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“Logos, workwear can be used for branding”- The influence of workwear in brand building and work identity

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**“Logos, workwear can be used for branding”- The influence of
workwear in brand building and work identity**

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The purpose of this research-based thesis was to investigate how workwear affects the employees' work identity and work wellbeing. The purpose was also to find out how workwear affects the image and brand of a company. As the topic is so large this thesis focuses on the restaurant industry.

The theoretical base of the thesis consists of four parts. The first part concentrates on the workwear itself; what is workwear? It also concentrates on the history of workwear with particular focus on women's workwear. The second part of the theoretical section concentrates on the laws and legislations that concern workwear and especially that used in the restaurant industry. The third part discusses the image and brand of a company and how workwear affects it. The fourth part concentrates on work identity and the work wellbeing of an employee and the effects of workwear on these aspects.

The research of this thesis project was conducted using semi-structured interviews with three different focus groups. The three focus groups give the research a holistic view of the topic and these included restaurant employees, representatives from the management level of the restaurant industry and producers of workwear. This method ensures that there are three different points of view on the subject. The interviews lasted for 30- 40 minutes. The identities of the interviewees were anonymized for analysis and are referred to by their occupation. The results of the interviews were analyzed using the inductive content analysis method.

During the analysis of the interviews three topics arose. The first topic is a key point about workwear, which concerns the appearance and comfort aspects that the interviewees found important. It also relates to the maintenance and material issues of the workwear. The second topic is wellbeing and work identity. This part concentrates on professional pride and work identity aspects. It also concentrates on the effect that workwear has on the sense of community. The third topic is the needs of the company and this concentrates on the views of the interviewees about employee appearance and the opportunities that companies have with workwear towards creating a company image and brand.

The end result of this research was that employees were more willing to compromise from the safety aspects of the work wear than appearance and comfort. It was extremely important that the work wear could be easily maintained and cleaned. Another important finding was that the clothing fitted the wearer and did not restrict movement during their work day.

Keywords, Workwear, work identity, work wellbeing, image, brand

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Tämän kvalitatiivisen tutkimus pohjoisen opinnäytetyön tarkoitus on selvittää miten työvaate vaikuttaa työntekijän työidentiteettiin sekä työhyvinvointiin. Tämän oppiennäytetyön tarkoitus on myös selvittää mitä työ vaate merkitsee yrityksen brändille ja imagolle. Koska aihe on niin laaja, oppiennäytetyön fokus on ravintola-alan työntekijöissä ja yrityksissä.

Opinnäytetyön teoriaosuus koostuu neljästä osasta. Ensimmäisessä osassa käsitellään aihetta; mikä on työvaate. Ensimmäisessä osassa käsitellään myös työvaatteen historiaa. Historiaosuus käsitellään pääsääntöisesti naisten pukeutumisen kautta. Toisessa teoria osassa käsitellään työvaatteen turvallisuutta koskevia säädöksiä ja lakeja. Kolmannessa osassa käsitellään yrityksen imagoa sekä brändäystä. Kolmannessa osiossa myös käydään läpi työvaatteen merkitystä ravintolalana yritykselle. Neljännessä teoria osuudessa käsitellään työvaatteen merkitystä työntekijän työhyvinvoinille sekä työidentiteetille.

Opinnäytetyön tutkimus pohjautuu teemahaastatteluihin kolmen eri fokus ryhmän kanssa. Kolme fokus ryhmää takaa tutkimukselle kokonaisvaltaisen tuloksen. Fokus ryhmät olivat ravintola työntekijät, ravintola-alan hallinnon työntekijät sekä työvaate tuottajat. Tämä mahdollisti kolmen eri näkökulman saannin tutkimus aiheelle. Teemahaastattelut kestivät noin 30-40 minuuttia. Tulokset haastatteluista on analysoitu anonymisti ja haastateltaviin viitataan opinnäytetyössä heidän ammattien mukaan. Haastattelu tulokset analysoitiin induktiivisella sisällön analyysillä.

Haastatteluiden analyysissä selvisi kolme pää aihetta. Ensimmäinen aihe joka on keskeisiä näkökohtia työvaatteeseen kattaa työvaatteen vaatimukset ulkonäköön ja mukavuuteen. Ensimmäisessä aiheessa käsitellään myös työvaatteen huoltoon ja materiaaliin liittyviä vaatimuksia sekä vaatimuksia työasusteisiin. Ensimmäisessä aiheessa käsitellään myös haastateltavien ajatuksia työvaate tarjonnasta. Toisessa aiheessa keskeisin ajatus on hyvinvointi ja työidentiteetti. Tässä aiheessa käsitellään haastateltavien ylpeydentunnetta työtä kohtaan, yhteisöään kohtaan sekä työidentiteetin vaikutusta työhön. Kolmannessa aiheessa käsitellään haastateltavien ajatuksia työntekijöiden ulkonäöstä sekä yritysten mahdollisuuksista hyödyntää työvaatteita imagon luomisessa sekä brändäyksessä.

Opinnäytetyön lopputuloksista selvisi että työntekijät olivat halukkaampia joustamaan työvaatteen turvallisuudesta kuin mukavuudesta ja ulkonäöstä. Tutkimuksessa kävi myös ilmi että oli erittäin tärkeää että työvaatteet voitaisiin helposti huoltaa ja puhdistaa. Toinen tärkeä havainto oli että työvaatteiden tuli istua käyttäjän päällä eikä rajoittaa liikkumista työpäivän aikana.

Keywords Työ vaate, työ identiteetti, työhyvinvointi. Imago, brändi

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to give readers a clear view how workwear affects employees and companies. The aim of this thesis is to find out how workwear effects on the work wellbeing and work identity of the employee and how does workwear affect the brand and image of a company. In this thesis qualitative research methods are used to get a more holistic view of the subject. Research is done by semi-structural interviews and analyzing the data using inductive content analyzing methods. Because of the large range of different workwear the main focus point in this thesis is the restaurant field.

The idea of this these came from an own interest in the subjects. Also the scarce information about the subject concerning the impacts of workwear on an employees work identity and wellbeing motivated this theses. The base for this thesis is that workwear impacts greatly an employees work wellbeing and identity. The starting premise is also that workwear is an important part of a company brand and image.

The theory of this thesis will be in four parts. The first part explains what workwear is and how has it evolved throughout the history. The second part concentrates on the Finnish legislations concerning workwear and work safety. The third part consists of the companies view point of the subject. This part will explain how workwear effects on a company. It also explains what company image is and how it affects a company. The fourth part explains the employee's point of view. This part will explain what work identity is and how it affects employees. It also explains what work wellbeing is.

2 Workwear

Many people wear daily workwear at their work places. Every piece of workwear has its own quality demand depending on the profession using it. Workwear must support the user's professional identity and the image of the company. It has to also protect the wearer from possible dangers of their work. In some cases workwear is meant to protect the product, and its production poses form possible human contamination like hairs, dust and other small particles. (Huttunen 2012)

When the level of demand is high it limits the design differently than in normal clothing. An important demand of functioning workwear is that it fits on different ages and body types. The material of the workwear and details, for example pockets have been chosen according to the purpose of the clothes. The impact of trends varies between different professions. Most of the producers have some demands about the fitting and sizing that change throughout time. The aim of these changes is not only to improve comfort but to keep clothing up to the current trends. Even the design process of workwear concentrates on current trends. (Huttunen 2012)

Many professions have rules of mandatory workwear. Some of the rules are set by companies themselves but some rules are even set in the Finnish legislation of work safety. These legislations control employee safety and hygiene. (Huttunen 2012)

In 2014 a fast food restaurant Hesburger launched a new workwear line made from recycled materials. For example the shirts were made from recycled plastic bottles and pants from old shirts. The workwear was designed by Touchpoint Oy which is a design company that concentrates on green design. According to their sales and marketing manager Carita Peltonen the company encourages companies to go through their storage for possible reusable materials. This allows companies to combine cost-effectiveness and ecological responsibility. (Laakso, 2014, 25)

The word “work clothes” usually means:

- Ordinary clothing (suits)
- Protective clothing (Fire fighters)
- Professional workwear (Waitresses, cooks)

