

The Continuum of the Performance Management Process of Au- rinkomatkat

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<p>This thesis was conducted by two international tourism degree program students of HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences (UAS) Miia Joro and Sade Lehtonen. The commissioner of the thesis was Aurinkomatkat. The aim of the thesis was to provide Aurinkomatkat information about the effectiveness of their performance management process. They wanted to establish a continuum for their performance management process for the employees working abroad.</p> <p>The objective of this thesis was to find out whether the employees of Aurinkomatkat considered that there was a continuum in their performance management process. Subsequent objective was to find out the best practices to improve the current performance management process.</p> <p>A mixed methods research design was used since the data was collected quantitatively and the answers to the questionnaire were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. A questionnaire was selected as the data collection method due to the amount of population and its distribute nature. The questionnaires to the employees working abroad were sent out on the 14th of March, and by the 7th of April, 18 responses had been received. That was a total of 16.4 percent of the amount of employees working in destinations outside of Finland. From the 18 respondents, eight were destination managers and ten were guides.</p> <p>The results showed that there is still room for improvement in the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat. The areas that needed the most improvement were cross-cultural issues, reward targets and providing feedback. Based on the results of the questionnaire, recommendations for improvement were gathered, and the parts that needed improvement were pointed out.</p>	
<p>Keywords Performance Management, Performance Management Process, Working Abroad, Motivation</p>	

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1 Introduction

Nowadays the importance of performance management is increasingly brought up by businesses. Performance management is not a specific technique or instrument; it is a continuous process that links to organizational objectives. Planning, acting, monitoring, and reviewing are the parts that form the performance management process.

(Armstrong & Baron 2005, 13.) The concept of individual performance management was not entirely recognized by organizations until the late 1980s. Afterwards, organizations have acknowledged that by improving the individuals' performance, the performance of the whole organization will improve. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 1-2.) In this thesis, the term performance management refers to ongoing training and development of individuals and teams.

The aim of this thesis is to provide Oy Aurinkomatkat - Suntours Ltd Ab, which will be later only referred to as Aurinkomatkat, information about the effectiveness of their performance management process. In addition, recommendations for improvement are gathered. The commissioner of this thesis, Aurinkomatkat, wants to establish a continuum for their performance management process for the employees working abroad. The employees working abroad consist of destination managers and guides. The destination managers and guides switch destinations several times a year and therefore the work group varies frequently. Nevertheless, all the employees of Aurinkomatkat are a part of the Finnish social security system. The fact that the employees switch from one destination to another several times a year brings additional factors to be considered in the performance management process. In this thesis, the forementioned will be taken into consideration when researching the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat.

The objective of this thesis is to find out whether the employees consider that there is a continuum in their performance management process. Subsequent objective is to find out the best practices to improve the current performance management process of Aurinkomatkat. The main and the sub research problems can be stated as the following questions:

- 1) Is there a continuum in the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat in the opinion of the employees working abroad?
- 2) How to develop a continuum for the performance management process?

Due to the initiative of Aurinkomatkat, this thesis was scoped to research the performance management process of the employees working abroad, leaving out the employees working in Finland. Approximately 40 percent of the employees of Aurinkomatkat are working in destinations outside of Finland (Aurinkomatkat 2014b). All together there are 110 destination managers and guides working abroad who were selected as the target group due to the challenges a mobile working environment causes for the performance management process. All of the employees working in destinations outside of Finland in the period of 14.03.2014-07.04.2014 were qualified to participate in this research. The participants were not limited to permanent or temporary employees.

Secondary data can be defined as the data that already exists and primary data as the new data that the researcher collects (Saunders et al. 2012, 304). When writing this thesis, both primary and secondary data were used. The secondary data was gathered by looking through earlier studies concerning the thesis topic. These consisted of books, articles, internet sources, and statements and materials from the contact people of Aurinkomatkat. By doing this, a broader understanding of the research problem was enabled. The primary data was collected through survey research, and a questionnaire was selected as the data collection method. In this thesis, a mixed methods research design was used since the data was collected quantitatively and the answers to the questionnaire were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The questionnaires to the employees working abroad were sent out on the 14th of March. The response time was from 14th of March to 30th of March. Later, the response time was extended until the 6th of April due to lack of responses. By the 6th of April, 17 responses had been received. An additional response was collected on the 7th of April, which made the total number of respondents 18. That was a total of 16.4 percent of the amount of employees working in destinations outside of Finland. From the 18 respondents, eight were destination managers and ten were guides.

The report structure of this thesis follows the traditional report model, also known as IMRD. The term IMRD comes from the words introduction, methods, results, and discussion. The report model presents the fore mentioned topics one at a time. (Vuorijärvi & Boedeker 2006, 177.) This thesis consists of eight chapters. First, chapter two will provide background information on Finnair Group and introduce the commissioning party, Aurinkomatkat. The next two chapters, chapter three and four, present the theoretical framework of the thesis. Chapter three familiarizes the reader with the concept of performance management, performance management theories, employee motivation, working abroad, and cultural differences. This is followed by chapter four describing the performance management process, the role of a line manager, and challenges related to the performance management process. Next, research methodology will be presented in chapter five. After the research methodology, data analysis and findings are presented in chapter six. Last, discussion and conclusion are provided in chapters seven and eight.

2 Background

This chapter gives an overview of Finnair Group and presents the commissioner of the thesis, Aurinkomatkat. Aurinkomatkat is a part of Finnair Group and therefore Finnair Group is briefly introduced as well.

2.1 Finnair Group

Finnair was founded in 1923, and it is one of the oldest airlines in the world. In 2013 Finnair celebrated its 90th year in operation. (Finnair 2014c.) Finnair flies to over 70 destinations, which include destinations in Finland, Asia, North-America, and Europe (Finnair 2014a). Finnair Group's corporate areas consist of airline business, aviation services, and travel services. The subsidiaries of Finnair Group operate in the corporate areas that support airline services. There are approximately 6000 employees working for Finnair Group. The Finnish government owns 55.8 percent of Finnair Group's shares. The rest of the shares are owned by public bodies, financial institutions, private businesses and households. (Finnair 2014b.) Furthermore, Finnair aims to be the leading airline in the Nordic countries and the most preferred option in the Asian traffic. In the traffic between Asia and Europe, Finnair aims to be amongst the three leading operators. Finnair's success factors comprise of quality, freshness, and creativity. Additionally, Finnair is a strong Finnish brand with various positive associations. (Finnair 2014d.)

Finnair's competitive strategy is based on high-quality service, position as one of the most accurate operators, and its traffic between Asia and Europe. Finnair offers the shortest, the most environmentally friendly, and the most pleasant connections to the large hubs in Asia. In the future, Finnair will increase the connections to Europe, the amount of Asian destinations, and the regularity of flights. Finnair Group reveres a professional, motivated, and committed workforce. Additionally, job satisfaction and staff capabilities are highly promoted in a changing work environment. The personnel strategy of Finnair is supported by reward based management. Finnair takes the environment into consideration in all of its actions, and it identifies the role of a responsible partner in the society. (Finnair 2014d.)

2.2 Oy Aurinkomatkat – Suntours Ltd Ab

Aurinkomatkat is a part of the travel services of Finnair Group. In addition, the fore mentioned corporate area includes Aurinkomatkat's subsidiary operating in Estonia, Finland Travel Bureau (FTB), FTB's subsidiary Estravel operating in the Baltic countries, and Amadeus Finland. (Finnair 2014f.) Furthermore, Aurinkomatkat is one of the leading Finnish tour operators, and it has been operating in Finland since 1963. Last year it celebrated its 50th year in operation. The services provided by Aurinkomatkat are for example holiday packages, flights, hotels, theme travels, cruises, active holidays, group travels and tailor made trips. In the year 2013, Aurinkomatkat employed roughly 260 people (Aurinkomatkat 2014b.) In the winter season 2013-2014, 110 employees worked in destinations abroad (Rautavaara, K. 12.12.2013). In the year 2013, Aurinkomatkat had approximately 300 000 clients and the turnover of 221 million euros (Aurinkomatkat 2014b).

The amount of destinations offered by Aurinkomatkat varies seasonally. In the winter season 2013-2014 it had 23 destinations and in the summer season 2014 it will have 28 destinations to travel to. Every destination does not always have a destination manager of its own; some destinations are combined to be led by one destination manager. In the winter season 2013-2014 Aurinkomatkat had 19 destination managers and in the summer season 2014 it will have 23 destination managers. The destinations which do not have a destination manager of their own, are typically smaller destinations located close to each other. These destinations have a shared destination manager. (Rautavaara, K. 03.02.2014.) The employees who are qualified to work as destination managers may choose to change their job description seasonally between a guide and a destination manager (Rautavaara, K. 12.03.2014). In addition to the destinations managers, there are several guides working in the destinations. Guides commonly work in two to three destinations a year. They have a main destination for both summer and winter seasons. Furthermore, they may help to set up or close down an additional destination. (Rautavaara, K. 03.02.2014.)

Aurinkomatkat believes that their personnel are their key to success. Their management culture reflects on setting goals, appraising performance, providing feedback and creating development plans. It considers that performance management acts as the builder of mutual trust and commitment. In addition, individuals' goals are targeted to meet the strategic objectives of the organization. (Aurinkomatkat 2013, 3-4.) However, there has not been done any previous research about the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat due to the fact that performance management is a rather new concept in Finnair Group (Rautavaara, K. 03.02.2014).

2.3 The Role of a Guide and a Destination Manager

The job descriptions are the same in each destination, but the size of the destination affects the time consumed with a particular task. The size of a destination is determined by the amount of clients which defines the amount of employees working in a certain destination. A destination manager is always responsible for running the destination. However, the role changes when running a team of two or a team of 15. (Vuori-Ramirez, K. 16.04.2014.)

The job description of a destination manager comprises of managing the employees in a destination, checking the service quality, managing the supplier relationships, and accounting. The destination manager is responsible for all the decisions made in the destination and for sharing the destination's objectives to the team. The destination manager carries out the performance management process of the guides and ensures the team works properly. Additionally, the destination manager is in charge of the operational management of the destination including cost efficient negotiations of the destination services, resourcing, networking, organizing meetings, and public relations. Furthermore, the destination manager is in charge of monitoring and developing the additional sales, and reviewing the service process and customer feedback. (Vuori-Ramirez, K. 16.04.2014.)

Aurinkomatkat provides guide services to the customers who purchase holiday packages. Guide services are not included if only flights are purchased. (Aurinkomatkat 2014a.) The role of a guide is to represent Aurinkomatkat in the destinations. The

guides have to be at least 23 years old, and they have to have a positive attitude towards life and work. In addition, they need to be flexible, fluent in Finnish and English, and they need to be able to handle pressure well. (Aurinkomatkat 2014c.) The job description of a guide includes airport transfers, welcome ceremonies, tours, and handling all unexpected issues (Vuori-Ramirez, K. 16.04.2014).

The characteristics of the job as a guide have changed over the 50 years that Aurinkomatkat has been operating. The amount of interaction between the customers and the guides has decreased. That is due to the customers being more independent and demanding, having better language skills, and travelling more. Consequently, the assistance of a guide is not needed as much as before. Nowadays, the role of a guide is to be an information bank with good cultural knowledge of a destination, about its events, and recommendable activities. Most of the guides are full time employees of Aurinkomatkat and they work approximately a total of four years in different destinations. Moreover, a large amount of employees working in the headquarters of Aurinkomatkat are former guides. (Selänniemi 2003, 84-86.)

3 Performance Management

The theoretical framework of this thesis is divided into two chapters. This chapter presents the concept of performance management including different performance management and employee motivation theories. Additionally, the factors that have to be taken into consideration when working abroad and theory concerning cultural differences are presented.

As described in the introduction of this thesis, the concept of performance management started to become more recognized in the 1980s. In the early 1990s, the Institute of Personnel Management conducted a research which demonstrated that there was still confusion about what the term performance management meant. Some interpreted the term as an appraisal process, for others it was a synonym for performance-related pay. Correspondingly, some people understood it as a concept of training and development. In the second research conducted by the Institute of Personnel Management in 1997, there was a more joint understanding about the term performance management. However, it was clearly divided into two schools of thought: those who focused on pay and to those who saw it linked to development. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 1-2.)

Nowadays, it is often agreed that performance management is a natural process of management and that appropriate management of teams and individuals leads to accomplishment of organizational goals (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 2). Hendry et al (1997, in Armstrong & Baron 2005, 2) describe performance management as a systematic approach in which organizational goals can be met by increasing the levels of individual and team performance. Furthermore, Walters (1995 in Armstrong & Baron 2005, 2) comprehends that in order to get the employees to work sufficiently and towards the needs of the organization, they need to receive direction and support from the organization.

In performance management, a broader picture of the organization has to be understood in order for it to function sufficiently. The individual's, team's, and organiza-

tion's objectives, strategies, and development necessities need to be allied. Moreover, performance management needs to take interest in improving itself in order to be effective in the individual, team, and organizational levels. (Armstrong & Baron 1998, 7-8.) The aim of performance management is to get individuals and teams to do their best in meeting the expectations set for them. Thus, these expectations need to be comprehended and formulated cooperatively between the management and the individuals. The capability of meeting the expectations is impacted by the level of support, processes, systems, and resources offered by the organization. (Armstrong & Baron 1998, 51.) As previously stated, in this thesis the term performance management refers to ongoing training and development of individuals and teams.

3.1 Performance Management Theories

There are several theories that link to performance management. Expectancy theory, goal setting theory, and the AMO (ability, motivation, and opportunity) framework are the most relevant for this thesis since they address the key issues of motivating people to perform better. In addition, psychological contract and attribution theory have importance to the performance management process. (Crawley, Swailes & Walsh 2013, 171.)

Expectancy theory is aimed towards work motivation, and it is especially useful in the management of performance and reward. Expectancy theory considers that people are motivated to work towards goals which they consider achievable and when the rewards offered are valued. It suggests that work behavior is determined by the expectations individuals have of their own competences, the effort they are ready to put in, and the rewards offered. These rewards may be for example money or status, or just a sense of challenge or interest. The non-concrete rewards lead to pride and sense of personal achievement. (Crawley et al. 2013, 171; Hutchinson 2013, 62.) Moreover, goal setting theory has some similarities with the expectancy theory, and it is one of the most dominant theories on work motivation (Hutchinson 2013, 65). Goal setting theory suggests that people are motivated when having challenging but achievable goals. In addition, these goals need to be specific. An important part of the theory is knowledge of re-

sults. Additionally, motivation is linked to our sense of selves, competencies, values, and beliefs. (Crawley et al. 2013, 171.)

Boxall and Purcell point out that in the AMO framework, the letters A, M, and O come from the words ability, motivation, and opportunity. The AMO framework suggests that if an organization wants their employees to work efficiently, an employee must have ability, sufficient knowledge, and skills for the job. The employee must be motivated to perform well on the job, have interest towards the job, and suitable incentives to carry out the tasks. Finally, the employee must have the opportunity to perform well. To enable good performance, the social context, work structure, technology, and tools must support the employee. (Crawley et al. 2013, 171.) The AMO framework is supportive when deciding which parts of the human resource policies should be developed. The ability of the workforce can be ensured by recruiting capable employees, and by training and developing. The motivation can be influenced by extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, performance reviews, feedback, career development, employment security, and work-life balance. Employee motivation is further described in the next chapter of this thesis. Opportunity can be developed by contribution initiatives, autonomy, communication, job design, and job rotation. (Hutchinson 2013, 10.)

As seen in Figure 1 below, the Applebaum et al's model of performance, employee performance is improved by encouraging employees to positive discretionary effort. If any of the key components, A, M, or O, are missing, discretionary effort may not be achieved. Discretionary effort refers to the level of effort a person is willing to put in, and therefore a lot higher than the effort required. For example, if an employee has the ability, skills, and motivation to perform well, but is not empowered to make decisions and is restricted by the job description, performance is likely to be reserved. Positive discretionary effort leads to good organizational performance. (Hutchinson 2013, 10-11.)

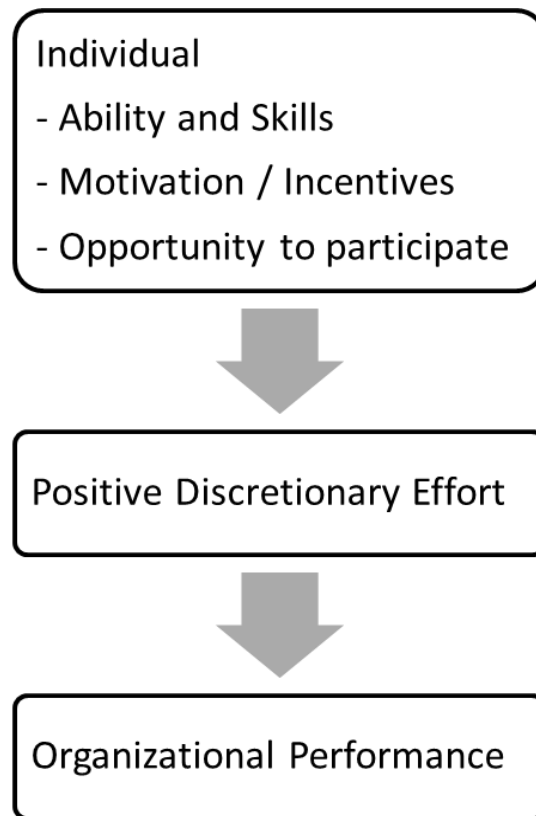


Figure 1. The AMO Model of Performance (Adapted from Hutchinson 2013, 11)

Schein (1978, in Crawley et al. 2013, 171) describes the psychological contract as the expectations between an individual employee, and the organization. It is formed when an employee is hired and given expectations about the organization. The employee's motivation to perform well is determined by how well the employer meets the expectations of the employee. The expectations include work conditions, praise, rewards, and promotion. This is especially relevant to an expatriate employee, who may find differences in between the headquarter managers and the subsidiary supervisors. (Crawley et al. 2013, 171.)

