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Interorganizational cooperation within the Northern Norwegian tourism industry

A case study of Innovative Opplevelser

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Abstract

The adventure tourism industry experienced substantial growth before the Covid-pandemic, and the pandemic has caused significant challenges for the actors within the industry. This thesis investigates how inter-organizational cooperation between existing actors in an existing case: InnOpp, could be beneficially implemented and which benefits and challenges are relevant for the actors. To investigate this, both a preliminary qualitative and a quantitative study are performed. The preliminary study is performed with its basis in existing theory, with the population being the project leadership group of InnOpp, which was used to identify what benefits and challenges would be important for the actors. Likewise, a value chain model was merged from two existing models to better suit the adventure tourism industry's purpose. The findings from the preliminary study confirm some of the existing theories, while they also present ned potential benefits and challenges for the actors.

With the findings of the preliminary study in mind, the quantitative study is performed with the population being the linked actors to InnOpp. The findings suggest that inter-organizational cooperation could be implemented within *HR Management*, *Joint Product Development*, *Technological Development*, and *Market Activities*, and that these should be considered the focus areas for inter-organizational cooperation in the coming years. Further, the findings suggest that *Complementary Resources* and *Joint Product Development* are important benefits for the actors and incentives to stay in the cooperation. However, InnOpp needs to work on refocusing their activities to the current trends and work on challenges related to *Size* to increase their linked actors' satisfaction. In the future, it will be important for InnOpp to adapt to the trends and regional market while maintaining regular contact between the actors.

Background

Until 2020, the tourism industry had been experiencing strong growth, both in employment and value creation, through globalization and internationalization. This industry involves several minor actors within the hospitality-, transport- and adventure sector. While these sectors experienced growth, the adventure sector had the most substantial growth in Norway (Nærings- og fiskeridepartmentet, 2019). Nevertheless, the industry had a low-value capture and profitability even before the coronavirus. Some crucial causes for this were the competitive environment among actors, the high number of small and newly established actors, and the dependability on seasons (NHO, 2020).

Furthermore, the steady growth also increased demand for sustainable solutions, both in cultural and social conditions and environmental issues. These solutions require innovative business ideas that aim to improve sustainability and profitability.

The introduction of the coronavirus caused the tourism industry to decline, as the number of visitors fell drastically (Statistisk Sentralbyrå, 2021). As a result, the Northern region, which previously had seen steady, strong growth, experienced a rapid decline as the number of international tourists stalled in 2020 (Engebretsen & Jakobsen, 2020). However, World Tourism Industry estimates that the tourism industry will be back to its prior 2019-level in less than four years (UNWTO, 2020). This is supported by numbers from Menon (Engebretsen & Jakobsen, 2020), who estimated the lost revenue in 2020 to be approximately 40% of its potential revenue, 20% in 2021, and 7% in 2022. Thus, this relatively short period will be crucial for actors within the industry to find innovative solutions to create a sustainable and profitable business model to gain a competitive advantage for the future.

Existing theory suggests increased dependability on other actors in a mutual development system within the industry as a solution. Development systems work as actors have relational exchanges, creating new opportunities and challenges. To my knowledge, few existing studies look into the benefits and challenges of such a cooperative system in the tourism industry. The tourism industry is highly competitive, characterized as uncertain, unstable, and highly changeable (Vodeb, Competition in tourism in terms of changing environment, 2012), making them an intriguing case for further studies.

Tourism Industry

As stated above, the tourism industry is a large industry that incorporates multiple industries within one due to the many services it includes. Tourism is known as “the act and process of spending time away from home in pursuit of recreation, relaxation, and pleasure while making use of the commercial provision of services.” (Walton, 2020). In light of this definition of tourism, the tourism industry can intuitively be understood to incorporate all service industries that facilitate this. This includes transport, attractions, travel companies, hospitality, and many more. Therefore, in this thesis, the tourism industry is defined as the service industries that facilitate tourism.

The tourism industry is a competitive industry with an emerging number of destinations and options for customers (Vodeb, 2012). Further, the industry is characterized as “uncertain, unstable and highly changeable” (Vodeb, 2012, s. 274), making it crucial for the businesses within the industry to renew themselves and adapt to the changing environments to sustain profit. This has increased the demand for inter-organizational cooperation for enterprises to further their internal capabilities to create a superior performance (Wilke, Costa, Bandeira De Lamônica Freire, & Ferreira, 2019).

In Northern Norway, several municipalities depend on the tourism industry, both employment and value creation (Engebretsen & Jakobsen, 2020). Thus, a change in the tourism industry will impact both the local communities and the entire region. One source of the recent change in the industry is the coronavirus, which hit the tourism industry hard as the international tourists remained at home, causing a significant financial loss. On behalf of Arctic365, Menon has estimated the lost revenue due to coronavirus. The total loss is estimated to be 7.8billion NOK in 2020-2022 (Engebretsen & Jakobsen, 2020): 4.5billion NOK in 2020, 2.4billion NOK in 2021, and 0.9billion NOK in 2022. These estimations are based on three primary industries within the tourism industry: lodging, restaurant, and activities. The losses are divided relatively equally between these three industries, showing that the coronavirus affected several essential aspects of the tourism industry (Engebretsen & Jakobsen, 2020). This significant change in the environment has provoked innovation among the tourism businesses in Northern Norway.

Research Question

Based on the background information above, I have chosen inter-organizational governance within the tourism industry as my chosen subject for this master thesis. This is a broad subject, and for quality concerns, the subject is limited to a regional area: Northern Norway, specifically, Nordland County. Further, the issue could be discussed in light of several aspects. Still, in this thesis, it will be discussed in light of the development of the business processes for creating a competitive advantage. This thesis is set in a situation where the market is recovering from an ongoing pandemic.

This thesis aims to create a deeper understanding of how inter-organizational governance can be used within the Northern Norwegian tourism industry to develop their businesses and create a beneficial situation. This will be achieved by examining which business processes inter-organizational cooperation could beneficially implement through a commercial exchange. Further, the thesis will look at the possibilities for bilateral cooperation within the Northern Norwegian tourism industry and the challenges. To get a better insight into the consequences for the tourism industry, I will hereafter focus on one company: Innovative Opplevelser. Innovative Opplevelser is an organization facilitating cooperation between actors within adventure tourism, giving them a unique insight into the market. This master thesis will have a descriptive approach with a quantitative methodology. This approach intends to understand better the possibilities of inter-organizational cooperation within a regional tourism market.

Therefore, the research question for this master thesis is: "*In which business processes can Innovative Opplevelser beneficially facilitate inter-organizational governance between existing actors within the Northern Norwegian tourism industry?*". In addition, this research question includes the sub-research questions: "*What benefits have a positive effect on the linked actors' perception of the overall benefits within the InnOpp-cooperation?"* and "*What challenges have an increasing effect on the linked actors' perceived dissatisfaction with the InnOpp-cooperation?".*

Innovative Opplevelser

Innovative Opplevelser, hereafter known as InnOpp, is a network-organization functioning as a facilitator of cooperation between actors in adventure tourism. The organization has a regional limitation to Nordland County in Northern Norway. Since its foundation in 2008, InnOpp has grown and currently has approximately 60 actors linked to its network. These actors are mainly businesses within the adventure-tourism industry in the region, but there are also R&D companies, travel destination companies, and national chain actors. In addition, there are also governmental actors linked to the network; however, they are only observers (InnOpp, 2020).

In 2016, InnOpp gained associated member certification from Norwegian Innovation Clusters. This certification provides competence-building and financial funding (InnOpp, 2020). InnOpp is structured as a user-oriented network, where the leadership group is based on the board selected by the linked actors. The organization is funded through both membership fees and government funding for projects. The leadership group takes suggestions from the members regarding which projects and initiatives they want to participate in and helps with applying for funding for these (Jervan, 2021). In 2018, Nordland County mapped all relations within the regional tourism industry to understand the interaction between actors (InnOpp, 2020). InnOpp was proven to have a central role with its linked actors in this relation-map.

InnOpp's primary purpose is to create valuable adventure experiences instead of just a destination. According to their reports, the potential for increased value creation within this market is considerable in the years to come (InnOpp, 2020). By looking at the relative growth since the organization's foundation in 2008, it can be argued that their cooperation has led to the desired outcome so far. The relative value-growth of the regional market compared to the national value-growth before the coronavirus-pandemic was found to be more significant in the study. However, despite this curve showing steady growth, the coronavirus-pandemic hit the tourism industry hard. Menon (Engebretsen & Jakobsen, 2020) estimated the income-loss of the Northern Norwegian tourism industry based on numbers of growth from earlier years, and their findings are summarized in Figure 1 below. In this figure, one can see the expected growth without the pandemic (long dotted-line) and the estimated outcome of the pandemic (short dotted-line).

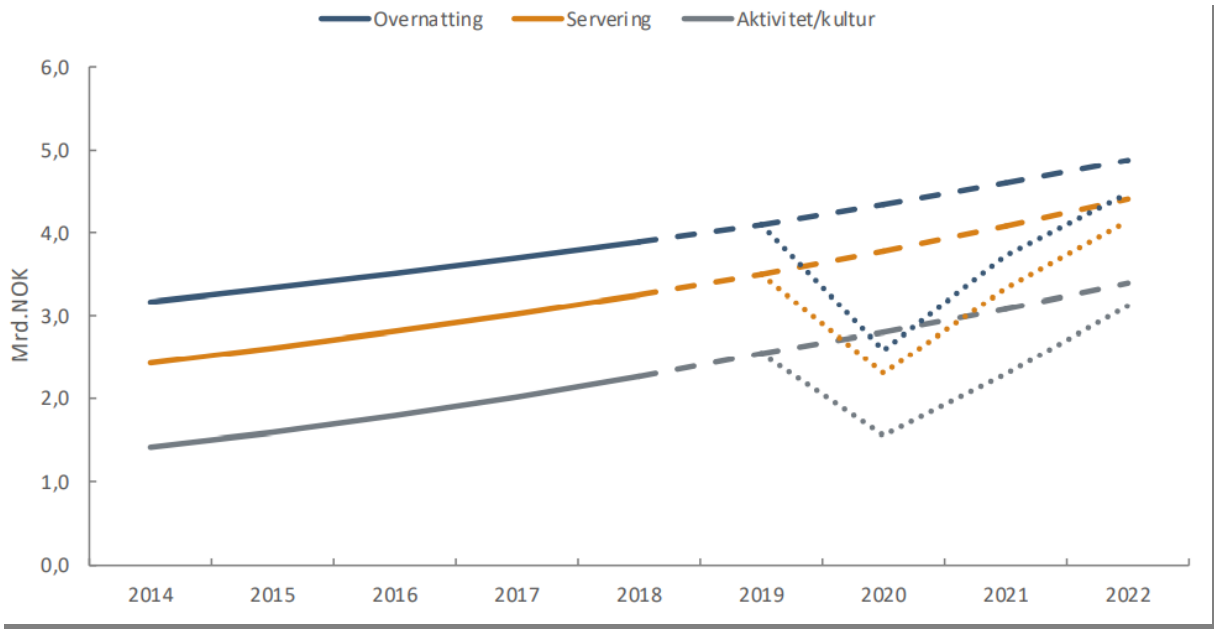

Figure 1 The Covid-pandemic's effect on revenue within the tourism industry.

Based on these two figures, one can gather that the impact of the pandemic is potentially enormous, which affects the achievability of InnOpp's stated goals. Their overall goal is to increase the value-creation and profitability in the adventure tourism market through joint projects, strengthened cooperation, and improved network relations (InnOpp, 2020). In 2019, before the pandemic, their stated goals included quantitative numbers of increased profitability and growth in members. However, the pandemic caused implications for the implementation capacity of these.

Priorly, InnOpp has had several successful initiatives for its actors and the regional adventure-tourism market. These initiatives have been organized network meetups and study trips for their members. The goal was to increase the linked actors' increased knowledge and competence about the market and the possibilities they could benefit from. While these initiatives have been strictly for the members and linked actors, InnOpp has also organized initiatives that have been for all actors within the national market. The best example is the "Norsk Opplevelseskonferanse" (hereafter known as NOK). NOK attracts national actors to participate and share their experiences and aims to increase competence, grow network relations, and inspire innovative and new possibilities. InnOpp has arranged this conference for over a decade and established its credibility. In 2019, before the pandemic, the conference hosted 270 participants. In 2020, NOK was still hosted, though as a digital option

where the participants could get reflections made by various actors in the market regarding the potential for the future and how they could survive in the coming seasons. Internal research by InnOpp, found evidence of NOK being a relevant and vital initiative of the linked actors (Jervan, 2021).

InnOpp have also facilitated other initiatives meant to help their members in the difficult time of the pandemic. For instance, they have hosted the webinar series “Krafttak for Reiseliv I Nord”, an important and relevant initiative in their internal research. This initiative was primarily based on sharing experiences and knowledge and providing actors within the market with developing their competence and human capital. In addition, InnOpp also offered their members one-on-one coaching when the pandemic began, which was meant to give more direct feedback to each linked actor about how they could come well out of the pandemic (Jervan, 2021). All of these initiatives by InnOpp have aimed to help their actors navigate the changing environment and market, find new possibilities, and overcome challenges.

Disposition

In this first chapter, I have explained the background for the chosen subject and research question and introduced the case-company InnOpp, and the research question and disposition for the master thesis was presented. In the next chapter, I will first review literature about the tourism industry. Following this, a literature review will be performed on existing theories and studies regarding inter-organizational governance and commercial exchange. The goal is to understand the problem better and formulate the problem I want to study precisely. Then, to gain a complete insight into the relevance of the theory and its relation to the case, I will perform a preliminary qualitative study. This will be the agenda for the third chapter in this thesis. These findings will then be related to the theory presented in chapter two. Based on this, hypotheses for the quantitative study will be created, and in chapter four, I will give my methodology design and the planned research process for the main study. Following, the fifth chapter will include the data analysis and findings. In the sixth chapter, there will be a discussion of the findings and a conclusion based on the presented hypotheses. In the final chapter, I will discuss ethical aspects, validity, and reliability of the study and conclusions.

1. Theory

1.1 Innovation

Innovation can be argued to be the main prerequisite to creating new products, services, or processes in businesses. This is supported by Baregheh et al. (2009), who defined innovation as: “Innovation is the multi-stage process whereby organizations transform ideas into new/improved products, services or processes, in order to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace.”. This definition includes several important aspects, that makes it easier to understand what innovation truly is. The first part “multi-stage process” shows that innovation is not something that happens once, but rather a process that occurs over time. Further, the second part “organizations transform ideas into new/improved products, services or processes” means that new ideas are developed and modified with the help of an organization’s resources into the desired result. The desired outcome is the third and last part of the definition; “In order to advance, compete and differentiate themselves successfully in their marketplace”. This part aims to explain the motivation behind investing resources into innovation. With the help of this definition, it can be understood that innovation is an essential process in a business’ long-term plan to create financial and organizational success.

The need for innovation can be determined by performing regular environmental scanning of the market and thus following the changes that occur in the market. Vodeb (2012) argued that companies within the tourism industry should “strive to consistently carry out environmental scanning” (p.274) to be able to adapt quickly to changes in the competitive environment and market. In addition, the company’s internal capabilities will be a dependent factor for this type of innovation as their internal capabilities will be a defining cause in what the company can achieve.

One recent change that has caused significant implications in the market is the coronavirus. However, even before the coronavirus, the tourism industry was experiencing a change in the tourism industry and change in the demand being conveyed by the customers. Customers demanded more diverse destinations and differentiated experiences (Vodeb, 2012), resulting in businesses needing to rethink gaining a competitive advantage. To facilitate this both in the age of the coronavirus and after, cooperation and partnership with other companies are becoming increasingly more important. This changes the focus on their

product lines and competitiveness as the businesses need to work together to achieve the mutual goals for the destination. This could be executed by merging individual businesses' strengths to gain a mutual competitive advantage in the market (Vodeb, 2012).

Considering the changes in the industry before the coronavirus in light of the changes due to the coronavirus, organizational cooperation seems likely to become necessary to facilitate innovation within the tourism industry. Thus, innovation will be understood as the development of both new and existing products and services with the help of cooperation, resulting in both evolutionary and revolutionary development of products and services. While evolutionary development is easily understood as the natural evolution of a product, revolutionary development is related to creating new products – either by conjoining assets or creating new assets. This form of cooperation is known as inter-organizational governance and will be in focus for the rest of this thesis.

1.2 Inter-organizational Governance

Interorganizational governance can be understood as the institutional framework between organizations in which contracts are initiated, negotiated, monitored, adapted, and terminated. Empirical research has identified multiple types of inter-organizational governance, but they are split into two categories: non-market and market governance. Market governance is considered discrete exchange between independent units, occurring just once with the help of the market's "invisible hand" (Heide, 1994). For example, an actor completing a one-time purchase at an independent unit. However, when the exchange changes to regular occurrences, we enter the non-market governance where relationships between the actors are created. Then, the "invisible hand" of the market is replaced by formal governance, in either bilateral or unilateral form (Heide, 1994). This thesis will focus on non-market governance, where relationships have been created between existing actors.

As mentioned above, non-market governance comprises two forms of governance: unilateral or bilateral. Unilateral governance is based on a vertical, hierarchical framework, while bilateral is based on a horizontal framework. Both Hart (1989) and Simon (1991) argued the foundation of unilateral governance to be an authority structure, where one party of the relationship creates the rules and instructions and can impose decisions on the other party. From this, one could argue that the degree of authority in unilateral governance varies, but the main feature of unilateral governance is the ability of one party to affect the other's

decisions. On the other hand, it can be argued that bilateral governance is built on a foundation of mutual trust and commitment, where both parties need to work in unison to achieve their mutual goal. This is supported by Rokkan and Haugland (2002). They argued that both the commitment of time and resources and the symmetry of the relationship are essential factors in creating a lasting relation exchange. The focus in this thesis will be on how both unilateral and bilateral governance can be used to increase companies' competence and further their development of products.

1.3 Dimensions of Interfirm Governance

To better understand the difference between market and non-market governance and how non-market governance can be divided into unilateral and bilateral governance, I will use Heide's (1994) three dimensions of interfirm governance: relationship initiation, relationship maintenance, and relationship termination. These three dimensions give a good guideline to understanding the difference between non-market and market governance and unilateral and bilateral governance. Moreover, the dimensions are linked to the main lifecycle phases: introduction/launch, growth, maturity, and decline (Dempsey, 2018).

1.3.1 Relationship Initiation

Heide's (1994) first dimension relationship initiation is related to the introduction/launch phase where a business starts and creates the business structure (Dempsey, 2018). Thus, this first dimension involves evaluating potential partners, initiating negotiations about the potential relationship, and adjusting goals and incentives (Heide, 1994).