Professional work wear and shoes is an important tool in the service sector. Well designed and maintained work wear and shoes are promoting health, work ability and work well-being. Workwear can be a suit, jacket and trousers or/and apron. (Rauramo, 2004, 109-110)

Clothing has various functions protection function, beauty function and symbolic function. Protection function means that the clothing has to protect the user from the environmental impact (Cold, Heat, Wind, and Rain), prevent the user from injuries for example at work, traffic and sports. The beauty function has been through ages an important factor of clothing designs. Through the ages people have wanted to highlight their personalities through clothing. The symbolic function of clothing shows fellowship and belonging to a certain group for example national dresses, Police uniform, football fans clothing. (Eberle, Hermeling, Hormberger, Kilgus, Menzer & Ring 2013, 49)

In addition to the already mentioned basic functions, clothing must look good and fit well. Clothing must endure use and feel comfortable under different circumstances. Preferably good clothing has to be washable by water or dry cleaning and keep its original form after cleaning. An important requirement for workwear is that maintenance costs are low. (Eberle et al. 2013, 49 & 225)

A well designed workwear is stylish, durable and most of all functional, comfortable and safe. When the employee does not notice that they are wearing a work uniform that means that it is a good workwear. Workwear creates an atmosphere for the clients. Workwear also helps separate the staff from customers. It also finalizes the image of the restaurant. (Puhakka, 1992, 16)

2.1 The evolution of workwear

The first recorded workwear dates back to the middle ages. The first official workwear was a leather apron that was used in extremely dirty occupations. The leather apron was used by dye-shops, iron factories and glass factories. Smiths, masons, shoemakers and tanners also used a leather apron. In some cases even fishermen used a leather apron as protection. The leather apron was known as a protective workwear in the middle ages in Western Europe. In the 16th the leather apron made its way to the Nordic countries. In the end of 1800 the Finnish legislation on occupational safety and health was made. Before this workwear was the same as everyday clothing. Most common used as workwear was the white tie clothing from the time period. Even in factories employees used to wear their best clothing as workwear. Only in some special occupations (postmen) and occupations that were extremely dirty used a specially made work uniform. (Mäkinen, Antikainen, Ilmarinen, Tammela & Hurme 1996, 12)

The evolution of workwear for men was most visible in the factories. In the end of 19th it was still common that men used their old "Sunday best" clothing as workwear. This normally consisted of strait wool trousers and wool coat and in some case a vest. Linen was also used as a material for workwear. When fabric buying got more common cotton and flannel materials made their way into workwear. At the end of the 19th century cotton based moleskin trousers started to replace the old wool trousers. Employees that worked in hot environment used a long shirt knitted of coarse linen tread which changed later on to a cotton shirt. Iron- and glass factory employees used a linen shirt under their leather apron. (Mäkinen et al. 1996, 12-13)

Workwear of women all the way to the end of 19th century was mostly the apron. The material, size and model of the apron varied according to the work they were doing. For a long time the aprons were big and wide that covered the whole front. The aim of these aprons was to shield the regular clothing from dust, grease and other dirt. Most of the aprons had also pockets to hold small work tools for example small scissors or spools of thread. The fashion industry had also an impact on the appearance of the apron. The popular shoulder ruffles of the begging 20th century could be seen in the aprons of working women. The hem line of women's workwear was mostly regulated by the fashion industry of the time. Fashion had also a huge impact on the materials in women's work clothing. The increasing importance of work safety leads to people paying more attention into their workwear. The large dresses that women wore became dangerous. In 1926 a maintenance inspector proposed that women should wear a pantsuit when operating machinery. (Mäkinen et al. 1996, 13-16,)

When the Finnish legislation on occupational safety and health was made people started to pay attention on the safety of workwear. The beginning of the Finnish legislation on occupational safety and health is considered to be 1889. It is the year that the legislations to protect industry professions were set. It did not yet regulate workwear but it started a common in-

terest in the industry. The same year an article was published in Finnish industry journal about what were inappropriate workwear. In the article the focus was on the dangers of long aprons, skirts worn by women and long work dresses in a factory environment. In the article the author also pointed out what would be the best workwear for the industry. This was the first time in Finland that these issues were brought to the public. (Mäkinen et al. 1996, p.14)

In 1908 the first legislation about workwear was set. The legislation concerned bakery workers and how they dressed in the work environment. According to the legislation a bakery worker had to dress in clean white clothing that was used only in the working environment. The clothing also had to be durable to washing. In 1914 a new legislation about protection of professional dangers was set. In this legislation there was for the first time article about proper locker rooms and hand wash stations. These new aspects contributed also to the evolution of workwear. Workwear started to become more a fashion statement. Every day clothing and workwear was no longer the same thing. 1930 was a milestone in the history of workwear. In 1930 a new work safety legislation was set and in one of its articles 15 § concerned workwear. According to the article if the nature or environment of the work makes it necessary the employer must provide employees with proper workwear and other required safety tools. In 1958 the whole work safety legislation was renewed. After this the legislation has been changed several times to match new directives and standards. (Mäkinen et al. 1996, 14-15)

Because of the diversity of the restaurant industry workwear has differed according to the nature of work. The biggest changes have been in women's workwear. This is why the focus in this part is mostly on women's workwear.

Workwear was regarded as an expensive asset and it was maintained accordingly. If an employee's uniform got broken in some way it was sent to be repaired. The life time of a general workwear was much longer than nowadays. The fashion of a certain age has had also an impact on the evolution of workwear. (Kaljunen, 1981, 11-12)

2.2 Evolution of workwear in the hospitality industry

In the beginning of the century a basic women's workwear was a long white dress made of linen cloth. The white linen fabric had a functional purpose, it was easy to clean. These work dresses could be boiled, cleaned, mangled and starched. Headdresses were an important part of the kitchen workwear. From the headdress a person could immediately know how prepared food. Cook's always had their heads cover with a white hat. The only people how worked in the kitchen and did not have to wear a hat were the dishwashers and other employees in so called lower class tasks. For a woman in a kitchen the most important part was the hat or coif. It showed her status in the kitchen. The ones who did not get a hat had to use a scarf to cover their head.

The kitchen uniform also included an apron and cloth. These parts also were part of a man's uniform. The head chefs could be recognized from their tall white hat. The earliest makings of this head chef hats are found from the 1500s (middle ages). The kitchen uniform has not changed hugely throughout the ages. The coats are mostly white but they are much shorter than in the beginning of the century. (Kaljunen, 1981, 11-12)

In the 1930-40 it was not uncommon that the head waiter wore a tailcoat and in special occasions even the waiting staff wore tailcoats. The main issue with this was that the staff member was required to acquire it them self. Also the maintenance of the tailcoat was on the staff member's responsibility. If the restaurant did not approve the staff members outfit it could take weeks before they could acquire a new one. This meant that the head waiter could not come to work until they had a suitable work uniform. (Kaljunen, 1981, 11-12)

Throughout the ages the classic waiter's uniform has been black and white. In the 30-40s it was in fashion that the waiters had a unified work uniform and coats. At that time it was common to use gray or green colors. These uniforms could also have very unique cuts. For waiters Black well fitted coats came to fashion in 40-50s. This is when the uniform was a silk blouse and the well-fitting coat. (Kaljunen, 1981, 11-12)

In the beginning of the century women cleaners mostly wore a long dress that dragged the floor. In 1910 the hemline started to get shorter and in 1920 the hemline was already have way of a women's shin. After the 1920 long workwear dresses were mostly never worn except on special occasions or special themed restaurants. (Kaljunen, 1981, 11-12)

In the beginning of the century kitchen work shoes were very sturdy even heavy. These shoes prevented kitchen staff slipping on the wet floor. On the other hand the parlor side waiters were often made to use cute but uncomfortable shoes. The work shoes of the waiter mostly relied on the shoe fashion of the time. (Kaljunen, 1981, 11-12)

3 Safety and legislation

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Act number 738/2002 work must be safely. Employers duty is to recognize and estimate the dangers that appear at the workplace and aim the remove those dangers. The most common ways to prevent danger in the working environment are technical solutions and other work arrangements. If those dangers cannot be totally removed or controlled the workers must be provided with protective wear. The employee has to use given workwear to minimize accidents. (Ristikko & Marttila-Vesalainen, 2006, 112; Mäkinen et al.1996, 21)

