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Motivation at the workplace

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Motivation at the workplace.

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The purpose of this master's thesis was to produce information of the target department's state of motivation. Also, to explain the issues that affect motivation in a workplace. The objective of this theses was to improve employee's motivation proactively that can lead to engagement to the employee company. The research was targeted to one specific department that consisted of 31 employees at the time of the research. In the target department there had been problems with high turnover of employees. Motivation was seen by the author as an important theme in working life and the goal of this thesis was to find out issues that explain motivation.

The combination of real-life target department's experience and theoretical and conceptual background was seen as an appropriate way to research the subject. The theoretical part of the thesis was constructed by getting to know the self-determination theory and the concepts of knowledge work and engagement. The research was conducted by a mixed method research design. Data was gathered by a survey by using a questionnaire.

The results of this thesis showed that the content of the work, ability to influence one's own work and pay and benefits were the most important issues that affected motivation in the target organization. The theory used and the concepts analysed supports the findings of this research.

The state of motivation was seen to be on a good level in the target organization but there came up some suggestions that could help to maintain and develop good motivation in the future. The most important lesson was seen as being the importance of a more individualistic view to motivation needs. Conversations between the team-leader and employee were seen as an important way to find out what could be done to improve overall motivation.

In the future, this type of motivation survey can be used to repeatedly give information of the status of motivation and lead to deeper conversations inside the department. This is seen as a tool to increase engagement to the organization.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This master's thesis is a research of a department in an organization that functions in a field of financial management. The field could be described as being knowledge intensive. There is some shortage of professionals in the field and so the issues concerning engagement and job-satisfaction are very important to consider. The topic for this study evolved from the fact that a short time ago several people resigned the case company in a short period of time. Loosing several people is very challenging situation to an organization in the knowledge intensive field.

A while ago, questions were raised if anything could be done in order to ensure that people are really motivated in their work and engaged to the organization. However, before these resignations, there had been studies conducted about motivation in the organization which will be shortly explained later in the thesis. It is justified to think if the previous studies of motivation until now have helped the situation or not. The assumption in this thesis is that they haven't. At least, it would be beneficial for the department if the issue was thought again in a fresh way. This thesis helps to understand motivation in depth and as an outcome there can be found a tool for measuring motivation in a more repetitive way that is at the same time very practical.

In the future especially, employees need to feel motivated about their careers more than ever. This requirement sets new challenges to managers and people who are involved in human resources but also for individuals. This topic has especially come up as the millennials have entered into the working life. Still, motivated staff is crucial for the organization's success no matter what age the employees are. It has been stated by the management that they are interested in hearing what the staff need in order to feel that they are motivated and engaged to the organization.

Also, the staff benefit from the research. Hopefully it will help them analyze the things that affect their motivation and understand how motivation is built. The employees hopefully feel that the employer tries to improve their motivation and is interested in issues concerning it.

2 THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

In the structure of this thesis the purpose is to picture the order of issues and help the reader to follow the logic. First, there is the introduction of the subject. Secondly the definition and conceptual framework of the thesis in order to give a clear structure to the thesis. Also, a situational analysis of the target department and background in general.

After background analysis there is an introduction of the methodology used. In the following theoretical part, the thesis will concentrate on the theoretical background by defining knowledge work and engagement. Also, the self-determination theory (later SDT) is introduced in this part. Next chapter is about the research by SDT and of the nature of human motivation that help to justify the theoretical part.

After the theoretical part of the thesis, there is an introduction of the questionnaire used for this research and the results that have come out of the survey and in the following chapter there is the analysis of the data. Lastly there are the conclusions and suggestions for future research.

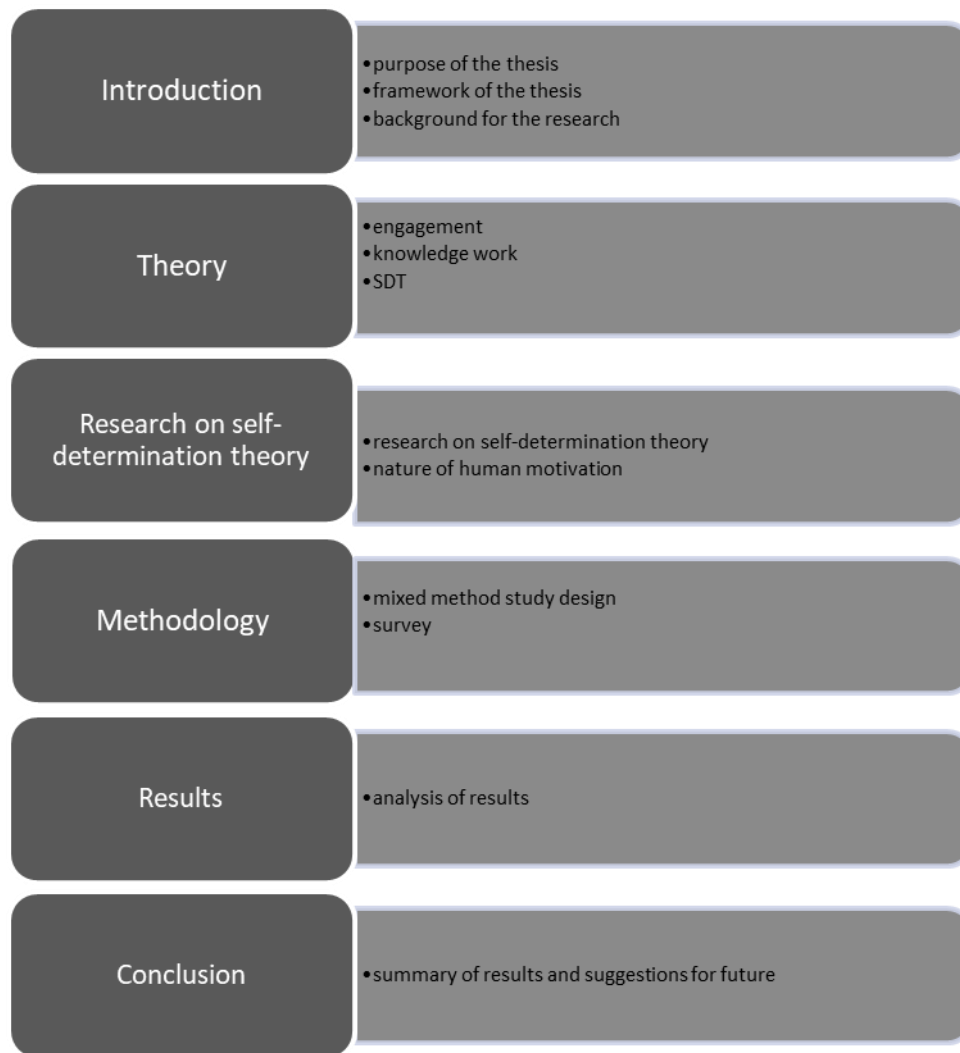


Figure 1. Structure of the thesis.

3 THE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

3.1 The purpose of the research

The purpose of the research is to produce information about the target department's state of motivation. It is seen here, that it is crucial to know about the status of motivation before actions to improve it can be investigated. The information gathered by the survey can be a guide, so that the team leaders are able to do something about improving employee's motivation proactively. Assumably this can lead to better engagement to the company.

In the field the company operates, which is knowledge intensive, it is very important to have engaged personnel. There will be high costs to the company if they have to constantly recruit and train new people and there is difficulty even to find skilled employees in the geographic area the company operates. High turnover of employees has resulted in problems for the company during the time this research was conducted. The author sees that motivation is an important issue to research in order to improve engagement.

The assumption is that the team leaders, would want to be on the pulse of their team's level of motivation. This way they can act sooner rather than later according to the situation. At the same time, there are issues that cannot be affected or changed so easily. In such cases, the team leader could send the message to upper management and raise some future ideas concerning the issues. The team leader could also find alternative solutions to the problems at least in short term. This would give at least a feeling to the personnel that their issues of motivation are taken seriously.

3.2 The objectives of the research

The objective of this thesis is to increase the awareness of how companies see motivation and what effects it has to working atmosphere and well-being but also to the organization's profitability. The focus has been on practical development project and it is up to the organization how they want to use the results and suggestions that come up from it. The questionnaire that was created for this survey can work as a tool to keep following the state of motivation over time as it can be used repetitively.

Motivation has been recognized as an important antecedent of productivity. In the research it has been indicated that the conditions that nurture and support employee well-being are also the most conducive to and most supportive of productivity, commitment, creativity and other characteristics of highly effective employees. The objective of this thesis is to point out the importance of employee well-being in general. Also, it is the objective to point out that the modern employee needs to feel that they have purpose, value and meaning to the company they work for. Mainly this research aims to produce a deeper understanding of issues that motivate people and bring some discussion of the subject but also it forms a model of way of measuring motivation on a regular basis by a questionnaire. (Gagne 2014, 13.)

3.3 The research problem

The initial research problem is the high turnover of employees in the target department and the high cost of this to the organization. The organization needs educated people to engage. In this organization a lot has already been made in order to learn about employee motivation. Still, there seems to have been problems concerning the motivation and engagement. It would be beneficial to gather information on a regular basis about the problem in grass roots level by a targeted survey. This would be an individualistic and very open way of analyzing motivation among a small entity of people.

This type of research could also be easily repeated several times during a year. In some organizations these kinds of research are conducted even once a month.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the issues that affect human motivation according to self-determination theory?
2. What are the specific characteristics concerning motivation in the target department?
3. Could this research be taken into use in the organization for the future as well?

4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Conceptual framework explains the key concepts in particular research, proposes relations between them, and discusses relevant theories and models based on literature review. Theoretical framework gives the research a sound scientific basis, it demonstrates understanding of existing knowledge on the topic. The conceptual framework also helps the reader to evaluate the guiding assumptions. It gives the research directions, allowing the researcher to convincingly interpret, explain and generalize the findings. (Vinz 2019.)

Figure 1 below is the way the author has decided to conceptualize this research. Eventually it is assumed here, that the concept of knowledge work can be seen as the background or the underlying reality in the working environment. The circle in the picture stands for this. The target company works in a knowledge intensive field. The problem, the company has faced, is that engagement has been on a low level recently. The managers have faced challenges in how to attract and keep employees engaged since there

has been an increase in the turnover of employees in the past couple of years and difficulty in finding skilled people to replace them.

It is understood in this research that motivation is one part of bigger concept of job-satisfaction and also closely linked to engagement. All aspects of job-satisfaction have not been analyzed in this thesis. For example, appreciation, communication, fringe benefits or policies. This research analyses work motivation, in other words: is the employer motivated and engaged? Does he or she feel like their work is meaningful? Do the employees feel that their motivation needs are met? The analysis has been framed to cover motivation at workplace only.

The SDT was seen as most suitable theory for this research because the theory is a modern approach to human motivation for example in comparison to Maslow's hierarchy of needs -theory. SDT highlights the importance of human's inner resources for personality development and self-regulation. The theory sees need satisfaction as being more psychological rather than physiological as compared to Maslow's theory, which makes sense in today's work life. The theory investigates growth tendencies that are innate for humans. The basic human needs can be very easily linked in today's working life and are valid especially in the knowledge intensive field that will be explained more in detail in the thesis. (Deci & Ryan 2000 b, 68-71.)

The author sees SDT as best describing the modern times and challenges that organizations are faced with in today's work life. The theory understands the dichotomy of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation which is also the author's perspective and experience of motivation. To mention shortly two other motivation theories to consider in comparison to the chosen theory, there is for example the Herzberg's two-factor theory of motivation, that introduces the idea of issues that contribute to motivation and issues that are a source of dissatisfaction when absent. These are categorized as "motivators" and "hygiene" factors by the theory. However, these factors may not efficiently take into account the individual personality traits. (Leadership Central 2020.) Another theory of motivation is the McClelland's need for achievement theory. It is a well-known need-based theory that manifests the following:

“needs are learned or acquired by the kinds of events people experience in their environment and culture” (Your article library 2020).

McClelland theory sees needs as learned and focuses on three types of need categories, which are need for achievement (sort of competitive need), need for power (need to influence or direct others) and need for affiliations (need for warm relations with other people). (Your Article Library 2020.)

The author sees that in today's working life, as the employees need to feel meaningfulness of their work and the values are individualistic, the managers must be aware of the psychological aspect of human needs. The millennials especially, are not merely pawns that can be played but they are active players themselves who look for better opportunities to thrive. They have the hunger for personal development and are not expecting to settle for a career in the same company for 30 or more years. The author believes this is not only concerning millennials but to some extent other generations as well.

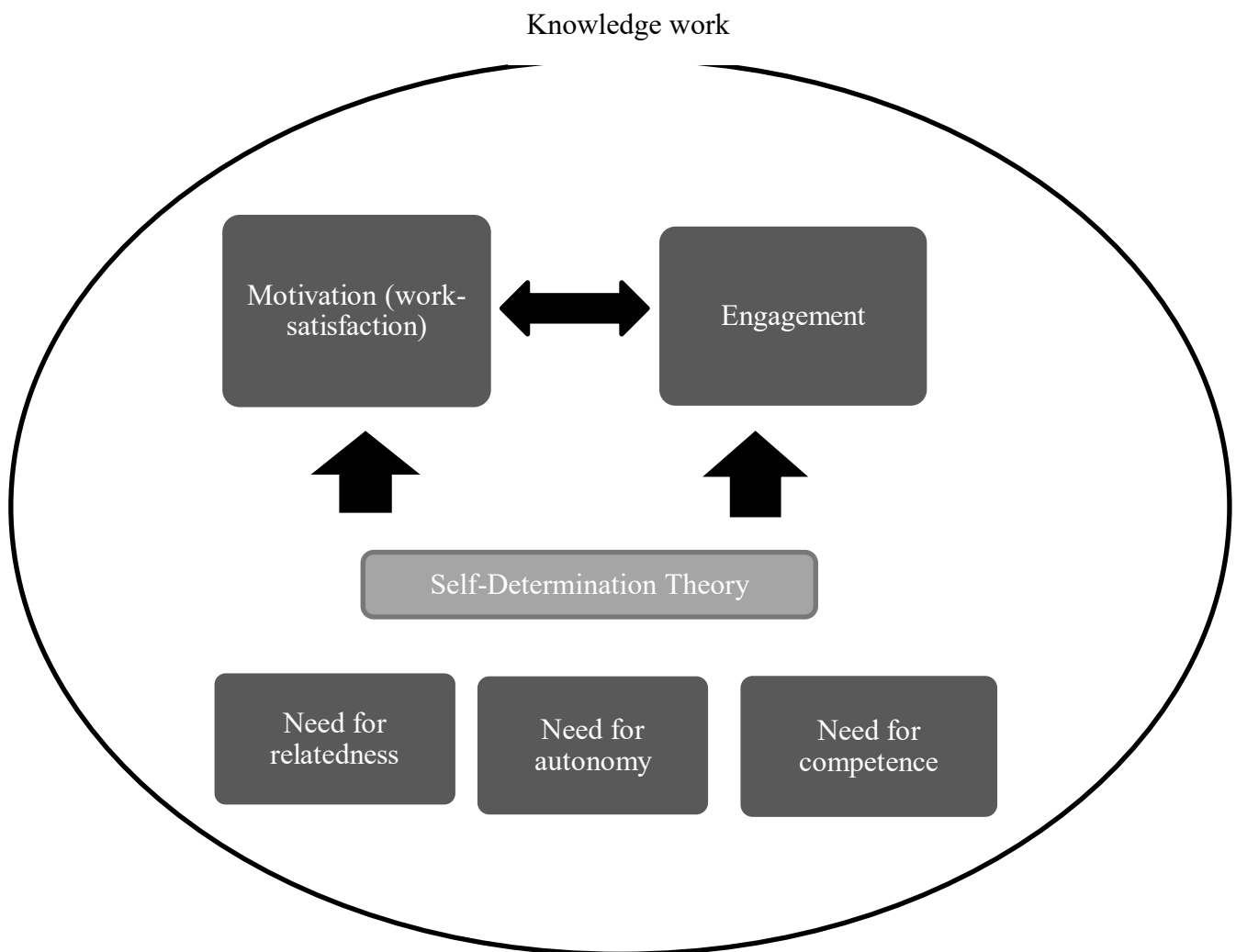


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of this thesis

5 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

5.1 The background of the company

As described earlier in this thesis, the target department has faced motivation challenges recently. There are the different personalities, ways of working, common rules and all the different things that make the department unique. The results from this research aim to explain the motivation need of this particular department.

