

# Analysis of Factors Impacting Job Satisfaction and Motivation among Employees in Organization X

Daniel Nordman

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## DEGREE THESIS

Author: Daniel Nordman  
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Supervisor(s): Roger Nylund (Novia)

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### **Abstract**

This master's thesis was done on behalf of my current employer which specializes in comprehensive building technology contracts in Finland and Scandinavia with a focus on HVAC solutions. Motivation and Job satisfaction is more important than ever to be able to keep up with the competition. My current organization is no exception to this requirement and when recent pulse studies showed quite negative responses on some aspects, a need to investigate the reasons why arose.

The main purpose of this study was to identify the key factors leading to demotivation and job dissatisfaction among the blue-collar employees in project organizations. The secondary purpose was to identify current levels of motivation and job satisfaction.

The theoretical framework contains research on organizational behavior, employee engagement, motivation and job satisfaction. The empirical part of the thesis is based on concurrent quantitative and qualitative study conducted through online surveys.

As a result of the study the key factors were identified and a draft for a plan to diminish key factors was prepared and handed over to management.

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Language: English    Key Words: Job Satisfaction, Motivation, Employee Engagement, Organizational Behavior, Personality, Rewards, Leadership, Organizational Justice

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### **Abstrakt**

Detta examensarbete gjordes på uppdrag av min nuvarande arbetsgivare som specialiserar sig på omfattande byggnadstekniska kontrakt i Finland och Skandinavien med fokus på HVAC-lösningar. Motivation och arbetsglädje är viktigare än någonsin för att kunna hålla jämna steg med konkurrenterna. Min nuvarande organisation är inget undantag från detta krav och när nyligen genomförda PULS-undersökningar visade ganska negativa svar på vissa aspekter uppstod ett behov av att undersöka orsakerna till detta.

Huvudsyftet med denna studie var att identifiera de viktigaste faktorerna som leder till demotivation och missnöje bland de anställda i vår projektorganisation. Det sekundära syftet var att identifiera nuvarande nivåer av motivation och arbetstillfredsställelse. Det teoretiska ramverket innehåller forskning om organisatoriskt beteende, medarbetarengagemang, motivation och arbetstillfredsställelse. Den empiriska delen av avhandlingen baseras på en kvantitativ och en kvalitativ studie som genomfördes med hjälp av online-enkäter.

Som ett resultat av studien identifieras nyckelfaktorerna och ett utkast till en plan för att minska på nyckelfaktorernas negativa inverkan överlämnades till ledningen.

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Språk: Engelska      Nyckelord: arbetstillfredsställelse, motivation, medarbetarengagemang, organisatoriskt beteende, personlighet, belöningar, ledarskap, organisatorisk rättvisa

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## **Preface**

I would like to thank my organization for the opportunity to do this master's thesis and their support when I needed to take time off to focus on writing.

I would like to thank our department secretary at our organization for assisting with the survey translations.

Special thanks to my supervisor, Roger, who motivated me to push forward.

I also want to give a shoutout to my Opponent who dared to take on my thesis and produced quite challenging questions.

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## **Abbreviations**

|      |  |
|------|--|
| CIPD | Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development |
| CWB  | Counter-productive work behavior                 |
| JCT  | Job Characteristics Theory                       |
| KPI  | Key Performance Indicator                        |
| OB   | Organizational behavior                          |
| OC   | Organizational commitment                        |
| OCB  | Organizational citizenship behavior              |
| OJ   | Organizational justice                           |
| SIP  | Social Information Processing Theory             |

# 1 Introduction

This master's thesis was done on behalf of the company I currently work for, which specializes in comprehensive building technology contracts in Finland and Scandinavia with a focus on electrical and HVAC solutions.

This thesis covers aspects of the broad subject of organizational behavior, employee engagement, job satisfaction and motivation.

The introduction chapter consists of a description of the background, continues with the formulation of the problem and the purpose and delimitations of the thesis. It concludes with the overall disposition of the thesis.

## 1.1 Background

The company I work for was bought up by a larger organization some years ago. Our department, being a part of this new mother company, now has a new set of obligations to our stakeholders, as well as some new perks and benefits for the employees.

The obligation to the stakeholders is reflected as a participation fee of several percentiles of EBITDA to the main group, and a requirement to reach a certain profit margin from all projects that are carried out.

The production is carried out by blue-collar employees consisting of electricians, plumbers, technicians, assemblers, hired workforce, and so on. The blue-collar employees have a reward system in place that entitles a payout depending on a key performance indicator (KPI) measured by hours spent compared to calculated hours for carrying out the job.

It has been well recognized and observed that committed, motivated, and engaged employees perform better than the rest. Many studies have investigated these areas and there is substantial evidence to support this idea.

Due to reasons some of our projects have lately not resulted in such margins, that a reward could be paid out to employees, leaving them with a feeling dissatisfaction and demotivation, which in turn has begun to impact the effectiveness of our project organizations and organization in general. Consequently, this has led to an environment with negative attitudes and behaviors.

Furthermore, since our projects seem to only become bigger and bigger, the pay-out day for the rewards for the blue-collar employees are only getting pushed further and further in the future. The rewards themselves have become more uncertain and do not motivate the same way they have done in the past.

Job satisfaction has become more important than ever in the modern workplace. Studies show that job satisfaction is one of the greatest factors impacting job performance and effectiveness of employees. As a result of this, organizations are devoting more time and energy than ever to foster the best possible attitudes among their employees (Lumen, no date).

## **1.2 Problem formulation**

The status or ‘pulse’ of the organization has been observed in recent job satisfaction/employee engagement surveys which have us some distance away from benchmarking levels, on some subjects more than others. The survey in question assesses the current direction of the organization (on a department-level) and employees’ opinions and experiences of their closest foreman, based on topics such leadership, motivation, and well-being. The ‘pulse’ survey questions can be found in Appendix A.

The background for this thesis was set after a few discussions with the department manager, where we discussed that the current levels of job satisfaction are not great, and it must be analyzed this why this is the case.

Low levels of engagement and commitment among blue-collar employees are caused by lack of motivation and feelings of job dissatisfaction. In addition, there seems to be an uneasy atmosphere among some of the blue-collar workers at the company.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Thesis**

The main purpose of this thesis is to analyze the key factors impacting job satisfaction and motivation among blue-collar employees in project organizations. The secondary purpose is to give suggestions and a plan for ways of eliminating or diminishing negative key factors. Both purposes have been achieved through the study.

The research questions for this thesis are:

Main research question:

- What are the key factors leading to job dissatisfaction and demotivation among employees in project organizations?

Supportive research question:

- What is the current level of job satisfaction and motivation among blue-collar employees?

### **1.4 Delimitations**

There are practical, theoretical, and methodological delimitations to my study. These are explained below.

#### **Practical Delimitations**

The main delimitation for this thesis is that the research will be focused on blue-collar employees within the organization's project department. In this context, a blue-collar employee is defined as an employee paid at an hourly rate.

The reason why the study is not limited to a single project, is that the everyday tasks of the blue-collar employees are affected by what happens "inside" different projects, but also what happens in the overseeing organization. The second delimitation is that specific factors or events that could have impacted job satisfaction and motivation before the year 2023 will not be considered. The reason for this is that I am looking for recent and fresh data for my research, and if something happened too far back in time, those specific factors related to that event might be distorted and perhaps some important key details are forgotten.

Lastly, employees who have worked at the company for less than six months won't be able to participate.

### **Theoretical Delimitations**

There are some theoretical delimitations to the study. For one, selected theories and concepts have not been explicitly researched nor tested in Finnish or Nordic Environments. However, they are theories mostly established in the western world, so some relevancy should exist. However, there are some blue-collar employees in the organization who may not entirely fall into the "Western" category.

Another delimitation is that the selected theories present a broad picture of the subject, that could result in a shallow analysis of results. Due to this reason, and time constraints, the depth and scope of the following subjects and theories have been limited by the following:

- Chapter 2.1: Organizational commitment, specifically the following aspects will be considered as stand-alone factors to be used for measuring motivation and job satisfaction (affective commitment, continuance commitment, normative commitment).
- Chapter 2.3: Social Information processing theory and the dispositional approach. These theories will be used to indicate that there are nuances of job satisfaction that are beyond the control of the employer. Factors from these theories will be used for measuring motivation and job satisfaction.
- Chapter 2.4: Motivation, the factor 'competence' was added (from self-determination theory). Will be considered as a standalone factor. Relatedness and Autonomy is considered in other theories and will not be considered from the aspect of SDT.

### **Methodological Delimitations**

As this study has a heavy quantitative component, there is the risk of oversimplification. Another delimitation is the lack of time, which could impact the response rate. The response time will be extended if there are too few responses by the initial deadline.

## 1.5 Disposition

The following chapters are included in this thesis and below is a brief description of them.

- Chapter 1:  
Gives a general introduction to the master thesis and its limitations.
- Chapter 2:  
Presents the theory used throughout the thesis.
- Chapter 3:  
Gives an understanding of why used research method was chosen.
- Chapter 4:  
Presentation of the results of the conducted surveys
- Chapter 5:  
Presents an analysis of the results.
- Chapter 6:  
Discussed the credibility of the thesis and general thoughts about the results and conclusions.
- Chapter 7:  
Presents the recommended future work to the team which is in focus of the study.

## 2 Theory

This chapter presents the various theories that are used for the research. It introduces key topics that are relevant to this study. Some of those key topics are also in line and a deep dive into some of the subjects mentioned in the annual job satisfaction/employee engagement surveys (Appendix A).

The theories will be retrieved from organizational behavior, theories of human resource management, job satisfaction theories, and different motivational theories. Due to the lengths and breadths of the subject of organizational behavior, the term ‘workplace phenomena’ will be used as a chapter heading instead. The theories align to a large degree with the results which will be discussed in chapter 5 and 6.

The key topics: ‘Job Satisfaction’, ‘Work Motivation’, and ‘Job Satisfaction’ selected for this study are highly related to, and interlinked with each other, which the theories will show in the later chapters. Consequently, factors influencing motivation can be explored from a job satisfaction perspective, and factors influencing motivation can be explored from an employee engagement point of view. An illustration can be found in Figure 1 below.

A combination of these can also be used by the organization to achieve better performance in their projects and in the organization in general.



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**Figure 1 - Own figure - Job Satisfaction, Employee Engagement and Work Motivation**

Factors such as work design, elements of structure, and the idea that some needs must be satisfied before others, which Maslow’s theory of needs suggests, are worth mentioning, but won’t be included in my frame of reference. However, further research could certainly investigate those factors as well.

## **2.1 Workplace Phenomena**

This chapter aims to capture some of the causes and effects of motivation, job satisfaction, and their respective opposites.

Phenomena from the workplace can be explained by organizational behavior (OB). Buchanan & Huczynski (2019, p. 3) define OB as “*the study of the structure and management of organizations, their environments, and the actions and interactions of their individual members and groups.*”

The following topics have been selected in this chapter: ‘attitudes and behaviors’, ‘organizational commitment’, ‘job satisfaction’, ‘motivation’, ‘organizational justice’, and ‘organizational citizenship behavior’. These topics have been selected based on the perspective that they are either causes or effects of job satisfaction and/or motivation and their respective opposites.

### **2.1.1 Attitudes and Behaviors**

In order to understand job satisfaction and motivation, one must first understand the underlying work attitudes of employees. The study of attitudes and behaviors seeks to explain why employees behave in a certain way.

Newstrom (2007) states that: “*Attitudes are the feelings and beliefs that largely determine how employees will perceive their environment, commit themselves to intended actions, and ultimately behave.*” Newstrom continues that “*job-related attitudes predispose an employee to behave in certain ways*”. (Newstrom, 2007, pp. 203-204).

Leonard (2019) explains that “*an attitude is a psychological state of mind*” and “*behavior is the actions of a person based on specific stimuli*”. Thus, positive attitudes will result in positive behavior, and negative attitudes are highly likely to result in negative behavior. Leonard (2019) further explains that negative attitudes result in negative behaviors such as strikes, poor performance, absences, and high employee turnover among other ill effects. (Leonard, 2019).

Positive attitudes from employees and the resulting positive behaviors are something that the organization should strive for (Newstrom, 2007, p. 203).

Among the different job attitudes, organizational commitment and job satisfaction are among the two that have the most power to shape our behavior at work (Lumen, no date). These attitudes will be discussed further in chapters 2.1.2 and 2.1.3.

### 2.1.2 Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment (OC), in the simplest of terms, refers to how much employees care about their workplace, both on an individual level (the job itself) and on an organizational level (Indeed Editorial Team 2023). Gordon (2023) describes organizational commitment as *“the psychological attachment and the resulting loyalty of employees to an organization, based on the pride of being part of the organization and the belief that their organization values them”*.

According to Meyer & Allen (1991), there are three common themes among the many definitions of commitment. Common themes are: (1) affective commitment, (2) continuance commitment, and (3) normative commitment. Meyer & Allen believe these common themes should be considered as components of a whole, rather than individual types. According to this view, all three forms of commitment can be experienced simultaneously. (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67).

**Affective commitment (a desire)** refers to *“the employee’s emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization”* (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67). Employees who display affective commitment want to stay in the organization because they enjoy their work. Furthermore, they want to become more involved and adopt an active role in the development of the organization. Affective committed employees often have high levels of job satisfaction (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023). **Continuance commitment (a need)** means that employees stay at the organization because it is the best option, and they are unlikely to find better benefits elsewhere. **Normative commitment (an obligation)** means that employees stay in the organization because they feel they have a duty or a responsibility to do so because of the company’s investment in their development. (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023).

When employees are truly committed to the organization, they do even more than is required of them, i.e. organizational citizenship behavior. Meyer & Allen (1986), among others, found that affective and normative commitment (not continuance commitment) are correlated positively with organizational citizenship behavior, which will be discussed further in Chapter 2.1.6.)

Committed employees exhibit more positive behavior, greater tenacity and drive, and lower rates of absenteeism. Furthermore, Organizational Commitment can be used as a predictor

of employee engagement, satisfaction, and performance among many other benefits. (Jay, 2021).

It is important to understand the different commitment levels to understand why employees remain at the organization. As mentioned in Chapter 1.4, factors (normative commitment, affective commitment, continuance commitment) extracted from this chapter will be considered as stand-alone factors and will not be included in any deeper analyses. The factors are included to understand where the organization stands in terms of commitment.

