

# DEVELOPING JOB SATISFACTION AT ELDERLY CARE COMPANY X

Job satisfaction survey and development plan

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Thesis

Bachelor of business administration  
International business

2023

Bachelor of business administration  
International Business

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<b>Commissioned by</b>			
<b>Title</b>	Developing job satisfaction at elderly care company X- job satisfaction survey and development plan		
<b>Number of pages</b>	49 + 6		

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This thesis discusses the job satisfaction at commissioning company X operating in elderly care sector in Finland. The main objectives were to evaluate what the current job satisfaction level is and create a job satisfaction development plan based on the current level and the needs of the employees. The purpose was to give company X the needed information for them to make sure that their employees are satisfied with their job. The job satisfaction survey gave the employees the opportunity to affect their own job satisfaction through empowering them by asking concrete suggestions how their job satisfaction could be improved.

The research method was quantitative online survey. In the survey different statements were evaluated on 1-5 scale. The survey included open questions to clarify reasons behind work related stress and time management as well as ready-made concrete solutions how job satisfaction could be improved based on theoretical knowledge. The key concept was job satisfaction in elderly care field. Job satisfaction has been researched from different fields and from different points of view the emphasis in creating knowledge base has been on researches and topics that are related to the nursing field. Studies have shown that in care field safety, and work-related stress play crucial role in job satisfaction. In the case company physical safety levels are great but factors affecting the psychological feeling of safety within the work community were identified. The development plan was created based on survey results and ideas and themes discussed in open questions. This was done because research shows that empowering employees can improve their job satisfaction as well as efficiency, and employee retention. The data was analysed by calculating mean and mode answers and categorizing the survey statement to analyse the bigger picture. The data was organized to reflect which areas of job satisfaction need to be addressed. The open question answers were decoded and categorized so that the common themes of answers are shown.

The main finding was that the company has great employee job satisfaction levels. The areas that could be developed are stress levels, how rewarding the work is and directly work-related aspects like division of tasks and feeling of rush. The response rate was 75% and therefore the company can utilize the results.

**Keywords** job satisfaction, work climate, work burden

Bachelor of business administration  
International Business

Special remarks

Thesis includes job satisfaction development plan and job satisfaction survey submitted to the commissioner.

Tradenomi  
Kansainvälinen liiketalous

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<b>Työn nimi</b>	Työtyytyväisyyden kehittäminen vanhusten palveluasumisen yrityksessä X -työtyytyväisyyskysely ja kehittämissuunnitelma		
<b>Sivumäärä</b>	49 + 6		

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Opinnäytetyön aiheena oli hoitajien työtyytyväisyys toimeksiantajayrityksessä X, joka tuottaa ympärivuorokautisen palveluasumisen palveluita vanhuksille Suomessa. Tarkoituksena oli kartoittaa yrityksen tämänhetkistä työtyytyväisyyttä ja tavoitteena on laatia työtyytyväisyyskyselyn pohjalta kehittämissuunnitelma, jonka avulla hoitohenkilökunnan työtyytyväisyyttä voidaan parantaa.

Tutkimusmetodinä oli kvantitatiivinen kysely, joka toteutettiin verkossa. Kysely vastaamaan lähetettiin kaikille Yritys X:n työntekijöille vastattavaksi. Kyselyssä oli väitteitä, jotka vastaajat arvioivat asteikolla 1–5, avoimia kysymyksiä, joiden tarkoituksena oli mahdollisuus tarkentaa esimerkiksi työn stressitekijöitä ja antaa vastaajille mahdollisuus jakaa heidän omia ehdotuksia kuinka heidän työtyytyväisyyttään voidaan parantaa. Lisäksi kysely sisälsi teorian pohjalta tehtyjä valmiita kehitysehdotuksia, joita vastaajat arvioivat. Keskeinen konsepti tässä opinnäytetyössä on työtyytyväisyys ja sen työntekijälähtöinen kehittäminen. Tietoperustan pääpaino oli tutkimuksilla, jotka liittyvät erityisesti hoitoalaan. Tietopohjassa keskeisinä aiheina nousivat esiin työturvallisuus ja työperäinen stressi. Työturvallisuus jaetaan fyysiseen turvallisuuteen ja eettiseen kuormitukseen, joista jälkimmäistä käsitellään kehittämissuunnitelmassa.

Opinnäytetyön tuloksia voi hyödyntää yritys X ja työtä voivat muutkin alan yritykset käyttää pohjana luodessaan omaa työtyytyväisyyden kehittämissuunnitelmaa. Kyselyn vastausprosentti on 75 %. Yritys X:n työtyytyväisyys on hyvällä pohjalla, mutta erityisesti avoimien kysymysten vastauksista nousi kehityskohteita esille.

**Avainsanat** Työtyytyväisyys, työilmapiiri, työn kuormittavuus  
**Muita tietoja** Toimeksiantajalle on toimitettu työtyytyväisyyskyselyn tulokset, sekä työtyytyväisyyden kehittämissuunnitelma

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Developing job satisfaction

This thesis discusses job satisfaction and its development in a company providing elderly care and assisted living services. Studies in nurses' job satisfaction has been conducted in different areas of nursing field but this thesis includes a complete development plan for the job satisfaction and focuses especially to the elderly care field of nursing. This thesis focuses on how the job satisfaction could be developed and the actions commissioning company could take to improve their care employees' job satisfaction levels. In this thesis the theoretical background in job satisfaction as well as important factors of job satisfaction in care field are discussed and based on the information as well as job satisfaction survey results a development plan will be made.

It is highly beneficial for employers to put emphasis on job satisfaction. Satisfying work that is beneficial and good for the employee makes the employees want to do their best. When employees are doing the absolute best they can then the results they are producing will be better, which is great for the company. When employees see that work benefits them, they are more committed to the employer, which can save money in recruitment and onboarding costs. Having a good and satisfying job is ethical right for humans. This type of good work advances the wellbeing, and health of the employee. The wellbeing factors that good work affects especially are spiritual, and financial wellbeing. (Luukkala, 2011, 25) In this thesis the development plan will be made to make the work at company X as good as possible so that the employees are committed and produce the best results possible.

### 1.2 The case company and operational field

The commissioner is a Finnish elderly care company providing assisted living services in southern Finland. Their customers or residents live within the company's facilities and receive around the clock care. They have 79 employees in four locations in four different municipalities. The company has opened two new

facilities within the past year. The commissioner has nurses with different educational backgrounds. They have nurses with bachelor's degrees, vocational qualifications and in addition care assistants.

A Thesis on employee job satisfaction is needed as the case company operates in the care industry and employs nurses. Finnish KEVA estimated that in 2022 Finland was missing over 16 000 registered nurses, bachelor or masters level educated, and over 8 000 practical nurses, vocational level, from how many nurses were needed during that year. (KEVA, 2023) Operators in the healthcare sector might be competing from educated nursing staff. Therefore, it is important for companies to make sure that their employees are satisfied with their job and employer so that the care employees continue working for their companies and within the care field. This specific commissioning company was chosen because of connections made with the operators and care field employees in Southern-Finland while the author was working for one company within the field. Company X had been part of discussions with the connections, and they had portrayed the company as having a positive mindset towards development. Open mind to different development ideas were considered as highly important feature of a commissioning company so that the development plan can be made with the employees and their needs in mind.

This thesis work is relevant because in addition to researching the current employee job satisfaction levels a development plan is made. The limitations of this thesis are that the development plan applies only to the commissioning company, but it can be used as a model on how another company operating in the same field tries to develop their employees' job satisfaction.

### 1.3 Purpose, objective, and research questions of the thesis

The purpose of this thesis is to find ways to develop employee job satisfaction of care employees at Company X.

The main objectives are:

1. Based on theory form possible ways to improve employee job satisfaction level.

2. Determine the current employee job satisfaction level. Have employees rank the suggestions in order of relevance based on their experience at company X. Collect other ways to improve job satisfaction from the employees to involve them in the process of developing their own job satisfaction.
3. Create an employee job satisfaction development plan for company X.

The main research question is: How can company X improve the employee job satisfaction levels of their care staff? Other research questions that need to be answered are:

1. In which ways could company X improve their employee job satisfaction based on relevant theory?
2. What is the current employee job satisfaction level at company X?
3. Which actions are needed according to the employees of company X to develop their job satisfaction and which development ideas are most relevant according to the care staff?

These are important things that need to be researched to make the most relevant employee job satisfaction development plan. As this research focuses on how to improve the employee's experience working with company X, the employees are strongly included in the process. This approach has been taken because the employees are the experts of their own work and work conditions and therefore experts in how their job satisfaction can be developed. This approach also ties to the theory that employees should be empowered, which will be discussed later in detail. Theory used is from different management and HR related sources as well as theoretical knowledge and research conducted on nurses. Theory and research used are from different countries as the field has similarities and differences and at times the culture in which research has been conducted gives different perspective to the topic.

The current employee job satisfaction level is included to allow company X to measure the effectiveness of the development plan if they decide to implement

it. Determining the job satisfaction levels in different areas of job satisfaction allows determining which areas need to be developed and through what type of actions.

## 2 WHAT IS JOB SATISFACTION AND THE AREAS OF IT

### 2.1 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction describes the level of gratitude and how content an employee is with their job (Fahed-Sreih, 2020, 15). Fahed-Sreih has identified four main factors that affect job satisfaction. Satisfaction with the actual job, satisfaction with co-workers, satisfaction with supervisors, and lastly satisfaction with the policies at workplace. (Fahed-Sreih, 2020, 15). These four key elements have been used as the base for the employee job satisfaction survey in this thesis. Because this thesis focuses on developing the job satisfaction of employees, therefore the opinion on how these different categories of job satisfaction should be developed is asked from the employees. There are different types of job satisfaction surveys but for example system created by Spector in 1985 used a scale from 1 to 6, 1 disagree very much 6 agree very much (Fields, 2002, 14). The scale and methodology used was similar but the survey made for this thesis is based on more recent theory and modified to fit the needs of the field.

Job satisfaction includes other areas but the four main ones are introduced here. These areas go more into detail of things that affect job satisfaction. Therefore, later on other factors affecting job satisfaction will be discussed. These factors fall under the first category of satisfaction with the actual job. Job satisfaction and work wellbeing go hand in hand. The topics that these both meters share are work engagement and meaningful work.