The case department belongs to a group of companies operating internationally but mainly the offices are located in Finland. The target department is situated in Finland as well. The company operates in the fields of financial management, human resources management and development, client relationship management, outsourcing and software. The values of the company are: respect, trust, courage and future. The company has acknowledged that the employees are the core of the company's business and that they want to commit to the well-being of the employees. (Company's website 2019.)

The target department of this research operates in the field of financial management. There are five men and 26 women in the department. Out of the 31 members of the department, four people are in managerial positions and two are interns at the time of the research. The department has been divided into teams. There have been three teams in the past but just recently the teams have been restructured into two teams due to changes in team leaders' positions. This means that there are fewer teams in total and more members in each team. Also, each team leader has three more subordinates than before. This raises a question if there will also be relatively more time for the team leaders for the team compared to previous situation.

There have been two major organizational changes in the previous five years and one is going on while this research is being conducted. This has raised thoughts about the values of the company in relation to the organizational changes. One of the values is trust and due to the organizational changes, the employee might question trust to the management. The employee might fear that his or her job is at risk either to end or change drastically. Trust can be seen also as trust to co-workers, to the team leaders or to customers. Customers' trust to the company is one aspect also. Trust of the customers is crucial because of the nature of the field especially and future success.

The value of respect might suffer some inflation since the work itself is under a lot of changes due to organizational rationalization. This might evoke feelings of losing autonomy and how it affects competence concerning one's own work. The employee might feel that he or she is not in control of their own work and that he or she is not respected if his or her opinion is not heard beforehand. Also, the value of future can fade a bit if one is not able to trust that the management wants to listen to the employees. In a positive way future can be understood as keeping competitive and constantly developing the business to be market leader in the field.

Courage is a value that is more difficult to analyze. One can think of how courage effects motivation. On one hand, it is courage towards future and for example the changes that can involve technology or new ways of working. On the other hand, it can mean that there should be innovativeness support in the organization. This could mean listening the customers and learning about their businesses so that their needs are understood in the future as well. The professional employee has a lot of knowledge of the customer and it is important to acknowledge this.

Workwise the people in the teams have somewhat different positions among themselves and there are people of roughly two different titles. In general, all the employees are referred to as professionals by the management and there is intention of everyone being equal. The team consists of people of different kind of chores and responsibilities in the field of financial management. There are no clearly set common goals for the teams as such. Rather there are more task related goals for each person on their own.

The company has an open space office where there are two departments at the same space working. There is the target department of this thesis but also another department of about the same size. One could say that the space is challenging. The organization has flextime at use and there are some other modern benefits as well.

5.2 Analysis of motivation in the target department

In the background of this thesis lies the fact that in the target department, several employees resigned in a short period of time. In less than a year five people resigned and in two years' time there were also two people more who resigned. Aside from that there was also one person who retired and one who had maternity leave during this time. The high turnover rate raised questions of why these people left and what could be done in order to prevent such development in the future. There was no exit - interviews held to the people who resigned so there were no valid answers to that question. Naturally some suspicions of the reasons had been expressed.

Motivation had been measured on a monthly basis for several years in numeric form by scale of motivation from one to five. In case a person's motivation sank under scale three, he or she had a talk with the supervisor about what could be done to improve the motivation. All numbers on that scale had a description of the stage of motivation in rather general level. The company also gathers information by broad people first - surveys on a yearly basis. The results of these are dealt in all levels of the organization.

After the resignations the elected spokesperson for the personnel asked by an e-mail for reasons that the employees feel is diminishing their motivation. These results were discussed in the department and management participated to those discussions. A lot of the issues that came up from those e-mail replies dealt with same issues that are discussed in this thesis.

At the time of the resignations the idea for this research evoked in the organization. A podcast by a Finnish adjunct professor of the University of Lapland, Marko Kesti,

has highlighted the measuring of motivation. He points out the importance of individual thinking in job-satisfaction studies. He states that along with huge yearly people first -type of surveys, there should be so called “on the pulse” studies that measure job-satisfaction and wellbeing on a more personal level and more frequently. The benefit of this is that corrective actions to improve wellbeing can occur sooner and the individuals get their voices heard. (Kesti 2019.)

There seems to be a need to analyse motivation and some recent developments also concerning the work-life in general and due to the author’s personal experience of issues with motivation. There have been developments recently heavily towards digitalization. The aim has been for some time now towards “paperless offices” and to this direction the path has taken in the target department as well. Also, technological solutions have changed the entire field over the years. For example, in the target department, there has been some use of robotics already.

The field is knowledge based and the employee’s face development towards harmonization of chores. The aim being to ease the substitution system and replacement of employees. This development is understandable and it has great qualities but it raises question of is it motivating for an employee to be easily replaced by someone else. The development is towards anonymity. Service is based on anonymous systems where the person who is on duty, handles the issue instead of one steady individual that the customer is acquainted with for many years and who knows the whole entity rather than a part of it.

In today’s working life the employer cannot guarantee that the work is a constant and the employees’ loyalty is rewarded in the long run. On the other hand, the employees are no longer willing to engage in dull and routine like jobs. They are willing to take more responsibility of their careers themselves. They move towards challenging and rewarding jobs and this way try to secure their staying valuable in their careers. (Liukkonen, Jaakkola and Kataja 2006, 98.)

5.3 Boundaries of the research

This is a research of one department of the organization, not the whole company. This will frame out the upper management and involves only the members of the department to participate in improving their motivation and engagement. The research will handle issues that the company is interested in and able to influence or support. These issues do not include issues of overall health or individuals' life situation outside work.

The results of the research are not generalizable or universal as such. They only tell the target department, important information of the situation at hand and also points out issues that could be taken to use in order to develop in the future.

It is important to bear in mind that one survey gives limited information of such as issues of motivation. It is the state of motivation at that particular time. There is a risk that the employee is on either good or bad mood just when the survey is conducted. This makes repeatability crucial if long term benefits are to be aimed at.

6 JOB-SATISFACTION

6.1 Job-satisfaction theories

Working adults spend more of their waking hours at work than anywhere else. So, it is clear that work should ennoble, not kill, the human spirit. A research by Amabile and Kramer (2011) consisted of 238 professionals' diary entries in seven different American companies. These diaries revealed the persons' inner work lives: the usually hidden perceptions, emotions and motivations that people experience as they react to and make sense of events in their workdays. Researchers found out that in as many as

third of the 12000 diary entries, the diarist was unhappy, unmotivated or both. The research also showed that promoting workers' well-being is not just ethical; it makes also economic sense. Fostering positive inner lives sometimes requires leaders to better articulate meaning in the work for everyone across the organization.

Job-satisfaction is a broad term. The definition of this thesis follows that of the SDT. The theory's understanding of human motivation and what they call goal pursuits, requires a consideration of innate psychological needs. The idea is that the better the basic needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are satisfied the better the human well-being, performance and motivation are. The three psychological needs are considered essential for understanding the *what* (content) and *why* (process) of goal pursuits. (Deci & Ryan 2000 a 227.)

The concept of job-satisfaction is complex since it is the outcome of several different issues that come from the interaction of work, life and overall wellbeing. Personal characteristics, previous experiences, values, the principles and politics used in the workplace, the practice of work safety and also labour legislation deal with job-satisfaction. (Vartiainen 2017 13.)

It is important to realise that differences in personalities affect job-satisfaction greatly. According to Routamaa both managers and employees need to understand that. A common problem that Routamaa has found out in his research is the inability of managers to understand this and motivate subordinates according to their personalities. (Kivioja 2016.) It is obvious, that there are financial restraints for managers on how much time they are able to invest in their subordinates and in case there is not much time, the manager is not able to get to know his or her subordinates in personal level and is unable to lead them in the best way possible. This thesis does not produce information on personal level but hopefully it generates discussion to a more individualistic direction by revealing inner thoughts of employees for example on issues that they find either most motivating or most harmful to motivation. Also, some questions in the questionnaire aim to point to more individualistic direction.

Robbins, in his book *Organizational Behaviour* lists some issues that affect job-satisfaction, he also includes personality. As one issue he lists the job conditions. Good job

conditions are understood as jobs that provide training, independence and control. Such conditions are seen positive and interesting. Issues like interdependence, feedback, social support and interaction with co-workers outside the workplace are related to job-satisfaction as well. Also, management style plays a big role in job-satisfaction. Employees who experience autonomy support from their managers generally experience higher job-satisfaction. (Robbins 2017, 118.)

Another issue that affects job-satisfaction is before mentioned personality. Employees who believe in their inner worth and basic competence are more satisfied with their jobs compared to people who have negative feelings about their competence. (Robbins 2017, 118.)

Also, one issue Robbins lists the pay. Pay correlates with job-satisfaction and overall happiness but only to a point when people reach the standard level of comfortable living. (Robbins 2017, 118.)

To sum up job-satisfaction; it has been consistently shown in previous studies that job resources such as social support from co-workers and superiors, performance feedback, autonomy, and opportunities for personal development are positively associated with job-satisfaction and engagement. (Bakker & Bal 2010, 189-206.)

6.2 Gender and job-satisfaction

The case company and especially the target department consists mainly of women. This is why it is important to discuss gender shortly. Gender is a fact that naturally has some effect on job-satisfaction and motivation.

Bernstein, Gallo and Torres (2018 a) state that sometimes people are at cross roads with their careers. They feel that they have not made any advancement or grown professionally. People think, if they are still doing the same thing as in their last job, or in their last role or title of several years. They think about their career advancement or

the lack of it. Also, there is a question of how my managers promote their professional growth. The issue came up in a podcast called women at work. Nicole Torres made an important point about women's' job or career satisfaction:

“If you show up to work every day, and you are not getting to work on things that are intellectually challenging, things that are very tied to what your job says it should be, and you are just doing kind of low-promotability, routine work that no one else wants to do, that is going to affect how you show up at work.” (Bernstein, Gallo & Torres 2018 a.) An interpretation of this is getting sort of a reputation that restricts you to routine work and you are not given any new challenges. You show up as someone who does not even want challenges even if you do.

In the podcast there is a discussion of how women often do jobs that can be called non-promotable jobs. For example, the office housework and the most routine work. There is a belief that women are by nature helpful and empathetic but what we need to understand is that there is an opportunity cost for that time spent in doing that routine work. If women more than men have a portfolio of tasks that are less promotable, then they are not going to get promoted as quickly, and in fact they may never get promoted. (Ibid. 2018 a.)

The employee should be able to prioritize and know how and when to say no to the jobs that are non-promotable. The author sees, that especially in a female intensive field, the first point is for managers to become aware that this is a problem for job-satisfaction. (Ibid. 2018a.)

It is very relatable to women at work episode about sisterhood at work. In this podcast they raise a subject of emotional vulnerability at workplace. It is seen that often white men are rewarded of being emotionally vulnerable, as being emotionally intelligent. Whereas, when women show emotion it is interpreted as being weak or angry. The environment of the workplace is seen better when there is safe to show your vulnerability. It is highlighted in the podcast that with vulnerability it is not meant only that one is able to share tears and frustration but that is leads to higher level of engagement and greater creativity. Also, it is important to have trust to your co-workers and at least

have one whom you can show your authentic emotions. (Bernstein, Gallo & Torres 2018 b.)

The trust involves also the way feedback is given. What you say and how you say it is something very important when giving feedback, also the ability to explain the emotional experience for example to harsh critic or failure to your team or co-worker and not being judged for that is valuable. However, women are not a homogenous group and the point is not to generalise. (Ibid. 2018b.)

7 ENGAGEMENT

7.1 Definition of engagement

Generally, in research, work engagement has been conceptualized as a positive, fulfilling and work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption. Vigour means high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest efforts in one's work, and persistence even when there are difficulties. Dedication means being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense significance, enthusiasm inspiration, pride and challenge. Finally, absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, there is a feeling that time passes quickly. (Bakker & Bal 2010, 189-206.)

Engagement can be seen as loyalty towards the employer and this loyalty has been divided into instrumental loyalty and identification or affective loyalty. The instrumental loyalty means that the loyalty is formal and based on different benefits material or immaterial. Identification or affective loyalty on the other hand means the social bonds inside the organization and identification with the organization. (Saari & Ojala 2011, 242.)

Another definition of employee engagement by Kevin Kruse on Forbes magazine (website of Forbes) is that employee engagement does not mean employee happiness. Happy employee does not equal hardworking or productive employee on behalf of the company. Kruse explains that employee satisfaction doesn't mean employee engagement and that satisfied is not enough. According to Kruse's definition, employee's engagement means emotional commitment to their work and their company. The employee does not work for pay checks or just for the next promotion, but for the organization's goals. When employees are engaged, they use discretionary effort. The emotional commitment of the employee means that they actually care about their work and their company. Kruse gives examples of retail clerk picking up trash on the store floor or computer programmer working overtime when needed, without being asked.

Harter, Hayes and Schmidt use Kahn's perception of engagement in their definition. Employees are engaged when they feel that they are part of something significant and have opportunities to feel an impact and fulfilment in their work with their co-workers whom they trust. What is interesting as well is the need to know what is expected of them as well as receiving feedback is a strong need. (Harter, Hayes & Schmidt 2002, 269.)

Another interesting view to engagement is that of Saari's (2014, 33). In her dissertation she introduces the concept of psychological contract. A concept that means the contract between the employee and the employer of the rights and responsibilities of the work. In other words, it is about the exchange of the views of the two parties and it is seen as subjective. The employee's personal predisposition and the social cues he or she gathers from the organization create the psychological contract. Mutual loyalty and assumption of the continuum of the work have been included in the contract. The outcome being the commitment to the organization. Saari explains that the success of the psychological contract affects the strength of the commitment to the organization (Saari 2014. p. 6 and 32.)

According to Saari's dissertation (2014, 6), the workers act in a reactive manner in the changing environment. They change their psychological contracts according to the consequences and aim at the most stable career. According to several studies, psychological contracts are one part of the commitment to the employer organization. The

author feels that the idea of the employee as reactive agent to how the environment changes describes very well the developments in the case company. The ideas of a stable career for example can raise thoughts of how much opportunities the employee has to offer inside the company, in case there are none, he or she reacts by searching them outside the company. Organizational changes can have similar outcomes.

Feeling of being valued has been found to be the strongest driver for engagement but it can also be seen as the outcome of engagement. It is also seen as overarching driver of other drivers. Other drivers are for example: training, development and career; immediate management; performance and appraisal; communication; equal opportunities and fair treatment; pay and benefits; health and safety; cooperation; family friendliness; and job-satisfaction. Claxton studied small and medium sized enterprises in her research and even though they were in the field of manufacturing the service sector can relate to the findings as well (Claxton 2014, 189.)

Employee engagement involves a sense of participation, freedom and trust. It can be felt at three levels: the emotional, the cognitive and the physical. In case the employee feels engaged in all of these levels that is to say that they are more likely to produce good work and stay with the organization. (Ward 2008, 17.)

The likeliness of work engagement can be increased with some processes and benefits like: work-life balance programs, flexitime, telecommuting, compressed workweeks, reward programs and performance management systems. Beyond this, the environment should be created as such that the employee feels valued, motivated and involved. There are two key questions that managers should expect positive answers to. Firstly “Do I know what is expected of me at work?” and secondly, “At work do I have opportunity to do what I do best every day?”. (Ward 2008, 18.)

