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JOB SATISFACTION: FOUR CASE COMPANIES OPERATING IN  
FORESTRY

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<b>Title</b> Job satisfaction: four case companies operating in forestry  <b>Commissioned by</b> four anonymous companies	
<b>Abstract</b>  <p>This thesis studies the job satisfaction of production employees in four forestry companies, whose names shall remain confidential. Three of the case companies are Finnish and one is Russian. The satisfaction of the target group was researched quantitatively with the help of an opinion survey. The primary objective of the research was to examine the overall satisfaction of the production employees. For all four case companies, this was the first time employee satisfaction had ever been examined.</p> <p>The primary research process and its results and findings are discussed in the second part of this paper. The first part discusses the theory of job satisfaction and well-being, and the work-related values of Finns and Russians. The work cultures of both countries are also shortly introduced.</p> <p>The primary research was able to gather information about the overall situation of employee satisfaction in the four case companies. The response rates were very high, increasing the reliability of the study. It was, however, found that further research needs to be conducted in order to better understand the reasons causing satisfaction or dissatisfaction in each of the companies. This further investigation will also help find out what concrete measures can be taken to improve the satisfaction of the employees.</p>	
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis studies the job satisfaction of four small or medium-sized companies operating in forestry. Three of the case companies are Finnish and one is Russian, and in all four companies, employee satisfaction has never before been examined. By conducting a quantitative research, I wanted to offer the companies' managerial department information about the current level of satisfaction among the employees who work in the production lines of the organizations. The objective was to improve the job satisfaction of these employees by getting their collective opinion on what they find positive and what negative about their work and the workplace. With the newfound information, managers would be able to make the necessary changes to improve the satisfaction, well-being and motivation of the employees, find explanations to existing problems, and overall benefit the whole organization.

This paper has been divided into two main sections. The first section focuses on the theory of job satisfaction and well-being and the second on the primary research. The first part will provide information on the different components of job satisfaction and well-being, discuss their effects on an organization and introduce some of the most famous theories on the subject. Also, the work-related values of Finns and Russians are taken a look at. The second section of the paper will focus on the primary research process, describe and analyze the results and offer a few conclusive thoughts about the findings.

## 2 JOB WELL-BEING AND SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction, a part of job well-being, is a subjective feeling within a person describing how she or he feels about their work. It stems from the attitude towards one's job and the extent to which the job in reality meets one's own value system and set expectations. It is created by the presence of factors each individual finds important for their own happiness and well-being. In this thesis, job well-being and job satisfaction are discussed as one bigger entity since they are so closely intertwined and often discussed as synonyms for each other. Well-being and satisfaction only exist together, both feeding off each other.

### 2.1 Components of well-being

Well-being is a combination of many different aspects. These aspects include psychological, physical and social well-being in addition to one's value base, know-how and professional ability. All these factors influence a person's well-being and his or her ability to perform. (Ojala 2003, 14-15.)

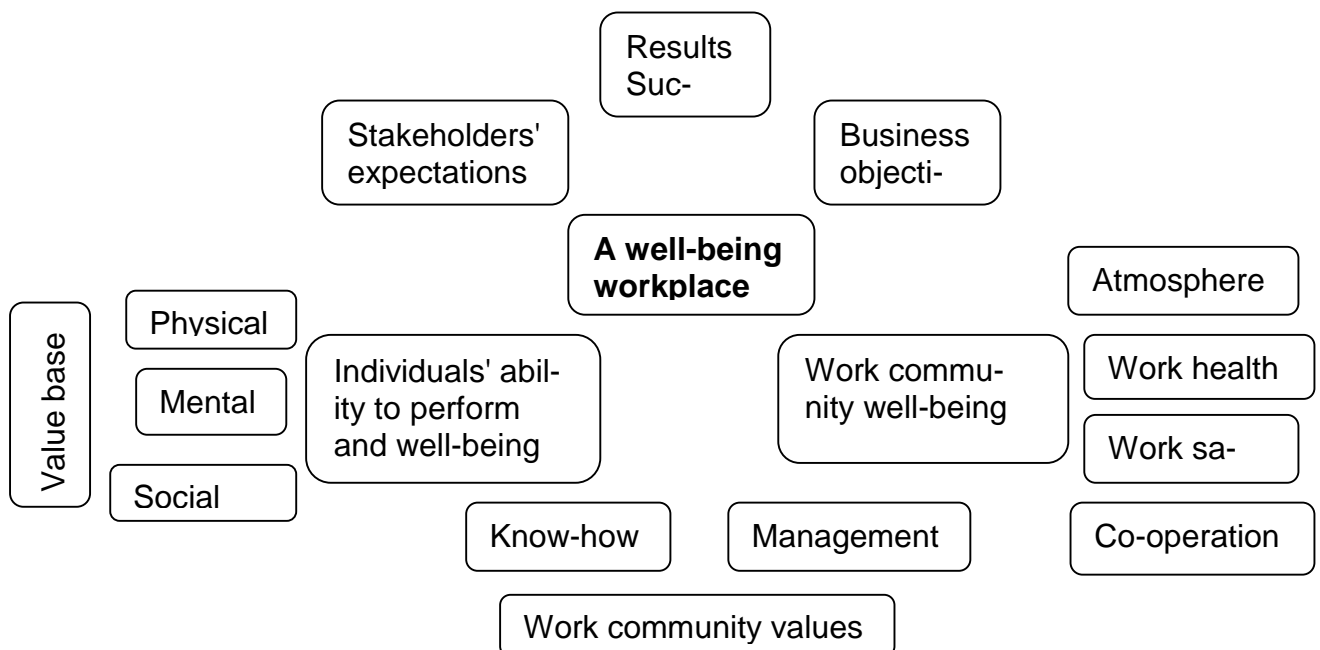


Figure 1. Job well-being (Ojala 2003, 17).

### **2.1.1 Physical and psychological well-being and the working environment**

Being healthy both physically and mentally is, in my opinion, the basis for job well-being. One needs to be not only healthy, but also in a good enough physical condition to be able to complete the tasks assigned. One needs to be in such a shape physically that their work does not completely wear them out. A person should be able to keep a healthy balance in their life between work and other areas. Having enough energy to enjoy one's free time in addition to performing at work is vital for well-being. (Ojala 2003, 15.)

The responsibility for each individual's health belongs to the employees themselves and to the organization. As described by Juuti and Vuorela (2002, 133), the purpose of occupational safety and health and occupational healthcare is to produce and maintain well-being, health and safety which extends from work to the whole working community. These activities monitor employees' work control, the working environment, and relationships to be able to form a clear picture of the relation between a person and his/her work. (Juuti & Vuorela 2002, 133.) Outside work, each individual can affect his/her health and well-being by simple lifestyle choices. Following a healthy diet and getting enough sleep and exercise are crucial for physical and mental welfare.

Considering the topic of physical well-being, it is crucial to discuss the physical working environment. The Centre for Occupational Safety of Finland, TTK, lists multiple factors which should be considered when designing a functional working environment that drives work satisfaction. According to TTK, the organization needs to think what qualities make the environment functional for their purpose and how the environment suits the present work culture. The facilities need to accommodate the tasks, work processes and their requirements, as well as the individualistic needs of the employees. Challenges caused by varying situations should be taken into consideration as well. (Centre for Occupational Safety 2015.) Working in an environment in which the facilities and/or equipment constantly hinder one's ability to complete tasks as desired, directly lowers the level of satisfaction.

### **2.1.2 Social well-being and relationships at work**

Well-being has its very important social aspect. It is composed of the relationships and networks one has with their colleagues, family and friends, and the ability to effectively communicate (Ojala 2003, 15). Being able to form meaningful relationships with other people is crucial for well-being and mental health. At work, friendships that extend outside the workplace do not need to be formed, but being able to get along with other people is important. One needs to be able to act as a functioning part of the work community and also feel like they belong. Lämsä and Hautala (2004, 102) state that work communities, associations, clubs and families are examples of groups. Some groups one is born into and others he/she joins to satisfy social needs or to achieve a common goal. Each group has a mission which explains the reason it was created for and what are its objectives and goals. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 102.)

A group functions through communication. The way a group communicates effectively describes its nature. Communicating openly, trusting each other and helping one another lay the foundation for a good workplace atmosphere. Openness should be executed with work related matters, not personal life. Each employee has the right to be informed about the issues concerning work but also the responsibility to share found problems and issues in need of improvement. It is everyone's concern to make sure information gets passed on to others concerned with the matter. In addition to effective communication, a workplace needs to have an agreed set of values and rules which all employees abide by. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 122; Juuti & Vuorela 2002, 71; Ojala 2003, 45; Järvinen 2008, 94.)

Workplace communication should function with the idea of employee equality. Each member of the group needs to have the opportunity to be heard and have an impact on decision-making. Managers have an important role in making people feel like they have a chance to affect their work and the development of the work community. Communication at the workplace should enable work-related problems to be solved and improve cooperation. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 123; Ojala 2003, 45; Järvinen 2008, 98.)

### 2.1.3 Work ethics and commitment to work

Ethics is an area of science which examines the acceptability of people's actions, values and endeavors. It describes what is right and good or wrong and bad, and studies how things should and should not be. Ethics includes theories on behavior which explain what can and cannot be done and what people should do based on responsibilities. Work ethics, specifically, includes the speculation of how committed a person should be to their work. Commitment is a psychological connection, the relationship between a person and their work. It includes the attitudes and behavior connected to one's work. A committed employee works efficiently and enthusiastically and feels responsible for his/her work and the work community. Responsibility belongs to the set of good ethical values, along with honesty, openness, fairness and confidentiality, to mention a few. These values guide people's behavior so that they benefit not just themselves, but the whole human nature. (Heikkonen 1995, 16-17; Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 92, 94.)

Work commitment is typically divided into three different categories. Continuance commitment includes the desire to work constantly because not having work is seen as less beneficial than working. A person with continuance commitment compares the advantages and disadvantages of his/her work and the effects working has personally. This kind of commitment is related to an area of ethics called utilitarianism. A person that works diligently and performs as well as possible because they treat their work as a responsibility has normative commitment. He/she lives by an internalized set of rules and norms which can be based on formal agreements or the law but also cultural and communal beliefs of what is good and valuable. Normative commitment is connected to deontological ethics. The third and deepest dimension of commitment is called affective commitment. It is an emotional bond a person has with their work. A person treats their work with affection and considers it to be important. He/she works enthusiastically and is willing to make sacrifices for work and put a lot of effort into it. Affective commitment is connected to ethics by its idea of work in itself being valuable. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 93-94.)

Commitment also has a number of different natures. If a person has no other option than working in the current position, he/she is forced to be committed to that work. This kind of commitment is not very strong since the employee does not have very many reasons for working towards the company's set objectives or stay in the company at all. Commitment based on rewards is centered on the possibility of receiving different kinds of material, psychological and social pay-offs. An employee with this type of commitment compares his/her work efforts to the rewards received from them, which defines the level of commitment created. Commitment is an instrument of reaching some important personal goal. Trust-based commitment includes the responsibility and affection one feels towards their work. The moral material in this type of commitment involves also the employer. Each employee is entitled to some rights in exchange for fulfilling their responsibilities. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 95-96.)

#### **2.1.4 Values, motivation and the content of work**

A person's value base is particularly closely related to job satisfaction. It includes the attitudes one has towards their work and other issues in their life. It also holds the values one has and by which they lead their life. A person's value base includes motivation, the so-called drive which directs human behavior, work included. Work which suites the person doing it and his/her interests creates inner motives and a foundation for long-lasting job motivation. When people feel their work is what they are meant to do, it makes it feel like less of a burdening task. Work becomes an asset, a hobby which gives joy but also enough challenges to the person doing it. (Ojala 2003, 15; Juuti & Vuorela 2002, 67.)

Motivation can be created by multiple different factors. Lämsä and Hautala (2004, 80) suggest that motivation for work is influenced by each individual's inner and outer factors. Inner factors can, for example, be needs, as outer factors refer to the physicalities of work, such as work itself and the rewards received from work. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 80.) It could be said that each person's motivation for work is a unique mix of wants and needs of variant importance. For some, the

inner need of self-actualization is much more important than a high salary. Somebody else may value flexible working hours and fringe benefits over everything else. It is essential that a person's work needs to coincide with their values and not go against them in order to further well-being at work and outside it. Without a motivating factor it can be difficult to find work pleasant and be able to give it one's best effort.

<b>Work should be</b>	<b>Work can be developed by</b>
-interesting	-broadening and enriching it
-independent	-creating sensible ensembles
-versatile	-enabling customer relationships
-given feedback on	-developing team activities
<b>Work is the source of vitality and the joy of living</b>	

Figure 2. Sensible work is the source of joy created by work (Juuti & Vuorela 2002, 70).

### 2.1.5 Professional ability and know-how

Enjoying one's work and thriving at it requires sufficient management and adequate know-how. These factors are particularly important in modern knowledge work. In our current world of constant development and change, people must be able to educate themselves and better their professional know-how. Modern work offers challenges which can only be tackled by continuously trained professionals. It is the organization's responsibility to ensure that each employee has the basic knowledge and know-how with which to tackle the tasks of their work. Offering each new employee the necessary introduction and guidance to their new work is of the most importance. Juuti and Vuorela (2002, 48) state that these activities are an essential part of work control and a supporting part of work well-being. For an introduction, consider the welcoming and initial directing of a new employee; its main purpose is to make that employee feel like they belong as an important part of the work community. Guidance, on the other hand, aims at the

employee being able to grasp new tasks and to control them, enabling the employee to work independently. (Ojala 2003, 16; Juuti & Vuorela 2002, 48.)

Only so much can be taught or learned from books and manuals. Work itself is the best educator. In the book *Organisaatiokäyttäytyminen (Organizational behavior)*, Pauli Juuti states that many skills can only be practiced at work, thus it is important one is able to learn from their job. Constant learning benefits not only the employee, but also the organization they work for. According to Juuti, as a responsible person strives to continuously learn and improve oneself, a successful organization pursues to develop the capabilities of its staff so that it can better tackle the new challenges the organization faces. (Juuti 1999, 75.) Learning can happen in many different ways. One should tirelessly improve his/her knowledge and skills at what they typically do but also aim to learn new skills and practices. It is also beneficial for each organization to have employees who can do more than just one thing. Employees can thus learn for each other. In addition, organizations can offer employees training outside the workplace in the form of classes and courses taught by trained professionals.

#### **2.1.6 Leadership, management and feedback**

Research has proven the importance of leadership. One of the most important factors creating well-being at the workplace is the right type of management and particularly the manager closest to the employee. Being a great manager requires people skills and the ability to stay objective and fair towards all employees. A good leader takes into consideration the whole human nature in all its rational and emotional aspects and appreciates and respects each employee. He or she is able to create structure and make the employees feel like their efforts and work have a sensible purpose. A good leader supports his/her employees and offers them encouragement. He or she respects each individual and their opinions, thoughts and ideas. A good leader is able to set standards by which work, for example, can be evaluated. He or she can sense what is going on within the team of employees and pass on those feelings and events. A leader should also be

able to alleviate conflicts between employees and offer his/her opinions and suggestions of compromise. Being able to establish a management system which is coherent and treats each employee equally is vital. (Ojala 2003, 16; Juuti 1999, 155-157.)

As stated by Juuti and Vuorela (2002, 35) employee ill-being can directly be linked to imperative leadership. The way companies were managed in the early stages of industrialization does not suite the organizations of modern information society. Leaders of today focus on developing the potential of employees and managing their know-how and skills. People's knowledge and abilities are useful only to the extent to which they are utilized. Managers and employees themselves have the responsibility of harnessing the existing know-how so that it is fully used but also shared to others so that it benefits the whole organization in the best way possible. (Juuti & Vuorela 2002, 35; Juuti 1999, 153; Ojala 2003, 16.)

Being able to give and receive feedback is essential for the well-being and development of individual employees but also for the entire organization. According to Juuti and Vuorela (2002, 69), research shows a Finnish manager is not one to comment much on employee performance. Receiving appropriate feedback, however, can have very positive results. It can help the employee find a new perspective from which to examine the work and see how the methods of working could be improved. Positive feedback is a provider of new resources which make it easier to take on more demanding tasks at work. Each employee wishes to be given credit for what e/she has created and achieved. It is the manager's responsibility to share his/her views on how each employee is performing. An issue to be kept in mind is the style in which performance is commented on. Interaction at the workplace should always happen in a constructive, appropriate manner (Juuti & Vuorela 2002, 69; Järvinen 2008, 98.)

### 2.1.7 Laws and regulations

Creating and maintaining a well-being workplace requires the dedication and effort of the whole organization. Company management, employees and co-operators each have their own role and tasks in furthering well-being in accordance with set laws and regulations (Manka, Hakala, Nuutinen & Harju 2010, 27-28). Manka et al. (2010, 20) mention the following laws to guide companies in ensuring well-being:

- Occupational Safety and Health Act
- Occupational Health Care Act
- Occupational Diseases Act
- Act on Occupational Safety and Health Enforcement and Co-operation on Occupational Safety and Health at Workplaces
- Employment Accidents Act
- Employment Contracts Act
- Annual Holidays Act
- Employees Pensions Act
- Act on the Protection of Privacy in Working Life
- Act on Equality between Women and Men
- Working Hours Act
- Act on Co-operation within Undertakings

Management should follow these regulations, introduce employees to work safety and guide them in safe work practices, monitor work well-being, safety and costs caused by employee ill-being, and organize occupational health care. Employees have the responsibility of looking after, not just their own but the whole work community's well-being. Each employee should follow the common rules of the workplace and the directions given by management. Reporting detected places of improvement is also crucial. (Manka et al. 2010, 28.)

The primary purpose of an occupational health and safety committee in an organization is to provide the employees with the best possible working conditions. As a co-operative function including company management and the employees,

occupational health and safety aims to solve detected problems and prevent future issues from occurring. Each employee is legally entitled to occupational health care organized by the employer. The health care provider aims to help create a healthy workplace and working conditions in addition to supporting the health of employees and their ability to work. Work well-being can also be created and maintained with the financial support and information received from pension insurance companies. (The Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors JHL 2015; Manka et al. 2010, 28.)

## **2.2 The value of employee well-being and satisfaction**

One would not be in the wrong saying employees are a company's most valuable resource. They are the most important part of production. In what circumstances is this resource most beneficial to the company? In the book by Pauli Juuti and Antti Vuorela (2002, 64) it is clearly stated that desirable results are created by employees who are healthy and feel well (Figure 3). It is those employees who benefit the company, its customers and even themselves. (Juuti 1999, 75; Juuti & Vuorela 2002, 64.)