Attribution theory considers how far people feel to be responsible for their own actions, and what it causes to external events. In this matter, there are substantial differences between national cultures. (Crawley et al. 2013, 171.) Chiang and Birtch describe that employees from different countries see the results of their performance at work differently. In the USA or in the UK, which are more individualistic societies, performance at work is mostly recognized by the employee's own actions, not to actions of others. However, in the more collectivist cultures such as cultures in Asia, performance

may be recognized to external factors, or even luck or destiny, rather than to individual's features. (Crawley et al. 2013, 171-172.) Therefore, performance management in other cultures may be complex, and requires an understanding of the specific culture when doing the performance appraisals. (Crawley et al. 2013, 172.)

3.2 Employee Motivation

As discussed above, motivation has been extensively researched. Therefore, it can be defined in diverse ways through different theories. Furthermore, it is an important part of employee performance, and as seen in the AMO theory earlier, it is a contributor to positive discretionary effort. Yet, according to the AMO theory, performance can be influenced by two other components as well, the ability and the opportunity to perform well. (Hutchinson 2013, 49.)

Motivation is hard to measure due to its intangible nature. Additionally, different people can have different motivators. Motivation can be seen as a set of pull and push factors which make people act in the ways they do. Both external and internal factors can affect individual's motivation. The external factors may include rewards and the nature of work performed. Alternatively, internal factors consist of individual's needs and motives. In addition, there are three features of action in which motivation can result: what an individual is trying to do, how hard an individual is trying, and how long an individual goes on trying. (Hutchinson 2013, 50-51.)

It is important to highlight that while money is a motivator for many people, so are the others aspects including gained appreciation, having responsibilities, career opportunities, and achieving a sense of accomplishment (Hutchinson 2013, 70). Extrinsic and intrinsic motivators are often seen as the two wide topics of motivation. Extrinsic motivation comprises of tangible benefits which are provided by others. These include pay, promotion, careers, pensions, and healthcare provision. Intrinsic motivation originates from the assumption of getting psychological rewards. These may include feelings of self-esteem, respect, achievement, and recognition. Nowadays, there is recognition of a total reward process, in which workers can be motivated by a combination of

the fore mentioned topics. This concept highlights that it is important to consider rewards in all of its facets. (Hutchinson 2013, 51; Armstrong & Baron 2005, 103.)

3.3 Working Abroad

Multinational companies often send their employees overseas for international assignments. The ability to adjust is important in terms of the success or failure of the assignment. The adjustment is multidimensional including psychological wellbeing, adjustment to the work conditions, and adjustment to interacting with the people in the host country. The adjustment depends on the origin of the employee, the host country, the cultural distance between the two cultures, organizational aspects, work dynamics, and personality factors. (Crawley et al. 2013, 89.) High-quality management is important for both domestic and international organizations. However, the international organizations critically need good managers in order for the quality of the employees to remain constant throughout the organization. The recent technological developments have made it easier for the managers not to be located at the same place as the employees. (Deresky 2006, 355.)

There are various aspects which should be taken into consideration when sending people to work abroad. An employee should be taught to be aware of cross-cultural issues and how to live and work in another culture. Moreover, if needed, language training should be provided. During the employment, an employee who is working abroad should be able to receive support on the fore mentioned cross-cultural issues. The support given during the employment abroad aims to motivate the employee and decrease the stress levels of the employee. (Andrews & Mead 2009, 366-369.)

Culture shock is a state in which a person is affected by new cultural experiences. It is typically linked to result in frustration, homesickness, depression, and resentment towards a new culture. Nevertheless, there are ways to overcome culture shock by understanding it, and being familiar with its symptoms. Additionally, an individual should network with the locals and the local culture, and understand the behavior of the local culture and locals in order to avoid stressful situations. After getting used to new cul-

tures, different people develop their own systems in order to cope with the culture shock. (Andrews & Mead 2009, 371-372.)

A reverse culture shock can occur after a long-term period abroad. The repatriate has to get used to the differences between the country of origin and the country one returns from. An organization can help to overcome these issues by mentoring the employee of returning home, introducing the repatriate to others who are in the same situation, and debriefing the manager about the working period abroad. This debriefing gives the employee an opportunity to tell the manager about the experience and share valuable aspects of it to the organization. In addition, it helps the employee to overcome a feeling of alienation, and it validates that their experience is appreciated by the company. (Andrews & Mead 2009, 372-373.)

3.4 Cultural Differences

The societal culture reflects to the culture of a society which includes joint attitudes, codes of conduct, and expectations. A person is not born with a culture, rather born into it. Through time, cultures develop due to the changes in the external and internal environments. The societal culture is typically understood as the culture of a certain region or nation. Instead, organizational culture comprises of the joint expectations, standards, and goals within an organization. (Deresky 2011, 106-107.) A cultural profile gives the basis for a manager to understand different people from diverse cultural backgrounds; nevertheless a person should be treated as an individual. The differences between different cultures come from the shared values among dissimilar groups of people. The term value can be explained as how people in a society comprehend right and wrong. (Deresky 2011, 109.)

In Hofstede's research four value dimensions are presented. The four value dimensions are power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity. These dimensions can be demonstrated through scales which illustrate how a specific country places within these dimensions. (Crawley et al. 2013, 79.) A more recent study about cultural dimensions has been done by GLOBE Project team, and unlike in Hofstede's research, they identified nine value dimensions. The nine value dimensions the

GLOBE Project team identified are assertiveness, future orientation, performance orientation, human orientation, gender differentiation, uncertainty avoidance, power distance, institutional collectivism versus individualism, and in-group collectivism. Some of these dimensions are similar to the ones previously identified by Hofstede. (Deresky 2006, 92.) In addition, Fons Trompenaars has researched value dimensions (Deresky 2006, 96). For this thesis, the Hofstede's research on value dimensions was selected to be presented because it was the pioneer on the value dimensions researches, and it gives a clear overall picture of the researched value dimensions.

Hofstede describes power distance as how a society accepts uneven dissemination of power in institutions. Power distance can be defined through high power distance and low power distance. In high power distance, an employee of an organization understands the authority of the superior through chain of command. Therefore, in high power distance it is common to have autocratic leadership. Some examples of countries with high power distance include Malaysia and Mexico. Instead, low power distance countries comprise of for example Denmark and Austria. In low power distance countries subordinates and superiors are cooperative and equal in power. (Deresky 2011, 111-112.) In high power distance people can be motivated by the relationships between the subordinates and the superiors. On the other hand, in low power distance people are motivated by team work and the relationships among peers. (Deresky 2011, 395.)

Hofstede defines uncertainty avoidance as how people in a certain society feel threatened by uncertain circumstances. If a country has a high level of uncertainty avoidance, strict laws and procedures are used to guide their citizens. In an organizational level this can be seen as the formality in rules and procedures. In addition, it is typical to have a lifetime lasting employment, and for managers to have a tendency for low-risk decisions. The countries with high level of uncertainty avoidance include for example Japan and Greece. Alternatively, countries with low uncertainty avoidance include for example Denmark and Great Britain. In low uncertainty avoidance protests are accepted, and organizational actions are less controlled and less formal compared to high level of uncertainty avoidance countries. Moreover, in low uncertainty avoidance, managers are

willing to take higher risks, and it is typical to switch jobs. (Deresky 2011, 112-113.) In terms of motivation, it is suggested that people in low uncertainty avoidance might be motivated by risky opportunities and fast advancement in their career while people in high uncertainty avoidance appreciate the job security (Deresky 2011, 395).

Hofstede describes the trend of how people in a society look after themselves and their close family members as individualism. If a country has high individualism, such as the United States or Australia, democracy, individual initiative, and individual achievement are highly valued. On the other hand, if a country has low individualism, the country is commonly linked with collectivism. (Deresky 2011, 113.) In low individualism, people can be seen to be motivated through group goals and support, while in high individualism people are suggested to be motivated through advancement and autonomy (Deresky 2011, 396).

In the fourth value dimension, masculinity, Hofstede describes the values within a society. If a country is high in masculinity, it encompasses materialism, confidence, and lack of concern for others. On the other hand, if a country is low in masculinity, it tends to have more feminine features such as concern of relationships, concern for others, and concern for quality of life. High masculinity countries include Japan and Austria. In contrast, low masculinity countries include for example Switzerland. In low masculinity countries, more women are in high positions, and fewer conflicts and job stress occur. In low masculinity countries, people are suggested to be motivated through flexible roles and networks. Instead, in high masculinity, people are content with the traditional work and its roles. (Deresky 2011, 396.)

Later, Hofstede developed a fifth value dimension, a long-term short-term dimension. In long term orientation societies, such as the Asian countries, the aim is in long-term goals, sometimes in the expense of short-term profits. Instead, in countries with short-term orientation, such as the United States and Canada, short-term results are valued and the employees are assessed according to those short-term goals. (Deresky 2011, 114-115.)

It is important to understand the cultural differences among the country of origin and the country where one is working. The cultural differences are important to understand in order for the guides and the destination managers to succeed in their job abroad. Next, an example of the cultural differences is presented. The countries Finland, Thailand, and Spain were chosen for the example because Thailand and Spain are both destinations of Aurinkomatkat, and Finland is the country of origin of the employees. Through this example, some of the key features of each society can be interpreted.

As seen in figure 2 below, Finland can be perceived as low in power distance which means that in Finland hierarchy is only for convenience, equal rights are enforced, and attitude towards managers is informal and on first name basis (The Hofstede Centre 2014a). In contrast, Spain and Thailand can be perceived as high in power distance, as attitude towards management is formal and information flow is hierarchical (The Hofstede Centre 2014b; The Hofstede Centre 2014c).

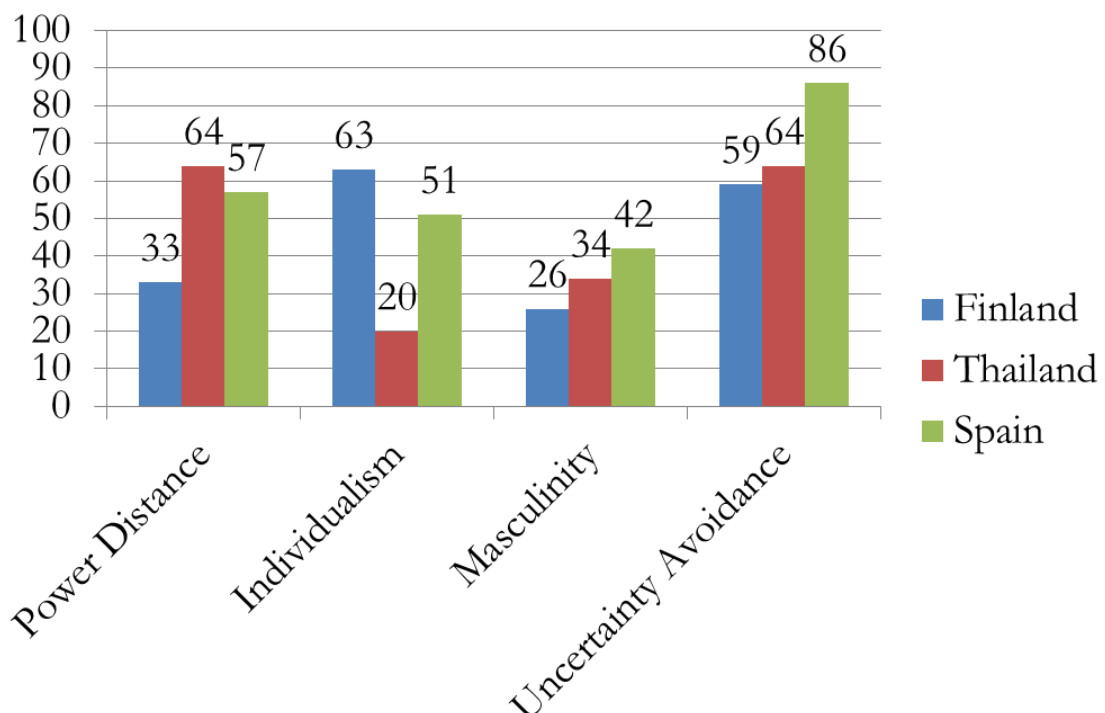


Figure 2. Finland in comparison with Thailand and Spain (Adapted from The Hofstede Centre 2014a)

In addition, as seen in figure 2, Finland can be seen as an individualistic society which means that individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their close family members, and hiring and promotion situations are based on merit only (The Hofstede Centre 2014a). In comparison, Thailand is low in individualism, which means that Thailand is a collectivistic society with people taking responsibility for the family, extended family, and extended relationships (The Hofstede Centre 2014c). In addition, when Spain is compared to most of the European countries, it is collectivistic, but when it is compared to other countries in the world, it is noticeably individualistic (The Hofstede Centre 2014b).

As seen in figure 2, Finland scores low in masculinity which makes Finland a feminine society and involvement in decision making and wellbeing are highly valued (The Hofstede Centre 2014a). Thailand is classified as a feminine society as well, and this can be seen in less competitiveness as in countries with high masculinity (The Hofstede Centre 2014c). Spain scores a little higher in masculinity than Thailand, and therefore has features of both masculine and feminine societies, still having the focus on feminine features (The Hofstede Centre 2014b). Additionally, Finland is a society of rather high uncertainty avoidance with emotional need for rules, punctuality, need to be busy and hardworking, and importance of security in individual motivation (The Hofstede Centre 2014a). As in Finland, strict rules and policies are used to exclude the uncertainty in Thailand as well (The Hofstede Centre 2014c). In addition, Spain is a country of high uncertainty avoidance with rules for everything (The Hofstede Centre 2014b).

4 Performance Management Process

As illustrated in figure 3 below, performance management process can be described as a continuous cycle. The process can be divided into four parts: plan, act, monitor and review. First, in the planning part, the objectives and competence requirements will be agreed on. Second, in the acting part, the work required to accomplish the objectives will be done. Next, in the monitoring part, the progress towards achieving the objectives will be checked on. Last, in the review part, a review meeting will be held in order to assess progress and achievements, and to identify the development needs. After the needs for improvement have been identified, the cycle will start again from the planning part. All of these parts include various tools which will be demonstrated later on in this chapter. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 13-14.)

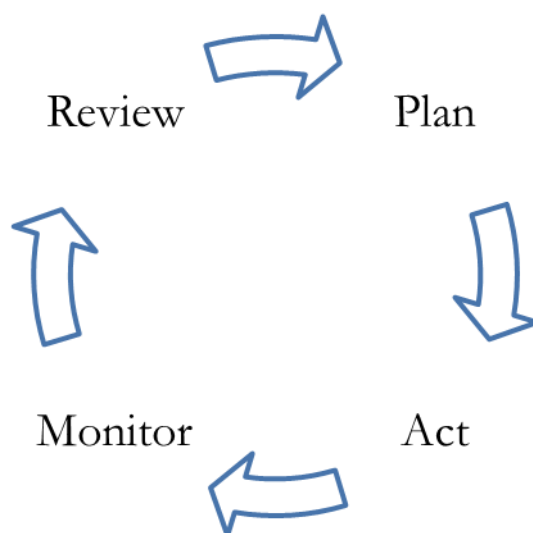


Figure 3. The performance management cycle (Adapted from Armstrong & Baron 2005, 13)

The performance management processes in individual, team, and organizational levels are similar to each other. Nevertheless, the tools and techniques used in these processes somewhat differ. In each of these levels the goal is to assess the current level of performance and compare it to the objectives. (Foot & Hook 2011, 252-253.) The results of well executed performance management process benefit organizational, managerial, and individual levels. In the organizational level, a well-organized performance management process can lead to aligned objectives amongst individual, team and organiza-

tional levels, enriched performance, motivated workforce, increased level of commitment towards the organization, enhanced development and training procedures, and reinforced core values of the organization. Moreover, it can provide the foundation for a learning organization and for career planning. (Armstrong & Baron 1998, 81-82.)

For the managerial level, a well implemented performance management process can provide the foundation for performance and behavioral expectations. It contributes to teambuilding, motivation and leadership practices, and it can enhance performance in the individual and team levels. Moreover, a well-executed performance management process provides recognition and opportunity for development. Additionally, it can help to support the underperformers, and it can be used as a coaching tool as development for individuals. In the individual level, a well fulfilled performance management process can lead to understanding of one's roles and objectives. Additionally, support and reassurance from managers to individuals, and the opportunity to be involved in the process of communicating objectives and plans for improvement can be reached. (Armstrong & Baron 1998, 82.)

Team performance management process includes similar steps as individual performance management process. These are such as agreeing on objectives, formulating plans for objectives, monitoring progress, reviewing and assessing achievement, and redefining objectives and plans. The objective is to give the teams a full amount of responsibility to accomplish all activities. Setting team objectives is similar to setting individual objectives. They will be made according to an analysis of the purpose of the team and its responsibilities for attaining results. The team should agree on the targets and aims of performance in cooperation. These can include roles of each team member. Team performance review meetings assess the feedback and control information of their achievements against specified objectives. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 122-123.)

4.1 Plan

The first part of the performance management cycle is performance planning. The tools of performance planning comprise of setting the direction, completing perfor-

mance agreements, and agreeing on personal development plans. It has the emphasis on how the employees can achieve their full potential. In addition, it motivates by providing individuals the opportunity to perform and develop by recognizing their own achievements. In order to set the direction, a plan should be made to what an employee is anticipated to do and know. The plan should be made in accordance to the desired results and the needed improvements in competence and performance. In addition, the plan should specify how a manager will give support and guidance for an employee. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 24.)

Performance agreements are formulated when evaluating the past performance, and when deciding requirements for the future. These requirements are influenced by organizational strategies, and interpreted into individual's objectives and actions. Personal development plan is conducted in cooperation with the organization and the managers. It encompasses broad development activities such as coaching, project work, self-managed learning, job extension, and enhancement. Furthermore, the development plan enables the continuum in development of an individual by making it possible to take more challenging tasks and a wider role. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 24-25.)