Ward distinguishes employee satisfaction from employee engagement. Employee satisfaction is the minimum required, engagement brings the person to life and unleashes their talents and delivers improved performance. So, what are the issues that make employees engage? Ward has listed some key issues to work engagement: bonuses,

perks and incentives and valuing employees by listening to them. She claims that listening employees and valuing them results in best outcomes especially in USA and Europe. (Ward 2008, 18.)

Cathy Miller Perkins (2019) lists the following issues as being conditions that encourage engagement. First is challenging and interesting work. Second condition is the care, investment and respect of managers. Third condition is the feeling of making progress in significant work. Miller Perkins points out that as employees, everyone is responsible for taking care of our inner work-lives, however the management is responsible for creating the conditions in the work environment that increase the likelihood that employees will engage. They can design jobs that are interesting and challenging, invest in the growth of employees, and help all make progress on significant work.

7.2 Importance of engagement

Currently the strategic priorities for the service organizations include identifying ways to develop and maintain good service climate inside organizations that promotes customer experiences. When for example service sector employees receive meaningful job-related resources from their organizations, they reciprocate by becoming more engaged in their job roles and provide better service to customers as well as the other members of their organization. (Findley Musgrove, Ellinger & Ellinger 2014, 15.)

There are indicators that employees that are engaged in their organizations are more productive. There is a link between employee engagement and discretionary effort, innovation, customer loyalty, quality, profitability, earning per share and productivity. That is the reason why there has been increased interest in learning what drives employee engagement and there has risen a question of what does “feeling valued” mean? (Claxton 2014 188-189.)

Meyer and Allen list several issues that explain how the world of work has been changing. These include the increased global competition, rapid developments in information technology, reengineering of business and replacement of “jobs” with “roles”. In addition to these changes, much emphasis is being placed on flexibility and efficiency. Companies must be able to adapt to changing conditions and to cut costs. They ask if commitment even matters anymore. Meyer and Allen’s answer to that question is that it does matter. The first reason for it is the fact that organizations are not disappearing. They may become leaner, but they maintain the core people who are the organization. The jobs these core people will be doing are going to be very different from those of their predecessors. The term “job” will become a wider term “role” which requires more skills and ability to adapt to the demands of the situation. Technology has reduced the simpler tasks and the tasks that remain for people require higher level knowledge. (Meyer & Allen 1997, 4-6.)

The second reason why commitment is not disappearing is that even if organizations contract out work, their own success might depend on it. Third reason according to Meyer and Allen is that commitments develop naturally. In other words, people need to be committed to something even if it is voluntary work or hobbies as the alternative is alienation. (Ibid. 1997, 6.)

Martha Finney’s viewpoint in human resource management journal is very eye opening. She defines a great employee as someone that identifies with the company’s mission and who goes to extremes to help the organization to reach its goals. Great employees do not care about games and free coffee; they care about customer service, innovation and making the world a better place. The great employees love to close a deal, please a customer, find the solution and do all these things with co-workers. Great employees are passionate about their work. Great employees want to see a clear line between their efforts and their company’s most essential goals. They want to be heard and believed and acknowledged as individuals with points of view of their own. Finney presents a sentence that she believes great employees want to be able to say when they look back on their life’s career journey:

“I see exactly the reason why I was there at that time.”

(Finney 2008, 4.)

Finnay advises the organizations to shift their focus from becoming a great place to work to attracting great employees and treating them with honour and respect. Once you do that, they will give you the moon in return. (Finnay 2008, 4.)

7.3 The process of engagement

Konttinen and Skyttä (2010, 48) have illustrated the process of engagement as seen in figure three. In this figure they explain that individuals first build engagement by pondering what the change in organization or in their work means to themselves. How do I benefit from this? If the answer to this question is; nothing. The person does not engage. The second step of engagement has to do with the individuals own work and chores. The question is; how does this change affect my work, clients and rewards? The third step has to do with the effect to individuals' team and pondering reaches outside the self to others as well. Only after these steps, the contemplation of the individual is focused on the organization aspect. At this step the individual is at the point of acceptance of the change and the strategic need for it. The fifth step extends the contemplation even further than the organization. This step has to do with ideologies.

Konttinen and Skyttä (2010, 49) claim that the importance of ideologies in the society has grown in the recent years and in some instances the ideology is the motor of engagement.

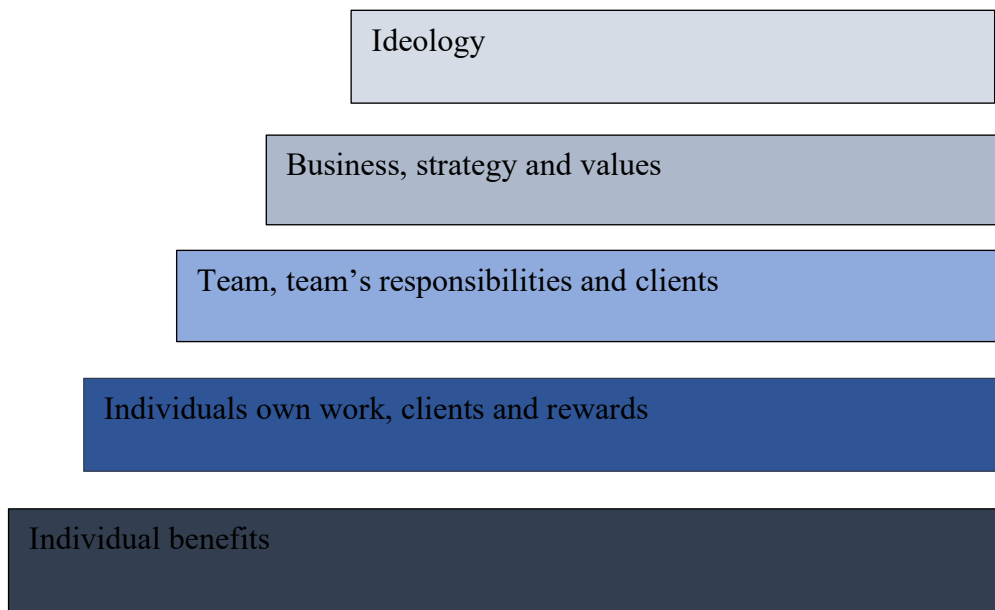


Figure 3. The process of engagement from individuals own view to broader concepts. (Konttinen & Skyttä 2010, 48.)

The key to successful engagement process according to Konttinen and Skyttä (Ibid. 2010. 49) is involving employees to decision making. The ideas and thoughts as well as suggestions of the employees should be heard. The message of figure three is that if the management doesn't involve the employees, the process starts from step four. In this case, the management ignores the fact that individuals' engagement normally starts from step one. It is important to pay attention to the lower steps, because individuals need to process these steps as well, in order to engage.

7.4 Motivation and engagement

The figure below illustrates the relationship of motivation and engagement. Kinnunen and Saarikoski explain this relationship (2005, 101-102) by saying that if the employee is intrinsically motivated, feels joy of work and interest in the work, she or he is more engaged to the work. The employee also understands the common goals and has a sense of meaningfulness of them better than an individual who is more externally motivated, to this person pay and benefits motivate.

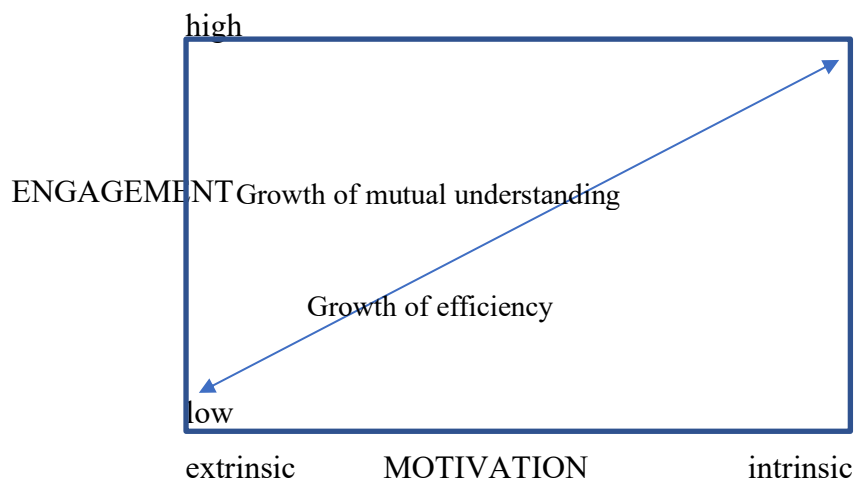


Figure 4. The relationship of motivation and engagement.

Kinnunen and Saarikoski (2005, 102) also point out that the things that create extrinsic motivation normally do not cause long term engagement. This is seen as an important issue concerning the objectives of this research. In the survey the aim is to find out issues that the employees find motivating in order to form a picture to both themselves and to the management. By this both parties can take action in order to analyse the state of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. In chapter 7 the concepts of the two types of motivation are explained more in detail.

In an international organization it is pivotal to ponder about the guidelines coming from the top in a most practical way. It is very important for individuals to know how these guidelines are affecting his or her work. The common meetings and gatherings play an important role in the process of reaching goals. The meetings and common planning processes nurture relatedness and engagement. (Kinnunen & Saarikoski 2005, 96.)

8 KNOWLEDGE WORK

In this chapter the aim is to describe the underlying characteristics of the nature of the target department and field it is linked in. The purpose of this chapter is to increase the understanding of the requirements of knowledge work to employees and provide a situational analysis of how the work challenges motivation. Meaningfulness of work is also discussed in this chapter briefly since the author sees it as a trend that is closely connected to the concept of knowledge work. This is because people in knowledge intensive field especially demand more and more of substance and meaning of the chores they perform.

8.1 The nature of knowledge work

Knowledge work is a term that has risen from the overall technological restructuring of working life. For example, hard physical labour changed into computerized management of processes and chores that demand constant attention and problem-solving skills. In other word mental capacity. Knowledge work has perhaps achieved its fastest growth but its' importance will strengthen still in the near future. Knowledge work means the use of new technology and it requires high level of expertise. (Pyöriä 2002,58.)

In the knowledge work era, the boundaries of manufacturing and service has been somewhat blurred as the companies sell systems and solutions. The physical objects and information systems that are integrated into them are more and more a part of the value chain of companies. The employee's ability to learn fast and constantly develop new skills and use these skills to benefit the innovativeness has become more and more the prerequisite for the success of companies. (Alasoini 2002, 47-48.)

A very central strait of working life in the 1980 and 1990 was the transformation from industrial labour to services. The development of information technology and telecommunications were the stepping stone for changes in manufacturing and ERP systems.

The management of information became important and routine-like jobs were diminished by automation. A new form of work called telecommuting describes knowledge work well. Knowledge workers can be categorized as being usually upper white-collar workers with rather strong positions in the labour markets. Their jobs consist more and more of decision making, reprogramming and real time analysis. (Pekkola 2002, 23-25 and 32.)

There are benefits to knowledge work like the overall growth of technology skills and higher education levels. It seems that work is viewed as more meaningful and fulfilling than in the past. From another viewpoint, at the same time people get more easily burnt out. The work-life balance has brought many challenges to individuals. The working hours have become longer and the emotional burden has become heavier. It has been noted that the most successful companies are those that can build their values and modes of operation so that they support the job-satisfaction of the employees. (Pyöriä 2002, 60-61.)

8.2 Leading knowledge work

Knowledge work requires the use of person's mental capacities and flexibility. This sets challenges to both the individual and the management in different ways. The issue in this research is the way how it challenges motivation in the workplace and in a larger scope, job-satisfaction. It has been realized that the better the job-satisfaction, the better the customer service. Frisk and Venäläinen talk about leading wellbeing in workplace in a podcast by Lifted, a performance coaching company. They list five issues that promote well-being at work and eventually the effectiveness of the organization. These five issues are: culture, management, community, working environment and the content and load of work. (Rantala 2019.)

They raised as most important the role of the management. The management must see the importance of motivated staff and create the opportunities for it. All begins with

the management realizing this. The key is to be consistent with the efforts and understand that the efforts take time. Another important fact is that the management must care about the people and know their individual differences, in other words the personalities of their subordinates. It is important that the management are genuinely interested in people and about the “silent signals” they show. Shortly, the management must offer the framework for job-satisfaction but the work itself is done together, taking part each on their own behalf. Self-management has become important skill in today’s work life. There is a challenge to both management and individual employee to take care of the workload and sufficient recuperating. (Ibid. 2019.)

In the podcast, the participants give an example of a Finnish manager who put a bowl near the entrance of the work place and each employee was supposed to put either a red or a green ball into the bowl depending on how the day had been like. The balls were calculated every day and this way the manager was able to react when there were more red balls than green. The idea behind this is that the manager must be interested in the everyday issues concerning the motivation. The simplest way to find out could be by asking the question: how are you? (Ibid. 2019.)

The target department of this research operates in the knowledge intensive field and it provides services in the form of outsourcing financial management. After learning about the knowledge work more in detail from different sources the author sees some interesting issues that could explain the target departments challenges concerning motivation. They could explain the resignations as well in some extent. In the target organization, there has been organizational changes in recent years and these changes have affected the department and the nature of work. An evaluation of the development has been more to the direction of automatization and anonymity at the cost of autonomy. Also, for example the training system has changed in recent years and it has been seen by many as a change to the wrong direction. At the same time the field requires constant learning and development from the employees.

It was stated by The Association of Finnish Work that there is research that in B2B sector the customer is four times more likely to turn to the competitor if the problem is service-related rather than price- or product related. The next reference speaks of this issue. (The Association of Finnish Work 2014, 17.)

“Investment in services as well as employees who have the knowledge, personal skills and motivation to provide them is, therefore, becoming increasingly important to drive high value growth for business”. (The Association of Finnish Work 2014, 17.)

It is not difficult to believe that investment in higher value service mean investing in employees in all skills levels. In the target department this applies as well to the two different skill level employees and also trainees. There is evidence that well-compensated and happy employees provide better customer service and, be better value for shareholders. (The Association of Finnish Work 2014, 23.)

8.3 Meaningful work

Since the 1970's there has be technological and social developments occurring in the western societies that have brought vast social and cultural changes that challenge the meta trends of modern industrialism. The changes occurring in work and production are large-scale. There is a shift in the nature of industrial work towards forms of production that are discursive, symbolic and highly integrated. There has emerged new products and practices in service, knowledge, information and financial transactions. The “global world” is a technological phenomenon. (Casey 1995, 1-2.)

There was the financial crisis of 2008 that has caused rising levels of unemployment and led to loss of income, reduced output and weak growth internationally. For example, unemployment is more than just economic matter; it has led to social isolation. For those who remain in workforce, the nature of work has been restructured. Companies respond to the financial crisis by reorganizing people and operations. Governments and businesses in different countries are waking up to the idea that if we are to prosper, the models of work from the past are no longer fit for purpose. Employees, especially the younger generation, expect work to be meaningful and fair. Employers

need to find ways to engage their workers to gain their commitment. (The Association of Finnish Work 2014, 4.)

Some other reasons why high value work is particularly relevant is that there are competitive threats from globalization and especially certain regions like Asia and Latin America. There are more women coming to workforce and more people are delaying retirement. There are also technological changes like viral marketing, that have for example changed the relationship of customer and company. (Ibid. 2014, 12.)

Steger (2009) lists three things that he sees as constituting meaningful work. First, the work we do must make sense. With this it is meant that we know what is being asked of us and be able to identify the personal and organizational resources we need to do our job. Second, the work we do must have a point. We must see how the little tasks help build the big picture. It is important to see the purpose of the little tasks to the benefit of the whole company. Finally, the work that we do must benefit some greater good. We must be able to see how our work helps others, for example by making their work easier. We want to work to express ourselves, and we want to matter to the world. (Steger 2009.)

Meaningful work or high value work can be also described as work that is *productive* because it creates new value, *sustainable* because it creates value over time and *inclusive* because it creates shared value across businesses, employees and society. (The Association of Finnish Work 2014. 8.)

