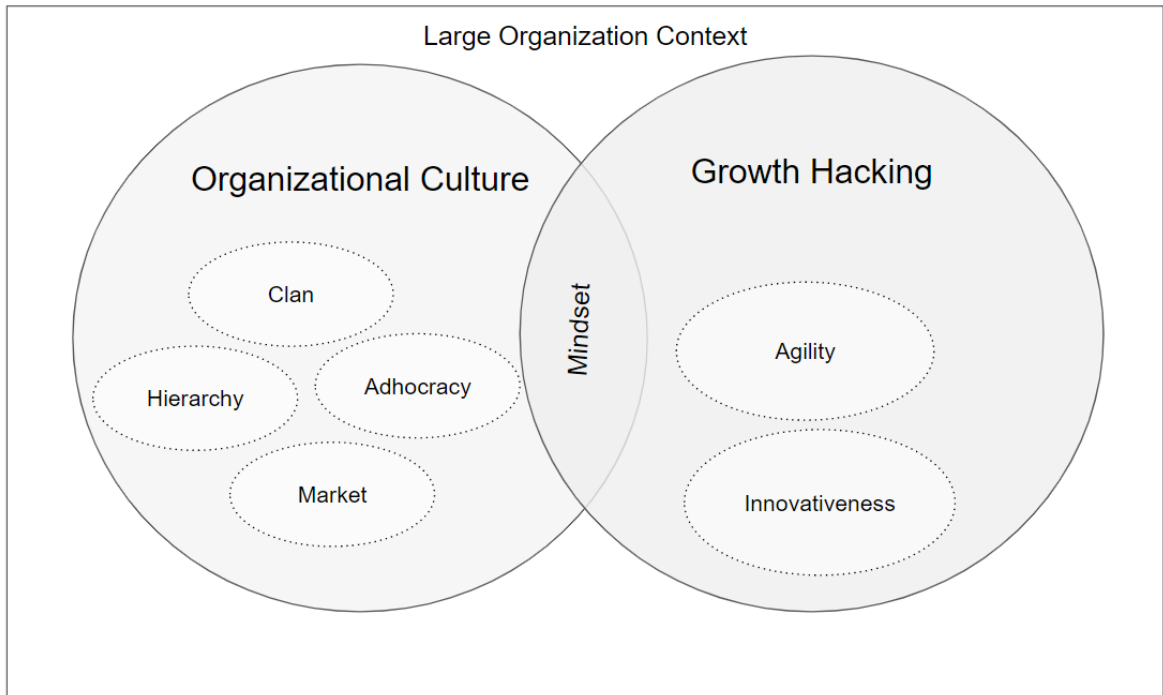


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical review discusses about two main concepts: growth hacking and organizational culture.

Growth hacking is a strategy and set of methods in marketing. However, it is as much of a mindset and a way of reacting and doing things. In the preliminary literature review, it was concluded that agile methodology and innovativeness have very similar cultural characteristics as growth hacking. For this reason, they are fitted inside the growth hacking concept in this framework. Later, the findings of this research are compared and complemented with the previous findings from research about organizational culture, innovativeness, and agile methodology.

For the organizational culture part, CVF is applied since the framework offers tools to assess organizational culture profiles and a method to compare them with each other. Thus, the four culture types of this framework are fitted in the organizational culture theory of this research's theoretical framework. The location of the culture types in the framework shows how closely these culture types, based on the previous literature about the relationship between agile methodology,

innovativeness and organizational culture, correspond with growth hacking mindset; agile adhocracy culture being the closest and most corresponding with growth hacking mindset, and hierarchy culture being the furthest one. Lastly, the theoretical framework is fitted inside the large organization context.

1.6 Delimitations

The delimitations of this research are due to the scope of organizational culture and the context of growth hacking. As stated in the preliminary literature review of this research, growth hacking is a relatively new concept, and there is practically no existing academic literature on the subject. The vagueness of the academic research and the prior established models for this style of marketing can be seen as a delimitation. However, for this reason, this research takes explorative approach. The goal is to formalize broad connections and the relationship between growth hacking and organizational culture.

The case companies are selected by using the context of large organizations in Finland. Due to the researcher's location and time restrictions, this study is limited to the Finnish organizations alone. However, it is to be noted that the interviewees' nationality or language are not limited to Finnish, as many digital marketing professionals in Finland are not native Finnish speakers. Large organizations were chosen as the focus group since growth hacking is rather new, yet growingly popular method in the large organizations, but also, because large organizations are, usually, more mature than small businesses, which makes the culture in large organizations more formalized and established.

Secondly, this research takes focus on marketing perspective of growth hacking. Growth hacking mindset can be also applied in other business areas than marketing and sales, such as product development, but those business functions are not included in this study. Due to the nature of the study, the selected interviewees have both hands-on and strategic experience in marketing and growth hacking. The interviewees were the ones, who had presented and/or led the growth hacking operations in the represented organizations.

Thirdly, growth hacking is often associated with startup world, and even more so with modern software startups. It has been concluded that growth hacking is not only for startups, and not only for software companies. However, it is more likely to be selected as a marketing strategy in companies with “intangible” products, such as software as a service (SaaS) products and other digital services. Although growth hacking tactics are easier to apply to digital platforms, no reason why growth hacking would not work with tangible products was found in the literature review. However, it is worth mentioning that these sample companies selected for the empirical part of this research only represent intangible product offer, i.e., digital services of various kind. This was not a sample frame made by the researcher, but rather a coincidence and due to the current state of the growth hacking’s occurrence among large Finnish organizations.

Last delimitation is the scope of applied organizational culture theory. It is worth to remark that this research does not aim to answer the questions on how to change any organizational culture in order to make the culture more suitable for growth hacking. In addition, this research does not address the question about organizational structure nor offers plans for organizational structure changes. Organizational change and organizational structures are much wider topics and left out of this research purposefully.

1.7 Research Methodology

This study is conducted by using a qualitative research method with exploratory approach. The method was chosen to support the objectives of this study; to build a new theory on a topic which currently is studied sparsely and to provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena of growth hacking (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

The study is conducted by using multiple case study in order to get in-depth understanding of real-life phenomenon in contextual condition, and to draw a single set of “cross-case” conclusions (Yin, 2009). The primary data is collected in

two parts: first, by using an OCAI tool that provides basic understanding of the case companies cultural profiles, and secondly, by interviewing participants from the case companies to get in-depth understanding of when, why and how did they start growth hacking, what kind of challenges have they faced while implementing and doing it, and what kind of effect their organizational culture has had in it. The secondary data is collected from the existing literature in the field of organizational culture, growth hacking, innovativeness, and agile methodology. The literature about growth hacking includes mainly consultative books, online articles, and best practices.

The participants to the multiple case study were selected by using non-probability, purposive sampling. The sampling was done using three criteria. First, the context of the research is large Finnish organizations, hence the case company must be a large Finnish organization. Secondly, the case company must be doing growth hacking consciously, i.e., they have implemented growth hacking methods and tools into their marketing strategy before taking part in the research and they call the method growth hacking. Thirdly, the participant from the case company must have both operational and strategic experience from marketing and growth hacking, namely, managing the growth hacking operations in the case company as well as working closely and/or as a part of the team responsible of growth hacking operations. This is to ensure that the participant understands both strategic reasons to implement growth hacking and how it is done in practice in the case company.

1.8 Structure of the Research

This research is divided into two parts. The first part, containing chapters one and two, presents the theoretical part of the study. The second part, chapters three to five form the empirical part. The structure is illustrated in the Figure 2.

Chapter one introduces the topics of growth hacking and organizational theory and justifies the need to conduct this research by presenting research gaps in existing literature. Furthermore, this chapter provides the preliminary literature review,

definitions of the key concept and the theoretical framework for this study and clarifies the delimitations and the research methodology. The second chapter forms the theory behind the research topic. It discusses the strategic, operational, and cultural sides of growth hacking and examines the concept of growth hacking mindset. This chapter also explains the existing academic literature of organizational culture, introduces the theory of CVF, used in the empirical part of the research, as well as discusses the findings of previous research in organizational culture, innovativeness and agile methods.

The empirical part of the study is presented in the chapters three to five. Chapter three explains how the research was conducted and describes the context of the research, data collection method, data analysis methods and examines the reliability and validity of the research. Chapter four focuses on describing and presenting the findings from the multiple case study and applies them to the existing literature. Lastly, chapter five summarizes the research findings, discusses about the managerial implications of the research, as well as explains the limitations of the research and offers suggestions for future research.

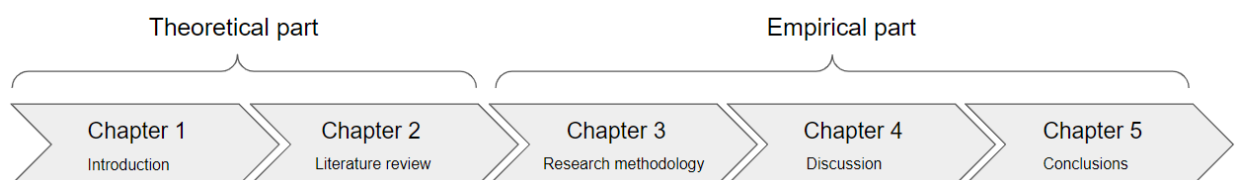


Figure 2. Structure of the Research

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the literature review is to discuss about growth hacking as it is presented in the non-scholarly literature and evaluate the previous academic research on organizational culture and its implications with growth hacking related fields.

2.1 Growth Hacking

Growth Hacking is a modern concept and an umbrella term for strategies that focus on organization's growth. Primarily, growth hacking is a marketing strategy (Holiday, 2012; Herttua et al., 2016), and closely related to other marketing concepts, which have similar characteristics and use the same set of tools, such as viral marketing, guerrilla marketing (Herttua et al., 2016), inbound marketing and content marketing (Geru, Rusu & Capatina 2014; Patel 2017). Essentially, it is about maximizing return on investment and expanding efforts where they will be most effective (Holiday, 2013), which is done through rapid generation and testing of ideas, and the use of metrics to evaluate the emergent results (Ellis & Brown, 2017). All the decisions are based on data, so growth hackers need to constantly measure and analyze their actions. In the long run this reduces costs, as the company learns what it does well and what is not worth continuing. (Holiday, 2013) With the measurable tactics and tools, growth hacking is a solution to the marketing's challenge to deliver measurable outcomes.

Although the term itself is new, growth hacking tactics are not. The term "growth hacker" was created by Sean Ellis (2010), when he used the term in his personal blog to describe a person who is solely focusing on enabling a company's growth. Ellis's goal was to find other likeminded people: "growth hacking" was becoming a phenomenon, although there was neither name nor characteristics to define it. Growth hacking can be applied using the common digital marketing tools and tactics, like social media marketing, search engine marketing, content marketing, inbound marketing, and so forth. As Fong and Riddersen (2016) state, "most

growth hacking tactics are simply technological implementations of marketing strategies that have existed for centuries”. The depth of that ultimate goal, growth, is what differs growth hacking from traditional marketing. Therefore, the growth hacking strategies also differ from traditional marketing strategies.

2.1.1 Growth Hacking Methodology

One of the first recognized modern growth hacking activities was done by Hotmail, when the company decided to attract more new customers by placing a text “P.S.: I love you” under each email in 1996. This worked as a practically free way to advertise the service in every single email that was sent. The trick worked, and Hotmail was able to grow the number of new users exponentially. (Ries, 2011; Holiday, 2013) This test sums up growth hacking; it was a novel experiment; affordable to operate; and executed for the sole purpose of gaining rapid growth for the product.

Growth hacker is a person whose job is to implement those selected growth hacking actions inside the company in order to make it grow fast and with small investments. In the literature, growth hacking process is presented to start by creation of cross-functional team, or a set of teams which combine the talents from different organizational units to perform (e.g. Ellis & Brown, 2017). It has been argued that growth hacker needs a combination of marketing skills and technology knowledge (Chen, 2012; Herttua et al., 2016). Chaubey (2019) illustrated this by stating that a growth hacker is someone who operates in the intersection of product, marketing, and technology (see Figure 3).

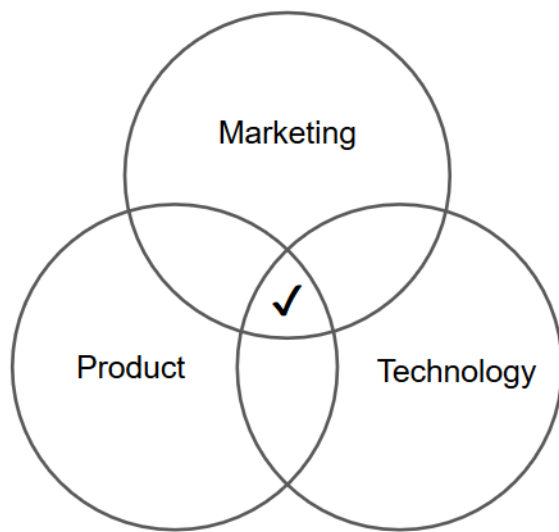


Figure 3. Growth Hacker's Skillset (Chaubey, 2019)

Fong & Riddersen (2016), however, believed that while both technological and marketing skills are important, they do not need to be found on the same person. Growth hacking can be done in teams where everyone's skills and talents are combined. While one team member is the marketer, the other can be a technologist, and "just because you do not know how to code does not mean you cannot hack growth. [...] It can be a mentality adopted and executed by the collective skill sets of a group" (Fong & Riddersen, 2016).

Regardless whether growth hacker needs to have skills in technology, product development and marketing or not, it is mutually agreed that growth hacking should take place in all these functions, by creating invincible products that user cannot live without. This goal intersection of product development and marketing is usually called Product Market Fit (PMF), which means that the product is developed to fit the market needs perfectly. The term was first created by Marc Andreessen and later popularized by Eric Ries, to drive startups to success, and by Sean Ellis, as a growth hacking tactic.

Andreessen (2007), defines PMF as "being in a good market with a product that can satisfy that market". According to his idea, a company can always say from their performance whether they have achieved PMF or not (Andreessen, 2007). Ries (2011) explains that the best way to get Product Market Fit is by using Build-

Measure-Learn feedback loop; starting with a minimum viable product (MVP) and by improving it based on the feedback. MVP is a development technique which essentially means creating a new product which has just enough and sufficient features to satisfy the early adopters, after which the product can be improved and complemented based on the feedback until PMF is met (Ries, 2011). Mainly because of the desired PMF, growth hacking process needs to include multiple team members across the company. As the goal is to develop the best possible product for the target market to attract as many customers as possible, marketing, product development, and customer service need to be part of the process, so that the marketing decisions are based on the best knowledge of customer interface, customer behavior and product design. (Holiday, 2013) Marketing department needs to contribute to the process because they know best what the customers want, but, as Holiday argues, marketing should not be a separate function but rather as something built into the product itself.

Growth marketing does not think products as static, hence, PMF needs to be constantly measured. Even when the product seems to be “perfect”, the development process is not ended but improvements and iterations are needed constantly. (Holiday, 2013) When the product is ready to be marketed, the key is to market it to right people, using tactics that are targeted exactly to them and testing constantly new ideas to find growth opportunities.

Growth hacking tactics can be various, including digital marketing, viral marketing, guerilla marketing and so forth. The only criteria that distinguishes one tactic as growth hacking, is its objective to grow the business and its fast, agile execution with evaluation and analysis phase after. As Holiday stated (2013) *“if handing out flyers on the street corner accomplishes that [growth objective], then consider it growth hacking.”* However, it can be argued that since the fast execution, relative affordability and measurability are one key elements that define growth hacking, the most commonly used tools are digital; e-mails, pay-per-click ads, blogs, and platform APIs, instead of commercials, publicity, and costly campaigns (Holiday, 2013).

One of the biggest differences in growth hacking and traditional marketing is the idea of marketing function loop. Traditional marketing takes place only in the first steps of customer journey (bringing in potential customers) while growth hacking marketing tries to influence customers in their whole lifespan. Growth hacking does not think marketing as a “lead machine”, nor just a way to build awareness and brand. While branding is important, growth hacking’s goal is not to create stronger brand with traditional and costly ways (e.g. billboard or television ads) but to use cheap and scalable ways to grow the brand name (Holiday, 2013). It has also been argued that the key to growth is not by attracting new customer, but by improving customer retention (Ries, 2011; Holiday, 2013; Hertzum et al., 2016)

To show the variety of growth hacking methods, few are explained more in depth below.

Fong & Riddersen’s ASP

Fong and Riddersen presented “ASP” framework, which stands for Automated Selling Process. They describe ASP as a “digital replica of the perfect salesperson”, which is applicable to any kind of business. The framework is constructed from six components; Attraction, First Impression, Engage & Educate, Follow-Up, Sales Technology, and Referrals & Retention. (Fong & Riddersen, 2016)

The first step, Attraction means the actions to gain attention to the offered products or services. In traditional marketing, this means e.g. print ads or television; in digital marketing, content in YouTube and social media. While the tactics vary among companies, the goal is the same: to get attention. The second step, First Impression is to offer a good first impression to the prospective by giving them personalized and professional experience in that channel, where they first meet the company. The third step Engage & Educate, includes actions that make the prospect to enjoy and feel comfortable with the company offering engaging and educational content. In the fourth step, Follow-Up, the target is to continue a

dialogue with the prospect and politely remind them about the offering and the company's presence using various digital tools in order to turn them actual customers. The next step, Sales Technology, as the name states, is to use technology to close sales easier and to provide frictionless purchase experience for the customer. Lastly, Referrals & Retention is using specific tactics to generate satisfied and referring customers which in turn help to turn next prospects into customers. (Fong & Riddersen, 2016)

Patel and Taylor's Product, Push and Pull tactics

Patel and Taylor presented a framework of three P's (2014), standing for Product, Push and Pull tactics.

Pull tactic means getting visitors by giving them a reason to come, i.e. pulling them towards the organization. This can be done in numerous ways, but the core is to give the visitors something valuable so that they want to familiarize themselves with the organization. Online, this could be for example by offering an e-book, a white paper, or an interesting blog post. (Patel & Taylor, 2014)

Push tactic is a more aggressive one than Pull tactic. Instead of enticing people, the key is to find out where the potential customers are and then push them onto the organization's site. Paid advertisement is a good example of Push tactics. For example, the marketer can do a research about the search engine keywords that their potential customers are searching, create a Google AdWords campaign using those keywords and eventually push the visitor to the site through that campaign. (Patel & Taylor, 2014)

Product tactic, as the name implies, relies on the product. The tactic implies that if the product is good enough (i.e., meets the PMF), it sells itself with a help of a word of mouth. In the Product tactic, a marketer uses the current customers and encourages them to invite others to use the product. For this tactic, the first step is to have a good product that people find useful, and second, to establish a good referral program in place. (Patel & Taylor, 2014)

These tactics are used in the growth hacking process, which is executed in six steps, as a “growth hacker’s checklist”. First step is to define actionable goals, which means deciding which metric the growth hacker wants to improve and defining it as narrow and specific as possible. The second step is to implement analytics to track the goal and measure the success in it; and third step is to leverage existing strengths, which means to start from the experiments that are easiest or most effortless to do first. Fourth step is executing the experiment, fifth is optimizing it based on the data collected from the first experiment cycle; and sixth, repeating the whole process.

