

# Kamu – Supporting Peer Well-Being in an Organization

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<p>Nitor is an information technology company with 150 employees. The organization aims to maintain a hierarchy free environment and operates completely without middle management. The CEO is the direct supervisor of each employee. This type of structure requires progressive solutions in order to effectively support the well-being of employees. The Kamu support system was created to meet that need.</p> <p>Kamu is an employee that supports peer colleagues by coaching, mentoring, sparring, and listening. The idea is to help a colleague balance work and other aspects of life, and to provide support in professional and personal development. Kamu is not a superior, but is responsible for providing continuous support for a colleague.</p> <p>The purpose of this thesis is to look at how the employees of Nitor perceive the Kamu system, what its benefits and challenges are, and why some employees choose not to participate in the system. The aim is to develop the system further to make it as meaningful and useful as possible.</p> <p>A qualitative research was conducted to gain data and insight on how the Kamu system is perceived. The method of research involved semi-structured interviews with Nitor employees with different roles or no role in the Kamu system.</p> <p>The results of the research show that the overall attitude toward the Kamu system and its outcomes is mostly positive. A variety of benefits, as well as some challenges were recognized. Reasons not to participate in the system were also identified, the main reason being lack of time. Based on the results, an extensive set of recommendations was created.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b> Peer support, peer coaching, peer mentoring, self-leadership, psychologically healthy workplace, motivation	

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# 1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to find out how the case company's unique system of coaching, mentoring and supporting of fellow colleagues is perceived by the case company employees. The Kamu system was launched in the spring of 2017 and has now been operating for approximately two years. This thesis investigates how well the system has been adopted by the employees and aims to present suggestions on how to develop it further, to meet the need of the employees. It is known that not everyone is involved yet, and the aim is to understand why not and how the Kamu system could be made more accessible and interesting. From those that do take part, the aim is to learn what are the benefits and challenges, and also collect their insight on how to develop the programme further.

Chapter 1 explains the background of the thesis topic and introduces the case company and the principles behind Kamu support system. The research question, demarcation, benefits, and key concepts related to the study, as well as the international aspect chosen, will be introduced.

## 1.1 Background

Organizational mentoring and coaching programmes have been around for decades, and they are being increasingly advocated as key tools in developing employees and supporting their learning and self-leadership. (Parker, Hall & Kram 2008, 487-488.)

Usually these types of programmes are based on the idea that a more experienced or knowledgeable supervisor or senior passes on their insight to the less experienced, or that the supervisor uses coaching methods to lead the subordinates.

Peer coaching is done between employees at the same or similar level. It is a form of a specialized developmental relationship that facilitates career learning. It is recognized that peers can provide emotional and psychological support that help in different aspects of development. (Parker & al. 2008, 489.)

**Kamu system** is a peer support system created to help support the case company employees. Any employee can become a **Kamu** after attending Kamu training. Kamu supports peer colleagues by coaching, mentoring, sparring, and listening. The colleague Kamu supports is called **Kaveri**. The idea is to help balancing work and other aspects of

life, and to provide support in professional and personal development. Kamu is not a superior, but is responsible for providing continuous support for the colleague. Kamu-Kaveri pairing is done by mutually agreeing to work together, initiated by the Kaveri. Participating the system is recommended but fully voluntary. (Nitor 2019.)

Kaveri has freedom to steer the Kamu-Kaveri relationship to where it is most useful. The usefulness is not defined by superiors or the Kamu, but by the Kaveri him/herself. Whether it is coaching or mentoring or just a discussion, the Kaveri is free to decide the topics of the discussions and what type of support they want from the Kamu. Kamu system includes features from both coaching and mentoring, but they are not interchangeable, nor do they exclude each other. The participants are free to build their Kamu relationship in a mutually beneficial way without strictly set contents or schedule. Discussions with Kamu are strictly confidential, and only if something arises that requires assistance of superior and/or occupational health services, will Kamu contact the appropriate direction together with the Kaveri in question. Both parties are free to end the relationship at any time. Also changing Kamu is possible, and even recommended in some cases. (Nitor 2019.)

Kamus training includes a two-day course where the instructor presents coaching methods and principles that can be utilized within Kamu work. Results Coaching System approach represents the basis of Kamu training. In addition to results coaching methods, the case company's Kamu education is based on ICF's eleven coaching competences. (International Coach Federation 2019.) Most of the competences are also embedded in David Rock's six step approach to discussions called Quiet Leadership (2006), which is used as a basis to teach the required level of the competences. (Nitor 2019.)

A tool called **NitorMindPlatter** (Figure 1) has been created for Kamus to use in discussions with Kaveris. The platter includes 10 sections that present different aspects of well-being, such as sleeping, eating, and physical time. The idea is to go through all the aspects in the platter by grading them from 1 to 6, 1 being poor and 6 being good. Those grades are then submitted anonymously to a database that contains all grades from all Kaveris. The aim is to gather data in the long-term, and hopefully recognize some trends regarding different aspects of the employees' well-being. NitorMindPlatter is also meant to be used as a tool guiding the Kamu discussions to cover different aspect of well-being holistically. (Nitor 2019.)

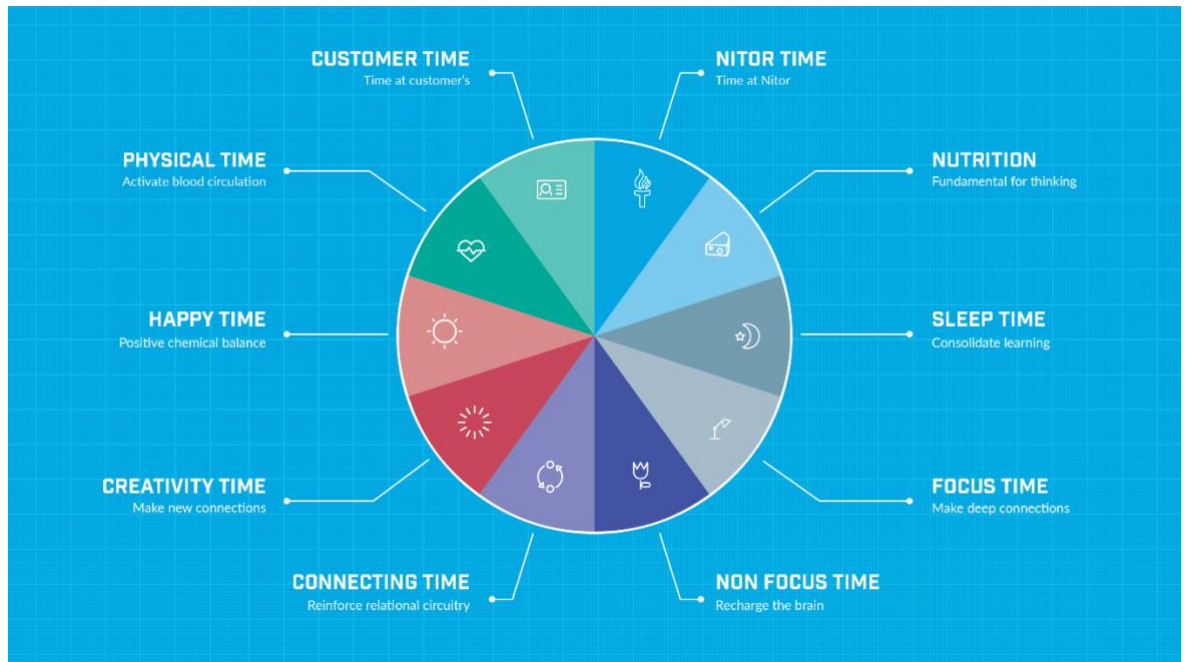


Figure 1. NitorMindPlatter (Nitor 2019.)

The case company is a flat organization with no middle management. The CEO is the supervisor of all the employees without any other supervisor structure in between. This type of organization model requires other types of leadership solutions, of which Kamu system is an example. Nitor operates on **Lean and Agile principles**, such as minimum bureaucracy, highlighting self-management, and continuous improvement. The case company's core customer work is based on these values, but they are also present in the company culture and human resource management ideology. (Vilmi 4 February 2019.)

Most of the case company employees work as consultants in customer organizations, usually as a part of a team that consists of fellow nitoreans as well as other companies' consultants and the customer's employees. There is no middle management working as supervisors but there are account managers that work as interfaces between the customer, the team, and the organizational operations. The account managers are not supervisors but have traditionally taken the role of listeners and team organisers. However, there is a lot of movement between teams and the customer, and project or team members can change quite fast. The account manager stays with the account, but the employee can end up with a new account manager every few months. It is difficult to create a lasting support contact in a situation like this. Sometimes the work is also done alone or with only one other team member and there might not be an account manager at all. Given the changing environment, lack of supervisor's time, and a challenging industry, there is a need for a support system that is available for everyone at all times. Kamu support system is the case company's answer to that need. (Nitor 2019.)

## 1.2 Research Question

This thesis studies how the Kamu system is perceived by the case company employees, and what are the potential reasons and factors behind its success and/or failures. Based on the findings of the research, this thesis aims to present suggestions on how to develop the Kamu system further.

The research question is worded as: **How do the employees perceive the Kamu system and what are its benefits and challenges?**

The research question is further divided into following Investigative Questions (IQ):

**IQ 1.** What is the overall attitude towards the Kamu system and its outcomes?

**IQ 2.** What are the potential reasons why employees are not participating in Kamu system?

**IQ 3.** What are the potential problems if Kamu and Kaveri do not have the same mother tongue?

**IQ 4.** What are the potential challenges in working as Kamu?

Table 1 presents the theoretical framework, research methods, and results chapters for each investigative question.

Table 1. Overlay matrix

Investigative question	Theoretical Framework	Research Methods	Results (chapter)
IQ 1. What is the overall attitude towards the Kamu system and its outcomes?	Coaching and mentoring, organizational well-being theory, SDT and intrinsic motivation, JD-R model	Semi-structured interviews of Kamus, Kaveris and those with neither role	4.3 4.4 4.5 5.1
IQ 2. What are the potential reasons why employees are not participating in Kamu system?	Organizational well-being theory, SDT and intrinsic motivation, JD-R model	Semi-structured interviews of Kamus, Kaveris and those with neither role	4.3 5.1
IQ 3. What are the potential problems if Kamu and Kaveri do not have the same mother tongue?	Organizational well-being theory	Semi-structured interviews of Kamus and Kaveris	4.8 5.1
IQ 4. What are the potential challenges in working as Kamu?	Coaching and mentoring, organizational well-being theory, SDT and intrinsic motivation, JD-R model	Semi-structured interviews of Kamus	4.6 5.1

### 1.3 Demarcation

This thesis studies the perceived benefits and challenges of the Kamu system from the employees' point of view. The point of view of management as well as influence on personnel strategy is excluded. Also excluded is analysis of other support systems in the case company. Cost effects of implementing the system and providing the support structures around it, is excluded from this study.

### 1.4 International Aspect

The majority of the employees in the case company are native Finnish, and Finnish language is predominantly used in the organization's communication. However, there is a small number of non-Finnish speaking employees, and the use of English language is increasing, and in many cases preferred by all the employees. There is also an on-going discussion whether English should be the company's official language. Even though all the employees are regarded as fluent English speakers, there is a possibility for a language barrier, especially when it comes to dealing with something as personal as

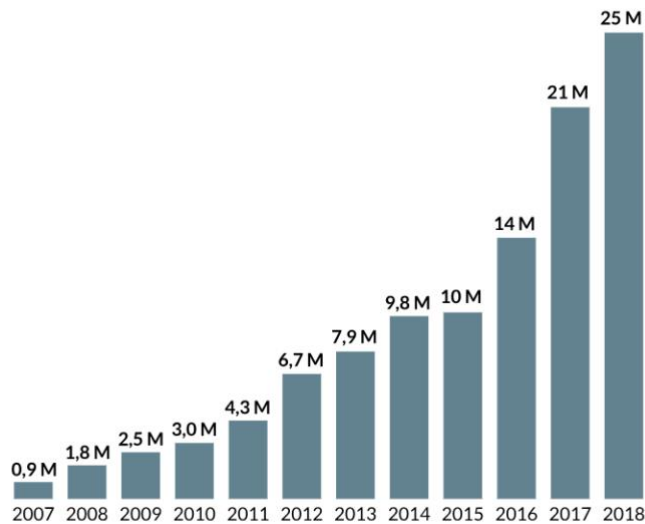
relational learning and support. The international aspect comes from studying possible language barriers. Investigative Question 4 is specifically designed to map possible challenges regarding language.