9 SELF-DETERMINATION THEORY AND STUDIES

9.1 Self-determination theory and types of motivation

SDT was developed in the nineties by professors Edward Deci and Richard Ryan. At the time it challenged the existing theories of human motivation. The previous theories were founded on the belief that human motivation was linked to organism's primary needs. Needs were seen to be in relation to the surrounding environment. Innate psychological needs were specified as issues like food and water. These needs gave rise to human drive states, that make a person act and pursue the things he or she needs. In other words, primary needs motivate people to reach the goal like getting fed or avoiding thirst. In case a person is not able to satisfy the need, he or she will suffer. In the early tradition, needs were seen more as physiological rather than psychological. (Deci & Ryan 2000a, 228.)

In more modern science, due to the rise of positive psychology, researchers started to understand motivation more as a something that can be acquired rather than something that is only innate and primary. SDT defines needs as:

“innate psychological nutriments that are essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity and well-being”. (Deci & Ryan 2000 a. 229.)

The theory suggests a dichotomy of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation means in short that people often engage in activities that make them feel competent and make them experience efficacy. It is seen that people have a primary need for feeling like causal agents. They need to experience that they have an effect on things. According to Deci,

“Intrinsically motivated behaviours are based in people's needs to feel competent and self-determined”. (Deci & Ryan 2000 a. 233.)

Intrinsic motivation can be described as doing something for its own sake and enjoyment. The behaviour is energized by exploratory drive and curiosity. (Gagne M. 2014, 2-3.)

Intrinsic motivation is proactive. The work itself makes the person feel motivated and inspired. Frey and Osterloh find three descriptions for intrinsic motivation. First description is that pleasure is derived from the activity itself and the end goal and the action itself are equally important. The second form of intrinsic motivation comes from achieving a goal which a person has set oneself, even if the process itself is not enjoyable. The third description of intrinsic motivation in organization are the standards of fairness or group membership that are particularly important. There is empirical research that shows that employees feel that they want to follow these standards even at the cost of their own advantage. (Frey & Osterloh 2002, 2.)

In contrast extrinsic motivation is reactive. It is built on material rewards or punishments, carrots or sticks. It is understood as facing threats and gathering tools for survival. An individual is forced to kind of push himself to doing something because there is no better choice. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 6., 16.)

Deci and Ryan have differentiated intrinsic motivation and internalized extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation means that doing something is pleasurable in itself whereas internalized extrinsic motivation means that doing something feels valuable because it has connections, values and goals that are important to oneself. An example of this are cultural demands, values and regulations that have been learned. To incorporate them into the self is natural and seen as relatedness and socializing with others. (Deci & Ryan 2000 b. 238.)

The most people's work cannot be considered always enjoyable or highly interesting, in reality we need to set in some regulatory capacities such as self-control, orderliness, perseverance in the face of difficulties, self-discipline, and restraint. These according to the SDT is seen as being human's internalization processes. (Gagne 2014, 110.)

Extrinsic motivation can be seen as being very close to intrinsic motivation when it is well internalized. Especially if it is compared to controlled forms of extrinsic motivation. This way it is very important that the management know the difference and the social environment is facilitated to optimal motivation. (Ibid. 2014, 27.)

SDT is a dialectical theory which means that it examines human beings as they function to get their basic needs satisfied. The social context in which this happens, sometimes satisfies the needs and sometimes thwarts the needs. It is believed that the better the needs are satisfied the more positive outcomes are predicted. (Ibid. 2014, 16.)

Humans are social animals and they must sometimes relinquish their selfish urges and do behaviours that they don't find enjoyable. Such behaviours can result in the good of themselves or for the collective and the motivation comes from that. The process of learning the norms and behaviours necessary for coexistence is called internalization. Human beings transform the values and behaviours from the environment, absorb them, and use them to regulate themselves. Internalization can happen by coercion or in an autonomous way which makes the individual feel agentic. With the former, people tend to measure their own worth against the behaviour. However, the latter style makes people identify personal value to themselves and integrate it into their core self-regulatory system. (Ibid. 2014, 3.)

9.2 Basic psychological needs

SDT identifies three basic human needs. The needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy. SDT assumes that in optimal conditions, these needs are satisfied and it results in well-being and psychological health. People are seen as vital, curious and growth oriented. As soon as one of these needs is not satisfied, deprivation is resulted. (Deci & Ryan 2000a. 229.) SDT sees that basic psychological needs have evolved in humans rather than learned and they function as important motivators for people across the lifespan. There are different domains like school, sports or workplace and also different levels of satisfaction during the lifespan but the basic needs are there and they are universal. (Gagne 2014, 15-16.)

9.2.1 Need for competence

First need in SDT is need for competence. Their theory shows that need for competence means that the individual feels that he or she is skilled enough and competent to do his or her job and gets things done. For example, the employee feels that he or she is capable of pulling through given tasks. Competence requires succeeding at optimally challenging tasks (Deci et al. 2001.)

Competence also means that the employee has a feeling of learning new things and making progress. The feeling of going forward and being competent in their field. The politics of training in an organization or training opportunities outside the organization are crucial. Also, the system of giving and receiving feedback is seen to affect the feeling of competence. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 6.)

There is term called flow, that describes well the state when the employee feels dedication, is energetic and enthusiastic towards his or her work. The employee gets absorbed in the work and feels fulfilment. When employees feel flow in their work, they feel energized and less exhausted also outside work. (Ibid. 2014, 4.)

9.2.2 Need for relatedness

Second need is need for relatedness. In SDT, relatedness means that humans have a sense of mutual respect, caring and reliance with others. It refers to desire to feel connected to others. The theory argues that social constructs such as feedback, communications and rewards conduce towards feelings of relatedness, and this way enhance intrinsic motivation. (Deci & Ryan 2000b. 70, 231.) People are inclined to internalize the behaviours and values in their social environment in order to feel a sense of belonging within that environment. (Deci & Moller 2005, 594.)

A crucial issue concerned with relatedness and motivation is the working atmosphere. A good atmosphere in the workplace makes employees feel like they care about other

and they are cared for. Motivation is linked to the people around us and at best employees feel that they are part of a supportive, safe and warm social space. In such a space, individuals can function at their best. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 30.)

Relatedness means that there is a sense of mutual respect and reliance with others (Baard, Deci & Ryan 2004, 246). Another way of seeing relatedness is by the idea of moral obligation to the peers. By enacting moral obligations volitionally, people are able to feel both related to their culture and autonomous in their actions. (Deci, Ryan, Gagne, Leone, et.al. 2001, 940.)

Gagne introduces a term secure work place, which means that employees feel that support is available when needed. The employee's capabilities and efforts are being affirmed and appreciated. Also, they have a feeling that they can act and take initiative without being interfered with or interrupted. (Gagne 2014, 109.)

9.2.3 Need for Autonomy

Third need is need for autonomy. Autonomy is defined as freedom to make choices and fulfil one's own pursuits. According to SDT, autonomy refers to volition. It is not so much about individualism or independence but of one's integrated sense of self. (Deci & Ryan 2000 a. 231.)

According to SDT, autonomy is not the same as independence or individualism, that it means volition and endorsement of one's behaviours. The theory states that in both individualistic and collectivist cultures, people have autonomous values and research show that in both individualistic and collectivist cultures, autonomous behaviour relates to motivation and well-being (Gagne 2014, 4.)

If an individual feels autonomy, they have an experience of being able to make choices of their own. They have a freedom to choose and act. They are not forced or controlled from outside, instead the motivation comes from the self, from inside. (Martela & Jarenko 2014 29.)

There have been numerous studies that suggest that if the manager is supportive of subordinate's autonomy it promotes self-motivation. Autonomy support involves supervisors understanding of subordinate's perspective. It involves giving choices and providing information in nonmanipulative way. It also involves encouraging self-initiation. When managers have been more autonomy supportive, their subordinates have reported greater job satisfaction, less absenteeism and better physical and psychological well-being. Also, there has been seen a higher level of trust in the corporation. (Baard, Ryan & Deci 2004, p. 2048-2049.)

From Deci's early research emerged that tangible rewards, evaluations, threats of punishment and deadlines tended to undermine intrinsic motivation. Instead having one's perspectives and feelings acknowledged, in other words autonomy needs, tended to enhance intrinsic motivation. This autonomous motivation leads to satisfaction of basic needs and it has been studied that it has payoffs in terms of productivity, creativity, and lower burnout and turnover. (Gagne 2014. 19, 29.)

The lack of autonomy creates a feeling that the employees are controlled and act on demands of others and their views are irrelevant. As a result of this the feeling of responsibility diminishes and also innovativeness and creativity suffer. (Deci, Connell and Ryan 1989, 588.)

9.3 Studies of SDT

A study by Baard, Deci and Ryan of a motivational basis of performance and well-being has been based on SDT. According to the theory opportunities to satisfy the three intrinsic needs will create self-motivation and effectiveness. The satisfaction of the basic needs also makes a person internalize extant values and regulatory processes, so it also facilitates adjustment. By adjusting a person receives necessary nutriment in order to grow and develop him or herself. Baard, Deci and Ryan had a hypothesis that intrinsic need satisfaction on the job would predict both better performance ratings and

psychological well-being of employees. Naturally they included in their studies, that both social contexts and individual differences influence people's intrinsic need satisfaction and this way their motivation, performance and adjustment. (Baard, Ryan & Deci 2004, p. 2046, 2049-2065.)

Two studies were conducted to test the theory. First a pilot study of a major U.S. banking corporation of 59 employees. The primary study was then conducted of 698 first-line employees from a major investment banking firm. The researchers used questionnaires for gathering the evidence. The results of both studies provided support for the relevance of SDT to motivation in workplace. It was suggested that performance on the job and psychological adjustment are influenced by satisfaction of people's intrinsic needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness. This satisfaction is influenced by managers' supportiveness of autonomy and subordinates' orientation towards wanting to be autonomous. (Ibid. 2004, 2061-2062.)

In the studies, the researchers explored the concept of autonomy support, which they saw as an interpersonal style that can be used by managers in their different managerial functions. The managers need to understand the subordinates' perspectives and then provide them with choice, reflect feelings, provide rationales for requested behaviors and all in all understand the specific issues that are needed in different situations in order to result to create desired outcomes. (Ibid. 2004, 2062-2063.)

Exploring SDT in work organizations and also some related theoretical perspectives indicate that the work environment has crucial importance in how effective the performance is. Baard, Deci and Ryan's approach to work satisfaction is that satisfying the basic needs, results in effective performance. They also found out that there were consistent gender differences in the organizations. Women tended to perceive the managers as less autonomy supportive compared to men. Women also perceived less satisfaction of their relatedness need also and resulted in lower performance evaluations and lower in well-being. There are various ways to explain this but one explanation is that managers were actually less autonomy-supportive of women than of men and this would lead to women feeling also less relatedness. There were disproportionately lower percentage of women in managerial roles, which according to researchers, adds

complexity because it is possible that male and female managers are differentially autonomy-supportive. The researchers conclude that further research will be required of the gender differences. (Ibid. 2004, 2062-2063.)

Another research was conducted for a division of a major office machine corporation. Nearly 1 000 employees participated. The technicians worked “on the road” and the managers had little direct contact with them. The data was collected over an 18-month period, spanning three calendar years. The organization committed to change the climate toward more participative management and employee involvement. (Deci, Connell and Ryan 1989, 581-582.)

The research has as guiding line the ideas of autonomy support, noncontrolling feedback and acknowledged of the subordinate’s perspective. The issue at the organization in question was that the managers and the technicians had very little contact since the technicians were in the field most of their working time. The organization was having profitability and morale problems, the work force had been reduced and the wages frozen. The corporate management wanted to change the organization climate and move toward a more participative management and employee involvement. (Deci, Connell and Ryan 1989, 581-582.)

The research showed that the interpersonal orientations of the managers did relate to the variables that considered better climate and particularly trust. However, it seemed that when employees were very concerned about their wages, benefits and security, supervisory issues were not as important as the researchers predicted. (Deci, Connell and Ryan 1989, 588.)

The research shows that satisfaction of the three basic needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness) were found to positively predict wellbeing at work and negatively predict exhaustion. This in turn has predicted that the better the fulfillment of the basic needs, the lower the rate of turnover would be. (Gagne 2014, 18.)

9.4 A Cross-Cultural Study of Self-Determination

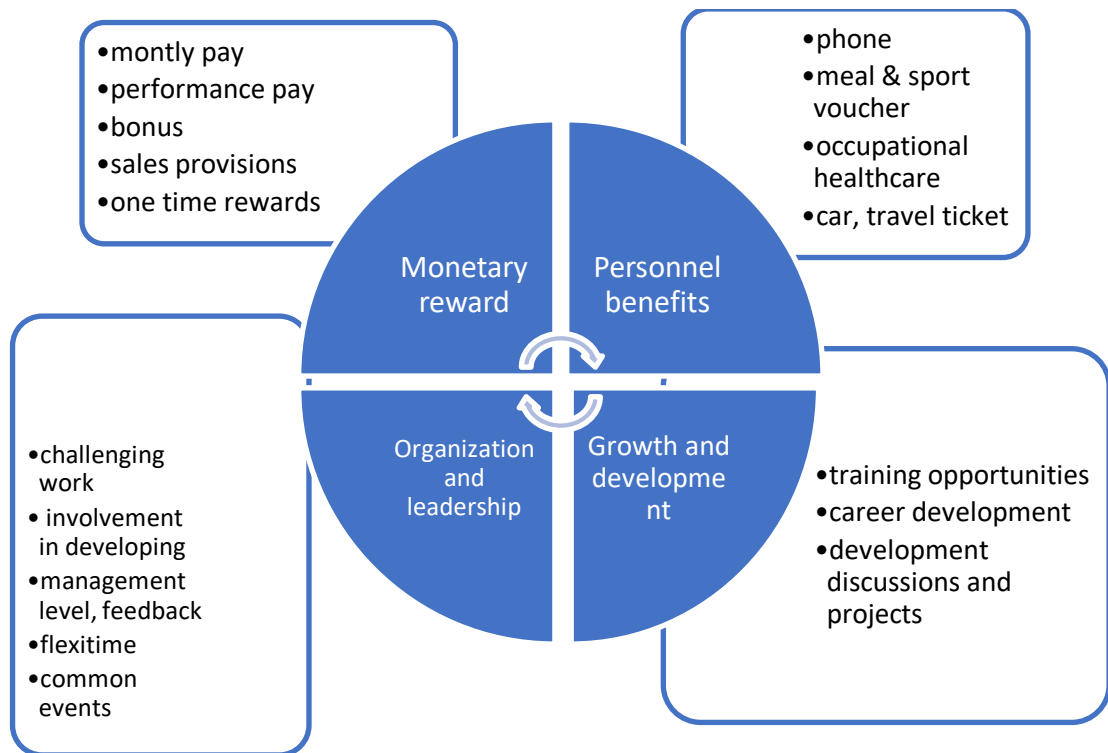
Deci, Ryan and Gagne have done research on whether culture affects the need satisfaction, motivation and well-being in the work organization. It has been debated, if culture has influence on needs or wheatear, they are universal. The researchers claim that the innate psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence indeed are universal and not affected by culture. The researchers studied organizations in Bulgaria, a former eastern bloc country and United States. The study showed that there are some socio-cultural factors that affect needs satisfaction. For example, the Americans' experience of need satisfaction at work depends more on the managerial climate and less on other factors such as peer relationships compared to Bulgarians. The Bulgarians need satisfaction results more on other factors than managements autonomy support. However, in spite of the cultural differences, people were seen as quite similar in issues that affect their motivation and well-being in workplace. (Deci et al. 2001, 939.)

Employees who reported most need satisfaction on the job also had better levels of psychological well-being in both cultures. Also, as manager's in both cultures were more supportive of autonomy, the employees experienced greater need satisfaction. This also led to better work outcomes. The values in these two cultures in other words did not affect significantly the results. (Gagne 2014, 24.)