### **2.1.3 Job Satisfaction**

Newstrom (2007, p. 204) explains job satisfaction as *“a set of favorable or unfavorable feelings and emotions with which employees view their work”*. Job satisfaction is often related to feelings of growth, recognition, achievement, responsibility, advancement and to the work itself (Herzberg, Mauser, and Snyderman, 1967).

Organizational effectiveness and employee wellbeing depends to a large degree on the the job satisfaction level of the employees. It encompasses all facets of a person’s experiences, such as how they view their daily tasks, the work environment, the role of management, and their relationship with coworkers. Two of the many indicators of job satisfaction are employee absenteeism and the employee turnover rate. If these are high, then overall job satisfaction is probably low. (LPC, 2023).

Aside from the notion of job satisfaction, one should also be aware of its negative counterpart, job dissatisfaction. Boatman (2021) explains that the phenomenon of job dissatisfaction occurs when employees’ expectations remain unmet, resulting in negative perception, lack of work motivation, and organizational commitment.

Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1967) stated that job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are not opposites. The opposite to ‘job satisfaction’ is ‘no job satisfaction’, and the opposite to ‘job dissatisfaction’ is ‘no job dissatisfaction’. This will be explained in chapter 2.4.1 more thoroughly.

Figure 2 below illustrates what has been discussed in this subchapter. It seeks to explain how both job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction are created. A range of factors can lead to job satisfaction, and job satisfaction will lead to even more positive outcomes. One thing that

will result in job dissatisfaction is unmet expectations. Job dissatisfaction will lead to additional negative outcomes.



**Figure 2 – Own figure - Job Satisfaction and Job dissatisfaction.**

Theories of job satisfaction will be further explored in chapter 2.3.

### 2.1.4 Motivation

The term motivation refers to the reasons, the “why” of why individuals choose to behave in a certain way. Cherry (2023) describes it as *“The process that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behavior”*.

The concept of motivation can be split into two categories of autonomous motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation means to do something because you are intrinsically motivated - meaning you do it because you find it interesting and enjoyable. Extrinsic motivation means you do something because you are extrinsically motivated – you do something because it leads to distinct outcomes. (Ryan and Deci, 2017).

Ryan and Deci (2017) make the following statement about intrinsic motivation:

*“The phenomenon of intrinsic motivation reflects the primary and spontaneous propensity of some organisms, especially mammals, to develop through activity – to play, explore, and manipulate things and, in doing so, to expand their competencies and capacities” (Ryan and Deci, 2017, p. 123).*

Motivational theories will be further explored in chapter 2.4.

### **2.1.5 Organizational Justice**

Another factor likely to impact the attitudes and behavior of employees is the sense of organizational justice. Cropanzano, Bowen, and Gilliland (2007, p. 35) define organizational justice as *“a personal evaluation about the ethical and moral standing of managerial conduct”*. Employees’ perception of the actions made by management and the organization regarding fair decision-making and treatment is essential for maintaining a sense of organizational justice (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2019, pp. 743-745).

There are three sub-components to organizational justice: ‘distributive justice’, ‘procedural justice’, and ‘interactional justice’. These components work together and can be treated as separate components of ‘overall’ fairness caused by different managerial actions. If at least one component is well maintained, potential ill effects can be partly mitigated, and some benefits also accrue. (Cropanzano, Bowen & Gilliland, 2007).

The first component, **Distributive Justice**, refers to how employees perceive the fairness of decisions made within the organization, with a focus on outcomes. It comes down to what some employees get, and what others do not. For example, salary increases or opportunities. The second component, **Procedural justice** refers to how fair employees perceive the organization’s decision-making processes to be. The effect of unfavorable outcomes can be alleviated by using fair decision-making processes. (Cropanzano, Bowen & Gilliland, 2007).

An example of procedural justice is resource allocation based on personal friendships across organizational hierarchies. (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2019, p. 743).

The third and last component, **interactional justice**, refers to interpersonal treatment within the organization, often focusing on one-to-one transactions with supervisors. Interactional justice can be further split into two separate sub-components: informational and interpersonal justice. **Informational justice** means telling the truth and offering ample

justification when things go south. **Interpersonal justice** means treating each other with dignity and respect. (Cropanzano, Bowen & Gilliland, 2007).

According to Cropanzano, Bowen & Gilliland (2007, p. 34), there is a positive relation between:

- organizational justice and organizational justice, and
- organizational justice and organizational citizenship.

Organizational citizenship behavior will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **2.1.6 Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) refers to employees who by personal choice engage in behaviors on a personal or organizational plane that go beyond their originally described role. (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2019, p. 746). Organ (1997, p. 86) describes OCB as *“individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization”*.

The opposite of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is counter-productive work behavior (CWB). Buchanan & Huczynski (2019, p. 746) define CWB as *“any intentional employee behavior viewed by the organization to be harmful to its legitimate interests.”* A variety of factors in the workplace, such as those pertaining to organizational justice may give rise to CWB. (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2019, p. 746).

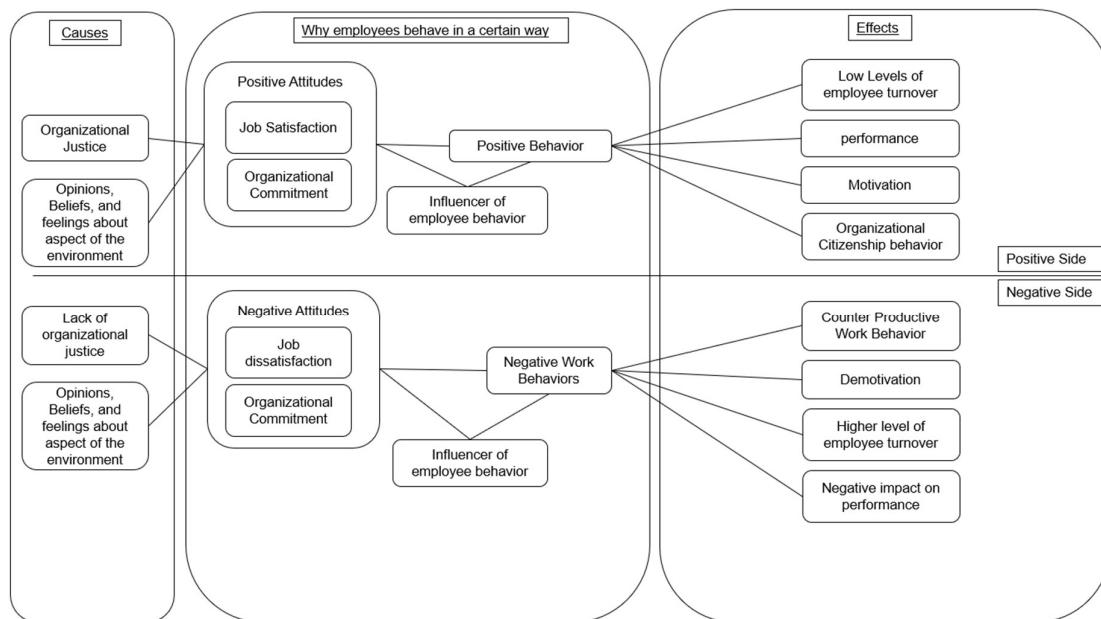
### **2.1.7 Chapter Summary**

Below are key ideas taken from this chapter. The key points are:

- If there are above-normal levels of organizational citizenship behavior, then motivation and satisfaction are likely to be above-normal levels as well.
- Lack or insufficient organizational citizenship behavior (or there exists counterproductive work behavior) will have a negative impact on work motivation and job satisfaction.

- Lack of organizational justice will negatively impact working motivation and job satisfaction and will likely lead to counterproductive work behavior.
- Fairly perceived organizational justice will have a positive impact on work motivation and job satisfaction.
- Committed employees are more likely to be motivated and satisfied with their job.
- Uncommitted employees are more likely to be demotivated and less satisfied with their job.

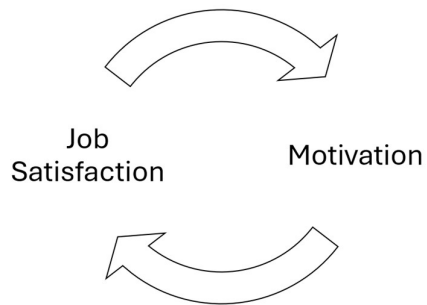
Figure 3 below summarizes the key ideas from chapter 2.1. There are a couple of different ways one can interpret the picture below. For instance, job satisfaction can be analyzed from either the causing factors or from the effects. It can also be analyzed by looking into organizational commitment.



**Figure 3 – Own figure - Cause and effect of workplace phenomena.**

Even though these terms differ, it can be challenging to separate factors impacting motivation from job satisfaction. One could instead argue that the factors impact the combination of job satisfaction and motivation. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are often motivated in their work. The opposite is also true, motivated employees are often

also satisfied with their job. The idea of the interrelated factors is illustrated in Figure 4 below.



**Figure 4 – Own figure - Job Satisfaction and Motivation relationship.**

As mentioned in chapters 2.1.3 and 2.1.4, motivation is defined by “*acting forces to initiate behavior*” (Britannica, no date), while job satisfaction is defined as “*feelings employees have toward their job*” (Newstrom (2007)). Motivation can enhance job satisfaction, and job satisfaction can impact motivation.

## **2.2 Employee Engagement – Human Resource Management**

Many definitions of employee engagement exist in today’s workplace. The various definitions make, according to Bridger (2022) “*reference to a range of human resources management and organizational behavior concepts such as work effort, commitment to the organization, job satisfaction, motivation, and optimal functioning*”. Bridger (2022) argues that the denominator of the definitions “*is that they view engagement as an internal state of being*” (Bridger, 2022, p. 6).

Bridger states that “*Engagement is something that the employee has to offer and cannot be ‘required’ as a part of the employment contract or objective-setting process*” (Bridger, 2022, p. 6). Kahn (1990) defined employee engagement as: “*the harnessing of organization members’ selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances*” (Kahn, 1990, p. 694).

In this work, Kahn also considers personal disengagement, which he defines as “*the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally during role performance*” (Kahn, 1990, p. 694).

According to Bridger (2022), there are five enablers to employee engagement through which improved employee engagement can be achieved. These are: (1) leadership, (2) strategic narrative, (3) employee voice, (4) integrity, and (5) involvement. Furthermore, Bridger argues that previously mentioned enablers are not distinct from each other, but to a degree, function co-dependently. (Bridger 2022, p. 79).

The five enablers of employee engagement will be discussed in the following sub-chapters.

### **2.2.1 Leadership**

According to Bridger (2022) there is no doubt that the capabilities of leaders and managers to engage their teams is critical to employee engagement. A commonly used phrase is *“people join companies, but leave managers”* (Bridger 2022, p. 82).

The effects of different leadership styles on employee engagement, such as transformational and have been studied. One of which investigated the effect of transformational leadership style found that supervisors, who often known to be optimistic themselves, are able increase daily employee engagement and even organizational citizenship behavior by boosting the optimism of employees by inspiring, motivating, and by paying attention to the needs of the employees. (Tims et al, 2011, pp.123-129). Newstrom (2007, p. 164) states that *“positive leadership generally results in higher job satisfaction and performance”*.

A study conducted by Xu et al (2011) uncovered three specific leadership behaviors that predicted employee engagement: (1) supports the team, (2) performs effectively, and (3) displays integrity. Further analysis revealed that ‘supports the team’ was the strongest predictor of subsequent engagement and that ‘performs effectively’ and ‘displays integrity’ has approximately the same correlation to employee engagement. (Xu et al, 2011).

One of the many studies looking into the impact of leadership on employee engagement, the CIPD *Managing for Sustainable Employee Engagement* report identified managers as one of the key factors influencing employee engagement. This report identifies key competencies which are important for the sustainable engagement of employees. The competencies including a description of them can be found in figure 7 below. The framework developed by CIPD can be used for two different purposes, enhancing employee engagement by addressing the necessary management behaviors, and for reducing stress at work. (Lewis et al, 2012). The framework is presented in figure 5 below.

| Competency                            | Brief Description   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Open, fair and consistent             | Managing with integrity and consistency, managing emotions/personal issues and taking a positive approach in interpersonal interactions |
| Handling conflict and problems        | Dealing with employee conflicts (including bullying and abuse) and using appropriate organizational resources                           |
| Knowledge, clarity and guidance       | Clear communication, advice and guidance, demonstrating understanding of roles and responsible decision-making                          |
| Building and sustaining relationships | Personal interaction with employees involving empathy and consideration   |
| Supporting development                | Supporting and arranging employee career progression and development  |

**Figure 5 – Own adaption of ‘Summary of the ‘Managing for sustainable employee engagement’ framework’ (Lewis et al, 2012).**

### 2.2.2 Strategic Narrative and Purpose

The parent company already has a strategic narrative, and our organization, as a subsidiary, must follow the same narrative. However, when it comes to purpose among employees, it could of course have an impact on motivation and job satisfaction

According to Bonchek (2016), “*a strategic narrative is an emotional story that inspires employees, excites partners, attracts customers, and engages influencers*”. Bridger (2022) explains that a strategic narrative is “*visible, empowering leadership providing a strong, strategic narrative about the organization, where it’s come from and where it’s going is a key enabler of employee engagement.*”. A Strategic narrative can be seen from the perspective of providing purpose and meaning to employees within the workplace. (Bridger, 2022, p. 97)

However, Bridger (2022) notes that:

*It is not enough for employees to be motivated simply because the organization provides them with a job. Providing compelling purpose at work, or strategic narrative, can help create meaning for employees, which contributes towards employee engagement (Bridger, 2022, p. 97).*

Pratt and Ashforth (2003) posits that there are a couple of ways we can find meaning at work. They talk about this from two perspectives; “*meaning in working – which is a belief that their job contributes to the greater good*” (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003) and “*meaning at work – which is a belief that one is helping other to contribute and/or achieve satisfaction*” (Pratt and Ashforth, 2023). They continue that one or the other is not good enough, that there

should be harmony between these different values for one to truly find meaning at work. (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003).