Next, defining expectations and objectives will be discussed. The objectives for individuals and for teams are based on the organizations objectives (Foot & Hook 2005, 288). Expectations are decided and defined through role profiles. Role profiles describe the main requirements of a specific role. Objectives can be numerical targets and expectations of behavior, and they can be related to work or personal life. A good objective should be exact, it should relate with the objectives and values of the organization, and it should be stimulating, measureable, and attainable. In addition, the objective should be jointly agreed by the individual and the manager, and it should be time-related and highlighting teamwork. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 25-27.)

4.2 Act and Monitor

Coaching is an important part of performance management. In coaching, the manager acts as a coach in order to support and develop the employee's knowledge and skills. The need for coaching may ascend in formal or informal meetings, but it should be

highly related to everyday activities. When a manager gives a new task to someone or gives feedback on a task that has already been done, a new opportunity to coach ascends. The manager can help the employee to learn new skills or techniques that are needed to perform well on the task given. Furthermore, when giving feedback, the manager can help to develop the performance for next time. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 43.)

Coaching consists of making people aware of how well they are performing, ensuring that they know what is expected of them, and helping them to understand what they need to know in order to complete the task. This gives the manager the opportunity to guide the individuals at the beginning of the task, so that the employees will get their tasks completed right at the first time. Coaching gives an opportunity to promote learning in any situation. In addition, it is used to encourage people to look at problems, and give them the chance to overcome them. Coaching is most effective when the manager understands that the coach's role is to help people to learn. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 43.)

One of the important elements of a performance management process is giving feedback. Through giving feedback, the achievements and areas for improvement can be stated. The feedback should be based on evidence, not to a personal opinion. The feedback should be given as soon as possible after the incident in order to make the most use of it. Key issues should be selected in order to avoid an overload of criticism. If an individual receives too much criticism it may lead nowhere. In addition, it is important to provide positive feedback on the things an employee has accomplished well. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 34-35.)

By knowing what the existing performance is, the performance can be improved in the future. This can be done by measuring performance. There should be a consensus in the planning stage concerning the criteria which will be used to evaluate the objectives. These can relate to quantified outputs or clear performance indicators, and they should be carried out by meeting the precise requirements. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 29.) It is important to decide what should be measured, because if the wrong parts or too

many actions are measured, it is difficult to keep track of them (Foot & Hook 2005, 290). In order to retain records throughout the year, documentation should be done during the performance management process. The performance management forms should be clear, and they should include open spaces with the opportunity for additional comments. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 44.)

4.3 Review

There should be a formal review held once or twice a year. Performance review gives an overview of key motivational, performance, and developmental concerns. It is important to understand the past performance in order to improve it in the future. Moreover, a formal review meeting provides the superiors and the individuals an opportunity to take a step back and jointly discuss the key concerns of individual development and performance improvement. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 31-32.)

The assessment of performance is done through analysis of results, and the explanations for the level attained. These results are compared with the objectives stated. The assessment of performance is one of the most typical performance appraisal systems. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 35-36.) Performance appraisals are often used to motivate, inspire, and help employees improve their performance. In addition, it is a way of giving feedback to the employees about their performance at work. Performance appraisals can help organizations become more efficient, but they need to be a part of a bigger performance management process of the organization, as if only performance appraisals are used, the impact may not be as solid as hoped for. (Foot & Hook 2005, 265-266.)

There are three main uses for appraisal reviews; performance, potential, and reward reviews. In the performance review, the focus is on what the employee has done in the past, and what to develop to make the employee to perform more efficiently in the future. Some managers give this sort of informal feedback constantly, but it is unlikely that all managers in a particular company will appraise their staff frequently enough. Therefore, a formal appraisal is important in order to gain fair and reliable results. A performance appraisal interview is the right place to link individual's performance to

the performance required by the organization, and to the goals and objectives of the organization. (Foot & Hook 2005, 268.)

The potential and development review aims to recognize the people who have potential to take up a new or more challenging position in the company. This will be done by assessing past performance. The focus is not only on what a person has done in the past, but trying to identify what one would be capable of doing in the future. This way the organization can benefit from the individual's talents and skills. For this appraisal to work, the organization needs to have an atmosphere where everyone is encouraged to learn new skills. In addition, the relationships between the employees and the managers need to be open to build trust throughout the organization. The reward review is based on rewarding the employees based on their past performance. It is hoped that the incentives will drive the employees to work better and harder in the future. Many organizations have linked performance-related pay to excellent performance at work. (Foot & Hook 2005, 269-270.)

In addition to the traditional appraisal with the employee and the manager, a 360° appraisal can be used. It involves feedback from colleagues, internal and external customers, and the manager. The 360° appraisal involves a lot more paperwork than the traditional appraisal, due to the various people appraising one person. In a 360° appraisal, the appraised may receive conflicting feedback from the different people due to the lack of insight they may have towards the appraised work. (Naisby 2002, 100-102.)

4.4 The Role of a Line Manager

A line manager is a person who directly manages other employees. Therefore, the term direct manager can be used as well. The manager is accountable for the organizational management, and the practical management of the employee. In most organizations, the line managers have the responsibility of implementing human resource management, not human resource specialists. The breach between intended and actual practices can be explained by the problems line managers face when implementing human resource practices. These problems can be work overloads, lack of capabilities and skills, unwillingness, and insufficient support. (Hutchinson 2013, 13.)

The ability and motivation of those who have to implement the performance management process are important factors in the process. The knowledge, skills, and abilities required when implementing a performance management process go well beyond the everyday responsibilities of line managers. The variety of skills required, especially for the interviews, is extremely important. This is because it is the employee's personal relationship and experience with the line manager that carry the most personal meaning to the employee being appraised. The role of a line manager is extremely demanding as it includes review of past performance, reflecting on potential, and recommending rewards. These three aspects of an appraisal may be unsuited, as the evaluator has inconsistent roles to play as a judge and as a coach. The personal relationship between the line manager and the employee can be affected by the role taken. (Crawley et al. 2013, 172-173.)

Typically in a performance appraisal, the person who is being appraised and the immediate manager are present. The manager should know the person who is being appraised, and the subordinate's usual job performance. The manager and subordinate see each other every day, but they may be too busy to discuss performance. The performance appraisal interview gives them the time to sit down and discuss the employee's performance and development. However, when working closely with the subordinate every day, the manager may have strong feelings about the employee, and they may affect the impartialness of the performance appraisal. Therefore, it is important for the manager to be impartial and not to mix personal feelings in the appraisal. (Foot & Hook 2005, 273.)

4.5 Challenges in a Performance Management Process

Engelmann and Roesch (1996, in Armstrong & Baron 1998, 76) define performance management as a complex process. If not carefully designed and executed, the process can lead to poor motivation of employees due to lack of feedback. In addition, it may cause unfocused communication between the employees and the managers. Furthermore, it can lead to unproductive use of manager's time (Armstrong & Baron 1998, 79). The organization needs to be clear about the purposes of their performance man-

agement process. If too many different purposes are tried to be fulfilled, most likely none of them will happen. In addition, the objectives should be introduced to the employees and other workers before launching the process in order to gain their commitment. If the managers and other employees are suspicious about the reasons, the process is unlikely to succeed. (Foot & Hook 2005, 270-271.)

When performance management does not work, it may be worse than not having performance management at all. A poor performance management process damages the authority of management. If employees do not value the performance management process used, it can cause lack of motivation. (Bacal 1999, 23.) Managers do not always look forward to the performance management process, and if they are forced to conduct it, the employees will not enjoy it either. If the organization understands why the managers and the employees do not look forward to the current performance management process, it can come up with a new and improved version of the process that adds value for everyone. When preparing the forms, methods, and schedules, the managers should be consulted about the process. If not, the process cannot be enhanced properly and the managers may feel the forms are not suitable for their work conditions. (Bacal 1999, 11-13.)

Most people have fear of confrontation, however, if managers are too afraid of conflicts, they may not want to bring up problems that the employees have. Employees should see the process of performance management as a process designed to help rather than a process of blame. If the process is seen as a supportive process, the employees and managers are more likely to cooperate and open up with their problems. (Bacal 1999, 15.)

Even though linking performance appraisals with pay has been successful in many occasions, there are still several points that need to be taken into consideration when deciding on this matter. First, it can be difficult for the employees to confess to any developmental needs when their salary increase depends on it. Second, they may be unwilling to accept any help in their performance if the incentives are dependent of excellent performance. (Foot & Hook 2005, 270-271.)

5 Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodology used in this thesis. First, the target of the research, objectives, and research questions are introduced. Second, the research design and methods are described following by the presentation of the survey and questionnaires. Next, the population and sample are described. Last, data collection, validity and reliability are covered.

The target of the research for this thesis was to find out whether the employees of Aurinkomatkat considered there to be a continuum in their performance management process. Subsequent aim was to find out the best practices to improve their current performance management process. The research focused on the employees who were working in destinations outside of Finland. The main research problem was stated as a question: “Is there a continuum in the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat in the opinion of the employees working abroad?” In addition to the main research problem, a sub question was stated as: “How to develop a continuum for the performance management process?”

5.1 Research Design and Methods

The target of the research and the previously stated research problems were the main indicators when deciding on the most suitable research design and methods for this thesis. Research design refers to the plan which has to be followed in order to answer the research questions set. The research design comprises of objectives which are research questions, specification of where the data will come from, how one aims to collect and analyze the fore mentioned data, and possible ethical issues one may face. The aim in research design is to reflect that the researcher has put effort in thinking through the elements that belong in the selected research design. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012, 159-161.)

There are three types of research designs: quantitative, qualitative, and multiple methods research design. Figure 4 below demonstrates how these research designs are further divided into mono method and multiple methods. In mono method the research

is either quantitative or qualitative. In contrast, if more than one research design is used, it is called multiple methods. Multiple methods can be divided into two sub categories which are multimethod research and mixed method research. (Saunders et al. 2012, 164.)

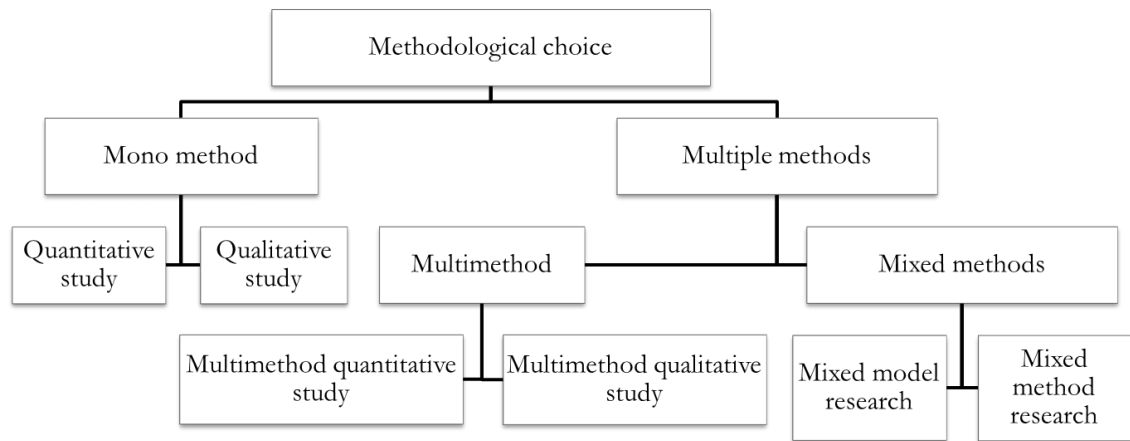


Figure 4. Methodological choice (Adapted from Saunders et al. 201, 165)

Qualitative and quantitative research are often differentiated by explaining that quantitative research focuses on numbers and has closed-ended questions while qualitative research focuses on words and consists of open-ended questions (Creswell 2014, 2). Moreover, quantitative research examines the differences between variables. These variables are measured numerically in order to get valid data. When conducting a quantitative research, it is vital to make sure that the questions planned for the questionnaire are clearly stated. (Saunders et al. 2012, 163.) Yet, the difference between qualitative and quantitative research is not quality, but the process of how the research is conducted (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005, 109). It is common to combine both quantitative and qualitative elements in a research design for various reasons. (Saunders et al. 2012, 161.)

Multiple methods research comprises of using more than one research method in the data collection and analytical procedures. As described previously, multiple methods can be divided into two sub groups which are multimethod research and mixed method research. Multimethod research covers more than one data collection technique

linked to analysis procedures. Moreover, the multimethod research is limited to follow either a quantitative or qualitative design. For example, one may collect data by using questionnaires and structured interviews and analyze the data by using quantitative techniques. In multimethod research, quantitative and qualitative methods should not be mixed. However, in mixed methods research designs, both quantitative and qualitative methods can be used. (Saunders et al. 2012, 164-165.)

For this thesis, a mono method quantitative research design was chosen to be followed at first due to the fact that the respondents were working abroad, and it was seen as the most time-efficient way to conduct the research. Additionally, the researchers did not expect many of the respondents to leave additional comments and explanations to the open text fields. However, when the amount of the open text answers was larger than expected and the answers were analyzed, a multiple methods mixed methods research design was seen more suitable since the answers to the questionnaire were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Two of the most common quantitative research designs are survey research, and experimental research. Survey research includes studies using questionnaires or structured interviews. Experimental research consists of finding out whether a specific action impacts an outcome. (Creswell 2014, 13.) The survey research design was seen as the most suitable one for this thesis due to the fact that the research was aimed to gather the opinion data of employees of Aurinkomatkat.

The nature of the research design can be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. Exploratory is useful when open-ended questions are asked in order to understand what is happening, and to gain more information about the problem stated. It is useful when used flexibly, and when the researcher aims to clarify understanding of a problem. Exploratory research can include literature reviews and various types of interviews. The interviews are usually unstructured, and highlight the quality rather than quantity. In a descriptive research, the focus is in getting an exact profile of persons, situations, or events. (Saunders et al. 2012, 170-171.)

Descriptive research can be conducted as an addition to exploratory research, or as a part of exploratory or explanatory research. Descriptive research highlights having a

clear understanding about the phenomenon prior to the data collection. Explanatory research is defined as a study that wishes to form causal relationships between variables. It focuses on a problem or a situation in order to describe the relationships among the variables. (Saunders et al. 2012, 171-172.) In this thesis, the nature of the research is a combination of descriptive and explanatory research. They were selected for the research of this thesis due to the fact that open-ended questions are asked in order to understand what is happening, and the research is aimed to get an exact profile of the current performance management process of Aurinkomatkat.

5.2 Survey Strategy and Questionnaire

Two of the most common data collection methods used in a survey strategy are questionnaires and structured interviews (Saunders et al 2012, 417). For this thesis, a questionnaire was selected as the data collection method due to the amount of population and its distribute nature. The structured interviews could have been hard to arrange due to time differences and the size of population. Moreover, if structured interviews would have been selected, more time should have been reserved for the data collection and for the analysis of the results.

The response rate, validity, and reliability of the data can be influenced by the design of the questionnaire. In order to design a good questionnaire, the individual questions should be carefully planned, the layout should be clear, and the purpose of the questionnaire should be well explained. In addition, the questionnaire should be pilot tested and there should be a well-planned and implemented system which allows smooth delivery and easy return of the completed questionnaires.

As figure 5 below displays, there are various types of questionnaires. They can be divided into self-completed or interviewer-completed questionnaires. Self-completed questionnaires refer to questionnaires that are completed by the respondents. These types of questionnaires can be sent electronically as Internet-mediated, Web-based, or intranet-mediated questionnaires. Additionally, self-completed questionnaires can consist of mail questionnaires and delivery and collection questionnaires. Furthermore, there are interviewer-completed questionnaires which are conducted by doing a tele-

phone questionnaire or a structured interview. (Saunders et al. 2012, 419-420.) Internet- and intranet mediated questionnaires are typically done by email or through a website. In internet questionnaires emails are used to post and receive a hyperlink to the questionnaire. If a questionnaire is prepared with this method, it is advisable to include a covering letter to the email. Moreover, a follow-up should be done to all recipients after sending the questionnaires. In the follow-up, a researcher should thank the respondents who have already replied to the questionnaire and remind the non-respondents to respond to the questionnaire. (Saunders et al. 2012, 454.)

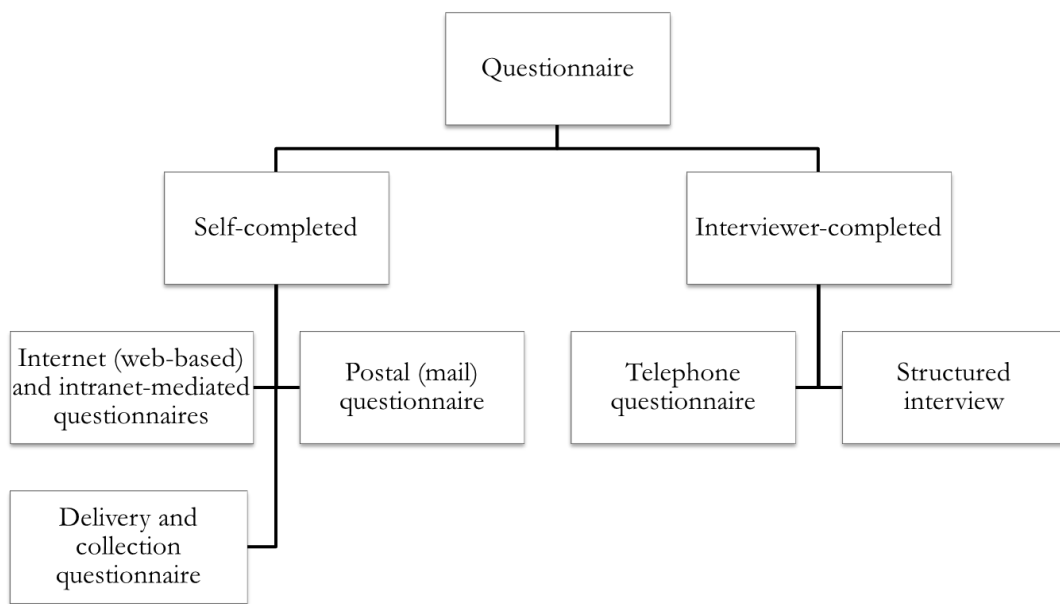


Figure 5. Types of questionnaire (Adapted from Saunders et al. 2012)

The data for this research was collected through Webropol online surveys. Webropol was decided to be used as the main tool due to the fact that HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences offer students licenses in it in order to conduct their researches. Moreover, Webropol was seen as a useful tool in order to design the layout of the questionnaire and the question types properly. For the research of this thesis, one questionnaire was designed to be suitable for both guides and destination managers. This was seen as the best option since most of the questions were the same for both groups. By deciding to conduct one questionnaire for both groups, the analyzing of the results was made easier.