Undoubtedly people work because of the necessity for monetary reward. However, it has been shown that managers who use rewards in non-controlling ways, rather than emphasizing them as a way to motivate employees, are able to get better outcomes in autonomous motivation. It is also important that reward structures do not require people to compete for rewards and that employees are not too focused on rewards. This has a tendency to manifest taking the shortest path to the outcome and it can lead to gambling and cheating. Also, it is important that employees feel equitably paid in order to be optimally motivated. Rewards are seen by the SDT as most effective if the they are not salient, reflective of good performance, non-competitive and equitable. (Gagne 2014, 28.)

Deci, Connell and Ryan define being self-determined as to experience a sense of choice in initiating and regulating one's own actions. In their research they studied the managers' interpersonal orientations toward supporting subordinates' self-determination versus controlling their behavior. Some early experiments have shown that any input affecting behavior can be classified as informational or controlling. For example, feedback can be perceived as either informational or controlling depending on the interpersonal context like the way the manager communicates. Evaluations, rewards and deadlines on the contrary are issues that are usually relatively invariant. Interpersonal contexts within organizations are more variable and thus they explain variation in employees' attitudes. This is something the management needs to acknowledge when they want to promote support for enhancement of self-determination. (Deci, Connell and Ryan 1989, 580.)

There are both material and immaterial ways to rewards and the picture below gives a comprehensive view to reward systems framework. The picture was represented in an article on Tilisanomat. Sari Leskinen from HR4 Company explains the reward systems in depth. This is included in this framework because the picture represents a totality of meaningful work. It is found very illustrative here of the issues that contribute to motivation at the workplace and engagement.



Picture 5. The framework of total reward system. (Männistö 2018, 20.)

The goal for the company's total reward system is to support, engage and direct the functions based on their chosen strategy. The reward system must be based on the company's goals. This means goals that have been either reached or even exceeded. The goals can be measured in several different ways, for example the turnover or profit. Goals can be set also on different levels like department, team or personal level, just to mention few. It is very important, when planning the reward system, to think of the elements, both material and immaterial it will be built on. The meaningful work is much more than just the material rewards. Often the immaterial rewards are not even easy notice as being rewards. (Männistö 2018 20–21.)

It is central to the engagement of employees to notice the atmosphere at work, supportive management and opportunities to grow and learn. Monetary rewarding is naturally important and it should be on sufficient level but it alone does not engage employees in the long run. In the end the content of the work, learning and development are the most important according to the article in Tilisanomat. The total reward system

should be transparent. I should be understood and the goal should be followed regularly during the year. Communication concerning the reward system is important as well. (Männistö 2018, 22.)

10 THE NATURE OF HUMAN MOTIVATION

10.1 Nature of human motivation in SDT

SDT views human motivation both in quantifiable and qualitative aspect. There are various explanatory issues on the background of motivation. Specifically, the theory suggests three different categories of motivation. Those are, autonomous motivation, controlled motivation and amotivation. These categories all influence the employee functioning differentially. (Gagne 2014, 234.)

Autonomous motivation means acting with volition. The employees have inherent pleasure and satisfaction. In other words, they experience intrinsic motivation. They feel that the task has importance in itself. Controlled motivation means that there is internal or external pressure when the employees perform their work. They have external regulations and they could be pressured by demands, threats or rewards. Amotivation is lack of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Employees do not see the fit between their actions and consequences and feel they are not able to achieve their goals. (Ibid. 2014, 234.)

The workplace is a significant part of an individual's life and it greatly affects his or her life and the well-being of the community. The nature of work has been linked casually to an individual's sense of control and depression. It has also been recognized that depression is second only to ischemic heart disease in contributing to reductions in productive and healthy years of life. However, the well-being of employees is in the

best interests of the employers. The employers spend substantial resources in hiring employees and trying to generate products, profits and maintain loyal customers. Employees demand more than tangible benefits such as pay and pension. They demand also greater meaning and personal development from their work. Ever more employees call for enjoyable fulfilling and socially useful work. (Harter, Schmidt & Keyes 2002, 2.)

In observing a variety of high performing workplaces, it has become clear that the definition of employee engagement that cut across industries, boundaries and even different cultures represented high cognitive and emotional activity. Joy, interest and love (or caring) lead to bonding of individuals to each other, their work, and their organization. When managers pay attention and respond to each individual as a unique person, the daily experiences lead to higher frequency of joy, interest and love (or caring). The employees become more cognitive and emotionally engaged when their basic needs are met. (Ibid. 2002, 2.)

Harter defines basic human needs in the following way. First, they are the clarity of expectations and basic materials and equipment being provided. The fulfillment of these needs reflects the credibility of the organization to the employee. If expectations are not clear and basic materials and equipment are not provided, negative emotions such as boredom or resentment occur. The employees become more focused on surviving than thinking about how the organization can succeed. (Ibid. 2002, 5-8.)

The second definition of needs is the importance of feeling one's contribution to organization. Do the individual employees have the opportunity to do what they do best in their current roles? It is important for the managers to find the connection between the needs of the individual and the needs of the organization. (Ibid. 2002, 5-8.)

Thirdly, it is important for an individual to feel a sense of belonging to something beyond oneself. This need has to do with employees having their opinions heard and involved in the decision making. Involvement can influence individual employee's interest, which in turn broadens the scope of his or her thinking and acting. A meaningful mission or purpose can generate ownership to the organization. Friendships at

work also appear to influence ownership and positive emotions that reinforce creativity and communication. (Ibid. 2002, 5-8.)

Fourthly, it is important to create an environment in which employees can discuss their progress and grow. This means building intellectual resources at work. If the basic needs are being met the employees progress becomes more focused on the organization's functioning and is applied in a way that helps the organization learn and improve. (Ibid. 2002, 5-8.)

Porter and Miles have created a classification system of variables that influence motivation. According to this view, the organizational setting must focus on several sets of these variables. They are 1) individual characteristics, 2) job characteristics, 3) work environment characteristics, 4) external environment characteristics. One or more of these variables should be changed or affected if motivation is to be affected. (Perry, Lyman & Porter 1982, 89.)

10.2 Nature of human motivation according to Logotherapy

In this thesis an interesting field of positive psychology is shortly discussed as well. It is considered here important to introduce along with SDT. The author sees it as complimentary to SDT. As SDT considers three basic needs, logotherapy adds to it a spiritual background. Logotherapy can be described according to Victor Frankl as following:

*“logotherapy focuses on the search for the meaning of human existence”
(Selva 2017.)*

The main idea behind logotherapy is the idea that lack of meaning is the main source of stress and anxiety. Logotherapy aims at finding the meaning of life and it is defined by the idea that human beings are motivated by a “will to meaning” as opposed to “will to pleasure” and “will to power”. (Selva 2017.)

Victor Frankl takes his ideas from his personal experience of life in concentration camps. In concentration camp environment, humans have been deprived of the possibility to satisfy the basic needs. For example, their nutrition is inadequate, they are not able to get enough rest, they lack a sense of safety and dignity. Also, the people in camps suffered physical pain and they have no human rights in general. In spite of the suffering, especially individuals who had rich intellectual capital, were able to adapt to the circumstances and see beauty of nature and to use a spiritual dimension in a deeper sense than ever before. (Frankl, Jokinen & Sandborg 2010.)

Logotherapy sees that in addition to the basic human needs, there is also a spiritual dimension above and beyond the hierarchy of needs. This is interpreted as individual's ability to influence his or her life autonomously. An individual can choose their attitude to life. In other words: life offers humans a purpose and meaning but they can feel that their life has a meaning even if the basic needs are not satisfied. The basic idea behind logotherapy is that the meaning of life is to be found from the world and not from the individual self. (Ibid. 2010.)

According to logotherapy, human freedom is finite freedom. Ultimately man is not subject to the conditions he faces; rather, these conditions are subject to his decision. He decides whether he will face up or give in, whether or not he will let himself be determined by these conditions. Logotherapy suggests that the employee is also free to take a stand to conditions and decide whether or not he succumbs or surrenders to the conditions. (Frankl 2010. 160.)

10.3 Benefits of motivated employees to businesses

There have been studies of the reasons for the best performing companies' success in Finland and other Nordic countries. According to these studies, it has been found that it is not only the management of traditional systems of production but there are more and more issues that concern the so-called functional flexibility. Functional flexibility means such workplaces that give the employees autonomy to take part in decision-making. In other words, the employees have a lot of influence over their work. At the same time, they have a lot of possibilities to learn and grow professionally. A common

denominator for successful companies has been the willingness and ability to actively look for new opportunities and solutions. These benefits both the professional growth inside the company but also outside the company by supporting the connections to businesses outside. (Ylöstalo 2002, 39.)

Harter, Hayes and Schmidt studied the relationship at the business-unit level between employee satisfaction-engagement and the business-unit outcomes. Their implication was that business-unit level satisfaction has positive correlation to customer satisfaction, productivity, profit, employee turnover and accidents. Also, their other implication was that the business-unit outcomes will generalize across organizations. In other words, the results will not depend on the field of the organization. (Harter, Hayes & Schmidt 2002, 269 – 276.)

The study was based on 36 companies and over 7 000 business units and it applied the idea of positive psychology, meaning that the engagement, intrinsic motivation and wellbeing occurs when the employee's basic needs are met fairly consistently. However, the study measured the overall satisfaction and employee engagement as indicators of business-unit performance related culture rather than indicator of individual employee satisfaction. So, the study was not based on individual characteristics. The study concludes that employee satisfaction and engagement are related to meaningful business outcomes and these are generalizable across companies. The research shows that managers can influence the overall satisfaction at the business unit level by understanding the true nature of job satisfaction and more specifically motivation. (Ibid. 2002, 269 – 276.)

The results of the research showed also, that the overall profits, the profit per employee and profits per department correlated strongly. The same research also showed that the variables correlated also with customer satisfaction, staff turnover and work safety in a positive way. The data indicate that workplaces with engaged employees, on average, manage to keep employees, satisfy customers and to be financially productive and profitable better than workplaces that have less engaged employees. (Ibid. 2002, 16.)

11 METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

11.1 The research design

A mixed method research design was chosen for this research. According to the definition of Creswell, Plano, et.al. (2003, 6) mixed methods research involves both collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data means closed-ended information such that can be for example attitudes and behaviour. The analysis of such information consists of statistically analysing scores to answer research questions. In contrast, qualitative data consists of open-ended information that the researcher gathers. The participants answer in their own words. The analysis of qualitative data forms categories of words or images and analyses the diversity of those ideas. (Creswell, Plano, et.al. 2003, 6.)

This thesis can be categorized more specifically to be an embedded case study. Case being the target department and the motivation in this department. The purpose of case study in qualitative research is to explain phenomena in a small group of people, like a team in a workplace or individuals in a specific context. The researchers do not try to find out a universal, generalizable truth but to get deep into the social context of the case in particular. The case is seen as unique to the understanding of the phenomena in an embedded case study. Embedded case studies are often used for example for instructional purposes in business, law or medical schools. (Scholz & Tietje 2002, 2-5.)

Typically, case studies examine the different variables that coexist in order to provide a deeper understanding. Case study can involve interpreting the demographics such as cultural norms, values and attitudes. This thesis concentrates on motivation related attitudes and feelings. Case studies take place in natural settings and the setting for this research is one department of an organization. As case study has been criticized as unscientific. However, it can create deep understanding of the variety of human experience and human society. (Bronwyn et al. 2005.)

Bronwyn et.al. have described case studies into four types. The types are chosen according to the purpose of the study. First type is illustrative case studies. Illustrative case studies are basically descriptions of events or situations and the purpose is to make unfamiliar familiar. The second type is exploratory case studies. The basic idea of this kind of study is to find questions and select types of measurement prior to the main investigation. The third type is the cumulative case study. In this type information is collected from several sites at different times and collection of past studies will allow greater generalization of the results. The fourth type is critical instance case studies. The purpose of them is to question or challenge a highly generalized or universal assertion. (Bronwyn et al. 2005).

This research could be described as being of the first type, the illustrative case study. The aim is to find out what issues rise from the survey about the motivation state of the employees. These issues are unknown before the study and need to be known and acknowledged before something can be done to improve. The study analyses the situation at the target department and finds out events and opinions that the employees have experienced concerning their motivation.

11.2 Survey by a questionnaire and analysis

A survey was chosen with cooperation and mutual agreement with the company because it was agreed it suited best the analysis of motivation and was the best way also in a sense of validity, objectivity and reliability. A definition of a survey according to Trochim (2020) is that a survey encompasses any measurement procedures that involve asking questions of respondents. Roughly the surveys can be divided into questionnaires and interviews.

If this sample was studied by interviews, there could be a risk of getting only the opinions of the few loudest and not the people who are not so verbal in their style of communicating. There would also be loss of anonymity that could affect responses and

there would also be a risk of bias from the researcher's side. Interviews would take much more time as well.

By conducting a survey, using a questionnaire, it is possible to ask the target group the same set of questions anonymously and draw conclusions. However, the choice of questions is challenging and crucial for getting the answers to the actual research questions. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019, 504.) The author believes that combining both open-ended and closed-ended questions benefits the analysis of motivation the best and gives a good view to the situation.

Questionnaires are often used for illustrative/descriptive or explanatory research. This research is illustrative/descriptive research of how employees describe their motivation needs in the target department. In illustrative/descriptive research, attitude and opinion questionnaires are commonly used. They are common in studies of organizational practices and they enable the researcher to identify and describe the variability in different phenomena. Alternatively, this kind of research will enable to explain relationships between variables, in other words, explain cause and effect relationships. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019, 356.)

Quantitative analysis method for the survey is statistical analysis. This is common analysis for surveys where questionnaires are used. The statistical analysis is built mainly from numeric data, for example percentages but there is also verbal data that supplements the numeric data. Especially in this research, the combination of both numeric and verbal answers brings the best of the analysis. (Vehkalahti 2014, 13.)

For this research, it is appropriate to use numeric measurement and analysis in order to find out the issues concerning motivation but also it is necessary to respondents to answer open-ended questions and explain in their own words rather than only ticking boxes. There is also a possibility in the future to organize following interviews to the survey in order to seek to explain findings of the questionnaire even deeper. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019 175.)

In the questionnaire, there are a few questions that are open-ended and the people can answer them in their own words. The data from those questions has been analysed by

qualitative methods and a deductive aspect has been chosen since the themes to examine are linked to the theoretical background of this thesis. A thematic analysis has been used. The focus is on derived themes from SDT to examine the data gathered by the questionnaire.

There are certain steps to using thematic analysis. First the researcher has to familiarise with the data. In this research this means familiarising with SDT and engagement. Also, it is important to know the reality of knowledge work. The researcher will need to look for meanings, recurring themes and patterns in the data. Secondly there is coding of data. There can be references to actions, behaviours, beliefs, conditions, ideas and many other issues by which one can manage the data. (Ibid. 2019, 651-658.)

The codes that are chosen can be either theory or data driven. Searching for themes and recognising relationships is seen as following stage of analysis to coding. In this stage the researcher seeks for example overarching themes from the data. The final stage of the thematic analysis is redefining themes and testing propositions. At this stage the researcher re-evaluates and reorganises themes and analyses if the themes are meaningful in relation to one another and to the data set. (Ibid. 2019, 651-658.)

12 RESEARCH EXECUTION AND RESULTS

12.1 Research execution

In the late November of 2019 the questionnaire and the research topic were introduced to the target department and the process of the research was explained. The research was conducted in December of 2019. The questionnaire consisted of nine questions in total. Some of the questions were closed-ended but there were also open-ended questions where the respondents were able to explain in their own words their feelings

of motivation in the workplace. As explained earlier in the thesis, the target group is one department of an organization. The department consisted at the time of this research of 31 employees and out of them 29 replied to the questionnaire. The questionnaire (in appendix) was open for replies from 9.12 to 19.12.2019.

