

An insight into the experiences of Lapland's seasonal workers

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<p>The purpose of this study is to gain understanding of Lapland's seasonal employees. The study has three goals. First is to define the key characteristics of seasonal employment. The second research question is to find factors of both motivation and demotivation of the seasonal workers. The third objective of this study is to find out how work wellbeing is perceived in seasonal employment.</p> <p>First the thesis focuses on providing a theoretical framework to the study. This includes three chapters, each reflecting one of the research questions. The order of these chapters is the same as in which the research problems are presented. The purpose of the theoretical framework is to provide an understanding of the subjects and to give reasons for the topic of the study.</p> <p>This is followed by the empirical part of study where the used research methods and working methods are presented alongside with the results. The chosen research method is qualitative study and the material was collected by conducting three (3) in-depth interviews arranged face-to-face and through Skype. All the interviews were recorded and later translated into written format in order to be able to analyse them better.</p> <p>The results show that the employees find the seasonal nature of the work as a positive thing, even though at times it makes planning life ahead challenging. Seasonal workers are often offered poor contracts with minimal amount of promised hours per roster, and they feel they need to take a leap of faith signing the contracts.</p> <p>The surroundings of the workplace and opportunities to pursue their own hobbies are seen as the most motivating factors of the employment. The interviewees feel they could return for another season of work, although two of them would not return to the same job. Only one of the interviewees had taken the employment not knowing anyone in the destination, suggesting that most seasonal employees go to Lapland with their friends or have made friends during the previous seasons.</p> <p>The results of the aspects of wellbeing in this study are varied. The results show the level of training received at the beginning of the employment is low and at times the appreciation of the workers to be unsatisfactory. The results also suggest there to be difference in the valuation of new employees and those returning for another season. Social support was named as an important factor of the seasonal employees' wellbeing and as a source of strenght.</p> <p>A suggestion for futher research could include deeper analysis of the seasonal employees' coping methods in Lapland. As this thesis focuses more on charting the key featuses of the seasonal work, the workers' motivational factors and the percetion of work wellbeing, the aspect of the employees' true coping methods was not presented.</p>	
Keywords Seasonal work, Lapland, motivation, work wellbeing	

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1 Introduction

I have been a seasonal worker for two winter seasons. Although my employment was in Rovaniemi, which for some Lappish people seems to be barely a part of Lapland, the experiences I gained left me with a growing interest in hearing other people's stories. During my second season I compared my experiences of the previous time and first arriving to Lapland not knowing anyone or anything about the place with some of my colleagues. Their stories and the range of emotions they had gone through made me consider studying the topic further. After discussing this with my peers in school, this thesis started to get its shape.

This study has three research questions. First one was to find out the defining characteristics of seasonal employment. This means finding the factors that make seasonal employment unique and differentiate it from the so called normal work. The second research question was finding out what motivated the seasonal employees to take on this type of employment and what gives them strength and motivation during the employment. In this part of the study also the demotivating factors were aimed to be identified. The third research question was to gain knowledge and understanding of the wellbeing of the seasonal employees.

This thesis has two parts. The first one introduces theoretical framework built from already existing research related to the three research questions. The second part of the study consist of the empirical part. The latter was carried out by three in-depth interviews of people who have experience of the seasonal work in Lapland. Two of these were conducted face-to-face and one through Skype. Each interview was then transcribed into written form in order to be able to analyse the results and key findings better.

The results of the study are presented by the themes of the study and a summarising table of the findings is provided. After this the results are further discussed along with an analysis of the validity of the results. The thesis is completed with a short conclusion and evaluation of the process. Based on the analysis of the results and validity a suggestion for further study is proposed.

To give a short overlook of the study it could be said that some features labelling the seasonal work are hectic environment, multiple tasks and long days. It is customary to work hard when the season is at its high-peak and rest when it gets quieter. The workdays are often long and even as much as sixty hours of work per week is considered normal. (Rennotreissut 14 September 2016.) Some choose to travel to Lapland for work for personal

interest towards natural environment, some to get reunited with colleagues while some may be seeking challenges (Chen & Wang 2015, 354-356; Tuulentie & Heimtun 2014, 373-378). Seasonal employment is perceived hard and tiring yet many of the seasonal employees seem to feel that working the normal office hours is unattractive if not even boring. Despite the hard work many of the employees are interested in returning to Lapland for another season.

2 Seasonal work in Lapland

The province of Lapland is a broad part of Finland. It is considered to include eight different tourism regions according to Lapland – Above ordinary (2016) or even fifteen as suggested by Only in Lapland (2016), having a great impact on the economy of Lapland (House of Lapland 2016; Valkonen 2011, 16). Each of these have something different to offer for visitors; some are more focused on nature activities while some offer more urban atmosphere. A great amount of other services has risen to support the tourism industry in Lapland. Some examples of these are different equipment rental firms, transportation models and gift shops. (Pirttijärvi 2008, 8, 11.) This also means great versatility in the employment sector.

Seasonality is a big factor in the hospitality industry. Butler (2001, 5) defines it as “A temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, which may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as numbers of visitors, expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and other forms of transportation, employment and admission to attractions”. In other words, seasonality in tourism can be explained by the high- and low-peaks in the visitor amounts of a destination that often follow the natural changes of seasons such as snowfall, school holidays or social seasons (Butler 2001, 6-9).

Pahkamaa and Salmenkorva (2014, 60) have approached the definition differently. They define seasonal work as an employment for a period of time that has been agreed on already before the employment starts. They argue the need for this type of employment to be based on the changes of the seasons of traveling. They also give examples of the most typical work contracts to their description: fixed-term or part-time contract or hiring an agency worker.

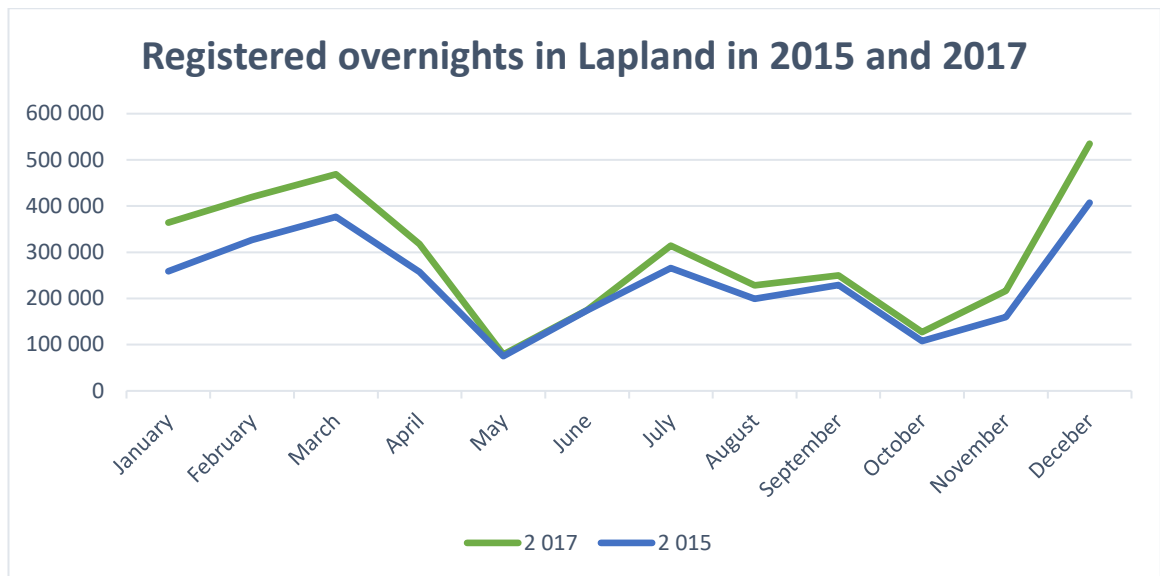


Figure 1. Registered overnights in Lapland in 2015 and 2017 (Statistics service Rudolf 2018)

The biggest tourism season in Finnish Lapland is during the winter months. The high-peak for the foreign tourists is in December while most of the domestic visitors come between March and April. Another, smaller, high-peak in the visitor amounts is in the summer, when the sun never sets creating a completely different experience for the tourists. A third rush can be seen in September, when domestic people travel north to see the spectacular autumn colours. (Lapinliitto 2011, 20.) This is demonstrated in figure 1, where the pattern can be seen repeating itself. From these numbers it can be seen that the need of workforce in the tourism sector varies largely as the seasons change. As presented in table 1. the results of a study conducted in 2008 by Pirttijärvi show that 62 % of the workforce in Finnish Lapland were seasonal employees.