Work engagement which shortly means employee's experience of feeling enthusiastic and that the work is meaningful (Työterveyslaitos, 2023), can be identified by three core things feeling energetic, being dedicated, and getting immersed into the work tasks. Work must be challenging enough for the employee to be energetic, but not too challenging otherwise the work starts to take up energy. If work is not challenging it does not give energy and then it could be that the employee is only working for the paycheck. Dedication can be achieved for example if the employee agrees with company's values. Getting immersed into the work tasks is also important because it can be an indication that the processes of the work work and the employee is able to get into a flow while doing their tasks. If the

employee is unable to get into a flow while working, they might get bored and tired. This leads to work taking up all the employee's energy so that they are tired at home and do not have the energy to do for example their hobbies. If work engagement levels are high then the employees are more tolerant to any faults within the work. (Luukkala, 2011, 28-29) There are different actions to make employees more engaged and committed to the company. One extreme real life example of this is how Google has built employees' dedication to the company. They simplify their employees' lives by offering free meals, fitness opportunities, and a swimming pool as well as childcare services. They offer hobby opportunities at the workplace. More traditional ways are offering personal and professional development opportunities, integration of employees to decision making processes, making work interesting and challenging enough, creating safe atmosphere, and having managers who have great social and leadership skills. (Henkel, 2013, 44-46.)

Work can be made meaningful for the employee by several different factors. These include making a living, work guiding personal time management, getting content into life, belonging into a community, and it can be something to be proud of. The best type of work is something a person enjoys doing and for them that can be one of the factors making work meaningful. The salary and making a living from work is important for meaningful work. Money helps to fulfil physical needs of a person and when all those needs, like food, and shelter, are met then we can focus on getting spiritual fulfilment. Being poor and not earning a living wage causes mental health problems. Work helps with personal time management by giving a reason to wake up in the morning. It gives rhythm to the day and activates people. Work can give meaningful content to people's lives as it gives interesting or passionate topics to discuss with friends or family and a meaningful work allows people to learn and develop themselves. Belonging into a community creates friendships and expands individuals' social networks. Sometimes formation of cliques can be seen at a workplace. These as well as gossiping decrease the meaningful nature of work due to the poorer social value gained. Especially Finns tend to be proud for having work and working. These types of people want to perform well and gain a good reputation. This can be also seen in professions that require a calling. For example nursing and care field can be seen as a field

that requires calling and when a nurse is asked why they work in the field they might answer “because I want to help others”. (Luukkala, 2011, 22-25) As this essay discusses nurses and the profession is seen as a calling it must be remembered that that is not the only factor making work meaningful or satisfying. Meaningful work and the study of the area focuses on how the human spirit can flourish and be engaged, human spirit meaning that the work allows self-expression. In meaningful work one can express themselves and they do not have to work against their personal values and beliefs. Calling means that the work is worthwhile for the employee. The work must be socially significant and/or personally meaningful. It is debated if meaningful work and calling go hand in hand or if they are independent concepts. Can work be meaningful without calling and can a work in a field that one has calling for not be meaningful? (May, et.al, 2019, 347-354)

## 2.2 Increasing job satisfaction

People leave their jobs because they believe that another workplace could be better. Many companies have exit interviews or questionnaires but those might not tell the whole truth. Many times people do not give the actual reasons behind their departure but give other believable reasons like shorter commute or better salary. (Cottrell, 2016, vii-viii.) In his book on work related wellbeing Luukkala discusses factors that increases job satisfaction and factors that reduces the dissatisfaction towards work. These factors are partially different. Increasing factors are the interesting nature of job, learning new things, being able to express oneself, the worth and functionality of a service or product, and feeling useful. These factors are related to the actual work tasks whereas the factors that reduce dissatisfaction are not directly connected to the actual tasks of the job. The factors that reduce dissatisfaction are being content with the salary, having safe work environment, having good ergonomics at work place, the needed tools are working, flexible schedule, encouraging management, great coworkers. To increase job satisfaction work must be interesting and allow development of skills because if the work has too strict routines it is easy to get bored. It is also important to be allowed to do the tasks in your own style. The dissatisfaction reducing factors make sure that the employees can do their tasks without outside distractions. The

salary must reflect tasks and how hard the person is working. Safety must be great so that the employees do not stress over their own safety and use their energy on that good safety allows employees to focus fully on their job instead of having to look over their shoulders while working. Luukkala himself described his work as criminal psychologist. Some of the convicts were aggressive and got angry easily, when this happened Luukkala started to look for the emergency exits in case the situation escalates and becomes dangerous. He had to be alert which takes a lot energy and he became more tired after those encounters. (Luukkala, 2011, 28-30)

Management style is also important. A good manager encourages their employees and knows that humans respond better to encouraging feedback instead of negative. A great manager gets their employees excited about changes and is able to get everyone to commit to those. It is important to give both constructive and positive feedback as feedback is not as rewarding if it is only given when something has been done incorrectly. There are two different ways of thanking employees, passive thank you and actual thank you. The passive is staying quiet when everything runs smoothly, this type of manager gives feedback only when something has been done incorrectly. The actual thank you is saying thank you out loud when something has been done correctly or thanking for good work spontaneously without specific reason. The first one decreases job satisfaction and the second one increases it. (Luukkala, 2011, 29-30) For management style communication is important. Great boss listens and asks questions from their employees. Important questions to ask are how the job could be done better, and if the employees need help with their work. Good boss also cares about the answers and acts based on the responses. (Cottrell, 2016, 70)

Orientation theory discusses the means that direct the choices people make about their work. Everyone has their individual goals and rewards they seek from their work. These goals and rewards may be independent from the nature of work and the content of the actual job. Based on orientation theory the way people see their work affects things they recognize to affect their job satisfaction. For people, who view work as a mean to make their life fulfilling prioritize pay as the most

important factor for their job satisfaction. Other factors these types of people have listed to be most important for their job satisfaction are security, coworkers, intrinsic job satisfaction, and autonomy. (Armstrong, 2006, 246)

### 2.3 Project management and change management

Project management process and tools can be utilized in the development plan. The project lifecycle may as follows:

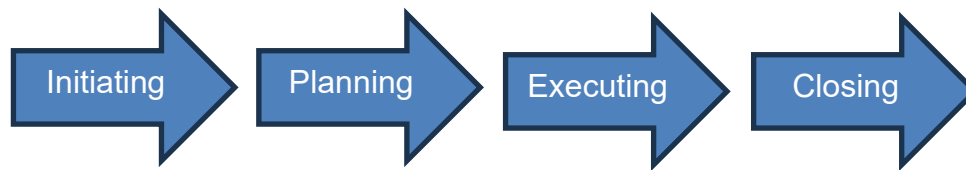


Figure 1. Project management cycle.

Initiating is starting the project when a development opportunity has been discovered. Planning phase creates the footsteps to follow during the project and the different phases of it. Executing is the implementation phase of the project when the plan is put into action. Lastly the closing, going over the results and seeing what was done and learned. (Kloppenborg & Wells, 2019)

For project management communication is important. Planning creates the framework for communication and coordination of project and during the execution phase the communication and coordination must be done well to succeed. (Kloppenborg & Wells, 2019) Planning includes creating the specific goals for the project. A good template for goal creation is SMART goals format. The goal must be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timebound. (Heldmark, 2018) One way to communicate the different phases off project is through Gantt Chart. Gantt char can be used to show the schedule. (Kloppenborg & Wells, 2019)

### 3. AREAS OF JOB SATISFACTION

#### 3.1 Important themes of job satisfaction

Research that include job satisfaction of nurses have identified many different themes that fall under satisfaction with the actual job. These researches include a study on burnout, job satisfaction, and general health of nurses, and a concept analysis study that has been published in international nursing review. A concept analysis on job satisfaction in nursing field found that the three most important themes that affect job satisfaction are that work and its environment fulfil the employees needs, that the employee gets positive or gratifying emotional response to the working conditions and “job value or equity”. (Liu, Aunguroch & Yunibhand, 2015)

The south African study on nurses covers work related stress, burnout, job satisfaction and general health of nurses. This study was done on South African nurses, and it was based on a set of questionnaires. The study found that the most important factor affecting job satisfaction in nurses is stress that is specifically related to staff issues. Other factors the study recognized were security risks, other types of work-related stress than the one caused by staff issues, and lack of resources. (Ilic, Khamisa, Oldenburg & Peltzer, 2015) The study didn't define the security clearly but based on the context and content of the study it can be considered to be about security in sense of safety at work. Staffing issues may be a needed conversation based on the KEVA evaluations that were discussed earlier. Based on how many nurses are urgently needed overall in Finnish nursing field it can be assumed that staffing issues may cause smaller job satisfaction levels and therefore had to be included in the survey research.

#### 3.2 Safety

The South African study found work safety as one of the most important factors affecting the job satisfaction of nurses. (Ilic, Khamisa, Oldenburg & Peltzer, 2015) The situation might be different in Finland. The work safety of Finnish elderly care workers appears to be studied a little. A Finnish group who studied the understanding moral distress among eldercare workers came to the same conclusion.

In their study they stated that The self-assessed safety issues of eldercare workers “seems to be a little-studied theme” (Koivisto et al. 2022) In 2021 Tehy, Finnish union for health and social care, early childhood education, and rehabilitation professionals, commissioned a survey on the overall work safety of nurses. Over 4000 nurses responded and 69% of them had faced physical violence or threat of it. (They, 2023) Therefore, safety has been included into the survey. The importance of safety for job satisfaction is important to keep in mind even if there isn't safety issues currently. The survey might bring up relevant data on the safety of company X's employees and show if there is need for action.