12.2 Results concerning issues that affect motivation

In the questionnaire the first question was: “How long time you have worked for the company”. This question was seen by the author as an important background information especially when analysing the state of engagement but also when considering the experience of the work in the target department. The results are analysed in more detail in page 65. Second question was: “Out of the following issues, mention three that affect most positively your motivation”. This question aimed to gather information of issues that the employees find positively affecting their motivation in their day to day experiences. The choices weren't in any order of importance. Figure six shows the results of this question. 21 respondents out of 29 found (72,4 %) the content of the work (tasks and versatility) affecting their motivation in a positive way. Second most picked category was pay and benefits. 16 respondents out of 29 (55,2 %) found pay and benefits affecting their work motivation positively. The third most picked out issue was flexibility. 12 respondents out of 29 (41,4 %) found flexibility of the work affecting their motivation positively.

There were three categories that were picked as affecting motivation the most seldom, only by one or two person each and those were; mutual leisure time activities with colleagues, leisure time, hobbies and family life, sense of good work community. The results pointed out that friendliness among colleagues was also mentioned by three individuals to the part where one was able to comment openly, (in the figure six; good colleagues and good work community). These replies seem to support the importance of intrinsic a little bit more than extrinsic motivation considering the overall human motivation. It can be seen that this result supports the view of SDT and the basic needs it has defined.

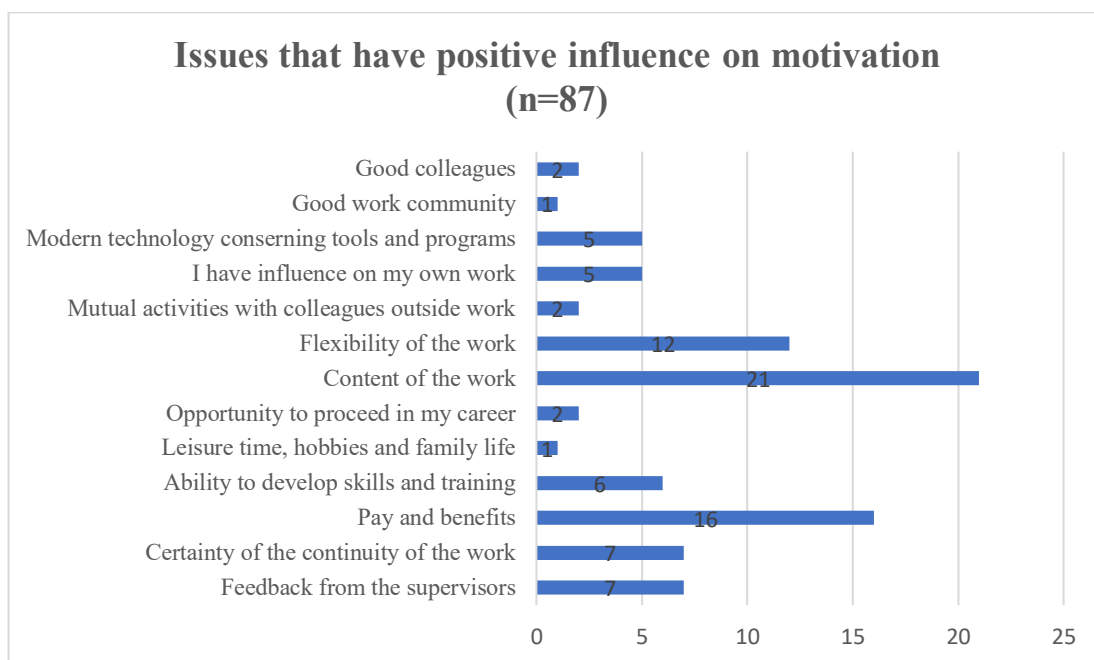


Figure 6. Issues that have positive influence on motivation.

In the questionnaire the third question was “Out of the list of issues, choose three issues that affect your motivation negatively the most”. This question aimed to gather information of issues that the employees find negatively affecting their motivation. The choices weren’t in any order of importance. Figure seven shows the results of this question. The most, 19 respondents out of 29 (65,5 %) found low pay affecting their motivation negatively. Secondly, 16 respondents out of 29 (55,2 %) found that technical problems affect their motivation negatively. Thirdly, 14 respondents out of 29 (48,3 %) found that haste and hectic affect their motivation in a negative way. This question seems to support the more extrinsic issues concerning motivation since the pay has been listed as the most negatively affecting issue.

Also, 11 respondents out of 29 found too heavy workload affecting their motivation in a negative way. There is an assumption that this means that they experience too heavy workload at the time of the survey. This is an interesting point to think further since five respondents out of 29 found that they don’t have enough work and that affects their motivation negatively. In addition to this, one respondent found that they don’t have enough challenges. He or she had both not enough work and challenges. It would

be logical to think at this point of the division of labour and is there something to be done about it.

There are 11 people who say they have too much work and five who say they have not enough work. The assumption is that there is uneven division of work there and that has some effect on motivation in a negative way. The conclusion of this is that by some actions like reorganizing and training, there could be some benefit to motivation. Naturally, there would most likely be other benefits also for example to productivity. It can be said, that there is at least a reason to ponder what reasons lie behind this issue. Are there trust issues, perhaps problems in managing issues concerning direction of work, or lack of time for the managers to use for planning division of work. Perhaps there are issues concerning knowhow between employees and work cannot be shifted or something else.

The workload presumably affects the feeling of hecticness and haste. By dividing work load more evenly, the assumption is that employees would not feel that they have haste in their work so much. The feeling of haste was seen as one of the top three issues that affect motivation in negative way.

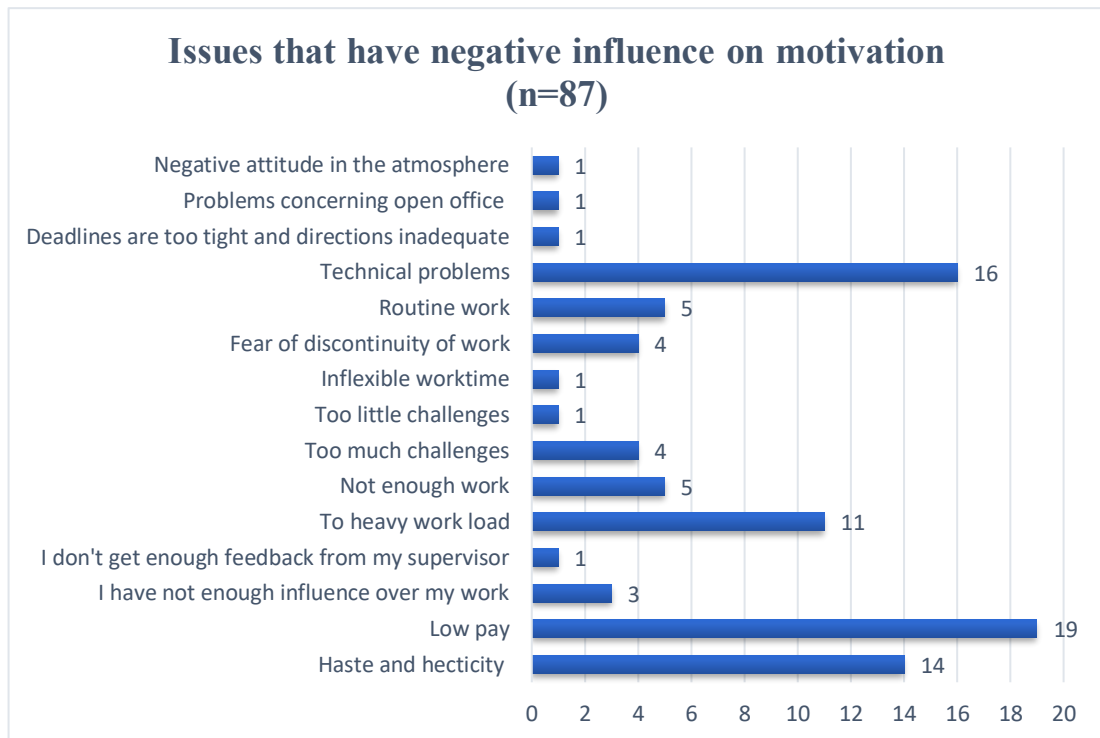


Figure 7. Issues that have negative influence on motivation.

There seems to be no controversy between these two questions concerning issues that affect motivation. For example, 16 respondents find that pay and benefits affect their motivation in a positive way and 19 respondents find that low pay affects their motivation negatively. Also, certainty of continuity of work affected positively in seven person's responses and the fear of losing one's job negatively on four person's responses. Six employees found that new skills and training have a positive effect on their motivation and four respondents found that they are negatively affected by too much challenges. This supports the assumption that the employees might feel that they are perhaps not getting enough training.

12.3 Results concerning open-ended questions

The employees were asked to mention one or more issues that they feel could help them be more motivated in their work. They were asked to reply this question with their own words. There were 25 people who replied to this question and out those

replies 40 individual items to explain motivation was gathered. The replies were itemized to the ones that pictured the same issue. For example, it was decided to itemize the answers “substitution system”, “work should be organized so that...”, “realistic goals” and “ability to balance work and life” under theme: organizing of work. The transcript (attachment 1) of the individual answers is found in the appendix of this thesis. In this transcript it has been marked with certain colour the answers that have been itemized as belonging to one theme.

When asking the employees to list issues that they would find increasing their motivation in work, see figure eight, there is little contradiction to the previous two questions. The respondents most often mentioned “learning and growing professionally”. Second most often mentioned theme was “organizing of work”. Higher pay was only the third most often mentioned theme. In the third question concerning the most negatively affecting issue, pay and benefits were found the most negatively affecting issue and in the second question of the second most important issue affecting positively to motivation. Some mentioned also issues related to working atmosphere and the feeling of having certainty of continuity of work. So, in open ended questions the respondents seem to be motivated more in intrinsic manner but pay as seen an extrinsic motivator is also important.

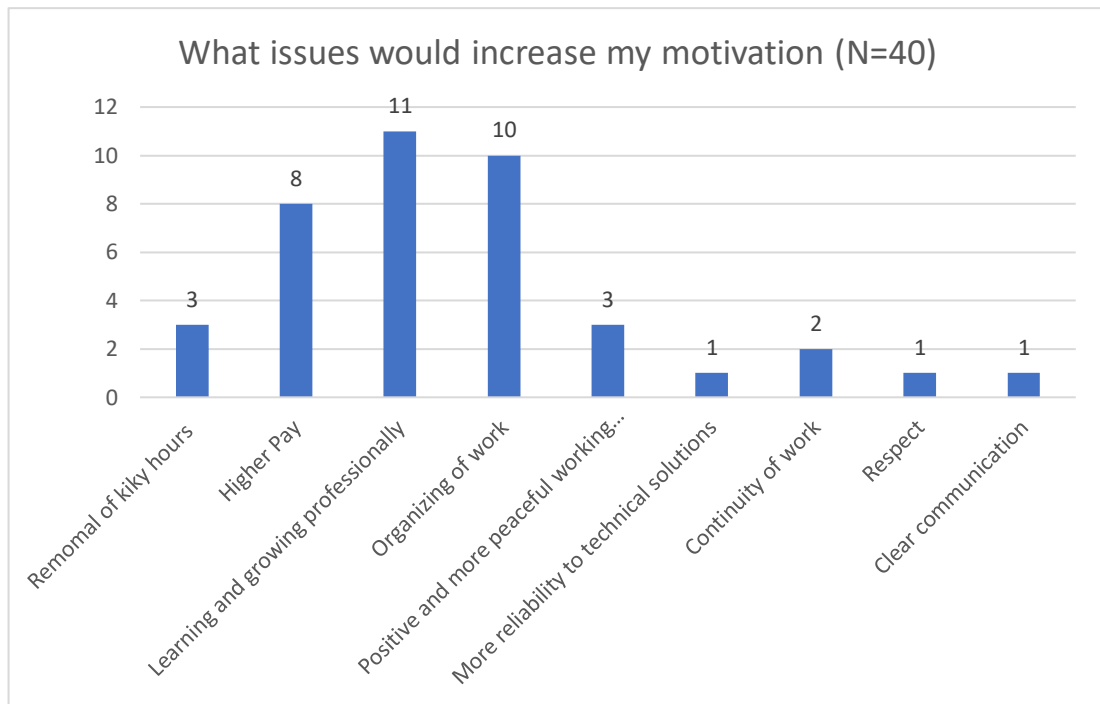


Figure 8. What issues would increase my motivation.

The respondents were asked next what issues have weakened your motivation recently in their own words by open ended questions. See figure nine. There were 30 individual replies from 24 respondents. The respondents most often replied issues concerning the organizing of work. These were issues like unevenly allocated workload, frustrating unnecessary chores or the feeling that the substitution system doesn't work during leisure times. One respondent for example replied:

“during your days off, the substitution system doesn't work”

There was also concern of the team leaders not having enough time to get things going. The next issues that came up from this question had both equally six replies. These were the adding of Kiky hours to work time. This was a national agreement to add Finnish competitiveness and employment that started in 2016. In reality to the target organization this meant the increase of 24 hours to the working time per year. The companies have had freedom to suit this Kiky agreement as they see best and some have even rejected it. In the target organization the agreement was fully taken to use. Changes in organization were the other issue that got the same amount of replies as

Kiky hours. There have been two major organizational changes in five years and obviously these changes seem to affect motivation harmfully. The organizational changes are not discussed in detail in this thesis, but shortly said, the changes affect the professionals in the department more or less and to some this might mean shifting their position to other cities.

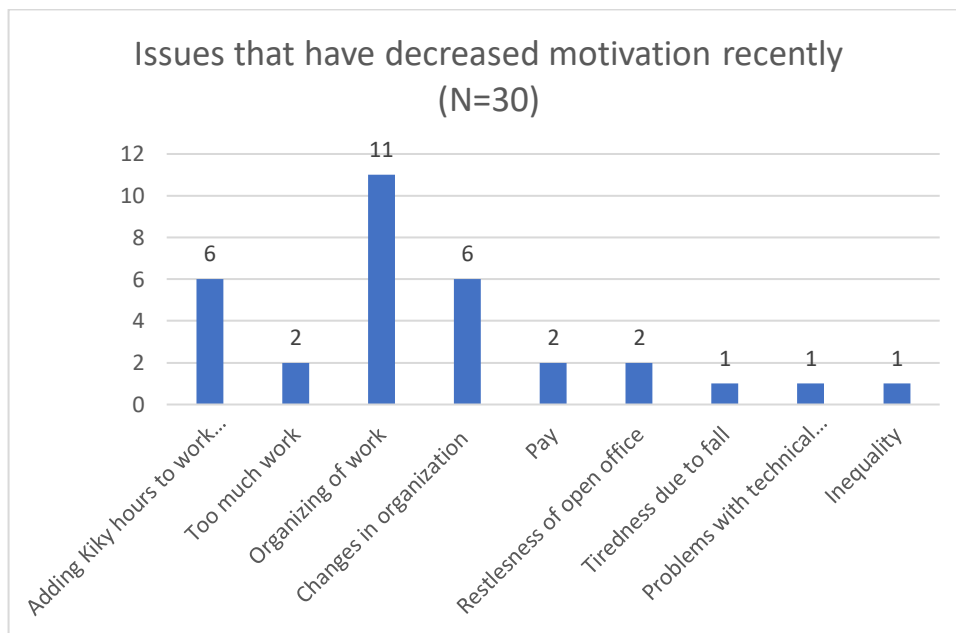


Figure 9. What issues have decreased my motivation recently.

What is noteworthy in the outcome of this question is that pay has not been the most motivation decreasing factor in open-ended replies even if it was that in the closed-ended questions. This might be because the employees might have found the closed-ended questions more general level and the open-ended kind of more personal and as being the most recent thoughts. However, there is some controversy concerning how pay affects motivation in the target organization. It can be seen that this might tell something about the versatility of issues that affect motivation and the concept of motivation as well.