In market governance, there is not an initiation process as everyone can participate, while in non-market governance, initiation processes are used to select who can enter the relationship. Within bilateral governance, the actors are put through a social initiation process to align their goals and incentives. In unilateral governance, the initiation process consists of selective entry requirements based on the potential actors' skills and qualifications (Heide, 1994).

1.3.2 Relationship Maintenance

The second dimension is relationship maintenance and relates to the subprocesses required to maintain and uphold the ongoing relationship. This dimension relates to the growth- and maturity phase of the life cycles where a business is solidifying itself to become a high-functioning unit (Dempsey, 2018). There is a total of six subprocesses to relationship maintenance.

The first sub-dimension is role specification, which relates to specifying roles and allocating roles to different actors (Heide, 1994). Within market governance, roles are individually applied to each transaction, while non-market governance relates to the recurring role through the relationship. In the context of bilateral governance, roles often become more multi-dimensional and intertwined, meaning roles overlap due to the joint activities and responsibilities. In unilateral governance, roles are imposed by one of the parties and individually assigned but recurrence through the relationship (Heide, 1994).

The second sub-dimension, planning, means creating a system in which the future duties and responsibilities are made explicit. There is no mutual planning in market governance as planning only relates to individual transactions. In non-market governance, planning is a necessary part of the relationship to achieve mutual goals. Bilateral governance has planning that is characterized by being proactive while being open to changes in the future. Similarly, unilateral governance also has proactive planning, but one actor has developed it with a formalized contingency plan (Heide, 1994).

The next sub-dimension is adjustment processes, in which the partnership is adapting to a changing environment. Due to its limited time horizon and involvement, market governance has a naturally low degree of adjustment processes. It is more likely that a sudden change gives cause to termination of transaction or compensation for change. However, in non-market governance, adjustments are necessary as there is a longer time horizon and parties' involvement. Bilateral governance has a mutual nature of adjustments where adjustments are negotiated as the circumstances change. Unilateral governance has pre-designed adjustments as mechanisms before the occurrence happens and takes place as pre-planned adjustments to a potential change (Heide, 1994).

The monitoring procedure is the fourth sub-dimension and consists of monitoring to which degree contractual compliance has occurred. In the market, governance monitoring is based on external, reactive measurements of output at the completion of a task. Similarly,

non-market, unilateral governance is also based on external, reactive measurements at completion, though unilateral measures both the output and actors' behavior. However, in bilateral governance, monitoring occurs proactively through internal socialization that aims for self-control among the actors (Heide, 1994).

The fifth sub-dimension is incentive systems which include allocation of rewards to aspects of performances. The incentive system is related to the short-term output in market governance, while in non-market governance, it relates to the outcomes of the relationship. Bilateral governance is based on a long-term reward system related to system-relevant attitudes towards commitment to the actors. On the other hand, a unilateral incentive system is mostly long-term, based on the governance outcomes, giving rewards related to the observed behavior (Heide, 1994).

The last sub-dimension is enforcement and enforces that the actors' obligations are fulfilled. Market governance is externally enforced through legal systems, while non-market governance has internal enforcement systems. Within bilateral governance, enforcement relies on internal mechanisms powered by a mutuality of interest. Similar to bilateral governance, unilateral is also enforced by internal mechanisms, but differing from bilateral in that the mechanisms are based on enforcement through legitimate authority (Heide, 1994).

1.3.3 Relationship Termination

The third and last dimension is relationship termination which revolves around the termination of an existing relationship between actors (Heide, 1994). This dimension relates to the last phase of the life cycle: decline. In this phase, the business needs to choose whether to renew themselves through innovation or end before the losses become major (Dempsey, 2018).

Within a market governance relationship, termination happens as the transaction is completed, while in non-market governance, the termination is at a time in the future. Bilateral governance has an open-ended relationship with no finite termination point, meaning relationship termination within bilateral governance is not planned for but may occur for unforeseeable changes in the circumstances. This can be understood through a mutual dependence on each other. On the other hand, unilateral governance typically has a fixed termination point of the relationship or explicit mechanisms for termination (Heide, 1994). For example, this could either be a future date or completing a task. However,

unilateral governance may also have an open-ended relationship without a set termination point (Heide, 1994).

1.3.4 Connection with Commercial Exchange

Based on the discussion of the three dimensions above, it can be argued that different underlying factors make up the foundation of bilateral and unilateral governance. In order to create lasting bilateral governance, the actors need a mutual dependency built on trust and common values through relational exchange. The importance of relational exchange in bilateral governance is also supported by research finding a link between symmetrical dependence structures, as found above to be the case for bilateral governance, and relational exchange (Heide, 1994; Rokkan & Haugland, 2002). This means that the need for adequate relational exchange increases in order to achieve lasting bilateral governance. However, unilateral governance requires the hierarchy to be clearly defined, explicit rules, and established guidelines. Moreover, unilateral governance also requires relational exchange between the parties due to the required cooperation between the facilitator and actors to achieve mutual goals. This relational exchange can be established, despite power asymmetry, through mutual trust and dependency according to the social contract (Bradach & Eccles, 1989).

1.4 Identification of Relationship

In this thesis, the cooperation facilitated by InnOpp builds on two different aspects. First of all, there is cooperation between the facilitator (InnOpp) and the actors (members of the network), and second, there is cooperation between the actors (members of the network). Naturally, this complicates the relationship in focus as these two aspects are different. However, this thesis aims to understand how the facilitator, InnOpp, can successfully facilitate the cooperation between the linked actors, making the first aspect the relevant one: what can the facilitator do to achieve improved cooperation to the actors.

By looking at the dimensions introduced above, one can identify what governance this relationship falls under. First, relationship initiation is based on skills and qualifications (as location), and the potential actors are evaluated against InnOpps long-term strategy. Regarding relationship maintenance, the roles within the organization are a mix of overlapping and individual, as the roles inboard (who also is the leadership group) is

individually assigned. However, in the actors-group, the roles overlap with each other. Planning occurs in joint discussions concerning the expectations and desires of the actors, but the leadership group creates the strategy. Adjustments are negotiated, when necessary, while monitoring is a mix of internal and external. The incentive system relates to the long-term benefits of the cooperation, and the cooperation is enforced through internal rules. Finally, there is a termination point in the future, but with the possibility of renewal (InnOpp, 2020).

Based on this, it can be argued that the relationship is a mix between unilateral and bilateral, as one would expect in volunteer cooperation with power asymmetry and a clear leader. The unilateral qualities relate to governance that functions as a mechanism to create the necessary environment for facilitating cooperation between actors. However, the relationship between the facilitator and actors also needs to be based on trust and mutual reliance to work; one party could not work without the other. Further, the leadership group, symbolizing the power asymmetry in the relationship, has elected the actors to act on behalf of their common good. Thus, the relationship is both unilateral and bilateral. To succeed with a relationship that demands an exchange between the parties, the need for an exchange arises.

1.5 Commercial Exchange

The exchange between two actors is defined as commercial exchange and can be divided into two different forms. These two are discrete and relational exchange and can be considered polar cases, and the difference between these can be described by the foundation they are based on. While the discrete exchange is related to neoclassical economic theory, relational exchange is based on social context (Rokkan & Haugland, 2002).

1.5.1 Dimensions

To fully grasp the difference between discrete and relational exchange, Kaufmann and Dant (1992) developed seven dimensions that could be used to differentiate them. These seven were evolved from Macneil's (1980) eleven norms of social contracts (p.40) and aims to create an understanding of the social norms in both discrete and relational context. The first dimension is Focus and relates to the perceived importance of the relationship compared to the transaction. The second dimension is Solidarity concerns how the relationship is

created and sustained. Mutuality is the next dimension and implies using positive outcomes as an incentive. The fourth dimension is Flexibility and relates to adjustments for environmental changes. Role Integrity is the fifth dimension and concerns the complexity of roles in the relationship. The sixth dimension is Restraint and relates to the degree to which the parties restrain their power usage. The seventh and last dimension is Conflict Resolution and reflects the social context in which conflicts are resolved. (Kaufmann & Dant, 1992).

Discrete exchange focuses on the importance of the individual transaction, while relational exchange focuses on the importance of the relationship. In terms of solidarity, discrete exchange has bargaining and legal enforcement on each transaction, while relational exchange relies on trust and other social mechanisms to sustain agreements. When it comes to mutuality, discrete exchange requires a positive outcome on each transaction. However, relational exchange concerns the positive outcomes of the relationship over time. Discrete exchange has a low degree of flexibility, as it is based on terminating the existing process and creating a new one. Relational exchange builds flexibility in developing and evolving the existing processes. Within discrete exchange, roles are simple, defined, and separated, while in relational exchange, roles are multi-dimensional, complex, and often overlapping. Restraint is based on the limitation of the law in discrete exchange, while the parties voluntarily restrain their power in relational exchange. Discrete exchange solves conflicts through formal, external processes, whereas relational exchange has informal, internal processes embedded in the relationship (Kaufmann & Dant, 1992).

While discrete exchange often has been linked to unilateral governance and relational to bilateral, I will argue that based on the above discussion of the differences between discrete and relational exchange, the relevant form of exchange in the case of this thesis is relational exchange. This is based on the focus in the case of this thesis is on the relationship built on mutual trust between the parties and the long-term benefits of the relationship. Further, it has an evolving perspective, where the existing actors are developed further. In addition, the roles are somewhat defined and separated, but they are also complex and multi-dimensional. Both the actors and facilitator voluntarily restrain their power, and any conflicts are resolved internally. Although it may not be a perfect match, the degree of cohesion between the case and relational exchange is convincingly high. Further, relational exchange will be elaborated.

1.6 Relational Exchange

Håkansson and Snehota defined relational exchange as “an interactive process where commitments are made, outcomes are observed, and further investments made, if outcomes meet or exceed expectations” (1995). They further argued that a company’s performance is dependent on its ability to develop good and lasting relationships (Håkasson & Snehota, 1995), showing the importance of relationship-building. This is supported by Ring and Van de Ven (1994), who argued that inter-organizational relationships are a tool that can be used to help deal with an uncertain future, where the need for mutual trust and congruence arises.

Empirical research has identified various elements that affect the relational exchange between different parties, but a recurring element is a need for trust. Trust has been defined as an “expectation that alleviates the fear the one’s exchange partner will act opportunistically.” (Bradach & Eccles, 1989, s. 104). Therefore, trust can be argued to be a tool that aims to create a social contract between parties and makes cooperation easier. This is supported by Rokkan and Haugland (2002), who argued that mutual trust is one of the necessary factors to achieve relational exchange over time: the parties need to be able to trust that the others will be able to commit the time and resources as agreed upon beforehand, as well as fulfill their agreed-upon part of the goal. However, trust cannot be established on paper but evolved through recurring transactions in cohesion with the social contract. When mutual trust is created between the parties, it allows for better cooperation and governance as the mutual reliance on each other is understood, and the social contract functions equally well as a formal contract (Bradach & Eccles, 1989). The social contract also creates a shared and evolved social norm in the relationship and allows for internal disputes to be solved according to the reference point (Macneil., 1978).

Power-relation has been identified as another crucial factor in relational exchange. Rokkan and Haugland (2002) argued that a balanced relationship in terms of power is necessary to achieve a lasting relational exchange between equal actors. However, a balanced relationship does not always need to be symmetrical. Cuevas et al. (2015) found that power asymmetry can exist in the relationship when there are future positive expectations. Further, they found that power asymmetry can lead to increased trust when there is a mutual understanding of its necessity for constructing their joint goal. Similarly,

Bradach and Eccles (1989) argued that trust and authority are intertwined and mutually dependable and can co-exist in a relationship.

The two factors above align with the underlying foundation of bilateral and unilateral governance, although in different manners. As bilateral governance builds on mutual dependency, trust, and symmetry, the need for both mutual trust and a balanced power-relation can be directly applied. However, unilateral governance differs from bilateral as it builds on hierarchy, set rules, and *Asymmetrical Power Relation* – yet unilateral also requires relational exchange to succeed. In order to facilitate unilateral governance between facilitator and actors within the tourism industry, there must exist a trust in terms of commitment and mutual goals, which allows for Asymmetrical power relations as long as this is for the common good. Based on this, the theory on relational exchange relates to bilateral and unilateral governance, though in different aspects, and will be the basis of further discussions.

1.6.1 Benefits

From empirical research, there have been found multiple benefits to achieve good relational exchange, but this research has not been administered to the tourism industry to my knowledge. These benefits create incentives for actors to create relational exchange between different parties to create a strong unilateral or bilateral governance. The main motivator for relational exchange is creating a competitive advantage that will give the parties a long-term benefit with regard to suppliers and customers. The long-term benefits of cooperation beat the short-term gains from opportunistic behavior. Dyer and Singh (1998) identified four benefits that could be achieved by creating relational exchange, leading to a competitive advantage. Following, these will be elaborated on and related to bilateral and unilateral governance.

Joint Product Development

The two first benefits are related to the direct outcome of the relational exchange between the actors. The first is that relational exchange could create beneficial *Joint Product Development* created in conjunction with assets of both parties. This leads to new assets that one actor alone would not create (Dyer & Singh, 1998). The beneficial value in the bilateral cooperation between actors is easily understood, as they can create new and valuable products/services that could provide them with a competitive advantage. Within unilateral

governance, *Joint Product Development* will be beneficial to both the facilitator whose success depends on creating a unique opportunity for the actors and the actors who will use these in their daily business. Cooperation allows the actors to invest in specific assets and resources without worrying if it will be used or not as the cooperation creates an assurance of usage. This relates to both actors having invested in a partnership, as an inter-organizational governance demands, no one actor wants to engage in a short-term opportunistic behavior leading to a loss of investment. Thus, the actors have safety for the long term.

In the Northern Norwegian tourism industry, where products may be very specific in an area, bilateral cooperation ensures that the investment in said product will pay off over time. Unilateral governance may also create safety in providing knowledge and experiences to actors in need. Thus, the potential long-term benefit for the actors within the industry is the increased value creation, which brings potential for increased value capture.

Competence Development

The second benefit related to the direct outcome is *Competence Development* between linked actors. Dyer and Singh (1998) argued that a firm's allies are their most important source of new knowledge that could create performance-enhancing technology and innovation. They further state that *Competence Development* occurs through regular interaction, which allows for sharing of specialized knowledge.

The changing tourism industry in the world requires the Northern Norwegian tourism industry to create new options for the consumers to be able to both persuade consumers to use their services and to compete with other international competitors. For both unilateral governance and bilateral cooperation, *Competence Development* is an important benefit as both parties gain valuable knowledge that can be used to further their opportunities. In the long-term perspective, *Competence Development* will be an important tool to create a stronger relation between actors, an improved product to the customers, and an increased competence within each actor, which could facilitate new possibilities and value-creation.

Complementary Resources

The next benefit identified by Dyer and Singh (1998) was *Complementary Resources*. This benefit was based on certain resources needing other resources to be utilized fully, and where the sum of two resources combined was greater than the sum of the two resources individually (Dyer & Singh, 1998).

The tourism industry is, as mentioned before, made up of a set of different industries, and it can be intuitively understood that a combined package deal is in higher demand for consumers than having to put together a trip themselves. This relates to unilateral governance, where this would be an incentive for attracting new actors and for bilateral cooperation, whose business might depend on it. This increased value for the cooperation is linked to *Complementary Resources* having a higher value creation with the customers.

Effective Governance

The last benefit was *Effective Governance* and is linked to the governance of the cooperation (Dyer & Singh, 1998). As discussed before, the need for formal contracts and legal agreements are reduced with the usage of trust. With the actors trusting each other to uphold their part of the agreement, the governance becomes more efficient. Bradach and Eccles (1989) said that trust works as lubrication of the governance as the mutual reliance creates for better governing of the cooperation. Kezar (2004) argued that good trust was necessary to create good relationships, and good relationships were the foundation of good governance. Thus, it can be stated that the benefit of relational exchange is better governance over time.

For the Northern Norwegian tourism industry actors, this applies to improving their governance, which could have a beneficial effect on their profitability and value capture.

1.6.2 Challenges

There also exist some challenges with inter-organizational governance and relational exchange, which may work as a demotivator for actors considering participating in a cooperation. In empirical research, three main challenges have been identified, and in the following, these will be elaborated and related to the tourism industry's characteristics. These three challenges may affect the bilateral and unilateral governance differently due to their basic differences in underlying factors.

Size

The first challenge is the *Size* of the inter-organizational governance. The increasing number of participants in a cooperation has been found to have negative effects on the relational exchange (Rokkan & Haugland, 2002). This can be understood as it may be easier to hide in a large group than in a smaller group. This relates to unilateral governance and bilateral cooperation, as an increasing size may cause poorer focus on the actors and less

personal adjustments. Further, this challenge complicates the two other challenges: *Free-riding* and *Asymmetrical Power Relation* (Rokkan & Buvik, 2003).

Free-riding

The second challenge is *Free-riding*: where participants utilize the benefits of a cooperation, but are not providing to the cooperation. Rokkan and Haugland (2002) found support that *Free-riding* has a negative effect on the chain-vendor when *Free-riding* occurs within the inter-organizational cooperation. This can be directly related to unilateral governance and the relationship between the facilitator and actors. If not all actors are fulfilling their part, the facilitator may experience problems with other actors who are not receiving what was promised. Further, this causes a fault on the first of the underlying factors of bilateral cooperation: all actors need to commit the time and necessary resources according to their agreement. If the inter-organizational cooperation includes too many actors and does not have good enough routines to "control" everyone's contribution to the common good, it will be easier for an actor to "hide" in the group undetected.

Asymmetrical Power Relation

The third and last challenge is the *Asymmetrical Power Relation* between the actors, causing a fault on the second of the underlying factors for bilateral cooperation: a symmetric balance between the actors. Research has argued that asymmetry in the relationship has a negative effect on bilateral cooperation (Rokkan&Haugland, 2002). While this is a potential challenge for bilateral cooperation, unilateral governance holds it as a requirement, making it a two-sided challenge. However, Cuevas, Julkunen & Gabrielsson (2015) argued that *Asymmetrical Power Relation* could be accepted by the actors when the power asymmetry is used to achieve a common goal. The implication of this is that when the power asymmetry is used as a governing body for inter-organizational cooperation, where the future goal is beneficial to all associated members, the power asymmetry may be accepted and not have negative impacts on the relationships within the cooperation.