Herttua et al. Growth Hacking Process Framework

In Herttua, Jakob, Nave, Gupta and Zylka’s Growth Hacking Process Framework (2016), the growth hacking process is divided into five steps. In the framework (Figure 4), the first step is to analyze the actual situation of the company and the product with data-dependent methods. The second step is to obtain PMF by optimizing the product according to the results from the earlier step’s analyses. The third step is to test the PMF by performing A/B tests, to find out the best possible version of the product based on the determined goals. After the A/B tests, the product is ready for the market and “hacked” to growth. The next step is to perform a hacking action. According to Herttua et al., the first thing to clarify is the content and the design; after that, a strategy is needed to be determined. The action needs to be measurable, analyzable, and implementable, and preferably something that convinces the existing customers stay, i.e., affects in the retention phase instead of acquisition phase. Lastly, the action has to deliver the core value of the product to the customer. The action itself can vary, and the choice depends on the company’s aims and goals, as well as the learning effects during the earlier process. As growth hacking is a permanent process, the whole process is repeated after the first round.

2.1.2 Growth Hacking Mindset

“Before you growth hack your business, you must first hack your mind.”

(Holiday, 2013)

According to the literature, growth hacking is not exclusively, nor most importantly defined by certain kinds of tools and actions used, but it requires a certain kind of mindset inside the company and among the employees (Holiday, 2013; Fong & Riddersen, 2016). Holiday, who interviewed and wrote a book about different companies who had implemented growth hacking into their strategy, noted that most of the successful growth hacking companies did not share common set of tactics, but a common mindset. (Holiday, 2013) The same ideas have been presented by other growth hacking professionals in the last decade. Fong and Riddersen (2016) said that growth hacking is not something that one can learn in a classroom, but it is a mindset that can be adopted. Aaron Ginn, pioneer in growth hacking has said in his much-cited line (2012a), that “growth hacking is more of a mind-set than a tool kit”, when he explained one of the common myths about growth hacking. For startups, adopting this mindset is more natural, as startups are lacking the money to use on traditional marketing, but having the flexibility and agility to perform experimental marketing tactics. However, nothing makes it impossible for larger companies to implement growth hacking mindset into their strategies as well, and it overlaps with the large organizations’ need of more agile teams (Ellis, 2014).

Regardless of the importance given to the mindset, only few authors define the mindset that they request in their texts, and those who do, usually explain it through the growth hacking processes, i.e., the mindset is “correct” when these processes, such as PMF take place successfully. While only few definitions are given, some common characteristics can be identified, these being agility to perform fast experiments, creativity and openness to come up with out-of-the-box ideas, open mind towards learning, and ability to “think like a startup”: keeping the sole focus on growth, and knowing how to measure it.

The most important characteristics, and the one that distinguishes growth hacking from traditional marketing, seems to be the latter. Growth hackers' only goal is growth, and everything they do should speed that in one way or another. Since growth is measured and every action that a growth hacker does to speed up growth should be based on data, it is important to have a data-driven, analytical mindset and rely on facts instead of gut feeling (Ellis, 2010; Ellis & Brown, 2017; Van Gasteren, 2019). Holiday (2013) claims that a growth hacker “a feeling backed with data and information”, and a growth hacker needs to use that data to create the best possible new product or feature. Ellis (2010) tells that growth hackers need discipline to follow a growth hacking process, analytical mindset to decide which experiments are worth continuing and which ones not, entrepreneurial drive and an ability to take responsibility for growth; while Ginn (2012b) describes “passion for tracking and moving a metric” as one of the common characteristics between growth hackers, and Williams (2016) expands the idea by stating that it is not enough to be data-driven, but to know which the most important metrics are to measure the objectives.

Agility and speed are other characteristics mentioned by many authors. Noud van Alem (2018), the ex-head of marketing in both Google and Uber, encourages growth hacking companies to embrace the agile methodology, and use its processes, tools, and trainings to respond quickly to customer needs and market changes. Van Gasteren (2019) states that one of the most important skills in growth hacking mindset is to understand that speed is more important than perfection, so that one can generate a lot of experiments fast. This demands agility and an open culture which accepts failing as an obligatory part of experimenting. Williams (2016) puts this into words as writing that growth hackers love experimenting, and for them “failure is learning, another piece of data to guide future experiments”.

Creativity is an essential characteristic of growth hacker (Ellis, 2010; Ginn, 2012c) and one strength that both growth hackers and traditional marketers have in common (Williams, 2016). While brand marketers use creativity to craft stories for

emotional connections, growth hackers use creativity to find unique opportunities to create growth. One hack offers only limited growth opportunities and works only as long as the competitors do not copy them, so being a successful growth hacker demands creativity to constantly come up with new ideas, and agility to execute them fast (Ellis, 2010; Williams, 2016). This innovative mindset repeats in other articles as well. Van Gasteren (2019) calls it an ability to be open to alternative problems and alternative solutions, i.e., finding out which problems lead to biggest losses and solving them with strategies that are not executed by anyone else.

Curiosity towards new solutions, tools and tactics combined with the ability and willingness to learn and develop oneself is also mentioned by many authors. As growth hacking is about constant experimenting, it demands certain openness towards alternative points of views, but also curiosity and insatiable desire to learn (Ginn, 2012b) and develop oneself. Van Alem (2018) sees this as both learning via experimenting and learning via educating oneself. Analyzing, measuring and learning about everything you do is “an absolute necessity” if you want to grow. Van Gasteren states, that one of the characteristics of growth hacking mindset is having high level of “Digital Intelligence” – essentially, will and ability to learn all the newest digital tools and platforms.

Lastly, as stated earlier, growth hacking takes place in the whole customer funnel, which means that to succeed, growth hacker needs to think about the whole funnel from potential buyers to long-lasting customers. Since growth hacking sees a product as the ultimate key to drive success, growth hacking is done in cross-functional teams which demands collaboration skills and open culture in the organization. In that sense, MVP and PMF methodologies can also be seen as mindsets that guide growth hacking, rather than being execution plans to create successful products fast. To have successful cross-functional teams, the organization should have low hierarchy and open attitude towards new suggestions and ideas (Van Alem, 2018). Collaborative working environment should be extended to customers as well. Holiday (2013) states that we have to stop thinking that products which we market are static, but rather develop them

constantly by the feedback we get from our customers. Therefore, the mindset demands humility to take the feedback, listen to the customers and accept that marketing, after all, is not the most important part of the customer acquisition journey, but product is.

2.2 Organizational Culture

Organizational culture, being based on the concept of culture itself, is not tangible. Therefore, finding a perfect definition for organizational culture has been a difficult task for researchers over the decades.

Organizational culture is a complex and wide term, which includes the set of values, beliefs, assumptions and symbols that define the way how a company conducts its business (Barney, 1986). Practically, it covers how employees do their jobs, behave, and interact with people inside and outside of the company. It reflects the personality of company and is concerned with how things are done in an organization on a day-to-day basis. Organizational culture impacts on what kind of relationships employees tie with their work, each other, managers, customers, and other stakeholders. It affects not only performance but also how employees feel about work and the organization; whether they are proud of their employer and whether if they work competitively or collaboratively. (Hult et al., 2003; Cameron & Quinn, 2006; Cunliffe, 2008)

While organizational culture is often discussed as a unified factor that takes place in the whole organization, many authors note that it is a complex and flexible entity, and one culture does not necessarily characterize the whole organization. It is possible and even likely to see the different subunits, hierarchical levels and teams having their own cultures (Martin, 1992; Cameron & Quinn, 2006). It is also to be noted, that not all organizations share the same level of cultural depth. While in some organizations the culture is very strong and cohesive, in others it might be fragmented and difficult to read from outside. Whether weak or strong, organizational culture has a powerful influence throughout the company, having a

strong impact on the success of the business (Deal & Kennedy, 1982) and working as a competitive advantage for the company (Barney, 1986).

2.2.1 Competing Values Framework

Many scholars tend to divide organizations into different, predefined cultural types depending on their cultural characteristics. In this literature review, Cameron and Quinn's the Competing Values Framework is used as a main theory base for the culture types. The same framework is later used to define the organizational culture among the case companies in the empirical part of this study.

The theory of Competing Values Framework dates back to the 80's. The theory was first presented by Quinn & Rohrbaugh (1983), based on statistical analysis of 39 indicators of effectiveness. The authors discovered two major underlying conceptions of effectiveness: firm's focus and its structure. When these two dimensions are polarized, they form the four competing values: Internal focus or External focus; and Control or Flexibility. Since a firm cannot have one hundred percent in both polarities in one dimension, they are competing values, hence the name. Placing the two competing values on a matrix, the framework constructs of four quadrants corresponding with four organizational culture types. Quinn and Rohrbaugh named these types as Human relation model (flexible structure with internal focus), Open system model (flexible structure with external focus), Internal process model (controlled structure with internal focus) and Rational goal model (controlled structure with external focus). (Quinn & Rohrbaugh, 1983; Cameron & Quinn, 2006)

This study was later continued by Cameron and Quinn, who wrote their book *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture* (1999) based on this framework. What Cameron and Quinn discovered was that the four cultural types (quadrants in the framework) match precisely the main organizational forms that have developed in organizational science. They developed the framework further based on the key management theories about organizational success, approaches to organizational quality, leadership roles, and management skills. They identified

each quadrant as a cultural type and created an Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) to diagnose the dominant orientation of the organization based on these four core types. In their model (Figure 5), the names of the four types were updated as clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy types, respectively as presented in Quinn and Rohrbaugh's model earlier. (Cameron & Quinn, 2006)

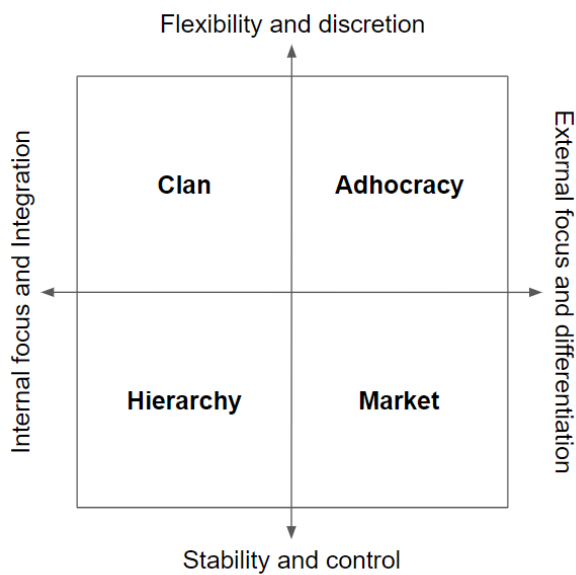


Figure 5. Competing Values Framework (Cameron and Quinn 2006, 35)

The organizational culture types are presented more detailed below, as characterized and drawn by Cameron and Quinn.

Hierarchy Culture

Hierarchy culture has high control and high internal focus. The culture is characterized with stability, predictability, and efficiency. An organization with this culture is generally formalized and a structured place to work. Maintaining a smooth-running operation is important and formal rules and policies hold the organization together. The quality strategy is to detect errors, control and measure processes, and use systematic problem solving and quality tools. (Cameron & Quinn, 2006)

While hierarchical culture can be seen somewhat unfavorable in nowadays fast and agile working environments, hierarchy was the ideal form of organization until the 1960s. In 1947, Weber proposed seven characteristics that are known as the classical attributes of bureaucracy: rules, specialization, meritocracy, hierarchy, separate ownership, impersonality, and accountability. These characteristics were adopted widely in organizations to generate efficient, reliable, and predictable output. This type of culture offered a maintainable, stable, and controlled environment, which helped companies to achieve good results. This led organizations to value control, standardized rules and procedures, and hierarchical decision-making as the path to success. (Cameron & Quinn, 2006)

Market Culture

Market culture shares high stability and control with external focus. The organization with market culture is results-based and emphasizes winning; reputation, success, competitiveness, and productivity are the most important values. Leaders in these organizations are producers, hard drivers, and rivals at the same time, while the people are characterized by competitiveness and goal-orientation. The organization finds competitive prices and market leadership important, and manages quality through improving productivity, competitiveness, measuring customer preferences and involving customers and suppliers to the production. (Cameron & Quinn, 2006)

Market culture as the most effective type of organizational culture was born in the late 1960s when transaction costs with external constituencies were seen as a key source of effectiveness. Unlike a hierarchy culture, a firm led by market culture operates through economic market mechanisms, so the major focus was to conduct transactions in order to create competitive advantage. (Cameron & Quinn, 2006)

Clan Culture

Clan culture presents high flexibility and high internal focus. An organization where clan culture is predominant, is typically a friendly place to work. The employees

often have a lot in common, and they want to and are encouraged to share a lot about themselves. The culture type emphasizes friendliness, openness, teamwork, participation, and consensus. The organization is characterized with low hierarchy and mentoring leaders, rather than top-to-bottom orders and formal rules. Success in these organizations is defined by addressing the needs of the clients and caring for the people. Quality is managed through open communication, employee involvement, empowerment, and team building. (Cameron & Quinn, 2006)

The history of clan culture sets back to the 60's and 70's, when American organizational culture researchers paid attention to post-World War II Japanese firms. These firms shared the same values, beliefs and goals among all employees and had created a cohesive, participating environment in the otherwise turbulent world situation. This family-like culture boosted their effectiveness, and therefore, got the interest of Western countries as well. (Cameron & Quinn, 2006)

Adhocracy Culture

Adhocracy culture is highly flexible with external focus. The culture is characterized as dynamic, entrepreneurial, and creative. In an adhocracy-oriented organization people are encouraged to take risks and be initiative. The long-term emphasis is on growth and the goal is to be a product or service leader on the market. The quality strategy is to focus on continuous improvement, find creative solutions and anticipate customer needs. (Cameron & Quinn, 2006)

Adhocracy culture is the newest culture type of the four, and it emerged after the industrial age when organizations' success was not anymore defined by strict rules and efficient processes, but more by the innovation and dynamic adaption to ever changing market conditions. The organization was believed to drive success with pioneering initiatives, and the managements' task was to foster creativity and entrepreneurship among the employees. (Cameron & Quinn, 2006)

years. As stated earlier, innovativeness, creativity and agility are all characteristics that can be identified in growth hacking mindset, so the findings among literature that examine the compatibility and relationship between these characteristics and organizational culture, is worth to discuss.

Innovativeness in the company, shortly, is the capacity to introduce new production process, product or service, or idea, such as a new structure or administrative system in the organization (Hult et al., 2003). Innovativeness has been seen as one way to gain competitive advantage (Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2014) which has made organizational culture and its relationship with innovativeness increasingly researched topic among academia in the recent years. The earlier studies support the idea that an organizational culture is a key factor in enabling innovation capability (Loewe & Dominiquini, 2006; Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2014) or even the major factor affecting the speed and frequency of innovations (Maher, 2014).

The organizational culture's importance in innovativeness has been identified by e.g. Loewe and Dominiquini (2006), who placed collaborative, open culture as a one of the four key factors that can promote innovativeness in the company, critical people and their skills, visionary leaders and aligned organization, and systematic processes and suitable tools being the other three factors (Figure 7).

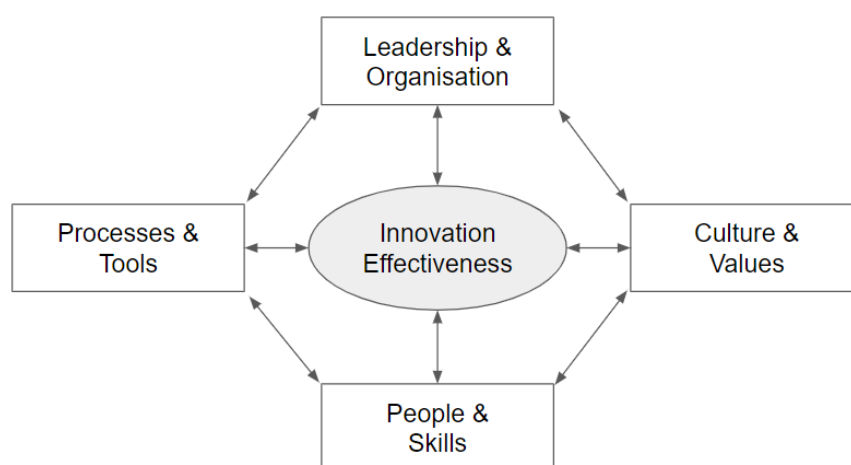


Figure 7. Key Factors of Innovative Effectiveness (adapted from Loewe & Dominiquini, 2006)

While one specific type of culture that best promotes innovativeness has not been identified by previous researchers, many of them link innovativeness with few specific cultural characteristics. Maher (2014), and Loewe and Dominiquini (2006) emphasize the importance of collaborative culture in gaining innovativeness; innovative ideas are rarely created alone so collaborative environment, diversity and acceptance of different viewpoints and new ways of thinking promote innovativeness. Open culture, which gives employees freedom to express their ideas and opinions supports innovation process; open flow of communication should be encouraged, rather than punished (McLean, 2005; Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2014).

Trust, safeness, and transparency are important as well. Failure is a necessary part of innovation; thus, an innovative organization needs to have a high tolerance for mistakes and failures (Loewe & Dominiquini, 2006; Losane, 2013). Innovation also requires proper working conditions, encouragement and organizational structure that stimulate employees' creativity and support new concepts and ideas. In addition, flexibility in the working methods and high diversity and cooperation between employees from different backgrounds are mentioned to be beneficial for innovativeness. (Claver et al., 1998; McLean, 2005; Losane, 2013; Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2014)

Some authors give the importance and responsibility to create an inspiring and innovative culture to the management. Maier et al. (2012) argue that systematic management approach is essential for innovation, and companies need to integrate innovation management into their management systems. Szczepańska-Woszczyzna (2014) discusses the managers' role in stimulating innovativeness and identifies that management style that emphasizes tasks and interpersonal relationships as well as motivates the employees to be creative is important for innovativeness. Hult et al. (2003) state that organizations need the innovation capability to translate market intelligence knowledge into practice. This is highly related to the managers skills to acquire market intelligence and act on it, and in which extend they do so. Edinger (2012) asserts that the leaders should foster

innovativeness in their organization by focusing on outcomes, developing reciprocal trust, challenging the status quo, being inspiring and setting hard-to-reach goals that make the employees to stretch.