According to Finnish standard association later called SFS legislates that basic protective workwear has to meet certain requirements. SFS has set standards to guide protective wear

providers and buyers. Standard EN 340 provides protective wear requirements for ergonomic, sizing, product aging, compatibility, labeling and instruction of use. One of the basic requirements is that the material may not cause harm to the user. The materials may not release in regular conditions any agents that are poisons, cause cancer or any other diseases. The material of the protective wear should be selected so that the production process and waste disposal causes a minimum amount of environmental impact. (SFS-Käsikirja, 2010, 11)

3.1 Protective wear

There are several different reasons why workers use protective wear. The clothing varies according to the possible hazards. Different hazards require different standards and requirements for the clothing. Protective wear can be designed to protect from the following hazards. Protective clothing can be used to protect the employee from possible heat dangers for example heat radiation, fire and sparks. They can also be design to shield the employee form cold objects and low temperatures. Weather hazards which can mean protection against rain, bad visibility and wind can also be an aspect when designing protective wear. (Ristikko & Marttila-Vesalainen 2006, 113)

Protections against harmful chemicals for example acid, gas and harmful dust is a pivotal issue in many protective wear. Workers that are exposed to biological dangers such as microorganisms, radiation and infection risks need also protective work wear. Protective wear has to keep workers safe from possible mechanical dangers which could mean protecting employees from cuts, needle sticks and prevent workers from getting hooked from their work wear for example to machinery.(Ristikko & Marttila-Vesalainen 2006, 113)

3.2 Kitchen work wear legislation

Workwear has also strict regulations that the Finnish food and safety authority Evira has set. Most strict regulations concern the kitchen workwear. According to Evira the main objective of workwear is to prevent food contamination. Employees that handle easily perishable food goods have to have protective workwear that are according to the standards and regulations of Evira. Work uniform, protective headpiece and proper footwear are the minimum parts of a food industry workers workwear, if needed an employee can also use a work jacket, apron and disposable shoe covers. (Evira, 2015)

Kitchen workwear has to also meet regulations in material and design. Workwear has to be easily cleanable and it has to be durable. According to Evira logos and ads are allowed on workwear in moderation if they do not affect the ability to distinguish dirt. An employee is allowed to clean their workwear at home. (Evira, 2015)

Mandatory disposable gloves have to be used when handling unpacked food. Disposable gloves need to be changed often and at least after contact with something dirty for example money, dirty surfaces and other sources of contamination. (Evara, 2015)

Basic requirements

1. Common requirements
 - Protective wear must be design and made so that the user can work ergonomically and the protection level of the garment is optimal. A protective garment may not cause danger or other disturbances.
2. Extra requirements for certain groups of protective wear
 - Date of manufacture and if possible expiration date must be marked on the protective wear. When designing clothes for this group following things must be taken in to consideration. Quick dressing or undressing in an emergency situation, visibility of the user and minimize the possibility of getting hooked on machinery. (Mäkinen et al. 1996, 23)

4 Effect of workwear for the Company

Nowadays companies put more and more effort to the design of their workwear. Company colors and logos that are used in workwear act as a type of business card for the company. Workwear sends a clear message of the company image. At best the company workwear can even be a tool to motivate employees and send a positive message about the company. Workwear has to make its user feel proud of their work and company they represent. Company workwear is also an excellent tool to stand out from different competitors. (Huttunen 2012)

The importance of workwear that promote the company has especially grown in the fast food industry. Nowadays customers want to have even in fast food restaurant a welcoming and pleasant environment this means that the importance of well design workwear has grown. This has led to new ways of designing workwear. Ecology and sustainability are becoming more and more important in the design process. Concentrating on quality and durability has become one of the key points in design. Also attention in to surplus of material or products has risen. (Laakso, 2014, 25)

Workwear is low cost tool to create and strengthen a company image and brand. Details and colors on workwear can also show the task the employee has in a company. The human eye can see hundreds of different colors. Companies usually want to play it safe and are prone to choose more familiar colors like blue, red and white for their company. The designer can always try to find a compromise by using one of the company's main colors and carefully selected a new color but the new combination has to have a good meaning and purpose behind

it. The vision of what workwear should be often vary between the employer and employee. Also a strong idea of one's own work can effect so that the employer desires for unpractical solutions to the workwear. (Mäkinen et al. 1996, 131-134)

Service professions and companies often struggle with a strong workwear image. Everyone has an idea of how a butler or a waitress is supposed to look. Companies often at first try to get rid of the stereotypical clothing of their own field but in the end they tend to choose the more familiar clothing type. (Mäkinen et al. 1996, 131-134)

4.1 Corporate image

Corporate image consists of three parts. First part is the identity of the corporation. It shows what the company is like. It indicates the company values, business idea and strategy. Secondly the corporate image includes the profile of what the company wants to say and appear outward. Thirdly is the image that the stakeholders have created. A company cannot create an image into people's minds. People make the image them self from their own viewpoints, feelings and history. A company can affect to the building of image only by giving people the tools for making their own view of the image. (Viitanen, 2003, 11)

Companies often use visual symbols to strengthen their image. A visual symbol is a significant product of using graphics which should support and strengthen a company's image and brand as much as possible. This means that the company symbols are not only used as art but also as powerful communication tool. Therefore the symbols should be design in a way that they can be used in several different marketing and PR products and happenings. This symbol should be easily used with different materials. For example it is not a certainty that a symbol that works on printed paper especially in black and white is as successful as a colored company flag or as workwear as marketing tool. (Eriksson, 1982, 81)

When designing a company symbol probably the biggest challenge is that unused and unseen symbols are harder and harder to invent. Company symbols are often designed based on their first letter of the company name. This often leads to a problem that many companies have the same letter shortenings. It does not matter how the letters are designed because of the limited amount of letters in the alphabet it is hard to design a unique company symbol in this way. Some letter symbols are modified to look like different objects to create an image that is at the same time a letter and an object. These types of symbols often fail and become an image that is neither a letter nor a symbol. (Eriksson, 1982, 81)

4.2 Company Brand

A working and good brand is a tool to increase the value of the company in such a way that it can be seen in the company balance sheet. A truly good brand can be transfer from owner to

owner and identify brand users easily. A good brand also defines how the brand is different from competitors. Working marketing is not the same thing as a good brand. The purpose of marketing is to create, gain and market demand. Brands purpose is to redeem the expectations of a company's products, services and service experiences of the target group. Brand is the feeling that is generated in an employee, customer, jobseeker or subcontractors. Brand is not advertising and it does not arise by it. (Tolvanen, 2014)

To create a good brand it demands courage to dissociate from competitors. Brand also known as stakeholders image of a company reflects to all parts of the company aspects. There are challenges when creating a good brand. It is not only an issue for the communication and marketing departments. A good brand is one of the key tasks of the owners and company management. A good brand arises from the courage to start to create the future of the company and to dissociate from other competitors. (Tolvanen, 2013)

Brand cannot be created without uniformity, discipline and interesting behavior. When creating a good brand it is visible in the media, coffee brake small talk and company results. Successes stories often get the face of the owner or lead manager of the company. A brand cannot be created without a coherent brand idea. (Tolvanen, 2014)

5 Employees wellbeing and identity

The personal identity of a person consists of the conscious ideas about them self and the features they think they have, values, attitudes and independent ways to control and express feelings. With this idea the personal identity means that the person sees and defines them self and their relations hip to the others and to the world at conscious level. The selfhood of an individual is in constant move and therefore the final level of maturity or balance is never reached. The development of an individual's identity requires possibilities to see and experience new things. (Toskala & Hartikainen, 2005, 54; Verner.net)

Well-being is one of the basic needs of people. An age old question has been how to define good life. To achieve well-being has been one of the goals of philosophers throughout the age's even dating back to Aristotle. Nowadays well-being has transformed itself from philosophical to scientific way of thinking.

