



Development Proposal of Employment Offer: Case Organization X

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This thesis was commissioned by an organization, which has separate employment offers in different countries in which it operates. The aim was to develop an even better employment offer to obtain competitive advantage and to achieve better job satisfaction. The objective of this thesis was to synergize the offers in all countries in a way it is possible within the laws and regulations. This thesis also gave additional information for the organization in what it could offer even more. The theoretical framework concentrates in areas of human resource management, which are related to the subject area. The focus areas were strategic human resource management, best practices, requirements and trends, competitive advantage, and job satisfaction. This cluster of focus areas directed the research and the development proposal. The thesis is a research based development study, which was implemented as quantitative research. An online survey was conducted to all employees of the target organization. The results were analyzed by SPSS statistics software by utilizing cross tabulation method.

The key result of the research was that the employment offers need development, as well as synergizing to be congruent in all countries. According to the results, especially employment offers of Sweden and Norway needed development. As an outcome of the research, all focus areas needed development. A development proposal was presented in accordance with the theoretical framework presented in this thesis and with the results of the research. The proposal is a synergized employment offer, which can be utilized in all three countries. It is developed to be a better functioning employment offer to achieve the target of this thesis.

Keywords: HRM, employment offer, development

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1 Introduction

The workforce, individual people, have expectations in their work life. The expectations can be demanding or they can be just small single things, but what is common with them is, that the individuals have the will to give their input and time to get something back from their employer. Of course, one is money, but individuals have much more demands than that. Whether the demands are shorter hours, free coffee, paid time off, promotions or a corner room in the office, they are things that truly matters for individuals. (Corporate Offers 2021.) Most commonly they want to know what is expected from them and want to be treated right and fairly, but these demands may be as important as any other demand. Employees are never fully satisfied, but organizations around the world need to find the ways how to make their employees happy to be motivated and less exhausted. (Osprey 2018.)

The theory part of this thesis concentrates on some key areas of developing employment offer. In order to build a well-functioning employment offer, it must be built top to down. It means that an employment offer should always be based on something, so organizations will not end in a situation of offering certain things without understanding why they are selected to an employment offer. To have a solid basis on all related areas, strategic human resource management is defined and the connection of it to the areas is disclosed. Theory of requirements and trends in human resource management are sift through to understand what are required to take into account in the development proposal and what are current trends in human resource management right now, which are elements which should be concerned in an employment offer. The link between human resource management to job satisfaction and competitive advantage in terms of current employees and attracting new ones in defined to understand and therefore underline the importance of the employment offer. Also, best practices are taken into account as much used approach in developing.

This thesis is a research based development study, which is made with quantitative method. Research of the target organization is made with survey for all employees to gain principally quantitative information of their satisfaction to current offers, but also open questions are used to receive more specific information. The data gathered from employees is binded with the theory and therefore used to the development proposal of employment offer in the target organization.

1.1 Objectives

This thesis is commissioned by the target organization. The purpose is to solve the target organizations challenge in human resource management. It has a problem with having partly separate employment offers in all three different countries, where it operates. The purpose is

to synergize the employment offers in a group and aims to a result, where the offers are synergized and developed to a better functioning offer.

The aim is to develop an even better employment offer to obtain competitive advantage and to achieve better job satisfaction. This thesis will solve the problem by synergizing the offers in all countries in a way it is possible within the laws and regulations. The thesis will also give additional information for the organization in what it could offer even more. Aim is to obtain better job satisfaction and achieve competitive advantage in terms of recruiting more employees and keeping current employees.

The research problem focuses on improving employment offer. This thesis focuses on finding answers to the research questions. The research questions are:

- What the organization should offer for employees to achieve better job satisfaction and competitive advantage?
- Which areas should be implemented or developed?
- What kind of employment offer suit this particular organization best?

1.2 Organization Introduction

The target organization stays anonymous and is named in this thesis as organization X. It is located in the Nordics, more specifically in Sweden, Norway and Finland. According to Tilastokeskus (2021), organizations with turnover between 10 and 50 million euros and employees between 50 and 250 are defined as medium sized organizations. According to this, the target organization is a medium sized organization.

The target organization is a group, which consists of several companies located in Sweden, Norway and Finland. The companies in different countries were separate companies before their merger into the group. This is the reason why employment offers are partly different within the countries. They have been synergized partly in the past years, but the intention is to unify them as close as possible in the near future. Status of the current employment offers are represented in the following table 1.

	Sweden	Norway	Finland
Work time	40h/week, flexitime in most positions	40h/ week, flexitime in most position	37,5h/ week, lunch not work time, flexitime in most positions
Distance work	In most positions	In most positions	In most positions
Cars	Work cars and benefit cars for some employees	Work cars	Work cars and benefit cars for some employees
Parking cars	Paid	Free of charge	Free of charge
Parking bikes	Free of charge	Free of charge	Free of charge
Culture/ sport benefit			400€/ year
Phone and computer	Yes	Yes. Also, private internet for home up to 1000NOK/month	Yes
Lunch		200NOK/month	Employee pays 80% up to 11,30€ per lunch
Travels	Train: 2. class when travel under 2hrs, 1. Class when over 2hrs	Most environmentally friendly. Train: 2. class when travel under 2hrs, 1. Class when over 2hrs	Train: always 2. class
Bonuses		5% of annual profit per year	
Bonus holiday pay	0,8% of monthly salary per day on holiday	No, instead 5 or 6 weeks holiday	50% extra on annual leave
Salary when sick	Days 2-14: decreased with 20%, days 15-90: employer pays 10% of salary under base 8 and 90% of salary over base 8	Employer pays first 16 days	Employment less than 1month: half. 1month-3years: 4 weeks. 3-5 years: 5 weeks. 5-10 years: 6 weeks. Over 10 years: 8 weeks
Home with sick child	Paid for 120 days	10 days per year for children under 12 years	Paid for 4 days
Maternity leave	480 days, employer pays 50 days	12+12 months, not paid by employer	Till child turns 3, employer pays 3 months
Salary revisions	1. April. Salary review is carried out in connection with the annual salary review	1. April. Employees individually, salary interview in connection with the annual salary audit	According to collective agreement
Occupational healthcare	Yes, extended	Yes	Yes, extended
Health maintenance	In every 3 years		Entry control & in every 5 years for employees over 35 years old
Healthcare benefits	Employer pays reading glasses if employee works over one hour per day by display	Employer pays reading glasses if employee works over one hour per day by display, up to 800NOK	Employer compensates reading glasses: 100€ frames, lenses (through healthcare)
Accident insurance for free time	Yes		Yes
Discounts in stores	Yes		Yes

Table 1: Current employment offers

The table represents the current situation of employment offers in different countries in which the organization operates in. The employment offers are mainly different within countries, but some congruences occur. The differences are explained with the merger, which happened in the past. Also differences in laws and regulations of the countries affects on the dissimilarities.

2 Human Resource Management

Employees are a necessary, even the most essential resource, in organizations. The success of an organization is strongly related in its employees and their features, capability, and motivation. (Kauhanen 2012, 14-17.) But on the other hand, the success in human resource management (HRM) affects on if employees are a success factor or not (Viitala 2021, chapter 1).

HRM focuses on people in an organization. It is about acquisition of the human system, and motivating, maintaining, developing, and recognizing the people in the human system. (Kauhanen 2012, 14-17.) HRM is also a way to make sure an organization has the right amount of employees allocated to right tasks so that they are able to work in accordance with the objectives of an organization. These tasks can be divided into four main focus areas: planning, organizing, resourcing and evaluation. (Viitala 2021, chapter 1.)

This chapter focuses on different areas of HRM which supports the research of the target organization. These focus areas are selected to give a theoretical framework about HR-practices on an upper level, which will give general information for the development proposal. It is important to understand the entirety of HRM, and clarify how the focus areas are, both related together, and also related to the development proposal to the target organization.

The considered focus areas of HRM in this thesis are strategic human resource management (SHRM), best practices, requirements and trends, competitive advantage, and job satisfaction. These focus areas are interconnected strongly and affect to each other. This narrates, that HRM does not include separate areas, but an entirety of related matters. This is the reason, why HRM should always be managed top to down when building, developing and conducting it, but also when planning changes in any areas of it. This means that HRM should be managed according to strategy and every area of HRM should be managed on the HRM level. The following figure 1 explains the connections of the focus areas of this thesis.

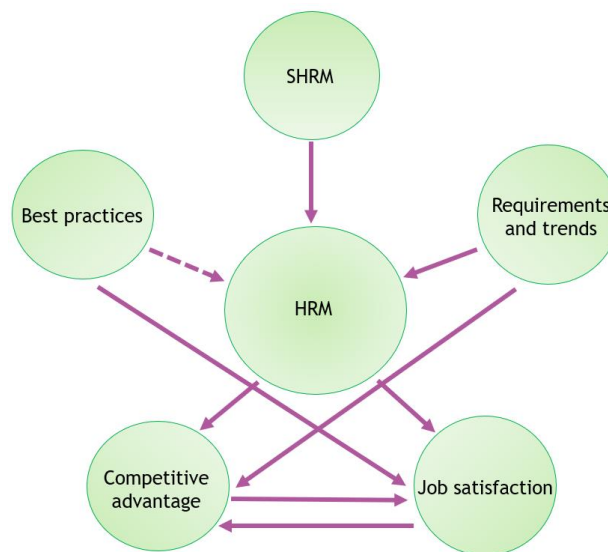


Figure 1: Interconnection of the focus areas

SHRM defines how HRM should be done in an organization. Best practices might be considered in an organization's HRM and they have effects on job satisfaction. Requirements and trends have effects on both HRM, and competitive advantage. HRM affects both, competitive advantage and job satisfaction, but also competitive advantage affects on job satisfaction, which in turn affects vice versa. Therefore, HRM is a complex theme, which should always be seen in organizations as uniform. These interconnections are explained in the following chapters.