When discussing psychological aspect of feeling safe the atmosphere of workplace can lead to a person feeling un-safe. If coworkers are gossiping and judging and cliques have been formed, those outside of the cliques or the employees who are facing judgement and gossiped about can feel unsafe in their workplace. They might have to be on guard all the time and careful to who they tell which things and how their work appears to others. (Luukkala, 2011, 28-30) A guideline for increasing the appeal of elderly care field recognized these same themes of psychological safety. Work community with safe atmosphere shares the responsibility for work and the fluency of workflow. When the employees feel psychologically safe they share their feelings and it creates open communication. The key actors in creating this psychologically safe environment are the team leaders, managers and the upper management of a company. They must lead with example and create the atmosphere where everyone is and feels respected, appreciated, considered, and heard. The same guideline stated that different types of tools can increase work safety. This takes into account the physical safety. (Huotari et al. 2020, 70-71, 112)

### 3.3 Rewarding work

People want a job that can be seen as rewarding. The employee and employer are in a social reciprocity relationship where both parties feel like they are getting and giving equally. Rewards that the employee gets is the salary that is suitable when considering their own education, experience, and input. (Luukkala, 2011,

49-51) The reward can be meaningful work, and personal and professional development possibilities. How this can be affected is by coaching and offering development opportunities within the company (Berlin, 2019, 26). Especially younger generations appreciate career development opportunities at workplace. They tend to want to have ongoing learning processes and develop their skills to reach their goals constantly. (Fahed-Sreih, 2020, 16) If the reward and input are not balanced for the employee it affects their overall performance and wellbeing. First their wellbeing gets worse, then they start experiencing stress related symptoms like insomnia. Eventually if the unstable situation continues they start getting ill more often and eventually all this leads to long sickleaves. (Luukkala, 2011, 50-51)

One way of creating a more rewarding work environment is through coaching method. Coaching is approach in which the manager has one-on-one discussions with their employees periodically, for example on monthly basis. In these discussions first the employee's personal goals for their career and work are discussed and a development plan is made. Then later on in these discussions the level of support needed and the progress on reaching the goals that have been agreed to in the initial meeting will be discussed. In coaching employee is given support to reach their personal goals for their job and career. It's an approach to help each other to succeed better in their job and the benefit is that the job becomes more rewarding but also the feeling of being appreciated within the work community. When done correctly coaching can increase the skills of employees within the company and make them appreciate their work tasks more. How coaching can be done is by having conversations between employees and manager to determine goals and how those goals can be reached and then later on following up on the progress of reaching the goals. The manager should arrange employees the opportunities to do tasks that allow them to develop the skills they need to reach their goals. It empowers and includes employees and gives them autonomy on their own tasks and professional development. The most important part of coaching is feedback and making it part of the daily life at the workplace. (Berlin, 2019, 26-30) Coaching approach can be made to include career development planning. The core is personalized approach in terms of services and procedures

that allow career development that benefits both the individual employee and the whole organization. (Fahed-Sreih, 2020, 21)

### 3.4 Policies and empowering

Empowering in terms of job satisfaction means that employees are included in decisions that affect their job and they are allowed to some extent take actions on issues within their work. It helps with employee retention as empowering approach can improve job satisfaction of employees. Empowering also can increase efficiency, when employees are given the opportunity to tell how their task could be done more time and resource efficiently. Empowerment encourages employees to take more responsibility on their own work. The approach tells the employees of a company that empowers them that they are trusted by the management. The employees cannot be given full autonomy on policies or procedures but the empowering needs to be structured and controlled. (Connell & Phillips, 2011, 204-211)

Policies related to time management can affect the feeling of rush at workplace. Eliminating time that is wasted is important, this can be done by creating lists of things that have to be done and then prioritizing the items on that list. Avoiding procrastination is equally important as well as figuring out the things that are not part of the actual work but are related to it. For example, if a task that requires certain items or information, the needed tools and information is close to where the task is done. If work involves routine tasks and then tasks requiring more creativity, the routine tasks are important to do first so that they do not affect the ability to focus. This allows the thought processes needed to become more time efficient as the employee is able to focus on the tasks fully. A way to eliminate the wasted time is to have a diary on how time has been spent. This shows which actions take unnecessary time. (Luukkala, 2011, 133-134)

There are several different things that take up time unnecessarily. These include not having clear goals, not prioritising, lack of knowledge and skills, coworkers who are indifferent, difficulties in saying no, not delegating, not finishing what has been started, trying to achieve perfection, and not learning from mistakes. The goals guide which actions are needed. When there is a clear goal all actions and

effort can be put into reaching that instead of doing a unrelated task that steers away from the goal. When someone does not have the skills needed, then they take more time in completing their tasks. This can be eliminated by hiring choices and onboarding and training processes. Everyone must know and act upon their rights and responsibilities. If one person in a team is indifferent about their work, it can easily affect the whole result, especially if a work task or process requires the effort of more than one person then one indifferent employee is affecting when task can be finished or done completely. Prioritizing which tasks and processes are important. When indirect work like reporting, takes up too much time, it is taking time away from the direct work that could be done instead. Then the more important tasks for the results or customers are left undone or have to be rushed. (Luukkala, 2011, 134-137)

Company that decides to empower their employees need to set ground rules and clearly communicate the scope in which the empowerment is desired. (Connell & Phillips, 2011, 204-211)

Policies on onboarding process are also important and the development of these policies should be done through empowering processes. The purpose of onboarding processes in terms of improving job satisfaction is to facilitate learning of competences needed in the job position and to modify new employees' existing knowledge and skills as well as attitudes to achieve effective performance in the job. Onboarding should have specific objectives that after completion the new employees know certain things about the company and its culture as well as have the needed specialized skills. A well organized onboarding process decreases turnover rates and improves performance. (Fahed-Sheid, 2020, 25-27) Work related stress and job satisfaction

Another important factor for job satisfaction is work related stress. For nurses an important factor affecting work related stress negatively is staffing issues. (Ilic, Khamisa, Oldenburg & Peltzer, 2015) Questions around work related stress and stress caused by number of staff were added into the survey. Finland does not have enough nurses currently and the situation is at risk of getting worse (KEVA, 2023). Therefore it is of high importance to include stress due to staff issues into the survey and evaluate if there are problems with staff numbers that affect job

satisfaction. The factors causing stress will be asked in the survey as well as specifically about stress due to staffing issues.

Rush creates stress. Rush can come from underestimating how long it takes to complete a task and therefore reserving too little time to completing it. Feeling accomplished is important for wellbeing, reaching the wanted results, and for overall energy levels. When there is enough rush, that is not overbearing the optimal level of performance has been reached. It makes taught processes more efficient, easier to focus on the right things, and to prioritize tasks. All of these lead to good quality work performance. When an employee does not have enough tasks to do during their workday they get frustrated and forgetful easily. And too much tasks and too great of a rush makes employees nervous and more prone to mistakes due to rushing. (Luukkala, 2011, 129-130) One other field that has huge rush is hospitality. A small study was conducted if mindfulness exercises could affect stress levels of hospitality workers. In study the participants integrated 15 – 30 minute audio mindfulness exercise to their workday and the results show that it reduced the stress levels. Mindfulness has been shown to decrease stress levels overall and decrease all stress related symptoms. (Blom, Zwall & Fernandes, 2022, 1-5.)

There are three main tasks to do to eliminate rush are great planning of work, creating to do lists, and prioritizing the tasks on that list. It is important to remember to not aim for perfection when planning the work because that can take up time from doing the work. The key to eliminating rush is to remember that rush does not prevent from planning and not planning creates the rush. The role of to do list is to remind about all tasks that need to be done and when the to do list is long prioritizing makes sure that the necessary tasks are done when needed and the most urgent ones are completed first. If some tasks are of equal importance then those can be done in order of interest. (Luukkala, 2011, 131-132)

Few ways to prevent excess work-related stress are to decrease the emotional strain of work, increase professional skill levels, decrease the amount of stress reactions, and to change lifestyle habits. All employees have some basic skills needed in that work. For recently graduated and students it is the theoretical

knowledge base that can be turned into the necessary skills. The onboarding process and training employees when changes are made are crucial so that all employees have the needed professional skills. Changes encourage all employees to gain new skills and update their existing ones. When employees' professional skills are not updated then eventually the employees are starting to lack the needed skills as the work evolves and field advances. To decrease stress reactions at work it is important for employees to learn skills needed to relax. Employers should encourage smaller breaks in addition to coffee and lunch breaks like standing up and doing stretches every ones in a while. When discussing the effects of work related stress working too much causes people to get overly tired. If someone gets overly tired the changes can be seen in daily life. Those changes may include challenges in making decisions, difficulties in finding the right words to use, problems with short-term memory, not thinking what the person is saying like cursing or being snappy, and lastly goal oriented mindset might get lost. (Luukkala, 2011, 57-58, 64-65) Stress can be reduced by exercise because it lowers stress hormone, like cortisol and adrenaline levels. At the same time exercising makes body produce noradrenaline which improves cognitive function and learning. Stress causes brain damage and increase in heart rate can reverse it. The benefits of exercise are immediate and exercise makes people's mood better. (Boschi, 2020, 239.) This is why short breaks from work can also be highly beneficial if spent doing light exercise.

It has been researched that poor management and working conditions are threats to patient safety in care field. This is because high stress levels impact concentration, processing of cognitive information, and like Luukkala had stated high stress levels hinder decision-making abilities and impact behaviour at work negatively. The specific events at care field workplace that are stressful are often safety related and high stress levels have been shown to be associated with accidents at work. (Halbesleber, 2008, 174) Another way to positively impact work related stress levels is in line with Luukkala's observations. It is to arrange training programs that train employees to handle stress and burnout and teach them different coping mechanisms. (Wheeler, 2008, 187)

## 4. METHODOLOGICAL IMPLEMENTATION

### 4.1 Method

Main research method is quantitative survey. It is quantitative because the main data gathered and analysed is numerical. Quantitative survey gives more general information where as qualitative gives specific information based on the respondents experiences (Hakava, 2018). The survey will be descriptive, meaning it investigates what is going on and why, (Greenfield & Greener, 2016, 203) online survey. This type of approach has been used in job satisfaction surveys and the rating scale of statements has been recommended by Spector in 1985. Spector used rating scale 1 – 6. (Fields, 2002, 14.) This method was adapted to the field used and more recent data on job satisfaction. The scaling was modified to fit scale used previously in the 2022 survey commissioned by Company X and conducted by company Elo. They used rating scale from 1 to 5 and therefore a similar method was chosen. This allows company X to compare data between ongoing year and 2022 as well as the data that comes from upcoming years' questionnaires with similar topics.

### 4.2 Approach

The approach for this thesis research relies heavily on the job satisfaction survey. A survey is conducted in October 2023. Survey questions have been made based on background research as well as taking into account what the managers of the different locations want to know. All locations receive the exact same survey. The questions that discuss management and their effect on job satisfaction have come from the managers themselves. The commissioner wanted to give the manager's the opportunity to ask anonymous feedback on their performance from their employees. The questions and wishes were in line with what literature has suggested to be important for job satisfaction. The key components were conflict solving, feedback, support, and equal treatment.