Table 1. The changes in workforce of Lapland's tourism businesses (Pirttijärvi 2008)

Quality of the employment (289 companies)	Amount of people	Percentage of the workforce
Full-time employees	1276	38 %
Seasonal employees	2105	62 %
All together	3381	100 %

As presented earlier, Butler (2001b, 6-7) explained the natural changes of the seasons to have a big influence on the tourist masses. Winter in Lapland is presented as snowy and

fun with many activities (VisitFinland 2018). These could be divided in two main categories: winter sports and Christmas work. Winter sports include things like skiing and snowboarding, snowshoe hiking and snowmobile safaris. Christmas work is made of all things Christmas and creating Lapland the Christmas wonderland with Santa Claus and elves and reindeer rides. The workplace and the nature of the job both affect the skills needed of the employee. As Valkonen (2011, 20) presents, many of the tourism products in Lapland are based on creating experiences and awakening emotions in the customers.

In their research Valkonen and Veijola (2008, 49) as well as Möller, Ericsson & Overvåg (2014, 389) and Lyytinen (2015) found that some seasonal workers appreciate the temporal nature of the work as it allows them to choose when they work and have some time for themselves before the next season starts. Others have found similar answers. For example, the safari workers Valkonen (2011, 166) interviewed felt that the breaks between the seasons help the employees gain back their energy and thus increase work wellbeing. Also, Lappalainen (9 January 2017) stated the seasonality being the best part of the job. She feels that one can work harder than normally as one knows exactly how long they have left before the season ends.

As the nature of the seasonal work is seen as exciting and interesting, it is also a factor that takes a lot of energy. Long working hours and the large number of customers create a hectic environment and often the employees might not have a chance to have breaks during the day. This added to the required skill set and stress can become overpowering. (Lyytinen 2015; Valkonen & Veijola 2008, 32-33.) Study also suggests that alcohol and gambling are a common issue within the seasonal employees, as these are used as coping methods to balance the hectic work life (Valkonen & Veijola, 2008, 34, 39).

Valkonen (2011, 71-73) suggests that some feel it to be more important to fit in the group and as a part of the team than to master the equipment used in the work. This implies the employees being the key feature of the work and further stresses the importance of the skills of the workers in creating a relationship with the customer (Morris 2003, 223, 235-236). Valkonen (2011, 64) also presents some characteristics that are used in the job applications of safari guides to be the skills of adapting, the skills to learn new things and a certain type of personality. All these emphasise the importance of the employee as a person. Similar results can be seen in the work of Valkonen and Veijola (2008, 51-53).

In their research Valkonen and Veijola (2008, 33) found results suggesting that the aim of the work has changed from creating experiences for the tourists into doing business. This

could be explained by Baum and Lundtorp's (2001, 2) research of the business challenges brought by seasonality. As they explain, the short operating seasons in for example ski resorts create pressure on generating the whole year's revenue in a few short months. Earlier it was almost customary to join the tourists for drinks in the evening but these days many feel that they should prepare themselves for the next day and therefore have to turn down all of these invitations. A safari guide interviewed by Valkonen (2011, 167-168) felt that the employers have changed the criteria of the guides they hire. When previously a good and highly valued guide would have many skills and strength to take a group on a tour for several days, nowadays the requirements are positive attitude and an everlasting smile. These kinds of workers can do three short safari tours in one day, thus making more money for the company.

In addition to this, the employees often receive minimum wages. Ainsworth and Purss (2009, 225) and Riley (2004, 140) suggest that this is mainly due to the social norms of the tourism industry, which indicate that there are always going to be enough unskilled labour available to avoid the need of paying the employees well, whether or not they have the proper education.

3 Motivation

Mitchell and Daniels (2003, in Findsrud, Tronvoll & Edvardsson 2018) state that “Motivation produces effort, and people work harder when they are motivated”. Research suggests there to be two origins of motivation: internal and external. Internal motivation comes from within a person, from one’s own interests and values. External motivation can be for example salary at the end of the month or other rewards gained by completing a task or succeeding. (Findsrud & al. 2018.)

Ainsworth and Purss (2009, 222) state in their study that tourism industry at large is depending on seasonal workforce to be able to function successfully. They say that “seasonal employees provide most of the face-to-face contact with the customer, therefore they strongly influence service quality and customer perceptions”. This adds to the fact that they are an important asset to the companies working in the tourism industry and should be valued. Through understanding the needs and motivations of the employees the companies may be able to gain even better results and more satisfied returning customers. This chapter explores some of the motivational factors and features of the seasonal work in Lapland.

3.1 Sources of motivation

As many of Lapland’s seasonal workers come from other parts of the country or even abroad, they leave their normal lives behind when heading north and face different conditions both at work and outside it. For some these experiences have been great while others have suffered from various factors. Whichever the case, as the blog Rennotreissut (14 September 2016) states: “If one wants to make it in Lapland as a seasonal worker, one must be a bit insane.”

A factor of motivation several researchers have found is the environment the seasonal employees work in. According to Keskitalo-Foley (2006, 137) this does not mean the Lappish nature but more the ski centres and such surroundings built for the tourists. Many seasonal workers are interested in the possibility to pursue their hobbies and personal interests on their free time, and some even mention it to be the main reason for them taking the job (Keskitalo-Foley 2006, 137; Tuulentie & Heimtun 2014, 376-377; Valkonen 2011, 37). Valkonen (2011, 39-40) also writes that the skills and experience taught by the personal hobby make it possible for the employees to survive better in their job as this way they are already used to being outside in the snow and cold and can focus on the customers’ experiences.

Most jobs the seasonal workers in Lapland do in the hospitality industry are related to customer service. Despite the additional stress it creates, the customers are also considered as a great motivational factor. Seeing customers happy and enjoying the experiences created for them gives the employee a feeling of success. This has been listed as one of the most rewarding moments in the seasonal work. (Valkonen 2011, 42.)

Hedonism means seeking happiness in life through doing things that bring pleasure and avoiding anything causing pain (Mastin 2008). Haapala (2013, 31) connects this to seasonal work by saying hedonism and close relationships with colleagues are the most important motivators. Haapala (2013, 30) also writes that seasonal workers often create a tight group and spend most of their free time together. This is agreed by Lappalainen (9 January 2017), who refers to the new colleagues as a family.

A combining feature in the motivational factors of Lapland's seasonal workers seems to be the personal interests towards Lapland as a destination. Seeking for hedonism and friends in a job have become more important than the actual work and professional growth.

3.2 Sources of demotivation

While there are many good things said about being a seasonal worker in Lapland, some downsides have also been recognized. As mentioned before, many of these are of personal perceptions and experiences. Several can also be connected to seasonal employees elsewhere on the globe.

Many seem to feel that high labour turnover is a natural character of hospitality and tourism industry, and not necessarily a bad quality (Kusluvan 2003, 6; Pahkamaa and Salmenkorva 2014, 61; Riley 2004, 137; Valkonen & Veijola 2008, 49). The seasonal workers and part-time employees see it as a possibility to create the balance between work and free-time as they choose, they see it as a possibility to travel and the indicator revealing the industry's hot spots of the moment.

The group of people one works with was mentioned in many existing researches of the positive features of the seasonal work suggesting it to be one of the most important factors in creating a positive working environment (Haapala 2013, 30-31; Lappalainen 9 January 2017; Valkonen 2011, 71-73). However, as stated earlier, the turnover rate of the seasonal employees is high. This leads to one's group, that is also referred to as family (Lappalainen 9 January 2017), experience possibly several changes during the season. As many of the seasonal employees do not meet their families and friends outside of the

work environment during the season, even one colleague's absence can lead to negative feelings and decrease one's motivation towards the work.

