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# Exploring 'Good Work' in IT Consultancy Business

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## PREFACE

The concept of good work looks at the broader aspects of work and reflects on it not only from the engagement and excellence, but also from the ethical point of view. This has become quite important in today's scenario when the loyalty and morality in the organizational and social contexts are coming under stress. It takes a lot of personal effort to become self-aware and even stronger courage to accept the facts and change oneself.

This journey of exploring the good work, going through the various literatures, finding and connecting the individual and organizational perspectives, has been a rewarding experience for me. At the same time, it also inspired and challenged me to consider my own ways of looking at my work. I am highly indebted to Dr Leenamaija Otala for introducing me to the concept of good work and Dr Marjatta Huhta for being a very patient and supportive supervisor for my study. The kind words of encouragement from both of the instructors always gave me an assurance that I was on the right path.

My gratitude also goes to my friends, who ventured to be the pilot interviewees and to the members of my reference group for validating the results and providing constructive feedback.

Last but not the least, I would like to thank my family for the whole hearted support without which this study would have not been possible.

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<p>This study explores the conditions of good work in IT consultancy business. The objectives of the study are to find the attributes that employees consider important for good work in an IT consultancy business, and to examine the present conditions in the case company for the good work as well as how the likelihood for good work could be improved.</p> <p>The concept of good work is used as a framework for this study and supported by the model for engagement and the factors affecting it. The model is built on the theory of motivation and the experience of flow as seen from the individual's perspective as well as the theory of positive deviance and transformational leadership, as seen from the organization's socio-cultural point of view. In the literature review, quite many topics studied were found to be overlapping and linked to different theories. As a result, the attributes from the theoretical framework were grouped under six headings of empowerment, meaningfulness, relatedness, communication, rewards &amp; recognition and leadership.</p> <p>This research is a qualitative type of research with the data coming from two main sources. The first source is the survey questionnaire based on the literature review, which was responded by 64 people representing the population both from the product development and IT consulting employees in the case company. The second source is the interview and open discussion with eight employees in the case company.</p> <p>In order to answer the research question, the results were compiled from the questionnaires and interviews and analyzed against the theoretical framework to understand what people see as the characteristics for each of six headings and to what extent the conditions for good work are met in case organization. Additionally the implications were discussed and recommendations were prepared for the management and employees that could enhance the opportunities for doing the good work in the case company meeting the standards for excellence and ethics and at the same time leading to a feeling of well-being in employees. The recommendations are subsequently validated in the case organization by the reference group formed by the researcher.</p>	
Key words	Good work, engagement, motivation, leadership, positive deviance

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## 1 Introduction

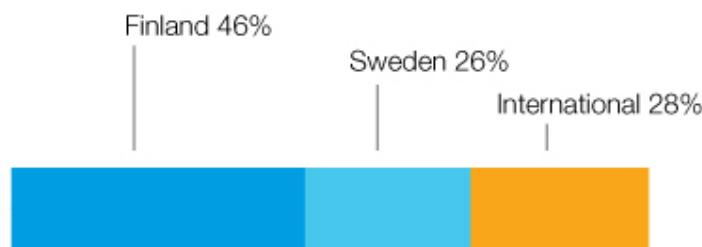
Driven by the market forces, more and more companies are undergoing cost optimization activities and are trying hard to do more with less resources and fewer number of people. Employee contribution, therefore, becomes a critical business issue as companies need to have better engaged workforce to produce more without compromising the quality of the output but with less employee inputs. Research results from organizations and corporate demonstrate that the engagement level of employees and their satisfaction are related to the employee performance and meaningful business outcomes, including the overall profitability of the company (Harter et al. 2002: 274). The organizations that fail to engage their employees may lag in market for talent, customers, revenues, investors and capital.

The IT consultancy business is a people oriented business; and the effectiveness with which the organization manages, develops, motivates, involves and engages its knowledge workers determines the success of the business in the market place. IT companies spend significant amount of their revenues on training their human resources to be experts in their specific field of operations. When these employees are not motivated and engaged, their productivity is much less than their potential. As more and more processes move towards transparency (e.g. e-governance) and automation, the job opportunities for IT professionals are all constantly growing around the world. It is, therefore, important for IT companies to keep their employees engaged in order to efficiently use them for gaining competitive advantage.

The inspiration for this project comes from the good-work research. An ambitious study of good work in American professional life was started in 1995 by three principal investigators, Howard Gardner, Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, and William Damon to define good work and find out factors driving it. This study tries to explore the good work in the context of IT consulting business and examines the factors that may influence the good work in this industry.

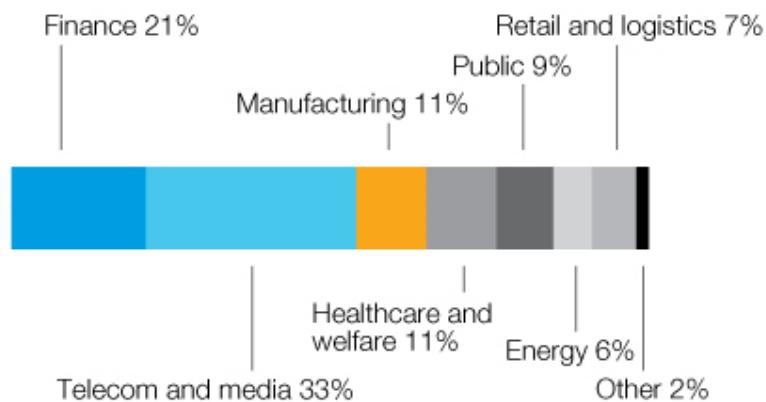
### 1.1 Case Company

The case company is a leading IT consultancy company in Northern Europe providing IT and product engineering services. The company employs around 18000 people in about 30 locations worldwide and has its headquarters in Finland. The main markets for the company are the Nordics, Russia and Poland, with the case company's customers served using the global delivery model. The offshore delivery centers are primarily located in the Czech Republic, Belarus, China and India. In 2010, Finland accounted for 46% of the net sales for the company as shown in Figure 1.



*Figure 1. Net sales by country (Case Company 2011).*

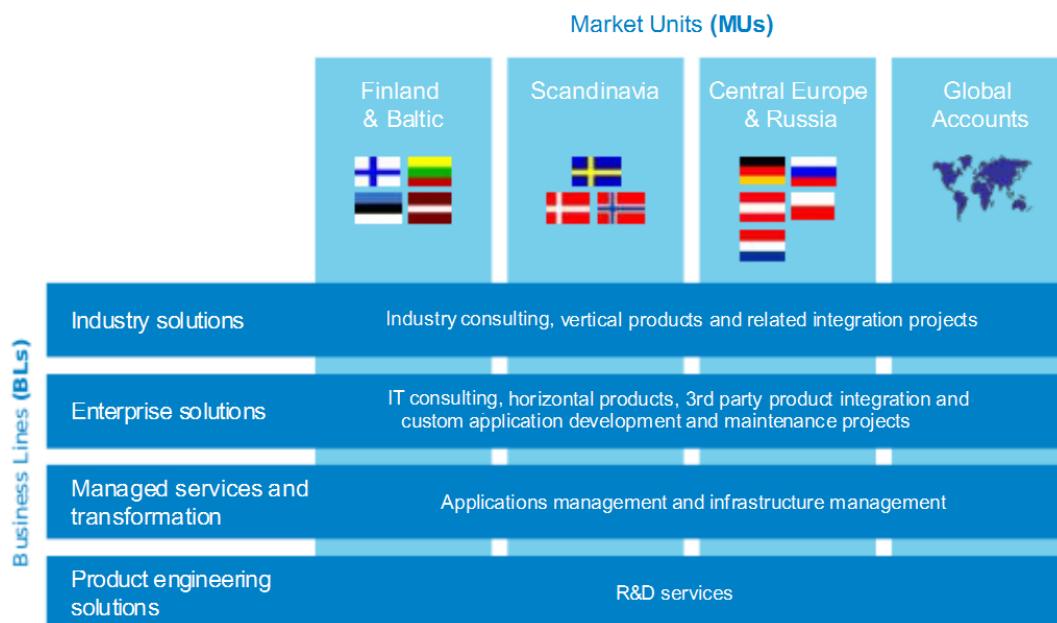
In 2010, the Financial services accounted for the 21% of the net sales as shown in Figure 2 below.



*Figure 2. Net sales by customer (Case Company 2011).*

In its business practice, the case company stresses the values that highlight the importance of delivering excellent quality work to its customers, as well as individual and organizational learning and teamwork, while taking care of its employees and customers.

In order to adapt to changing conditions in the markets and to fulfill expectations from its customers and investors, the company has been struggling to have better synchronization for its delivery capabilities and improve its operating margins by simplifying and aligning them with its strategy. To meet these objectives, the operating model of the case company has changed twice in the last three years. Each of these organizational changes has lead to job cuts in the case company. In 2009, a new matrix operating model comprising country organizations, service lines and industry lines was established to drive development of the company-wide competencies and horizontal offerings as well as the global delivery model. Since 2011, the earlier operating model has been refined to reflect the company's strategic priorities in terms of both the markets and solutions to customers, as illustrated below in Figure 3.



*Figure 3. Operating model for case company (Case Company 2011).*

As illustrated in Figure 3, the current operating model is built based on the market units and business lines. The market units are the ones that lead sales within their assigned customers and markets. They also have the responsibility to develop the case company local position in the market and its customer relationships. It is the responsibility of the market units to take care of the profits and losses of its respective segments. The market units in the case company are Finland & Baltic, Scandinavia, Central Europe and Russia, and the Global accounts for the Key Customers spread across the world. The business lines, in their turn, have the responsibility to develop and de-

liver company offerings to its customers. The business lines for the case company are industry solutions, enterprise solutions, managed services and transformation and product engineering solutions. Their additional responsibilities are to drive delivery and operational efficiency and support the sales organization. These business lines are managed as global units spreading across all the market units. The majority of the case company personnel are working in the business lines.

Even though the major stream of case company's revenue comes from the IT consulting business, the company's own product development is another earning stream for the company. The company has its own product portfolio and provides the hosted solutions to its clients maintaining the products and the data centers. At the same time, the IT consulting business focuses on developing solutions for its customers, while the customer owns the intellectual property rights for the solutions developed by the case company. To serve its major customers, the company has set up a few regional development centers, in order to ensure its local presence and present near-shore delivery options for these customers.

Currently, it is quite common in the case company for its IT and management consultants from one business line to work for another business line. For example, after the new operating model came to effect in 2011, the researcher's parent unit was Software Engineering Services unit in the Enterprise Solutions business line and the contracted unit was Financial Services from Industry Solutions business line in Finland. The researcher's parent unit was a talent pool of IT consultants located in Finland, but working on projects spread across different customers. The consultants from this unit were mainly working in customer premises. The projects in the contracted unit for Financial Solutions were typically of short duration ranging from three to six months, with comprising a team of fewer than ten people. Such projects could be, for instance, a product development project where the objective was to improve the existing product offered by the case company, or a customization project where the objective was to provide a specific feature required by the customer, on top of the existing features of the product. The team distribution was such that the people having access to the customers and making delivery decisions were located in Finland, close to the customer; while the people working on the deliverables were located in India. The teams were largely virtual teams so that the team members in Finnish and Indian teams did not meet in

person, but had regular audio conferences for constant communication. This research setting, therefore, is located at the cross sections of delivery units within the two business lines: industry solutions and the enterprise solutions business lines of the case company.

## 1.2 Research Problem and Research Question

Since IT companies have adopted the global delivery models to manage risks, gain access to global talent pool and achieve cost optimization, these organizations increasingly have virtual teams distributed over the world with limited opportunity to work face-to-face. These complex organizational structures are also characterized by multiple reporting lines. Managing such virtual teams, while keeping their participants satisfied and engaged in the work is a major challenge for the managers in IT businesses across the world.

The case company for this research is an IT Consultancy company. This research tries to explore the challenges faced by the case company in keeping the knowledge workers engaged to promote good quality work, while utilizing the global delivery model for serving its customers in a cost effective way.

Every year, the case company conducts an internal employee satisfaction survey to sense, how satisfied its employees feel with the organization and its practices. One parameter measured in the survey is the employee engagement. In year 2010, the employee engagement was found to be positive only by 61% of the total work force. This is sharply under the industry benchmark figure of 79% and needs to be improved.

The case company also conducts regular customer satisfaction surveys where customers provide the feedback about their satisfaction level with the services received from the company on a scale of 1 to 5. A rating of five indicates that the customer had a delightful experience of doing business with the case company. This rating is a key index of delivery excellence for the case company, as better rating and happy customer signifies a more likely opportunity for longer term relationship with customer and positive referrals from them. The target is to have a minimum rating of three for all the projects in the organization. It has not been possible to meet this customer satisfaction target figures for the case company due to low level of employee engagement.

The other problems highlighted by lower employee engagement levels are the missing targets for service excellence related to the cost and timeliness of deliveries. It is, therefore, not unusual to see projects that are running behind the schedule and where the costs are much higher than planned. These factors also bring down the margin variance for the profitability. The decreased level of employee engagement also leads to reduced loyalty resulting in higher turnover rate for employees for the case company.

To address the research problem, it is important to find out how the good work is characterized from the point of view of IT professionals. What are the current practices and structures within the case company that allow and motivate the professionals to do good work and what are the bottlenecks to good work as put by the work culture and practices within the case company. The research questions thus framed is:

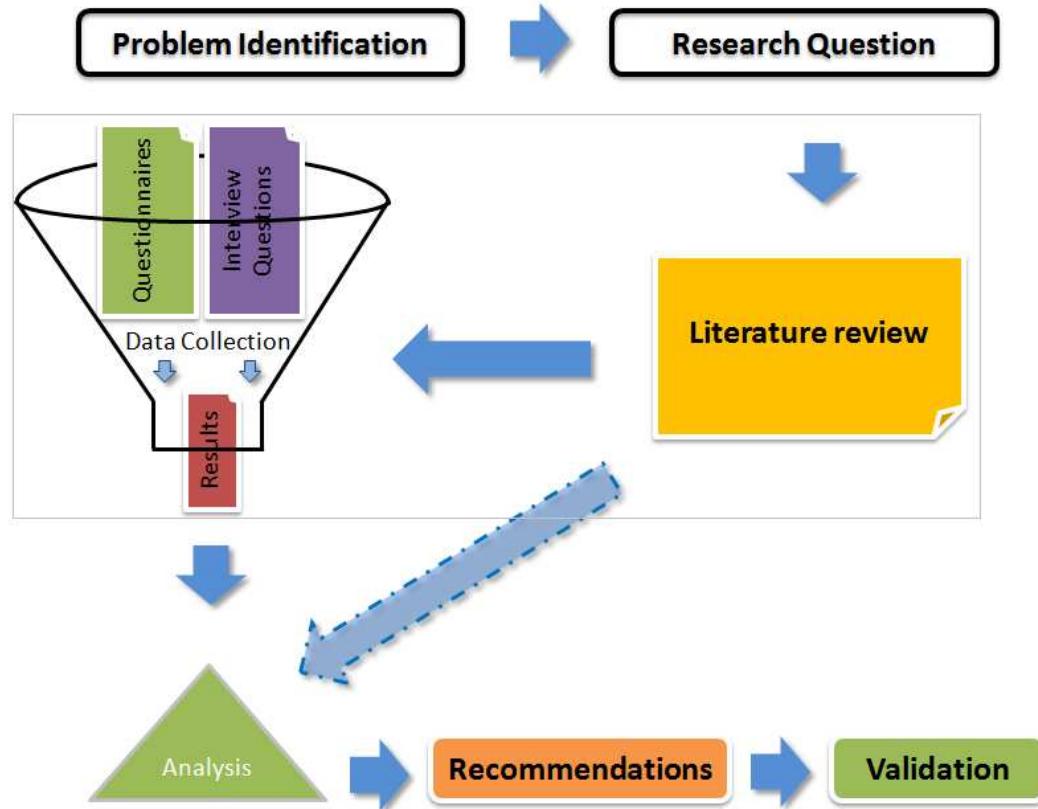
To what extent are the conditions for good work met in the case company?
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To find out the answers to the above, the study develops the analysis steps by steps, going through the sub-questions that formulate the basis for the overall understanding and analysis of the working environment and organizational culture. A sub-question thus framed is:

- What do the employees see as most important criteria for good work?

### 1.3 Research Design

The structure of study, leading from the problem identification till the final results are prepared in terms of recommendations for the management, is shown in Figure 4. A four phased approach will be implemented to carry out the research.



*Figure 4. Research design.*

As illustrated in Figure 4, the first phase of problem definition started with the identification of the business problem, scoping of problem and resulted in the formulation of the research question. A rough plan of research was created at this point of time along with the activity timelines.

The second phase consisted of going through the academic literature and collecting information about the practices, surveys, researches and findings about the engagement at work and its relationship to good work concept. The relevant literature about engagement at work was found from the academic journals and books. The material was reviewed to prepare the theoretical framework about the engagement at work. This framework was then utilized to formulate the survey questionnaire and interview questions.

During the third phase of data collection, the questionnaire was sent to the participants. The interviews were conducted with selected people from the target population

set. The data collected from the survey questionnaire and the interview was then reported.

In fourth and concluding phase of the study, a further analysis of collected data and information was made. At this time triangulation of inputs from questionnaire, interviews and literature was made to increase the reliability and validity of the data. The conclusions were drawn from the analysis of the collected data and recommendations were prepared accordingly keeping the organizational constraints in mind. The validation is achieved for the recommendations from the reference group formed by the researcher.

#### 1.4 Structure of Study

The thesis is based on the research approach as mentioned in section 1.3, and accordingly the sections have developed and are documented. The structure of the document therefore, is as follows:

Section 2 provides the theoretical framework, which forms the basis for this research. It starts with the model of good work and then highlights the importance of engagement for the good work. Then the theories of self determination and the concept of flow affecting the individual factors for motivation are discussed followed by the concept of positive deviance and transformational leadership that are related to the organizational factors leading to engagement at work place. The section ends with the analysis of theoretical frameworks used and their relationship to good work concept.

Section 3 describes the research methodology used for collecting the inputs and the treatment of data. The basis for questionnaire and the sample population for the questionnaires are discussed and are followed by the interview details. This section also talks about the validity and reliability for the research methods employed to collect the data for this research.

Section 4 describes the findings from the collected data. First the results from the questionnaires are summarized, including the participant profiles to provide a current state of affairs in the case organization. Then the results from interviews are summa-

rized. The data collected from the survey questionnaires and from the interviews are then analyzed and correlated together with literature to form an overall assessment of the scenario.

Section 5 describes the key issues in the case organizations as found in this research. The implications of these issues are discussed and are followed by the recommendations both for the employees and the higher management. This section also describes the limitations, validity and reliability of this study. The study concludes with the summary of the complete research in Section 6.

## 2 Conceptual Framework for Good Work

In this section, the conceptual framework for good work is discussed, emphasizing the importance of engagement for its achievement. Subsequently, several theories outlining the aspects affecting the employee engagement are considered. Additionally, this section discussed how the components having a bearing on employee engagement relate to the construct of good work.