The survey will be anonymous. To guarantee full anonymity to the people answering the survey I will not be asking the age, or what level of qualifications the nurses who answer have. I will be asking in which location the nurses work to get location specific data for company X.

The order of the questions come from the work community research conducted by Elo last year at Company X. Based on that survey the order of importance of action last year was the following:

The ability of the employees to perform and their own resources.

The functionality of the work community.

Employees' outlook on their own job.

The actions of own direct supervisor.

Employees' own skills and development of the individual employee as well as the organization.

(Elo, 2022) This survey acts as a guide to which areas need to be addressed more in the survey and in which order the questions should be asked. The question themes that needed most urgent action last year will be addressed first to make sure that the employees can give their full attention to answering them. It will be important to remember while doing the survey and development plans that just over 60% of the employees answered Elo's survey (Elo, 2022) and that company X has opened two facilities since the survey conducted last year. Therefore the base of the development plan cannot be determined by last year's results.

Based on the survey results the job satisfaction development plan will be made. A high importance will be put on the action suggested by the employees themselves as they are the experts and that will follow on the empowerment aspect of job satisfaction. Therefore, conducting this research and making the development plan can be added as the first step of employee job satisfaction development.

### 4.3 Target group and the choice of data providers

Target group is the care employees of company X in all four locations. The survey is shared with the contact person at company X who then shares it with the employees. The survey is done online and I can get the data immediately after someone has answered the survey directly. Webropol is a trustworthy platform for online surveys. The platform doesn't require the responders to log in or to give any of their personal information. The only personal information that is asked is in which location the responder works in. There is a chance that someone might put identifying information onto the open questions but if that does happen the personal information will be edited out. Webropol was chosen as the survey platform as it is used by Lapland UAS and therefore accessible for this purpose. An online survey is easier to conduct and makes sure that handwriting issues do not interfere with the results. Online survey is also more accessible to all of Company X's employees also for those who are on a vacation.

### 4.4 Description of the data collection process

Data collection process started with creating survey questions and the survey. The link was sent to the service manager of company X who then sent it to facility managers to be shared with the employees on their own channels. The survey was open for two weeks for company X's employees to answer. After the two weeks is up the link was closed and the data was exported to Excel.

The survey questions were divided into three categories:

Own resources and job

Value from job

Management

Actions that may affect job satisfaction

Own resources and job statements focused on professional development opportunities, how content the employees are on their job, and work related stress. This

statement and question set had statements like I'm able to develop myself professionally and that number of staff doesn't increase stress levels. This statement and question set also included statements and open questions specifically for those who have started at the company within the last 12 months, between October 2022 and October 2023. These statements focused on the onboarding process at company X and whether the new employees felt confident on their capability of doing their job at company X after onboarding was completed. Open questions asked for suggestions and areas of improvement.

Second set of statements and questions focused on the value brought by the job. This category had statements on workplace atmosphere and safety. The statements also included topics like job position helping forward in career goals and the meaningfulness and how rewarding the job feels.

Management questions and statements were made based on the requests of the managers. They listed things they wanted to know and statements and questions were formed based on those. This was done per request from the commissioner to make sure the management gets the type of feedback they feel they need. Statements focused on the quantity of feedback, conflict solving and listening to the employees. Questions included where the managers have succeeded in their job and what they should improve. Because this thesis focuses on developing job satisfaction one question was added to ask how managers could improve employees' job satisfaction. This differs on how they could improve their job by asking job satisfaction specific ideas. The answers may overlap but both questions were added to ensure that the needs of both parties are met by this set of questions and statements.

Actions that may affect job satisfaction has four actions that will be graded. The actions are:

Coaching, discussions with manager and personal work related goals for employees. The purpose is to support employees and give them tasks that assist in them reaching their personal goals.

Empowerment. Increase bringing employees to discuss and have their output heard when making work practices.

Clear shared goals in a facility and accomplishing those.

Changes in practices to make work feel more meaningful. For example changing processes to give more time to spend with the residents. If there should be made any changes, specify in the open question below, please.

These suggestions come from theory discussed earlier in this essay. These were added to give direction on what type of actions could be made. On this page also other ideas for developing job satisfaction were asked. This was done to make sure that the employees could express all their ideas. The whole survey can be found from the appendices.

#### 4.5 Analysis of the data

The survey methods that will be used are rating scale, rankings, and open questions (Greenfield & Greener, 2016, 206). The survey includes some predetermined suggestions on how the job satisfaction could be improved and then have the participants rank them in order of importance. The scale I will be using is from 1-5 with the sixth option of prefer not to answer/ I don't know. The reason that the sixth option was added is that it makes data more reliable as people are not forced to give answer when they do not have one. (Greenfield & Greener, 2016, 206-207). The middle option is included as last year's survey had scale 1-5. This way company X can still easily compare the data from last year to current one and if they go back to having the same company do the survey next year and they are still using the 1-5 scale, the data is easily comparable then.

The analysis methods are calculating the overall mean and mode for the answers. The categories that receive most negative answers will be used in highest of importance when creating the development plan. The open questions will be analysed based on the themes of the answers and their frequency and the suggestions will be reflected on the answers to other questions. The other questions are statements that are ranked on scale from 1 to 5 based on how much the participant agrees or disagrees with the statement. The last part of the survey includes suggestions that are given a grade between 4 and 10 based on how much the participant sees that that suggestion could affect their job satisfaction. For these answers mode and mean are also calculated. The grading system of 4-10 was

chose because it is commonly used grading scale in Finland and therefore it should be easy for the respondents to use. Based on if the suggestion is seen as relevant, grade above 7 it can be included on the development plan. The inclusion is finally determined by the main questions and how urgently each area needs to be developed.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1 Background information on subjects

Many aspects of job satisfaction is linked to work related stress. Work related stress is impacted for example by staff and resource issues, too great of a rush, and work atmosphere. People want to feel accomplished as it increases wellbeing and overall energy levels. When work becomes too stressful it can be seen from an individual by them having hard time finding the right words to use, short-term memory problems, being snappy and having quicker temperament, lacking the ability to concentrate and process information and having challenges in making decisions. Stress-free environment is safer for both the residents and the employees as they are not making careless mistakes as easily. (Luukkala, 2011. Fahed-Sreih, 2020.)

Work safety can be divided to the physical safety and psychological safety. The first one is a theme that seems to be little-studied theme when it comes to elderly care field. Psychological safety is more studied and same themes are applicable in several different fields. Psychological safety is hindered by poor atmosphere where people are gossiping, judging coworkers, and formation of cliques. In psychologically safe environment the atmosphere feels safe, and responsibilities are shared. Workflow is fluent and people are communicating openly. (Luukkala, 2011. Huotari et. al. 2020. Koivisto et. Al. 2020)

Policies at work are important in creating safe, and stress-free environment and making the work rewarding. It is important to train the existing employees as well as new ones. Through training and onboarding processes employees are learning competences. This also makes sure that the employees are not lacking any necessary skills or knowledge. Prioritizing tasks makes sure that all the tasks gets the needed focus and when the routine tasks are done first then people are more creative as they are not thinking about the other tasks that have to be done that day. (Fahead-Sreih, 2020. Luukkala, 2011)

Rewarding work gives training and personal development opportunities. Salary must reflect the requirements of the work possibilities but it is crucial that work is meaningful to the person doing it. When work is meaningful then it becomes more

rewarding. Personal and professional development opportunities given by the employer benefit both parties. It makes the work more satisfying as the employee is able to challenge themselves by learning something new and it enhances the competences within the company. (Fahead-Sreih, 2020. Luukkala, 2011)

## 5.2 What is the current employee job satisfaction level at company X?

The survey questions were divided into six categories of job satisfaction. Safety, question 23, how rewarding the job is, questions 5, 21, 24, 25, and 26, satisfaction with the work itself, questions 2, 3, 6, 7, and 20, policies which were divided into satisfaction with care practices and values, questions 12 and 13, and satisfaction with onboarding processes, questions 16, 17, and 18, work related stress, questions 4, 8, 10, 11, 14, and 22, and lastly management, questions 28-25. It was decided to analyze the two factors of satisfaction with the policies separately because in many cases the difference between satisfaction with care practices and satisfaction with onboarding process was great. These questions discuss the level of satisfaction on scale from 1 to 5. The answers to open questions were decoded and put divided into these six categories as well.

On whole company level the order from least to most satisfied categories is how rewarding the work is, work related stress, satisfaction with the work, onboarding processes, care practices, management, and safety. The averages of answers can be seen from the table below. Overall the scores are high and the employees are satisfied with their work and employer. Overall job satisfaction level in company X is 3.91, which is the average from all answers given in the job satisfaction survey. Rewarding level is 3.83, work related stress 3.73, and satisfaction with the work 3.84. These three categories are in the center of focus in the job satisfaction development plan.

Category	Average
How rewarding the work is	3.83
Work related stress	3.73
Satisfaction with the work	3.84
Onboarding processes	3.97
Care practices and values	4.07
Management	4.09
Safety	4.11
Overall level of satisfaction	3.91

Table 1. Company X's job satisfaction survey average answers of each category.

These same categories were used to analyse the situation on a location level. The table for those results can be seen below. There are differences in the categories in which the employees are most satisfied with. Also the open questions had a request that Company X would keep treating all locations as independent locations instead of trying to make them identical and noticeably part of a chain. For these reasons separate smaller development plans are made for each location based on what they need to improve the most apart from the general company x development plan. For location 1 the own development plan includes onboarding processes and management work. Locations' 2 and 3 development plans focus on onboarding, and safety concerns. Location 4 needs most development in management and safety. The highest importance is placed on the development suggestions from the employees.

Category/Average	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3	Location 4
Safety	4.36	3.67	4.36	4.36
How rewarding the work is	3.76	3.46	4.26	4.09
Satisfaction with the work	3.75	3.56	4.24	3.97
Care practices and values	3.91	3.68	4.50	4.42
Onboarding processes	3.80	3.26	4.36	4.38
Work related stress	3.68	3.55	4.19	4.15
Management	3.84	3.91	4.62	4.04
Overall level of satisfaction	3.80	3.63	4.37	4.13

Table 2. Average answers for each evaluated category by location.