Choosing a workplace based on personal interests and hobbies can also prove to have downsides. In their research Ainsworth and Purss (2009, 223, 226) found out that it is highly common for a seasonal worker to be employed on a daily basis, meaning that they have no guarantees of sustainable work. This also means no guarantees of sustainable income, leading to stress and a feeling of uncertainty of the future. As many would like to spend their free-time pursuing their hobbies in the area, it might become impossible with the lack of money and the need to be alert in case a shift would be offered. This is also seen in the nature of the seasonal work, as mentioned earlier, as the wages are often very low.

4 Wellbeing at work

International Labour Organization (2018) also known as ILO defines wellbeing at work as following: “Workplace Wellbeing relates to all aspects of working life, from the quality and safety of the physical environment, to how workers feel about their work, their working environment, the climate at work and work organization”. The World Health Organization agrees to this and presents more concrete examples of each aspect, such as the respect for balancing work and family, zero tolerance to harassment and discrimination, training the employees for everyone’s safety and providing recreational space for the employees. (World Health Organization 2012.)

There are many ways one can affect their own feelings and experiences and the way they perceive a certain moment. Many helpful tools can be drawn from positive psychology, which studies people’s strengths and aims to develop them as well as the skills of handling the difficulties of life. It explores the tools for enhancing a person’s wellbeing. (Ojanen 2007, 10.) Uusitalo-Malmivaara connects positive psychology into creating and maintaining social contacts (2014, 21). Thus, it could be said that positive working environment helps the employees create relationships with one another and build a strong work team.

The PERMA-model is an important part of the positive psychology. As introduced in Figure 2., it centralizes the five corners of how one can be happy, making it easy for one to perceive their own reactions and choices in life, giving tools for one to change their own perspective. Martin Seligman, the creator of this theoretical model, based it on five elements of happiness and psychological wellbeing. These are positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishments. (Positive psychology program 2017.) The PERMA-model can easily be applied to all parts of life including wellbeing at work. For example, the component 3, relationships, were mentioned as one of the most important motivational factors for the seasonal employees in Haapala’s study (2013, 30-31). Since this is also a factor of happiness, the conclusion can be drawn that it is thus a component of work wellbeing.

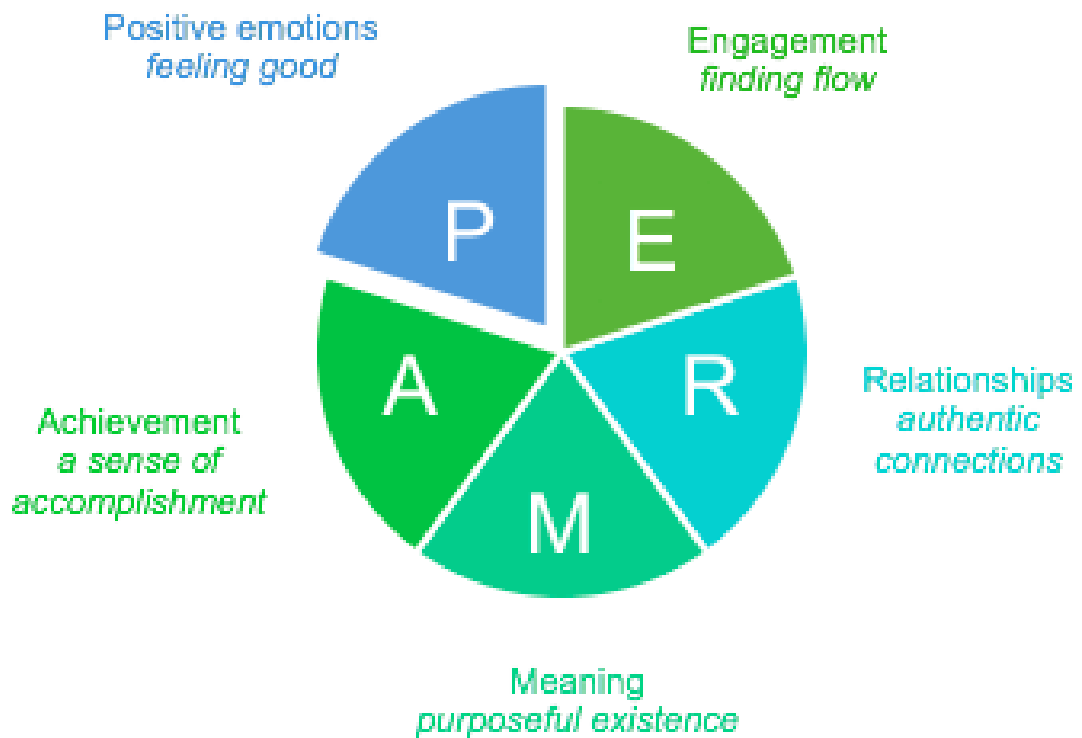


Figure 2. PERMA-model (Positive psychology program 2017)

Rauhala, Leppänen and Heikkilä (2013, 15) studied psychological capital, a theory by Fred Luthans. They connect this to the work life by understanding psychological capital's connection to positive emotions, which lead to better work motivation and work satisfaction and move on to commitment and efficiency. Luthans created this theory by defining the key components of positive psychology and named this theoretical model the HERO-model after the four aspects it is combined of. It can be seen in Figure 3. The first one is hope, representing the will of power, keeping the goal clear in one's mind and being motivated in getting there. The second aspect is called efficacy, representing confidence and one's trust in one's own abilities, creating the base for one's own behaviour. The letter 'R' comes from the word resiliency. It means the so called every day skills and psychological strengths that can be seen in individuals as well as in teams. These skills are the force and strength that prevents one from giving up. These skills can be improved by purposefully exposing one to situations they are uncomfortable in. Finally, the letter 'O' stands for the trust and belief in positive outcomes and seeing the opportunities the future will provide. (Rauhala et. al. 2013, 35-47.)

Psychological capital is also defined as the singular attitude of both the employer and the employees where initiative, hard work and taking responsibilities become apparent. This means that the participants are involved and doing their best. It can be seen as mutual

trust in the strength of the team; trust in that greater results can be achieved as a team than separately as individuals. (Rauhala et. al. 2013, 26, 68.) This confirms the seasonal employees' feelings of the importance of having a good work team, as was found in the motivational factors.

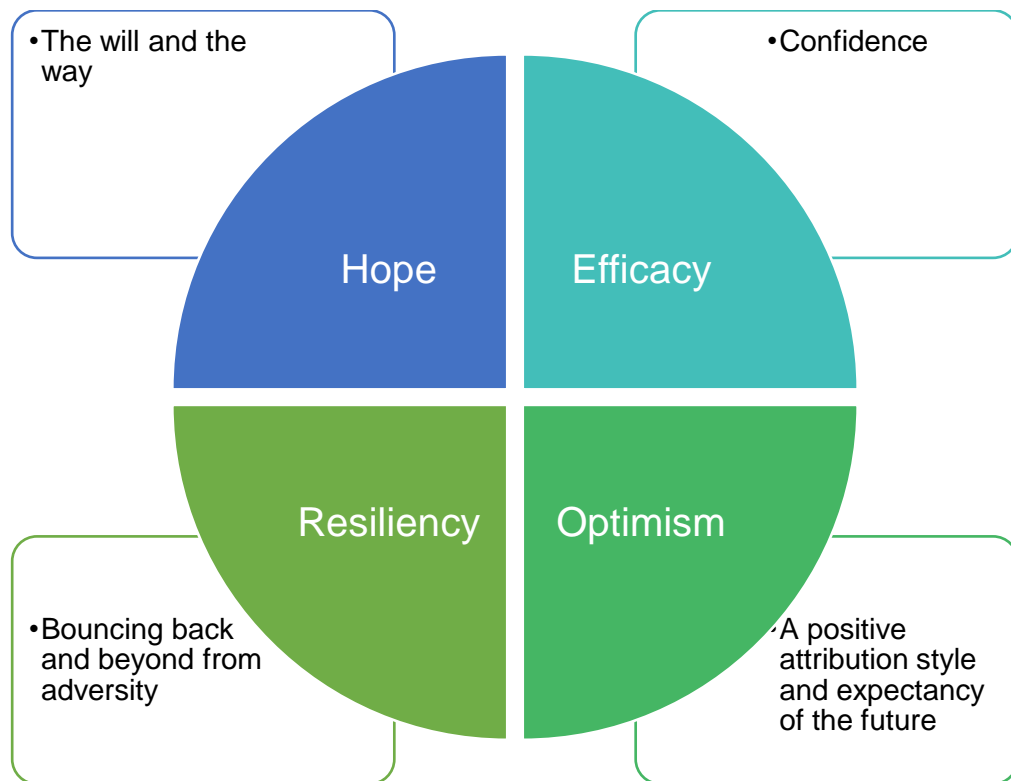


Figure 3. HERO-model by Fred Luthans (in Rauhala et. al. 2013, 8)

Both the PERMA-model and the HERO-model can be used to investigate an employee's wellbeing at work. Both of these start from oneself and can be used as a type of guidelines towards becoming more aware of one's personal strengths. They can also be used by the employer in order to better understand the employees and to improve their management styles.