## **1.5 Benefits**

As the Kamu system is already in use and an important part of the support structure of the case company, it is beneficial to find out how the employees view the system. The aim of this thesis is to also discover ways to make it more efficient and as supportive as possible. This type of peer support and collegial coaching is not very widely documented yet, so the study will hopefully also help in developing the field of People Operations as well. On a personal note, as a People Operations professional, one benefit of this thesis is to gain unique insight on support and coaching in an organization, and hopefully be able to utilize that insight in future endeavours.

## **1.6 Case Company**

Nitor is an information technology company that provides technical solutions to its customers and coaches them in Agile transformation. Nitor was established in 2007 and today employs 200 people, of which 50 are sub-contractors. Nitor headquarters are located in Helsinki, and in the spring 2018 their Swedish branch opened in Stockholm, employing five staff members at the moment. Nitor's turnover has grown steadily and more than doubled in two years. (Nitor 2019.) Great Place to Work Finland has ranked Nitor as the best place to work in 2018 and 2019 (Great Place to Work Finland 2019), and in 2018 Nitor was ranked as the second-best place to work in Europe. (Great Place to Work Finland 2019.) The results for Europe 2019 will be revealed in June 2019.



**TURNOVER (EUROS)**

Figure 2. Nitor turnover (Nitor 2019.)

## 1.7 Key Concepts

**Kamu** – A coach, mentor, a sparring-partner for peer colleagues. Promotes personal and professional development of a colleague. (Nitor 2019.)

**Kaveri** – A colleague who is being supported by Kamu. (Nitor 2019.)

**Coaching** – A form of talent development that aims to help achieve personal or professional goals by facilitating, self-directed learning, personal growth and improved performance. (Besser & Wilson 2006, 10.)

**Mentoring** – “A relationship between an older, more experienced mentor and a younger, less experienced protégé for the purpose of helping and developing the protégé’s career.” (Ragins & Kram 2007, 5.)

**Self-leadership** – An approach on how people manage and lead themselves. It is seen that even though behaviour is often influenced by external forces, internal rather than external forces influence actions. (Stewart, Courtright & Manz 2011, 185-186.)

**Psychologically healthy workplace** – Defined as a “workplace that does systematic, planned and proactive efforts to improve employees, teams, and organizational processes and outcomes and is able to maintain positive adjustment and desirable functions and outcomes under challenging conditions or in crisis”. (Salanova & Llorens 2014, 129.)

## 2 Fostering Support at Workplace

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework of this thesis. The first part illustrates the principles of coaching and mentoring and their relevance in facilitating learning and development. To argue for the importance on well-being for performance, the second part continues to organizational support and well-being. With job demand-resources model I argue that peer coaching is a resource in organizational support. The review continues to theories of self-leadership and intrinsic motivation, followed by relevant features of organizational culture that enable the creation and functioning of the Kamu programme.

Figure 3. illustrates the framework of relevant theories and models related to Kamu system. Respective chapters of each theory are presented in the figure.

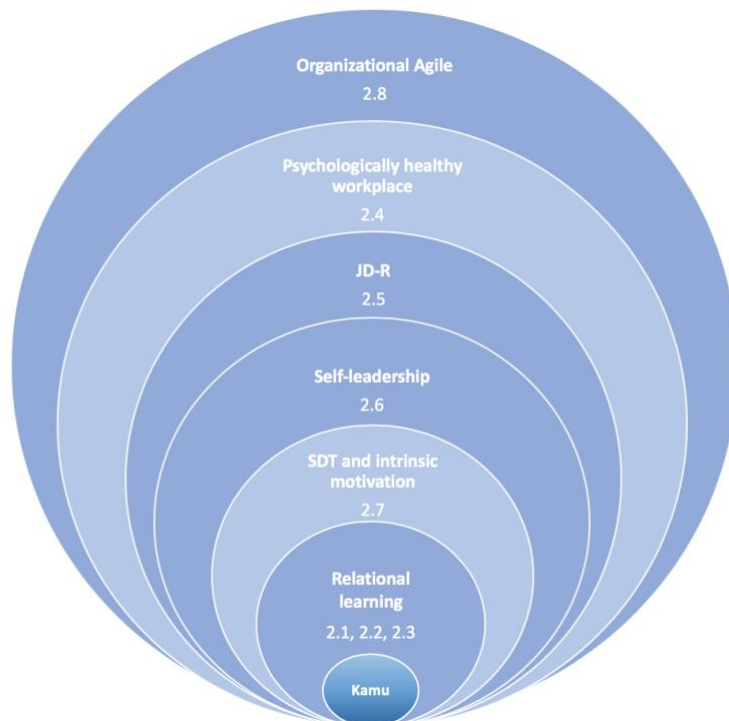


Figure 3. Theoretical framework of the research

### 2.1 Career Learning by Coaching and Mentoring

Career learning has shifted from a one-time degree education to a lifelong process of preparing for work, transitioning between jobs, losing work and adjusting to changing circumstances. (Guindon & Richmond, 2005, 97.) Employees have a very high need for emotional and informational support, as they strive to maintain their skills and adaptability. This need is largely unmet and one of the challenges for management is to promote learning and career development. During the past couple decades, it has been

acknowledged that coaching, mentoring and other developmental relationships are essential in supporting employees keeping up with required pace in today's work life. (Parker & al. 2008, 488.)

Lankau and Scandura (2007, 95-96) state that there has been an unprecedented change in the way employees experience work and that there are increased demands on individuals for self-development, flexibility, and change. Books and training programmes are no longer enough to keep up with required competencies, but individuals must often look to others to keep up with professional and job demands. Mentoring and coaching are examples of such forums that facilitate this learning.

Caporale-Berkowitz and Friedman (2018) list three ways that peer coaching is beneficial in a workplace:

- Creates culture that values connection.
- Replaces social snacking with meaningful dialogue.
- Increases psychological safety.

“Peer coaching is about cultivating a network of allies that can provide mutual support in creating positive change to improve performance.” (Caporale-Berkowitz & Friedman 2018.)

Although sometimes words coaching and mentoring are used as synonyms, in this study it is important to understand their separate meaning. Whitmore (1992, 14) illustrates the difference between coaching and mentoring by stating that opposite to mentoring, coaching is not dependent on passing the knowledge of the more experienced, but it requires expertise in coaching, not the matter at hand.

## **2.2 Coaching Principles**

There is no one agreed standard definition of coaching (Passmore, Peterson & Freire 2013, 1), but one of the most commonly seen definition is by Whitmore (1992, 12-13), “Coaching is unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.” International Coach Federation (ICF), defines coaching as follows: “Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.” (ICF 2019.) These two definitions can be seen combined in Results Coaching System definition: “Facilitating positive change by improving thinking.” (NeuroLeadership Institute, 2015, 18).

ICF has defined eleven coaching competences:

1. Ethics and standards
2. Establishing the coaching agreement
3. Establishing trust and intimacy with the client
4. Coaching presence
5. Active listening
6. Powerful questioning
7. Direct communication
8. Creating awareness
9. Designing actions
10. Planning and goal setting
11. Managing progress and goal setting (ICF 2019.)

Law (2013, 56) defines coaching as:

- Unlocking people's potential to maximize their own performance.
- Helping people to learn by using facilitation rather than teaching them. From an instructional point of view, they are directly concerned with the immediate improvement of performance and the development of skills through a form of tutoring or instruction.
- Enhancing performance in the domains of work and personal life, and this is underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established psychological approaches.

NeuroLeadership Institute's (NLI) model for Brain-based coaching consists of four sections. The purpose of **session 1** is to inspire the coachee to find and engage to three primary goals. Another purpose is to introduce the coaching process and establish trust and credibility as a coach. **Session 2** aims to help the coachee see how the goals would be achieved by creating a set of strategies and setting actions around those strategies. **Sessions 3-11** are about achieving the goals by executing one strategy at a time. The coach manages the process. The purpose of **session 12** is to summarise and celebrate what has been achieved. (NLI 2015, 9.)

The basis for creating a learning facilitating environment in the case company is based on SCARF model. (Mikkonen 2019.) SCARF stands for **status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, and fairness**. (Rock 2008, 1-9; 2012, 1.) The model attempts to help coaches create healthy relationships with the coachees. Studies have shown that using the framework also facilitates organizational cohesion. (Bowman, Ayers, King & Page 2013, 102.)

The model is built on three central ideas:

1. The brain treats many social threats and rewards with the same or even greater intensity as physical threats and rewards.
2. The capacity to make decisions, solve problems, and collaborate with others is generally reduced by a threat response and increased under a reward response.
3. The threat response is more intense and more common, and often needs to be carefully minimised in social interactions. (NLI 2015, 32.)

Threat and reward responses refer to the limbic system of human brain, where the brain processes automatic responses to our surroundings, either telling us to back **away** from threats or going **toward** rewards. (NLI 2015, 30.) A threat would for example be a barking dog or an unfriendly person, and reward would be for example food or a familiar face. Sensing threats hinders judgement and collaborating whereas toward reaction enables seeing more options, choices, and opportunities. (NLI 2015, 30-32.) The SCARF model attempts to create a psychologically safe environment where a person does not sense threats, and therefor remain susceptible to learning and creativity. (NLI 2015, 33.)

The five components of SCARF have an influence on how individuals sense their social surroundings and depending on the individual's response, either away or toward state is created.

**Status** – Less than or better than others: the brain constantly monitor the status in a group. Stress hormone is released when being criticised and therefor feeling less secure and confident in a group. The brain sees a drop in status same as physical threat. If you are acknowledged for your work in front of your peers, you feel more secure and toward state is enhanced.

**Certainty** – Ability to predict outcomes: the brain predicts the future by connecting past experiences to the present, and when facing uncertainty, the limbic system response is experiencing away emotions.

**Autonomy** – Sense of control: sense of autonomy comes from having a choice. If an individual feels they have a choice in a situation, they most likely feel more toward emotions.

**Relatedness** – In-group or out-group: considering someone a friend or foe affects whether they are considered as threats or not.

**Fairness** – Perception of fair exchange: When we feel that we have been treated unfairly, we may experience disappointment and anger, which are away emotions. Toward emotions such as joy and motivation result from the feeling of being treated fairly. (NLI 2015, 33-34.)

Understanding these five aspects helps individuals and coaches navigate better in the social environment of the workplace. (NLI 2015, 33.)

**Quiet leadership** (Rock 2006) is not an academic theory but a practical six-step approach to having conversations. It aims to improve thinking, listening and speaking of the coach. The ultimate goal is to coach in way that improves and challenges the thinking of the coachee. The steps are:

1. Think about thinking
2. Listen for potential
3. Speak with intent
4. Dance toward insight
5. CREATE new thinking
6. Follow up

The basis of the approach lies in neuroscience and how human brain creates individual maps of everything it comes across with, through sensing the world around us. This makes the maps truly individual as no experience is ever the same for two people, thus the mapping each one creates is different. When we have conversations, people go through these individual maps of past experiences, therefor the experience of the discussion is also different for the both parties. It is also very easy to give advice to someone, but the problem is that the advice is based on maps of the advice giver and might not make sense to the one being advised at all, again because of the totally differently organised mapping in his or her brain. (Rock 2006, 3-28.) All six steps will be introduced in more detail in the following subchapters.

### **2.2.1 Think About Thinking – Step 1**

The basis of the quiet leadership is improving the way people think, not what they think about. It is important that the person thinks through their own issues, rather than being told what to do. As everyone processes information differently, it makes more sense to help them make their own ideas clearer, find relationships between concepts, and prioritizing their thoughts. *Letting people do their own thinking* is the first part of the step

one. The second part of step one is *focusing on solutions*. David Rock divides focus into two categories: interesting vs. useful. It is quite natural to start looking for reasons and explanations for problems or something that has gone wrong, but focusing on problems leads to blame, excuses and justifications. This is a complicated and draining way and rarely leads anything more than to potentially interesting discussions. Instead of interesting, focus should be on useful. Solutions, new ideas, and thinking well is the way forward. Research in solution-focused therapy suggests that it is easier to start new habits than to change old ones. (Rock 2006, 48.) So, trying to fix something that is in active use is much more difficult than evoking new thinking. And that is done by giving room for new ideas and focusing on solutions.

