

Study of Intrinsic motivation in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

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| <p>The purpose of this thesis was to investigate intrinsic motivation of the executive assistants and secretaries in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The objective in turn, was to examine how well intrinsic motivation has been achieved among these executive assistants and secretaries. How respondents evaluate their job satisfaction, work environment and motivation was also researched. Lastly, factors that increase or decrease motivation were studied, as well as if there is a need for additional training in any specific area.</p> <p>The theoretical part of the thesis focused on two main themes, motivation and intrinsic motivation. The former deals with the general definition of motivation, differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and work motivation in light of these two motivation theories. The section dealing with intrinsic motivation discusses the definition of intrinsic motivation, the self-determination theory and intrinsic rewards and finally, how to increase intrinsic motivation.</p> <p>This thesis was a traditional research which was conducted with a quantitative research method. The data collection was completed with a Webropol survey in spring 2015. There were 22 respondents, which is 58% of the population.</p> <p>The findings revealed that intrinsic motivation and overall work motivation of the respondents seem to both be good. Most respondents are motivated in their work and find it satisfying. However, the research revealed that in general respondents wish they could have more challenging and variable tasks.</p> | |
| Key words intrinsic motivation, work motivation, work environment, work well-being | |

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1 Introduction

There are two fundamental ways to get motivated: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is reactive and it is based on rewards and punishments. Intrinsic motivation is proactive which means that the act itself is already satisfying. It leads the person to do things he finds satisfying. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 6) According to Edward Deci, *“For intrinsically motivated people the activities are ends in themselves rather than means to an end.”* (1975, 23)

1.1 Background and the commissioning party

The significance of intrinsic motivation as a factor to increase work motivation and work well-being has been recently emphasized considerably. It is no longer enough just having competitive salary and various external incentives to motivate employees. But now the satisfaction and the feelings of success got from work have overtaken the relevance of extrinsic rewards. The importance of intrinsic motivation and aiming towards it is often perceived as a more relevant matter for creative and highly-paid careers, but in his writing Frank Martela points out, that this is not the case. According to him, it's not the content of the work what makes the so-called less appreciated and low-paid occupations worse than the others, but it is what kind of treatment these workers receive. If the working environment is supportive and positive, even a job as simple as cleaning can feel meaningful and satisfying. (Martela 2014) Intrinsic motivation is therefore particularly important for individual's well-being, but also for the whole work community. Intrinsically motivated employees are proved to be more productive and innovative than the others. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 6)

The commissioning party of the thesis is the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate intrinsic motivation of the executive assistants and secretaries in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The research topic is rather interesting and important, as intrinsic motivation and its elements can be seen crucial from the work well-being and motivation's point of view.

The main objectives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs are promoting secure and welfare of Finland and its citizens as well as work for a secure and fair world. The ministry concentrates on issues such as foreign and security policy, trade policy and development policy. It also deals with significant foreign policy issues and international relations. (Ulkoasiainministeriö 2013)

The number of personnel in Finland was 998 in 2013. The Finnish Foreign Services are formed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, diplomatic missions and consular missions. Finland has 92 diplomatic missions worldwide and the number of personnel outside Finland is approximately 1700 employees. Majority of these employees are locally engaged staff members and around 600 of them are Finnish citizen. (Ulkoasiainministeriö 2013, 3-5; Ulkoasiainministeriö 2014)

1.2 Objectives and limitations of the research

The main objectives of the research are to examine how well intrinsic motivation has been achieved among the executive assistants and secretaries of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and how the respondents evaluate their job satisfaction, work environment and motivation. The research also aims to get new and reliable information of the subject as well as to produce coherent and interesting report based on the results. The research population is limited to executive assistant and secretaries of the higher civil servants.

1.3 The structure of the thesis

The first chapter introduces background and commissioning party of the thesis as well as main objectives, research methods and the structure. The theoretical part of the thesis is divided into two main themes, which are motivation and intrinsic motivation. The motivation theme deals with the general definition of motivation, differences between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and work motivation through two existing motivation theories. Intrinsic motivation chapter in turn discusses the definition of intrinsic motivation, the self-determination theory and intrinsic rewards and finally how to increase intrinsic motivation.

After the research methods, research results are presented. Following the results come discussion chapter. In analyzing the results chapter results are being analyzed based on the theories and possible improvements are suggested. The last chapter of the thesis is conclusions, which summarizes the results and implementation of the work.

2 Motivation and work motivation

The first part of the chapter discusses motivation and explains the differences between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The second part introduces two motivational theories used when defining work motivation.

2.1 Motivation

Motivation is the most relevant term when talking about why people choose to behave in a certain way. Whether it is about an athletic, who day after day practices and aims for better results or about an office worker, who spends countless hours with a project behind those both actions is an individual motivation, a reason to do something. Fredrick Herzberg summarized the meaning of motivation in the following paragraph:

“If I kick my dog (from the front or the back), he will move. And when I want him to move again, what must I do? I must kick him again. Similarly, I can charge a person’s battery, and then recharge it, and recharge it again. But it is only when one has a generator of one’s own that we can talk about motivation. One then needs no outside stimulation. One wants to do it.” (Herzberg 2003)

Briefly said motivation is a theoretical concept that explains why people choose to engage in particular behaviors at particular times. It is the desire that makes us enthusiastically to do something. (Beck 2000, 3) Basic motivational premise is that people tend to approach goals or engage in particular activities when the expectation is that the outcome will be desirable. And vice versa, if the outcome is expected to be unpleasant, we avoid those kinds of activities. (Beck 2000, 31)

2.1.1 Two approaches to motivation

It is not easy to define motivation in a way that satisfies everyone. However there are two major differences in emphasis, which divides the main approaches to the regulatory approach and purposive approach. With these two approaches it is possible to divide the motivation into actions and needs that originate from the needs of human physiology and to natural goal-oriented behavior of human beings. It should however been taken into account that despite the different emphasis, in some cases these two approaches share common terms, but the meaning is different depending on the emphasis. (Beck 2000, 24-25)

The regulatory approach has a long tradition all the way back to Darwin’s theory of evolution. It emphasizes the internal needs and forces of human body, such as hunger and pain

and how the body tries to maintain the internal balance. This process is also called homeostasis. The main focus on the regulatory approach is on the need/drive aspect of the process and on the physiology of need/drive. (Beck 2000, 25) With this focus Robert S. Woodworth created following sequence:



Figure 1. A sequence of human behaviors driving mechanism. (Beck 2000, 26)

As an example he used the internal need for food. The need drives human to be active until the need is fulfilled. After that is a quiet phase which lasts until a new need arises. And with the new need begins also a need round. (Beck 2000, 26)

The background of the purposive approach is in the ancient philosophical views about choices of goals and behaviors. The main focus is on why people choose certain alternative over another. According to the purposive approach people tend to look to the future and choose the option we believe would have the best outcome. We also choose the option we expect to have greatest value to us in the future. This approach is more cognitive than the regulatory approach and it has also less to do with physiology. (Beck 2000, 26)

2.1.2 Extrinsic and Intrinsic motivation

According to Frank Martela and Karoliina Jarenko there are two fundamental ways to get motivated: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is reactive and it is based on rewards and punishments. The main focus is not in the task itself, but rather how to get rewarded or avoid punishments. Intrinsic motivation is proactive which means that the act itself is already satisfying. It leads the person to do things he finds satisfying. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 6)

Extrinsic motivation refers to an action and behavior, which is based on some kind of external reward. When talking about the extrinsic motivation, motivation and the desire to do something aren't coming from the person himself or from the meaningfulness of the task, but behind the motivation is often a reward or a punishment that makes the individual to act in the desired manner. For example, companies pay their employees' salaries and bonuses, when the employee has achieved a good result. Or alternatively, a child is always punished in the same way after doing something wrong. In both cases, people learn to behave in a desired manner, either in order to get the prize or to avoid the punishment.

For this reason, the action and behavior may feel forced and it can be seen as something, which only has to be done because there is no other choice. (Martela & Jarenko 2014,14; Ryan & Deci, 2008)

In working life extrinsic motivation can be seen in the form of external rewards and other incentives as I mentioned above. Although intrinsic motivation can be considered as a more meaningful matter than extrinsic motivation from the work well-being's and satisfaction's point of view, only a few people would actually be willing to go to work without being paid, so the external rewards and motivation are an essential part when talking about work motivation .

Whereas the external motivation originates from external factors, internal motivation is coming from the individual. Gisela Hagemann mentions in her book that "*A person can be forced to do something, but you can never force him to actually want to do it.*" (1991, 7) This sentence summarizes well the biggest difference between the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. When action is intrinsically motivated, the matter or assignment is not perceived only as a tool to achieve something else but the cause itself is inspiring and brings pleasure for its maker.