1.7 Value Chain

A business' value chain describes the activities a business operates in to create a product or service (Tardi, 2020). Thus, the value chain is an important part of the business

model. Understanding the value chain brings a business important knowledge about which parts of the business they can invest in to create a competitive advantage. A value chain is built up of a set of business processes, and these processes describe the activities of the business. Even though there is a multitude of empirical research, these have focused on the distribution channel perspective. However, Grängsjö (2003) introduced the idea that the value chain of the tourism industry should relate to the customers' perspective of the complete tourism end-to-end product and not just the individual product distribution.

The demand for a different perspective on the value chain, where the customer approach was included, was in focus when Yilmaz and Bititci (2006) introduced a value chain for the tourism industry with a customer-oriented perspective. This value chain aimed to understand how the intertwined tourism industry works, with the focus being on the customer. This value chain is based on Gereffi et al. (2005) 's adaptation of Porter's value chain model, which originally aimed to use processes to create competitive advantage (1985). The adaptation by Gereffi et al. aimed to change the processes to fit into cases with inter-firm governance patterns (2005). Brown (2008) introduced a joint model that consisted of both Porter's processes for competitive advantage (1985) and Gereffi et al. (2005) 's inter-firm governance patterns and created five core business processes and three support business processes. While all of these are relevant for a production company, some processes are less important for a service industry. These relate to procurement, logistics of products, and transformation from input to output.

The model I propose as most suitable for the tourism industry consists of the four main business processes introduced by Yilmaz and Bititci (2006), with the sub-processes relating to Brown's (2008) adapted model. While Yilmaz and Bititci (2006) give structure to the value chain model and function as the basis of the model, Brown (2008) 's adaptation is within this structure, aiming to create depth and understanding to the processes. This joint model illustrates the value chain of the tourism industry in the main processes while highlighting the sub-processes that are important for creating a competitive advantage. This model is shown in Figure 2 below.

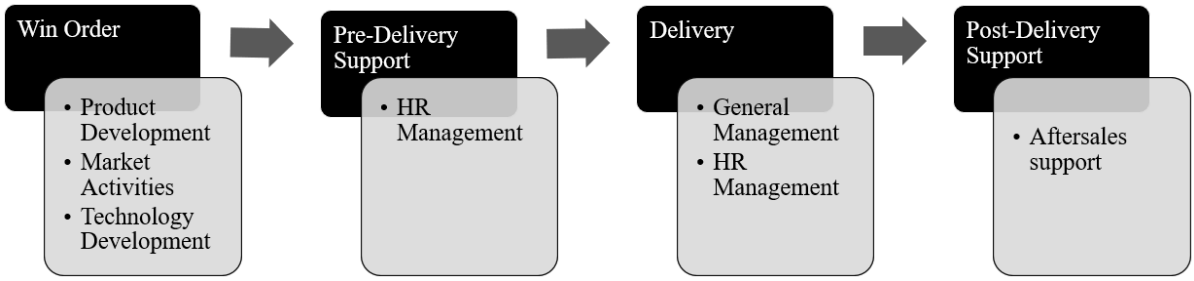

Figure 2: Value Chain Model

By looking at the model above, the customer-oriented perspective becomes the focus as the value chain is based on 1) capturing the customers and 2) delivering a high-quality product. This makes intuitive sense when considering the customers' demand within the tourism industry, as discussed prior. Further, one can notice that HR management is a part of two processes, as well as indirectly affecting other sub-processes, and the importance of HR management can be linked to the basis that the tourism industry is service-based and, as such, the need for well-established service in different parts of the product delivery is natural. Further, the processes will be elaborated, the sub-processes explained, the role of cooperation identified, and the possibilities and challenges for the tourism industry discussed.

1.7.1 Win Order

The first process in the value chain is *Win Order* and consists of several sub-processes. This process is the most complex part of the value chain, as this is where the actors need to stand out to achieve success in engaging customers (Yilmaz & Bititci, 2006). Due to the high number of actors within the tourism industry, all with unique and intriguing products to offer customers, there is a high demand for activities that aim to attract both new and recurring customers. Thus, this process includes *Product Development*, *Market Activities*, and *Technological Development*.

Product Development

Product Development consists of several business functions: innovation of products, redesign of a product or service to fit the target group and engineering a new product or service (Brown, 2008). Innovation and further development of products and services are

related to adapting the findings from the environmental scanning. There is a strong need for continuous development of the product and service the businesses in the tourism industry offer (Vodeb, 2012). This can be explained by the need to stand out and have a unique product that the customers prefer over the competitors'. Further development of products can be linked to changing consumer patterns, the need to better fit the selected customer target group and natural changes in trends and demand.

The potential for inter-organizational cooperation within *Product Development* is significant (Dyer and Singh, 1998), both in terms of sharing experiences with other actors and conjoining assets to create a unique product for the customers. This also implies that furthering the actors' knowledge and competence related to the *HR Management* -process, is also an important part of the success of product and service development. Based on this, it can be stated that existing theory argues for a beneficial utilization of inter-organizational cooperation within *Product Development*.

Market Activities

Market Activities is the next sub-process, intending to create attention around the firm's products and services to existing and new customers and gain insight into the market. This implies that the marketing process is divided into creating attention and gaining market insight. In relation to creating attention, empirical research looks at business functions as promotions for products or services, advertisements on various media, and selling the idea of the product or service to the customers (Brown, 2008). This can be found in the tourism industry as creating attention for a product such as a hospitality facility and providing the destination or region with an attractive look for earlier customers to repurchase or for potential customers to purchase. This business function is where the business sells the dream of the destination to the customers (Pender & Sharpley, 2005). The other side of the *Market Activities*-process is researching the competitive market and performing market analysis to gain important and valuable insight into the market and customers. The market research provides the actors with a better understanding of the market and customers and develops their offer to better fit this purpose. Further, it helps the actors with their brand positioning in the market, which provides knowledge to develop their marketing strategy (Hague, 2021).

The benefits of including joint marketing are increased publicity to the cooperation, increased knowledge about the market for the actors, and increased attractiveness for potential actors to join. However, the challenges related to joint market activities concern the

practical implications of facilitating this: Different actors have different needs for their market activities, and thus challenges relate to financing, organizing, and planning of strategy. Thus, based on existing theory, it can be argued that cooperation within market activities can be beneficial when related to larger market analysis and knowledge-development regarding their target groups and adapting their products; however, more specific market activities will be difficult to cooperate within.

Technological Development

Technological Development is the last sub-process of winning the customer and relates to the development and evolvement of technological solutions and current processes. The business functions related to this are maintenance of technological equipment, automation of procedures, and design and redesign of software and hardware (Brown, 2008). In the tourism industry, this is related to the trend of technological options within the tourism industry, helping customers with all steps of their travel from the booking to guided tours to post-trip sharing of their experience (Ascolese & Llantada, 2021). This trend is often considered Tourism 2.0: mobile tourism made available through technology. This could be by simplifying booking through specialized software, creating mobile guides, and developing interactive technological hardware displays for consumers (Beça & Raposo, 2011). Other business functions related to this are developing websites with a design fitting to the target group, designing social media presence, and making processes more efficient with the help of digital aids.

The benefits of *Technological Development* are easier access to information about the products, increased visibility for potential customers, and more efficient governance. However, *Technological Development* comes with major challenges: Software and hardware solutions require a specialized competence to create and maintain them. Further, technology-averse customers may experience a dislike for the product if the technological solutions are a requirement for utilizing the product completely. Based on this, it can be argued that cooperation within technological development has potential, but it is difficult to facilitate it due to the different demands of the actors.

1.7.2 Pre-Delivery

Pre-Delivery is the second process in the value chain and consists of activities like providing travel details, information about trips, helping with visas, and other information the customer needs before their departure (Yilmaz & Bititci, 2006). This process has only one sub-process: *HR Management* due to pre-delivery support being based on customer service activities.

HR Management

Human Resource (HR) Management means how the firm manages its personnel. This includes business functions such as recruiting and hiring new employees, training current employees, compensating employees for their work, and dismissing employees (Brown, 2008). The tourism industry is a service industry, meaning the need for good employees is strong; thus, the demand for good HR management is important. There has been an increasing demand for educated and specialized employees, causing increased importance for human resource development in the tourism industry (Rekha & Reddy, 2013). Further, the need for more specialized knowledge and competence about the market and customers is increasing as the customers' demand and traveling patterns change, as discussed previously.

The benefits of cooperation within *HR Management* are an increased competence and knowledge within the various actors' companies and employees, thereby an increased quality of products and satisfaction of customers. However, this challenge is related to the unique competence needed for each actor that may not be transferable. With this theoretical background, it can be argued that inter-organizational cooperation with *HR Management* positively affects the actors.

1.7.3 Delivery

The *Delivery*-process is where the customers utilize their products. Grängsjö (2003) stated, "the tourism product is produced in interaction with the customer, and the customers have to be imported to the arena of production, to the destination" (p.427). The meaning of this is found in the delivery of the product or service; the unique part of the tourism industry value chain is that the product is produced when the customer arrives at its destination. In other words, the delivery process is where the quality of the products is created and delivered to the customer, making it the most important process from the customers' perspective. This process includes two sub-processes: *General Management* and *HR Management*.

General Management

General Management consists of the structure of the firm's management. This process includes business functions as organizational governance, business management, and administrative support (Brown, 2008). In addition, this sub-process includes the physical infrastructure necessary for the product or service. Within the tourism industry, these business functions relate to how the firm is structurally organized, considering their legal affairs, financial situation, public and government relations, and the physical infrastructure required for them to deliver the product or service to the customers. The structural governance of the business has an important role in creating a common goal and guidance for the employees (Ingram, 2019) and efficiency in terms of delivery. Further, this also involves how their services are being executed and made available to the customers.

The benefits of cooperation are increased quality of organizational governance through sharing knowledge and competencies, improved relations to other actors within the same market, and helping develop a sustainable business. However, as the actors may have different business models, it is challenging to create a common basis for cooperation with the implementation and execution of products and services. A different benefit of cooperation could be mutual utilization of physical infrastructure; actors may invest in physical infrastructure with other actors, reducing the risk per actor and financial consequence. Based on this, it can be stated that existing theory could be beneficial to some degree; however, due to the unique business models to each actor, this might be challenging to facilitate.

HR Management

The sub-process *HR Management* was introduced before, and its value is the same in this process; increase the knowledge and competence of the employees and the business. However, this process may relate more to the service requirement of the tourism industry. Due to the tourism industry being a service industry, good personnel is needed and important for the businesses' success. This includes greeting the customers, making their experience greater while creating opportunities for additional sales, and providing help if needed.

A benefit of inter-organizational cooperation is, as previously discussed, increased knowledge and competence of the employees and the business. This also relates to sharing experiences with others and gaining insight into how others succeed with their customer service. Further, cooperation could be beneficial in recruiting new employees to the business

and bringing value to the delivery of the product or service. This is coherent with the previous findings related to the potential of inter-organizational cooperation; there is a big potential for a positive effect.

1.7.4 Post-Delivery

The last process in the value chain is the *Post-Delivery* support, where customer satisfaction is measured. In this process, the products are evaluated to ensure the quality of the products (Yilmaz & Bititci, 2006). The sub-process in post-delivery is *Aftersales Services*.

Aftersales Services

Aftersales Services consist of supplying support service to customers post-delivery. The business functions of the helpdesk for customers and customer support are included here (Brown, 2008). This can be related to providing customer support if they have inquiries about the product or service after they have "completed" it; this could, for example, be questions about an activity or inquiries about a hospitality destination. The level of customer service a customer receives is an important factor in whether they will consider traveling to the destination again later (Morgan, 2019), and therefore need to be good enough for the customer to feel appreciated. This also relates to following up with the customers after delivery to gain insight into customer satisfaction and identify what can be improved.

The benefit of inter-organizational governance within *Aftersales Services* relates to benefits from the *HR Management*; increased competence in creating aftersales and increased knowledge in how to utilize this process completely. Thus, it can be stated that *Aftersales Services* have a limited potential for inter-organizational cooperation linked to *Effective Governance*.

1.8 Summary

In the first chapter of this thesis, the case-company InnOpp was introduced, based on information from websites, their annual reports, and communication with the project leader. This gave the background information needed to find links in the literature review, chapter two of this thesis. The main points relevant for this thesis found in the literature review will now be summarized, as this is what the following pre-qualitative study is based on.

The two dimensions of interfirm governance, unilateral and bilateral governance, were introduced and discussed in light of InnOpp. It was found that InnOpp has a combination of unilateral and bilateral governance due to their nature of horizontal cooperation between actors and vertical cooperation between the facilitators and the actors. After that, the role of commercial exchange was linked to interfirm governance as a requirement, and the two main variants of commercial exchange were introduced; relational exchange and discrete exchange. Both of these were also discussed in light of InnOpp, and it was found that relational exchange is the relevant variant due to InnOpp being inter-organizational cooperation based on creating relationships with other actors within the same market.

With the basis discussed and linked to InnOpp, the benefits and challenges of relational exchange were discussed in light of the tourism industry. Empirical research identified four benefits; *Joint Product Development*, *Competence Development* between actors, *Complementary Resources*, and *Effective Governance*. Research also identified three relevant challenges with relational exchange; the *Size* of the cooperation, actors *Free-riding*, and *Asymmetrical Power Relation*. While the relevance of these benefits and challenges were discussed in light of the tourism industry, their relevance for the inter-organizational cooperation in focus in this thesis was not clear. Thus, this will be studied in the pre-qualitative study, where the findings aim to understand the identified benefits and challenges' relevance for InnOpp.

The next part of the literature review aimed to understand which business models, processes, and functions inter-organizational governance could be implemented in and how cooperation could be beneficial for the actors' business models. Empirical research was discussed, and based on existing theory regarding different business models within the tourism industry, a business model was merged and discussed in light of the needs of the tourism industry. This business model consisted of four main processes and several sub-processes. The first main process was *Win Order*, including *Market Activities*, *Joint Product Development*, and *Technological Development* as sub-processes. *Pre-Delivery* Support was the second main process with *HR Management* as the sub-process. The third main process, *Delivery*, included *General Management and HR Management* as sub-processes. Lastly, *Post-Delivery* Support was the fourth main process, including *Aftersales Services* as the sub-process. However, these sub-processes were all found to have potential benefits from

cooperation to various degrees. *Product Development* and *HR Management* were found to have the biggest potential for utilizing inter-organizational cooperation.

In contrast, *Market Activities*, *HR Management* and *Technological Development* were beneficial if applied with a more general market perspective. *Aftersales Services* was the only process found to have somewhat limited potential as it was dependent on *HR Management*. The specific relevance of these business processes to InnOpp's cooperation was unclear, and this will also be a focus area in the pre-qualitative study. Further, the potential for cooperation within the various sub-processes will also be studied.

Based on this, the pre-qualitative study has several goals; gain a better understanding of the relevance of the identified benefits and challenges from empirical research on relational exchange, gain a better understanding of the relevance of the merged business model to the actors of Innovative Opplevelser, and understand the potential of inter-organizational cooperation within the identified sub-processes. In the next chapter, the methodology of the pre-qualitative study is presented, the study is performed, and its findings are analyzed and discussed in light of the existing theory presented priorly.

2. Pre-Qualitative

In the foregoing chapters, the existing theory is applied to the tourism industry in a general aspect. However, the link between the existing theory and the inter-organizational cooperation InnOpp is still unclear. Due to empirical research not being applicable to the exact case of this thesis, InnOpp, it will be beneficial to conduct a preliminary study with the goal of applying existing theory related to the tourism industry to the inter-organizational governance facilitated by InnOpp.

The purpose of a preliminary, qualitative study is to enhance the effectiveness of the quantitative study by developing an understanding of the link between theory and practice (Morgan, 2013, chapter 6). Further, the preliminary study aims to better understand the perceived business model within the industry, thereby adjusting the priorly presented business model. A preliminary study is smaller in scope than the main study and has limited input data. In this thesis, a preliminary study will be applied in order to explore the possibilities of inter-organizational governance in the adventure tourism industry and how it could be organized. In the following, the preliminary study suggested for this thesis will be presented, and its methodology will be presented. In the end, the findings of the preliminary study will be presented and related to the existing theory above. The findings of the preliminary study aim to bring the theory and practice together and help create relevant hypotheses for the quantitative study.

2.1 Research Question and Hypotheses

To ensure the study investigates the intended goal, a research question is developed to focus on the study. This preliminary study aims to investigate the same aspect and field as the main study; thus, the research question is the same as the main study. “In which business processes can Innovative Opplevelser successfully facilitate inter-organizational governance between existing actors within the Northern Norwegian tourism industry?”. This research question includes the sub-research questions: “What benefits are related to inter-organizational cooperation?” and “What challenges are related to this?”

2.2 Methodology

In order to conduct a preliminary study, there first need to be created a methodology that will help assure the quality of the study. A research methodology is created by determining the research design, research approach, sampling, and how the data will be collected and analyzed. With the help of these, the research plan is created, and a preliminary study can be conducted.

2.2.1 Research Design

The research design is the general plan for conducting the research to answer the research question successfully. A well-planned research design minimized the risk of error concerning answering the research question (Saunders et al., 2016). The purpose of the preliminary study has been established above as enhancing the effectiveness of the quantitative study by developing an understanding of the connection between existing theory and practice by looking into new input to the theory. This implies that the preliminary study will have a deductive approach, investigating whether the existing theory can be added and implemented into the InnOpp-case (Saunders et al., 2016). A deductive design allows for a more descriptive and open-ended approach (Fisher et al., 2010), beneficial given the preliminary study's purpose to link existing theory and practice (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Furthermore, Morgan (2013) stated that preliminary studies could have three different orientations, depending on their purpose: discovery-oriented (exploratory), development-oriented (descriptive), and definition-oriented (explanatory). He further argued that discovery-oriented should be applied when the goal is to explore options and reveal new things that could affect the theoretical foundation, development-oriented when the goal is to develop a prespecified theoretical framework in the light of a new application, and definition-oriented when the goal is to specify the existing theoretical framework for the relevant issues of your application. These can be used alone or in combination, but the three rely on different strengths from qualitative research as they are diverse in their output goals. In the case of this thesis, the development-oriented approach is most suitable, as it will explore the possibilities for new, unknown aspects of the existing theory that could be relevant and important for the hypotheses and findings of the quantitative study. The findings of the development-oriented part will give insight into whether the existing theory can be applied to this InnOpp's practice and if there exist other benefits and challenges than

those identified in the theoretical framework. This will ensure that the quantitative study has the most suitable focus and thereby help increase the value of the findings for the real-life companies linked to InnOpp.