The third part of step one is *stretching* and taking people beyond their comfort zone. The idea is to challenge thinking in a way that the brain creates new hardwiring instead of sticking to the old ones and thus making them stronger. When trying something new, it is easy to give up because the brain follows the known path of thinking that allows all kinds of reasoning for sticking to what is familiar, even if the person knows that habit is not beneficial. (Rock 2006, 50-57.)

The fourth part of step one is *accentuating the positive*. According to Rock's model, transforming performance requires providing continuous positive feedback in different ways and different forms. Validating, encouraging, supporting and believing in people's potential helps them to see their ability to change in new light. Instead of giving blunt negative feedback or even disguising it in the sandwich model, Rock introduces a new approach with a set of question types to use:

- What did you do well, and what did you discover about yourself as a result?
- What were the highlights of this project and what did you learn?
- What went well and would you like to talk more about how you do more of this?
- What did you do well and what impact do you think this had on everyone else?

This is not to say that that there should not be honest and direct conversations about truly poor performances, but because people are very hard on themselves, it is better to concentrate on the positive to improve performance. (Rock 2006, 58-65.)

The final part of step one is putting *process before content*. On macro level this means having clear objectives to focus on. On micro level it means that clear expectations have been set, so that both parties know what they are talking about, why, and what is the aim of the discussion. (Rock 2006, 66-67.) An example of a good process in a conversation:

- Both know their roles in the dialogue.
- Both know the length of the discussion.
- Both know and agree on the outcome the discussion aims to.

- Both know how the discussion is tied to other issues, such as overall goals.
- Choosing the right type of approach in any given situation.
- Constant clarification of the main points of the discussion.

### 2.2.2 Listen for Potential - Step 2

People tend to interpret things they hear through their own perspective. For example, when someone describes their problem, one might come up with all kinds of ideas that they then offer as solutions to the other person. As established earlier, this is probably not the best way to help. The second step in Rock's Quiet Leadership model is *listening for potential*. (Rock 2006, 72-84.) The idea is to listen to someone as they would have all the tools and knowledge to be successful within themselves. Some example questions for listening to potential would be:

- How can I best help you think this through?
- Do you want to use me as a sounding board?
- Do you have a sense of what you want to do, and want to explore that with me?

Listening to potential requires ability to identify and to put aside mental states that could cloud the ability to listen openly. David Rock (2006, 78-84) has created a tool called *clarity of distance*, that helps recognizing patterns more easily, by maintaining a distance to the topic at hand. In clarity of distance model there are four different mental frames that a leader can get stuck in. Keeping these pitfalls in mind can help maintain the clarity of an observer.

- **Lost in the details** – The coach should be able to lead the way and help keep the big picture in mind. It is not useful for the coach to get lost in the same forest of details the coachee is trying to find a way out of.
- **Mislead by filters** – Filters are the unconscious mental frames that are the sum of our assumptions, expectations and predictions. It is a common trap to fit people in predetermined boxes that are of our own making. Recognizing the filters helps to take a step back and listen more effectively.
- **Having an agenda** – There might be all kinds of agendas, for example when you manage someone. You might for example want them to perform better or fit the team. By identifying the agenda, it can be put aside and then start concentrating on the other person's possibilities.
- **Hot spots** – A hot spot is a charged issue that brings out feelings and makes us emotionally engaged. This can cloud judgement. By identifying those hot spots and actively stepping away from them helps maintaining the clarity of distance.

### 2.2.3 Speak with Intent – Step 3

Step number three is to speak in a way that has maximum possible likelihood to improve people's thinking. Over the years of coaching, David Rock has noticed three core patterns that get in the way when communicating. (Rock 2006, 86.) The first one is that people take much more time than necessary to describe their ideas, resulting the listener to "check out" of the conversation. The second pattern is that the conversation drifts to side tracks because the listener does not understand exactly what the speaker is saying. The third pattern is that the speaker uses language and concepts that the listener is unable to relate to. These patterns can be avoided by *speaking with intent* i.e. being *succinct, specific and generous*. (Rock 2006, 85-100.)

Being succinct means keeping the conversation more focused. Instead of taking several minutes to convey the message, and as result losing the listener, succinct speaker is able to deliver the message with a few sentences, end therefor keeps the conversation engaging. Being succinct also gives the listener a chance to process information in bite-sizes, rather than having to process information worth of several minutes.

While using as few words as possible, we need to make sure that the listener understands exactly what we mean. To be specific, we need to provide just enough information to illustrate the point. Being specific requires paying close attention and taking mental notes of what the other person is saying, to be able to respond accurately and detailed.

Being generous means putting yourself in their shoes and focusing in their needs in the conversation. In this context being generous can be categorised as follows:

- Choose your words carefully.
- Be sensitive to avoid throwing people off balance.
- Pay attention and give people all your focus.
- Acknowledge people and make them feel safe.
- Be human by sharing your humanity and what is important to you.

### 2.2.4 Dance Toward Insight – Step 4

Step number four is *dance toward insight*. It is a way to have conversations and a type of a map consisting of four elements that are permission, placement, questioning and clarifying. (Rock 2006, 101-149.)

## Dance Toward Insight



Figure 4. Dance toward insight (Rock 2006, 110.)

The conversation starts with asking for a *permission* to dive into the matter at hand. This gives a sense of respect and builds trust (Rock 2006, 112-114). The next step is *placement*. It is about anchoring the conversation, establishing exactly what the discussion is about and what is going to happen next. Placement can be done multiple times throughout the conversation. It helps summarizing the starting point and where to head next. (Rock 2006, 18-119.)

Once permission has been established and clear frames have been placed, the *questioning* can start. Rock talks about powerful questioning, and what he means by that is asking questions that focus on the way a person thinks about the issue, instead of focusing on the details of the problem or trying to give advice. An example of a thinking question would be “How long have you been thinking about this?” or “How important is this issue to you, on a scale from one to ten?”. The aim of these questions is to make people think about their issue more clearly and at a higher level, understand the background of their thinking, and in result find insights. (Rock 2006, 123-133.)

The final element of dance of insight is *clarifying*. It is not the same as paraphrasing, it adds something to what has been said and takes the conversation to a higher level. Clarifying means finding the bottom line and voicing the essence of the conversation. (Rock 2006, 139.)

Dance toward insight is a basic coaching tool but can also be used in everyday conversations. The facilitator uses this tool to help the other person reflect and through insight move to action. (Rock 2006, 148.)

### 2.2.5 CREATE New Thinking – Step 5

As dance toward insight focuses on fine-tuning thinking and finding insights, CREATE model helps to transform those insights into action. (Rock 2006, 151-152.) As a coach or discussion facilitator this model can be followed to find concrete action points after some thought processing and hopefully newly found insights. Figure 5 illustrates how the steps of dance toward insight are included in each of the CREATE steps, and how awareness of a dilemma travels through thought processes, questioning and insights towards a desired outcome.

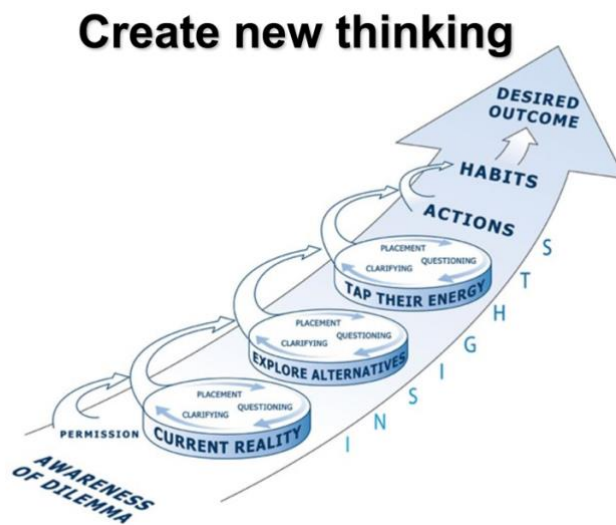


Figure 5. CREATE model (Rock 2006, 151.)

CR stands for *Current Reality*, and it is the first element in the CREATE model. It explores the current reality of someone. At this point the person becomes aware of their dilemma and after reflection, possibly find some insight. (Rock 2006, 152.)

From there the model moves to EA, *Exploring Alternatives*. This is where different ideas are thrown around and people try to find out what could be done with the insights of the previous element. (Rock 2006, 152.)

The third part of the model is TE, *Tap their Energy*. This is where people are energized to take action. The facilitator then helps finding some concrete action and turning insights into habits. (Rock 2006, 152.)

### 2.2.6 Follow Up – Step 6

CREATE helps undertake action after insight, but commitment might not stick without following up. Whether the chosen actions have realised or not, it is important to follow up in order to deepen the new wiring that was created earlier. For this, David Rock has introduced a tool called FEELING, illustrated in figure 6.



Figure 6. FEELING model (Rock 2006, 175.)

The first thing in following up is checking the simple *facts*. Neutrally checking what has been done compared to what had been planned. The second step is to check the *emotions* related to the task. Emotions help connecting learning in the long-term memory and if there are negative emotions in the way preventing from completing the task, they can be managed at this stage. During CREATE, people are stretched to find new thinking, so acknowledgement of effort and positive validation *encourages* them to continue on that path. In *learning* we find out what the person has learned during the task. (Rock 2006, 175-182.)

During follow up the biggest focus goes to learning because it helps naming and understanding the new wiring created during the task. The following questions help deepen people's learning:

- What was your big insight this week?
- What did you find about yourself?
- What other insight did that open up?
- What did you discover about your thinking or habits?
- What new habit did you notice starting to emerge? (Rock 2006, 179.)

Once the facts, feelings, encouragement and learning have been established, the model guides to ask about *implications*. This helps giving the wiring more focus and connecting them to other parts of the brain. Questions like "What are the broader implications of being

able to this now?” or “What impact has this learning had on you?” help define the implications. The final step of following up is finding a *new goal*. The idea is to look into how to help people to recognize and further embed developing habits. (Rock 2006, 179-182.)

### **2.3 Mentoring and Peer Mentoring**

Mentoring is a form of a developmental relationship where a more experienced and usually senior mentor is committed to providing advice and developmental assistance to a less experienced protege. A mentor is typically not the direct manager of the person being mentored, but someone who is available when guidance and advice is needed. (Irissou 2012, 23.) Mentors provide career development through challenging work, coaching, sponsorship, exposure and visibility, and protection and guidance as well as psychosocial support by confirmation, acceptance, friendship, and counselling. (Forret & de Janasz 2005, 479.)

Peer mentoring refers to a relationship between two employees working at a similar level. This type on variation on traditional mentoring has increased during past decade, as organizations are changing and becoming flatter with fewer senior manager positions. (Tong & Kram 2013, 229.) Theorists have suggested that peer mentoring has a key role in in the integration of new employees as well as in sharing valuable technical or job-related information. Having open communication, collaboration, and mutual support may be easier in peer mentoring relationship than a traditional one, due to absence of hierarchical positions. (Tong & Kram 2013, 230.) On the other hand, McManus and Russell (2007, 287) note that traditional mentors are in a better position to influence career development by offering challenging assignments or protection. McManus and Russell (2007, 287) further propose that informal peer mentors provide more job-related than career-related developmental functions to their protégés.

McManus and Russell (2007, 284) state that individuals in mentoring relationship are expected to be learning, growing, and developing both personally and professionally, which is possible when people are sensing psychological safety. They further state that protégés feel safer to reveal difficult and challenging thoughts to a peer mentor than to a hierarchically higher mentor, and therefor propose that peer mentorship is characterized as more psychologically safe than traditional mentorships. Consequently, peer mentorships may result in deeper and broader learning than that experienced in in traditional mentorships. (McManus & Russell, 2007, 286.)

## 2.4 Psychologically Healthy Workplace

Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (Työterveyslaitos 2019) describes a well-being organization as a place where

- here is openness and trust
- there is enthusiasm and support
- everybody works for common goals
- there is positive feedback
- there is a reasonable work load
- problems can be discussed freely
- there is ability to maintain operational during change.