In addition, to support efficient innovation process, the employees should be given a high autonomy. Goals should be agreed together in the organization, but the employees should have high autonomy and permission to decide the best way to achieve those goals; in contrast, control is an impediment in the innovation process (McLean, 2005). It has also been argued that incentives can promote innovativeness; employees should get individual recognition for their work, feel that their work is meaningful for the common goals and be rewarded for innovative behavior (Claver et al., 1998; Maher, 2014; Szczepańska-Woszczyzna, 2014) Lastly, McLean (2005) and Maher (2014) claim that resources, namely time and money and permission to act, support successful innovation process; in order to be innovative, an employee needs time and money to be creative and a right to use those as they see the best.

In addition to this, organizational culture and its compatibility to agile methods has been studied widely, especially in the software development context, as agile methods, such as Scrum, Kanban and Extreme Programming, are usually seen as software development frameworks. Agile methods were first popularized by Manifesto for Agile Software Development, written by seventeen agile software development gurus, including leaders and founders of software companies. The manifesto includes four statements, which define agile framework: individuals and interactions over processes and tools; working software over comprehensive documentation; customer collaboration over contract negotiation; and, responding to change over following plan (Beck et al., 2001). These statements underline agile methodology as something that involves high collaboration, flexible approach, and fast reactivity to ever-changing market conditions. However, agile methods are not based on a clear common core idea (Iivari & Iivari, 2011) which makes the term broad and definition of agile method flexible. While agility and agile methods alone are not synonyms to growth hacking or vice versa, “agile and growth hacking

have complementary mindsets” (Whitehouse, 2017). It can be seen that agile methodology and growth hacking have various similarities, including iterative processes, testing and experimenting, cross-functional teams and transparent, open communication.

According to Othman, Zouaoui and Hamdoun (2016), the previous research has revealed that organizational culture is a relevant aspect that can influence the adoption and the acceptance of agile methods. In their literature review it was shown that hierarchical cultures hinder the acceptance of agile methods while development and rational (adhocracy and market) cultures promote the acceptance of agile methodology. However, among these companies that have adopted group culture and development culture (clan and adhocracy), the role of the company in the acceptance of agile methodology plays key role – while in the companies with rational culture, the influence is much smaller. Siakas and Siakas (2007), on the other hand, identified the cultural characteristics of an agile culture, stating it requires active involvement of all team members and seems to be most suitable in organizations, which have horizontal hierarchy emphasizing flexibility and spontaneity. Consultation, participation, empowerment, consensus and compromise are characteristics that set the base for agile cultures and support the agile success factors, such as accommodation of volatile requirements, focus on collaboration between developers and customers, and support of early product delivery.

2.4 Summary

The theoretical part of this research discussed about growth hacking and the mindset's role in the concept, and continued with organizational culture focusing on Cameron and Quinn's Competing Values Framework, and the previous literature around the relationship between organizational culture, agile methods and innovativeness.

Although growth hacking is a marketing strategy, there are no common methodologies nor tools that clearly distinguish it from other existing marketing methods. It is closely related to viral marketing, inbound marketing and guerrilla marketing, and uses common digital marketing tools. For this reason, it could be argued that growth hacking is mainly a mindset that drives the growth hacking team to work efficiently to achieve the goal, growth. As discussed earlier, the mindset is highly associated with similar characteristics as innovativeness and agile development cultures; all three cultures are ultimately formed by similar determinants. The difference is the strategic focus, since the innovation culture's goal is to produce innovative and creative ideas, and in agile culture it is to produce a working product. However, these goals are achieved through similar kinds of methods and mindsets: they value low hierarchy, open communication, and collaboration in organization-wide teams and with customers; and produce creative and innovative solutions via agile and flexible methods. All three cultures accept continuous change and learning, and have a safe environment with tolerance for mistakes.

As a conclusion, the characteristics that form each of these cultures are summed in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Summary of Growth Hacking Mindset, Innovation Culture, and Agile Culture

	Growth Hacking Mindset	Innovation Culture	Agile Culture
Values	Data driven, analytical; experimentation; risk taking; agility; speed; continuous learning; creativity; innovativeness; digital intelligence; openness	Freedom; risk taking; trust; openness; creativity; flexibility; continuous learning	Flexibility; spontaneity
Strategy	Growth as a strategic goal	Innovativeness as a strategic goal	Working product as a strategic focus
Structure	Low hierarchy; cross-functional teams; cooperative teams; diversity; transparency	Low hierarchy; freedom, autonomy; flexibility; cooperative teams and group interaction; transparency	Low, horizontal hierarchy; flexibility; cross-functional teams; cooperative teams; diversity
Behavior	Discipline to follow processes; curiosity towards new tools; ability to learn; agility; entrepreneurial behavior; collaboration; tolerance for mistakes, permission to fail; analytical process	Collaboration; encouragement; tolerance for mistakes, openness of new ideas, ability of adoption of new ideas, processes or products, adapt quickly to external market shifts, trust relationships, focus on edge competences; resources and rewards	Collaboration with customers; interactions; collaborative teamwork; consultation; participation; empowerment; consensus; compromises; accepting the continuous change

Comparing these cultures to the organizational culture profiles provided in the CVF, it can be seen that adhocracy culture, market culture and clan culture have characteristics that fit and support growth hacking mindset, innovation and agile methods. In addition, growth hacking mindset demands discipline that can be associated with the high-control cultures; market culture and hierarchy culture. Low control and hierarchy, which is determining innovation culture, agile methods, and growth hacking mindset, is predominant in clan culture and adhocracy culture. The compatibility and relationship between the organizational culture profiles and growth hacking, innovation and agile cultures is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Compatibility of Growth Hacking Mindset, Innovation Culture and Agile Culture with CVF Organizational Culture Profiles

	Growth hacking mindset	Innovation Culture	Agile Culture
Clan	Safeness, collaboration, open communication, teamwork, low hierarchy	Safeness, trust, collaboration, open communication, teamwork, diversity, low hierarchy	Collaboration, participation, empowerment, consensus, compromises, low hierarchy
Adhocracy	Agility, risk taking entrepreneurial drive, creativity, innovativeness, continuous improvement, finding creative solutions, curiosity, continuous learning; "digital intelligence", low hierarchy	Innovativeness, creativity, flexibility, risk taking, constant learning, improvement, low hierarchy	Agility, creativity, flexibility, continuous change and improvement, low hierarchy
Market	Profitability, focus on growth, goal achievement, control in experimenting	Goal achievement, quick adaptation to market shifts, high autonomy	Collaboration with customers
Hierarchy	Control and discipline in experimenting?		

3 RESEARCH METHODS

This section presents the research approach of the study which includes the research method, the context of the research, as well as data collection methods and data analysis methods. Lastly, the reliability and validity of the research are examined.

3.1 Research Context

The research context is large Finnish organizations that have implemented growth hacking as a part of their marketing strategy, or that see growth hacking as one of their methods to achieve growth.

One of the most popular definitions of large organization comes from the European Commission, which defines large enterprises in relation to small and medium-sized enterprises; SMEs have less than 250 persons employed, and an annual turnover of up to EUR 50 million or a balance sheet total of no more than EUR 43 million (EU recommendation 2003/361). Large enterprise is one that exceeds these criteria with either employed persons or an annual turnover and balance sheet total. However, in this research, the definition of large organization from the Finnish Accounting Act (*Kirjanpitolaki*) is applied as the context is large Finnish organizations. The Accounting Act (1997/1336) defines large enterprise as a reporting entity that has total assets of EUR 20 million, net turnover of EUR 40 million, and an average number of employees of 250. At least two of these criteria must exceed for the organization to be considered a large enterprise.

Due to the lack of research in the topic, it is difficult to find definite numbers of Finnish firms which have adopted growth hacking into their marketing strategy. One reason for the lack of information is the misunderstanding and, partly, misuse of the term growth hacking (Herttua et al., 2016). For the same reason, even the companies which do not identify themselves as “growth hackers” and have not consciously chosen to do growth hacking, usually use some or most of the tools

and tactics that are also used in growth hacking. These include, but are not limited in marketing automation tools, landing page tools, and social media management tools. Some companies, as well, might already work in a way that could be considered as growth hacking: doing fast, iterative experiments, analyzing them and doing data-based actions. However, for the purpose of this study it was decided to include only companies which have consciously implemented growth hacking into their strategy. This was done in order to determine whether there is a relationship between the consciously chosen growth hacking methods and organizational culture, and if yes, what kind of relationship exists.

Furthermore, although growth hacking often links to many areas of business and company functions, the term is primarily used in marketing, hence this research takes the marketing context of growth hacking.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

In this research, the primary data collection was conducted by using semi-structured interviews together with OCAI. The participants were selected by using non-probability, purposive sampling, i.e., choosing sample units because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration of the research topic. This is not intended to be statistically representative but rather deliberate selection of samples that give in-depth understanding of the specific topic. (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003)

The case company sampling was based on three criteria. First, as the research context is large Finnish organizations, the companies in question are based in Finland. There is no limitation on the establishment country and/or the basement of the headquarter or other units of the case company.

Secondly, to define the change in marketing and the challenges of adopting growth hacking strategy, the companies must have implemented the growth hacking methods and tools into their marketing strategy before taking part in the research. Thirdly, to ensure the participant's understanding and experience from the

research topic, the participants from the case company have both hands-on and strategic experience from marketing and growth hacking, namely, leading or having close operations in the growth hacking processes in the case company. Titles vary from product owner, growth manager, digital sales manager, etc.

This research uses multiple sample frames, or information sources, from which the sample is selected. Primally, the researcher's personal network was used to find suitable sample companies. Secondly, suitable samples were searched through specific social media groups in Facebook and LinkedIn (consisting of growth hacker professionals) and searching growth hacking themed events, articles, and podcast, which included growth hacking specialists telling about their experiences. These specialists were contacted personally if they fit the sample criteria. Thirdly, chain sampling, i.e., asking the interviewed people to identify more people who fit the criteria (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) was used.

Using these sampling methods, sampling frames and selection criteria, 26 growth hacker professionals were contacted, out of which 10 agreed to be interviewed. Two interviewees dropped out due to the time schedule, and two others were from the same organization, and therefore gave the interview together. After all, total of seven interviews were conducted between June 2019 and April 2020.

In exploratory studies, when the research area is not well known, data collection is likely to be less structured to cover a broad agenda (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In this research, the interviews were semi-structured and hold face-to-face, via virtual meetings (using virtual conference tools such as Microsoft Teams), or regular phone calls. Face-to-face and virtual meetings were prioritized, but the interviewees were given the right to choose the most suitable way themselves. All interviewees were asked to prepare 1 hour for the interview, and the interviews took between 27 minutes and slightly over one hour, the average interview length being 45 minutes. The information about each interview's interviewing platform and interview length can be found below (Table 3).

Table 3. Interview Information

Interview	Interview platform	Interview length
Interview 1	Face to face	44 mins
Interview 2	Phone call	43 mins
Interview 3	Phone call	27 mins
Interview 4	Face to face	38 mins
Interview 5	Virtual meeting	46 mins
Interview 6	Virtual meeting	62 mins
Interview 7	Virtual meeting	59 mins

The interviewer had a list of key questions (see Appendix 1) which were covered during the interview, but the order and wording of the questions varied slightly between the interviews. The questions were formed to cover all the research sub-questions RQ1 – RQ4, i.e., measure the interviewees perception of growth hacking and growth hacking mindset, when, why and how growth hacking processes had been started in the case company, how growth hacking had changed the way marketing is done and what kind of benefits it has had, and what kind of organizational culture is in the case company and what kind of challenges it brings to growth hacking. Interview structure can be found below, in Table 4.

Table 4. Interview Structure

Interview steps	Description	Research sub-question
Introduction (2-5 min)	The interview process and aim are explained	
	Permission for audio recording is asked The interviewee's anonymity and rights are explained	
Interview topics (20-45 min)	1. Understanding of growth hacking and growth hacking mindset	RQ1
	2. The motivations and way to start doing growth hacking	RQ2
	3. How marketing is done currently and before the implementation of growth hacking	RQ2
	4. The organizational culture profile	RQ3
	5. Challenges in growth hacking process and how they were solved	RQ4
	6. Gained benefits from growth hacking	RQ2, RQ4
Closing (2-10min)	Opportunity for additional thoughts	
	The interviewee is thanked for their interest and time in participating	

The current state of each company's culture was examined by conducting an OCAI test (Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument). The OCAI test was asked to be filled before each interview, which gave the researcher time to analyze the test results before the interview and an idea about the culture profile of the case company.

The interview template and OCAI form can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, respectively.

3.3 Data Analysis

The OCAI tests were examined by using the analyzing method designed for this specific instrument and provided by Cameron and Quinn. The average scores for

each type of organizational culture were computed by adding together the answers of each corresponding culture type in each dimension and then divided by the total number of dimensions. This is, adding together all the numeric answers given to the culture type A, then dividing the sum by 6; then doing the same for the culture type B, and so forth. This analyzing method gives the average scores for each culture types and shows what type, or types, is the dominating one(s) in the organization. The average scores were then plotted in the culture type graph, giving a visual presentation of the culture type in the said organization. (Cameron & Quinn, 2006) The same method was used for defining both “current” cultural type and “preferred” cultural type, which gives a picture to which direction the organization’s culture is developing in the future.

This analyzing method combines Mayring’s qualitative content analysis (2012) and categorizing method proposed by Ritchie and Lewis (2003). The main reason for this method was to find the meaningful distinctions and the extent to which they appeared in the data. The analyzing process started with transcribing the interviews, then classifying the answers given to specific questions from each interview and identifying the main themes and concepts that repeated in the answers. Following the categorizing method, the data was labeled for better processing. Each answer was divided into single findings, and each finding was categorized to a specific category related to the answer topic. An example of one categorization is given in the Appendix 4. The findings are discussed in the empirical part of this study, in the following Chapter 5.

3.4 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity, generally, are used to define the quality of the research. Although the concepts were first developed for natural sciences, in their broad meaning they help to define the strength of the data in qualitative research as well. (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003)

Reliability concerns the replicability of research findings, measuring whether or not they would be repeated if another study, using similar methods, was

undertaken. Validity, on the other hand, is traditionally understood to refer to the 'correctness' or 'precision' of a research findings. Validity is often described to consist of two dimensions, internal and external validity. Internal validity measures whether the research results are showing what they intended to measure, while external validity. (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003) Both concepts were considered when designing the research. The methodology, including the explorative qualitative method, sampling frame and data collection, were chosen to support the research objectives, and dependability was secured by documenting the research process in detail (Yin, 2009). Both concepts are discussed in the following.

Triangulation of different data sources and theories was applied to build a coherent justification for the research theme (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Combination of multiple theories and previous research on the topic of organizational culture, agile methods and innovativeness was done to avoid intrinsic biases with the secondary data. In addition, reliability of the research was considered when designing the sample selection. The case companies represent various forms and fields, both very traditional and modern (industrial companies, finance and energy vs media and ICT), as well as state-owned, private, and public listed companies were selected to participate. This gives depth to the findings and makes the study more transferable. Low sampling size and the problems related to generalization were considered when designing the research methods. Generalization, however, has limited use in the field of qualitative research, and the value of this research lies in the exploration of the vaguely researched topic and the aim is to discover broad relationship between organizational culture and growth hacking (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, by conducting low number of interviews the researcher had possibility to explore the topic deeply with the interviewees.

As the organizational culture is a concept that is not necessarily familiar to the participants, a brief explanation about the used tool (OCAI) was given with the instructions how to answer to it. In addition, during the interviews the different viewpoints and manifestations of organizational culture were explained to the

interviewees in order to gain richer results and increase the validity of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

An important part when designing the research was an attention to the social desirability bias. It was assumed that some organizational culture types, especially hierarchy, could be seen as unfavored quality by the participants, meaning if the participants saw some of the options called “hierarchical”, they would be less likely to choose them. This possible problem was handled in four ways. Firstly, the participants were given an opportunity to do OCAI and the interview anonymously, which allows them to answer more openly and transparently about the current state of the company’s culture. Secondly, the participants were given clear instructions for filling the OCAI form with indications that there are neither right or wrong answers nor right or wrong culture types. Thirdly, the names of the culture profiles (hierarchy, market, clan, adhocracy) on the OCAI form were not mentioned, which was done to prevent the possible effect that the culture name could have to the answers, which in turn would make the answers less valid. In the same way, wording in the interviews was kept neutral in order to avoid biased answers from the interviewees. Fourthly, the participants were asked in the interview to analyze whether the test result was truthful. In addition, they had an opportunity to explain and discuss about their culture further.

Although the actions to avoid the problem were taken, some interviewees showed during their interviews that they are not proud of the current culture, trying to explain some certain cultural characteristics, especially hierarchy (*“this is due to the fact that we are a public listed company”, “it is cultural heritage”, “if I personally could choose, we would do this differently”*). This indicates that the interviewees see some cultural characteristics “better” or more acceptable than the others, which might have an impact in the answers in OCAI form. It is possible that if the interviewees think that some characteristics are more valuable or socially acceptable than the other ones, they give more points to those characteristics. Furthermore, participants personal motivation level was considered to affect the validity of OCAI results, and the culture profiles drawn. It is possible that the

participant interest in careful responses, as well as personal tendency to divide points either carefully and timidly (evenly to all profiles) or confidently (maxing out certain profiles) affected the results. This, however, was considered to carry little importance to the results, as the purpose was not to get absolute correct numeric values for each profile, but rather an idea about the most and least dominating profiles.

It is worth mentioning that when discussing about the OCAI results with the participants, none of them thought that the results were incorrect or not fitting, although many of them used the opportunity to further discuss about the state of the culture. However, the participants mainly answered to the test alone, and in some cases with some help from their colleagues from the same team. Filling the test was intended to be relatively easy and not time consuming for the participant, for which reason the tests results were not asked to be filled by more than one participant from each case company. This, naturally, gives one sided view from the organization's culture. However, for the purpose of this research, the answer can be seen to give enough information about the state of the organization culture in each case company; this study was not designed to find out what is the absolute state of the organizational culture in each case company, but rather to find out the general state in the case companies together, as well as how they affect growth hacking process. With these validation and reliability measures, the interviewees answers can be confirmed, but the absolute validity of each culture profile cannot be secured.