Overall the statement that got the most negative response in terms of job satisfaction was my job helps me reach my career goals. The average response to it was 3.24 and mode answer 3. The best scored answer was for statement my values align with company values which got average of 4.41 and mode answer 5.

Overall the job satisfaction level for each question was great. For stress levels one statement was My job causes stress that affects me also during my free time. As the answer scale was from 1 disagree to 5 agree and the average response was 2.62 and mode answers were 1 and 2, the care employees are able to unwind from their work day well and their work is not too stressful.

### 5.3 In which ways company X could improve their employee job satisfaction based on relevant theory?

Based on theoretical knowledge actions that could improve employee job satisfaction are empowering, rush eliminating actions, allowing personal and professional development, working on the general atmosphere at the workplace, stress management training, increase skill levels, and giving tools to complete skills.

Empowering can be included in many aspects of job satisfaction. It is allowing the employees to be part of changing their work and the practices. The level of empowering that is allowed must be communicated clearly. The benefits of empowering include increase in efficiency, increases the ownership the employees take from their job, and increases the employee retention.

Empowering can be a key aspect in making the work more efficient and to eliminate rush. The employees know which actions take unnecessary time and that is how more efficient work can be reached through empowering. To eliminate rush it is important to plan work, create to-do lists especially if there are huge number of tasks that need to be done. Prioritizing the tasks makes sure that everything is done in time, and lastly procrastination must be consciously avoided. How these can be done is by having time spending diary so that the time allocated for tasks can be as accurate as possible. This makes sure that the employer or employees themselves do not create unnecessary feeling of rush due to timing issues. Routine must do tasks should be scheduled to be done first. From the diary and planning the tasks and extra steps that take up time can be recognized. If it is noticed that some tools, supplies or information are stored far from the place where they are needed or all needed supplies are stored far away from each other and separately those can be moved closer to the place where they are needed or stored

together to eliminate the extra steps that create wasted time. This approach is similar to the Lean management approach.

Poor work atmosphere greatest emotional strain. The key part to improve work atmosphere is by making sure that everyone feels appreciated, considered, and heard at the workplace. The key players in creating safe atmosphere are team leaders, managers, and the upper management improving the atmosphere by setting an example and encouraging open communication.

To improve work related stress levels it is important to work to decrease stress reactions at work. This can be done by encouraging small breaks throughout the workday in addition to coffee, and lunch breaks. Small breaks could be taking a minute to stretch or if working still a lot then stretching legs and walking a bit. A concrete action that employer can take is to invest into training of skills needed to decompress and relax. It is important to include teaching skills for handling stress.

Training is important when starting at a company but also during a work contract. Onboarding process makes sure that the employees have the needed skills, knowledge and competences to work in the specific company and in the role. Training helps to make sure that when changes are made, the employees continue to have the needed skills. Training opportunities make employees more satisfied as they can increase their professional skills. In all training specific objectives that must be learned are important to make sure that the employees gain the needed and wanted skills. Assisting tools and equipment can also improve job satisfaction as well as safety but also new tools and equipment require training so that employees know how to use and utilize them.

To make work more rewarding coaching and career development planning are possible ways to improve how rewarding the job is and that way also job satisfaction. Coaching requires communication and regular feedback from the manager. Both actions require communication about the employee's personal goals. The manager gives opportunities to improve the skills employee needs to reach their goal and the company gains more committed employees and employees with more diverse skill sets.

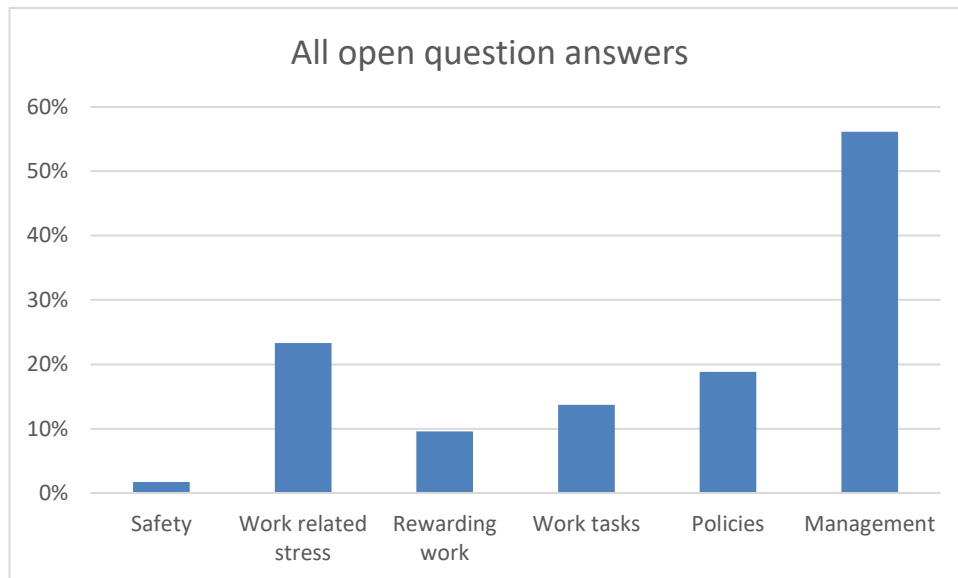
The survey included concrete development ideas that the employee's graded on scale 4, fail to 10 excellent. The ideas came from these theoretical areas that affect job satisfaction as well as the solutions that theory suggested that could improve job satisfaction. The given suggestions are:

1. Coaching
2. Empowering
3. Shared goals and reaching them
4. Practice and policy changes to make work more meaningful and time efficient

These suggestions may improve the efficiency of work, decrease the feeling of rush, and make the employees take more ownership for their work.

5.4 Which actions are needed according to the employees of company X to develop their job satisfaction and which development ideas are most relevant according to the care staff?

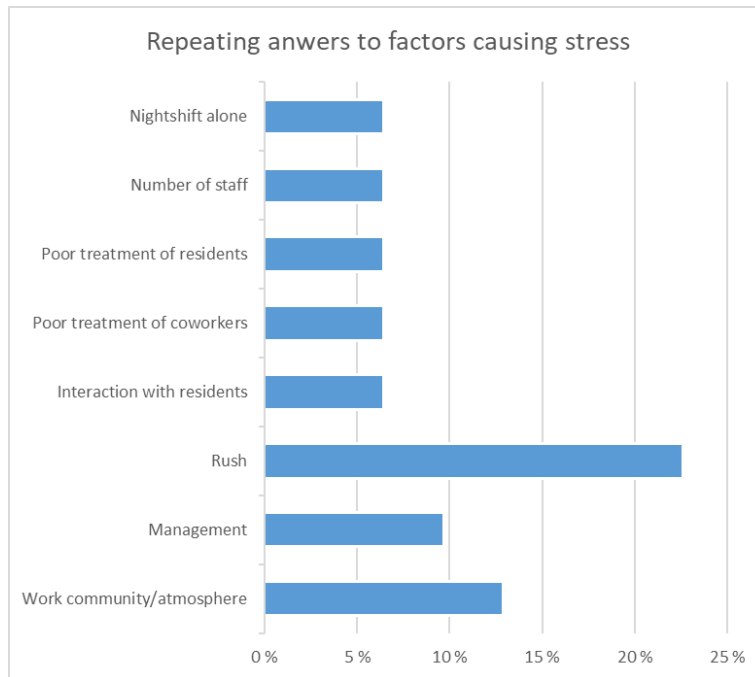
The answers to open questions were divided into the six categories for data analysis. In the graph below the rates in which different categories rose have been listed. It must be mentioned that some respondents have written the same thing or similar idea several times in different questions. Management, and stress related topics were discussed separately and in several questions and therefore they have the most areas that require development.



Graph 1. Open question answer frequencies for each category.

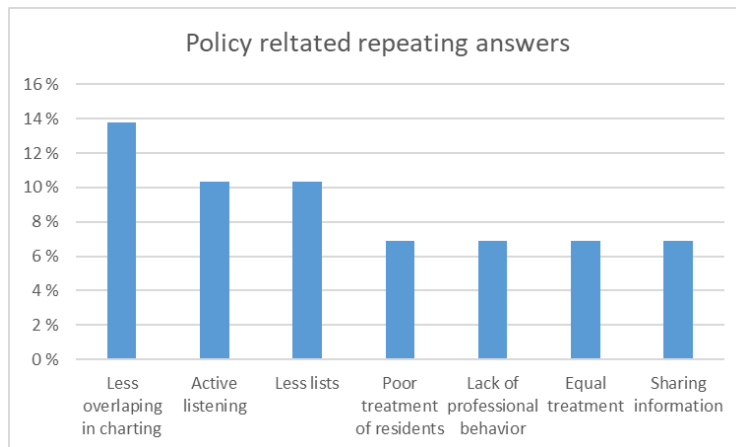
Safety aspect does not require much development as in all locations and overall rating safety has been amongst the three best scoring areas. Safety related development idea that was brought up by more than one person, is increasing the number of people working nightshift from one to two. It was stated that working nights alone increase stress levels.

Work related stress levels have been stated to increase due to interpersonal challenges within the workplace as well as rush. Managerial issues were also linked to these interpersonal challenges stated. Some responses indicated that they felt that management did not condemn or intervene with the negative behavior of employees and that creates negative and stressful atmosphere. For management the most common answers for development were treating all employees equally, Showing appreciation or saying thank you, and giving feedback. One person said about feedback giving that it could be a shared effort so that the employees would also give positive feedback to each other.



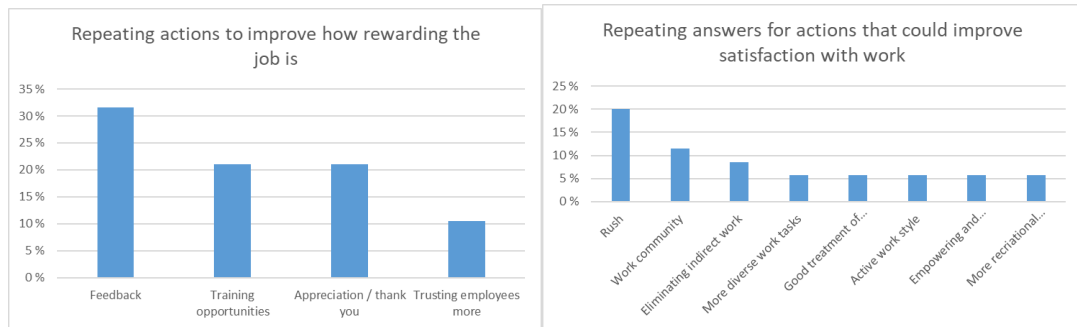
Graph 2. Repeating open question answers for factors causing stress.