Another definition according to American Psychological Association (2019) states that psychologically healthy workplaces share five important characteristics:

- They provide opportunities for employee involvement.
- They promote employee health and safety.
- They foster work-life balance.
- They support employee growth and development.
- They recognize employees for their achievements.

HERO (Salanova, Cifre, Llorens, Martinez & Lorente 2011, 117-141) is a theoretical model that integrates research results from areas such as job stress, human resource management, organizational behaviour, positive occupational health psychology, and salutogenesis theory. An organization can be defined as a HERO if it “makes systematic, planned and proactive efforts to improve employees, teams, and organizational processes and outcomes and is able to maintain positive adjustment and desirable functions and outcomes under challenging conditions or in crisis”. (Salanova & Llorens 2014, 129.)

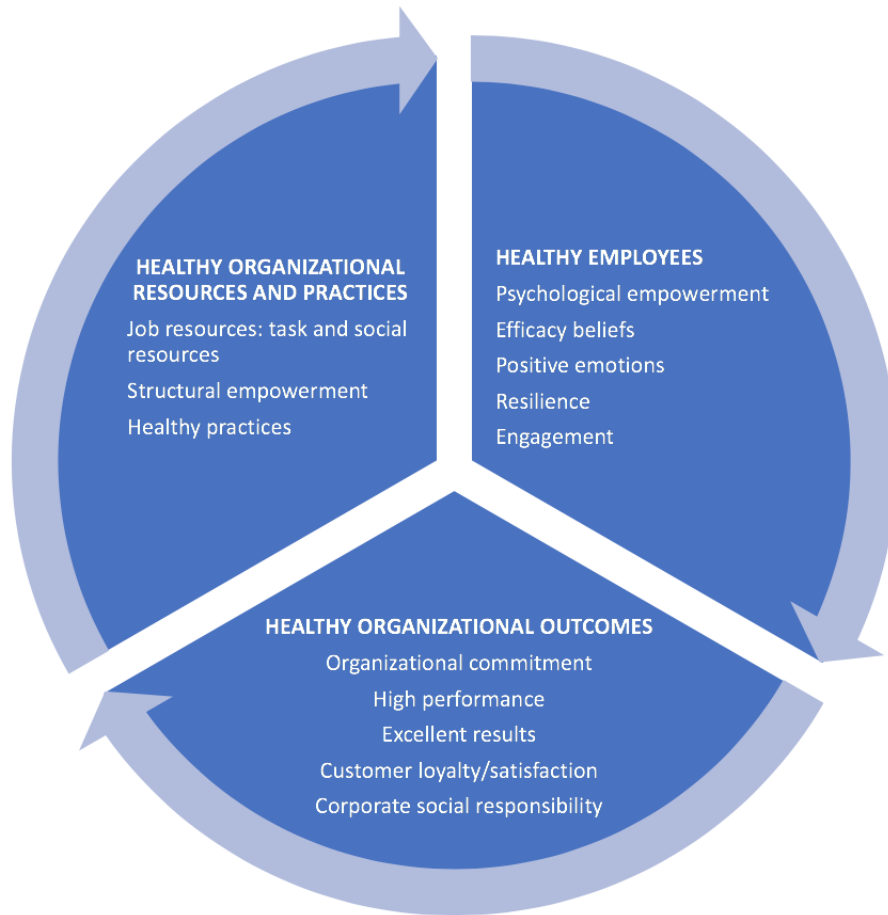


Figure 7. HERO model (Adapted from Salanova & Llorens 2014, 131.)

The main suggestion of HERO model, illustrated in figure 7, is that collective experience of well-being at work consists of three interrelated elements: healthy organizational resources and practices, healthy employees and teams, and healthy organizational outcomes. (Salanova & Llorens 2014, 129.)

Healthy workplace resources can be further divided into three categories: primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions. Primary interventions and initiatives include actions that reduce stress factors. Secondary interventions and initiatives aim to enhance individual's ability to manage their stress levels, and tertiary initiatives treat or heal the individual. Even though organization focuses on primary initiative, secondary and tertiary interventions are still necessary, because individuals face life demands beyond the organization's control. Balance between all three is important. (Day & Randell 2014, 10-11.)

## 2.5 Job Demand-Resources

Job demands-resources (JD-R) model by Bakker & Demerouti (2007, 309-328) is based on the assumption that all factors associated with job stress in different occupations can be divided into two general categories: *job demand* and *job resources*. Job demands refer to those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects that require effort of skills that are associated with physiological and psychological costs. For example, high work pressure and emotionally demanding clients are job demands. Job resources are aspects of work that promote achieving work goals, reduce physiological and psychological costs associated to job demands, as well as stimulate personal growth, learning, and development. (Bakker & Demerouti 2007, 312.)

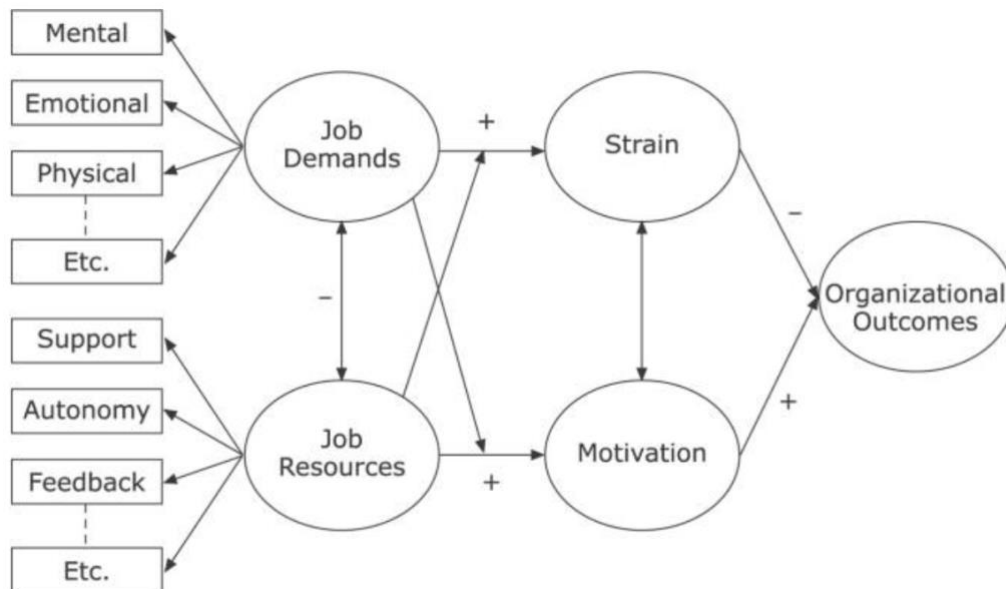


Figure 8. The job demands-resources model (Bakker & Demerouti 2007, 313.)

Figure 8 of the JD-R model illustrates the two different psychological processes that have a role in developing job strain and motivation. The first process is about job demands that exhaust the employee mentally and physically and may lead to loss of energy and health problems. The second process includes motivational job resources that potentially lead to high work engagement, low cynicism, and excellent performance. Job resources may be either intrinsically motivational by adding to growth, learning, and development, or extrinsically motivational because they help achieving work goals. (Bakker & Demerouti 2007, 313.)

JD-R model also proposes that several different job resources may act as buffers for the impact of several different job demands. The roles of the demands and resources depend on the characteristics of the organization in question. For example, a good relationship with one's supervisor may alleviate work overload or appreciation, and support from a leader may help coping with job demands. Also, autonomy is associated with more possibilities to cope with stressful situations and social support from colleagues may be instrumental in alleviating work overload and strain. (Bakker & Demerouti 2007, 314-315.)

The final proposition of the JD-R model states that the influence of the job resources on motivation or work engagement is stronger when the job demands are high (Bakker & Demerouti 2007, 315). This is based on conservation theory by Hobfoll (2001, 337-421) stating that people seek to obtain, retain and protect their valued material, social, personal, or energetic resources.

## 2.6 Self-Leadership

Historically management research has focused on how supervisors and leaders influence followers, but a different perspective of how people manage and lead themselves was introduced by Manz and Sims (1980, 361-367). They examined a variety of strategies for individual self-influence, such as self-observation, self-management of cues, self-goal setting, self-reward/criticism, and rehearsal. Later Manz (1986, 585-600) has extended his theory to conclude that even though behaviour is often supported by external forces such as a leader, actions are ultimately controlled by internal rather than external forces.

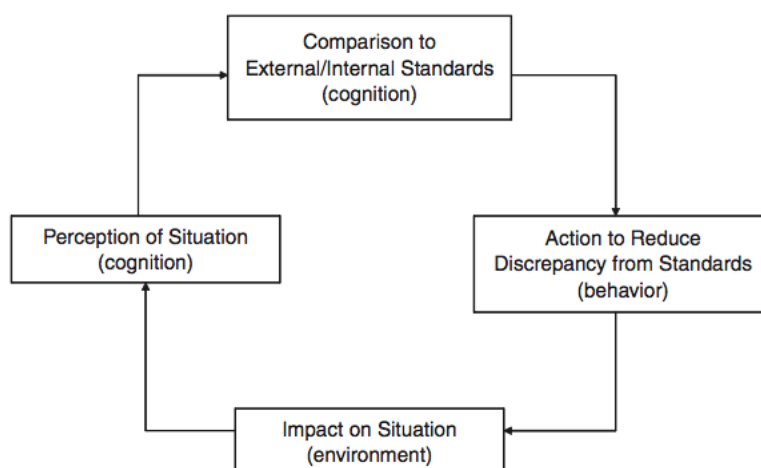


Figure 9. Theoretical framework for self-leadership (Adapted from Manz 1986, 187.)

Figure 9 (Manz 1986, 187) illustrates how an entity (e.g. individual or team) self-regulates by first assessing the current situation and compares it to identified standards. Next, the gap between the current state and desired outcome is addressed by such behaviour that reduces the gap. The impact of adjusted behaviour is then assessed and incorporated to feedback, which then leads to a new start of the cycle. Manz (1986, 186) further concludes that the extent of self-leadership goes beyond complying with external standards to internally establish those standards. This is an innate tendency in the case company's culture, and self-leadership cycle tends to work quite fast, both in context of individual and organization.

In their review of self-leadership literature, Stewart, Courtright and Manz (2011, 196-199) find that the literature has expanded to study internal forces instead of just concentrating on behaviour studies and external processes. They recognize three internal forces that the literature focuses on: *intrinsic or natural reward, thought self-leadership, and emotion regulation*.

The concept of **natural reward** is regarded as an important force of self-leadership, and individuals are argued to experience a greater sense of control over their work when its reward is natural. (Manz, 1986, 593.) Originally the concept of natural reward is derived from self-determination theory by Deci & Ryan (2000, 70) who state that performing activities themselves can have intrinsic reward. Individuals can also adopt *natural reward strategies* to motivate themselves, by embedding tasks with intrinsic reward (Stewart et al 2011, 197). Adopted strategy means finding motivation to do a naturally unmotivating task but finding a deeper purpose behind it. An example would be a nurse who is bathing patients, who then feel more comfort, thus the nurse feels intrinsic motivation to promote that comfort, even when doing something less motivating in nature. Other thought-leadership tools are mental imagery of performance, constructive self-talk, and identifying alternative beliefs to currently held dysfunctional beliefs, which can foster self-efficacy, setting challenging goals and work persistence and therefor enhance effectiveness. (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998, 240-261.) Studies show that thought patterns focusing on external obstacles rather than personal deficiencies may enable increase self-efficacy perceptions and a sense of personal control and therefor result in higher performance. (Stewart et al. 2011, 197-198.)

Emotion regulation (ER), can be categorized into antecedent- and response-focused strategies. Antecedent strategies occur before fully developed emotional responses and include strategies such as selecting pleasant tasks or altering work processes into a more enjoyable form. Response-focused strategies address emotional responses after they

have been triggered. An example would be taking deep breaths or counting to ten before engaging to an argument with a colleague. (Gross & Thomson 2007, 3-24.)