2.2 Work motivation

How to increase the productivity of employees and how to make employees engaged to their work? These are examples of the various questions employers have to ask themselves when considering how to increase the work motivation. Work motivation refers to the internal and external factors that make employees motivated to their work. There is no single way to motivate people as there are different kinds of jobs there are also people with different personalities and different values, so what works for one doesn't necessarily work for the other. There isn't either a specific theory about work motivation, however I will introduce two mostly used and applied motivation theories in the field of work motivation.

2.2.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory created by Abraham Maslow. According to Maslow achieving certain needs motivate people. (McLeod 2007; Maslow 1943) When one need is fulfilled people reach for new needs. Maslow has presented his theory in the form of a hierarchical five stage pyramid. Each stage represents different motivational need. The five stages can be divided into basic and growth needs. Basic needs, also called physiological needs, include stages for physiological, love, safety and self-esteem needs. Growth need is formed by the need of self-actualization. According to

Maslow, humans are not aware of the higher needs before the lower needs are being satisfied. This doesn't however mean that it is not possible to fulfill the higher needs before all the lower needs are being satisfied. (McLeod 2007)

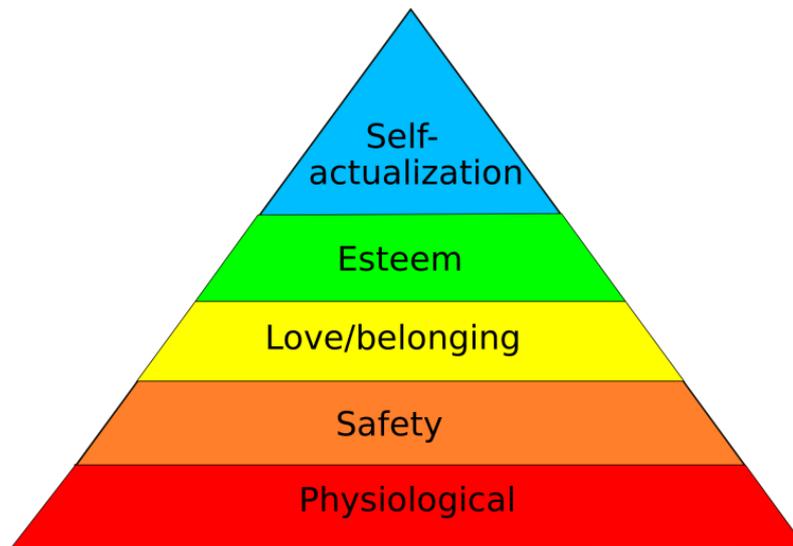


Figure 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Wikipedia)

Physiological needs are the biological needs humans need to be able to live such as oxygen, water and food. These are also the strongest needs because without the physiological needs being fulfilled, humans can't reach for the other needs. When physiological needs are fulfilled they no longer control the behavior and person can move to fulfilling new needs. Need for safety refers according to its name to a state where person feels he is safe and there are no existing fears. Need for safety is usually more important for children than for adults. Need for love and belonging refers to the human need to be loved and to be able to love back. According to Maslow, humans seek to overcome feelings of loneliness. Need for esteem involves the need for self-esteem as well as the esteem person gets from others. People want respect from others and at the same time they need to respect themselves. Feelings of mastery and independency are also important aspects of the need of esteem. When all the preceding needs are satisfied person can reach to fulfill the need of self-actualization. The need for self-actualization is about people finding their own potential, things they are good at and they find enjoyable. It's also about growing as a person and learning something new about yourself. (Simons, Irwin & Drinnien 1987)

2.2.2 Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory

Fredrick Herzberg studied the sources of employee motivation by asking people a set of questions. These questions dealt with such questions as when did people feel particularly good or bad about their job. The research findings revealed that particular characteristics of job are related to job satisfaction where as other factors are always linked to dissatisfaction. (Herzberg 2003)

Table 1. Factors affecting job attitudes (MindTools; Herzberg 2003)

| Factors for Satisfaction | Factors for Dissatisfaction |
|--------------------------|--|
| Achievement | Company policies |
| Recognition | Supervision |
| The work itself | Relationship with supervisor and peers |
| Responsibility | Work conditions |
| Advancement | Salary |
| Growth | Status |
| | Security |

However according to Herzberg (2003): *“The opposite of job satisfaction is not job dissatisfaction but, rather, no job satisfaction; and similarly, the opposite of job dissatisfaction is not job satisfaction, but no job dissatisfaction.”* From this finding we can conclude that the feelings of dissatisfaction and satisfaction are not actually the opposites. They need different criteria when being analyzed in order to show the real factors of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction. (Herzberg 2003)

Herzberg's theory includes two stages which aim to increase job satisfaction and decrease dissatisfaction. First stage is eliminating the factors that create dissatisfaction and second stage is about helping the employees to find satisfaction from their work. With these two steps you should be able to increase the well-being and motivation of employees. (Herzberg 2003)

3 Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation refers to a behavior that we do without external rewards or motivators just because we find the action satisfying and rewarding. Intrinsic motivation arises from a genuine enthusiasm and desire towards a matter or an activity; this also means that intrinsically motivated person does not need external rewards to continue the activity. (Deci 1975, 23)

Edward L. Deci is one of the most famous researchers of intrinsic motivation. According to him, intrinsic motivation is based on the human need to be competent and self-determining. Intrinsic motivation in its early forms can be seen when it drives the behavior of small children in their search for challenges and ways to cope with them. It is however essential to notice that intrinsic motivation appears in different ways in different ages, but common to all stages is the need to feel competent and self-determining in relation to the environment. (Deci 1975, 65,100) Intrinsic need to feel competent and self-determining helps to identify what action or behavior could potentially produce satisfaction, and thus it is easier to set yourself goals and act in a way that leads towards them. (Deci 1975, 54-59)

Intrinsic motivation can be both endogenous and internalized. Endogenous motivation is the strongest form of motivation, when person is endogenously motivated he feels that the action itself is enjoyable. If motivation is internalized, person feels that an action is valuable because it relates to own values and goals. Even if endogenous motivation is the strongest, it is also the most flickering. Therefore, it is important that the internalized motivation is strong, so that things will get done even if a person doesn't have a great inspiration towards the action at the moment. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 14; Deci & Ryan 2000c)

3.1 Self-determination theory

When speaking about intrinsic motivation, it is important to note also another essential theory that Deci and Richard M. Ryan have developed. This is the self-determination theory. The self-determination theory is based on the idea that a person seeks to do things he finds interesting and important. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 13) When all the basic needs of life are taken care of, people tend to look for the stimuli and activities to fulfill the intrinsic need for new challenges and activities that produce pleasure. Based on this, it is possible to distinguish three important psychological basic needs that form the body for human well-being. These basic needs are autonomy, competence and relatedness. By applying

these three needs and striving to fulfill them it is possible to influence the work well-being as well as improve one's own personal health. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 28)

Autonomy refers to the experience that a person has the opportunity to decide for his own actions and he has a full freedom of choice and action. When action is self-motivated, people experience that the desire to do something arises from inside and not from the external motives. In this case, the action is seen enjoyable and activities related to that are perceived as something supporting personal interests. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 28-29) Autonomy is not about being able to do whatever you want, but it is about having the opportunity to do things that are useful from one's own point of view. (Järvillehto 2012)

Competence refers to the experience of knowing how to do your work and how to get results. Shortly it is about individual's experience of their own competence and productivity. That's why it can be considered natural, that a person enjoys an action he is good at and vice versa experiences something he is not good at unpleasant. It should however be taken into account, that a work that is too easy won't produce satisfaction no matter how good you are at it. Satisfaction is produced by a work that provides the right amount of challenges and thus also provides an opportunity to the feelings of success. When the work is seen satisfying and adequately challenging it is possible to achieve a flow-mode. In the flow-mode person is fully focused on the work and all the energy is focused on the job in hand. For the flow-mode it is typical to lose the sense of time. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 29-30)

Relatedness means the human need to be connected with other people. People are ultimately social animals and are at their happiest when they feel that someone cares for them and they have a safe community to work at. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 30) Another concept that can also be linked to the basic need of relatedness is responsibility. Lauri Järvillehto uses responsibility instead of relatedness in his list of three basic human needs. According to him, responsibility means awareness of the fact that one's own actions and life are meaningful also to other people and with this realization it is possible to understand that people are dependent on other people and the sense of community created by them. (Järvillehto 2012)

Autonomy, competence and relatedness are basic needs and the lack of them causes depression and overall unhappiness. Therefore it is particularly important to take care of fulfilling all these needs. According to Martela and Jarenko intrinsically motivated employees are more enthusiastic, active and productive employees. So for this reason, it would

be advisable in every workplace to take into account the well-being of every single employee. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 31-32)