2.1 Strategic Human Resource Management

Strategic human resource management (SHRM) is part of the management system and strategy in an organization. The difference between HRM and SHRM is slightly indefinite, but can be explained so, that HRM defines the ways to lead human resources and SHRM defines the strategy of how HRM should be operated in a consistent way according to business strategy. SHRM only implement strategic human resource management and does not include the operational management of employees. SHRM gives answers on an upper level to how human resource management is driven in an organization. It corresponds to the needs of personnel function and takes care of human affairs. In practice, it gives answers to the question of how organization relates to people. (Suurnäkki 2006, 30-33.) Kauhanen (2012, 16) underlines that SHRM is about how acquisition, motivation, maintenance, development and rewarding of the human system is driven in the company. Strategic human resource management should never be a separate function of a company. It needs to be built according to each company's business strategy, which means that SHRM is a bridge between business strategy and personnel. The basic mission and goals of the company defines how thing should be done in an organization, as well as how strategic human resource management should be

conducted. It can be explained as an abutment to the process of securing wellbeing and motivated personnel. SHRM supports the making of the future from the view of managing employees and employee related tasks and the right fulfilment of it creates and strengthens internal resources. (Tuimala 2020, 4.) Strategic human resource management is a necessary part, because motivation and commitment of employees are necessary for the success of an organization (Suurnäkki 2006, 30-33).

SHRM can be explained in various process diagrams. The way people see SHRM varies a lot, because no one right way to present it has been invented. Even the whole concept of SHRM is indefinite. The figure 2 below is one way to explain SHRM whilst it is the most known process diagram of SHRM.

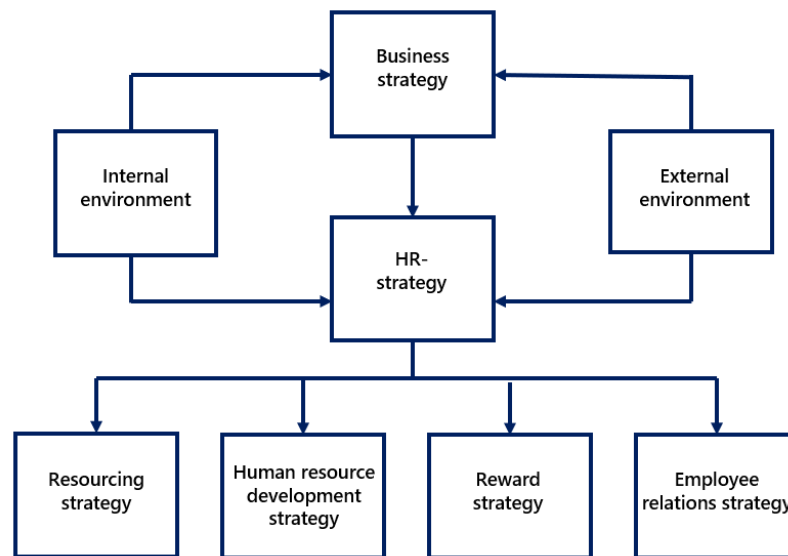


Figure 2: SHRM model (in accordance: Hendry & Pettigrew 1986)

According to this diagram, internal, and external environment has impacts on both business strategy and HR-strategy. Business strategy should always define HR-strategy and HR-strategy should define the resourcing, human resource development, reward, and employee strategies. The practices are implemented in to practice according to these strategies. This means SHRM is a process which results to development of HR-strategies that integrate both vertically and horizontally into business strategies. These strategies express the expectations of the entire organization which are useful for the effectiveness, leading people, learning and developing, as well as, rewarding and building employee relations. (Hendry & Pettigrew 1986, 3-8.)

Strategic human resource management has various targets for which it strives for. SHRM is to attract the personnel, which the organization wants to hire. It aims to maintain the personnel already existing by motivating, encouraging, and creating the conditions for good work

performance. SHRM is to develop skills of the employees and reward for good performance, as well as maintain working capacity of each employee, so they are able to performance well now and in the future. It also supports to employees have as long career as possible and make it valued. (Kauhanen 2012, 16-17.)

The hub is that SHRM works as it is supposed to work. SHRM has some crucial elements which it needs to be workable and successful. First, all the elements of the strategy should be compatible with each other. Agreed and integrated HR-practices should have the ability to generate intended individual and collective HR effects and those effects should lead into success, innovations, agility, resilience, and sustainable competitiveness. The SHRM-process should have the ability to generate continuous SHRM and organizational learning in both feedback and theoretical dimensions. SHRM should aim to success of workforce by defining right HR professionals, right HR-practices, right HR-function, right workforce costs and right clusters of practices which are consistent. (Kauhanen 2012, 16-17.)

The right combination of HR-practices has a huge role when looking into success of SHRM. Some practice may strengthen or widen the effects of another practice, or the effect may have an effect of vice versa. The HR-strategy need to be implemented in practical terms to operative level so that the strategy will not remain with just words. (Suurnäkki 2006, 59-67.)

Many organizations fail to manage SHRM, and the main points of failure have defined as follows. Organizations fail in SHRM if they consider employees only as costs. Also, if organizations do not have the right competence in HR, the strategy usually can't be either built or followed. If the senior management do not consider HR functions important and so HR do not get the needed support and finance for SHRM, usually the result is failure. (Kauhanen 2012, 16-17.)

2.2 Best Practices

The problem behind creating best practices in HRM is about how to improve efficiency and productivity of employees to improve performance of organizations. These pursuits are featured in conversations around HRM especially in past years. The ways are considered to be applicated "good", "best", "innovative" and "result-oriented" practices and bundles of practices. This means that best practices can either be separate practices or bundles of practices with the best fit. By using these practices and bundles, organizations aim to achieve competitive advantage and effect on their performance. Not only organizations benefit in using best practices, but the benefits for employees are also remarkable. From the perspective of employees, good practices enhance the overall quality of work life. This means best practices has positive social and psychological effects on the lives of individuals. (Pyöriä 2012, 119-122.) According to Silva, Warnakulasurlyya & Arachchige (2019), good practices may also be a competitive advantage for an organization.

A huge number of lists of best practices is created by many experts. One of the most known list is created by Jeffrey Pfeffer. It is created from seven practices, which can be used universally apart from organization, country, or industry. These are employment security, selection of new recruits, self-directed teams and decentralized decision-making, payroll system, which is proportional to the performance an organization, extensive employee development, systematic reduction of status gaps and barriers, and extensive dissemination of information about financial situation and output within the organization. (Pyöriä 2012, 119-122.) Erik van Vulpen, who is a recognised expert in HR, partly agrees with Pfeffer about the best practices. According to him, seven best practices are security of employees, selective hiring, self-managed and effective teams, fair and performance-based compensation, training in relevant skills, flat and egalitarian organization, and information easily accessible for those who need it. (van Vulpen 2021.)

Despite from huge number of lists, researchers are not in a common understanding of the quantity and content of best practices. However, most of the researchers agree, that bundles have more effect on organizational performance, than individual practices have. (Pyöriä 2012, 119-122.) Van Vulpen (2021) agrees to this stating, that best practices are bundles, which are in a synergy. Meaning that there are no individual good practices, which works in a way that benefits the company, but the right practices with a right fit, maximizes the benefit for an organization. Silva et al. (2019) states, that nonetheless best practices have two main characteristics: they are inimitability and link to a superior performance. So best practices are ones, which others cannot imitate and add value to an organization. Ulrich & Dulebohn (2015) claims, that best HR-practices are aligned, integrated and innovative. According to them, best practices are created around people, performance, work, and information. So best practices are ones, which has the best features and are targeted to the right and meaningful things.

The subject of best practice has still many open questions to research for. Still unclear is, that are bundles actually better, than individual practices, because some experts claim to be able to point out the best practices, but some say that any practice is not better than other without the right synergy. Some experts claim, that HR-practices should be linked to organizations business and service strategy, but no consensus is on how extensively. Known is, that differences of best practices or bundles may vary on industry, sector, country, and country group. Despite this information, it is still unknown how and why they vary, so more research is needed to understand these differences and the reasons behind them. (Pyöriä 2012, 119-122.)

As a conclusion, there may not be individual best practices, but bundles which are a best fit for a certain organization may have a positive effects on the organization's performance. However, seeking for individual practices may make best practice bundles by shaping them to

fit to an organization and respond to its needs. This means the “one fits all” thought does not apply to HR-practices. On the very basis, organizations should understand why they have certain practices or why they are willing to implement them. After that, they should know how they affect to each other and are they unique or innovative to generate better advantage. Organizations should also have an understanding of their business environment to create their practices or bundles to fit their industry, country, organization, and individual employees.

2.3 Requirements and Trends

There are several requirements associated with HRM, which are necessary to consider in organizations to meet their basic requirements. It is also associated with various trends to achieve competitive advantage and better job satisfaction. In some cases, these trends are also part of employee’s requirements, even though they are not related to laws and regulations. As a result of these matters, organizations should be aware of requirements and trends to understand what is required from them, and in the other hand, what is expected from them.

One of the main responsibilities of organizations is to follow rules and regulations. If organization violates the regulations, it exposes itself to risks, which can be harmful or even disastrous. If an organization violates this, it is in a major risk of ending up in termination of business. The possible risks are for example lawsuits, financial losses, and reputation damage. HR-professionals in organizations should be aware of all the requirements joint to HR-practices. (Joubert 2020.)

From the perspective of HRM, some legal topics are mentioned to be the ones which should always be taken into account. These are workplace discrimination laws, wage and hour laws, employee benefits laws, immigration laws and workplace safety laws. Workplace discrimination laws are to protect employees against any discrimination based on age, disability, genetic information, national origin, race, colour, sex, pregnancy, or religion. Wage and hour laws defines minimum wages, work hours per week, overtime pay, and child labour regulations. Employee benefits laws helps to protect employees access to benefits including for example retirement, insurance and healthcare requirements. Immigration laws defines when and how an immigrant can be hired and what are the requirements included to doing so. Workplace safety laws defines if occupational healthcare is required, as well as the width of it and in which situations it is needed. These are some to mention, but many other requirements must be considered in addition, such as country-specific laws and regulations. (Joubert 2020.)

In addition to laws of employment, many countries have collective agreements. They are a more detailed framework for the terms and conditions of employment, than the laws are.

Some of the collective agreements are universally binding, which means they are mandatory to comply, whilst some are optional so organizations may choose to comply it or not. If an organization is required to follow a collective agreement, it must be considered as demanding as any law. (Työsuoje.fi 2021.)