In summary to individual self-leadership Stewart et al. (2011, 203) list that

- individuals who embed intrinsic (natural) rewards are more self-led and more effective, and that individuals can be taught how to create intrinsic rewards in their work
- thought self-leadership is a way to manage thinking patterns, and those individuals who practice constructive self-talk feel more control over their work, are more efficient, and achieve higher performance
- emotion regulation enhances effectiveness and well-being.

## 2.7 SDT and Intrinsic Motivation

Self-determination theory, SDT (Deci & Ryan 1985), looks at human motivation and inner resources for personality development and self-regulation. Empirical research has identified three basic psychological needs that are the basis for self-motivation and personality integration. Those needs are competence, relatedness, and autonomy. (Deci & Ryan 2000, 68.)

SDT is also part of the basis of **Draivi**, a model introduced by Jarenko and Martela (2015), stating that intrinsic motivation is needed to be creative and innovate, which is crucial in modern global markets. They describe this mind-set as strong inner drive to fulfil a chosen task and call it “Draivi”.

Jarenko and Martela (2015) introduce in their model four elements of intrinsic motivation: *autonomy, competence, relatedness, and benevolence*. The first three are based on self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and the fourth comes from the research done in past few years by Richard Ryan and Draivi co-author Frank Martela.

Autonomy means that employees feel they get to do work that is interesting to them and is based on their own interests and values. Therefore they get to do what is interesting, not what they are made to do. There are ways to support autonomy:

- Giving the right task for the right person.
- Recruiting based on enthusiasm.
- Giving freedom to make own choices.
- Giving room for fine-tuning the task.
- Possibility to influence on the goals and procedures of the company.
- Minimizing bureaucracy, rules and micro-management.
- Avoiding bonus rewards.

In intrinsically motivated and self-directed organization everyone manages their own work, and the leaders' role is to support rather than telling what to do. Management by coaching is being talked about a lot and that seems to be the way the modern organizations are heading.

Sense of competence at work is built on three principals:

- Skilful doing and sense of control.
- Getting things done.
- Continuous learning and development.

Relatedness is divided into three connected themes:

- Mutual team spirit.
- Management cares and appreciates.
- Trustworthy and fair procedures.

Sense of benevolence means that there is sense that one's work influences the world in a positive way. When people feel that their actions make others happy, benefit or feel better, it amplifies motivation. (Jarenko & Martela 2015.)

**Extrinsic motivation** means doing something for gaining a reward or avoiding a punishment. The task itself does not motivate and the nature of action is reactive. For example, salary or fear of getting fired represent extrinsic motivation. At its worst, doing something based on extrinsic motivation and with no true desire to do it, can be mentally consuming and feel heavy in the long-run. **Intrinsic motivation** means that doing something is proactive and is derived from person's personal interests and values. The implications of extrinsic motivation can be described as narrow viewpoint, seeing threats and feeling consumed, whereas intrinsic motivation opens up viewpoint, helps see opportunities and gives energy. However, the writers point out that it is good to recognize that both types of motivations are usually present and intertwined. For example, money is a resource that is needed to provide for family. It is also an indicator that someone values the work that is intrinsically motivated. (Deci & Ryan 2000, 70; Jarenko & Martela 2015, 32-34.)

In order to understand intrinsic motivation, Jarenko and Martela describe the four basic dimensions of human feelings (2015, 30), illustrated in figure 10. The dimensions are positive and negative feelings and high and low activation levels.

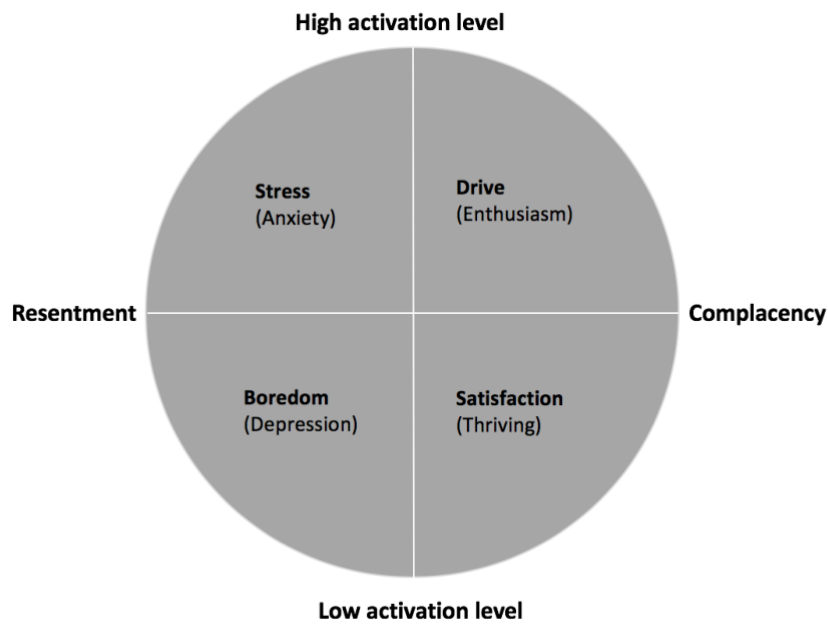


Figure 10. Four basic dimensions of feelings (Adapted Jarenko & Martela 2015, 30.)

Combining these dimensions results in four different basic dimensions that a person can experience at work: boredom, stress, satisfaction, and drive. Boredom and satisfaction represent low activation level, whereas stress and drive are on high activation level. Stress is more harmful than boredom in the long-run, as stress tends to lead to emotional and physical reactions. (Jarenko & Martela 2015, 30-31.) Jarenko and Martela (2015, 31) claim that the optimal state is feeling the drive, where the employee feels positive and high-energy enthusiasm toward work. From the employer's perspective, a driven employee is more sustainable than an efficient employee. They continue coming back to work driven to perform at their best possible level, whereas an efficient employee might burn out and lose that efficiency. (Jarenko & Martela 2015, 31.)

Jarenko and Martela (2015, 155) state that intrinsic motivation can and cannot be led. Motivation has to start from within, but the manager has a role of an enabler whose job is to create such working environment where there is nothing stopping the employee from thriving. In addition, the manager is a coach, inspirer and a support person, who works together with the employee to reach common goals. (Jarenko & Martela 2015, 155-156.)

## 2.8 Organizational Agile

Organizational agility can be described as organizational resilience, flexibility and dynamism. Agile practices enable reacting quickly to changing environments, and thus

might create strategic benefits. Core Agile principles such as openness and self-management are what differentiate agile organizations from formal organizations, that are based on hierarchy and chain of command. (Janhonen & Taipale 2018, 131-143.)

Agile values and principles that the case company has adopted, were first introduced in 2001, in the Agile Manifesto (Agile Alliance 2019), by a group of software developers to improve the traditional waterfall development method. They saw that the traditional way was lacking the ability to react in unstable and unpredictable environments, where original product specifications are quickly outdated, and bureaucratic procedures hinder and oppress the developers. They created four new values that are followed in Agile development frameworks (Rigby, Sutherland & Takeuchi 2016):

- People over processes and tools.
- Respond to challenge rather than follow a plan.
- Working prototypes over excessive documentation.
- Customer collaboration over rigid contracts.

The origin of Agile is based on Lean, a Japanese leadership and production philosophy of Toyota Motor Company. Among production ideologies, Lean emphasizes employees' ability to utilize their full capacity in running and improving their work. (Hakola 2018, 147.) From Lean comes Toyota Kata, the ideology of continuous improvement. Instead of having a clear and paved path from current situation to the end target, Toyota Kata's path consists of setting target conditions in an unclear territory where taking next steps is based on experimenting and adjusting accordingly to pursue the set vision. (Rother 2010, 49.)

### **3 Methodology**

This chapter looks at the research design and the research method selected for this thesis. The data collection and data analysis method will also be explained, as well as the risks of the research and how they were managed.

The research question was created based on the need to understand how Kamu peer support is being perceived by the employees of the case company, and to investigate further development possibilities of Kamu system.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The commissioner was mainly interested in subjective experiences. The type of information needed was experiences of the Kamu support system from all parties, as well those not participating as Kamu or Kaveri. A point of interest was also suggestions on how to develop Kamu peer support. As this study can be considered as research related to psychology, anthropology and sociology, the choice of research method in this case is qualitative. (Mamun, Bishwajit, Hafsa & Mamun 2014, 9.)

The method of collecting data was chosen to be semi-structured interviews. There were certain specified research interests, but the purpose was to stay open to any type of findings regarding the Kamu system.

All of the sample interviewed were employees of the case company. The interviews were divided into three phases: Kamus, Kaveris, and those without neither role. Background information has been collected from the case company intranet, case company People Operations, the programme director Kirsi Mikkonen, and other staff members working as Kamu. Figure 11 illustrates the phases and elements of the research design of this thesis.

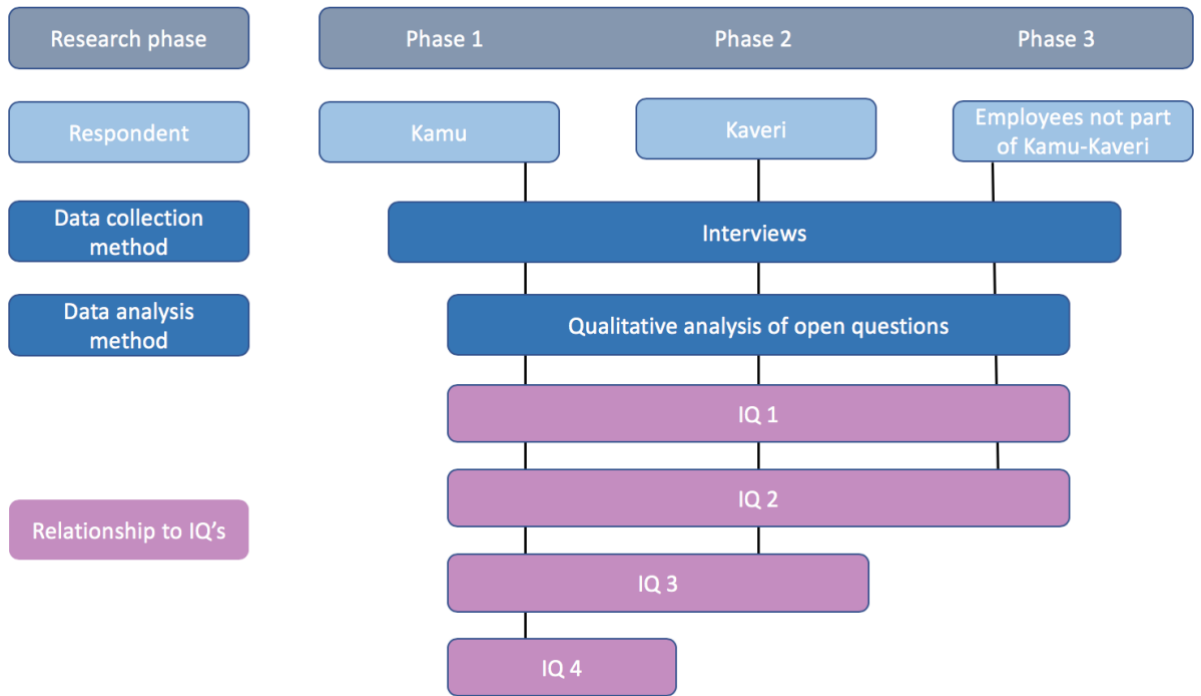


Figure 11. Research design

Preparing this thesis required careful background research on the programme itself, as well as thorough research of sources such as books, journals, studies, meta-analysis, and articles. All aspect regarding work well-being, company culture, company practices, and peer support form a very wide net of aspects affecting the thesis topic, thus critical selection of relevant theory, was required.

### 3.2 Data Collection

After selecting the research method and sample demographic, an interview guide was created. See Appendix 1 for the interview guide. The guide was designed to gather information from all the respondent groups: Kamus, Kaveris, and those with neither role. Some respondents had both roles of Kamu and Kaveri. The interviews with them were divided into two parts to cover their insights of both roles.

The points of view when designing the questions for the interviews, were:

- How is the Kamu system working?
- How much of employee's time is needed to run the Kamu system?
- How difficult or easy it feels as a Kamu or Kaveri?
- Does it feel useful for Kaveri?
- How could the programme be developed further?
- Why some people are not taking part?
- Are there language barriers?
- Any benefits or challenges that have been overlooked.