3.2 Four intrinsic rewards

Where the research of intrinsic motivation is relatively new is also the awareness of the ways to motivate employees with intrinsic rewards. The old belief that it is possible to encourage employees into better results with wages and punishments is losing its success to the new research results about intrinsic motivation and the positive effects increasing it has. The new realization is that engagement comes directly from engagement itself. (Thomas c2009, 47) Where extrinsic motivation is increased by external rewards such as wages and incentives, intrinsic rewards increase the internal well-being of humans. The importance of salary as the main source of motivation is emphasized when person's income is small, but the more people earn, the less importance money has. When money is no longer seen as the main motivator, the spot is taken by the recognition got from work and the possibility of self-realization. (Hagemann 1991, 42)

Deci and Ryan mentioned autonomy, competence and relatedness as the sources of intrinsic motivation. Kenneth Thomas in turn, divides intrinsic rewards into four different categories, which are a continuation to the self-determination theory's three psychological basic needs. According to him, the most important forms of intrinsic rewards are sense of meaningfulness, choice, competence and progress. These four are requirements of self-management and they also carry a strong emotional charge. People also tend to be significantly happier with their work when they are able to achieve one or more of the sources of intrinsic rewards. The sense of meaningfulness and sense of progress are related with the purpose of the work and sense of choice and sense of competence are linked to the work activities. (Thomas c2009, 48-50)

3.2.1 Sense of meaningfulness

A sense of meaningfulness refers to the opportunity to feel that you pursue a worthy purpose. It means that you have the feeling that the work is worth your time and energy. The sense of meaningfulness could also be described as the passion for the task. When people grow older their passion tends to change and develop. For young workers passion usually means the possibility to show that they are capable to do their work. Older and more experienced workers already have the feeling of competence which leads into their passion to resettle into a specific area of work they feel particularly passionate about. As the object of the passion is different for different people, it is important to match people with the tasks they find meaningful. But since people with similar interest often end up in

same fields it is possible to be motivated by a shared, meaningful purpose. (Thomas c2009, 51-52)

3.2.2 Sense of choice

The main idea behind the feeling of choice is that people have the opportunity to select activities they find important and they are also given the possibility to perform these activities in a way they find personally most reasonable. With this explanation, feeling of choice could be seen as a direct reward to the need of autonomy. Also the early stages of sense of choice go back to our childhood. According to Thomas sense of choice is strongly affected by the relation we have to authority figures. As a child we learn to obey the authorities and are given the expression that they know more than we do, but as we grow up we understand that our opinions and values also matter and even the authorities can be fallible. The possibility to effect on our choices creates a feeling of independency which partly explains why a sense of choice is intrinsically rewarding. If however our ideas and work are not appreciated we feel again like children who are trying to fight against the authorities. The sense of choice is important when we are committed to a certain purpose. In that case it means we are given the possibility to perform those activities we find meaningful in accomplishing the purpose. (Thomas c2009, 53-54)

3.2.3 Sense of competence

A sense of competence deals with the experience of being able to perform work well. People have the natural desire to master different skills and being able to perform activities well is a source of pleasure. Sense of competence increases engagement to the task in hand because positive feedback and pure enjoyment make the task feel more satisfying and worth the time and effort. Feeling of competence is also important when reaching for a specific purpose. When you perform the task well instead of just getting it done so-so you feel an important difference in the process of achieving something. (Thomas c2009, 55)

3.2.4 Sense of progress

Sense of progress involves the feeling that you are making progress and achieving your purpose. It is important for people to feel that they are making progress in order to maintain the engagement and enthusiasm towards the task. Even though the ultimate goal is finishing the task, feeling of progress doesn't necessarily have to come directly from the moment you are able to finish the task. It has more to do with the everyday progress being

made towards the purpose. That is after all what makes people motivated. (Thomas c2009, 57)

3.3 How to increase intrinsic motivation

It is crucial to be able to recognize what are the main motivation factors for each and every person in order to find the right ways to motivate and encourage employees. (Leiviskä 2011, 49) As motivated people are more enthusiastic and productive, they also help to create a better working environment. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 31-32) Motivated people are usually happy with their work and thus this affects also to their working environment in a positive way. Being intrinsically motivated is an overall experience of your own interests and skills meeting the requirements of the work as well the feeling of being in charge of what you do. This makes you feel trusted and appreciated. Because of the positive outcome, intrinsically motivated employees should be a goal to aim in every work place.

The first premise for fulfilling and increasing intrinsic motivation is fulfilling the basic needs of a person. In this case Maslow's hierarchy of needs could be used as a base theory for the needs. Fulfilling physiological needs requires that a person's salary is sufficient to cover the basic living expenses such as food and accommodation. After paying the living expenses one should however be left with more than just the inevitable amount of money. If a person has to constantly worry about whether the salary is going to be enough for living, it is only natural that also while working the most urgent thought is a need to earn money. When the salary is at an adequate level it is possible to search the motivation and sources of satisfaction from the work itself. (McLeod 2007)

Work environment and a person's own experience of his safety at work could be seen as another step towards increasing the intrinsic motivation. However safety in this context doesn't necessarily mean being for instance physically threatened at work, although possible mental or physical harassment at the workplace are essential reasons to decrease motivation and job satisfaction. When the economic situation is bad, could the safety issue be seen more as a fear of losing one's job or getting laid off. Uncertainty of whether the work is going to continue or not doesn't motivate to try one's best nor does it contribute the job satisfaction. (Leiviskä 2011, 116) Uncertainty also increases the amount of rumors going around the work place and when the energy of the personnel is focused on finding out what is going on in the workplace, the work itself often becomes secondary. (Hagemann 1991, 52) Therefore it is important to have open communication about what happens in the work community and when, in order to avoid confusion.

One should never underestimate the value of right kind of leadership and feedback to the motivation and self- esteem of employees. According to Hagemann on the first day most of the people are motivated, but over the time working conditions make them lose their enthusiasm. (2011, 39) With the right kind of leadership it is possible to keep employees motivated and increase their confidence in their own abilities and knowledge. With poor leadership in turn, it is possible to destroy employee's motivation for work and in general towards coming to work. Giving feedback is crucial in order to help the employees develop. Positive feedback encourages continuing the good work and constructive criticism in turn, will help you to see your own needs of improvement. Complete lack of feedback is one of the biggest killers of motivation. (Hagemann 1991, 66-70)

As the last part on how to increase intrinsic motivation we could see employees' opportunity for development and to be able to decide for their own actions. If a workplace introduces a new practice or system it is important that everyone has the equal possibility to get training to get acquainted with it . Intrinsic motivation arises from the fact that people experience that their own skills meet the requirements of the work. But if you all of a sudden have to work with a completely unknown task without any instructions, it is clear that the motivation decreases, because also your own feeling of adequacy and competence is questioned. Therefore, regular staff training and skills assessment is an essential tool to increase intrinsic motivation. (Thomas c2009, 69)

4 Research methodology

This chapter will introduce the research approach and the research question and also the data collection system used for the research.

4.1 Research question and research approach

The research question of this thesis was to examine how well intrinsic motivation is being implemented at the executive assistants and secretaries in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs

This thesis was a traditional research which was concluded with a quantitative research method. I believe that the quantitative method is best suited to support a research conducted with a survey, which is indicated to study a small target group. However there was also a qualitative part in the end of the questionnaire to complete the quantitative results and to offer the responders a possibility to give more personal answers of their experiences.

The research approach was mainly quantitative, because I wanted to analyze the statistics of certain variables. I believe that by comparing different variables it is possible to get some interesting and new information.

4.2 Data collection and analyzing the data

Collection of the data was done with a survey. I received a list of potential respondents from the Personnel Unit of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and send them a cover letter and a link to the survey via an e-mail. The total amount of people chosen for the target group was 38 employees. These 38 people represent executive assistant and secretaries of the higher civil servants. The survey was targeted for this target group in order to have a group with similar job descriptions. With similar job description the research results can be considered to be more reliable.

The survey consisted of background information, three main themes as well as two open questions to examine more personal experiences. The three main themes had questions where the respondent was asked to choose the best suitable alternative from 1 to 4. The value 1 stands for disagreeing completely, 2 for somewhat disagreeing, 3 somewhat agreeing and 4 for agreeing completely. Open questions had questions to research more personal experiences and feelings of the respondents.

The survey was implemented as a Webropol online survey. Webropol was found to be the easiest way to get people to respond, because it was carried out via the Internet so you can fill it up quickly even during the work day. The response time was two weeks and a reminder email was sent on the second week.

The research material was first analyzed with the help of Webropol's own data analyzing tool. After that every reply was given a serial number from 1 to 22. There were a total of 22 respondents. Following that the data was entered into Microsoft Excel and from there it was transferred into SPSS data analytics software. With SPSS it was possible to analyze connections and correlations between certain variables. All the figures of the results were created with SPSS.

After analyzing the research material, conclusions were made using the theories introduced earlier in the two theory chapters.

