



Master's degree thesis

IDR950 Sport Management

Digital transformation in norwegian multisport organisations: a case study perspective

How does administrators in multisport organisations percieve digital transformation?

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Preface

This master's thesis is a result of a total of five years of study where the last 2 years has been conducted at University of Molde in the master program Master of Science in Sport Management.

Writing this master thesis has been challenging, exhausting, especially because of the pandemic which has negatively affected my motivation, but in the end, I managed to finish this master thesis, which I am grateful for. This has also been very interesting. I have learned so much and it is a time I will never forget. Now I am ready to start a new chapter in my life.

I would not have managed complete this all by myself. First and foremost, I want to thank my supervisor Christos Anagnostopoulos for aiding me through the process and believing in me. I will also show gratitude to the people around me, my family, and friends.

Summary

Digital transformation is a complex process where organisations often meet obstacles and challenges during the transformation, and the sport industry seemed to have been one step behind other industries. NIF has been criticized for the lack of digital solutions and tools and has now initialized a modernization project to improve and enhance the digital structure within Norwegian sport organisations.

The purpose for this research study is to explore how administrators in multisport organisation perceive digital transformation. The empirical data has been collected through qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews with three informants from two multisport organisations.

The empirical data has been connected and discussed through different selected theories that are of relevance. This includes “the digital framework” by Matt et al., (2015), “the four lessons” by Tabrizi et al., (2019), “inertia” by Moradi, et al., (2021) and “change management” by Cameron & Green (2019).

In the empirical evidence it shows that the lack of resources is the main issue that the administrators perceive for the digital transformation, and especially the lack of competency for operating and administrating these new digital tools. There also comes forth the lack of a proper strategy. In addition, the empirical data shows that NIF also need more resources and better strategy for this. At the same time, it comes forth that they also are happy for finally getting a digital upgrade, it has been experienced much dissatisfaction with their previous digital tools, and they are eager to be more efficient, have better information-sharing and be better digitally in general.

Suggestions will be to establish a better digital transformation strategy for implementing the digital tools and solutions within the multisport organisation.

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1.0 Introduction

Digital technologies are embedded in the 21 century and are in continuous growth and development (Score and Change, 2019). Over the years different organisations have highly prioritized becoming more digital, both for consumers and stakeholders (Score and Change, 2019; Vial, 2019; Matt et al., 2015) Digitalization is something people expect and want as the majority population is getting increased with their knowledge and skills with digital technological, resulting in organisations must keep up (Score and Change, 2019; Vial, 2019). Furthermore, as being stated in Score and Change (2019) and Deloitte (n.d.), digitalization is something organisations must have, and especially sport organisations because they are on step behind everyone else.

Something that also have pushed sports organisations and regular businesses to implement new digital solutions is the COVID-19 virus. They had no other choice than to have a digital transformation in their organisation, which has led to a change in the organisational structure, how they run the organisations, nonetheless the virus has also given the opportunity for organisations to have more time to focus on digital transformation (LaBerge, O'Toole, Schneider & Smaje, 2020; Schmidt & Fühner, 2020) which is something I will elaborate later in the paper and in the chapter of main findings.

It has been made an improvement for digital transformation for sport organisations in Norway and it is NIF who is the responsible for this initiative (NIF digital, 2021). NIF has also received a lot of critics of their digital area for a long time (Bergerud, 2020: Evalueringsutvalget, 2016). They finally had started for real to digital transform the Norwegian sport, but how is this digitalization project being perceived by different multisport organisations? Have this been an easy digital transformation process for the administrators? It is safe to say that digital transformations come with difficulties, but it also comes with opportunities.

1.1 NIF and the digitalization project

The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (hereafter NIF) organises all sports federations in Norway (NIF, 2021) and has initiated a modernization project. NIF is an enormous and complex organisation with 55 national

federations, 17 regional confederations and 10 786 clubs (NIF, 2021) and it also is the biggest volunteer organisation with approximately 1.7 million members (Bryhn, 2021) There exist 9 454 multisport organisations within NIF and a multisport organisation which means it is a sport organisation with more groups of sports, rather than just one sport like a football club (NIF, 2021). There may for example be 12 different sport groups within a multisport organisation, which also means there is extra amount of organising and work in total by comparison with a regular club.

A multisport organisation is a democratic member-based organisation (NIF, 2021) The purpose is to conduct activity organised underneath NIF (NIF, 2021). The work in multisport organisation shall be characterised by voluntariness, democracy, loyalty, and equality (NIF, 2021).

With a huge complex organisation as NIF, it comes with difficulties and there exist lots of parts and factors to keep in motion, and the digital transformation has not been flawless. The modernization project (NIF, 2021) was an initiative which came as a result from lots of critics, mainly from Riksrevisjonen (2017) who laid forth a report where they criticised NIF on different areas. The area of IT was one of the topics which got critics and it was uncertainties with the costs regarding IT, and it was not clear what the main priorities of this area was (Riksrevisjonen, 2017, p. 41).

A report from Evalueringsutvalget (2017) to the board of directors of sports also mapped out many negative aspects of IT- area, where it was said the biggest challenge was that there was no strategy for digitalization at all in Norwegian sports (Evalueringsutvalget, 2017, p. 4). Furthermore, the IT-solutions from NIF had focus only on the employees, rather the consumers (Evalueringsutvalget, 2017). According to Hernes, Christiansen & Kristiansen (2017) NIF IT had on their website; *“When you are using solutions from NIF, you will be sure that you always have access to simple, modern and functional solutions to prices adapted for the sports”* (Hernes, et al., 2017). As a follow-up on that statement, Evalueringsutvalget (2017) did a small survey on national federations and regional federations and the result was they were very displeased with the functionality of the solutions (Hernes, Christiansen & Kristiansen, 2017). Another finding of this report was that the department of IT in NIF during those last three years, they had a deficit of 20 million kr. (Evalueringsutvalget, 2017).

Later, as a result from all this critical reports and comments, the modernization project came to life with a main purpose to *“provide with much as possible resources for activities for a memberbased, efficient and an organisation willing to change”* (NIF, 2021). From that they made four main objectives where main object three are: “Good and efficient digital solutions” (NIF, 2021) They split the project into three main parts, where one is digitalization projects (NIF, 2021). Regarding the department responsible for this, instead of calling their IT department the “IT-department”, they are now called “NIF Digital” (NIF, 2021).

1.2 Research question

The topic of this research was an inspiration of where I had my internship at. I understood eventually that my topic was right in front of me. The organisation I had my internship at, was undergoing a digital transformation, so that resulted in having that topic in my research. Formulating the research questions was on another hand more difficult to formulate, I have been changing that many times, but finally landed on what is presented below. Digital transformation in Norwegian sport organisations is still new, so to conduct similar exploratory research on this topic is encourageable. Instead of ‘leaders’ I have chosen to use the word ‘administrators’ because the focus on the research is not on the leader, which also would have led the research to write more about leadership, but of course it is an important aspect in a digital transformation. Therefore, the topic and research are as presented:

Topic:

Digital transformation in Norwegian multisport organisation

Research question:

How does administrators in multisport organisations perceive digital transformation?

The topic revolves around every Norwegian multisport organisation; therefore, the research question is to narrow it down to how administrators in a Norwegian multisport organisation perceive digital transformation. Through in-depth interviews with the

administrators, the digital solutions and key moments around the digitalization will be presented and discussed.

1.3 Disposition

The outline for this research is divided in 8 main chapters, and it is as follows:

1.0 Introduction

This chapter has already been introduced, here I am presenting the theme and background for the research, also presenting, and explaining my topic and research question and limitations for this research.

2.0. Literature review and theoretical background

This chapter has the purpose of reviewing previous literature that has a relevance for this research, like digital transformation, digital transformation strategies and literature connected to change management. Following is presenting relevant theories and terms that relate to the empirical data in the main findings chapter.

3.0 Methodology

Here is the methodology for this research presented, it aims to look at both advantages and disadvantages for the different choosing that are of relevance. The methodology is presented in steps from research strategy to evaluation which involves elements like what kind of research approach has been conducted, sample method and reliability and validity, and ethics.

4.0 Main findings

As hinted in the title, here is the findings of this study being presented, the empirical data collected from qualitative in-depth interviews. The empirical data is presented in an organised fashion through categories that is believed to have a relevance for the purpose of the research.

5.0 Discussion

This chapter aims to connect the chosen theoretical background with the empirical data. The findings will be analysed and discuss how it fits in the different theoretical concepts and terms.

6.0 Conclusion

Here it will be a short summary of what has been found as important, and a conclusion for the research question will take place.

7.0 Further research

This chapter will present interesting points to consider when doing further research on this topic, what can be done differently, and do a similar project with different perspectives and methods.

8.0 References

9.0 Appendix

Here are the attachments for this research, the interview guide used in the qualitative interviews and the project specification.

2.0 Literature review and theoretical background

This chapter is divided into two parts, the first one is literature review where I review relevant literatures, then second part is theoretical background with some clarification of concepts that are relevant for the research question: *how does administrators in multisport organisations perceive digital transformation?*

2.1 Literature review

As mentioned briefly in the introduction, there does not exist much research conducted previously, but there exists some similar research out there. To find the literature presented below, I used key words as ‘*digital transformation sport*’, ‘*digital sport*’, ‘*digital transformation*’, ‘*change management sport*’, ‘*change management* and ‘*change management digital*’. This resulted in a lot of interesting literature that have been conducted with relevance for this research.

One of the first literature I found was a master thesis done by Bergerud (2020) where he studied the digital transformation in NIF. The data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with both informants from NIF digital and informants from different sports federations around the country, included two multisport organizations. Bergerud (2020) found out that NIF is partly successful in giving Norwegian sports organisations better digital solutions. As Bergerud (2020) points out, NIF seems to prioritize the digitalization much more, to make it easier for the user and better communication. It also comes forth that there are a few challenges, because of the different needs from organisation to organisation which makes it difficult.

Bergerud (2020) also points out the gap between perceived utility and user-friendliness that are connected to the new digital solutions that are implemented. Communication and training are mentioned to be one of the very important factors for the implementation process. He also found out user-friendly and intuitive solutions is key elements for NIF to succeed in the digitalization-promise in the future.

The research journal from Ehnold, Faß Steinbach & Schlesinger (2019) where the purpose was ‘to identify the scope and purpose of the use of digital tools in voluntary sports clubs (VSCs) and to identify club-specific factors that influence their usage (Ehnold, et al., 2019).

They collected data through conducting online surveys in Austria and Germany. They had a lot of different variables in their findings and analysis. Two interesting variables was *lack of human resources in implementing digital processes* and *lack of expertise in using new digital technologies* where it was used a Likert-scale from 1-5 where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is fully agree (Ehnold, et al., 2019, p. 8).