Hakanen (2011, 110) found some factors adding to an employee's work load to be hectic environment, the lack of guidance and support, loneliness and insecurity. All of these are factors that can be identified in seasonal work, as explained in this research. Each of these is also a factor having an impact on one's work wellbeing. In his study he also named some factors adding to the personal strengths of an employee. He divided these in multiple categories, one of which was named the social resources of the work and one the task related resources. Both of these include several matters important to work wellbeing. To give a few examples of these strengths, some task related resources are considered to be the versatility of work tasks, independence at work and receiving feedback from one's

performance and the importance of working with customers. Even though as mentioned in chapter 3.1, customers can be stressful, but they are also considered to be one of the greatest assets of many a seasonal employee. Seeing them smile and hearing a genuine “thank you” is considered a great strength. The social resources are the support of the manager, fairness and trust, receiving feedback and appreciation and noticing how work engagement and one’s enthusiasm reaches the whole team. (Hakanen 2011, 52-60.)

Work motivation can also take the form of work engagement. Work engagement could be defined as a state of mind where one is focused, excited and willing to invest in their work as represented in figure 4. Work engagement differentiates from the flow-state in length and depth. While in the flow-state one might forget the world around them and focus solely on the task at hand, work engagement may start before going to work and feel more like a general enthusiasm towards the job. (Hakanen 2014, 342-344.) In the seasonal employment in the tourism sector this may be for example the feeling of excitement for the coming day and doing your best throughout the day without having to put additional effort in it, so to speak. Another good example of this could be found in the Christmas work in Lapland. While working in the role of an elf the employee is expected to behave like an elf at all times. This means not only smiling but also being happy and cheerful, demanding the employee to do emotional labour among other tasks. (Veijola & Paakkonen 2014, 75.) If the employee is feeling work engagement, this role may come easily, as they are happier to work and give more of themselves.

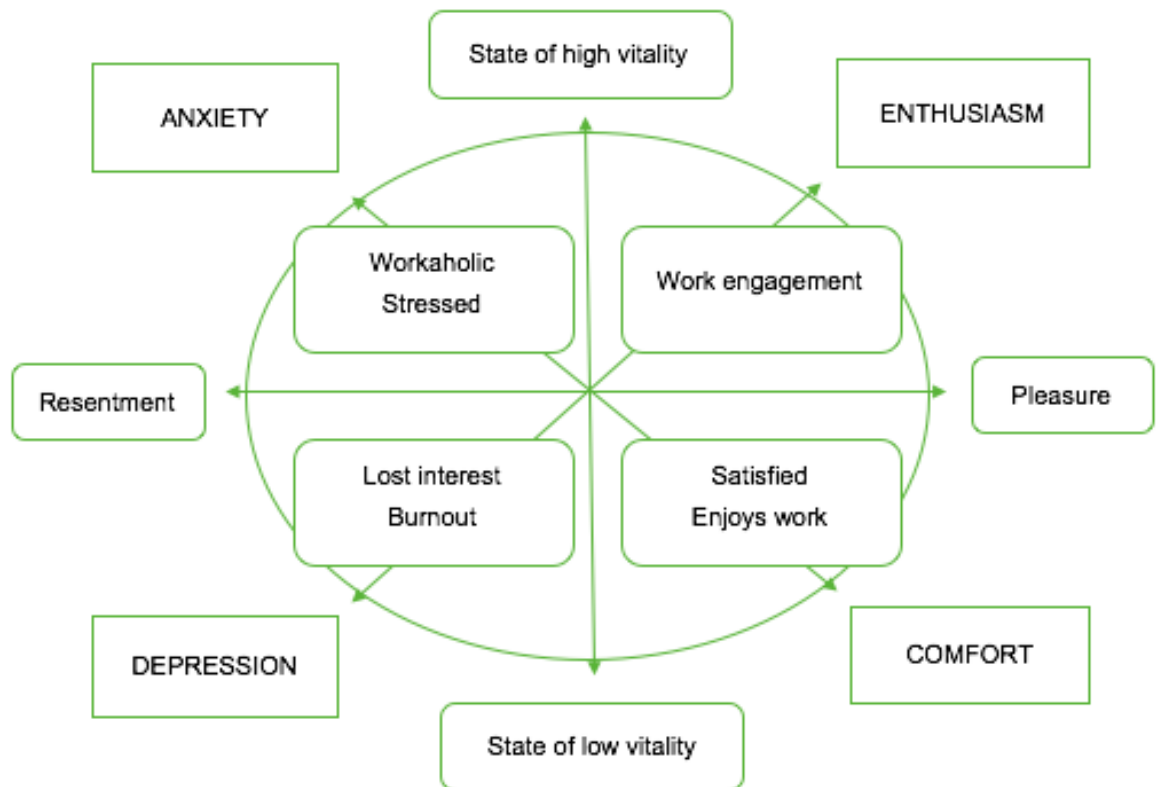


Figure 4. Dimensions of work wellbeing. (Hakanen 2005; Warr 1999 in Hakanen 2014)

In his study Hakanen (2011, 19, 35) also suggests that in order for an employee to enjoy their work it doesn't always need to be fun. In fact, his study shows that the more demanding and varying the tasks are the more there are chances for an employee to feel moments of success. This can be more motivating than having an easy job.

In the previous chapter some motivational factors were found in pursuing one's own hobbies around the work itself (Keskitalo-Foley 2006, 137; Tuulentie & Heimtun 2014, 376-377; Valkonen 2011, 37). Study also shows that sometimes choosing the workplace based on these interests turned out to be challenging and factors that drained one's motivation towards the work (Ainsworth and Purss 2009, 223, 226; Haapala 2016, 61-63; Mähönen 2015). According to Hakanen (2011, 26-27) there are three main reasons based on which people mostly choose their workplaces.

These are

- Work as work; work is seen as something one must do in order to get money for living.
- Work as a career; one is focused and gives more of their personal resources. One wishes to proceed in their career and develop themselves further.
- Work as a calling; work is an important part of life and is seen rewarding in more ways than receiving pay.

When connecting these to the results of Chen and Wang (2015, 354-356) the deeper goals of Lapland's seasonal employees can be understood. Those taking on a seasonal employment for the first time or returning for another season with reasons such as meeting friends made last time or willing to experience something new or pursuing their hobbies belong to Hakala's category 1; work as work. For this group the biggest sources of motivation come from factors outside of work and peer support. For those who perceive work as a career the reasons for choosing this kind of an employment may be professional growth by testing one's own limits and challenging oneself. For this group the motivational sources and coping methods may be of more personal type, such as work engagement and perceiving the given tasks meaningful while one can develop through them (Findsrud & al. 2018; Hakanen 2011, 19, 35, 106-107).

Emotional labour was defined by Middleton in 1989 as "emotional dissonance, meaning the conflict between real emotions and those expressed in a situation" (in Morris 2003, 228). As emotions are often tied with memories (Lamia 2012), it's important for the tourism industry to inspire positive emotions in customers. This has affected the management level's expectations of the employees, who are assumed to only show emotions desired by their employers. The more the worker needs to invest in upkeeping the foretold role, the more psychological energy it consumes. This can lead to the employees not being themselves at work but instead playing a role. (Morris 2013, 223, 227; Valkonen 2011, 198-200; Valkonen & Veijola 2008, 34-35, 56-58; Veijola & Paakkonen 2014, 75.)