2.2.2 Research Strategy

With the research design and plan established, the research strategy is next. This relates to the strategy of collecting the data from the preliminary study. Various research strategies exist, but descriptive, deductive research is best-suited with in-depth interviews with key interviewees. Interviews are a suitable research strategy as they will enable the interviewees to share their perspectives and experiences of the topic flexibly and dynamically (Fisher et al., 2010). This strategy provides detailed answers based on the interviewees' depth-knowledge about the subject. When conducting interviews, Saunders et al. (2016) argued that interviews could be categorized into three types; structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. When referring to qualitative research interviews, the semi-structured interviews are the most suitable as they allow for a structure with key topics and questions prepared, but with flexibility for follow-up questions and the interviewees' opinions to be disclosed. Semi-structured interviews are based on a structured pre-planned interview guide, but with the possibility of adapting the interview to benefit the quality (Saunders et al., 2016).

Semi-structured interviews require a pre-planned interview guide to ensure that the key topics from existing theory and its relevant questions have been implemented into the interview (Saunders et al., 2016). The questions are asked in a logical order to create a structure for the interview. However, the interview guide should be a dynamic guide that can be easily adjusted with relevant follow-up questions when considered relevant and beneficial. The goal of the interviews is to get the interviewees to give relevant information about the case without the interviewer leading the questions to a certain answer and without debating the interviewees' answers. This is ensured by letting the interviewee be in focus, having simple yet structured questions, and avoiding leading and confirming questions.

It has been argued that semi-structured interviews should be opened by some fact-based comments regarding the research and the interviewers' understanding of the industry, as this is beneficial for creating credibility and gaining the interviewee's confidence. This allows the interviewer to shape the interview and will be advantageous for the quality of the data collected (Saunders et al., 2016). The interview should consist of a variety of open-

ended questions, probing questions, and specified questions to ensure the quality of the interview. Open-ended questions allow the interviewee to describe a current event, which is suitable when in need for the interviewee to provide an extensive answer. Probing questions are used to explore the responses further and focus the question in a certain direction or follow up on the interviewee's previous answer. Specified questions are used to obtain specific information regarding a topic or confirm a fact (Saunders et al., 2016). In the preliminary interviews of this thesis, the interview guide consists of a mix of these three types of questions, as can be seen in the attached interview guide (Appendix A2 Interview Guide – Preliminary Study). At the end of the interview, the interviewees will be asked to give a final statement on the subject and case.

2.2.3 Sampling

To focus the research, the population needs to be defined. The target population of this thesis is the members of InnOpp's cooperation, as they are the case studied during the research. During the preliminary study, the focus is on discovering the depth-knowledge the cooperation is founded on, creating the natural sample for the preliminary study to be those working with administrative and managerial work within InnOpp. This implies that there will be a non-probability, purposive sampling for the preliminary study. Saunders et al. (2016) explain this sampling as "...select cases that will best enable you to answer your research question (s) and to meet your objectives." (p.301). This form of sampling is beneficial when working with a case study, where certain information is needed. For this study, this applies to people with a unique insight into the InnOpp-cooperation. Therefore, the sample of the preliminary study is limited to those working with InnOpp, those responsible for the project.

The sample of the preliminary study is set to the two people working with InnOpp, further known as "interviewees". They have been purposely selected due to their position and knowledge of the case.

2.2.4 Data Collection

With the research design, strategy and sampling created, the data collection can be planned. The semi-structured interviews will be conducted individually over online video chat due to practical reasons as location, time, and corona restrictions. Although using online video chat features to conduct interviews has become increasingly more common, they also

have limitations regarding non-verbal communication such as body language and gestures (Weller, 2016). However, the practical considerations in terms of cost/time and the ongoing pandemic make internet video calls the most appropriate for this study. These interviews will be recorded for transcription afterward to create contextual data for further analysis. While there are some potential disadvantages to using recording during the interview, as potentially limiting the honesty and completeness of the interviewee's answers, there are several advantages to this. Recording allows the interviewer to focus solely on the interview and transcribe answers afterward. This further creates accurate and unbiased collected data, and the interviewer can go through the interview again if any questions arise about collected data (Saunders et al., 2016). The interviews were recorded after written consent and approval, following the Norwegian Centre of Research Data (NSD) guidelines.

When conducting interviews, Saunders et al. (2016) identified several key aspects of the interviewer's behavior and attitude during the interview that could affect the quality of the data collected from the interview. They argued that appropriate behavior reduces the scope for bias during the interview. This applies to both non-verbal and verbal behavior as gestures and comments, increasing the importance of neutral behavior. Further, attentive listening skills are important for completely understanding the interviewees' answers and should be combined with summarizing their answers and confirming your understanding with closed questions.

2.3 Data Analysis

2.3.1 Transcribing the Data

Following the interviews, a transcription of the data will be necessary. Transcription of qualitative data is a verbatim reproduction of the interview. This means a word-pressed account of what was communicated in the interview, both verbally and physically. Transcription makes the following analysis easier when performing a qualitative interview as it allows for more comparable data content. Transcription should follow as soon as possible after the interviews have taken place to ensure the interview is transcripted as correctly as possible (Saunders et al., 2016). Transcribing of data can occur in several different ways, for instance, only what was said in words, both what was said verbally and expressed physically, or what was said in phonetics. Further, due to transcription being time-consuming, it can also

be considered if one wants to transcribe the data oneself or hire someone else to transcribe the data. The choice of which form of transcription to use relates to how much data there is and the future usage of the transcribed data.

In the pre-qualitative study, a transcript of only words was used as the goal was to understand whether the presented empirical research applies to the case in this thesis. The researcher performed the transcription manually as manual transcription allows for higher accuracy of what was communicated than an automatic transcription due to audio quality and dialects (Saunders et al., 2016). When transcribing, each interview object was given a randomized alphabetic letter code to create anonymity, which was saved separately on a secure server. Thus, hereafter they will be referred to as “Interview Object A” and “Interview Object B”. The complete transcript was 14 pages long, with approximately 6500 words.

2.3.2 Processing the Data

After transcribing the interviews, the analysis was conducted. The choice of analysis was a thematic analysis where the goal was to identify patterns or themes across the data. Thematic analysis is beneficial when analyzing qualitative data due to its systematic yet flexible approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis helps identify “key themes and patterns from a data set, test theories, and verify conclusions” (Saunders et al., 2016). In this pre-qualitative study with a deductive approach, the themes and patterns examined were pre-established through the literature review. The theories being tested were based on existing empirical research, with the study's goal to gain a better insight into the existing research’s relevance for the inter-organizational governance within InnOpp.

The thematic analysis involves coding the data into single phrases and words that are more easily comprehensible. In a deductive study, this means creating a priori-codes, meaning labeling the data into words and phrases related to the existing theory being tested (Saunders et al., 2016). Following this, the categorized data was searched for key concepts and factors related to the literature review. This allowed the qualitative data to be categorized into various themes identified from existing theory, making it easier to look for a pattern in the answers. In the next part, the research quality of this pre-qualitative study will be discussed before presenting and discussing the findings from the analysis.

2.4 Data Quality

To ensure that the quality of data is holding an acceptable quality, the limitations of the research are investigated. In qualitative studies, these limitations are divided into the credibility and transferability of the study, in addition to its dependability. These can be considered parallels to internal validity, external validity, and reliability (Saunders et al., 2016).

2.4.1 Credibility

Credibility relates to the confidence of the collected data, meaning whether the findings represent a credible interpretation of the original data collected in interviews. This is ensured by developing a method analysis that accounts for an objective perspective by the researcher and that the findings are not altered to match the researcher's personal beliefs and assumptions (Saunders et al., 2016). In this thesis, credibility is considered by writing transcripts of the interviews, and after that, an objective analysis is performed on the transcripts. Further, when inaccurate statements occurred during the interviews, the interviewees were asked to elaborate on them to understand what they meant. In addition, confirming questions regarding the interviewee's statements were asked and “approved” by the interviewees during the interview.

2.4.2 Transferability

Transferability relates to whether the research’s findings can be transferred to another setting. One main issue here is the small sample size, although the sample equals the whole population being researched. However, the qualitative study conducted in this study does not have a purpose of creating theories or evolving models but gaining an understanding of the effect of existing theory onto a given case: InnOpp. Thus, this research does not aim to be transferred to other settings, and transferability is irrelevant and will not be elaborated further.

2.4.3 Dependability

As stated earlier, dependability is parallel to reliability and refers to the consistency during the research and whether the findings are possible to replicate later. (Saunders et al., 2016). There are mainly four threats to reliability, as discussed below.

Participant error relates to factors affecting the interviewees' participation in the study (Saunders et al., 2016). In this thesis, participant errors could be identified as conducting interviews at a sensitive time, such as conducting interviews before an important meeting or engagement. This was mitigated by letting the interviewees decide the interview time themselves as to what fits well with their schedule. Participant bias concerns whether any factors were causing the participants to give a false response. For instance, if the interviewees were worried about negative effects from members of InnOpp after the interviews. This bias was mitigated by guaranteeing the interviewees their anonymity in the information letter and not giving any identifying characteristics in the discussion of findings. Further, the information letter stated the topic of the survey and its purpose, without going into details of which variables would be asked about. The information letter would prepare the interviewees for the interview, and if directly cited, the interviewees would be asked to confirm citations (Saunders et al., 2016).

Researcher error relates to factors altering the researchers' interpretation, for example, not being sufficiently prepared for the meeting, conducting the interviews at a "bad" time in their schedule, or if the researcher had other factors affecting their capability of objective interpretation. This was reduced by preparing for the interview beforehand, setting up the schedule ahead of time, and creating guidelines for conducting interviews. (Saunders et al., 2016). Researcher bias refers to the researcher letting their subjective opinion affect the interpretation of the interviews. In the analysis, this was reduced by transcribing interviews, having a model for how to analyze the data beforehand, and keeping subjective meanings separated from the study's findings.

2.4.4 Ethical Considerations

When considering the ethical aspects, both formal requirements and informal principles should be minded (Lund & Lund, 2012). To begin with the latter, the first principle is to minimize the risk of harm, meaning to not put the interviewees in an uncomfortable position due to their answers, the second principle is obtaining informed consent, and the third is protecting the interviewees' anonymity and confidentiality. (Lund & Lund, 2012). This is taken into consideration with maintaining the anonymity of the interviewees, not giving away any identifying details that can link answers to interviewees, giving an information letter beforehand regarding what topics they may be asked, and gaining informed consent. Thereby, this research has taken precautions to reduce the risk of

the first three principles to a minimum. The fourth principle is avoiding deceptive practices, which includes hiding the purpose of the research or altering the interviewees' perspective beforehand. This is mitigated by the information letter the participants received before taking the study and with them taking the study without interference. The last principle is providing the right to withdraw consent; this is performed by informing the interviewees that they could withdraw their consent from the research by contacting the researcher or supervisor.

The formal requirements relate to the study needing approval from NSD to collect the data, and this approval depends on following an NSD-standard for information letter and have requirements to what it needs to contain, consent needs to be given and saved, and guidelines for the treatment of data needs to be followed. The information letter and consent form can be seen in Appendix A1 Information Letter and Consent Form – Preliminary Study

2.5 Findings

In this part of this chapter, the findings from the preliminary study will be presented and discussed in light of the literature review from chapter two in this thesis. As stated earlier, the data were analyzed using a thematic approach where the goal was to identify patterns and themes related to the existing theory for "coding". Therefore, the presented data are categorized into two main categories: benefits and challenges and business areas and processes.

2.5.1 Benefits and Challenges

Benefits

When asked to identify the benefits for the actors linked to the inter-organizational cooperation InnOpp, the interviewees identified three benefits. The first one was increased possibilities to utilize their resources due to cooperating with other actors. This was described as "being better together". When seen in the light of *Complementary Resources* from the existing theory (Dyer & Singh, 1998), this first identified benefit can be considered equal to the identified benefit from theory. In the interviews, this benefit was explained as a result of "actors finding each other" and "finding new collaboration partners" through the network created by InnOpp.

The second benefit identified was improved product development in the context of increased focus on creating innovative products and sharing experiences regarding products.

This was explained through the network functioning as “a place where actors could meet to work with their products and get feedback from each other”. The network was also described as a “co-producing ecosystem” where the actors were dependent on collaborating to “make each other better”. In light of the existing theory, this benefit could be linked to *Joint Product Development* in that several actors together develop products for a specific purpose (Dyer & Singh, 1998).

The third and last benefit was increased knowledge and competence among the actors. This was related to the product the actors offered their customers and the market they operated within. The benefit was related to seminars/webinars, group meetings, one-on-one coaching, and written material developed by research institutions. In light of the existing theory, this relates to the theoretically identified benefit; *Competence Development* (Dyer & Singh, 1998). In the interviews, the benefit was explained as “the network allowed the actors to gain competence and knowledge, without going through intensive, formal degrees” and “an increased awareness of the importance of knowing your customers”.

Further, when asked about what they believe works well within the InnOpp-cooperation, the interviewees pointed out the relationships and network with other local actors. They also stated that the NOK conference worked well and created involvement from the actors.

Within benefits, the interviewees identified three benefits that confirmed the relevance of three of the benefits identified in the literature review. *Complementary Resources*, *Joint Product Development*, and *Competence Development* were all identified as potential benefits of relational exchange by Dyer & Singh (1998). Although the last potential benefits they identified; *Effective Governance* (Dyer & Singh, 1998), was not identified by the interviewees directly when asked about benefits, its relevance remains as both interviewees indirectly stated *Effective Governance* as a benefit when discussing the business processes later. Therefore, all four identified benefits from theory were relevant in the preliminary study and will be considered when creating hypotheses for the main study.

From this, it can be stated that the four benefits discussed above are relevant for the InnOpp-cooperation, and thus a set of null hypotheses can be developed, as seen in Table 1below. These hypotheses aim to test for a significant relationship between the independent variables (the identified benefits) and the dependent variable (the actors’ perceived benefit of the cooperation).

$H0_1$	The linked actors do not perceive development of complementary resources to have a positive effect on their perception of the benefits of being part of the InnOpp-cooperation.
$H0_2$	The linked actors do not perceive joint product development to be a positive effect on their perception of the benefits of being part of the InnOpp-cooperation.
$H0_3$	The linked actors do not perceive development of actors' knowledge to be a positive effect on their perception of the benefits of being part of the InnOpp-cooperation.
$H0_4$	The linked actors do not perceive effective governance to be a positive effect on their perception of the benefits of being part of the InnOpp-cooperation.

Table 1: Hypotheses for Benefits

Challenges

The interviewees identified two challenges impacting the cooperation the most within InnOpp. The first challenge was *Free-riding*, although with a different perspective than the one presented in existing theory (Rokkan & Buvik, 2003). The *Free-riding* the interviewees identified as a challenge reflected the time and involvement the actors gave to the network; some actors had a higher level of involvement and were interested in participating and contributing to the common goal, while others were satisfied with only participating sporadically. When related to the literature review, this can be transferred to the theoretical challenge of *Free-riding*. However, as the theoretical challenge of *Free-riding* consisted of actors using the perks without contributing to them, it could seem the more relevant challenge is actors not participating actively. This challenge could be considered a different form of *Free-riding* where the actors are a part of the network in name and get the perks of the network status without contributing with their knowledge, experience, and time to improve the inter-organizational cooperation.

The second challenge the interviewees identified was *Various Ambition Levels* among the actors due to a varying consciousness regarding the potential of the cooperation. In the interviews, it was stated, "...(the network) is nice to have, not need to have", in the context of the actors not completely being aware of the benefits InnOpp could provide to their business. This challenge relates to the first one as those actors, not being fully aware of the potential of the cooperation for their business, seem likely not to get involved and use time. The challenge can be summarized as *Various Ambition Levels*. Regarding the presented empirical research, this challenge was not identified, and as such, is an interesting finding from the preliminary study.

In light of the theoretical framework, the interviewees only identified one of the presented challenges as those they believed relevant for the cooperation, although they had a different perspective: *Free-riding*. However, they identified one challenge the empirical research had not included: *Various Ambition Levels* and consciousness regarding the benefits of the cooperation for the actors. The empirical theory presented three challenges; *Size*, *Free-riding*, and *Asymmetrical Power Relation* (Rokkan & Haugland, 2002; Rokkan & Buvik, 2003). Going forward, both the challenges identified by the interviewees and the existing theory will be included in creating hypotheses. However, regarding *Free-riding*, only the interviewees' perspectives will be included due to the relevance to the case of InnOpp.

When the respondents were asked about what they believed needed to change in the coming years to improve the InnOpp-cooperation, the interviewees stated a renewed focus on the market trends. These trends were identified as digitalization and sustainability by the interviewees. Further, one of the interviewees said they were missing more physical meetings, more network gatherings, and more time to cooperate within the InnOpp-cooperation, which had been limited due to the ongoing pandemic.

From the discussion of existing theory and findings from the interviews, it can be stated that the four challenges discussed above are relevant for the InnOpp-cooperation. Based on this, a set of null hypotheses can be developed, as presented in Table 2. These null hypotheses intend to test for a significant relationship between the independent variables (The identified challenges) and the dependent variable (the actors' perceived dissatisfaction with the cooperation).

$H0_1$	The linked actors do not perceive development of complementary resources to have a positive effect on their perception of the benefits of being part of the InnOpp-cooperation.
$H0_2$	The linked actors do not perceive joint product development to be a positive effect on their perception of the benefits of being part of the InnOpp-cooperation.
$H0_3$	The linked actors do not perceive development of actors' knowledge to be a positive effect on their perception of the benefits of being part of the InnOpp-cooperation.
$H0_4$	The linked actors do not perceive effective governance to be a positive effect on their perception of the benefits of being part of the InnOpp-cooperation.

Table 2: Hypotheses for Challenges

2.5.2 Business areas

Keys Areas and Bottlenecks

In the interviews, the interviewees were first asked to identify what business areas and processes they meant were the main key areas and bottlenecks for the actors within the InnOpp-cooperation before being asked about the specific business processes identified as the sub-processes in the literature review (Brown, 2008). The key areas identified in the preliminary study were customer insight and market insight, and more exact, how to create more sales to the customers with a) adapting the products to the market segment and b) creating more additional sales while the customers were at the destination. This key area relates to the changes seen in the tourism industry; to differentiate from others to attract customers, the actors need to know how to adapt their product to their target segment (Vodeb, 2012; Wilke et al., 2019). This was also supported by the interviewees, who stated that one of the major changes in the tourism industry over the last few years was the increased demand for competence and knowledge. The change in demand for the products demanded higher adaptability towards the customers, an increased focus on creating a specific customer segment, and increased knowledge about creating and capturing value in the market.

On the other side, the business areas the interviewees identified as the most crucial bottlenecks for the actors were utilization of technology within their business and time- and cost-efficiency. This was supported by the ongoing technological wave in the tourism industry and most other industries (Vodeb, 2012). Further, the interviewees stated in the interviews that the biggest challenges for the future in the tourism industry, in general, were digitalization and technological progress, and efficient use of their time.