HRM has extent number of changing trends. Recognizing and implementing these trends, organizations may gain competitive advantage. HR-practices has a role in whether recruiting new talents is easy or difficult. As in many other areas of HRM, also the trends of 2021 vary widely. The following trends in figure 3 are named by Daljeet Kaur Lal, who is an expert in the field of HRM. He introduces eight top trends, which can be seen as ways to “formulate, implement corporate strategies, and improve employee engagement to boost a business”. (Kaur Lal 2021.) The same trends are named in various other sources as well.

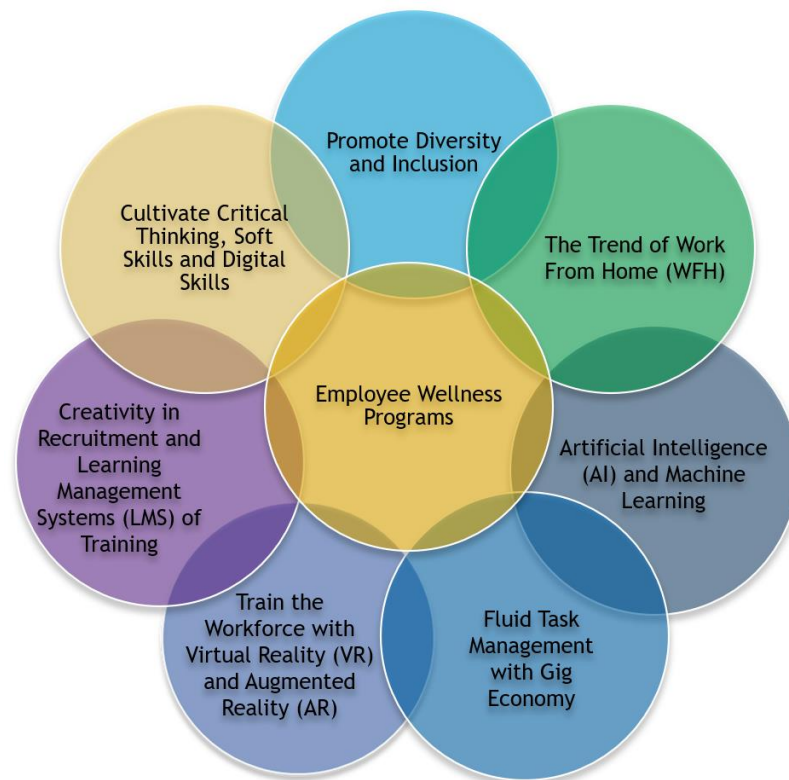


Figure 3: Trends of HRM in 2021

Organizations should promote diversity and inclusion. Organization culture is a significant factor when it comes to positive experience of employees. When organizations make employees feel them part of the community, the positive experience increases. Organizations can strengthen this experience by hiring employees belonging to diverse ages, races, genders, sexual orientations, and cultures. Organizations should make a culture which enables employees feel confident to express their ideas and to motivate them to be involved in the vision of organization in a holistic way. According to research, cohesive organization culture

boosted employee performance to 56% and turnover risk decreased to 50%. (Kaur Lal 2021.) Benefits of workplace diversity are for example higher employee engagement, increased creativity, better decision making, better company reputation and improved hiring results. It is also important in receiving more and better job applications, because 67% of job seekers experience diverse workforce as an important matter. (Zojceska 2019.)

In last couple of years, we have been seeing exponential growth in work from home (WFH) and in 2021 many organizations offer full-time WFH opportunity. Employees value highly flexible work which means organizations need to adapt to new workplace settings, both to keep current employees, and to attract new candidates. Managers have been seeing that WFH opportunity has caused less employee absenteeism. (Kaur Lal 2021.) According to a research, four in ten people, who currently has a WFH opportunity, would seek for another job if their employer would require working from business premises. Most of the respondents will look favourably on a new job if another organization offer the same compensation and WFH opportunity 2 or 3 times a week. This means that most of the organizations not offering WFH will suffer of lack of applicants and resignation of employees, if the work is something that another employer can offer as WFH. (Barrero, Bloom & Davis 2021, 1.)

Organizations can utilize artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning in many ways. AI-based algorithms can assist organizations in recruitment and streamline workflow, as well as promote merit-based selection eliminating both conscious and unconscious bias. AI can be helpful managing onboarding, training, integration, performance, reporting, payroll, and data administration, while machine learning may help access the data. (Kaur Lal 2021.) On the other hand, Prikshat, Malik & Budhwar (2021, 1-2) points out, that use of AI for HRM lacks theoretical basis for understanding, and also its adoption of integrated and processual framework is limited. Therefore, utilizing AI and machine learning still leaves questions about how, when and why it should be utilized.

Fluid task management with gig economy is one of the main trends in 2021. Younger generations are not willing to work in a traditional way anymore. People are increasingly looking to work independently on their terms and conditions, utilizing flexible schedules and telecommunication for a better work-life balance. 9-5 work is not trendy anymore while more flexible ways to work increases popularity which leads organizations looking for new ways to keep employees efficient and agile with this continually changing trend. Organizations need to search for the best talents, but also create a work environment which makes employees loyal to the organization. To attract new applicants and to upscale organizations reputation, organizations are forced to enhance employee experience, provide continuous learning and skills development programs. (Kaur Lal 2021.)

Virtual reality (VR) and Augmented reality (AR) are technologies which can be used in work life. VR is a fully artificial environment, where the user is locked from the real world and can only see the features of the VR. AR provides digital details around the real world like virtual objects overlaid on real-world environment. In AR the real world is enhanced with digital objects. (Gleb 2020.) VR and AR has become go-to training methods for organizations in multiple industries. They are used for employee growth and hands-on experience. AI and AR can used as training programs to develop skills, as well as contribute to front-end processes like recruiting and onboarding. (Kaur Lal 2021.)

Creativity in recruitment and learning management systems (LMS) for training in mentioned as current trends in HRM. To attract talented employees, organizations need to adapt creative ways to select applicants or their positions. (Kaur Lal 2021.) Organizations usually desire to encourage the best talent to apply, which might demand to use the most effective recruiting method, which is often also the most creative method. Creativity in recruiting is a broad concept, which can be almost anything which leads to the organization to the goal. Creative recruiting can be promoting company culture, highlighting employees, creating recruitment video, recruiting students or pre-graduates, hosting recurring events or offering incentives to apply. (Indeed 2021.) Organizations should assimilate LMS's and tools to facilitate training and workshops, because they can help to cultivate future talent via the internet. LMS's can include tools such as Bridge, Absorb, GoSkills, and Moodle. Incorporate mentoring programs can be used to escalate employee's retention rates. (Kaur Lal 2021.) LMS can be used in both mandatory and optional tasks. Mandatory tasks, in which LMS can be helpful, are for instance training of mandatory regulatory procedures and occupational health and safety. Optional tasks may be performance management, system of targeted training opportunities, and learning programs. (Recruiter.com 2021.)

In the past times, majority of organizations used education and work experience as the most important criteria when recruiting. Today's trend is to focus more on critical thinking, soft skills and digital skills. Critical thinking, like strategic thinking and conflict management, and soft skills such as emotional intelligence and creativity are considered as very valuable skills in work life. Also digital skills, like data analytics and digital literacy are great skills in today's world. Applicants with learnability and ability to work in a tech-human blended work more are valuable opportunities for organizations. (Kaur Lal 2021.) Jay Rosenzweig, who is the founder of the global talent management organization Rosenzweig & Company, points also soft skills as one of the most important criteria when hiring. According to him, these soft skills to prioritize are leadership, communication, drive, creativity, problem solving and ability to multitask. He underlines, that employees with these skills can often adapt well to an organization and its mission, and these skills might have the most powerful impact on business. (Rosenzweig 2019.)

Organizations should build motivated, engaged, and loyal employees, but their stress levels have raised due to fastened pace work culture and competitive race. Needless to point out, that a contradiction is found here. Organizations should strengthen employees work-life balance by providing workplace wellness programs to enhance their wellbeing. These activities can be even very small deeds such as healthy lunches, team building activities, fitness classes, counselling sessions, celebrations, and weekly interaction on site or remotely. A good way to improve employee's wellbeing is to train them about different mental issues and provide tools how to handle them. (Kaur Lal 2021.) Wellness programs is considered as an extra cost in many organizations, even though latest researches show that they usually reduce costs. The return was \$2.71 for every \$1 spent in years 2002 to 2008 in a research. By completing a cardiac rehabilitation and exercise program, low health risk status was achieved by 57% of people with formerly high risk. Investing to the wellness of employees can be considered as any other investment made in an organization and can be counted with return on investment method. (Berry, Mirabito & Baun 2010, 2-5.)

2.4 Competitive Advantage

Every organization wants to be seen as an attractive employer and as one, where people wish to work. The competition within organizations to attract the talents they want to hire, has become more intensive in the past years. This has led to the situation we are now in, that HRM in general is not anymore just about payment of wages, absences, training, and publishing job advertisements on local newspapers. Organizations need to build strong employer brand with a great story of the organization and create an inspiring work environment. (LinkedIn Talent Solutions 2016.) HRM requires basic assumptions, policies, and operating models, as well as concrete actions when we talk about the long-term success of companies, competitiveness, and performance. It is understood generally in HRM that it does not only give additional value, but also competitive advantage. Therefore, HRM is in a huge role when talking about competitive advantage in terms of keeping employees and attracting new ones. (Suurnäkki 2006, 16.)

Competitive advantage of an organization, from the perspective of employees and prospective applicants, can be divided into two main subjects: employee branding and organizational attractiveness. They both affect on whether an individual want to work for a certain organization or not. This means organizations need to understand what attracts applicants and employees. (Alnıaçıka, E., Alnıaçıka, Ü., Eratb, & Akçınb 2014, 337.) The following chapters will describe what employee branding and organizational attractiveness means, how they are beneficial for organizations and what factors effect on them.

Every organization has an employer brand. It means how employees and applicants see the organization as an employer. (Alnıaçıka, E. et al. 2014, 337.) In practice, it is about how an

organization is marketed to both job seekers and current employees. And when mentioning the word “marketed”, it means as any other marketing is considered: to attract and therefore sell something. In this case the product or service is to work in the organization. Employer brand defines the essence of an organization and describes why it is unique in comparison to other organizations. It also describes for what the employer stands for. The aim of positive employer brand is to communicate about the positive benefits of the employer and aims to describe why the organization is a good place to work. (Lybrand 2018.)