The questions are what contribute to a person's well-being. Studies have shown that in addition of feeling good people also need some sense of individual spirit. People also need feel meaningful and competent with their activities and have a good base of personal research to cope with negative experiences. (Mattila. 2009; National accounts of well-being)

5.1 Work identity

Work identity or professional identity starts to develop already during professional studies and continues to develop throughout an individual's work career. The attributes, features and other labels that define an employee's ability to identify to their profession is the definition of work identity. The following criteria's should be met by the employees work identity.

1. The profession has to be recognized by the community and it has to have clear aims and duties.
2. The profession has to have attributes, features and labels which separates it from other professions.
3. Identifying with the profession is personal and cannot rely on the subjective idea of the profession but is connected to the persons whole personal life situation. (Helsingin Kaupunki; Rintala & Elovaino, 1997, 29-30)

When beginning to work in an organization the employee faces the organizations own established company strategy, culture and values. At this point the employee has to reevaluate their earlier expectations and visions when meeting the reality of the new company. The individual's personality defines what kind of knowledge they adapt from their working environment and how they build their professionalism. (Rintala & Elovaino, 1997, 29)

In a working environment an employee has to choose what kind of signal they send to the employer. This leads to so called negotiation of their work identity. Remaining happy in a working environment an employee maximizes their opportunity's to advance in their field. A balanced working identity is the key to a happy employee. When an employee starts working the so called negotiation begins between their sense of self and the employee's idea of the company values. The negotiation can have two outcomes. First one is that the employee decides to compromise their own identity with the work environment. For example a shy employee who is happy at work but does not like the social parts of the working environment (small- talk, office parties) decides to engage in office socializing. By compromising their values and sense of self an employee maximizes their chances to advance in their work place. The second option is that the employee does not compromise with the work environment. In this scenario the shy employee does not engage in the office social parts. This could lead to lost opportunities to advance. (Carbado & Gulati, 1263-1265)

Clothing has a huge impact on how people behave with each other. For example a uniform of a police officer's represents authority and power. Individuals use appearances to find out clues about others. Clothing is a powerful tool to find out a person's possible gender and background. It also can offer clues of their status, authority and possible occupation. Studies

have shown that clothing and appearances have a greater impact on a first impression than an individual's personality. (Johnson 2001)

People use clothing to signal something or to tell something about them self. It is common for people to try to look younger, older, slimmer and prettier than they in reality are by using optically deceptive clothing, accessories and hair styles or make up. The study of semiotics studies everything that can be used as signs. One of the key concepts in semiotics is the study of active signals. In clothing semiotics can also be seen. In a well-known environment people do not pay attention on everyday wear which can be seen as semiotics. This does not mean that the clothing does not have any meaning but in fact it shows that it works well as a signal. An effective signal does not draw attention to them self but leads to the meaning that the signal represents. (Koskennurmi-Sivonen, 2012, 27)

5.2 Work well-being

Well-being at work means that it encourages good and motivated management as well as the professionalism of employees. It helps employees to cope better at work it also means that the work is safe, healthy and pleasant. Promoting well-being at work concerns both employers and employees. The duty of employers is to guarantee safety of the work environment, to guarantee impartial treatment towards employees and to provide good management. Well-being at the workplace can be improved in many ways, for example developing working conditions. (Ministry of social welfare)

Employees have also a big role in workplace well-being. The success of an organization depends largely on the well-being of employees. A happy worker is often more efficient at work. Progressive organizations have started to support employee's possibilities to connect work life with private life. Nowadays organizations concentrate more on sustainable development which includes taking care of employees, maintaining ethical values and upholding social responsibility. (Rauramo, 2004, 14)

Work welfare is mostly understood to be a wide range of different parts working together. Under the work welfare concept there are aspects that affect a company, workplace environment and the individual worker. Work welfare consists of good management and leadership, organized work, a mutual code of conduct and positive business culture. Work welfare improves when an individual has a chance to further educate their work knowledge and effect to their work. Parts that also improve work welfare are meaningful work, encouraging and coherent leadership, opportunity to give feedback and a mutual trust between employee and management. (Manka, Hakala, Nuutinen & Harju 2010, 7)

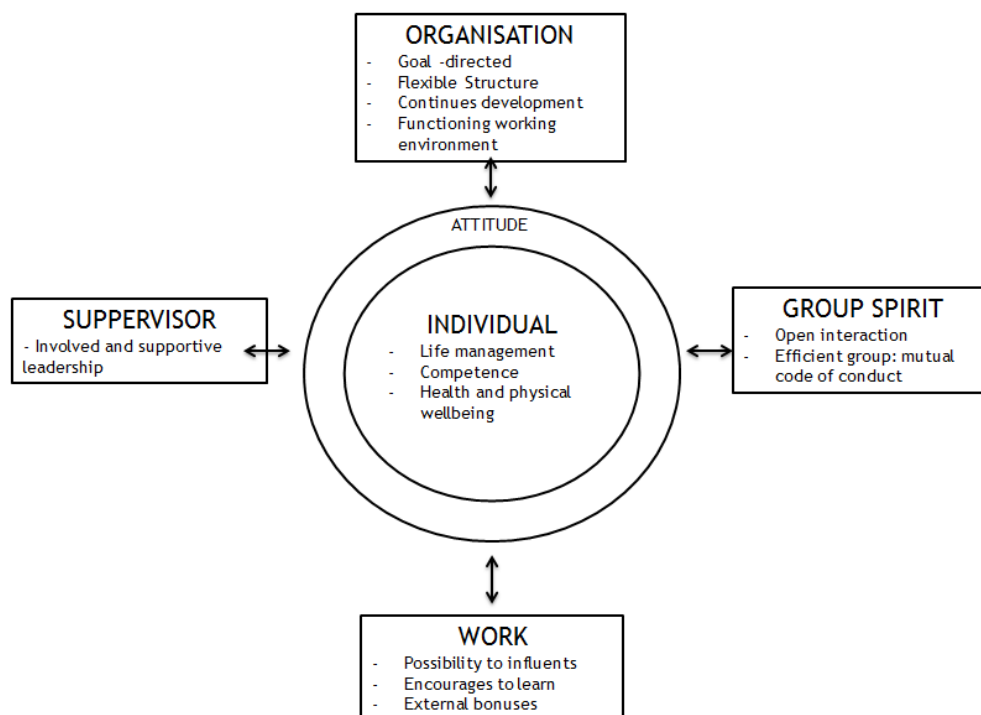


Figure 1: Factors of work well-being (Manka et al. 2010, 8)

Organizations that have a working well-being plan have usually the following things

- Professional healthcare personnel or a working occupational healthcare service. A clean and working lunch area or staff restaurant.
- Safe working environment and community. A working risk management policy
- An impartial, equal and supportive working environment
- A shared vision, mission and values of the organization
- An organization that supports professional growth

(Rauramo, 2004, 15)

6 Research methods and data collection

The purpose of this thesis is to find out; what is the meaning of workwear in the employee's point of view and what the impact of workwear is for the employee and company. The theory part consists of three parts. The first part was the legislation concerning workwear. The second part shows how workwear affects a company brand and image. The third part shows how workwear affects the well-being of an employee and work identity. The theory was chosen as a preconception of what workwear means for an employee and company.

This thesis uses qualitative research methods. This means that the research is done by using semi structured interviews with three different focus groups. The first focus group is employees in the restaurant industry. The second focus group is the management level of the restaurant industry. The last one is the producers that supply the workwear. By using three different

focus groups to study a single subject it is possible to get a holistic point of view of the research.

The purpose was to interview seven people working in the restaurant industry. One interview was canceled because of timetable difficulties. During the fifth and sixth interview I noticed that no new information was coming about the subject. This is another reason for canceling the last (seventh) interview. In this thesis the interviewees are referred to by their occupations and not by their names. The reason for this is that some of the interviewees wanted to be anonymous.

For this thesis six professionals of the restaurant industry were interviewed about the meaning and effect of workwear in their working life. The interview was a semi-structured interview and the focus was on how workwear impacts on an employee's work identity and well-being. The interview also focused on how workwear can affect a company's image and brand.

The six interview subjects were from different fields of the industry; this method allowed the gathered information to be more holistic. The interview subjects represented basic restaurant employees (waiters), management level (restaurant managers) and producers. Every interview had the same key points which allowed getting a general overview about the issues.