5 Research results

First come the general results of the research and then individually presented the three main question groups. These main groups are work well-being, work environment and motivation. Lastly, the answers from the open questions section are introduced. The survey was answered by 22 people, which is 58 % of the total amount of the target group (38).

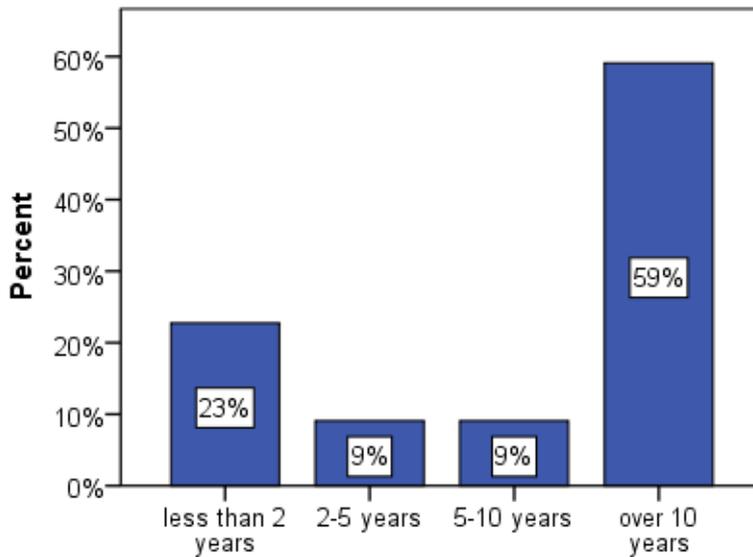


Figure 3. Work experience in years

The biggest respondent group (59%) is the people who have worked over 10 years in the Foreign Ministry. The next are people who have worked less than 2 years with 23%. Lastly second and third alternative have both 9% of the respondents (Figure 3).

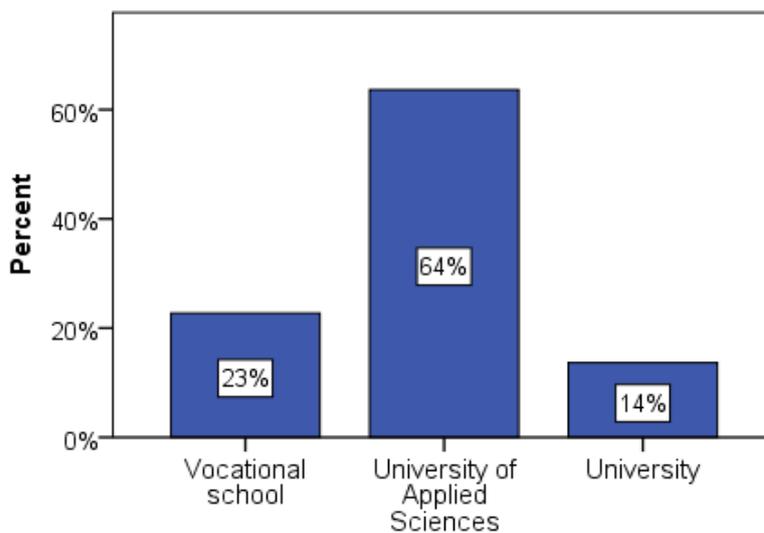


Figure 4. Education

The majority of respondents went to the University of Applied Sciences (Figure 4). The percentage of respondents who went to University of Applied Sciences is 64 %, which is about 2/3 of the respondents. The second largest group is people who went to a vocational school with 23%. The smallest respondent group is the people who went to University with 14% of the respondents.

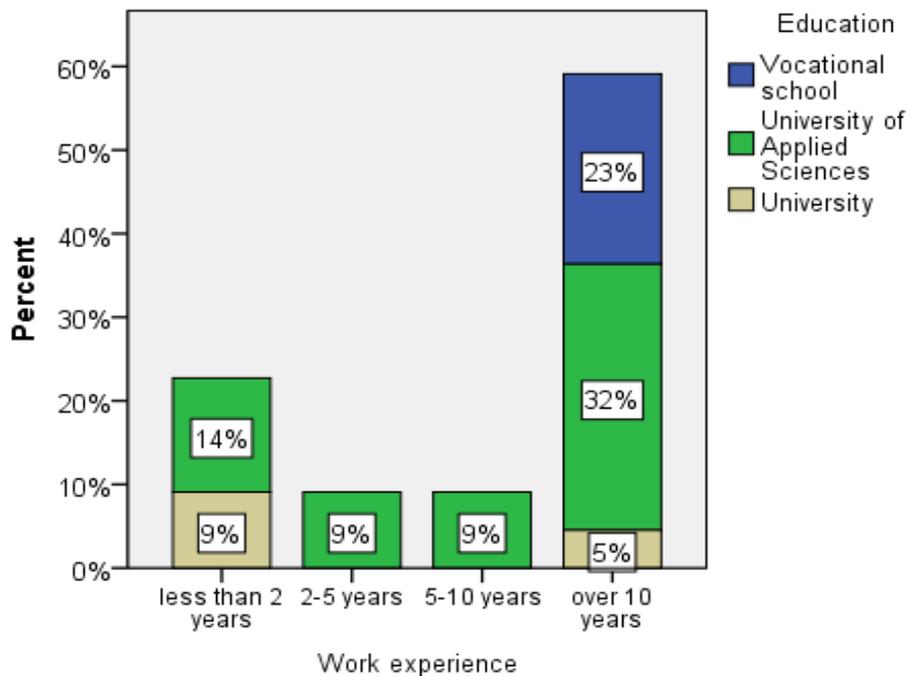


Figure 5. Work experience versus Education

Slightly more than half of the respondents have worked over 10 years in the Foreign Ministry (Figure 5). Graduates from vocational school and university of applied sciences form the biggest groups in this category. Second largest group is people who have worked less than 2 years. This group consists of graduates from university or university of applied sciences. The two categories remaining both have equal amount respondents from university of applied sciences.

5.1 Work well-being

Most of the respondents consider their work to be satisfying (Figure 6). Half of the respondents find their work completely satisfying and 45% quite satisfying. Only 5% of the respondents don't find their work satisfying.

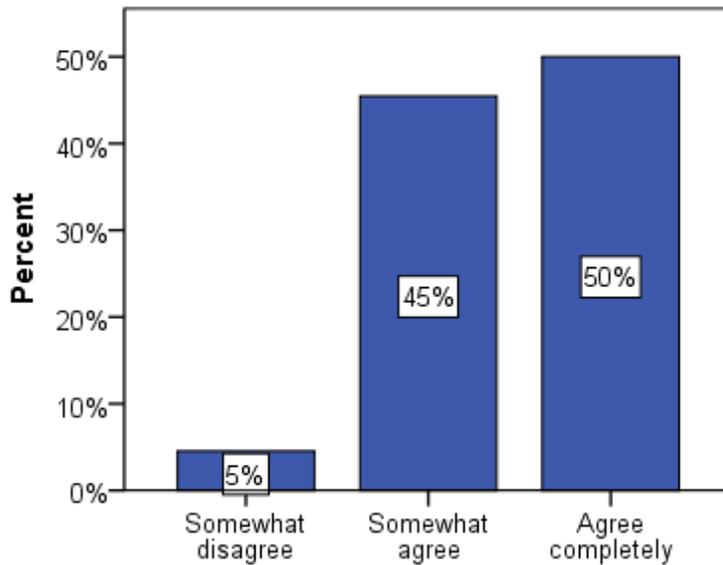


Figure 6. I find my work satisfying

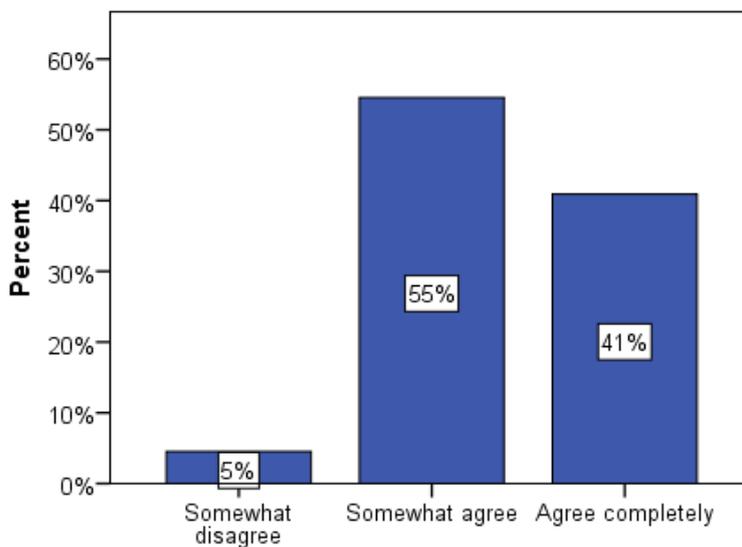


Figure 7. My work is independent enough

When observing how independent the respondents perceive their work (Figure 7), a majority of the respondents reply that they feel that their work is independent. 41% agree completely with the statement and 55% somewhat agree. Only 5% somewhat disagree with the statement.