One way to easily measure the value of well-being is cost-savings. Work accidents and sick leaves, disablement, substitute employment costs and interruptions in operation are all expenses caused by the lack of well-being. A bad atmosphere at work can cause employees to leave the company and take their know-how with them. Frequently changing employees also costs the company money. Well-being, on the other hand, increases productivity, the amount of efficient working time, the quality of work and innovations. This all contributes to the company's profitability. According to the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (2015), measures taken to improve well-being can benefit the organization six times the amount invested in the process. (Ojala 2003, 86; Finnish Institute of Occupational Health 2015.)

Well-being not only reduces direct financial costs, but also contributes to the organization's structural equity. Employee satisfaction can be increased with structural equity by cherishing and utilizing employee know-how. This also leads to an increase in customer satisfaction and as a whole, to the organization's intangible property. (Ojala 2003, 92-93.)

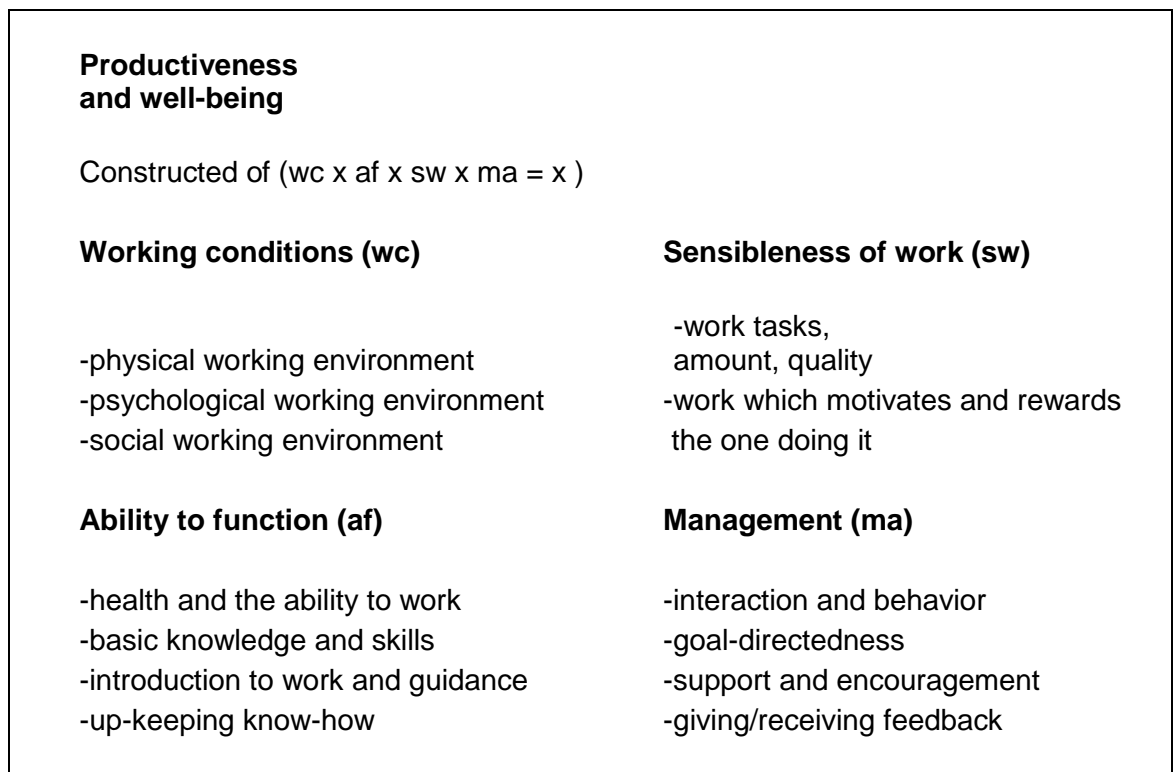


Figure 3. Productiveness and well-being (Juuti & Vuorela 2002, 135).

## 2.3 Theories on job satisfaction

### 2.3.1 Maslow's hierarchy of needs

According to the American social psychologist Abraham Maslow, people's motivation stems from five categories of different kinds of needs. Maslow's theory suggests needs can be universally categorized and applied to all people. It presents the order of importance according to which needs create motivation (Figure 4). Beginning from the bottom level of very basic physiological needs, every level

of needs has to be satisfied relatively well before moving upwards in the hierarchy. While satisfying some need leads to it losing its motivating power, failing to fulfill it causes dissatisfaction. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 82; Juuti 1999, 35, 37.)

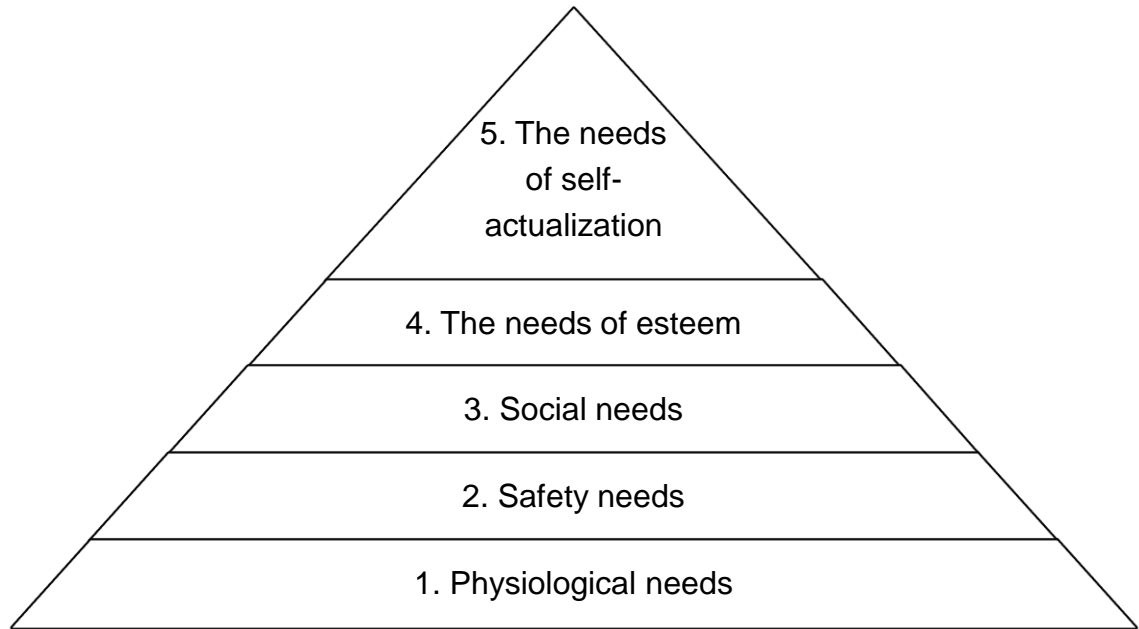


Figure 4. Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 82).

The content of self-actualization varies from person to person since people's interests, strengths and weaknesses are very individualistic. It is impossible to satisfy these needs completely. Self-actualization can include, for example, personal accomplishments, creativity, mental development and growth, and the increase of knowledge. (Juuti 1999, 37; Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 82.)

The needs of esteem include independence, self-respect, acknowledgement, accomplishments, status, and being appreciated and respected by others. When a person is able to fulfill these needs, his/her self-confidence will increase making them feel like they are competent and enough the way that they are. In an organization, these needs have a notable status. The employees who are trying to satisfy their needs of esteem, are the ones who strive to succeed in their tasks and gain higher status in the company. The company's organizational culture should be based on equality and the respect of individuality so that as many employees as possible would be able to fulfill their esteem needs in the company's social environment. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 82; Juuti 1999, 37.)

Acceptance, caring, friendship and love, the need to function as a group and the feeling of togetherness, are all social needs which make people feel like they are a part of a community. These needs can never be completely fulfilled, but one can try to satisfy them both at work and during free time. The endeavor to form friendships acts as a motivator, and the behavior, values and goals of a person are influenced by the friends one has. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 82; Juuti 1999, 36.)

Guarding oneself from danger and harm and pursuing security belong to the level of safety needs. Opposite to self-actualization, esteem and social needs, safety needs motivate a person only to a certain extent, which means they are not limitless. Modern circumstances have caused a decrease in safety as a motivator. For example protection against dismissal has diminished the fear of losing one's job and thus this fear does not motivate as much anymore. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 82; Juuti 1999, 36.)

Physiological needs keep a person alive. They include the very basic of human needs, such as hunger and thirst, shelter, warmth and sleep, which need to be fulfilled at least to a certain point before one can pursue to satisfy upper level needs. Physiological needs have a limit but they have to be satisfied over and over again in a small amount of time. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 82; Juuti 1999, 35-36.)

Maslow's theory can be seen as oversimplified because research has shown that human behavior is affected by more than just one motive at a time. These motives and their importance depend greatly on the individual at hand, and they are satisfied in a complex manner. Maslow's theory, however, presents the great scale of different kinds of humane motives and needs. (Juuti 1999, 38.)

### 2.3.2 Herzberg's two-factor theory

The theory by Frederick Herzberg and his colleagues divides the factors influencing the content of work motivation into two categories: satisfaction and dissatisfaction factors. According to this theory, satisfaction and dissatisfaction are caused by different actors. Satisfaction is created by so-called motivators, which are things related to the actual work and work tasks. These factors affect a person positively, producing a good attitude and satisfaction. Dissatisfaction is caused by factors related to the psychosocial and physical working environment, and not by work itself. These are called hygiene factors and affect a person negatively, creating dissatisfaction and a negative attitude. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 84.)

<b>Motivators</b>  - related to work itself - increase satisfaction	<b>Hygiene factors</b>  - related to working environment - increase dissatisfaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Acknowledgement for work</li> <li>•Accomplishments at work</li> <li>•Possibility to grow and develop</li> <li>•Promotion</li> <li>•Responsibility</li> <li>•Work itself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Company policy and administration</li> <li>•Relationship with manager</li> <li>•Relationships with coworkers</li> <li>•Working conditions</li> <li>•Salary, status</li> <li>•Work safety</li> </ul>

Figure 5. Motivators and hygiene factors (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 84).

Herzberg suggests satisfaction and dissatisfaction are two completely separate entities. Removing something which causes dissatisfaction does not make a person more satisfied, it simply makes him/her less dissatisfied or the situation neutral. It is easier to influence satisfaction after neutralizing the factors causing a person to be dissatisfied. To achieve the ideal situation of a high level of satisfaction with minimal dissatisfaction, both categories of factors have to be in simultaneous balance. Research, however, has shown that both satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by same factors. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 84; Juuti 1999, 23.)

### **2.3.3 McClelland's three needs theory**

The theory by David McClelland focuses on the importance of three different humane needs: achievement, power and social relationships. His theory emphasizes particularly the need for achievement, which entails the desire to succeed and the need to exceed oneself. A person is motivated by work which is challenging, complicated and responsible, and wishes to be given feedback on performance. The work cannot, however, be too difficult in regards to accomplishing the set goal so that the possibility of failure does not grow too big. Completing a task and the feeling of achievement are valued over receiving rewards. Nevertheless, gaining status or the respect of others are symbolic signs of success which a person with high need for achievement desires. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 85-86.)

## **2.4 Work-related values and Russian work culture**

### **2.4.1 Finland**

The factors affecting the satisfaction of Finnish employees can be separated into three different categories. The first category includes factors related to how one feels about the work itself and to what extent this work enables them to grow, develop and express themselves. In other words, the first category of satisfaction is connected to how independent and interesting, variant and challenging the work is. According to the research done by Finnish Business and Policy Forum EVA in 2010, interestingness is seen as one of the most important qualities of work. In this research asking what makes a good workplace, over 90% of respondents rated this quality as quite important, important or very important. Over 90% also thought being able to actualize oneself was similarly essential. The workplace offering good advancement opportunities was rated at least quite important by about 75% of respondents. (Juuti 1999, 26; Finnish Business and Policy Forum EVA 2015.)

The second category of satisfaction is connected to materialistic and social well-being. It includes the factors describing how satisfied one is with how they are compensated for their work and what the workplace's interpersonal relationships are like. This category also holds the possibilities one has to affect the social working environment and the content of the work. According to EVA's research, receiving high compensation for work was not among the most valued qualities of a workplace. A bit over 10% rated this as very important while about the same amount thought it to be not that essential. Having a steady and secure job was valued over money. A good workplace spirit was the quality most valued. Over half of the ratings were "very important" when only a few percent of respondents thought it to be not very important or not important at all. Having an invigorating and fair manager was one of the top values; over 40% of respondents saw this as very important. (Juuti 1999, 26; Finnish Business and Policy Forum EVA 2015.)

The final category of satisfaction includes factors related to the physical working environment and its qualities. In EVA's research, over 95% of respondents rated a cozy working environment to be important, with over 50% seeing it as very important. The two qualities in the research receiving most "not very important" or "not at all important" ratings were having flexible working hours and being able to work from home, and the job being socially reputable/having a high status. Instead, not having to take work home and regular working hours were very valued. (Juuti 1999, 27; Finnish Business and Policy Forum EVA 2015.)

Even though receiving a high salary is not among the top values of Finns regarding work, money is the biggest motivator for working. This transpires from the research Arjen Katsaus made by the Finnish bank and insurance agency LähiTapiola in 2013. Over half of the respondents stated that the main reason for working is getting money, while 20% considered the content of work to matter the most. In Southern Finland where one has the opportunity to choose what job to take, people valued work itself more than in other parts of the country. In Northern Finland, small towns and the countryside, money motivates the most according to 80% of respondents. (Riippa 2013.)

This shows how much people and their values are influenced by the environment they exist in. It would seem rational to think that above all else, people work for money. They work to be able to provide for their families and lead comfortable lives. A high salary, however, is rarely the factor which alone makes a person satisfied with their job. Interesting work, a pleasant working environment and a positive atmosphere at the workplace make a person enjoy the job that they have. If one had the option of choosing which job to take, they would most likely choose one which suites their interests the best, not the one with the highest salary.

#### **2.4.2 Russia**

Finnish work culture is based on equality. Each employee is just as important and valuable as any other, regardless of their status in the company. Everybody's opinion is valued, and to an extent, everyone has the opportunity to make decisions concerning their work and the workplace. According to Haapaniemi, Moijanen and Muradjan (2003, 104-106) this does not apply in Russia. Employees rarely have the opportunity to affect their own work. All responsibility is concentrated at the top of the company hierarchy to the people who have the power to make decisions and give orders. Employees do not show initiative but instead everything happens through orders from higher authorities. Independent work has to be strictly regulated in order for it to reach set goals. It is usual for employees to gladly leave decision-making and the responsibility for their work to their manager. (Haapaniemi et al. 2003, 104-106.)

In Russia, social relationships and networks are in many respects considered to be more important than money. Throughout history, money has not been able to guarantee Russian families the basic security they have needed. Proper social connections have been more valuable in the time of need. This is valid even in modern Russia where people put a lot of effort into communality and value it higher than individuality. The significance of networks is one of the features which make Russian culture as a whole more collective than individualistic. The organization one works for forms a big part of social circles. Russian employees are

much more committed and attached to their workplace than Finnish workers. Belonging to work communities and other networks makes up a big part of Russian's social relationships. Status and social roles are held in higher regard. Similarly to Finland and its work culture, mutual understanding and trust are vital for the functionality of a workplace community. Giving and receiving all natures of help is a part of what Russian networks and their purpose is all about. Being a part of some network enables utilizing other members of that network and their connections to reach personal objectives. (Haapaniemi et al. 2003, 96, 99-102.)

The regularly conducted research called the World Values Survey reveals how important work and its different qualities are to Russian people. The research conducted in the years 1999 and 2000 asked the respondents to rate the importance of work on a scale from 1 (very important) to 4 (not important at all). The results suggest that for both Finns and Russians, work has great personal significance. The objects the respondents were asked to rate based on their importance, included politics, family, religion, friends and recreation, in addition to work. For Finns and Russians, family was quite understandably the most important object. Work, however, came as a close second. What may surprise some is the fact that Russians seemed to value work even a bit higher than Finns. On the scale from 1 to 4, the mean value Finns gave work was around 1.5 as for Russians, it was between 1.3 and 1.4 (very important= 1). (Magun 2007, 119-121.)

In addition to the overall significance of work, the research aimed to find out what qualities of work the respondents considered to be most valuable. They were asked to mark on a list of eleven different work values the ones they considered to be important. They could choose as many as they wanted. The three items chosen most often by Russians turned out to be interesting work, a secure job and a high salary. The three least valued were the work not being too stressful, the job being responsible and getting plenty of vacation time. Finns' choices did not differ much. They also valued a secure, high-paying and interesting job, and did not care too much about long holidays or worry about the work including too much pressure. However, one of the three items chosen least often by the Finns was having a job that is highly esteemed. Finns thought that having a job which

includes responsibility is relatively important while Russians valued being able to gain people's respect with their work more. (Magun 2007, 133-134.)

The qualities Russians and Finns find important in a job reveal a bit of what they are like as employees. Finns pursue interesting work which includes responsibility and the opportunity to take initiative. Personal accomplishments are found to be important. Finns are not hesitant of taking on big workloads to ensure high-quality outcomes. Nevertheless, a job with more comfort and less difficulty is welcomed by Finns if the work itself is not impacted as a direct consequence. Russians, on the other hand, are willing to sacrifice some ease and comfort if that means they do not have to work harder than usual in order to reach sterling results. Russians value social appreciation for their work and a high salary more than Finns. (Magun 2007, 135.)

### **3 PRIMARY RESEARCH**

#### **3.1 Design and methodology**

The primary research was an opinion survey with an objective to measure the overall satisfaction of the four companies' employees working in production. Managers and company officials were not included in the target group and neither were the employees working in maintenance and repair. The survey was designed based on the theory of work well-being and my own view on what are the key components of well-being and satisfaction.

The method used was quantitative. As described by Heikkilä (2010, 16), quantitative research is conducted when the purpose is to measure something with the use of percentages or amounts. The research is often implemented by using forms with predetermined response options. The results are described numerically, and different kinds of figures and charts can be used in demonstrating them. In primary research, the data collection method used is decided by determining which method suits the research problem the best. When the chosen method is

informed inquiry, the questionnaire forms are personally delivered or collected by the researcher. Additional questions or clarifications can be made if considered necessary. Quantitative research is often unable to sufficiently clarify the causes of different matters. Instead, it can be used to define the prevailing situation of the researched subject. For quantitative research to be successful, the research sample has to be representative and big enough. (Heikkilä 2010, 16, 18.)