The following figure shows the basic information of the interviewees. It shows their gender and age. It also shows what profession they represent and what their workwear consists of. Because of the anonymity of the interviewees the figure shows also how they will be referred to later in this thesis.

Interviewees

| Gender | Age | Profession | Workwear |
|--------|-----|---|--|
| Female | 54 | Teacher of catering and restaurant services in a vocational school in the capital area | Workwear consists of classical waitress clothing which is white shirt and black skirt or trousers and cooks clothing when working in the kitchen |
| Female | 33 | Restaurant manager in a fine dining restaurant in Helsinki later referred to as manager 1 | Workwear consists of black loose dress with half sleeves and a rope that is used as a belt. |
| Female | 35 | Teacher of a university restaurant later referred to as manager | Workwear consists of Black trousers, |

| | | | |
|--------|----|---|---|
| | | 2 | cooks jacket and an apron. |
| Male | 53 | Workwear producer with a long history with workwear clothing later referred as producer 1 | No mandatory workwear |
| Female | 42 | Marketing manager in a workwear production company later referred to as producer 2 | No mandatory workwear |
| Female | 25 | Waitress in a theme restaurant | Workwear consists of Black jeans, shirt with buttons and an apron |
| Female | 26 | Waitress in a themed fine dining restaurant | Workwear consists of a work dress. The color changes with the season. This interview got canceled |

Figure 2 Interviewees

Interviewees were found through my own acquaintances, school connections and teachers.

The two main tasks of this study are:

1. How does workwear affect the work well-being and work identity of an employee in the restaurant industry?
2. How does workwear affect the brand and image of a company?

6.1 Qualitative research

The main idea of qualitative research is to study “real life” and understand the study subject. This means that the beginning idea of reality is manifold. In qualitative research method the aim is to research the target as holistically as possible. Qualitative research method is not only a one particular research project but a set of several different researches. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2006, 152- 153)

Qualitative research method has seven common features.

1. The research approach is holistic information gathering and the data is collected in a natural and real situations
2. People are the main source of information. This means that the main information comes from interaction between the researcher and test subjects. Data can be recovered using test and different forms (Pen and paper tests)

3. Inductive analysis is important. The researchers aim is to find out new facts. For this to happen the main focus of the research cannot be on testing a hypothesis but rather researching the material in a holistic form. Important is the quality of the data not the quantity.
4. Using qualitative research methods when collecting data. This means using for example themed interviews, group interviews and workshops. The main objective of this method is that the “voice” of the subjects is shown.
5. Target groups and people are carefully chosen not randomly sampled.
6. The research process is flexible and the research plan can be changed during the research if needed.
7. A key viewpoint is that every case is unique and interpreted according to that viewpoint. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2006, 155)

6.2 Semi structured interview

Semi-structured interview is a good tool to gather qualitative information. The main reason to use semi-structured interviews in a research is to gain information about a specific situation. In addition, semi-structured interviews can provide a valuable insight about issues that are not immediately visible. (LaForest. 2009, 1)

In qualitative research data saturation means that the main data of the research repeats itself. When data saturation has been reached gaining new information is hard. To reach data saturation the researcher has to know what they want to gain from the data. The research has to have a clear research problem. Without a clear problem data saturation cannot be gained. The problem with data saturation is that especially when interviewing peoples personal experiences every new interviewee is unique and every new interview even with the same person brings something new because the experience and interests changes. Because of this the data saturation point has to be looked critically. To use data saturation as a research tool depends on the aim of the research. When researching a communities insights and believes by using the ideas and believes of an individual data saturation can be used. (Vilkka, 2005, 127-128)(Assoc 2014)

For this thesis the data was collected using a semi structured interview with three different focus groups. The First group represents the ideas and views of the basic restaurant staff. The second group represents the management level views and ideas and the third group represents the producers of workwear.

The aim of using three different focus groups is to get a general overview about restaurant workwear and its meaning for a company and employee. The interviews will be recorded to help data gathering.

6.3 Data Analysis

There are several ways of analyzing data. The method that was chosen for this thesis was inductive content analysis method. This type of analyzing method is very suitable for analyzing unstructured data. As a process content analyzing is used as a tool to analyze documents and data objectively and systematically. Inductive content analysis method can be considered as not only a single method but also as a theoretical frame which can be applied to different analytical projects. With the help of inductive content analysis a researcher can perform several different kinds of researches. (Kyngäs & Vanhanen, 1999, 3-12; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2006, 93)

When using the content analyzing method the main aim is to build a model for describing the phenomenon in a conceptual form. There are two different ways of using content analysis method, inductively and deductively. In this thesis the data is analyzed inductively. Inductive content analysis means directing the analysis process. The aim of the researcher is to produce a set of different categories from the basis of the data. (Kyngäs & Vanhanen, 1999, 3-12)

In this thesis the data will be gathered by semi-structured interview of three focus groups. The interviews will be analyzed by identifying common topics that rise from the interviews. These common topics will be analyzed by using an analytical framework. By using an analytical framework it is easier to identify the main points of each topic. (LaForest, 2009, 2)

After interviewing the interviewees I listened to the interviews several times to gain a good base knowledge about the contents of the interviews. After listening to the interviews I started to write down all the expressions that are connected to the research questions.

Basic expression:

"It is important to remember proper work shoes because during the day you walk a lot"

Reduced expression:

Advises for work well-being

Basic expression:

"Workwear is not too tight, proper and sturdy shoes"

Reduced expression:

Demands on workwear comfort

Basic expression:

"Main color black so stains are not visible"

Reduced expression:
Thoughts about appearances

Basic expression:
“Too revealing workwear feels and looks awkward”

Reduced expression:
Worries about workwear appearances

After that I collected all those expressions and reduced them into shorter reduced expressions. These reduced expressions I categorized into several smaller subjects groups and gave them a new Sub- category.

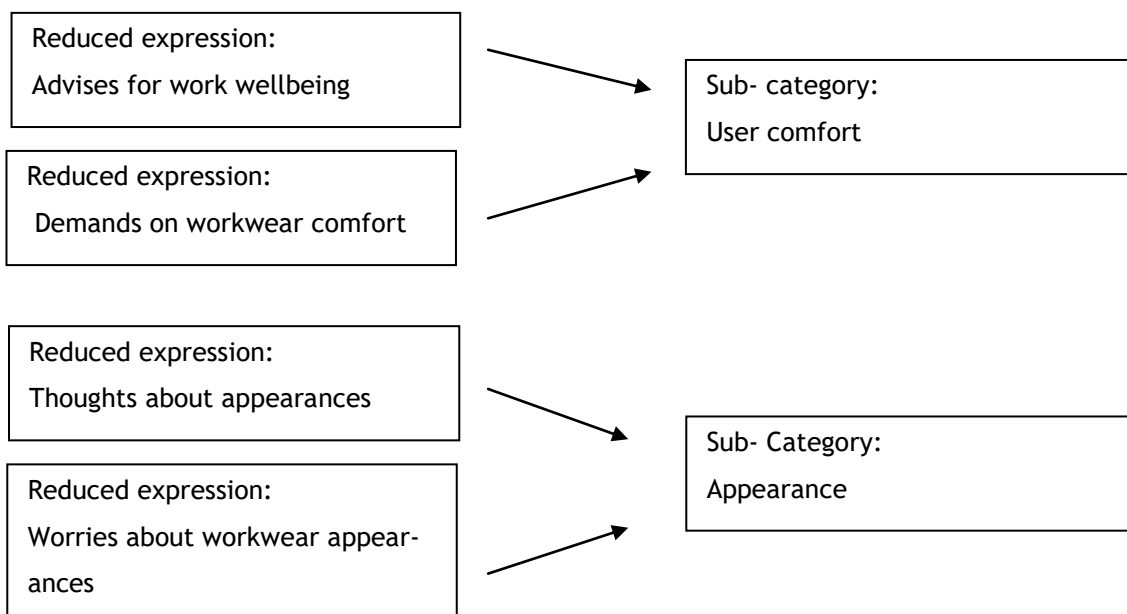


Figure 3 Example of forming sub-categories

In one sub- category could be several different reduced expressions that all concern the same thing. After that I started to group together these new sub-categories into new smaller groups and gave them a new topic name.