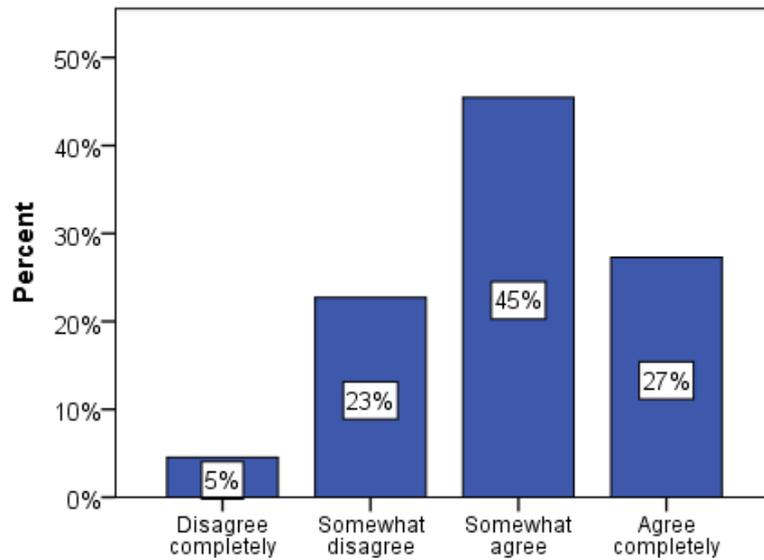


Figure 8. My work is challenging enough

The replies to the statement “My work is challenging enough” (Figure 8) show, that there is dispersion in the respondents’ responses. 28% of respondents feel that their work is not challenging enough. 72 %, in turn, either completely or somewhat agrees that the work is challenging enough.

All of the respondents feel that they understand the objectives of their work. 68% of them feel that they agree completely with the statement “I understand the objectives of my work” and 32% somewhat agree. The average grade of the answers is 3.7.

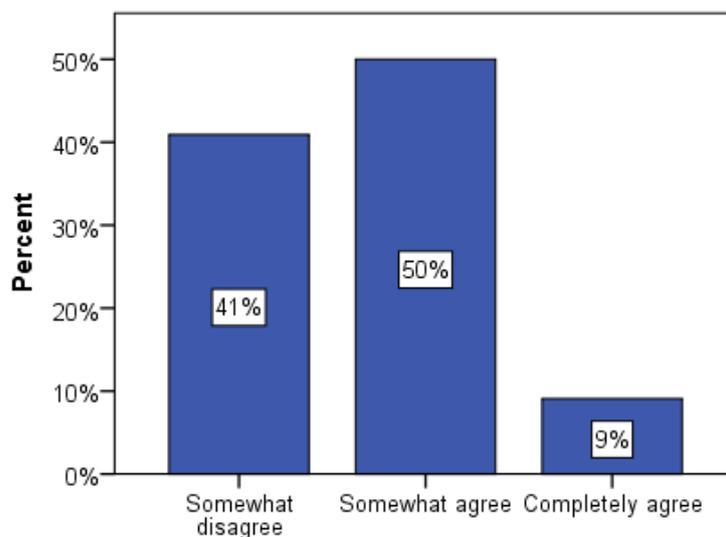


Figure 9. I can affect the content of my work

When asked about whether the respondents feel that they can affect the content of their work, 41 % of respondents answer that they have a little or no chance to affect. 50% percent of the respondents feel that they have somewhat a chance to influence the content of their work and 9% feels that they have good changes to affect the content of their work. (Figure 9)

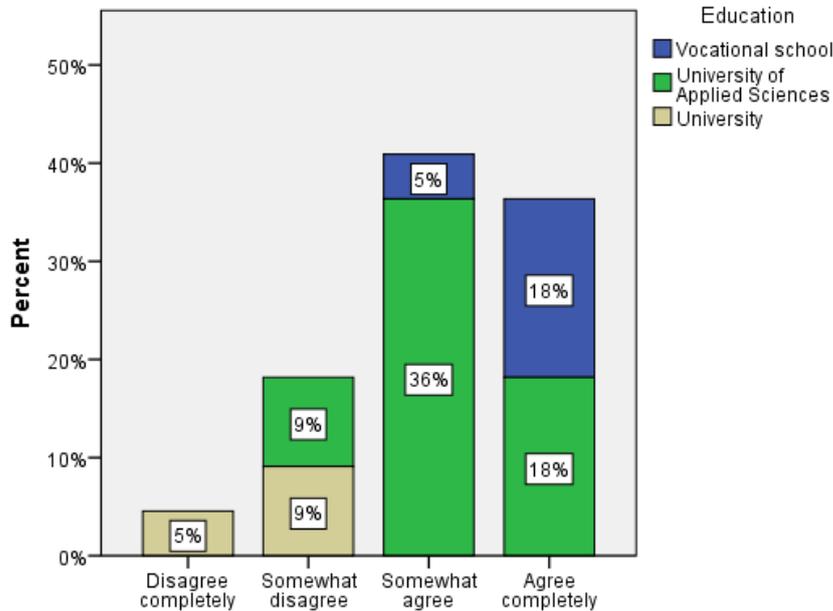


Figure 10. Job description matches my education

Comparing the education of the respondents (Figure 10) to whether the job description matches their competence, it can be noted that all of the respondents that went to University, feel that their job description does not match their own skills. Vocational school graduates' in turn all feel that their job description matches their skills. Of the graduates from the University of Applied Sciences 9% feel that their job description doesn't match their skills and 54 % feel that it does match.

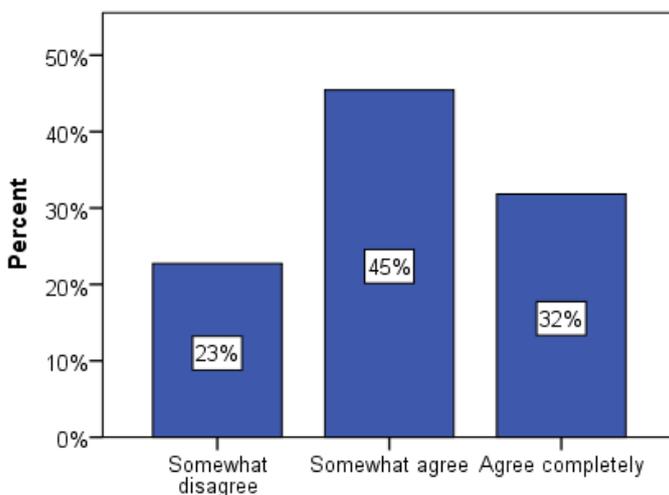


Figure 11. My work is versatile enough

23% of respondents feel that their work is not versatile enough. 77 % of respondents however agree completely or somewhat, to the statement that their work is diverse enough (Figure 11).

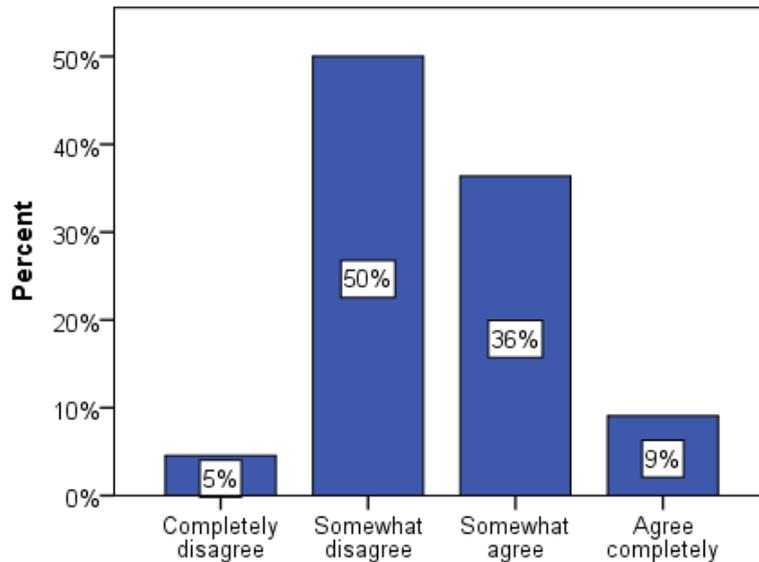


Figure 12. There are advancement possibilities in my work

The majority of respondents (55%) feel that they do not have advancement possibilities in their work. 45 % of respondents nevertheless regard that they have the possibility to advance in their career (Figure 12).

82% of the respondents feel that they are able to develop in their work and 18% feel that they have no chance to develop. The average grade for the statement “I have the opportunity to develop in my work” is 3.18.

A clear majority of respondents or 77 % feel that their workload is appropriate. Yet 23 % feel that their workload is not appropriate.