### **2.2.3 Employee Voice**

Dromey (2016) defined employee voice as “*the ability of employees to express their views, opinions, concerns and suggestions, and for these to influence decisions at work.*”. Bridger (2022) presents the idea simply as “*employee voice is about conversations, dialogue and talking.*” (Bridger, 2022, p. 116).

Bridger (2022) notes that “*Giving employees a voice provides them with the opportunity to positively impact their organization on a variety of levels*”.

Employees won't speak up if they believe their opinions are subject to negative consequences in any way (Bridger, 2022), or if the potential costs of doing do outweigh the benefits. This is known by the term ‘*Employee silence*’, which is the opposite of employee voice (CIPD, 2024).

‘Openness’, ‘good communication’, and ‘approachability’ are the key characteristics of leadership that empower employee voice. (IPA and Tomorrow’s Company, 2012, cited in Bridger, 2022, p. 106).

### **2.2.4 Involvement**

One could argue that employee involvement falls under the category of employee voice. However, Bridger (2022) reasons that it is important to be explicit about employee involvement in engagement, therefore it is a separate topic all together. Involvement is according to Briger (2022) about creating opportunities for employees to “*actually do something different, to contribute, to genuinely get involved in the success of the business*”. Bridger summarizes: “*in a nutshell, involvement ensures employees have the opportunity to engage with the organization*”. (Bridger, 2022, p. 116).

### **2.2.5 Integrity**

Organizational integrity is about ensuring the words of an organization matches its behavior (Bridger, 2022, p. 122). In other words, there should be no gaps between the words and the

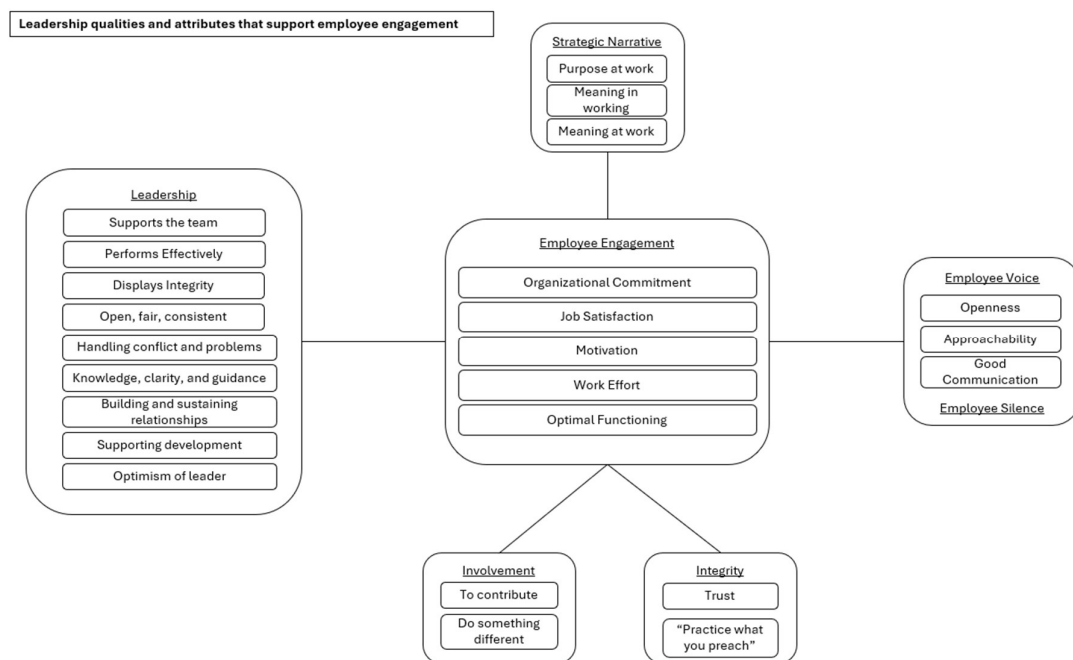
actions of a company. The phrase “*practice what you preach*” comes to mind here. (Bridger, 2022, p. 122).

Bridger (2022) argues that organizational integrity is a critical enabler, not only of engagement, but also trust in the organization and management team (Bridger, 2022, p.122)

## 2.2.6 Summary of Employee Engagement

Employee engagement, job satisfaction and motivation are all interlinked and interconnected. Meaning that factors impacting employee engagement will have an impact on motivation and job satisfaction as well, and vice versa.

Figure 6 below aims to summarize the topic discussed in chapter 2.2. The idea that engagement, satisfaction, and motivation are interconnected is emphasized once again.



**Figure 6 – Own figure - Employee Engagement overview.**

The five enablers of employee engagement surround the central idea, that employee engagement, job satisfaction, and motivation are interrelated.

## 2.3 Job Satisfaction

According to Jex and Britt (2008, p. 137) among others, there are three general approaches to explaining the development of job satisfaction: (1) job characteristics, (2) social information processing, and (3) the dispositional approach. These theories will be discussed in this chapter.

There is a strong overlay between job satisfaction theories and motivational theories. The more noteworthy theories in this area include among others Herzberg's two-factor theory (see chapter 2.4.2.), the job characteristics model (see chapter 2.3.1.), and the dispositional approach (see chapter 2.3.3.). (OSHWIKI, 2013). These theories will be discussed later in the subsequent chapters.

### 2.3.1 Hackman and Oldham: Job Characteristics Model Theory

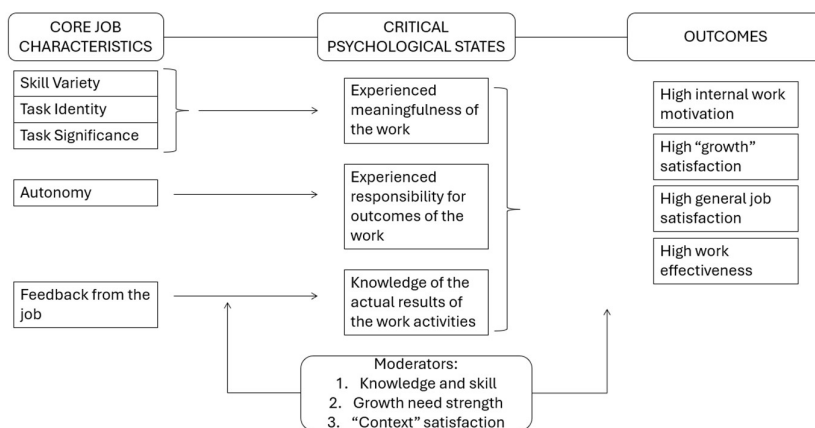
The job characteristics theory (JCT), also known as situational approach was originally developed by Richard Hackman and Edward Lawler. Greg Oldham took Lawler's place as he started to become interested in other issues during the development of the theory. (Miner, 2005, p. 75).

JCT argues that satisfaction with the job stems from the nature of the job, or the work environment. The theory assumes that all people have the same objective needs (e.g., psychological growth) (Judge, Locke, Durham, 1997, pp. 152-179).

Jex and Britt (2008) notes that *"job satisfaction is determined primarily by the nature of employee's jobs or by the characteristics of the organizations in which they work"*. They continued that *"According to this view, employees cognitively evaluate their jobs and organizations and make some determination of their relative level of satisfaction"*. (Jex and Britt, 2008, p. 137)

The job characteristics theory has grown significantly since it was first introduced. The original theory was to some extent, based on a few propositions drawn from Maslow's hierarchy of needs and expectancy theory. (Miner, 2005, p. 75-77)

The later known job characteristics theory, developed back in 1976, states that motivation and satisfaction depend on how well the work meets five core dimensions: 'skill variety', 'task identity', 'task significance', 'autonomy', and 'feedback'. Figure 7 below illustrates Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics theory.



**Figure 7 – Own adaptation of The Complete Job Characteristics Model (Hackman and Oldham, 1980, cited in Miner, 2015, p. 78).**

**Core job characteristics** include the five components: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and lastly, feedback from the job. These components are explained below. Hackman and Oldham described the five components like this:

**Skill variety** means a range of activities performed for a job that challenges an individual's skills and abilities, making the task meaningful, even though it may not be of greater significance. **Task identity** refers to the job's requirement for a complete, identifiable piece of work, making it more meaningful for employees compared to smaller, more monotone, and repetitive tasks. **Task significance** refers to the significant impacts of the job on other's lives or work, enhancing the meaningfulness of work. **Task significance** means that the meaningfulness of work is enhanced when the task has a significant impact on other people or the environment. **Autonomy** is about having the freedom to choose how, when, and by whom work is done. **Job Feedback** means that the individual doing the job receives clear and direct information about the effectiveness of his or her performance for said job. (Hackman and Oldham 1976, pp. 257-258).

Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics theory define three different psychological states that need to be fulfilled for an employee to experience the highest form of "self-generated" motivation and many more outcomes. Hackman and Oldham (1976, pp. 256-257) define the psychological states in figure 8 below.

| Psychological state                          | Description   |
|--|---|
| Experienced Meaningfulness of the Work       | The degree to which the individual experiences the job as one which is generally meaningful, valuable, and worthwhile.              |
| Experienced Responsibility for Work Outcomes | The degree to which the individual feels personally accountable and responsible for the results of the work he or she does          |
| Knowledge of Results                         | The degree to which the individual knows and understands, on a continuous basis, how effectively he or she is performing on the job |

**Figure 8 - Own adaptation of Hackman & Oldham's psychological states.**

## Outcomes

The four outcomes “high internal motivation” “high growth satisfaction” “high general job satisfaction” and “high work effectiveness” can only be achieved when all psychological states are present. If parts of the psychological states are missing, fewer outcomes will be achieved. (Hackman and Oldham, 1976, pp. 256-257)

Hackman and Oldham's model is explicitly employed to calculate the motivating potential score (MSP) for a given job:

$$MPS = \frac{\text{Skill variety} + \text{Task identity} + \text{Task significance}}{3} \times \text{Autonomy} \times \text{Feedback from the job}$$

Although the job characteristics approach assumes that people have the same objective needs, Judge, Locke, and Durham still recognize the fact that not all people value or want the same things. (Judge, Locke, and Durham, 1997, p. 179).

Judge, Locke, and Durham (1997, p. 179) viewed the dispositional approach, the job characteristics approach, and the situational appraisal approach as complementary to each other. (Judge, Locke, and Durham, 1997, p. 179).

Salancik and Pfeffer criticized JCT on two counts. Firstly, JCT assumes that “*job characteristics are objective components of the work environment*”. Salancik and Pfeffer argued that jobs are “social constructions” and not objective entities. Secondly, JCT is based on the idea of need satisfaction, although there is little evidence that supports the “*utility of needs in the prediction of employee outcomes*”. (Jex and Britt, 2008, p. 138).

### 2.3.2 Social Information Processing Theory

Social information processing theory (SIP) is a theory developed by Salancik and Pfeffer in 1978. The Social Information Processing Theory states that *“affective responses to the job are governed by social persuasions (E.g. from co-workers) rather than from characteristics of the job and work itself”* (Judge, Locke & Durham, 1997, p. 152).

According to Salancik and Pfeffer (1978), there are two main mechanisms by which feelings of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction can be developed (Jex and Britt, 2008, p. 138). One of the mechanisms, which has its origins in Bem’s (1972) Self Perception Theory posits that *“employees look at their behaviors retrospectively and form attitudes such as job satisfaction in order to make sense of it”*. This view suggests that the *“employee’s job satisfaction fluctuates based on the features of the situation, rather than the features of the work environment”*. (Jex and Britt, 2008, p. 139).

The second mechanism, which has its roots in Festinger’s Social Comparison Theory (1954), suggests that *“people often look to others to interpret and make sense of the environment”*. Consequently, social information processing from the social environment will lead to attitudes such job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction. This means that a newly hired employee could become dissatisfied just by being in the same environment as a preexisting dissatisfied employee (Jex and Britt, 2008, p. 139)

This version of the situational approach has been severely criticized by Stone (1992) and does not explain how the people who do the social processing got their attitudes in the first place. (Stone 1992, cited in Judge, Locke, Durham, 1997, p. 152).

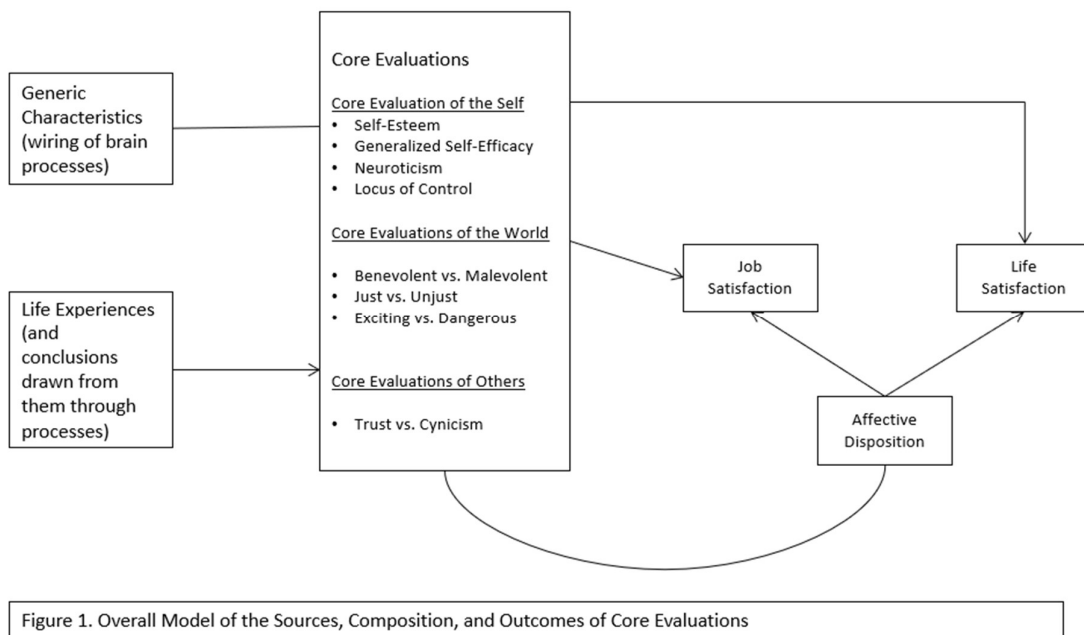
Social Information processing theory will be considered as a standalone factor.