### 2.1 Construct of Good Work

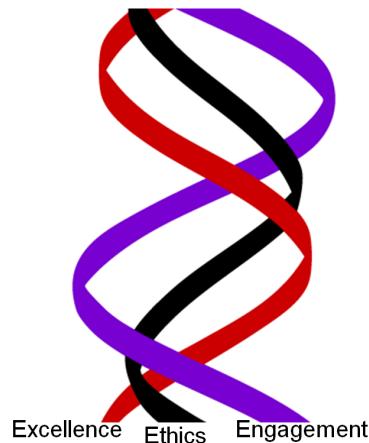
As mentioned in the introduction, the findings from the Good Work project indicate that a piece of work is said to be good if it is excellent in quality, personally meaningful to the employee, and contributes to a social benefits (Gardner 2010: 5). To be excellent, the work must also be successful according to the highest standards of the field. In the context of information technology, the excellent work means that it is of high technical quality, efficient, with minimum possible wastage and it follows the company's best practices, repeatable due to proven processes.

For the work to be excellent in quality the employee should be an expert in technology, well versed with the processes and the quality metrics, and able to use tools efficiently at work. As the IT technology is changing very quickly, the employee should then be eager to update the technical skills and understand the impact of the newer technology on the existing ways of working.

For the work to be engaging, the work should provide a feeling of satisfaction and enjoyment leading to a feeling of personal well-being. The employees should feel connected to the vision and mission of the organization and feel pride to be a part of the organization.

To be ethical, the work must also conform to universal moral standards and be done in a responsible way serving the wider good. Additionally, the good work is more likely to be achieved if the work promotes the feeling of equity where the workers believe that they are treated fairly by those in power and their compensations are not dwarfed by the salaries drawn by management (Gardner 2010: 8). The good work is, therefore,

represented as a set of three inter-twined strands of Excellence, Ethics and Engagement as depicted in Figure 5.



*Figure 5. Triple helix of good work (Gardner 2010: 6).*

Good work is more difficult to achieve than merely adequate or comprised work, as it requires more time, energy and involvement and, therefore, it is less frequent. Human behavior is shaped by many contradictions and it is often easier for the employee to get by than to excel, thus saving time and effort, even if the work suffers.

Research findings suggest that, the good work is likely to occur when there are clear standards in the field for what constitutes good work, and such standards are known and supported in the workplace, and by the broader society and eventually learned and internalized by the individual worker. Good Work project has extensively discussed the various aspects that have an influence on the possibility of doing good work and based on the results of the Good Work Project, the good work framework was developed (Good Work Project 2004: 19) and it is shown in Figure 6, to mention the four factors that can facilitate the achievement of good work, if their alignment reinforces each other.

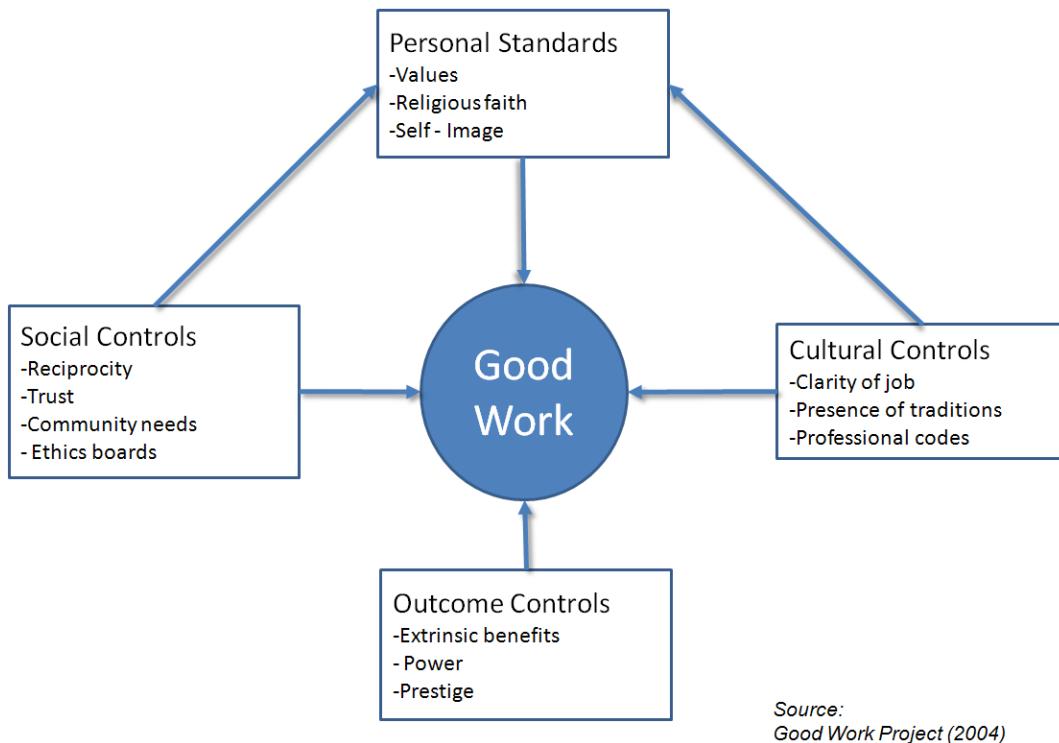


Figure 6. Conditions affecting Good Work (Good Work Project 2004).

The Figure 6 shows the four factors which facilitate good work and whose alignment affects the likelihood of good work. If the factors become unbalanced and their alignment shifts, the conditions for doing a good work deteriorate. In an organization, the cultural and the social controls related to the job and organizational context play an important role in ensuring the benefits of the work to the employee, the organization, its customers and the society. They also influence the personal values of the employees.

As illustrated in Figure 6, the *cultural controls* are defined by the requirements of the job and the implicit rules and practices of the profession (Gardner 2010: 115). For example, the company communicates its professional code which every associate in the company has to agree to. For traditions, these may include handling of issues related to confidentiality, accounting practices, corruption and conflict of interests, workplace practices, the guidelines provided for compensation, equality and non-discrimination and fair working conditions. This may also define the ways, the outcomes are measured and the assessment about a work done is made. In most business ventures, the most frequently cited measure of good work is the profit. Therefore, the manager's

work is often judged by the bottom line irrespective of the affect of his managerial skills on the team satisfaction, creativity and morale. When the requirements of a job get quite complex, traditions serve to remind practitioners of their duties, and these are often put down formally into professional codes.

The second factor influencing the good work, as shown in Figure 6, is *social controls* and these are as important as the *cultural controls* and come from the group of people working in the same domain. They determine how well the professional community abides by the code of conduct. These are the institutional and interpersonal relationships that bind a person to his or her job. Even though the managers may have the responsibility to communicate the content and spirit of the professional code of conduct, the regular practices of the group determine how well the code of conduct is followed within the company. When the alignment of the job requirement is strong with the practices within the company, there is more likelihood of achieving good work. Overall, the perceived support from the organization that employees feel has an impact on their engagement at work.

The *personal standards*, shown in Figure 6, is the third factor of good work that includes personal values, goals, motivations, genetic traits, early experiences from interaction within family and community. Religious faith and personal standards are influenced by the social practices and cultural background and determine how professionals see the requirements of the field and domain into their self-image. For example, a positive self-image is a pre-requisite for attaining the condition of flow, where the person is spontaneous, having a sense of control leading to a positive and pleasurable experience.

The fourth factor influencing good work is *outcome controls* which refer to the effects of the external forces on one's work. These include the available opportunities, compensations and benefits associated with a particular job and the power and prestige that are tagged with it. The quality of the work is at risk, however, when the individuals enter a field in search of fortunes. Their engagement in work remains limited and is governed by financial benefits rather than a will to excel.

The research findings suggest that the alignment of the above mentioned four factors makes it easier to achieve a good work (Gardner 2010: 116). The researcher believes that the factors of personal standards fueling the quest for excellence must be supported by the social controls driving the community practices, in order to achieve a work that is of excellent quality and is also personally meaningful to the professional. As a result, the good work is likely to occur when there are clear and strong standards for what constitutes the desirable performance, and these standards are enforced by a concerned community, internalized in the self-image, and are not contradicted by any strong external pressures from the outside forces.

The following sub-section takes a look at the concept of engagement and its importance as one of the pillars of the good work.

## 2.2 Engagement in Good Work

As seen from the good work project, engagement is one of the pillars for achieving good work. The engaging and personally meaningful work affects the level of commitment and involvement towards the organization and its values. Quite much research has been done to investigate the antecedents for engagement and different models have been proposed (Bakker et al. 2008, Saks 2006). The concept of engagement at work was defined by Kahn as harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles, where people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during role performances (Kahn 1990: 694). Another definition of work engagement presents engagement as a positive, fulfilling, work related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al 2002: 74). In their Global Workforce Study (2008), Towers Perrin group utilizes a three part engagement model based on the rational, emotional and motivational aspects that drive respectively the thinking, feeling and acting of employees based on the strength of the employee connections to their companies and jobs. All these definitions, even though explaining the concept in different terminologies, agree that the way how employees perceive their job and organization leads their thinking and feeling about their motivation and meaningfulness of the work, which finally directs their actions.

### The Engagement Continuum

Research findings suggest that the level of engagement of employees with their work varies and not all employees are engaged enough to give their best at the job. This phenomenon is known as an engagement gap, which poses a serious risk for organization because of the strong connection between employee engagement and company financial performance. Two engagement continuums representing different levels of commitments are compared in Figure 7.

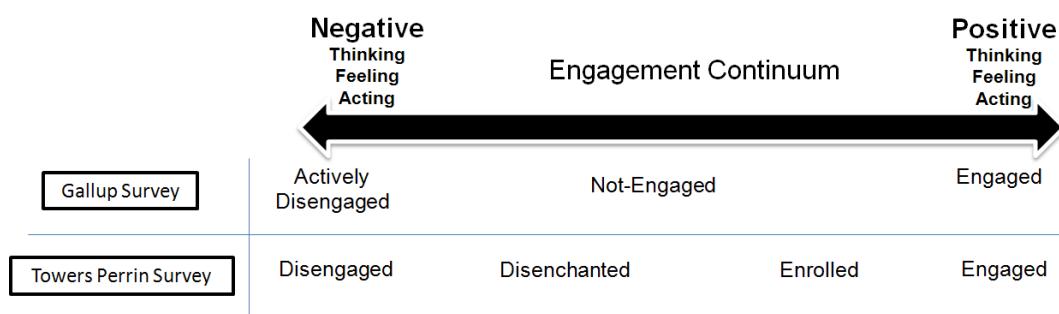


Figure 7. The engagement continuum (based on Gallup and Towers Perrin survey).

As shown in Figure 7, the Gallup Organization (2006) in its survey uses the classification of employees in the range of “engaged”, through “not-engaged” to “actively disengaged”. The Towers Perrin’s global workforce study (2008) suggests the classification of the “engaged”, “enrolled”, “disenchanted” and “disengaged”.

According to both Gallup (2006) and Towers Perrin (2008), *engaged* employees do their job with passion and enthusiasm and are aware of being strongly connected to their organization. They provide emotional and physical input to the company's performance and development, and facilitate higher productivity. They want to know the desired expectations for their role so they can meet and exceed them. They are curious about their company and their place in it. They are proud to be members of their organizations and advocate for their company's products and services and they are very likely to stay with their company.

*Not-engaged* (Gallup 2006), *enrolled* and *disenchanted* employees (Towers Perrin 2008) can be grouped together as partly engaged. They put their time into their work, but there is no energy, passion or enthusiasm from their side. They may understand

well their roles and responsibilities and perform them well, but they still are not connected emotionally. They tend to concentrate on tasks rather than the goals and outcomes which they are expected to accomplish.

Finally, *actively disengaged* employees are unhappy at work and spend their working time acting out their unhappiness. The negative influence of such workers constantly affects other people and destroys achievements of engaged workmates. Workers with a low level of engagement are disinterested and not curious about their organization or their own role in it and they often have poor relationships with their managers and coworkers.

As suggested Towers Perrin's global workforce study (2008), the level of organizational engagement can be qualified based on the following three dimensions: a) being rational and having cognitive understanding of the organization's strategic goals and values (thinking), b) being emotionally connected to the organization's strategic goals and values (feeling), and c) having the motivation governing the willingness to do more than the minimum effort in their role at work (acting).

The way employees process and evaluate drives their thinking process. Engaged people understand well their job and its connections to the organizational strategy and outcomes, whereas this understanding is missing for the disengaged employees. The engaged employees also feel emotionally connected to their work and this drives their actions towards better output.

### 2.3 Self-Determination Theory of Motivation

The term motivation refers to the process that initiates, controls and sustains certain goal oriented behaviors. Motivation is a crucial element in setting and attaining goals—and research shows individuals can influence their own levels of motivation and self-control. The social conditions in which a person develops and functions have an enormous impact on the motivation, personal growth and well-being and social functioning and integration of the person. The reasons why people move to act can range from some strong external factors to the intrinsic factors arising from their interests and values. When the motivation to act comes from the intrinsic factors, people feel that

they own their behavior and enjoy their work even though there may be no outside recognition (Deci et al. 2000:71). The concept of motivation is also closely linked to the 'Personal' factors of Good Work model (Figure 6).

A sub-theory of Self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan (2001) called Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) proposes the self-determination continuum where the motivation ranges from the a-motivation on the one end where individual does not show an intention to act and have a pervasive feeling of lack of control and competence; to an intrinsic motivation at the opposite end, where the individual seeks novelty and challenges to use their skills effectively by learning, exploring and extending their existing skills because of the inherent enjoyment and the interest that the activity provides. The extrinsic motivation lies in between the a-motivation and intrinsic motivation and is driven by the instrumental reasons when activity is performed to attain certain outcomes (Deci et al. 2000: 72). The motivation continuum ranging from a-motivation to intrinsic motivation is shown in Figure 8.

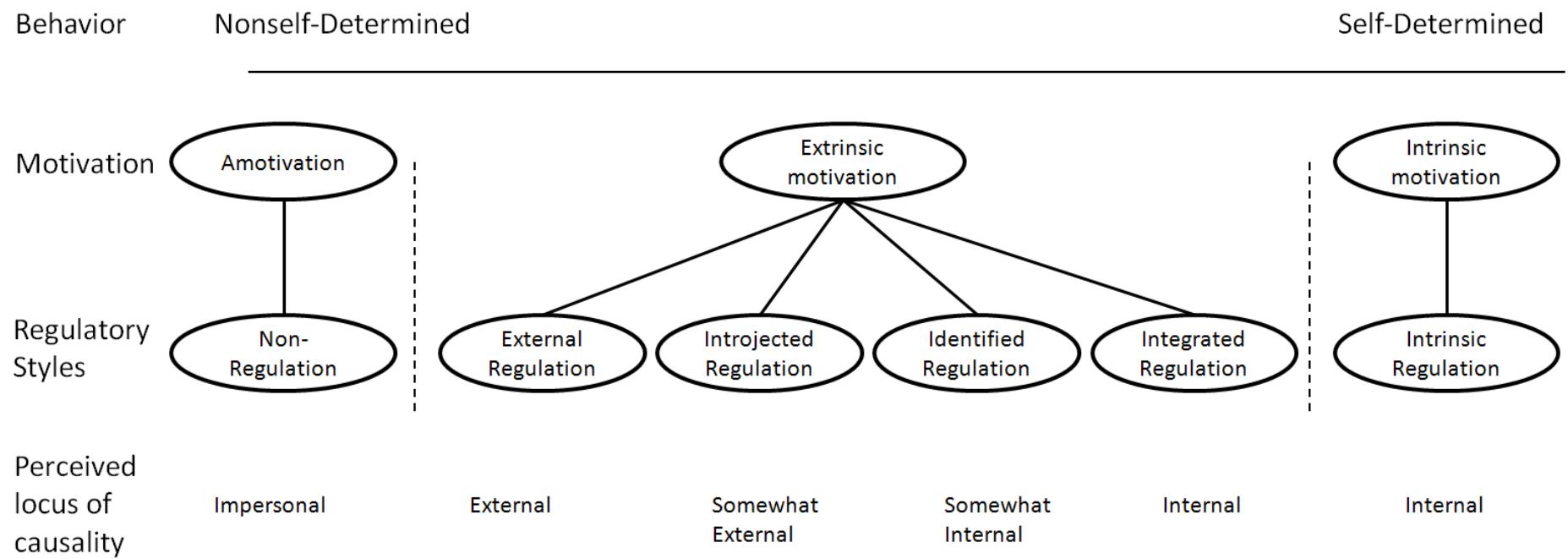


Figure 8. The motivation continuum (Deci et al. 2000: 72).

The Figure 8 above illustrates the motivation continuum as proposed by the OIT that ranges from the a-motivation to intrinsic motivation. At work *extrinsic motivation* is more predominant and behavior can range from unwillingness or a passive compliance to active personal commitment, depending on how the activities are viewed and the values internalized. If the perception for these activities is that these are forced activities, of little value. When the work is done only to satisfy an external demand or for possible reward, then the behavior is least autonomous and referred to as *externally regulated* behavior as shown in Figure 8. In this case, individuals have a feeling of being controlled and alienated. The feeling of being forced to work comes from the perception that their behavior is controlled by external forces or circumstances one does not fully own, hence they do not get any satisfaction out of the activity. People will stop doing the activity as soon as the external reward or demand driving the work is removed (Deci et al. 2000: 72). When the regulation is *introjected*, the behaviors are still performed to achieve a reward or avoid a punishment, but they are internal; For example, to avoid guilt or anxiety, or to boost the ego with pride. The individuals still feel that the control over their behavior is not fully their own and is mostly driven by the circumstances and other external contingencies, as people do not see value in their actions and do not have the feeling of satisfaction for a job well done (Deci et al. 2000:72). This is shown as introjected regulation in Figure 8.

When an individual values the behavior and considers the actions personally important and starts to accept the action as their own, it is called *regulation through identification*, shown as identified regulation in Figure 8. In this case the choice is more intrinsic in nature and the behavior is performed willingly, even if the activities may be unpleasant as the feeling of 'ought to be done' starts getting replaced by a feeling of 'want to do'. When the values for the behavior are well understood and assimilated to one's behavior, then this stage is called *integrated regulation* (Deci et al. 2000: 73). People start experiencing greater autonomy, and the activity is done for the highly valued outcome, even though the activities are not done solely for interest in itself.

When the motivation comes from within, then it is the strongest kind of motivation that comes from the sheer sense of satisfaction of a job well done. This is the stage called *intrinsic motivation*. Intrinsically motivated people strive to be competent to master the task. They enjoy competition, derive the pleasure out of their work, and want to learn

skills to the best of their abilities. Their actions are driven mainly by the personal goals and achievements rather than financial incentives.