The survey (Appendix 1) was divided into five different categories each containing arguments on one component of well-being. The categories were working conditions and work safety, work itself and its content, communication and interaction, leadership and management, and the work community and atmosphere. The respondents were asked to choose one option describing to what extent they agreed with the presented arguments. Satisfaction was measured with the help of the Likert scale. The respondents had to choose whether they completely agreed, somewhat agreed, neither agreed or disagreed, somewhat disagreed or completely disagreed with the presented arguments.

Each category of arguments included an open commentary section. In this section the respondents were given the opportunity to disclose opinions, views and suggestions related to the topic of arguments they had just answered. The open commentary section was added to the survey to enable important issues that possibly were not handled in the arguments to transpire. In this section the respondents also had the chance to explain why they decided to answer some argument with the chosen option. The first page of the survey included directions on how to take part in the research and how to turn in the completed form.

## **3.2 Implementation**

### **3.2.1 Finland**

In Finland, the survey was implemented in week 42 of 2014. Together with the company managers, we organized a little gathering in which I personally introduced the survey to the company employees. In these gatherings I shortly explained the purpose of the research and gave the opportunity to ask questions. I told the employees that taking part in the research was completely optional and would be done anonymously. Each employee was provided with one copy of the survey in Finnish language and an envelope in which they would turn the form in after taking part in the research.

In all three companies, the employees had about seven days to take part in the research if they wanted to. The filled-out forms were returned in closed envelopes to the same place where the employees return their lists of working hours. This envelope method was used to guarantee complete anonymity and confidentiality. After the response time had ended, the sealed envelopes were given to me by the managers.

### **3.2.2 Russia**

The same research form was used in Russia as in Finland. The form was translated into Russian by a fellow business student Damira Kuanyshpayeva. The research could have been implemented in English but probably not as successfully. I wanted to avoid issues caused by language barriers and make it as easy as possible for the respondents to take part in the survey.

In Russia, I did not personally introduce the survey to the employees because I do not speak Russian. Instead, I designed a bulletin (Appendix 2) containing all the necessary information about the research. I felt it was important to let the employees know ahead of the research what was coming so that they would not

be surprised and suspicious. The bulletin as well was translated from English to Russian by Ms. Kuanyshpayeva. In Russia, the survey was implemented during week 7 of 2015. The forms and envelopes were distributed to the employees by their foreman. The filled-out forms were returned to a designated box.

The results of the survey were analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The answers to the questionnaires were entered into the program using different numbers from 1 to 5 to indicate each answer option. If, for example, a respondent had chosen to completely agree with the presented argument, his/her answer was entered into Excel as number 5.

## **4 RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH**

### **4.1 Company A, Finland**

In company A, the response rate was 100 percent. The questionnaire was given to 19 employees working in production, and all of them decided to take part in the research.

#### **4.1.1 Working conditions and work safety**

Up to fifteen of the total nineteen respondents stated that they feel somewhat or completely safe in their work and at the workplace. Two respondents somewhat disagreed with this, and two neither agreed or disagreed. This argument got an average rate of 3.7 on a scale from 1 (=completely disagree) to 5 (=completely agree). Fourteen respondents also felt that the appliances and equipment they have in use are up-to-date and enable them to do their job as well and safely as possible. This argument received an average rate of 3.8 with only one person somewhat disagreeing with it and four neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Sixteen respondents agreed with the argument "I have decent work clothes and accessories in use", from which up to nine agreed completely. None of the respondents

chose option 3 (neither agree or disagree), but three chose to somewhat disagree, producing an average rate of 4.2. Thirteen respondents felt that the working environment matches the needs of the work tasks and the people working. Four respondents somewhat disagreed with this and two did not have a clear opinion. This argument got an average rate of 3.7.

The final two arguments of this category regarding ergonomics both got an average rate of 3.5. Fourteen respondents thought that they had gotten the necessary instructions on safety and ergonomics at the workplace. Two respondents chose to completely disagree with this and two to somewhat disagree. One person neither agreed or disagreed. Twelve respondents agreed that they pay attention to ergonomics while working. Three respondents chose to neither agree or disagree, while four somewhat or completely disagreed. One respondent was not familiar with ergonomics as a concept. According to him/her, the settings in different work stations cannot be made to suite all employees of different heights. One other respondent commented that working ergonomically is not always possible because some work tasks include working in spaces which are too tight. The third respondent to comment on this category or arguments stated that he/she had received ergonomics training in a previous job.



Figure 6. Average satisfaction concerning working conditions and work safety, company A.

#### 4.1.2 Work itself and its content

Twelve out of the total nineteen respondents found their work to be pleasant, while three felt somewhat or completely opposite. Four respondents did not have a clear opinion, contributing to an average rate of 3.5. The third argument of this category received the same average of responses. Ten respondents found their work to be at least somewhat meaningful while two somewhat did not and seven respondents felt neither way. Ten respondents also felt that their work gives them joy and experiences of success while seven somewhat or completely disagreed with this. Two respondents neither agreed or disagreed producing an average rate of 3.1.

All nineteen respondents somewhat or completely felt that they have the know-how their job requires. This argument got a very high average of responses, 4.8. Up to sixteen respondents also stated that they have the desire to develop and advance in their career, but only eight felt that their current job enables this. Five

respondents somewhat or completely disagreed with the argument "I feel I have the possibility of evolving in my work and advancing in my career", and six neither agreed or disagreed, producing an average rate of 3.1. Related to professional know-how and skills, one respondent commented that he/she sometimes has difficulty understanding directions if they are not in Finnish.

Thirteen of the total nineteen respondents felt that their work is versatile enough. Five respondents somewhat or completely disagreed with this and only one neither agreed or disagreed. This argument got a 3.7 average of responses. Fourteen respondents thought that their work challenges them enough. With an average rate of 3.9, two respondents somewhat felt that their work is not challenging enough and three respondents did not have a clear opinion. Only nine of the total nineteen respondents felt that they can influence the content of their work. Five respondents somewhat or completely disagreed with this and five neither agreed or disagreed producing an average rate of 3.2. Up to fifteen respondents agreed that they get enough support in their work from co-workers and managers. Three respondents felt the opposite and one felt neither way. This argument got a 3.9 average of responses.

Thirteen respondents of the total nineteen did not feel that their work is too physically demanding for them while only two thought that it is. Meanwhile three respondents experienced that their work is mentally too heavy and thirteen felt the opposite. These arguments got an average of responses of 3.9 and 3.8, five meaning that the respondent does not at all feel that their work is too mentally or physically straining for them. Thirteen respondents agreed that they are not continuously stressed because of their work. Three somewhat or completely disagreed with this and three neither agreed or disagreed contributing to an average rate of 3.7. Fifteen respondents thought that they recover from their work well enough on their free time. Only one respondent disagreed with this and three did not have a clear opinion. This argument got a 4.2 average or responses. One open comment stated that the ability to recover and the amount of stress experienced are directly connected to the work tasks performed. Some tasks are more challenging and burdening than others.

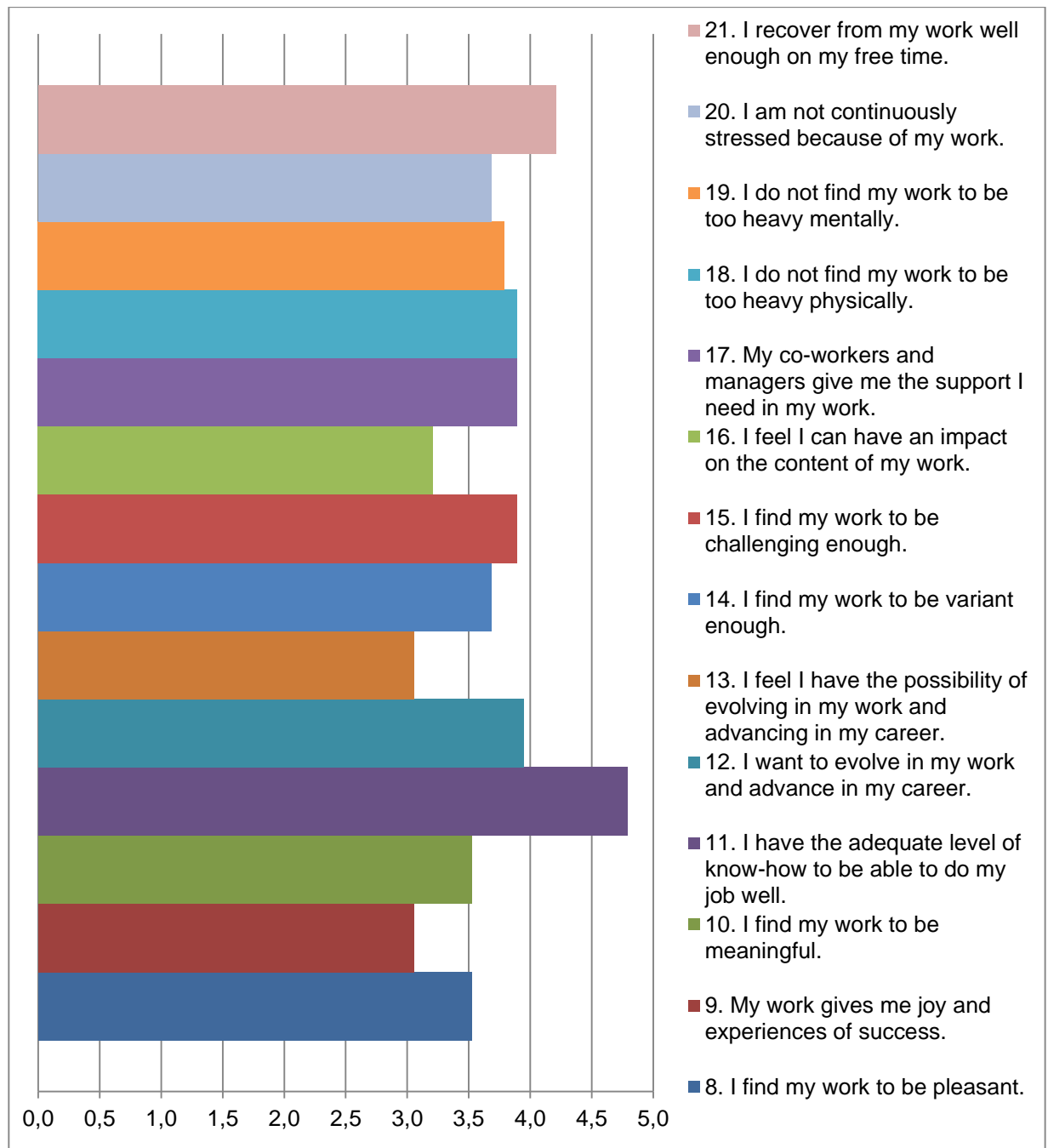


Figure 7. Average satisfaction concerning work itself and its content, company A.

#### **4.1.3 Communication and interaction**

Only five of the total nineteen respondents felt that informing about the workplace's joint matters works well. This argument got an average rate of 2.6 with up to ten respondents disagreeing with it. One respondent commented that sometimes information flow is nonexistent. In another comment it was stated that often information does not reach the people who are in need of it. Only one person stated that regular meetings are organized for the employees in which they can discuss current matters of the workplace. Up to fifteen respondents somewhat or completely disagreed with this and three neither agreed nor disagreed. This argument got a very low average of responses, only 1.9.

Nine respondents somewhat agreed with the argument "I feel it is possible for me to bring up issues to be discussed together". Four respondents somewhat disagreed with this and the rest neither agreed or disagreed producing an average rate of 3.3. Eleven respondents agreed that they feel they are listened to at the workplace. Only three respondents felt the opposite and five did not have a clear opinion. This argument received a 3.5 average of responses. Eleven respondents felt that their opinion is valued and nine thought that they can have an impact on common matters. Four respondents experienced that their opinion does not matter and is not appreciated, contributing to an average rate of 3.4. Meanwhile five respondents felt that they cannot influence common matters, producing an average rate of 3.2. One respondent left an open comment stating that he/she feels their opinions matter because of their long history working for the company.

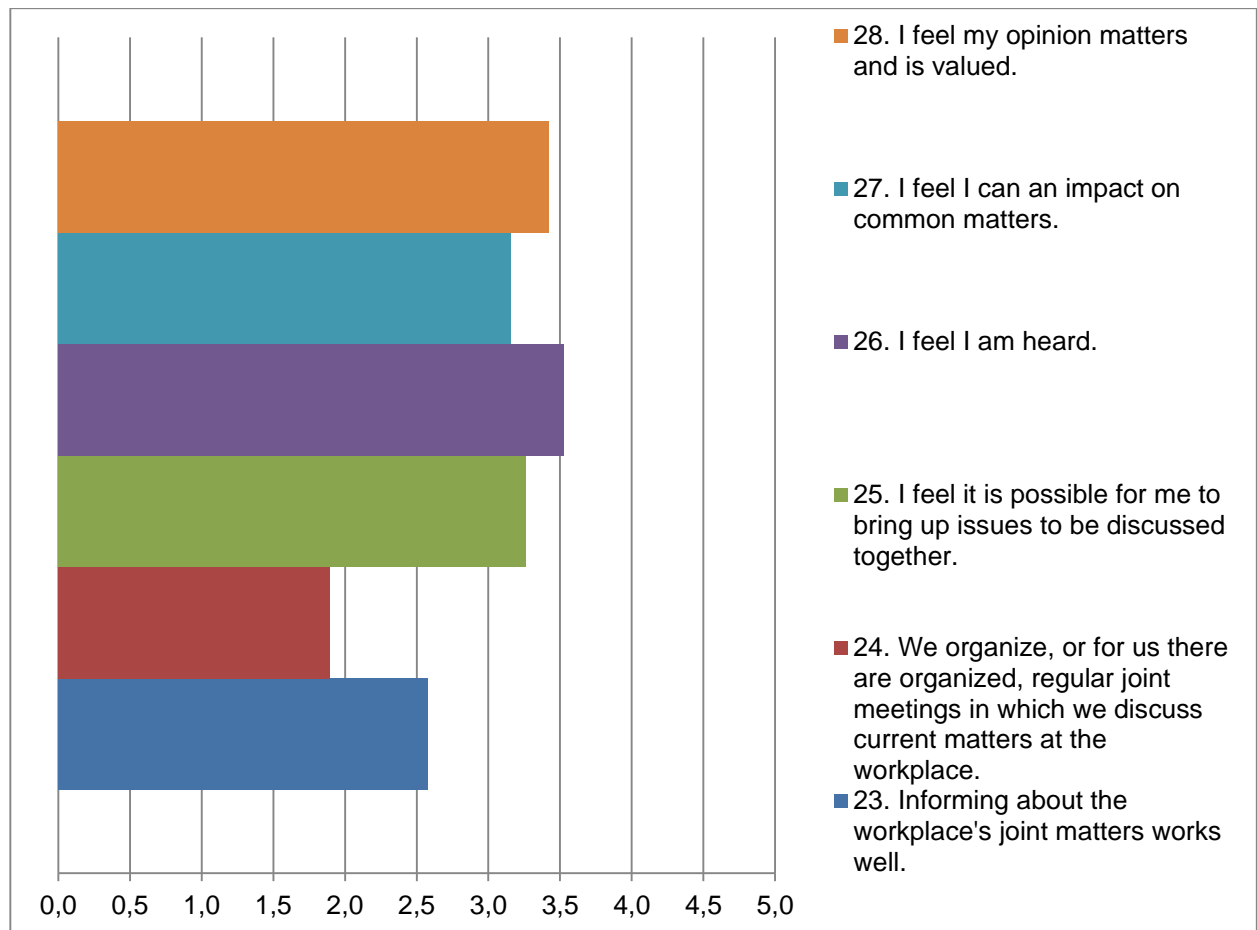


Figure 8. Average satisfaction concerning communication and interaction, company A.

#### 4.1.4 Leadership and management

Up to sixteen of the total nineteen respondents felt that management's expectations towards them are clear and realistic. One person completely disagreed with this and two neither agreed or disagreed, producing an average rate of 4.0. One respondent commented that the expectations towards them sometimes vary depending on the productivity and profitability of their work. Fourteen respondents thought that they get the support they need in their work from management. Only one respondent somewhat disagreed with this and four neither agreed or disagreed, contributing to a 3.8 average of responses. Up to seventeen respondents felt that they can approach management and discuss all things occupying their mind. One respondent somewhat disagreed with this and one neither agreed or disagreed. This argument got a 4.4 average of responses. Seven respondents agreed that their work is rationally and well organized and seven somewhat or

completely disagreed. With five respondents neither agreeing or disagreeing with the made argument, it received an average rate of 2.9.

While twelve respondents felt that management treats employees fairly, only six thought all employees are equal in the eyes of management. With an average rate of 3.4, six respondents disagreed with the argument "I feel management treats employees fairly" and one neither agreed or disagreed. Meanwhile up to nine respondents disagreed with the argument "I feel all employees are equal to management" and four neither agreed or disagreed contributing to a 2.6 average of responses. Fifteen respondents felt they get enough feedback on their work and its quality. Up to seventeen stated that the feedback they get is both negative and positive constructive feedback. Fourteen respondents felt that they can give feedback to management. All three arguments on feedback got an average response between 3.8 and 4.0.