The participants were mostly representatives from the club with a leader position. 13.8 % was strongly disagree with *lack of human resources in implementing digital processes* and 21.2 % was fully agree with that. 19.7% was strongly disagree with *lack of expertise in using new digital technologies* and 13.1 was fully agree with *lack of expertise in using new digital technologies*. It shows that the lack of resources is experienced as an issue towards an implementation of digital processes. As it being explained further in Ehnold, et al. (2019) the variables had not that much of an impact on the use of digital tools in VSCs, but as Ehnold, et al. (2019) refers to Matzat & Sadowski (2012) volunteers have the knowledge and skills to acquire the digital skills that are needed by using what they call a “do-it-yourself approach”. Furthermore, they point out that when it comes to achieving organizational goals, strategies are a must, and the lack of a strategy for digitalization can result in uncertainties and resistance within the organization (Ehnold, et al., 2019, p. 18)

An article from Ebert & Duarte (2018) has a few pages about digital transformation, but a more focus on how the digital transformation is affecting software technology and the software industry. One of the key points that are being presented at the start of this paper is that digital transformation is “... about adopting disruptive technologies to increase productivity, value creation, and the social welfare” Ebert & Duarte (2018, p. 16). Furthermore, it comes forth that even digital transformation is the megatrend across industries, it still comes with challenges, because of it demanding new set of competencies (Ebert & Duarte, 2018, p. 16).

The research paper conducted by Henriette, Feki & Boughzala (2016) I found are saying that it was a research still in progress, so it was just a few pages long. Nevertheless, the purpose for this study was to get a better understanding of the stakes and impacts of digital transformation of businesses. They collected data through an exploratory qualitative method and conducted semi-structured interviews with three senior consultants in digital transformation (Feki, et al., 2016, p. 4) and one of the main findings was that “...

digitalization represents strategic organizational and cultural stakes for the company and requires the commitment and involvement of top management.” (Feki, et., 2016, p. 2).

They also point out that the users are being placed by digital transformation at the heart of corporate strategy, because it should be and easy-going and user-friendly for having a quick process in the digital tools. The findings showed also digital transformation related to profound changes in the business model which can include elements like processes, resources, operational methods, or culture (Feki, et al., 2016, p. 6).

An article published by Tom-Roger Stensberg, a has a broad experience in different sale and leadership- businesses. He also has a wide knowledge about digitalization and wrote this article, which was published on a blog, which had the purpose of elaborating on five challenges which usually being experienced in a digital transformation (Stensberg, 2021). The challenges which are most experienced under a digital transformation is: *limited time or resources, limited budget, safety-worries, lack of competency and the people must accept the digital technologies* (Stensberg, 2021).

Stensberg (2021) refers to a survey done by TIBCOs where 13.3 % of the participants answered that they struggle with limited time or resources in their digital transformation. The same survey also showed that 8.73 % of the participants that lack of competency is an obstacle for the digital transformation. It is later being stated that by a survey that Norwegian organisations sees digitalization as important but lacks the competency for reach its full potential (Stensberg, 2021).

A review study by Gregory Vial in 2019 conducted a review of 282 works and build a theoretical framework for digital transformation. The process of the digital transformation is being explained like this in steps: *“a process where digital technologies create disruptions triggering responses from organisations that seek to alter their value creation while managing the structural changes and organisational barriers that affect the positive and negative outcomes of this process.”* (Vial, 2019, p. 1). Also, in this review they mapped out 27 definitions that exist for digital transformation. As being mentioned in Vial (2019, p. 129) leadership is an important factor when it comes to digital transformation, because the leaders must work to create a digital mindset within the organisation, and at the same time being able to respond to disruptions that occur by digital technologies. It also shows that digital

transformation leads to employees getting new roles that they traditionally were outside of their functions, to work with it-functions that they never had done before (Vial, 2019m p, 129).

Another important point that comes forth for employees and the work with IT, is that the skills that are “*required for future workers who will form the digital workforce (Colbert et al., 2016) are also becoming increasingly relevant (Watson, 2017)*” (Vial, 2019, p. 129). The last important element I want to bring forth from Vial (2019) is resistance and which was found in 40 sources connected with implementing digital transformation and it is referring to resistance to change, because like being explained further, resistance may happen among the employees when disruptive technologies are introduced in the organization (Vial, 2019).

Operational efficiency was also found to have a positive impact of digital transformation, like the improvement of business process among other things. Vial (2019, p. 130) points out the benefits of having a cloud solution that do not require to be provisioned, managed, or maintained by an IT-staff. Under organisational performance it is being stated by Vial (2019, p. 130) that digital technologies increased the customer engagement and participation, and that can result in higher profits for firms.

Speaking of change, an article from 2016 conducted by Wagstaff, Gilmore & Thelwell investigated repeated organisational change. They collected the data through 20 semi-structured interviews. From that, Wagstaff et al., (2016) found out the employees from the interviews reacted to recurring organisational change in positive and negative emotional, behavioural, and attitudinal change (Wagstaff, et al., 2016, p. 1). The elements from the positive reactions were related to resilience, learning, performance, challenge appraisals, and. On the other hand, the elements for the negative reactions were related to trust, cynicism, organisational development, motivation, turnover, engagement, and commitment (Wagstaff, et al., 2016, p. 1).

In Cameron & Green (2019) elaborates of the importance of having IT people: “*IT people with change management skills are needed now more than ever.*” Cameron & Green (2019, p. 292). They are needed because the benefit of the good of the organisation, they are need because they can understand technology, be aware of what is out there, and the importance

of how the changes are created for the organisation that they desire (Cameron & Green, 2019). Furthermore, they also elaborate if a change occurs in information-sharing, and problems may happen because it is believed that the technology itself will automatically change behaviour. On the contrary, what happens is the habits and attitudes that already are present will be reinforced by the new technology, therefore a change in the culture may be the answer for creating change in the information-sharing that are required within the organisation. In other words, the change must be addressed (Cameron & Green, 2019, p. 307).

Further up in the chapter of IT change, it states that it-change is about the change of process. As they elaborate, *“it involves people doing different things in different ways with different inputs and different outputs”* (Cameron & Green, p. 296). The it-change process is resulting in employees doing their regular work in a totally different way.

An article done in 2019 by Tabrizi, Lam, Girard & Irvin having the interesting title “Digital Transformation Is Not About Technology” which later stating the article is about change management. The article says that digital transformation is the highest concern regarding directors, CEOs, and senior executives. The purpose of Tabrizi, et al., (2019) article, is to go deeper into why some of these fail and others succeed by going through 5 lessons. Lesson 1: Figure out your business strategy before you invest in anything (Tabrizi, et al., 2019, p. 2)

Lesson 2: Leverage insiders, which refers to instead of having consultants from outside to apply the solution for the organisation, they are using the internal resources, their staff who have the most knowledge on what works and not (Tabrizi, et al., 2019, p. 2)

Lesson 3: Design customer experience from the outside in, which tells about get on an analytic level of costumers how they like stuff, this is especially if one of the objectives for having a digital transformation is to increase the satisfaction among costumers (Tabrizi, et al., 2019, p. 3)

Lesson 4: Recognize employees’ fear of being replaces, which is about employees may perceive that the digital transformation can threaten their position in their organisation, it can result in resistance in change (Tabrizi, et al., 2019, p. 4). The last lesson is not relevant.

As a conclusion in Tabrizi et al. (2019) on why digital transformation worked for the organisations is because “*their leaders went back to the fundamentals: they focused on changing the mindset of its members as well as the organisational culture and processes before they decide what digital tools to use and how to use them. What the members envision to be the future of the organization drove the technology, not the other way around.*” (Tabrizi, et al., 2019, p. 5).

2.2 Clarification of concepts and theoretical background

In this chapter I will present and explain the different theories and terms that are related to the overall topic of this research: *Digital transformation in Norwegian multisport organisations*, and research question: *how does administrators in multisport organisations perceive digital transformation?*



Fig. 1: *Digital pyramid* (Gupta, 2020)

The term ‘digitalization’ is something that will be frequently used throughout this paper and to give a better understanding of the concept I will define and explain the different terms that are related to digitalization.

2.2.1 Digitization

Following the pyramid shown above, the foundation of the pyramid is digitization. And that term sounds very similar to digitalization. It often occurs a misunderstanding between the two terms, so it is important to note the differences. According to Bloomberg (2018) the term digitization is very straightforward as it being explained here; “*...taking analog information and encoding it into zeroes and ones so that computers can store, process, and transmit such information*” (Bloomberg, 2018). Analog basically means that is paper-

based, so the term is about taking paper-based information and convert it into digital information (Bloomberg, 2018).

2.2.2 Digitalization

This research is not about making something analog into digital, it is rather about changing existing digital solutions and improve them. Which makes us move up in the pyramid on to the level of digitalization. The term digitalization first appeared in 1971 and the literature for that topic has been increasing a lot since then. The concern was no longer from converting analog data to digital data, but rather how the structure of different areas that includes social life around the digital communication and media infrastructures (Brennen & Kreiss, 2016, p. 5). Gupta (2020) refers digitalization to “*enabling or improving processes by leveraging digital technologies and digitized data*”. In other words, using the digital technologies and digitized data that already exist within an organisation and make it new or better.

Furthermore, it is being stated in Gupta (2020) that the term and action of digitalization does not involve a change or transformation, but simply makes an improvement of the existing business processes. In Parida, et al. (2018, p. 23) digitalization is being explained as a fundamental disruptive force which was a result from the fourth industrial revolution. This have changed our thinking patterns about how the processes and activities are being conducted in different business, which encourages businesses to change and improve their existing business models (Parida, et al., 2018).

As different digital technologies and solutions evolves and being more and more implemented in different industries, the need for skills development is increasing which is a critical challenge for digitalization (Parida et al., 2018)

2.2.3 Digital transformation

With that being clarified, let’s move on to the top of the pyramid, digital transformation which connects to the overall topic of this research, *Digital transformation in multisport organisation*. I will then elaborate on digital transformation in the sporting industry.

As mentioned in chapter 2.1, Vial (2019) mapped out 27 different definitions of digital transformation. There have been difficulties define this term by many researchers, but here are some I have picked out, and I will present the one I will be using for this research paper.

“Use of digital technologies to radically improve the company’s” Bekkhus, 2016

Most of these definitions that are found are a little vague like this because digital technologies may be unclear, and the word radically I think can see as a bit extreme. It is not always the goal to radically improve the company, but maybe a slight improvement of one bit of the digital structure.

“Digital transformation highlights the impact of IT on organizational structure, routines, information flow, and organizational capabilities to accommodate and adapt to IT. In this sense, digital transformation emphasizes more the technological root of IT and the alignment between IT and businesses” Li et al. 2017

A long and heavy definition that maybe explains too much. It is on another hand a definition that is relevant and correlates for this research project. But the definition from Vial (2019) developed for their framework has the best ring to it.