Study suggests there to be two levels of emotional labour: surface acting and deep acting. Surface acting occurs when an employee is playing the given role and the customers see only the emotions asked for by the employer. Deep acting on the other hand is a state where a worker personally feels the shown emotions. This way they truly come from within the employee and contributing may be easier and less stressful. Study also suggests that great numbers of customers served, and monotonous interactions are more prone to lead to the workers producing emotions only as surface acting. (Veijola & Paakkonen 2014, 73-74.)

Earlier in the text there was an example of working as Santa's elf and thus producing emotional labour. It was said to be easier if the employee felt work engagement, as this way the effort of staying in the role may be easier. If deep acting is added to this, one could assume that working would become even less burdening.

Study suggests that the level of training a seasonal employee receives for their tasks is not always considered highly important. Partially due to the nature of the work some of the

workforce may already be familiar with the location, job and its responsibilities while some are there for the first time and thus new to it all. Often at the beginning of the season the staff gets a basic level training, where they are introduced to the company and its goals and values. Proper instructions on how to perform the intended work tasks is often left to the minimum. This does not give the employees a feeling of security and certainty to be able to perform their tasks well. The study of Ainsworth and Purss (2009, 225-226) also states that some companies treat the new employees with less appreciation than the ones who are returning employees. The participants in their study also articulated that the overall appreciation of their work performance and input was very low if non-existing. Only if they did something wrong were they given attention. Valkonen and Veijola (2008, 32) found that sometimes the need of training and know-how was purposefully disregarded by the employer, giving an example of a situation where an employee was forced to drive a car as well as a snowmobile, even though the worker did not have a driving licence. The employee felt the reasons behind this kind of behaviour to be explained by the rush and haste of the season.

Haapala (2016, 61-63) takes this further suggesting that there is a significant difference between seasonal or part-time employees and those with full-time contracts. In her study she found that many were denied the opportunities of participating in different training sessions, due to them not necessarily working for the company after a few months. This has a direct impact on their abilities of career growth as well as their self-esteem. She further suggests that many feel they need to work extra hours whenever needed, as declining may lead to fewer hours in the near future. This is agreed by Mähönen (2015) who found this to be linked to the motivation of both parties.

Many of the seasonal workforce travel to the destination for the period of the season, meaning that they need a temporary place to live while working in Lapland. Many companies have a habit of providing accommodation to these employees, often in an apartment shared with several other seasonal workers. This may in some occasions lead to the feeling of belonging and tighter relationships with colleagues, but it is also a feature of the seasonal work many have negative feelings of. For example, the study of Valkonen and Veijola (2008, 38-39) brings forth the results of the seasonal staff experiencing problems with not having any personal space. While at work they are surrounded by customers and while at home they continue having people around them. In some occasions the only space the seasonal employees have for themselves is their bed, while everything else is shared with others. Another element adding to the issues of living in the shared apartment are the working hours. For example, in ski centres some of the staff members start early while others may work as bartenders and thus come home very late in the evening. For some

this appeared as mixing work and free-time completely, as both were experienced in the same place.

At the beginning of the chapter the definition of work wellbeing by ILO (2018) was presented. They continue stating that the employees' wellbeing has been proven to be a key component in an organization's long-term success and productivity. As Baum and Lundtorp (2001, 2) found, it is much harder for a company to maintain the level of quality in products and services when they employ workers only for short-term seasonal contracts. For this it is of an even higher importance for the tourism industry in Lapland to look after their employees.

5 A study of Lapland's seasonal workers

The research was made of three females who have been working in the Finnish Lapland as seasonal employees. The research had three main goals. One was to define characteristics of seasonal employment, second was to find out factors of motivation as well as demotivation in seasonal work and Lapland as the working environment, and the third goal was to find out how is work wellbeing perceived in seasonal employment. This chapter introduces the used research methods, working methods, results and summary.

5.1 Research methods

The research method used in this thesis was qualitative research. This is defined as a term for a range of different methods used in the study of natural social life. The material used in qualitative research is mainly textual and visual materials, such as in-depth interview transcripts, fieldnotes, video recordings and internet sites, that document human experiences while engaged socially. (Saldana, Leavy & Beretvas 2014, 3-4.) It aims to investigate and understand the meanings behind actions and can be described to answer the question "why" (Crossman 2018).

Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault (2015, 37, 102) suggest that the qualitative methodology is flexible throughout the research. This means that even though the researcher has plans and set research goals to follow, the interests of the researcher will be specified while the study proceeds. This way for example an interview plan may change once conducting the interview. They also explain the term in-depth interview as a free form of interviewing. It is done face-to-face and can be closer to a conversation rather than a typical interview with strict questions that need to be answered. On the contrary: the person who is being interviewed is encouraged to talk of their own opinions and experiences in their own words.

I chose qualitative research and in-depth interviews as my research method due to the nature of the research questions. My aim and interest were to hear people's personal views and experiences of seasonal work in Lapland. I felt that the best way to do this would be by creating some questions to support the interviews I was going to do, but to let the interviewees speak freely. This way I would get the most natural and honest research material.

5.2 Working methods

My first interest towards my research topic came from personal experiences. Discussing it with my peers and teachers shaped it to its current state. At the beginning I was planning to conduct closer to ten interviews and making sure they were of different genders, age

groups and countries to get a broad view of the issue. I was also planning to travel to Lapland to meet everyone in person. Discussing my plans with my peers helped me narrow the scope of the research and understand what is doable and useful for a bachelor's thesis.

Early on I decided not to look for a commissioner, mainly because I wanted to be in charge of the research. I started off with the literature review trying to find a broad base for my research. This included finding and reading several books, articles and blogs of relevant topics as well as some theses of interesting issues.

The next step was to create the base for the interviews. I started by thinking of relevant questions that would provide answers to the themes I was interested in (Appendix 1.). I tried to create rather open questions, and to have possible variants in case the interviewee would say one thing or another. I knew already then that I would want to encourage them to speak freely and thus I wanted the questions to be used if needed, they would be more of guidelines than traditional interview questions. This way the interviewees would feel more comfortable to speak of their experiences and not worry about getting off the topic, just as was suggested by Taylor, Bogdan & DeVault (2015, 37, 102).

The interview questions can be divided under the three research questions; characteristics of seasonal employment, factors of motivation and demotivation and work wellbeing in seasonal employment, as demonstrated in Table 2. Characteristics of seasonal employment included information about the workplace, salary, hours and roster as well as whether or not their educational background influenced their work. The questions under the theme of motivation included questions related to their relationship with Lapland and their workplace and how they perceived working there. The third theme, wellbeing at work, included questions about the interviewees' training to the job, housing conditions, free-time and co-workers.

Table 2. interview questions assembled by the research questions

The research question	The related interview questions
Characteristics of seasonal employment	Workplace What were your tasks? Salary Do you think your educational background influenced your salary/tasks?

	<p>What were your working hours, did you get a proper roster or were they more flexible?</p>
<p>Factors of motivation and demotivation</p>	<p>Had you visited Lapland before for other reasons? What made you apply for the first time? (What about this time?) Did you know anyone there? What was the best part in working there? What was the hardest part? How would you describe the overall experience? Have you thought about going back and if yes, why? If you went back, why and was it the same place or different and why?</p>
<p>Work wellbeing in seasonal employment</p>	<p>What kind of training did you get? How did you feel about working there? How did you feel when you first went there and started at a new job? Where did you live and what was the place like? If you had flatmates, how many of them were there and how did you feel about them? How much did you have free-time? How did you spend your free-time? How did you feel about your employer and co-workers? Did you go home in-between or see any of your family members/friends?</p>

As it happened I knew some people who have been seasonal workers in Lapland and contacted three of them, asking if they would be interested in sharing their experiences with me. I told them from the beginning what the interviews were about and that the whole research would be conducted anonymously so they would know they can speak freely. All three were willing to participate, so I arranged time to meet two of them face-to-face and one via Skype, as she currently lives elsewhere.