Sub-Processes

After identifying the main key areas and bottlenecks, the interviewees were asked about their experience and evaluation regarding the potential of inter-organizational cooperation within the sub-processes identified in chapter two. InnOpp has already facilitated cooperation within some sub-processes, while others have not been focused on. Therefore, the interviewees were asked to either share their experience if they had already facilitated cooperation within the sub-process or their evaluation of the potential for cooperation within the sub-process. To avoid confusion, the six sub-processes were asked about, regardless of which main process they belonged in.

The first sub-process the interviewees were asked about was *Market Activities*. The interviews showed that InnOpp facilitated no formal marketing campaign. The explanation was that marketing campaigns were within the destination companies' work-field. Therefore, they did not participate in this sub-process to avoid competing with the destination companies regarding the same goal: creating attention to the Northern Norwegian tourism possibilities. However, the other part of *Market Activities*, market insight, is an activity the interviewees identified as important. The interviewees stated that the cooperation could be beneficial regarding increasing the actors' competence about gaining market insight, using the market insight to adjust their products to their customer segment, and attracting the desired customers to their business. This is coherent with the benefits identified in the theoretical framework presented earlier; joint market activities that aim to increase knowledge about the market and customers could be a potential benefit for the actors (Brown, 2008).

Product Development is the second sub-process the interviewees were asked about. During the interviewees, this sub-process was identified as one of the main focus areas within the cooperation. This process was described as "InnOpp's core process to facilitate joint activities within". It was also stated that this area had been one of the main goals of the cooperation since its foundation; "developing innovative products within the tourism industry". In light of the identified potential in the literature review, this is in cohesion. The literature review identified potential benefits for the actors when facilitating cooperation within *Product Development* (Brown, 2008).

The sub-process *Technological Development* was the next sub-process the interviewees were asked about. The interviews found that this was not a business process focused on in InnOpp's cooperation. The interviewees stated they had some minor activities regarding utilizing digital aids and improving their social media appearance and "digital universe" through seminars and webinars. However, there had not been any formal plans to include this as a goal for the cooperation. Although not included yet, the interviewees identified this process as likely to have future potential for the actors. This was explained by the changing demand of customers and the development of new technology that could help the actors. The literature review identified potential for beneficial outcomes when implementing inter-organizational cooperation within *Technological Development*, which is coherent with the findings from the preliminary study. However, this potential was linked to

increasing the competence regarding technological development and digital aids, and not the development of software and hardware (Brown, 2008).

The next sub-process the interviewees were asked about was *HR Management*. In the interviews, this process was identified as the other main focus area within the InnOpp-cooperation. The importance of cooperation within *HR Management* was linked to increasing the competence and knowledge of the actors, both in terms of the market and the products they offer to their customers, and in terms of the general business knowledge and development. The existing theory argued that *HR Management* had the potential for creating beneficial outcomes when cooperation was implemented (Brown, 2008). This supports the findings from the preliminary study.

General Management was the following sub-process the interviewees were asked about. Within this sub-process, the interviewees stated that they had seen potential in facilitating cooperation but were somewhat limited due to every business needing "their own" model and relations to their local market. However, they had tried facilitating some activities within increasing competence about transforming from seasonal tourism to all-year tourism, in addition to the relationships that were created with other actors within the InnOpp-cooperation. The interviewees also stated that, when asked, they had helped some actors with general management; however, this was not something they had made as an activity they offered. In the interviews, it was stated, "we function as support for the actors when needed; someone they can discuss ideas with and get help with changing their business, but this is not something we have yet offered to everyone as an activity.". It was deduced from the existing theory that it could be beneficial to have potential within this business process, although it was made challenging due to the different business models (Brown, 2008).

The last sub-process the interviewees were asked to elaborate on was *Aftersales Services*. Regarding this sub-process, the interviewees stated that the important aspect for the tourism industry was additional sales and not aftersales. This was explained through adventure tourism activities, like those offered by their linked actors, which was more of a once-in-a-lifetime-happening than a repeating occurrence. They further stated that they had worked on creating competence about gaining more customers' sales while they were at the destination but to a limited degree. The interviewees considered it to be little to no potential for beneficial collaboration within *Aftersales Services*. This is supported by the potential drawn from the theory earlier; there was limited potential for cooperation directly regarding

aftersales; however, there could be some potential when seen in the light of competence development about the area (Brown, 2008).

Based on this, it can be stated that all six business processes have a potential for beneficial cooperation within InnOpp, and as such null hypotheses can be formed as presented in Table 3. These hypotheses aim to test for a significant relationship between the independent variables (the business processes) and the dependent variable (the actors' perceived potential for beneficial cooperation within InnOpp).

$H0_1$	The linked actors do not perceive cooperation within joint competence development regarding market- and customer insight to have a positive effect on their overall satisfaction with the InnOpp-cooperation.
$H0_2$	The linked actors do not perceive cooperation within joint product development to have a positive effect on their overall satisfaction with the InnOpp-cooperation.
$H0_3$	The linked actors do not perceive cooperation within joint competence development regarding utilizing technology and digital aids in their businesses to have a positive effect on their overall satisfaction with the InnOpp-cooperation.
$H0_4$	The linked actors do not perceive cooperation within joint competence development regarding their business, market and customers to have a positive effect on their overall satisfaction with the InnOpp-cooperation.
$H0_5$	The linked actors do not perceive cooperation within joint competence development regarding general management and business development to have a positive effect on their overall satisfaction with the InnOpp-cooperation.
$H0_6$	The linked actors do not perceive cooperation within joint competence development regarding creating addition sales to have a positive effect on their overall satisfaction with the InnOpp-cooperation.

Table 3: Hypotheses for Business Processes

2.6 Hypotheses

Based on the research question and the theory discussed above, several null hypotheses were developed and briefly presented. The null hypotheses are hypotheses used in statistical testing, in this case: a quantitative study. Null hypotheses are formed as a statement that proposes there is no effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable, and as such, the different independent variables are not important for the dependent variable. On the other hand, the alternative hypotheses propose a positive effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable, thereby a significant relationship between the hypotheses. Hypothesis-testing aims to statistically reject the null hypothesis and prove the alternative hypothesis (Hayes, 2021). The design of the statistical testing will be elaborated on later.

The null hypotheses developed from existing theory and the findings of the preliminary qualitative study can be categorized into three areas: 1) benefits of the cooperation, 2) challenges within the cooperation, and 3) the potential for cooperation within pre-identified business processes. The hypotheses within the first category aim to investigate the actors' perception of the identified benefits related to their overall perception of the benefits of being in the InnOpp-cooperation. The purpose of this is to decide if the benefits identified in theory and preliminary study positively affect the actors' overall perception of benefits within the cooperation. The second category investigates if the identified challenges are relevant to the cooperation and are perceived causes to the linked actors' dissatisfaction with the cooperation. The hypotheses within the latter category also have the perspective of the linked actors as the hypotheses aim to investigate how the perceived cooperation within different business processes affects the actors' overall satisfaction with the InnOpp-cooperation.

The intention with these hypotheses is to gather insight into which business processes InnOpp should facilitate cooperation within in the future and understand what motivates the actors to participate and what they find challenging with the cooperation. This insight will give the findings required to answer the research question and the sub-research questions. A conceptual model can be used as a guide to creating a visual representation of the links between the different independent- and dependent variables to show what the alternative hypotheses are aiming to prove (Stanford University, 2003). In other words, a conceptual model is a representation of the hypotheses that show the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The hypotheses, with their respective independent and dependent variable(s), are presented below. These variables are illustrated using conceptual models to fully grasp how the variables are relevant to the research question.

2.7 Benefits

The hypotheses related to benefits are based on the benefits discussed in the theoretical framework, which the interviewees in the preliminary study confirmed. In addition, the benefit the interviewees did not identify as relevant to the InnOpp-cooperation is included due to its theoretical relevance. These four benefits make the independent variables of the hypotheses. The dependent variable is the same for all four hypotheses; the actors' perceived overall benefit of the InnOpp-cooperation. An overview of this is shown in Figure 3.

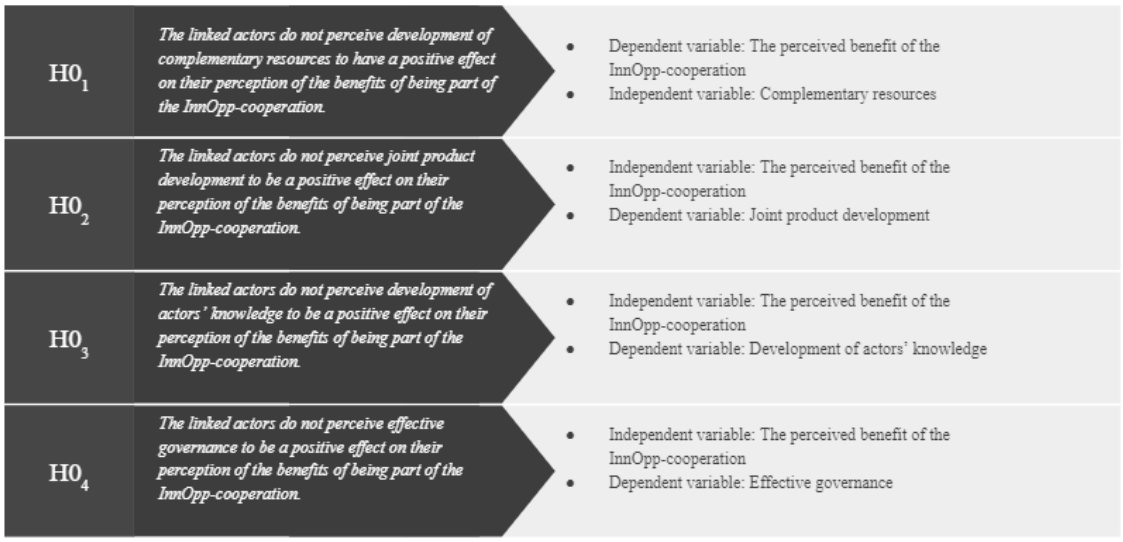

Figure 3: Hypotheses with Independent and Dependent variables for Benefits

This overview identifies the independent and dependent variables per hypothesis, and the relationship between all four independent variables and the dependent variable is illustrated in the conceptual model below. This model shows that all four independent variables affect the dependent variable; this relationship is based on the literature review and the preliminary findings.

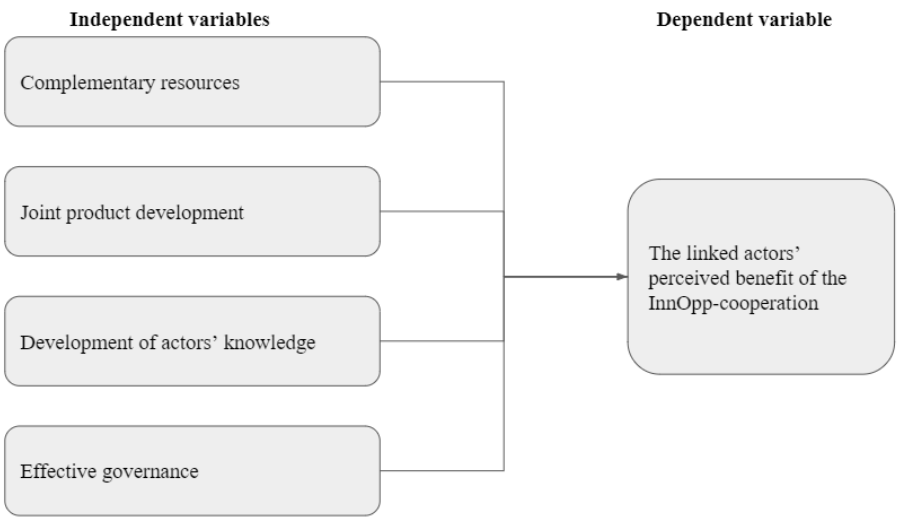

Figure 4: Conceptual model for Benefits

2.8 Challenges

The next category is *Challenges*, and as such, the hypotheses relate to the identified challenges and their effect on the actors' dissatisfaction within the InnOpp-cooperation. These are based on the theoretical discussion prior and the findings from the preliminary study. The interviewees identified two challenges as they considered relevant for the cooperation, where one of these was similar to the presented theory. Although they did not identify the remaining two theoretical challenges as relevant, they are included as hypotheses due to their relevance from empirical research. The four challenges are the independent variables, and the dependent variable is the perceived dissatisfaction with the InnOpp-cooperation. This is shown in *Figure 5* below.

$H0_1$	*The linked actors do not perceive free-riding to have an increasing effect on their perceived dissatisfaction of the InnOpp-cooperation.*	• Dependent variable: The perceived overall dissatisfaction of the InnOpp-cooperation. • Independent variable: Free-riding
$H0_2$	*The linked actors do not perceive different ambition levels among actors to have an increasing effect on their perceived dissatisfaction of the InnOpp-cooperation.*	• Dependent variable: The perceived overall dissatisfaction of the InnOpp-cooperation. • Independent variable: Different ambition level
$H0_3$	*The linked actors do not perceive the size of cooperation to have an increasing effect on their perceived dissatisfaction of the InnOpp-cooperation.*	• Dependent variable: The perceived overall dissatisfaction of the InnOpp-cooperation. • Independent variable: Size of the cooperation
$H0_4$	*The linked actors do not perceive asymmetrical power-relation between actors to have an increasing effect on their perceived dissatisfaction of the InnOpp-cooperation.*	• Dependent variable: The perceived overall dissatisfaction of the InnOpp-cooperation. • Independent variable: Asymmetrical power-relation

Figure 5: Hypotheses with Independent and Dependent variables for Challenges

As seen in the figure above, each hypothesis has a unique independent variable, though they have a common dependent variable. The relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable is illustrated below in a conceptual model which aims to explain the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables, based on existing empirical research and the findings from the preliminary, qualitative study.

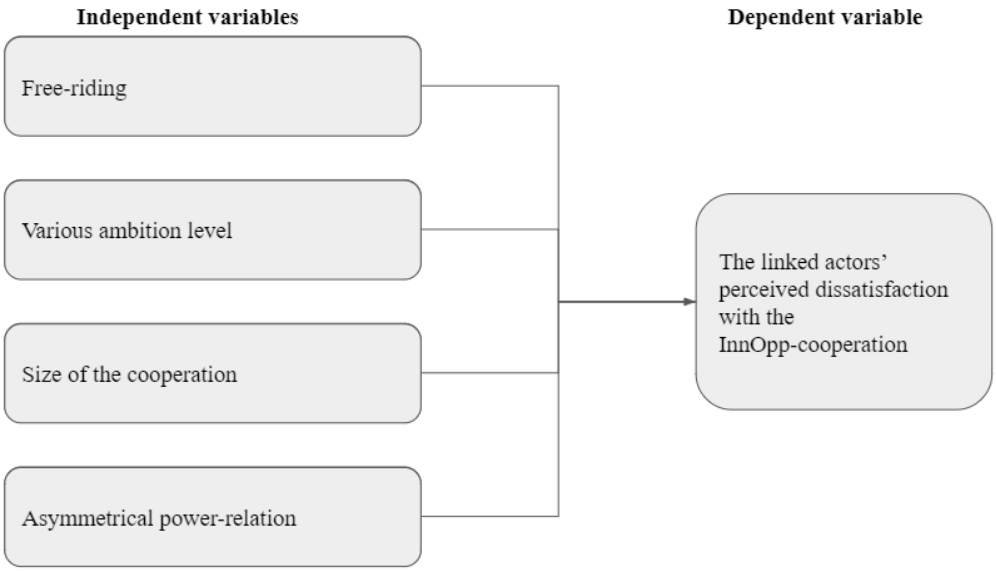

Figure 6: Conceptual model for Challenges

2.9 Business Processes

The null hypotheses related to the business processes are based on the business processes identified in the literature review, which the interviewees confirmed to be relevant. Therefore, the independent variables are the identified business processes. The dependent variable is the linked actors' perceived satisfaction with the facilitated cooperation within InnOpp. There are six different independent variables with one common dependent variable. In Figure 7 below this is illustrated.

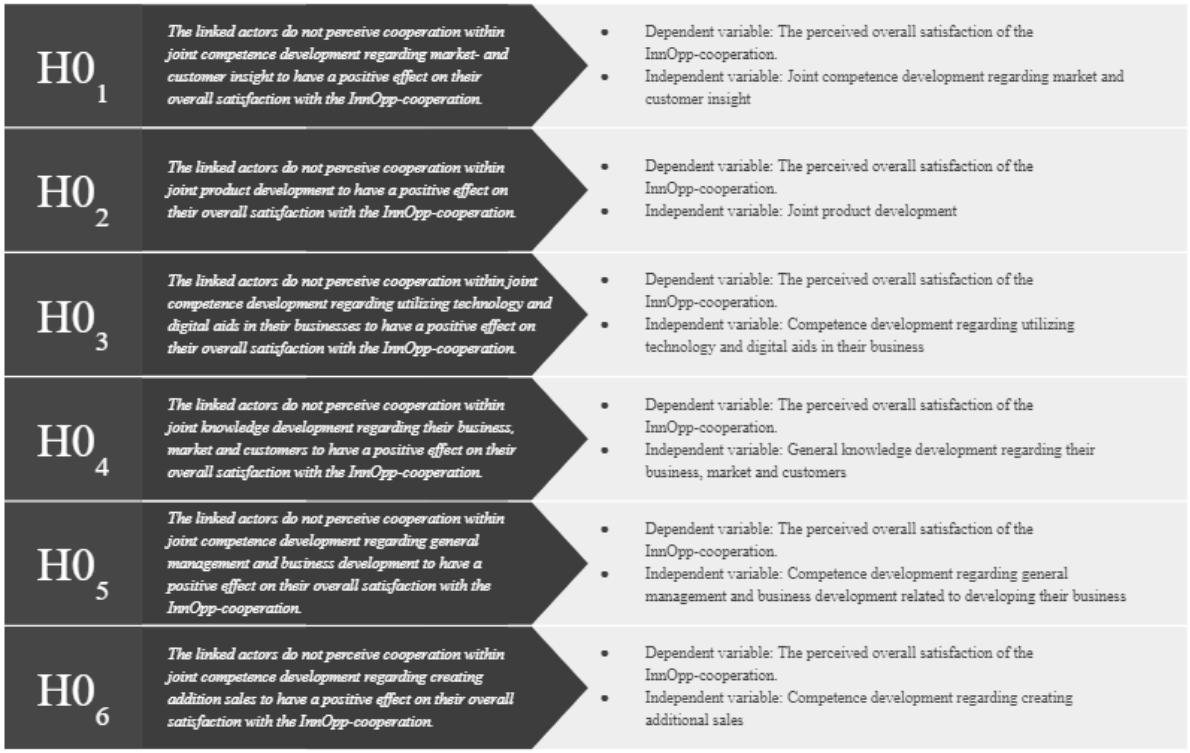

Figure 7: Hypotheses with Independent and Dependent variables for Business Processes

Although *Aftersales Services* was identified to have little to no potential for beneficial cooperation by both empirical research and the findings from the preliminary study, it is included within the sixth null hypothesis. However, it has been focused on additional sales, which the interviewees identified to have potential for beneficial cooperation. The relationship between the independent and dependent variables is presented in the conceptual model below.