In this thesis the questionnaires were sent as a hyperlink via Aurinkomatkat's email in order to reach the respondents conveniently. By doing this, a respondent could easily open the questionnaire via the hyperlink, and the process of completing the questionnaire is easy. This way no further action, such as mailing the questionnaire, is necessary for the respondent. Similarly, by sending the questionnaire through Aurinkomatkat's email, it was assessed that it could motivate the employees to answer the questionnaire more than if the link would be sent from a HAAGA-HELIA email address. In addition, by doing the questionnaire via a hyperlink, it was perceived that time can be saved as the results are already in an electronical form.

For this thesis, the hyperlink was sent together with a covering letter (Attachment 1). The covering letter was sent by email to the destination sales and service manager of Aurinkomatkat, Katja Rautavaara, who emailed it further to the employees working abroad. It was not possible to send the email directly to each employee's own email address. Instead, they were sent to the email addresses of each destination. Each destination of Aurinkomatkat has their own email address which the destination manager and the guides in the particular destination all have access to.

Most of the questionnaires combine both open-ended and closed-ended questions (Saunders et al. 2012, 432). Fink (2009, in Saunders et al. 2012, 432) defines that in open-ended questions the respondent is allowed to provide one's answer in their own way. Fink and deVaus describe that in closed-ended questions and force-choice questions the predetermined answers are provided from which the respondent chooses from. Moreover, open-ended questions are commonly used in semi-structured interviews and in detailed interviews. Open-ended questions are time consuming to analyze, therefore it is good to keep them to a minimum in the questionnaire. (Saunders et al. 2012, 432.)

There are several types of closed-ended questions. First, list questions provide the respondent a set of answers to choose from. Second, category questions are designed in a way that the respondent is able to select one category from the answers. These types of questions are useful when aiming to collect data concerning behavior or attributes.

Moreover, self-completed questionnaires should include maximum of five response categories. Third, in ranking questions the respondent is asked to rank objects in order. By doing this, the importance of a selected item can be placed. Rating questions are typically used when aimed to collect opinion data. These types of questions are used for example in Likert-style rating which asks how strongly one agrees or disagrees with the stated question. In Likert-style rating, the amount of rating scales usually varies from four to seven. The purpose of the questionnaire and the type of respondents will determine how many scales should be used. (Saunders et al. 2012, 432-436.) Last, quantity questions are answered by a number, and in matrix questions there can be two or more responses recorded at the same time (Saunders et al 2012, 440).

The questionnaire (Attachment 2) used in the research for this thesis, included four types of questions. They were category questions, rating questions, open-ended questions, and combinations of the previous. The different question types were used in order to get a realistic understanding of the employees' opinions about the performance management process. This way the respondents would not feel limited to only certain options, and they would have the possibility to give their own opinions, and provide explanations to the answers. The combination questions were used in a way that the respondent could provide an answer not specified in the answer options or to clarify the answer given. The open-ended questions were situated after the rating questions and in the end of the questionnaire to give the respondent the possibility to provide more detailed answers. It was decided that only a few open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire due to the time it would take to analyze them, and due to the fact that it had been decided that predetermined answer options were useful for this research.

The category questions and rating questions were compulsory and the open-ended questions were optional. Most of the questions were compulsory due to the fact that opinion data was collected and all the employees should have been able to give an answer. The rating questions used the Likert-style rating. The rating scale consisted of four options agree, partly agree, partly disagree and disagree. In addition, an option for the 'I do not understand the statement' was included. The rating scale of four options

was selected in order to force the respondents to provide their opinions. The option 'I do not understand the statement' was included to make sure that the respondents did not reply to something they did not understand.

The questionnaire (Attachment 2) consisted of 22 questions of which two were only for destination managers. The questions were divided into ten pages in order to keep the questionnaire clear and easy to read. The questionnaire consisted of four parts: background information, performance management process, work motivation, and work life balance. In the bottom of the questionnaire, the progress of the questionnaire could be followed from a colored bar. This way the respondent can estimate the timing of the questionnaire. In addition, the questionnaire had a previous button in case the respondent wanted to modify the answers already given.

The first page of the questionnaire (Attachment 2) consisted of a short description of the aim and structure of the questionnaire. The first questions defined the respondent's gender and age. When deciding on the age options on the questionnaire, it was seen as the best option to have the same distributions as generally used in Finland in order the results to be comparable to other studies (Tilastokeskus 2014). The age limit for working as a guide is 23 years therefore the first answer option is narrower than the other answer options. Next, it was asked how long had the respondents been working for Aurinkomatkat. The time was measured in seasons instead of years due to the fact that Aurinkomatkat often uses seasons when referring to time. Next, the job descriptions in the past season, and the amount of seasons working in those positions were asked. These were important to know in order to differentiate the results between the guides and the destination managers. The next eight questions were related to the performance management process and they were aimed to find out the employees' opinions about it.

After the questions about the performance management process (Attachment 2), three questions about work motivation were stated. These questions dealt with the employees' ability, motivation, and the opportunity to carry out the tasks needed. Next, three questions about work life balance were stated to find out whether the employees con-

sidered that enough support is offered when working abroad. Questions 20 and 21 were for destination managers. In these questions the focus was on how the destination managers carry out their tasks related to the performance management process. Last, additional comments and opinions about the questionnaire were asked.

5.3 Population and Sample

It is possible to research data from all the members of the population or take a sample from a larger group. Sampling is an important part of the quantitative research method, and by taking a smaller sample money and time can be saved. (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005, 145.) If the research data is collected from all the members of the population, it is called as a census. However, it is not always possible to collect data from all of the members of the population. Therefore, sampling techniques are used to decrease the amount of data. In some cases, the sample is used to represent all of the members of the population by generalization. (Saunders et al. 2012, 258.)

As mentioned above, at times it is possible to collect data from the census, the whole population. However, in some cases it might be that the census does not offer any more useful results than collecting data from a sample. These cases include impracticability of including the whole census, money restraints, and time limitations. (Saunders et al. 2012, 260.) Nevertheless, in this thesis it was selected to collect data from the census which included the employees of Aurinkomatkat working abroad in destinations as guides and as destinations managers. It was decided, that the census were not too large in order to collect the data, and due to the opinion data wished to be collected, it was seen as a good option to collect as many opinions as possible within the census. By sending the questionnaire to the entire workforce abroad, a wider perspective of their opinions could be reached.

5.4 Data Collection

When collecting data through questionnaires, the effort should be put into planning what data needs to be collected, analysis plan, and designing the questions in a way that they meet research objectives and answer to the research questions stated (Saunders et

al. 2012, 423). The design, the structure of the questionnaire and pilot testing will reflect on the internal validity and reliability of the data collected. Moreover, it will affect the response rate. A valid questionnaire consists of precise data, and it measures the concepts that were intended to be collected. Reliability refers to the data being collected consistently. (Saunders et al. 2012, 428-429.)

Before conducting the questionnaire it should be pilot tested in order to improve the questionnaire in a way that there are no problems in data recording and respondents will not have problems in answering the questions stated. Moreover, it provides the researcher an opportunity to examine the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. The pilot testing should be conducted with a similar sample as the final questionnaire. Sometimes a time may limit the pilot testing. Nevertheless, it is better to conduct the pilot testing by using acquaintances than not doing it at all. By doing this, it can be tested whether or not the questionnaire makes sense to the reader. (Saunders et al. 2012, 451.)

The pilot testing for the questionnaire of this thesis was done in two phases prior to sending out the final questionnaires. These phases included acquaintances and the destination sales and service manager of Aurinkomatkat, Katja Rautavaara. The first phase of pilot testing included ten acquaintances aged 24 to 57. This phase of the pilot testing focused on the readability of the questionnaire, comprehension, and the overall structure of the questionnaire. The respondents completed the questionnaire and commented to the fore mentioned issue in written and verbally.

The second phase of the pilot testing included a meeting with the destination sales and service manager of Aurinkomatkat, Katja Rautavaara. Katja Rautavaara completed the questionnaire and while completing it commented on the parts that could be developed. Based on the discussion with Katja Rautavaara, a few modifications to the questionnaire were done. They included using the term 'season' instead of 'year' when asking how long the employees have been working for Aurinkomatkat. This change affected the questions three, four, five, and eleven in the questionnaire (Attachment 2). Additionally, for the question number nine an additional statement was designed as "I

give feedback for my manager regularly”. For the question number 14, an additional statement was included as “I am motivated to attain and update my knowledge on my own”. Last, an answer option “recognition” was changed to “open feedback and recognition” in the question number 16.

As described in the previous chapters, an open hyperlink via email was decided to be sent with a covering letter (Attachment 1) due to the fact that the employees shared a common email address within a destination. In the covering letter the purpose of the questionnaire was explained and the importance to get the respondents to answer with honesty was highlighted. Moreover, a timeline of 14.03.2014 to 30.03.2014 was given during which the questionnaires should be filled in. Additionally, in the covering letter it was stated that it would take approximately five minutes to fill in the questionnaire. Last, it was stated that the results will be provided to the respondents after the analysis, and the contact information in case any concerns would occur was given.

A remind letter (Attachment 3) was sent to Katja Rautavaara on the 24th of March, and she sent it on to the employees. By the 24th of March, 12 employees had responded to the survey. The remind letter was sent as a reminder to the employees who had not yet responded to inform them that the questionnaire was open until the end of the week. In addition, the remind letter served as a thank you to the employees who had already responded. A time extension letter (Attachment 4) was sent to Katja Rautavaara on the 31st of March, and she sent it on to the employees on the 2nd of April.

By the 31st of March, 13 employees had responded to the survey. The time extension letter was sent as a reminder to the employees who had not yet responded to inform them that the response time had been extended until the 6th of April. By the 6th of April, 17 responses had been received. On the 7th of April one of the guides was visiting Katja Rautavaara at Aurinkomatkat headquarters and was willing to fill out the questionnaire. Therefore, the link to the questionnaire was re-opened for one more day, which made the total number of respondents 18. It was a total of 16.4 percent of the amount of employees working in destinations outside of Finland. From the 18 respondents, eight were destination managers and ten were guides.

It was decided that these results would be analyzed, and the response time would not be extended anymore. This decision was made based on the fact that it was the season changing time and the employees would have returned to their posts little by little. Therefore, the response time would have had to be extended until the summer in order to all the employees to be back to work. Nevertheless, since a list of the personal email addresses was not available, it could not have been guaranteed that any more answers would have been received even if the response time would have been extended until the summer. A thank you letter for the employees (Attachment 5) was sent out to Katja Rautavaara on the 30th of April and she sent it on to the employees.

The main limitations in the thesis process were related to the empirical research. The timing of conducting the questionnaire overlapped with the season changing time. Therefore, some of the destinations had already closed or were about to close for the winter 2013-2014 season. Since the season was ending, some of the employees were already in their yearly vacations in Finland and therefore the amount of employees still working in the destinations abroad had decreased. Moreover, Aurinkomatkat could not provide a list of the email addresses of the people working abroad. Therefore, the link to the questionnaire had to be sent to the destinations' emails and not to the employees' personal emails.

6 Data Analysis and Findings

In this chapter the data gathered will be analyzed and the results will be presented. First, the background information will be analyzed. Next, the analysis of the performance management process is displayed followed by the analysis of work motivation and work life balance. The number of respondents will be referred to as the letter N. Furthermore, the reliability and validity of the empirical research will be overviewed.

First, the results were analyzed via Webropol quantitatively, and due to having various open comments they were analyzed qualitatively using content analysis (Attachments 9-15). The content analysis was completed with a data-oriented approach. First, the data was summarized in order to make it more clear and compact. Next, the summarized data with similar contents was divided into themes. The themes were categorized with an appropriate title. Last, the information was described impersonally in order to highlight the most relevant information for the research. (Ojasalo, Moilanen & Ritalah-ti 2009, 124-125.)

6.1 Background Information

The total number of the respondents was 18. Figure 6 below demonstrates that the gender of the respondents was mostly female 72.2 % (13 respondents) and 27.8 % (5 respondents) male.

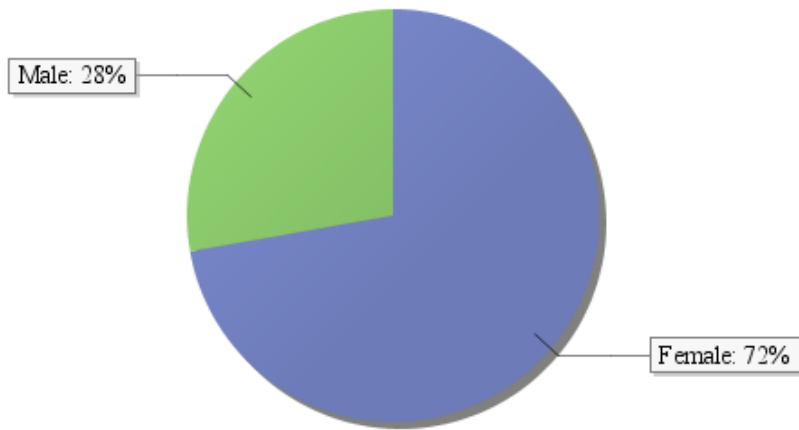


Figure 6. Sex (N=18)

As figure 7 displays, the majority of the respondents with 67.0 % (12 respondents) were aged between 25 and 44 years old. Furthermore, 11.0 % of the respondents (2 respondents) were aged between 23 and 24 years, and 22.0 % of the respondents (4 respondents) were 45 years old or older.

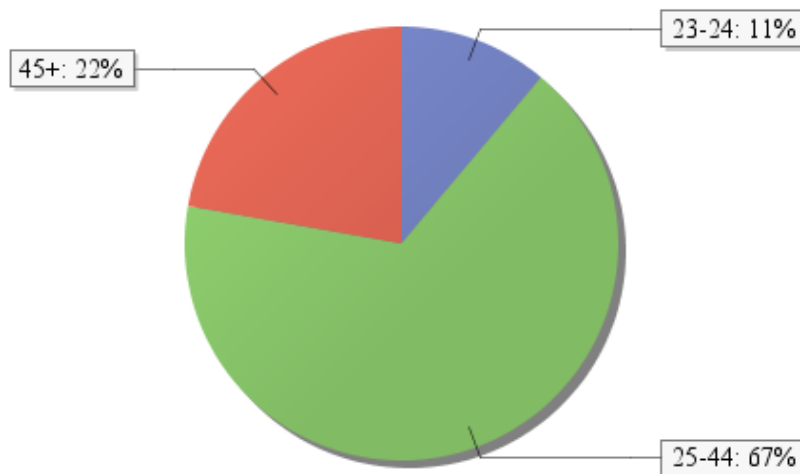


Figure 7. Age (N=18)

As figure 8 below exhibits, there were both rather new employees of Aurinkomatkat and employees who had been working for Aurinkomatkat for longer represented in the questionnaire. 27.8 % of the respondents (5 respondents) had been working for Aurinkomatkat under two seasons (0-1 years). Similarly, 27.8 % of the respondents (5 re-

spondents) had been working for Aurinkomatkat from three to eight seasons (1.5-4 years). Moreover, 33.3 % of the respondents (6 respondents) had been working for Aurinkomatkat from nine to twenty seasons (4.5-10 years), and 11.1 % of the respondents (2 respondents) had been working for Aurinkomatkat more than 21 seasons (more than 10.5 years).

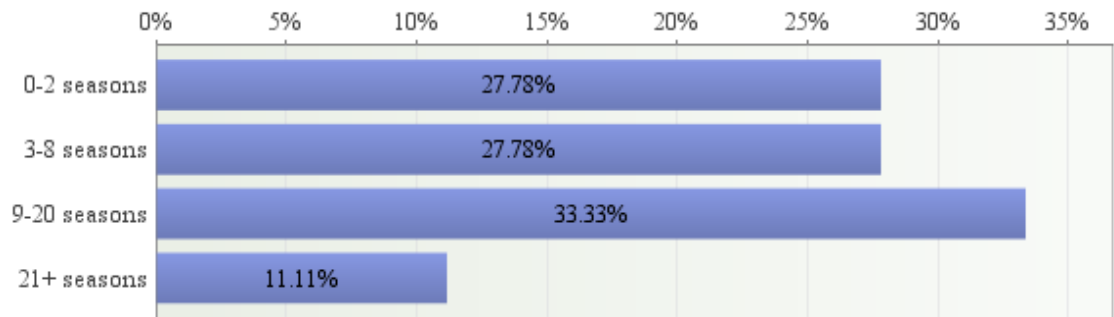


Figure 8. How long have you been working for Aurinkomatkat? (N=18)

As seen in figure 9 below, 56.0 % of the respondents of the questionnaire (10 respondents) were guides and 44.0 % (8 respondents) were destination managers. That established the response rate of the destination managers to 42.1 % and the response rate of the guides to 11.0 %.