At the beginning of each interview I explained the aim of the research again and asked permission to record the interview with my phone. I also reminded the participants that they could freely tell me if they felt uncomfortable discussing a certain topic. The two interviews that were conducted face-to-face were done on two separate weekdays after work,

so I made sure we would still meet early enough to avoid the feeling of rush. The third one was conducted on a Sunday afternoon, so there was not quite the same need to think about the time.

The next step was to transcribe all three interviews into written format in Microsoft Word and print them out, as then it would be easier to find possible similarities between them. This way I was also able to write notes and mark the key findings on each. I compared each theme in the transcriptions to each other as well as to the ones found from already existing research during the literature review. For this I found the easiest way to be to create a sheet in Microsoft Excel where I was able to get information of all three interviews side by side. This way I was also able to get the results organized according to the themes, as in the interviews the participants were not interrupted, if they brought up a subject I was meant to discuss later.

5.3 Results

In the following subchapters the results of this study will be presented. This will be done by having them divided under each research question, as to get them structured better.

The results were gathered through three interviews. The first interview lasted thirty-eight minutes, the second one lasted one hour and thirty-seven minutes and the third interview lasted two hours and two minutes. The two last ones were significantly longer than the first one because parts of these interviews were somewhat unrelated to the research questions. Each participant told stories and explained things in their own way, which assumedly also affected the length of the interviews.

All participants were females from Finland. At the time of their seasonal employment they were aged between nineteen and twenty-four. Each of them had experience of moving around and thus knew what it is like to start over someplace new. Two of them had been employed seasonally more than one time, one of them in different places while the other one had returned to the same workplace. The participant who had returned to the same location had done both winter and summer seasons.

5.3.1 Characteristics of seasonal employment

Two of the interviewees had been employed in ski resorts and one had been engaged in Christmas work. The participants' tasks included working in the security department at an airport, waitressing in restaurants and the tasks of a receptionist in lodging services and in the role of an elf. For two of them the environment they would work in was familiar prior

arrival. One explained that she had decided to move to the area on a whim and found the job soon after.

All three interviewees had been hired to help in the seasonal rush and had multiple tasks related to customer service. Participant 1 had worked as a trainee and thus did not receive any salary. Participants 2 and 3 both confirmed the level of wages paid to the seasonal employees to be low. Both of them also told that the contracts given to seasonal employees are very poor. They were offered contracts with only a few promised hours of work per week, leaving them in a difficult situation. For example, on her second time working in Lapland participant 2 was offered a contract with only 20 hours of work in three weeks forcing her to find a second job in order to get some security.

Participant 3 had had trouble with few working hours too, and when she was invited back for the following winter season, she demanded a better contract. Having worked several seasons in the same place she added that the employers seem to be starting to realize that few workers return for another season and have recently started to give better contracts and considerably more salary to the returning employees than before. When at the time of her first season some years ago the returning employees' wages were increased with 10 cents for each season, nowadays the difference is closer to one euro for a season.

All three participants had some work experience and related educational background but felt that they didn't necessarily need the education in order to get the job. Participants 2 and 3 agreed that the level of work experience was of higher importance than education, as it increased their salary. The two participants who had worked in ski resorts added to have received additional benefits such as discounted prices in restaurants and other services for the staff members of the resort. One of them also told that her workplace had a few free passes to ski slopes that the employees were allowed to use. No such benefits were mentioned in the earlier studies.

Participants two and three brought up the temporal nature of the work. They agreed that it is hard work but just like Lappalainen (9 January 2017) said, they too thought that one can work harder for a short period of time. Both of them explained having used thinking about this as a method of pushing through hard times. Participant 3 brought forth the negative side of seasonal employment by discussing how difficult it is to plan ahead in life, as one has work for a few months and then no work for the next three months. She felt this to be

the downside of the whole tourism industry in Lapland, as it is and will always be so seasonal. She added that one has to be incredibly lucky to find a permanent job in the industry, assuming that one wants to stay in Lapland.

Participant 3 mentioned the company's aims of doing business. She told that during their training at the beginning of the season all the employees are made to practise selling a product to the others. The task is carried out through a sort of a game, where the sold item and the type of customer are drawn, and the situations can be very non-realistic, encouraging the employee to use their imagination and come up with unexpected reasonings to why this product should be bought. This supports the findings of Baum and Lundtorp (2001, 2) and Valkonen and Veijola (2008, 33), as presented in chapter 2.

5.3.2 Motivational factors

Many results of the factors of motivation were not directly relatable to the findings of the literature. For example, the aspects of first deciding to leave for Lapland were not presented, nor was whether the employees knew the place or people from the destination. Also, the employees' motivation of returning for another season were not found from earlier research.

The reasons behind the interviewees taking the employment in the first place were different for all three. Participant 1 felt she had the opportunity to go do something different and new on account of her training period. Many of her friends had stayed in the city of her school, so she had wanted to utilize the chance for something she had not experienced before. Participant 2 had taken on her first seasonal employment in Lapland after graduating from college, as she wanted to move apart from her parents. However, she chose the job and location because her sister lived in the area and recommended the place. The second time she had wanted a break from her normal life and said that she wants to enjoy life and gain experiences while she is still young. She added to never have moved to a place where she wouldn't already know someone, in other words, even as she moved to a new place for the season, she already had friends in the area. Participant 3 seemed to have the least exact reasons behind her decisions. She explained to have moved to the area from the spur of the moment and thus had to look for a job. She too knew people living in the area and thus participant 1 was the only interviewee moving to a new place completely on her own.

As the already existing literature shows, the surroundings of many a seasonal workplace are considered attractive (Keskitalo-Foley 2006, 137; Tuulentie & Heimtun 2014, 376-377;

Valkonen 2011, 37). This was also the opinion of the participants in the interviews, although they seemed to be both interested in the surroundings aimed for the customers as well as the natural setting of Lapland. Two stated clearly to have been interested in the opportunities of skiing and snowboarding when choosing the workplace. The participants also mentioned the importance of having a good work team and making friends as one of the best things, as suggested by Haapala (2013, 30-31).

Participant 3 was of the opinion that in addition to having a good team to work with the customers are a highly motivating factor. Just like suggested by Valkonen (2011, 42), she felt that being able to make them happy and enjoy their vacation made her day better too.

For the hardest parts of their experiences each participant had different experiences. One of the interviewees named angry customers. As her job included being an elf, she had often experienced situations where she was not taken seriously. Especially in occasions when the customer was unhappy they often demanded to get to speak with someone else, meaning "anyone in normal clothes". These moments had become even more challenging, as during the latest season she had worked as the Head elf, so she had been the first person the employees would call for in challenging situations.

Another interviewee mentioned the hardest part of working there to have been the constant feeling of being annoyed about having to go and work in a place where the general atmosphere was not good. She summed up her overall experience to be mixed. She was confident that she will go back to Lapland for another season, but she was very determined of getting a good job. She was keen on experiencing many new things in her life, but at the same time she felt old enough to want to look for a job where she can improve herself.

One explained how she had not been taken as a part of the group, she said: "You go to a new place with people you don't know, you take the risk and then it doesn't work out". Being left out like that had had a strong impact on her whole stay and her overall experience of the season was not positive. She considered it to be largely of pure luck what kind of a season it will be, depending of what kind of people there happen to be working that time. Despite her negative experiences of seasonal employment, she did not refuse to consider taking on seasonal employment again, although she did mention she would look to work someplace else.

5.3.3 Wellbeing in seasonal employment

Each participant had received some level of training at the beginning of their employment; mostly basic introduction to the company which didn't include very specific advice towards the tasks. Each participant had also experienced the feeling of not being appreciated as they are only seasonal employees. Participant two had strong experiences of how the returning employees and the new ones were considered to be in different positions and of different value to the company.

Other aspects of work wellbeing of the interview results that were directly visible in the theoretical framework were the importance of the group and a trustworthy manager and the complications created by living in a shared house with other seasonal employees. Participant three also gave an example of how she was expected to engage in emotional labour while at work.