For policies the answer trends are shown below. Some of the answers are to questions that were asking what is wrong and others for questions asking for improvement ideas. Both can be used to give picture on what should be developed as well as how. Some employees feel like charting takes too much time and responses indicated that same information had to be repeated in different places. This was seen as something that takes time out of working with the residents. Some felt like their coworkers do not treat the residents as they should be treated. One respondent outlined that some employees take out their frustration on the residents and that bothers and frustrates them in turn. Policies category also includes the onboarding process. The average answer for it was 3.97 from scale from 1 to 5. Employees are fairly satisfied with the onboarding process but the improvement suggestions included repetition during the training process and one stated that the onboarding process could last longer than for a day to get the repetition and to be able to process all the information so that everything would be easier to remember. One person stated that they felt like their trainer was in a rush which reflected negatively on the process and another one said that they wished for only one trainee to do the onboarding. One suggestion also read that the process could be more systematic.



Graph 3. Repeating open question answers related to policies.

The repeating actions for how to improve how rewarding the work is are giving feedback, giving training opportunities at workplace and during work hours, showing appreciation and saying thank you and showing that the management trusts employees. And on the right is a graph showing through which actions the satisfaction with the actual work could be improved. Many responded that actions that would eliminate the rush and indirect work. Indirect work is something like loading the dishwasher or laundry for example. The reasoning behind answers about eliminating indirect work and getting more diverse work task was commonly that the nurses feel like they cannot utilize their full professional potential and their skills. Few nurses outlined that they would wish changes in how the recreational activity instructing responsibilities would be divided. One wished for separate recreational activity instructor where as another one wished that more nurses would share the responsibilities. One person wished for more support into arranging these activities. They wrote: "I wished that I would have the skills/be brave enough to initiate recreational activities for the elderly outside the facility or get outsiders to do recreational activity visits." They continued that they have gone to their manager to ask and suggest these activities but their manager but as the manager does not give any type of yes or no answer, nothing gets done for these activities. The answer was written in Finnish and translated into English the type of wording and dialect terminology used may indicate frustration about the situation.



Graph 4 (left). Repeating open question answers for improving how rewarding the job is.

Graph 5 (right). Repeating open question answers for how to improve satisfaction with work.

In the survey the respondents were given four ready development ideas to grade on scale from 4 to 10, which is similar to the school grade system used in Finland. The suggestions were following:

Coaching conversations: Coaching, conversations with manager about personal goals related to work. The purpose is to give support and work tasks that support in reaching these goals.

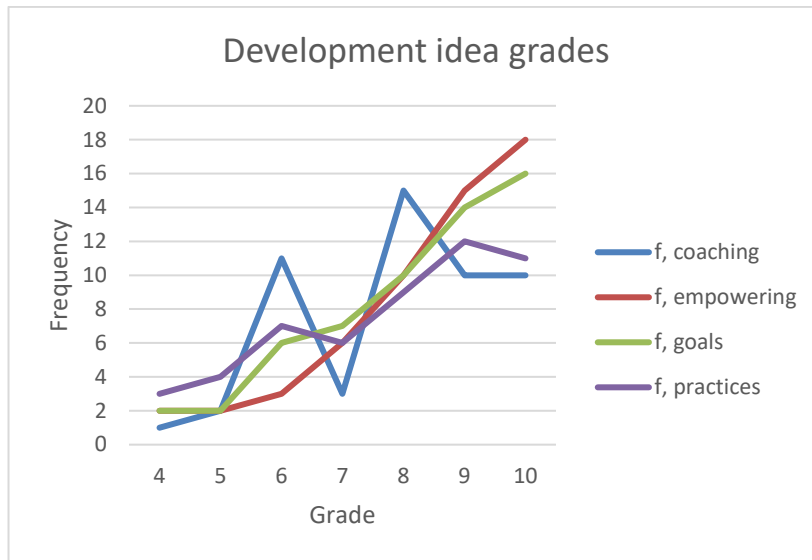
Empowering. Taking into account employees' opinions when creating new policies.

Clear common goals for locations and reaching them.

Changing practices so that my work would feel more meaningful. For example, changing policies so that more time would be left for direct work with the residents.

The graph below shows the answer frequencies to these suggestions. For the fourth one, changing practices, it was also asked what type of changes should be made. The graph shows that all of the suggestions got positive response. Below the graph are the means and modes of the suggestions listed in a table. Practices and coaching had the lowest and second lowest mean but the mode answer for practices was 9 and for coaching it was 8. Empowering and goals both got the average above eight and their mode answer was 10. These suggestions got the

most positive feedback. But from the graph we can see that empowering got increasingly more positive answers whereas for coaching the respondents were more divided. Others saw it many saw it to be beneficial, but many also saw it as something that is not needed.



Idea	Mean	Mode
Coaching	7.90	8
Empowering	8.45	10
Goals	8.23	10
Practices	7.81	9

Graph 6. Answer frequencies of different grades for ready-made development ideas.

Table 3. Mean and mode answers for ready-made development ideas.

### 5.5 How company X can improve the employee job satisfaction levels of their care staff?

The areas that were chosen to improve were rewarding of work, work related stress, and the work tasks themselves, which includes feelings of rush. The chosen actions to make work more rewarding are training opportunities, onboarding process, and the giving of feedback. Improving work related stress, is done by training, and working to improve the atmosphere. Lastly the satisfaction with actual work will be developed by evaluating where time is wasted in daily life and

making and communicating a plan on how to become more time efficient to decrease the feelings of rush. The time taken to chart is evaluated and considered if that process could be made more efficient. The responsibilities of workers are discussed in terms of indirect and direct work as well as the recreational activity responsibilities. The tasks are evaluated if they meet the education of the employees. That came up in the open feedback but on the survey's rate the statements part when stated that I can utilize my skills fully in my work, the average answer was 4.02 and mode answer 5 when 5 means agreeing. The open questions brought up concerns for the treatment of residents and that is addressed in the development plan. After implementation, feedback is gathered and if changes are needed they should be made according to the feedback. Empowering is included in all processes by addressing feedback given by the employees and by including them in work task related discussions. The management feedback is given through coaching method and practices that are developed came from the open question when asked first if practices should be changed to leave more time for interaction with residents and then which areas should be changed.

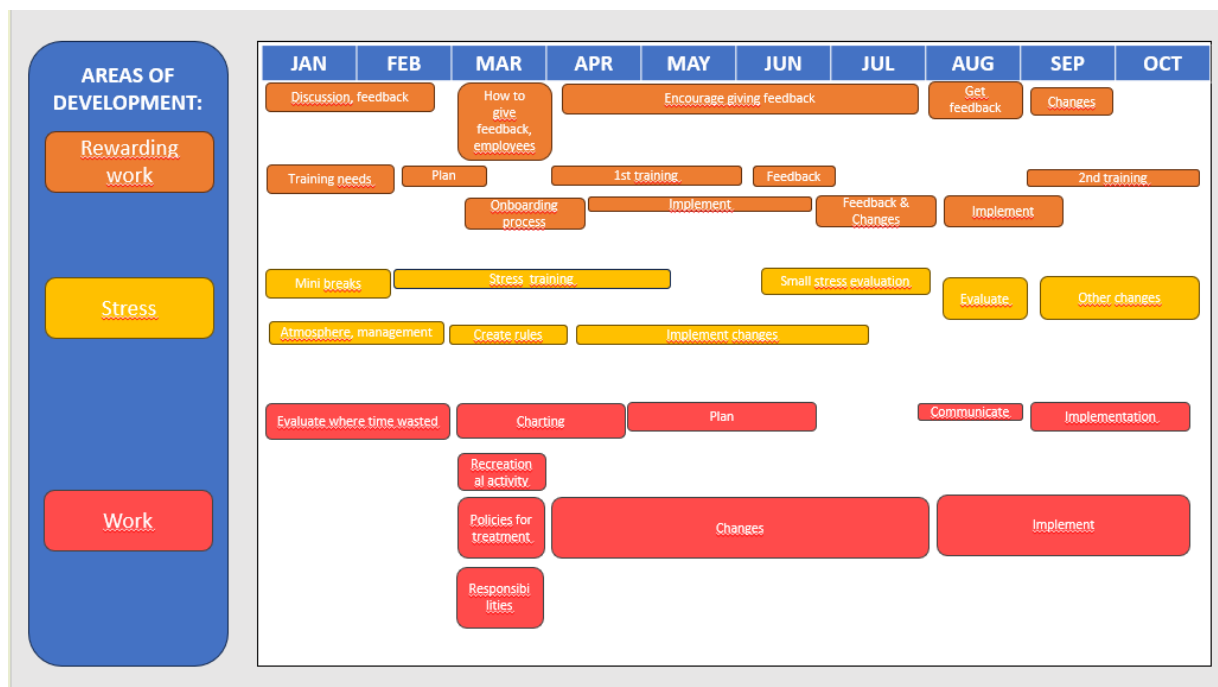


Figure number 2. Gantt chart for implementation of the development plan.

For all goals introduced in this section the deadline for meeting them is October 2024. To make work more rewarding the following goals will be set. Giving feedback part of daily life, increase training opportunities offered to employees, and

improve onboarding. To decrease work related stress the following goals have been set. Improve the ability to handle stress, and improving the overall atmosphere at workplace. Lastly for improving the work tasks the goal is to evaluate how time is spent and to organize more time for direct work done with residents.

Giving feedback part of daily life. In January and February the managers evaluate how they give feedback and how they should improve their feedback giving. They start to implement and actively focus on giving constructive feedback. In March employees are educated how to give feedback to each others and Between April and July they are actively encouraged to give feedback to each other. In August feedback is collected if employees feel like they are receiving more feedback and if the process works. In September, if needed, changes are made so that the employees could get the feedback they desire.

Increase training opportunities for employees. In January and February the needs for training in terms of the topics are evaluated. In February and March a plan for these trainings and a set timeline is made. The first training is either in April or May. After the training feedback about it is gathered so that improvements can be made. In September or October the second training is held.