### 2.3.3 The Dispositional Approach

The dispositional approach suggests that there is a close correlation between job satisfaction and personality. Consequently, individuals (in this case, employees) will always have the same level of satisfaction, and these will remain unchanged over time. (OSHWIKI, 2013).

Judge, Locke and Durham states that *“the dispositional approach to the study of job satisfaction argues that there are relatively stable characteristics of the person (i.e., traits) that affect job satisfaction independently of the attributes of the job or situation”* (1997).

They developed a theoretical model to show the effect of three classes of core evaluations which can be seen in figure 9 below.



**Figure 9 – Own adaptation of ‘Overall Model of the Sources, Compositions, and Outcomes of Core Evaluations (Judge, Locke, and Durham, 1997, p. 175)’.**

According to this model, ‘affective disposition’ has a direct effect on job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Core evaluations pertain to how the individual sees themselves, other people, and the world. (Judge, Locke, and Durham, 1997, pp. 152-174). Judge, Locke, and Durham (1997) noted that: *“People who have positive core self-evaluations, who believe in their inner worth and basic competence, are more satisfied with their jobs than those with negative core self-evaluations”*. This model has been criticized by Stone (1992) as it does not explain how people who do social processing got their attitudes in the first place.

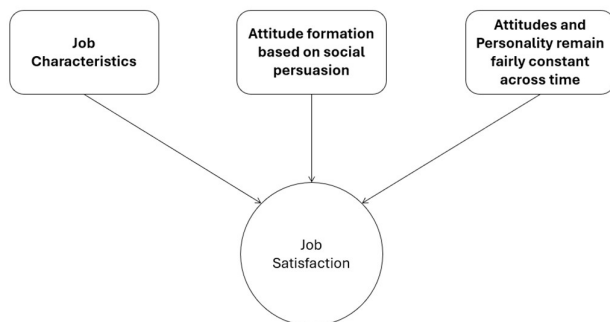
### 2.3.4 Summary of Job Satisfaction

To summarize what has been discussed in the previous sub chapters. Job satisfaction can be explained from three different approaches:

1. Job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback)

2. Social Information Processing (attitude formation as a result of social persuasion e.g. co-workers)
3. The Dispositional Approach (Attitude and personality are closely related and remain constant across time)

The three general approaches to job satisfaction are presented in figure 10 below.



**Figure 10 - Own adaptation - Development of job satisfaction.**

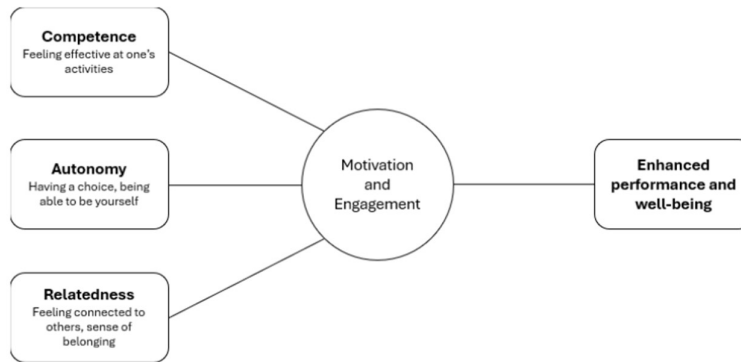
## 2.4 Motivational Theories

This thesis briefly presents three theories of motivation: (1) Edward's and Deci's Self-Determination Theory, (2) Herzberg's two-factor theory and (3) Victor Vroom's Expectancy theory.

### 2.4.1 Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) was a theory introduced by Psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan in 1985 (Cherry, 2022). SDT provides a framework for understanding human motivation and learning, positing that individuals are driven by a desire for growth and fulfillment (Ryan and Deci, 2017).

Deci and Ryan posited that when the three basic psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are met, people will become self-determined and be intrinsically motivated towards an activity. (Ryan and Deci, 2017). The concept is illustrated in figure 11 below.



**Figure 11 – Own adaptation of Self Determination Theory, Competence, Autonomy and Relatedness (Main, 2023).**

Deci and Ryan explain it like this:

*“Important within SDT is the idea that these active propensities for intrinsic motivation, internalization, and social integration are accompanied by, and indeed grounded in, specific phenomenal satisfactions” (Ryan and Deci, 2017)*

they continued.

*“SDT posits that inherent in such pursuits are satisfactions in feeling competence, autonomy, and relatedness. These proximal satisfactions reflect, in the deepest sense, the essence of human thriving, and they predict any number of indicators of wellness and vitality” (Ryan and Deci, 2017, p. 5).*

Competence in this context will be used as a stand-alone factor. Relatedness and autonomy are considered in other theories.

## **2.4.2 Two-Factor Theory – Frederick Herzberg**

Frederick Herzberg was an American psychologist who was among the first to research employees’ attitudes toward their jobs. In 1959 Herzberg conducted an experiment to understand employee motivation and satisfaction. Specifically, the causes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction at work, which are considered in the 2-factor theory of motivation. When looking into what people want from their jobs, Herzberg, Mauser, and Snyderman received answers based on feelings of happiness or unhappiness. (Hertzberg, 1967)

The most frequently described factors in terms of happiness were related to that of their tasks. In terms of unhappiness, it was the conditions surrounding the job. Herzberg found that there are certain things to motivate employees to achieve higher performance i.e. motivating factors. Herzberg also found that hygiene factors can satisfy employees and stop them being demotivated but will not make them more motivated. (Herzberg, Mauser, and Snyderman, 1967)

Herzberg divided the factors into two; *motivators* and *hygiene factors*, also known as maintenance factors.

Environmental factors represent to the individual an unhealthy psychological work environment. Herzberg states “*Hygiene operates to remove health hazards from the environment of man. It is not a curative; it is, rather a preventive.*” (Herzberg, Mauser, and Snyderman, 1967, p. 113).

Preventative means in this context means that if the hygiene factors are satisfied, individuals will not be motivated, however, they will not be dissatisfied either. *Hygiene factors* are extrinsic in nature, the lack of these factors lead to negative job attitudes and eventually job dissatisfaction. According to Cambridge dictionary (no date), the term hygiene factor is described as: “*A feature of a job that will make a worker unhappy if it is not provided*”. The hygiene factors are company policy and administration, supervision, salary, interpersonal relations and working conditions. (Herzberg, Mauser, and Snyderman, 1967).

As an extension to company policy and administration, a new factor “management’s role” is added. It encompasses many different elements from many of the theory chapters.

*Motivators* on the other hand, are intrinsic in nature, the existence of these factors lead to positive job attitudes and job satisfaction. *Motivators*. According to Cambridge dictionary (no date), the term motivators is described as: “*a person or thing that makes someone enthusiastic about doing something.*” The motivators are achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, and advancement. The two factors are not opposite to each other. The opposite of job dissatisfaction is not job satisfaction, but rather no job dissatisfaction. The same rule applies to job satisfaction, where the opposite is no job satisfaction. (Herzberg, Mauser, and Snyderman, 1967)

Herzberg found to motivate employees you need to ensure you are providing the motivating factors to be able to see a difference in motivation, high performance, and overall

satisfaction. Herzberg also stated that to improve motivation and job satisfaction one must first consider the hygiene factors. (Herzberg, Mauser, and Snyderman, 1967)

Herzberg's motivator and hygiene factors are presented in figure 12 below.

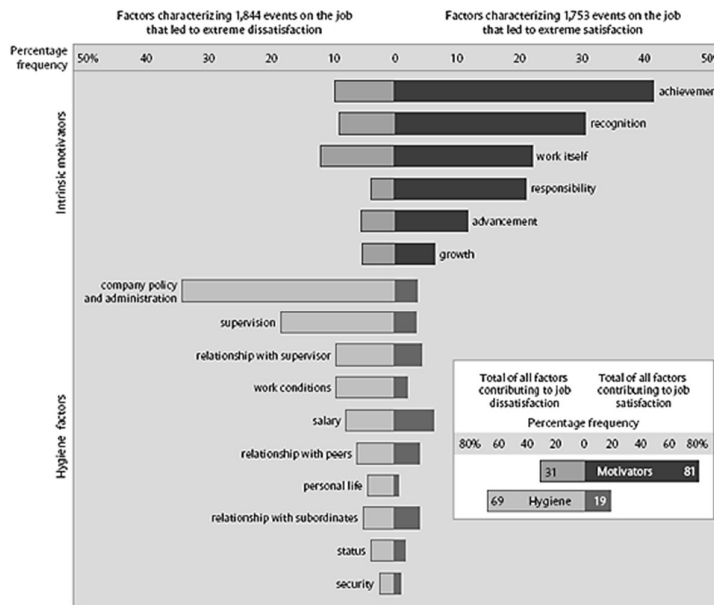


Figure 12 - Own adaptation of Comparison of satisfiers and dissatisfiers, Herzberg, 1959, p. 81).

Herzberg's theory has received its fair share of criticism and shortcomings. Herzberg mentions in his book that his studies were performed in a 30-mile radius of Pittsburg, America. Cultural considerations outside this area are likely a significant factor Herzberg also mentions that only top and medium level employees such as accountants and engineers were selected for the study, i.e. blue-collar employees were left out (Herzberg, Mauser, and Snyderman, 1967, pp. 31-33).

Robbins and Judge (2013) criticized Herzberg's work and noted that both hygiene and motivational factors should be capable of motivating employees if they are of equal importance (Nickerson, 2023)

### 2.4.3 Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory

Victor Vroom was a Canadian psychologist came up with the expectancy theory back in 1964. It is also known by the abbreviation VIE (because of the three components: Valence,

Instrumentality, Expectancy). What differentiates Vroom's theory from those of Herzberg among others is that Vroom focuses on outcomes, rather than needs (Juneja, no data).

Vroom's expectancy theory seeks to explain what motivates people to choose one option over another. Miner explains it like this "*Vroom's theory starts with the idea that people tend to prefer certain goals or outcomes over others. They thus anticipate experiencing feelings of satisfaction should such a preferred outcome be achieved*". (Miner, 2005, p. 97)

Juneja (no date) explains it like this: "*the intensity of a tendency to perform in a particular manner is dependent on the intensity on an expectation that the performance will be followed by a definite outcome and on the appeal of the outcome to the individual.*". Consequently, the theory consists of three core components: Valence, Expectancy, and Instrumentality (Sutton, 2024).

*Valence* is an employee's expectation of satisfaction after achieving goals, rather than the actual satisfaction they anticipate. *Expectancy* is the belief that improved efforts will lead to better performance. Factors that can influence expectancy are for example appropriate skills, resources, information, and the necessary support needed. *Instrumentality* is the belief that good performance leads to valid outcomes. Factors that can influence instrumentality are for example belief in decision-makers, process simplicity, and clarity of performance-outcome relationship. (Juneja, no date).

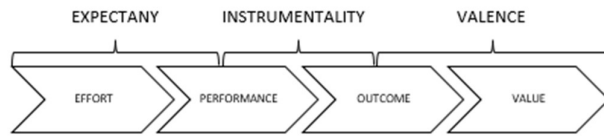
Consequently, expectancy theory focuses on the following relationships (Juneja, no date):

1. *Expectancy (Effort-performance relationship)* - How likely is it that the employee's work will be recognized in his performance review?
2. *Instrumentality (Performance-reward relationship)* - Does the employee believe that getting a good performance appraisal will translate into organizational rewards?
3. *Valence (Rewards-personal goals relationships)* - Does the employee perceive the rewards as appealing enough?

Vroom reasoned that motivation can be calculated by the following formula:

motivation = expectancy \* instrumentality \* valence (M = E x I x V)

The theory is illustrated in figure 13 below. The figure captures the different relationships of the factors: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence.

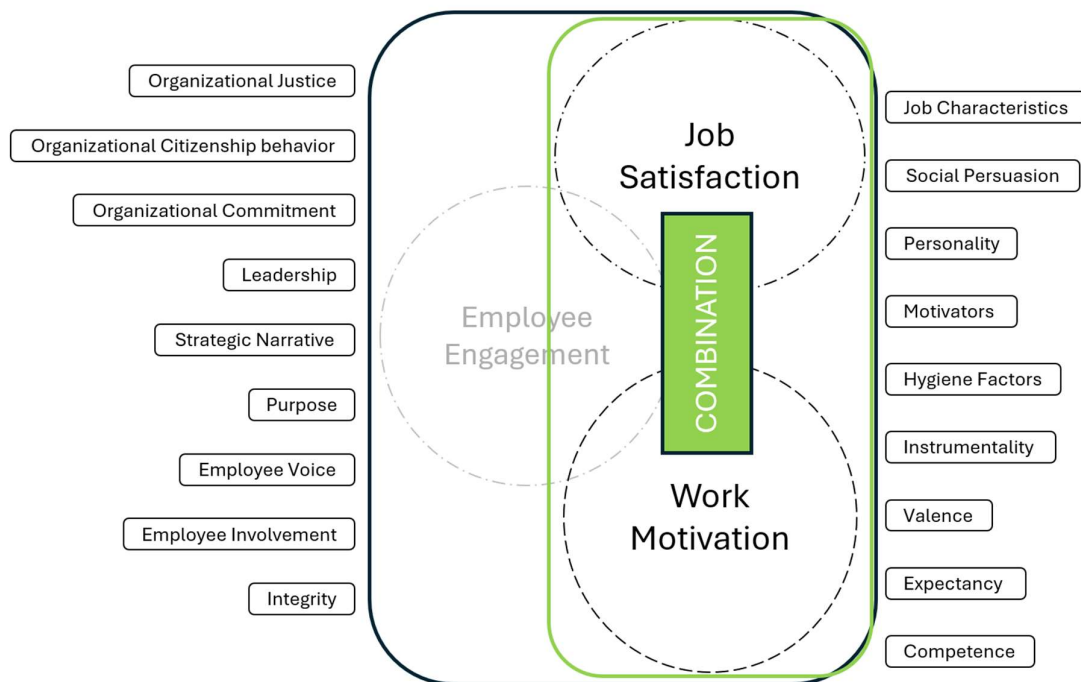


**Figure 13 - Expectancy theory.**

If any of these factors are too low, motivation will be low. If any of these factors are zero (0), the motivation will be non-existent.

## 2.5 Theoretical frame of reference

Figure 14 below visualizes the theoretical frame of reference used in this thesis. Employee Engagement, Job Satisfaction and Motivation will be the main themes. Topics on the left-hand and right-hand sides are used for the empirical study.