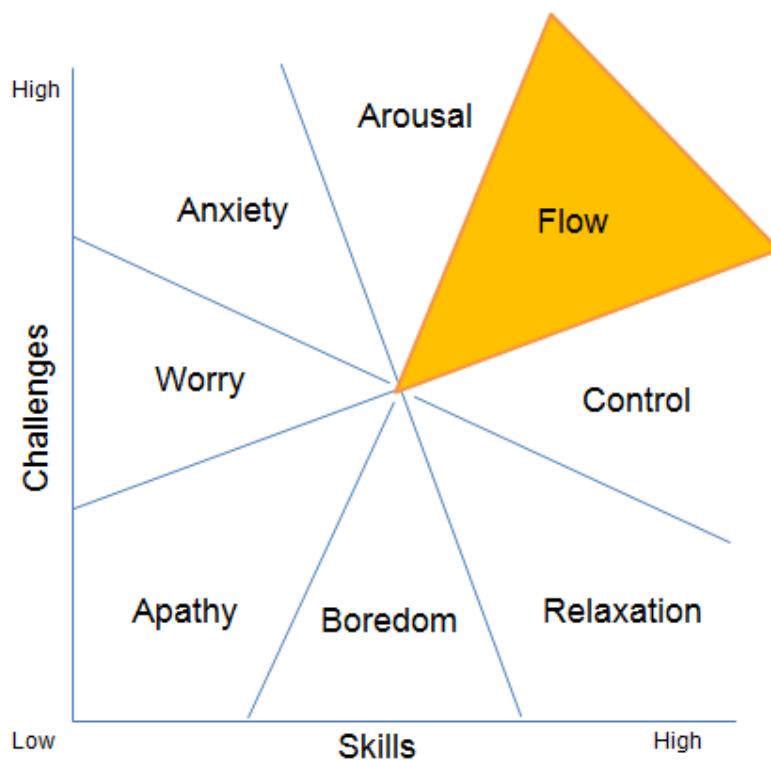
The key to *autonomous regulation* is satisfaction of basic psychological needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness, and the lack of satisfaction leads to poorer performance and reduced physical and psychological well-being (Deci et al. 2000:74). The need for autonomy represents individuals' inherent desire to feel volitional and to experience a sense of choice and psychological freedom when carrying out an activity. The need for competence is defined as individuals' inherent desire to feel effective in interacting with the environment by engaging in challenging tasks that test and extend one's skills. A satisfaction of the competence need allows the individual to adapt to more complex and changing environments, whereas a competence frustration is likely to result in helplessness and a lack of motivation. The need for relatedness is defined as individuals' inherent propensity to feel connected to others and be accepted as a member of a group. This need is satisfied when people experience a sense of communion and develop close and intimate relationships with others. The satisfaction of each of these needs contributes to individuals' flourishing and autonomous motivation that leads to employee engagement in an activity because the employee considers the activity personally valuable and intrinsically interesting (Deci et al. 2000: 75). In contrast, when employees feel controlled, their need for autonomy is obstructed. Employees, who are, for instance, forced to meet a deadline, may experience little desire in executing the task. On the contrary, the autonomy supportive organizations facilitate autonomous regulation by allowing the person feel competent, related and autonomous. Overall, the organizations having the conflicts between these basic needs set up the conditions for the alienation (Deci et al, 2000: 74).

In the next sub-section, the concept of flow is discussed. The experience of flow is a special case of intrinsic motivation that happens when the skills and challenges match and a feeling of control over the situation persists. It is an optimal condition of autotelic experience when someone has a feeling of totally lost in an activity.

## 2.4 Experience of Flow

The concept of Flow was researched and proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (1990), who is also one of the principle investigators for the Good Work Project. Flow is a condition of optimal positive experience which a person feels when they are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter at the time. The experience is accompanied by the feeling of extreme joy that is intrinsically rewarding and satisfying as one becomes fully involved in the task that stretches their skills and abilities to the limit. The Flow concept further corroborates the importance of absorption in one's work for engagement that has been put forward by Schaufeli et al. (2002) in their research related to the work engagement.

For achieving the condition of experiencing a flow in an activity, the task goals must be clear and the task itself must be bound by rules. The flow experience, therefore, usually occurs in structured activities. In activities where the goals are not clearly set in advance, the person must develop a strong personal sense of what one wants to do. The activity must be challenging enough to match the skills of the individual, leading to a feeling of control, but at the same time, supported by immediate feedback. The form of feedback can vary considerably in different activities, but it tells a person if the person is moving in the right direction towards the goal. It is important for an individual to learn to set goals and to recognize and gauge the feedback in order to enjoy an activity. Any possibility to which a skill corresponds can produce the flow. The flow experience is so desirable that one wishes to repeat it as often as possible, but to remain in flow, one must increase the complexity of the activity by developing new skills to meet new challenges (Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 52). The Figure 9 illustrates how the different combinations of challenges and skills required lead to different experiences.



*Figure 9. Challenges and skills combinations (Csikszentmihalyi 1997: 31).*

As shown in Figure 9, perceived high skill and high challenge produces a subjective flow experience. Engagement in high skills and challenges promotes task interest because it allows the individual to hone one's skills and provides a sense of achievement leading to a favorable subjective experience. On the contrary, low perceived skills and high perceived challenges would produce anxiety, while low perceived skills and low perceived challenges would result in apathy.

In addition to increased task interest, the combination of high skills and challenges at work also promotes the positive mood due to the perception of competence and self-worth, which leads to organizational spontaneity that includes making constructive suggestions, enhancing one's own knowledge and skills in the ways that help the organization, protect the organization from potential problems, and help co-workers (Fullagar et al 2009: 610). The research investigating flow at work suggests that optimal experience of flow is predominantly a situational state of mind rather than a trait. It is, therefore, possible to design the tasks by manipulating the motivational job char-

acteristics with the skill variety and autonomy to increase the possibility of flow experience at work (Fullagar et al. 2009: 608).

During the flow experience, the concentration is deep and only the present matters, so that one is able to forget all the unpleasant aspects of life. When all the relevant skills of the individual are needed to cope with the challenges of the situation, the person's attention is completely absorbed by the activity. People become so involved in what they are doing that the activity becomes spontaneous and almost automatic, and they stop being aware of themselves as separate from the actions that they are performing. Although the flow experience appears to be effortless, it often requires strenuous physical exertion or highly disciplined mental activity. There is a loss of self-consciousness as all concern for the self disappears, and the person becomes one with the activity being performed. The transformation of time seems to cause a loss of time awareness (Csikszentmihalyi 1990).

However, the lack of rules makes it difficult to achieve the experience of flow, as it is not clear what is permitted and what is not, and the uncertain values result in erratic and meaningless behavior leading to anxiety (Csikszentmihalyi 1990: 86). Additionally, when the rules at the workplace go against employees' goals, people do not see any meaning of the activity that they are indulged in, and this leads to boredom.

Overall, the concept of flow is one of the important components in achieving positive experiences and is related to the concepts of positive psychology, where the feeling of well-being and happiness is considered as a sign of being healthy rather than following the narrow view of absence of illness as health. This transforming view of positive psychology is discussed in the next section as an important paradigm for the organizations to create the positive climate leading to the phenomenon of positive deviance at workplace.

## 2.5 Positive Psychology

The experience of flow is found to be associated with the positive mood, which is a core component of the psychological well-being. The positive emotions broaden the scope of attention and cognition prompting them to pursue a wider range of thoughts

and actions than is typical for an individual and making them more flexible and creative in the long run. Experiencing positive emotions allows people to transform themselves by becoming more creative, knowledgeable, resilient, socially integrated and healthy. The positive emotions also undo the lingering negative emotions leading to a feeling of health and well-being (Fredrickson 2005: 328). Following up further on the similar concepts, the positive organizational scholarship focuses on the organizational dynamics leading to the creativity, vitality, strengths and virtues by defining the positive deviance for extraordinary outcomes. Managers who are able to create environments in which employees have a chance to feel positive about themselves, their jobs and the organization, have more engaged and productive work units. The positive deviance facilitates the best human conditions and focuses on strengths and capabilities.

In his paper on Positive Psychology, Martin Seligman (2000) calls for shifting the focus of organizational studies from illness and pathology towards a focus on human strengths and virtues. Positive psychology is about the experiences of well-being, contentment and satisfaction from the past, and hope and optimism for the future, as well as flow and happiness from the present activities. At an individual level, positive psychology focuses on positive individual traits, courage, interpersonal skill, forgiveness, high talent and wisdom. At a group level, it is about civic virtues, responsibility, tolerance and work ethics (Seligman et al 2000: 5). Cameron et al. (2003) further elaborates this notion to mention the concept of organizational virtuousness referring to the behaviors that extend beyond the customary motivations towards fostering benefits to others irrespective of reciprocity. The deviance continuum as proposed by Cameron et al. (2003) is illustrated in Figure 10.

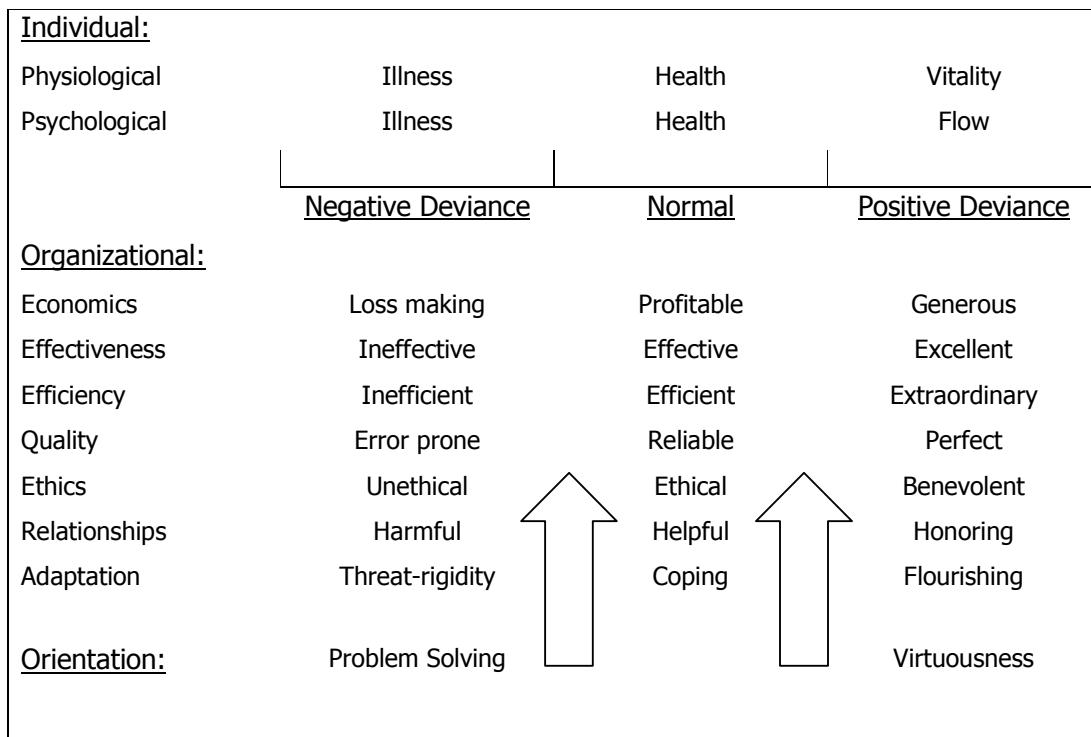
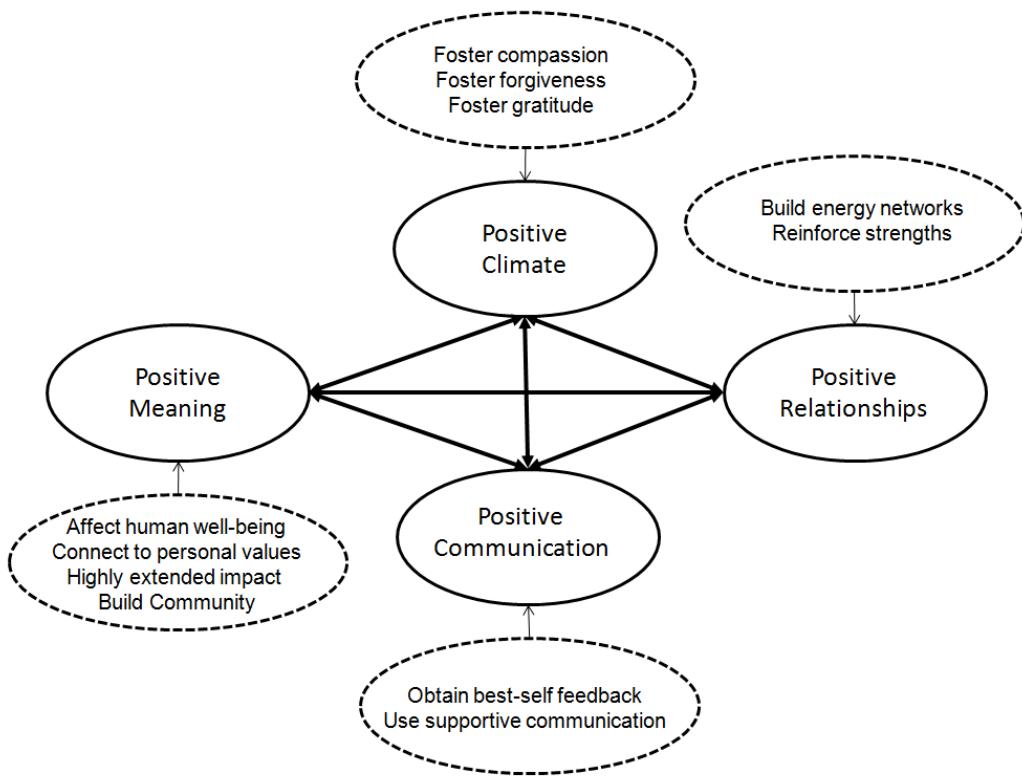


Figure 10. The deviance continuum (Cameron et al. 2003).

As shown in Figure 10, this continuum depicts a state of negatively deviant performance (on the left) improving to normality or healthy performance (in the middle) and going up to a state of positive deviant performance (on the right). At the individual level, the physiological and psychological illnesses are shown on the left and healthy functioning is located in the middle. The right side of positive deviance involves high levels of physical fitness levels or psychological flow. The analogy from the above figure can be extended further to organizations, where the conditions of ineffectiveness, inefficiency, losses and error prone performance characterize the negative deviance whereas the positive deviance is characterized by excellent, extraordinary, generous and flawless virtuous performance. The right side of Figure 10 is what the organizations should target for virtuousness. The virtuousness amplifies and fosters escalating positive consequences, and has buffering qualities that can protect the organizations against negative consequences. Virtuous tendencies are intrinsically motivated, oriented toward the betterment of human beings, and extend beyond the immediate concerns of self-interest (Cameron et al, 2003).

Leading an organization towards virtuousness requires applying positive leadership with focus on positive deviant performance and an orientation towards the strengths rather than weaknesses and eventually fostering the conditions in organization which employees consider to be inherently good. This cannot be achieved if leadership concentrates merely on resolving problems, overcoming obstacles, increasing competitiveness or attaining profitability. Four positive strategies for leadership are proposed by Cameron (2008: 14) for producing the extraordinary positive performance. These are the factors for fostering positive climate, building positive relationships, conveying a positive meaning and ensuring positive communications within the organization. These strategies are illustrated in Figure 11.



*Figure 11. Positive leadership strategies (Cameron 2008: 14).*

As shown in Figure 11, positive climate, positive relationships, positive meaning and positive communication, all reinforce each other. Taken together, the facilitation of these conditions is important for achieving positive leadership. Each of these strategies are discussed separately further in this section.

### 2.5.1 Positive Climate

The first strategy of positive leadership, shown in Figure 11, is to build a positive climate in the organization, where positive emotions predominate over the negative ones equipping its employees with optimistic attitudes and cheerful outlook. In most of the cases, people tend to pay more attention to the negative signals, as we have learnt from the childhood that ignoring a negative threat could be lethal. The negative emotions, however, narrow people's thought-action repertoires and diminish their coping abilities; whereas positive emotions are proven to broaden people's momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring personal resources (Frederickson 2003: 314). In order to counter the negativity, therefore, the positivity should be in abundance. Positive leaders choose to emphasize the flourishing side of the organizational climate as they personally induce, develop, and display positive emotions by fostering the feelings of compassion, forgiveness and gratitude among the employees in the organization.

In order to be able to demonstrate the organizational capability for compassion, the people need to be aware of the occurring around them and then sharing the information broadly. While maintaining the sensitivity to privacy concerns, positive leaders make it legitimate for employees to share personal concerns at work. The tightly knit communities so formed within the organizations sharing a common value system tend to notice one another and detect one another's difficulties. When the difficulties are noticed, leaders make it rightful to express compassionate feelings by the way of planned forums or events and the organization responds to these distress calls collectively. In face of traumatic events, the actions of leaders are crucial and positive leaders call others to action, share stories of caring and articulate values that reflect that the organizations care for its employees (Cameron, 2008). The belief of employees that that organization cares about them and their well-being, increases the likelihood of reciprocation of the care for the business by them as they become more engaged in order to fulfill their obligations to the organization (Saks 2006: 605).

When hurtful events occur in organization, forgiveness is encouraged in order to move forward and not be weighed down by animosity and grudge holding. A positive climate actively replaces the negative energy with positive responses. The positive leadership acknowledges the trauma cause but emphasizes on a positive future than a negative

past. The outcomes of organizations should be associated with a higher purpose that provides personal significance for organizational members as it helps in replacing the focus from self to an elevating objective. Instead of abandoning those affected, offering the social support helps humanizing the harmful event, as it communicates that human development and welfare is as important for the organization as the financial bottom line. Leaders should choose the language carefully so that to provide the context where forgiveness is a legitimate response to the harm or offense. Expressions of forgiveness are almost always accompanied by the statements about caring, humility and reconciliation (Cameron et al. 2003).

Observing the acts of compassion and forgiveness creates a sense of gratitude in people and this leads to a dramatic effect on individual and group performance by eliciting positive behavior. Physiological health, cognitive functioning and performance at work are substantially higher when gratitude is fostered. People experiencing a feeling of gratitude are most optimistic, attentive, determined and engage in more helping behavior towards other people and have a sense of being more connected to others. The expressions of gratitude by one person tend to motivate others to express gratitude and a self-perpetuating virtuous cycle occurs when gratitude is expressed (Emmons et al. 2003: 388).

### 2.5.2 Positive Relationships

The second strategy for positive leadership and illustrated in Figure 11 is about enabling the positive relationships that creates positive deviant outcomes physiologically, emotionally and organizationally. Positive social relationships enhances the health, feeling of well-being and the nature of relationships as they affect the hormonal, cardiovascular and immune systems of the body. When people experience positive relationships, it affects the level of health-enhancing hormones in the body thereby bringing down the stress levels and the body works less hard to cope under the effects of stressful condition. This has a soothing effect on the body and mind and helps in establishing increased trusts in humans for teamwork and pro-social behavior (Heaphy et al 2008: 147). For example, it was proven that social and emotional support at work from supervisor and coworkers leads to healthier cardiovascular system.

Forming close friendships at work tends to enhance and increase productivity and performance, but the key enabler is giving to the relationship rather than receiving from it. The positive effects are felt in relationships that help people contribute to the benefit of others, rather than merely receive support from them. The demonstration of altruism, compassion, forgiveness and kindness are necessary for the positive relationships to have their maximum positive impact on well-being and performance (Cameron 2008: 41). Employees, who participate in programs in which they provide support to fellow employees, rather than receive support, increase their commitment to organization and their inclination to pro-social behavior.