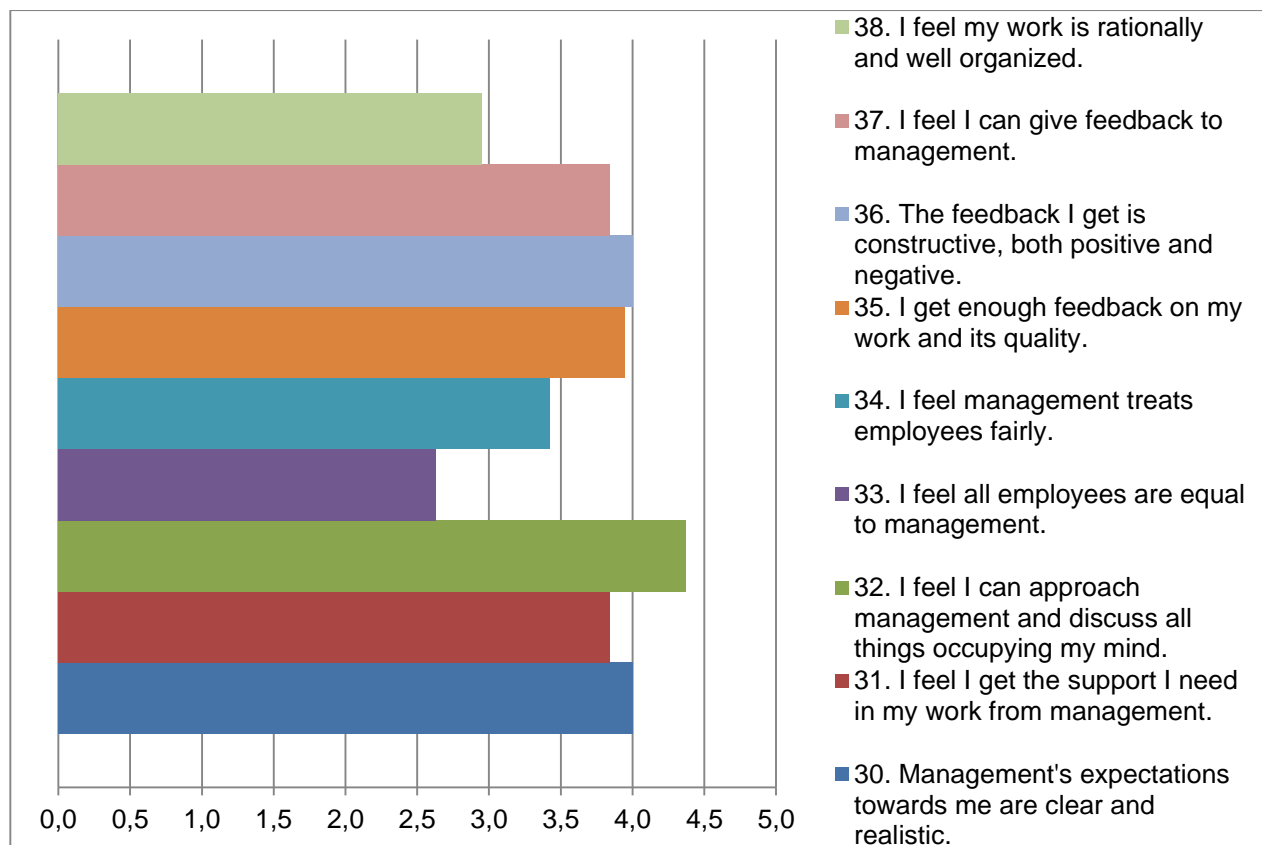


Figure 9. Average satisfaction concerning leadership and management, company A.

#### **4.1.5 Work community and atmosphere**

Sixteen of the total nineteen respondents somewhat or completely agreed that the general atmosphere of the workplace is good and positive. Only one respondent completely disagreed and two did not agree or disagree, contributing to a 3.9 average of responses. Similarly, sixteen respondents thought that the workplace's common rules are clear and adhered to. This argument got an average rate of 3.9 with no respondents disagreeing with it and three neither agreeing or disagreeing. Fourteen respondents stated that they feel comfortable and like they belong at the workplace. No respondent disagreed, but five did not have a clear opinion, producing an average rate of 4.1. Fifteen respondents somewhat or completely agreed with the argument "Nobody from the work community gets discriminated or bullied". Two respondents chose to somewhat disagree with this and two were neutral on this matter. This argument got a 4.2 average of responses. Two respondents commented that the fear of being laid off affects the general atmosphere of the workplace negatively. One employee, however, felt that the work community has gotten used to many different kinds of situations and because of this, changes do not cause as much stress anymore.

Up to seventeen respondents of the total nineteen felt that co-operation between employees work well, and two did not have a clear opinion. Eighteen respondents agreed that when asked, they receive help from co-workers and also give it back. One respondent neither agreed nor disagreed with this argument. Seventeen respondents thought that within the work community, they are able to give each other constructive feedback. One respondent somewhat disagreed with this and one neither agreed nor disagreed. Up to eighteen respondents felt that they are capable of discussing and solving problems without management interference. All four arguments received a response average of 4.2-4.5.

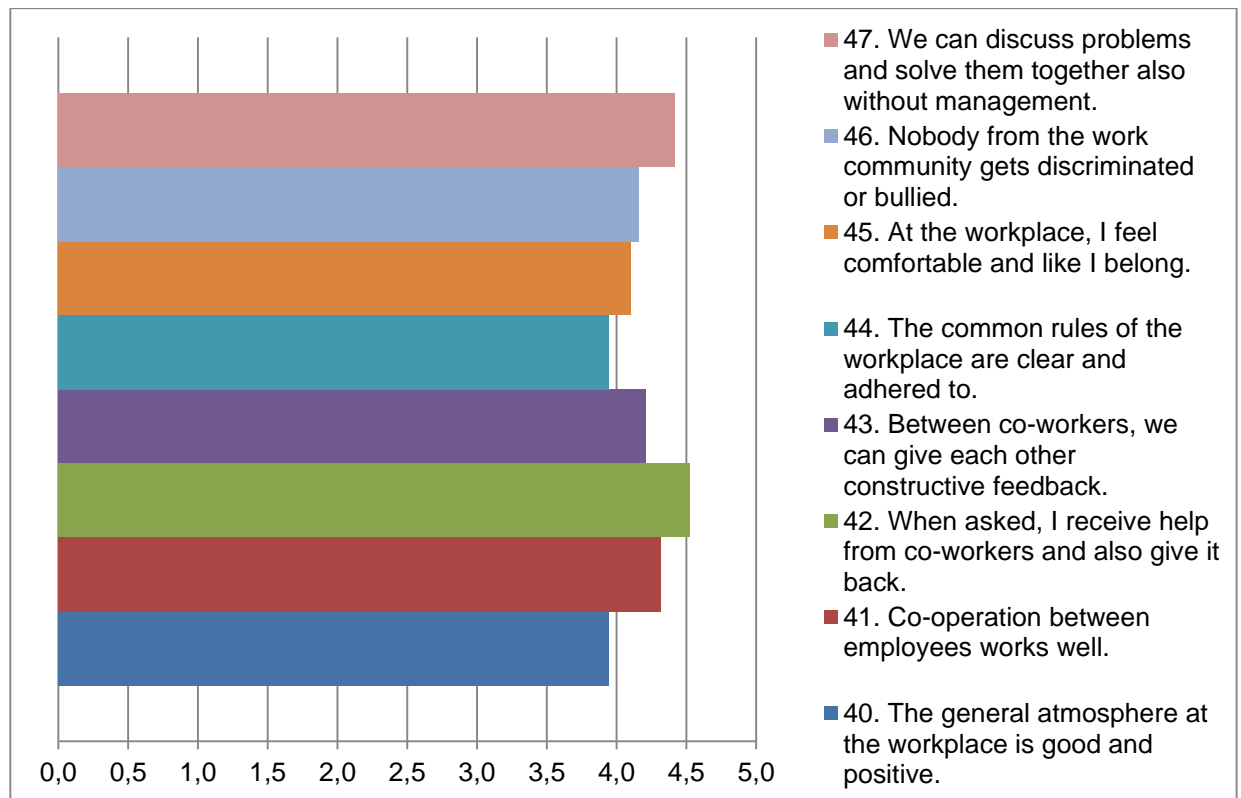


Figure 10. Average satisfaction concerning work community and atmosphere, company A.

## 4.2 Company B, Finland

Company B has 20 employees working in production. 18 of them took part in the research, making the response rate 90 percent.

### 4.2.1 Working conditions and work safety

The results of the first category of arguments show clear room for improvement concerning work equipment, appliances and the physical working environment. With a 3.4 average score, the respondents felt safe while at work. This result is only satisfactory but does not cause great concern. Four out of eighteen respondents somewhat disagreed with the argument "I feel safe in my work and at the workplace", no one chose to completely disagree. The respondents, however, were quite dissatisfied with the appliances they have in use and the environment in which they have to work in. Only three respondents out of eighteen somewhat

agreed that they have up-to-date appliances and equipment in use, while three neither agreed nor disagreed and the rest disagreed. The average rate for this argument came out to be 2.3.

Even worse results were received with argument number four: "The working environment and premises match the needs of the work tasks and the employees". Four respondents out of eighteen somewhat agreed with this argument while the rest either somewhat or completely disagreed producing an average rate of 2.2. One respondent commented that management feels negatively about improving working conditions and that the infrastructure does not match the 21st century. Another respondent felt that the grounds are in poor condition and one described the appliances or equipment to be "ancient" and working conditions very poor. The respondents were nevertheless quite satisfied with the clothes and accessories they are equipped with. Sixteen respondents out of the total eighteen somewhat or completely agreed with the third argument "I have decent work clothes and accessories in use" producing an average satisfaction rate of 4.2.

The results show the respondents keep ergonomics quite well in mind when working. Only three respondents out of eighteen somewhat disagreed with the argument "I pay attention to ergonomics while working". Twelve out of eighteen somewhat or completely agreed with this argument producing an average rate of 3.7. One respondent left an open comment stating that management feels negatively about work safety and another employee said they have not gotten any instructions on safety and ergonomics from management. These comments support the results of the final argument of this category. Only five respondents out of eighteen somewhat agreed with the argument "I have gotten the necessary instructions on safety and ergonomics at the workplace" while ten somewhat or completely disagreed. This argument got an average satisfaction rate of 2.4.

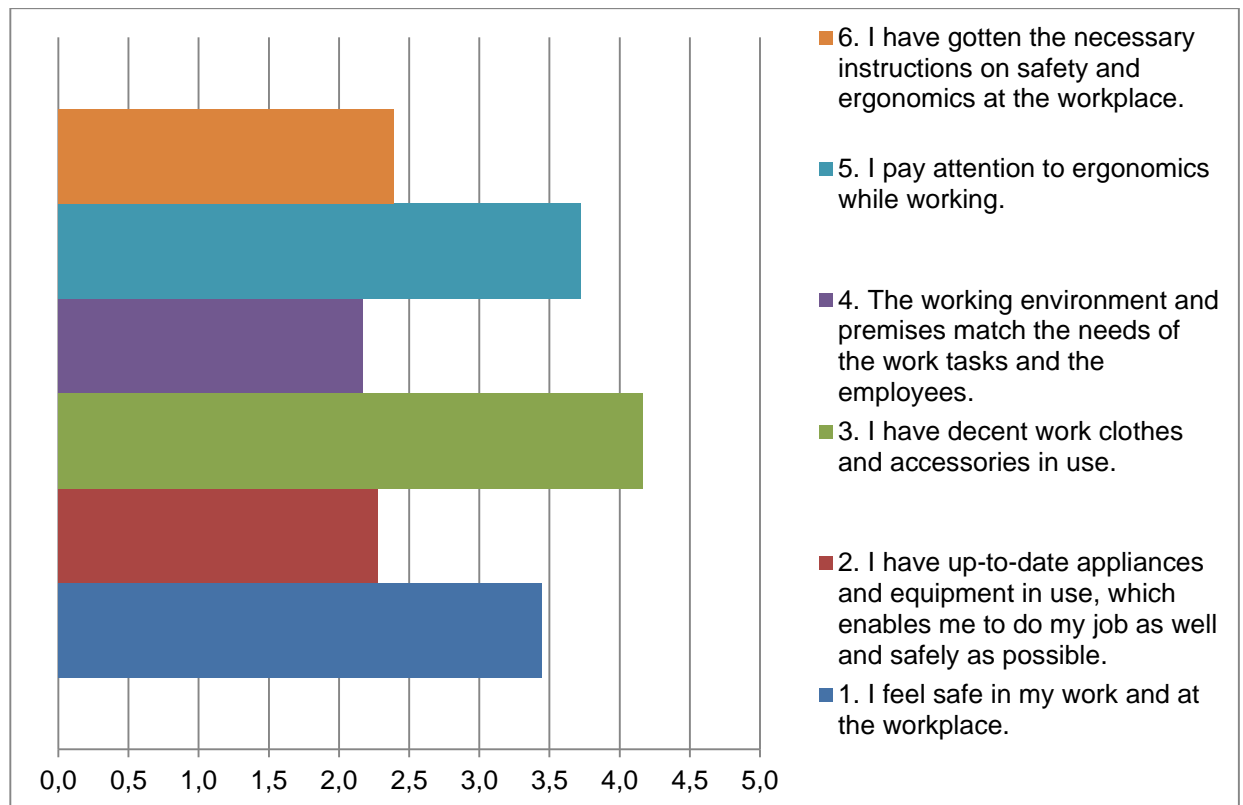


Figure 11. Average satisfaction concerning working conditions and work safety, company B.

#### 4.2.2 Work itself and its content

It seems that the employees of company B are not very satisfied with the content of their work and what it offers them. With an average rate of 2.4, only three out of the total eighteen respondents agreed with the argument "My work gives me joy and experiences of success". Seven out of eighteen respondents found their work at least somewhat meaningful, while eight felt the exact opposite. A little bit of a better result was received with the first argument of this category: "I find my work to be pleasant". With an average rate of 3.2, nine respondents at least somewhat agreed with this argument while six chose to somewhat or completely disagree. With a low rate of only 2.7, the respondents seemed to feel their work is not variant or challenging enough. Only six respondents chose to somewhat or completely agree with the argument "I find my work to be variant enough" and "I find my work to be challenging enough". The employees also seemed to think they have very little opportunity to affect their work. With an average rate of only

2.6, six respondents agreed with the argument "I feel I can have an impact on the content of my work" while ten somewhat or completely disagreed.

The most positive result of this category was received with argument number 11. Sixteen respondents somewhat or completely felt that they have the know-how their job requires while two did not have a clear opinion. The research also showed that the respondents have a clear wish to evolve and advance in their career but feel that their current job does not enable this very well. Twelve out of the total eighteen respondents stated that they have the desire to develop, while two respondents completely disagreed. Meanwhile only six respondents felt they have the opportunity to develop when up to ten employees felt at least somewhat that they do not. Most respondents also felt they do not get enough support from their coworkers and managers in their work. Ten respondents felt this way while six employees stated that they get enough support. This argument got an average score of 2.6.

Only seven out of eighteen respondents somewhat or completely agreed with the argument "I do not find my work to be too heavy physically". This argument got an average rate of 2.9 with up to seven respondents stating that their work is too physically straining for them. The following argument got only a mildly better result. With an average rate of 3.1, the respondents felt their work is not too mentally heavy for them. The answers to this argument were quite evenly divided between all five choices. Nine respondents stated that they are not continuously stressed because of their work, while only five respondents felt the opposite. This argument got an average rate of 3.4. The final argument of this category "I recover from my work well enough on my free time" got quite a good result. With an average rate of 3.9, up to thirteen respondents somewhat or completely agreed with this argument while only three disagreed.

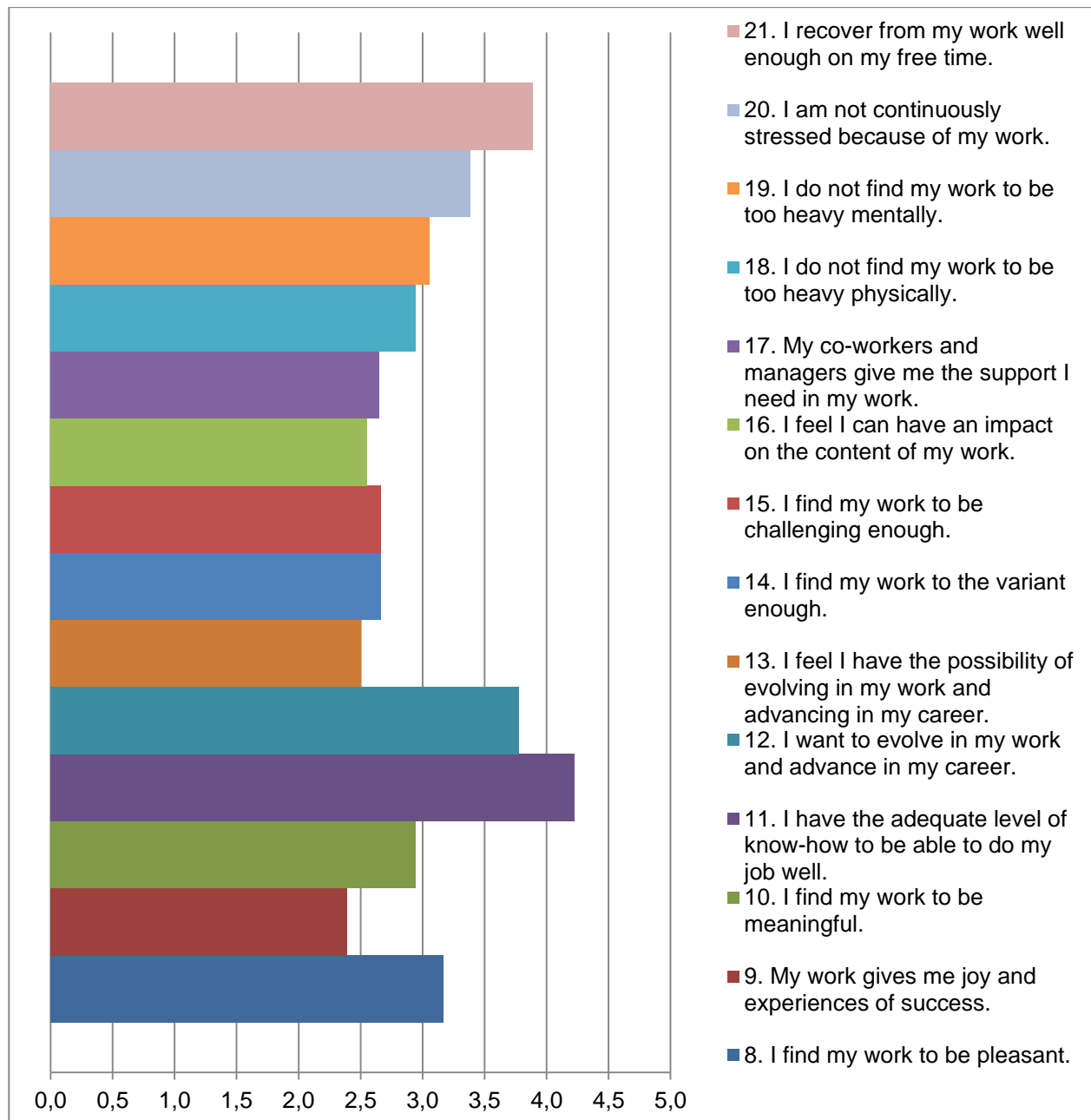


Figure 12. Average satisfaction concerning work itself and its content, company B.

#### 4.2.3 Communication and interaction

This category received quite poor results throughout all six arguments. Only three respondents out of the total eighteen felt that informing about the workplace's joint matters works at least somewhat well. Up to thirteen employees felt the opposite, producing an average rate of 2.1. Up to fourteen respondents somewhat or completely disagreed when argued that regular joint meetings are organized

at the workplace. This argument got the poorest result out of this category, only 1.8, with only one respondent somewhat agreeing with the presented argument. Only three respondents somewhat agreed with the argument "I feel it is possible for me to bring up issues to be discussed together". This argument got an average score of 2.1 with eleven respondents disagreeing, eight of them completely. The next and final three arguments all got an average rate of 1.9-2.0. Only two respondents somewhat felt that they are heard, they can have influence on common matters and that their opinion matters and is valued. With all three arguments up to fourteen respondents out of the total eighteen somewhat or completely disagreed with the previous.