Lastly, it should be noted that the interviews were held in Finnish for the Finnish speaking participants; one interview out of the seven was held in English. In all interviews the terms *growth hacking* and *growth hacking mindset* were used in English instead of the Finnish equivalents (*kasvuhakkerointi* and *kasvuhakkerointiajattelutapa*). This was a conscious decision and made due to the fact that majority of the books and articles about the subject are in English, hence it was assumed that the participants would understand these terms as well, if not better, than if they were translated in Finnish. In addition, growth hacking

mindset does not have an established or commonly agreed Finnish translation. Furthermore, the terms growth hacking and growth hacking mindset were used instead of any variants, such as growth marketing. These wording choices can have an effect in the participants attitudes and answers when the used term differs from their own definition. Thus, the interviewees bias regarding their opinions cannot be completely ruled out.

4 DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings drawn from the semi-structured interviews are presented. The goal in this part is to answer the research question and sub-questions by relying on the theory of organizational culture, innovation, and agile methods, as well as the empirical research results. The content of the seven interviews was divided broadly into three themes: first, interviewees' perception of growth hacking, second, how growth hacking is implemented and executed in the case companies, and third, the organizational culture, how it is managed and what kind of challenges it brings in the growth hacking process.

The interviewees represent large companies from various business fields. By the participants request the business field is kept anonymous. Table 5, below, presents the basic information about the interviewees; their position (for the purpose of defining the interviewee's background and the growth hacking operations' strategic focus in the case company), the time when growth hacking was started in the organization and the size of the growth hacking team. In addition, it is worth to mention that six case companies were doing growth hacking for their own organization's needs. Interviewee 5 works in an organization that produces B2B services which include growth hacking type of work, i.e., performs growth hacking actions as a service.

Table 5. Summary of Interviewees

Interviewee	Position	Time of growth hacking operations (at the time of the interview)	Team size
Interviewee 1	Director, Digital Sales Development	1 year	6
Interviewee 2	Head of Growth, Digital Services	1 year	-
Interviewee 3	Head of Digital Services	1 year	-
Interviewee 4	Growth Manager	>1 year	14
Interviewee 5	Development Manager	2.5 years	4
Interviewee 6	Product Owner	<6 months	5
Interviewee 7a	VP, Digital and Growth Marketing	<6 months	5
Interviewee 7b	Marketing Manager		

Interviewee 1

Interviewee 1 leads a digital sales team in the case company. She has earlier experience of growth hacking in the media industry. The size of the growth hacking team is six persons, and in addition to the interviewee herself, includes e.g. web analyst, developer, visual designer, and content producer. The team was founded first by outsourcing the members, but after concluding that the people work well together, they were hired to the organization by the Interviewee 1. The organization operates in Finland in a traditional field, for both B2B and B2C (business-to-consumer) customers.

Interviewee 2

Interviewee leads a digital service sub-unit. The cross-functional growth hacking team consists of members from various departments: analysts, service designers, and people from marketing department and digital development. Company 2 is traditional large Finnish organization with mainly brick-and-stone business, and B2C operations.

Interviewee 3

Interviewee 3 leads the organization's digital consumer services and has previous experience in growth hacking from ICT sector. Company 3 is an old, traditional

state-owned organization. The virtual, cross-functional growth hacking team has members from marketing, communications, product development, analytics, and design.

Interviewee 4

Interviewee 4 leads growth hacking operations in the organization's marketing. The growth hacking team is practically the whole 14 people marketing team, including product marketers, a content producer, graphical designers, and a marketing technologist. Company 4 operates in the ICT field and B2B sector and is a part of a Nordic conglomerate.

Interviewee 5

Interviewee 5 works in an old, public-listed company. The growth hacking was started in the organization around 28 months ago, and the operations are now relatively established and mature. The team has four people who do systematic growth hacking but uses resources from other teams and units as well. In addition, the team works as an internal consultant and educates other teams about growth hacking methods and mindset, as well as facilitates growth hacking sprints.

Interviewee 6

Interviewee 6 works as a product owner in a traditional industrial company. The growth hacking processes were started around six months ago, and the team consists of five people: one analyst, two marketing/content producers, one process specialist and a product owner (interviewee herself), who also does strategic sales and marketing, planning and hands-on work with landing pages etc. The team uses other teams' resources, when they have a need for art designer, developer, more help with the contents, etc. The company operates in the North Europe and has both B2B and B2C operations.

Interviewee 7a and 7b

Interviewee 7a and 7b are working in growth marketing in a large public-listed company, which operates in the technology field. The growth marketing team has

five members, but they use resources from other teams as well, especially in the content production and for building the websites. Although the processes, tools and methods are common for the marketing team, the methodical growth marketing started less than six months ago, and the team is still in the beginning of their journey to systemize the processes.

4.1 What is Growth Hacking

In the non-scholarly literature, growth hacking is defined as a strategy that solely focuses on growth and is done through iterative and continuous chain of hypotheses, experimenting, optimization, and analyses. In addition, growth hacking is often described as a combination of marketing, technology, and product knowledge (Chaubey, 2019). The core elements that repeat in the literature and define the methods, are agile experimentation, data-backed decisions, and new, alternative solutions. However, growth hacking rarely manifests by specific methods or tools, but rather as a common *mindset* in the organization. The elements of the mindset and how they compare to innovation culture and agile methods were given in the summary of the literature review (see Chapter 2.4).

Due to the lack of established definition, the interviewees' perception of both growth hacking and growth hacking mindset were explored in the beginning of the interviews; first by asking how the interviewee would describe growth hacking and, secondly, how the interviewee would describe growth hacking mindset. The two questions were formed to find out whether the understanding of the basic concepts was similar among the case companies, and how it correlates with the definitions presented in the theoretical part of this research. Growth hacking and growth hacking mindset were asked separately, because mindset is an important factor in the whole growth hacking process, hence, it was worth to investigate whether the participants see them as something separate. Another reason to get a separate definition for the mindset, was to find out the participants' understanding about the cultural side of growth hacking, and what underlying organizational culture characteristics they might associate with growth hacking mindset.

4.1.1 Perception of Growth Hacking

The definitions mentioned by interviewees had similar characteristics as the definitions discussed in the theoretical part of this of this research. The answers also showed that the concepts were mutually understood among the case companies as the interviewees gave relatively homogenous answers about what growth hacking means to them. The answers were categorized with three roof-categories, which demonstrate the three different points of views: cultural, strategic, and operational. Many of the interviewees' definitions or parts of them could be categorized in more than one category.

The cultural point of view appeared in the interviews by describing growth hacking mainly as a mindset possessed by the employees or as *“a matter of culture and a way of doing things”* (Interviewee 2). The culture that enables safe environment to take risks and tolerates failure enables innovativeness (Loewe & Dominiquini, 2006; Losane, 2013), and this aspect was brought up by Interviewee 4, who told that in their growth hacking team all decisions are based on data, and that they *“boldly try new things, and everyone has a right to succeed and fail”*. Interviewee 5 admits that growth hacking has *“lots of culture changing aspects involved”*, and that the term could be *“smart hacking”* as well, as it is a way of doing things smarter, not necessarily differently. Few participants (Interviewees 4, 5 and 6) mentioned the term *“agility”* as something that growth hacking demands, or as a way of doing growth hacking. Interviewee 4 further describes the importance of growth hacking in their organization and calls it a process that should take place in all the teams and functions, implying it is more of a strategy or mindset than toolset or method.

“[Growth hacking is] growing sales or conversion percent or whatever decided as a KPI [Key Performance Indicator], but so that we work agilely and not plan a yearlong campaigns [...] because today’s world is changing so rapidly that we just have to be able to work with faster reactivity.”

Interviewee 6

Strategic point of view was taken by some interviewees. Interviewee 3, for example, described growth hacking as “*ways to maximize growth with minimum efforts*”.

“[It is] not just marketing or just product development but anything and everything the organization can do to maximize growth and get better results.” Interviewee 3

Thirdly, operational point of view was demonstrated by describing growth hacking as a method: doing experiments and analyzing the results.

“With us it culminates in the agility and experimenting [...] trying to solve the problems with hypotheses and learn about them all the time.” Interviewee 5

“[Growth hacking is] doing fast experiments in short time, seeing what works and what doesn’t, scaling those that work and getting the business profit out of it.” Interviewee 6

In addition, the case companies shared their opinions about the difference between growth hacking and growth marketing, which was not offered in the question forming. While Interviewee 5 states that some people use these terms as synonyms, he does not see them as the same, and personally prefers growth hacking, because for him it is “*much more comprehensive and means improving the whole digital business by experimenting.*”

On the other hand, during the interview with Interviewees 7a and 7b, they clarified that they saw these two terms clearly different and, in their processes, the adopted methodology was growth marketing. In these two interviews, it seemed that while the definitions for either growth hacking or growth marketing are not set, they carry a lot of values and expectations.

4.1.2 Perception of Growth Hacking Mindset

As discussed earlier, growth hacking is mainly a mindset, not a specific “toolkit” (Ginn, 2012a). Growth hacking can be performed with very different methods, but this mutually adopted mindset that leads the team and the organization is what drives the team to success (Holiday, 2013; Fong & Riddersen, 2016). In the literature, the definitions for growth hacking mindset were various and rather vague. The main common characteristics mentioned were having sole focus on growth and continuous improvements; agility to perform fast experiments; creativeness and innovativeness to come up with new problems and solutions to them; high ability to take and bare risks and safeness in the organization to support failing; and so called learning culture, willingness to develop oneself constantly (Williams, 2016; Van Alem, 2018).

In this research the participants had corresponding answers with these earlier descriptions. Majority of the participants described growth hacking mindset as an ability to do experiments; accepting the experiment results and possible failures (Interviewees 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7b), and getting out of the comfort zone and having an open mind: *“not getting stuck with the pre-set hypotheses”* (Interviewee 7a). Interviewees 1, 4 and 7a, additionally, described the mindset by being open for alternative solutions and finding things to improve; *“seeing the opportunities”*, as Interviewee 4 said. In addition, growth hacking mindset was described with adjectives related to corporate innovativeness, such as lean thinking (Interviewee 2), relentlessness and agility (Interviewee 6) and courage to seek growth (Interviewee 5).

“Of course, everyone is seeking growth all the time, but do you have the courage it takes while you’re searching for it? That courage, that is growth mindset.” Interviewee 5

“It’s willingness to try and courage to fail, too, because that’s unavoidable. It’s really important you won’t become demoralized when impediments raise

or when results are not what originally planned. It's the kind of relentlessness, fastness and agility.” Interviewee 6

Besides these descriptions, Interviewees 1, 4 and 6 associated growth hacking mindsets with willingness and readiness to learn and develop oneself. Interviewee 4 brought this up by describing how the world has changed and the marketers must be able to keep up in the development in order to succeed.

“[You cannot] have the kind of locked mindset, “I know what works, I handle this, I’m pro at what I am doing”, and never try anything different [...] with growth hacking mindset you understand how dynamic this world is, how fast things develop, why we need that speed and that no one can say for sure how things should be done.” Interviewee 4

Interviewee 1 mentions that this mindset, willingness to learn and deal with change as a permanent condition is something that she seeks in all the employees she recruits.

“That mindset is what I’m looking for when I recruit my team members. [...] You must have the kind of attitude that you find things to improve and you react to change as it is a permanent condition. And on the other hand, that you are ready to learn something new all the time.” Interviewee 1

Also Interviewee 6 describes the mindset with similar words, portraying it as an ability to see change as a positive thing and having “Digital Intelligence”, mentioned by Van Gasteren (2019), i.e., ability to learn all the new digital tools and platforms. This burning desire for learning and development can be seen among the interviewees themselves as well. Many of them told they had been getting trainings about growth hacking, and Interviewee 6 had a growth hacking mentor for her own personal development. This further demonstrates the importance of continuous learning in growth hacking.

Besides defining the characteristics, few interviewees (2, 3 and 4) mentioned that growth hacking mindset is something that the whole organization, and not necessarily growth hacking team alone, should share. Interviewee 3, for example, pointed that the whole organization should work with growth hacking mindset even if they are not developing digital services, and continues: *“One change in our mindset is that the growth can be achieved with any means, so we don’t do product development only for the joy of publishing a new feature but to grow our sales.”*

While the right kind of mindset or attitude was considered as an important part of growth hacking by many interviewees (e.g., *“growth hacking absolutely needs a certain mindset”*, Interviewee 4) Interviewee 5 told the term is rather difficult to him and described the term growth hacking mindset as a “buzzword” with negative connotation. In addition, Interviewee 2 mentioned that the characteristics identified in growth hacking mindset are “hyped”.

“[Growth hacking mindset] includes agility, organizational culture and lean thinking, these things that have been around for centuries [...] but especially in this time of digital developing it has hyped and, could I say, even trending aspects.” Interviewee 2

4.2 Growth Hacking in Large Organizations

In the following part of the interview structure, the interviewee was asked when, why and how growth hacking was implemented into their organization’s marketing strategy. The purpose of these questions was to find out what kind of motivations they had to adopt growth hacking methods and how they succeeded in doing so. In addition, the interviewees were asked to describe the growth hacking process in order to find out how it differs from the way they were doing marketing before.

4.2.1 Motivation and Way of Implementation

The majority of the case companies has been doing growth hacking for fairly short period of time: in the Companies 1, 2, 3 and 4, growth hacking had been started around a year ago, while in the Companies 6 and 7 the growth hacking teams had been formed in less than 6 months ago, at the time of the interview. Company 5 was the only one which had been doing growth hacking for much longer period, for around 28 months. However, even when the method was rather new in the case companies, the term and way of doing was not necessarily so. Interviewees 1 and 3 mentioned that they had used growth hacking methods and tools in their previous jobs, and in the Companies 2 and 7 the growth hacking tools and methods themselves were familiar and used already before, but the overall way of working as a team had changed to support growth hacking process. As Interviewee 2 describes, *“We had done growth hacking type of experiments [...] but of course we didn’t call it growth hacking. Probably, because that term wasn’t as hyped and didn’t get as much attention.”*

Motivation

In the case companies, growth hacking started for various reasons. One of the most mentioned motivations to adopt growth hacking was to increase the profits, either by growing sales in the existing channels or by finding new digital channels to enable growth (by Interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 4). For example, Interviewee 3 tells that the main reason for their organization to adopt growth hacking was to increase the number of active users in one of their digital services. Interviewee 1 describes that they knew the digital channels had much more unused potential that needed to be brought into fruition. Interviewee 2 tells that they wanted to test the method, whether it works in their traditional business.

“We wanted to increase the sales of the whole digital channel and we saw lots of potential there. It was like a virgin base to improve the conversions in all our sites, improve the advertising we do [...] So it was a very clear profit objective. We calculated that we need more money from the digital channels.” Interviewee 1

“We started to think what kind of digital services we could improve and grow [...] and there we got this idea that we should at least try this kind of working method. We were not completely sure how it fits in this kind of large and somewhat hierarchical organization, and especially to business that is not really purely digital business [...] but we wanted to take this experimenting approach and try if [...] we can get results in three months. And if we do, we can continue.” Interviewee 2

The second-most mentioned reason was internal motivation; need for cultural or organizational change. For example Interviewee 4 describes how they started growth hacking so that they *“could get the team to the next step, do more, faster”*, and continues *“The second [reason] was the excitement of all the possibilities, there were so many tools and things and ideas to test and to use to scale the growth.”* Furthermore, Interviewee 3 mentions that their marketing, which had been done in rather traditional way, needed a change and new aspects, and the only way to drive that change was to change the mindset. Adopting growth hacking was their way to do that.

Interviewee 6 continues by mentioning that one of their motivation was to grow and increase their own professionals' skills, *“so that we could have a self-sufficient team.”* Before starting growth hacking, the interviewee's team was using outsourced resources from traditional marketing agencies, where the results came often late and their own team could not react fast enough to change the marketing campaigns' course. Interviewee 6 describes this inability to react, and passively wait for the final results to be *“extremely frustrating”*, and she saw growth hacking as a solution to react faster and get measurable information, but also as a toolset for their own team to take part in the operative side of marketing actions.

“With the traditional style we had a month or two long campaign and then we got the results two weeks or a month after the campaign had finished. And that is simply not acceptable in today's world. It's extremely frustrating,

hearing that if we had changed the CTA button's text we would've got more conversions [...] You shouldn't live in that kind of situation, you have to be able to do the experiments in real time and see from the results what works and what doesn't - and optimize what does and stop doing what doesn't."

Interviewee 6

Lastly, in some cases the motivation was external pressure in the form of a change in market situation. Interviewee 5 and 6 describe that they had adopted growth hacking because it offered tools and methods to develop marketing to today's needs. As Interviewee 5 states, in their case the global trend from print to digital, and from one-time payments to subscription models, has changed their business completely. This has forced them to adapt in order to stay competitive.

"You cannot do digital subscription business the same way as you used to do in the print era [...] You have to stay ahead and know how online stores and digital business work today. That is the need we are answering with growth hacking." Interviewee 5

Way of implementation

Continuing from "why" to "how", the case companies followed two main ways to start the processes; either by implementing growth hacking to the established marketing team (Companies 4 and 6), or by changing the organization structure and forming a completely new growth hacking team (Companies 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7). The main reason for forming a completely new team was to enable time and resources for the professionals, but also, to work as an inside startup, which had a mandate to test and try out new methods in small scale without risks, large investments or the need to ask permissions from management. For this reason, many of the interviewees saw a separate team almost as a compulsory decision, as it led them to take control over the growth hacking decisions and work in a way that was not necessarily allowed in the other parts of the organization.

“[The growth hacking team] kind of gives us the permission to do things more freely. It gives you that safety that now you, officially, have the possibility to try out new things even though you haven’t done them before. It’s a tool to overcome these, I don’t know, political or cultural obstacles that you might have in a company.” Interviewee 7b

“You have two options, either you go top down, which means that you create the models and then managers do the legwork and try to convert operational teams on their side. Or you do it bottom up, so that the teams can decide how they are going to make this happen.” Interviewee 3

Interviewee 7b describes this need for a new separate team as a logistic change. For them, founding an own growth marketing team was a way to give people the mental push to work for the common objective and permission from the management to really do so. The organization had an unsuccessful experience in trying to implement a system where anyone could submit their ideas for innovations. Even when encouraged by rewards, it did not work since it was based on free will; employees did not have dedicated time for innovation.