**Figure 14 - Theoretical frame of reference.**

### **3 Methodology**

This chapter presents the methodological aspects of the study, which include the details of the research design, justification of factors, research implementation and data collection, quantitative and qualitative data analyses, and lastly, reliability and validity.

The goal of this study is to measure current levels of motivation and job satisfaction in order to determine the key factors.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Since the goal of this study is to analyze and measure factors impacting job satisfaction and motivation, a mixed methodology was chosen. Using a quantitative and qualitative approach in combination provides a better understanding of research problems and complex phenomena than either approach alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

A mixed method was used to answer the research questions. A quantitative priority with an additional qualitative component and a concurrent design where both types of data are gathered simultaneously.

A quantitative approach is often used to get a view of the bigger picture, or the “what”, while a qualitative approach is used to explore the underlying reasons, the “why”. A mixed method can be used to get the best of “both worlds”.

There are many practical reasons why I chose to go with a combined research method. For one, leaning toward a quantitative method supported by a qualitative method will hopefully result in a higher response rate, compared to what simply using a qualitative method would result in. However, a purely quantitative approach would only have been focused on previous planned research questions, and important things would have been missed altogether. A merely statistical analysis of Likert scale questions would have a limited impact on the research aims.

The second reason why the researched chose the combined method, was because it enables answers to the survey questions to be measured by using a Likert scale type of survey.

An anonymous Likert type survey will make it easier for the target group to participate, without much hassle (surveymonkey, no date).

By using anonymous online surveys, you eliminate the potential factors that could defer the surveyors from taking part in the survey. In chapter 2.2.3 I mentioned employee voice and its opposite employee silence, which means employees won't speak up if they believe their opinions are subject to negative consequences in any way. Anonymous surveys diminish the risk of this happening.

It was decided that a 7-item Likert scale would be used because it was the biggest scale that Microsoft forms would support. The 7-item Likert scale can be found in appendix C (surveymonkey, no date). By using bigger scales, the researcher can better measure the different nuances of the answers. As research will show, there are not only white and black answers. Answers rated from 1-3 will be categorized as negative, meaning demotivation or dissatisfaction. Answers rated 4 will be categorized as neutral. Answers rated 5-7 will be categorized as positive, meaning motivation and satisfaction.

The original Likert scale was developed back in 1932 by Rensis Likert, an American psychologist. The Likert scale is powerful tool for measuring attitudes and opinions (Johnson, No date)

By using a combined research method, specifically, a quantitative research method supported by a qualitative method, it will be possible for the researcher to analyze which factors have the most impact on motivation and job satisfaction among employees. By adding a qualitative part to the survey, by means of open-ended questions, and the possibility for the surveyor to answer freely I will be able to capture the "why" questions are answered a certain way. I will also be able to pick up things I might have otherwise missed.

A purely qualitative method would surely have resulted in some interesting answers as well, but at a lower response rate, compared to the combined method.

To summarize, a Likert Scale type survey is a comfortable, safe, and easy way, with minimum effort required by surveyor to gather data for my study.

A reward of 200€ will be given to one of the surveyors in an effort to increase the response rate. Incentives can motivate respondents to complete long and complex surveys. Using incentives increases the likelihood of respondents answering the survey by 30%. However, there is also a risk that comes with the incentive such as biased responses (Malnik, 2023).

The study will use data obtained from the answers of a self-administered survey. A well-structured questionnaire with both closed-ended and open-ended questions is prepared as the

main instrument to collect data from the respondents. By adding open-ended questions, I give the survey taker the option of freely expressing his opinions about the topic and underlying reasons.

An additional research choice I made was send out my survey in three different languages, with English being the main language. The other two languages were Finish and Swedish. The reason for this is to encourage and make it possible for the employees to answer in their native language.

The created questionnaire contained 49 statements for the respondents to rate using the Likert-scale. Each part of the questionnaire included an open-ended question so that the respondents could add comments of their own. The questionnaire concluded with three (3) open-ended questions about job satisfaction and motivation.

The created questionnaire was quite lengthy. During the test runs the estimated completion time was around 10 to 15 minutes. These test runs were not done by blue-collar employees, however. The reason for this was that I did not want any of the blue-collar employees to know any of the details within the questionnaire, to avoid potential gossip between employees, and possible distortion of the answers.

The average time complete was closer to 30 minutes as it turns out. Might be because the respondents took their time to consider their answers, or because some of the questions might have been rather difficult.

The questionnaires were in English. However, everything was translated to both Swedish and Finnish as well. That way the respondents could choose which language they were most comfortable with. The reason the 3-language questionnaires were created was to get a greater response rate. The assumption was that employees would like to answer in their mother tongue.

A potential issue with doing a multilingual survey is that the translations might not have the exact same meaning between languages. However, the researcher had some assistance with checking the translations before sending out the questionnaires.

Within my survey I had embedded instructions for how to participate in the lottery of 200€. One of the reasons why I decided to give away 200 euros to one of the respondents was to hopefully compensate for the length of the questionnaire. The lottery participation details

were included in a secondary questionnaire that I had included a link to within the primary questionnaire.

By doing it this way the risk of respondents gaining access to the lottery participation questionnaire, without first completing the main questionnaire was diminished. Additionally, a list of participants was collected without knowing who had given which answers during the main survey

There were some problems doing it this way, as it turned out. The number of participants on both the questionnaires did not align, meaning some employees had not understood how to participate in the survey, or simply missed it, since instructions were at the very end of the main survey. As a result of this I had to contact everyone whose names were not on the participation list, to ask them if they did the main survey, and if so, if they wanted to participate in the lottery.

### 3.2 Survey Guide and Structure

The survey is divided into 6 different parts, which can be found in table 1 below.

|        |  |  |
|--------|--|--|
| Part 1 | Closed-ended questions<br>rating [1-7] | Demographic. Personal Background (age, discipline, work experience (years at the company)) |
| Part 2 | Closed-ended questions<br>rating [1-7] | Workplace Phenomena (organizational behavior)  |
|        | Open-ended                             | Workplace Phenomena (organizational behavior)  |
| Part 3 | Closed-ended questions<br>rating [1-7] | Employee Engagement  |
|        | Open-ended                             | Employee Engagement  |
| Part 4 | Closed-ended questions<br>rating [1-7] | Job Satisfaction   |
|        | Open-ended                             | Job Satisfaction   |

|                            |  |  |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Part 5                     | Closed-ended questions<br>rating [1-7] | Motivation                                     |
|                            | Open-ended                             | Motivation                                     |
| Part 6                     | Open-ended                             | Question 1<br><br>Question 2<br><br>Question 3 |
| Table 1 – survey structure |  |  |

The survey was structured in the following way:

1. **Demographic information about the respondent.** (questions number 1 to 3 in the questionnaire). Questions were asked about the respondent's age, occupation (electrical, plumbing, other mechanical), work experience at the current organization.
2. **Workplace behavior.** (questions number 4 to 9 in the questionnaire). Questions were asked from the theory chapter of workplace phenomena (organizational behavior). Questions about organizational justice, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior). Open-ended questions were included to give the surveyor the opportunity to freely answer in his own words.
3. **Employee engagement.** (questions 10 to 21 in the questionnaire). Questions were asked from the theory chapter of employee engagement. These questions were about leadership, strategic narrative, purpose, employee voice, involvement, and organizational integrity. Open-ended questions were included to give the respondent the opportunity to freely answer in his own words.
4. **Development of job satisfaction.** (questions 22 to 31 in the questionnaire). Questions were asked from the theory chapter of development of job satisfaction. These questions were about skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback from the job, social information processing and the dispositional approach.

Open-ended questions were included to give the surveyor the opportunity to freely answer in his own words.

5. **Motivation.** (questions 32 to 49 in the questionnaire). Questions were asked from the theory chapter of motivation. These questions were about competence, responsibility, achievement, recognition, growth, work itself, company policy and administration, management's role, supervision, relationship with colleagues, relationship with supervisors, work conditions, effort-performance relationship, performance-reward relationship, reward-personal goals relationship, and salary. Open-ended questions were included to give the surveyor the opportunity to freely answer in his own words.
6. **Concluding part.** (questions 50 to 52 in the questionnaire). Open-ended questions were asked here. The questions were (1) what do you like most about your job, (2) which 3 factors impact your motivation and job satisfaction the most? and (3) which 3 factors impacting motivation and job satisfaction do the organization need to work on, in your opinion? These questions were obligatory to answer, unlike the open-ended questions mentioned earlier.

### **3.3 Research Implementation and Data Collection.**

The present research was conducted through quantitative and qualitative analysis with a relatively small group of blue-collar employees. Survey data was collected from respondents, using a structured questionnaire. Digital questionnaires created in Microsoft Forms were sent out to the target group.

On Monday 28<sup>th</sup> of April, on the first week an email was sent I sent out to 33 selected employees. The email explained the purpose of the survey, and that it was anonymous, not requiring any organizational account verification. It also mentioned the fact that one of the respondents would have an opportunity to win 200€ as a participation prize. If any of the selected employees were seen at the office, they received a kind reminder to participate in the survey there as well.

On the Monday of week two, a reminder was sent out to the target group by email. During the days after there were no additional responses, so it was decided that regular messages

should be sent out to the same target group again. If any of these blue-collar employees were seen at the office, they were again reminded of the survey.

After seven days, 8 employees had completed the survey (hit rate ~25%) and at the end of the second week, 18 employees had answered making the final hit rate 56%. There were a few “red days” during these two weeks, and it probably had an impact on the hit rate as well.

In chapter 1.4 it was mentioned that the response time for the survey would be extended if there were too few responses. This was also the case during the research implementation phase.

A few conclusions that the researcher made during these two weeks where some employees do not read their emails, either because they have been locked out of their organizational email accounts, or perhaps because they did not have time to read their emails due to some projects being in their completion phase.

Some feedback I received about my survey was that some questions were difficult to understand, and there were indeed many questions.

During the phase of quantitative analysis, it was decided to postpone the timeline to get a higher response rate from one of the occupation groups, the plumbers. One of the plumbers had shown interest in participating but had not had the time to do so. The plumber in question was contacted again, and this resulted in one additional response, making the final response rate approximately 58%.

### **3.4 Analysis (methods)**

Since both quantitative and qualitative data was collected during the survey. Because of this the data had to be analyzed first separately, when together.

#### **3.4.1 Quantitative Analysis**

The collected survey data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Cronbach’s Alpha was used to measure the internal consistency and reliability of the original data sample gathered by the 19 respondents for the 49 questions. The resulting Cronbach alpha was 0,9522, which was indeed good.  $CA > 0,8$  is in general considered good. (Statistics Solution, no date)

The frequency of the occurrence of each answer (e.g. how many “agree”, “strongly agree”). Percentage totals for each part were calculated and used to compare the different groups (electrician vs plumber, 0–2-year work experience vs 6–10-year work experience.).

The collected data was first analyzed using the built-in analysis tool found in Microsoft forms. Later the data was exported and analyzed in Microsoft excel.

### **3.4.2 Qualitative Analysis**

Qualitative data will be thematically analyzed.

## **3.5 Justification of Factors**

Factors are in line with the frame of reference presented in chapter 2.5, which were determined through the literature review. Factors are selected based on observations in the environment based on the last few years at the company. Inapplicable factors for the organization have been removed.

An example of inapplicable factors is the advancement factors, according to Herzberg. Advancement of a blue-collar employee would result in a white-collar position, which leaves the employee outside the scope of the study. Job security is also eliminated as a factor since layoffs haven't been relevant for decades. Factors in personal life are encompassed by row 16, personality. The factor “relationships with subordinates” is eliminated because it would only be applicable from a white-collar perspective. Blue-collar employees are considered equal, and a formal hierarchy does not exist there. Situations exist where blue-collar employees temporarily take on leadership responsibilities, but this is reflected as an increase in responsibilities, which is encompassed under row 18.

Organizational justice will be referred to as total organizational justice and will thus automatically include the four components: distributive, procedural, interactional, and informational justice). The factor ‘distributive justice’ part of organizational justice was replaced by Herzberg’s motivational factor: rewards. However, distributive justice is still encompassed by total organizational justice.

The two factors; building and maintaining relationships and supporting development (leadership trait) are excluded from the theoretical framework because they pop up in other included theories. The factors used in the survey can be found in table 2 below. The researcher assumes that factors will likely have an impact on motivation and job satisfaction.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1  | Organizational Justice   |
| 2  | Organizational Commitment  |
| 3  | Organizational Citizenship Behavior  |
| 4  | Leadership   |
| 5  | Strategic Narrative  |
| 6  | Purpose  |
| 7  | Employee Voice   |
| 8  | Involvement  |
| 9  | Integrity  |
| 10   | Skill Variety  |
| 11   | Task identity  |
| 12   | Task significance  |
| 13   | Autonomy   |
| 14   | Feedback   |
| 15   | Social Persuasion  |
| 16   | Personality  |
| 17   | Competence   |
| 18   | Feelings of Responsibility   |
| 19   | Feelings of Achievement  |
| 20   | Feelings of Recognition  |
| 21   | Feelings of Growth   |
| 22   | Daily Tasks  |
| 23   | Management's role (follow-up question to company policy and administration)  |
| 24   | Relationship with peers  |
| 25   | Company policy and administration  |
| 26   | Supervision  |
| 27   | Relationship with supervisor   |
| 28   | Work conditions  |
| 29   | Work itself  |
| 30   | Effort-Performance-Relationship (What is the likelihood that the effort of the individual is recognized as performance according to organizational goals?) |
| 31   | Performance-Reward-Relationship (Will the performance lead to rewards?)  |
| 32   | Rewards-Personal Goals-Relationship (Are the potential rewards appealing enough?)  |
| 33   | Salary   |
| Table 2 – identified factors in theoretical frame of reference |  |

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

The survey itself was completely anonymous and needed no verification with an organizational account to access and carry out. The fact that the respondents entered their work email, although in a separate questionnaire, gave the researcher a list of participants. Two hundred euros was allotted to one random participant, as promised in the initial survey email.

Research ethics have been taken into consideration and all collected data that might be traced back to specific employees in some way was deleted after publishing of the thesis in order to preserve the integrity of the respondents.