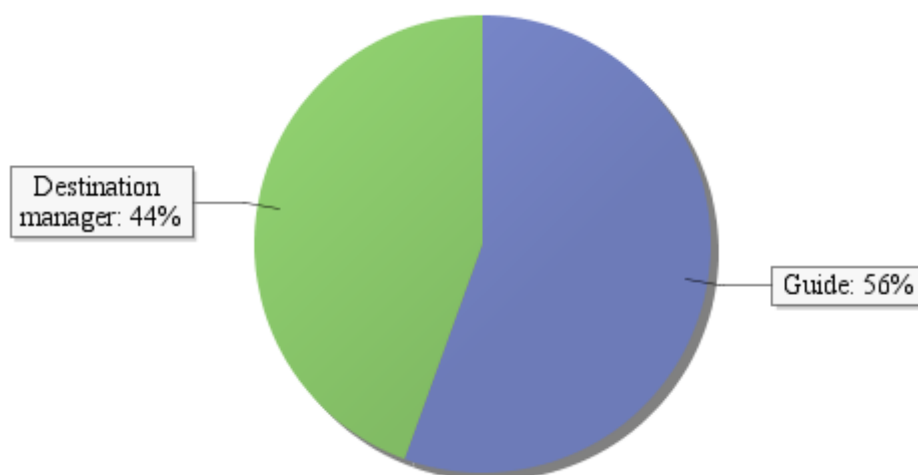


Figure 9. Job description in the winter season 2013-2014 (N=18)

As figure 10 shows, 50.0 % of the respondents (9 respondents) had been working in their current positions from zero to two seasons (under a year). Moreover, there were five respondents (27.8 %) who had been working in their current positions from three to eight seasons (1.5-4 years), and three respondents (16.7 %) who had been working in their current positions from nine to twenty seasons (4.5-10 years). Additionally, 5.6 % of the respondents (1 respondent) had been working in their current positions for over 21 seasons (10.5 years).

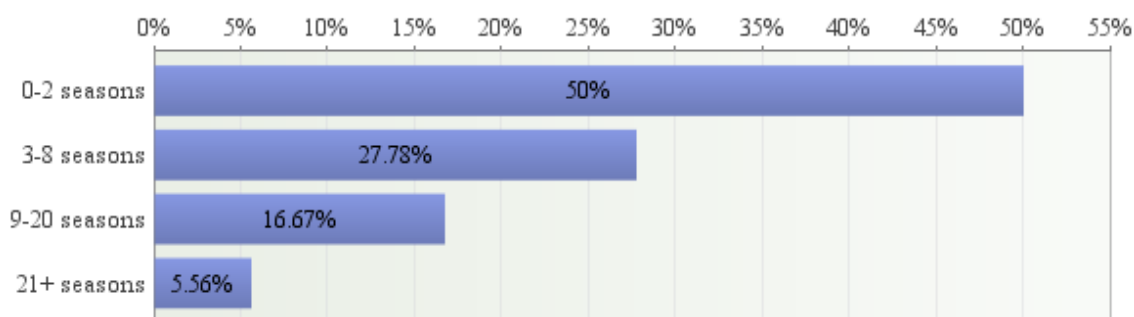


Figure 10. How long have you been working in your current position? (N=18)

6.2 Performance Management Process

As attachment 6 displays, the respondents felt that the goals set in their job descriptions were rather clear. 66.7 % of the respondents (12 respondents) agreed with the statement ‘The goals set in my job description are clear’ and 33.3 % of the respondents (6 respondents) partly agreed with the statement. There were no major differences in between the destination managers and guides in terms of the responses to this statement.

The respondents were rather aware of what was expected of them. As seen from attachment 6, 66.7 % of the respondents (12 respondents) agreed with the statement ‘I am aware of what is expected from me’. Additionally, 27.8 % of the respondents (5 respondents) partly agreed with the statement. Only 5.6% of the respondents (1 respondent) partly disagreed with the statement. As figure 11 below displays, 80.0 % of the guides (8 respondents) and 50.0 % of the destination managers (4 respondents) agreed with the statement. The rest of the guides (20.0 %, 2 respondents) partly agreed.

Therefore, it can be suggested that guides were more aware of what was expected from them than the destination managers were.

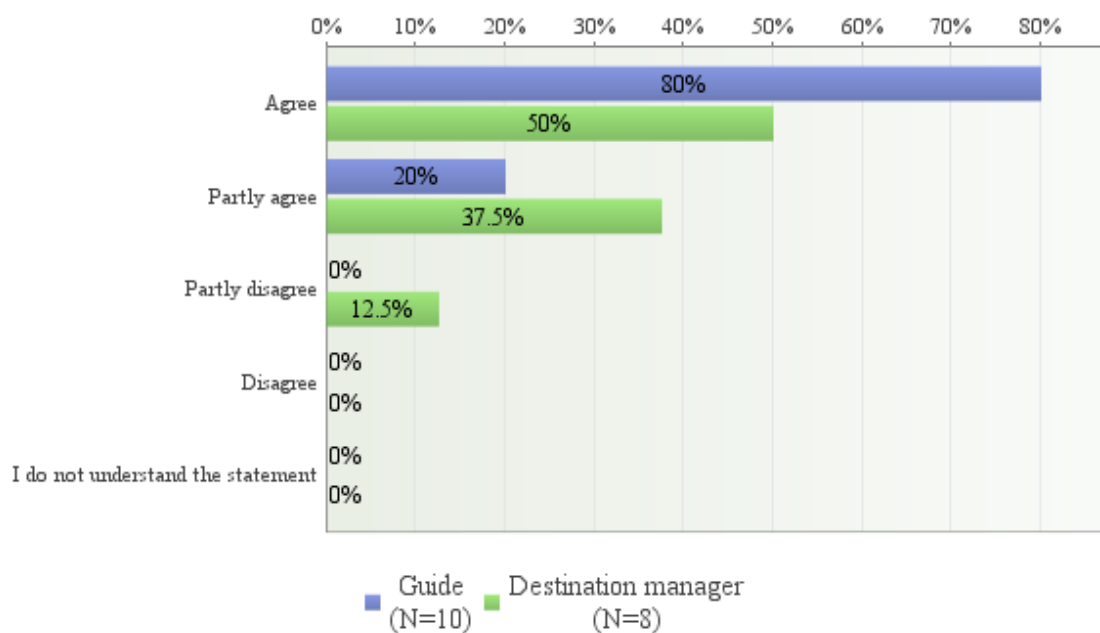


Figure 11. I am aware of what is expected from me (N=18)

55.6 % of the respondents (10 respondents) were aware of their personal development plan, and agreed with the statement ‘I know what my personal development plan is’ as seen in attachment 7. 27.8 % of the respondents (5 respondents) partly agreed with the statement, and 11.1 % of the respondents (2 respondents) partly disagreed with the statement. In addition, 5.6 % of the respondents (1 respondent) did not know what his or her personal development plan was, and disagreed with the statement. There were no major differences in between the destination managers and guides in terms of the responses to the statement. The respondent, who was not familiar with the personal development plan, specified the answer in the open text field after the statements. The respondent told that he or she did not have a personal development plan, and therefore did not know where to aim in the job.

Half of the respondents (9 respondents) were aware of how their manager would support and guide them. 33.3 % of the respondents (6 respondents) partly agreed with the statement ‘I am aware of how my manager will support and guide me’ whereas 16.7 % of the respondents (3 respondents) partly disagreed with the statement. As seen in fig-

ure 12 below, the destination managers were more aware of how their manager supported and guided them than the guides. 62.5 % of the destination managers (5 respondents) agreed, and 37.5 % (3 respondents) partly agreed to be aware of how their managers supported them. However, only 40.0 % of the guides (4 guides) agreed to know how they were supported, and 30.0 % of the guides (3 guides) partly agreed and 30.0 % of the guides (3 guides) partly disagreed to being aware of how they were supported by their managers.

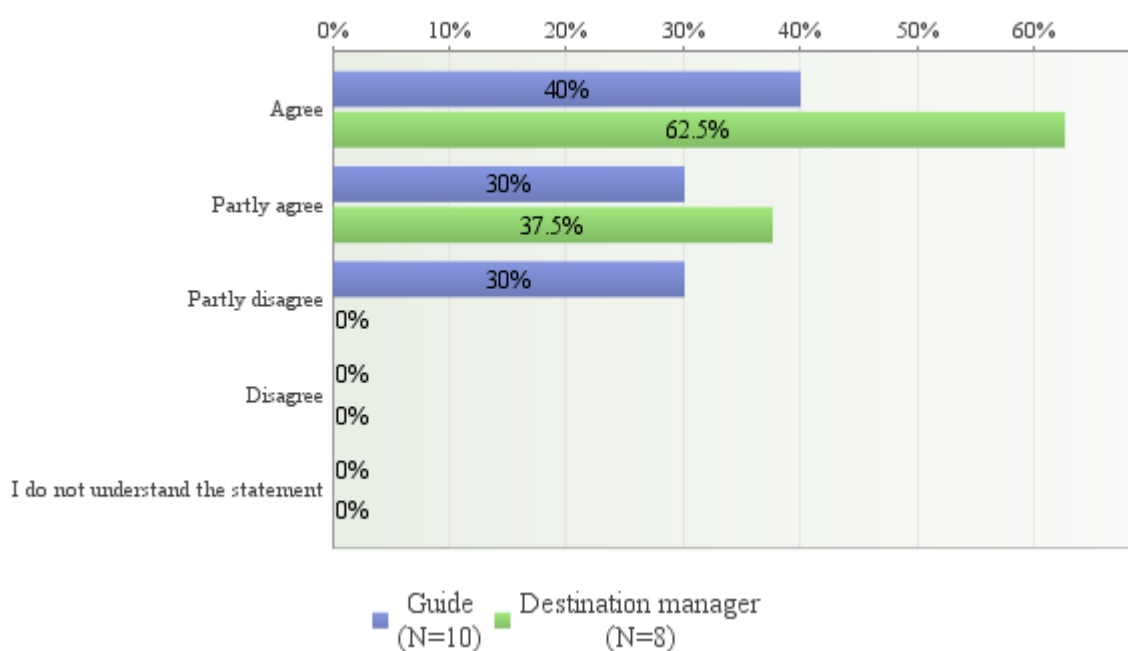


Figure 12. I am aware of how my manager will support and guide me (N=18)

50.0 % of the respondents (9 respondents) were involved in the process of setting the objectives for themselves with their managers. In addition, 33.3 % (6 respondents) partly agreed to being involved in the process of setting the objectives for themselves, and 16.7 % (3 respondents) partly disagreed with the statement ‘I was involved in the process of setting the objectives for myself with my manager’.

In the opinion of the respondents, the objectives set for them were not as exact and measurable as they could have been. Only 28.9 % of the respondents (7 respondents) felt that the objectives set for them were exact and measurable. Additionally, 28.9 % of the respondents (7 respondents) partly felt the same way. However, 11.1 % of the respondents (2 respondents) partly disagreed with the statement ‘The objectives set for

me are exact and measurable' and 11.1 % of the respondents (2 respondents) disagreed with the above statement. One of the respondents who left a comment in the open text field considered that the objectives were too general, and that most of the objectives were not even measurable. There were no major variances in between the destination managers and guides in terms of the responses to this statement.

As can be seen from attachment 6, most of the respondents were aware of the objectives of Aurinkomatkat, and expressed that their personal objectives were related to the objectives of Aurinkomatkat. 44.4 % of the respondents (8 respondents) were aware of the objectives of Aurinkomatkat, and 33.3 % of the respondents (6 respondents) were to some extent aware of the objectives of Aurinkomatkat. Only 22.2 % of the respondents (4 respondents) partly disagreed with the statement 'I am aware of the objectives of Aurinkomatkat'. 50.0 % of the respondents (9 respondents) considered that their objectives were related to the objectives of Aurinkomatkat, and 27.8 % of the respondents (5 respondents) partly stated that they were related. Only 22.2 % of the respondents (4 respondents) partly disagreed with the statement 'The objectives set for me are related to the objectives and values of Aurinkomatkat'.

The opinions of the respondents varied quite a lot, when it came to how inspiring and achievable the respondents felt the objectives were. 33.3 % of the respondents (6 respondents) specified that the objectives set for them were inspiring and achievable. Additionally, 38.9 % of the respondents (7 respondents) stated that the objectives were rather inspiring and achievable. On the other hand, 22.2 % of the respondents (4 respondents) partly disagreed with the objectives set for them being inspiring. Similarly, 5.6 % of the respondents (1 respondent) considered that the objectives set for them were not inspiring and achievable at all.

The respondents were not all aware of how the objectives set for them were measured. 33.3 % of the respondents (6 respondents) knew how they were measured, and 33.3 % of the respondents (6 respondents) partly knew how they were measured. Additionally, 22.2 % of the respondents (4 respondents) partly disagreed with the statement 'I know how the objectives set for me are measured' and 11.1 % of the respondents (2 re-

spondents) disagreed with the fore mentioned statement. There were no major variances in between the destination managers and guides in terms of the responses to this statement.

When the open comments of the respondents were analyzed (Attachment 9), the objectives were not seen as realistic as they could have been. Not enough guidance on how to reach the goals was provided from Aurinkomatkat, and the respondents felt that they were not always aware about the changes in the company.

In figure 13 below, it is described that 67.0 % (12 respondents) as the majority felt that the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat was continuous. Nevertheless, 33.0 % (6 respondents) considered that the process was not continuous. With the answer 'no' a respondent had to provide an explanation to the answer in open text field.

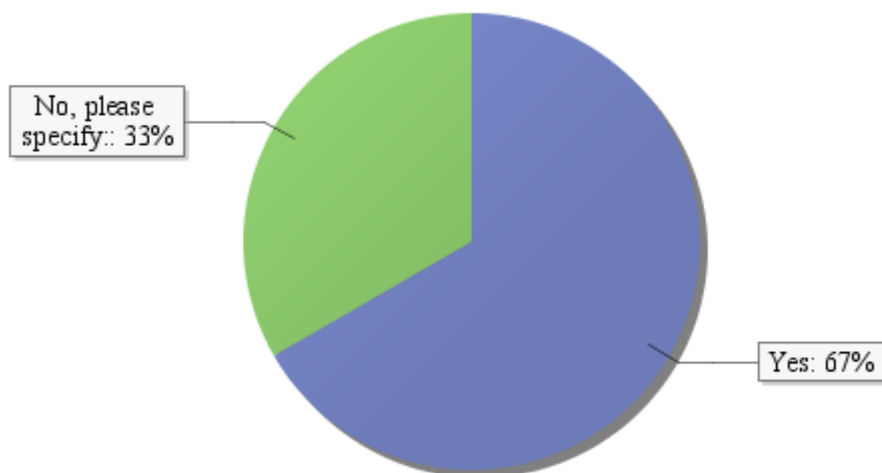


Figure 13. In your opinion, is the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat continuous? (N=18)

As figure 14 below displays, 20.0 % of the guides (2 respondents) and 50.0 % of the destination managers (4 respondents) answered 'no' to the question 'In your opinion, is the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat continuous?' When the open text field answers were analyzed (Attachment 10), the answers divided into two differ-

ent themes, differences between destinations, and that information does not transfer well between destinations and destination managers. The differences between destinations were seen in the performance management processes, and because of the learned things did not always apply to another destination. The information in the performance management process was not seen to be transferred well, and the guides had to be responsible for transferring the information from a destination to another.

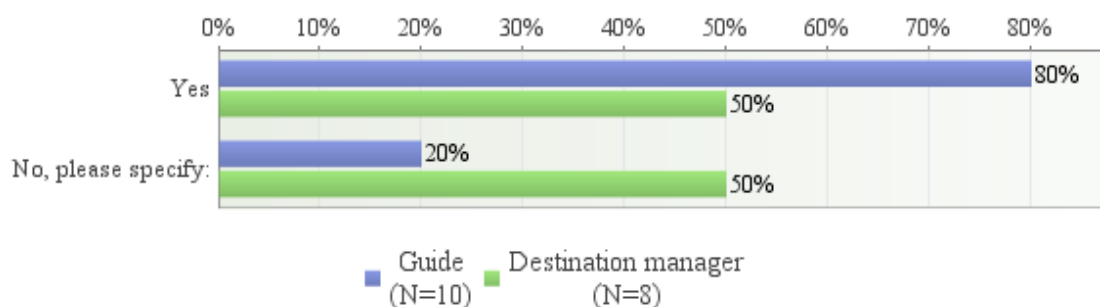


Figure 14. In your opinion, is the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat continuous? (N=18)

Attachment 7 exhibits how the respondents of the questionnaire assessed their working relationship with their manager. 55.6 % of the respondents (10 respondents) answered that they received coaching from their managers for their daily activities. 22.2 % of the respondents (4 respondents) partly agreed with the fore mentioned statement. However, 16.7 % of the respondents (3 respondents) partly disagreed that their manager coached them in their daily activities, and 5.6 % (1 respondent) stated that they did not to receive coaching when necessary. Most of the respondents felt that when they received feedback it was based on evidence (72.2 %). Nevertheless, one respondent (5.6 %) partly agreed with the statement and the rest (22.2%) partly disagreed with the statement. There were no major differences between the destination managers and guides in terms of the responses to the statement.

50.0 % of the respondents (9 respondents) considered that they received both criticism and positive feedback from their managers. 22.0 % of the respondents (4 respondents) partly agreed that the feedback received from their manager combined both positive and negative aspects. Furthermore, 22.2 % of the respondents (4 respondents) partly disagreed with the statement, and 5.6 % (one respondent) considered that they were

not able to receive both positive feedback and criticism. Whether a respondent considered that they were able to receive feedback regularly and not only in the formal review meeting varied. 38.9% of the respondents (7 respondents) considered that the feedback was provided often, and 22.2 % of the respondents (4 respondents) partly agreed that feedback was provided regularly. Moreover, 33.3 % of the respondents (6 respondents) partly disagreed that the feedback was provided on constant basis, and 5.6 % (one respondent) stated that the feedback was not provided on continuous basis.