“There were other teams that tried this before [...], more like this innovator incubator type of a thing. [...] But why this didn’t really work out was that there was no driver, there was no team. It was just like “here is a bunch of money, submit your ideas”, that was it, there was nobody doing the logistics, and I think we have now already found out that the logistics is a very big part of this. And depending on what you contribute, some people need more help or a bit more... push in the back [...]. So, I think the most important thing now is that we have a team that can dedicate their time to this and don’t have to do it just on the side.” Interviewee 7b

However, all the interviewees saw this kind of working only suitable in the beginning and had plans to scale growth hacking into other teams later, when the operations have been tested enough in one team. In addition, not everyone was

favoring the “inside startup” type of thinking from the start. Especially Interviewees 3 and 4 shared their ideas about whether growth hacking should be done separately or integrated to already existing teams. Interviewee 3, for example, mentioned that although they had to start with a dedicated growth hacking team and *“some people might think it is better to have a separate growth hacking team, I think it is smarter to bring this idea how to grow specific KPIs into the already established teams.”*

In few of the companies (Companies 1, 3 and 5), the interviewee him or herself had changed job and started the new method in the new workplace.

“My colleague and I had done it [growth hacking] in our previous jobs, so we did a proposal to the management board, “this is what we need to do”, and “this kind of roles we should have” and the leader of our department told that we’ll start with an outsourced team [...] so that’s how we started.”

Interviewee 1

In the beginning of the implementation process, Companies 2 and 3 mentioned using a consultant for guidance and to boost the process. Both described that the consultancy was needed to create a systematic model of working, and both had agreed a three-month long period after which the learning had to be transferred to the organization’s own team. Furthermore, Interviewee 6 mentioned that she had used a mentor from more advanced growth hacking organization to get more understanding about the process. In addition, in Companies 2, 4, 6 and 7 the team or part of it attended growth hacking trainings to get hands-on experience and deeper picture what growth hacking demands. In the Company 4 alone everyone who is taking part in the growth hacking process, had been trained by outsourced growth hacking consultation agency.

“At first, we were inspired, brought the idea to the team and just started to do [...] but it was quite messy, running around like headless chickens. We just started to do the experiments and tried to do the segments and [...] we

all just had this idea that we have to try something and create new ideas, better ideas. The first few weeks we used to study the theory and everything else. [...] But we also trained everyone. [...] It is partly about the mindset why it took so long. You have to know what the experiments are, what experimenting means. What size they are, how they are scaled.”
Interviewee 4

As Interviewee 4 describes, the implementation can be complex even when the team is involved and compliant for the change. In large organizations' context, the processes naturally take time and careful implementation can be observed as compulsory. As Interviewee 3 described, *“transformation is slow, there is not any magic button that changes everything. We progress little by little, and in one way that [slowness] is a conscious choice.”*

4.2.2 Growth Hacking Methods

This sub-section discusses about how growth hacking is practically done in the case companies. During the interviews, the interviewees were asked to explain the used methods and tools in their growth hacking processes, and how they differ to traditional marketing, or the way how marketing was done in their company before growth hacking was started.

As discussed before, growth hacking can follow various processes and strategies. The common denominator among all mentioned strategies, is experimenting, i.e., running constant, small and inexpensive tests to eventually come up with solutions that increase growth. Among the case companies, Interviewees 2, 4 and 6 told that they are doing it in sprints or via scrum method, which essentially means deploying agile methods; scrum is a specific agile method, and originally used in software development. This shows the connection between agile methodology and operational growth hacking. Interviewee 1 told that they “could go with sprint model” but instead they use Kanban, another agile development and project management method. In the Interviewee 6's company, sprints are part of the scrum process which had been deployed already four years ago. Growth hacking,

in other words, did not change their process but complemented it. Interviewee 4 described the sprint process as follows:

“The team has five weeks long sprints. In the first week they decide the goals and what kind of experiments they want to do, after that is 3-4 weeks of experimenting and the last week is for analyzing the experiments.”

Interviewee 4

Many of the interviewees did not mention a specific method how they operate growth hacking but described the overall process as a chain of hypothesis, experiments and analyzes; the same kind of framework as presented by Herttua et al. (2016). The growth hacking team starts the process by creating hypotheses, then tests these out via experiments, and finally analyzes the experiments and forms a decision about the next steps and needed optimization based on the results. At this step, analytics tools and analytical mindset become important.

Interviewee 3 carefully describe the process in their company. In practice, they started by setting common goals of things that they want to improve, and created a backlog of ideas they could try in order to reach those goals. The interviewee told they had an innovation workshop in which the team together gathered more than a hundred ideas and wrote them down. Before starting to work on the ideas, the team analyzed all the ideas and evaluated them by how much effort they needed and how big impact they possibly had on growth, and *“those which had the biggest impact and smallest effort got to be in the first place in the backlog, so we did those first”*. This shows how the analytical mindset and prioritizing the growth already had found its way to the team. After the evaluation, they started to complete the ideas one by one.

As Interviewee 1 describe, they started growth hacking with an outsourced team, but after some time, they hired all the outsourced people and started their own internal growth hacking operations. Outsourcing, however, divides opinions among the interviewees. Main reason for outsourcing in large organizations is because

the marketing teams are relatively small and lacking resources in operative work but have the money to pay for agencies to do it. While some organizations use agencies on a day-to-day basis, some prefer not to; Interviewees 4 and 5 state that they want their team to learn the operational skills and growth hacking method thoroughly, which is not possible if they outsource some parts of the operations. Some interviewees also mention that when doing all operations by themselves they have a better control over the method. Growth hacking demands agility, and outsourced agencies are not always able to work in the same way. Interviewee 4, for example, shared his viewpoint to the topic by describing that he has heard it makes working more difficult, because the outsourced agencies rarely work with the same methods or as fast as the growth hacking team in their organization.

“I guess a lot of companies have [outsourced]. What I have heard a lot of them [other companies] have the problem that they have outsourced partners and it makes growth hacking immediately harder. Or not hard necessarily, but more complex [...] it can work pretty well if they [agencies] all are able to work agilely.” Interviewee 4

Change in marketing

As some of the growth hacking tools and tactics were already familiar in the case companies before the start of the growth hacking operations, it was asked what had changed in the marketing since the adaptation. The interviewees agreed that the marketing operations had not changed all so much, but the overall way of working and preparation before the start of tasks had. Interviewee 1, for example tells that getting used to work with growth hacking methods has taken time in their company, but now everyone is motivated and able to do it. With growth hacking, the team’s analytical mindset has become stronger, and specially the knowledge about KPIs and measuring the results has increased significantly.

“When I came [to work] here, I was used to lead by numbers, all the CTRs [click through rate] and conversion rates and such, and I remember when I asked about them, I found out it just wasn’t the way of doing marketing here

back then. But now everyone talks naturally about conversions and CTRs and [...] knows what the customer lifetime value is and so on, and it has been a huge change.” Interviewee 1

Besides the analytical thinking and data-orientation, some of the interviewees mentioned that coworking and communication has increased and changed the marketing methods.

“We hadn’t had that kind of team who works across organization [...] People were familiar with each other, we had cooperation before, [...] but we hadn’t worked with that kind of cross-functional composition and that way before.” Interviewee 2

Interviewee 3 describes that before growth hacking, the team was not aware of all the cooperation opportunities, and how great results they can achieve when the knowledge and know-how is shared. This realization has naturally boosted their teamwork and increased cross-functional projects.

“We have pretty ‘traditional’ growth hacking team in the way that we have people from marketing and communications, from product development and analytics and so on [...] So this made them aware of the things we haven’t done. We have a product development team that develops new features to our service, and we have a marketing team, but these don’t work very closely together. [...] so now for example we target marketing to these customers who have used our service at one point but have stopped using it and so on.” Interviewee 3

An important finding was that growth hacking was done on side in all the case companies, i.e. none of the team members had all the working hours allocated purely to do growth hacking. This shows that implementing growth hacking does not mean that the organization ditches traditional marketing altogether. As

Interviewee 3 mentions, *“of course we do brand marketing and other things with traditional methods.”*

On the other hand, Companies 4 and 5, who had done growth hacking for slightly longer period, tell that growth hacking operations have evolved during the time besides established their place in the marketing function. Especially Interviewee 5 describes that nowadays, growth hacking is for them a way of working instead of a specific task or role. In his point of view, the current state with growth hacking is so stabilized that they do not necessarily call it growth hacking anymore, so *“the term is starting to dilute away”*, and continues, *“if anything, we have taken a step back from “hacking” and emphasize the hypothesis part. So, we do solid work before we start the actions.”*

Interviewee 4 in turn tells that with growth hacking the overall performance has increased. Besides of getting more work done, the team gets measurable results of the work and knows which direction they should optimize it. This clear chain of actions has increased the work efficacy.

“For example, check how many changes we have made in AdWords or in our landing pages in 2019 versus 2018, the difference is insane. We have tried so many new things with these tools we had already. So, one difference is that we simply do more all the time. That’s probably the biggest [difference], which also has the biggest impact in growth.”

Interviewee 4

4.3 Growth Hacking Culture

Following the interview structure, the organizational culture profile, which was created based on their answers to OCAI, was presented to the interviewee. The interviewees were asked to explain whether the showed profile fits in their idea of their organizational culture and give more detailed information if they felt so. After presenting the profiles, the interviewees were asked to tell what kind of challenges they had had when they started to do growth hacking, and what benefits they have

gained now when growth hacking is used. In addition, some of the interviewees were asked to think in a bigger picture, what common challenges large Finnish organizations might have when they start growth hacking, what makes growth hacking hard in large organizations compared to startups or share their growth hacking experience from previous jobs, if they had any. The questions formulation was chosen intuitively according to the interviewee's background and previous answers.

The organizational culture profiles are presented and discussed in the sub-chapter 4.3.1. The specific cultural, structural, and operational challenges is discussed in the sub-chapter 4.3.2, the way how the organizations' had managed the challenges and their culture continues in the sub-chapter 4.3.3., and finally the discussion chapter is concluded with the experienced benefits from growth hacking in the sub-chapter 4.4.3.

4.3.1 Culture Profiles

To define the current organizational culture among the case companies, an OCAI test was used. This sub-section discusses about the similarities and differences between the organizational culture profiles and seeks to find connections between the empirical results of this research and the previous academic research discussed in the chapter 2. The graphic presentation of each case companies' culture profiles can be found in the Appendix 3.

Academic research has investigated the relationship between organizational culture, agile methods, and innovativeness in companies. As stated earlier, agile methods are methodologically very similar with growth hacking and seemingly demand the same kind of mindset as growth hacking. Innovativeness and innovation culture, on the other hand, have to a great extend the same cultural characteristics as growth hacking mindset. For these reasons, the previous findings of relationship between organizational culture, innovativeness and agile methods are compared and supplemented with the findings of this research.

In the previous literature, one specific suitable culture type for agile methods or innovativeness has not been identified. However, both were characterized by organizational values such as freedom, willingness to take risks, trust in employees, openness, creativity, flexibility; organizational structures, such as high autonomy, flexibility and transparency, cooperative teams and group interaction; and behavior such as collaboration, tolerance for mistakes and failures, openness for new ideas, ability to adopt new ideas, continuous learning, processes and tools. In addition, in previous research it has been concluded that the organizational culture types that best promote the use of agile methodology, are the competitive, results-oriented market and agile, risk-taking adhocracy culture. Cameron and Quinn (2006) state that adhocracy culture has positive effect on innovation, as well. As analyzed in Table 2, compatible cultures with innovation are likely the adhocracy culture, but also clan culture and market culture. As discussed in the theoretical summary of this research, growth hacking mindset seems to share mutual characteristics with adhocracy culture, clan culture and market culture. This, as discussed more detailed shortly, goes hand in hand with the results got from the case companies.

The cultural profiles based on the interviewees' answers to OCAI are presented in Table 6. In the table, each of the interviewees is presented in their own row, and average answers to the cultural profiles are in their own columns. First row for each interviewee presents the answers given to the current situation, and the second row (separated with dashed line) presents the preferred situation, in which they would like to be in the next five years. For each case company the most dominating culture or cultures in the current situation and in the preferred situation are bolded. Furthermore, the change in current situation and preferred situation is illustrated with colors. In each case company's answers, the profiles which dominance increases are highlighted with green color, while the profiles which dominance decreases are highlighted with red color. The profile which dominance increases the most is highlighted with dark green, and the profile which dominance decreases the most is highlighted with dark red.

Both current and preferred cultures were formed based on the answers that the interviewees gave in the OCAI form (see Appendix 2).

Table 6. The Organizational Culture Profiles

Case companies	Organizational culture profiles			
	Clan	Adhocracy	Market	Hierarchy
Interviewee 1				
Current	28.3	18.3	25.8	27.5
<i>Preferred</i>	29.2	26.7	26.7	17.5
Interviewee 2				
Current	35	19.2	24.2	21.7
<i>Preferred</i>	40.8	20	25	14.2
Interviewee 3				
Current	18.3	21.7	30	30
<i>Preferred</i>	33.3	30	21.7	15
Interviewee 4				
Current	25	22.5	40	12.5
<i>Preferred</i>	30.8	44.2	19.2	5.8
Interviewee 5				
Current	23.3	25.8	28.3	22.5
<i>Preferred</i>	26.7	31.7	25.8	15.8
Interviewee 6				
Current	35	8.33	10	46.7
<i>Preferred</i>	37.5	35	15	12.5
Interview 7 (average)				
Current	23.8	16.5	35.4	24.6
<i>Preferred</i>	16.7	23.3	49.2	11.3

As can be seen, the case companies' profiles differ greatly. Market culture is dominant in Companies 4, 5 and 7, while in Companies 1 and 2, the clan culture takes the lead, Company 6 has hierarchy culture and Company 3 has shared dominance in market culture and hierarchy culture.

This variation in profiles can be due various factors. A valid reason is the different industries where the organizations operate. The participants previous experience and background can have an effect as well. This was seen in the Interviewee 7a's and 7b's answers. Both interviewees work in the same organizational unit but rated the organizational culture rather differently because of their own personal experience. Interviewee 7a had a background from a very traditional industry, and felt the current employer much more modern, flexible and agile when comparing to the previous job, whereas Interviewee 7b, who had been working for the employer for the last eight years, saw the company much more hierarchic, but on the other hand, more collaborative and less competitive than her colleague. For this reason, an average of the Interviewee 7a's and 7b's answers was chosen to represent Company 7's profile.

While the current profiles differed with some extend, all the case companies had much more heterogenic and corresponding answers in the preferred culture. Companies 1 and 2 stay with clan culture, increasing their dominance slightly, and Company 3 moves to the direction of clan culture from the shared dominance of market and hierarchy cultures. Companies 4 and 5 lessen the dominance of marketing culture and move the dominance to adhocracy culture. Company 6, which currently has very dominating hierarchy culture, sees the clan culture and adhocracy cultures dominating in the future, and Company 7 keeps the dominance in market culture, only increasing its dominance in the future. This heterogenic view about the future can be seen in the Interviewees 7a and 7b answers as well; while their view about their own organization's culture differed in the current situation, they had almost exactly the same answers to the preferred situation.

While the culture types are different, some patterns can be detected in the way how the interviewees wanted to develop their organization's culture. All of the case companies reported their will to become more agile (adhocracy culture) and less hierarchic (hierarchy culture). In addition, in all the case companies except the Company 7, the proportion of adhocracy culture is wanted to increase the most in the future (the increase in points). Furthermore, all of the case companies had

hierarchy culture as the least dominating culture in the preferred situation. This finding indicates that growth hacking demands characteristics associated with adhocracy culture, while hierarchy can be unfavorable. It is suggested that experimenting and other growth hacking activities requires flexible and adaptive culture that supports testing and creates an environment where everyone has the permission to fail.

The result does not mean necessary that hierarchy is not suitable with growth hacking mindset and processes, but it indicates that the interviewees do not value the characteristics of hierarchy culture, or they value them significantly less than the other culture types' characteristics, and see hierarchy as impediment for their company's success. Worth of noting is that apart from Interviewee 4, all the interviewees had hierarchy visible in their current culture but were willing to decrease its dominance the most in the preferred culture. As Interviewee 2 mentions, *"Hierarchy in any form does not belong to growth hacking culture [...] But we have to accept that in a large corporation some kind of hierarchy has to be present so that even basic functions work. So, it's not even a thing that should be completely eliminated."* Large organizations do not work without hierarchy as it is built inside of their structure, but according to the interviewees, its role should be significantly lower.

Another interesting note is how strong the dominating cultures types are in the case companies. Cameron and Quinn call this the "strength" of the culture, and it is measured by how big part of the total points are given to the specific culture types. Evenly divided points indicate "weak" cultures, whereas large proportion of points to one culture type indicates strong dominance in that type. The strengths of the cultures are analyzed in the table below (Table 7).

Table 7. The Strength of the Organizational Culture Profiles

Company	Current		Preferred	
	Most dominating profile, % of points	Two most dominating profiles, % of points	Most dominating profile, % of points	Two most dominating profiles, % of points
Company 1	28.3	55.8	29.2	55.9
Company 2	35	59.2	40.3	65.8
Company 3	30	60	33.3	63.3
Company 4	40	65	44.2	75
Company 5	28.3	54.1	31.7	58.4
Company 6	46.7	81.7	37.5	72.5
Company 7	35.4	60	49.2	72.5

In many of the case companies the differences between culture types are not significant, which shows an equal share of points to the profiles, meaning that the culture is not strong. Interviewee 1's company has only 10 points difference between the most dominant and least dominant types (28.3 to clan; 18.3 to adhocracy), and Interviewee 5's company less than 6 points difference (28.3 to market; 22.5 to hierarchy), which indicates that the culture types are practically as strong, and none of the types is dominating. On the other hand, Interviewee 6 rates their company so that the difference between the strongest and weakest type is almost 40 points (46.7 to hierarchy; 8.3 to adhocracy), which indicates very strong dominance for hierarchy. However, all the other companies except Company 6 had stronger dominating culture in the preferred situation, which might indicate that the interviewees know what characteristics help their organization, and in which direction it should develop in the future. Stronger preferred profiles might also indicate that a clearer focus is needed and valued in the future.

In a conclusion, the analysis of the profiles demonstrates that while growth hacking can be applied in all types of organizations, agility and low hierarchy are values that the interviewees see beneficial for growth hacking. All the interviewees would like to strengthen adhocracy cultures role and decrease hierarchy in the future. However, none of the culture types manifest as the most suitable, or preferred

type; clan culture, market culture and adhocracy culture were all favored by the interviewees, although adhocracy's role seemed to increase the most when every interviewee's profile was considered.