## **4 Findings**

This chapter will present the quantitative and qualitative results. The research questions for this thesis are:

- What are the key factors leading to job dissatisfaction and demotivation among employees in project organizations?
- What is the current level of job satisfaction and motivation among blue-collar employees?

### **4.1 Participant Overview**

The response rate for the survey was approximately fifty-eight-point-six percent (57.6%) (n = 19). The average response rate for online surveys is about 29% (Malnik, 2023). The incentive seems to have had the desired effect.

#### **Occupation**

Sixty-point-eight percent (60.8%) (n = 14) of the electricians participated in the survey. Fifty-five-point-six percent (55.6%) (n = 5) of the plumbers participated in the survey. Only electricians and plumbers participated in the survey, no one from the 'other' category. Not that many blue-collar employees can be put into this category, so the lack of participants is not surprising. In this category sprinkler and ventilation assemblers were considered.

A visual representation of occupation distribution can be seen in figure 15 below.

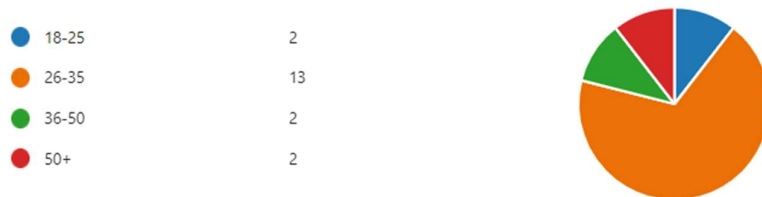


**Figure 15 - Occupation of respondents. (data: MF questionnaire 2024).**

### Age

Sixty-eight-point-four percent (68.4%) of the respondents (n = 13) were between the ages of 26 to 35. Ten-point-five percent (10.5%) of the respondents (n = 2) were between the ages of 18 to 25. Ten-point-five percent (10.5%) of the respondents (n = 2) were between the ages of 36 to 50. Ten-point-five percent (10.5%) of the respondents (n = 2) were over 50 years of age.

A visual representation of age distribution can be seen in figure 16 below.



**Figure 16 - Age of respondents. (data: MF questionnaire 2024).**

One of the major reasons why not so many older employees participated in the survey is because they often tend to move over to the service department of the company to stay closer to home.

### Work experience at the current organization

Forty-two-point-one percent (42.1%) of the respondents (n = 8) had worked less than two years, but more than six months at the organization. Ten-point-five percent (10.5%) of the respondents (n = 2) had been with the organization more than three years, but less than 5

years. Thirty-six-point-eight percent (36.8%) of the respondents ( $n = 7$ ) had been with the organization for more than 6 years but less than 10 years. Ten-point-five percent (10.5%) of the respondents ( $n = 2$ ) had been with the organization for more than 10 years.

A visual representation of work experience distribution can be seen in figure 17 below.



**Figure 17 - Work experience at the organization. (data: MF questionnaire 2024).**

The answer to this question aligns and confirms the answers from the first question, that employees tend to switch to the service department when they get older.

## 4.2 Quantitative Summary (classified)

This chapter presents the findings of the quantitative research undertaken for this thesis. Chapters 4.2.1 to 4.2.4 present the responses from the Likert scale statements for each of the four thematic areas identified from the literature review. These areas are: (1) Workplace Phenomena, (2) Employee Engagement, (3) Job Satisfaction and (4) Motivation.

Most of this chapter has been reduced in the public version of the thesis due to confidentiality reasons. Some real-life examples remain below.

### 4.2.1 Workplace Phenomena (classified)

In all figures in chapters 4.2.1 to 4.2.4. The following colors have been used in the subsequent graphs. The color coding is described below. Numbers can be added to the different colors. These numbers should not be used for analysis. Since the type of data collected is ordinal data, the distance between the colors is not equal.

Color **RED** - indicates 'strongly disagree, very dissatisfied, or strongly negative opinion'.  
[number -3 in Likert Scale Graphs]

Color **ORANGE** - indicates 'disagree, dissatisfied, or negative opinion'. [number -2 in Likert Scale Graphs]

Color **GOLD** - indicates 'somewhat disagree or slightly dissatisfied'. [number -1 in Likert Scale Graphs]

Color **LIGHT GRAY** - indicates 'neutral or neither agree nor disagree'. [number 0, or -1/2 in Likert Scale Graphs]

Color **LIGHT GRAY** - indicates 'neutral or neither agree nor disagree'. [number 0, or 1/2 in Likert Scale Graphs]

Color **DARK GRAY** - indicates 'somewhat agree or slightly satisfied'. [number 1 in Likert Scale Graphs]

Color **BLUE** - indicates 'agree, satisfied, or have positive opinion'. [number 2 in Likert Scale Graphs]

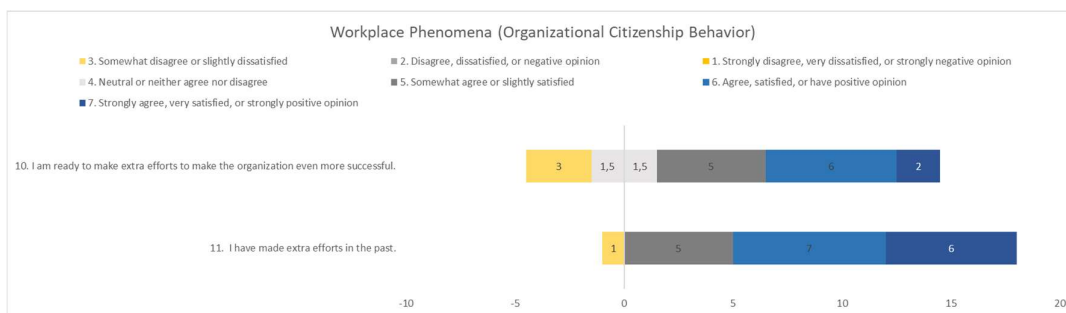
Color **Dark BLUE** - indicates 'strongly agree, very satisfied, or strongly positive opinion'. [number 3 in Likert Scale Graphs]

Eleven statements related to the topic of workplace phenomena are thematically presented in this chapter

Below is an example of the quantitative data summary,

### **Organizational Citizenship Behavior**

The last two statements relate to organizational citizenship behavior. A visual representation of the distribution of responses can be found in figure 20 below.



**Figure 18 - Visual representation of distribution of responses to organizational citizenship behavior.**

Table 5 below summarizes the results of each statement by using the number of respondents and percentage.

| Statement  | [1]             | [2]             | [3]                | [4]                | [5]                | [6]                | [7]                |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. I am ready to make extra efforts to make the organization even more successful. | (n = 0)<br>(0%) | (n = 0)<br>(0%) | (n = 3)<br>(15,8%) | (n = 3)<br>(15,8%) | (n = 5)<br>(26,3%) | (n = 6)<br>(31,6%) | (n = 2)<br>(10,5%) |
| 2. I have made extra efforts in the past.  | (n = 0)<br>(0%) | (n = 0)<br>(0%) | (n = 1)<br>(5,3%)  | (n = 0)<br>(0%)    | (n = 5)<br>(26,3%) | (n = 7)<br>(36,8%) | (n = 6)<br>(31,6%) |

[1] Strongly disagree, very dissatisfied, or strongly negative opinion,  
 [2] Disagree, dissatisfied, or negative opinion,  
 [3] Somewhat disagree or slightly dissatisfied,  
 [4] Neutral or neither agree nor disagree,  
 [5] Somewhat agree or slightly satisfied,  
 [6] Agree, satisfied, or have positive opinion,  
 [7] Strongly agree, very satisfied, or strongly positive opinion

### **Statement 10 – I am ready to make extra efforts to make the organization even more successful**

Zero percent (0%) of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement (n = 0). Zero percent (0%) of the participants disagreed with the statement (n = 0). Fifteen-point-eight percent (15.8%) of the participants somewhat disagreed with the statement (n = 3). Fifteen-point-eight percent (15.8%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement (n = 3). Twenty-six-point-three percent (26.3%) of the participants somewhat agreed with the statement (n = 5). Thirty-one-point-six percent (31.6%) of the participants agreed with the statement (n = 6). Ten-point-five percent (10.5%) of the participants strongly agreed with the statement (n = 2).

Fifteen-point-eight (15.8%) of the participants disagreed to some degree with the statement (n = 3). Sixty-eight-point-four (68.4%) of the participants agreed to some degree with the statement (n = 13). Fifteen-point-eight percent (15.8%) had neutral opinion about the statement (n = 3).

**Statement 11 – I have made extra efforts in the past**

Zero percent (0%) of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement (n = 0). Zero percent (0%) of the participants disagreed with the statement (n = 0). Five-point-three percent (5.3%) of the participants somewhat disagreed with the statement (n = 1). Zero percent (0%) of the participants neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement (n = 0). Twenty-six-point-three percent (26.3%) of the participants somewhat agreed with the statement (n = 5). Thirty-six-point-eight percent (36.8%) of the participants agreed with the statement (n = 7). Thirty-one-point-six percent (31.6%) of the participants strongly agreed with the statement (n = 6).

Five-point-three percent (5.3%) of the participants disagreed to some degree with the statement (n = 1). Ninety-four-point-seven percent (94.7%) of the participants agreed to some degree with the statement (n = 18). Only five-point-three percent (5.3%) of the participants had neutral opinion about the statement (n = 1).

**Comments from respondents:**

“Organizational citizenship behaviors could be much better in many other workers if they would be compensated fairly”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “Organisational citizenship behavior could be much better in many other workers if they would be compensated fairly”

### **4.3 Comparison of Data Between Groups (classified)**

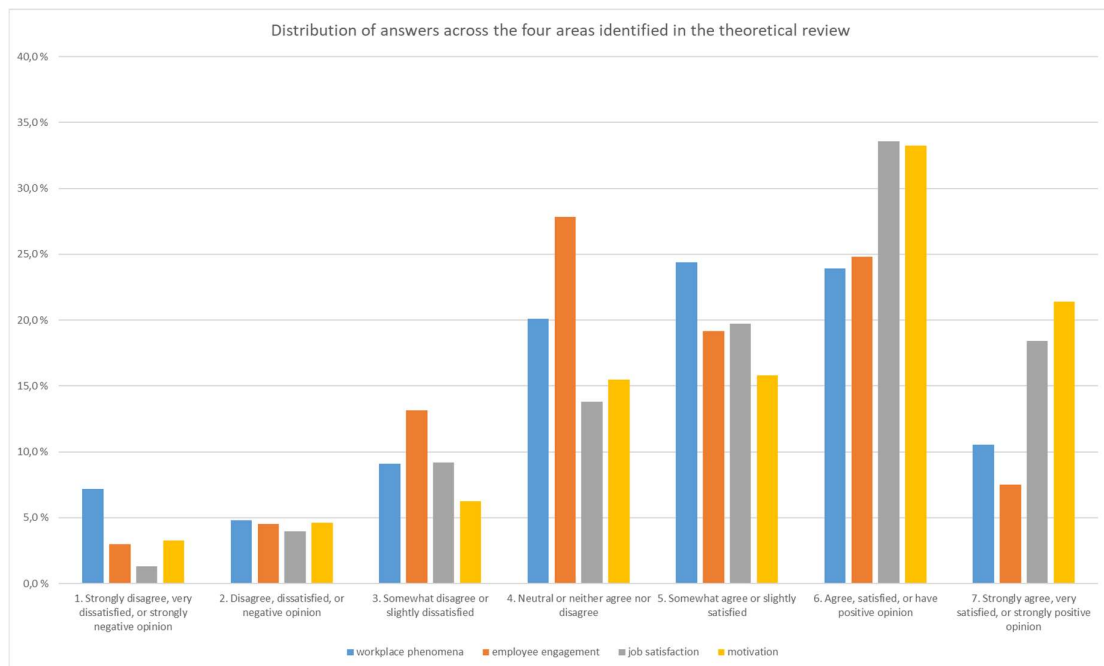
Text has been removed due to confidentiality reasons.

### **4.4 Visual presentation of negative, positive, and neutral responses (classified)**

Parts of the text from this chapter have been removed due to confidentiality reasons.

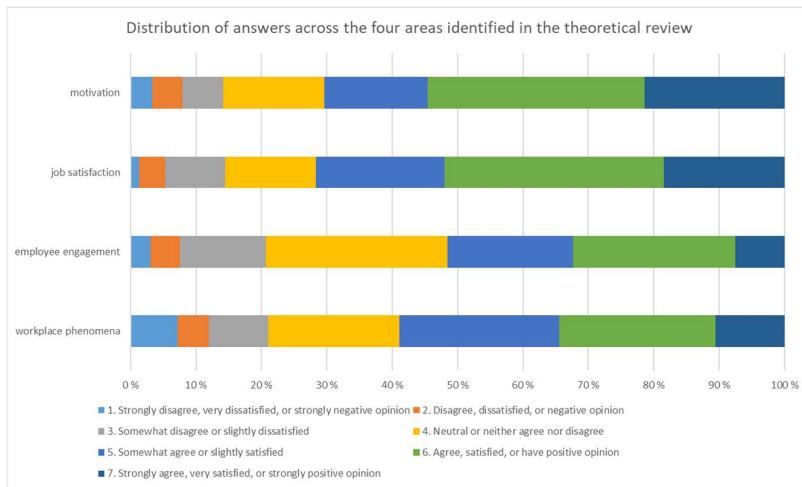
Figure 32 below shows the distribution of percentages, the total percent of negative versus positive responses, and lastly a 'total' percent obtained by subtracting negative % from positive %. The statements in the figure are in the same order as in the questionnaire. Figure 33 below shows the same as figure 32, but rather than being in order, the results are sorted by the 'total' percentage. Figures 34 and 35 show the data sorted by 'total negative' and 'total positive' percentages.

Figure 36 presents the occurrence of the different answers in the four different themes of the questionnaire. The most frequent answer in statements found in the motivation part of the questionnaire was '6. Agree, satisfied, or have positive opinion', the least frequent was '1. Strongly disagree, very dissatisfied, or strongly negative opinion'. The most frequent answer in the statements found in the job satisfaction part of the questionnaire was '6. Agree, satisfied, or have positive opinion', the least frequent answer was '1. Strongly disagree, very dissatisfied, or strongly negative opinion'. The most frequent answer in the statements about employee engagement was '4. Neutral or neither agree nor disagree'. The least frequent answer was '1. Strongly disagree, very dissatisfied, or strongly negative opinion'. The most frequent answer in the statements about workplace engagement was '4. Neutral or neither agree nor disagree'. The least frequent answer was '1. Strongly disagree, very dissatisfied, or strongly negative opinion'.