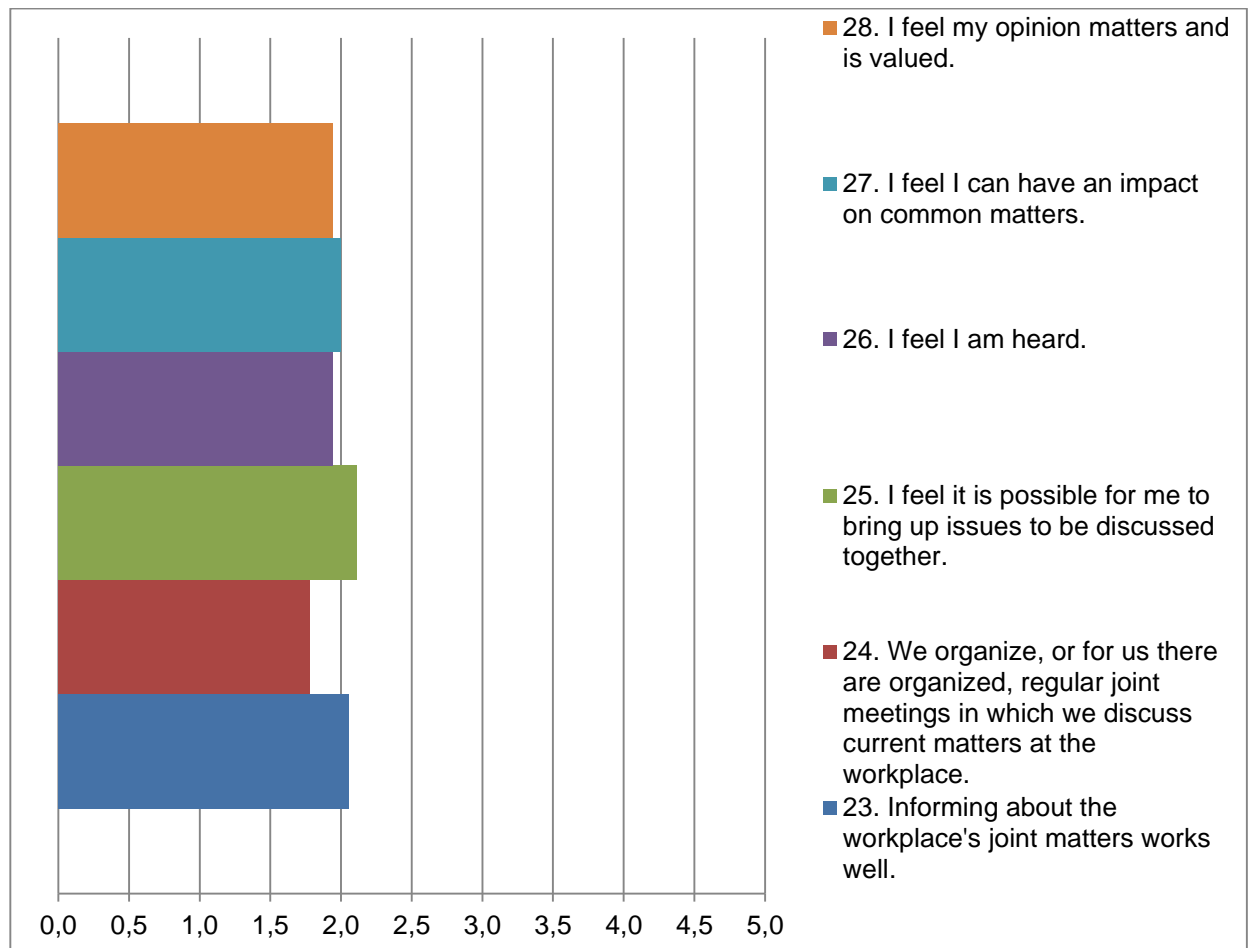


Figure 13. Average satisfaction concerning communication and interaction, company B.

#### 4.2.4 Leadership and management

Only six respondents out of the total eighteen somewhat agreed that management's expectations towards them are clear and realistic. With an average score of 2.7, seven respondents somewhat or completely disagreed with this argument while five neither agreed nor disagreed. Only three respondents felt their work is rationally- and well organized, while up to fourteen respondents felt the opposite producing an average score of 2.0. The employees were clearly also dissatisfied with how they are supported by management. With an average score of only 2.0, just one respondent completely agreed and one somewhat agreed with the argument "I feel I get the support I need in my work from management". One respondent neither agreed nor disagreed, and the rest somewhat or completely disagreed. Six respondents out of eighteen felt they can approach management and share their concerns. This argument got an average score of 2.6 with ten respondents somewhat or completely disagreeing with it.

With a very low average of 1.8, only three respondents out of the total eighteen felt all employees are equally treated by management. This argument got the lowest average from this category. Up to twelve respondents completely disagreed with the presented argument. The next argument: "I feel management treats employees fairly" received a bit of a better result. Five respondents somewhat or completely agreed with this argument, while eleven chose to somewhat or completely disagree producing an average rate of 2.4. Only five respondents out of the total eighteen felt they get enough feedback on their work and its quality. With an average rate of 2.6, nine respondents somewhat or completely disagreed with the presented argument. Even more respondents felt the feedback they get is not constructive, both positive and negative. Up to eleven respondents felt this way producing an average rate of 2.3. Seven respondents felt they can give feedback to management, and nine somewhat or completely felt they cannot, producing an average rate of 2.6.

This category of arguments got open comments from five respondents, more than any other category. These comments reflect great dissatisfaction towards the

manager closest to the employees, the work foreman. According to the respondents, the foreman is not up to his job and instead of helping he disrupts work and interferes when not needed. A couple of respondents think the foreman is not needed at all and that everything would work better without him. The employees feel he acts inappropriately by talking bad about all employees behind their backs. One respondent commented that the foreman flees from responsibility and alters the truth when passing information on to upper management. It was also said that he does not listen to the employees and does not plan enough when it comes to upcoming weeks and the work that needs to be done. One respondent thought the foreman affects the whole workplace atmosphere negatively.

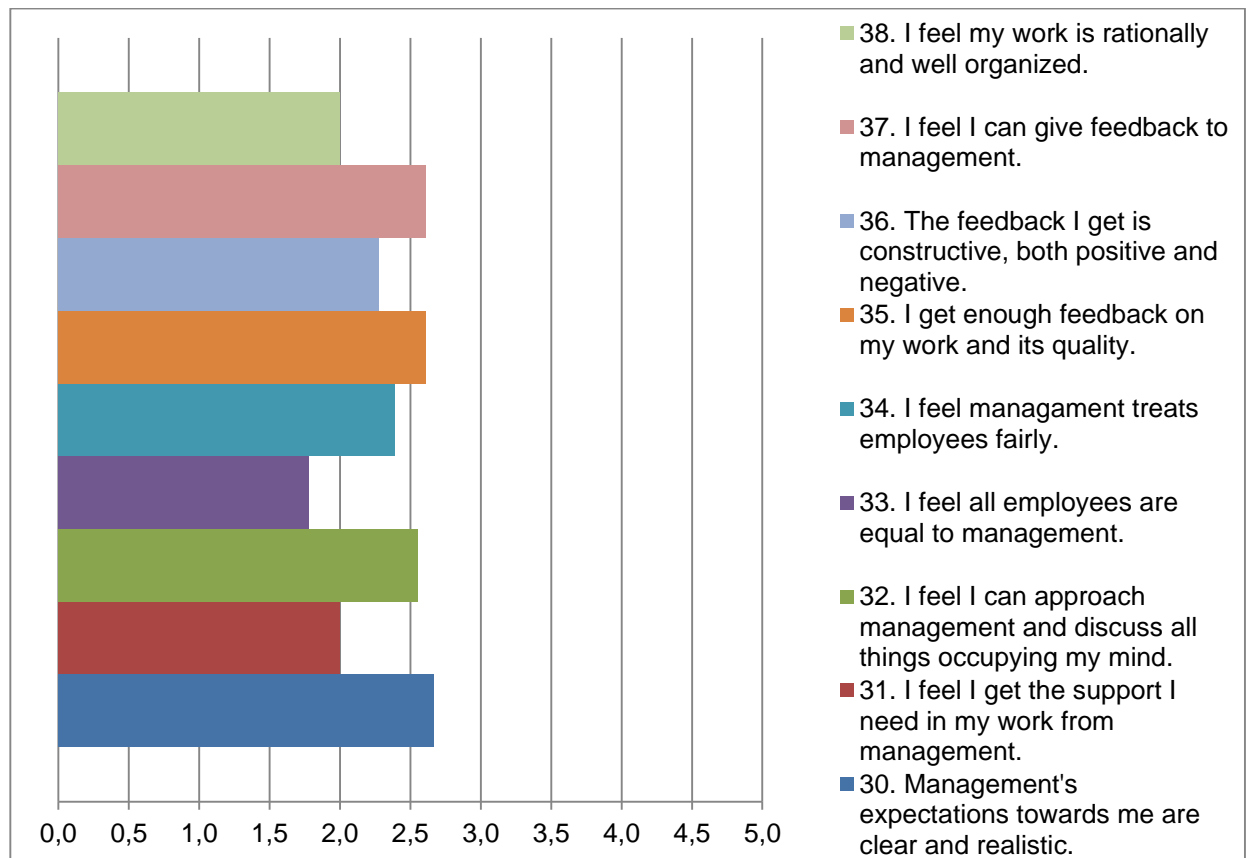


Figure 14. Average satisfaction concerning leadership and management, company B.

#### 4.2.5 Work community and atmosphere

The final category of arguments got the most positive results with company B. Ten out of the total eighteen respondents felt that the general atmosphere at the workplace is good and positive. Only four respondents disagreed with this, making the average rate 3.3. Argument number 44: "The common rules of the workplace are clear and adhered to" got the same average. Eight out of eighteen agreed with this argument, while three disagreed and the rest did not have a clear opinion. Up to thirteen respondents agreed that they feel comfortable at the workplace and that they belong. This argument got an average rate of 3.8 with only three respondents disagreeing with it. The same mean value was received with argument number 46. Twelve respondents out of eighteen felt that nobody from the workplace gets discriminated against or bullied, while three chose to disagree.

With quite a high average of 4.2, up to sixteen respondents felt that the employees work well together and not one respondent disagreed with this. Seventeen employees also thought that they give and receive help from others when asked. With only one respondent neither agreeing nor disagreeing, this argument got an average rate of 4.6. Fifteen respondents chose to agree with the argument "Between co-workers, we can give each other constructive feedback". With an average rate of 4.1, only one respondent somewhat disagreed with this argument, and two neither agreed nor disagreed. Up to sixteen respondents also felt that the employees can discuss problems together and solve them without management. This argument got an average of 4.6 with only two respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing with it. This category of arguments got only two open comments. One respondent felt the employees have a good relationship with each other, and another said that he/she is ready to resign because of workplace conflicts.

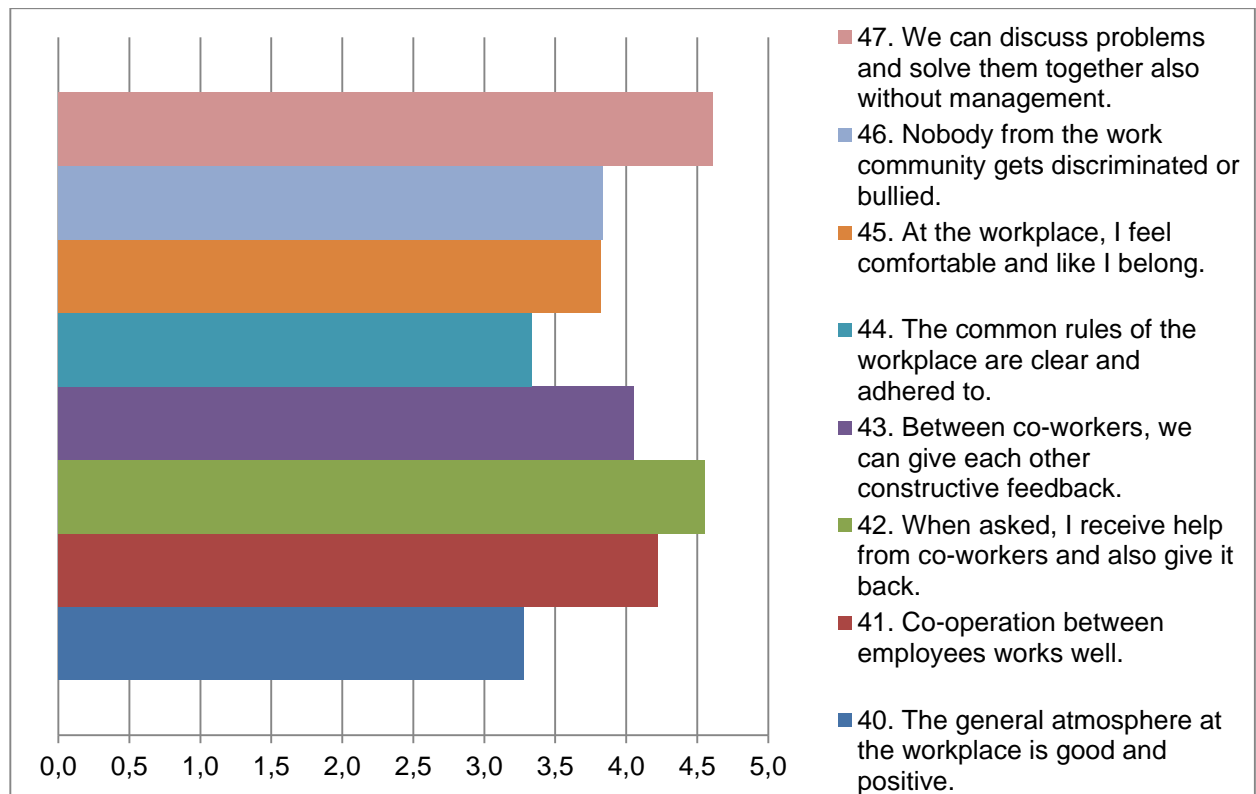


Figure 15. Average satisfaction concerning work community and atmosphere, company B.

### 4.3 Company C, Finland

Company C has the smallest number of employees of all four companies. The survey was given to ten employees, and nine of them took part in the research. This means that the response rate was 90 percent.

#### 4.3.1 Working conditions and work safety

The answers to the first category of arguments showed the employees are quite satisfied with the physical working environment and work safety. To the first argument stating "I feel safe in my work and at the workplace", all respondents felt that they somewhat agree. The average score for argument 2 "I have up-to-date appliances and equipment in use, which enables me to do my job as well and as safely as possible", was also "somewhat agree".

In rest of the answers to the arguments of this category, there was a bit more divergence to be seen. When stated "I have decent work clothes and accessories in use", three respondents chose to completely agree. One respondent stated that they somewhat agree. The rest of the answers were "neither agree nor disagree" or "somewhat agree". For this argument, the average score of satisfaction was 3.9.

Argument number 4 "The working environment and premises match the needs of the work tasks and the employees" got an average satisfaction score of 3.8. Two respondents stated that they neither agree nor disagree, and the rest somewhat agreed. Answers to argument number 5 suggest that with an average of 3.7, the employees pay attention to ergonomics while working. One person chose to somewhat disagree and two people neither agreed nor disagreed. One respondent stated that they completely agree, and the rest somewhat agreed.

The sixth and final argument of this category received answers which were a bit harder to interpret. When argued "I have gotten the necessary instructions on safety and ergonomics at the workplace", five respondents chose option number 3, neither agree nor disagree. Only one person chose to completely agree and one to somewhat agree. The average satisfaction score was 3.3. The reason for over 50% of respondents choosing to neither agree nor disagree may lie in how the argument was presented. Combining two different issues into one argument may cause confusion on how to answer. If the respondent feels that they have gotten the necessary instructions on safety but not on ergonomics, the obvious option to choose would be "neither agree nor disagree".

This category of arguments received open comments from only one respondent. According to them, some work tasks are impossible to complete ergonomically. With this the respondent refers to having to carry heavy weights over distances which include dangerous places such as stairs. The respondent also felt the tools and safety equipment are not at a sufficient level and suggested acquiring proper chairs and ergonomic rubber mats for the work stations. The respondent also suggested getting someone from outside the workplace to monitor each work station's work habits.

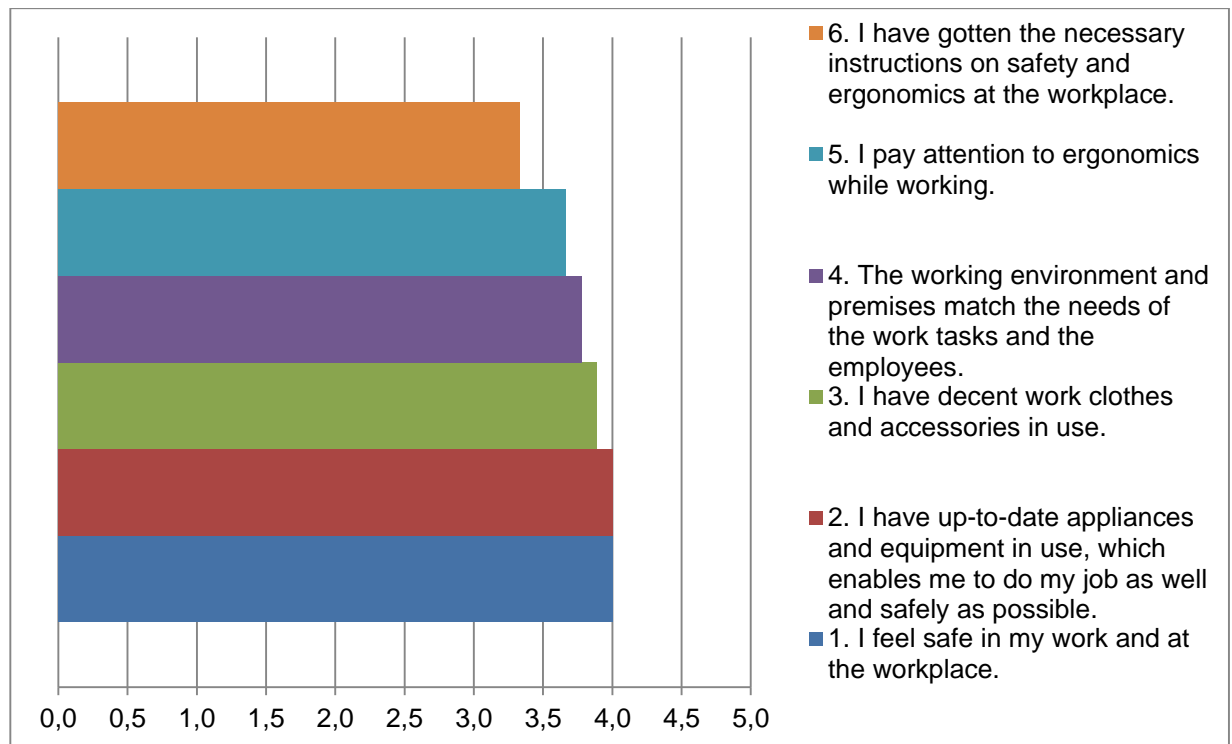


Figure 16. Average satisfaction concerning working conditions and work safety, company C.