“As a process that aims to improve an entity by triggering significant changes to its properties through combinations of information, computing, communication and connectivity technologies” Vial, 2019, p. 121

This is the definition I will use for this research paper. Because this correlates with the digitalization project by NIF. What NIF want to improve with this digitalization-project is to improve the digital solutions and platforms for the different sports organisations. Improving information-flow, better the communication between parts both internal and external and for the social environment around the organisation, and better connectivity technologies so it will be easier for the organisation to run a multisport organisation. For example, between the administration and to one of the sports groups like football, but also from the sport organisation to its members and external environment like parents, others that are interested in the different sports and stakeholders. If you add ‘digitalization’ with ‘business’, you get digital transformation, because as Gupta (2020) points out, *“digital transformation is really business transformation enabled by digitalization.”* It is also very

much about change, changing their existing systems and how they work digitally. That is what digital transformation is about, changing and improving an existing entity by implementing new and better digital technologies.

2.2.4 Digital transformation in the sport industry

As previously mentioned in the introduction, sport organisations has always been one step behind when it comes to digital solutions and technologies (Score and Change, 2019). Digital technologies are in constant growth and will continue to grow as we know of. Businesses must keep up with the constant changes, and that can be difficult, which has been especially for sport organisation. It is being stated in Deloitte (n.d.) that sports organisation needs a total overhaul of digital technologies and tools, it is needed in every aspect of the organisation. Digital transformation is not a straightforward process, but a digital transformation will open a lot of doors and give sports organisations a world of opportunities.

When talking about digital tool, it refers to a lot of different digital aspects, but to mention some, it can be software (e.g., cloud-based systems, website, app, program) hardware, social media or like how Marakovits (2021) puts it, digital tools can be “*internet-based programs and resources that can be used to support, enhance, and facilitate instruction that is online and technology driven*” which also fits with this research and the digitalisation from NIF, where they are improving the existing digital tools within the multisport organisation to enhance the online and technology driven tools, like the website and the improving the communication tools between the administration and the different sport groups.

Moreover, Stegman & Ströbel (2019) elaborates on the beneficial part of digital platforms, where the value co-creation strengthens the bond the relationship between actor and clubs, which again can result in repurchase behaviour, like buying merchandise or attending matches repeatedly and not just one time. They also highlighting the possibility with digital platforms where other actors like sponsors, media a such can map out customers more precisely (Stegman & Ströbel, 2019). When implementing such digital tool, Gagnon et al. (2012) points out information and training, training others to teach the digital tools and how they work are essential for a successful implementation. This is also highly important to have these factors for gaining trust with the employees and volunteers. The administration

shall use it too of course, but there are many more who shall be using this, everyone else need proper training and information to make sure they feel safe to use the different digital tools.

2.2.5 Areas for digital transformation in sports organisations

Score Change (2019) divide digital transformation into three main areas for sports, in-house, performance and fan experience. This paper will only focus on in-house and fan experience, because it is not about improving sports performances. In-house can be for example new roles and departments, creating a position dedicated to IT, an own IT-person, or if it possible to create a new IT-department. Like Score and Change (2019) continues to elaborate, there is many sports organisations who have managed to create such new roles and department with only focusing on digital transformation. In that way the people who can do what they were intended to do in their position and not focus on digital work as most of them are not used to or do not inhabit the right set of skills.

The other area, fan experiences which can be divided into three levels, globalisation, localisation, and personalisation (Score and Change, 2019). The most relevant level for this research is localisation, in the way of creating better website and other digital tools for reaching out in a better way to the community around the multisport organisation, localise the content for the municipality like the websites or social media. Stegman & Ströbel

The different concepts and terms have been explained in different contexts, but how does an organisation approach such process like digital transformation? Or especially how does a sport organisation?

2.2.6 Digital transformation strategies

Matt, Hess & Belian (2015) highlights the importance of having a digital transformation strategy for implementing and integrating within an organisation. Strategy in theoretical terms can be explained by *“an examination of organisation objectives and the degree to which the current range of services (and products in the case of some sport organisation which rely heavily on merchandise and equipment sales) help achieve these targets”* (Smitch, 2004). Many sports organisation rely on merchandise and equipment sales, but in relevance for this research this is not the case. The sport organisation must map and clarify

how their existing services are being done, what needs to be improved and what are their overall objectives.

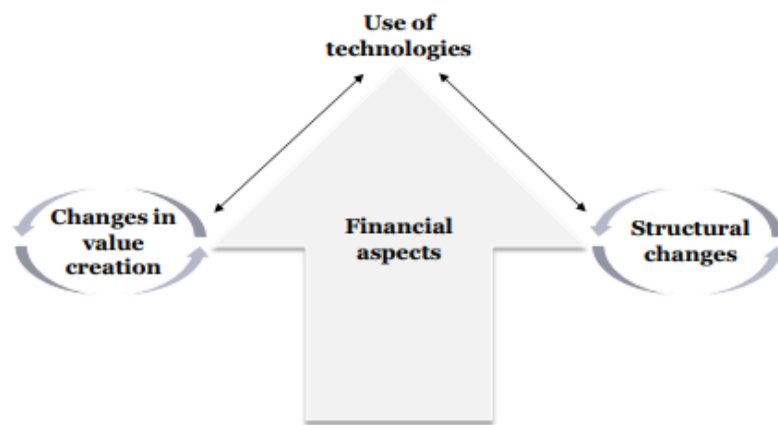


Fig. 2: *Digital framework* (Matt et al., 2015, p. 5)

Digital transformation strategies can be used similarly in every industry, and Matt et al. (2015, p. 3) divide digital transformation strategies in four dimensions; use of technologies, changes in value creation, structural changes, and financial aspects. Use of technologies refers to the attitudes towards new digital technologies, but also the exploitation of the digital technologies and tools that are being implemented (Matt, et al., 2015). Those the organisation really wants to have these digital technologies, will they be using it, do the organisation feel that they need it? Which is something that are needed to be decided early in the process.

Changes in value creation usually is a result from the digital transformation, resulting in changing value chains, but also it is resulting in a change of structure within the organisation. This is a change that are needed for operating successfully digital transformation and further work with digitalization. The financial aspect is not huge concern regarding this paper, but it is of relevance with future work with digitalisation because of the need for eventually hiring a it-person for a sport organisation.

2.2.7 Change management

As briefly mentioned earlier in the chapter, digital transformation is very much about change. Changing an entity in an organisation, changing value-creation, changing the structure, changing how their routines and how they gather information, change how

information is shared, changing the ways of reaching out in public, to its members. A digital transformation is resulting in change in almost every aspect of an organisation, which also refers to the research question; *how administrators in multisport organisations perceive digital transformation?* Which can also be formulated as how does the administrators conceive all these new changes in the organisation? A change like this comes also with challenges and obstacles.

As stated previously in the literature review, when doing a digital transformation and implementing new digital tools, there are needed a change in competences (Ebert & Duarte, 2018). It is not only the digital tools that are being depended on, but there are also the human skills and mindset of it all. Many organisations fail in a process of change, and it can be by different elements, but Gill (2003) points out why it can result in failure by: poor planning, monitoring and control, lack of resources and knowhow- and incompatible corporate policies and practices (Gill, 2003, p. 308). Resources are known to not be the best in Norwegian sport organisation, there are usually provided by a lot of volunteer work which Norway is very good at. Change efforts in organisation, for example a digital transformation in a multisport organisation usually often lacks the necessary resources, like budget, systems, time, information and the necessary expertise like knowledge and skills (Gill, 2003, p. 308).

In Vial (2019) inertia is seen to be one of the most fundamental obstacles to digital transformation. In an organisational context, inertia refers to *“the organisation’s ability to make internal changes in the face of significant external changes.”* (Moradi, et al., 2021, p. 2). Inertia is according to Vial (2019) relevant in organisation where there is resources and capabilities that may play out as barriers to disruption, a disruption to digital transformation (Islam, et al., 2017; Svahn et al., 2017a)

Gill (2003) continues to elaborate on the different challenges that may occur, like lack of commitment to change, but there is also something called resistance to change when it is purely ‘managerial’, which may result in conflict in different areas, like between the administration and those below in the different sports groups who are volunteers. Gill (2003) points out that the most powerful forces that are the reasons for resistance to change are emotional. There can be dislike of surprises, disturbed practices, habits, and relationships, moving people from their ‘comfort zone’ (Gill, 2003, p.309). To elaborate on this, let us put

it this way: if it is a person who have used the same digital system or a tool for 7 years straight, and without the person know about it, the management have been working and implementing to get a new set of digital tools and technologies. Suddenly comes the day when the management announces to the employees and to this person “now you have to use this”. This can come as a shock and a radically change with how the person are doing things. Therefore, there also a need for good transparency and including everyone within the organisation that will have a role in the digital transformation, so it comes with as a few obstacles as possible.

Time can be an obstacle itself where the administration, the other underneath the hierarchy how to use a certain amount of time dedicated to the digital transformation. On another hand, usually that is more demanding when it is not a global pandemic going on. This research does not have the focus on COVID-19, but it surely has a role to play when doing a process like this. Maybe the virus had resulted in the organisations have more time dedicated to this, and no worries about having postpone other activities. This is something I will elaborate on in the chapter of discussion later.

Finally, a final aspect regarding the implementation of digital tools, the utility value among the employees is something that is seen as important. This is an important aspect because it refers to the employees sees the value of the implementation. It is essential that information and communication down to others is rich and are very clear of how it works, but also why undergoing a digital transformation like this. Training them for these digital tools are also important, and the leaders need to always encourage and motivate everyone, which can help them get positive attitudes towards the digitalization, which again helps the cooperation between the different parts and links within the organisation. It may be a slow start in the first steps of the transformation, but they may see the value or the outcome of the different digital tools in the future (Wigfield, 1994).

3.0 Methodology

In this chapter of the master thesis, I will elaborate on the process of my research design and how it fits towards my research question; *“How does administrators in multisport organisations perceive digitalization transformation”* I will addition to that explain my process of choosing informants for the interviews and how I conducted that, analysis design and how my interview process was, ethical considerations, and elaborate on validity and reliability of this research design in the end of this chapter.

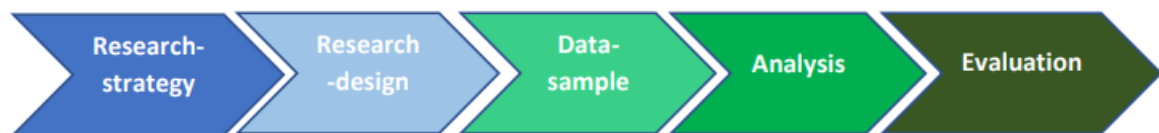


Fig. 3: The construction for the methodology in this research paper (Storaas & Tvedte, 2019)

First, the research questions for this paper:

Topic:

How are digitalization affecting a multisport federation?