Forming positive energy networks within the organization can facilitate positive relationships at work. This requires that the positive energizers be placed in the positions that require a lot of coordination and wide interactions within the organization. Because positive energizers create and support vitality in others and are themselves optimistic and trustworthy, interacting with them inspires energy in people. Positive energizers can also be asked to coach or mentor others. On the other hand, the negative energizers, those deplete the good feelings and enthusiasm of others should be approached to improve their outlook using the four sequential steps. First they should be given a direct and honest feedback about their de-energizing behavior and its effect on the organization. If this does not bring about any change in them, they should be made aware of the alternative behaviors and emotions with support from coaching and training. If this still proves ineffective, the individual should be placed in a non central position that minimizes the contamination of negative energy to others. As an ultimate step, the person may be allowed a chance to flourish elsewhere (Cameron 2008: 45). Conducting a formal network diagnosis of the positive energy network in an organization helps to identify the current positive energy hubs, black holes and peripheral members who need development. The results may be used to create stronger positive energy networks by putting right people in right places within the organization.

Additionally, positive leadership focuses more on individual and organizational strengths rather than weaknesses, and creates such environments where people have a chance to do what they do best. This improves performance as people learn quicker from the positive examples than the negative demonstrations, and identifying what the workers should do is more helpful than telling them what not to (Cameron 2008: 47).

Overall, positive leaders foster positive relationships by emphasizing strengths, small victories and positive imagery with the organization members instead of stressing errors, mistakes or problematic behavior. Business practice proves that people are more energized to perform, when they know about their success.

### 2.5.3 Positive Communication

In order to enable the positive communication in organizations, the affirmative and supportive language must replace the negative and critical language. Research shows that the single most important factor in predicting organizational performance is the ratio of positive statements to the negative ones. Positive statements express appreciation, support, helpfulness, approval or compliments, whereas the negative statements express criticism, disapproval, dissatisfaction, cynicism or derogatory. Research reveals that the ratio is about 5.6 to 1 in high-performing organizations, which means that in high performing teams, five times as many positive statements were made as the negative statements. In medium performing organizations, the ratio was 1.85 to 1, whereas when negative statements buried the positive statements by a ratio of 0.36 to 1, the organizational performance was substantially poorer (Losada et al 2004: 747). The high performing teams also asked more frequently for other team member's viewpoints rather than imposing a standpoint and were less self-focused than the low performing teams. The high performing teams were also better connected, had more information flows, participation and interpersonal interactions than the low performing teams. Another similar finding is associated with the experienced emotions and performance. Since, the positive comments tend to bring positive emotions; people who experience a ratio of at least three positive emotions to every negative emotion tend to flourish in mental health and individual performance (Fredrickson et al 2005: 684).

Therefore, positive leaders model positive communication by minimizing criticism and negativity and replacing it with an abundance of positive feedback and expressions of support. The positive talks must exhibit the characteristics of authenticity and sincerity, because the comments that appear to be untrustworthy or disingenuous have the reverse effect. The appropriate positive to negative statement ratio needs to be maintained, as too much positivity can give rise to a feel of complacency and lead to mediocrity, whereas too much negativity can lead to defensiveness and withdrawal (Camer-

on 2008: 57). The strategies of best self-feedback and supportive communications need to be suggested to facilitate the positive communication within the organization.

For instance, the best self-feedback strategy is based on the process of positive feedback for improvement in individual. Positive information is gathered from the acquaintances about an individual to highlight the individual's key strengths, unique talents and highest capabilities, during the feedback collection. Such communication focuses on the positive side and people uncover their strengths and positive attributes which they often cannot identify by themselves. These feedback sessions also lead to a stronger relationship between the individuals and the feedback givers due to appreciation, reciprocity and an enhanced desire to live up to the positive self-portraits (Cameron 2008: 58). A focus on strength can lead to excellence and positively deviant performance when people discover that they add unique value in circumstances that are natural and effortless to them. The individual can later be assisted in formulating the strategies for capitalizing on their strengths.

When a negative message needs to be delivered, it is difficult to communicate in a way that builds and strengthens a relationship. The use of supportive communication while delivering the negative feedback addresses the uncomfortable issue but preserves the relationship. During the supportive communication, the evaluative approach of making the judgment of an individual or their behavior is replaced by the descriptive approach where the situation is described without any judgment; the objective consequences and personal feelings associated with the situation are then identified, and the acceptable alternatives are suggested. This leads to a constructive conversation as the emphasis is on the commonalities and collaboration, and the individual does not take defensive stand because they do not feel blamed, attacked or devalued (Cameron 2008: 61). For supportive feedback, the harmony among the words, feelings and the thoughts of the communicator must be maintained in order to be authentic and sincere, and the corrective approach should be problem-centric and not person-centric.

#### 2.5.4 Positive Meaning

The meaning that an individual associates with one's work has a profound impact on the individual's work engagement and commitment. Based on the meaning of the work, it can be seen as a job, career or calling. When the only meaning attached to the

work is the financial or material reward, then no particular satisfaction is obtained from the work, and it is seen merely as a means for obtaining financial resources to engage in some other activity, more meaningful and satisfying to the worker. In this case, their relationship with organization is that of compliance to the organizational rules and procedures, as they see the whole setup as a reward and punishment system, but they themselves do not necessarily believe in the purpose of the actions they take.

On the contrary, individuals seeing their work as *career* are motivated by success that the work brings to them in terms of prestige, power, recognition, capability development and advancement in the organization. They have identified themselves with the organizational objectives and are motivated to play their roles of organizational members seeking involvement and providing their contribution. The third group of workers who feel their work as a *calling* find that their work has a significant meaning to them, and find it intrinsically rewarding and fulfilling. These inherent benefits reach beyond the personal benefit or the financial rewards for them, as they attach a profound value to their work (Cameron 2008: 68). These workers have internalized the organizational goals by completely adopting them as their own. Such individuals internalize the organizational culture and mission and carry a conviction that what they are doing is right and good.

Cameron (2008) describes a combination of four basic attributes to associate a piece of work with meaningfulness for the employees. The first attribute is the understanding that their work has a positive impact on others. This could be achieved by making employees aware of the contribution of their work to the welfare of others. This understanding could be facilitated by leaders by giving the employees an opportunity to interact directly with those receiving their output or services. The second attribute is to associate work with core individual values by highlighting the relationship between the individual's core values and the organizational benefits. The third attribute is to highlight the long term impact of the work and the legacy it creates for the future. The fourth attribute is to build a sense of community by focusing on goals that lead the individuals to contribute to the organization. These contribution goals are motivated more by benevolence rather than by the desire for acquisition, thus leading to the growth orientation as opposed to the orientation that is driven by the self-interest goals (Cameron 2008: 78).

Generally, high level of meaningfulness at work is associated with positive outcomes due to the extraordinary individual and organizational performance, and it leads to higher job and life satisfaction as compared to those who find their work less meaningful. Importantly, a positive interpretation of the meaning can positively influence the perception of the worth of the work by an individual. The leadership has an important responsibility to choose the right message towards their employees, so that they feel a sense of worth, in their work.

To effectively implement the positive deviance, the leadership needs to be transformational and inspire followers to change for better by themselves internalizing the concepts of the positive deviance, and starting the upward spiral towards the positivity in the organization. In the next section, the transformational leadership and the attributes enabling the transformation leadership are discussed. The differences between authentic and the pseudo transformational leadership are also discussed in the next section.

## 2.6 Transformational Leadership

The transformational leadership is defined as the process whereby leaders stimulate and inspire the followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes by offering a purpose that transcends short-term goals and focuses on the higher order intrinsic needs and empowering them. Transformational leadership involves inspiring followers to commit to a shared vision and goals for an organization or unit, challenging them to be innovative problem solvers, and developing leadership capacity via coaching, mentoring, and provision of both challenge and support. Transformational leadership comes in contrast to the transactional leaders who lead through social exchange only, by offering rewards for productivity or denying rewards for the lack of productivity. Transactional leadership depends on contingent reinforcement, which could be either positive as in material contingent reward, or negative, as in the active or passive forms of management by exception where the leaders direct their attention towards the failures to take corrective actions (Bass et al. 2006: 8).

The four components of transformational leadership are: a) idealized influence, b) inspirational motivation, c) intellectual stimulation, and d) individual consideration. The first component of the transformational leadership is *idealized influence*. It represents the ability of building confidence in the leader and appreciating the leader by his fol-

lowers, which forms the basis for accepting radical change in organization. Without such confidence in the leader, that is, in his motives and aims, an attempt to redirect the organization may cause great resistance. Charismatic leaders are seen as role models by the followers who identify themselves with their leaders and want to emulate them. The charismatic leadership constitute a symbol and model for other individuals. Charismatic leaders display convictions, take stands and appeal to followers on an emotional level. A charismatic leader has a clear set of values and demonstrates them in every action, providing a role model for the followers, with genuine trust built between the leaders and followers. Trust for both the leader and the follower is built on a solid moral and ethical foundation. The leaders with idealized influence are honored, appreciated, they are trusted, the followers admire them, and they identify with them and try to imitate them. Such leaders, which represent the model roles to their followers, do "the right things", demonstrating high moral and ethical behavior. They do not use their position and leaders' abilities to achieve personal interests, but they direct them to use the potentials of their followers and to achieve the aims of organizations (Bass et al 2006: 6).

The second component of transformational leadership is *inspirational motivation*. Inspirational motivation represents a degree to which the leader articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to the followers and drives their efforts "to go extra mile" to achieve the organizational and the group's goals. Leaders with the ability to provide inspirational motivation challenge the followers with high standards, communicate optimism about future goals, and provide meaning for the task at hand. In the conditions when transformational change is being conducted in an organization, the leader has the task of clear and continuous stimulation of the others to follow a new idea. Transformational leader's behaviour displays enthusiasm and optimism as the leader inspires a strong sense of purpose in their followers. The followers are motivated to act, and they understand that the leader has high expectations of them. It is also important that this visionary aspect of leadership is supported by adequate communication skills that allow the leader to articulate his or her vision with precision and power in a compelling and persuasive way (Bass et al. 2006: 6).

The third component of transformational leadership is *intellectual stimulation*. The ability of the leader to challenge assumptions, take risks and solicits followers' ideas has

an important role in the transformation process. Such leaders stimulate the efforts in their followers and encourage creativity and innovativeness in their followers. The leader's vision provides a framework for the followers to see how they connect to the leader, the organization, each other, and the goal. Once they have this big picture view and are allowed freedom from convention they can creatively overcome any obstacles in the way of the mission. A great tool possessed by such leaders is the story telling, using the analogies and metaphors to create and share the vision, to which all are able to connect bringing their new and creative ideas. If the ideas and the solutions of problems suggested by followers differ from the ideas represented by leader, the followers are not criticized (Bass et al. 2006: 7).

The fourth component of the transformational leadership is *individualized consideration*. The leader with individualized consideration attends to each follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach, and listens to the follower's concerns and needs. Such leader gives empathy and support, keeps communication open and provides enough challenges for the followers. This type of leadership also encompasses the need for respect and celebrates the individual contribution that each follower can make to the team. As a result, the followers have a will and aspirations for self development and have intrinsic motivation for their tasks. The leader's behaviour demonstrates acceptance of these individual differences. The supportive climate thus created helps followers and colleagues to develop their higher potential, by embracing new challenges in new environment and results in learning and growth of the individuals. The individually considerate leader listens effectively. A two-way exchange in communication is encouraged where followers can freely express their views, and is often embodied in the so called "management by walking around" (Bass et al. 2006: 7).

#### *Authentic and pseudo transformational leadership*

The leadership can be socialized or personalized. The socialized leadership cares for the benefits of the wider group by developing and empowering others. The drive for the socialized leadership comes from the unselfish concerns that the leaders feel for the society and the legitimate authority channels are used for serving the collective interests. The leaders need to be morally uplifting to be transformative for the benefits of the followers in the long run. On the contrary, personalized leadership is more con-

cerned with serving personal interests by showing the behaviors of personal dominance and authority that exploits others. The personalized leadership uses the punishment and manipulation tactics and show little regards for the rights and feelings of the followers. The agenda for the personalized leadership is to serve self-interest, so even though they may exhibit the characteristics of transformational leadership, they are called inauthentic or pseudo-transformational leaders.

Even though each of the components of the transformational leadership can be checked to decide the authenticity of the leadership, it is best reflected by the individualized consideration of the followers. Whereas the pseudo transformational leader sees the followers as means to meet the personal agenda, the growth, desires and needs of the followers are the main concern for the authentic transformational leader. The authentic leaders always lead the way by upholding the integrity and moral values, even in times of change and tempting opportunities, providing the example for the followers. Leaders that have high integrity, and those who care for their followers are considered more effective and truly transformational by their followers (Bass et al. 2006: 14).

George et al (2007) suggest that each individual has unique experiences, guiding principles and different ways of managing oneself and others, so one cannot become authentic by copying someone else. They suggest following steps on the way of becoming an authentic leader.

1. Authentic leaders find their inspirations directly from the formative experiences of their own life. They appreciate difficult experiences and rise above their own challenges to find deeper meaning of leadership.
2. They are self-aware about their own blind spots. This requires listening to the feedback and overcoming the feelings of denial
3. Their individual beliefs and convictions form their values. The values and principles are tested under pressure to learn what's most important to the person. The principles used in leading come from having a solid base of values tested in adversities.
4. In order to sustain high levels of motivation, authentic leader needs to understand and balance one's own extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivations are linked to the values and are more fulfilling than extrinsic motivations.

For authentic leaders, it is also important to realize one's own passion and give their life a meaning.

5. Building a support team is important to provide affirmations, advice and perspectives. The support teams also calls for the course corrections whenever needed. During the low times, this team will still support them for who they are and not for what they are.
6. Being authentic means maintaining a sense of self, irrespective of location and integrating life by reflecting the same values in all aspects of life
7. Authentic leaders empower the people to lead and achieve better results over time, as the employees grow and take new roles and responsibilities supported by their leaders (George et al 2007: 137).

The different concepts used for building the theoretical framework for good work model based on motivation, flow, positive psychology and transformational leadership in this section are summarized in the next sub-section.

## 2.7 Summary of the Literature Review

The literature review discussed the theories and concepts that have a direct or indirect bearing on the engagement that an employee feels towards his work and the organization. The theory of motivation and the concept of flow were described first, as these were targeted more towards the individual factors related to engagement. These were then followed by the concept of positive psychology at work place and the transformational leadership theory as these concepts were more related to the overall organizational climate.

The good work model defines the alignment of factors for encouraging the excellent work. These factors are related to

- i) Personal standards (values, beliefs, self-image) which help to achieve quality work and make a difference and is driven by personal values and motives.
- ii) The socio-cultural conditions, including the professional codes and traditions and the organizational climate (reciprocity, trust, ethics) affecting the work and the group dynamics on the performance and the satisfaction of the individual in the context of work.

- iii) The extrinsic benefits, power and prestige, and their alignment to perform good work in a responsible manner.

The alignment of above factors increases the likelihood of achieving the good work, which is defined as the combination of excellence, engagement and ethics. The excellence is related to the technical capabilities of the individual to do their work meticulously, and is governed by their skills, willingness to upgrade those skills and knowledge with time to keep abreast with latest happening in their sphere of work. The skills might be related to the technical knowledge or the knowledge of using tools and processes. The engagement explores the personal side of the corporate world, and depends on how well the employee can identify with the meaningfulness of the work. The ethical factor is more about accountability and responsibility that pervades not just the organizational context but also delves deeper in to the effect of the work practices on the social life and broadly on the humanity.

The theories discussed in Section 2 relate to the construct of good work either at an individual level or at a broader level of organizational climate that provides the socio-cultural environment and the extrinsic motivation for the workers either to flourish or to deteriorate. Each of the theory points to a set of specific attributes, which could be summarized under the major groups, as shown in Table 1 below.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Key attributes</b>	<b>Literature Mapping</b>
Empowerment	Autonomy	Theory of Motivation Theory of Flow Leadership Theory Theory of Good Work
	Flexibility	
	Sense of control	
	Responsibility	
	Trust	
Meaningfulness	Competence and skills	Theory of Motivation Theory of Flow Leadership Theory Theory of Good Work Theory of Positive Deviance
	Challenges and opportunities for growth	
	Learning and development	
	Goals and Feedback	
	Intrinsic benefits	
Relationships	Relatedness and belongingness	Theory of Motivation Theory of Good Work Theory of Positive Deviance
	Reciprocity	
	Trust	
	Community	
Communication	Feedback	Leadership Theory Theory of Positive Deviance
	Appreciation	
	Information sharing	
	Meaningfulness	
	Perceived support	

	Trust	
	Motivation and Inspiration	
	Listening	
Recognition	Rewards	Leadership Theory Theory of Good Work Theory of Positive Deviance
	Appreciation	
	Compensation	
	Growth opportunities	
	Extrinsic benefits	
Leadership	Motivation	Leadership Theory Theory of Positive Deviance
	Trust	
	Empowerment	
	Supervisor support	
	Fairness	
	Organizational Climate	
	Authentic	
	Coaching and Mentoring	
	Listening	

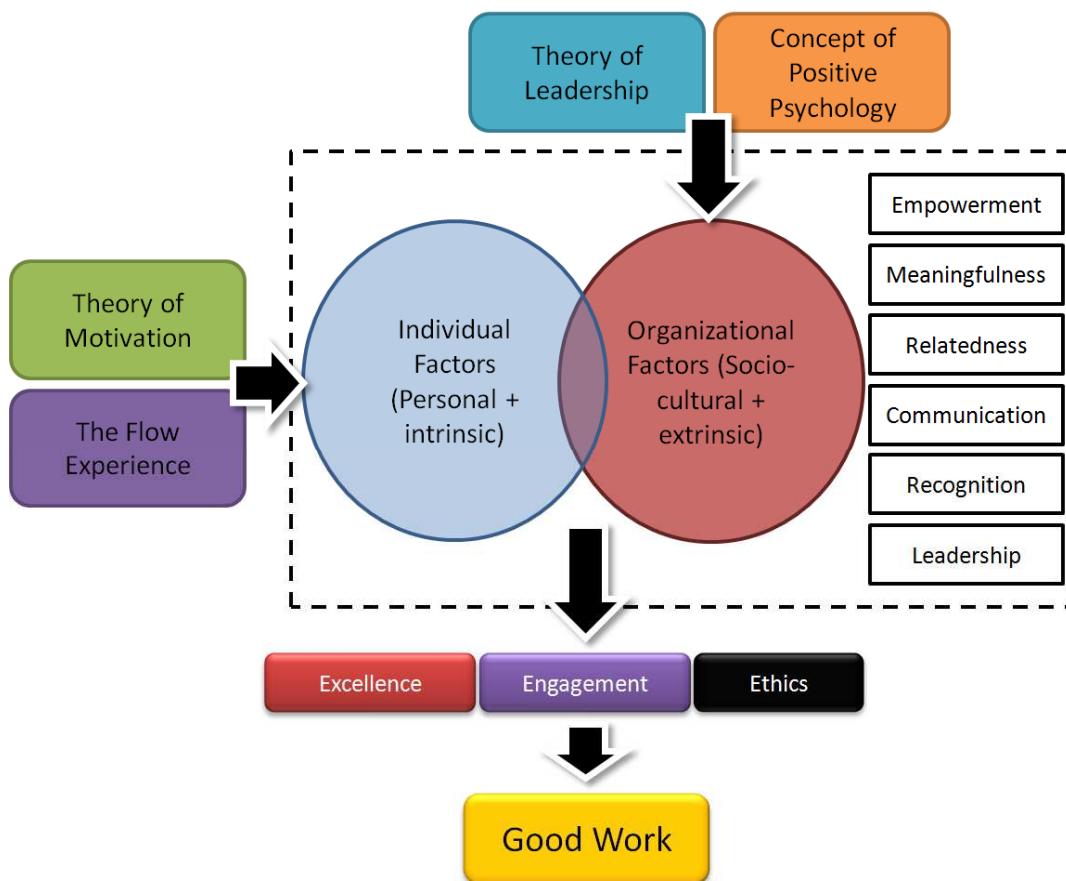
Table 1: Key factors for good work from literature review

The Table 1 overviews the key factors for good work gathered from the literature review discussed Section 2. These factors do not operate in silos irrespective of other factors; hence, a considerable overlapping happens across different theories leading to repetition of some theoretical developments under different groups.