Emotional labour was experienced by interviewee 3. This came up while she named the hardest part of seasonal work, but she also gave another example. She stated: "If you're having a bad day and you show it, it affects many more than just yourself. So, you kind of have to pretend to be smiling, also to your colleagues". She combined this with the importance of having good team to work with and how much easier it is to go back and push through another season with employees who know how hard it can be and who thus understand her without her having to explain it, like she may need to to someone who hasn't experienced seasonal employment before. She added that sometimes the new workers have such positive image of the work that she feels it would not be fair for them to let them see the negative sides of the seasonal employment.

All three participants mentioned to have received little training at the beginning of their employments, including basic introduction to the workplace, its ethics and goals. Participant 3 had slightly more positive opinion of her training, she explained that a couple of training days are held at the beginning of each season, and every employee has to participate in them, even if they are returning employees. She seemed to think of this as a good thing that set all the workers to the same starting line and gave them an opportunity to get to know each other before the actual work started. Participant 2 had different view of this kind of training. She felt that this kind of general introduction leaves out many important factors of the job and the workplace. She added that there had been a serious gap between the returning employees and those who had taken the job the first time. The new workers, including her, had no knowledge of how things were meant to be done, and they had not felt welcome to ask for help from the others.

Participants 2 and 3 had had experience of living in a shared accommodation provided by the employer for the season. Participant 2 had gotten one flatmate after a couple of months. She told she had been very lucky, as the person she shared the apartment with was very nice and they became good friends, and still keep in touch with one another. Participant 3's experiences were the opposite. She had lived in a shared house twice, both times there had been multiple people living under the same roof. Unlike interviewee 2, she had not become better friends with these people after living with them for several months. She said one can manage for those couple of months but absolutely no longer. The biggest issues had been in cultural differences, the total lack of privacy and not having anything in common with her flatmates, which made dealing with everyday moments hard. She added that she was lucky enough to have some friends in the area that lived elsewhere, so as she put it, she got to escape to their apartments every now and then.

Two interviewees brought up the importance of having good and trustworthy management. In his studies Hakanen (2014, 354) talked about the concept of serving leadership. This means that the manager is present mainly for the employees and intends to help them succeed in every way possible. It is seen as a way of positive leadership which aims to helping the employees and creating a motivated work environment.

Participants 2 and 3 stated the pace of the work having been hard at times and them having counted days until the next day off or the end of the season, which could be considered as a method of resiliency. Resiliency, not giving up even in the hardest moments, was introduced as a part of the HERO-model in chapter 4. Also components of the PERMA-model can be found in the results of the interviews. Positive emotions created by colleagues, relationships created during the season and achievements, new skills learned, all came up in the interviews.

5.3.4 Summary of the results

Below is a table summarizing the results of the study as presented in the previous chapters. The interviews brought similar results as the theoretical framework had suggested to all three research questions. In addition to this they also provided some information that had not been mentioned in the previous studies.

Table 3. Summary of the results

Research question	Results found both in the interviews and theory	Result not found in theory
Characteristics of seasonal employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Worked in ski resorts and Christmas work ○ Customer service related tasks ○ Low wages ○ Poor contracts: few promised hours of work per roster ○ Educational background not seen necessary ○ Temporal nature of the work a good thing, one can work harder for a limited period of time ○ Stress on doing business ○ Multicultural workforce, especially during the winter seasons' high peaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work experience increased salary, a small raise for returning employees/season ○ Additional benefit on top of the salary, such as ski pass
Motivational factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ High interest in working in a location where pursuing hobbies like skiing is possible ○ Good team to work with and creating friendships was seen important ○ One participant indicated hedonism as motivation by mentioning the will to enjoy life while young ○ One brought forth gaining motivation from making customers happy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reason behind the decision of going to Lapland the first time were various ○ All participants were positive of returning for another season, two would change workplace but may return to the same destination ○ Only one participant left for Lapland without knowing anyone in the area
Wellbeing in seasonal employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Level of training not very high at the beginning of the employment ○ Experiences of feeling unappreciated as being only a seasonal employee, one participant had felt an actual gap between the first-timers and the returning employees ○ Importance of good team spirit and a trustworthy leader as factors of strength and support, ○ One participant had experienced difficulties living in shared accommodation, while one had become close friends with her flatmate ○ One participant had been expected to engage in emotional labour while working as an elf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two participants did not utilize their free-time in full, while one told that the opportunities and ways she had for spending her time off work were multiple and capturing them was what kept her going and gave her energy

6 Discussion

This chapter will analyse the results and findings of the research even further, taking into consideration the theoretical framework of the thesis. In this chapter each of the three research questions will be looked at and the findings will be combined with the material provided by the earlier studies. The following subchapters will also consider the validity of the research and give suggestions for further research. At the end the overall process of the thesis will be evaluated.

6.1 Analysing the validity

I originally created the interview question in English, as it came naturally in the whole thesis process. However as all of the participants were Finnish, the interviews were also conducted in Finnish. I had not created separate translations of the questions beforehand but did it in my mind as the subjects came up in the interviews. After this the results were again translated into English, which may have influenced the validity of the results. However, as I use both languages in my daily life I believe I was able to bring forth the most important issues and answers.

At the beginning of each interview I wanted to chart the background of the person by asking a few general questions. These included age, gender and where they are from. All three participants were young females, which I fear may have made the results more homogenous. Having one or two males might have resulted in different outcomes, as might have done having one non-Finnish person participating. Another limiting factor in the results was the used research method. As Crossman (2018) states: "The downsides of qualitative research are that its scope is fairly limited, so its findings are not always widely generalizable". Having interviewed only three people the answers and findings are strongly of their personal experiences and thus not necessarily enough to be able to draw conclusions. However, the used research method was the right choice for the type of research at hand.

As the interview questions were created and the interviews conducted before finalizing the theoretical framework of this study, they were not as clearly structured as they should have been. This made it more difficult to follow their purpose and to see how they were linked to the study. Naturally, this also excluded the option of making any changes or adding to them. Afterwards it seemed like some questions were not as necessary as others, while some aspects could have used more details. Due to this the aims of the study had to be reconsidered, which lead to some remodelling of the theoretical framework.

As previously mentioned, two interviews were noticeably longer than the first one. I believe there to be several factors that could have affected this. As I have not conducted many such interviews and it has been some years since the last time, I was most likely somewhat nervous to start with, which may have led to both me and the interviewee subconsciously aiming to finish sooner. As I did not do any so-called practise rounds, I was most likely not as fluent interviewer as I was during the next two, and thus may have left out some additional questions that could have potentially brought more needed information. Also, as brought forth at the beginning of chapter 5.3, the two latter interviews included some discussion unrelated to the research. This may also have affected the validity of the research, as even though I did my best to be unbiased when analysing the transcripts, I may have taken into account some of the information provided outside of the scope of the research questions.

Lastly, as the results showed some similarities but also some differences to the findings of the theoretical framework of this thesis, it leads me to wonder if I left some earlier studies unnoticed. Another possible reason for differences is again found in the used research method. Each interviewee presents issues from their perspective, and thus may bring forth matters someone else may not have experienced or may not think about at the moment of the interview. Also, each researcher analyses the results slightly differently, possibly considering some findings more important to the research questions than others.

6.2 Analysing the results

In this part of the thesis the results of the study will be considered from the perspective of my personal experiences of Lapland's seasonal work.

6.2.1 Thoughts on seasonal employment

Even though all interviewees were employed for seasonal workers and shared many similar experiences, they all had very different stories to tell too. Participant 1, who was working as a trainee, had rather negative overall image of seasonal work. As her training period had been at the very beginning of the winter season, there had not been many customers. Due to the nature of her contract she was working full-time, even though the amount of work to be done was minimal. These factors influenced her perception of her whole period of employment and limited her experiences of for example the rush at work that the others have expressed.

Participants 2 and 3 both have been employed seasonally more than once and brought forth many factors that were found in the literature research, as mentioned in the results.