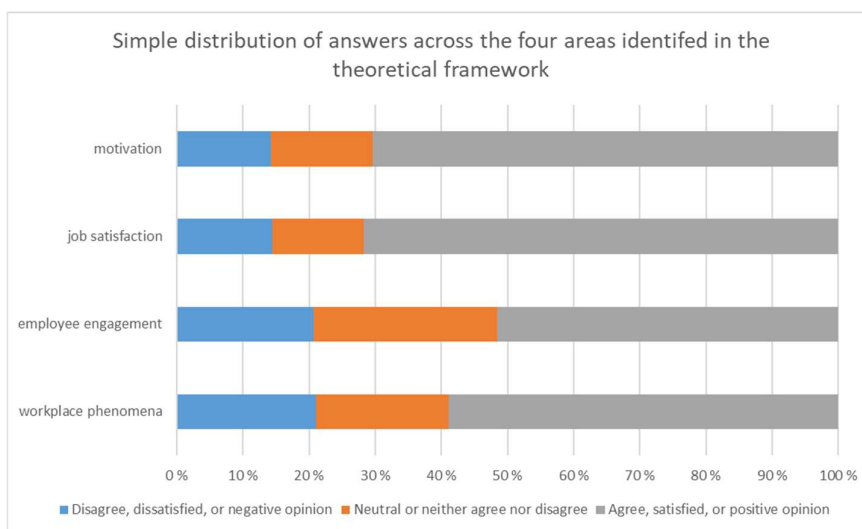
**Figure 19 - Distribution 1 of answers across the four areas identified in the theoretical review.**

Figure 37 presents the same data as in figure 36, but this time in a 100% stacked bar graph for easy comparison.



**Figure 20 - Distribution 2 of answers across the four areas identified in the theoretical review.**

Figure 38 below has compiled the answers to either ‘negative’, ‘positive’ or ‘neutral’. The results show a majority of positive responses.



**Figure 21 - Distribution 3 of answers across the four areas identified in the theoretical review.**

## 4.5 Qualitative Summary (classified)

The last part of the survey focused on open-ended questions that were designed to capture a few different things:

- (1) What the respondents like most about their job
- (2) Three factors that impact motivation and job satisfaction the most

- (3) Three factors that the organization needs to work on and improve

### **Question 50: What do you like most about your job?**

The purpose of the first question was to find out what is unique about our organization in the eyes of the employees. Perhaps it would be possible to use the information when marketing and recruiting. One can assume that these aspects of the job will also motivate the employees and give them some job satisfaction.

A thematic analysis of the answers revealed that what the respondents like most about their jobs are factors about the job characteristics as according to Hackman and Oldham's model (1976). Those were skill variety and task identity.

Answers regarding skill variety are:

“Challenges”<sup>2</sup>, “To be able to think”<sup>3</sup>, “That there is variation”<sup>4</sup>, “Versatility”<sup>5</sup>, “Variability”<sup>6</sup>, “To get to use your own head”<sup>7</sup>, “To get to solve the problems yourself”<sup>8</sup>, “Multiplicity of tasks”<sup>9</sup>, “Challenges”<sup>10</sup>

Answers regarding task identity are:

“Seeing the imprint of my work”<sup>11</sup>, “To get the work done”<sup>12</sup>, “When you are in charge of your own area and can manage it from start to finish”<sup>13</sup>

Responsibility was also mentioned by one respondent. Leadership was mentioned by two of the respondents, presumably lead fitters:

“To lead the fitters”<sup>14</sup>, “Leadership”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “Haasteet”

<sup>3</sup> “Att få tänka”

<sup>4</sup> ”Att det är varierande”

<sup>5</sup> ”Monipuolisuus”

<sup>6</sup> “Vaihtelevuus”

<sup>7</sup> “Oman pään käyttämisestä”

<sup>8</sup> ”Siitä että saan ratkaista itse ongelman”

<sup>9</sup> “Multiplicity of tasks”

<sup>10</sup> “Challenges”

<sup>11</sup> ” Nähdessäni työni jäljen”

<sup>12</sup> “Att få arbetet klart”

<sup>13</sup> “Kun saa oman osa-alueen vastuulleen ja saa hoitaa sen alusta loppuun”

<sup>14</sup> “Att leda montörerna”

<sup>15</sup> “Ledarskap”

The closest supporting theory is Herzberg's two-factor theory. Responsibility can be considered a motivator. Leadership in this context was not covered by any specific theory. From a blue-collar perspective leadership can be put into the category of responsibility.

The rest of the factors mentioned briefly are salary. What is commonly known in the construction industry (especially when the projects are far away from the office) is that 'per diem allowances' are big motivators for employees.

The rest of the factors mentioned are a chance to be creative, flexible working schedules, teamwork, the people, colleagues, to be able to learn new skills as well as the fact that the work is physical, and it keeps you active were the rest of the responses.

The closest theory to 'the people' and 'colleagues' is Herzberg's two factor theory. Learning new skills is encompassed by Herzberg's motivator: "Growth". Work is physical, and it keeps you active, flexible working schedules can be put into the job characteristics theory.

**Question 51: Which 3 factors impact your motivation and job satisfaction the most?**

This part removed in public version of thesis due to confidentiality reasons.

**Which 3 factors impacting motivation and job satisfaction does the organization need to work on, in your opinion?**

This part removed in public version of thesis due to confidentiality reasons.

## **5 Discussion**

This chapter discusses the research questions of this study which were introduced in chapter 1.3. The research questions are:

- What are the key factors leading to job dissatisfaction and demotivation among employees in project organizations?
- What is the current level of job satisfaction and motivation among blue-collar employees?

To determine the key factors, it was necessary to measure the current level of job satisfaction and motivation. This question was answered in the results chapter (chapter 4.2).

A restatement of the frame of reference can be found in figure 39 below. The red factors were identified as key areas where at least some of the factors were identified, the yellow factors produced some interesting results, in the sense of being a cause of effect or job dissatisfaction.

The theories suggested that low levels of job satisfaction would lead to low levels of organizational citizenship behavior, this was however not the case. Commitment is high among employees. The collected data supported the idea that social persuasion may have a big impact on job satisfaction in our organization. Meaning that the negative attitudes of one employee can spread to other employees.

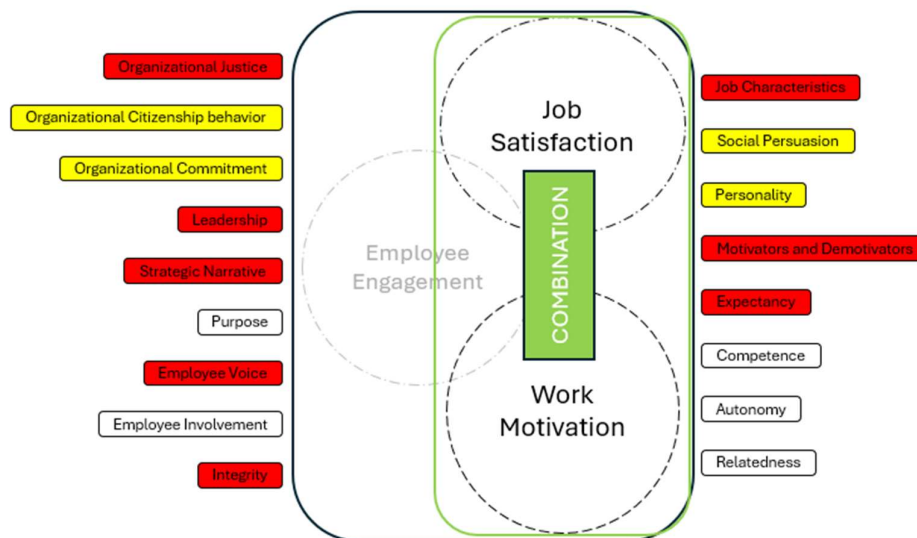


Figure 22 - Results vs frame of reference.

## 5.1 Analysis of Findings

Key factors in the context of this thesis are defined in one of the following ways:

- Factors are supported by both qualitative and quantitative data (question 51, 52)
- Factors with an equal or larger total percentage of negative responses compared to positive.
- Factors with more than 20% total negative responses.

Part of this text has been removed from the public version of the thesis due to confidentiality reasons.

### 5.1.1 Key Factors Leading to Job Dissatisfaction and Demotivation

Part of this text has been removed from the public version of the thesis due to confidentiality reasons.

Key factors from all theoretical chapters were identified. A few of these factors were to be standalone factors as mentioned in chapter 1.4 (and 2.1.2). The first key factor identified by the collected data was continuance commitment [key factor X1] (sub-component of organizational commitment). This was a stand-alone factor and would not be analyzed for any deeper meaning. Another key factor identified was normative commitment [key factor X2] (also sub-component of organizational commitment).

Organizational commitment, or the components of continuance commitment and normative commitment, as explained Meyer & Allen (1991) received some strongly mixed opinions. A Few of the respondents agreed with the respective statements listed in the survey, which would indicate that Meyer & Allen's (1991) three component conceptualization is not a significant factor in a way which would lead to demotivation and job dissatisfaction. If employees stayed at the company because they did not really want to, it would surely have a negative impact.

There is some small evidence to support that employees who have been longer with the company feel more of an obligation to stay, compared to those who have been with the company for less time (see table in chapter 4.3). The last component, affective commitment received strong positive opinions. The additional statement received overall positive

opinions, which means that the employees are, to some degree, committed to staying in the company, even for the foreseeable future. Further research would be needed to determine if staying at the organization because one feels an obligation to stay is a good or a bad thing.

More than half of the respondents are not staying at the organization because there is no better alternative (continuance commitment). This is, however, good news. If they stayed at the company because of this reason, it could mean they would not be as motivated as they could be.

The collected data shows that only parts of the aspects of the strategic narrative are fulfilled. Most of the respondents do feel a purpose and meaning at work, however, they do not know about the strategic narrative of the organization. Pratt and Ashforth (2003) stated that there should be harmony between the personal values of the employees and those of the organization. The collected data indicates that that harmony may need improvement in the current organization.

A case study of Crown Worldwide Group shows that reestablishing a purpose at work helped to reconnect the people up and down the organization and helped bring the supervisors closer together with their team. (Bridger, 2022, p.99). The current organization could try to implement a solution like this, to bridge the gap between management and blue collars. The next key factor adds further weight to the idea of the gap.

The fact that many blue-collar employees disagree with what management does in terms of leadership, communication, growth opportunities and supportive work environment further strengthens the impact it has on employee voice. This statement received more negative opinions than positive, which is concerning indeed. Company policy and administration received strong negative feedback as well. These factors are hygiene factors in nature according to Herzberg. Other identified key hygiene factors that the research confirmed are salary (mentioned earlier), supervision, and growth. Relationships with supervisors was also identified as a key factor, however, only by one respondent.

## **6 Conclusion**

Parts of this text have been removed from the public version of the thesis due to confidentiality reasons.

Overall, of the four selected themes in the theoretical review, factors that negatively impact job satisfaction and motivation surprisingly came from theories other than those of motivation and job satisfaction. It was in fact workplace phenomena and employee engagement.

Factors that could motivate and give job satisfaction for employees were also identified during the study. A few factors were identified as both positive and negative. For instance, rewards will have a negative impact on attitudes if not sufficient. Rewards can also be used to further motivate and increase job satisfaction.

Key topics selected from theories of organizational behavior, theories of employee engagement, Victor Vroom's expectancy theory and Herzberg's two-factor theory were the most relevant for the study. These identified most of the key factors leading to demotivation and job dissatisfaction. The other identified factors that were more positive in nature, and could certainly be used at a later stage

Ryan and Deci's self-determination theory was perhaps the least relevant. Intrinsic motivation is the key focus in Ryan and Deci's theories. The collected data shows that extrinsic rewards motivate a lot more than intrinsic rewards. If the research was aimed at white-collar workers, SDT could have played a bigger role.

A few main problem areas were identified. The collected data indicated that many of the identified key factors relate to bonuses and rewards, as was written in the introduction chapter.

Current levels of job satisfaction are not great. However, the data supports that it might not in fact be entirely because of factors originating from theories of motivation and job satisfaction, but rather from organizational justice, leadership and employee voice. The collected data shows that blue-collar employees had more job satisfaction in the past and exhibited more organizational citizenship behaviors.

There seems to be a division between management and blue-collar employees. Case studies (Bridger, 2022, (case study: Grown Working Group, re-establishing the purpose of the organization helped the supervisors get closer to their team), show that a good strategic narrative could help bridge the void between these working-class groups.

The blue-collar employees overall agree and have positive opinions about the statements in the questionnaire. It is, however, likely, as the collected data suggests, that negative (as well as positive) attitudes among some employees will impact the rest of the employees. This leads to the conclusion that overall positive results might not necessarily be what the organization wants, but instead that there should be as little negative responses as possible.

This conclusion is in line with that of Herzberg, F., Mausner, B. & Snyderman, B. (1967). According to Herzberg, all hygiene factors must be addressed to eliminate dissatisfaction before trying to 'increase' motivation.

Blue-collar employees are indeed very committed to the organization. A significant number of employees are not continuance committed, which is good in a way. If they were continuance committed, then they would leave the organization as soon as a "better" alternative presented itself. Currently it seems like there might be better options, but the employees are still staying at the organization because of some factor. A significant number of employees are not normatively committed, meaning they don't stay at the organization because they feel a responsibility to do so. However, equally as many employees, to various degrees, feel a responsibility to stay at the organization. Employees who have stayed for a long time at the organization are more likely to be normatively committed than those who have only been for a few years with the company.

Employees are in general to make extra efforts (OCBs) to make the organization more successful. It is however concerning that some employees have made extra efforts in the past but have stopped for some reason.