4.3.2 Cultural Challenges

The interviewees identified several factors that had been inhibiting the acceptance of growth hacking or made the implementation more difficult. The challenges were categorized into three main categories – cultural challenges, organizational structure challenges, and operational challenges. However, as organizational culture is a complex subject and affects everything a company does, these challenges cannot be divided strictly to cultural, operational, or structural side, thus the categorization was made mainly to help analyzing the answers. Regardless of the research's focus on organizational culture, structural and operational challenges are discussed briefly as well, thus focusing on the cultural aspects that can be seen in these challenges. The findings are summarized in Figure 8.

Cultural Challenges	Structural & Operational Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hierarchy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → need to ask permissions and justify decisions → need to show the results -Lack of reactivity, speed and agility -Resistance to change -Tolerance for mistakes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Hierarchical organization structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Siloed teams → Conflicting goals and expectations -Lack of resources -New technologies and tools, lack of digital intelligence to adopt them -Challenges related to the business operations, e.g. GDPR -Wrong kind of trainings or lack of them

Figure 8. Summary of Growth Hacking Challenges

Cultural Challenges

Hierarchy

Hierarchy is the oldest of the CVF organizational culture types and has proved its value for organizations over the decades. Being one of the most distinguished cultural characteristics in large organizations, hierarchy has many benefits. It helps

people to coordinate processes, increases control and efficiency, and reduces chaos with clear authority structure and order of communication. The more complex the operations are, the more the organization needs coordination and management, hence, hierarchy. However, for growth hacking, where the teams need to be able to make fast decisions and work agilely, hierarchy can cause various challenges.

One of the possible challenges when starting growth hacking, is to get permission to the new strategy from the managerial level. As discussed earlier, growth hacking had been implemented in majority of the case companies by creating an inside startup, which has authority to work in their own, unique way. Many of the interviewees mentioned that for successful growth hacking, it is obligatory to have a mandate to make decisions on your own. However, almost all the interviewees told that selling the idea of growth hacking and converting their managers had not been the challenging part of implementation. Interviewees 3 and 4 both mention that asking permissions is not the right way to work; hence, in a strictly hierarchical organization the process is too slow or even unable to work. For example, Interviewee 3 pointed that they would not be able to drive the growth hacking change inside the organization if they did not just decide to do so, no matter of the consequences. The interviewee thinks it is important that employees have the right to decide on their own, even in large organizations.

“I have a mandate to do the right things [...] and I can forward them inside our organization [...] If we had started by asking permissions or something, like ‘hey let’s try this’, it would’ve taken such a long time it had never happened.” Interviewee 3

“It just doesn’t work if you say that our team will start to do this kind of small, agile, fast [work], and the management board is like “why should we use time for that?” You need a mandate to make these kinds of decisions and change everything that needs to be changed. In a very hierarchical organization this might bring challenges.” Interviewee 4

Interviewees 4 and 5 stated that selling the idea to operational level is actually harder than to the management; it is important that the motivation is born inside the team, not brought from outside. Interviewee 4 told that it is common that the management gets inspired by the possibilities of growth hacking, but it is much harder to get that feeling down to the employees.

"[In our company] they [management board] have been with me since the beginning, telling what we do is amazing. But [...] I can't go to the production level and tell how exactly they should work or what they should test. The first sparkle of inspiration and enthusiasm towards growth hacking has to be lightened up in the team. My job, how I can help, is to make that happen. Challenge them to think bigger, offer help and ideas... but it is not going to happen by me or anyone going there and ranting about how they should start testing and experimenting." Interviewee 4

As Interviewee 4 continues, it can be a disadvantage if the management team gets inspired with the cost of operational level. It is important that the people who are doing the experimenting process get careful training for the job, as well.

"The product managers go to a training, become inspired about the concept and come back to the organization the next day to change everything. But they are far away from the practice [...] they don't train the people who actually do the work, and they themselves do not know what the everyday work looks like." Interviewee 4

On the other hand, Interviewee 1 mentioned using lots of time and resources to explain the need and benefits of growth hacking to the management; Interviewee 7a continues this by stating that the problem is common with marketing, which traditionally has not been known to deliver measurable outcomes. Marketing, in her experience, has to justify their actions and budget increases, especially in

large organizations. Marketing as a function needs to deliver value, or otherwise it has been seen as a waste of time.

“We really did a lot of legwork. We went to talk to many executive boards, explained this in the [company] level [...] Never in my life have I made this many PowerPoints than during the first weeks when we visited different places and just talked and calculated [the possible profit] euros.”

Interviewee 1

“If you’re doing small experiments, [the management is] like “ok, what is this hobby called?” [...] You have to do it big scale or you need to scale it up very fast, or you need to be able to present your business case very strongly - that this is scalable. [...] In R&D it’s tolerable because there everyone knows that you have ten ideas and maybe one of them succeeds. But then in marketing it’s not known to be so.” Interviewee 7a

Interviewee 2 shares her experience telling that the problem is not the senior management, but the mid-managerial level, which has a big role in communicating the cultural change.

“My experience is that upper management supports the employees. And operational level is enthusiastic and our teamwork, spirit and culture work well together. [...] but mid-management has contradictory thoughts, some of them are very suspicious and questioning if this is just a new, fancy name for old, not profitable way of working. [...] and it is also larger than the executive level so there are more people to convert.”

These answers highlight that while hierarchy per se is not necessarily a problem in large organizations, large gaps between steps in the hierarchy can cause challenges when the need for change need to be communicated to the operational level; or on the other hand, when the permission for that change needs to be

asked from the management. Being allowed to work agilely, in the way what growth hacking demands, is a key to successful implementation.

Slowness and lack of agility

As discussed, and highlighted in the previous section, in order to do fast and constantly iterative experiments, growth hacking teams need agility and reactivity. Slow processes were one of the challenges mentioned by Interviewees 1, 4 and 5. Interviewee 1, for example, told that in their organization the employees have been used to slower way of working than what growth hacking requires. Interviewee 4 shared very similar experience, describing in detail how the process should flow faster. He, as well, states that the problem is not their organizational culture, but the way how people are used to work.

“We are just so damn slow. [...] We produce a lot of ideas but we choose only few and are mentally locked with them, instead of trying, testing, keeping the experiment flow wide instead of long [...] We should just work faster and have courage to kill [the experiments which do not work]. And I’m not saying our culture doesn’t support that because it does, we just don’t know how to work like that, not yet.” Interviewee 4

Interviewee 5 mentions that although they can produce experiments fast, utilizing the experiment results, *“running the last mile”*, is challenging.

“In a way we are in good situation – we can do agile experiments and we get great, quality results, but running the last mile to actually change these things... I guess it is like that in large organizations, big ships turn slowly.”
Interviewee 5

In addition, Interviewee 5, who has been working in large organizations his whole career and has extensive experience from public listed companies, shares his opinion that the processes of large organizations are profoundly slower than of startups because of the more complex organizational structure and process

chains. As he says, *“the secret in the small companies’ agility is that they do not have processes”*. In the large companies the process from hypothesis to action is a long path, which is partially a cultural challenge, partially structural.

“When you start working in a large organization it takes quite a long time before you get familiar with the processes and who is responsible for what. First, you need to develop the relationships [...] it’s all about knowing the right people.” Interviewee 5

Resistance to change

Changing an organization’s culture is a compulsory, thus not an easy task to manage its survival through changes in the external environment (Cameron & Quinn, 2006). In general, the change to start using growth hacking methods took more time than the interviewees had thought, not only because of the methods differed greatly from the previous way of working, but also because of the resistance of change among employees, mentioned by Interviewees 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7b. Interviewee 6 mentions that even when she personally was sure they can change their way of working, people in other teams and units in the organization had an attitude that the slow speed is normal, and something that belongs in the change. For her, as to many other interviewees, this caused frustration.

“The most frustrating thing has been that “don’t wait that this kind of change will happen in the timetable you want it to happen” [that the other people have said] but we, you know, just turned a deaf ear to it.” Interviewee 6

As a leader, it is hard to tell the team how to work when the team has strong and long-lasting experience of doing the job in their own, specific way. As Interviewee 5 tells, *“there is this very strong opinion that we have done this for 100 years and we know how to do this – so changing this mindset, it took more time than I ever imagined.”* In addition, Interviewee 5 shares his experience that resistance to change, as well, is more visible in the operational level than among managers. *“In*

the upper level they quite well understand the need for change [...] but what comes to the small daily tasks, it's a whole another environment."

While being frustrating, Interviewee 1 has an experience that the resistance to change takes time but is a phase which will pass. *"we [team leaders] have already done this in other firms and we knew that there is the change resistance phase and that this will still end up all well."*

Tolerance for mistakes

Failing is part of experimenting, and an ability to bear that is a skill which all growth hackers should possess (Williams, 2016; Van Gasteren, 2019). As discussed by Loewe & Dominiquini (2006) and Losane (2013), fear of failure and lack of tolerance for mistakes are some of the cultural factors that can slow down organizations' innovativeness, as well. Although many of the interviewees mentioned that failing, or getting unexpected results, is "an unavoidable part of growth hacking" (Interviewee 6), few interviewees mentioned that it has been one of the biggest challenges at the same time. Companies 1, 2, 4 and 7 told that the mistakes have to be tolerated even when it "hurts to handle the inconclusive results" (Interviewee 4) and bear the feeling that nothing happens.

"In the large organizations that mindset that we can start with trying small things first, and that you have the kind of courage and even will to fail, it might be something that they [employees] are not used to [...] It's like, you are not a failure, the experiment is." Interviewee 2

"In the beginning one of our challenges was all the inconclusive results [...] From the beginning we've known that 20 percent [of experiment results] can be thrown in the success box and 80 percent will be inconclusive and fail, so there is no need for it to cause pain. But it did, and it still does."
Interviewee 4

Structural and operational challenges

Siloed teams and Conflicting goals

One of the biggest challenges in large organizations, mentioned by Interviewee 2 and 3, is the siloed teams. Although, siloed teams are practically a choice of organizational structure, and therefore outside of this research's main focus, the problem was experienced to manifest largely in the culture side as well. When the functions, units or teams have separate objectives and team members, it causes conflicts in goal setting, allocation of resources and budgets and even higher difficulties in communication, openness, and knowledge transfer between the teams.

Interviewee 2, in whose organization growth hacking is done in cross-functional team, describes this by stating that in a large organization the subunits can be very separate which causes problems with formalizing the big picture, *“and in growth hacking you should see the whole customer journey, the whole funnel”*. She continues by telling that one of the problems that siloed teams bring with them is the allocation of budgets and other resources, as well as managements different viewpoints about the goals. *“The budgets are leading the operations [...] and it is understandable that if you have been given a certain budget to meet certain goals, you don't want to waste it [in experimenting and growth hacking]”*, Interviewee 2 states.

“Management has a huge role in forming a mutual objective and deciding how we are allocating the resources. They might think that this kind of working is good and we need it, but at the same time they hold on the old tasks, demanding that they need to be done as well and preferably the same way as before – that's where we have the collision. You cannot do both the new and old at the same time.” Interviewee 2

Interviewee 3 shares the opinion about how the siloed teams might lead to different, separate goals, which in turn creates conflicts in the growth hacking process. In his opinion, this is one of the common challenges that large

organizations face when they start processes which demand cross-functional teams.

“You have a separate marketing department which has their own goals, and, in the worst case, marketing is really far away from the actual business. And then you have a business unit which has their own goals, and you have analytics team [...] and development team [...] and these don’t necessarily play at all for the same goal.” Interviewee 3

Lack of resources

Another problem, which large organizations’ siloed teams, separate goals and management’s blind eyes might cause, is the lack of resources. Very often in the beginning of large organizations’ growth hacking journey, growth hacking is not the only task that the dedicated team is doing. When marketing team is expected (either by the management, other teams, or both) to do their previous, old tasks and the team wants to allocate their time to growth hacking, a conflict is expected. This challenge was mentioned by Interviewees 2, 6 and 7a.

“I think the logistics are difficult because people still have their everyday jobs and they do this [growth hacking] on the side [...] There’s certain team members who feel very overloaded.” Interviewee 7a

“In growth hacking you should consider the whole customer funnel but in large organizations the teams are siloed [...] so even if you would like to, you probably don’t have time to, or it’s irrelevant for your own KPIs and success.” Interviewee 2

Digital tools and digital intelligence

Majority of the interviewees could not name any specific tool or method that is not suitable for their organization because its size or culture. This supports the finding that the operational side of growth hacking is suitable for large organizations. Interviewee 3, however, mentions that although he has not encountered those

personally, he acknowledges that some other companies might have problems with not having the right type of digital marketing tools or the lack of digital intelligence; although, the problem is not that such tools or methods do not exist, but that marketing teams in large organizations do not have permission to start using them, or they do not have control over them. Interviewee 4 shares the same opinion, but also points out that some of the tools which large organizations' marketing teams use are often managed by outsourced agencies, which makes fast decisions and agile work impossible.

“Things can be solved as long as we know what we want. At some organizations it can be that, for example, [...] there is not some specific software that is needed. But we have carte blanche to use whatever we want.” Interviewee 3

“In large companies, even the websites are extremely stiff and often produced by some media agency, so it is hard to change anything there [by yourself]. [...] Or Facebook campaigns, small companies do everything inhouse but in large organization it is often outsourced, so you can't just test stuff and check what works and what doesn't.” Interviewee 4

However, growth hacking demands ability to absorb information, learn these new digital tools and be ready to expand the skills to new areas. This, as pointed out by Interviewee 6, is sometimes challenging especially among the older employees.

“This, unfortunately, is the characteristic where you see the difference between generations. And it is not age discrimination. But you do need certain kind of ability to perform the experiments independently, and even though we can teach people to use tools, you must have the ability to absorb new skills. And you need to see the change in positive light, without resistance to change.” Interviewee 6

Challenges in the business operations

In addition, some of the interviewees mentioned very specific challenges they had encountered, which were not directly connected to the organizational culture. These challenges demonstrated on the operational side; the companies had encountered that they could not do some specific actions because of their business operations complexity; e.g., GDPR was seen as a factor that made some of the operations harder, and large organizations especially need to take the data security seriously. Another encountered challenge was the lack of benchmarks and best practices to use as a reference, mentioned by Interviewees 3 and 6. The whole concept is so new that there are very limited amount of evidence of what actually works and how to scale the methods through the company. This causes problems with the decision making, but also when planning the future. Since growth hacking has not yet been done in large organizations, these case companies who are currently doing it, do not have any benchmarks how it could be scaled successfully.

“What is agonizing us, is how to scale this. How can we turn this into continuous work, so that is not some separate project [...] We have talked with Sean Ellis but even he does not have a silver bullet how to scale this into the organizational level.” Interviewee 3

As discussed earlier, outsourcing is a way how growth hacking can be performed in organizations and for example in Company 1 the whole growth hacking team was first outsourced. However, the benefits of outsourcing divide opinions, and many of the interviewees see outsourcing more as a challenge and a weakness than helpful resource. The main difficulty that the interviewees identified were the extra step in the process; if a growth hacking team wants to test something in their platform or in some campaign, which is managed by an outsourced agency, the team has to contact the agency to do it for them. Managing the tools and platforms inhouse gives freedom and ability to do experiments autonomously. Another challenge that outsourcing carries, is that the skills stay outside the organization. As many of the interviewees mentioned, one of their main motivations to start

growth hacking was to develop the team, and this can be only done if the operational work is done inside the team.

“I like that we do things inhouse and don’t outsource. That’s how we learn and grow as a team [...] and I’ve noticed the development from the data and from the working methods.” Interviewee 4

Another problem is the lack of right kind of training and consultation. The consultation does not consider the differences between large organizations’ departments (e.g., sales, marketing and product development) and commonly are not customized to fit large organizations’ needs.

“We have tried to educate our personnel but when we have had these customized boot camps, it’s too focused on marketing. And that causes rejection instead of inspiration. [...] Because this is not just marketing’s project.” Interviewee 4

As a conclusion, it is important to note that all the interviewees identified some extent of problems that were caused by the organizational culture. However, it seemed that the cultural challenges were not necessarily the biggest obstacles that the case companies had faced, but problems with the hierarchical organization structure, as well as siloed teams, were mentioned often. In general, hierarchy was not identified as a challenge by the interviewees, but those interviewees who worked in rather hierarchical organizations (Companies 1, 3 and 6), also identified more cultural problems and described them with more depth than those organizations whose culture was already rather non-hierarchical (Companies 4 and 5).

In addition, it could be seen that in those case companies where growth hacking had been started by creating dedicated growth hacking teams, the interviewees had experienced more problems with hierarchy than in those, where growth hacking is done without a dedicated team. This is understandable, since the

reason to create a new, dedicated team was to get authority, and essentially more freedom to work within the growth hacking process.

4.3.3 Managing the Culture

While the focus of this research is not organizational culture management, the topic was approached by asking the interviewees how they solved the challenges they had faced, as this opens viewpoints on the challenges, as well.

Transparency and open communication

The main way to unravel the problems was by open communication inside the organization. Almost all the interviewees (1, 2, 4, 5 and 6) mentioned openness as the key to overcome the cultural challenges. This includes talking about the problems, but also about the benefits and learnings. For example, Interviewee 6 shares that they have regular sprint reviews for everyone in the sub-unit, including management, which works as a discussion forum for sharing new learnings and results. As Interviewee 4 mentions, having an open conversation about the gained learnings and failures been an efficient method to increase knowledge, trust and team spirit.

“We have a “show and tell” meeting where we can share our fails, so sharing the knowledge is our key [...] I’m rooting for fail boards too [a board where all the team’s mistakes and failures are written down] but let’s see what HR thinks about it.” Interviewee 4

On the other hand, as Interviewee 5 states, continuous fails and inconclusive results can cause frustration inside the team, so while being open about the failures is important, the wins should be shown and celebrated as well.

“You have to take care that people don’t get bored [of failures]. [...] Most of the results are inconclusive, like the experiment had no effect on anything, and it’s a moment of frustration. So, when we get wins, they should be

scrubbed on the faces. People need to feel that this [growth hacking] is worth it.” Interviewee 5

Common goals and objectives

McLean (2005) stated a high autonomy is important for successful innovation, and although the goals are agreed together in the organization, the employees should have a right to decide the best way to achieve those goals. This was supported in the empirical part of this research as well, since the participants noted that the only way to get growth hacking to work is to have common goals inside the company. As discussed in the challenges, siloed teams often cause skewed objectives (highlighted especially by Interviewees 2 and 3); hence, the objectives should be agreed together and communicated transparently to the whole team to avoid conflicts in working methods and allocation of resources.