They both emphasized three parts; the poor quality of the contracts offered to seasonal employees, the quick pace of the work and how one can work harder for a set period of time. As presented earlier, participant 2 had been offered a contract with 20 hours per 3 weeks. However, she had heard this to be customary and that one should have faith in things working out and more work to be available than offered to begin with. Yet she felt forced to look for another job, so she would have some stability. She also said that if she hadn't gotten the other employment, she wouldn't have gone to Lapland for that winter at all. She continued that in a way, she understands the employers and that it's impossible to promise full hours for each employee, as they can't know what the season will be like. Yet this puts the workers in an impossible situation.

Listening to the participants' stories brought back memories and I felt I was able to relate to them very well. For example, the long and busy work days and possibly no time for breaks was definitely familiar. It was not always easy or fun to work, but I have to agree that at the end of the day the season is not that long, and with willpower one can indeed work harder. Participant 3 summed this feeling up as following: "It's all about your own attitude. Even if you don't really care you can still do your job well. It can only be an asset later on in life". For me this means doing the best one can, even in the moments where the work is the last thing found interesting. For me this attitude showed as being able to be proud of myself at the end of the season.

6.2.2 Thoughts on motivation

Only one participant had taken the employment not knowing anyone from the area, which was surprising to me. The participants named reasons such as enjoying life and personal hobbies and seeking experiences to be the reasons for taking on the seasonal employment. Because of this I would have expected heading to a new place alone to be the normal behaviour. However, as one of the participants told, heading someplace new is not always easy and as in her case it had close to ruined her whole experience, as not being part of the group meant she stayed alone for most of the time.

Personally, I felt the hardest part of seasonal employment to be going someplace new and not knowing what it will be like. At the same time this was what made it exciting and interesting. It was the factor that created all those experiences and made me grow more independent. Support of family and friends was very important. Even though I did not have much free-time to spare as I was working long days and doing my best to complete some studies at the same time, I strongly believe that I would have quit halfway through if I hadn't had people around me to share the stress and the laughter with. For this I agree with participant 3 naming the people as the best part of the work.

6.2.3 Thoughts on wellbeing in seasonal employment

Participant 2 mentioned that the general atmosphere of the workplace influences the employees interest towards working there and performing the tasks well. Pahkamaa and Salmenkorva (2014, 62) wrote that a worker's attitude towards their own job affect work satisfaction greatly and that a content employee is more efficient and successful in their work. They also state that an employee's poor attitude is often visible to the customers, thus affecting their experience of the place, and in worst case can affect their whole vacation experience.

Each of the participants agreed that social support and having people around them was of high importance. In addition to this being a motivating factor it was also considered to be a source of strength during hard times. Each participant mentioned in their own words that they need likeminded people around them to be happy. This could be linked to the employees' free-time, as two participants told to have spent a lot of it with their friends. Only one had seen family members during the employment period, and this too was due to them traveling to Lapland for a skiing holiday. Participant 1 said to have phoned her family on regular basis during the employment, as it made her feel like they had not been that far.

Especially when the work environment is hectic, and the days are long, it is easy to forget that customers can easily see the range of emotions from me. I recall having several moments when nothing seemed to make any sense and the days seemed to be never ending. During those moments my own attitude was not at its best. I believe the most helpful thing for me was the support of my colleagues, as we were all in the same situation and thus understood each other. Words of thank you from both the customers and the management after a hard day made a big difference, which again highlights the importance of a good manager.

Going away on my own and leaving my family and friends behind gave me new perspective of their meaning in my life. During my first season I visited home once and surprised everyone. After those couple of days I had mixed feelings leaving again, as it was hard to say goodbye again, even if for a relatively short period of time, and at the same time I was excited to go back to this place that felt like my new home and to get back to all those people who created my seasonal family.

6.3 Conclusion and suggestions for further research

Seasonal work seems to be ruled by uncertainty of the future for both the employer and the employees. As the employer is motivated to create a full year's revenue in a few short months, they often seem to be unwilling to give good contracts for the workers. This is a factor that adds stress to the employees, as they can't be sure of how much work they will be doing, which affects their overall life during the season.

Two of the participants in this study had only worked for winter seasons, which adds to the conclusion of that being the prime time for the tourism industry in Lapland. Participant 2, who had worked for one or two summer season as well, said they are much shorter and ridiculously easy in comparison to the winter seasons.

Based on the research seasonal employment has both positive and negative sides, but the negative ones are overcome with strong willpower and the support of friends and team members. Lapland as the work environment and the new experiences each season bring are considered attractive to a state where each of the three participants in this study agreed to be considering of returning to Lapland sooner or later. Perhaps it is as the blog Rennotreissut (14 September 2016) states: "If one wants to make it in Lapland as a seasonal worker, one must be a bit insane."

Further research could include deeper analysis of the seasonal workers' coping methods in Lapland. As this thesis focused more on mapping what the key features of seasonal work are, what motivates the employees to pursue seasonal employment and their work wellbeing, the aspect of the employees' coping methods was not presented. Also, as found in the result analysis, the empirical research was not as thorough and in-depth as it could have been, leaving room for more study.

6.4 Evaluation of the thesis process

At the beginning of the thesis process I was reminded I should write the literature review before moving on into the empirical part of the research, as it gives base to the whole work. I did my best to do as I was instructed and found myself getting very interested in reading books and articles that were not quite related to my work. More than once I had to step back and ask myself if the text I had in front of me was going to be useful or not.

I found it difficult to decide which sources to use and to determine what can be considered reliable enough for this type of work. It was hard to draw the line of what was too old to be used, when sometimes it was the only thing I could find. I decided to accept two blogs as

sources, one of which I quoted once and one of which was used a bit more, due to the nature of the thesis and the research method used.

I had several breaks during my thesis process, some longer than others. Overall the process took me closer to two years to complete. At the end I had very little time left, and I noticed the importance of having the theory base ready before moving on to the empirical part as I had not finished it before having conducted the interviews. So, at the end I was writing them both at the same time, which I believe did not result in the best possible outcome. To give an example of this, the interviews were not designed quite as well as they could have been, had I focused on the theory part properly. As I wrote in the result analysis, afterwards it was impossible to make any changes or add something to the interviews, which I believe lead to the lack of depth in the research.

Another matter resulting from the haste was that I did not meet my thesis supervisor very often and therefore wrote a lot before sending it to her to be commented on. I believe that the overall quality of a thesis is improved if given feedback on regularly, as the instructor might have some ideas that one doesn't think of themselves.

One thing I was truly glad to have done is to have marked down each and every source of information immediately, so that I would not have to go looking for it again later on. This is something I learned watching my peers struggle to track some of their notes back to their sources for proper referencing.

From the very beginning I was more interested in conducting the interviews and hearing other people's experiences than writing the theory base. I found it interesting to get to know their stories and how they had felt about different parts of the experience. Partially due to this I found it challenging at times to stay focused on what I was looking for in their stories, and thus the interviews were partially not entirely related to the research. Still, I was satisfied with the topic of my research throughout the process and it gave me a feeling of success to notice I still found it interesting after two years.

Overall, I believe I have learned a lot during this thesis process; some academic skills and some that can be incorporated to other parts of life too. If I were to do it again I would do my best to stay focused and not have as many long breaks, as one tends to lose motivation towards finishing something if it's left for long periods of time. I would also finalize the theoretical framework before moving on, as I now know how much easier it would make the overall process.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview questions

Age

Gender

Where are you from? (Have you changed cities a lot?)

Workplace

What were your tasks?

What kind of training did you get?

How many seasons have you done here?

Have you been to other places in Lapland as a seasonal worker?

When was the first time you went to Lapland as a seasonal worker?

Had you visited Lapland before for other reasons?

What made you decide to apply the first time?

(What about this time?)

Did you know anyone there?

How did you feel about working there?

How did you feel when you first went there and started at a new job?

Where did you live and what was the place like?

If you had flatmates, how many of them were there and how did you feel about them?

Salary

Do you think your educational background influenced your salary/tasks?

What were your working hours, did you get a proper roster or were they more flexible?

How much did you have free-time?

How did you spend your free-time?

How did you feel about your employer and co-workers?

Did you go home in-between or see any of your family members/friends?

What was the best part in working there?

What was the hardest part?

How would you describe the overall experience?

Have you thought about going back and if yes, why?

If you went back, why and was it the same place or different and why?