#### 4.3.2 Work itself and its content

The results of the second category of arguments show that the employees feel relatively positive about the content of their work. With an average score of 3.4-3.6, the respondents stated they find their work to be pleasant and meaningful, and that it gives them joy and experiences of success. To the argument "I find my work to be variant enough", the answers were quite evenly divided between all choices. The average score of satisfaction came out to be 3.1. Only one respondent thought that their work does not challenge them enough. All others chose to answer that they neither agree nor disagree, somewhat agree or completely agree. For this argument, the average score came out to be 3.7.

All respondents seem to feel confident about their skills when it comes to completing their work tasks. When stated "I have the adequate level of know-how to be able to do my job well", all respondents at least somewhat agreed. All but one respondent also showed interest in bettering themselves and advancing in their career. With an average score of 3.9, only one respondent stated they somewhat

disagree with wanting to develop themselves and move forward career-wise. The argument "I have the possibility of evolving in my work and advancing in my career" divided the respondents' opinions quite effectively. Only one respondent stated that they completely agree and one that they completely disagree. The average score came out to be 3.0.

All respondents were able to quite well describe how they feel about their chances of affecting their own work. Only one respondent chose to neither agree nor disagree when stated "I feel I can have an impact on the content of my work". This argument got the lowest satisfaction score of this category, only 2.8. The employees' work does not seem to be too consuming. With an average score of 3.7-4.0 the respondents felt their work is not too heavy physically or mentally and that they are not continuously stressed and are able to recover well enough from work on their free time. When stated "My coworkers and managers give me the support I need in my work", only one respondent chose to somewhat disagree. This argument got an average score of 3.4.

Similar to the first category of arguments, this one also got open comments from only one respondent. In his/her opinion, filling in for somebody during their break does not work like it should. The product gets prepared only to the point that it creates a jam in the next work station so that the person coming back from their break has to catch up again. This opinion could reflect that the respondent thinks employees do not consider each other enough in their work or that in general the system of keeping the production going while break times, is badly organized.

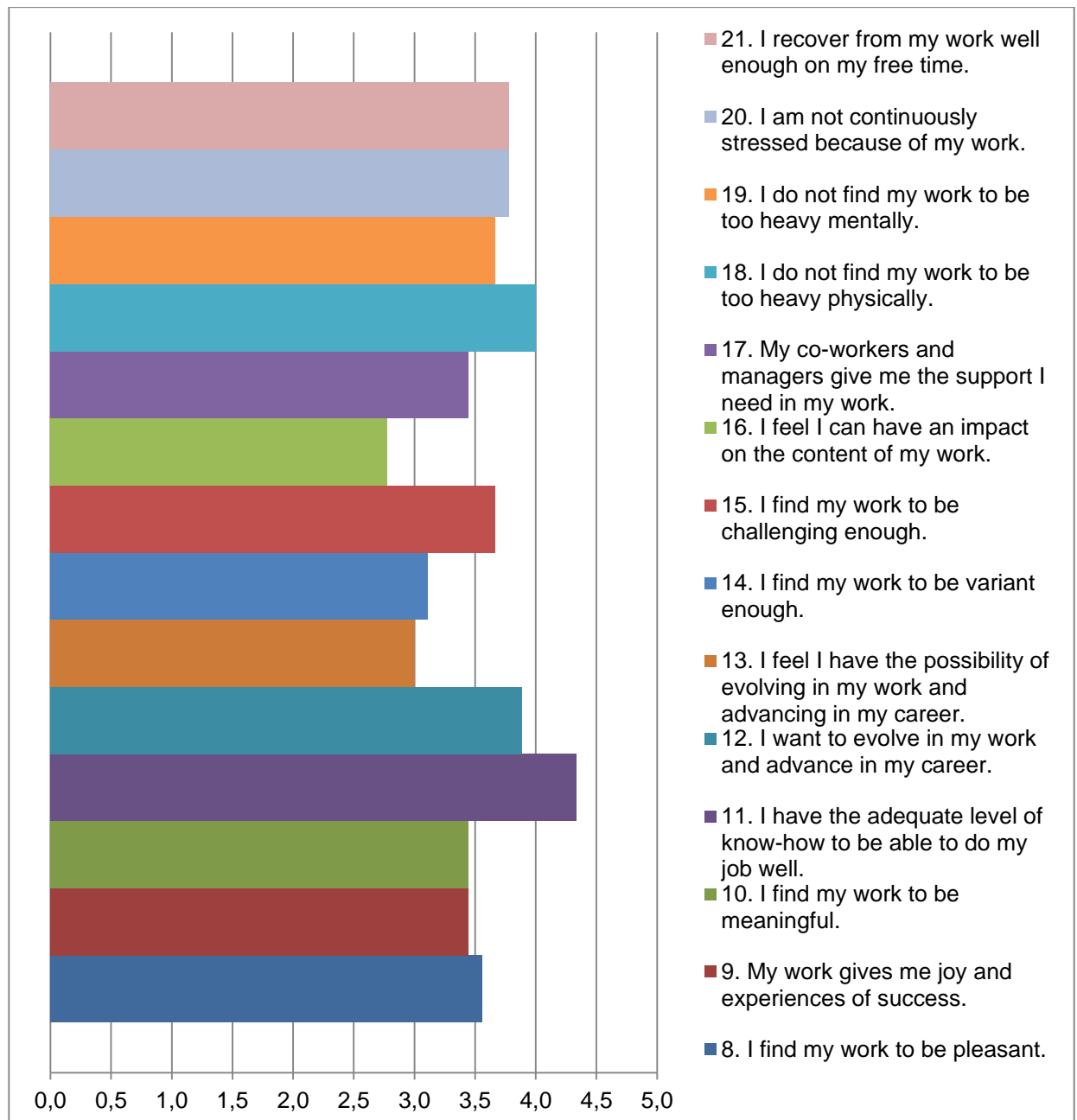


Figure 17. Average satisfaction concerning work itself and its content, company C.

### 4.3.3 Communication and interaction

The results of the third category of arguments show there is some improvement to be made in the way employees are informed and given the opportunity to discuss together the workplace's common matters. When argued "Informing about the workplace's joint matters works well" two respondents chose to somewhat agree while three of them somewhat disagreed. The rest neither agreed nor disagreed producing an average rate of 2.9. The next argument "We organize, or for us there are organized, regular joint meetings, in which we discuss current matter at the workplace" got the lowest satisfaction rate of this category, only 2.4. Six respondents out of the total nine somewhat or completely disagreed with this argument. One respondent commented that even though initially promised, meetings are no longer organized. They also presented some concrete solutions to how communication could be improved. In his/her opinion, technology should be better utilized. Employees should communicate through their hearing protection headsets and be given the opportunity to communicate with a chat window on their computers. In addition, data about current and upcoming production should be available on the computer for the people concerned to see. According to the employee, information is currently passed on using little pieces of paper and the employees who have needed information are hard to find. The employee suggested practices should be updated while wondering if all time-consuming entries and forms are truly necessary.

The opportunity employees have to influence common matters and decision-making seems to be at a decent level but definitely could be improved upon. With an average rate of 3.1-3.4, the respondents felt they are heard and their opinions are valued, and that they can bring up issues to be discussed together and have an impact on them. Unfortunately no open comments were made related to this topic.

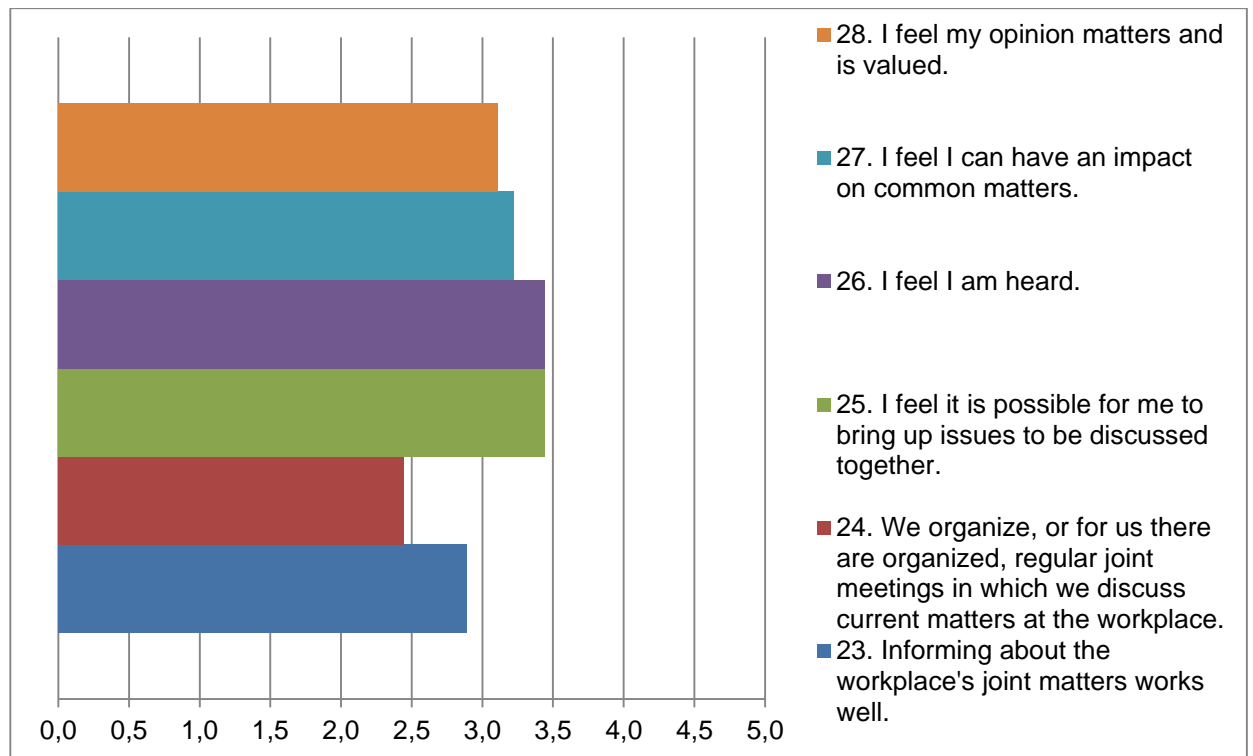


Figure 18. Average satisfaction concerning communication and interaction, company C.

#### 4.3.4 Leadership and management

The employees' satisfaction towards management seems to be at a medium level. With an average score of 3.3, the employees felt the expectations set for them are clear and realistic and that they are supported in their work by the management. It also seems that management has made itself quite available to the employees since as many as three respondents completely agreed with the argument "I feel I can approach management and discuss all things occupying my mind". Regarding this argument, only one respondent chose to somewhat disagree making the average satisfaction rate 3.9. The answers to the argument "I feel my work is rationally and well organized" were equally divided between choices 2, 3 and 4. The average for this argument was 3.0.

Quite an interesting difference in results can be seen in the arguments discussing equality and justice. When argued "I feel all employees are equal to management" most (five) respondents disagreed: two respondents neither agreed or dis-

agreed, and two somewhat agreed. Nevertheless, only two respondents disagreed with the argument "I feel management treats employees fairly", while six respondents somewhat agreed. It may be that even though management is practiced through fairness towards all employees, the manager/s simply has a closer relationship with some employees than others. This can easily result in the employees feeling like some are more popular than others or even management's favorites. It is nonetheless only natural for the chemistry between some people to work better than with others. It does not mean all employees could not be treated with justice.

The results concerning feedback are quite encouraging. With an average of 3.8, the respondents felt they get enough feedback on their work and its quality. Concerning the nature of the feedback received, the results were divided into two. Five out of nine respondents somewhat or completely agreed while four somewhat disagreed. The average for this argument came out to be 3.4. The only respondent who gave open comments stated that management does not often offer employees encouragement. The argument "I feel I can give feedback to management" reinforces the impression that the management is quite easily approachable. Four out of nine respondents completely agreed with this argument and three somewhat agreed. Only one respondent neither agreed or disagreed and one somewhat disagreed. This argument got the highest satisfaction rate of this category, 4.1.

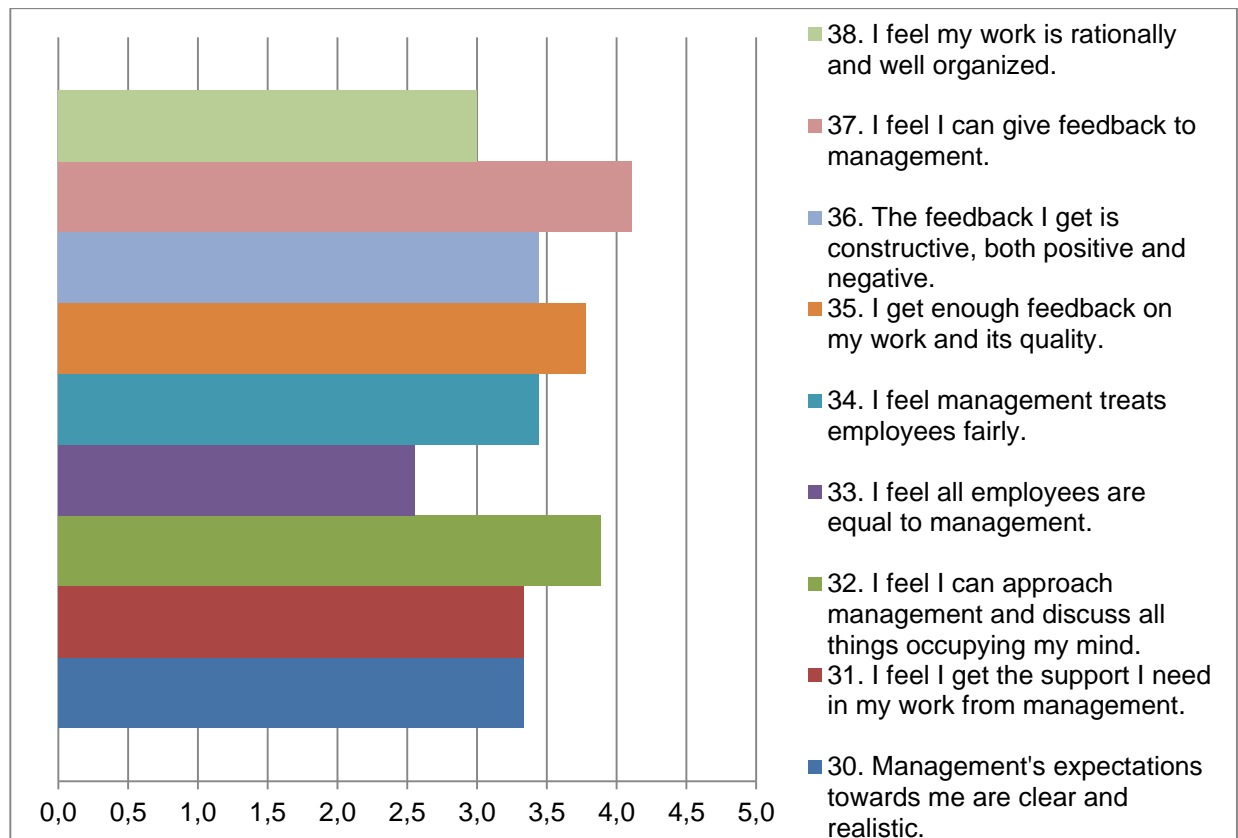


Figure 19. Average satisfaction concerning leadership and management, company C.

#### 4.3.5 Work community and atmosphere

Most employees were happy with the workplace's atmosphere and the interpersonal relationships. When presented the argument "The general atmosphere at the workplace is good and positive", six out of nine respondents somewhat agreed, while only one respondent completely disagreed. Seven out of nine respondents also felt the employees co-operate well together and all employees agreed with "When asked, I receive help from coworkers and also give it back". Eight out of nine respondents felt that they are able to give each other constructive feedback within the working community. The argument of this category that got the lowest average of 3.3 was "The common rules of the workplace are clear and adhered to". Only one respondent somewhat disagreed with feeling comfortable and like they belong at the workplace. This argument got an average score of 3.9 with seven respondents at least somewhat agreeing with it. The final two arguments of the questionnaire both got an average of 4.0. Seven out of nine respondents agreed that nobody at the workplace gets bullied or discriminated

against, while two chose to neither agree nor disagree. The final argument "We can discuss problems and solve them together also without management" got the exact same number of each answer choice. The only open comment on this category of arguments entailed the wish for tours or recreational visits to other facilities of the same interest group.