5.2 Work environment

According to survey responses, all of the respondents feel that their colleagues trust in them and they also feel that if needed, they can get help from others. When asked whether the respondents see themselves as a part of the organization's work community, 91% of respondents feel that they are and 9 % consider that they are not part of it.

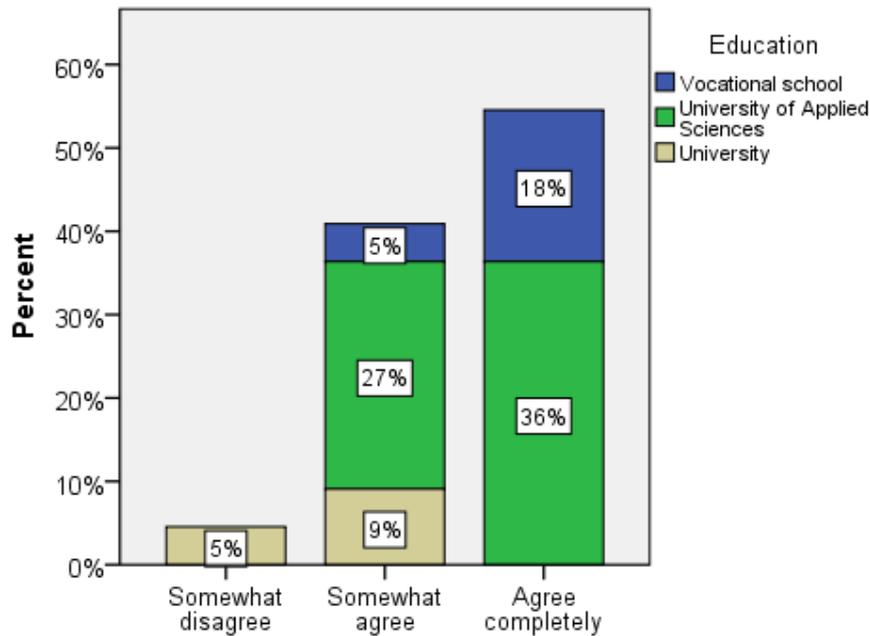


Figure 13. My superior trusts in my skills

| | | | Education | Superior trusts |
|------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Spearman's rho | Education | Correlation Coefficient | 1,000 | -,483* |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | . | ,023 |
| | | N | 22 | 22 |
| Superior trusts in my skills | Education | Correlation Coefficient | -,483* | 1,000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | ,023 | . |
| | | N | 22 | 22 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2. Correlation between education and superior's trust

When comparing whether education and respondents' own experience of superior's trust correlate, it is possible to note that the higher the education, the lower the experience of superior's trust. According to Spearman's correlation coefficient, there is a negative corre-

lation (-0,483) between education and the superior's trust. P value 0.023 indicates that there is somewhat significant correlation (Table 2). In this case, negative correlation means that when education increases the experience of the superior's trust decreases. This can be seen also in the table above. According to the figure 13 the University graduates have as a group the smallest trust on that their superior trusts in their expertise. However, because the research sample is a very small, the result cannot be considered completely reliable.

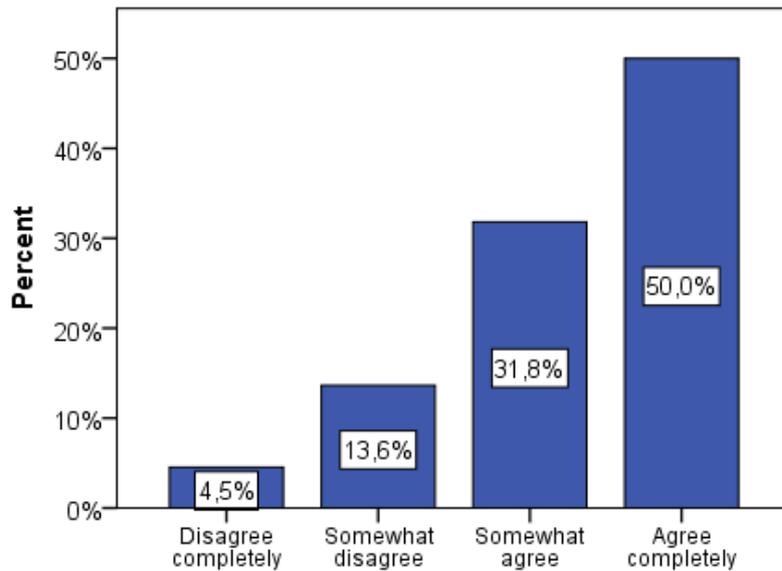


Figure 14. I receive feedback from my superior

The research results show that 18 % of respondents do not receive enough feedback from their supervisor. (Figure 14) 32 % of the respondents somewhat agree with the statement and the other half of the respondents completely agree.

To the statement “My superior takes my needs into account” 91 % of the respondents declare that they agree with it and, therefore they feel that their needs are taken into account. 9% of the respondents feel that their needs are not paid enough attention to.

5.3 Motivation

Majority of the respondents that have worked more than 10 years feel that they are motivated for their work (Figure 15). Of the whole respondent group this is 55%. Also of respondents who have worked less than 2 years almost all feel motivated. Among respondents who have worked between 2-10 years, the experience of their own motivation is more diverse. A total of 14 % of the respondents feel that they are not motivated for their work.

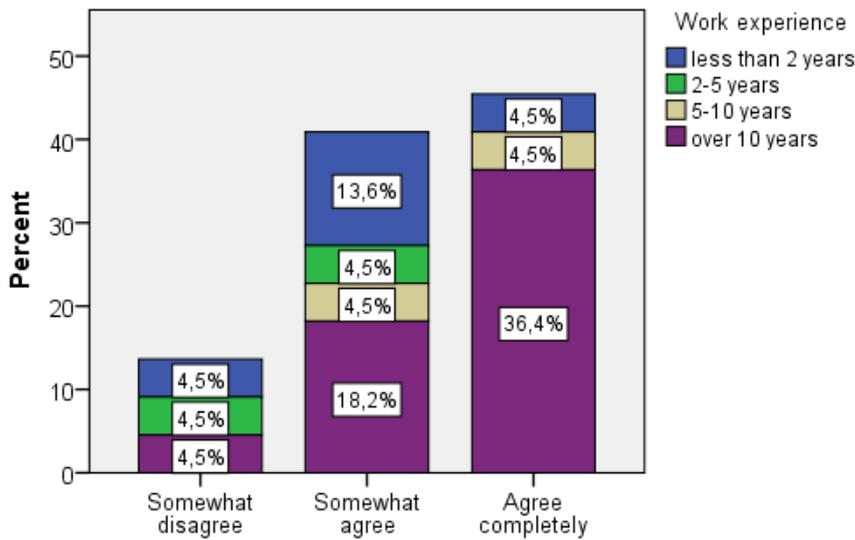


Figure 15. I am motivated for my job

The survey shows that 91% of respondents feel that the atmosphere of the workplace motivates them to cope with the workload. 9% feel that the atmosphere does not motivate. The average grade for the statement is 3.45.

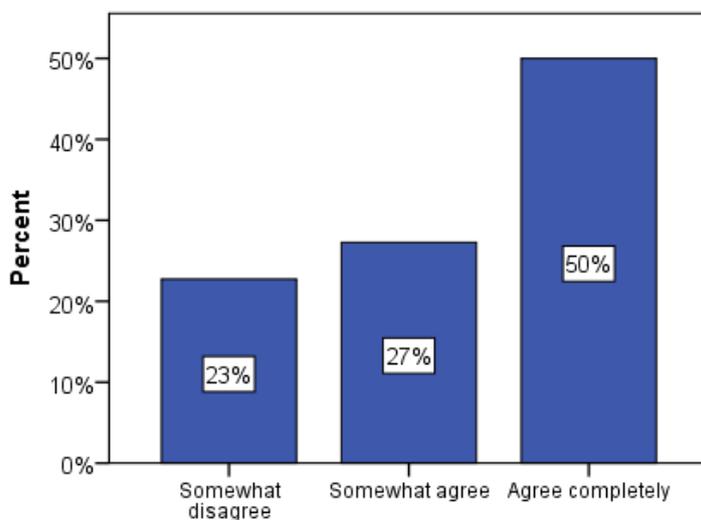


Figure 16. I have received enough training for my work

After studying respondents' satisfaction to their training (Figure 16) amounts it was possible to conclude that 23% of respondents did not receive enough training for their work. Half of the respondents agree completely with the statement and 27% somewhat agrees.