The theory of motivation emphasizes the need for the autonomy, relatedness and the competency. At organizational level autonomy is linked to the empowerment driven by the leadership, and trust that allows employees to take up the responsibilities facilitated by the supportive work environment. The experience of flow is an extreme case of intrinsic motivation and is driven by the sense of control, linking it back to autonomy. The other important condition for flow is the right balance of competency and skill, so that it leads to the feeling of achievement after the successful completion of activity. Experience of flow also points to the meaningfulness of the activity for the doer as the goals are clear and feedback is immediate to evaluate the progress.

Whereas the theories of motivation and flow influence the individual's intrinsic motivation, the positive psychology and the leadership influence the context more on the organizational level. The positive psychology talk about motivating the employees by the appreciation that makes them feel valued and inspires them to do good work. While communication is the most important tool to create the positive effect, it needs to be supported by organizational virtuousness at all the levels to demonstrate that the or-

ganization really means what its policies say. The same concept relates to the authentic leadership, where people look for the congruence between the words that the leaders speak and the behaviors that are demonstrated by their actions. The facilitation of the communication needs to be bidirectional, which means that the listening abilities of the leader are as much important as their speaking abilities. The positive organizational scholarship concepts and leadership theory both also emphasize on the importance of tangible or intangible rewards. The theoretical concepts discussed in the earlier section have been compiled in the Figure 12 below.



*Figure 12. Relationship between good work and supporting concepts.*

The Figure 12 illustrates the relationships between the supportive theories and the concepts presented in this document and their relationship to the main concept of good work through engagement. The theory of motivation and the experience of flow primarily relates to the personal factor of the good work model. The positive psychology as emphasized mainly by the positive organizational scholarship relates more to the

broader organizational (socio-cultural) context. The key factors of empowerment at work, meaningfulness of work, feeling of relatedness to the organization, the importance of communication, the fair rewards and recognitions and the significance of leadership practices influence the overall work context, organizational climate and the feelings of employees. The positive deviance of these key factors and their reinforcement for each other within the organization determines the level of engagement for its work force, leading to the good work for organization as well as its employees.

### 3 Research Methodology

This section describes the research approach applied to this study, and provides information about how the data were collected. Later on, the reliability and validity of the collected data are discussed. The target population for this study was made of the case company employees from the financial services unit and the software engineering services unit.

#### 3.1 Research Approach

The research approach applied to this study is qualitative research concerned with "holistic understanding of the behavior from the actor's own frame of reference in naturalistic and uncontrolled surroundings". It is a method to research unstructured problems because of its flexibility and exploratory method (Blaxter 2006: 65). Because of the general difficulty in defining the phenomenon of engagement, the qualitative research approach, namely the case study, has been chosen as the method for the research.

The case study research method is an empirical inquiry in the real life context for the contemporary phenomenon, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly marked. (Yin 2003: 13). This research is concerned with analyzing the situation in its natural settings and attempts to provide recommendations for improving the current situation. The qualitative data is collected by the questionnaire and interviews for this study. This study, therefore, focuses on an issue that is complex and cannot be clearly separated from the context by choosing the qualitative case study as the research method.

The literature for the research provides a general framework to understand what other researchers have done in this area to broadens the researcher's perspectives, and is used for legitimating and enriching the arguments and tell more about the application of research methods in practice (Blaxter 2006: 100). The literature review provides the information about the good work and the related constructs as for how they affect the potential for doing the good work. Later on while analyzing the data, the references from the literature are drawn to legitimate the researcher's understanding and make the reasoning sounder. The amount of literature available is usually overwhelming and

can demand considerable amount of time; therefore, unless the research is tightly defined the boundary of the literature survey may be unrestricted. To cope with this challenge, it was important to narrow down the search to high quality relevant sources which was done by utilizing library databases, such as EBSCO, and internet search engines, such as Google scholar, provide an essential tool to search for the literature in question.

The section below describe in detail, the questionnaire and the interviews used for data collection for this Thesis, the sampling of respondents and the schedules when the data collection was carried out.

### 3.2 Data Collection

In social science, researchers commonly use more than one method for validation of the results for their studies. The surveys are frequently complemented with personal interviews to capture the description part that cannot be done via the questionnaires. Usage of two or more methods to verify and validate the results, increases the reliability of the study and this cross examination process is known as triangulation (Blaxter 2006: 86). The data was collected using the questionnaire. Since the questionnaire respondents did not have much choice to express their opinions apart from the questions asked, the semi-structured interviews were conducted to fill in the information gaps, and to gain more understanding about the perception of respondents.

#### 3.2.1 Questionnaire

The important factors for engagement were noted from the literature review and were grouped together under six headings as described in the previous section. The questions were selected under each of these headings to reflect on the experience of employees in the current organization. The questions were chosen so that the employees are easily able to identify their situations with the existing context without ambiguity or requiring additional explanations. The questionnaire having 30 questions was prepared based on the reviewed literature. The questions were answered on a Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". None of the questions were made mandatory. As a separate question within the same questionnaire the participants were asked to rate three most important factors defining good work from a list of ten op-

tions. The questionnaire was created in Google docs, and a link to this questionnaire was sent to around 320 people from the Financial Services and Software Engineering Services unit of the organization.

As mentioned before that for the case company, the two main business practices are the product development and the IT Consulting. The sample was chosen to have a balanced view and the participants from both the practices could provide their opinions. Fortunately the researcher was associated with the both groups as IT consulting was the parent organization and the contracted organization was product development. So the respondent population represented a fair sample of the work and the context where the employees are associated in the current organization, as they came both from the product development as well as IT consulting organizations. The questionnaire was open for submission from 12.06.2011 to 30.06.2011. In all, 64 responses were received which made a response rate of 20%. The questionnaire also collected the demographic information about the participants, but ensured their anonymity. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix I: Questionnaire for Data Collection.

### 3.2.2 Interviews

The data that cannot be captured with the responses for the questionnaire or the observations can be collected through the way of interviews. Whereas the interviewer strictly adheres to the set of questions put formally in the questionnaire during a structured interview, a semi structured interview offers flexibility for the discussion during the interview. The new questions could be brought up during the interview depending upon the results of the replies from the interviewee. The unstructured interview is considered to be naturalistic and in-depth. It could be narrative or non-directive (Blaxter 2006:172).

The participants were interviewed to represent views from the product development as well as from the IT consultancy operations in order to understand their views about the employee engagement and good work. The interviews were semi structured and were followed by the open discussion between interviewer and interviewee. All the interviews were carried between May 2011 and June 2011. Participants were briefly introduced about the concept of good work and its relationship to engagement before starting with the interview questions. Each interview lasted about 45 minutes and was con-

ducted in English in a relaxed environment, but in a professional way. Interviews were conducted either face of face or by way of Microsoft live meeting software enabling the sharing of desktop and providing audio conferencing facility. Few interviews were recorded, with the approval of interviewees. In all the cases, field notes were taken which were subsequently reviewed by the participants.

S.No.	Participant Role	Location	Operations	Interview Date	Means of Communication
1	Technical Lead	India	Product Development	29.04.2011	Live Meeting
2	Project manager	Finland	Product Development	03.05.2011	Live Meeting
3	Project manager	Finland	IT Consulting	18.05.2011	Live Meeting
4	Senior Software Developer	India	Product Development	24.05.2011	Live Meeting
5	Senior Software Developer	Finland	IT Consulting	31.05.2011	Live Meeting
6	Project Manager	Finland	Product Development	13.06.2011	Face to Face
7	Continuous Service Manager	Finland	Product Development	13.06.2011	Face to Face
8	Project Manager	India	Product Development	28.06.2011	Live Meeting

*Table 2: Interview participants.*

The Table 2, enlists the details for the interviewees and the interview schedules. It also records the means of conducting the interviews. The participants from the above table are identified during the compilation of the interview results in section 4 as P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7 and P8 respectively. The interview questions are listed in Appendix 2 (Interview Questions).

### 3.3 Reliability and Validity

Reliability means demonstrating that the operations of a study, such as the data collection procedure can be repeated with the same result by another researcher (Yin 2003:34).

In this study, rigorous techniques and methods for gathering high quality data were used for establishing the credibility of the study in order to explore the conditions for the good work in the case company and the ways to enhance the likelihood of good work. Books and articles from many sources were studied for this research in order to prevent any bias. The reference materials chosen are in the context of the research topic and are listed in the reference section.

More than one method of data collection were used to ensure the validity of the output. The questionnaire responses were anonymous to get honest responses from the participants. Qualitative interviews were conducted to get more insights from the participants to have reliable results. The notes captured from the interviews were reviewed by the participants to ensure that the correct information was recorded. The efforts have been made to prevent the researcher's bias towards analyzing the results, by linking the cause and effects for deviance to the literature.

All social research gives rise to a range of ethical issues around privacy, informed consent, anonymity, secrecy, being truthful and the desirability of the research. The researcher, therefore, owes a duty to exercise responsibility in the processes of data collection, analysis and dissemination (Blaxter 2006:158).

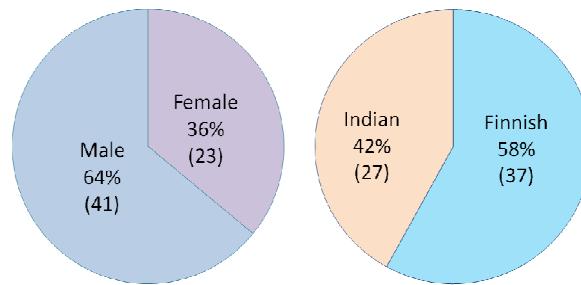
The anonymity of the participants has been ensured in the research. In addition, the audience and participants of the study were made aware of the purpose of the study and its basic procedures and how the data gained from it will be used. At any point of time, the research does not disclose any of the confidential information about the participants or the case organization. Due credits have been provided to other's work that has been referred to in this Thesis. The identity of the case company has also been keep confidential throughout this study.

## 4 Results and Analysis

This section reviews the responses received from the questionnaire and interviews. The responses received are analyzed and linked with the literature to interpret the results.

### 4.1 Results from the Questionnaire

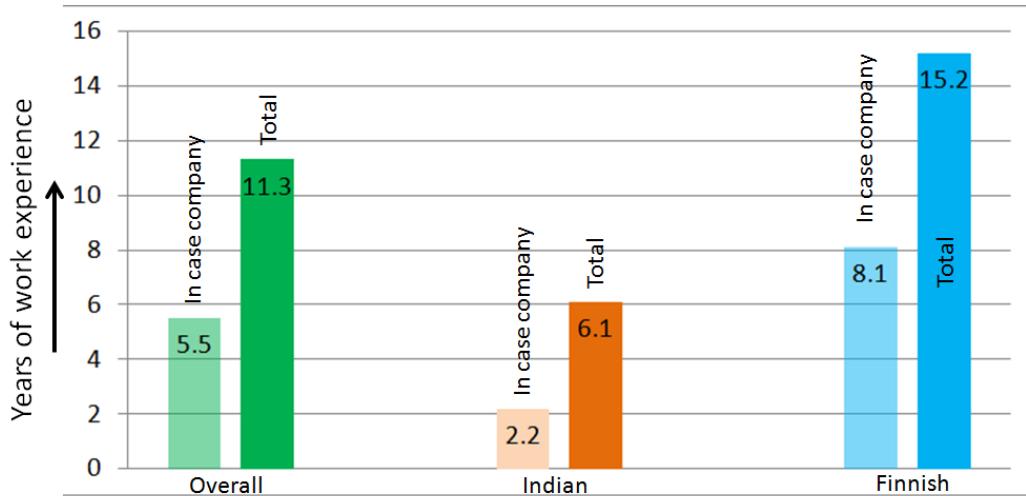
This section presents the findings from the survey questionnaire. The purpose of using questionnaire was to understand the current status and perception of respondents towards the scenarios drawn. The questionnaire was filled by 64 respondents. For some cases, the responses formed a trend, but for others, results of the questions were mixed and any specific trend was not visible. In the cases, the overall trend was not visible, further analysis was made to check, if there were any differences in the responses between the participants from Finland and India. The findings, based on the highest frequency mode values of responses are mentioned below. The complete data for survey is presented in Appendix 3 (Responses to the Questionnaire).



*Figure 13. Questionnaire respondents' profile.*

As illustrated in Figure 13, out of the 64 participants that responded to the survey, 64% were males (41 of 64) and 36% were females (23 of 64). 58% participants were from Finland (37 of 64) and 42% of respondents were from India (27 of 64).

Interestingly the difference between the average work experience of Finnish participant and Indian participant was quite large as illustrated in the Figure 14 below.



*Figure 14. Average work experience profile of the respondents.*

The average work experience for respondents of questionnaire is illustrated in Figure 14. Whereas the average work experience of respondent from India was 6.1 years, the average experience of Finnish counterpart was 15.2 years. The contrast was even more striking for the average work experience in the case company which was 2.2 years for Indian participants and 8.1 years for Finnish participants. The different maturity levels of employees between Indian and Finnish team may have led to quite many mixed opinions.

The overall job satisfaction of the employees of case company did not form a trend, as the results were evenly balanced both in favor of and against the statement. The results of rest of questions are combined under their headings placed against the major factors described in the literature review and reported below.

### *1. Employee empowerment in case organization*

The five questions: number 9, 12, 25, 26 and 27 were linked to the empowerment of employees within the case company. The question 26 was a reverse scoring question and disagreement to the scenario was considered as a positive response.

9	I have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect my work
12	My work provides me enough flexibility to maintain a healthy family – work life balance
25	In my team everyone takes responsibility for problems that arise in their work
26	I have to seek permissions for everything from my manager
27	My opinion seems to count at work

For all of the questions above, the responses showed that the employee empowerment in the organization is a good level, and people feel that they have enough control to affect their day-to-day work and the flexibility at the job to maintain a healthy balance between work and family life.

### *2. Meaningfulness at workplace*

The six questions 2, 4, 5, 6, 23 and 24 reflected the aspects related to the sense of meaningfulness that the employees of the case organization feel at their workplace.

2	My job is a good fit with my skills and interests
4	I get time for reflection and thinking in order to improve my working methods
5	I can use the processes and tools effectively at my work
6	I know what is expected of me at work
23	Performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else
24	I like the identity my job gives me

The respondents agreed that they are mostly aware of the expectations from them at work (Q6) making the work meaningful to them. They also agreed that they had right competencies to carry out the job and the job itself is in line of their interest (Q2). This is important both from the point of motivation and competencies for the employees. The respondents had mixed opinion about the time they get for reflection and thinking (Q4), with equal number of participants agreeing and disagreeing. But the responses between Finnish and Indian teams varied. Whereas Finnish participants were of opinion that they do not get enough time to reflect, Indian counterparts felt otherwise. The people were however unable to decide if they could use the processes and tools effectively in their workplace (Q5), Liked the identity that the job gave them (Q23) and if they found their job leading to an experience of flow (Q24).

### *3. Relationships at organization*

The four questions 7, 11, 16 and 22 probed about the relationship that the employees felt in their organizational context.

7	I have a positive working relationship with the person I report to
11	I get a sense of belongingness at my workplace
16	I feel proud to be working in this organization and would recommend my workplace to others

22	In my team, members are encouraged to help one another
----	--

The positive relationships were emphasized between the subordinates and their immediate supervisors (Q7) and respondents felt that their team members are encouraged to help each other (Q22). However the results for the sense of belongingness to their workplace (Q11) and feelings of pride to be working the case company (Q16) were mixed. While Indian participants mostly agreed, the responses from Finnish participants were balanced in both the cases, meaning that both negative and positive views were expressed by almost equal number of respondents.

#### *4. Communication within the organization*

Questions 8, 18, 19, 28 and 30 explored about communication aspects within the team and the case company including those due to cultural differences.

8	We share our knowledge and competences within our team
18	We communicate openly about issues at work
19	I have access to all the information required to do my job effectively
28	We regularly encounter conflicting situations working in multi-cultural teams
30	There is a continuous communication on progress and developments within organization

The respondents agreed that they mostly communicated openly about the issues at work (Q18) and that the knowledge and competency sharing was practiced within the teams (Q8). The results for questions about access to information for doing job (Q19), multi-cultural issues (Q28) and continuous communication about the progress and development within the organization (Q30) were mixed, with either the number of people agreeing and disagreeing being similar, or most of the respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing to the scenarios.

#### *5. Recognition at the workplace*

The four questions 10, 13, 20 and 29 asked the participants about the recognitions they felt at the workplace. It asked about both the tangible as well as intangible rewards.

10	I get a feeling of respect and recognition at my workplace
13	My company has a fair system of rewards linked to employee performance
20	I receive timely feedback from my managers about my work

29	Appreciation at work far outweighs the negative feedback
----	--

Whereas respondents felt positive about the respect and recognition in broader terms at the workplace (Q10), the fairness of rewards and its linkage to performance was disagreed overwhelmingly (Q13). Most of the respondents chose to neither agree nor disagree about the ratio of appreciation being more than the negativity at work (Q29). About the timely feedback (Q20), the response trend was mixed, with more Finnish participants agreeing that feedback was timely, but response from Indian team was balanced for this question.