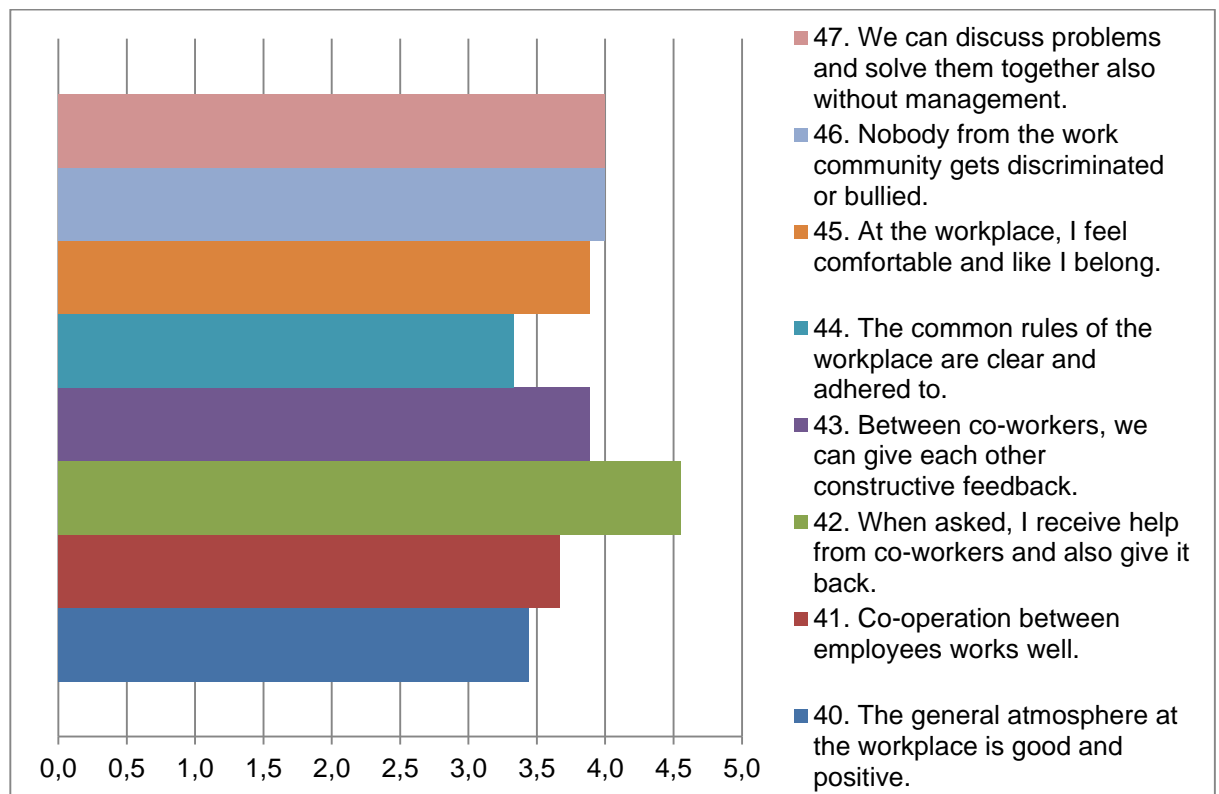


Figure 20. Average satisfaction concerning work community and atmosphere, company C.

#### 4.4 Company D, Russia

In Russia the survey was given to twelve employees. Eleven decided to take part in it, which makes the response rate 91.6 percent. None of the respondents decided to leave any open comments.

#### **4.4.1 Working conditions and work safety**

With quite a good average of 4.2, the respondents felt safe at work. Up to ten of the total eleven respondents felt this way, while only one did not have a clear opinion. Nine respondents also felt that the equipment and appliances they work with are up-to-date, while one respondent somewhat disagreed and one chose to neither agree nor disagree, producing an average of 3.8. In contrast only two respondents somewhat agreed with the third argument "I have decent work clothes and accessories in use". Up to six respondents completely disagreed with this argument making the average rate only 2.0. Six out of eleven respondents somewhat agreed that the working environment matches the needs of the work tasks and the employees. This argument got an average rate of 3.0 with four respondents somewhat or completely disagreeing with it and one respondent not choosing to answer. Nine respondents felt that they have gotten the necessary instructions on safety and ergonomics at the workplace. Two respondents decided to neither agree nor disagree with this argument producing an average of 4.3. Nevertheless, only five respondents agreed that they pay attention to ergonomics when working while the rest neither agreed nor disagreed, and one left a blank answer, producing an average of 3.8.

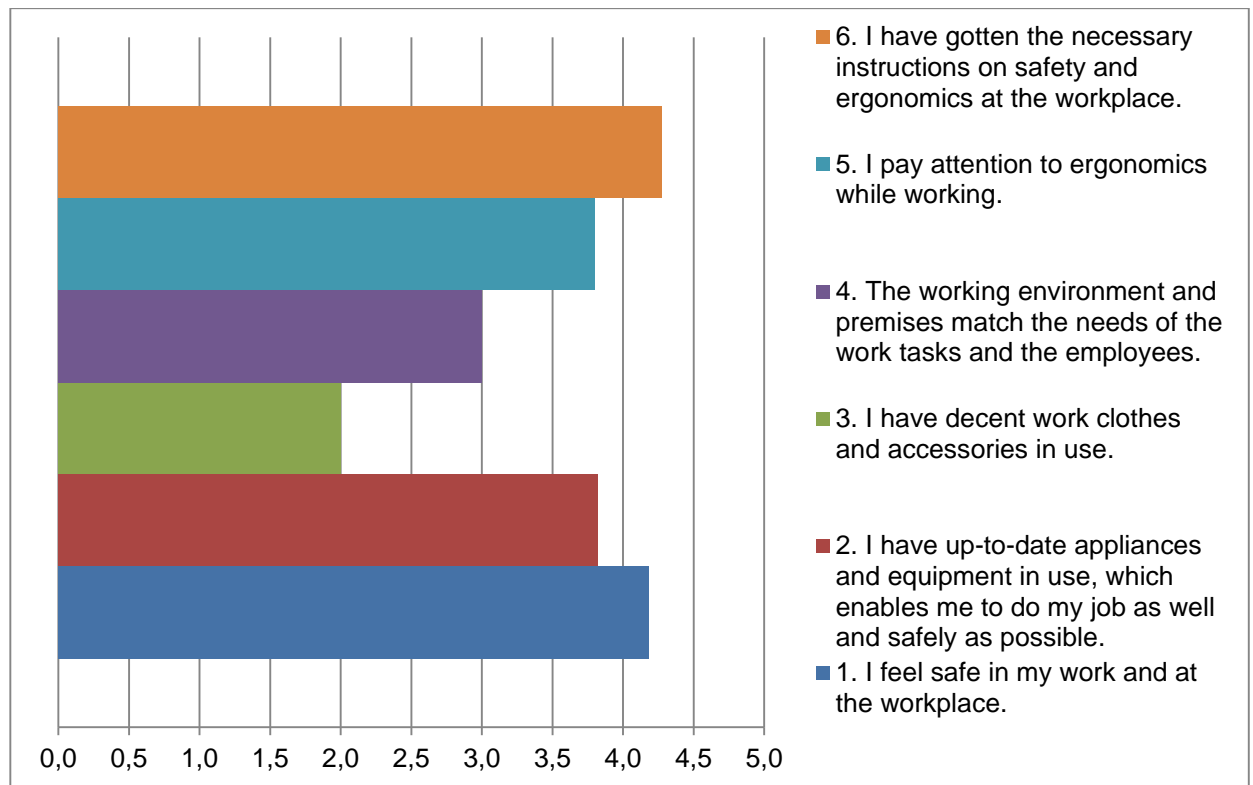


Figure 21. Average satisfaction concerning working conditions and work safety, company D.

#### 4.4.2 Work itself and its content

Quite interestingly, up to eight respondents out of the total eleven found their work to be pleasant, but only two felt that their work gives them joy and experiences of success. With an average of 4.0 not one respondent considered work to be unpleasant, but three did not have a clear opinion. Simultaneously up to five respondents disagreed with the argument "My work gives me joy and experiences of success" producing an average of only 2.5. Nevertheless, up to eight respondents found their work to be meaningful while three neither agreed nor disagreed producing an average of 3.9.

With a very high average of 4.9, all respondents felt they have the knowledge and skills their work requires. Only four respondents stated that they want to develop and advance in their career. These four decided to completely agree with the argument "I want to evolve in my work and advance in my career", while the rest neither agreed or disagreed or to some extent disagreed, producing an average of 3.3. Only three respondents felt that their current workplace enables career

advancement and personal development. With an average of only 2.2, up to six respondents chose to completely disagree with this argument.

Nine out of the total eleven respondents felt their work is versatile enough. One person chose to somewhat disagree and one to completely disagree producing an average of 3.9. Seven respondents felt their work challenges them enough. With an average of 3.4, two respondents chose to completely disagree with this and two to neither agree nor disagree. Up to ten respondents agreed that they can influence their own work. With one respondent somewhat disagreeing with this, the argument got an average of 4.1. Seven respondents felt they get enough support in their work from co-workers and management. This argument got an average of 3.4 with four respondents somewhat or completely disagreeing with it.

With averages of 4.2 and 4.5, the respondents felt their work is not too physically straining and that they recover well enough from work during their free time. Only one respondent found their work to be a bit too heavy, and one did not have a clear opinion. All respondents somewhat or completely agreed that they recover well enough. Only six respondents stated that they do not feel their work is too mentally heavy. With an average of 3.5, three respondents felt the opposite, while two respondents neither agreed nor disagreed. Nine employees agreed with the argument "I am not continuously stressed because of my work". One respondent chose to somewhat disagree and one to neither agree or disagree producing an average of 3.9.

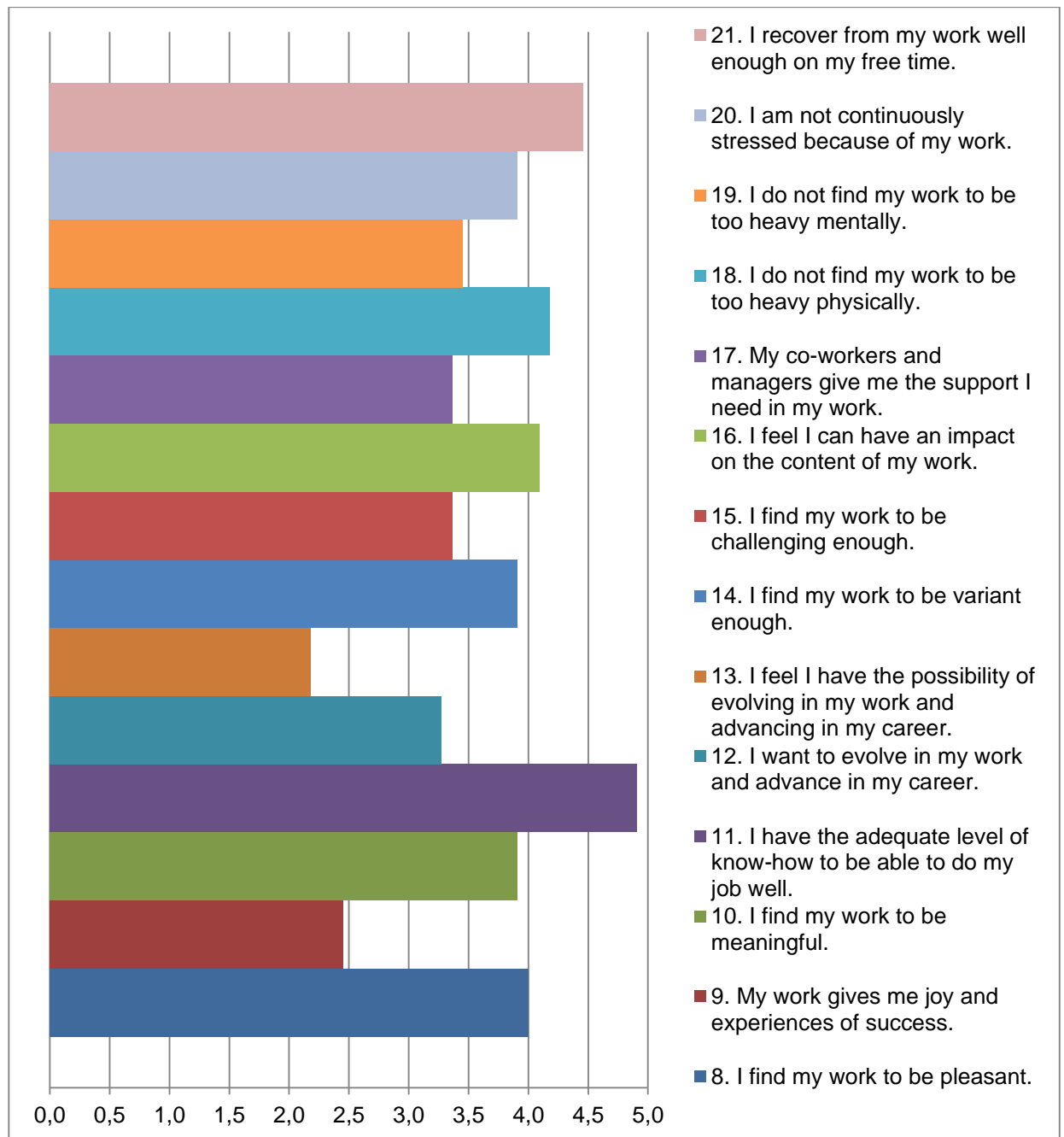


Figure 22. Average satisfaction concerning work itself and its content, company D.

#### 4.4.3 Communication and interaction

Eight respondents out of the total eleven at least somewhat felt informing about the workplace's joint matters works well. With an average of 3.8, two respondents completely disagreed with this and one neither agreed nor disagreed. Up to eight respondents stated that regular joint meetings are not organized for them at the workplace. Three respondents felt otherwise producing an average of 2.1. Seven

employees felt they have the opportunity to bring up issues to be discussed together. With an average of 3.5, two respondents felt the opposite and two did not have a clear opinion. Only four respondents felt they get heard at the workplace, while three disagreed and four neither agreed nor disagreed, producing an average of 3.1. While eight respondents felt they can affect common matters, only three thought their opinions matter and are valued. With an average of 3.5, only three respondents felt they are not listened to. Three employees also felt their opinion is not valued, but five neither agreed nor disagreed, contributing to an average of 2.8.

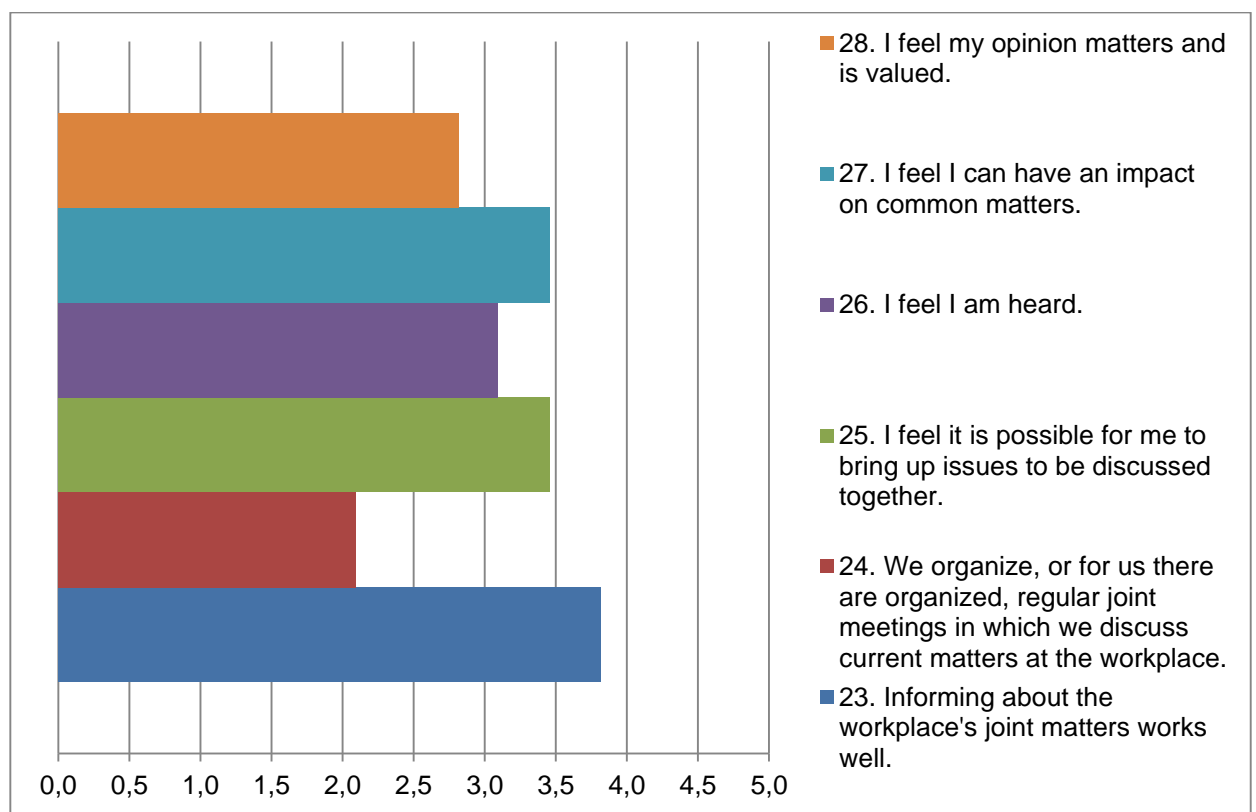


Figure 23. Average satisfaction concerning communication and interaction, company D.

#### **4.4.4 Leadership and management**

Up to eight respondents could not determine whether they agreed or disagreed with the argument "Management's expectations towards me are clear and realistic". Two respondents agreed with this argument, and one completely disagreed, producing an average of 3.1. Five respondents felt they get enough support from management. Five felt the opposite, and one neither agreed nor disagreed producing an average rate of 2.8. Seven employees felt they can approach management and discuss all things occupying their mind. Only one completely disagreed, and the rest neither agreed nor disagreed contributing to an average rate of 3.5. Only four respondents agreed with the argument "I feel my work is rationally and well organized". Four respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, and three disagreed producing an average of 2.9.

Only one respondent felt all employees are not equal to management. Five respondents felt the opposite, and five neither agreed nor disagreed resulting in an average of 3.4. Three employees did not think management treats employees fairly, while four thought it does. This argument got an average of 3.0 with four respondents neither agreeing nor disagreeing with it. Six respondents felt they get enough feedback on their work and seven thought the feedback is constructive, both negative and positive. In both cases only one respondent somewhat disagreed with the presented argument. Only one person felt they cannot give feedback to management, while eight respondents felt that they can. All three arguments on feedback received an average above 3.5.