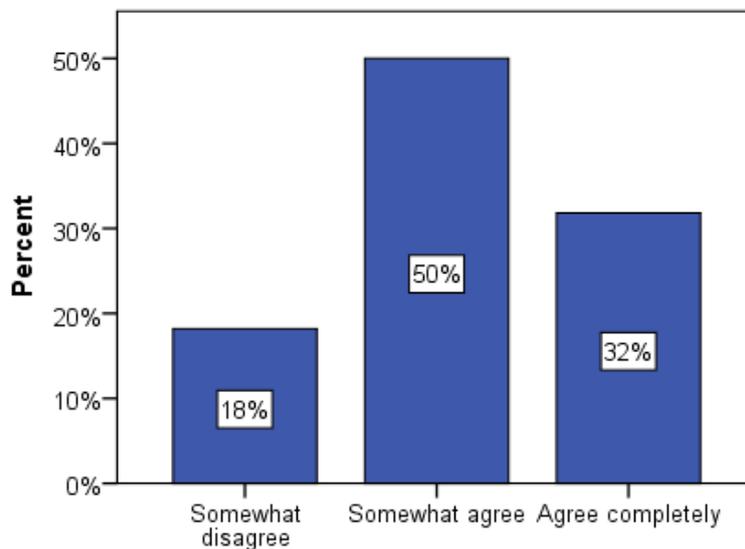


Figure 17. I get recognition for work

The majority of respondents (82%) receive recognition for their work (Figure 17). 18% feel that they do not get enough recognition for their work.

The majority (95%) of the respondents feel that they have the opportunity to receive training for their work if needed. Only 5% feel that they do not have the possibility to get more training.

Lastly in the motivation section there is a statement asking whether respondents have the opportunity to learn new skills in their work. 19% of respondents feel that they do not learn anything new in their work. Despite this, 81% of respondents state that they have the opportunity to learn new skills in their work.

5.4 Open questions

In the open questions section respondents are asked to answer in two questions which are meant to complete the answers given in a multiple choice part. The first question is "What motivates you in your work and what in turn decreases motivation?" The second question is "Do you need further training in any field? What?"

When observing the answers about what motivates the respondents, it is possible to notice few same themes. The respondents name accountability and independence of the work as the most important sources of motivation. In addition important characteristics to increase work motivation are how interesting and challenging the work is. According to the responses a possibility for independent and challenging work increases the feeling of being trusted and that your work is being valued. Setting clear objectives is also seen essential, because nonspecific assignments are perceived as factors to decrease motivation.

“Clear objectives and achieving the objective motivates, also learning a new thing motivates.”

Positive and constructive feedback can be seen as an important factor to increase and maintain motivation. Through feedback it is possible to develop as a worker and learn something new. Although factors related to the job description and work itself are the biggest motivation increasers, also the organization’s working environment has a great influence. Several respondents emphasize the importance of a positive working atmosphere. The Foreign Ministry is considered to be a very interesting and diverse work environment.

As in factors increasing motivation, also in factors decreasing it can be seen several topics repeating themselves. As a main factor to decrease motivation, respondents mention a routine work. Working days consist of the same tasks day after day and there is often too little work to do. The respondents feel that they would have the skills and will to take on more demanding tasks.

“If there are too few tasks to do, it is difficult to get done even the tasks that you should do.”

“Contentless work and mind-numbingly long working days decrease motivation.”

As the other extremity, motivation is decreased by excess workload and stress. Problematic is also seen the poor flow of information within the organization. Respondents feel that new computer programs and renovation of old customs complicates and slows down working. Whereas feedback and trust increase motivation, lack of trust and bad or no feedback decreases it.

The survey aimed to research respondents' potential need for additional training and in which areas they would like to have it. The majority of respondents however feel that they do not currently have any need for a special training. Respondents also mentioned that the Foreign Ministry provides satisfyingly possibilities for additional training if needed. The

responses however include few repetitive wishes for additional training regarding the work of assistant/secretary.

Most answers included the wish to get more language training. The respondents feel that they would like to have a language training that is suitable for maintaining and recapitulation of language skills. Also as the assistant's job may include preparing documents in a foreign-language, the respondents see that a course emphasizing these skills would be useful. In addition, some feel that training is needed for the usage of different computer programs, such as Outlook. Especially important training is seen when introducing a new program. Lastly, the respondents feel that a general training for the work of assistant / secretary could be useful, as well as a training which focuses on the general tasks and customs of the Foreign Ministry and Foreign missions.

6 Analyzing the results

The purpose of this chapter is to examine and analyze the survey responses with the help of the main elements of the intrinsic motivation. These three main elements are autonomy, competence and relatedness. Possible improvement proposes are also presented here.

6.1 Autonomy

Autonomy, competence and relatedness are important factors from the intrinsic motivation's aspect. These three are also the ground for the self-determination theory. According to the survey responses, 95% of the respondents feel that their work is satisfying and about the same percentage also agrees that their work is independent enough. However, almost half of the respondents feel that they have only little opportunity to influence the content of their work. The basic idea behind autonomy is that workers should have the opportunity to influence the content of their own work and be able to modify the work content and work methods to meet better their own needs. It's been noticed that a possibility to affect more on your own work improves intrinsic motivation and increases commitment to the work. If the possibility for autonomy is aimed to be improved, employees' changes to influence the content of their work should be increased. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 28-29; Deci & Ryan 2000, 234)

The research results show that the majority of respondents feel that they are motivated for their work. Most motivated according to the study are those who have worked over 10 years. Out of 22 people who answered to the survey 3 feel that they are not fully motivated for their work. Respondents state in the survey that too busy or empty working days decrease work motivation. Some of the respondents would also like to perform more variable and challenging tasks. Unevenly divided workload and the lack of changes to perform more challenging and variable tasks could be seen as possible reasons for lack of work motivation. According to Thomas, it is important for people to feel that they are doing something that is meaningful for them. If there isn't any kind of feelings of passion towards the work, motivation decreases and the work begins to feel forced. (c2009, 51-52)

6.2 Competence

When asked how challenging respondents find their work, 28% of respondents answer that their work is not challenging enough. 23% of respondents in turn feel that their work is not versatile enough. If these results are analyzed based on the self-determination theory, it can be concluded that the respondents' need for competence is not coming true for everyone. According to Martela, a work that is too easy does not produce satisfaction no mat-

ter how good you are it. In order to get satisfaction from work, it has to be challenging to the right point otherwise the work is becoming too perfunctory. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 29-30)

The survey shows that university graduates feel that their job content does not match their skills and expertise. In this case, behind this observation might be a feeling of being overeducated for the position and also not getting a possibility to perform tasks which would match better own skills and education. Out of the vocational school graduates in turn, everyone agrees completely or somewhat that their job description matches their education. Respondents from University of Applied Sciences have more diversity in their opinions about the statement. There are respondents both in favor and against. Based on this, it could be considered whether it would be possible to widen the job description of executive assistants and secretaries to meet better the skills and needs of people from different educational backgrounds.

The research results indicate that in a general level the respondents are confident that their superiors trust in them. Those of the respondents who have gone to university have however a lower trust in that their superiors trust in their expertise. The reason behind this could possibly be the already mentioned feeling of being overeducated. Respondents may feel that because they are not given the opportunity to perform more demanding tasks, the superior does not trust enough on their skills. This is also supported by the fact that almost all of the vocational school graduates feel that they can agree completely with the statement "My superior trusts in my skills". On the other hand the result may also be due to the fact that the respondents from a vocational school have been working longer in the organization, while on average the university graduates belong to the group that have the least experience. So basically this might not be that much an educational issue but, rather about the correlation between work experience and the trust you have in yourself. It can be assumed that when you gain more experience, the trust you have in yourself and in others trusting you will increase as well. However, because the target audience is rather small, neither of the possible outcomes can be proved reliable without further research. The results may nonetheless be somewhat approximate.

Out of the respondents 18% feel that they do not receive enough feedback from their superior and 18% for their part that they do not get enough recognition for their work. In the open section of the survey respondents bring up good feedback as a factor that increases motivation. Correspondingly negative feedback decreases motivation. (Deci & Ryan 2000, 234) According to Hagemann, by giving feedback you are helping employees to develop and to get more motivated for their job. Complete lack of feedback is the worst motivation

killer. (Hagemann 1991, 66-70) Positive feedback and recognition create employees an experience of performing their work well. This in turn increases the sense of competence and commitment to work. Sense of competence is important when aiming to pursuit work related goals. (Thomas c2009, 55-56)

According to Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene theory factors to increase well-being and motivation are achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement and growth. (2003) If the work itself feels tiresome and in addition to this one experiences that he is not getting enough valuation and responsibility, it is clear that the motivation is not at its best. Based on the survey, 55% of the respondents feel that they have no opportunities to advance in their careers. According to Herzberg, possibilities for development and advancement in a work are important areas when starting to invest in increasing the work well-being (2003). If a person feels that he has already reached everything achievable in a work and there is nothing new to achieve or learn affects this negatively to work motivation. By widening the job description of the executive assistants and secretaries it would be possible to offer employees the opportunity for development and getting the much-needed responsibility.