A good employer brand helps to retain talented employees, build trust in leadership, and develop strong engagement on both individual and team levels, but also on an organizational level. Organizations with good employer brands attracts more talented applicants. In addition to getting and retaining employees, a favourable employer brand can have positive economic impact in many ways. It can reduce recruitment costs because of improved recruitment performance, contribute to employee retention, reduce staff turnover, and improve organization culture. These circumstances make a good employer brand truly valuable and a great competitive advantage for organizations. (Almaçık, E. et al. 2014, 337.)

Organizations surely wants to achieve a great employer brand, but more difficult is to tell how it can be achieved. Organizations should understand what the factors are, which their employees experience important in order to retain the current employees and to attract potential recruits. Employees should be seen as the internal customers of organization and the jobs as internal products. (Almaçık, E. et al. 2014, 337.) Many factors such as industry, communication, location, ownership, artifacts, employee experiences, compensation level, benefits, learning opportunities, and public visibility in media effect on employer brand (Kauhanen 2012, 69). Despite of many factors which can be used to boost employer brand, using them in practice successfully is not that easy. Organizations cannot choose how applicants and employees sees the organization. However, they can affect on what kind of touchpoints the individuals have and what happens in the touchpoints. Because these touchpoints often occur within conversations of people, every employee of the organization effect on the employer brand of the organization. Every single employee matters. Because of this, employer branding is not something marketing, HR, executives or any other department of the organization is able to build independently. Good employer brand is created by being a good employer. (Vaisto 2021.)

Organizational attractiveness is about the positive benefits a person sees in working for a certain organization. It is regarded as a multi-dimensional construct and contain of different values. They are corresponding to different aspects of employer attractiveness such as interest, social, economic, development, and application values. If an organization has great attractiveness, it draws applicants’ attention and encourages the existing employees to stay loyal for their employer. That pointed out, organizational attractiveness is one of the most

important key factors of competitive advantage compared to other organizations. (Almaçıka, E. et al. 2014, 337-338.)

Organizations has many ways to become an attractive organization. The right ways depend on many factors and the best way to achieve it may vary a lot even in almost similar organizations . According to a research, employees experience monetary features less important than non-monetary, which means employees cannot be bought only by offering high salaries. Organizations should offer much more than just money. Socio-economic condition of a country may influence the importance of organizational attractiveness, as well as many other, still unknown factors. Remarkable is also that female and male perceive the relevance of HR-practices differently. For example, male respondents give higher importance on salary than female respondents. (Almaçıka, E. et al. 2014, 337-338.) These facts make building organizational attractiveness a very complex task, but the importance of organizational attractiveness for organizations is obvious. Because not a right way to increase organizational attractiveness has been invented, the best way to receive information is from the experts: employees and job seekers.

Organizations should be aware of which practices affect the most in terms of competitive advantage. They should build competitive advantage by finding the right focus areas and investing to them to increase employee branding and organizational attractiveness. If individuals see the positive matters of working for a certain organization and are willing to apply for it, organizations get more and better applicants. By having committed employees, who sees the benefits of staying, the result is less costs and usually satisfied employees. This results to competitive advantage.

2.5 Job Satisfaction

Most people spend significant part of their time at their workplace. Despite this, research shows that unsatisfactory of work experiences 8 out of 10 employees, which is remarkable. Every organization should make sure that this fact does not apply to them and find the ways to improve job satisfaction. (Barman 2021). To understand how to improve job satisfaction, organization should understand how job satisfaction is build and what things affect it. In overall, it is defined as a combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances. It is about a set of favorable or unfavorable emotions and feelings, which employees experience in their job. Factors that have an impact on employee's job satisfaction are communication, culture, security, leadership, opportunities, career development, working conditions, employee personality, compensation, benefits, rewards, and recognition. (Bourne 2021.)

Job satisfaction can be affected in many ways. The first step of organizations is to know their employees, because only then the organization is able to understand what are the important

factors influencing job satisfaction in this particular organization. In every organization these factors vary, so the only way to clarify them is to ask it from employees. A good way to receive this information is with an employee survey. It both gives valuable information, and employees feel that they are taken into part of decision-making. On a general level can be said, that improving rewards, recognition, employee retention, encouragement, health, feedback opportunities, and responding to feedbacks, as well as getting rid of micromanagement are ways to improve job satisfaction. (Barman 2021.)

According to a research made in Istanbul University, using best practices increases job satisfaction. It revealed that best practices are significantly related to job satisfaction by having a positive impact on it. These practices are participation, empowerment, job rotation, self-directed team, and contingent compensation. The organizations which use best practices, experiences higher level of communication within co-workers, employees and people outside the organization, which leads to greater involvement in decision-making. The involvement forwards to better job satisfaction. It also increased in organizations where employees can trust their supervisors and their job is challenging and intrinsically rewarding. However, the researcher points out, that not much research is made of this. (Gürbüs 2009, 110-114.)

According to another research, high HRM exposure is not enough to increase job satisfaction when employee's HRM view is considered. They also point out, that the differences in employee's understanding of HRM, unlike the exposure, have an effect on how employees respond to personal, work and workplace properties. However, the research shows, that by building a positive HRM view of employees increases job satisfaction. (Hauret, Martin, Omrani & Williams 2020.)

One area of improving job satisfaction is offering benefits, which employees value highly. Quantitative research was made to rank five key benefits, which were health insurance, vacation and paid time off, retirement plan, employee discounts and maternity and paternity leave. The most valued benefit of these was health insurance, which was the most important benefit with a clear difference to the others. The second and third most important benefits were retirement plan and vacation and paid time off. The least important benefits were employee discount and maternity and paternity leave, to which was given only a very marginal value. The researchers underline, that organizations should focus on investing to the benefits that highly matter to most employees. (Chamberlain & Tian 2016.)

Job satisfaction of employees is important. It does not only affect on individuals' health and overall satisfaction of life, but it also has effects on the success of organizations. It increases profits, higher productivity, lower employee turnover and has impact on loyalty to the organization. (Bourne 2021.) According to Barman (2021), additionally, good job satisfaction

links also to lower long-term HR costs and contribution of positive results towards employee referral programs, as well as higher employee retention. Job satisfaction has also disadvantages and limitations, which should be considered as risks. High satisfaction might lead to employees not wanting to leave their comfort zone and refusing to challenge themselves. (Reddy 2022.) One way of presenting the process of HR-practices affecting on job satisfaction is explained in the figure 4 below.

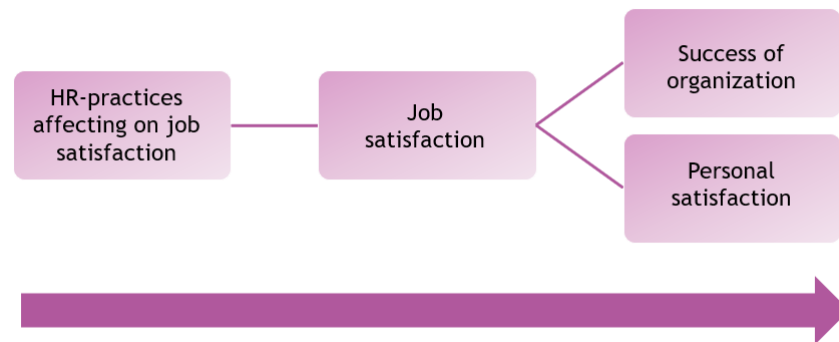


Figure 4: Job satisfaction

The figure above explains, how the process of job satisfaction should happen from view of HRM. As previously explained, this is not the way the process usually happens, because also other matters affect on job satisfaction and the result is not always only positive matters. But in simplicity, organizations should have HR-practices, which have positive impact on job satisfaction, which results in success of organization and personal satisfaction of employees.

3 Implementation of Research

The implementation of research on the target organization is presented in this chapter. This chapter describes the background of the research. All the needed information before entering to the results and analysis is described in this chapter.

This chapter includes the definition of the research based development study to explain the type of this thesis to give an overall understanding of how this thesis is implemented. Plan of the research is declared to open the objectives of this research. Introduction of research and data collection methods is included to describe how the research is made, as well as gives the reasons why these methods are chosen. Pilot research and description of course of the actual research is described in the end.

3.1 Research Based Development Study

This thesis is a research based development study, which was implemented by quantitative method. Research based development study was chosen, because the aim was to solve a known problem in an organization, which was developed in this thesis. It was also chosen to generate reliable and high quality data based information by using literature and information from the target organization.

Research has always a reason or a task, to which the research tries to find answers for. The reason or task controls which research methods are the most suitable. Researchers strive to choose an approach and method, which gives the best answers to the problem. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sarjavaara 1997, 135-139)

The importance of research is emphasized in research based development study. This method strives to solve problems which has raised from real situations or to renew practices. Often it is used also to generate new information of work life practices. Research development study can be started from various starting points such as from the need of development in an organization and desire to change. This method is not about describing or explaining things, but presenting better alternatives and taking them in to practice. Practical objectives direct the development study, but the knowledge base, decisions and solutions are not created from the mind of the researcher, but from literature and other reliable sources. Implementing the results to practice and using the developed ideas makes the fact, that the results are useful in research based development study. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2014, 17-22.)

Plan and proceeding according to plan is highlighted in research based development study. Usually it is structured so, that it starts with ideation and through dealing with various ideas, comes to a conclusion, implementation, and assessment. The starting point, objectives, forms, the progress of the process and conclusions are described accurately and transparently. In research based development study, the process is as important as the result. Starting from the beginning, information should be gathered from practice and theory systematically and with critical assessment. Usage of varied and comprehensive methods as well as active communication with different parties are important in the process. A well done process also includes writing and presenting about proceeding in different phases and to different target groups. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalahti 2014, 17-22.)