Sub- Category

Main Category

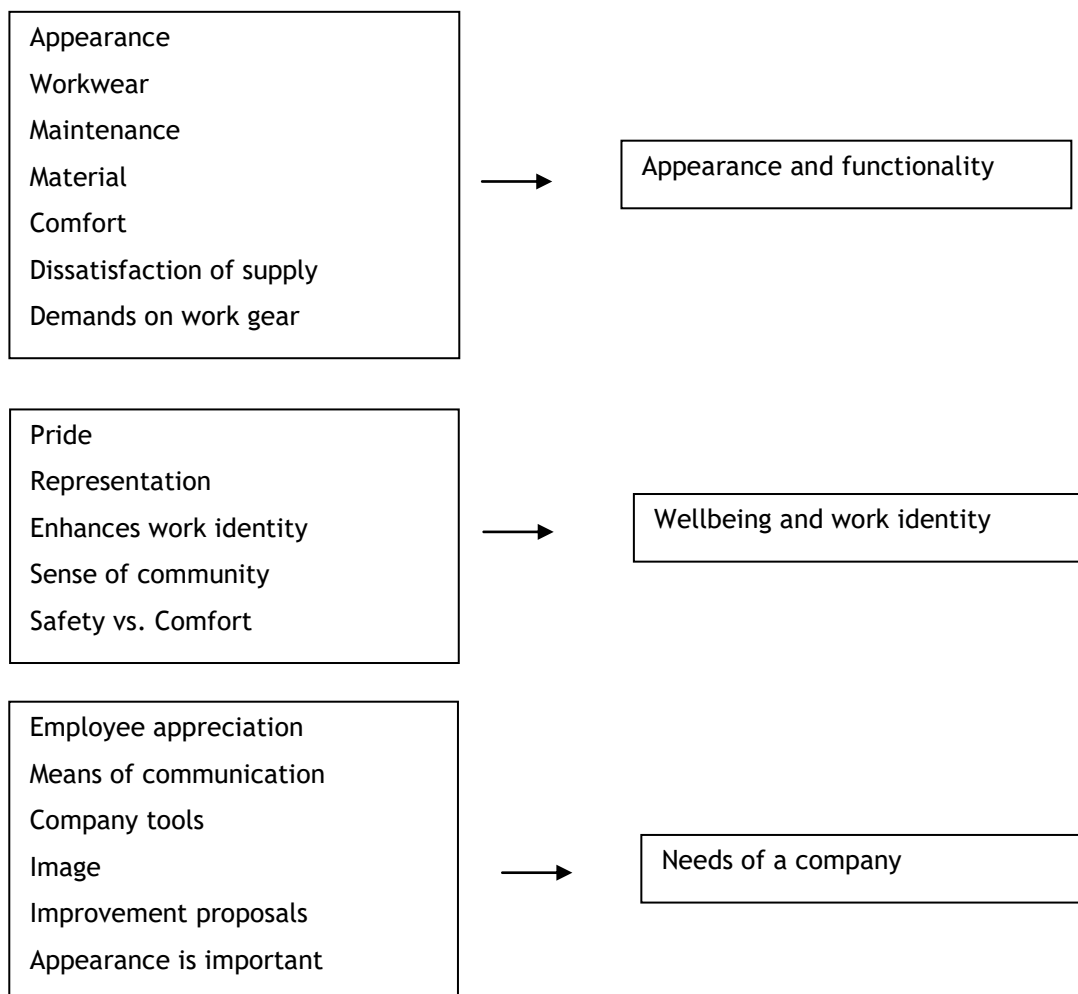


Figure 4 Example of forming main categories

7 Findings

The findings of this research are explained throughout the main category topics mentioned in the previous chapter. Some of the topics can be found in more than one main category. This is because a same issue can affect more than one main category. For example user comfort can be seen in both “key points about workwear” and “needs of an employee”. Interviewee’s often mentioned the importance of comfort during work. The importance of comfort could be categorized as a key part of a working workwear or an important issue in work well-being.

When explaining research findings I have used quotes from the interviews to demonstrate how the issues were seen from the interviewees’ point of view. Because the interviews were done in Finnish the original quotes are in Finnish. The quotes that are used in this thesis as an example are translations of the original Finnish quotes. The quotes will be marked with quotation marks. If the quote is piece of a larger sentence then there will be three dots to indicate this.

7.1 Appearance and functionality

Appearance was an important factor of workwear for the interviewees and with that they meant that the workwear was well fitting, good looking, clean and dissent. Interviewees wanted to look good and feel relaxed in their workwear.

“What is important is that it is big enough that you can move without exposing too much skin.” (Waitress 1)

“Sometimes there have been shirts with a huge logo which makes you embarrassed or letter combinations that customers have understood awkwardly wrong.” (Manager 1)

According to the interviewees cleanliness and the fact that the clothing was easy to wear was an important part of a good workwear. It was consider also important that staff members could be easily recognized from customers. According to the interviewees it was not important that the status of an employee could be seen in their clothing. This meant that all staff members would have the same workwear.

“Black is as a color of course the best because it does not show stains in the same way as white does.” (Manager 1)

“It is important how the staff is seen by the customer.” (Waitress 1)

When the interviewees were talking about the demands for workwear, sub-categories appearances and workwear often over lapped. The over lapping was mainly when the interviewees spoke about comfort. The core function of workwear is to protect the employee from potential hazards in the working environment. Workwear has to be safe and in the same time stylish and comfortable. Employees want to look good which results to better confidence and work moral. When an employee is happy and has comfortable workwear they can concentrate all their energy on the job. They do not have to worry about how they look or how to move. Wearing proper workwear enables employees to also be carefree about their clothing when working. Employees do not constantly have to be afraid that their clothing will get dirty.

“If you have to think about what you are wearing you cannot concentrate on the task given which is customer service” (Manager 2)

“Workwear of course because people look different and are differently shaped so the clothing has to be fitting for many different people.” (Manager 2)

All the interviewees emphasized that the maintenance of the workwear has to be easy.

“Because we maintain the workwear our self and are working in a shift work profession it is important that you are able to wash your clothing easily and quickly after the evening shift so that it clean and dry for the morning shift, a white workwear is unhandy because it has to be washed after every shift, especially during the pre-Christmas party season when we do long shifts.” (Manager 1)

Material was also an important part in good workwear. According to the interviewees they prefer mixed fabrics. Cotton was thought to be weak and unpractical.

“Cotton wears out, mixed fabrics last longer in use” (Producer 1)

“No loose buttons, easy to close and open, breathable technical fabric which absorbs moister.” (Producer 1)

What came up during the interviews was that the most important property of a good workwear was the fitting of the clothing. Every interview subject said that it is extremely important that the clothing is well fitted on the person. When the clothing fits it is much easier to concentrate on the work its self. If the clothing fits badly the main focus and concentration goes to thinking about the clothing and how to move. This slows the employee and work efficiency suffers. Workwear has to be made in such a way that the employee can do their normal work routines without any restrictions. If an employee’s shirt is too tight they might not be able to lift their hands up which affects work ergonomics.

“...The other side of this is that workwear has to be breathable, comfortable to wear and easy to maintain” (Teacher)

Interviewees felt dissatisfaction towards the supply of workwear. Because of this the selection of different clothing is quite limited in Finland. Also dissatisfaction towards the range of colors in workwear was an issue with the interview.

“There are not many importers so not many choices” (Manager 2)

“Nowadays it is hard to find Finnish workwear” (Teacher)

Interviewees also mentioned the importance of good work shoes. Good working shoes ensure that the employee protects their feet form possible broken glass, pans dropping and slipping. It also helps with the amount of walking and standing. This was an important part in their

work comfort and endurance. Also interviewees mentioned that proper protective gear to support the employee was important.