Research question:

How does administrators perceive digital transformation in a multisport organisation?

To answer the research question above, qualitative method has been the preferable approach which I had decided early in the process, because of the small amount of research that has been done towards this topic before, especially in Norwegian sport and multisport organisation. In addition, this was a field that I did not knew much about. Semi-structured in-depth interviews has been very helpful because it created to opportunity to have follow-up questions on sayings that needed elaboration, and it can create new questions that I did not have before.

3.1 Research strategy

A research strategy is being describes as the approach that is being used for answering the topic question and research question (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 177). When conducting a research strategy, it is important to bear in mind some questions the researcher should ask themselves, if the research is feasible, if it suitable to the research question and if it is ethical (Johannesson & Perjons, 2014). These are questions that will be answered

throughout this chapter. The purpose of this paper is to understand, analyse and discuss how leaders conceive the changes that comes with digital transformation within their organisation. The main priority of this research is technical issues and challenges that they may experiencing, but also explore what benefits that are occurring. Furthermore, I have also investigated some chosen reports from Riksrevisjonen and Evalueringsutvalget where the digitalization of NIF has been one of the topics.

To answer the research question shown above best as possible, a qualitative approach is chosen where I have conducted different semi-structured in-depth interviews with representatives from the multisport organisations, the main users, and administrators of the new digital tools, which creates most of the emphasis of this paper. To get a better result in the findings, both qualitative and quantitative could be the preferred method. In that way I could have done surveys for not only the main users that are operating these tools, but also way down in the hierarchy, the coaches, the members, the parents, then I would get a complete oversight of how they have perceived this new digitalization, because it is affecting every part of the multisport organisation. The reason for the qualitative approach is because this topic, especially with the pandemic which have a huge impact of everything, is very new to everyone, there is almost no research that can be find on this topic.

There is one very similar research that is found, which was very interesting and got some inspirations, but this research had not the virus included, which I will elaborate on later. In addition to that, through a qualitative method, the respondents can elaborate and give a fuller and better explanation of how they feel and what they mean about the topic. It also gives the interviewer the chance for follow-up question that may be would not be thought of at all and would not have the chance to do in a quantitative method.

The qualitative research method is according to Williams (2007, p. 67) a holistic approach which involves discovery. This means as qualitative approach sees the whole, all (Jacobsson, n.d.) instead of just one simple part. As Jacobsson (n.d.) continues to explain, the parts are close together in a system, like an organisation, like the multisport organisation that are included in this research, when that happens, the whole (the digitalization) impacts the parts so the functions of the organisation could be altered. The research method is also not about raw data like numbers and statistics, but rather meanings or qualities that are not captured in a quantitative method, for example feelings, thoughts,

experiences, and their own opinions about a topic (Gratton & Jones, 2014). According to Creswell (1994) in Williams (2007, p.67) this approach “... is also described as an unfolding model that occurs in a natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual experiences”. Rather quantitative answering the “what”, qualitative is more about “why” and “how” a phenomenon happening (Johannesen, Tufte & Christoffersen, 2016).

3.2 Research design

There exist different kinds of research design when doing a research. There is important to classify which kind of design that fits the research that are going to be conducted. The four different classifications are called predictive, explanatory, descriptive and exploratory (Gratton & Jones, 2014). As it is being hinted in the name ‘predictive’ it is about predict or forecast future phenomena, and this research is based on the findings of an explanatory research. Descriptive research is to give clarity and gain information of the status quo, describing a phenomenon. Explanatory is to describe why a phenomenon happens (Gratton & Jones, 2014).

I will conduct my research in the type of exploratory, because as it being explained in Gratton & Jones (2014) this type of research takes place where it is not much to work on, there have not been conducted much research of this specific area earlier, a place where it is either little or no knowledge at all. I also did not have so much knowledge about the digitalization project from NIF and there is very limited research that are connected to this project. In addition to that, this topic combined with the COVID-19 virus as mentioned earlier is very new to everyone. It is also known that digitalization in sports is essential, but it is not much knowledge of how it affects the different sports organisations, but rather have been mapped out the benefits of doing a digitalization process. Therefore, the classification of exploratory research is the one that fits my research.

The qualitative method can also be characterized as a dialog, especially as my interviews are semi-structured where I as a researcher control most of the conversations, but also the informant gets the chance to speak freely.

My purpose of this study is to find out and describe how leaders conceive digital transformation in a multisport organisation. It also worth to mention that a multisport organisation is much more complex than for example a football club, where they are having a lot on their plate, which was mentioned in the introduction of the multisport organisation.

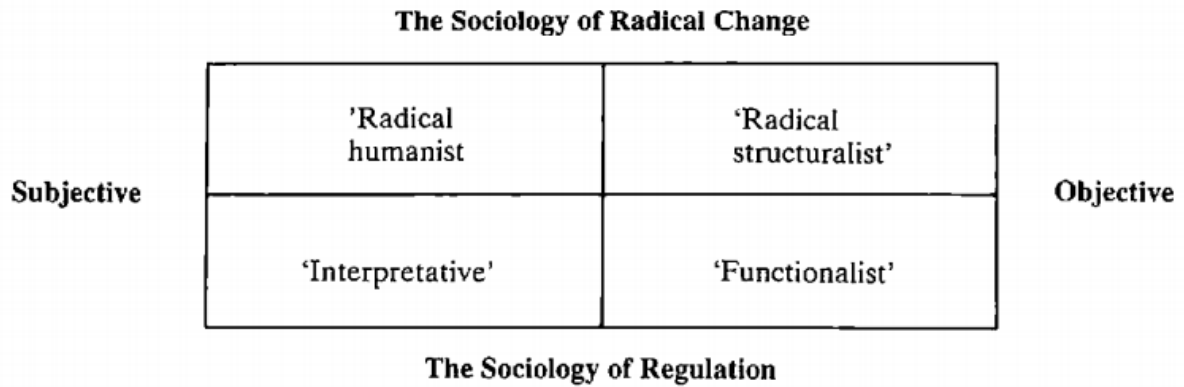


Fig. 4: *Four Paradigm Model of Social Theory* (Burrell & Morgan, 1979)

This research fits in the paradigm of interpretive of the four paradigms by Burrell and Morgan (1979)

Qualitative research is mainly in the interpretive paradigm, because like explained in Denzin & Lincoln (2005) it is about an approach in the way of interpretive and naturalistic of the world, and it means that the researchers for this approach "...attempting to make sense, of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them." (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). In other words, I as a researcher want to understand and give meaning of how this digitalization process has affected the multisport organisation.

The aim for this research is like it is being described by Cohen, et al. (2007) in Rehman & Alharthi (2016) to understand "*through the eyes of the participants rather than the researcher*" (Cohen, et al., 2007, p.21), which means I want to explore how the respondents is experiencing this digital transformation, and I as a researcher shall only observe and give meaning to their experiences and meanings. It also means that for this research, it is an inductive approach, because I gather theories by the data, instead of having theories and assumptions to begin with (Saunders et al., 2019). Like Saunders et al. (2019) continues to explain about inductive, "... *by generating data and analysing and reflecting upon what*

theoretical themes the data are suggesting.” (Saunders et al., 2019, p. 157). Which is what I have chosen to do for this exploratory research, through the interviews I have discovered theories and terms, I want to explore and extract theoretical concepts from the data.

It was well-known that NIF got a lot of critics of their digital solutions, so after they initiated the digitalization project, I want to explore how leaders conceive these new digital solutions and tools.

3.3 Sample and recruiting respondents

To answer the research question best as possible, *how does administrators in multisport organisations perceive digital transformation?* the process of recruiting informants has been by different strategies. Initially, it must be said that the sample process of this research was both easy and problematic. The easy part was because of the internship I had in this multisport organisation. Because of that it was easy to ask the respondents because I had worked with them for three months. The problems that occurred later was when I was going to find more respondents, which is something will be elaborated later in this chapter.

The respondents are chosen initially by three criteria, that they had a leader-role in the organisation, the respondents are from a multisport organisation, and they have been highly involved in the digitalization process from NIF and for their organisation.

Initially, a representative sample is difficult to achieve because it is incredibly time-consuming and expensive, and it is not the purpose of this research as the goal of this sample method is to achieve a true mirror image of the entire population (Johannesson & Perjons, 2014, p. 43).

In the case of this research, an exploratory sample is rather the one that fits this research, because like explained in Johannesson & Perjons (2014, p. 43) it is not required to be a representative sample of the population, but it is meant to get information and insights for exploring a new era, or a new topic, like how a digitalization process affects a multisport organisation under a pandemic.

3.3.1 Convenience and snowball selection

There exist different kind of strategies when conducting a sampling, but for this research it

has been a mix of convenience and snowball sampling. As being explained in Gratton & Jones (2014, p. 113) snowball sampling is a sampling method where you find your first informants and these first informants then gives advice or mention other people that could be of relevant to conduct an interview. The other sampling method that I conducted in my research, was convenience sampling. This is according to Gratton & Jones (2014) a sampling based on location, accessibility and so on. It can also be described as the 'easy' version to recruit informants because of the researcher chooses the informants because they are close to them, it is to just go talk with them.

The total amount of people that are included in my sample is three informants. I will elaborate more on this in the chapter regarding critics towards the methodology. Because it was mainly planned to have at least 5 included in the sample. In the sample are two males and one female, which is all different leaders in their multisport organisation. I wanted to interview more in the organisation, but I experienced that they most likely would not have given me the richest of interviews, because as mentioned this digitalization process is still quite new.

As it is being mentioned initially in 3.3 the easy part was because I had an internship in the one multisport organisation for three months. It was only logical for me as a researcher to conduct interviews with those I had worked with. When I had the internship, the organisation was also in the middle of this digitalization, so have experienced first-hand this process, and have been very much included. Nevertheless, as a researcher, I shall not elaborate my own opinions, but it really helped to be in this process myself and was very interesting and knowledgeable.

Already at the start of the internship I had some dialogue with the different people there if it would be possible to eventually conduct an interview with them for the master thesis, and already they said it was no problem at all for me to do that. So, because of that and the convenience, but also their position and work towards this topic I found them to be interesting informants. As it is mentioned in Johannesen et. al., (2016) one of the first informants can show me to the next one, which is something that occurred to me. I conducted interviews with two informants of the organization, which I already had planned and talked about long ago. After that, I got information and a tip of who I could interview next. I got the phone number and introduced myself and then I explained my case. The informant would

love to be interviewed and it was no problem at all. Johannesen et al. (2016) explains that some advantages to recruit via phone is that is more efficient, but on another hand, it could be problematic because I as a researcher cannot show any form of identification, so I am depended on that I show that I can be trusted. I have been lucky and fortunate regarding this, especially of my background in the multisport organization, which helped increase my legitimization.