#### *6. Leadership in organization*

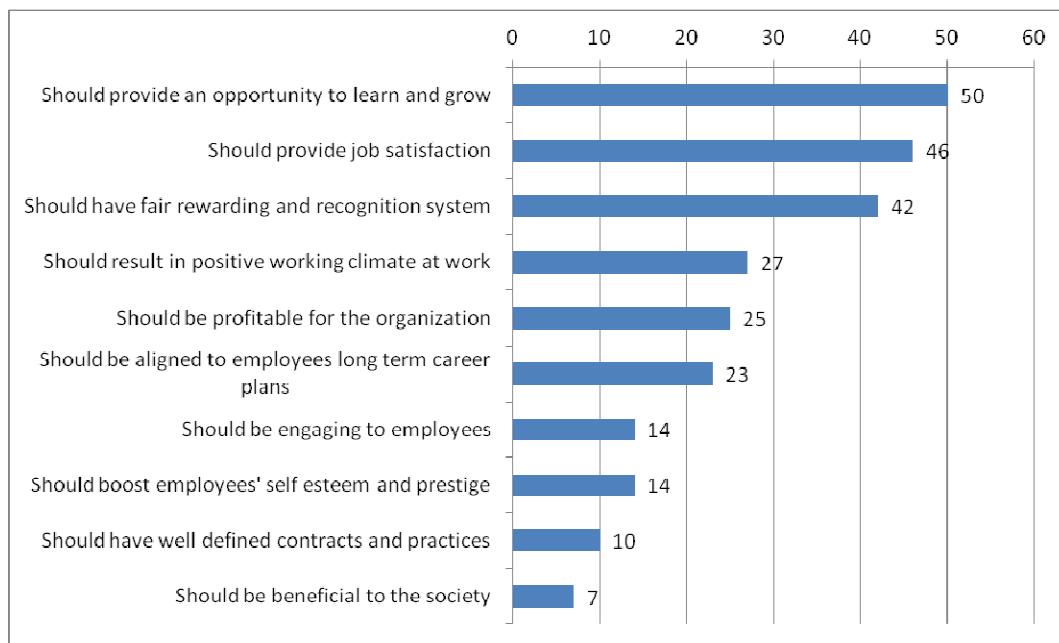
The questions 3, 14, 15, 17 explored about how people perceived their immediate supervisors, while question 21 was targeted towards the perceived organizational support, which is an important attribute the leadership should pay attention to in order to seek loyalty from the employees.

3	My manager encourages and supports my learning & development
14	My manager's behavior at work demonstrates the company's core values
15	I get the coaching and mentoring needed to improve my performance
17	Failure is accepted as a part of learning process within my team
21	I can expect help from my company in the time of personal crisis

Respondents agreed that their immediate supervisors encouraged and supported their learning and development (Q3) and most of the managers behaved to uphold the core values of the case company (Q14). They also agreed that instead of leading to blaming the employees, the failure was seen as an opportunity to learn in their respective teams (Q17). The response however was mixed for the coaching and mentoring the sub-ordinates expected from their supervisors (Q15), with Indian participants agreeing more than the Finnish participants. Help was company in the time of personal crisis (Q21) was something that most of the respondents were not sure of while responding.

#### *Three most important conditions for defining good work*

Respondents were allowed to tick three conditions out of ten options for the most important conditions defining good work, as shown in Figure 15.



*Figure 15. Three most important conditions defining good work.*

The numbers in Figure 15 represents the times respondents selected the option. Among the ten options given to the participants to rate three most important factors defining the good work, the most important was "Should provide an opportunity to learn and grow" with 50 respondents selecting the option, "Should provide job satisfaction" with 46 respondent selections and "Should have fair rewarding and recognition system" with 42 selections. We also see that only few people consider the benefits to society when they think about the good work.

#### 4.2 Results from the Interviews

The results from the interview of eight employees are reported below. The role of employees ranged from software developer to project manager in the organization. The three employees from India were interviewed, while the rest five were from Finland. The interviewees were also included to the sample of respondents for the questionnaire. The interviewee details were given in section 3, Research Methodology. While the persons interviewed from India were mainly located in case company's premises, the persons in Finland were distributed, three of them worked for product development and were sitting in case company's premises along with other colleagues, but two of them were working as IT consultants for the customers and were located at customers'

offices. The number in parenthesis after the comments indicates the interviewee from the Table 2: Interview participants. The results are reported in the same order as the variables for the good work in the questionnaire section.

### *1. Employee Empowerment*

The autonomy for the employees to make day to day decisions related to their own work was considered an important enabler for the motivation and engagement of the workforce by the interviewees. The interview results show that employees get a feeling of control as they find that the work environment in case organization is quite free and flexible and employees are allowed to do what they like. This also allows them to strike a balance between work and family life (P2, P5, P7). Employees feel that they have a chance to affect the processes and have freedom to plan and decide about their own ways of working (P6). It was also mentioned that the responsibility and empowerment should go hand in hand to be successful and for this trust and support from the supervisor was seen as the key enabler at the work place (P7).

### *2. Meaningfulness of work*

Interviewees mentioned different attributes for the work to be seen as meaningful. The responses could be grouped as follows.

- The clarity of objectives, goals and criteria for job (P1, P2, P7).  
This also included the availability of the processes and tools to define the job criteria. Knowing the big picture is also required to make the job more meaningful to the employees.
- Opportunity to learn and grow (P2, P8).  
Interviewees saw the opportunity to learn and grow for continuous improvement as a powerful motivator that adds to the meaningfulness of the work. A positive attitude of employee facilitates the learning process
- Challenging and interesting work (P4, P5, P6). This is enabled by the technical skills of the employee and is also related to the feeling of achievement when the work is carried to the closure.

- Security at job (P3, P8). Interviewees said that the work place should provide them some job security so that they don't always have the fear of losing the job with every organizational change and could concentrate more on work at hand.

The interviewees agreed that in case organization there was always an opportunity to learn and it was also facilitated by the supervisor. However the clarity of objectives was missing in many cases which made the job less meaningful to the employees (P1). Job safety has also emerged as the concern for some employees in Finland (P3, P8). This is linked to the frequent organizational changes each one leading to job cuts. The situation causes much anxiety to all in the affected units and after the changes, it is difficult to find the clear reporting lines and exactly where they fit in the organization (P8). For Indian counter parts, the job security is not a concern and they perceive better content of work and technologies that they get to work with as the important attribute of good work. It was reported that there is not fulltime work for employees in India as the confidence in the offshore team is low that they can provide the quality output (P4). One interviewee also mentioned that the constant hurry is an issue as there is too much to do in the short time, so ultimately the quality suffers. The key knowledgeable persons in the projects are always too overburdened to share their knowledge and experience. This leads to lack of learning for others (P3).

### *3. Feeling of relatedness at Workplace*

The mixed sentiments were reported related to the way interviewees felt connected at the workplace. The positive relationships with the immediate supervisors made the employees comfortable within the organization and led to increased feeling of belongingness to the organization (P1). It was also feeling of community in the big team as people are interested in working together and help each other (P7). Others did not feel connected to the organization as they only hear from their managers when it is time to plan the vacations. They felt connected more closely to the customer than the parent organization and the only link that they thought existed with parent organization was related to the salary payment (P5). An interviewee working in virtual team had never met the team mates in person, and lacked the feeling of togetherness. They never even had any kick off meetings (P6).

#### *4. Communication at the Workplace*

The communication at work included the exchange of information within the team for day to day work and knowledge sharing as well as the communication within the organization related to organization changes and regular progresses. This also included the listening abilities of the supervisor and organization. Mixed sentiments were echoed during the interviews.

The good communication skills were seen as a definite pre-requisite for good team work (P1, P2, P5, P6, P7, P8). The open and positive communication was seen as a big enabler for the information flow and developing a common understanding for good work (P5, P6, P7). A pro-active communication supported by the regular feedback is seen as a constituent for the good work (P7).

Positive communications happen in the case organization when issues are just seen as project issues without any personal blames. This was seen also as promoting the good relationships within team (P7). However the other feedback mentioned the scope for improvement related to communication within the case organization. The lack of communication leading to lack of clarity about the overall objectives is seen as a challenge in the case company (P1, P2). The lack of communication within the team and especially from the line manager has created a feeling of dissociation from the organization (P5). Pro-active communication is missing from the team members, as they keep on waiting for the work to assigned and followed up instead of asking of work and updating the work status by themselves (P6). People also find it difficult to get the required information about the company or a project (P5). The cross cultural communication is not always working and leads to a loss of trust and confidence between the teams (P2, P4). A more personal touch was required while communicating about the organizational changes. This kind of information needs to be shared in group meetings and not in video sessions (P6).

### *5. Rewards and recognition*

The interviewees mentioned that the work must be rewarding to be called a good work. The following items were mentioned as they way people like to be rewarded for the excellent performance.

- Financial rewards (P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, P8). These rewards included the better salary and bonuses. The company shares were also suggested as a way of rewarding the people and recognizing their contribution to the organizational success.
- Appreciation is the common polite thing that people expect for a work well done (P2, P7, P8). A timely appreciation is seen as a big motivator. A regular constructive feedback and encouraging words are also seen as a reward. It is better to know exactly what we did was appreciated. A mere thank you without elaboration does not help (P7).
- Career growth (P1, P2, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8). This includes the options for working on-site for wider experiences, promotions or better role, more challenging work assignments
- Other answers include participation to events, conferences and opportunities for affiliation (P5) and indirect financial rewards like company paid outings (P2)

Four out of eight interviewees mentioned that they did not see any way to affect their compensation as there are just collective incentives, but nothing related to the individual performance. No bonuses have been paid to employees in last couple of years as they are tied to EBIT (Earnings Before Income Tax) and not individual performance (P2, P3, P5, P7).

### *6. Leadership*

The leadership aspect in the organization explored both the relationships and practices of the immediate supervisors and also that of the top management. The support from the supervisor was seen important for the possibility of good work (P1, P8). Interviewees saw following qualities as important to be a good supervisor:

- Clarity of objectives and focus (P1, P3, P7). The supervisor, should not just always be busy with the operational details, but should have a vision for the future as well.
- Transparency, integrity and authenticity (P1, P3, P6). This included the genuine concern for the team mates' issues, honesty and truthfulness of the supervisor.
- Ability to coach and be a mentor (P1, P2). This includes also the encouragement and inspiration to lead team members to realize their potential for their career growth.
- Trust in team (P1, P2, P5, P6, P7) to provide autonomy
- Excellent communication skills (P1, P2, P7). This also included the good listening ability and the encouragement of two way communication. Providing active feedback was also seen as important feature of communication.
- Approachable (P8)
- Expert skills (P6, P8). Knows the information that is contained in data. Able to interpret the data from presentations and spreadsheets.
- Courageous (P4, P6, P8). This included making own independent decision and standing by them.

The interviewees agreed that in the case company, the immediate supervisors are facilitator for:

- Learning opportunities (P1, P2, P5). This also includes the encouragement to view the bigger picture and understanding of business scenario.
- Resource availability for project (P6)
- Empowerment of subordinates (P2, P6)
- Creating positive climate (P6, P7) by seeing the failures as opportunities to learn instead of blaming persons.

A lack of visibility of the management was seen as the cause for concern (P3, P5, P6) in projects as well as at the organizational level.

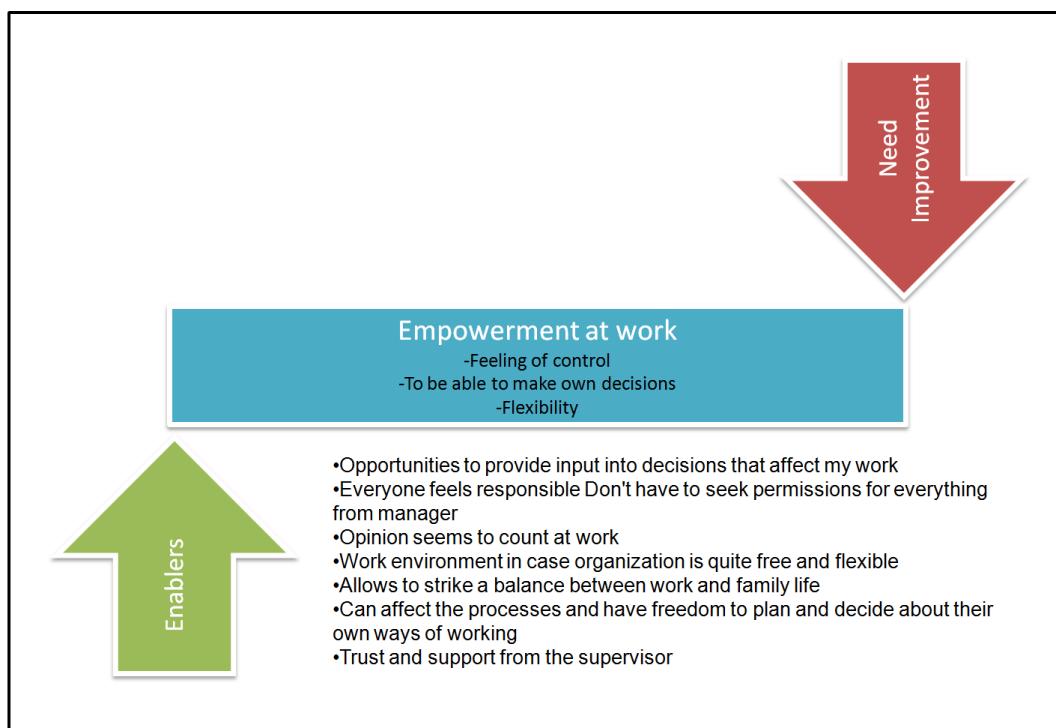
#### 4.3 Analysis of Results

This section combines the results from the questionnaire and the interviews and analyzes them backed up by the literature and the organizational context of the case organization to reflect on the findings from the collected data. The findings are listed

under the six factors of empowerment, meaningfulness, relatedness, communication, rewards and recognition and leadership, according to the framework developed in Section 2.

### *1. Employee Empowerment*

The first factor, employee empowerment implies that professionals have significant control over the choice in how to behave in most circumstances. Employees want to have a say in the decisions affecting their work. The workplaces where leaders create a trustful and challenging environment encouraging employees to move away from the prevailing orthodoxy and to innovate lead to high level of engagement and moves the organization forward. Figure 16 shows the enablers of employee empowerment in the case organization



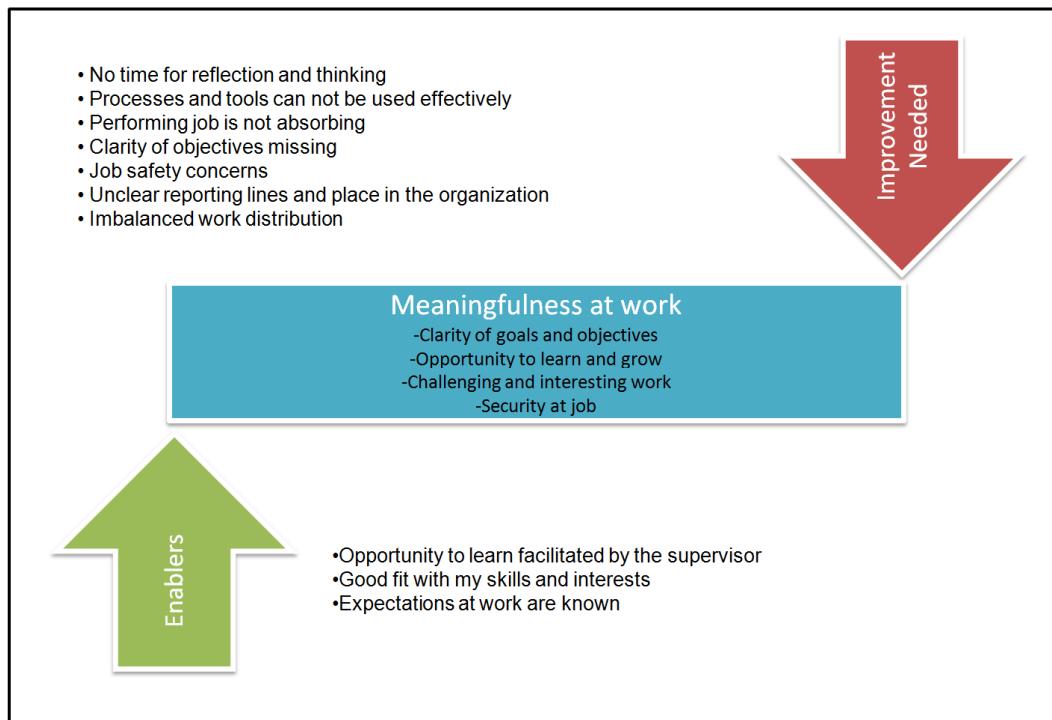
*Figure 16. Employee empowerment in the case organization.*

As illustrated in Figure 16, the empowerment at workplace is manifested by the feeling of control and flexibility. The results from the questionnaire and interview showing that the autonomy is prevalent in the case organization. The trust exists between the subordinates and immediate supervisors. This evokes positive actions and feelings in em-

ployees and ultimately leads to the feeling of personal well-being and better interpersonal relationships (Gardner 2010: 104). Trust lowers transaction costs by not requiring the close monitoring of others behavior and promotes cooperation, reciprocity, knowledge sharing and better communication between employees and their immediate superiors. People have a flexibility to make the decisions related to their day to day working, their decisions are supported by their supervisors and this enhances the meaningfulness of the work to the employees. The support and the trust from the leadership also lead to psychological safety (May et al. 2004: 16). The empowerment is also facilitates by the flexibility offer at the work place in the case organization, as this leads the employees to be able to maintain a balance between the work and the family life. Flexibility also reflects on employee's perceptions about whether rules and procedures are really needed or are merely red tape.

## *2. Meaningfulness of work*

The second factor impacting the good work in the case organization relates to the meaningfulness of work. Meaningfulness of job and employee empowerment is closely related with one reinforcing the other. The literature review shows that the meaningfulness of work can be substantiated by many factors including the co-worker relations, trust, opportunities to learn and grow, clarity of goals and feedback. The analysis of results from the questionnaires and interviews indicate that the meaningfulness of work is disturbed by a number of factors and there is a good scope of improvement at various levels in the case organization. The meaningfulness of work, how employees see it, the enablers of motivation at work and the scope of improvement for the meaningfulness is illustrated in Figure 17.



*Figure 17. Meaningfulness at work in the case organization.*

As illustrated in Figure 17 employees feel that clarity of goals, opportunities to develop, job security and challenging work add to the meaningfulness of the job. The intrinsic motivation is increased with the clarity of goal and the continuous feedback that an individual receives, as it helps in measuring the progress of the individual towards the goal (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). As shown in Figure 17, in the case organization, many times the objectives are blurred at individual as well as organizational levels. The possible reasons can be manifold. Quite frequently the individuals are assigned to the projects where the scope and schedules are not clear and changes frequently due to improper change management methodology adopted for the project. The lack of communication in the project aggravates this further. In many instances people are allocated to multiple projects to retain the full billing. Those cases eventually lead to multi-tasking and when the task priorities are not clear the meaningfulness of work is lost. Each of the organizational change leads to new structure and new reporting relationships. When the reporting lines are unclear, people fail to understand their position in the new structure. It requires quite much time and communication to understand what the changes mean in practice to those continuing with the organization.

The results show that the respondents find that the case company generally has good processes and tools, but quite many people disagree that they can use them effectively. This might be related to the usability issues for some tools, where the user interface is not intuitive enough. But on the other hand, it might also be related to the lack of proper trainings for these tools.