"You can work in any kind of clothing just as you have good shoes" (Waitress 1)

"...and if needed protective gear for example oven mitts that are long enough that they protect the whole arm and the shoulder would be protected" (Teacher)

7.2 Well-being and work identity

All the interviewees emphasized that work well-being is directly connected to comfortable and good workwear. Good workwear also creates a feeling of professional pride. When an employee is happy with the clothing they are also proud to wear them. This leads to a confident and happy employee especially if the employees have been able to contribute in the design and acquiring process of the workwear.

"yes it shows the level with what kind of equipment you have" (Producer 1)

"It is a kind of support for your person that you wear proudly your clothing" (Teacher)

Work clothing is a sign of professionalism and it shows who represent the restaurant. According to the interviewees working in ones own's clothing was a sign of unprofessionalism and bad representation of a restaurant. Many interviewees emphasized that it is important to them that they would be recognized as staff members.

"the worst would be probably that you would go waiter in your own clothing" (Manager 2)

"People, customers know that this person is staff" (Manager2)

It is a clear sign when an employee puts on their work clothing that they are at work and represent the restaurant that they are in. Workwear helps employees to transform them self into their work role. Workwear is a tool for employees to easily separate between their work identity and off duty identity. When an employee is done with their shift workwear also makes it easier to switch into off duty identity.

"... you know that when you put on your work clothing what your role is, who you represent and when you take of the clothing that role goes away too"(Teacher)

"... It is weird how you notice that you are like a totally different person when you leave the locker room" (Teacher)

If the employee likes their workwear it is much easier for the employee to be confident and customer oriented. Also believe in one's own capabilities and professionalism is partly linked to the employee's satisfaction to their workwear.

"At best it builds the work identity of an employee. At worst it affects negatively in one's own believe toward their own profession. If the clothing is unhandy and old it is hard for the person to believe in them self" (Producer 2)

"Students look at you differently and your own identity changes during the changes of clothing, the person becomes a teacher...also for students we try to show that when you put the cook clothes on you have a role that you are starting to work in this industry" (Teacher)

Work clothing gives employees also of feeling of sense of community. When everyone in the restaurant is wearing the same clothing employees know that they belong to something. It is also a sign that that the restaurant has a mutual code of conduct which everyone respects. According to one interviewed motivation increases if the restaurant has good and stylish workwear.

"Unified workwear otherwise it can look like no one cares" (Producer 1)

"Everyone dresses as agreed; it is also mutual game rules" (Manager 2)

During the interviews what came up was that employees were more willing to give up safety aspects than comfort aspects. For example workwear producers told that the most popular kitchen staff clothing is short sleeved chef's coats. This is a good example where comfort has won safety. According to the workwear producers this can also be a result that the equipment in kitchens has gotten better and safer which then gives the chance for chefs to wear a short sleeved coat. Still a traditional long sleeved chef's coat protects more from possible burns than a short sleeved one.

"Long sleeve are often rolled up. Short sleeved coats have a better user comfort. Because of the development of kitchens work safety has changed" (Producer 1)

"Comfort is more important than safety because waitresses move a lot" (Waitress)

7.3 Needs of a company

Workwear has to be inconspicuous. This means that the clothing needs to be made in a manner that customers do not pay attention to it. Workwear has to be designed so that it fits the

environment and does not “pop-out”. This does not mean that the clothing has to be plain and simple but in harmony with the restaurant feeling and theme. Most of the time the first thing a customer sees when entering a restaurant is a staff member. This is why it is important how the clothing looks on the employee.

” good clothing does not stand out to the customer” (Producer 1)

According to the interviewees good workwear is also a way to show appreciation toward employees. If employees are taken into consideration when designing new workwear it increases their work well being.

*” It is also a great way for the employer to show appreciation towards their employees”
(Producer 2)*

” If the employees have had changes to influence to the clothing and perches it would be even better” (Manager 2)

When a customer walks into a restaurant often the first thing they see is a staff member. Because of this it is important that the employees are dressed accordingly. It is extremely important how the staff members look to the customer according to the interviewees. Workwear is an important message tool for customers. Clean and maintained clothing is for the customer a representation about the restaurant. Clean clothing gives a welcoming and appealing view for possible customers. Workwear also shows possible customers the type of restaurant they are coming to if it is a fast food, fine dining or themed restaurant. Work clothing also shows customers who are staff and who are customers.

”The style level can also been seen in the clothing of the staff” (Manager 2)

”In my opinion it is important for the image that you stand out from the crowd so that everyone knows that you are staff. So that just by the clothing people are able to know who works there” (Teacher)

Workwear is a powerful tool for advertising a restaurant. Because good workwear does not stand out from the environment they send subconscious messages to the customers about the standards of the restaurant. Because workwear is a powerful branding tool it is important that the workwear matches the restaurant feeling, a modern restaurant needs modern workwear.

”Unified and stylish clothing are a good advertising. Implant an idea. Status does not show from clothing, modern brand needs modern clothing” (Manager 1)

Companies can customize their work wear by using colors and company logos. According to one restaurant manager there are endless ways in which workwear can be used as a branding tool. They told that workwear is a big part on how employees interact with customers and it is one of the first things that have to be planned when opening a new restaurant.

"Logos, workwear can be used for branding however" (Manager 2)

Workwear can also be used as a recruiting tool. If a restaurant has stylish and good looking workwear it can be a possible advertisement to job seekers. People want to look good and this applies also in a working environment this is why work is a key aspect in branding and marketing a restaurant

"They have nice workwear, they look nice" (Manager 2)

Unified workwear shows to the customers that the restaurant cares about how they appear to others. According to the interviewed unified workwear is an extremely important part of creating a coherent restaurant experience. According to the workwear producer's companies pay more and more attentions on how the staff members look. Companies have started to have a very clear vision about what kind of feeling they want the customers to get when visiting their restaurant. Because of this companies pay more attention on what kind of clothing their staff wears. Many restaurants have started to unify kitchen staff and parlor staff workwear. It is not uncommon to see kitchen staff with the same workwear as the parlor staff. The only difference between these can only be the material of the clothing but the model and framework stays the same. If a restaurant has no clear work clothing or employees use their own clothes it can often lead to a sloppy and unprofessional feeling to the customers. According to the interviews also restaurant employees feel that not having proper workwear in a restaurant and servers using their own clothing gives the restaurant a "who cares" feeling.

" Workwear are a big part of a companies out showing image. The communicational potential should not be left unused" (Producer 2)

"Nowadays because of the open kitchen they want to be good looking and matching to the image of the company" (Producer 1)

One interviewee wisd that companies would pay more attention towards what the employees want with their workwear. The interviewee thought that it was important that the owners would understand that employees are the ones who wear the clothing not management. Including employees in the design process is a valuable tool for restaurant owners to gain knowledge about the key parts of a good workwear.

"The owners should realize that they do not work there" (Waitress)

" Probably a kind of easy maintenance and wrinkle free clothing will probably be a big word in the future" (Teacher)

According to one interviewed restaurant owners should also pay attention on how the employee looks for the customer not only work clothes. With this they mean that how employees do their hair and make-up. They also talked about should tattoos and piercings be visible in a customer service profession. These aspects of an employee's appearance can also have an effect on the restaurant experience and restaurant image.

"Customers do not look at the person you are they look at how you look" (Waitress)

"It is very important how we look, not only clothes but also tattoos and piercings" (Waitress)

8 Conclusion

My study was a qualitative research. The aim was to gain holistic knowledge about the effect of workwear to the employees work well-being and work identity. My aim was also to find out how workwear affects the brand and image of a company in the restaurant field. A smaller aim was also to learn about research process and analyzes. I feel that these goals were met. Because of this process I have gained a strong base of knowledge about workwear. I have also gained knowledge about how workwear affects an employee and a company. I will also explain in this chapter some aspects of workwear that came up during the interviews that did not fit my research question but still I found important to mention in this theses.

All the interviewees talked about similar topics. The most important aspect was comfort of the clothing and its appearance. During the interviews what was surprising was that most of the restaurant interviewees talked about more about comfort than work safety. This may be a sign that the kitchen equipment has developed to be much safer that the safety aspects do not come to up during the interviews. Company image and branding did not have much meaning to the interviewees except for the producers. What I noticed during the interviews that the difference between brand and image was unknown to the restaurant workers. Another important aspect of a well-designed workwear is that it is practical. It has to be maintained easily because of the fast pace life of restaurant employees and it has to fit different body types. According to the interviews the most challenging to design is the work clothing for female employees because of the several different body types.