The collected data indicates that there are issues with leadership somewhere in the hierarchy, or at least some aspects of it. As mentioned in chapter 2.2.1 leadership plays a big role in the engagement of employees, and if some leadership behavior or leadership traits are under criticism, this will negatively impact engagement, which in turn will impact job satisfaction and motivation. The factor that received the most negative response was optimism of leaders. Engagement of employees is essential for success of an organization. In chapter 2.2 it was stated that there exists five so called enablers through which employees will be engaged. These enablers were leadership, strategic narrative, employee voice, integrity, and involvement. The survey data indicated that all these enablers, except for involvement, is something that the respondents "strongly" disagree with.

As mentioned in chapter 2.3.2, factors selected from information processing theory, dispositional approach and self-determination theory would be stand-alone factors. The collected data shows that the levels of job satisfaction have changed, to the negative side, for many of the employees working for the organization.

Factors partly outside of the scope of the thesis were mentioned (investing in personal development such as courses, classes), incompetence of some fellow employees, planning of work or rather, hiring incompetent personnel.

## **7 Recommended Future Work**

Job design, elements of structure, and Maslow's theories could be used for future research, as they can also impact job satisfaction and motivation.

More research is needed for the following topics:

- Why have levels of job satisfaction dropped in recent years?
- What part of management's role don't the respondents agree with?

Recommendations for the organization:

- Create a good strategic narrative in an effort to bridge the gap between blue-collar work and management.
- Leadership training
- More transparency is needed for the policies surrounding rewards
- Communication of survey results

The draft for a plan was created at the end of the thesis writing process with more recommendations.

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## Appendix A

| Survey |  |
|--------|--|
| 1      | Would you recommend the organization as an employer to a friend or an acquaintance   |
| 2      | do you regularly receive feedback from your supervisors?   |
| 3      | Does your closest supervisor clearly tell you what is expected of you?   |
| 4      | Are you ready to make extra efforts to make the organization even more successful?   |
| 5      | If necessary, do you get support from your supervisor?   |
| 6      | Does your supervisor regularly monitor your work situation?  |
| 7      | Are you proud to work for the organization?  |
| 8      | Do you know the general goals of your organization?  |
| 9      | Does your supervisor involve you in decision-making that affects you or your colleagues?   |
| 10     | Is your stress level at work generally reasonable?   |
| 11     | Do you have enough time to recover from the strain caused by work between workdays?  |
| 12     | Do you feel that your supervisors respect you?   |
| 13     | Is the work well planned in your team?   |
| 14     | Does your supervisor manage your team well?  |
| 15     | Does your team regularly monitor their own performance?  |
| 16     | Are there conflicts in your team that have a negative impact on work?  |
| 17     | Do you enjoy your work?  |
| 18     | Do you understand how the work done by your team supports the achievement of the organization's most important goals?                    |
| 19     | Do you know what you are expected to achieve in your daily work?   |
| 20     | Do you feel that your colleagues respect you?  |
| 21     | Do you get support when your workload is heavy?  |
| 22     | Are you motivated in your work?  |
| 23     | Do you know how to give each other feedback in your team?  |
| 24     | Can you influence your work situation?   |
| 25     | Is it easy to get things done in your team?  |
| 26     | Does cooperation work well in your team?   |
| 27     | Have you been the target of harassment, bullying, sexual harassment, or other discrimination in your own unit during the last 12 months? |
| 28     | Does the division of work tasks work well in your team?  |
| 29     | Do you have the necessary conditions to do a good job?   |
| 30     | Do you work towards a common goal in your team?  |
| 31     | Are you able to express your opinions freely in the team?  |

## Appendix B - Survey Questions

| <b>Part 1: Demographic Information</b>  |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Question 1.1 -<br>Age   | a) [18-25]<br>b) [26-35]<br>c) [36-50]<br>d) [50-65]                   |  |
| Question 1.2 -<br>Discipline  | a) [electrical]<br>b) [plumbing]<br>c) [other]                         |  |
| Question 1.3 -<br>Work<br>Experience.   | a) [< 3 years]<br>b) [< 5 years]<br>c) [< 10 years]<br>d) [> 10 years] |  |
| <b>Part 2: Workplace Phenomena (organizational behavior)</b>  |  |  |
| Closed-ended<br>rating [1-7]<br>1= strongly<br>disagree, very<br>dissatisfied, or<br>strongly<br>negative<br>opinion<br>4 = neutral<br>7 = completely<br>agree,<br>completely<br>satisfied,<br>highest<br>positive<br>opinion | Closed-<br>ended.  | <p><u>Question 2.1: Organizational Justice.</u></p> <p>2.1.0 The decision-making, procedures, interactions and outcomes of the organization and management are <u>fair and equally distributed</u>. (total organizational justice) (total) (part of this is distributive justice also)</p> <p><del>2.1.1 (distributive justice) How fair is what is receive for my work? (The compensation I receive for my work is fair)</del></p> <p>2.1.2 (procedural justice) How fair is the process that leaders use to make decisions? (The process that leaders use to make decisions is fair)</p> <p>2.1.3 (interactional justice) To what degree do leaders treat people with dignity, respect, and emotional support. (The leaders treat me with dignity, respect, and emotional support)</p> <p>2.1.4 (informational justice) Is the information used for decision making being shared fairly? (The information used for decision making is shared fairly)</p> |

|  |                       |  |
|--|-----------------------|--|
|  | Open-ended question   | 2.1.5 Optional: comments organizational justice  |
|  | Closed-ended.         | <p><u>Question 2.2: Organizational Commitment</u></p> <p>2.2.1 I am proud of being part of the organization.</p> <p>2.2.2 I am committed to staying in the organization for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>2.2.3 (affective commitment) I want to get more involved in the company and help it reach its goals.</p> <p>2.2.4 (continuance commitment) I am staying at the company because there is currently no better alternative.</p> <p>2.2.5 (normative commitment) I am staying at the company because I feel an obligation or a responsibility to do so.</p> |
|  | Open-ended question   | 2.2.6 Optional: comment organizational commitment  |
|  | Closed-ended question | <p><u>Question 2.3: Organizational Citizenship Behavior</u></p> <p>2.3.1 I am ready to make extra efforts to make the organization even more successful</p>  |
|  | Open-ended question.  | 2.3.2 Optional: comment organizational citizenship behavior  |

| <b>Part 3: Employee Engagement</b>  |               |   |
|---|---------------|---|
| Closed-ended rating [1-7]<br>1= strongly disagree, very dissatisfied, or strongly | Closed-ended. | <u>Question 3.1: Leadership.</u><br>I   |
|   |               | <p>A) <u>My supervisor(s) displays optimism regularly.</u></p> <p>B) <u>My supervisor(s) supports the team.</u></p> <p>C) <u>My supervisor(s) performs effectively.</u></p> <p>D) <u>My supervisor(s) displays integrity.</u></p> |

|  |                             |  |
|--|-----------------------------|--|
| <p>negative opinion<br/>4 = neutral<br/>7 = completely</p> |                             | <p>E) <u>My supervisor(s) is open, fair, and consistent.</u><br/>F) <u>My supervisor(s) handles conflicts and problems.</u><br/>G) <u>My supervisor(s) has knowledge, displays clarity, and guidance.</u></p>                                  |
| <p>agree, completely satisfied,</p>                        | <p>Open-ended question.</p> | <p>Optional: comment leadership</p>  |
| <p>highest positive opinion</p>                            | <p>Closed-ended.</p>        | <p><u>Question 3.2: Strategic Narrative.</u><br/>I am familiar with the strategic narrative of the organization.<br/>I know where the organization has come from and where it's going, its vision, goals, the reason why we do what we do.</p> |
|  | <p>Open-ended question.</p> | <p>Optional: comment Strategic Narrative</p>   |
|  | <p>Closed-ended.</p>        | <p><u>Question 3.3: Purpose.</u><br/>I feel a sense of meaning and purpose at work</p>   |
|  | <p>Open-ended question.</p> | <p>Optional: comment purpose</p>   |
|  | <p>Closed-ended.</p>        | <p><u>Question 3.4: Employee voice.</u><br/>3.4.1 My voice is heard at the organization, management listen to my thoughts and opinions,<br/>3.4.2 I am able to influence matters that affect me at work,</p>                                   |
|  | <p>Open-ended question.</p> | <p>Optional: comment employee voice</p>  |
|  | <p>Closed-ended.</p>        | <p><u>Question 3.5: Involvement</u><br/>3.5.1 I have the opportunity to get involved in the company,<br/>3.5.2 I am able apply my own ideas, expertise, and efforts toward solving problems and making decisions.</p>                          |

|  |                      |  |
|--|----------------------|--|
|  | Open-ended question. | Optional: comment involvement  |
|  | Closed-ended.        | <u>Question 3.6: Organizational Integrity.</u><br>The words of an organization match the behavior, meaning that the organization does what it says it will do. The organization “ <i>practice what you preach.</i> ” |
|  | Open-ended question. | Optional: organizational integrity   |

| <b>Part 4: Development of Job Satisfaction</b>  |               |  |
|---|---------------|--|
| Closed-ended rating [1-7]<br>1= strongly disagree, very dissatisfied, or strongly negative opinion<br>4 = neutral<br>7 = completely agree, completely satisfied, highest positive opinion | Closed-ended. | <u>Question 4.1: Skill variety.</u><br><br>My work tasks are challenging requiring me to use a range of range of different skills and abilities                      |
|   |               | <u>Question 4.2: Task identity.</u><br><br>I am able to do a job/stay at a project from start to finish and to see a visible outcome of my work                      |
|   |               | <u>Question 4.3: Task Significance.</u><br><br>I perceive my work tasks to be important and significant  |
|   |               | <u>Question 4.4: Autonomy.</u><br><br>I am able to be independent in my work. I get to decide what job gets done and how the job gets done                           |
|   |               | <u>Question 4.5: Feedback from the job.</u><br><br>I receive feedback from my work including clear and direct information about the effectiveness of my performance. |
|   |               | <u>Question 4.6: Social information processing.</u><br><br>I am influenced by what my team members say and do at work.   |
|   |               | <u>Question 4.7: job satisfaction and personality.</u>   |

|  |             |  |
|--|-------------|--|
|  |             | My levels of job satisfaction has more or less been the same since I started working here                          |
|  |             | <u>Self efficacy: I believe in my ability to complete a task and/or a achieve a goal.</u>                          |
|  |             | Maybe 1 more question here   |
|  | Open ended. | <u>Question 4.8: Comments to questions 4.1-4.7</u><br><br>Feel free to comment your answer to the questions above. |

| Part 5: Motivation  |               |   |
|---|---------------|---|
| Closed-ended rating [1-7]<br>1= strongly disagree, very dissatisfied, or strongly negative opinion<br>4 = neutral<br>7 = completely agree, completely satisfied, highest positive opinion | Closed-ended. | <u>Question 5.1: Competence.</u><br>I have the knowledge, skills and experience needed to do my job effectively   |
|   |               | <u>Question 5.2: Responsibility.</u><br>I take responsibility/have the opportunity to take responsibility for my work.  |
|   |               | <u>Question 5.3: Achievement.</u><br>I feel motivated and satisfied after the successful completion of a job, after having solved a problem, and after seeing the results of my work.                                       |
|   |               | <u>Question 5.4: Recognition</u><br>I am recognized for my efforts, work, and ideas   |
|   |               | <u>Question 5.5: Growth</u><br>I have the possibility to grow within the organization   |
|   |               | <u>Question 5.6: Daily Tasks/work itself.</u><br>I enjoy my Daily Tasks and work itself   |
|   |               | <u>Question 5.7: Management's roles (related to company policy and administration)</u><br>I agree with the doings of the management (e.g. leadership, communication, opportunities for growth, supportive work environment) |

|  |             |   |
|--|-------------|---|
|  |             | <p><u>Question 5.8: Company policy and administration</u><br/>Organization and management policies and guidelines are clear.</p>  |
|  |             | <p><u>Question 5.9: Supervision</u><br/>My supervisor is nagging and critical to everything</p>   |
|  |             | <p><u>Question 5.10: Relationship with colleagues.</u><br/>I have a good relationship with my colleagues.</p>   |
|  |             | <p><u>Question 5.11: Relationship with supervisor</u><br/>The working relationship with my supervisor is good (interactions, discussion during work and informal break times)</p> |
|  |             | <p><u>Question 5.12: Work conditions</u><br/>I have access to the right tools, facilities, work accommodation.</p>  |
|  |             | <p><u>Question 5.14: Effort-Performance</u><br/>My efforts at work are recognized as “performance” by the organization.</p>   |
|  |             | <p><u>Question 5.15: Performance-Reward</u><br/>I believe that my efforts (and performance) will lead to rewards.</p>   |
|  |             | <p><u>Question 5.16: Rewards-Personal Goals</u><br/>The potential rewards are appealing enough for me (urakkapohja)</p>   |
|  |             | <p><u>Question 5.17: Salary</u><br/>I am satisfied with my current salary</p>   |
|  | Open ended. | <p><u>Question 5.18: Comments to questions 5.1-5.17</u><br/><br/>Feel free to explain the reason for the ratings behind the answers.</p>  |

**Part 6: Additional Open-ended questions**

|  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
|  | What do you like most about your job? |
|--|---------------------------------------|

|  |            |   |
|--|------------|---|
|  | Open-ended | Which 3 factors affects, according to you, motivation, and job satisfaction the most?                           |
|  |            | Which 3 factors affecting motivation and job satisfaction do the organization need to work on, in your opinion? |
|  |            | Name 3 things you like most about your job  |
|  |            | Name 3 things you dislike most about your job   |

## Appendix C – 7-item Likert Scale

Rating scale (1-7)

1. Strongly disagree, very dissatisfied, or strongly negative opinion. (täysin eri mieltä, hyvin tyyvymätön, vahvasti negatiivinen mielipide)
2. Disagree, dissatisfied, or negative opinion. (eri mieltä, tyytymätön, negatiivinen mielipide)
3. Somewhat disagree or slightly dissatisfied. (jokseenkin eri mieltä, jokseenkin tyytymätön)
4. Neutral or neither agree nor disagree. (neutraali, ei sama eikä eri mieltä)
5. Somewhat agree or slightly satisfied. (jokseenkin samaa mieltä, jokseenkin tyytyväinen)
6. Agree, satisfied, or have a positive opinion. (samaa mieltä, tyytyväinen, positiivinen mielipide)
7. Strongly agree, very satisfied, or strongly positive opinion. (täysin samaa mieltä, hyvin tyytyväinen, vahvasti positiivinen mielipide)