Invitation to take part in the research was sent by email to the whole staff of the case company. Everyone willing was interviewed regardless of their role in the case company or in the Kamu system. The interviews took place at the case company's premises. All of the interviews were voluntary and conducted under mutual understanding of confidentiality.

### 3.3 Risks and Risk Management

The main risk of the study was a low number of interviews. There was also a risk of insufficient representation in different response groups. To avoid these risks realising, the research project and its purpose was visibly advertised in the case company. Email invitation to take part in the research interview was sent to every employee. Reminding and advertising was done via email and in internal discussion channels. The number of interviews and representation in response groups reached a satisfactory level.

### 3.4 Analysis Methods

All of the interviews were recorded on tape and then transcribed into separate Word files per respondent. The text was then carefully gone through for findings, which were then listed in Excel sheet, see Appendix 2 and figure 12.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	Recording no.	Respondent group	IQ	Finding	Theme: Overall attitude/view	Theme: Benefit personal	Theme: Benefit organisation	Theme: Challenge	Theme: Kamu features	Theme: Development idea	Quote
32	2	Kamu	IQ1	I don't think Kaveris hold back anything in discussions					x		
33	2	Kamu	IQ1	The most important thing is that we don't forget anyone	x						
34	2	Kamu	IQ1	Try keep coaching mindset in Kamu and have something else next to it to cover other managing issues	x						
35	2	Kamu	IQ1	Key outcome is that Kaveri thinks it was beneficial for him or her		x					
36	2	Kamu		Get to know Kaveris as persons		x					
37	2	Kamu	IQ1	Learn things from Kaveri		x					"I also learn things and may change something in my life because I notice that this is good for him, it must be good for me also."
38	2	Kamu	IQ1	One Kaveri has started to take care of himself, he feels more energized			x				
39	3	Kaveri	IQ1	The system has a lot of potential but is hasn't really worked for me	x						
40	3	Kaveri	DEV	There should be clear guidelines how often to meet and what to do so no one has to assume things						x	
41	3	Kaveri	IQ1	Only one Kamu meeting, never really hit it off, unsure why, was really excited about haning a coach with dialogic abilities				x			
42	3	Kaveri	IQ1	If it doesn't work, it's up to yourself to fix it, but there are no guidelines on how to do that				x			

Figure 12. Excerpt from data analysis tool (Appendix 2.)

Analysis of data was done by listing the findings per IQs and respondent groups. The findings were then grouped by themes that were identified in the analysis. Data was then formed into results by combining the respondent group, theme and IQ.

## 4 Results

This chapter introduces the results from the data collection. The findings from the interviews are divided by IQs, then thematically and by respondent groups, see Appendix 2. The implications of these findings will be discussed in the following chapter.

### 4.1 Number and Profile of Respondents

Altogether 24 interviews were conducted with four different respondent groups. Table 2 shows that 8 respondents answered as Kamu, 15 respondents answered as Kaveri, and 5 respondents are not part of Kamu system by their own choice. This means that 4 of the respondents had both roles as Kamu and Kaveri and both of those roles were discussed in the interview.

Table 2. The number of respondents of each respondent group

Role	Kamu	Kaveri	Kamu and Kaveri	Neither role	Total
Number of interviews	4	11	4	5	24
	16,67 %	45,83 %	16,67 %	20,83 %	100,00 %

At the time of the interviews the case company had 120 employees, i.e. the population of this research, of which 31 were Kamus and 71 Kaveris.

### 4.2 Results by IQs, Themes, and Respondent Groups

The results from the interview analysis can be divided by investigative questions, and further into themes. The themes that were identified in the interviews can be categorized as follows:

- IQ1, IQ2: Overall attitude and views on the Kamu system
- IQ1: Features of Kamu work
- IQ1: Personal benefits of the Kamu system
- IQ1: Benefits of the Kamu system for the organization
- IQ1, IQ2, IQ4: Challenges of Kamu system
- Development ideas

### **4.3 Overall Attitudes and Views**

Overall attitude toward Kamu system was differentiated by respondent groups. Each group has a unique point of view; Kamu and Kaveri are part of the Kamu system, each with their own role, and those with no role in the system present yet another view. The combination of the respondent groups, i.e. samples, represents all aspects present in the case company.

#### **4.3.1 Respondent Group: Kamu**

Within IQ1 the first theme is about overall attitude and views on Kamu system. The response from Kamus was positive, stating that they like the system very much, they find it interesting, and experiences of Kamu sessions have been good. Kamus made several statements on how they see that Kamu system helps avoiding the need for middle management or creating more complex organizational structures. It is recognized that there is a need to check how employees are doing in general, and that it is very important that every employee has somebody to tell worries about, and who is interested in their development. It is further recognized that Kamu system does not totally replace the need for discussing issues related to work relationship, such as salary and other compensation models. However, it is also recognized that Kamu system has potential to replace aspects of the face-to-face practice in the case company, such as listening, support, and setting personal direction

"Nitor the level of trust between colleagues is really high it's kind of stunning how much people support each other. If you have a question or need help you usually get more than one person to answer or to help you despite the problem so there is always someone willing to work, giving time for you so this is a pretty special environment."

Coaching was seen as an important aspect in Kamu work. It was also stated that corporate agendas should not be part of Kamu coaching. Kamus recognize the importance of the voluntary nature of the Kamu system, as even employees who do take part, seem to value that having a Kamu is not mandatory. Another valued aspect is that Kamu and Kaveri are equal, in the sense that there is no hierarchical difference between the roles. It is recognized that equality also eliminates the sense of obligation that might be present in a traditional leadership-employee relationship. Kamus views on internal Kamu training were also positive, and meetings with other Kamus and sharing experiences and learning to use coaching tools together was seen as important and

useful. In general, Kamus were happy with the system but it was stated that it should no longer be considered as an experiment, but to be changed so that everybody would have a Kamu.

#### **4.3.2 Respondent Group: Kaveri**

Overall attitude of Kaveris on the Kamu system is positive. Kaveris stated that they are satisfied, find it useful, and are motivated to continue. One respondent stated that the system has not worked out for him personally but that the system has potential. It was stated that discussing personal or career development with a peer (=Kamu) feels better and more personal than discussing them with a superior. However, it was also seen that Kamu and superior face-to-face complete each other. Kaveris point out that it is important to keep company goals and measurements away from Kamu discussions, and to concentrate on personal well-being.

"I find it important that we have some kind of system for getting kind of peer coaching or some sort of opportunity to talk about how's it going, the personal improvements and goals and problems and whatever you want to share."

Using NitorMindPlatter tool within Kamu discussions was considered easy and as a good starting point and structure for the discussion. It was stated that NitorMindPlatter illustrates the wholeness of well-being and helps understand how professional and private lives are tied together.

"So, for example, there are these nutrition and sleep time and these aspects that perhaps bring quite nicely into focus the most important aspects of your well-being, but not going too much to your personal area. But still, if you want to discuss you can bring up things that affect for example your ability to get enough sleep or whatever."

Kaveris state that it is good that Kamu is not mandatory and that it is possible to change Kamu. The system is seen as a natural part of the organization and that it is becoming more relevant as the organization grows. It was seen important that there is a structure for support, otherwise Kamu type of discussions would not take place. For example, ad hoc discussions in office kitchen around the coffee machine were not seen as sufficient alternative for a Kamu discussion.

"...kamu is kind of a peer and the fact that there is no form of power the relationship should be more open and also as you discuss things more broadly so like you know if you talk with the CEO about some problems than maybe you know you can't really put changing jobs on the table that change the tone of the discussion immediately but for instance with a kamu I could definitely imagine people talking pretty openly about maybe changing jobs for instance because that I think is a valid solution to some problems for instance if you want some sort of career growth that's not available at Nitor or something so I think it's good to have it separated."

There is also interest among Kaveris in becoming a Kamu. It is seen as a nice way to help colleagues. Overall participating in the system is seen as giving a good example.

#### **4.3.3 Respondent Group: Neither Role**

In this respondent group there was more variety regarding positive and negative attitude toward Kamu system. However, most of the comments were neutral or positive and there was also willingness to become a Kamu and Kaveri. Freedom from hierarchy, opportunity to discuss personal level challenges, social contacts, and voluntary were among the positive comments. Also, possibility to have supporting discussions in general was seen as a positive, even if the respondent him/herself had not recognized such need within him/herself.

"...everybody says we don't need managers and when you get rid of the managers you realise that holy shit, we really needed managers."

Benefits of coaching were recognized, and it was stated that Kamu from another team could provide another perspective. Holistic approach divided opinions; for some it was seen as positive, but for another it feels perhaps too invasive to personal areas. There was also some uncertainty of what Kamu system really means and what Kamu does. Those who showed interest in being a Kamu were worried whether it would be too much of a personal challenge or investment.

Hours away from customer work and tight schedule in customer project were recognized as reasons not to participate in Kamu system. Lack of time in general was also recognized as a reason not to participate.

"I don't want the customer to feel like this guy is never present in our office."

Other reasons stated for not participating in Kamu system included feeling there is no need for a Kamu, not wanting to bring personal issues to workplace, not finding the right Kamu, lack of motivation for coaching and growth, and doubt about usefulness of having a Kamu. Some concerns of confidentiality and quality of discussions were stated. Further it was stated that more formal process and professional coaching instead of peer coaching would motivate participating.

"I don't know what the system could offer, what are the things people are going through or helping each other, is it technology? Is it company development?"

#### **4.4 Features of Kamu Work**

Features of Kamus and Kamu work were recognised as a separate theme in the data analysis. Also different perspectives from all respondent groups were recognized; those who do Kamu work describe their methods and how they see themselves as Kamu, those who are Kaveris describe how they view the Kamus and Kamu sessions, and those with neither role describe what Kamu and Kamu work is according to their understanding.

##### **4.4.1 Respondent Group: Kamu**

Kamus state that Kamu relationships are based on trust, and that Kamus ask, listen, reflect, and give positive feedback. It was further stated that Kamus help Kaveris find solutions themselves by asking questions that provoke thinking on different angles and perspectives. According to Kamus, they are the facilitators of discussions, but not trying to be experts on the topics.

It was recognised that successful Kamu sessions include going through goals, following up progress, aiming for improvement and that the atmosphere is open, comfortable, and safe. A less successful discussion was recognised as when there is nothing to grasp, when situation persists with no improvement.

Frequency of Kamu meetings was stated to vary between once a week to once a year, most common frequency being quarterly. Discussion topics were stated to vary between work and personal life, and it was further stated that Kamu is open to any topic Kaveri wants to present. NitorMindPlatter was stated to be a good tool which helps follow improvement, provokes discussion, and gives permission to talk about different topics.

#### 4.4.2 Respondent Group: Kaveri

Experience in coaching and mentoring, ability to create a structured discussion, communicating skills, and experience in working with people were recognized as important features in Kamu. Good listener, analytical, perceptive, and trustworthy were stated to be features of a good Kamu. Also good chemistry between Kamu and Kaveri and connecting beyond work level was recognized as important. It was further stated that some distance to Kamu is preferable, rather than being a close friend or working in the same team.

Kamu discussions were stated to include both personal and professional issues, some concentrating only in the other. It was recognized that Kamus can motivate, give perspective, and help focus on targets. Goal setting, help in crisis, coaching to find answers and clarity were stated as elements of a good Kamu session. It was also stated that Kamu should restrain from bringing their own issues in the session. Kamu meetings are described as informal, relaxed, and free from pressure to meet goals and develop. It is recognized that Kamus are not professionals in mental health, and that some topics are considered too big or difficult to discuss with a Kamu. The significance of Kamu discussions was stated not to be very high, but that they are still useful and good experiences.

NitorMindPlatter was stated to bring good structure and base for Kamu discussions, and that it helps compare development in different areas over time. However, some respondents also stated that NitorMindPlatter is no longer used or has never been used as part of Kamu discussions, due to reasons that it feels pretentious or that Kamu chooses not to use it.

"I would definitely like the Kamu sessions to provide a structure, so I would like there to be, maybe it's a characteristic of the Kamu or maybe it's a characteristic of the process, that I would like to go through is someone taking responsibility of the process, is someone looking out for me or setting some sort of agenda or process."