After the last interview with the leader of the second multisport organization, I discovered some weaknesses and challenges. Because the interviews turned out to be shorter and shorter, especially the last one. That resulted in understanding the questions in the interview guide needed some changes and make it different, but time was not on my side, so I just had to end it there. Even with these few interviews I still managed to get a lot of interesting points and opinions which I will represent in the chapter of main findings and discussion.

3.4 Analysis design

After conducting each interview, I listen through every recording and wrote notes of potential categories and themes and highlighted important points from the participants. I did not start with the process of transcription before I was done with every interviews. After conducted the interviews, I started to transcribe, and I struggled at first because I tried to use different programs I found, like an automatic service by Word from Microsoft office, but it did not come out right. It seemed that it could not catch every word because of the variety of the quality and some mumbling at times, so it got very messy.

I then decided to the old way, listen to the recording, and typed down every single word on a document. I was thinking about writing it on English right away as I transcribed it, but I found out it would take me some extra time, so I decided to just go with the language that was spoken, Norwegian. Nevertheless, the transcription has helped me much as I managed to automatically analyse it while typing it. While I transcribed it, I wrote simple notes and words that could fit as a code or a theme. After fully transcribed everything, I started analysing, writing codes, categories, and themes.

When I started with the chapter of main findings, then I started translated the quotes in Norwegian to English. I saw that as a challenge, because it is not always that easy to

translate Norwegian sayings into English, so it the formulation from different quotes can be seen as not optimal several places in the chapter, but my priority was to capture the points and meanings from the participants, and not perfecting my English writing, as it also not my native language.

3.5 Interview process

The first two interviews were conducted at the informant's workplace in a meeting room/lunchroom, the second was done in their main office. They had an open office-solution at the second one, at that time there was only one other in the office. It was also a temporary office, so I had to conduct the interview with the other one present, which I initially found uncomfortable, but throughout the interview I found it easy-going.

An interview guide was made in advance for these interviews. I had the same guide for every interview because of the questions could be asked all of them. I was not certain that I had the best interview guide, I was not sure I had the right questions. I had some assumptions, and rather had a lot of follow-up questions which worked splendid. For the first two interviews it was not needed for any introduction where we all were familiar with each other.

At the start of the third interview, the other organization, we had a short unformal conversation where we talked about different things, it was not the plan, but it helped in the way of reducing the tension and stiffness of the situation, so it was more comfortable to start the interview. I had to introduce and present myself more for the third interview. For every interview I informed about my duty of confidentiality, and my choosing of anonymity, even all of them was okay with it not being anonymous, but like explained earlier it would be easier that way and it is a responsibility for me as a researcher to respect that either way. I explained that they can back out whenever they want from the interview and the project. I followed up with asking about permission to record the interview, which everyone was fined with, and I told them that everything will be deleted at the end of the project.

In experience from research done in the past, to be nice and lighten the mood really helps, it helps for me as a researcher, and it also makes the informant more relaxing. It is also a goal to create trust and safe and warm atmosphere where you feel safe. Furthermore, even if I, the interviewer, had a good knowledge to the situation for them to begin with, I wanted to be neutral and conduct the interview in the way of that we had no relation earlier. I was

deliberately on conducting the interviews and presenting myself as an independent part with no predetermined opinions or interests for the subject, in that way it would also lead to decreasing the chance of the informant answering me in the way I anticipated the answers to be.

As mentioned, an interview guide was used throughout the interviews, where I first had the introduction part before I started the recording, then I moved over to the transition where I had some simple questions to begin with. After the transition, I moved over to the main section of my interview guide where I had several straight-forward questions, but also questions that invited reflection and their own opinions. I was very careful of not interrupting, but it was some rare occasions I had to break in and just ask for elaboration on something that was being said, for example an acronym I had not heard before. Throughout the interviews I was intentionally showing encouraging responses, like small gestures or confirming words, to show interest for what the informant was telling. I did that because I legitimately thought it was interesting, but also for the sake of showing interest. I noticed that for some questions the informant was answering other questions that I had planned to ask later, so it was some moments it was a little pause because of me thinking of what I was going to be asking next. Besides that, it went very well. I had almost follow-up questions for every answer the informant had, so even the interview guide was not optimal, I managed to come up with good questions on the spot.

As for the final part I asked some questions regarding the future for this matter and end it with asking if the informant had something extra, they wanted to add that had not been said previously. Someone had something to add, mostly some of them repeated the most important points for what was been talked about through the interview, but mainly this part meant the end for the interview.

3.6 Evaluation

This is the last stage of the steps in the model that were presented at the beginning of this chapter, and it refers to the evaluation of the data and if it is reliable, trustworthy, has the research really been researched as intended, and ethical considerations when conducting a scientific research project. In the end, I will elaborate on critics for my own research design and methods.

3.6.1 Reliability

When conducting a research project is important to evaluate the reliability and validity of the research. As it is being defined in Golafshani (2003, p. 598), Joppe (2002, p. 1) defines reliability:

“...The extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study is referred to as reliability and if the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.”

To simply put it, reliability refers to how much of the data is reliable or trustworthy. It is about how accurate the examination of the topic has been conducted, what data is being used and how it is being analysed. As a researcher this is important factors to consider. For this research it can be discussed for being both reliable and not reliable. First, the research design I have chosen for this research, I mean have resulted in reliable data, because even I had not prepared the best interview guide, it still resulted in good data because I managed to ask the right questions. I got a variety of answers, but in average it was quite similar answers throughout the informants. I also got informants which has been in the game for a long time, lots of experience, but also very reflecting persons, in addition the one informant had a history with IT-work in the past, which I noticed he was reflecting and had good arguments and opinions.

I also must be critical for my own research design because this had no form of test-retest-reliability, which is being referred as stability in Golafshani (2003). This research would be more stable if I had done the same research on the same group, but at different times (Golafshani, 2003). This would have increased the reliability. Another version of reliability is internal reliability, and it refers to the ability to produce same results by using different selection in the same research topic within same period (Sander, 2019). But this would be difficult to achieve because of the limitations of time and extent of this research.

Another important factor when conducting these interviews, it can happen that the leaders may be biased in the way of they do now want to cast shade upon their organisation or situation. As a researcher, I just must hope they have given honest and own opinions about the topic.

Nevertheless, because of the long experiences the informants had, and my choosing of research design, interviews and chosen theories, it has given the research reliable and trustworthy data.

3.6.2 Validity

Unlike reliability, validity is being defined as:

“Validity determines whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are...” (Joppe, 2000, p. 1 in Golafshani, 2003, p. 599).

As Golafshani (2003, p. 599) elaborates, if what is being researched is accurate and if the researcher in fact is measuring what was intended. To explain this further, there exist two different kinds of validity, the first one is internal validity which refers to how credible and trustworthy the results are based on the assumptions and hypothesis made beforehand (Dahlum, 2021). External validity refers to how much of the results of the study can be generalized to the world (Bhandari, 2020)

With the above mentioned, it is not certain my informants which is only 3, can be generalized. If I had conducted more interviews in other multisport organizations, it may happen they had different sayings and opinions. But the 3 of them all had similar sayings and key words which increased the validity, but if I had gone through with more interview rounds with similar informants and more informants that would have increased the validity of this research very much.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Ethics initially refers to human beings and what is right or wrong. It is also an important area for research projects because of the close-up interaction with people through interviews. Because of the in-depth interviews I have chosen for my research, there exist some other informal requirements for me as a researcher, like trust, confidentiality, respect, reciprocity and showing gratefulness. Besides that, The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH) have established

guidelines since 1993 and last updated in 2016 and is a committee to ensure ethics in research and encourage to responsible research (Forskningsetikk, 2018).

As being stated in Forskningsetikk (2018), these guidelines is binding for both single individual and institutions. As a researcher I also have a responsible for myself to ensure that research being done is ethical and responsible. A research project that involves informants can only be conducted after the participant is informed and gives consent. The ethical research guidelines were carefully considered throughout this research.

It also a requirement to give the participant every information that is needed (Forskningsetikk, 2018). The participant has also the chance to withdraw from the project at any time. Therefore, it is important when conducting the interviews, to inform them clearly about the purpose, anonymity, and intentions of the research, and what their rights are for the participation in this research. This is also for showing respect and the confidentiality that applies for the interviews, but also to build trust between the researcher and the informant.

Privacy for the informants is a very important part of NESH guidelines, and it is my duty as a researcher for respecting that. So, in that case, like mentioned earlier, I got permission to use the names and positions the participants had, but from a researcher perspective, I also must take responsibility and respect personal information either way. So, in that case, I chose to anonymise the personal information. This is not research that needs the information regarding age or gender for the sake of the study. Withal, therefore I am using pseudonymisation

Pseudonymisation has the purpose of anonymising the informants in the way that they can't be identified (Data Protection Commission, 2021). There also results in an easier way of analysing in the main findings and discussion. I have chosen three unisex names that are commonly used in the English language, Adrian, Casey, and Billy.

Another important aspect of this to consider in matter of ethical, is because of the nature of the interviews may encourage also negative opinions and sayings about things, which can be sensitive for some. That is another reason I want to have it as anonymous as possible.

3.8 NSD

According to laws and regulations regarding conducting qualitative research with people involved, this research has been reported to The Norwegian center for research data (NSD) and has been approved by the reference number: 999845. The personal information has been stored safely and been deleted when planned and according to the guidelines and requirements to NSD. A confirmation was sent to NSD for the end of this research project.

3.9 Critics

When I was conducting the interviews, I noticed that it hadn't fully been implemented within the organisations, it was still in the starting phase, not every group within the multisport organisation had got these new digital solutions yet. So, if I had conducted the research or the interviews a bit later, it could result in better reflecting and would have resulted in much better empirical data. I also must consider if I asked the right questions, and after going through the main findings and discussion, I see that some questions could be different, and adding some better questions too.

In this chapter, the process of the methodology for this research project has been presented and evaluated. The process has been elaborated by obstacles and how the different steps have been done. The research has also been considered by ethical aspects, and how the reliability and validity is for this research. The following chapter will present the empirical data.

4.0 Main findings

“Society is changing, how can we change with it.” Adrian

In this chapter I will present the main findings through the interviews. The main findings are associated with the topic and research question which is *digital transformation in a multisport organisation* and *how does administrators conceive digitalization?* There is also a relevance for the results in the presented literature and theory in chapter two.

The main findings are divided into categories and sub-categories. Where it was most output was on resources, which was divided into competency, NIF, communication and information and time. Here it is presented how the experience and conceives the resources of within their organisation, but also how they experience NIF. Following, I will be presenting findings in the category strategy and leadership which has the following category utility value. In the end, I have the category positive aspects of the digital transformation, where there is a few mentioning's of the positive sides and how they perceive the digitalization positively.