The survey includes a question about whether the respondents have a need for further training in any field. Most of the respondents seem mostly satisfied with their current skills however there arise some wishes for extra training. Most support gets the idea of having additional language training. As the Ministry for Foreign Affairs works noticeable at the international level, it is natural that the assistants and secretaries should be able to use foreign languages fluently. It is often exactly executive assistants and secretaries who take care of correspondence on behalf of civil servants, for example with travel and meetings related matters. If a person feels that their own language skills are not entirely up-to-date, this will affect their experience of their own ability to perform tasks that require expertise in this field. As Deci mentions in the Self-determination theory, humans have a natural need to master things they are working with. (1985, 26-27) Therefore a possible survey regarding assistants' language training needs could be useful.

23% of respondents feel that they have not received enough training for their work. It is repeated also in the open section area that there is an existing need for a training that focuses at the general level on the work of assistant as well as working in the Foreign Ministry. It also emerges that there is a need to get more comprehensive training in the usage of computer programs. A potential resolution for this could be unified and manda-

tory training sessions for all executive assistants and secretaries, if they are not already held.

6.3 Relatedness

Feelings of autonomy and competence are important sources of intrinsic motivation, but so it is the last part of the self-determination theory, relatedness. All of the respondents feel that their co-workers trust in them and they will be able to get help from others if needed. Almost all respondents also feel that they are part of the organization's work community. Since people are ultimately social animals, has every individual a need to be noticed and accepted. (Martela & Jarenko 2014, 30) Therefore, it is important that inside the organization it's been discussed about how to increase trust and interaction between the workers. According to Lauri Järvillehto, people need to realize that their own actions have an impact and relevance also to others. (Järvillehto 2012) If there are conflicts between individuals, this will also affect the others. The survey shows that the respondents experience poor flow of information as a demotivating factor. By drawing more attention to the information flow and that important information reaches all employees, it is possible to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts caused by it.

7 Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis was to study how well the intrinsic motivation and general work motivation is being implemented on executive assistants and secretaries in the Foreign Ministry. The theory part of the thesis presents the wider theoretical frameworks related to defining motivation and intrinsic motivation and the smaller sub theories within them. The study was conducted with a Webropol online questionnaire, which surveyed respondents' feelings about work well-being, work environment and motivation. The survey also included two open questions which were designed to give respondents a chance to explain more precisely and more personally what motivates them and what in turn decreases motivation. The other open question aimed to find out whether respondents feel that they need additional training in some area.

The request to participate in the survey was sent to 38 executive assistant / secretary. Out of them 22 or about 58% responded to the survey. Since the respondent group is quite small, the results achieved from the research cannot be considered completely reliable. But as the final respondent group represents more than half of the original group, the results can however be seen at least directional. In order to obtain reliable results, a new study should be carried out with a higher number of participants and so that the respondents would be represented more equally each work experience and education category. In this study the education of respondents' was mostly focused on graduates from university of applied sciences and work experience to those who have worked for the organization for over 10 years. Particularly more university graduates would have been needed.

Based on the thesis research it can be concluded that primarily the Foreign Ministry takes well into account their employees and their needs. Majority of the respondents feel motivated for their work and the basic elements for fulfilling the criteria of intrinsic motivation are taken into account. The organization's work environment is perceived as positive and encouraging and the respondents understand what the purpose of their work is. However, according to the survey it is possible to say that the executive assistants and secretaries would like to be able to work with more variable and challenging tasks.

It seems that at the moment, the tasks are too much stuck with what is old and customary, while there is potential to develop the content of the work into more extensive direction. Wider job description would match better the expertise of people with higher education and at the same time it would also reduce the workload of the superiors. Thus, both the superior and assistant would certainly benefit from the result. The base for intrinsic motivation is satisfying job and the opportunity for learning new things and getting challenges.

Therefore with small changes it would already be possible to accomplish great and positive changes in the work motivation of employees.

In my opinion, the thesis process was very interesting. I have worked in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as a summer assistant, so I have also some kind of image and experience of the content of the assistant work on my own. Doing this thesis taught me a lot about doing a wider research and especially analyzing the data was interesting, although also demanding. All things considered, doing a thesis gave me a lot and I also hope that the commissioning party can benefit from my research.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. Questionnaire

Työtyytyväisyyskysely

1. Olen ollut työssä
 - a. alle 2 vuotta
 - b. 2-5 vuotta
 - c. 5-10 vuotta
 - d. yli 10 vuotta

2. Ammatillinen koulutus
 - a. ei ammatillista koulutusta
 - b. opistotason koulutus
 - c. ammattikorkeakoulu
 - d. yliopisto
 - e. muu, mikä _____

Vastaa seuraaviin väittämiin asteikolla 1-4

1 = täysin eri mieltä

2 = jokseenkin eri mieltä

3 = jokseenkin samaa mieltä

4 = täysin samaa mieltä

3. Työtyytyväisyys

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Työni on itselleni mielekästä | 1 2 3 4 |
| 2. Työni on riittävän itsenäistä | 1 2 3 4 |
| 3. Työni on tarpeeksi haastavaa | 1 2 3 4 |
| 4. Ymmärrän työni tavoitteet | 1 2 3 4 |
| 5. Voin vaikuttaa työni sisältöön | 1 2 3 4 |
| 6. Työnkuvani vastaa omaa osaamistani | 1 2 3 4 |
| 7. Työni on riittävän monipuolista | 1 2 3 4 |
| 8. Työssäni on mahdollista edetä | 1 2 3 4 |
| 9. Minulla on mahdollisuus kehittyä työssäni | 1 2 3 4 |
| 10. Työmäärä on sopiva. | 1 2 3 4 |

4. Työilmapiiri

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 11. Koen, että työtoverini luottavat minuun | 1 2 3 4 |
| 12. Voin tarvittaessa kysyä apua työtovereiltani | 1 2 3 4 |
| 13. Koen olevani osa organisaation työyhteisöä | 1 2 3 4 |
| 14. Esimieheni luottaa osaamiseeni | 1 2 3 4 |
| 15. Saan palautetta esimieheltäni | 1 2 3 4 |
| 16. Esimieheni ottaa huomioon tarpeeni | 1 2 3 4 |

5. Motivaatio

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 17. Koen olevani motivoitunut työhöni | 1 2 3 4 |
| 18. Työpaikan työilmapiiri motivoi työssä jaksamista | 1 2 3 4 |
| 19. Olen saanut tarpeeksi perehdytystä työhöni | 1 2 3 4 |
| 20. Saan tunnustusta työstäni | 1 2 3 4 |
| 21. Saan tarvittaessa koulutusta työhöni liittyen | 1 2 3 4 |
| 22. Minulla on mahdollisuus oppia uutta työssäni | 1 2 3 4 |

6. Mikä sinua motivoi työssäsi ja mikä puolestaan laskee motivaatiosi?

7. Kaipaako lisäkoulutusta jollakin osa-alueella? Millä?

Attachment 2. Questionnaire/ English

Work well-being questionnaire

1. Work experience
 - a. less than 2 years
 - b. 2-5 years
 - c. 5-10 years
 - d. over 10 years

2. Education
 - a. no education
 - b. vocational school
 - c. university of applied sciences
 - d. university
 - e. other, what? _____

Answer the following statements on a scale 1-4.

1 = Disagree completely

2 = Somewhat disagree

3 = Somewhat agree

4 = Agree completely

3. Work well-being

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1. I find my work satisfying | 1 2 3 4 |
| 2. My work is independent enough | 1 2 3 4 |
| 3. My work is challenging enough | 1 2 3 4 |
| 4. I understand the objectives of my work | 1 2 3 4 |
| 5. I can affect the content of my work | 1 2 3 4 |
| 6. Job description matches my own experience | 1 2 3 4 |
| 7. My work is versatile enough | 1 2 3 4 |
| 8. There are advancement possibilities in my work | 1 2 3 4 |
| 9. I am able to develop in my work | 1 2 3 4 |
| 10. The workload is appropriate | 1 2 3 4 |

4. Work environment

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 11. My colleagues trust in me | 1 2 3 4 |
| 12. I can get help from my colleagues if needed | 1 2 3 4 |
| 13. I see myself as a part of the organization's work community | 1 2 3 4 |
| 14. My superior trusts in my skills | 1 2 3 4 |
| 15. I receive feedback from my superior | 1 2 3 4 |
| 16. My superior takes my needs into account | 1 2 3 4 |

5. Motivation

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 17. I am motivated for my job | 1 2 3 4 |
| 18. The working atmosphere motivates to cope with the workload | 1 2 3 4 |
| 19. I have received enough training for my work | 1 2 3 4 |
| 20. I get recognition for work | 1 2 3 4 |
| 21. I have an opportunity to receive training if needed | 1 2 3 4 |
| 22. I have an opportunity to learn new skills in my work | 1 2 3 4 |

6. What motivates you in your work and what in turn decreases motivation?

7. Do you need further training in any field? What?