The constant hurry in delivering the projects does not seem to give any time to the team mates to learn and improvise. As soon as one task finishes, the other one starts without giving any time for reflection or collecting the lessons learnt. On an organizational level this creates a lack of learning, and more efforts are wasted in other projects repeating the same mistakes as the project teams cannot learn from the previous projects.

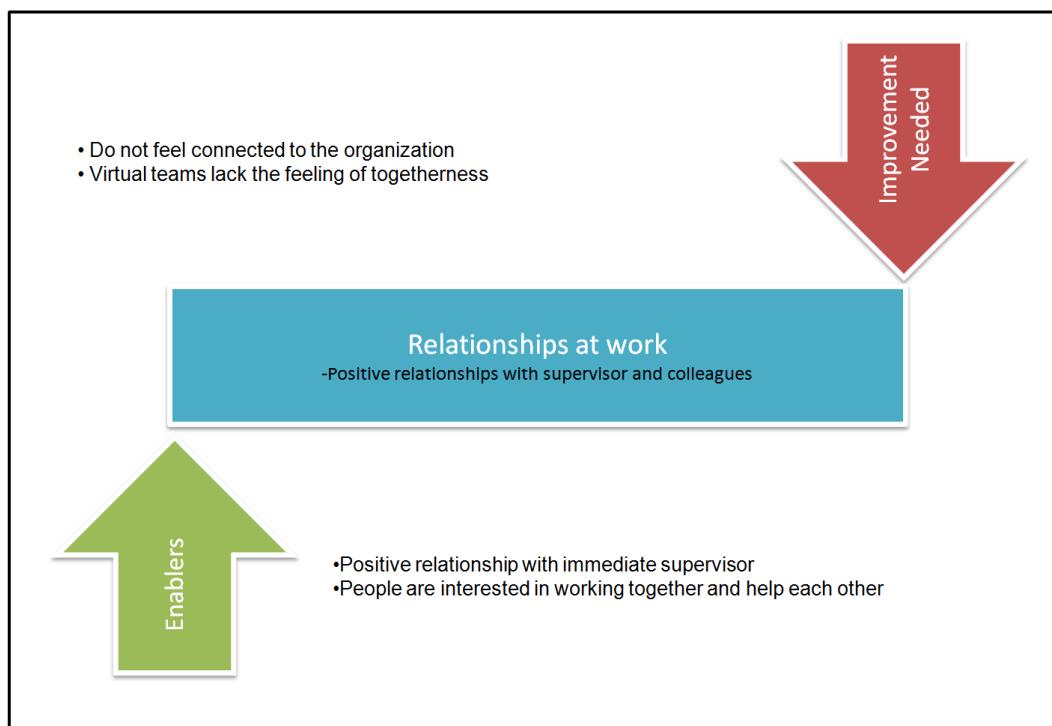
There is also a lack of intrinsic motivation to do the job in the case company. People are more governed by extrinsic benefits as they do not really seem to identify positively with the identity this job gives them. Neither do they find their work absorbing. This might be due to a mismatch of skills and challenges; but the other reasons might be that the personal values do not align with the vision that the case company portrays, or the core values of the case company are not appealing enough to the employees. The Indian participants, for example, found the work lacking challenges. The questionnaire results show that the Indian work force in the case company is quite young compared to Finnish participants. With many multinational companies moving work to India for cost optimization, the opportunities for the job are ample in the Indian market. The Indian employees, however, want to do their work with latest technology in order to build their high market value. These findings are related to the outcome controls factor of the Good Work model as described in Section 2.

As the studies suggest, when people do not fear about the negative results for their self-image, status or career, they show and employ themselves fully and feel psychologically safe (Kahn 1990: 708). Thus, during the troubled economical times, job security is the critical factor, as the companies are trying to do more with less number of people. In the case company, employees in Finland are constantly worried about the organizational restructurings and the job cuts it brings. It also contributes to the loss of meaningfulness as described before; but on the other side, the opportunities to

learn and grow increase in the company undergoing the change, as the new ways of working are designed and the new roles are created.

### *3. Relatedness to the organization*

The third factor affecting the good work in the case organization is the relationships at work mostly contributing to the meaningfulness of work. When the employees are treated with respect and their work is valued, their interactions with the others within the organization, and the social identities that they receive from being a member of the group, bring a sense of belongingness and the sense of social identity within the organization (May et al 2004: 15). As shown in Figure 18, in case organization, the employees have a positive relationship with their superiors which also bring a feeling of psychological safety to them.



*Figure 18. Relatedness in the case organization.*

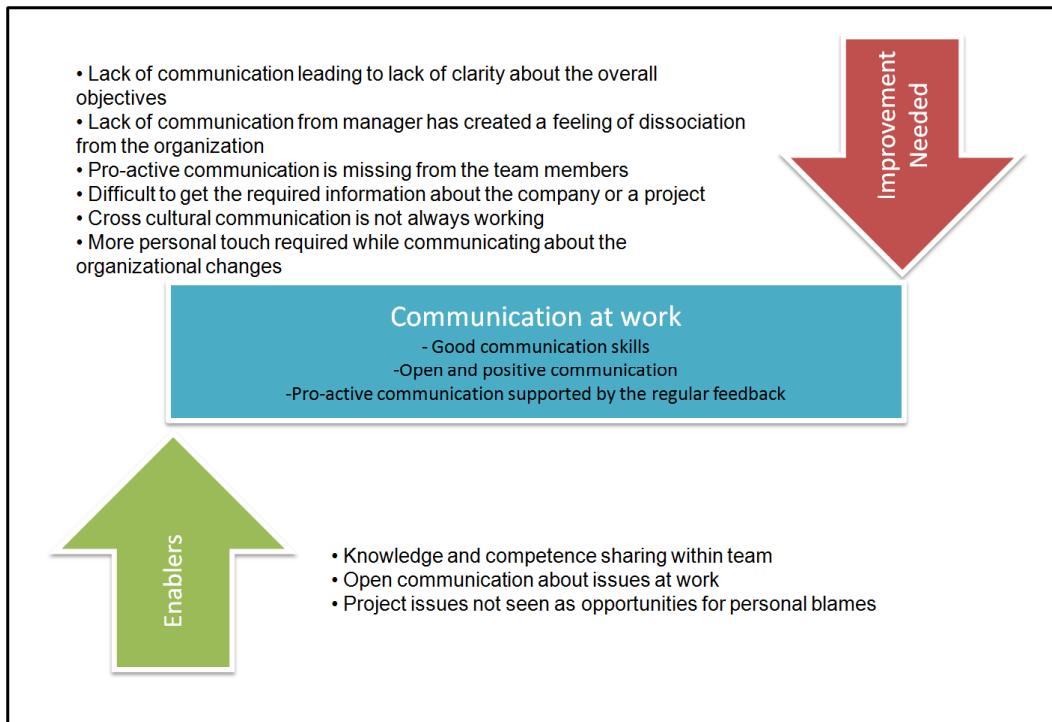
As shown in Figure 18, the relationships with the immediate supervisors and co-workers are found to be positive, and the employees are encouraged to help each other. The relationships within the project teams have been found to be good, giving

more sense of meaning for the employees towards their work when they are co-located. However, this is not mostly the case with the project teams working in virtual mode. The problem becomes even worse, when the virtual teams start up without a kick-off meeting. In those cases, the participants' introductions to the team are missing, and the teams do not have any agreed way of working.

The feeling of relatedness has a significant bearing on the physical work location of the employee. The employees in India were sitting at the case company premises, co-located with the other members of their unit. The employees in Finland however are distributed. Only some of them are sitting in case company premises with their teams. This is especially true for the assignments which are completely off-shored by the customers and driven by the case company. For the other employees working in resource hiring mode especially, the work location is away from their parent unit in the customer premises. This feeling of community is missing for those sitting away from their parent units as they are more closely connected with the customer teams for their day to day work, but not so closely with their own company. In those cases if the supervisors do not make an effort to reach out to the far located employees, this leads to a feeling of alienation in the employees against their parent organization.

#### *4. Communication*

The fourth factor impacting the good work in the case organization is the communication at the workplace. Communication has a dramatic effect on the conduct of any organization's business. The positive communication that expresses appreciation, support, approvals and appreciation leads to meaningfulness of work, and make the employees more engaged. The communication needs to be two way to be effective. The results from the questionnaire and interviews are illustrated in Figure 19.



*Figure 19. Communications in the case organization.*

Figure 19 shows that the internal communication is effective when the teams are co-located. When the teams are distributed globally in the case organization, the communication challenges creep in. This leads to a loss of shared understanding and trust and results in lack of efficiency of the team performance. The multi-cultural aspects have been found to be blocking the communications. One frequent example of the miscommunication is that Indian counterparts regularly fall short of their commitments made to the Finnish team. The Finnish team has no doubts about the technical expertise of the Indian counterparts. This kind of scenario is a typical example of the cultural differences existing between the Finnish and Indian cultures. The organizational hierarchies are very well established in Indian culture and a considerable power distance exists between the levels in the hierarchy. This power distance leads the employees at the lower level to accept the commands from the higher level without questioning. Whereas, in Finnish culture, an open debate on issues are almost always invited due to low power distance, which makes hierarchies flat within an organization. Due to this reason Indians find it very difficult to say "No", to the things which they cannot do. Sensitivity towards the cultural differences is, therefore, important for communication in an organization spread across the globe.

The employees in the case company also feel that the organizational communication could be better, especially when talking about the sensitive issues like organization restructuring. The communication about the strategy is at such a level that the employees do not really understand how their work impacts it, or what they can do better in order to facilitate the implementation of strategy. The various layers of management in between are expected to translate the strategy from the top management to the specific actionable items, when communicated to the employees, but most often it is the sheer repeat of the same slides that top management presented. This leads to the loss of clarity of objective and goals.

Less pro-activeness in communications from the team mates is also seen as a challenge for the teams. This leads to the situation that team mates keep on awaiting the work to be assigned to them, but do not report the status, issues faced or the progress on the tasks assigned. This leads to an erosion of trust between the team participants, and increases the monitoring efforts considerably.

##### *5. Rewards and Recognition*

The fifth factor affecting the good work is the rewards and recognition for the employees. Rewards are a reflection of whether people feel they are given regular, objective feedback and are valued accordingly. While compensation and formal recognition are important, the main component is constructive feedback that is immediate, specific and directly linked to performance. The results for rewards and recognitions at case company are illustrated in Figure 20.

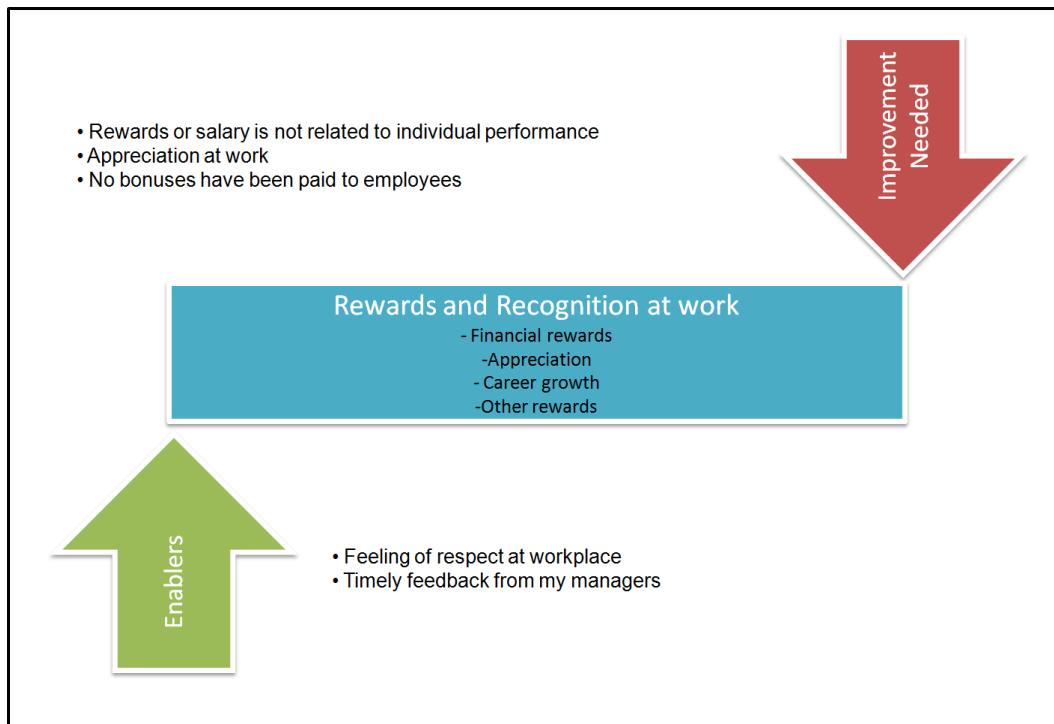


Figure 20. Rewards and recognitions in the case company.

Figure 20 shows that the employees get a feeling of respect at work and also receive timely feedback from their managers about their work. These are enablers of good work at the case organization.

Employees, however, see the financial rewards as the important way of valuing their contributions to the organization. In the case organization, the bonuses are linked to the earnings before income tax (EBIT) margin. This had led to the situation that employees in Finland have not been given any bonuses in last couple of years. The performance appraisal however is based on the individual's achievement of goal. But there is no increase in salary even though an individual may surpass the expectations. This leads to a situation where employees do not feel any control over affecting their compensations. The indirect financial rewards are also missing from the general practices of the organization.

The appreciation for a good work is also not frequent in the case organization. Most of the employees have reported to get a "Thank You" after a good job, but they want to know what was appreciated, so that they can repeat the same. Also it makes the appreciation more genuine and trustworthy.

## 6. Leadership

The sixth factor affecting the good work is the leadership style and the management practices that have profound influence on the level of engagement for employees. Followers respect the authenticity and transparency of their leaders and are more reciprocating towards the organization. The results from the questionnaire and interview about the leadership at the case organization are shown in Figure 21.

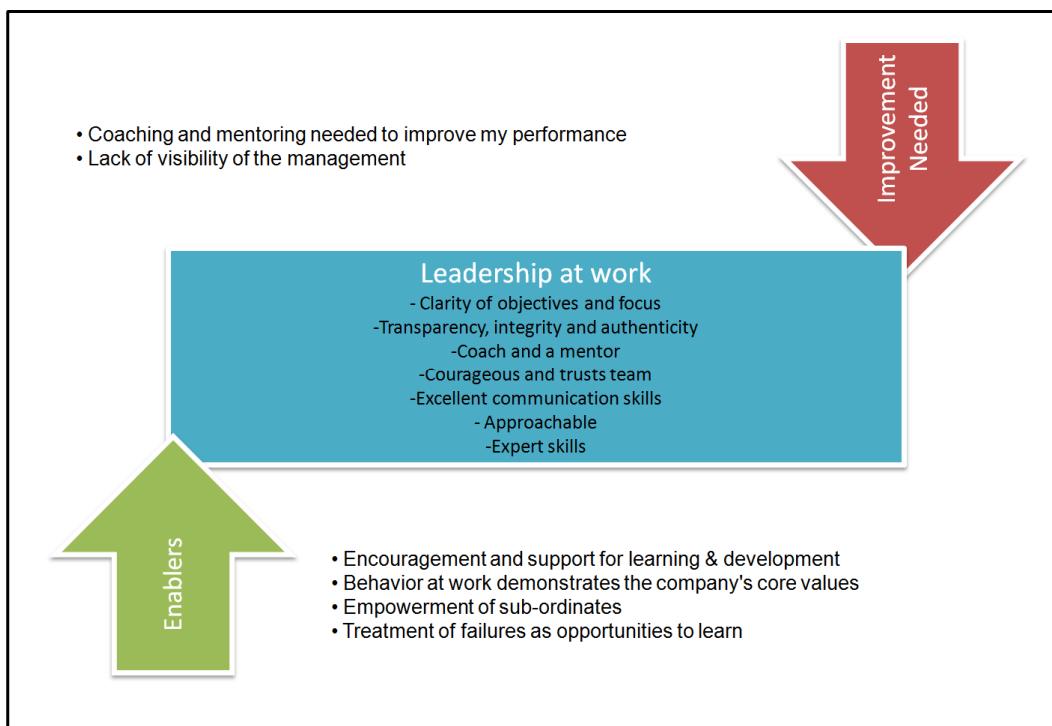


Figure 21. Leadership in the case company.

As illustrated in Figure 21, the employees in the case company are quite happy about the relationship with the immediate supervisors, and the support that they at the workplace from them as it lead to a feeling of control for the employees. The supervisors also promote positive deviance to some extent by seeing the failures as opportunities to learn instead of finger pointing. These are enablers for good leadership in the case organization.

There are concerns related to guidance from the immediate supervisors in terms of coaching and mentoring, when the employees take up new challenges. This increases

the learning curve for the employees, and they are not able to benefit from the experience of others. For people sitting on customer premises, lack of contact between the unit manager and employees is seen as a concern. This leads to a lack of identification with the parent organization, as the interpersonal relationships between the employee and the immediate line manager suffers.

However when it comes to perception of the organization, employees are uncertain if they can expect help in time of crisis from the case company. This reflects a loss of perceived organizational support and affects reciprocity and loyalty towards the organization.

The lack of visibility of management has also been reported as an issue. This leads to communications being misunderstood and the leadership as inauthentic. Under-communication has also been cited as one of the eight factors for the failure in implementing the change in organization (Kotter 2007: 100).

Summing up, the results from the questionnaires and the interviews are grouped under the six factors of employee empowerment, meaningfulness of work, relatedness at workplace, communications at work, rewards and recognition and the leadership practices at workplace, according to the developed framework. The findings are analyzed in next section for the practical implications and then preparing the recommendations for the employees as well as the supervisors in the case company.

## 5 Discussion and Conclusions

This section discusses the implications of the key findings from the results. As the results suggest, many good practices already exist in the case organization, especially leading to the feeling of empowerment for the employees. At the same time, there are also many that have some room for improvements for creating better conditions to increase the likelihood of good work. These implications and the recommendations are described further in this section.

### 5.1 Practical Implications

The key findings from the questionnaire and interviews relate to the six main areas that are analyzed for the practical implications.

First, unclear goals and objectives are analyzed. Employees many times change the projects during the year, whereas the goals are set at the beginning of the year, for the complete year. The change of projects after the goals have been set may result in the situation that some goals are not relevant any more, or the employee does not have a control to affect the outcome for the goal anymore. This leads to a loss of feeling of empowerment as well as a loss of focus for the employee, thereby reducing the meaningfulness of work to employee.

The second area of concern is the lost learning that affects the meaningfulness of job to employees. When there is a constant pressure to deliver, people do not find the time to think about their current ways of working. Even though project process mandates the preparations of lessons learnt at the end of each project and sharing it with others, in practice, it is considered of less value due to other urgent and important matters. Organizational learning suffers due to lost lesson learnt and people make same mistakes over and over again. This affects the excellence at work, which is one of the elements for the good work.