12.4 Three questions concerning competence, autonomy and relatedness

In the questionnaire the author wanted to consider the SDT and find out how the employees see their needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness being fulfilled. The first question aimed to measure competence in Likert scale and explain how employees feel their work matches their professional knowhow. The assumption is that if the employees feel that their professional skills are met and they are able to perform their chores well, their competence needs are met and they are happy. On the contrary, if they feel that they disagree with the claim, they feel that they perhaps have potential that is not at use in their work and the tasks are too simple or they might feel that the tasks are too demanding compared to their skills and would need some training or support for example. In the latter incidence the need for competence would not be met and the employees would not be happy.

The result from the question shows that 62 % of the respondents, state that they agree to the claim that their work matches their knowhow. See figure ten. This is 18 out of 29 respondents. Eight Respondents out of 29, which is 28 % stated that they strongly agree that their work matches their knowhow. There are however three respondents, that is ten pour cents, who state that they disagree with the claim. They feel that their work doesn't match with their knowhow in some level. Overall, the outcome of this question reveals that most employees seem to feel that their work matches their skills and this way according to SDT their needs would be met. On the other hand, there are few people who feel otherwise and might need some support or checking of chores in detail in order to find out why they feel that their work does not match with their knowhow.

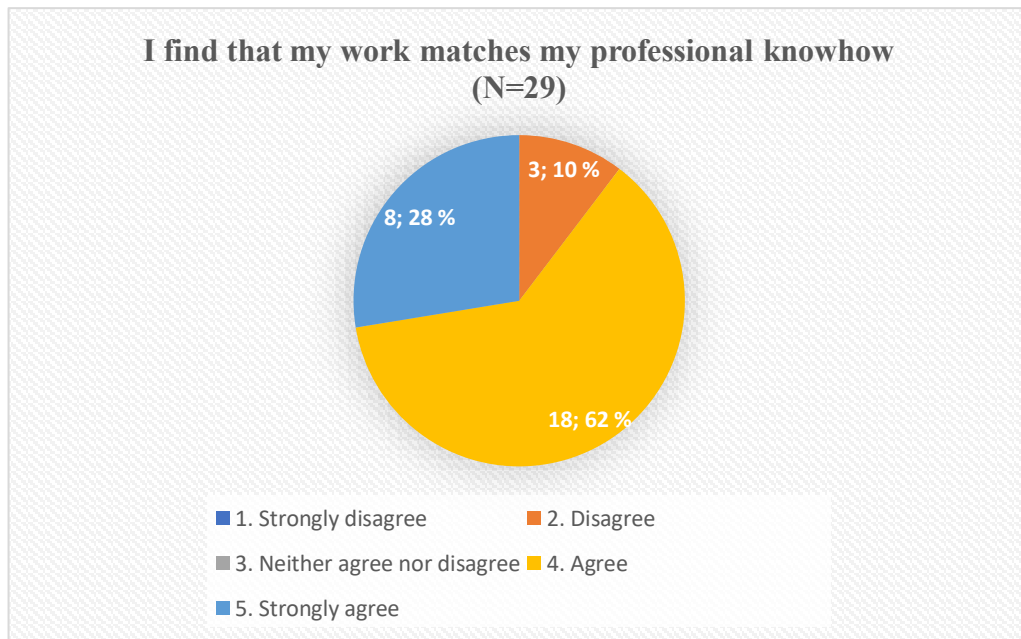


Figure 10. My work matches my professional knowhow.

The second question of this part of the questionnaire was about autonomy. The employees were asked if they felt that they were able to influence their work enough. See figure 11. Most of the respondents, 59 %, that is 17 out of 29 respondents felt that they were able to influence the content of their work enough. This result means that considering SDT, the employees get their autonomy need satisfied and are happy. 17 %, five out of 29 respondents disagreed with the claim. They felt that they didn't have much influence on their work. This means that there are a group of people who might feel that they are not quite autonomous and would wish to get more influence in their work. This might need an in-depth interview or face to face talk with the team leader and employee in order to find out more specific thoughts or wishes behind this view. The author's suggestion is that in order to find these employees who feel lack of autonomy, the team leaders could in the next one to one discussion ask questions concerning this issue and see if there is anything, they could do in order to improve it.

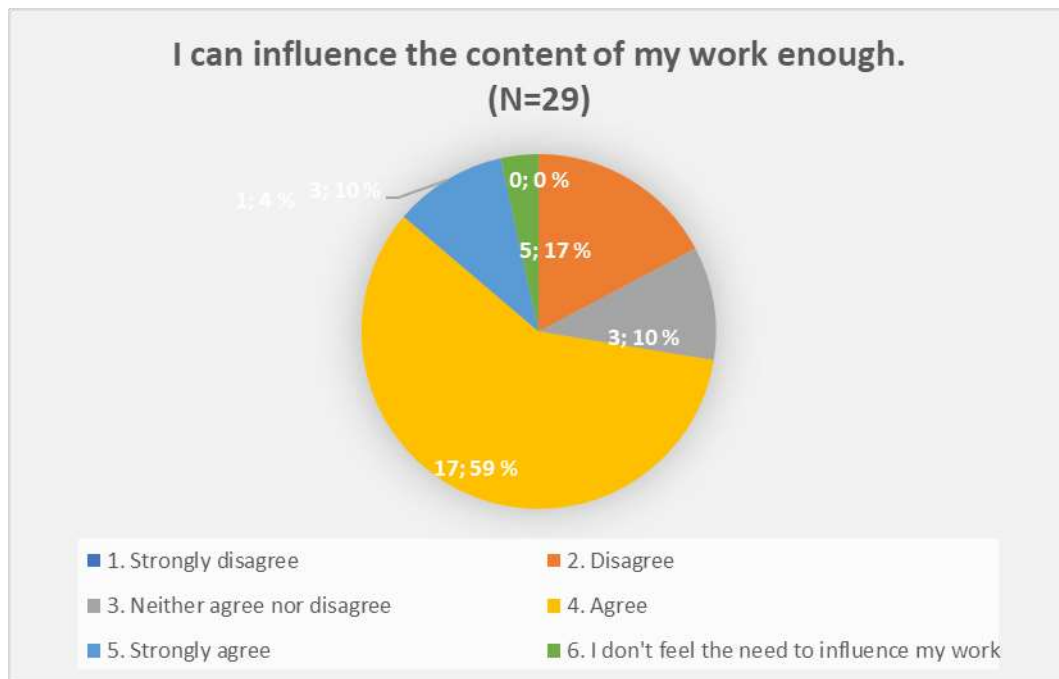


Figure 11. I can influence the content of my work enough.

The third question of this part of the questionnaire was about relatedness. The aim was to measure if the employees feel they can trust their colleagues and what kind of atmosphere there is in the workplace concerning relatedness. See figure 12. 69%, that is 20 out of 29 felt that they strongly agree that they can trust the support of their colleagues. This response signifies a very good atmosphere between colleagues and the trust inside the department. There were also eight employees who had slightly lower level of trust (the answer was agree) but this is a positive result as well in terms of relatedness need. One person out of 29 felt totally the opposite having the feeling that she or he strongly disagrees with the feeling of having trust to colleague's support. Naturally this is not good for the individual but it is something that might come up in one to one discussion with the team leader. In overall the situation with the relatedness need is excellent.

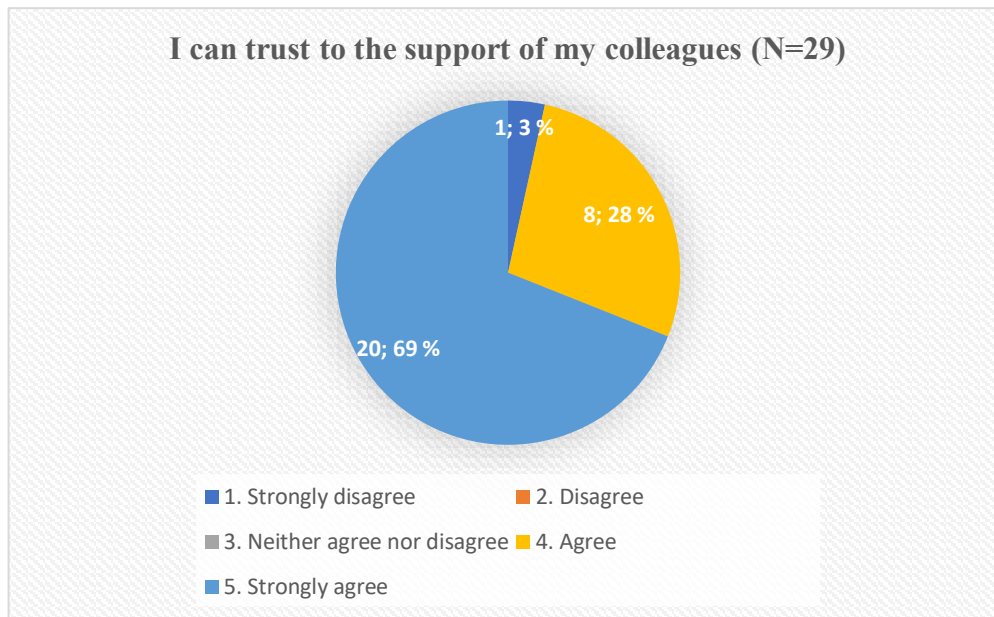


Figure 12. I can trust the support of my colleagues.

12.5 The general motivation in the target department

The last question in the questionnaire aimed to measure the overall scale of motivation in the target department. See figure 13. 16 employees out of 29 found that their work is quite motivating. This is 55 % of the sample which means that the respondents' motivation is on a good level. It can be claimed that there are no big problems at the moment. Ten employees out of 29 even found that their work is very motivating which is the best score possible. Still, there were two people who found that their work motivates them very little. This is again individually sad and further discussion would be needed in order to find out more in depth of these people's reasons. Perhaps some explanation can be found in the open-ended questions already.

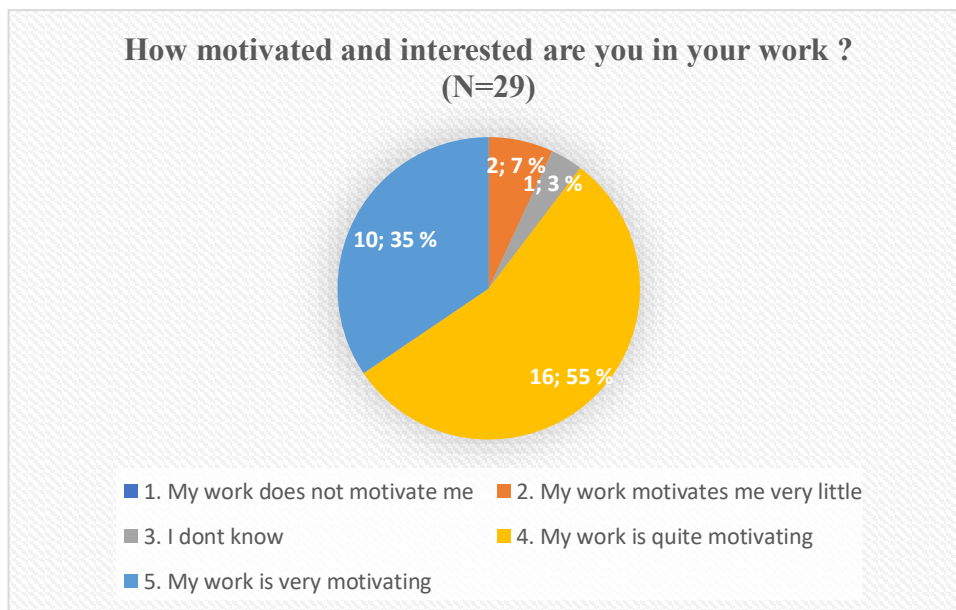


Figure 13. How motivated and interested are you in your work.

In the questionnaire, it was also asked about the time each respondent had worked at the target company. By this question it was aimed to find out if there are a lot of people who have worked at the company for a long time and are engaged. The author felt that if there was majority of those, this would have been consistent with the research findings that the Finnish don't value most highly the pay or possibilities of moving forward in career. According to Alasoini (2010, 31.) Finnish people value highest loyalty to the employer, the social relationships at the work place, ability to realize themselves and ability to balance work and life. Also, a comfortable working environment and the fairness in management are seen as important values in Finnish work. Naturally this also would tell that these people have had motivation to at least stay at the company and engage. On the other hand there were several people who resigned and those people are not included in this survey, so this means that at the time of the survey the reasons of the resigned were not heard in this survey. It is clear that the more engaged people were the ones that participated.

At the time of the research, there were 12 people out of 29 respondents who had worked over ten years in the target company. Seven people had worked for five to ten years. In general engagement to the company is on good level. On the other hand, those people who have left recently are not included in this research.



Figure 14. How long have you worked for your employer?

12.6 Thematic analysis considering SDT

In the conceptual framework of the thesis lies the SDT that is used for analysis of the research. Also, in the conceptual framework lies the surrounding knowledge work background and the engagement thinking. As has been explained in the thesis, SDT explains human motivation by basic need satisfaction. Upcoming themes in the open-ended questions according to SDT have been analysed. The themes being competence, autonomy and relatedness. The categorization of the responses to themes is found in detail in appendix of this thesis, as attachment 2.

Most of the open-ended replies concerning positive effects to motivation, are linked to the competence need. The theme being issues that support competence. Out of 41 single replies there were 21 that covered this theme. The replies were for example “to be able to make progress in one's career” and “learning new”. This result supports the theory and the importance of intrinsic need satisfaction. Second most often the replies linked to pay and benefits, there were 11 out of 41 replies that called for better pay and the Kiky hours to be removed from working hours. This theme relates to extrinsic motivation and is fairly understandable in a field that has rather low wages and high responsibility. The conceptual framework of the thesis suggest that pay and benefits

are important concerning motivation but in the long run they might not support engagement as much as the satisfaction of intrinsic needs.

The third most often mentioned need to come up in the replies was the issues that support the need for autonomy. There were six replies that supported this theme. These were for example “the ability to balance work and life well” and “the continuance of work”.

Also, in the replies concerning issues that have decreased person’s motivation there are mostly issues that were linked to the need for competence. There replies like “too little support for solving problems”, “additional work that feels unnecessary” and “frustrating unnecessary chores. In the analysis the issues that decrease employee’s motivation are linked to the competence need not being satisfied. There were 25 employees’ that replied to this question and these were divided into 30 different individual answers. From these it was itemized 13 replies that could be thought of competence related issues. Eight of the replies were about pay and benefits and six were concerned with organizational changes and the uncertainty of continuance of work.

This result can be analysed as being in line with other findings in this thesis and consistent with SDT. Mostly the issues concerning intrinsic motivation seem to have an effect to employee’s motivation but very important are also the feeling of pay and benefits and continuity of work to human motivation. The thematic analysis is pictured in appendix of my thesis as attachment number three.

13 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

13.1 Most common issues that affect motivation

SDT explains human motivation as a dichotomy of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Human beings want to satisfy their intrinsic needs but they also experience extrinsic motivation for example due to social, cultural or other reasons. In this research the content of the work was considered the issue that motivates employees in the target organization the most. This supports the theory's view of intrinsic motivation. Also, in the thesis it has been claimed that engagement increases when intrinsic motivation is high. Most of the respondents of this research can be seen engaged since the majority of employees have worked at the target company for over ten years.

In the target department it seems that content of the work is most often seen as being satisfying and at good state. However, there are also individual differences to this view. There are individuals who feel otherwise and see that the content of the work is not challenging enough or on the contrary is too challenging.

Pay and benefits were seen the second most positively affecting issue to motivation. This is an example of extrinsic motivation. Naturally employees work because they have to earn a living. In this thesis it was stated that pay correlates to job-satisfaction only to a point when people reach the standard level of comfortable living. The target company operates in a field where wages are rather low. In this light it can be seen as very logical that employees feel that pay and benefits affect their motivation. Up to some point rise on wages would indeed increase their motivation but the assumption is that at some point the pay is not so crucial anymore.