The frequency of Kamu meetings was stated to range from once a week to twice a year. Having the same Kamu for a longer period of time was recognized as useful. Introduction of all Kamus at a company trip was regarded as lowering the threshold to ask someone to be their Kamu.

#### **4.4.3 Respondent Group: Neither role**

Respondents with neither role stated that a certain level of coaching knowledge and experience should be expected from Kamus. It was also stated that Kamu should be fair, trustworthy, positive, and interested in learning and developing. Kamu with similar professional understanding and ability to put themselves in Kaveri's position was regarded important. Distant relationship and slightly different point of view with Kamu was regarded better than friendship. In order to build trust, longer Kamu relationship was stated to be more preferable to shorter relationships.

"I think we need to educate the Kamus on their collaboration and coaching skills and communication skills..."

A good Kamu discussion was regarded to include coaching, asking thought provoking questions, and setting concrete goals. Further it was stated that discussion should be mostly about professional and technical issues. Providing Kamus tools and base level training was regarded important.

#### **4.5 Benefits**

Benefits of having a Kamu system was another theme that can be identified in the interviews. What can also be identified were different types of benefits to Kamus, Kaveris, and the case company. The responses regarding benefits to the organization in chapter 4.4.2 include views from all respondent groups.

##### **4.5.1 Benefits for Kamus**

Among benefits for Kamus, the most important one was stated to be getting the satisfaction of helping others and feeling useful. Helping others and seeing them go forward with their ideas was stated to be inspiring. It was also stated that another benefit from being a Kamu is learning to be a better coach, and further use those coaching skills in everyday work and with other colleagues. Kamus also recognize the possibility to learn from Kaveri, specifically regarding how Kaveris handle different aspects of their lives. It was seen that problem-solving skills and operating outside one's comfort zone have also increased.

"I don't give advice anymore."

Building personal and deep relationships with Kaveris was seen as a benefit. It was also stated that getting to know Kaveris helps understand the reasons why people might not be feeling well.

"I also learn things and may change something in my life because I notice that this is good for him, it must be good for me also."

#### **4.5.2 Benefits for Kaveris**

Kaveris recognize that Kamu meetings help understand the current situation, set focus and goals, and also meet those goals. The meetings are seen as structured place and time where to stop and look at what could be improved. Kamu is seen as someone to take ideas forward with and is shared frustrations with. In general, just discussing problems and exchanging opinions with someone was regarded as important, useful, and relaxing. It was stated that meetings with Kamu have resulted in paying attention to things that would have been otherwise overlooked, finding awareness of new ideas, and solving problems that had been stuck.

"If there is no kind of end goal, then it's like just, it's easier to kind of go back to the old ones."

It was recognized that Kamu meetings help find peace of mind, handle emotions, and relief anxiety by crystallizing thoughts. It was further recognized that NitorMindPlatter has helped pay attention to different aspects of life, resulting for example in improved sleep rhythm and increased exercising activity.

"...you cannot come to your manager and like talk about some nutrition problem you have that you can actually discuss with Kamu."

"I realized that even though I'm very busy I'm actually quite happy with my life situation in general."

Getting to know the Kamu and becoming friends with them was also recognized as a benefit. It was also stated that Kamu system has improved life and work satisfaction in general.

"...I like the idea of having these regular meetings kind of like check-ups because if something like kind of worse happen that would kind of, it's kind of a mechanism for coping..."

### **4.5.3 Benefits for the Organization**

This sub-chapter includes views from all four respondent groups.

Among the recognized benefits are that Kamu system helps create sense of togetherness and community, by networking and helping get to know the colleagues. It was further recognized that building a structured, strong community increases psychological safety, makes employees feel happier and willing to help each other. According to respondents, positive atmosphere and overall good feeling among employees have increased in the case company.

"...I feel that just having this system and having this way of talking within the company has created sort of like a positive atmospheric change because it highlights how this whole company where it sort of has a peer-to-peer level, but there is very little management, and everything is voluntary..."

It is seen that Kamu system takes some burden off superiors and fills in gaps that are resulted from having no middle management. It is also seen that knowledge that Kamu system exists creates trust that the employer cares about employees' well-being and that in crisis there is someone who is ready to listen. Maintaining current operating culture and low hierarchy are seen as important benefits for the organization.

It is stated that employees who feel good in general, contribute to the work community and want to develop themselves, which in turn results in developing the organization. It is further stated that Kamu system also aims to prevent burn-outs and helps work at a sustainable pace, and that employees with better work-life balance are less likely to leave the organization.

It is recognized that there is also interest toward Kamu system outside the case company, which is beneficial for business purposes, and can also be seen as something to be proud of.

### **4.6 Challenges**

IQ4 was specifically designed to understand some challenges Kamus might have in their Kamu work. However, also challenges for Kaveris was identified as a theme, and therefor introduced in this chapter.

#### **4.6.1 Challenges for Kamus**

The main challenge that was recognized for Kamus is to find time to do Kamu work. It was stated that working full-time at a customer puts pressure on finding time to meet the Kaveris and attending Kamu trainings. It was further stated that also Kaveri's scheduling is problematic when planning Kamu meetings. It was recognized that customer work and responsibilities for the customer are usually prioritized over Kamu meetings. It was stated that the number of Kaveris needs to be limited for scheduling reasons.

Kamus recognize the need for further training on coaching, in order to enhance listening and questioning skills, to increase certainty, and to understand different areas of coaching. It was also recognized that learning not to give advice is difficult.

Also challenges regarding relationships with Kaveri were recognised. It was stated that if Kamu and Kaveri work in a same project, they might be too close to each other to successfully run the Kamu process. It was further recognized that the quality of discussions between Kamu and Kaveri might suffer for reasons such as Kamu having too many Kaveris or that the relationship has lasted so long that there is no longer topics to discuss.

It was recognized that the possibility to change Kamu poses a problem of losing the history that has developed over time. It was stated that if would Kamu suggest changing to another Kamu, it would feel difficult and like pushing the Kaveri away.

#### **4.6.2 Challenges for Kaveris**

Scheduling difficulties were present also in Kaveris' comments. It was recognized that as both parties tend to be busy, meetings keep getting postponed. It was further recognized that sessions spread too far apart cause forgetting good ideas and hinders development. Someone's Kamu having a large number of other Kaveris was also seen as a challenge.

"I don't really know what coaching is like supposed to be like..."

It was recognised that there is uncertainty of how Kamu system should work or what coaching really is. It was also recognized that there is a lack of guidelines and instructions concerning selecting and changing Kamu. It was further stated that Kamu should be able to notice difficulties in communication with Kaveri proactively suggest changing to another Kamu.

## 4.7 Development Ideas

One of the aims of this thesis was to receive development ideas from the respondents. This sub-chapter includes views from all four respondent groups.

To clarify what kind of benefits Kamu system might have, and to get more employees onboard, it was stated that experiences could be shared openly, and that there could be active reminding and info letters. It was also stated that there could be incentives to participate, however without forcing. It was further suggested that an active Kamu community would be created, and that People Operations could discreetly inquire employees why they do not have a Kamu. In order to help with time limitation issues, it was suggested that the management discusses with the customers allocating and allowing time to do Kamu work.

"When people hear that hey, you got help to your, like, exercise issue, or you got help to your connecting or sleep issue from the kamu system, it probably will induce ideas of like maybe I should also have it. So, making it work in real, and then being transparent about it, making it visible."

It was suggested that there would be clearer guidelines on how often to meet and what should be included in the Kamu meetings. It was stated that there could be dedicated Kamus who would only work internally, and not doing customer work. It was further stated that there should be professional mental services provided in addition to Kamu and supervisor support.

Need for training Kamus was recognized, and it was suggested that there would be training outside the case company available, as well as practicing coaching tools and skills with other Kamus,

In order to make selecting Kamu easier, it was stated that the introduction profiles of Kamus in the company intranet should be improved by making them more welcoming and personalized. Kamu speed dating was suggested, as well as matchmaking test, and software that pairs Kamus and Kaveris. It was stated that Kamu system should be made more visible and that there could be Kamu t-shirts to identify the Kamus. To make changing Kamu easier, it was suggested that there would be a time limitation with one Kamu, and that Kamus would be assigned and rotated. It was also stated that there could be regular reminders and proactive suggestions by Kamu to change Kamu.

"If there's ten developers stating that they are Java-klonkku and nothing else then I can't tell the difference between those developers."

"Speed-dating is just one example of a system where you get sort of very light contact with a prospective Kamu to figure out will this work, and they have very low cost of saying 'this is not working out'. Because right now, I feel like this is a very high social cost for me to say it's not working out."

It was stated that Kamu role could include representing Kaveri in difficult discussions with the supervisors. It was also suggested that Kamu would be more like junior-senior set-up, rather than peer set-up. Also mentoring new employees in ways of working was suggested.

#### **4.8 Hypothesis of Language Barrier**

IQ 2 was designed to find out if there are challenges due to different mother tongues between Kamu and Kaveri. There were no comments referring to language issues from any of the respondent groups in any area of this study. Therefore there are no specific results to report concerning IQ 2.

## 5 Discussion

In this chapter I will discuss the results presented in chapter 4, by reflecting them to the investigative questions and respective theories presented in this thesis. I will also present my recommendations for steps to develop the Kamu system, and where to direct further research on the topic. To conclude this thesis, I will discuss the reliability and relevance of the research and reflect on my personal learning.

### 5.1 Key Findings

The purpose of this thesis was to understand how the employees of the case company view the Kamu peer support system. More specifically it was important to understand what the benefits or challenges of the Kamu system are, and what are the factors that prevent some employees from participating.

Trust was stated to be the most important element of the Kamu system. This was recognized by all respondent groups, and it is also included in the very top of Kamu system operating principles. Neuroscientific studies show that when people build social ties intentionally, the brain releases oxytocin in the brain, which in turn enables trust, and therefor improves performance. (Zak 2017.) This suggests that preserving the element of trust in all levels of Kamu system, is not only crucial for the success of the system but strategically sensible.

Regarding how the Kamu system is seen in general, another key finding is that the case company employees expect Kamus to have experience in coaching, mentoring, or working with people. More specifically, all respondent groups regard listening skills, ability to ask right questions, and facilitating structured discussions as important skills for a Kamu. The respondent groups have different perspectives on *why* these skills are important; Kamus want to perform well, Kaveris find that structured discussions are the most helpful kind, and those with neither role expect certain standards in order to have a credible system supporting the organization.

As Kamu system is designed to rely strongly on coaching methods and principles, it was noticeable that there is a lack of deeper understanding of those methods and principles in each respondent group. Most Kamus have an excellent command on coaching and are able to utilize coaching skills also in their core work. On the other hand, some Kamus either choose not to use coaching as basis of their Kamu work or are unable to do so, due to lack of skills or confidence. Although there is quite a lot of freedom to execute Kamu

work in a manner that suits Kamu and Kaveri personally, it is clear that Kaveris would also benefit from more structured way of having discussions. It would also be beneficial to have clearer guidelines for Kamu meetings in general, for example the frequency of the meetings.

The main tool in Kamu work, NitorMindPlatter, is regarded as useful and as a good basis for discussions. It is simple to use, and it is not restricting the discussion. It also opens new and perhaps unexpected viewpoints for both Kamu and Kaveri. The biggest impact of NitorMindPlatter seems to be its effect on understanding the *holistic* approach to well-being, as it includes sections like “creativity time” and “non-connection time”, not just the basics such as work, sleeping, and eating. Some suggestions to add new tools in Kamus repertoire were made, which could bring new energy in Kamu work. However, most find NitorMindPlatter sufficient, and there are those who have yet to use its full potential, so continuing to use it seems reasonable. Providing new tools for more advanced Kamu-Kaveri pairs could be beneficial.

Based on the results, Kamu system promotes psychological health in two different ways; First, building successful Kamu relationships and thus having a strong community of trustworthy peers, creates a safer working environment. The second factor is the possibility to discuss both personal and professional issues with a peer, which is regarded psychologically safer than discussing them with a superior in hierarchy. These findings are in line with the theoretical base introduced in chapter 2.4 of this thesis.