Only 22.2 % of the respondents (4 respondents) considered that they provided feedback to their manager regularly. 44.4 % of the respondents (8 respondents) partly agreed that they provided feedback to their manager frequently, and 33.3 % (6 respondents) partly disagreed with the statement 'I give feedback for my manager regularly'.

It can be pointed out that most of the respondents agreed or partly agreed to be encouraged to learn skills in their workplace. Most of the respondents agreed that they were encouraged to learn new skills in their workplace (55.6 %). 38.9 % of the respondents partly agreed to the statement, and 5.6 % (one respondent) thought that they were not encouraged to learn new skills. Moreover, most of the respondents evaluated that their manager was capable of conducting their responsibilities related to performance management (55.6 %). 16.7 % of the respondents partly agreed with the fore mentioned, and 27.8 % partly disagreed with the statement.

The relationship between the respondents and their manager was seen to be mostly trusting and open (61.1%). 27.8 % of the respondents partly agreed that the relationship was open and trusting, and 5.6 % (one respondent) partly disagreed to the statement. Moreover, one respondent (5.6 %) considered that the relationship was not open and trusting.

The respondents were asked to provide an explanation if they disagreed with the statements in attachment 7 or wanted to provide further details to their answers. The answers were provided in an open text field. After a content analysis (Attachment 11),

two themes were found. The themes were more feedback and not in daily contact with their managers. The respondents wished to provide and receive more feedback regularly, receive criticism, and give feedback to their managers more often. It was stated that the managers were not in daily contact with the subordinates, sometimes not even in weekly contact. Moreover, it was indicated that the destination managers were not able to be in daily contact to their managers in Finland, and therefore the coaching and feedback did not occur in daily basis.

As described in figure 15 below, the amount of formal review meetings held in a season varied. 11.1 % (2 respondents) stated that they had had formal review meetings once a season. On the contrary, 50.0 % of the respondents (9 respondents) described that they had had two formal review meetings in a season. Last, there was a possibility to provide other answer in an open text field. 38.9 % of the respondents (7 respondents) provided an answer in the open text field. Five of the respondents who had provided an answer to option ‘other’ described that they had had formal review meetings once a month. Two answered that they had had formal review meetings three times a season.

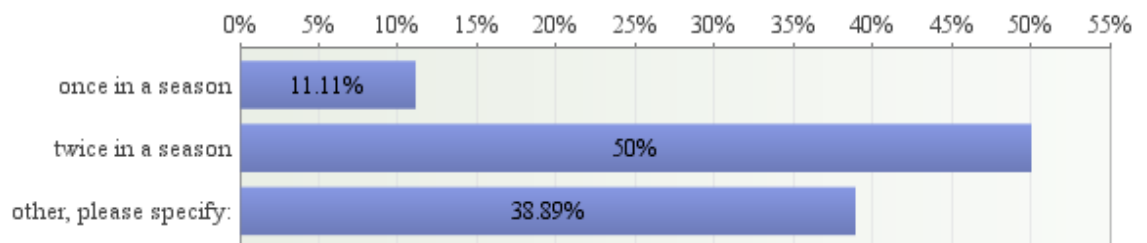


Figure 15. How often do you have a formal review meeting? (N=18)

As seen in figure 16 below, most of the respondents felt that there were enough formal review meetings. 88.9 % of the respondents (16 respondents) stated that they felt that there were enough formal review meetings. 11.1 % of the respondents (2 respondents) felt that there were not enough formal review meetings. The respondents who answered ‘no’ to the question, needed to specify their answer in the open text, and express how many formal review meetings they considered there should be. One of these employees felt that there should be a review meeting bi-monthly, and the other an-

swered that there should be two. However, in the latter answer, the respondent did not specify in what time period these two review meetings should be. It can only be guessed, if the respondent meant two in a season, two in a year, or two in some other period of time.

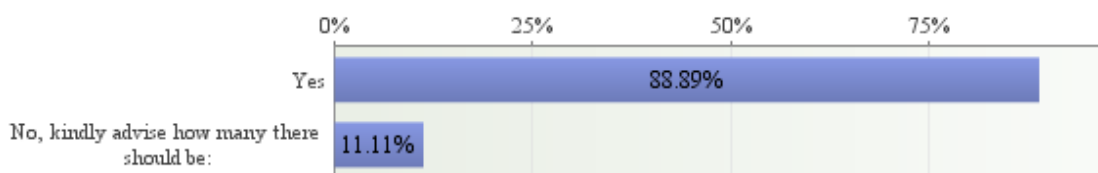


Figure 16. Do you think there are enough formal review meetings? (N=18)

As visible in figure 17 below, the 11.1% who answered ‘no’ to the question ‘do you think there are enough formal review meetings?’ were all guides. All of the destination managers felt that there were enough formal review meetings. However, even most of the guides thought that there were enough formal review meetings, only 20.0 % of the total amount of guides (2 respondents) thought that the current situation should be changed.

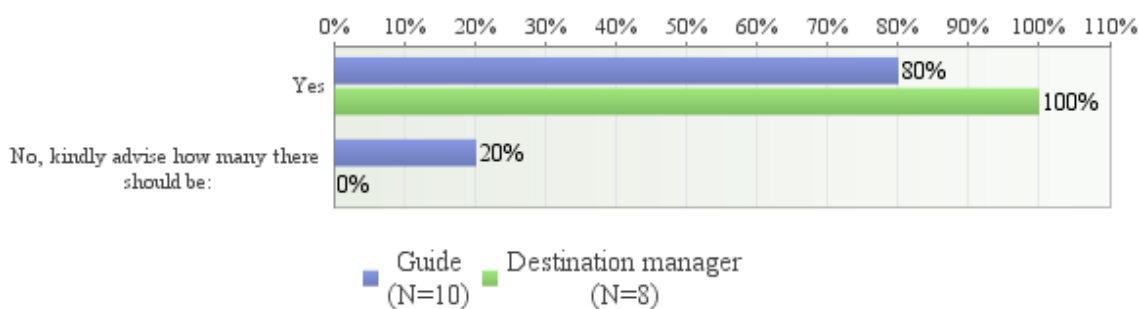


Figure 17. Do you think there are enough formal review meetings? (N=18)

As described in figure 18, the question ‘do you consider the reward based system to be fair?’ was quite equally distributed between the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answers. 56.0 % of the respondents (10 respondents) felt that the rewards based system was fair while 44.0 % of the respondents (8 respondents) did not agree with the system to be fair.

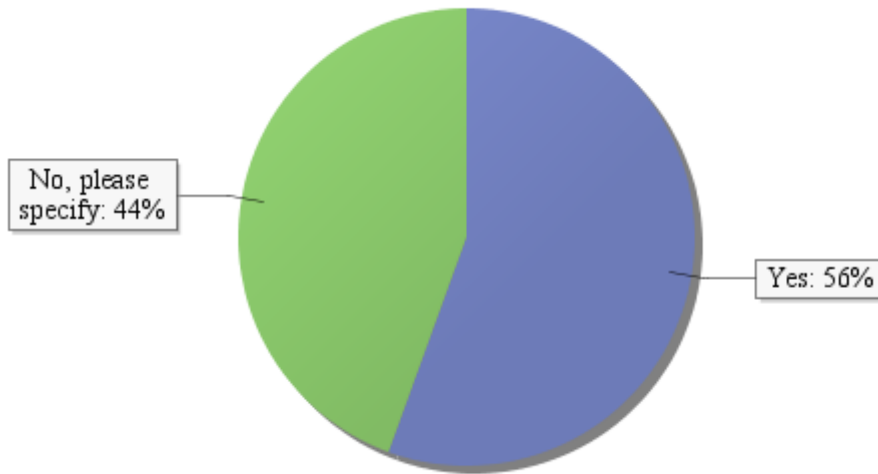


Figure 18. Do you consider the reward based system to be fair? (N=18)

The respondents were forced to provide an explanation to their answer to the question ‘Do you consider the reward based system to be fair?’ if they did not think the system was fair. As seen in figure 19 below, 70.0 % of the total amount of guides (7 guides) felt that the process was fair, and 37.5 % of the total amount of destination managers (3 destination managers) considered that the system was fair. After dividing the open text answers between guides and destination managers, it was made clear that the destination managers felt that the reward targets were too high to reach, and at times it affected their motivation. When analyzing the comments (Attachment 12), they were divided into two themes: monthly targets and too high targets. The respondents felt that monthly targets would be good, because then one bad month would not affect the whole season and they would be more motivating.

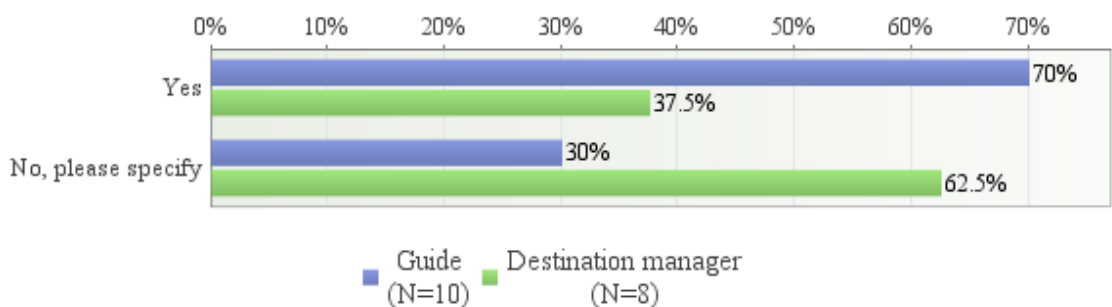


Figure 19. Do you consider the rewards based system to be fair? (N=18)

6.3 Work Motivation

From attachment 8 it can be stated that the majority of the respondents considered having the necessary skills and knowledge to perform the tasks needed in their job. Most of the respondents (12 respondents) with 66.7 % said having the necessary skills needed to perform the tasks essential for their job. The rest (6 respondents) with 33.3 % partly agreed to have the needed skills to perform the tasks in their job. Moreover, 61.1 % of the respondents (11 respondents) evaluated to have enough knowledge to perform the tasks needed for their job, and 33.3 % of the respondents (6 respondents) partly agreed on having the sufficient knowledge to perform the tasks needed for their job. 5.6 % (one respondent) partly disagreed on having the necessary knowledge to perform the tasks essential for their job.

The respondents were motivated to perform well in their jobs. 77.8 % of the respondents (14 respondents) agreed to be motivated, and the rest with 22.2 % of the respondents (4 respondents) partly agreed to be motivated to perform well in their jobs. Moreover, majority of the respondents (88.9 %, 16 respondents) expressed to be interested in the work that they do. Only 5.6 % (one respondent) partly agreed, and 5.6 % (one respondent) partly disagreed with the statement 'I am interested in the work I do'. The respondent who partly disagreed was a guide and in the open text field the guide explained that he or she was interested in the work that one did, however she or he felt that he or she was too highly educated, and would need a more motivating job.

A large majority of the respondents (14 respondents) agreed to be motivated to attain and update their knowledge on their own with 77.8 %. The rest of the respondents (4 respondents) with 22.2 % partly agreed to be motivated to update their knowledge on their own. Most of the respondents (66.7 %) fully agreed on having the opportunity to perform well in their job. The rest 33.3 % of the respondents (6 respondents) partly agreed on having the opportunity to perform well in their jobs. There were no major variances in between the destination managers and guides in terms of the responses to this statement.

The major differentiations in between the respondents occurred from the statement ‘The technology and tools support me in my job’. 38.9 % of the respondents (7 respondents) agreed that the technology and tools support them in their jobs, and 38.9 % (7 respondents) partly agreed with the fore mentioned. However, 16.7 % of the respondents (3 respondents) partly disagreed with the statement, and 5.6 % (one respondent) disagreed with it.

In the open text field more detailed explanations were provided. When analyzing the contents of the open text field (Attachment 13), three themes were found. First, the respondents felt that not enough information reached the destinations and the communication between destinations was not working properly. Second, the respondents evaluated that the technology used was poor. The poor technology was resulted from poor networking, no updated mobile devices, no guidance offered on how to use the technology, and the intranet not being as organized as it could have been. Last, it was stated that there was not enough time to familiarize with the destinations.

As figure 20 below displays, the respondents highly value respect, open feedback and recognition, and personal achievements. There were no major differences between the destination managers and guides in terms of the responses to the motivators. The aforementioned were considered to be either very important or important for all of the respondents. 77.8 % of the respondents (14 respondents) considered respect to be very important, and 22.2 % (4 respondents) considered it to be important. Open feedback and recognition were very important for 66.7 % of the respondents (12 respondents) and important for 33.3 % (6 respondents). Personal achievements were said to be very important for 72.2 % (13 respondents) and important for 27.8 % (5 respondents). The differences between the respondents came from the motivators regarding pay, promotion, and future career opportunities. In addition, two of the respondents gave an answer to the option ‘other’.

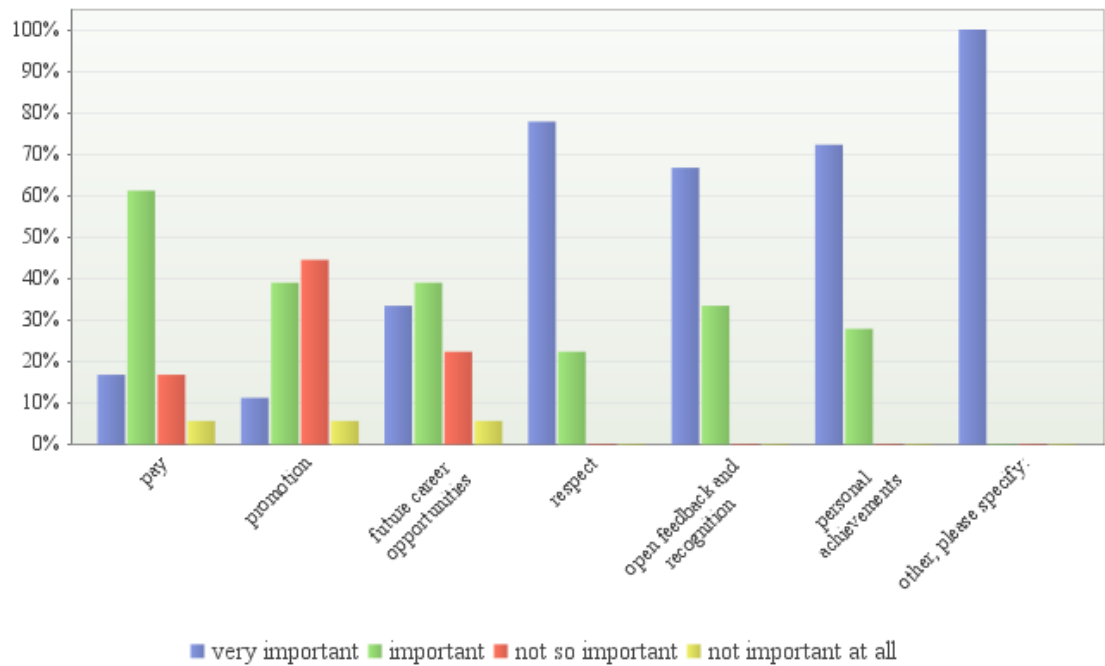


Figure 20. How important are the following factors regarding your motivation at work? (N=18)

As displayed in figure 20, pay was considered to be very important for 16.7 % of the respondents (3 respondents) and important for 61.1 % of the respondents (11 respondents). Nevertheless, 16.7 % of the respondents (3 respondents) did not consider it to be important, and 5.6 % of the respondents (1 respondent) stated that it was not important at all. Promotion was seen as very important only for 11.1 % of the respondents (2 respondents) and important for 38.9 % of the respondents (7 respondents). The majority of the respondents considered that promotion was not an important motivator with 44.4 % (8 respondents), and 5.6 % (1 respondent) considered that promotion was not important at all when it comes to motivation.

As figure 20 above displays, the future career opportunities were considered to be very important by 33.3 % of the respondents (6 respondents) and important by 38.9 % of the respondents (7 respondents). Moreover, 22.2 % of the respondents (4 respondents) did not think that the future career opportunities were important, and 5.6 % (1 respondent) did not consider it to be important at all. Last, there was an option 'other' with was answered by two respondents. These respondents described their answers in an open text field by stating that contents of work, feeling that his or her opinions are

taken into consideration, and the capability and skills to perform well were very important for them.

6.4 Work Life Balance

As figure 21 illustrates, the majority of the respondents (66.7 %, 12 respondents) had not experienced culture shock while working for Aurinkomatkat. However, 33.3 % (6 respondents) described that they had experienced culture shock. The respondents who had experienced culture shock were asked to describe their answer in open text field in more detail to specify which symptoms of culture shock they had had, and how did they overcome them.

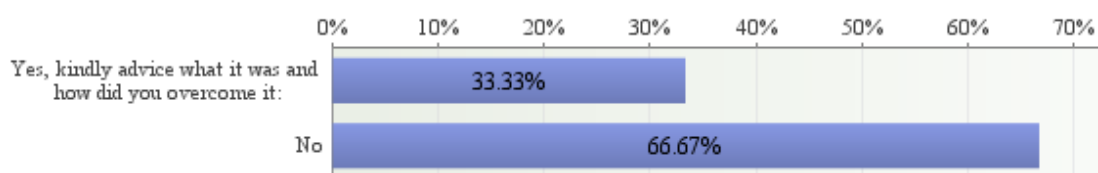


Figure 21. Have you experienced culture shock while working for Aurinkomatkat? (N=18)

As seen in figure 22 below, 50.0 % of the total amount of destination managers (4 respondents) and 20.0 % of the total amount of guides (2 respondents) had experienced culture shock while working for Aurinkomatkat. When analyzing the open text field answers (Attachment 14), the types of culture shocks experienced were racism, resentment, and frustration.