The third concern is lack of feeling of belongingness with the organization. It means that people sitting at customer premises do not relate themselves with the company anymore. The only thing that they need parent company is for salary payments. The

implications are that these employees cannot be expected to be the company's brand ambassadors to the customer in lack of this identification with the parent organization. Also they feel less proud of working with the case organization.

Fourth concern is about the communication issues at work. Cross-cultural communication issues exist in company leading to things being misunderstood and loss of trust. People find it difficult to contribute. This may lead to unequal distribution of work between Finnish and Indian teams due to lack of trust in virtual teams.

Less pro-activeness from subordinates is seen as a challenge. This leads to increased transactional costs in terms of constant monitoring and subsequent complaints from the subordinates about the lack of communication.

Fifth area of concern is the lack of appreciation at work place. The lack of recognition has been reported as a big issue almost unanimously. It comes both from the lack tangible benefits and also the non tangible benefits. In Finland the salary rise is mostly collective and is not linked to performance. So people do not feel motivated to take out additional risks or go extra mile, as they know that it will not bring them any benefit.

Sixth concern is about missing connections between organizational strategy and personal goals. The middle management layers in the organization have important task of breaking down the strategy components into actionable items, and ensure that people understand the importance of each item and its connection back to the organizational strategy. Top management's communication is in terms that the employees do not necessarily understand. This leads to a loss of meaning for employees when they do not know how their work affects company's business.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the results from the questionnaires and the interviews discussed in subsection 5.1, this section presents a set of suggestions to make the possibility of good work more feasible in the case organization by following these recommendations. The recommendations are based on the feedback collected during the interviews and the literature reviewed. In the theoretical framework of this Thesis, the emphasis was placed both on the individual factors as well as the organizational factors that can affect the engagement and hence the good work. Accordingly, the recommendations

presented below are directed to both the employees as subordinates as well as the managers as supervisors. The recommendations for the subordinates are equally valid for the supervisors as well, as they are always in the dual role of subordinates and supervisors.

### 5.2.1 Recommendations For Subordinates

Recommendation-1. Know the bigger picture. To create a more meaningful relation with the work, and more importantly, the organization, it is helpful for the employees to get to know the bigger picture and see how their day-to-day work contributes to the existing business. The case company organizes open house sessions with the key customers, and the employee participation to those will help them appreciate the business scenario and how the case company's efforts have enabled the transformation of the business for our customers. It is also good to learn about the corporate social responsibility initiatives that the company is pursuing.

Recommendation-2. Communicate. Communication is an indispensable tool for building the trust and relationships, as well as the expectation management. In the current situation, where the teams are not co-located due to the cost constraints or expertise constraints, the constant communication assumes even more importance as the cultures differ. Therefore, to enhance communication, the employees can be recommended to : a) agree common communication channels and practices within the project team, b) utilize training opportunities to get culturally aware about the issues at workplace and how to negotiate them in day to day work

Recommendation-3. Promote positive deviance. Each of the employees can affect the way others feel in the team. Be the first one to make a difference by increasing the amount of appreciation of the colleagues' work. This also makes them feel valued and leads to positive relationships at work ultimately leading to positive climate.

Recommendation-4. Create meaningful goals and measure progress daily. While the long term goals are important, it is equally important to set up own daily

goals and measure constantly the progress towards their attainment. It is important to know the constant incremental progress and minor achievements at the workday for producing positive emotions instead of waiting for major breakthroughs, which are rare.

### 5.2.2 Recommendations For Supervisors

The persons in a supervisory role have additional responsibility towards their subordinates for their management and well-being within the organization. The following are the recommendations for the employees who also have a supervisory role in the organization.

Recommendation-1. Clear goals and feedback. The goals need to be clear to be appreciated by the employees. They need to be revisited after every project change to ensure that employees still have control to affect the goal achievements. At the same time the development plans also need to be realigned. This is critical, that employees get a feeling that it is not just for fulfillment of a process, but is also beneficial to them. This sends an important message that the supervisor is sincerely following up the individual's business goals and also considers their personal development.

At the same time, the goal achievements should be facilitated by providing the right competencies and guidance to the employee by the way of mentoring and coaching. Again this creates supportive environment for employee and shows that supervisor is genuinely interested in employee's learning and growth.

Recommendation-2. Facilitate learning. Project managers must ensure that the good practices and the scope of improvement are recorded at the end of each project. Employees should be given some time to see their ways of working in retrospective in order to improve them. This will drive the excellence within the organization.

Recommendation-3. Facilitate communication. The communication needs to be facilitated on two fronts: a) organization level and b) project level. As for the organizational communication, supervisors must repeat the important messages

over and over again in order to communicate the right meaning to the employees. Different channels and different ways of putting the messages across should be utilized. All the communication must be coherent to sound authentic, honest and emotionally appealing to the employees. There should be clear job responsibilities and balanced distribution of work. This is even more important when the reorganizations take place. The people are lost, but the duties still need to be done. Care should be taken to ensure proper redesigning of jobs, communication of responsibilities and balanced distribution of work.

In order to improve the project communication, managers need to lead the project startups with the kick off meetings, to set the ground rules and so that participants can have shared understanding about the goals and schedules. Proper introductions of team members and their roles are also very important which can be done in these meetings. These suggestions are still more critical for the success of virtual teams. Therefore, the leaders need to ensure that the minutes of meetings are always captured and shared with the team to have the shared understanding for the decisions and action points. In order to promote the team connections, the managers must provide employees with opportunities to interact, both formally as well as informally.

Recommendation-4. Appreciation for performance. The outstanding performance must always be encouraged by the supervisor to show that it is valued within the organization. At unit level this may be done with a small gift voucher and appreciation at the unit meetings.

The findings, their implications and recommendations have been grouped under the six headings of empowerment, meaningfulness, relatedness, communication, rewards and leadership in the Figure 22 below.

Group	Key Finding	Implication	Recommendation for Employees	Recommendation for Supervisors
Empowerment	Empowerment is at good level in case organization	People feel in control of their work	None	None
Meaningfulness	-Lack of Clarity of Goals	- Loss of focus for employees	Create daily goals and measure progress	-Revisit goals at the end of each assignment and not only at the beginning of year.
	-Lack of learning due to constant hurry	-Lack of improvisations in way of working -Adversely affects excellence	None	- Retrospective at end of each project
Relatedness	Lost feeling of relatedness with parent organization	-People neither feel proud of working for the company nor feel a part of company	- Know the bigger picture - Utilize opportunities to connect with parent company	- Create more formal or informal opportunities for interaction
Communication	-Cross cultural communication gaps	-Lack of trust and commitment	- Attend cross-cultural trainings, become culturally aware	- Always start with kick off meetings. Way of working need to be agreed in the teams
	- Less pro-activeness of team mates	- Increased transaction costs for monitoring		
Recognition	Lack of appreciation	- Feeling that the work is not valued	- Promote positive deviance by sincere appreciations	- Small financial rewards with appreciation
Leadership	-Disconnect between Organizational strategy and personal goals	-Employees do not see how their work affects organizational success	None	-Personal goal to organizational strategy mapping - Clear job responsibilities - Clear place in organization
	-Organizational restructuring creates ambiguity	- Lower efficiency and unclear priorities		

*Figure 22. Implications and recommendations.*

The Figure 22 summarizes the sections of implications and recommendations. It shows the key groups for the good work as per the literature review and their mappings to each of the key findings, its implication and the recommendation both on the employee level as well as the supervisor level as described in this and the previous section. Ultimately these findings affect the engagement and excellence that are the key elements for the good work.

### 5.3 Validity and Reliability in This Study

The validity of this research, as defined in Section 3.3, has been improved by the detailed descriptions of the data collection and analysis methods gathered from the questionnaires and the interviews. During the interview, the field notes were taken, which were reviewed by the interviewee afterwards, to ensure the correctness of the recorded data. The interview scenarios were pretested with two of the friends working in the same field, but not in the case organization, to ensure that the introduction about the good work from the interviewer was described enough to convey the concept. The questions were made unambiguous and they were easy to understand and related to the day-to-day work of the interviewees.

To increase reliability of this study, different data collection methods and tools were employed. First, the questionnaire was developed, where the respondents could select only the options provided to them. In order to understand the important attributes of good work in-depth, the interviews were subsequently conducted. It should be noted that, the persons interviewed were also included to the respondents list for the questionnaire. The researcher formed a reference group of three persons, and the recommendations were reviewed and validated by this group. The reference group included: a) the researcher's project manager from the researcher's current project, b) the line manager of the unit to which the researchers belongs, and c) a colleague from the same unit. These people did not take part in responding the questionnaire or the interviews.

There are, however, some the limitations posed to this study. Firstly, in the spirit of emphasizing the positive factors leading to good work, the burnout phenomenon, for example, was left out of the scope of this study. Second, the questionnaire was responded by only a small number of employees, and the respondents form a very small sample of the total case company population. Third, all of the interview respondents were known to the researcher. On the positive side, this helped in getting a candid opinion about their feelings as for the organizational practices; but on the other hand it could have affected the objectivity of the responses and led to avoiding the discussion on unpleasant issues at work.

## 6 Executive Summary

The topic and objective of this qualitative study was to find the extent to which the conditions of good work are met in the case organization, which is in IT consultancy business. The good work itself is defined as the work that is excellent in quality, engaging to the employees and leads to a wider benefits for both, the workforce and the company. The case company is the organization with a global presence and main markets in Scandinavia, but its services are also delivered using global delivery centers in Europe and India. The problem of low employee engagement for the case organization has become visible from the employee satisfaction survey and was confirmed from the bottom line for the organization.

The theoretical framework of this study was based on good work concept which is supported by the concepts of motivation derived from the self-determination theory and the experience of flow as the concepts affecting the individual aspect for the good work through engagement. The other supporting concepts were those of positive organization scholarship and the transformational leadership, meant to show how to positively affect the level of engagement in the organizations. There is certain overlap of the applications derived from these supportive theories; nevertheless, six main groups of attributes affecting the good work were distinguished, which formed the framework for further analysis. These groups include: empowerment of employees, meaningfulness of work, feeling of relatedness for the employees, communication, rewards and recognition and the leadership.

The literature analysis was followed by the data collection. The reviewed literature formed the basis of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was responded by 64 employees. To have more in-depth understanding of the issues involved, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight participants. The results of both the questionnaires and interviews were reported and analyzed qualitatively in relationship to the theoretical framework to answer the research question about the extent to which the good work conditions are met in the case company.

Additionally, the practical implications of the findings have been evaluated and suggestions provided as for how the employees can enhance the conditions of good work by making the work more meaningful to them. It was concluded that good work is more likely to occur when the concepts are learned and internalized by the individual worker. A set of suggestions is provided for the supervisors and subordinates alike as for how to create conditions in the organization that would facilitate the good work. A reference group was formed by the researcher that included the researcher's supervisors from the project and line side, and the suggested recommendations were validated by this reference group.

In terms of the outcome, this study is relevant to the organizations where market conditions are changing rapidly due to uncertain economic outlook, which puts a lot of pressure on the employees and their leaders to live up to the standards of good work. There is no silver bullet to ensure that employees are engaged in their work in view of the challenging environments, but the achievement of good work requires a constant endeavor from the individuals to become self aware, uncover their core values, passions and beliefs, and eventually find a way to balance their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. The organization, in its turn, is responsible for facilitation of the positive and ethical socio-cultural environment, thus reinforcing the alignment of the factors to do the good work.

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### Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Data Collection

The participants were asked to rate the following 30 questions on a Likert scale of 1-5 ranging from “Strongly Disagree” through “Neither agree nor disagree” to “Strongly Agree”.

No.	Question
1.	I'm satisfied with my overall situation in the company
2.	My job is a good fit with my skills and interests
3.	My manager encourages and supports my learning & development
4.	I get time for reflection and thinking in order to improve my working methods
5.	I can use the processes and tools effectively at my work
6.	I know what is expected of me at work
7.	I have a positive working relationship with the person I report to
8.	We share our knowledge and competences within our team
9.	I have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect my work
10.	I get a feeling of respect and recognition at my workplace
11.	I get a sense of belongingness at my workplace
12.	My work provides me enough flexibility to maintain a healthy family -worklife balance
13.	My company has a fair system of rewards linked to employee performance
14.	My manager's behavior at work demonstrates the company's core values
15.	I get the coaching and mentoring needed to improve my performance
16.	I feel proud to be working in this organization and would recommend my workplace to others
17.	Failure is accepted as a part of learning process within my team
18.	We communicate openly about issues at work
19.	I have access to all the information required to do my job effectively
20.	I receive timely feedback from my managers about my work
21.	I can expect help from my company in the time of personal crisis
22.	In my team, members are encouraged to help one another
23.	Performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else

24.	I like the identity my job gives me
25.	In my team everyone takes responsibility for problems that arise in their work
26.	I have to seek permissions for everything from my manager
27.	My opinion seems to count at work
28.	We regularly encounter conflicting situations working in multi-cultural teams
29.	Appreciation at work far outweighs the negative feedback
30.	There is a continuous communication on progress and developments within organization

As a separate question in the same questionnaire, the participants were asked to choose three most important factors that they perceived were necessary for good work from the following list of options:

1. Should provide an opportunity to learn and grow
2. Should be engaging to employees
3. Should be profitable for the organization
4. Should be beneficial to the society
5. Should provide job satisfaction
6. Should boost employees' self esteem and prestige
7. Should result in positive working climate at work
8. Should have fair rewarding and recognition system
9. Should have well defined contracts and practices
10. Should be aligned to employees long term career plans

In addition, the participants were asked to fill in these personal details as well.

1. Gender
2. Nationality
3. Total work experience
4. Role in the company
5. Work experience in this company

## Appendix 2: Interview Questions

The following questions were asked in a semi-structured interview from the participants.

Q1: What are the characteristics of good work? What should be the values supported by good work and objectives achieved by it? What criteria should a job meet before it could be called a good piece of work?

Q2: What are the enablers of good work? What are the current practices in your organization that help you to deliver an excellent quality work?

Q3: What are the biggest hindrances to good work? Practices that you wish existed, but are missing from current job/work culture.

Q4: What are the qualities/skills that team members should possess to do good work?

Q5: What motivates you best at work? What are the biggest motivators to you at work? What makes you tick at work?

Q6: How would you like to be rewarded for an excellent performance? What would be the best and the most motivating reward to you?

Q7: What are the characteristics of a good supervisor? What kind of a boss would you prefer?

## Appendix 3: Responses to the Questionnaire

S.No.	Category	<b>Scenarios described</b>	Overall					<b>Finland</b>	<b>India</b>	
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree			
1	None	I'm satisfied with my overall situation in the company	6	21	10	<b>24</b>	3	2	13	3
2	Meaningfulness	My job is a good fit with my skills and interests	2	19	6	<b>34</b>	3	0	10	4
3	Leadership	My manager encourages and supports my learning & development	2	10	10	<b>30</b>	12	0	3	5
4	Meaningfulness	I get time for reflection and thinking in order to improve my working methods	2	20	17	<b>22</b>	3	2	<b>15</b>	9
5	Meaningfulness	I can use the processes and tools effectively at my work	3	22	14	<b>23</b>	2	3	11	9
6	Meaningfulness	I know what is expected of me at work	0	9	11	<b>37</b>	7	0	4	5
7	Relationship	I have a positive working relationship with the person I report to	0	4	9	<b>30</b>	21	0	1	6
8	Communication	We share our knowledge and competences within our team	0	11	12	<b>33</b>	8	0	9	5
9	Empowerment	I have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect my work	3	9	14	<b>35</b>	2	2	6	6

10	Recognition	I get a feeling of respect and recognition at my workplace	5	10	14	<b>31</b>	4
11	Relationship	I get a sense of belongingness at my workplace	6	14	15	<b>27</b>	2
12	Empowerment	My work provides me enough flexibility to maintain a healthy family –work life balance	1	6	9	<b>35</b>	13
13	Recognition	My company has a fair system of rewards linked to employee performance	<b>23</b>	19	14	8	0
14	Leadership	My manager's behavior at work demonstrates the company's core values	2	11	17	<b>25</b>	8
15	Leadership	I get the coaching and mentoring needed to improve my performance	5	15	16	<b>25</b>	2
16	Relationship	I feel proud to be working in this organization and would recommend my workplace to others	10	15	13	<b>22</b>	3
17	Leadership	Failure is accepted as a part of learning process within my team	1	6	21	<b>33</b>	3
18	Communication	We communicate openly about issues at work	1	9	16	<b>31</b>	6
19	Communication	I have access to all the information required to do my job effectively	0	17	11	<b>31</b>	4
20	Recognition	I receive timely feedback from my managers about my work	2	18	14	<b>26</b>	4
21	Leadership	I can expect help from my company in the time of personal crisis	3	12	<b>28</b>	18	3
22	Relationship	In my team, members are encouraged to help one another	2	3	14	<b>38</b>	7
23	Meaningfulness	Performing my job is so absorbing that I forget about everything else	6	<b>21</b>	19	16	1
24	Meaningfulness	I like the identity my job gives me	7	8	22	22	4

3	7	6	<b>18</b>	3
4	12	8	12	1
1	4	8	<b>17</b>	7
<b>17</b>	10	8	2	0
0	5	10	<b>18</b>	3
4	10	9	<b>13</b>	1
8	11	6	11	1
0	4	12	<b>19</b>	2
0	6	9	<b>17</b>	4
0	<b>15</b>	7	12	2
1	9	7	<b>17</b>	3
3	10	<b>16</b>	7	1
1	3	5	<b>22</b>	6
4	<b>15</b>	10	8	0
4	6	12	<b>14</b>	1

2	3	8	<b>13</b>	1
2	2	7	<b>15</b>	1
0	2	1	<b>18</b>	6
6	<b>9</b>	6	6	0
2	6	7	7	5
1	5	7	<b>12</b>	1
2	4	7	<b>11</b>	2
1	2	9	<b>14</b>	1
1	3	7	<b>14</b>	2
0	2	4	<b>19</b>	2
1	9	7	9	1
0	2	<b>12</b>	11	2
1	0	9	<b>16</b>	1
2	6	<b>9</b>	8	1
3	2	<b>10</b>	8	3

25	Empowerment	In my team everyone takes responsibility for problems that arise in their work	2	13	15	<b>27</b>	6	1	9	5	<b>16</b>	6	1	4	10	<b>11</b>	0
26	Empowerment	I have to seek permissions for everything from my manager	12	<b>21</b>	16	11	2	10	<b>12</b>	8	5	2	2	<b>9</b>	8	6	0
27	Empowerment	My opinion seems to count at work	3	12	14	<b>31</b>	2	3	8	6	<b>17</b>	2	0	4	8	<b>14</b>	0
28	Communication	We regularly encounter conflicting situations working in multi-cultural teams	6	20	<b>22</b>	14	1	4	13	<b>15</b>	5	0	2	7	7	<b>9</b>	1
29	Recognition	Appreciation at work far outweighs the negative feedback	7	6	<b>31</b>	15	1	5	2	<b>20</b>	7	1	2	4	<b>11</b>	8	0
30	Communication	There is a continuous communication on progress and developments within organization	4	8	<b>26</b>	24	1	1	6	14	<b>15</b>	1	3	2	<b>12</b>	9	0