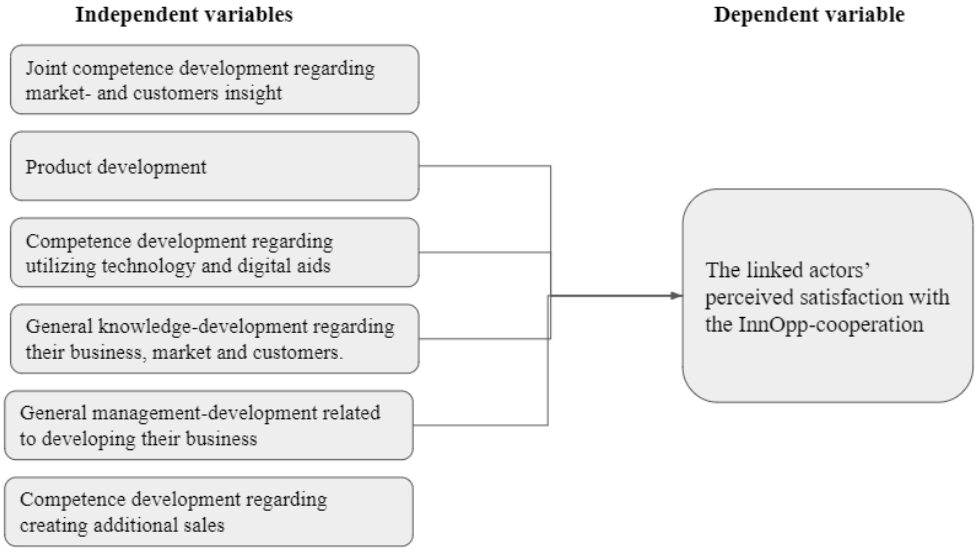

Figure 8: Conceptual model for Business Processes

2.10 Conclusion

The null hypotheses with respective independent and dependent variables have been developed and presented above. The dependent variables are closely linked to research questions, and with testing the null hypotheses for significance, the research question(s) can be answered. The presented conceptual models show the expected relationship between independent and dependent variables (s). In the next chapter, the quantitative study is presented with its methodology, method of data analysis, presentation, and discussion of findings from the study, and a discussion of data quality related to the study. This will lead to a conclusion regarding whether the null hypotheses can be rejected, and thereby the significance of the independent variables towards the dependent variable will be found.

3. Quantitative Study

Until now, this thesis has aimed to create an understanding of the existing theory in the literature review and tested it for relevance towards the InnOpp-cooperation in the preliminary study. The foundation has been created to test the established hypotheses with a deductive approach through a quantitative study. This study is based on the linked actors' perspective, and through the findings from this research, the research question will be answered. In this chapter, the quantitative study will be presented through creating the methodology, where the research design will be elaborated, the sampling presented and discussed, and how the data will be collected explained. Following this is the analysis of data, where the method of analysis will be explained, and with this, the findings of the analysis will be presented, and the fate of the hypotheses will be determined. This will provide an opportunity to discuss the findings in light of the existing theory. In the end, the data quality will be discussed, in addition to ethical issues will be taken into consideration.

3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Research Design

As introduced earlier in the preliminary study, a research design is how the research will be conducted to successfully answer the research questions (Saunders et al., 2016). The overall purpose of this thesis is to understand which business processes InnOpp should facilitate inter-organizational cooperation within. Further, a sub-purpose of the thesis is to understand the perceived benefits and challenges existing within the InnOpp-cooperation from the actors' perspective. To achieve the purpose, the main research will have a deductive approach, meaning it will be based on existing empirical research regarding inter-organizational cooperation and business processes within the tourism industry and the findings from the preliminary study. Furthermore, the research will have a descriptive design that aims to describe the situation in the tourism industry by applying existing theories from other industries and the identified aspects from the preliminary research. According to Saunders et al. (2016), research with a descriptive design and a deductive approach fits well with a quantitative method. This means that the research aims to collect mainly numerical data that can be analyzed based on quantitative methods (Saunders et al., 2016), helping

solve real-life problems for a company by doing analysis based on deduction of theory and data. In addition, to help explain the findings, some categorical data will also be collected through open-ended questions.

Quantitative methods are beneficial due to several reasons. One reason is that it makes the research easier to narrow down and complete as it has a clear structure (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Another reason is that it makes it easier to analyze findings with the help of statistical aids. Further, this method allows for a higher respondent sample, which helps with increasing the generalization of the findings. However, there are also several challenges related to a quantitative method. For one, the researcher defines what is relevant to investigate, potentially losing important data. This challenge has been reduced by using the preliminary, qualitative study findings as the hypotheses were based on what was discovered as relevant from the preliminary study. Another challenge may be misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the survey itself (Bryman & Bell, 2011), but avoiding too complex language and usage of professional and theoretical terms.

3.1.2 Research Strategy

With the foundation of the research created, the strategy is the next part. The research strategy relates to how the quantitative data will be collected. Numerous strategies can be used, but a survey is recommended for descriptive, quantitative research due to its quantitative nature (Saunders et al., 2016). A survey strategy allows for collecting standardized data from a relatively large number of respondents, used for quantitative analysis (Saunders et al., 2016). Thus, a survey is the best strategy for this thesis.

The benefits of using a survey strategy relate to the time-saving aspect of the research. The survey will be based on what has been presented in theory and will be distributed to the linked actors within cooperation by the project management in InnOpp. This makes it easier to reach out to a higher number of participants within the cooperation, giving more data that can be used to create a generalized perspective. However, there are also disadvantages to using a survey strategy. These relate to the questions being framed as statements that the participants rank based on their subjective meaning. Thus, the respondents will only be able to answer on aspects of the established theory, and explanations of connections may be lost in the strategy.

Further, a challenge with surveys is creating an understanding for the question in order for the respondent to interpret the question the way it was intended. This is, as stated

earlier, reduced by avoiding complex, theoretical language and adapting the language to the respondents. Another challenge is the motivational aspect: the respondents need to be motivated to complete the survey. To help reduce this barrier, reasoning will be presented in the beginning as to how it is beneficial for them to answer the survey.

The survey will be based on the theory presented and the hypotheses determined priorly, with its basis in the research question and sub-research questions. This means that a relatively large part of the survey will consist of closed answers formed as statements, where the respondents answer on a Likert-style rating scale. This provides answers that are easy to code for quantitative analysis. However, regarding the sub-research questions, there will also be an open answer option where the respondents can add what they find to be the main benefits and challenges (before being presented with the benefits and challenges from empirical research). The purpose of this is to investigate whether there exist other relevant benefits and challenges in the actors' perspective.

3.1.3 Sampling

To ensure the focus of the study is correct, the population needs to be defined. The population of this research is given as it is a case study, making the target population the members of InnOpp. A case study is characterized by a non-probability sampling technique, as the research is focused on a specified population. The survey will be sent out to all linked actors within the InnOpp-cooperation, meaning those willing to answer will become the sampling group. This technique is called self-sampling; a type of sampling where the actors are allowed to decide for themselves to take part in the research. This is a known choice of sampling when conducting a quantitative study facilitated by an online survey sent out to everyone within an organization (Lund & Lund, 2012). As such, it fits well with the intention of this thesis. Saunders et al. (2016) argued that self-selection was beneficial when access to respondents was limited. This case, closed, exclusive cooperation between selected actors, falls under this category, and as such, it would be beneficial for the project organizers within InnOpp to distribute the survey to their actors.

Using self-selection sampling can be advantageous for conducting a quantitative study as it helps reduce the time spent searching for individuals that fit the criteria to become part of the sample (Lund & Lund, 2012). Only the organization or case investigated needs to be identified when using the self-selection, as done in this thesis with InnOpp. With this implemented, the self-selection is put into action, saves time for both the researcher and the

responders, and has a low relative cost to conduct the study with self-selection sampling (Saunders et al., 2016). Further, Lund & Lund stated that self-selection could create commitment for the responders to participate in the study, resulting in improved attendance and greater willingness to share more of their insight (2012).

However, some potential disadvantages of self-selection sampling are linked to self-selection bias and representativeness. The potential self-selection bias relates to the inherent bias of the responders' characteristics due to personal feelings about the case being investigated. Further, the sample may not be representative of the population studied (Lund & Lund, 2012). This can be linked to different levels of engagement and involvement within the population, causing those most involved to be more likely to participate in the study. This is supported by Saunders et al. (2016), who stated that self-selection would have a low likelihood of representativeness as those who choose to respond often have strong personal feelings or commitment to the project. Despite these disadvantages, self-sampling functions as a good sampling technique in studies related to human subjects. Thus, this is the chosen sampling method for this study.

3.1.4 Data Collection

The plan for data collection is to use an internet-based survey. This form of data collection is becoming more frequently used (Blumberg et al., 2014). The survey will be developed in Qualtrics and sent out by the project leader to the linked actors within InnOpp. The survey design will consist of statements that allow for defining the actors' perception of both cooperation within various business processes and their perception of benefits of and challenges within the InnOpp-cooperation. These statements are based on hypotheses and provide the data required to measure independent and dependent variables to perform quantitative analysis. The hypotheses were introduced earlier, and the related independent and dependent variables were presented. Further, the survey's design will be elaborated.

The statements in the survey were designed to be answered by using a Likert-style rating. A Likert-style rating is characterized by the respondent answering how much they agree or disagree with a statement on a rating scale (Saunders et al., 2016). In this survey, the rating scale has six points. An even number of points are used to "force" the responders to express their feelings and avoid "sitting on the fence" (Sanders et., 2012). The six-point scale has been found to be the most suitable when needing the respondents to take a side (Taherdoost, 2019). Further, the Likert-scale is designed to show in a horizontal line, with

the same order of the points to avoid confusion (Saunders et al., 2016). Thus, the Likert-style rating is displayed in this survey, as seen in Figure 9: Screenshot from the Survey: Likert-Style Rating below. This scale is translated to “I strongly disagree”, “I disagree”, “I slightly disagree”, “I slightly agree”, “I agree”, and “I strongly agree”.

Figure 9: Screenshot from the Survey: Likert-Style Rating

Survey

The survey was sent out to the members of InnOpp, and to avoid creating confusion regarding English empirical terms, the survey was made in Norwegian. The need for speaking the same language as the respondents are increasingly relevant to ensure the quality of communication and avoid misunderstandings (Sha & Gabel, 2020). This concerns both the literal language and the figurative language. Thus, the survey sent out in this study was in Norwegian to avoid language barriers becoming a data quality issue. Further, the statements were made informal and without unexplained theoretical terms. When a theoretical term was used, it was first explained thoroughly and given an example of what it may be. Theoretical terms included and explained were the various business processes, benefits, and challenges as they are closely linked to the hypotheses.

Attached to the email being sent out with the link to the survey was an information letter. This information letter was according to Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) standards and provided information regarding the research project, the research questions, how their answers were processed, and how their anonymity was secured. At the end of this letter, it is stated that consent was given by checking off a box in the survey. Therefore, the first page of the survey gave a summary of the information and a box stating that by checking the box, they gave consent to use their answers. This box had to be checked to go further with the survey.

At the beginning of the survey, the questions regarded the respondents’ background. This background information was generally about their business to avoid any issues with maintaining their anonymity. Thus, the statements in the first section were about which industry the businesses were operating within, which region they belonged to, how long they had been running their business, the number of employees, the number of linked networks,

and how long they had been a part of InnOpp. These statements were answered using multiple-choice options adapted to the question and were transformed into both categorical and numerical data, which will be included in the discussion of findings. In the second section, a general perception of the cooperation was created using statements regarding the respondents' satisfaction with the cooperation. The statements were accompanied with a Likert-style rating on six levels from the equivalent of "I strongly agree" to "I strongly disagree".

The second part of the survey included six sections, one for each business process. Each section started with an explanation of how the business process as defined in this thesis and which business activities were included. Following, several statements regarding the perceived satisfaction of cooperation within the respective business processes were given. As described earlier, these were all accompanied by a Likert-style rating on six levels. All sections were created with the same structure on statements to avoid confusion regarding what was asked and save time for the respondents when answering the survey.

The third part of the survey started with a general section about the perceived potential for cooperation within InnOpp, given on the Likert-style rating. The second section of this part was the only section including open questions for the respondents to answer. The questions related to what they perceived to be the biggest benefits and challenges within the cooperation, and what they believed should be improved, and what was satisfactory today.

The fourth part of the survey contained four sections regarding each benefit. Similar to the business process sections, these sections also began with a description of the benefit and its definition in this thesis. Then each section was given three statements about the perceived relevance of the benefit for their business. All four sections were designed similarly to avoid miscommunication and confusion among the respondents. The statements were answered on a six-level Likert-style rating from the equivalent of "I strongly disagree" to "I strongly agree".

The fifth and last part of the survey included four sections regarding the challenges. Likewise, the benefits-part, the challenges were described and defined per this thesis before giving statements about the respondents' perception of the challenges within InnOpp. In this part, a Likert-style rating was also used to measure the respondents' answers.

These five sections aim to collect both numerical and categorical data that can be used in analysis to determine whether the null hypotheses can be rejected. In addition, the collected data will provide insight into the respondents' perspectives on relevant benefits and

challenges. The chosen method of analyzing the collected data will be discussed in the next part of this thesis.

3.2 Data Analysis

Two types of data were collected in the survey: categorical and ordinal. The categorical data relates to the open-ended questions, while the ordinal data was collected from the Likert-style statements. These will be analyzed differently, and the Likert data will be used to determine whether the hypotheses can be rejected or not.

The categorical data collected from the open-ended questions are classified to look for trends. This data cannot be defined numerically or rank, making the data nominal (Saunders et al., 2016). The analysis of this data will begin with classifying them into common categories before looking for trends in what seems to be occurring most often. This data will not be statistically tested but presented in a tag cloud and discussed. The findings from this analysis are not used to determine whether the hypotheses can be rejected or not but to look for the respondents' considerations related to the cooperation.

Data collected with Likert-style rating scales are technically ranked, ordinal data, and hence categorical data. However, when such data is collected using similar size gaps between the points, it can be analyzed as numerical interval data (Saunders et al., 2016). This allows the Likert data to be analyzed as continuous interval data (Wu & Leung, 2017). Further, the data is polytomous as more than three categories (Lund & Lund, 2013): there are six categories due to the six-point Likert scale. The data can be analyzed to find a Likert Score for each section in the survey, thereby a score related to each independent and dependent variable. The Likert Score is found by calculating the mean value of the statements related to each section and variable. This will give the data required to perform a multiple regression analysis to determine whether there exist statistical indications that could be used to reject the hypotheses.

In studies with small sample sizes, inspecting p-values to evaluate could cause false responses as the sample size has an effect on the p-value (Komaroff, 2020). Thus, it has been recommended to also check the effect size in cases with small sample sizes to gain a better indication of the effect. While p-values reports the likelihood of an effect’s existence, it does not reveal the size of the effect. The effective size can be interpreted through R-values, and may gain a better indication to reject the null hypothesis (Sullivan & Fein, 2012). Therefore,

both the traditional p-value and the R-value will be included to give a statistical indication. When inspecting the R-values, it has been found that there is an effect if the R-value is above 0.2 (Sullivan & Fein, 2012). To find the R-value of the independent and dependent variable, a bivariate test is run in SPSS to test for Pearson Correlation (Kent State University, 2021).

3.2.1 Assumptions

The collected data and the objective of this study fits well with a statistical testing method as multiple regression analysis. This analysis is used when determining the contribution of the independent variable to the dependent variable (Lund & Lund, 2020), which is coherent with the hypotheses and research questions. However, multiple assumptions need to be met to be eligible for multiple regression analysis. The two first assumptions are related to the study design: 1) There is one dependent variable consisting of continuous data, and 2) there are two or more independent variables that are measured on a continuous or nominal level (Lund & Lund, 2020). These assumptions are met in this study, as all data collected are considered continuous, as argued above.

The other six assumptions are related to the nature of the data and will be tested in SPSS. This means importing the data set into SPSS and preparing it for analysis. This is done by defining labels and removing incomplete entries. After this, the Likert scores for each section are created by creating a new variable that considers all the statements from the same section and calculates a mean value. There were 21 entries to the survey; however, only 14 complete ones. Those incompletes have only checked off for consent or only answered the background questions and not further. Thus, these entries will not be included in the dataset. These incomplete answers did not have any answers after the background information, which will not affect the data being tested. As there are three categories of questions and three sets of dependent/independent variables, three sets of tests on assumptions will need to be performed to ensure the data quality before interpreting findings. The data sets relate to *Business Processes*, *Benefits*, and *Challenges*, with their respective independent and dependent variables (see Figures X, X, and X). Hereafter, these data sets will be referred to as *Business Processes*, *Benefits*, and *Challenges* in this methodology.

Assumption three is that there should be independent of residuals. This assumption is completed by looking for first-order autocorrelation between the observations (Lund & Lund, 2020). The independence of residuals is tested by using a Durbin-Watson statistic in this thesis. The Durbin-Watson value should be approximately 2, but in the range between 0

and 4 to fulfill the assumption. The Durbin-Watson score for *Business Processes* is 1.674, *Benefits* is 1.965, and *Challenges* 2.425. Based on this, there was independence of residuals as assessed by Durbin-Watson Statistics.

The fourth assumption is that there needs to be a linear relationship between the dependent and independent variables, both individually and collectively. This is tested by visually investigating a scatterplot of the studentized residuals (Lund & Lund, 2020). The collective plots for all three datasets show linearity between the independent and dependent variables. Likewise, the partial regression plots for each independent variable per the dependent variables also show linear relationships. Thus, the assumption is fulfilled.

The data needs to show homoscedasticity of residuals is the fifth assumption. This assumption relates to the fact that the residuals are similar for all values of the predicted dependent value (Lund & Lund, 2020). This is visually tested in the same plot as the fourth assumption: studentized residuals in a scatterplot. Through visual inspection, all three datasets have met the assumptions of homoscedasticity as there is equal variance along the line.