As the case company relies strongly on self-leadership of the employees, the concept of motivation has an underlying presence in this research. It is beneficial to understand how motivation is built and how to lead intrinsic motivation. Since there is no middle management or an immediate relationship with the supervisor, it is crucial to be able to manage one's own work and find the motivation within that work. Kamu has potentially a significant role in helping find meaningful goals and also meet those goals. Based on this research, setting goals and following up on them is the most beneficial outcome of Kamu meetings for Kaveris. For Kamus the motivation was found in *benevolence*. The concept of benevolence as a source of intrinsic motivation is introduced in chapter 2.7 of this thesis. By far, the most common answer from Kamus when asked about benefits was that they get satisfaction out of helping colleagues. This is perhaps a key point if at some point we want to explore the possibility to implement Kamu system in other organizations. Then the question is that does that organization have such culture where helping colleagues is considered a main source of intrinsic motivation?

Another important element of the system is that it supports and helps maintain low hierarchy. Minimal hierarchy is a basic element of the case company's way of working. (Vilmi 4 February 2019.) The employees recognize the significance of the Kamu system for maintaining the organization flat. Kamus help carry the social burden of management by taking on the role of listener and supporter. However, annual supervisor face-to-faces are still considered important and irreplaceable. Support divided between Kamu and superior was seen as a wholesome solution.

Reflecting the JD-R model, introduced in chapter 2.5 of this thesis, Kamu system can be seen as resource offered by the employer. To ensure the quality of the system, emphasis and resources should be put in educating the Kamus. There are theory-based guidelines on how to build coaching and other relational learning programmes within workplaces. (Grant & Hartley 2013, 102-115.) Although the theory is based on the assumption that the coach is always the manager, there is no evidence that the same principles would not apply when coaching peers, as is the case in the Kamu program.

It was considered important to keep the Kamu system voluntary, but it was also considered important to attract as many employees as possible to have a Kamu. Clearly identifiable reasons not to participate were lack of time and pressure in customer projects. Some just do not see how they could benefit from participating. Some considered the system too light weight to be able to be of any assistance. Some had the misconception that the system is solely meant for handling personal issues, and as they want to keep personal issues away from the workplace, they don't take part in the system. Some of the image and misconceptions could be improved and corrected by focusing on educating Kamus, having clearer guidelines, and by improving internal communication about the system and its benefits.

Investigative question 4 was designed to find out what are the challenges that hinder or prevent Kamu work. Not surprisingly, the most common answer was lack of time. The pressure to perform in customer projects causes prioritizing customer work over Kamu work. This is also true in the case of Kaveri. It is difficult to find time to meet when both parties are tied up elsewhere. Lack of guidelines and uncertainty of what is expected of Kamu and outcomes of Kamu meetings, are also something that need to be paid attention to. However, they are easier challenges to tackle than the challenge of time.

Investigative question 3 stems from the fact the case company staff is multicultural and multilingual. The assumption was that when paired with Kamu/Kaveri with different mother tongue, issues regarding language may arise. However, when asked specifically about

challenges within Kamu system, there were no comments regarding language. The case company staff has a very good command of English language, which probably explains the result in part.

## **5.2 Recommendations for Developing Kamu System**

The basic principles of Kamu system have proved to be successful, so there is no need to change them. However, based on the results on this research, I have concluded that following steps would potentially enhance the appeal, effectiveness and credibility of Kamu system:

Enhancing knowledge by increasing internal communication

- Starting a regular Kamu newsletter
- Actively sharing the facts on how the system works and what is expected of each party, for example in newsletters and common monthly meetings
- Kamus and Kaveris themselves presenting good experiences to other employees in newsletters and common monthly meetings
- Monthly internal reporting of the number of Kamu meetings held and other anonymous data
- Enhancing the informative quality of Kamu profiles in the company intranet
- Introduction of new Kamus in monthly meetings and newsletters
- Invitation to attend internal Kamu course via internal email and/or newsletter
- Providing a questionnaire to help choose a Kamu

Strengthening the Kamu community

- Monthly meetings for Kamus, where they can practice coaching and new tools, and share tips and experiences

Educating Kamus

- In addition to existing Kamu training, there could be half a day brush-up course available regularly
- Regular introductions of coaching tools and tips for Kamus
- Active encouragement to attend trainings that support Kamu work

Supporting Kamus' time management

- Management clearly communicating to customers that some of Kamu's time is allocated to Kamu work
- Supporting the possibility to use taxi services to travel to meet Kaveri

Providing Kamu as a service

- Kamu or Kamus available who are not doing customer work, and can therefor allocate more time to Kamu work
- Weekly Kamu office hours with possibility to book a meeting with a Kamu

### **5.3 Suggestions for Further Research**

This thesis concentrated on understanding the employees' perception of the Kamu system. For further research I suggest looking at what kind environment this type of support model needs in order to be successful. The case company's culture is such that enables peer support, but it might not be the case in more traditional environments.

Another direction would be looking at overall costs of this type of system. What is the actual cost of Kamu system and how does it compare to other ways of providing support in an organization?

### **5.4 Reliability and Ethics**

Participating in this study was both voluntary and possible for every employee of the case company. This way it was ensured that all views were acknowledged, regardless of the role in the Kamu system. I am satisfied with the number of samples in each respondent group and trust the data collected is sufficient to represent the population.

Interviews were recorded on tape with respondents' permission. A written permission to use the interview data in both theses was asked of each interviewee. One person did not submit their permission, therefore that person's interview was excluded from the data. All data in the thesis text as well as appendixes is anonymised and not traceable to any single respondent by anyone else but me. All raw material of data prior to analyses will be destroyed following data protection protocols.

The research was designed together with the case company People Operations and the Kamu programme director Kirsi Mikkonen. Ms. Natalia Fey, a doctoral thesis writer from Hanken School of Economics, was also included in the interview design and implementation phase, as she will use the same data for her separate research regarding the role of coaching within organizations. No other connection or co-operation between these two studies exist.

### **5.5 Reflection on Learning**

I find that I am in a privileged position to write this thesis for a commissioning company that is also my employer. As a long-term employee of the case company, I have a good understanding of its cultural and operational environment. I am also an active participant in the Kamu system and work as a Kamu. This gave me a good basis for this thesis.

However, looking at the system from the outsider perspective, provided me deeper understanding of the theories and mechanisms behind the system.

Despite my enthusiasm to study the Kamu system, the amount of work ahead of me felt overwhelming and tedious. At first, the countless hours in the library digging deeper into the very sources of theoretical information was just a necessary evil for me, but as I stuck to it, I started making real connections between theory and practice. This inspired me to continue, and there was even a point when I had to tell myself to stop looking for more theoretical material, I got so caught up with all the exiting connections there was to find.

Now that all the data analysis and everything else is done, I feel like I have gained valuable experience in doing research. More importantly, I have gained knowledge and understanding of topics that are very relevant in the field of People Operations.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1. Interview guide**

#### **Collaboration on Peer coaching research project with NITOR**

##### **An Interview Guide**

**Main point to be Kamu is to have two ears that listen openly Kaveri, not the professional nor personal goal setting.**

##### **QUESTIONS TO KAMU:**

Study of “Kamu” narratives

- Do Kamu find the Kamu-sessions useful
  - o Why – Why not
- Your thoughts of being Kamu

##### **QUESTIONS TO KAVERI:**

Study of “Kaveri” narratives

- Do Kaveri find the Kamu-sessions useful
  - o Why – Why not
- Your thoughts of being Kaveri

##### **QUESTIONS TO NON-KAVERI:**

Study of “Not-yet-Kaveri” narratives

- Why have you not chosen Kamu?

##### **QUESTIONS TO KAMU & KAVERI:**

**More specifically about the implementation of the Kamu system into organization and how the system could be improved**

- - How does NITOR support the Kamu system?
- - In your opinion, what could be done to further enhance the usefulness of the Kamu system?
- - Anything else concerning the implementation of the Kamu-Kaveri that comes to mind?

**Key aspects of your Kamu -sessions**

- How would you describe the focus, or variation in focus, in your Kamu -sessions? What have been the topics you have discussed during them?
- 
- How frequently do your Kamu -sessions occur? Where do they occur?
  - In your view, how does frequency or location somehow influence the Kamu -sessions?
- 
- How long do your Kamu -sessions tend to be?
  - In your view, does the length influence the Kamu -sessions?
- 
- How would you describe a good Kamu -session?
  - ...and how would you describe a “not-so-good” or even a bad Kamu -session? (maybe answered above)

### **Pairing of Kamu & Kaveri**

- 
- What are the qualities of Kamu you are looking for?
- How do you select your Kamu and Kaveri?
  - How transparent is the process?
- What could be the best strategy for pairing Kamu & Kaveri?
- Have you used the opportunity to change the Kamu, why or why not?
- 

### **Goal setting**

- Do you set professional or personal goals in your Kamu-sessions?
  - How do you find this?
- 
- How do you perceive “the mind platter”/holistic coaching approach?
- 
- Is there anything you would like to add/take away from “the mind platter?”

### **The quality of the coaching process (Q only to Kamu)**

- How do your own coaching skills develop over time? Please describe the process. (Question to Kamu)
- 
- What tools do Kamu use to facilitate coaching process?
- 
- Do you feel that you need to learn about other coaching tools? (Q only to Kamu)
- 
- What particular coaching tool do you feel you need to learn about? (Q only to Kamu)
- 
- How do you learn about new tools? (Q only to Kamu)
- 

### **Outcomes of peer coaching**

- In your view what are key personal outcomes of coaching system at NITOR?
- 
- In your view what are key organizational outcomes of coaching system at NITOR?

### **Coaching and self-leadership development**

- Which parts of the traditional leadership does Kamu-Kaveri system cover at NITOR?  
—
- Does Kamu-Kaveri system support your self-awareness and self-development?  
—
- Does Kamu-Kaveri support your self-leadership and autonomy?  
—
- Do you find high autonomy and self-leading character of your work natural to you?
  - Why/why not?
- 
- What other ways the Kamu-Kaveri system supports you?

### **Development**

- 
- What developmental methods do you use at NITOR to enhance your personal development
- What other support do you use to enhance your well-being at Nitor?

If you have any other comments, please share them with us.

**Thank you for your participation!**

## **Appendix 2. Analysis tool**

Recording no.	Respondent group	IQ	Finding	Theme: Overall attitude/view	Theme: Benefit personal	Theme: Benefit organisation	Theme: Challenge	Theme: Kamu features	Theme: Development idea	Quote
1	Kamu-Kaveri	IQ1	Of traditional listening Kamu covers listening, support, setting personal direction	x						
1	Kamu-Kaveri	IQ1	Builds deep relationships, deeper discussions than with previous colleagues		x					
1	Kamu-Kaveri	IQ1	Being Kamu helps understand why people are not feeling that good, in many cases it's the situation at the customer, it's pretty important information		x					
1	Kamu-Kaveri	IQ1	Satisfaction of helping people		x					
1	Kamu-Kaveri	IQ1	Benefit as a Kaveri: Gives a certain direction		x					
1	Kamu-Kaveri	IQ1	Benefit as Kaveri: helps me understand where I want to focus my energy professionally		x					
1	Kamu-Kaveri	IQ1	With Kamu you can take ideas forward		x					
1	Kamu-Kaveri	IQ1	Employees build an overall structured, strong network of Kaveris and Kamus			x				
1	Kamu-Kaveri	IQ1	Builds a group feeling: we are here together, we want to help each other			x				
1	Kamu-Kaveri	DEV	Share openly examples of good Kamu sessions in monthly meetings						x	
1	Kamu-Kaveri	DEV	New trainings						x	
1	Kamu-Kaveri	DEV	Practice more with small groups						x	
1	Kamu-Kaveri	DEV	Practice coaching tools and skills						x	
1	Kamu-Kaveri	IQ1	A good coaching session is where Kaveri feels he reaches next level in thinking and they have more energy to go forward					x		
1	Kamu-Kaveri	IQ1	As a Kamu I try to see Kaveri as a human being, not a resource for the company					x		
1	Kamu-Kaveri	IQ1	MP always create a good discussion, for example, you don't usually think about creativity time					x		
2	Kamu	IQ4	I'm a busy gyu				x			
2	Kamu	IQ1	Discussions are always nice, number 5 or six					x		
2	Kamu	IQ1	I help them figure out things themselves, they do all the work					x		













