3.2 Research and Data Collection Methods

This thesis is a research based development study, which was done with a quantitative method utilizing survey as a data collection method. Quantitative research method was chosen, because it is the most useful method to measure the satisfaction of all current employees in this thesis. It both, gives the possibility to measure the satisfaction in numerical

format, but is also a cost effective and fast way to collect data from as many employees as possible. Survey as a data collection method was chosen, because it gave possibility to collect quantitative data, but also had the opportunity to use open questions. To receive more specific data about the satisfaction of employees, also open questions were used, so the understanding of the reasons were disclosed. Without using open questions for descriptive information of the reasons of the answers, the needed information of the satisfaction of employees would have stayed on a very general level. Without open questions, the reasons of satisfaction or dissatisfaction would have been unknown, which would have led to a situation where is unknown what actually should be developed according to employees. However, the emphasis was on numerical information. Quantitative research method was chosen also, because it enabled to collect data from a rather large number of employees, which are located scattered.

In a quantitative research method, the reality is built on objectively observable facts. It is usually made on the basis of conclusions of previous research and theories. It usually starts from defining concepts and setting hypothesis, which means assumptions of mechanism of action of the phenomenon. The data collection method should be planned carefully and the data must fit to quantitative research method. The key of quantitative research method is, that it measures data numerically and the data is collected to tabular form, as well as placed into a statistically manageable format. It includes the decision of the respondents such as the population and sample of the research. Conclusions are usually drawn based on statistical analysis of observational data, such as describing results using percentage breaks and statistical testing of the significance of the results. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sarjavaara 1997, 139-141.)

Survey as a data collection method is an inquiry in which questions are asked in the same way from all respondents. Survey fits in a research which is made for a large and scattered population. It fits a research where the questions are sensitive, because it can be done anonymously. The disadvantage of surveys is that the response rate might end up being low and the response time may be prolonged. When making a survey, all respondents must have the same IT resources to be able to participate in the research. The questions must be carefully considered, because survey gives only one possibility to ask the wanted questions. Also, the questions must be ones, which the research plan claims to measure, and the respondents need to understand what is asked. (Vilkka 2015, 94-101.)

3.3 Pilot Research

Before the actual research, a pilot research was done. It was done to resolve before the actual research if the questions are understandable, as well as to know how the pilot test group experiences the length and the amount of time to be used to the survey. It was also

done to resolve if the questions will give answers to research questions and how clear the questions are so that respondents are able to answer them. Three persons were selected to the pilot test group. They were asked the following questions: how clear and unambiguous the questions and the answer options are, does the answer options work in this context, how do they feel about the length of the survey and how reasonable they experience the used time on the survey. The respondents were asked to justify their opinions.

All three respondents experienced, both questions and answer options, clear and unambiguous. They stated that they were able to understand what was asked and they knew how to answer the survey. The respondents also experienced, that the answer options were very good in this context. The length and the used time were stated to be reasonable. In the pilot research, the organization was called as organization, but according to feedback from one of the respondents, the organization was called with its name on the actual research. The respondent noted that the questions would be even more clear with using the organizations real name instead of naming it as organization.

3.4 Course of Research

This research aimed to find answers to the research questions: what the organization should offer for employees to achieve better job satisfaction and competitive advantage, which areas should be implemented or developed and what kind of employment offer suit this particular organization best. The research was made to clarify what was the current situation of the organization, how employees experience the current employment offer and what should be developed or conducted. To be able to make the right employment offer for a certain organization, should be understood, how this organizations employee's experience certain offers and what they expect from employer (Barman 2021). This is so, because no universal best practices are founded and they need to be adapted by researching the organization (Van Vulpen 2021).

The research was made by collecting information of satisfaction of current employment offers and expectations from employees. Collecting information was done with a survey, which was sent to all employees of the organization by email, excluding the top management. The survey contained questions to which could be answered with a scale from 0 to 10 and refining questions with open answer options. Survey as a quantitative research method was chosen to maximize the comprehensiveness and coverage to be able to make the data as reliable as possible, but it also gave possibility to collect verbal information in addition.

The survey was sent on 31st January 2022 and employees had time to respond to it till 9th February 2022. In Sweden 13 responses from total 50 sent surveys was received, which made the response rate 26%. In Norway 2 responses was received from 17 sent surveys, so the response rate was 12%. In Finland 14 responses was received out of 63 sent surveys, which

made 22% response rate. All together 29 responses out of 130 sent surveys was received, so the total response rate was 22%. All employees were selected to the sample, because the population was not big enough to take only part of the data to the research and it was small enough to cost- and time-effectively handle all data.

The research was analyzed by utilizing IBM® SPSS® Statistics software platform. The numerical information was driven to the software and the information was transformed to cross tabulations. This gave the possibility to analyze relationships between variables. In this research, this method was utilized to measure the correlation between the different countries.

4 Results of Research

Results of the research are presented in this chapter. Results are presented in the following chapter by themes. The results are analyzed in the chapter after that.

The organization was named as its actual name in the research. Because the organization wished to be anonymous, the name is hidden from the results. Therefore, the name of the organization is modified to organization X and modifications are shown as italicized text.

4.1 Results

Awareness of employment offer

Respondents were asked “How aware are you about what *organization x* offers for you?”. This question was necessary to evaluate the relevance of the following answers, because the awareness of employment offer affects on how comprehensive the respondents experience the employment offer. In addition, this question provided information on whether the employment offer is presented well enough for employees. All together 29 responses were received. The following table 2 presents the numerical answers.

		Country			Total	
		Sweden	Norway	Finland		
How aware are you about what organization X offers for you?	2.00	Count	3	0	0	3
		% within Country	23.1%	0.0%	0.0%	10.3%
	5.00	Count	1	0	0	1
		% within Country	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%
	7.00	Count	4	1	1	6
		% within Country	30.8%	50.0%	7.1%	20.7%
	8.00	Count	2	1	7	10
		% within Country	15.4%	50.0%	50.0%	34.5%
	9.00	Count	2	0	5	7
		% within Country	15.4%	0.0%	35.7%	24.1%
	10.00	Count	1	0	1	2
		% within Country	7.7%	0.0%	7.1%	6.9%
	Total	Count	13	2	14	29
		% within Country	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 2: Awareness

Mean value in Sweden was 6.4, in Norway it was 7.5 and in Finland it was 8.4. The mean value in all countries was 7.5. Responses were mainly positioned between 7 and 9, so the responses were mainly congruent when taking into account, both all responses, and countries separately. This is stated so, even though deviant responses were received, which made the deviation between 2 and 10. Overall awareness is on a satisfactory level.

Satisfaction of support in work and free time balance

Respondents were asked: “How satisfied are you about how *organization X* supports your work and free time balance?”. This question was selected, because this is one of the main things affecting on employee’s satisfaction according to the theory of this thesis. This question gave answers if the employment offer supports the balance of work and free time well enough. In addition, respondents were asked to state reasons for their response on a free text paragraph. All together 29 responses were received and 11 of the respondents gave reasons for their answers. The numerical answers are presented in the following table 3.

		Country			Total	
		Sweden	Norway	Finland		
How satisfied are you about how organization X supports your work and free time balance?	3.00	Count	1	0	0	1
		% within Country	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%
	4.00	Count	1	0	1	2
		% within Country	7.7%	0.0%	7.1%	6.9%
	5.00	Count	1	1	0	2
		% within Country	7.7%	50.0%	0.0%	6.9%
	6.00	Count	1	0	1	2
		% within Country	7.7%	0.0%	7.1%	6.9%
	7.00	Count	3	1	1	5
		% within Country	23.1%	50.0%	7.1%	17.2%
	8.00	Count	4	0	4	8
		% within Country	30.8%	0.0%	28.6%	27.6%
	9.00	Count	2	0	4	6
		% within Country	15.4%	0.0%	28.6%	20.7%
	10.00	Count	0	0	3	3
		% within Country	0.0%	0.0%	21.4%	10.3%
	Total	Count	13	2	14	29
		% within Country	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3: Satisfaction in work-freetime balance

Mean value of responses from Sweden was 6.9, from Norway was 6.0 and from Finland was 8.2. Overall satisfaction in all countries was 7.5. Responses are scattered rather much, which made the deviation wide. Responses are positioned between 3 and 10. Remarkable is that responses differ somewhat depending on country. The difference between the lowest mean, Norway, and the highest mean, Finland, is 2.2.

Respondents were asked to state reason for their answers. Positive impact was mentioned on flexible working times and possibility to get easily days off when needed, as well as the freedom to work in way employees sees the best. The option of remote work was mentioned in several responses and was stated as a remarkable factor on work and free time balance. On the other hand, negative impact had the fact of working outside office hours. This was mentioned in several responses and could be divided into three groups: optional, mandatory and expected. Some respondents experience negative impact on working outside office hours, but notes, that they do it on their own will. Some employees are forced to work on their free time, such as answering to colleagues on Microsoft Teams. Some employees experience that working outside office hours is not demanded, but it is either needed or they are pressured to do so.

Satisfaction of support in physical wellbeing

Respondents were asked: "How satisfied are you about how *organization X* supports your physical wellbeing?". Satisfaction towards the support of physical wellbeing in the organization was asked because it is one of the most important factors in satisfaction of

employees. This question gave information about how well the employment offer supports physical wellbeing and which practices effect on it. Respondents were asked to evaluate the support on a numerical scale, as well as reason their answers in free text paragraph. All together 29 responses were received and 11 of the respondents gave reasons to their answers. The numerical answers are presented in the following table 4.

			Country			Total
			Sweden	Norway	Finland	
How satisfied are you about how organization X supports your physical wellbeing?	1.00	Count	1	0	0	1
		% within Country	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%
	3.00	Count	1	0	0	1
		% within Country	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%
	5.00	Count	2	0	0	2
		% within Country	15.4%	0.0%	0.0%	6.9%
	6.00	Count	3	0	1	4
		% within Country	23.1%	0.0%	7.1%	13.8%
	7.00	Count	2	0	1	3
		% within Country	15.4%	0.0%	7.1%	10.3%
	8.00	Count	3	2	4	9
		% within Country	23.1%	100.0%	28.6%	31.0%
	9.00	Count	1	0	6	7
		% within Country	7.7%	0.0%	42.9%	24.1%
	10.00	Count	0	0	2	2
		% within Country	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	6.9%
Total	Count	13	2	14	29	
	% within Country	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 4: Support of physical wellbeing

In Sweden the mean value was 6.1, in Norway it was 8% and in Finland it was 8.5, which made the overall mean value 7.4. Remarkable is that the mean differs in Sweden compared to Norway and Finland, positioning as rather lower mean value. The answers are scattered widely between 1 and 10, so all numbers were given by respondents, except 0 and 2. Despite this, the responses are mainly positioned in numerical values 8 and 9, specifically 55.1 of the responses in all countries are 8 or 9.