For me the most valuable interviews were the ones with the producers because they gave a new and fresh perspective for the topic. Because of their different view on the subject during their interviews I gain much more new information than during the other interviews.

Nowadays more and more restaurants have an open kitchen which has led to restaurant owners to concentrate also on the appearance of the kitchen staff clothing. According to the interviews many restaurant have started to unify kitchen staff clothing with the parlor staff clothing. Also it is more and more common that the whole restaurant staff has a unified workwear and so called workplace rank cannot be seen from the workwear.

When asked about the future of workwear most of the interviewed said that "only the imagination is the limit". According to the producers the future of workwear is technical fabric. More and more fabric from sports clothes will be used in workwear. There is already now a lot of technical fabric used in kitchen workwear to make them more comfortable but in the future the using of these types of materials will increase. What they also told was that workwear will be getting more and easier to maintain and clean. Also the durability will increase. According to the producers there is a lot of technology what still awaits adaptation into workwear. They said that probably the fabrics of the future will be made more in laboratories than fabric factories. Nano technology will probably be more used and maybe even "smart clothing" which could measure the body temperature of the wearer.

Another aspect in how workwear will probably evolve is that companies will want to stand out more and because of this put more focus on the appearances of workwear. According to one restaurant manager there are only a few workwear producers and their selection is quiet similar with each other. What also came up was that the really good and stylish work clothing was extremely expensive. According to one interview subject ecology and recycling will be in an important role with work clothing.

8.1 Thesis process

The idea for this thesis came from a personal interest toward clothing. The starting goal was to study what makes workwear good which would have included theory about materials and clothing construction. In the beginning the plan was to use different workshops to find out the preferences of restaurant industry workers towards fabrics and general clothing. This idea did not go far mainly because the lack of time and the fact that it would have not supported the study degree the theses was aimed at.

The topic evolved into a form that supported the degree program leaving all the material and technical aspects behind and were replaced with the employee well-being and identity parts. The theses also included aspects about the importance of workwear to restaurant companies

to get a holistic view of the topic. The aim for the theory was to find the most recent references which turned out to be difficult, especially with book sources. Theory that fitted into this thesis was extremely hard to find. The theory that could be found which had information about work well-being or work identity concentrated more on the mental side of the employee. Information on how clothing affects the employee was very little. Also information about the impact of clothing towards company brands and image was hard to find. In these books the main concentration was on the business side of image and branding.

In the start of the research one practice interview was made to find out how semi-structured interview works and to test the question frames. Since the first interview was successful it was also used as data for the content analysis. Because the practice interview was successful the same question frames were used in the five other interviews. The interviews were in average 30-40 minutes. After the sixth interview data saturation had been reached which meant that no new data was coming from the interviews. This meant that the data analyze could begin.

The main key points of workwear seemed to be comfortableness, appearance and that the clothing was easy to clean and service. Comfort was an important part in a good workwear. According to the interviewees if the clothing was not comfortable energy went to thinking about the clothing and how to move instead of the work itself. Also according to the interviewees appearance was a key factor in work motivation at work. Good looking clothing gave motivation to work. What came out from the interviews was that the restaurant industry is a very fast pace profession and because of this it was also important for the interviewees that the clothing was easily maintained.

In the literary review the safety and legislation plays a bigger role than in the findings of data. The interviewees spoke about safety only when asked specifically and none of the interviewees mentioned anything about legislation aspects. Can one assume that these issues are not relevant to employees and managers in a modern restaurant area? Could it be that because of legislations restaurants are already designed to be so safe that employees do not think about it? Could it also be that the employees are often educated to their field and safety aspects are so self-evident that employees do not think about safety?

All the interviewees emphasized that work well-being is directly connected to comfortable and good workwear. In the data there was a lot of overlapping with well-being and key point about workwear because of this the main focus will be on the identity part. One of the interviewees had not thought about the influence of workwear to the employees work identity but in the interview she found it was a very important subject and was happy to think about it because she felt that the workwear is a very important part to get into the work role. According to one interviewee it also added competence. The interviewees spoke about sense of unity and pride. They also spoke about how workwear affects their motivation and identity. Most of

the interviewees thought that it was easier to separate their work identity from their personal identity because of their workwear. Interviewees said that it is a clear sign that now you are at work when you wear your work clothing. According to some interviewees workwear even changed the way they carried themselves around other people. They also appreciated that the clothing sends a message to the customer about who they are.

All the interviewees had been working for a long time in the restaurant industry. According to the literature clothing is a powerful message and this was also supported by the interviews. Most of the interviewees were worried about how the customers see them. The interviewees emphasized that if the workwear is bad it does not represent the restaurant and sends a bad message to the customer. In the literature it was also said that a happy worker is more efficient. This aspect came out also in the interviews. According to the interviewees if the clothing was not well fitting or in other ways not good the work would suffer. One of the interviewees even said that work efficiency suffers if you have to think about what you are wearing all the time.

It is understandable that the needs of a company got less attention in the data. A reason for this is that only two from the six interviewees were producers who had knowledge about the marketing and branding side of workwear. According to the literature companies put a lot of effort to designing workwear. Workwear that shows company colors or logos can act as a type of business card for the company. In the literary review I spoke how challenging symbols are in brand image. Some of the interviewees mentioned also their feeling against company logos that they often felt uncomfortable and embarrassed wearing them. According to the literature at best the workwear can even be a tool to motivate employees. Interviewees also said that good workwear motivates and gives employees energy. Literature also stated that workwear has to make its user feel proud of their work and company they represent. This aspect was also an important part to the interviewees.

8.2 Discussion

Because qualitative research methods are used credibility is difficult to show. Because the study topic is about feeling and preferences of individual's credibility cannot be measured with any scales. During this research process the guidelines of qualitative research, semi-structured interview and inductive content analysis have been followed throughout the research also the gathering of a good literary review has been an important part of the research. When viewing at the credibility it is important to remember that there were only 6 interview subjects. Of these six there was only one man. The result could have been maybe different if there were more male interviewees and the answers concerning workwear could have been different if interviewees would have been male.

Another factor is that this thesis is not written in the native language but in English. Also English was not the native language of the interviewees this is why all the interviews were done in Finnish. Because of this all the interview quotes that are used in this thesis are translated from Finnish to English. Because the quotes are translations it is a possibility that a different connotation of the original word has been chosen.

The goal for this research was to carefully explain how work wear effects on the employees work wellbeing and work identity. The goal was to also show how work wear can effect on brand building and marketing for a company. The end result of this research was that employees were more willing to compromise from safety aspects than appearance and comfort. Most of the interviewees did not speak about safety aspects without specific interview questions. Another important finding was that that it was extremely important for the employees that the clothing fitted the user and did not restrict moving during work. Easy maintenance was also an important for good work wear.

A surprising finding during the interviews was that managers and employees did not clearly know the difference between branding and marketing. This could be clearly seen the interview results. When asked about how they think work wear affects the marketing of a restaurant they had a lot of ideas but when asked about how work wear affects branding interviewees gave the same answers.

To increase the value of this thesis it was important to give readers enough knowledge about how the research was done and how the data was analyzed so the reader can evaluate the results and credibility them self. Because the analysis is so transparent and carefully explained it is possible that another person could come to the same outcome of research. A smaller goal was to follow a good scientific practice. Because the topic of this research is not largely studied it can increase the value of this research. This was also an issue when conducting the research because there was no older research on the topic and no direct theory of the subject.

During this research process there has been enough time to conduct the research and read the interview result and theory several times. Used references are also carefully marked. All the interviews have been done in confidence. The names of the interviewees have been removed and changed for the thesis and the information resaved from the interviews has not been given to outsiders and the information is used only for this research purpose. Also the workplace of the interviewees has not been told in this thesis. The recordings of the interviews will be destroyed after submitting this thesis.

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Figures

Figure 1: Factors of work wellbeing (Manka et al. 2010, 8)

Figure 2: Interviewees

Figure 3: Example of forming sub-categories

Figure 4: Example of forming main categories