Assumption six is that the data must not show multicollinearity, meaning a high correlation between two or more independent variables (Lund & Lund, 2020). This is tested in two steps: 1) Check the Pearson Correlation-scores and 2) Check the Tolerance and VIF-scores. The first inspection of correlation scores should not show a correlation above 0.7, and the second inspection should have no VIF-scores above ten and no Tolerance-scores below 0.1 (Lund & Lund, 2020). In *Business Processes*, several correlations are found above 0.7, although barely over. The results from the second step will conclude whether there are multicollinearity issues. There are no VIF- and Tolerance-values outside the accepted interval in the second inspection. Thus, the assumption is met. In *Benefits*, there is one correlation above the given 0.7 acceptance value, and as such, the assumption is determined based on the Tolerance and VIF. There are no values outside the accepted interval regarding Tolerance and VIF; thus, the assumption is also met in this dataset. *Challenges* have no correlation above the accepted 0.7, and the VIF- and Tolerance scores are also within the accepted interval. This dataset also meets assumption six.

The seventh assumption is divided into three aspects; no significant outliers, no high leverage points, and no highly influential points. These three have in common that they look for no unusual points of observation (Lund & Lund, 2020). These are tested by looking at the Studentized deleted residuals (SDR)-score, Leverage points (LEV)-scores, and

influential points (COO)-scores. The SDR-score is compared against standard deviation and is considered an acceptable score within a +3 to -3 interval. The Leverage points-score is accepted as safe if under 0.2, risky if between 0.2 and 0.5, and dangerous if above 0.5. The influential points-score is measured using Cook's Distance-statistics. These are accepted if below 1. If several of these scores are outside the accepted intervals, these should be considered removed. (Lund & Lund, 2020)

The scores for *Business Processes* are within the accepted levels for SDR and COO; however, there are four values just above the 0.5-level. Due to two of the tests being accepted, the assumption is met for this dataset. This is also the case for *Challenges*, which have an acceptable SDR-score, two values outside the 0.5.level for LEV, and acceptable COO-scores. Thus, the assumption is met for this dataset also. While *Benefits* is within the acceptable interval regarding SDR, it has values outside the acceptable interval level for LEV and COO. Although there are two over the accepted level of LEV, there is only one outside the accepted interval for COO - and therefore, this observation is considered an outlier and removed from the dataset to avoid it affecting the regression analysis and producing false results. Without the outlier, the regressions analysis is re-run, and thereby assumptions three to seven need to be re-tested for *Benefits*. Assumption three is met with the new dataset, as the Durbin-Watson score is 2.698. The produced scatterplot and partial regression plots show linearity and homoscedasticity, and thus assumptions four and five are met. Regarding assumption six, there is still one correlation score above 0.7; however, both VIF and Tolerance are within the accepted level. The new values for assumption seven are still accepted for SDR, but there is only one value outside the accepted LEV-interval and no values outside the COO-interval. The dataset with the removed outlier is accepted until now and will now be known as *Benefits* going forward.

The eighth and last assumption is that the residuals are approximately normally distributed. This is done by visually inspecting a histogram and P-Plot while looking at Mean- and Std. Dev.- Values. The mean value should be approximately 0, while the standard deviation should be close to 1 (Lund & Lund, 2020). *Business Processes* have an approximately normal distribution in the histogram, and the P-plot shows an approximately normal distribution with points aligned along the line. The mean value is approximately 0, and the standard deviation is 0.74. The assumption is met. *Benefits* also show an approximately normal distribution in the histogram, with a mean-value close to 0 and a standard deviation of 0.82. The P-plot shows points aligned along the line, and the

assumption of normal distribution is met. Likewise, *Challenges* also have an approximately normal distribution in the histogram; the P-Plot shows no issues as there are points aligned along the line and with a mean close to 0 and a standard deviation of 0.83. The assumption is fulfilled for this dataset also.

All eight assumptions are met and fulfilled for the three datasets, and as such, the multiple regression analysis can be used to analyze this data. In the next part, the findings from the analysis will be presented and discussed in the light of theory, and a statistical indication will be given.

3.3 Discussion of Findings

The SPSS multi regression analysis findings will now be presented and discussed. The statistical findings related to the Slope Coefficient, P-value and R-value will combined give an indication into whether the null hypothesis can be rejected and provide answers to the research question.

3.3.1 Benefits

When interpreting the findings from the analysis, the first thing to inspect is the R-values. The R-value gives a good insight into whether the multiple regression model is a good fit for the data. Further, Pearson's R-value gives an indication off the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The R-value of *Benefits* is 0.753 and measures the strength of the linear association between the independent and dependent variables. A value of 0.753 indicates a moderate to strong linear association. This indicates a positive effect of *Benefits* towards the perceived overall benefits of the cooperation While this is a good indication to have in mind, the R2 and Adjusted R2-values are more commonly used to inspect how well the model fits. R2 measures the proportion of variation in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variable, meaning how much of the dependent variable can be explained by inspecting the independent variables. The Adjusted R2-value is the R2-value modified for the number of independent variables, making it more reliable as it takes into account variables not taken into account. This is preferable as it gives a more precise estimate of the correlation between the variables. The R2-value for *Benefits* is 0.567, which means 56.7% of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables. The adjusted R2 is lower at 0.35. This can be

interpreted as 35% of the variation in the perceived overall benefits within the InnOpp-cooperation can be explained by the identified benefits from theory and preliminary study. This implies that there are other benefits that the actors believe are important to their overall perception of how beneficial the cooperation is for them. Further, ANOVA results show a p-value of 0.11, meaning that the independent variables are not statistically significant to predict the dependent variable than the mean model. However, the p-value is barely above the p-value limit of 0.05, thereby does the perceived benefits identified earlier have a good prediction of the perceived overall benefits of cooperation within InnOpp.

The second step of interpreting the findings is to interpret the coefficient-values, p-values and R-values of each independent variable. These are presented in Table 4 below.

	Slope coefficient	P-value	R-value	95% confidence interval for slope coefficient	
				Lower	Higher
Complementary Resources	0.80	0.04	0.403	0.04	1.56
Joint Product Development	0.78	0.12	0.333	-0.25	1.81
Knowledge	0.12	0.95	0.412	-0.62	0.65
Effective Governance	-0.87	0.11	0.333	-1.99	0.24

Table 4: SPSS - Findings of Benefits from Multiple Regression Analysis

The slope coefficient with a negative value is interpreted as the independent value having a negative effect on the perceived benefits of being a part of the InnOpp-cooperation. From the findings, it can be stated that the identified benefits linked to *Effective Governance* have a negative effect on the total perception of benefits within the cooperation; although, with a p-value of 0.11 and R-value of 0.33, there is no indication of a positive effect. The remaining three benefits have a positive slope coefficient and thereby a positive effect on the perceived benefits of the cooperation, although Knowledge is quite low at 0.12. Knowledge also has a p-value of 0.95, meaning it is not significant, and despite a R-value of 0.412, the statistics do not indicate that this benefit affect the perceived benefits of the cooperation. *Complementary Resources* and *Joint Product Development* have a similar slope

coefficient, 0.80 and 0.78. However, only Complementary resources have a p-value below 0.05 and are thereby significant. Although. *Joint Product Development* has a p-value of 0.12 and is insignificant, but with a R-value of 0.33, there can be argued a statistical indication of positive effect on the perceived overall benefits.

When considering the hypotheses in light of the findings, it can be stated that there are indications of a positive effect with three of the benefits. However, knowledge has a p-value of 0.95, meaning it is very unlikely to have a significant effect according to the findings, and as such, the requirement of "effect" is not fulfilled. Thus, only two of the null hypotheses can be rejected, and their alternative hypotheses are accepted: The linked actors do perceive the development of Complementary resources and *Joint Product Development* to positively affect their perception of the benefits of being part of the InnOpp-cooperation. The two remaining null hypotheses do not have proof to be rejected and will remain.

In comparison to the open-answer question regarding what the actors perceive as the important benefits, 46% of the respondents answered that the opportunity to create a network with others to share experiences with was an important benefit. 12% also stated that product development was an important benefit. Interestingly, 42% of the respondents stated that competence- and knowledge development were important benefits to their businesses. This is incoherent with the statistical finding above. A possible reason for this incohesion could have been confusion regarding what was included in the statement, or they found it difficult to differentiate between competence development and the other benefits mentioned as they are also based on increasing competence. Another possible reason could be that while the actors find it important, they do not find it significantly important.

When asked about what worked well in the cooperation today, 36% stated the network relations, and 56% also stated the competence-sharing. This is coherent with the findings from the preliminary study, where the interviewees said the competence-sharing, with their NOK-conference included, was something they had received good feedback on, as well as the relationships created through the cooperation, was important for the actors.

In conclusion, it can be stated that there exists statistical indications of *Complementary Resources* and *Joint Product Development* being perceived as having a positive effect on the actors' overall perception of beneficial cooperation within InnOpp.

3.3.2 Challenges

Like with *Benefits*, the interpretation for *Challenges* begins with interpreting the R-values. *Challenges* have an R-value of 0.676, meaning the regression model fits the data moderately. However, there are rather low R2 and Adjusted R2-values at 0.456 and 0.215. These values imply that 45.6 % of the variance in the actors' perceived dissatisfaction with the InnOpp-cooperation can be explained by looking at the four identified challenges, and when being adjusted for the unaccounted variables, only 21.5% of the variation is explained. However, the ANOVA scores show a p-value of 0.197, meaning that the identified challenges can predict some of the changes in the dissatisfaction, although not statistically significant. The interpretation is that the identified challenges are collectively somewhat relevant to understanding what makes the actors dissatisfied with the InnOpp-cooperation. Further, the effect of each independent variable will be interpreted by inspecting the slope coefficient-values, p-values and R-values. These are presented below in Table 5.

	Slope coefficient	P-value	R-value	95% confidence interval for slope coefficient	
				Lower	Higher
Asymmetrical Power Relation	-0.76	0.75	0.066	-0.60	0.45
Size	0.71	0.02	0.602	0.11	1.30
Various Ambition Levels	0.21	0.42	-0.68	-0.36	0.78
Free-riding	-0.38	0.24	0.201	-1.06	0.30

Table 5: SPSS - Findings of Challenges from Multiple Regression Analysis

Asymmetrical Power Relation has a relatively high p-value of 0.75 despite having a slope coefficient of -0.76 and a low R-value of 0.066, and thereby *Asymmetrical Power Relation* is not significant for the actors' perceived dissatisfaction of the cooperation. *Free-riding* is the other challenge with a negative slope coefficient, meaning that an increase in this challenge actually would decrease dissatisfaction within the cooperation. However, *Free-riding* also has a high p-value of 0.24 and a low R-value of 0.201, making it insignificant. *Various Ambition Levels* among actors are found to positively affect dissatisfaction, meaning when it occurs, it will increase dissatisfaction; it is not significant

either and have a low R-value. The only challenge with a p-value below the significance level is the *Size* of the cooperation. It also has a relatively high effect with a slope coefficient of 0.71, meaning an increase in one unit of *Size* will cause an increase in dissatisfaction with 0.71. Further, *Size* has a R-value of 0.602; thereby, a large effect.

When relating the findings to the hypotheses, there is indications for only one increasing effect: *Size*. Both *Asymmetrical Power Relation* and *Free-riding* have a negative effect on dissatisfaction, meaning they will decrease the dissatisfaction, and as such, can not be used to reject the null hypotheses. *Various Ambition Levels* among actors have a positive impact; however, with a high p-value, it can be argued how much the effect is. Thus, only the null hypothesis regarding *Size* is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted; the actors perceive *Size* to have a increasing effect. The remaining three challenges are not found proof to be considered relevant towards the linked actors' dissatisfaction with the InnOpp-cooperation.

The Adjusted R2-value found that only 21.5% of the variation in dissatisfaction could be explained by the variables, which is coherent with the open answer-questions from the survey. When asked about what they perceived to be the biggest challenges within the cooperation, 33% of the respondents answered time consumption, while 25% also stated the cost of participating. 13% stated that a challenge was irrelevant information for their business, 4% too wide focus, and 4% too much focus on startups. 8% also meant that irregular information and low predictability were relevant challenges. By inspecting the findings from the open-answer questions, it can be understood why the Adjusted R2-value was low.

When the respondents were asked what needed to improve to increase their satisfaction, 43% stated more focus on relevant issues such as sustainability and changes in the market. This is coherent with the findings from the preliminary, where the interviewees stated the changing trends in the market to be challenging in the future. 14% of the respondents stated that more focus on the cooperation and network relationships were things they wanted improving; similarly, 14% wanted the network to become more visible.

To conclude, it can be stated that there is statistical indication of rejecting one null-hypothesis; *Size* and accepting alternative hypotheses about *Size* having an increasing effect on the perceived dissatisfaction. However, while the remaining null hypotheses can not be rejected, the open-ended answers gave input into what the actors' stated to be challenging within the InnOpp-cooperation: "wrong" focus for their businesses, time, and costs.

3.3.3 Business Processes

With the same starting point as *Benefits* and *Challenges*, the first thing to interpret for *Business Processes* is the R-values. The R-values were priorly explained as an estimate of how well the model fits the data. The R-value of *Business Processes* is 0.85 and indicates a strong linear association between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Further, the R2 and Adjusted R2-values are 0.732 and 0.502. As stated earlier, the difference between these two values is that the adjusted values consider the variables not included that could have an effect. This provides a more precise measurement of how well the model fits the data. The Adjusted R2-value can be interpreted as 50.2 % of the variation in the dependent variable, the perceived satisfaction of the cooperation can be explained by the six business processes tested for. Further, ANOVA shows a p-value of 0.078, which means the independent variables are not statistically significant to predict the dependent variable. However, the p-value is close to the 0.05 - level for significance, meaning the perceived cooperation within the various business processes is a good prediction for the total satisfaction of cooperation within InnOpp.

The next step of interpreting is to inspect the coefficient-values, with a focus on the slope coefficients, p-values and R-values. These are presented in Table 6 below.

	Slope coefficient	P-value	R-value	95% confidence interval for slope coefficient	
				Lower	Higher
HR Management	1.18	0.02	0.657	-1.28	0.56
Product Development	0.05	0.04	0.414	-2.22	4.13
Technological Development	0.07	0.08	0.427	-0.47	0.61
General Administration	-1.26	0.76	0.306	-2.47	-0.04
Market Activities	0.80	0.18	0.612	-0.48	2.08
Aftersales	-0.36	0.38	0.565	-0.13	1.43

Table 6: SPSS - Findings of Business Processes from Multiple Regression Analysis

The slope coefficients with a negative value can be interpreted as the independent variable having a negative effect on the dependent variable when the independent variable is increased. From the findings above, it can be stated that cooperation within *General Administration* and *Aftersales Services* have a negative effect on the perceived satisfaction of the InnOpp-cooperation, although neither has a significant negative effect, we can find relatively high R-values. However, due to the negative coefficients, there are not found statistical indications of positive effect. Further, both *Joint Product Development* and *Technological Development* have a minor positive effect on actors' satisfaction with the cooperation, with a respective p-value of 0.04 and 0.08. Thus, it can be stated that while only *Joint Product Development* has a significant effect, *Technological Development* has a close to significant effect. However, due to the relatively high R-value, there are statistical indications of positive effect in both *Joint Product Development* and *Technological Development*. *Market Activities* have a relatively big effect on the overall satisfaction of the cooperation, although not a significant effect with p-value = 0.18, there is an effect per the R-value of 0.612. Thus, there are statistical indications of a positive effect. HR has the relatively largest effect on satisfaction, with a p-value of 0.02 and R-value of 0.657, making it a significant effect.

The findings above find indications to reject four of the null hypotheses related to business processes. While cooperation within HR and *Joint Product Development* has a positive effect, they are also significant for the actors' over satisfaction. This provides the required proof to reject these two null hypotheses and accept the alternative hypotheses that there is a positive effect. However, *Market Activities* have a relatively large positive effect with a p-value just above the significance level and a high R-value, and as such, the null hypothesis is rejected due to statistical indication of positive effect. Likewise, *Technological Development* have a positive coefficient, relatively low p-value of 0.08 and a relatively high R-value of 0.427. Hence, there is statistical indication of a positive effect, and the null hypothesis is rejected. The remaining two hypotheses do not have statistical indications of positive effect and will remain.

This is coherent with what was stated by the interviewees in the preliminary study, who said that it was mainly in these four business processes that they believed there to be a potential for beneficial cooperation.

In conclusion, it can be stated that there is statistical indications of rejecting the null hypotheses related to HR, *Joint Product Development*, *Technological Development* and

Market Activities and accepting their alternative hypotheses; that they have a positive effect on the overall satisfaction. On the other hand, there is not statistical indication of positive effect related to *Effective Governance* and *Aftersales Services*.

3.4 Data Quality

There exist limitations in all research conducted, which decrease the research quality and the quality of the findings. The limitations are inspected to understand how big this negative effect is on the data quality. The limitations within quantitative research are related to mainly two issues: validity and reliability (Lund & Lund, 2012). Validity relates to the trustworthiness of the collected data and can be divided into multiple types, while reliability relates to the accuracy of the data. (Saunders et al., 2016). In the following, validity and reliability will be elaborated and related to the preliminary study before ethical considerations are discussed.

3.4.1 Validity

Evaluating validity means determining the appropriateness of the collected data, the accuracy of the findings, and generalizability (Saunders et al., 2016). Thus, validity is distinguished into internal and external validity. (Lund & Lund, 2012)

Internal Validity

Internal validity refers to the degree to which the research demonstrates a causal relationship between two variables and to which degree the findings are coherent with reality (Saunders et al., 2016). This study has a descriptive approach with the intent of creating in-depth knowledge; thus, internal validity will not be evaluated. This is supported by Saunders et al., who stated that internal validity could not be applied to exploratory and descriptive studies in the traditional way of validating causality (2016). However, in descriptive studies where the aim is to look for a correlation, interval validity “refers only to the accuracy/quality of the study” (Huitt & Kaeck, 1999). This means that interval validity considers how well the study was used, how the research was designed, which variables were measured, how the variables were measured, and which definitions were used (Huitt & Kaeck, 1999).

In this quantitative study, the measurement of the variables has been described priorly as being on a Likert Style-scale, which led to a Likert Score for the variables, and the chosen variables were established in existing theory and preliminary study. All theoretical phrases and words were explained, the survey was translated to Norwegian to decrease the language barrier, and the phrasing of the statements was made informal. Thus, it can be stated that the internal validity is satisfactory. However, a limitation to the internal validity is the low response rate. Only 14 observations were reported by 60 actors within the InnOpp-cooperation.