I will go into category by category, present and quote what was found by the different informants. Like stated earlier, there is being used pseudonym names for this research. To clarify, Adrian and Casey are from the same multisport organisation, and Billy is from another one, but the two organisations has been collaborating and gotten help from each other regarding the digitalization,

4.1 Resources

There was a mutual notion that the lack of resources for this digital transformation is a challenge when they first started implementing these digital tools and solution. This was because of lack of expertise and competency, and lack of staff itself. Like explained earlier, a multisport organisation is a huge organisation with lots of different sports underneath, and they are driven most of volunteers and the administration is not usually many. This comes forth as a huge pattern amongst the informants, the need for more resources is a big element for the digitalization transformation to be more efficient and successful over time. Below were some of the answers when they were asked about resources.

Adrian: "In a multisport organisation where we have a lot of tasks with few resources, it may be bit bumpy on the road." The informant repeats shortly after talking in general about the topic: "very many assignments on few resources."

Billy: "yes of course, we are only two people here, and with 12 groups, there is enough to do" Billy also adds "...yes, we need help"

There is a mutual experience amongst everyone that there is need for more resources. This digital transformation that includes a lot of new digital tools comes with difficulties and challenges, like Adrian describes their case: *"So, it is clear that the combination with social media, membership systems, our websites, apps, spond(a communication tools) that only the coaches use, it is a pretty big world to keep track of, and want to have super users on the various platforms, and then needs resources to manage to keep up with that."* Super users are about being a user on the different platforms with more access than regular users. There is a lot going on and there exist a bunch of digital platforms that needs constant care.

Like in all businesses, there will always be challenges when implementing new digital systems, and it will always be a bit slow in the beginning. Like Adrian points out: *"You see an efficiency long down the road, but it is little bit difficult to start with new systems when you are not used to, so it feels very heavy and less efficient."*

For Billy's case, they do not have their own IT-person, "yet" there are those two in the office that does the work, but they also have a person from an accounting firm who is highly skilled in IT and had helped them a lot. They also rely on the support from NIF.

NIF

Some interesting points from almost every informant which I was not intended or planned to get thoughts or opinions on was the resources in NIF itself. They all had a mutual conception about experiencing of lack of resources in NIF

There is both positive and negative sayings about the resources from NIF. When I asked about how happy they are with the process from NIF, Adrian answers: *"I am pleased on our behalf, they have put aside resources to help us get going, which I think is very good, NIF has many different clubs with different sizes, they also going to have digital deliveries which*

is very different, so I have been very satisfied, but as mentioned, I also wish they had more resources because I notices they have a lot to do.”

When interviewing the second informant, I also asked something similar I have done for most of them, if they gotten much support from NIF if needed, Casey responded with positive things which I will present in the category of communication, but in the end of his answer, Casey says “... *but the problem is, NIF does not really have the resources.*” Casey comes with a follow-up on that by giving an example by previous experience, where a sports team implemented a new system by NIF, which stated was way too early in the process. “*By that time, it was only one person who was working with this area, and they were a total of 2-3 people in the entire IT-department.*” Casey comes so with the question “*if NIF shall work with IT and use money on IT or should NIF use money to pay someone who can work with IT, so they rather can use time on sports*”. The informant means that they maybe should hire a company that can work with IT, instead of NIF itself.

Billy: “NIF are at all times supporting us, but it is clearly that we are not alone who have questions, and it happens sometimes it takes some time getting responds.” Which connects it to NIF lack some resources so they could give answers faster.

But it is not only issues that are related to digitalization and NIF, there also think that NIF have been very satisfactory nevertheless:

Adrian: “NIF has been offering consultant services for free, and in the long run, NIF is a huge organisation which means it will be safe staying with them, for example, in five years.” Instead of using other suppliers for digital systems. It also being experienced from their perspective that NIF are very obsessed with them as a multisport organisation and make them use as little time as possible, so they rather use more time on activities.

Casey: “We are a pilot group on integration with Idrettens Office 365 among other things, we have good connection in NIF, so I perceive that we gotten a lot of help from NIF.”

Competency

As a part of when answering about resources, the terms competency, set of skills, expertise

and training was mentioned frequently throughout the interviews with each informant. It is being experienced as one of the main challenges when it comes to the digital transformation because these new digital tools and technologies made them realise it lacks lots of competency. The question ask at the time was formulated differently from informant to informant, but the answers was similar throughout.

I asked: is it desirable to have a department or an own person dedicated working with IT?
Adrian: *“yes, absolutely..., there is a future objective to get an extra person dedicated to this, and streamline and release resources, so that the employees can get the opportunity to learn more about these digital solutions.”*

Billy: *“Yes, we could need an extra person for exactly this, who taught us, so we currently using the person mentioned earlier, which mainly is an accountant, but of course without a IT-person we probably would had some difficulties on the way.”*

Casey: *“I see that the whole digitalization has shown that there is actually a greater need for more employees in positions who can work with this daily and help their users, than when we did not have such systems, then it was nothing to help with.”*

Casey had an IT-background who was familiar with the work of different digital tools and was familiar and maybe had the skills to understand how to work with these more quickly than others. I asked if the digital transformation process would be slower if they would not have him or anyone who had the similar skillset: *“Probably yes, it would most likely taken some more time if it wouldn't be anyone with knowledge about this.”*

Furthermore, we were talking about volunteers, so I came up with a follow-up question if the informant thinks there lacks person with passion for sports, for what they work with. Casey chose to reformulate: *“but, there is a lack of competency around administration tasks, and there is lots of people with passion in the sports, in the practical part within a multisport organisation, as coaches what wishes to do something for the benefit of the sport, but to impose a volunteer doing something for the administration, for a paid employee, that is a bit more difficult, to get them use and use time on administration tasks.”*

With similarities as Casey, when talking about the different systems and competency, Billy points out that maybe should have the systems underneath NIF, but adds *“but also at the same time, it should be easy for us and the 12 groups we have who usually comes with different board members each year, so it is a continuous training process of the boards in the different groups.”*

It can also be experienced that the digital solutions which has the purpose to make things easier, has also been as seen as becoming more difficult for many people, and it needs to be professionalised. It also comes forth that continuity is an important element, continues training along the way, because of the volunteer part, most of the volunteers are being replaced every year, so it is being shown that continuity and experience is needed for having a stable process. Because of the replacement, they need to conduct training and courses for the different digital transform frequently. Some of the platforms that they need to reach out on, is their new website, Facebook, and Instagram.

Communication and information

Every informant experiencing the communication from NIF has been satisfactory. They have good courses and so on, but because of them being a big multisport organisation that maybe needs a tailored course just for them. Like Adrian puts it: *“About the courses that NIF have conducted, most of them are really good, but some have been very little focused on what we need, we are a large multisport organisation, one of the largest in Norway.”*

Adrian mentioning all the different digital systems and tools that have got a makeover, especially for the communication. *“... our website and communication channels like social media, there is a lot of information that is going to reach to our members and coaches, and we also need to reach the population of the town to show what we have to offer of activities.”* The importance of reaching out by good communication platforms is a high priority as in the past, especially their website was very messy and difficult to administrate, and now they finally can be better, and show the community their improvement.

Both Adrian and Casey mentioned challenges with the platforms because there is so many steps and digital tools that communicate with each other and how it is build up. *“There is so many profiles to deal with.”* Adrian points out that it should rather be an overall platform.

The first multisport organisation where I conducted the interviews with Adrian and Casey have been working a lot on website, and there is a mutual conception of satisfaction of help and support from that IT-supplier. They were one of the first sports organisation to work with them, so they got a handful of good information and help, but also on the other way around, it has made the IT-supplier some thoughts to consider too for development. As for the communication information-sharing within is experienced as being much better, before they did not have any cloud-based systems, but now they have.

Casey: *“All of the groups have had their own solutions of how they share and keep files, somebody has their own files at home, private owned drop boxes, OneDrive, and now has every file been sent to the administration who have saved most of them, what was necessary... Now everything will be the same, a common place for place for storage saving and information-sharing, it also means that the main group will get access to all of the files.”* Casey later points out that there have been issues regarding files and information-sharing in the past, there was an employee who had many important files and then later quit, so it was hard getting access to those files again. It seems they are very pleased with this common information-sharing solution.

Billy: *“.... We can't wait to get started, especially with sharing of documents, and make it visible for our groups, because our jobs is really about making their jobs easier. That is our main objective, so they can do sports, and we can administrate.”*

Billy's organisation has not yet implemented fully the cloud-based tools, but they had a meeting with the other organisation who had been doing that, and they seemed very excited to start with this. To make communication and information-sharing much easier.

In contrast of Adrian's and Casey's organisation where their accounting system is server based, Billy's organisation has come a long way on accounting where they have been working a lot digitalising that part of the organisation, which now is cloud-based solutions for every invoice-solutions. Billy adds that they were very analog before, and the work with accounting was paper based. *“...and now it's definitely not that, and that feels so good.”* adds Billy in the end, highlighting the satisfaction of a better digital solution.

Time

Time is not always an organisation's best friend, but in this case, it seems there have not

been that much of an issue. These interviews were conducted when COVID-19 was worse, so it was asked if the pandemic opened a window letting them focus and working even more on the digital transformation. Some of them, like Adrian sees themselves kind of “lucky” that they got more time working with this digital transformation and could have much more focus on it in comparison if there was not a pandemic.

Adrian: *“There is a lot of ad-hoc work that disappears when it is less activity going on in the sports groups. We have been able to use a lot more time on this, than if it had been normal conditions.... Probably so NIF themselves also got more time working on this, on Office 365 under the pandemic.”*

Casey: *“It could be but could also be that people felt that it gotten more to do, but now we can publish stuff in a very quiet period, I maybe feel that this is the time for doing stuff like this, so I think that it has helped us on several levels.”*

Billy: *“To a degree... We have been very good at facilitate; it has been lots of activities going on all the time. Also, because of COVID, we were sort of pushed into the digitalization, and had to dive into Teams and Idrettens Office 365, so we were kind of forced into this, like maybe would not have had happened if there were normal conditions, and then we just have to acquire the needed knowledge.”*

4.2 Strategy and leadership

Everyone seems to have been planning and done research in advance before diving into these digital solutions, but there was some that experienced that a proper plan and strategy would helped more. Also, Casey’s perception about NIF’s strategy of this digitalization could be better. This came as a respond when I asked about what characterizes a good digitalization process? and if the informant could, what would be the feedback to NIF about the digital implementation

Casey: *“It is about using the right digital systems and tools for the right club or multisport organisation, involving the sports groups in the process... It is also about good leadership within the sports organisation when something like that is being implemented.... Have most of it ready for as many as possible when you first decide for something, and present that solution, have arguments, have everything ready to go when presenting the solution, or else*

it will be challenges, so, clear leadership and good preparations is needed for a good digital process.”