Improve onboarding. The feedback stated that current onboarding processes feel rushed. This should be improved by creating a structured plan and by making the duration of onboarding minimum of two days. In March and April a plan and guidelines for onboarding process are created. The plan is implemented starting at the end of April with new employees starting at the company. In June and July feedback on onboarding process is gathered and necessary changes are made. The new onboarding process implementation starts in August or September. ‘

Improve the ability to handle stress to decrease the negative effects of work related stress. In January employees are actively encouraged to take short 1-3 minute breaks every hour or two to stretch or take a breath. Between February and May a stress processing training is arranged. Between June and July a small stress level evaluation is conducted so that the effects can be evaluated. In August the overall results are evaluated and changes are made. In September and October the changes are implemented.

Improve overall atmosphere at workplace. In January and February the management is trained on how they should behave at work. Leading by example and enforcing rules and policies. Between March and April rules are created first by management but then also the employees are invited to discuss about the rules and contribute to them. Between April and July the changes are implemented and enforced. In August the effects are evaluated and changes are made if necessary. In September and October the changes are implemented.

Evaluate how time is spent and organize more time for direct work with the residents. In January and February how time is used is evaluated and the areas that take unnecessary time are recognized. It is important to include employees in this process as they know where and how time is spent. In March discussions on charting, how recreational activity responsibilities should be shared, policies for treatment of both residents and coworkers, and how different responsibilities are shared, are held. This part involves the employees. Between April and July the plan and first changes are made. The overall implementation is between August and October. For charting related problems a plan on how to make the process more efficient is made between April and Jun. The changes are communicated and discussed in August and the implementation is between September and October. Charting issues were brought up in the open question answers and therefore that should be improved if possible.

The plan includes some overlapping. The areas that require more common discussion with all employees have been scheduled around the same time so that all necessary topics could be discussed at the same time. The first training could be the stress related training. This makes sure that even though the plan has different elements and development areas it is as doable as possible and does not cause additional stress with the schedule.

When this plan is executed, the employees should start to take more ownership in their work through the empowering nature of changing the practices. The stress levels should start decreasing and the overall atmosphere should be better. When the atmosphere is more open and safer open communication should be achieved. Through coaching and offering training opportunities the employees should be-

come more committed to the company. At the same time skills within the company are increased and the work has become more rewarding. Through coaching important information for needed training opportunities can be gained and giving feedback becomes part of the daily life. The employees are able to develop skills they need as well as the skills that are needed within the company. This could improve employee retention.

In the case company's case these onboarding processes can include giving the employees' the tools that are needed to fulfil company goals. As all the employees must have certain levels of qualifications to apply for a job at company X and with their educational background comes certain skillsets that they must have, the onboarding process doesn't have to rely that much into the hard skills needed for job. But if someone is changing a field within the care sector, for example, from psychiatric sector to the elderly care sector, they might need to refresh their memory on this skills and their specialized skills should be modified to fit the tasks in the field of providing assisted living for elderly. Also the policies and practices at the company should be taught during on-boarding and training on specific programs and equipment should be given.

The inclusion of empowering to onboarding processes could include discussions with older employees to see where the new employees' lack knowledge after starting at the company and where they need additional help, support, and guidance. Through empowering also asking for feedback from the new employees about the onboarding process is important. Through feedback from different people within the organization or facility the process can be improved to make as smooth transition into new job at a new company as possible.

As there was feedback that the employees would like the facilities to be treated as individuals instead of creating the company into a chain with identical locations the data was looked at weather or not individual development plans should be made. Due to the areas with poorest satisfaction levels were being in line in all locations the development plan was made only company wide.

## 6. DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Conclusion

In conclusion the employees at company X are extremely satisfied with their job. However the open questions revealed in which areas the company has room for improvement to make the employees even more satisfied. The most important part is the company wide development plan but the location specific plans are important in keeping the locations independent and to make sure that they are treated as individuals. The areas included in the shared development plan were areas that were repeating in each locations survey answers. Empowerment is one of the crucial elements of job satisfaction development. This is thesis is one example of structured empowerment as the employees are given the opportunity to tell anonymously how their job satisfaction could be improved but then how their suggestions are implemented is controlled.

The results are in line with the theoretical approach and the open question answers were aligned with the theoretical knowledge on job satisfaction. Safety consists both physical and psychological elements the latter is universal and same actions are present in all fields. Physical safety however is more field specific and requires field specific data.

The theory identified work related stress and work safety as highly important factors for job satisfaction. The worst results with most negative effects were from work related stress and therefore that fits the theory. Even though there are results for overall levels of work safety of nurses in Finland the nurses at Company X feel safe in their work and therefore the situation is better than suggested by the theoretical data. Management's role is huge for job satisfaction. They should lead by example and actively enforce policies. The open question answers verified this because many answers related to management were related to leading by example and about enforcing policies. Also giving feedback and actively listening were listed as important features which is in line with the theory. There are four managers discussed in the survey results and some the results are better than others.

Work can be made rewarding by giving feedback, offering training opportunities, and by having suitable salary. These were identified also in the survey results. Only one person mentioned dissatisfaction about the salary and therefore it can be concluded that the employees are satisfied with the financial compensation but they need the verbal reward as well as the development opportunities from their work. Even though coaching was one action to make work more rewarding based on theory, it was seen as a possible way to improve job satisfaction but it came last from the different suggestions. Empowering however was seen as highly important as suggested by the theoretical knowledge base.

## 6.2 Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations that Levin J. R. stated based on the real ethical issues in published or tried to get published research papers that they had noticed were integrity and accuracy. Integrity includes plagiarism of text and fabrication of data. Accuracy problems with data can be intentional or unintentional numerical errors. Sometimes data can be too good to be true and that is why the data used should be available by minimum on request. (Levin) Important principles in data analysis from ethics point of view are informed consent, assessment risks and benefits, and selection of subjects. (Rosnow and Rosenthal)

The consent was gotten from the contact person from company X. The survey participants were informed about the purpose of the survey, and the anonymous nature of it. The whole consent form can be seen in the appendix section. They were told that the survey is a part of bachelor thesis in international business and the working title of the thesis and explanation of what is done with the information gathered. The survey was voluntary for company X's employees and when responding they agreed to the usage of their answers for the purpose of the thesis. The participants were chosen when choosing the company to collaborate with for this thesis work. All employees were welcome to answer the survey. The risks were that some answers would give out personal or identifying information but those will be censored out when providing the data to the commissioner. In some cases it could be that based on the topic of open question answer the employee could be recognized but answers cannot be deleted because it was given only once as several suggestions, comments, and ideas in open questions were given

only ones. The responses can be rewritten in written Finnish before providing the results to the commissioner as many responses were written in spoken Finnish and with the regional dialect. The benefit is that the overall job satisfaction at the company will be increased and if there are systematical problems within the company, those can be addressed.

The integrity of this research is maintained by referencing the sources for theoretical base and to use all the data that has been received through the survey. It has been made sure that the data analysis is accurate by checking the calculations few times and making sure that the results follow the overall trend. By doing this the risk of having unintentional accuracy problems has been minimized. The data will be provided to the commissioner with the development plans in a format that they can check for possible inaccuracies with data analysis.

As the survey was conducted online there are data protection concerns that must be addressed. The survey platform, Webropol, used was provided by the school and therefore the data security levels were trusted. In the survey no identifying personal data was asked to maintain data security and anonymity of the participants. Some participants gave information that they can be recognized from and those answers were edited by removing the identifying feature. All data has been stored on Webropol's website and personal computer as well as external hard drive. The data security has been maximized by not storing anything in cloud environments. The collected data will be deleted from all devices once it is not needed.

Ethical question regarding the survey statements and questions include the management's performance were given by the managers' themselves. These questions were in line what theory would suggest as beneficial but the feedback they receive is dictated by what they want to hear. Due to receiving topics of questions instead of direct questions the integrity of that part of the survey was maintained as freedom of formatting was received.

### 6.3 Examination of reliability

75% of all employees answered to the survey. For location 1 65%, location 2 95%, location 3 60%, and for location 4 75% of employees answered. The margin

of error was calculated for the overall average answers. The formula used is  $MOE = Z * \sigma / \sqrt{n}$ . The quantile was with 95% confidence level 1,96. (Zach, 2020) With this formula the margin of error is 0,17. Therefore the results are highly reliable. Location 2 has the greatest response rate and also the most employees. Therefore location 2's employees have the most power over the overall results. Location 1 is the smallest with the second lowest response rate therefore their opinions do not come up in the overall results as much.

The development ideas based on this survey benefit location 2 the most based on the answer rate and location 1 the least. But when comparing the order of which categories need most and least development in all locations the order is quite similar. The differences in answer trends are minor. Therefore all in all the results can be considered as trustworthy and they give the overall picture of what is the job satisfaction level at the company and most importantly which areas need to be developed most urgently.

Many development ideas were only given by one person in the whole survey. The employees have differences in views that make the work stressful and what type of actions should be taken to improve job satisfaction of the employees. Some were repeated and those suggestions have been brought up in this thesis and the data analysis part. The development ideas chosen were chose based on the overall data trends combining and comparing the results to the evaluation of different statement, grading of ready-made development suggestions and what were the answers to open questions. The bigger picture and overall answer trends were considered greatly.

#### 6.4 Topics of future research

Same survey at company X should be conducted next year. Because this is a development plan, if the same survey is conducted next year, the affect of the plan can be evaluated the best. But the most important thing for company X is that they conduct a job satisfaction survey in 2024. Even if the survey doesn't have the same questions the improvement in categorial trends is important to point out and evaluate the success of this development plan.

For company X an important area for future research is a research on work safety. The overall average for safety was 4.11 which is great but there is room for improvement. It is important to evaluate which factors affect the sense of safety for the employees as only two individuals brought up the need for second night shift nurse and other safety related answers were not given. The need for research could be evaluated with a general discussion within the facilities in a meeting and if the nurses bring up anything that is concerning, then do a more thorough research and evaluate if and what actions should be taken to improve sense of security.

As the need for nurses in Finland in the future has been recognized by officials and organizations, this type of research could be valuable to conduct with larger target group of all nurses in Finland. The results can be used to make general guidelines to companies to improve the attraction of the field. These types of guidelines do exist but they can be re-evaluated and a wider field related development plan could be made. That type of research could be also utilized by the government and nurses' unions. The government could see if there are any legislative changes needed that could affect the attraction of the field in general. Employee unions can utilize the data when making collective agreement. It is easier to discuss the needs of the employees in the contract with the employer side when data of the situation and needs exists.