Respondents were asked to reason their given numerical values. Positive effect was mentioned to be in wide, optional healthcare and good ergonomic tools in offices. These factors were mentioned repeatedly in the responses. In every response from Finland, Smartum sport benefit was mentioned to be a huge benefit supporting physical wellbeing and was mentioned to be highly valued. Only one negative statement was received mentioning that employer does not support physical wellbeing at all. Employees mentioned, that short exercises in the office and massage benefit would be highly valued if employer would offer them.

Satisfaction of support in mental wellbeing

Respondents were asked: “How satisfied are you about how *organization X* supports your mental wellbeing?”. This question was selected, because it has huge effect on satisfaction, performance and individual wellbeing. Because organizations can affect employee’s wellbeing significantly in many areas, this question was selected to the survey. Respondents were asked to evaluate how well organization X supports their mental wellbeing on a numerical scale, as well as reason their statements in free text paragraphs. 29 numerical responses were received and 11 of them were given verbal reasons. The following table 5 presents the numerical answers of respondents.

		Country			Total	
		Sweden	Norway	Finland		
How satisfied are you about how organization X supports your mental wellbeing?	2.00	Count	2	0	0	2
		% within Country	15.4%	0.0%	0.0%	6.9%
	4.00	Count	1	1	1	3
		% within Country	7.7%	50.0%	7.1%	10.3%
	5.00	Count	4	0	3	7
		% within Country	30.8%	0.0%	21.4%	24.1%
	6.00	Count	2	0	2	4
		% within Country	15.4%	0.0%	14.3%	13.8%
	7.00	Count	2	1	3	6
		% within Country	15.4%	50.0%	21.4%	20.7%
	8.00	Count	1	0	2	3
		% within Country	7.7%	0.0%	14.3%	10.3%
	9.00	Count	1	0	1	2
		% within Country	7.7%	0.0%	7.1%	6.9%
	10.00	Count	0	0	2	2
		% within Country	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	6.9%
	Total	Count	13	2	14	29
		% within Country	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 5: Support of mental wellbeing

Mean value in both Sweden and Norway, was 5.5 and in Finland it was 6.9. Mean value of all countries was 6.2. Responses are scattered and positioned between 2 and 10 but presents a rather normal distribution. The answers are rather congruent, even though the mean is slightly higher in Finland. Although nothing special emerges from the answers in this question, it is noteworthy that the averages are lower than in the question of satisfaction of support on physical wellbeing.

Respondents were asked to reason their answers. Mainly, the answers underlines that no support of mental wellbeing is implemented, or the respondents can not point out the effort to this. Some of the respondents does not experience this as very necessary, whilst some hopes for more support on mental wellbeing. Overreaching demands and remote work was mentioned to have negative impact on wellbeing. One respondent answered that “I would

really like to see some values set in place about how we treat each other. Something we are aiming at that is conducive to a kind work environment. I would love that employee wellbeing, in addition to customer satisfaction, was part of our mission statement”, which could be a foundation for support of mental wellbeing. Also, fun things to do in workplace or with colleagues was mentioned as factor which could improve wellbeing.

Satisfaction of financial benefits

Respondents were asked: “How satisfied are you with financial benefits and rewards?”. This question was asked, because some people experience financial rewards and benefits as a necessary, even the most important, part of employment offer. 28 numerical answers were received, and 8 respondents reasoned their given numbers in a free text paragraph. The numerical answers of respondents are presented in the following table 6.

		Country			Total	
		Sweden	Norway	Finland		
How satisfied are you with financial benefits and rewards?	3.00	Count	2	1	0	3
		% within Country	16.7%	50.0%	0.0%	10.7%
	4.00	Count	3	0	0	3
		% within Country	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.7%
	5.00	Count	2	1	1	4
		% within Country	16.7%	50.0%	7.1%	14.3%
	6.00	Count	1	0	2	3
		% within Country	8.3%	0.0%	14.3%	10.7%
	7.00	Count	1	0	4	5
		% within Country	8.3%	0.0%	28.6%	17.9%
	8.00	Count	3	0	4	7
		% within Country	25.0%	0.0%	28.6%	25.0%
	9.00	Count	0	0	2	2
		% within Country	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	7.1%
	10.00	Count	0	0	1	1
		% within Country	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	3.6%
	Total	Count	12	2	14	28
		% within Country	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6: Financial benefits and rewards

Mean value in Sweden was 5.4, in Norway it was 4 and in Finland it was 7.5, which made the overall mean as 6.4. The difference between the countries is remarkable. Answers are rather scattered and mostly positioned between 3 and 8, which makes the deviation wide, when considering all countries, but deviations are smaller when viewing countries separately.

Respondents were asked to give a reason for their given number. The answers differed rather much and also differences was seen between countries. Respondents answered that they have no financial rewards or benefits, while at the same time this was stated to be on a good level. One respondent answered that “I feel we are supported in interesting ways and not just

one kind but in different ways that support different people”. The generalized experience is that financial rewards and benefits could be bigger and more of these are wished. Notable is, that one respondent from Finland answered that financial benefits and rewards are better than they used to be, whilst another respondent from Sweden answered that these have been worse lately compared how they were before.

Overall satisfaction of employment offer

Respondents were asked: “What is your overall satisfaction in what *organization X* offers for you?”. Overall satisfaction in what organization X offers was asked to receive an overall opinion of employment offers. 28 responses were received and 9 of the respondents gave reasons for their answers. The following table 7 presents the numerical answers.

			Country			
			Sweden	Norway	Finland	Total
What is your overall satisfaction in what organization x offers for you?	4.00	Count	1	0	0	1
		% within Country	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%
	5.00	Count	2	1	1	4
		% within Country	15.4%	100.0%	7.1%	14.3%
	6.00	Count	4	0	0	4
		% within Country	30.8%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%
	7.00	Count	1	0	2	3
		% within Country	7.7%	0.0%	14.3%	10.7%
	8.00	Count	5	0	5	10
		% within Country	38.5%	0.0%	35.7%	35.7%
	9.00	Count	0	0	5	5
		% within Country	0.0%	0.0%	35.7%	17.9%
	10.00	Count	0	0	1	1
		% within Country	0.0%	0.0%	7.1%	3.6%
	Total	Count	13	1	14	28
		% within Country	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 7: Overall satisfaction

Mean value in Sweden was 6.5 and in Finland it was 8.1. Mean value in Norway was 5, but considerable is that only one respondent from Norway answered to this question so the mean is based on only one employee’s opinion. Hence the overall average was 7.25. Despite this, the differences in means between the countries are rather big. Answers are positioned between 4 and 10, and mostly between 5 and 9. Deviation is rather big in both, viewing the countries all together and countries separately, excluding Norway.

Respondents gave reasons for their given numbers. Stress was mentioned to have a negative impact, but mostly the answers were good. The possibility to control own schedule and good benefits were mentioned to be positive things in what organization X offers for employees. The organization was told to be a good place to work overall, but always is room to be better,

as well as the organization was notified as trying to do its best by one employee's words: "I think the company tries hard to balance business needs with employee needs".

Matters in which organization x has succeeded

Respondents were asked: "In which matters *organization X* has succeeded in terms of what it offers for you?". The respondents were given opportunity to give open feedback in which matters organization X has succeeded in employment offer. The question was made as an open question to receive verbal feedback on the practices the employer has succeeded. All together 12 responses were received.

According to employees, the organization has succeeded in supporting free time in various ways. Remote work possibility and support in work and free time balance were mentioned several times. Health care offer was mentioned to be great, which support the wellbeing of employees. Employees experience to have good benefits and see, that basic things, such as Smartum sport and culture benefit, as well as Smartum lunch benefits are covered well. Generally, employees experience the employment offer to be on a reasonably good level. Support, encourage and support to enjoy free time were mentioned to have positive impact on employees.

Matters in which organization x should develop

Respondents were asked: "What could *organization X* offer even more?". To receive feedback on what should be developed on employment offer in employee's opinion, respondents were asked to give feedback on what organization X could offer even more in its employment offer. All together 14 responses were received.

More focus on employee's wellbeing, both physical and mental, was mentioned in several responses. Respondents wished to receive more support in employment offer to mental wellbeing. More support for physical wellbeing was hoped in several responses and also many development proposals towards this were submitted. Physical activities, better working environment, bike benefit and benefits to fitness, chiropractor and massage was claimed to give better physical wellbeing. Better flexibility in places to work and work hours, as well as transparency of organization is something that organization could do even more. Respondents hope to receive more time and money for training and education. Better salary was mentioned as a factor which could increase satisfaction, but also things such as trips, presents and things to do together with colleagues could have the same impact.

On the other hand, some respondents experience benefits as a secondary issue. According to these responses, first things in everyday work should be developed and benefits only after that. More clear responsibilities, ability to get help when needed and making employees feel

that they matter are more urgent issues to fix. Also clearance of values, why the organization is doing what it is doing and what is the aim of the organization and as people to each other was mentioned to be more urgent tasks to fill.

All things considered, not all employees experience the organization have the need to develop its employment offer. While at the same time others experience, that the organization has a lot to develop in its employment offer to be a good place to work. No correlation within countries was shown in this incoherent fact, which makes this as an interesting finding.

4.2 Analysis

Awareness level of what the target organization offers for employees is satisfactory overall. The need of rising awareness of employment offer is obvious in all countries. Especially in Sweden (6.4) and in Norway (7.5) the need is prominent, but also in Finland (8.4) the rate could be even higher. Awareness in Finland is highest of all countries and simultaneously the overall satisfaction is also highest in Finland, so considerable is, that these might have correlation. By rising the awareness rate, the satisfaction of employees might be higher, when employees are aware of what is offered for them.