Casey: *“NIF must have things ready when something is launched, and systems that are easy to use by adult with IT-experience but must also be easy to use by children and youths without that experience.”*

As a connection with the quote from Casey above, it could be experiences as very complicated when using some of the digital tools, there was many steps to just do a simple task, to elaborate, I am quoting Casey: *“For example, being a handball judge, you have to send bills digitally, and to do that you have to first in to the platform ‘Turneringsadmin’ and register that you have judged a game, then you get the bill in ‘Idrettens Office 365’ and have to approve it there and fill out so send it in.”* Right after this, Casey repeats the importance of having a good strategy ready, so NIF does not send out unfinished products.

This is not the only example given by Casey, at the end of the interview he finished by talking about the whole digitalization which itself have the purpose of making things easier, but you meet a lot of obstacles on the way. Casey gives explains by an example if you want to register a team, and I quote: *“Before you just sent an e-mail to NIF where you explained your case, but today, you have to log into ‘Turneringsadmin’, you have to send in the application there, the application goes further to leader for signing, then the application gets visible in another club who also must argument send in, where you need a pin-code, and also those who have more rights in the digital tool have to assign roles so they get access to, and again, you need a pin-code.”* It is being experienced as very heavy and complicated in some areas of the digital systems; it is not simple as it is supposed to be. Casey finishes with: *“So, maybe just an email would suffice instead.”*

It was also mentioned the project group that came to life gradually in the process. Casey points out it would maybe be proficient to establish a project group much earlier in the process. A project group is also mentioned by Adrian that explains that if there would be project leader 100% dedicated for this work, especially the website, it would have been a much quicker process.

Furthermore, it also being experienced that they did a good amount of research and planning when choosing their supplier for website which seems very successful.

Adrian: *“We chose a solution for our website which NIF has suggested to us, we did a big research beforehand when looking at new solutions.”*

Billy and their organisation have yet not defined which systems they want for their members, they want to be careful, rather just jumping into something and it is not an optimal system for their organisation. They want to take their time and find the one system that will be taking care of everything.

Adrian: *“I hope when we are starting fully with the new systems it will help release a lot of time, which can make us prioritize and be better at other areas, such as sponsors, subsidies, so that we can keep developing the organisation.”*

Utility value

There is a common conception that one of the challenges is to get the different groups and users to really use these new digital tools and solutions. Because, like presented earlier, there can be an issue when imposing a volunteer using something totally new for the benefit of the administration. It is important for them to see the value of it, and even it is a little heavy and slow at the start, it will be better.

Can it be challenging for people to really use these new digital solutions?

Adrian: *“Yes, absolutely.”*

There also a conception by Adrian that everyone seems very pleased so far, because it turned out there was a lot of unhappy opinions about their previous digital solutions. The administration has been conducted a lot of work so that it will be easier for the different groups working with it in the future. They hope they see the value of it and will continue using the new digital tools frequently.

Casey: *“the biggest challenges is to get people using these digital solutions as we want.”*

Here Casey elaborates on the volunteer part which presented earlier, which also makes the comparison with a regular employee, it would then be easier to say “*this is what you are going to do*” as Casey puts it, but Casey also adds “... *but like how it is now, they have the possibility to say; I don’t want to do that... and if we keep telling and pushing them about it, it may result in the person do not want to be in that position anymore.*”

Positive aspects of the digital transformation

It is important to consider the positive aspects of this digital transformation, even there is a conception that there exist many challenges and obstacles, there has been many positive sayings too, like some are mentioned.

There is a common conception amongst everyone that they are in an exciting time and looking very forward to fully implement all the digital tools and solution. The multisport organisations have good communications with each other, helping each other and gives advice. Billy think is this is very exciting and cannot wait for them to have better digital tools, and to have a better website to show.

5.0 Discussion

In this chapter I am going to analyse the main findings presented in chapter four and will then be reviewed towards what was presented in the theory chapter which included literature review and clarification of concepts and theoretical background. The purpose for this discussion is to find how empirical data correlates with the research question *“How does administrators in a multisport organisation perceive digital transformation?”*

I have chosen to not divide the discussion into categories like in the chapter of main findings. Because, all categories and sub-categories are interconnected with each other, so it will be easier to discuss throughout, a better flow than having to make pit stops at each single category, rather connecting category with category along the way. But the categories and terms I will have focus on throughout this discussion, is resources, competency, information, utility value, change and resistance to change, leading in process of digital transformation and strategy.

As stated in Deloitte (n.d.) and Score and Change (year) the sport industry has always been a step behind and needs a total overhaul of digital transformation within their organisation. NIF had finally initiated the digitalization project and started the digital transformation in sports organisations in Norway, but the transformation started maybe too fast, as it came with challenges and obstacles on the way, but was it maybe the right time to start implementing these new digital tools and solutions either way?

It was clearly that resources were seen as one of the most important aspect of the digital transformation. There was a mutual conception between the informants that lack of resources was an issue, and it was very desirable to have more resources, especially an extra person that are only dedicated to IT-work. In that way the others in the administration focus on developing themselves and the multisport organisation, and better be visible for what the organisation has to offer. It was talked about lack of resources in general, but also in the form of competency, resources in NIF, communication and information and time.

As presented in the theory chapter, resources are usually an obstacle when it comes to digital transformation. Gill (2003) stated that change efforts in organisations often fail because of lack of resources like, budget, systems, time, information, and necessary expertise.

Stensberg (2021) also elaborated on challenges when it comes to digital transformation, where limited time or resources was the first mentioning of the five challenges he had. The research done by Ehnold et al. (2019) also showed that lack of resources is an issue towards a digital transformation. This correlates with the participants answers as there was a red thread through them all, even they had some different experiences. The administrators were very clear that resources in different aspects was the main challenge and obstacle for the digital transformation in their multisport organisation.

As stated by Feki, et al. (2016) digital transformation is related to profound changes in the business model which can be processes, resources, operational methods, or culture. As shown, it has already changed how they perceives processes and resources. As Casey explained, the processes have radically changed than what it was before this digital transformation. Now it is even more steps when for example registering a new team that want to do a sport. Have the digital transformation from NIF maybe made the digital tools even more complicated before? It can be said so, but it is fair to say that it still in the early process, especially when I conducted these interviews. There may be that NIF is updating or changing their digital solutions in the future, which seems that Casey wants at least, because like the informant mentioned, *“maybe it is just easier to send an email.”*

There is very well-known that not every Norwegian organization, whether it is a multisport organization or just a regular club, does not sit on a lot of resources, especially because it is very affected by volunteering, which is wonderful of course, in that way they can use more subsidies on the activities itself, to the community, rather than using on employees.

On another hand, there is a clear pattern of the desire to have more resources and an extra person that can work with IT. It seems good that NIF finally started improving the digital tools and solutions for the Norwegian sport organizations, but it seems that they do not have enough of resources themselves, to have a proper painless digital transformation process. NIF themselves have gotten a lot of critics for their digital solution in the past, from the participants view, they are very helpful and supporting, but it is a conception that maybe dived into way too fast like Casey mentioned.

“...a process where digital technologies create disruptions triggering responses from organizations that seek to alter their value creation while managing the structural changes

and organizational barriers that affect the positive and negative outcomes of this process.”
(Vial, 2009, p. 1)

As we could see from the empirical data, the digital technologies quickly created disruptions within the multisport organization, that resulted in them realizing the lack of resources, the lack of competency, the need for a better strategy, and to get people to use the digital tools. Like Casey while being in the process, it was then Casey realized they need more people and competency, and so did Adrian and Billy. Which resulted in them having a high desire of hiring an IT-person as an employee to just work with the digital technologies, in other words, “...*managing the structural changes and organizational barriers that affect the positive and negative outcomes of this process*” (Vial, 2009, p.1)

While the positive outcomes will be that there will be more efficient, better information-sharing, better connection with the other sports groups, members and to better show what the multisport organizations as to offer of activities. The negative outcomes are as stated, resources, but also some of the processes of the digital tools itself like previously mentioned.

As pointed out in Ebert & Duarte (2018), Vial (2019), Cameron & Green (2019) and Parida et al., (2019) the importance for competency is higher than ever, the need for expertise within the area of IT should be a prioritizing element when it comes to digital transformation. Many organizations had no other choice to dive into the world of digitalization because of the pandemic and what people expect, because of the everlasting development of digital technologies.

“IT people with change management skills are needed now more than ever.” (Cameron & Green, 2019, p. 292.) Because the whole digital transformation process is very much about change, the process is changing how they usually have been working for a long time, and suddenly this big shift of digital tools and systems being implemented, which resulting in a structural shock in the organization. Like already mentioned, because of this digital transformation in the multisport organizations, it was then they realized how much they lack the competency for this. Because, also like explained in Cameron & Green, the change of IT-structure involves “...*people doing different things in different ways with different inputs and different outputs.*” Cameron & Green (2019, p. 296). Which being showed in the

empirical data that everyone is being affected in the way of them doing a lot of different things than they used to, with different inputs and outputs.

Like how they are publishing on their website, how they register a member, how they send in invoices for judges, there is a lot of new stuff going on, which seems is very heavy and complicated now, but as Adrian mentioned, they see an efficient structure in the long run.

Like being said by both Adrian and Casey, if they had established a project group for working with this process, it could have been a more painless digital transformation process, which leads me to the question, maybe they needed a better strategy to start with? They did some research of what supplier they wanted for some solutions, like their website and an accounting system that is cloud-based, but this is just a very small part of a strategy.

The digital framework by Matt et al. (2015) consists of four elements, where the first one is use of technologies which refers to attitudes towards new digital technologies, but also the exploitation of it. Which again leads me to the utility value, the people that really is going to these new digital tools, if there really is a need for it and is it really going to be used?

There seems that there was a strong need for a digital upgrade by every informant, it has been a desire for a long time. There has been lots of complaining on their former digital tools, especially their website, so the element use of technologies so far seems decent, but there is a common concern to get the sports group to use them. In correlation with Matt et al., (2019) digital tools cannot only be implemented, it also must be used. As it being stated, most of them are volunteers, so it there is a chance that some of them will be resistance to this change. Which is a very common element during change processes (Gill, 2003; Vial, 2019). Yet, this is only a concern, because the digital tools were not fully launched in their organization, so it is difficult to say if there occurred resistance or it went flawless

To discuss from the perspective of the interviewer and by the empirical data, every administrator has shown that they are very eager about this change and have very much been including as many as possible, being transparent, and being showing them on the way that this is the new set of digital tools that will being used in the future. Because, like stated by Vial (2019) the role of the administrators for a process like this is very important, they need to include everyone so that they develop a digital mindset within the multisport organization,

and if its only 'managerial', it can result in surprises for many employees and can result in conflict. Also, as Wigfield (1994) states, the importance of training and encourage helps with the cooperation.