As the physical safety of elderly care nurses in Finland is little-studied area of nursing, it is worth giving more attention to in the whole country. We have data that shows that care workers in general face physical violence or threat of it often but the research has not outlined the industry differences. Therefore to be able to direct resources and make comprehensive guide books to improve safety of care employees field specific studies are needed.

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## APPENDICES

## Survey Questions:

This survey is about employee job satisfaction at Company X. All answers are fully anonymous and participants will not be recognized based on their answers. This survey takes 10-20 minutes to complete.

This Survey is part of my bachelor's thesis on business administration at Lapland University of applied sciences. In my thesis research I'm determining the current state of employee job satisfaction of the care staff of Company X. These results are utilized to make employee job satisfaction development plan for Company X. The results will be shared with Company X, but the people who have answered to this survey will not be identified based on the answers and results.

By answering this survey you agree that your answers are utilized in my thesis and given to Company X. The thesis will be published on Theseus, as it is mandatory, but the company name will not be mentioned on the thesis.

Thank you for answering

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Tämä kysely selvittää hoitohenkilökunnan työtyytyväisyyttä Yritys X:ssä. Kaikki vastaukset ovat täysin anonyymejä, eikä osallistujia pysty tunnistamaan vastausten perusteella. Kyselyyn vastaamiseen menee noin 10-20 minuuttia.

Tämä kysely on osa kansainvälisen liiketalouden tradenomi opintojeni opinnäytetyötä Lapin ammattikorkeakoulussa. Opinnäytetyöni tutkii Yritys X:n hoitohenkilökunnan tämän hetkistä työtyytyväisyyttä. Kyselyn tuloksia hyödynnetään luomalla työtyytyväisyyden kehittämissuunnitelma Yritys X:lle. Kyselyn tulokset jaetaan Yritys X:lle, mutta yksittäistä henkilöä ja hänen vastauksiaan ei pystytä tunnistamaan tästä kyselystä tai opinnäytetyön lopputuloksista.

Vastaamalla tähän kyselyyn suostut siihen, että vastauksiasi käytetään opinnäytetyössäni ja luovutetaan Yritys X:lle. Opinnäytetyö julkaistaan Theseuksessa, koska se on pakollista, mutta yrityksen nimeä ei mainita opinnäytetyössä.

Kiitos, että vastaat kyselyyn!

Lotta Vuorikoski, kansainvälisen liiketalouden opiskelija, Lapin AMK.

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Survey questions:

In which facility do you work? / Missä yksikössä työskentelet?

Facility/yksikkö 1

Facility/yksikkö 2

Facility/yksikkö 3

Facility/yksikkö 4

Own resources and job / Omat voimavarat ja työ

Rate the statements from 1-5, 1 fully disagree, 5 fully agree. 6<sup>th</sup> option no opinion.

/ Arvostele väittämät asteikolla 1–5, 1 täysin eri mieltä, 5 täysin samaa mieltä.

1. I enjoy my job. / Viihdyn työssäni.
2. I can utilize my skills fully in my work. / Voin hyödyntää taitojani työssäni täysin.
3. I can complete all tasks that are expected from me in time. / Pystyn suorittamaan kaikki minulta odotetut työtehtävät annetussa ajassa.
4. I'm able to develop myself professionally in my job. / Pystyn kehittämään itseäni ammatillisesti työssäni.
5. My job challenges me enough. / Työni haastaa minua tarpeeksi.
6. I feel energetic at my job. / Tunnen oloni energiseksi työssäni.
7. My job causes stress that affects me also during my free time. / Työni aiheuttaa stressiä, joka vaikuttaa minuun myös vapaa-aikanani.
8. If you answered yes to the question above, which factors cause stress? / Jos vastasit myönteisesti yllä olleeseen kysymykseen, mitkä asiat aiheuttavat stressiä?
9. My workplace has always enough staff. / Työpaikassani on aina tarpeeksi henkilökuntaa
10. The number of staff does not increase my stress levels. / Henkilökunnan määrä ei nosta stressitasojani?
11. I am happy with the care work practices at my workplace. / Olen tyytyväinen hoitotyökäytänteisiin työpaikallani.
12. My values align with company X's values. / Arvoni vastaavat yrityksen X:n arvoja.
13. I feel I'm trusted by my coworkers. / Koen että työkaverini luottavat minuun.

Open question

14. When thinking about work related stress, career progress and your own professional development, and tasks at work, through which actions could your job satisfaction be improved? / Kun mietitään työni kuormitta-

vuotta, kuten työperäistä stressiä, urakehitystä ja omaa ammatillista kehitystä, ja työtehtäviä, millä toimilla työtyytyväisyyttäsi voitaisiin parantaa?

Following questions are for those who have started their job at Company X during the past 12 months. / Seuraavat kysymykset ovat heille, jotka ovat aloittaneet työnä Yritys X:llä viimeisen 12 kuukauden aikana.

15. The training practices when starting the work are sufficient. / Perehdytys prosessi työtä aloittaessa on riittävä?
16. After onboarding I was able to complete all the tasks required from me without any problems. / Perehdytyksen jälkeen pystyin suorittamaan kaikki minulta vaaditut työtehtävät ongelmitta.
17. Training helped me to familiarize myself with company values, practices, culture, and policies. / Perehdytyksen aikana minulle tuli tutuksi yrityksen arvot, toimintatavat, toimintakulttuuri ja käytänteet.

Open question:

18. How could the training process be improved? / Kuinka perehdytystoimia voisi parantaa.

Value from job / Työn tuoma arvo

Rate the statements from 1-5, 1 fully disagree, 5 fully agree. 6<sup>th</sup> option no opinion.

/ Arvostele väittämät asteikolla 1–5, 1 täysin eri mieltä, 5 täysin samaa mieltä.

19. My job is versatile enough. / Työni on tarpeeksi vaihtelevaa.
20. My job helps me reach my career goals. / Työni auttaa minua eteenpäin uravoitteissani.
21. My work community has a good atmosphere. / Työyhteisössäni on hyvä ilmapiiri.
22. I feel safe at my work. / Koen työni turvalliseksi.
23. My job is rewarding. / Työni on palkitsevaa.
24. I feel appreciated at my place of work. / Tunnen oloni arvostetuksi työpaikallani.
25. My job is meaningful. / Koen työni merkitykselliseksi.

Open question

26. How could your job satisfaction be improved by improving the value you get from your job, by improving other factors included on this question page or other factors that affect value gained from job? / Kuinka sinun työtyytyväisyyttäsi voitaisiin parantaa parantamalla työsi sinulle tuomaa arvoa, asiat joita tällä kysymyssivulla on käsitelty tai muut sinulle työn arvoon vaikuttavat asiat?

Management

Rate the statements from 1-5, 1 fully disagree, 5 fully agree. 6<sup>th</sup> option no opinion.

/ Arvostele väittämät asteikolla 1–5, 1 täysin eri mieltä, 5 täysin samaa mieltä.

27. I feel trusted by my manager. / Koen esihenkilöni luottavan minuun.
28. I am receiving enough feedback from my work. / Saan tarpeeksi palautetta työstäni.
29. It is easy to approach my manager. / Esihenkilöni on helposti lähestyttävä.
30. My manager treats everyone equally. / Esihenkilöni kohtelee kaikkia tasapuolisesti
31. My manager solves conflicts efficiently, equally, and well. / Esihenkilöni ratkaisee konfliktitilanteet hyvin, tehokkaasti ja tasapuolisesti.
32. I feel like I am heard. / Koen, että tulen kuulluksi.
33. My manager does the tasks they have agreed to do. / Esihenkilöni tekee hänelle kuuluvat sovitut tehtävät.
34. I am receiving enough support from my manager. / Saan esihenkilöltäni tarpeeksi tukea.

Open questions;

35. What are the things your manager has succeeded in? / Missä asioissa esihenkilösi on onnistunut?
36. What your manager should improve? / Mitä asioita esihenkiläsi pitäisi parantaa toiminnassaan?
37. Are there any actions your manager could take to improve your job satisfaction? / Millä toimin esihenkilösi voisi parantaa työtyytyväisyyttäsi?

Actions that may affect job satisfaction / Toimet, jotka voivat vaikuttaa työtyytyväisyyteen

Give these actions a school grade 4-10 based on how much you think they would affect your job satisfaction. / Anna alla oleville toimille kouluarvosana, 4-10, sen perusteella kuinka näet niiden voivan vaikuttaa työtyytyväisyyteesi.

38. Coaching, discussions with manager and personal work related goals for employees. The purpose is to support employees and give them tasks that assist in them reaching their personal goals. / Coachaus, keskusteluja esihenkilön kanssa henkilökohtaisista tavoitteista työssä. Tukea tavoitteiden saavuttamista ja antaa työtehtäviä, jotka tukevat tavoitteeseen pääsyä.
39. Empowerment. Increase bringing employees to discuss and have their output heard when making work practices. / Osallistavuus. Otetaan työntekijöiden mielipiteet voimakkaammin huomioon uusien käytäntöjen tehostamisessa.
40. Clear shared goals in a facility and accomplishing those. / Selkeät yksikön yhteiset tavoitteet ja niiden saavuttaminen.
41. Changes in practices to make work feel more meaningful For example changing processes to give more time to spend with the residents. If there should be made any changes, specify in the open question below, please. / Käytäntöjen muuttaminen niin, että kokisin työni merkityksellisemmäksi. Esim. käytäntöjen muuttaminen siten, että asukkaiden

kanssa tehtyyn työhön jää enemmän aikaa. Jos tämän tyylisiä muutoksia pitäisi tehdä, kirjoitathan alla olevaan kysymyslaatikkoon mitä asioita pitäisi muuttaa, kiitos.

#### Open question

42. What ideas for improving your job satisfaction do you have? These answers are fully anonymous and will be utilized in making the job satisfaction development plan. / Mitä ideoita työtyytyväisyyden parantamiseksi sinulla on? Muistutuksena, vastaukset ovat täysin anonyymeja ja tullaan hyödyntämään työtyytyväisyyden kehittämissuunnitelmaa tehdessä.