“As long as we are playing to the same goal and share mutual objectives, we have been able to solve the problems. Even if the budgets are separate and you agree on the objectives, it helps a lot when you have common will to work the things to the same direction.” Interviewee 2

As Interviewee 6 continues, when the goals are commonly and organizational wide agreed, the way how they are reached should not be a problem to the management.

“As long as we are getting profits, and we do the right things, and we have agreed the KPIs with our management [...] so that they are aligned and communicated clearly to everyone, they have nothing to say against [...] as long as the goals are met, by any means possible.” Interviewee 6

In addition, interviewee 5 discusses about the need for openness, but also mentions how incremental common goals and the feeling of togetherness are.

“Transparency creates that mutual feeling that we are not destroying but improving things. So that we can together do things slightly smarter and solve the customers’ problems [...] because that’s what it is, right, we are solving customers’ challenges and via that our own ones.” Interviewee 5

As discussed in the challenges, some of the participants had experienced need to justify their actions and ask permission from the management for growth hacking. The same way, many of the interviewees took their role as a “growth hacking evangelist” seriously in the organizations and used it to promote the method around the company. They dedicated time to give presentations about the benefits of growth hacking, explained the actions the growth hacking team had done and carefully described the process to other teams in order to scale the mindset further. Interviewees 1, 4, 5 and 6 mentioned that one of the problems – mistrust, discouragement and doubting from other teams or management – was solved by patiently presenting and explaining the benefits of the method to all around the organization, and believed that leading by example was a way to overcome these challenges eventually.

Recruitment

Lastly, one of the solutions to the challenge, mentioned by Interviewee 1, is to recruit suitable team members which already possess the growth hacking mindset. Although the literature suggest that growth hacking mindset can be adopted (Fong & Riddersen, 2016), it might be easier to seek for employees who already have an ideal attitude. Especially, when growth hacking often is implemented by creating a completely new team, which gives an opportunity for new recruitments.

“We have been able to get our team into the right mood, but that’s because we have been so very, very careful at the recruiting process, and asked how they work and what kind of role they take in a team.” Interviewee 1

4.3.4 Cultural Benefits

Lastly, the interviewees were asked what kind of benefits they have gained from growth hacking, and specified to consider both tangible benefits, such as financial profits, and intangible benefits, such as increased collaboration, better team work, faster reactivity time or increased customer understanding. Examples of the benefits were not necessarily mentioned to all the interviewees but rather were given if the interviewee seemed to have problems with finding any answer, or only mentioned the tangible benefits. The mentioned benefits are summed in Figure 9, below.


Benefits	
Tangible	Intangible / Cultural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Bigger profits -Saved costs -Improved conversion rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Faster, more agile way of working -More teamwork and improved cooperation -More structured and systematic way of working -New, better tools for working and analysing -More analytical mindset -New skills and learning inside the team -Increased will to develop and improve things
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Increased accountability → Easier communication with tangible outcomes → Increased trust and interest in marketing within the organization 	

Figure 9. Benefits from Growth Hacking

Tangible benefits

In the literature, the benefits of growth hacking are usually described to be very tangible. Mostly, the authors highlight that by doing growth hacking, companies can grow their customer base and increase the customer lifetime value by attracting new customers and keeping the old ones for longer. Profitability can be also increased by cutting the costs, as growth hackers goal is to run affordable yet effective experiments, and ditch the traditional, expensive channels. Profits and

other tangible outcomes were also one of the most mentioned benefits among the case companies, mentioned by Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6.

“In the beginning when we did completely virgin tests [...] we got unbelievable impacts. [...] That’s how it is when you improve conversions. I remember when we did that test and finished it, and I said, “you know what guys, we just brought this much money to the house”. And that was an insane amount of money what we did with that one single test.”

Interviewee 1

Interviewee 5 continues by describing that they gained profitability not only from more sales, but also from cutting down the production where it was proven by the experiments to be unprofitable.

“We have had couple of wins where we could show the profits and prove we had got some amazing ideas. But it also goes the other way. We have been able to go in the middle [of product development] before it [product] hits the market and tell that this is not worth to do. Those are big savings.”

Interviewee 5

As discussed in the background of this research, marketing has traditionally been considered as profession, where results cannot be counted or quantified (Grossberg, 2016), thus today’s marketing is challenged by growing demand of accountability and subsequent loss of influence. (Biegel, 2009; Quinn et al., 2016). With measurable outcomes, data-backed decisions and tracked process steps, growth hacking can be seen as a solution to this challenge. Interviewees 1, 2 and 7a mentioned the growth hacking experiments and data-based analyses have given them tools to justify marketing actions better and helped them to communicate with the different business units about the importance of marketing. Measurable outcomes have made it easier to explain the importance and benefits of growth hacking to other people inside the organization and sell the idea further,

as well. Thus, growth hacking potentially increases marketing's value within an organization.

“In a large organization it is a lot easier to communicate when you have data on the background. There are as many opinions as there are people, but when you show with data how the customers behave, they have nothing to say against.” Interviewee 2

“Maybe we have been able to bring some kind of tangibility to that [...] Of course, when we have presented those [results] to other places [...] those help us to communicate. When we have achieved something, we present it with the actual case and actual numbers.” Interviewee 1

Intangible benefits

Besides profits, conversions and other tangible benefits, many interviewees identified intangible, or cultural benefits as well. Interviewee 1 brings the idea of intangible benefits by continuing her discussions about increased value of marketing within the organization. She sees that working faster and more agilely, combined with the tangible outcomes, has created trust in the marketing team and growth hacking process.

“Before, when we worked with the waterfall [project management method], people [outside of marketing team] got used to wait for things to happen. Now they know we can get quick wins and fix things in no time [...] In one way it has created trust that we are able to work agilely [...] it's not only joy for our own team but also to those working around us.” Interviewee 1

Interviewee 7a continues with the idea and says that one benefit she sees, is the attention that growth marketing team has gained.

“Suddenly people [are] interested in what we are really doing [...] and we get the possibility to present it, both to the leaders and to anybody [...] and it just enabled more possibilities to cooperate”. Interviewee 7a

The same note, increased cooperation, teamwork, and communication between teams, was mentioned by Interviewees 1, 2, 5 and 6 as well. In these organizations, growth hacking has been the driving force to create cross-functional teams and increase cooperation and open discussion between different functions. As Interviewee 6 states, *“working with people outside of our own team has made the team spirit better. I can see that people think more from the others’ perspectives now, so they are not that tied on their own doing, own responsibilities. And I think it’s been very good.”* Interviewee 5 shares the same experience about how growth hacking has helped the team to think in wider perspective.

“We have people from different backgrounds and with wide skillsets, and together we think what we have been doing and what we should do next. This way we also get wider selection of ideas [...] we don’t want to exclude anyone outside because even if they are not professionals in that specific area, they might have great, fresh ideas to some problem.” Interviewee 5

Interviewee 1, as well, shares the feeling of new togetherness, and thinks that their organization has been able to create a community with the help of mutual projects and processes.

“[Previously] we had this “order and delivery” model inside of our organization, so if I needed something, I ordered it from other team [...] no one really knew other people’s tasks – people didn’t know each other. Now with the agile model everyone has an idea what is going on. Clearly, we have created the kind of digital business community and it is pretty big nowadays.” Interviewee 1

Lastly, development of the organization's culture and team's working methods was a topic that was discussed by almost all the interviewees. One of the specific cultural areas that had developed in the teams, was analytical mindset and "culture of measuring" (Interviewee 3). In addition, Interviewees 1 and 6 discussed about the skills and digital intelligence, which had increased by leaps in their teams. Interviewee 2 sees that growth hacking has made their way of working more systematic and methodological. Overall, growth hacking has made many of the marketing operations more systematic and increased the measurability, which in turn had increased the growth hacking teams' members more aware what they do and why.

"[The main benefit from growth hacking is] the culture of measuring and analyzing. This [adaptation process] forced us to build those fundamentals which, as I believe, would have not been built in other circumstances. In the beginning we had to pay a massive debt from not doing this kind of work before." Interviewee 3

"We are working in digital channel, and the knowledge in some teams has been really small. This has grown our own understanding what we can do in digital channels." Interviewee 1

"I strongly feel that we are now working in a structured manner for the first time ever. We measure what we do, and even before starting something we think what we want to achieve and when can we call the result successful." Interviewee 2

Interviewee 4 shares these opinions, and states that he can already observe the methodic and cultural development in the results and how people are doing their jobs. In addition, Interviewee 6 points that one of the benefits is simply all the new digital marketing knowledge they have been able to learn and start using, and which have made their work easier and more efficient. With the digital tools and methods, people have gained new digital skills and confidence in their job. As she

states, *“when you have the right tools you can do stuff effortlessly and easily [...] and get new skills and knowledge. With these tools you don’t have to be a coder to create a simple campaign landing page.”*

5 CONCLUSIONS

This part concludes the findings around the research question and five sub-questions, analyzes the relevancy and limitations of the research, defines the managerial and scholarly implications of the research, and presents suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary of the Key Findings

In this study the relationship between organizational culture and growth hacking in large Finnish organizations was examined by means of semi-structured interviews and organizational culture profiling from eight participants representing seven case companies. The research questions were formalized based on the literature review focusing on organizational culture and growth hacking. The discussion that aims to answer to the total of four sub-questions is presented in this sub-chapter. Each sub-question is answered separately, and the discussion around the main research question is formulated based on these answers.

***RQ1** What is growth hacking?*

In the literature, growth hacking is presented as a strategy that focus on organization's growth. It combines marketing, technology and product (Chaubey, 2019) and demonstrates through methodologies that use agile, iterative experimentation in order to find tactics that deliver most profit with least effort. The tools that growth hacking applies are common in digital marketing, including email marketing, marketing automation, social media campaigns, content and inbound marketing. While growth hacking can be seen as a way of working, it is more often described as a mindset than specific set of tools and methods (originally Ginn, 2012a). In this thesis, growth hacking is considered as a mindset, characterized with innovativeness and agility, and possessed by the growth hacking team in order to successfully execute the methods.

This versatility and multidimensionality could be seen in the empirical part as well. While many of the participants described growth hacking as a method, or a way of working, the definitions also included cultural and strategic aspects; growth hacking was often seen as a mindset. The interviewees mentioned that growth hacking is done through rapid experimentation to grow the business. While growth hacking is often categorized as a marketing strategy in the literature, few participants emphasized its importance to the whole organization, highlighting that growth hacking can and should take place in the whole organization, and the activities should focus on the whole customer journey. Growth hacking mindset was described as a willingness and readiness to learn; perceiving change as a permanent condition; creativity to find things to improve; tolerance for mistakes and courage to fail; questioning the status quo; and ability to see beyond the traditional marketing. As a conclusion, growth hacking is a strategy that focuses on growth and it is done through experimentation, using digital marketing tools. For successful execution, a right mindset is needed.

RQ2 Why and how has growth hacking been implemented and executed in large organizations' marketing?

Growth hacking is usually done in steps, which include analysis of the current situation, planning the test and creating a hypothesis of the outcome, the actual experimentation, analysis of the experiment round, and optimization based on the results, after which the process can be started again. The experimentation is done using digital marketing methods and testing different versions in product development. (Patel & Taylor, 2014; Herttua et al., 2016)

In all the interviewed companies, growth hacking was rather new method and established in the previous couple of years. Only two case companies reported that the situation with growth hacking was “stable”, i.e. growth hacking had changed as a common way of working instead of being specific or separate tasks and roles. These companies had worked with growth hacking methods for 12–28 months. The other five companies had implemented growth hacking but were still in the journey of searching the efficient working methods.

Growth hacking was implemented to the case companies for three main reasons. In the literature, growth hacking is described as a strategy that focuses on the company's growth, and this motivation was mentioned by many of the interviewees. Their growth hacking goal was to enable growth and increase profits by growing the customer base, new sales, increase conversions and other KPIs, or increase profitability by decreasing costs. Another important motivation was internal drive, a wish to get the growth hacking team "to the next level"; to develop people's skills, knowhow and working methods. The third reason was external pressure: the change in the market condition had made transformation of marketing actions and working methods compulsory.

In the majority of the case companies, growth hacking was started by creating a dedicated team, sort of an inside startup, which executes the growth hacking actions and has permission to work with agile methods. While outsourcing is common in large organizations and majority of the interviewees mention doing it to some extent, it divided opinions. Since growth hacking demands agility, the process can be controlled better when all the steps in growth hacking are done inhouse. In addition, developing the team members' digital marketing skills can be only achieved when the employees are doing operational work inhouse.

The interviewees' descriptions about the starting process and challenges they had faced speak for the complexity of growth hacking in large organizations' context. Starting the growth hacking methods is often a convoluted process and done in various steps. Adjusting the mindset and changing the working methods demands time, effort, and mutual agreement about the objectives. This, in many of the case companies, the implementation cannot be speeded up due to the organizational structures, culture and process models. As discussed, a separate growth hacking team can be one solution to overcome some of these problems to some extent. In addition, regardless of the relatively large organizational changes concerning the new team, marketing itself had not changed much in the case companies. Many of the interviewees reported that the change had occurred in organizational culture and in working methods, rather than in actions or tools.

RQ3 *What kind of organizational culture supports growth hacking in large organizations?*

The previous literature suggests that the culture types that support agile methods and innovativeness are clan, market and adhocracy, while hierarchy and control hinder the acceptance of agile methods and innovativeness (e.g. livari & livari, 2011; Othman, Zouaoui & Hamdoum, 2016). In addition, flexible, horizontal hierarchy has been identified to be beneficial for agile methods (Siakas & Siakas, 2007) and collaborative culture in gaining innovativeness (Loewe & Dominiquini, 2006; Maher, 2014). The findings of the compatibility of specific organizational culture types with agile methods, innovativeness and growth hacking was summarized and visualized in chapter 2.4 (see Table 2).

These earlier findings support greatly the empirical findings of this research. The results showed that case companies' dominant cultures differed both profile-wise and depth-wise. The current culture profiles were dominated by market culture, clan culture, and hierarchy culture, while adhocracy culture had rather low appearance in all the companies and it did not dominate in any of them. This illustrates that all these cultures are suitable for performing growth hacking, while no one specific culture that best supports growth hacking can be named. However, when the preferred cultures are examined, it can be seen that all the interviewees pursue for significantly bigger role for adhocracy culture in the future. This might indicate the importance of flexibility and agility of adhocracy culture for growth hacking.

While the role of adhocracy increased in the preferred profiles, the interviewees also gave significantly less value to hierarchical culture in the future. In general, hierarchy was seen as negative, although smooth running operations and process control is needed in growth hacking to some extent. Many of the interviewees emphasized the importance of systematic processes, even when contradictory with the agility of growth hacking. This finding is supported by the non-scholarly literature, where growth hacking mindset was called to demand discipline to follow the process (Ellis, 2010).

RQ4 *What kind of challenges the organizational culture brings to the growth hacking process and how are they managed in large organizations?*

Organizational culture can hinder or promote the acceptance of agile methods, as well as it can enhance an innovation process. Therefore, it can be argued that specific cultural characteristics make the implementation and execution of agile methods, innovation and therefore growth hacking harder in organizations. This was seen in the empirical findings, as the case companies had faced various challenges while implementing and executing growth hacking. Common challenges could be categorized into cultural, structural, and operational challenges, from which cultural challenges were on focus in this research.

The interviewees experienced lack of reactivity, speed and agility as characteristics that drove growth hacking operations more difficult. Growth hacking demands speedy processes and fast decision making; thus, complex organizational structure that leads to slow decision-making and experimentation processes impede growth hacking operations. Although in some of the case companies the slowness and lack of agility was due to the organizational culture, some of the interviewees perceived that the culture supports the agile way of working, but the challenge was the old routines and learned working methods. While hierarchic culture was not perceived as a direct problem by the interviewees, the participants had experienced challenges that could be argued to be caused by hierarchy. These included the need to ask permission from the management for the new way of working, as well as demand to show the results and justify the decisions regarding growth hacking. Majority of the participants agreed that one of the requirements for growth hacking is a freedom to work by the methods; i.e., the management needs to see the benefits of growth hacking process and give mandate to the team to do the necessary operations. Clear, mutually agreed goals and fair allocation of resources are needed, as well. Many interviewees expressed that without a dedicated growth hacking team they would have not succeeded. It was imperative to have ownership of the working methods and a mandate to make decisions autonomously. On the other hand, some of the participants had experienced resistance to change especially from the operational

level. This manifested by unwillingness to change the behavior and old working methods, doubts, and questions about the need for the change, and unwillingness to start using new digital tools. The last, although highly influential cultural challenge was the lack of tolerance for mistakes, and the fear of failure that was felt both by the participants themselves and their teams. Growth hacking is done through hypothesis and experiments, so mistakes are unavoidable, hence, growth hackers must bear inconclusive results and failures without unnecessary amounts of frustration and a risk of paralysis.

Hierarchical and complex organizational structure was one of the main challenges in the structural and operational side. Especially problematic was the siloed teams, as it caused problems with transparency, communication, and knowledge transfer. Large organizations are often built with many separate functions which have their own goals, which in turn can lead to conflicting objectives and inadequate allocation of resources. This problem tends to be present in growth hacking, since growth hacking teams are often cross-functional and the actions are intended to serve the whole customer journey, from product development to marketing and lead acquisition, sales, and finally to the retention and customer service. Furthermore, some interviewees mentioned the lack of new digital technologies and tools, outsourced control over them and the lack of skills to manage them as an operational challenge. Outsourced workforce was seen both as a necessity and a source of problems. Large organizations tend to outsource large part of their marketing tasks, but if the outsourced workforce does not work with the same agile methods, experimentation operations inside of the organization's own growth hacking team become infeasible.

The challenges were solved mainly with open communication and aligned objectives. These were especially important in organizations which had experienced problems caused by siloed working. Open communication flow is essential for reducing the frustration and feeling of failure caused by mistakes and inconclusive results in experimenting. Although the literature suggests that growth hacking mindset can be adopted (Fong & Riddersen, 2016), Interviewee 1

mentions that for them, recruiting the right people to begin with has been a solution to achieve a mutual, shared growth mindset. The way how the interviewees had solved their problems further highlights the importance of openness and transparency for growth hacking.

While the previous literature has focused on the tangible benefits of growth hacking, the findings of this research show that growth hacking brought both tangible and intangible benefits to the case companies. The main tangible benefits were increase in profitability through increased customer base, improved customer lifetime value and saved costs that came with improved working methods, while main intangible benefits were development in the team and organizational culture, including analytical mindset and a culture of measuring; more structured and systematic way of working; new skills and better tools. In addition, the cross-functional teams had led to increased cooperation, teamwork, and open conversation culture. The working overall had become more agile and flexible. Furthermore, the marketing's accountability had improved because tangible outcomes had made communicating the marketing efforts easier. This has increased trust and interest in marketing within the case companies.