By looking at the empirical data, it seems that the administrators so far have been successfully developing a digital mindset and motivating everyone for these new digital tools. They have been having meetings, are frequently in touch with the other groups, and other sports organizations, it seems they have been excellent at that part, even the process being experienced as heavy now. They have gotten positive feedbacks on most of it, everyone seems happy so far and ready for be using it.

But to having a continuous successful digital process over time, the element of structural changes in Matt et a. (2015) is important, there is a conception that a need for a structural change within the multisport organization, and it means changing how they are working with digitalization.

The many elements and factors that are mentioned in the discussion links to inertia, "*the organization's ability to make internal changes in the face of significant external changes*" (Moradi, et al., 2021, p. 2). Because it is about resources and capabilities that can be obstacles for disruption on digital transformation. The resources in the multisport organizations, like competency, information, communication, have all been obstacles when implementing this digital transformation. But there have been very much positive outputs as well, like there are a mutual conception about the positive output of information-sharing with having a cloud-based system so that every files securely saved, and it is available by everyone.

But, how can it be only positive outputs and no obstacles? To answer that, I am referencing Matt et al., (2015) and Ehnold, et al. (2019) importance of having a digital transformation strategy. Without a solid strategy for this kind of transformation, organization will be met with challenges whether they like or not. Like Ehnold et al. (2019) continues with, it can result in uncertainties and resistance within the organization.

This also takes us a further step back to NIF, which who started this digitalization project, which also being experienced by the informants that they should have a better strategy, but

also, like it being experienced by some of the informants, the digital tools can be sort of complicated and heavy. Like Feki, et al. (2016) points out, the users should be placed by the heart of corporate strategy when undergoing a digital transformation, because the digital tools should be easy to use, just like Casey mentions, it should be easy to use regarding experience.

It seems that the lessons by Tabrizi et al. (2019) needs to be implemented in both the multisport organisation and NIF itself. They need to figure out their business strategy before diving into a solution. They need to use their internal resources, the people who have the most knowledge about these kinds of digital solutions to apply for a final solution. And this is mostly for NIF, which needs to go on an analytic level of costumers, mapping out the needs, how they like it, to increase the satisfaction among customers, in this case, the multisport organizations (Tabrizi et al., 2019, p. 2)

6.0 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to study how administrators within a multisport organisation perceives a digital transformation. This has been done through an exploratory approach by conducting qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews with three administrators from two different multisport organisations which was undergoing a digital transformation when the interviews were conducted. NIF had initialized a digitalization project which had the purpose of digital transform both NIF and their organisations. The study aims to see the perspective of the administrators, the users by the new digital tools and solutions that are being implemented.

In the empirical evidence, it is clearly that the administrators perceive the digital transformation in very similar ways, bot also some differences. Despite the difference role and different organisations through the participants, it showed a clear patten of how the digital transformation is perceived by the administrators. The main difference between the two multisport organisation was on which stage they were on the different digital tools. The first multisport organisation had come along way on most of digital tools and solutions, but their accounting system was still server based at that time. The other multisport organisation had not come so far with all the digital tools like the first one, but they had come a long way with their accounting system which is now cloud-based.

As of the categories that was most mentioned in the empirical data and later discussed, which was resources, competency, information, communication, utility value and strategy, was shown to be interconnected and overlapped each other. Because of the exploratory approach, this is seen as a discovery and it was discovered by the analysis that it is a concern of the lack of resources, which again the resources in competency that was highlighted as most, the lack of competency for operating the new digital tools and solutions.

On another hand, the administrators were also happy and satisfied that they finally are digitalizing their multisport organisation, which has been outdated for a long time, and by the look at the empirical evidence, they have managed to develop a digital mindset overall in the multisport organisation, and they are looking forward to being able to have easier information-sharing systems which will help them being more efficient.

It come forward in the data that the administrators did not have a proper strategy for this digital transformation, something they also experienced NIF did not have either. It was conceived by the administrators that NIF rushed unfinished digital tools and the process around it. That resulted in them realising the lack of competency around the field of IT.

It is worth mentioning that this digital transformation is still early in the process, and they were in the middle of the process when these interviews were conducted, and they had not fully implemented all the digital tools in the whole multisport organisation. So, this conclusion will be based on what the administrators perceived at that time of the digital transformation, and therefore the conclusion will be split into two because of the two perspectives of how they perceived the digital transformation.

By the analysis and discussion of the empirical data, to conclude, the administrators perceive the digital transformation of their multisport organisation as challenging, mostly because of the lack of resources which is because of the lack of proper strategy. I also conclude that the administrators perceive the digital transformation as something positive, that they will be more efficient within the organisation by better information-sharing and communication, and to be more visible and more attractive to external environment.

6.1 Limitations

As presented earlier, NIF is a huge and complex organisation with a lot of different sports organisations and departments, it would be very interesting to be in touch with every organisational unit, which also is being affected by the digitalization, but that would take a big amount of time and resources, it would not have been achievable. Therefore, I chosen to limit the research for just two multisport organisation and with three informants. The terms like digital tools, solutions, systems are used throughout the research, and I have limited the research to prioritise of how the digital transformation process is being perceived and not focus on the different tools and the issues that follows with each specific digital tools and go in-depth of what the different digital tools are about, but rather how it being perceives around it.

7.0 Practical implications

To end this research study, I want to present some practical implications, recommendations from the researcher's perspective on what the multisport organization should and how they can manage a digital transformation process better.

First and foremost, there are limited resources in a Norwegian multisport organization, they cannot just hire everyone they like, but NIF need to acknowledge the lack of elements around the organizations, especially lack of competency and need to act.

Furthermore, some concrete practical implications for the multisport organisations. For having a more flawless transformation, it should be following Matt et al. (2015) digital framework where the importance of having a digital transformation strategy is being the foundation of having a successful transformation. The purpose of a digital transformation strategy is to “... *integrate the entire coordination, prioritization, and implementation of digital transformations within a firm.*” (Matt et al., 2015, p. 1)

- I have chosen to call the digital transformation a project, because it is time limited, it has a start and an end; therefore, they should develop a project specification with different clarifications.
 - Establish a team with defined roles, who is the project leader, who has the responsibility for the different assignments, so it is clear what needs to be done and who has the responsibility for it
 - The scope and time of the entire transformation
 - Set up a budget
 - Map out the different stakeholders, like suppliers for who can do their website, accounting system, eventually map out sponsors that can help them with maybe subsidies in exchange for the sponsors getting visibility.
 - Resources within the organisation, how is their competency for this? Who has the most competency for IT- work per date? How much can we work in this per week? Is it necessary to bring in expertise? Is it feasible?
 - Establish a time schedule with milestones; what shall be done by that time, who is going to do it and the priority of the task

For further research for this project, it is recommendable to study the digital transformation even deeper. It would be interesting to see study the phenomena over time, conducting interviews with the same informants, but repeatedly and see if how they perceive the digital transformation is same or it is any differences. For this research it is been conducted through the perspectives of administrators, it would be interesting to recruit participants that are members, coaches and other ones that are affected by the digital transformation to see how they perceives it.

NIF is like stated previously, a huge organisation, so to study the topic in more parts of the organisation could result in more understanding about the topic. Digital transformation in Norwegian sport organisation is still quite new, so to study it more with different approaches and perspectives will increase the comprehension of how important and complex the topic is, and increasing the awareness of it, to show how important it has become and will continue to be in Norwegian sports organisations.

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9.0 Appendix A

Interview guide

Introduction

- Background and purpose for the conversation
- Short brief about the master thesis
- Present research question: «*How does administrators in multisport organisations perceive digital transformation?*»
- Inform about the length of the interview (ca. 40-60 min)
- Inform about duty of confidentiality and anonymity
- Ask if something is unclear if the participant has any questions
- Inform about the recording and ask for permission
- Begin recording

Transition

- What is your position?
- What kind of experience do you have with digital solutions and/or the transition from one digital system to another?
- Follow-up questions
- Oppfølgings spørsmål
- What would you say characterizes a good process for digital implementation?
- Possibly ask follow-up questions for clarification after the respondent has answered

Main

- What was the background for these new digital solutions and why should one have this?
- What is to be achieved with this?
- Who will be the users of these systems?
- What was the status before the implementation of the new digital solutions and tools started? How was it?

End

- If you look ahead in time, what do you think the work with digitalization will be like?
- Do you have any feedback or advice on how NIF could have done it differently, or what they can do in the future?
- Is there anything you want to add that has not been said?

9.1 Appendix B

NSD

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

«Hvordan digitalisering påvirker et fleridrettslag?»

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å finne ut hvordan digitalisering på virker internt i et idrettslag. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Formålet med dette prosjektet er å få et bedre innsyn i hvordan et fleridrettslag blir påvirket av nye digitale løsninger og tjenester. Prosjektet vil ha et organisatorisk perspektiv, der det blir mest sett på organisasjonsstruktur og organisasjonsstruktur, men også andre faktorer som spiller inn.

Prosjektet er en masteroppgave og problemstillingen i oppgaven er «hvordan påvirker nye digitale løsninger og tjenester et norsk fleridrettslag?»

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Høgskolen i Molde er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Utvalget av informanter er basert på kriterier på hvem som kommer til å bruke de nye digitale løsningene og tjenestene mest, og stilling i norsk fleridrettslag. I forbindelse med dette prosjektet ønsker jeg 6 ansatte i forskjellige lederstillinger i norske fleridrettslag.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Dersom du velger å delta i prosjektet innebærer dette at du deltar på et intervju og svarer på spørsmål knyttet til prosjektet. Selve intervjuet tar ca. 50 min og vil helst være et fysisk intervju, men hvis det ikke egner seg, kan intervjuet gjennomføres digitalt. Intervjuet omhandler fakta spørsmål og dine synspunkt om hvordan nye digitale løsninger og tjenester påvirker et norsk fleridrettslag. Mer konkret, blir det spørsmål rundt organisasjonsstrukturen i forhold til digitalisering, andre faktorer og egne erfaringer rundt dette. Det vil bli tatt lydopptak og notater av intervjuet.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger vil da bli slettet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Det er bare studenten og veileder som vil ha tilgang til dine opplysninger. Data og mobile enheter brukt i forskningsprosjektet er kode beskyttet og navn og kontaktopplysninger vil bli erstattet med en kode som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data. Databehandler: Alvin Morten Øverstad Ringen

Deltakere vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i publikasjon om dette ikke er ønskelig

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er mai 2021. Etter prosjektets slutt vil alle personopplysninger og opptak slettes

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra Høgskolen i Molde har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- Høgskolen i Molde ved Christos Anagnostopoulos
- Vårt personvernombud: Merete Ludviksen. Tlf.:71214118 E-post: merete.ludviksen@himolde.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Prosjektansvarlig
Christos Anagnostopoulos

Student
Alvin Morten Øverstad Ringen

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet [sett inn tittel], og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- å delta i intervju
- at opplysninger om meg publiseres slik at jeg kan gjenkjennes

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)