Work and free time balance are stated to be satisfactory in Sweden and Norway, whilst in Finland it is good. The open question in which respondents were asked to give reason for their answers, states that work and free time are supported theoretically by offering remote work and flexible hours. However, the answers reveal that in practice this does not happen because of working outside office hours due to optional, mandatory, or expected reasons, and therefore the employment offer does not meet practically. With employer holding on to the employment offer with not demanding work outside office hours and encouraging employees towards taking care of having enough free time by themselves. Satisfaction in work and free time balance could be better if this would happen.

Satisfaction in support of physical wellbeing differs within countries and can be explained by rather different offers under this theme in different countries. The mean values are on a good level in Norway and Finland, whilst in Sweden the mean is on a satisfactory level. This indicates that the employment offers are rather good in the countries mentioned before and should definitely be developed to consistent also in Sweden. Synergizing the employment offers to be congruent in all countries is a task which should be done according to statistics. Remarkable is the rather high mean in Norway, even though the employment offer does not support physical wellbeing as widely as in Finland and Sweden, which makes this fact questionable and would need more research on the factors affecting it.

Support in mental wellbeing is satisfactory in all countries and got the lowest mean values of all questions. Reasons to this was stated that not much support is given, or employees does not know how mental wellbeing is supported in the organization. However, the answers are scattered widely, between 2 and 10, and therefore this is remarkable when considering the reasons affecting this. Especially in this theme, the differences between individuals stands out particularly strong, because some respondents does not consider this matter as significant in overall satisfaction, while some would definitely require more support for this. Overall, mental wellbeing is a part of employment offer, which would need development. Remarkable finding is also, that employees experiences that the organization supports their physical wellbeing better, than mental wellbeing, which can be pointed out in statistics of mean values in support of physical, and mental wellbeing.

Financial benefits were stated to be on a poor a level in Sweden and on a satisfactory level in Norway and Finland. This is an interesting finding, because not so huge differences occur between countries in employment offers that could explain the huge differences in mean values. Likely, the main reason to this can be found from the open questions to reason respondents given numbers. Respondents in Sweden state, that financial benefits and rewards have become worse, than they used to be, and in Finland the statements show the opposite, that these have been better than they used to be. Since the organization has synergized the employment offers partly in the past years, these decisions have most likely affected the satisfaction decreasingly in Sweden and increasingly in Finland. From this can be deduced that factors, which employees experience as important in employment offer, should not be weakened when synergizing the employment offers. This is definitely a fact that will be considered in the development proposal.

Overall satisfaction is on a satisfactory level and can be verified with the answers on asking overall satisfaction, as well as from the individual previous questions. Because of this, overall satisfaction of current employment offer is stated to be satisfactory but could be even better. However, some deviations occur between questions and countries, which must be considered in developing the employment offer.

According to the open questions in what organization has succeeded in and what could be developed, the main finding is that developing both physical and mental wellbeing should be developed according to the employees. Another main finding in what organization has succeed in, is supporting work and free time balance. These main findings can be also verified by the numerical mean values so, that support in physical and mental wellbeing are lower than support in work and free time balance. However, also the opposing view is expressed by stating that the organization has succeeded in supporting wellbeing of employees and the largest development target should be supporting work and free time balance. Notable is that financial benefits and rewards got statistically low mean value, but in the open answers, the

areas for development concentrates mostly in other areas. From this can be stated that non-financial benefits are weighted higher than financial benefits by employees.

As Alnaçıka, E. et al. (2014, 337) statement was pointed out in the theoretical part, “employees should be seen as the internal customers of organization and the jobs as internal products”. Due to this statement, one way to position the satisfaction of employees is to use Net Promoter Score® (NPS). NPS gives information if an individual will recommend a company or not. The scale is from zero to ten and divided into detractors, passives, and promoters. (Stahlkopf, C. 2019.) The mean values of each country in this research are positioned in the NPS in the following figure 5.

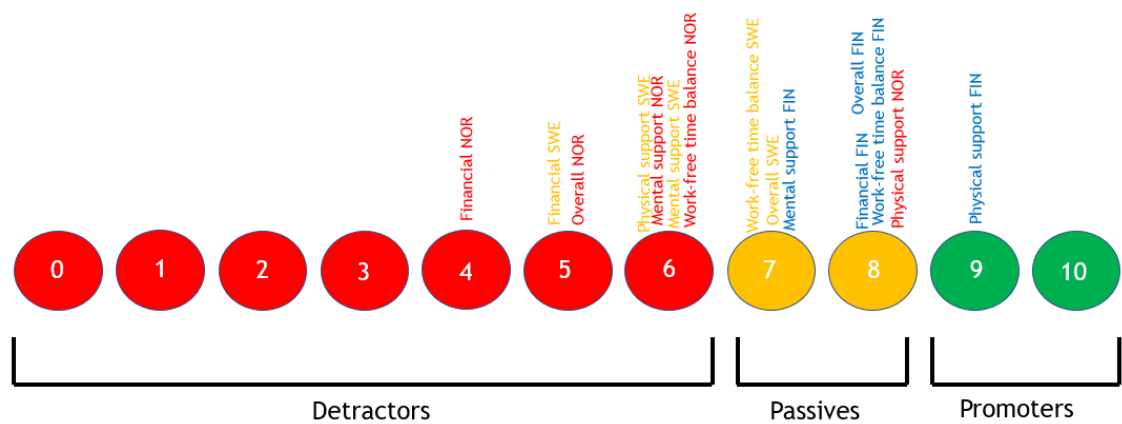


Figure 5: Satisfaction positioned in NPS scale

The figure above presents the mean values of each country positioned in the NPS. The differences between questions are scattered most in Norway and the mean values are best in Finland. Only satisfaction in physical support in Finland is positioned to promoters and all the rest in either detractors or passives. When developing the employment offer, the most interest will be in the mean values of areas positioned in the detractors. The goal is that mean values of all areas would be positioned at least in the area of passives.

The purpose of this research is to find answers for the research questions: what the organization should offer for employees to achieve better job satisfaction and competitive advantage, which areas should be implemented or developed and what kind of employment offer suit this particular organization best. According to the research made for the organization, the most interest is synergizing the employment offer so, that the satisfaction would rise in Sweden and Norway closer to the level of Finland. Of course, the mean values are not great in Finland either, so the employment offer in its entirety should be developed. From the different areas, especially support in mental wellbeing must be focused on. From separated focus areas, financial benefits and rewards in Norway and Sweden, support in mental wellbeing in Norway and Sweden, support in physical wellbeing in Sweden, and

support in work and free time balance in Norway needs special focus on. With developing these areas, satisfaction of employees could rise and increase the organization's competitive advantage in terms of recruiting new employees. If the satisfaction of employees rises to level of promoters on NPS scale, it means that employees promote their employer to other people and therefore the organization may receive more applicants and the quality of applicants could rise. And with better and more satisfied employees, it has most likely positive affect on performance of the target organization.

5 Development Proposal

Proposal of new employment offer is presented in appendix 2. This development proposal was made in synergy with the theory and with the results of the research. The considered things from both theory and research are presented first and after that, development proposals are defined of the areas, which are proposed to be developed.

The theory part of this thesis was utilized widely in developing the proposal of new employment offer. The top-to-down thinking of HRM is utilized in this development proposal by first considering about why something should be add or developed in the employment offer and only after that making the proposals to different areas. Therefore the idea of best bundles was utilized by making the right fit to this organization, which in this study means that research is used as the basis of developing. Because employment offer should add value to organization, and organizations should focus on investing only to the benefits which highly matters to employees. Because organizations should understand what attracts their employees, the research was a great basis on giving answers to these questions. In the development proposal, utilized elements were HRM trends, such as WFH and employee wellness programs, as well as making inspiring working environment as a key to competitive advantage. The idea that employment offer should develop skills, reward for good performance and maintain good working capacity was considered, as well as utilizing the finding of a previous research that insurance of one of the most highly appreciated benefit. The differences in laws, regulations and collective agreements are taken carefully into account, so that the development proposal is legal in all three countries.

Also the research was utilized widely in the development proposal. According to the results, awareness of what the target organization offers for its employees is on a satisfactory level, so it is proposed to raise the awareness, because it is an easy and cost-effective way to increase satisfaction. Both physical and mental wellbeing could be supported better. Smartum sport/culture benefit is highly appreciated in Finland, so it is proposed to be retained in the employment offer, as well as offering a similar benefit in Sweden also. In terms of law, this is not possible in Norway, but support on wellbeing can be carried out in

several other ways. Even though financial benefits and rewards were not highly evaluated in the numerical scale, only small improvements are proposed to this, because the verbal answers revealed, that employees do not see this as a very important area to be developed. Flexible hours and distance work must be retained, because these were highly valued benefits.

Development proposals for employment offer

Finland has culture/ sport benefit for 400€ per year, but Sweden and Norway none. Proposed is, that employees in Sweden would be offered sport benefit for 2000 SEK per year, which is the maximum benefit an organization can offer tax free. In Norway, such tax-free benefits are forbidden, so this benefit could be compensated with other sport activities. Office workouts and sport outside office are proposed, but the exact content need to be discussed with employees. With this proposal, satisfaction of support in physical wellbeing would most likely rise.

Private internet is offered in Norway for up to 1000 NOK/month. This benefit did not come up in the research, so proposed is to remove this benefit from new employees. Alternatively, a questionnaire could be arranged for employees if they value this, or if they even use this benefit. A negative impact to satisfaction was shown in the research, when benefits are worsened, so proposed is, that this benefit will not be removed from current employees without a questionnaire.

Norway has a lunch benefit up to 200 NOK per month, which is the maximum tax-free benefit. Finland has a lunch benefit, which includes that employer pays 20% of the lunch up to 11,30€ per lunch. Sweden has no benefits on lunches. Proposed is that the current benefits will remain in Norway and Finland, but in addition, lunch benefit could be included also in Sweden, even though it is a taxable benefit for employees. In terms of laws, these benefits cannot be fully synergized.

According to the current travel instructions, the cheapest and if possible, the most environmentally friendly ticket, should be chosen in Norway and Sweden. However, if the travel time in train takes over two hours, first class ticket can be chosen. In Finland, always the cheapest ticket should be chosen. Proposed is, that in all three countries, the cheapest ticket should be chosen and also the most environmentally friendly way, if it does not increase costs. The possibility to choose first class tickets was not mentioned to be an advantage and in addition, trend of organizations trying to decrease their carbon footprint directs the employment offer to be developed this way.