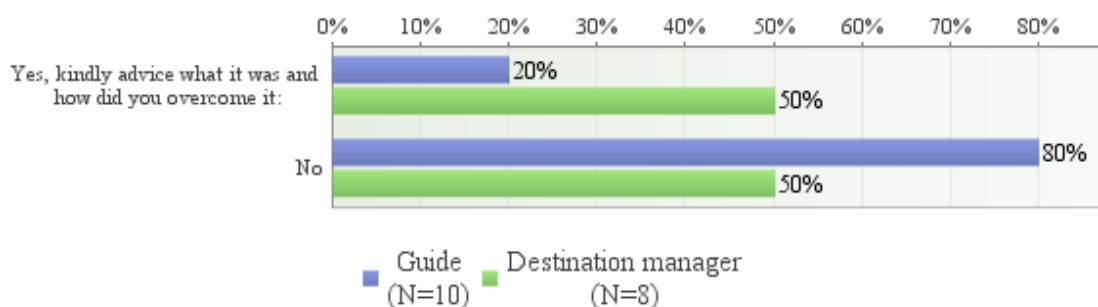


Figure 22. Culture shock (N=18)

As seen in figure 23 below, the opinions of the respondents were spread out quite evenly when asking about the support in cross-cultural issues. 27.8 % of the respondents (5 respondents) agreed, partly agreed, and partly disagreed with the statement 'Aurinkomatkat provides enough support in cross-cultural issues: how to live and work in another culture'. This left out a total of 16.7 % of the respondents (3 respondents) who disagreed with the fore mentioned statement. In the open text field (attachment 6) the respondents specified their answers. Four of the respondents stated that nobody pays attention to the cross-cultural issues and it is everyone's own responsibility to deal with them. Moreover, one of the respondents added that there should be more training, and the sessions should be more in depth.

From figure 23 below it can be stated that, in the opinions of the respondents, Aurinkomatkat does not provide enough support in language training. Only one respondent (5.6 % of the respondents) thought that enough support in language training was provided. 16.7 % of the respondents thought that Aurinkomatkat partly provided enough support in language training. Nevertheless, 27.8 % of the respondents (5 respondents) partly disagreed and 50.0 % of the respondents (9 respondents) disagreed with the statement 'Aurinkomatkat provides enough support in language training'. The respondents provided additional information in the open text field, five of the respondents said that language training was not provided at all. Couple of the employees who had been working for Aurinkomatkat for longer felt that Aurinkomatkat no longer appreciated language skills since the financial support for language training had been removed. There were no major differences in between the destination managers and guides in terms of the responses to this statement.

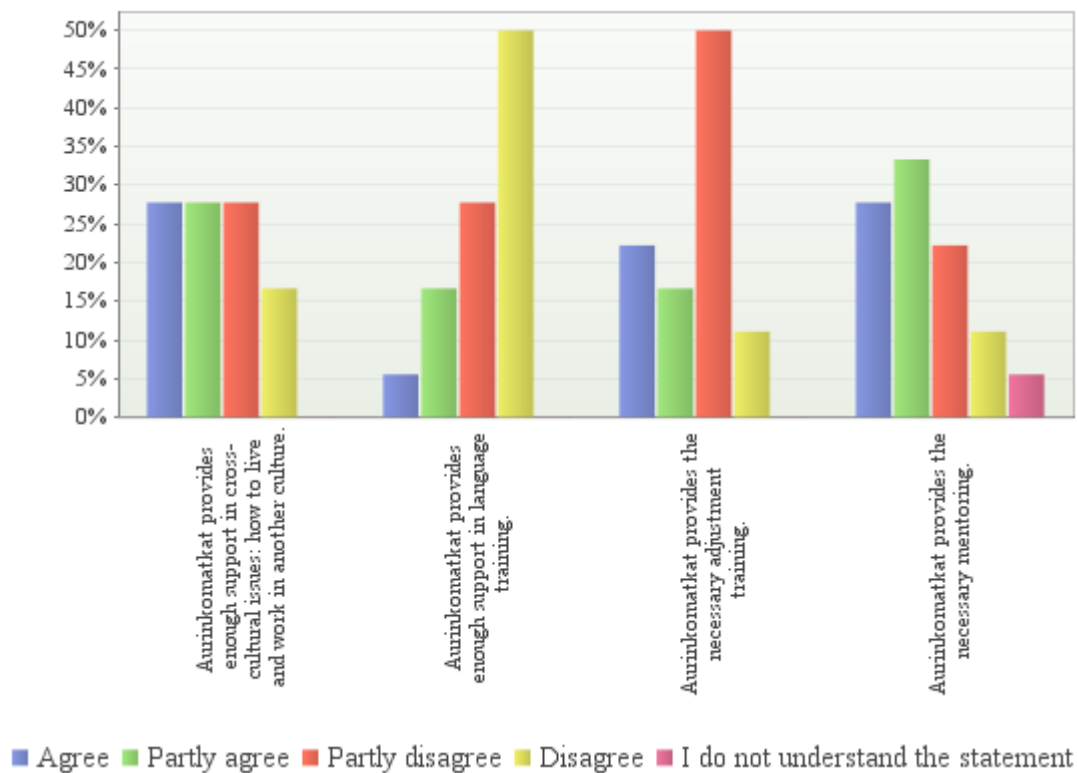


Figure 23. Working abroad (N=18)

As seen in figure 23 above, most of the respondents did not consider that Aurinkomatkat provided the necessary adjustment training. Only 22.2 % of the respondents (4 respondents) agreed and 16.7 % (3 respondents) partly agreed with the statement ‘Aurinkomatkat provides the necessary adjustment training’. 50.0 % of the respondents (9 respondents) partly disagreed with the fore mentioned statement and 11.1 % of the respondents (2 respondents) disagreed with it.

The respondents’ opinions varied when asking about the necessary mentoring. As seen in figure 23 27.8 % of the respondents (5 respondents) thought that Aurinkomatkat provided the necessary mentoring, and 33.3 % of the respondents (6 respondents) partly agreed that Aurinkomatkat provided enough mentoring. However, 22.2 % of the respondents (4 respondents) partly disagreed and 11.1 % of the respondents (2 respondents) disagreed with the statement ‘Aurinkomatkat provides the necessary mentoring’. Additionally, one respondent (5.6 % of the respondents) had not understood the statement, and chose the option ‘I do not understand the statement’. In the open text field the respondents stated that the mentoring comes from colleagues and close

management. Additionally, one of the respondents suggested that the guides who are familiar with a certain destination should do the mentoring, and a named mentor should be pointed out for everyone. There were no major variances in between the destination managers and guides in terms of the responses to this statement.

When analyzing the open comments about cross-cultural issues (Attachment 15), three main themes raised up. First, the respondents thought that there was not enough support for learning languages. Second, the respondents felt that mentoring should be done by the ones familiar with the destinations. Last, the respondents did not think that enough support in cross-cultural issues was provided.

6.5 Destination Managers

This part of the questionnaire was only for destination managers, and therefore the number of respondents in this part is eight, which is the number of destination managers who took a part in this research.

As seen in figure 24 below, all of the destination managers coached their subordinates in their daily activities. 37.5 % of the respondents (3 respondents) agreed and 62.5 % of the respondents (5 respondents) partly agreed with the statement 'I coach my subordinates in their daily activities'. In addition, all of the destination managers felt as they based feedback on evidence, not on personal opinions. 75.0 % of the respondents (6 respondents) based feedback on evidence, not on personal opinions, and 25.0 % of the respondents (2 respondents) partly based feedback on evidence, not on personal opinions.

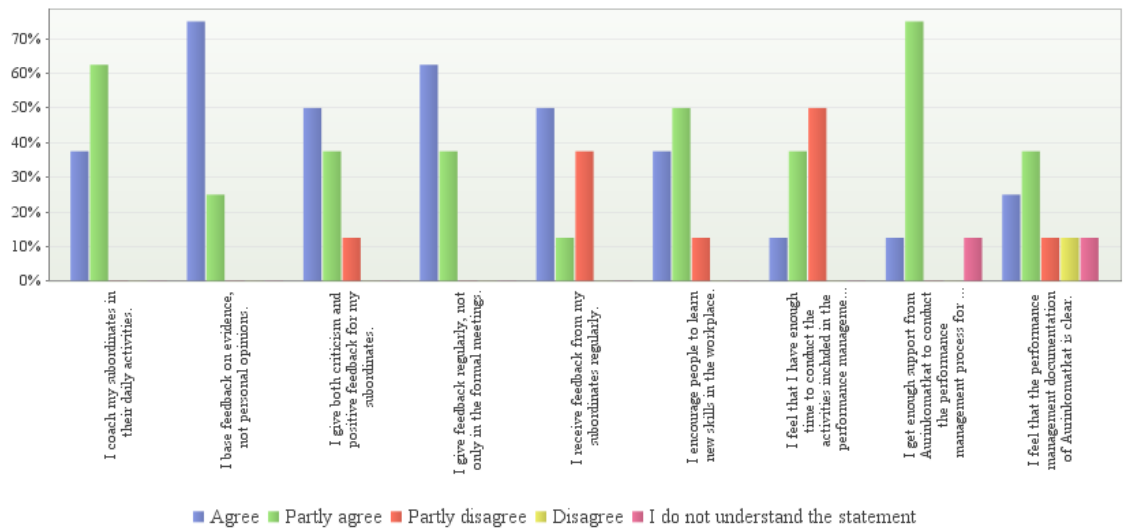


Figure 24. Destination managers' opinions about the performance management process (N=8)

Most of the destination managers provided both criticism and positive feedback for their subordinates. As seen in figure 24, 50.0 % of the respondents (4 respondents) agreed, and 37.5 % of the respondents (3 respondents) partly agreed with the statement 'I give both criticism and positive feedback for my subordinates'. Only 12.5 % of the respondents (1 respondent) partly disagreed with giving both criticism and positive feedback to their subordinates. In addition, 62.5 % of the respondents (5 respondents) agreed to give feedback regularly, not only in the formal review meetings, and 37.5 % of the respondents (3 respondents) partly agreed with the statement 'I give feedback regularly, not only in the formal meetings'.

50.0 % of the destination managers who responded (4 respondents) felt that they received feedback from their subordinates regularly, and 12.5 % of the respondents (1 respondent) felt that they sometimes received feedback from their subordinates. However, 37.5 % of the respondents (3 respondents) partly disagreed with the statement 'I receive feedback from my subordinates regularly'.

The destination managers felt that they somewhat encouraged people to learn new skills in the workplace. As figure 24 displays, 37.5 % of the respondents (3 respondents) agreed and 50.0 % of the respondents (4 respondents) partly agreed with the statement 'I encourage people to learn new skills in the workplace'. Additionally, 12.5

% of the respondents (1 respondent) partly disagreed with encouraging people to learn new skills.

As figure 24 displays, the destination managers did not consider that they had enough time to conduct the activities related to performance management. Only 12.5 % of the respondents (1 respondent) felt that they had enough time to conduct the activities included in the performance management process. 37.5 % of the respondents (3 respondents) partly agreed and 50.0 % of the respondents (4 respondents) partly disagreed with the statement 'I feel that I have enough time to conduct the activities included in the performance management process'. However, the respondents felt that they partly had enough support from Aurinkomatkat to conduct the performance management process. 12.5 % of the respondents (1 respondent) agreed, and 75.0 % of the respondents (6 respondents) partly agreed with the statement 'I get enough support from Aurinkomatkat to conduct the performance management process for my subordinates'. Additionally, one of the respondents (12.5 %) did not understand the statement, and therefore could not provide an answer to this statement.

As seen in figure 24 above, the responses of the performance management documentation varied in between the respondents. 25.0 % of the respondents (2 respondents) felt the performance management documentation of Aurinkomatkat to be clear, and 37.5 % of the respondents (3 respondents) assessed it to be somewhat clear. However, one respondent (12.5 %) felt the documentation to be partly clear and one respondent (12.5 %) did not think it was clear at all. In addition, one of the respondents did not understand the statement 'I feel that the performance management documentation of Aurinkomatkat is clear'.

One of the destination managers (D1) had several good points about the performance management process and working in small destinations. They were pointed out in the open text field as below.

I think giving feedback both ways should be done more. In a small destination it becomes difficult, because we live together, work together and spend a lot of time together, so the line between manager and subordinate blurs and then it's sometimes difficult

to give the criticism. I know I could be more encouraging, but sometimes it's also difficult, because you see that the motivation of the subordinates is not always at the best level and some think that they know everything useful already. In a small destination where destination manager is doing the same daily work as the guides, it's difficult to have enough time for the managing processes. I definitely also think that the performance management documentation is not clear and especially for the guides. I think that not even the managers fully understand the documentation.

At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents had a chance to leave additional comments and opinions about the questionnaire. One of the respondents stated that the language of the questionnaire was too academic and official, and it might be that not all of the guides would understand the language. However, another employee provided an additional comment that the questionnaire was interesting, and easy to fill in and read. When designing the questionnaire, it was taken into consideration that maybe not everyone would understand all of the statements, and therefore the additional answer option of 'I do not understand the statement' was added.

6.6 Reliability and Validity

When talking about internal validity in context of questionnaires, it refers to the questionnaire measuring the aspects that were planned to be measured. Content validity is concerned about whether or not the measurement questions offer enough exposure of the investigative questions. Criterion-related validity reflects to the capability of questions to make correct predictions. Moreover, construct validity refers to the level to which the measurement questions measure the presence of the constructs intended to be measured. (Saunders et al. 2012, 429-430.) The data collected for this thesis can be seen as valid since the questions in the questionnaire measured what they intended to.

Reliability is concerned about consistency of the questionnaire. A valid questionnaire should be reliable and vice versa. If a questionnaire is reliable, it will produce stable findings at varying times and under different conditions. These can be conducted by different samples or different interviewers. (Saunders et al 2012, 430.) The questionnaire for this thesis was prepared in a way that it was easy to read in order for all of the respondents to comprehend the questions asked. Moreover, the questionnaire was pi-

lot tested in two phases. These two phases included acquaintances of the researchers and the destination sales and service manager of Aurinkomatkat, Katja Rautavaara. As a result of pilot testing, modifications for the questionnaire were prepared. Therefore, it can be stated that the carefully planned questionnaire and the pilot testing resulted in a clear and understandable questionnaire. In case the respondents did not understand a question in the questionnaire, there was an option 'I do not understand the statement' in order for the respondents to be able to notify if they had not understood the question. This could then be detected when analyzing the results.

The fact that the questionnaire was sent as an open link to the destinations' emails via the commissioner's email had to be taken into consideration when assessing the reliability. It was not possible to get a list of the email addresses of all the employees working abroad, therefore the link was sent to the destinations' general email addresses as an open link. It is possible that one person could have answered the questionnaire more than once due to the fact that the questionnaire was an open link. In addition, it is possible that some people did not ever see the questionnaire due to the season switching time and the destinations' general emails used.

The questionnaire (Attachment 2) would be easy to repeat at any time, and then the results could be defined as reliable. A total of 18 responses were received which made the response rate 16.4 %. The non-response rate was 83.6 %. Due to the low response rate, the results are seen as an unrepresentative sample of the census, and therefore cannot be generalized. Even though the results of the questionnaire are opinions of only the 18 respondents, they give an idea of the direction of the opinions of all of the employees of Aurinkomatkat working abroad. When looking at the results separately for the destination managers and for the guides, the response rate varies. The response rate of the destination managers was 42.1 % and the response rate of the guides was 11.0 %. Therefore, the results of the destination managers are not as unrepresentative as the results of the whole research.

7 Discussion

In this chapter the key findings, recommendations for improvement, and assessment of the thesis process are presented. First, the key findings and their usefulness and validity are discussed. Next, recommendations for improvement and suggestions for further research are presented. Last, assessment of the thesis process and reflections upon learning and professional development are discussed.

The aim of this thesis was to provide Aurinkomatkat information about the effectiveness of their performance management process. In addition, recommendations about improving the performance management process were gathered. The objective of this thesis was to find out whether the employees of Aurinkomatkat considered that there was a continuum in their performance management process. The thesis focused on the employees who were working in destinations outside of Finland. Subsequent objective was to find out the best practices to improve the current performance management process of Aurinkomatkat. The research aim and objectives were reached, and the researchers were able to give an answer to the research problems.

Both destination managers and guides participated in the research. Therefore, an unrepresentative sample of the employees who were working in destinations outside of Finland could be formed. The fact that both destination managers and guides took part in the research was positive, and made it possible to research both parties.

7.1 Key Findings

When asking about the performance management process, the results were quite positive. All of the respondents felt that the goals set in their job descriptions were rather clear and they were quite aware of what was expected of them. However, not all of the respondents knew what their personal development plan was. It is very important that every employee knows what they should develop in order for them to perform better. The destination managers were more aware of how their managers supported and guided them than the guides were.

The objectives set for the respondents were not as exact and measurable as they could have been. Moreover, the objectives should be more specific and all of them should be measurable. Almost a third of the respondents did not consider the objectives to be inspiring and achievable. Some of the objectives were thought to be almost impossible to achieve. The respondents were not all sure how the objectives set for them were measured. A good objective should be exact, it should relate with the objectives and values of the organization, and it should be stimulating, measurable, and attainable. In addition, the objective should be jointly agreed by the individual and the manager, and it should be time-related and highlighting teamwork. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 25-27.)

Even though most of the respondents considered that the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat was continuous, a third of the respondents considered that the process was not continuous. It has to be remembered that performance management is not a specific technique or instrument; it is a continuous process that links to organizational objectives. Planning, acting, monitoring, and reviewing are the parts that form the performance management process. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 13.)

Almost half of the respondents considered that the feedback was not provided in constant basis. In addition, a third of the respondents stated that they did not provide regular feedback for their managers. Through giving feedback, the achievements and areas for improvement can be stated. The feedback should be based on evidence, not to a personal opinion. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 34-35.)