RQ *What is the relationship between growth hacking and organizational culture in large Finnish organizations*

Finally, to answer to this study's main research question, it can be concluded that one specific type of culture cannot be identified for successful implementation and execution of growth hacking. However, it seems that adhocracy culture can assist the growth hacking processes, and the characteristics tied with it are favored by the large organizations' marketing professionals. On the other hand, hierarchy can hinder growth hacking processes, which was perceived in both the preferred organizational culture profiles and in the challenges that the participants had faced once implementing and executing growth hacking. Considering the challenges that the participants had faced, and how they had managed them, it can be suggested that the problems related to growth hacking in large organizations are mainly caused by the organizational culture, and one of the best ways to manage them, is

to start a dedicated growth hacking team, which has an ownership of the working methods and resources to perform growth hacking activities by agile methods.

5.2 Managerial Implications

As discussed previously in the background of this study, growth hacking is gaining growingly more interest among large companies. It can be assumed that in Finland alone there are numerous large organizations, which are currently searching for ways to scale growth or to develop their culture to more agile direction, but indecisive whether growth hacking could be a method that helps them to achieve those goals. This research can help marketing managers in the decision-making process and in communicating the need for cultural and operational change.

This study gives practical view of how forerunner organizations in Finland have implemented growth hacking into their strategy, what kind of challenges they have faced and how they have solved these problems in their organizations. It also discusses about the benefits of growth hacking and especially of growth hacking culture. As it is concluded, growth hacking can be supported by organizational culture, but there are also cultural factors that impede growth hacking processes. These findings are something that marketing managers can consider and communicate further inside their organization when they are starting growth hacking operations. In addition, this research brings clearer and more wholesome picture about the previous findings on organizational culture, agile methods and innovativeness and places them in growth hacking context. As one of the findings is that growth hacking has many similar characteristics with innovativeness and agile methods, it can be suggested that marketing managers interested in growth hacking should familiarize themselves with the research on organizational culture and innovativeness or agile methods, in addition to this research.

Furthermore, this research gives a viewpoint to the large organizations' challenges with growth hacking. This information can be used in companies which work with large organizations and target growth hacking services for them. Especially, the

findings can be used to design targeted growth hacking consultation, coaching, marketing, or communication services for large organizations.

5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The research has limitations related to the methodology and sampling. The sample frame was formulated mainly by the researcher's own network, and those companies who could be identified as users of growth hacking strategies based on their appearance and activity on social media; e.g., job postings and participation in social media groups. This has a risk of causing sample bias. Furthermore, during the empirical part of the research it was also found out that the organizations who have used growth hacking methods for longer, are already starting to diminish and give less value to the term "growth hacking". As Interviewee 5 mentioned, *"the more growth hacking takes place as a common way of working, the more the term starts to dilute away"*. For these reasons, it is acknowledged that there are potentially dozens of companies in Finland which fit the sample criteria but were not identified as users of growth hacking. In the future, the lack of "public announcement" could be useful to consider, and pay attention to organizations which use alternative terms, such as growth marketing. This might lead to different and larger variety of answers.

Because the research was conducted by using small sample of case companies, the results indicate a relatively limited picture of the implications of growth hacking in large Finnish organizations. The purpose was to find rather broad similarities and differences in the organizational culture profiles of case companies. In the future, the topic could be studied with more evaluative approach to achieve a deeper picture of what organizational culture, characteristics and/or structures are needed to support growth hacking; and in different cultural and social contexts to identify the controllable and uncontrollable factors that promote or inhibit growth hacking.

In addition, research focus can be extended to change management and organizational culture management to study how the culture should be

management and changed to suit growth hacking. In the empiric study, many of the case companies had started growth hacking with an internal startup, thus it could be suggested that intrapreneurial skills are needed. For this reason, another interesting study would be focusing on the needed managerial skills in order to execute the internal startups. Furthermore, the literature about growth hacking suggest that the mindset is adoptable, hence, an interesting further research topic could be to study whether growth hacking mindset can be espoused individually and collectively in the organizations.

Furthermore, due to the nature of the study and the sample size that followed it, the organizational culture profiles, i.e., respondents' answers to OCAI were not analyzed using quantitative methods. In addition, this research only addressed large organizations without limitations in the specific areas. In the future, the research could take place with bigger sample size, which allows the use of statistical analyses. An analysis that considers the company size and industry and their correlation with the organizational culture in growth hacking context could take place, as industry and business sector can significantly affect the organizational culture.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview Template

Explain the research topic and aims, describe the interview process

Explain the interviewee's right for anonymity and how the data is handled during and after the research

Ask the permission for audio recording the interview

Perception of growth hacking

- How would you define growth hacking?
- What about growth hacking mindset?

Growth hacking implementation process

- When did you start growth hacking?
- What was the initial reason why did you start doing growth hacking?
- How did you start growth hacking, could you describe the implementation process.
 - Where did you acquire the information? How was it scaled to the whole team?
 - Did you use consultation, bootcamps, training...?
- How would you describe marketing at that time: how did you do (digital) marketing and enable growth back then (if needed, help by asking e.g. about the tools that were used; weekly schedule; teamwork) and what are the biggest differences compared to the way how you do it now?
- Do you do the growth hacking methods and tasks inhouse or outsourced?
 - If outsourced* →
 - What operations and/or skills have you outsourced and why?

- What would it require from your team and organization if you wanted to do those operations inhouse?

If inhouse →

- Do you have own growth hacking team? How big, under which subunit / department / function in your organization and who (titles, skills) are involved in there?

- Has the number of teams and/or team members changed?

- Are there other teams beside marketing and/or sales, who are actively involved or participating in growth hacking in your organization?

- Has this participation changed (increased) anyhow since you started?

- Do you have future goals or thoughts about scaling growth hacking to other teams inside the organization? Which ones?

The relationship between the organizational culture and growth hacking

Presentation and discussion about the organizational culture profile

- Did you have any problems in answering to the questionnaire? Did you do it alone or with a colleague?

- What business function, team or sub-unit did you have in mind when answering to the questionnaire?

- Does this profile fit in your culture / do you feel that this result is correct? What would you like to add?

- Has your cultural profile always been like this, and how has it changed since you adopted growth hacking methods? How do you wish to change it in the future?

- What characteristics in your organizational culture have caused challenges in starting and/or doing growth hacking? How have you tried to solve these challenges? (e.g. hierarchy, lack of trust, resistance to change, lack of agility, slow and complex processes...)

- Is this culture profile relevant for your whole organization, and if not, how does it change between the department / subunits / teams?
- Have these differences brought up challenges and/or problems?

Benefits and challenges of growth hacking

-Do you feel that the decision of starting to do growth hacking was successful? Do you get more done, better results or deeper understanding than before growth hacking?

-What benefits have you gained? Both tangible benefits, such as economic benefits from saved costs and increased sales, and intangible benefits, such as increased communication and cooperation, agility, increased customer understanding and faster reaction to market changes.

-What challenges have you faced in your growth hacking process, especially from the cultural point of view? Have you or your team members had problems with e.g. adopting or learning new roles, new tools, new working methods? Lack of agility and slow reaction time? Objection or negative feedback from management board and/or subordinates?

-How do these challenges manifest in your everyday work?

Growth hacking in large organizations vs small enterprises / startups

-What are the differences in growth hacking processes (implementation and execution) between large organizations and small enterprises in your opinion?

-Are there any challenges that are typical for large Finnish organization (same or different that you have faced in your organization)?

-Have you ever, while reading or hearing growth hacking themed articles or other material, thought that the methods, tools or tips mentioned are only suitable for startups? Why and where did this idea come from?

-Do you know or have heard of any growth hacking methods or tools that you could not start using because of the size or culture of your organization? Which ones, and why have you left them outside?

-Would you, personally, like to scale or change something in your growth hacking processes but it is not currently possible because of the size or culture of your organization?

-Any additional questions or something to add?

Thank the interviewee for the time and interest in participating.

Appendix 2. OCAI Form

<i>1. Dominant Characteristics</i>	<i>Now</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves.		
The organization is a very dynamic and entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick their necks out and take risks.		
The organization is very results-oriented. Major concern is with getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement-oriented.		
The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.		
Total	100	100

<i>2. Organizational Leadership</i>	<i>Now</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify mentoring, facilitating, or nurturing.		
The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk taking.		
The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify a no-nonsense, aggressive, results-oriented focus.		
The leadership in the organization is generally considered to exemplify coordinating, organizing, or smooth-running efficiency.		
Total	100	100

<i>3. Management of Employees</i>	<i>Now</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
The management style in the organization is characterized by teamwork, consensus, and participation.		
The management style in the organization is characterized by individual risk taking, innovation, freedom, and uniqueness.		
The management style in the organization is characterized by hard-driving competitiveness, high demands, and achievement.		
The management style in the organization is characterized by security of employment, conformity, predictability, and stability in relationships.		
Total	100	100

<i>4. Organizational Glue</i>	<i>Now</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
The glue that holds the organization together is loyalty and mutual trust. Commitment to this organization runs high.		
The glue that holds the organization together is commitment to innovation and development. There is an emphasis on being on the cutting edge.		
The glue that holds the organization together is the emphasis on achievement and goal accomplishment.		
The glue that holds the organization together is formal rules and policies. Maintaining a smooth-running organization is important.		
Total	100	100

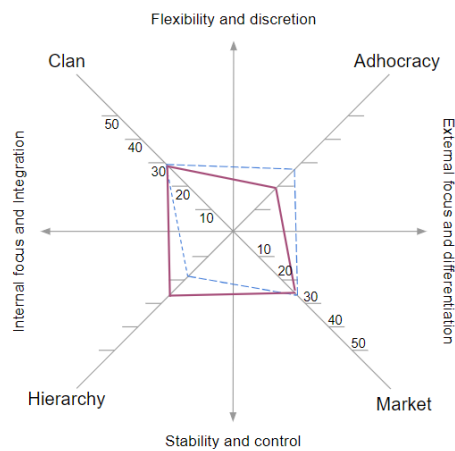
<i>5. Strategic Emphases</i>	<i>Now</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
The organization emphasizes human development. High trust, openness, and participation persist.		
The organization emphasizes acquiring new resources and creating new challenges. Trying new things and prospecting for opportunities are valued.		
The organization emphasizes competitive actions and achievement. Hitting stretch targets and winning in the marketplace are dominant.		
The organization emphasizes permanence and stability. Efficiency, control, and smooth operations are important.		
Total	100	100

<i>6. Criteria of Success</i>	<i>Now</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
The organization defines success on the basis of the development of human resources, teamwork, employee commitment, and concerns for people.		
The organization defines success on the basis of having the most unique or newest products. It is a product leader and innovator.		
The organization defines success on the basis of winning in the marketplace and outpacing the competition. Competitive market leadership is key.		
The organization defines success on the basis of efficiency. Dependable delivery, smooth scheduling, and low-cost production are critical.		
Total	100	100

Appendix 3. Case Companies' Organizational Culture Profiles

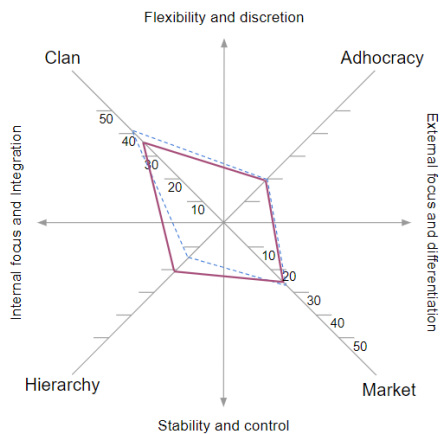
Interviewee 1

	Now	Preferred
Clan (A)	28,33	29,17
Adhocracy (B)	18,33	26,67
Market (C)	25,83	26,67
Hierarchy (D)	27,50	17,50



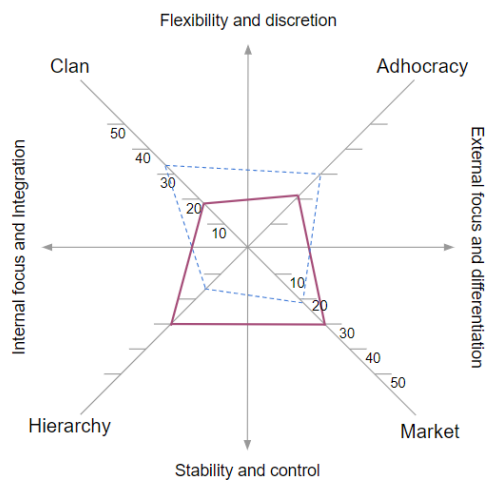
Interviewee 2

	Now	Preferred
Clan (A)	35	40,83
Adhocracy (B)	19,17	20
Market (C)	24,16	25
Hierarchy (D)	21,67	14,16



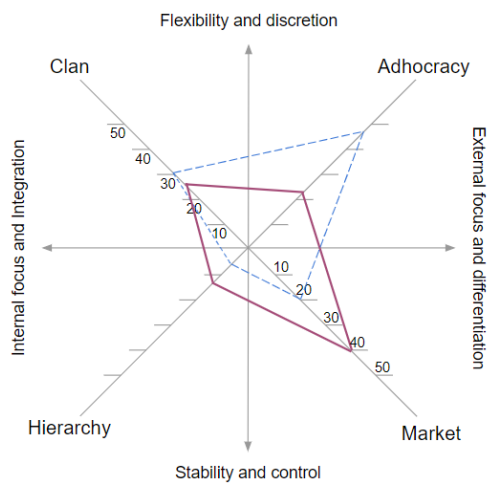
Interviewee 3

	Now	Preferred
Clan (A)	18,33	33,33
Adhocracy (B)	21,66	30
Market (C)	30	21,66
Hierarchy (D)	30	15



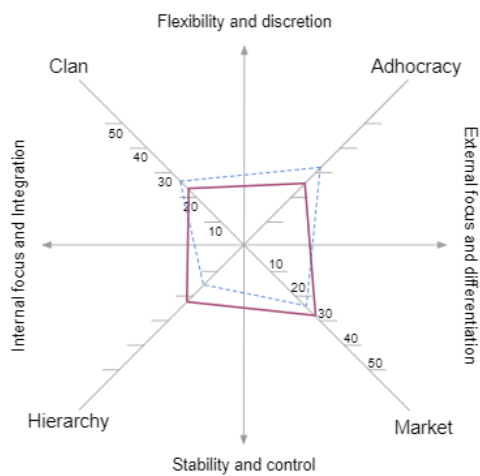
Interviewee 4

	Now	Preferred
Clan (A)	25	30,83
Adhocracy (B)	22,5	44,17
Market (C)	40	19,17
Hierarchy (D)	12,5	5,83



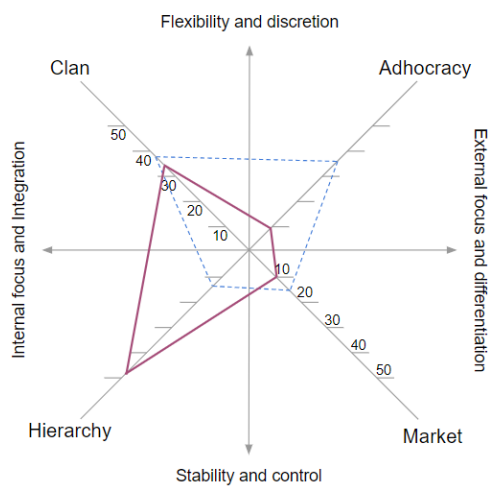
Interviewee 5

	Now	Preferred
Clan (A)	23,3	26,7
Adhocracy (B)	25,8	31,7
Market (C)	28,3	25,8
Hierarchy (D)	22,5	15,8



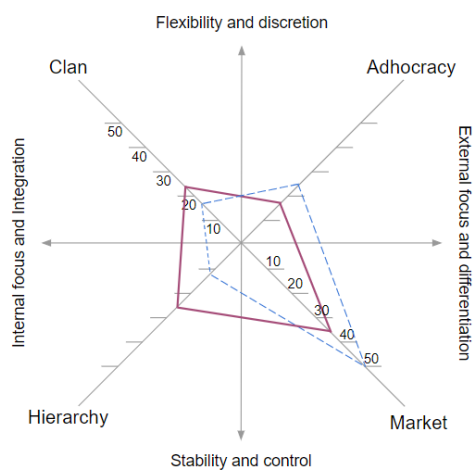
Interviewee 6

	Now	Preferred
Clan (A)	35	37,5
Adhocracy (B)	8,33	35
Market (C)	10	15
Hierarchy (D)	46,67	12,5



Interviewee 7a & 7b – average

	Now	Preferred
Clan (A)	23,75	16,67
Adhocracy (B)	16,25	23,33
Market (C)	35,42	49,17
Hierarchy (D)	24,58	11,25



Appendix 4. Example of the Data Categorization

Initial reason for growth hacking		
Categories	Categorized answer (translation and simplification)	Original
Growth and profit goals	We wanted to grow the sales in the digital channel. We saw a lot of potential in there as we had not done any experiments there yet.	No tietenkin me haluttiin se digitaalisen kanavan koko myyntiä kasvattaa ja nähtiin sieltä tosi paljon potentiaalia ku se oli ihan niinku neitseellinen maasto (Interviewee 1)
Internal pressure / need for cultural change	We wanted to get the team to the next step, to be able to achieve more, work faster.	Et saadaa tiimi seuraavalle tasolle, tehään enemmän asioita, nopeemmin asioita, se oli se ehkä alkuperäinen syy (Interviewee 4)
External pressure / market changes	The business has changed so much. You cannot do business in the same way as you used to do in the print era. You have to stay ahead and know how online stores and digital business work today.	Se liiketoiminta on muuttunu niin paljon niin nyt koko ajan mennään enemmän ja enemmän sinne digitilausten suuntaan [...] jolloin tullaan siihen et meidän on pitäny alkaa ajattelemaan tavallaan sitä verkkokauppaa enemmän ja enemmän. Eli siitä se on ehkä syntyny että pitää koko ajan miettii et digitilausliiketoimintaa ei voi tehdä enää samalla tavalla kuin tilausliiketoimintaa on tehty sillon joskus. Vaan sit nyt pitää kokoajan pysyä kärryillä siinä että miten se ylipäänsä, mikään verkkokauppa ja digiliiketoiminta, toimii verkossa. Siihen tarpeeseen ollaan tässä vastaamassa. (Interviewee 5)