Currently, bonuses are paid only in Norway, where employees receive 5% bonus of annual profit per year. Because the satisfaction being rather low in satisfaction of financial benefits

and rewards, proposed is to extend this to all countries. It would most likely increase satisfaction, but also encourage employees to work in a profitable way, which would lead into better organizational performance. This could mean, that by offering financial reward for employees, the major beneficiary could be the organization in reality.

All countries have occupational healthcare, but in only Sweden and Finland it is extended. Proposed is, that employees Norway would have an extended healthcare also. With adding this, both physical and mental, wellbeing in Norway could increase.

Currently, in Sweden, employer pays reading glasses if employee works over one hour per day by display. In Norway, employer pays reading glasses if employee works over one hour per day by display, up to 800 NOK. In Finland, employer compensates reading glasses up to 100€ of frames and pays lenses. Proposed is, that employer would compensate reading glasses up to 1000 SEK in Sweden, up to 1000 NOK in Norway and up to 100€ in Finland of frames and pays needed lenses if employee works over one hour per day by display. This benefit was not mentioned in the answers of research, but the offer should be equal for all employees apart from country.

Employees in Sweden and Finland have accident insurance for free time. Proposed is to extend this to Norway also. This is proposed in the terms of equal treatment but may also increase the satisfaction in Norway.

Employees in Sweden and Finland have negotiated prices to different stores. Even though discounts to stores were not mentioned in the research, a considerable thing is, that should prices be negotiated in Norway also. This does not cost any money for organization, but would demand some time to conclude them. Further research could be implemented to resolve if the discounts are used in Sweden and Finland and if employees appreciate them.

Other related areas to develop

In addition to the development proposal of new employment offer, other related matters are proposed. Awareness of what the organization offers for employees could be higher and therefore this is an area which could be implemented. It could increase employee's satisfaction, when employees are aware of all the benefits they can use, but is also a very cost effective way for organization to increase satisfaction. To achieve better job satisfaction, the organization could rise the appreciation of employees in also non-financial ways, such as taking employee wellbeing and satisfaction as part of its mission statement and its daily everyday life even strongly. According to feedback in the research, mandatory work outside office hours should be eliminated. Employees wish to have nice things to do at work and with colleagues. A structured way to implement this, could be an event calendar, with

different activities in accordance with the wishes of employees. Sport activities included could increase employee's wellbeing.

6 Summary

This thesis was made to develop a development proposal for the target organization. The aim was to develop an employment offer, which is in synergy in all countries in regards that is possible in terms of laws, regulations, and other related issues. The purpose was to develop an employment offer which treats employees equally in different countries as well as increases job satisfaction and competitive advantage in employee market.

The process of this thesis started with defining the subject area to be HRM so it would be in line with my major subject in studies. After having the frame of subject, I searched for an organization to which this thesis could be done for, and the target organization was contacted. The organization had a real need for developing employment offer, so it quickly formed to be the subject of this thesis. Some delimiting was done to narrow the subject to be even more clear and serve the need of target organization even better with giving deeper understanding.

After having the subject clear, the process continued with searching about the subject area. This was done to raise understanding of the subject and to give basis of knowledge of what the theoretical framework should include. With having enough information about the subject in general, topics of theoretical framework was chosen, and source material collected. The principles of scientific writing were followed when choosing literature, making reference notes and handling material. The literature is from reliable sources and were chosen to be relevant to the subject of this thesis. The subjects and literature were carefully selected and now afterwards can be stated that they support this thesis well.

The research was made as quantitative research to collect numerical information of satisfaction of employees. By utilizing quantitative research and implementing it with a survey, a best serving method to collect information was obtained. The open questions of the survey gave deeper understanding of the reasons behind the numerical answers. By utilizing numerical values and open questions, the best fit for the reason of the research was achieved and therefore answers for the research questions were fully answered. Both numerical values and open questions were utilized in the development proposal. The research and analysis methods were in line with the purpose of this thesis and gave the information which was targeted. A good research plan was made to have a well-structured and carefully made research to maximize the quality of the research. Research questions were adjusted precisely to have a clear problem to what the research was made to find answers for. The research and

data collection methods were planned well beforehand for a structured and consistent progress.

The development proposal was made in a synergy with utilizing the theory and the research. Because both theory, and research were made carefully and were well planned, they both gave answers and ideas to the development proposal. Making the development was easy, because needed information about what should be developed was already clarified. All developed areas needed to be done jointly with laws, regulations, and collective agreements so that they were legal in all countries. The development proposal is successful for having areas synergized and developed, as the target organization wanted to, but it also gives new information and ideas.

Ethical questions were considered throughout the whole process. In the beginning of starting this thesis, ethical questions were evaluated carefully by listing all possible related ethical issues and they were identified in which phase of the process they will or might appear. The guide of Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta was followed to maintain an ethical way to implement this thesis. According to the guide, the principles of honesty, carefulness and attentiveness were observed in every phase. References are presented so that the original authors are recognized. Data from research is planned, implemented, and reported in an ethical way. The main ethical issue in this thesis is securing anonymity, both the target organization's anonymity throughout the process, and employee's anonymity in the research. Both were fulfilled and neither the organization nor its employees cannot be identified. (Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta 2021.)

In the future, the target organization is proposed to continue research on the subject area. After implementing a new employment offer, a very important task is to measure the effects of it. Satisfaction of employees should be measured, but also economic impact on organizations performance should be covered. Utilizing same research table improves comparability.

This development proposal was made for a certain organization, which means that it cannot be utilized directly to other uses than for the target organization. However, the process of this research can be utilized wider. Data collection and analysis methods can be implemented in other researches and the pilot research can be utilized in planning researches. The arguments in development proposal are useful in similar cases. Additionally, the results of this research can be utilized wider in research field, as they indicate the correlation of employment offer and satisfaction of employees. Generally can be stated that better employment offer leads to better satisfaction.

The process of making this thesis was an extremely interesting journey. On the way, I learnt a lot about implementing a research, of its methods and analysis. Especially glad I am about the

research, which was my first one ever done with quantitative method and having it analyzed with SPSS statistics software. I also learnt a lot of additional information of HRM, even though I was familiar with the subject beforehand. By utilizing previous studies gave a lot more knowledge. The main challenges were the difficulty of narrowing the subject and making final decisions of the ways to progress, but nothing so challenging occurred that I could not cope with. Gladly, I had great support from school, as well as from the target organization. Overall, my thesis resulted as planned and I am very pleased with the outcome.

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Appendix 1: Research questions

In which country you are working in?: Sweden, Norway, Finland

How aware are you about what *organization X* offers for you?: 0-10

How satisfied are you about how *organization X* supports your work and free time balance?: 0-10

Reason for the answer above

How satisfied are you about how *organization X* supports your physical wellbeing?: 0-10

Reason for the answer above

How satisfied are you about how *organization X* supports your mental wellbeing?: 0-10

Reason for the answer above

How satisfied are you with financial benefits and rewards?: 0-10

Reason for the answer above

What is your overall satisfaction in what *organization X* offers for you?: 0-10

Reason for the answer above

In which matters *organization X* has succeeded in terms of what it offers for you?

In which matters *organization X* has succeeded in terms of what it offers for you?

Appendix 2: Development proposal

Proposal of new employment offer

Work time

Sweden and Norway: 40h per week. Flexitime in most positions.

Finland: 37,5h per week. Lunch not included in work time. Flexitime in most positions.

Distance work

Possible in most positions.

Cars

Sweden and Finland: Work cars and benefit cars for some employees.

Norway: Work cars.

Parking cars

Sweden: Paid.

Norway and Finland: Free of charge.

Parking bikes

Free of charge.

Culture/ sport benefit

Sweden: 2000 SEK per year.

Norway: Sport and wellness activities arranged by employer.

Finland: 400€ per year.

Phone and computer

Yes. Phone is a taxable benefit if it used for private use.

Lunch

Sweden: Up to 200 SEK per month. Taxable benefit.

Norway: Up to 200 NOK per month. Tax-free benefit.

Finland: Employee pays 80% and employer 20% up to 11,30€ per lunch. Exceeding sum is paid by employee.

Travels

Most environmentally friendly way if it is also the cheapest. When travelling with train, the cheapest ticket must be selected.

Bonuses

5% of annual profit per year.

Bonus holiday pay

Sweden: 0,8% of monthly salary per day on holiday.

Norway: No, but instead 5 or 6 weeks holiday.

Finland: 50% extra on annual leave.

Salary when sick

Sweden: On days 2-14, salary is decreased by 20%. On days 15-90, employer pays 10% of salary under base 8 and 90% of salary over base 8.

Norway: Employer pays first 16 days.

Finland: When employment has lasted less than 1 month, half of the salary is paid. Employment between 1 month and 3 years: 4 weeks paid. Employment between 3 and 5 years: 5 weeks paid. Employment between 5 and 10 years: 6 weeks paid. Employment over 10 years: 8 weeks paid.

Home with sick child

Sweden: Paid for up to 120 days.

Norway: 10 days paid per year for children under 12 years.

Finland: Paid for up to 4 days.

Maternity leave

Sweden: 480 days. Employer pays first 50 days.

Norway: 2 years. Not paid by employer.

Finland: Till child turns 3. Employer pays 3 months.

Salary revisions

Sweden: 1. April. Salary review is carried out in connection with the annual salary review

Norway: 1. April. Discussed with employees individually. Salary interview is in connection with the annual salary audit.

Finland: According to collective agreement.

Occupational healthcare

Yes. In addition, extended healthcare is offered.

Health maintenance

Sweden: In every 3 years.

Norway:

Finland: Entry control and in every 5 years for employees over aged 35.

Healthcare benefits

Sweden: Employer compensates reading glasses up to 1000 SEK of frames and lenses fully. Benefit requires that employee works over one hour per day by display.

Norway: Employer compensates reading glasses up to 1000 NOK of frames and lenses fully. Benefit requires that employee works over one hour per day by display.

Finland: Employer compensates reading glasses up to 100€ of frames and lenses fully. Benefit requires that employee works over one hour per day by display.

Accident insurance for free time

Yes.

Discounts in stores

Yes.