The number of formal review meetings held in a season varied from one to three formal review meetings. Most of the respondents considered that there were enough formal review meetings. Review meetings give an opportunity to reflect on the key issues of every day work life, and personal development (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 32).

There should be a formal review held once or twice a year. Performance review gives an overview of key motivational, performance, and development concerns. It is important to understand the past performance in order to improve it in the future. The

review meeting should form a discussion between the individuals involved in it. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 31-32.)

Almost a half of the respondents did not consider that the reward based system was fair. The guides thought that the reward based system was reasonable than the destinations managers did. The reward review is based on rewarding the employees based on their past performance. It is hoped that the incentives will drive the employees to work better and harder in the future. Many organizations have linked performance-related pay to excellent performance at work. (Foot & Hook 2005, 269-270.)

Almost a half of the respondents either partly disagreed or disagreed that Aurinkomatkat provided enough support in cross-cultural issues. The majority of the respondents did not consider that enough support was provided in language training or the necessary adjustment training. There are various aspects which should be taken into consideration when sending people to work abroad. An employee should be taught to be aware of cross-cultural issues and how to live and work in another culture. (Andrews & Mead 2009, 366-367.)

As figure 24 shows, the destination managers did not feel that they had enough time to conduct the activities related to performance management. However, the respondents felt that they had enough support from Aurinkomatkat to conduct the performance management process. The manager is accountable for the organizational management, and the practical management of the employee. The breach between intended and actual practices can be explained by the problems line managers face when implementing human resource practices. These problems can be work overloads, lack of capabilities and skills, unwillingness, and insufficient support. (Hutchinson 2013, 13.)

7.2 Recommendations

The development plan enables the continuum in development of an individual by making it possible to take more challenging tasks and a wider role (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 24-25). Therefore, Aurinkomatkat should ensure that every employee is aware of what their personal development plan is and that everyone has one.

Good objectives should cover all the key aspects of the job, they should be consistent, exact, stimulating, measurable, achievable, agreed, time bound, and teamwork-oriented (Armstrong & Baron 1998, 290). The objectives of the employees of Aurinkomatkat should be more specific and they should be measurable. In addition, it is important that all the employees know how the objectives are measured in order for them to know where to aim. Based on the results of the questionnaire (Attachment 10), more guidance should be provided on how to reach the goals, and in order to maintain commitment, they should always inform the employees working abroad about the changes in the company.

Performance management should be a continuous part of management, which includes the attainment of continued improvements in performance, the continuous development of skills and capabilities, and constant development from experience. (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 31). The employees who responded to the questionnaire, did not all consider the performance management process to be continuous. In order to achieve the feeling of continuation, based on the responses of the respondents (Attachment 10), it can be suggested that the information flow between destination managers in different destinations should be improved. The performance management documentation should not be transferred by the guides, it would be better to have the documentation in electronic form in order it to be accessed from every destination. Additionally, in order to practice the things learned previously, it would be good to work in the same destination more than once.

Through giving feedback, the achievements and areas for improvement can be stated (Armstrong & Baron 2005, 34-35). Based on the answers of the respondents (Attachment 11), feedback should be provided more often. Aurinkomatkat should advice all the managers to be in contact with their subordinates and give regular feedback.

It is hoped that the incentives will drive the employees to work better and harder in the future (Foot & Hook 2005, 269-270). Based on the respondents comments (Attachment 12) it can be suggested that the rewards should be based on monthly goals rather

that seasonal goals in a way that one bad month would not ruin the whole season. The targets should not be too high that the employees would have a feeling that it is possible to achieve them and motivate them.

An employee should be taught to be aware of cross-cultural issues and how to live and work in another culture. Moreover, if needed, language training should be provided. During the employment, an employee who is working abroad should be able to receive support on the fore mentioned cross-cultural issues. The support given during the employment abroad aims to motivate the employee and decrease the stress levels of the employee. (Andrews & Mead 2009, 366-369.) Based on the opinions of the respondents (Attachment 15), it can be suggested that Aurinkomatkat should provide language training for the employees working abroad. In addition, the support in cross-cultural issues should be increased. This could be done for example by mentoring. The mentoring could be done by the ones familiar with a specific destination, and a named mentor for everyone could be pointed out.

The manager is accountable for the organizational management, and the practical management of the employee (Hutchinson 2013, 13). Therefore, the destination managers should have enough time to conduct the tasks related to the performance management process. In order to do that, Aurinkomatkat should provide the destination managers with a specific time frame to do the managerial tasks. Additionally, they should be guided on how to conduct the performance management in cooperation with their other tasks.

This research could be easily repeated at any time. If the questionnaires would be conducted at another time, not in the off season time, the response rate could be a lot better. The research would be best to be conducted in the summer time for example June or July, or in the winter season before the beginning of March. Furthermore, the questionnaire could be used as a foundation if researching the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat in Finland, or in its subsidiary companies.

7.3 Assessment of Thesis Process

The concept of performance management was rather new for both of the researchers, and therefore the thesis process was interesting and educational. As a result of this thesis, a new area of expertise was gained. Since this thesis was conducted as team work, time management and delegation played an important role. The researchers stayed on schedule and the tasks were divided equally throughout the entire thesis process. The thesis seminars during the process were useful so that the researchers got an idea of how the other students were proceeding on their theses. However, the researchers would have wished to get more feedback from the other students when they were acting as opponents.

The main obstacles of the thesis process were related to the information gained from the commissioner. Some of the information would have been useful right in the beginning of the thesis process. For example, the individual email addresses were not available when sending out the questionnaires even though it had been planned to send the questionnaire to each person separately. Moreover, it would have been good to know the most suitable time to send out the questionnaires in advance, so that it would not have overlapped with the season changing time. Knowing this, if the research would be repeated, the researchers would insist on having all the possible information from the commissioner in the beginning of the process and not in little pieces during the process.

8 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to provide Aurinkomatkat information about the effectiveness of their performance management process. In addition, recommendations of improvement of the performance management process were gathered. Aurinkomatkat wanted to establish a continuum for their performance management process for the employees working abroad. The employees working abroad consisted of destination managers and guides. The destination managers and guides switch destinations several times a year and therefore the work group varies frequently. The fact that the employees switch from a destination to another several times a year brought additional factors to be considered in the performance management process. In this thesis, the above factors were taken into consideration when researching the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat.

The objective of this thesis was to find out whether the employees of Aurinkomatkat considered that there was a continuum in their performance management process. The thesis focused on the employees who were working in destinations outside of Finland. Subsequent objective was to find out the best practices to improve the current performance management process of Aurinkomatkat. The main and the sub research problems were stated as questions. First, is there a continuum in the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat in the opinion of the employees working abroad? Second, how to develop a continuum for the performance management process? The research aim and objectives were reached, and the researchers were able to give an answer to the research problems.

The questionnaires to the employees working abroad were sent out on the 14th of March, and a timeline of 14.03.-30.03.2014 was given to respond. Later, the response time was extended until the 6th of April due to lack of responses. By the 6th of April, 17 responses had been received. An additional response was collected on the 7th of April, which made the total number of respondents 18. That was a total of 16.4 percent of the amount of employees working in destinations outside of Finland. From the 18 respondents, eight were destination managers and ten were guides.

The results showed that there is still room for improvement in the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat. The areas that needed the most improvement were cross-cultural issues, reward targets and providing feedback. Based on the results of the questionnaire, recommendations for improvement were gathered, and the parts that needed the most improvement were pointed out.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. Covering letter

Dear employee of Aurinkomatkat,

This questionnaire is aimed to find out whether the employees of Aurinkomatkat consider that there is a continuum in their performance management process. This research focuses on the employees who are working in destinations outside of Finland. Through this questionnaire it is aimed to find out the best practices to improve the current performance management process of Aurinkomatkat. This research is done as the final thesis for the Degree Program in Tourism (HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences).

Your responses are extremely important in order to get accurate information about the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat. With your honest responses and constructive criticism, the development ideas can be provided. You are kindly asked to fill in the questionnaire by the 30th of March (30.03.2014).

This questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes to complete. All the responses are treated confidentially, and no single person can be recognized from the analysis of the results. The summary of the results will be sent to all of the respondents after the results have been analyzed.

Here you can find the link to the questionnaire:

<https://www.webpolsurveys.com/S/380BFA5F90B8A4C7.par>

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire. If you have any questions related to the questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact us by email: sade.lehtonen(at)myy.haaga-helia.fi or miia.joro(at)myy.haaga-helia.fi.

Sincerely,

Sade Lehtonen and Miia Joro
HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences

The Performance Management Process of Aurinkomatkat

This questionnaire is aimed to find out the employees opinions about the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat. First part of the questionnaire covers the background information followed by questions related to the performance management process. Next, questions about motivation and work life balance are stated. Kindly note that the question number 20 is only for the destination managers. Guides can skip that part and go directly to question number 22. Last, there is a possibility to leave additional comments.

Background Information

1. Sex *

- Female Male

2. Age *

- 23-24
 25-44
 45+

3. How long have you been working for Aurinkomatkat (one year comprises of two seasons)? *

- 0-2 seasons
 3-8 seasons
 9-20 seasons
 21+ seasons

4. Job description in the past season (winter season 2013-2014) *

- Guide
 Destination manager

5. How long have you been working in your current position? *

- 0-2 seasons
- 3-8 seasons
- 9-20 seasons
- 21+ seasons

Performance Management Process

6. For the following statements, please select the option that best matches your opinion *

	Agree	Partly agree	Partly disagree	Disagree	I do not under- stand the state- ment
The goals set in my job description are clear.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of what is expected from me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know what my personal development plan is.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of how my manager will support and guide me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was involved in the process of setting the objectives for myself with my manager.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The objectives set for me are exact and measurable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of the objectives of Aurinkomatkat.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The objectives set for me are related to the objectives and values of Aurinkomatkat.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The objectives set for me are inspiring and achievable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know how the objectives set for me are measured.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. If you disagreed with the above statements or if you have comments related to them, kindly explain.

8. In your opinion, is the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat continuous (eg. what has been agreed on and learned in the previous destination transfer to the coming destinations)? *

Yes

No, please specify:

9. For the following statements, please select the option that best matches your opinion *

	Agree	Partly agree	Partly disagree	Disagree	I do not under- stand the state- ment
My manager coaches me in my daily activities if necessary.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I receive feedback it is based on evidence, not personal opinions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive both criticism and positive feedback from my manager..	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My manager gives me feedback regularly, not only in the formal meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I give feedback for my manager regularly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am encouraged to learn new skills in my workplace.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My manager is capable of conducting the performance management process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The relationship between me and my manager is open and trusting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. If you disagreed with the above statements or if you have comments related to them, kindly explain.

11. How often do you have a formal review meeting (a planned meeting with your manager to discuss about your past performance)? *

- once in a season
- twice in a season
- other, please specify:

12. Do you think there are enough formal review meetings? *

- Yes
- No, kindly advise how many there should be:

13. Do you consider the reward based system to be fair? *

- Yes
- No, please specify

Work Motivation

14. For the following statements, please select the option that best matches your opinion *

	Agree	Partly agree	Partly disagree	Disagree	I do not understand the statement
I have the skills to perform the tasks needed for my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have sufficient knowledge to perform the tasks needed for my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am motivated to perform well in my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am interested in the work I do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am motivated to attain and update my knowledge on my own.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have the opportunity to perform well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The technology and tools support me in my job.

15. If you disagreed with the above statements or if you have comments related to them, kindly explain.

16. How important are the following factors regarding your motivation at work?

	very im- portant	important	not so im- portant	not important at all
pay *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
promotion *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
future career opportunities *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
respect *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
open feedback and recognition *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
personal achievements *	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
other, please specify: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Work Life Balance

17. Have you experienced culture shock while working for Aurinkomatkat (frustration, home sickness, depression, resentment towards a new culture)? *

Yes, kindly advice what it was and how did you overcome it:

No

18. For the following statements, please select the option that best matches your opinion *

	Agree	Partly agree	Partly disagree	Disagree	I do not under- stand the state- ment
Aurinkomatkat provides enough	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

support in cross-cultural issues: how to live and work in another culture.

Aurinkomatkat provides enough support in language training.

Aurinkomatkat provides the necessary adjustment training.

Aurinkomatkat provides the necessary mentoring.

19. If you disagreed with the above statements or if you have comments related to them, kindly explain.

This part is only for destination managers, if you are a guide; please go to the next question.

20. For the following statements, please select the option that best matches your opinion

	Agree	Partly agree	Partly disagree	Disagree	I do not understand the statement
I coach my subordinates in their daily activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I base feedback on evidence, not personal opinions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I give both criticism and positive feedback for my subordinates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I give feedback regularly, not only in the formal meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive feedback from my subordinates regularly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I encourage people to learn new skills in the workplace.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel that I have enough time to conduct the activities included in the performance management process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get enough support from Aurinko-	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

matkat to conduct the performance management process for my subordinates.

I feel that the performance management documentation of Aurinkomatkat is clear. ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

21. If you disagreed with the above statements or if you have comments related to them, kindly explain.

22. Additional comments and opinions about the questionnaire:

Thank you for completing the questionnaire. If you have any questions related to the questionnaire, please do not hesitate to contact us by email: sade.lehtonen@myy.haaga-helia.fi or miia.joro@myy.haaga-helia.fi.

Attachment 3. Remind letter

Dear employee of Aurinkomatkat,

Kindly note that you still have time to fill out the questionnaire until the end of this week (30.03.2014). If you have already completed the questionnaire, thank you for your responses.

Here you can find the link to the questionnaire:

<https://www.webpolsurveys.com/S/380BFA5F90B8A4C7.par>

Sincerely,

Sade Lehtonen and Miia Joro
HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences

+ Attachment 1

Attachment 4. Time extension letter

Dear employee of Aurinkomatkat,

Due to low response rate we have extended the response time for the questionnaire until 6th of April (06.04.2014). Your responses are extremely important in order to get accurate information about the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat. With your honest responses and constructive criticism, the development ideas can be provided.

Here you can find the link to the questionnaire: <https://www.webropolsurveys.com/S/380BFA5F90B8A4C7.par>

Thank you for everyone who have already taken time to complete the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Sade Lehtonen and Miia Joro
HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences

+ Attachment 1

Attachment 5. Thank you letter

Dear employee of Aurinkomatkat,

Thank you for everyone who took time to complete the questionnaire related to the performance management process of Aurinkomatkat. A special thank you for those of you who provided additional comments and ideas for improvement. These were beneficial for the purpose of the research.

The responses have now been analyzed and the results will be published shortly.

Sincerely,

Sade Lehtonen and Miia Joro
HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences
sade.lehtonen@myy.haaga-helia.fi
miia.joro@myy.haaga-helia.fi

Attachment 6. Performance Management Process

6. For the following statements, please select the option that best matches your opinion

Number of respondents: 18

	Agree	Partly agree	Partly disagree	Disagree	I do not understand the statement	Total	Average
The goals set in my job description are clear.	66.67%	33.33%	0%	0%	0%	18	1.33
I am aware of what is expected from me.	66.67%	27.78%	5.56%	0%	0%	18	1.39
I know what my personal development plan is.	55.56%	27.78%	11.11%	5.56%	0%	18	1.67
I am aware of how my manager will support and guide me.	50%	33.33%	16.67%	0%	0%	18	1.67
I was involved in the process of setting the objectives for myself with my manager.	50%	33.33%	16.67%	0%	0%	18	1.67
The objectives set for me are exact and measurable.	38.89%	38.89%	11.11%	11.11%	0%	18	1.94
I am aware of the objectives of Aurinkomatkat.	44.44%	33.33%	22.22%	0%	0%	18	1.78
The objectives set for me are related to the objectives and values of Aurinkomatkat.	50%	27.78%	22.22%	0%	0%	18	1.72
The objectives set for me are inspiring and achievable.	33.33%	38.89%	22.22%	5.56%	0%	18	2
I know how the objectives set for me are measured.	33.33%	33.33%	22.22%	11.11%	0%	18	2.11
Total	48.89%	32.78%	15%	3.33%	0%	180	1.73

Attachment 7. Feedback

9. For the following statements, please select the option that best matches your opinion

Number of respondents: 18

	Agree	Partly agree	Partly disagree	Disagree	I do not understand the statement	Total	Average
My manager coaches me in my daily activities if necessary.	10	4	3	1	0	18	1.72
When I receive feedback it is based on evidence, not personal opinions.	13	1	4	0	0	18	1.5
I receive both criticism and positive feedback from my manager.	9	4	4	1	0	18	1.83
My manager gives me feedback regularly, not only in the formal meetings.	7	4	6	1	0	18	2.06
I give feedback for my manager regularly.	4	8	6	0	0	18	2.11
I am encouraged to learn new skills in my workplace.	10	7	0	1	0	18	1.56
My manager is capable of conducting the performance management process.	10	3	5	0	0	18	1.72
The relationship between me and my manager is open and trusting.	11	5	1	1	0	18	1.56
Total	74	36	29	5	0	144	1.76

Attachment 8. Ability, motivation and opportunity

14. For the following statements, please select the option that best matches your opinion

Number of respondents: 18

	Agree	Partly agree	Partly disagree	Disagree	I do not understand the statement	Total	Average
I have the skills to perform the tasks needed for my job.	12	6	0	0	0	18	1.33
I have sufficient knowledge to perform the tasks needed for my job.	11	6	1	0	0	18	1.44
I am motivated to perform well in my job.	14	4	0	0	0	18	1.22
I am interested in the work I do.	16	1	1	0	0	18	1.17
I am motivated to attain and update my knowledge on my own.	14	4	0	0	0	18	1.22
I have the opportunity to perform well.	12	6	0	0	0	18	1.33
The technology and tools support me in my job.	7	7	3	1	0	18	1.89
Total	86	34	5	1	0	126	1.37