Construct Validity

Construct validity relates to the extent to which the survey's statements truly measure the variables, i.e., constructs, they aim to measure. (Saunders et al., 2016). There are three types of evidence to demonstrate construct validity; homogeneity, convergence, and theory evidence. The latter two are difficult to measure in this thesis as convergence relates to similar measurements of the concepts to similar instruments, and theory evidence requires investigating whether the findings from the study can be transferred and confirmed by the respondents' behavior. This leaves homogeneity, meaning that the instrument measures one construct (Heale & Twycross, 2015). This is tested by assumption five about homoscedasticity priorly, where it was found that all datasets were accepted. Construct validity can be increased by operationalizing all concepts (Peter, 1981). This is considered in this study by describing the concepts being tested, and this validity is satisfactory.

External Validity

External validity relates to the degree to which the findings and conclusions can be generalized. This generalization can be towards the population drawn from or towards a wider population (Lund & Lund, 2012). In this case study, external validity focuses on the generalization towards the population the sample is gathered from InnOpp. Generalization is an important aspect of the research conclusion as the conclusion makes a knowledge statement regarding a subject based on a limited sample. This thesis' conclusion states which business processes InnOpp should (continue) facilitate cooperation within, which benefits are important to the linked actors' perceived benefits of being part of the cooperation, and which challenges increase their dissatisfaction. As such, the findings from the sample are generalized to the whole population of InnOpp, and external validity aims to create

confidence that the conclusions made from the sample can indeed be generalized to the population.

To create this confidence, the sample must closely mirror the total population. This is done by ensuring that the sample and the population share similar characteristics (Lund & Lund, 2012). One of the threats to external validity is selection bias. Selection bias relates to how the sample was selected from the population. In this study, the sampling was based on self-selection, where the whole population was invited to participate. This sampling technique can cause self-selection bias, meaning those participating in the study may have their motivation to participate (Lavrakas, 2008). However, this bias can be reduced if all potential participants within the population are invited to the study, and there are not given any uneven incentive to motivate participants to take part in the study (f.ex. economic benefit) (Garbin, 2013.) Further, external validity is threatened by random errors, meaning outliers that affect the outcome (Saunders et al., 2016). This threat is reduced in two steps; the first is that the answer options have the same structure for all questions, and two, the assumptions are fulfilled in the analysis, and potential outliers are removed.

Although the importance of external validity is clear and many threats have been identified in theories (Lund & Lund, 2012), the findings in this thesis are not created to generalize outside the InnOpp-cooperation nor develop new theories or frameworks. The purpose of the study was to gain insight into the existing theory and how it could be implemented towards InnOpp. The presented theories are known, established theories and research "validated" by their peers, and broad theoretical relevance of the findings were enabled in the given research setting (Saunders et al., 2016). Based on this, the external validity is satisfactory as the respondents are part of the population being generalized towards, and they share the same characteristics (Northern Norwegian actors within the adventure-tourism industry who want to create innovative products for the future).

3.4.2 Reliability

Reliability is the other aspect when evaluating the research quality and the collected data and relates to whether the findings can be recreated similarly again (Ali & Yusof, 2011). To gather satisfactory reliability, it must be feasible to find a similar finding and conclusion if the research is replicated by other researchers (Saunders et al., 2016). Thus, it can be stated that reliability regards the trustworthiness of the findings. In quantitative studies, there are three types of attributes that can be tested for in terms of reliability. These

are internal consistency, stability, and equivalence (Heale & Twycross, 2015); however, when conducting a single study without the practical possibility of retesting, internal consistency measures the reliability (Lund & Lund, 2012).

Internal consistency, or homogeneity, is tested using Cronbach's Alpha. This test measures the average of all correlations in every combination of split-halves determined, and an acceptable score is between 0.7 and 1. This test is conducted in SPSS and shows that *Business Processes* have a value of 0.951, *Benefits* 0.862, and *Challenges* 0.702. Although the latter is close to the acceptable score, it is still above, and as such, the internal consistency has been accepted.

3.4.3 Ethical Considerations

The ethical consideration in the quantitative study is the same as for the qualitative study; the five informal principles were fulfilled likewise as in the qualitative study; the respondents received an information letter about the main topics within the study, the purpose of it, and how their data would be handled. Further, their anonymity was maintained by keeping their answers confidential. Further, this study was also approved by NSD, and as such, the formal requirements of information letter and consent were obtained, as seen in Appendix A3 Information Letter and Consent Form – Quantitative Study.

3.5 Conclusion

In the quantitative study, data was collected from the linked actors by a survey. These collected data was analyzed quantitatively in a statistics program: SPSS. In SPSS, multiple tests were run to check that the collected data met the eight assumptions for multiple regression analysis. These assumptions identified one outlier which was removed from the dataset of *Benefits*. Following this, multiple regression analysis was run and findings documented as discussed further up. In addition, other tests was run to validate the findings and check for effect size. These main findings from the regression analysis will be summarized below, and the research questions will be concluded.

The first data- and variable set to be tested was *Benefits*, where the four identified benefits from the literature review and the preliminary study was the independent variables and the perceived overall benefits of being in InnOpp was the dependent variable. It was found that two of the null hypotheses could be rejected based on statistical indications of

positive effect. Therefore, it was found that *Complementary Resources* (Slope Coefficient = 0.80, P-value = 0.04, and R-value = 0.402) has a positive effect on the perceived overall benefits within InnOpp. Likewise, *Joint Product Development* (Slope Coefficient = 0.78, P-value = 0.12, and R-value = 0.33) were also found to have statical indication of a positive effect on the overall benefits. Regarding the sub-research question, it can be stated the *Complementary Resources* and *Joint Product Development* are perceived by the linked actors to have a positive effect on their overall perception of benefits, and as such, are relevant benefits for the inter-organizational cooperation InnOpp.

The second data- and variable set is *Challenges*, with the independent variables being the identified challenges in the literature review and preliminary study and the dependent variable the perceived dissatisfaction within the InnOpp-cooperation. It was found statistical indication to only reject one null hypotheses: the one regarding *Size*. With a slope coefficient of 0.71, P-value of 0.02, and R-value of 0.602, there was found significant increasing effect, and the alternative hypotheses was accepted. The remaining three hypotheses did not have statistical indications for rejecting, and as such, will remain. Regarding the second sub-research question, it can be stated that *Size* is perceived to have a positive effect on the linked actors' dissatisfaction, meaning there is statistical indications of *Size* increasing their dissatisfaction.

The third and last data- and variable set is *Business Processes*, with the independent variables relating to the six sub-processes identified prior from existing theory. The dependent variable is the linked actors' perceived satisfaction within the InnOpp-cooperation. There were found statistical indications to reject the null hypotheses regarding *HR Management* (Slope Coefficient = 1.18, P-value = 0.02, and R-value = 0.657), *Joint Product Development* (Slope Coefficient = 0.05, P-value = 0.04, and R-value = 0.414), *Technological Development* (Slope Coefficient = 0.07, P-value = 0.08, and R-value = 0.427), and *Market Activities* (Slope Coefficient = 0.80, P-value = 0.18, and R-value = 0.565). To answer the research question, it can be stated that InnOpp should facilitate inter-organizational cooperation with the business processes related to *HR Management*, *Joint Product Development, Technological Development*, and *Market Activities*, to gain a positive effect on the linked actors' satisfaction.

The findings from this study can be used to gain insight into which areas InnOpp should facilitate their inter-organizational cooperation between linked actors, and which benefits may be focused on for beneficial effect on the overall perception of the cooperation

and which challenges to overcome to decrease dissatisfaction. There is a substantial limitation in the study concerning the sample size, and a similar study may be re-done to gain proof of significance. Further, when the respondents were asked open-ended questions about identifying what they perceived to be the most relevant benefits and challenges, there were some incohesion with the statistical findings. This may be explored in future research, with both a preliminary qualitative study and a main quantitative study with the sample size being the linked actors within InnOpp.

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Appendix

A1 Information Letter and Consent Form – Preliminary Study

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

«Interorganizational cooperation within the Northern Norwegian tourism industry»

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke potensialet for samarbeid mellom eksisterende aktører i nordnorsk reiseliv, samt dets tilhørende utfordringer. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Dette prosjektet er en innledende studie i en masteroppgave. Denne innledende studien har som formål å undersøke hvilke potensialer og utfordringer samarbeid mellom aktører innehar, og undersøke om hvordan det videre samarbeid vurderes. Problemstillingen til studien er linket til hovedstudien i masteroppgaven, og er som følger «*In which business processes can Innovative Opplevelser successfully facilitate interorganizational governance between existing actors within the Northern Norwegian tourism industry*», med del-problemstillinger: «*What benefits are related to interorganizational cooperation?"* og *"What challenges are related to this?".*

Opplysningene fra den innledende studien skal sammen med eksisterende teori på emnet og industrien føre til hypoteser som skal benyttes i selve hovedstudien i masteroppgaven.

Oppgaven er en avsluttende masteroppgave i økonomi og administrasjon (siviløkonomutdanningen) ved Norges Handelshøyskole. Oppgaven kan danne grunnlag for videre forskning og utredning.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?
Norges Handelshøyskole er ansvarlig for prosjektet. Veileder er Aksel Ivar Rokkan ved institutt for strategi og ledelse ved Norges Handelshøyskole

Oppgaven skrives av masterstudent Atalie N. Pedersen.

Oppgaven skrives i samarbeid med Innovative Opplevelser og kan bli delt med deres tilhørende aktører etter godkjent sensur av oppgaven. Ved deling med disse aktørene vil informasjon som kan identifisere deg bli behandlet konfidensielt.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?
Du får spørsmål om å delta på grunn av din sentrale bakgrunn og rolle i Innovative Opplevelser. På hjemmesiden er du identifisert som en av to ansvarlige for prosjektet, og med bakgrunn i dette vil du ha viktig og relevant informasjon og kunnskap angående temaet,

som menes å være fordelaktig for å få et komplett innblikk i samarbeidet tilrettelagt av og gjennom Innovative Opplevelser.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Du bes om å delta i et dybdeintervju med varighet på om lag 30-45 minutter. Det vil bli gjort opptak av intervjuet over digital plattform ved videomøte for å transkribere datainnsamlingen fra intervjuet. Notater vil også bli tatt underveis i intervjuet. Resultatet av studien samt oppgaven i seg selv vil bli publisert uten sensitiv informasjon, og eventuelle bedriftssensitive opplysninger vil utelates fra datagrunnlaget. Du vil ikke være direkte gjenkjennbar/identifisert i funnene i masteroppgaven, men på grunn av et lavt antall deltagere i den innledende studien og deres fremtredende roller, vil det være mulig at du kan bli indirekte gjenkjent. Intervjuet vil inneholde spørsmål angående dine opplevelser om hvordan klyngesamarbeidet til Innovative Opplevelser har fungert, hvordan potensiale og utfordringer du har opplevd som relevant for samarbeidet, og angående klyngesamarbeid innen ulike forretningsområder. Jeg tar lydopptak og notater fra intervjuet, som vil bli slettet ved fullførelse av masteroppgaven. Du vil ha mulighet til sitatsjekk før ferdigstillelse av oppgaven, hvis du ønsker dette.

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.

Tilgang til innhentet informasjon og data vil bare være tilgjengelig for student, Atalie Pedersen.

Navn og kontaktopplysninger vil bli erstattet med en kode som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data. All data vil lagres kryptert og passordbeskyttet. I oppgaven vil jeg opplyse om din tilhørighet til Innovative Opplevelser, men jeg kommer ikke til å utdype rollen mer enn dette for å ivareta ditt personvern.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Ved prosjektets slutt slettes alle data, noe som etter planen er i mai/juni 2022.

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 av Norges Handelshøyskole 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?
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Rolle	Navn	Telefon	E-post
Student	Atalie N. Pedersen	94 34 52 41	atalienp@gmail.com
Veileder	Aksel I. Rokkan	55 95 97 22	Aksel.rokkan@nhh.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

Aksel I. Rokkan
(Veileder)

Atalie N. Pedersen
(Student)

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjon om prosjektet «*Interorganizational cooperation within the Northern Norwegian tourism industry*», og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- ☐ å delta i dybdeintervju, og at informasjonen som innhentes behandles som beskrevet i informasjonsskrivet.

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

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

A2 Interview Guide – Preliminary Study

Innledende intervju - intervjuguide

A: Bakgrunnsinformasjon

1. Vil du begynne med å fortelle litt om din rolle i Innovative Opplevelser, og hva den innebærer?
2. Reiselivet har i de siste årene (også før korona-pandemien) opplevd en endret atferd og reisevaner hos sine konsumenter. Hvordan vil du beskrive utviklingen i reiselivet i Nord-Norge, før korona-pandemien?
3. Korona-pandemien påvirket reiselivsnæringen i stor grad, hvordan vil du beskrive hovedfølgene av korona?
4. Hva opplever du som de største utfordringene for reiselivet i årene som kommer?

B: Klyngesamarbeid

5. Klyngesamarbeidet Innovative Opplevelser har tilrettelagt for samarbeid mellom reiselivsaktører, hvordan fordeler opplever du samarbeidet har hatt for de tilknyttede aktørene frem til nå?
6. Hvilke fordeler opplever du aktørene synes er viktig for fremtiden?
7. Hvilke utfordringer opplever du har gått igjen i tiden før korona-pandemien?
8. Hvilke utfordringer mener du kan bli viktige å jobbe med, for å forbedre klyngesamarbeidet i fremtiden?
9. Hvordan opplevde du at korona-pandemien påvirket klyngesamarbeidet?
10. Samarbeid vil trolig være en viktig rolle i fremtiden for aktørene. Hvordan opplever du at aktørene stiller seg til framtidig samarbeid? (opprettholde samarbeid, mer/mindre samarbeid)?

C: Forretningsprosesser

11. Hvordan vil du beskrive en typisk forretningsmodell for en aktør innen reiselivet?
    a. Hvilke er nøkkelområder?
    b. Hvilke er flaskehalser?
12. I hvilke forretningsprosesser/forretningsområder har Innovative Opplevelser til nå valgt å fokusere klyngesamarbeidet innen?
    a. Hvilke vurderinger ligger i grunn for dette?
    b. Opplever du at det finnes potensiale for klyngesamarbeid i andre prosesser og områder?

13. I hvilke forretningsprosesser/forretningsområder opplever du at klyngesamarbeidet har en positiv effekt for aktørene?
    a. Hvordan? Kan du gi eksempel?
14. I hvilke forretningsprosesser/forretningsområder opplever du mindre effekt av klyngesamarbeid enn forventet?
    a. Hvordan? Kan du gi eksempel?

15. Hvis ikke identifisert i spørsmål 11, hvilke vurderinger har dere gjort for å implementere klyngesamarbeid innen _____, og er dere evt noe dere mener vil være aktuelt i fremtiden? Hvorfor/Hvorfor ikke?
    a. Markedsføring
    b. Produktutvikling
    c. Teknologiutvikling
    d. HR-ledelse (kompetanseutvikling/kunnskapsdeling)
    e. Generell ledelse og organisering (juridisk råd, økonomisk råd, relasjon med myndigheter/offentlige etater)
    f. Ettersalg (gjenkjøp av produkter, bygge merkevarelojalitet)

D: Avslutning

16. Hvor fornøyd opplever du at aktørene er med klyngesamarbeidet pr nå?
17. Hvordan mener du potensialet for fremtidig klyngesamarbeid er?
18. Har du noe å legge til som jeg ikke har spurt om eller som du finner relevant å dele med meg?
19. Har du spørsmål til datalagring og hvordan ditt svar vil se ut i oppgaven?
20. Jeg vil sende deg en transkribert versjon av intervjuet. Hensikten er at du skal få muligheten til å gjennomføre en sitatsjekk hvis ønsket.
21. Takk for din deltagelse!

A3 Information Letter and Consent Form – Quantitative Study

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

«Interorganizational cooperation within the Northern Norwegian tourism industry»

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke potensialet for samarbeid mellom eksisterende aktører i nordnorsk reiseliv, samt dets tilhørende utfordringer. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Dette prosjektet er en studie tilhørende en masteroppgave. Denne studien har som formål å undersøke hvorvidt klyngesamarbeid fungerer i ulike forretningsprosesser/områder, og hvilke utfordringer og potensialer som er relevante for samarbeidet.Problemstillingen til studien er som følger «*In which business processes can Innovative Opplevelser successfully facilitate interorganizational governance between existing actors within the Northern Norwegian tourism industry»,* med del-problemstillinger: «*What benefits are related to interorganizational cooperation?"* og *"What challenges are related to this?".*

Oppgaven er en avsluttende masteroppgave i økonomi og administrasjon (siviløkonomutdanningen) ved Norges Handelshøyskole. Oppgaven kan danne grunnlag for videre forskning og utredning.

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?
Norges Handelshøyskole er ansvarlig for prosjektet. Veileder er Aksel Ivar Rokkan ved institutt for strategi og ledelse ved Norges Handelshøyskole. Oppgaven skrives av masterstudent Atalie N. Pedersen.

Oppgaven skrives i samarbeid med Innovative Opplevelser og kan bli delt med deres tilhørende aktører etter godkjent sensur av oppgaven. Ved deling med disse aktørene vil informasjon som kan identifisere deg bli behandlet konfidensielt.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?
Du får spørsmål om å delta på grunn av din tilknytning til klyngesamarbeidet Innovative Opplevelser. Med bakgrunn i dette vil du ha viktig og relevant informasjon og kunnskap angående temaet, som menes å være fordelaktig for å få et komplett innblikk i hvordan klyngesamarbeidet har fungert.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du fyller ut et spørreskjema. Det vil ta deg ca. 10 minutter. Spørreskjemaet inneholder spørsmål om dine opplevelser av å være tilknyttet klyngesamarbeidet, hvordan du opplever det har fungert i ulike forretningsprosesser/områder, og hvilke potensialer og utfordringer du mener er viktig å fremheve. Dine svar fra spørreskjemaet blir registrert elektronisk.

Resultatet av studien samt oppgaven i seg selv vil bli publisert uten sensitiv informasjon, og ingen direkte opplysninger angående deg og dine svar vil inkluderes i oppgaven Du vil ikke være direkte eller indirekte gjenkjennbar/identifisert i funnene i masteroppgaven. Alle data vil bli anonymisert og videre slettet ved prosjektets slutt.

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.

Tilgang til innhentet informasjon og data vil bare være tilgjengelig for student, Atalie Pedersen.

Kontaktopplysninger vil bli erstattet med en kode som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data. All data vil lagres kryptert og passordbeskyttet.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?
Ved prosjektets slutt slettes alle data, noe som etter planen er i mai/juni 2022.

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.

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Med vennlig hilsen

Aksel I. Rokkan	*Atalie N. Pedersen*
(Veileder)	(Student)