The third most positively affecting issue to motivation in this research is flexibility of work. The reality of today's knowledge work is that people require flexibility in order

to be able to contribute to other things in life as well compared to work. Family, hobbies and friends are seen as an important balancing factor to demands at work. Considering the SDT, the need for autonomy supports this result. People have a need to feel that they can influence their timetable at work and at home.

In the survey it was asked also about the negative issues that affect motivation. Out of the issues to choose from, the mostly chosen was low pay. The recent developments in the economy have kept pay rises frozen or very modest. This of course explains the results of this question well.

Second most negative affecting issue was according to the respondents were technical problems. In the age of digitalization and paperless offices, the technical problems are common. In light of the SDT, these problems can be seen as diminishing person's competence needs. If a person is constantly faced with technical challenges, it most probably stalls his or her success in the work. It may even affect customer service and cause frustration to both customers and employees. This problem causes challenges and demands for the IT department and how they are able to solve problems as fluently as possible.

The third most negatively affecting issue was haste and hecticness. When considering the SDT, there are elements of each human need category that are affected by haste. A person can feel lack of autonomy, if there is no time or space to make autonomous decisions, they may instead have to only follow a set timetable. He or she might also feel lack of competence since there is no room for development of work or training. Also, the need satisfaction of relatedness suffers since haste makes people more irritated and perhaps resentful of co-workers who might have a better balance of work.

13.2 Analysis of open-ended questions

When asked as open-ended questions about issues that the respondents feel affecting their motivation positively, learning and growing professionally was the most often

mentioned issue. Second most often mentioned theme was organizing of work. This is defined in this thesis as organizing the workload and content of work. Higher pay was only the third most often mentioned theme.

When asked as open-ended questions about issues that the respondents feel affecting their motivation negatively, organising of work was the most important issue. The same issue has been an important factor in both positive and negative implications of motivation. It is safe to say that it has importance and should be acknowledged in the organization to large extent. Organizational changes and Kiky hours are also seen as negatively affecting issues to motivation. Kiky hours especially have been on the agenda of work unions recently and there is a lot of controversy surrounding them. Organizational changes are issues that always are on the background but the communication about them is crucial to motivation and also listening to the employees is something recommendable to some extent. In the knowledge work atmosphere people are experts of their field and want to be able to influence their field more than before.

13.3 Fulfillment of basic needs

Part of the research concentrated on finding out how the basic needs according to SDT are seen fulfilled by the employees in the target department. According to results, autonomy, relatedness and competence needs are seen fulfilled and the employees mostly find that they have enough autonomy and they can trust their co-workers. Also, they mainly feel that their work meets their skills well. However, there are individuals that find otherwise. These people are potentially lacking motivation and they should be looked after in the future.

14 CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this thesis was to find out the state of motivation at the target department. Overall motivation was on a good level according to the analysis of the research. Most employees found that their work is quite motivating and interesting. This is reassuring considering the target departments motivation and it can be said that things are on a good level. At the moment it could be analysed that people are engaged to the organization. There are a few people who don't feel the same and they demand some extra attention from the management. Also, the overall motivation of the employees is to be nurtured constantly and should not be taken as granted.

Another goal was to answer the question: What are the issues that affect human motivation according to SDT? The thesis has answered to this question by explaining the view of SDT and analyzing the results of the survey in light of the theory. The thesis finds that basic needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness reflect from the replies of the target departments employees.

One of the research questions was: What are the specific characteristics concerning motivation in the target department? The specific characteristics are shown in chapter 12. Briefly, the specific characteristics concerning the target department are the content of the work, pay and flexibility of the work. In knowledge intensive field it is natural that content of the work plays a big role in employees' life. Work life balance however is very important as well. To mention some specific characteristics concerning motivation were for example unnecessary chores that the employees saw as decreasing their motivation. Also, it came up that the substitution system was not found working very well by some.

The last of the research questions was: Could this research be taken into use in the organization for the future as well? The author sees that it could be taken to use and

the suggestion is that it should be taken to use even if the situation with motivation was found very good. This is because the research studies only the short period of December of 2019. In order to follow motivation and to find out important issues of what is going on at the department, continuous research is necessary. This questionnaire is easily repeated, it doesn't take much time from the respondents and it gives on the pulse information to the team leaders. This in turn helps the team leaders to plan and execute issues that keep up employee's motivation and engagement in the long run.

14.1 Suggestions for future action

The main suggestion for future actions in light of the research is that in the one to one discussion between team leader and employee it should be taken to agenda to ask deeper questions of motivational issues and things that have an effect on it. The goal for this is to find the persons who have problems with motivation. As it has been stated in this thesis, there are individual differences and differences in personalities that affect how motivation is built. The one to one discussion helps to find these issues and use them in the process of motivation building and taking care of person's motivation needs. There were few people who felt that they didn't have enough challenges in the department. Also, there were those who felt they had too much challenges. They should be taken into consideration in the one to one discussion. Naturally, the suggestion is that these issues would be solved in the long run to benefit all.

There is also a suggestion concerning non-promotable chores. It came out in the research that employees felt they had chores that could be described as unnecessary. These chores take time from the core duties of the work and training. Perhaps the management could have talks about these issues with the employees and see if some of those chores could be redesigned or even removed. The managers could be more aware that this is a problem for job-satisfaction.

Issues with equality at workplace is something that cannot be only left to speeches and posters. Equal opportunities and fair treatment affect motivation and engagement and it can be analysed from this research that there are some feelings of unequal division of work among employees. Perhaps this is a sign of a bigger problem. It is a suggestion of this thesis that the management should observe if there are bigger issues behind feeling of inequality in the workplace. Do all employees truly feel that they are appreciated equally and given opportunities in an equal amount. The main idea is that the management is able to see the importance of motivated staff and create opportunities.

Considering pay and benefits, it is a bigger question. In this thesis there will be no suggestions to those issues. However, small steps concerning titles and being able to advance in one's career inside the organization could be taken to discussion and these issues could be developed to some extent. Also, training possibilities and employee's ability to affect one's content of work could be designed in cooperation. There is the one to one discussion already that exist in the departments culture. This could be crucially important for good motivation results in case they would concentrate to finding the motivation factors of the employees.

14.2 Validity of the research

Validity means the ability to measure what was intended to measure. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019, 517). The intention of this research was to measure the motivation in the target department. The survey was able to measure the motivation of the target department well. The questions in the questionnaire were discussed with the team leaders of the target department and in those discussions, they were agreed. Naturally the research is not very wide and does not aim to compete with the very wide people first research. Since the intention was to get an in dept opinion of the employees of the state of motivation the aim was reached. The amount of questions was important to be kept small so that the questionnaire would be repeatable in the future. The long-term benefits could be reached only in the long term. The questionnaire was tested a few times before the launch first by the team leaders and then by the author's family members.

The questions used in the questionnaire are adopted and adapted from some other researchers' questionnaires.

14.3 Reliability of the research

In order for the survey to be reliable it should have consistency. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019, 517-518.) survey should produce consistent findings at different times and in different conditions. Also, there is a risk that the respondents interpret the questions in the questionnaire one way, when the researcher means something else. In order to avoid these from happening, the questions were tested a couple of times before launching the survey. The questions were discussed beforehand with the managers, the thesis supervisor and fellow students. The questions were aimed to form so that there would be minimum risk of misunderstanding. The questionnaire was for example in Finnish and the presentation was done before conducting the research in an office meeting to the target group by letting the employees know what was to be expected and when. The questionnaire had also a cover letter, that briefly explained why these questions were asked and some details concerning the answering. The questionnaire can be able to produce consistent answers at different times and in different conditions. The results of this survey can be held reliable in terms of response rate. Out of 31 employees 29 replied to the questionnaire.

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APPENDIX 1

Transcript of answers to question number four. What issues would help you get better motivation at work? The answer “I have a good motivation” has not been included in analysis and has been interpreted as neutral attitude to the question.

letting go of KIKY agreement x 3
Feeling of success in tasks
Learning new
The work should be organized so, that the individual tasks are carefully planned in some time period with team leaders and the organizing of the tasks should be based on the best possible estimate of timeframe (time of performing the task), the estimate of time frame should not be based on budget related estimates. All tasks need the time they need in order to be performed properly and the agreed time frame should be kept. It is not ok, if the time frame is interfered by demands from the higher level of organization that need attention right away.
Clear communication of upcoming changes
Realistic goals and timeframes
Better pay
Respect in the work community
Versatile chores
Certainty of continuity of work
Better pay
Removal of kiky hours of the worktime
Clear and adequate training for the new employees matching the challenges
To be able to get enough challenges
To be able to make progress in one's career
Better pay
Ability to balance work and life well
Training events
I have a good motivation
A good substitution system
Challenges
New challenges
Pay level
Better pay
Removal of kiky hours of the worktime
Calmer working atmosphere
Better pay
Better pay
Supervisor's support
It would be more appealing to come to work after vacations if the workload would not fall over you
The workload should be more even
Positive atmosphere

Good spirit among colleagues
The continuance of work
Flexibility of work
Versatile chores
Raise
Changing level of challenges of work in appropriate way
If the technical solutions worked better
Enough time to concentrate on the customer

40 replies

Themes

Removal of kiky hours
Higher Pay
Learning and growing professionally
Organizing of work
Positive and more peaceful working atmosphere
More reliability to technical solutions
Continuity of work
Respect
Clear communication

APPENDIX 2

Thematic analysis of issues that the respondents find would help them get more motivated in their work.

Mention one or more issues that would help you get more motivated in your work.

Theme: competence

Feeling of success in tasks

Learning new

All tasks need the time they need in order to be performed properly and the agreed time frame should be kept. It is not ok, if the time frame is interfered by demands from the higher level of organization that need attention right away.

Clear communication of upcoming changes

Realistic goals and timeframes

Versatile chores

Clear and adequate training for the new employees matching the challenges

To be able to get enough challenges

To be able to make progress in one's career

Training events

A good substitution system

Challenges

New challenges

Calmer working atmosphere

Supervisor's support

It would be more appealing to come to work after vacations if the workload would not fall over you

The workload should be more even

Flexibility of work

Versatile chores

Changing level of challenges of work in appropriate way

If the technical solutions worked better

Enough time to concentrate on the customer

Theme: Autonomy

The work should be organized so, that the individual tasks are carefully planned in some time period with team leaders and the organizing of the tasks should be based on the best possible estimate of timeframe (time of performing the task), the estimate of time frame should not be based on budget related estimates.

Respect in the work community

Certainty of continuity of work

Ability to balance work and life well

The continuance of work

Flexibility of work

Theme: Relatedness

Positive atmosphere

Good spirit among colleagues

Total:

21	Competence
6	Autonomy
2	Relatedness
11	Pay and benefits
1	I have a good motivation

APPENDIX 3

Thematic analysis of issues that the respondents find decrease their motivation at work.

Theme: Competence

haste

too much work

too little support for solving problems

there is a lot of chores that are not planned, the timetable and who is responsible are not thought of
problems with technical issues (for example Flow and Power Bin)

additional work that feels unnecessary, for example 4 DX

The unevenly allocated workload

Frustrating unnecessary chores

Directions that come to employees, are always incorrect the first time

Challenges coming from organizational changes

The substitution system doesn't work during leisure times

The team leaders don't have time to get on with things

There are not enough demanding chores

Theme: Autonomy

Interfering into small things

Theme: Relatedness

Inequality

Total:

Competence	13
Autonomy	1
Relatedness	1
Pay and benefits	8
Restless working atmosphere	2
Organizational changes	6

Responses:

haste

too much work

too little support for solving problems

there is a lot of chores that are not planned, the timetable and who is responsible are not thought of

problems with technical issues (for example Flow and Power Bin)

there have been many co-operations negotiations

uncertainty of continuance of work

Adding Kiky hours to working time

additional work that feels unnecessary, for example 4 DX

Adding Kiky hours to working time when the company is financially secure regardless, feels unnecessary

The unevenly allocated workload

The level of pay has stayed the same, even if you work has become more challenging

Frustrating unnecessary chores

Directions that come to employees, are always incorrect the first time

Interfering into small things

Adding Kiky hours to work time, the employee does extra flexitime in the spring and that is not appreciated in any way

Not being able to continue working at the office after internship

Inequality

Challenges coming from organizational changes

Adding Kiky hours to work time

Restless working atmosphere

Pay level is weak in comparison with demands of the work

Uncertainty

Open office

Adding Kiky hours to work time

The substitution system doesn't work during leisure times

The team leaders don't have time to get on with things

Tiredness due to fall

There are not enough demanding chores

There have been many co-operations negotiations

Future OS project

Adding Kiky hours to work time

APPENDIX 4

Sähköpostin viesti:

Hei,

viestin linkistä pääset vastaamaan kyselylomakkeen kysymyksiin. Vastaathan jokaiseen kysymykseen huolellisesti. Kysymyksiä on yhteensä yhdeksän. Kerron tutkimukseni tuloksista, kun palaan töihin. Kiitos osallistumisesta!

Toivotan hyvää joulua ja onnellista uutta vuotta!

Heidi

Kyselylomakkeen viesti:

Tervehdys.

Pidin pienen esittelyn opinnäytetyöstäni toimistopalaverissa 28.11. Kerroin tuolloin, että opiskelen Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulussa ylempää amk -tutkintoa. Opinnäytetyöni aihe on työmotivaatio.

Kyselytutkimukseni tarkoitus on selvittää; mikä motivoi ja mikä ei motivoi teitä.

Tutkin myös motivaation tilannetta yleisesti tilipuolella.

Olen tutkinut itseohjautuvuus -teorian pohjalta ihmisen motivaatioon liittyviä asioita ja tämä tutkimus pohjautuu tuon teorian näkemykseen.

Toivon, että tutkimukseni antaa kehitysvinkkejä ja uusia työkaluja, joiden avulla voimme yhdessä parantaa motivaatiota tulevaisuudessa.

Viestin linkistä pääset vastaamaan kyselylomakkeen kysymyksiin.

Lomakkeen joissakin vaihtoehdoissa on tekstinä ”other”, koska en pystynyt muuttamaan sitä suomen kielelle. Tuo kohta tarkoittaa, että voit halutessasi vastata jotakin muuta kuin mikä vaihtoehtoihin on valittu, voit vastata omin sanoin. Kiitos osallistumisesta!

Toivotan hyvää joulua ja onnellista uutta vuotta!

Ystävällisin terveisin

Heidi

APPENDIX 5

Motivation at workplace: questionnaire.

9.12.2019

1. How long time have you worked for Company X Oy

2. Choose from the following alternatives three, that have the biggest positive effect to your motivation at work.
 - feedback from your supervisor
 - assurance of the continuity of the work
 - pay and benefits
 - possibility to grow and training
 - leisure activities and family life
 - possibilities to progress at work
 - the content of the work (chores)
 - flexibility of work (flexitime)
 - socializing with co-workers in spare time
 - ability to influence the content of your work
 - modern technical solutions and tools
 - something else, what...

3. Choose from the following alternatives three, that have the biggest negative effect to your motivation at work.
 - hurry, hectic schedule
 - low level of pay
 - I don't have enough possibility to influence the content of my work
 - I don't receive enough feedback from my supervisor
 - too heavy workload
 - not enough work
 - too much challenges
 - not enough challenges
 - inflexible work
 - fear for the work's discontinuity
 - routine work (too much of routine work)
 - problems with technical tools and solutions
 - something else, what...

4. Mention one or several issues that would help you to get motivation in your work

5. Mention one or several issues that have affected negatively to your motivation in recently

6. I feel that my work matches by knowledge
 - Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree

7. I feel that I can influence the content of my work
 - Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree
 - I don't feel the need to influence the content of my work

8. I can trust the support from my colleagues
 - Strongly disagree
 - Disagree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly agree

9. How would you describe your motivation?
 - my work does not motivate me
 - my work motivates me very little
 - I don't know
 - my work is somewhat motivating
 - my work is very motivating