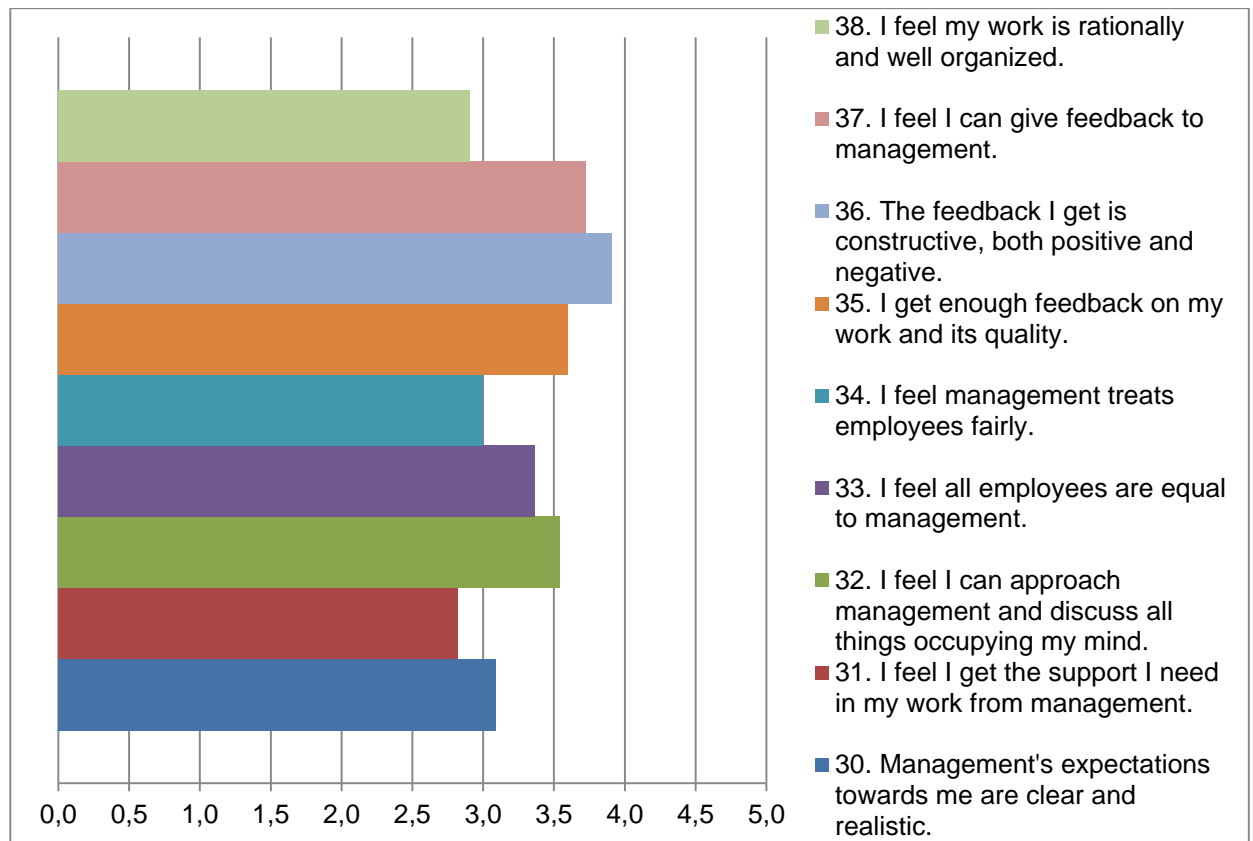


Figure 24. Average satisfaction concerning leadership and management, company D.

#### 4.4.5 Work community and atmosphere

Seven out of the total eleven respondents felt that the general atmosphere at the workplace is good and positive. Only one respondent disagreed with this, two neither agreed nor disagreed and one decided not to answer, producing an average of 4.1. Eight respondents thought that they have a set of clear workplace rules which are adhered to. This argument got an average of 4.2 with again only one respondent disagreeing with it and two neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

Three respondents felt the co-operation between employees does not work well. One person did not have a clear opinion, and the rest thought they can function together well as a work community. This argument got an average of 3.5. Nine out of eleven respondents agreed with the argument "When asked, I receive help from co-workers and also give it back". Not one respondent disagreed with this, but two neither agreed nor disagreed, contributing to an average of 4.5. This

same pattern of answers happened also with the next argument. Nine respondents at least somewhat felt they can give each other constructive feedback. Nobody disagreed, and two neither agreed nor disagreed. This argument got an average of 4.3. Up to five respondents could not clearly define whether they thought employees can talk about problems and solve them without management. Four respondents thought that they can, and two completely disagreed. This argument got an average of 3.2.

Eight out of the total eleven respondents stated that they feel comfortable at the workplace and like they belong. One respondent somewhat disagreed with this, and two neither agreed nor disagreed producing an average of 3.9. Only five respondents thought nobody at the workplace gets bullied or discriminated. Nevertheless, only two disagreed with this but four neither agreed nor disagreed, producing an average of 3.5.

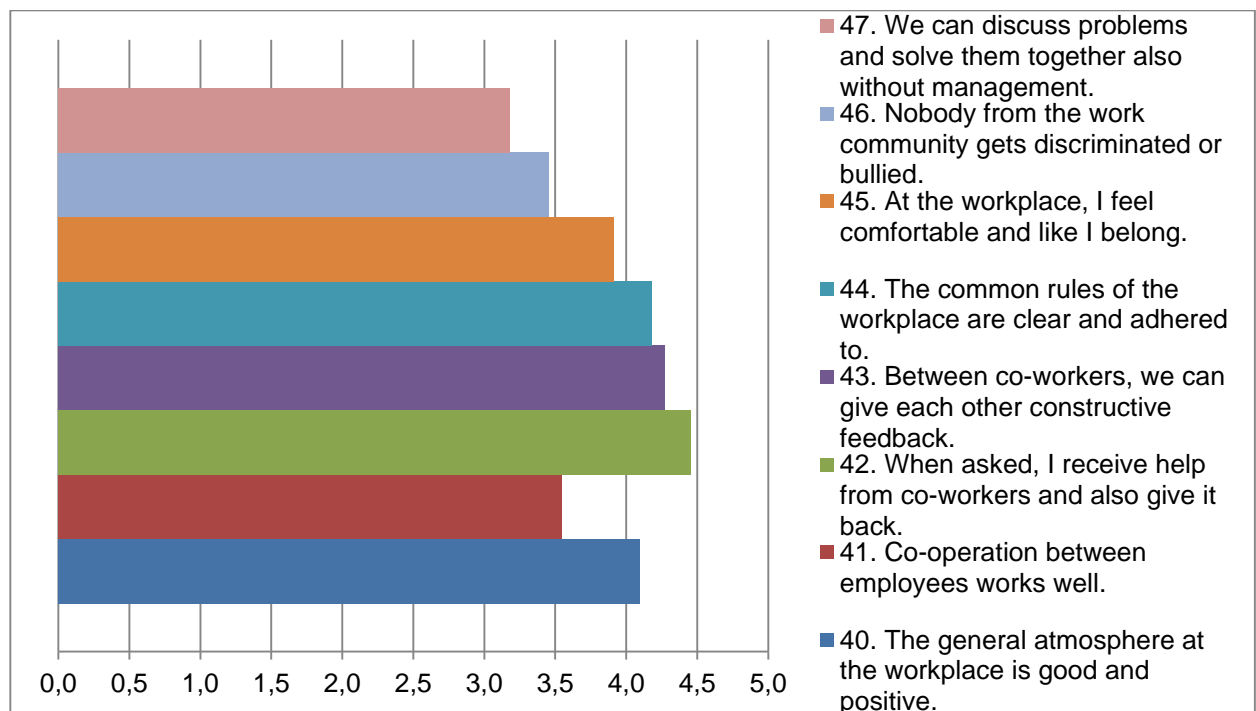


Figure 25. Average satisfaction concerning work community and atmosphere, company D.

## **5 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1 Result indications and suggestions for improvement and further research**

#### **5.1.1 Company A**

The employees of company A seem to be relatively satisfied with their jobs overall. The results of the first category of claims regarding working conditions and work safety did not reveal any cause for concern. The employees appear to feel quite safe at work and content with the appliances and equipment they have in use. They are also satisfied with the work clothes and accessories they are supplied with. The only thing I would suggest the company management to consider is the amount of training provided on work safety and ergonomics. Since the nature of work is such that it does not require continuous up-keeping or updating of skills or knowledge, the initial introduction and familiarization of new employees is crucial. The foreman of the employees has to make sure all new employees get the proper guidance in safe work practices before starting work. The same needs to happen every time an employee has to perform tasks not familiar to them. I would also suggest that the company considers organizing the employees some training on ergonomics. This would benefit not just the employees but also the whole organization by reducing injuries caused by work and bad ergonomics.

The results of the second category of claims were quite positive as well. The employees seem to feel competent in their work and to also somewhat like what they are doing. It appears they are able to recover from work well enough in their free time and do not find their work to be too stressful or heavy for them. At the time of the research, company A had recently gone through some organizational changes, and the employees were under the threat of being laid off. These factors might have had an effect on the stress level of the employees, and it is reasonable to keep that in mind while interpreting the results of the research.

The results indicate that the employees have a desire for career advancement but do not necessarily feel their current work enables it. This is very unfortunate but at the same time very difficult for management to have an effect on. The nature of work is such that within the company, there simply are not many opportunities for career advancement. Most of the employees work in the production lines and above them are the managers with different responsibilities, such as production or dispatch, and finally upper management. When necessary, a managerial position will be filled and all employees can be possible candidates, but continuous search for talent or skills does not go on in the company.

Another factor impacted greatly by the nature of the company and the work it offers is the amount of influence an employee can have on the content of work. I would encourage the company management to investigate whether it would be possible to give the employees better opportunities to influence their own work. According to the research results, the employees are not dissatisfied with their chances to have an impact but they are not particularly happy with them either. In the production lines of these types of companies, the work tasks tend to be very clearly defined and tied to a certain position in the production. However, giving the employees more power to choose certain tasks or to try new ones should be looked into.

The third category of claims, communication and interaction, revealed definite room for improvement. The employees somewhat feel they are heard and their opinions appreciated but think informing in the workplace does not work well. To find out why they feel this way, further research needs to be conducted. Do they feel they are not getting the necessary information from the management level, and if so, what kind of information do they wish to get? Does the problem exist within the employee community as in some employees not passing on information to others who need it? This problem in information flow is difficult to resolve before getting more information about the underlying factors causing it. One good place to begin, however, would be to start organizing regular meetings since they are not organized now according to the results. All employees also need to understand the responsibility they have in the company information flow. As previously

mentioned in the theoretical section of this paper, all employees need to think of others and pass on relevant information to those who need it in their work.

The employees seem quite satisfied with their manager/s. It appears the expectations towards the employees have been made clear and they are also realistic. The managerial level seems to be easily approachable and gives the employees enough constructive feedback. The matters which the employees are somewhat dissatisfied with are employee equality and the organization of work. Further research needs to be done to be able to say what has caused this low level of satisfaction. Because of the small number of open comments received, it is difficult to say why the employees feel they are not all equal in the eyes of management or why they think their work is not well organized.

The results on work community and atmosphere are very positive. No single matter causes any concern, and the employees seem relatively satisfied with all things discussed. It appears the employees get along greatly together and the atmosphere at the workplace is good and positive. As two of the open comments stated, the fear of being laid off affects the general atmosphere negatively. It is perfectly understandable that this type of stressful factor burdens the employees mentally and strains the atmosphere. Even though it cannot clearly be seen in the results, the employees' situation was somewhat difficult at the time of conducting this research and it could have had an effect on the results gathered.

### **5.1.2 Company B**

Unfortunately, the employees of company B seem quite dissatisfied. The overall picture received is negative. According to the first category of claims, the employees state that they pay attention to ergonomics while working but do not feel they have gotten the necessary instructions on safe work practices and ergonomics. Training on these matters should be given to existing employees, and the company should make sure the introduction and familiarization of new employees is done thoroughly as well.

The employees feel the work clothes and accessories they are equipped are sufficient. The same cannot, however, be said about the working environment and appliances. In the open comments it was said that the grounds are in bad condition and the machinery too old. I have seen the grounds myself and to an extent, I have to agree with the negative comments but obviously I am not constantly present to follow the situation, so my opinion is not very reliable. Weather conditions seem to affect the condition of the grounds greatly. This can be impacted by management and as far as I know, some action has already been taken. Updating the machinery, however, takes more than the opinions of the employees; it is a big financial investment. Nonetheless, management should consider replacing some of the older equipment to improve employee satisfaction and production efficiency, for example.

The employees seem to feel quite safe at work despite all the dissatisfaction. I recommend that further research is done to uncover all of the different factors causing dissatisfaction. One or two comments about the condition of the grounds or machinery are not enough to represent the whole community of employees.

What can be gathered from the second category of arguments is that the employees find their work somewhat pleasant but it does not really offer them joy or experiences of success, or seem very meaningful. The employees do not feel their work is varied and challenging enough or they can influence their own work. More variation should be arranged so that the employees can perform different work tasks and through this also feel more challenged. A new and different job description can also be found more positive than the old one, thus offering more joy and pleasant experiences. However, it may turn out that this kind of work or this specific job or company simply is not right for all of the employees. This type of work cannot meet the values and expectations of all people, as no kind of work can. In this case, more research should be done to hear from the employees themselves as to how their work could be altered to make it more enjoyable for them.

It is positive that the employees feel they have the level of know-how their job requires. Similarly to company A, the employees want to better themselves and

advance in their career but do not feel it is possible in their current workplace. In company B, career advancement and moving up in the organizational hierarchy is even more difficult than in company A. The employees are managed by one foreman above whom is upper management. The chances of being transferred to a managerial position are scarce due to the structure of the organization, and it is not very realistic to expect this issue to be tackled by the management if the current structure otherwise serves the company well.

The employees seem to recover from work well enough during their free time and are not continuously stressed because of their jobs. Whether the employees feel their work is too physically or mentally burdening for them is hard to interpret from the results since the mean values of the answers came to be around the option of "neither agree nor disagree". Further research should be done on this subject to better understand the situation and underlying factors. Some work tasks in company B involve heavy manual labor. It could be reduced by acquiring more machinery or tools or updating the current ones. The mental heaviness of the work could be related to the employees not getting enough support from their co-workers and/or manager, and the expectations towards them not being realistic and/or clear enough (discussed more later). By doing further research, we could understand why the employees feel they are not getting enough support, from whom exactly, and what kind of support they feel they need in their work.

The company's communication and interaction is not at a satisfactory level according to the employees. Regular meetings are not organized, information lines do not work, and the employees do not feel they are heard and appreciated or that they have the possibility to bring up issues for discussion. This calls for a reform of the entire communication culture within the workplace. A good place to start would be organizing a meeting in which this matter could be discussed with the help of a professional. Offering training for the foreman alone could help in maintaining functional communication in the future, but kick starting the comprehensive change may require somebody from outside the company. A professional could help initiate the discussion about the current problematic situation and guide it to go over different matters. He/she could help in opening up the

communication and offer different solutions to the problems uncovered. The process could then be continued with the received advice and by starting to organize regular meetings which would act as a venue for open discussion and interaction between all employees and the foreman.

The broad dissatisfaction among the employees of company B is also connected to leadership and management. The employees do not feel: the expectations towards them are clear and/or realistic, they get enough support from their manager, the manager is easily approachable and can be given feedback to, the employees are treated fairly and equally, they get enough feedback and the feedback is constructive, and that their work is rationally and well organized. Arranging an open discussion with the assistance of a third party could help with this issue as well. As an alternative, further research could be done to give the employees an anonymous chance to express their thoughts and feelings.

Most of the open comments received from the employees of company B were related to their manager, the work foreman. His lack of training and skills was criticized as was the way he treats the employees. Negative gossiping about others in the work community is not appropriate behavior for anybody, especially the manager. Tackling this sensitive issue may be quite difficult since the criticism is so directly pointed at one person. A discussion between the foreman and upper management should be organized. Previously mentioned training on communication could help with this matter as well, as could training on management skills.

Fortunately something positive could be found from the results concerning the satisfaction of company B. The co-operation between employees seems to work and they are able to solve problems together. They are able to give each other feedback and help one another when needed. The general atmosphere at the workplace seems to be alright but not as good as what is desirable. It is understandable that problems with other matters such as communication and management affect people's spirits and the workplace ambience. Being able to tackle the problems causing dissatisfaction can be expected to influence the atmosphere positively. The employees do not seem to have a clear opinion about whether they have a set of common rules at the workplace and/or that they are adhered

to by everybody. Because the work community of work B is a small one including less than 30 employees, workplace rules could be discussed and defined together within the community. I feel this is a better option than having the foreman or upper management compose a written set of rules without employee input. The employees could define together the different characteristics of a healthy work community and discuss what separates them from the ideal. After this they could put together some rules which they think would help achieve a better situation.

### **5.1.3 Company C**

The employees of company C seem relatively satisfied with all factors connected to working conditions and work safety. Whether sufficient instructions concerning safety and ergonomics have been given to all employees is quite difficult to form a clear opinion on. I recommend the company to look into the practices used in training new employees and introducing existing ones to new tasks. It can often be that new employees are introduced to their new jobs in such a short period of time that it is considered more important to instruct them on basic safety instead of ergonomics in order to prevent serious accidents and injuries. The value of good ergonomics is not recognized by all companies even today. Employees can be left to their own devices instead of furthering ergonomics as a co-operative function including both the employer and the employees.

The results on the second category of claims reveal a few factors causing some dissatisfaction among the employees of company C. The employees feel they cannot really affect the content of their own work and that their work is not versatile enough. Similar to companies A and B, the employees do not think their current workplace enables their career aspirations. In company C, the organizational structure is comparable to the one in company B. Positions in middle management are limited to one and the employees working in production are on the same level in the company hierarchy compared to each other. The employees' feelings of few advancement opportunities are justified and reflect the reality of the situation.

For company C, I would recommend job rotation. All employees systematically trying out different work tasks would benefit not just the employees but the whole organization. New and different work tasks would offer the employees more variability and possibly challenge them more than their original job. The company would naturally benefit from multi skilled people who can do more than just one thing. In the process of learning and trying new things, the employees could discover the kind of work which suites them best. Job rotation can result in some employees permanently switching to new duties they find more pleasant than their old ones. This would reduce the current dissatisfaction caused by not being able to influence one's content of work.

The employees of company C feel that they have the knowledge and skills their jobs require and that their work is challenging enough. They also have the desire to develop themselves and advance in their careers. The employees seem to feel their work is more mentally than physically heavy. Like in company A, at the time of the research, company C had recently gone through some organizational changes. This might have had an effect on the stress level of the employees and the perceived mental heaviness of the work. However, further research could be done to better understand the factors of work which burden the employees mentally.

Further research is also required to be able to form a clearer picture of the satisfaction related to communication and interaction. This research discovered that the employees do not feel informing about the workplace's common matters works well. The reasons why the employees feel this way were not, however, revealed. Further research could also determine the need for regular meetings which currently are not organized at the workplace.

The results received from the fourth category of claims show the employees can easily approach their manager and give him feedback. The employees seem to be relatively satisfied with the amount of feedback received from their work but do not necessarily feel the feedback is always constructive. I would recommend the manager to pay attention to the way he comments on employee performance.

It is in some ways a characteristic of Finnish culture, and the way that Finns communicate, to praise one another very sparingly. Because of this, employees can often feel that they get more negative than positive feedback, and that their performance is only commented on when they have done something wrong. When giving feedback to an employee, it is important to do it in private to avoid embarrassing him/her in front of their co-workers. Feedback should be given on actions and behavior, matters which can be changed and influenced by the employee. Negative comments on personality are always inappropriate and will only make employees feel bad about themselves without helping anybody. Positive feedback should be given on a regular basis; it does not require great success or huge accomplishments. Positive feedback can be given in front of others in the work community. Furthermore, something good can almost always be found in a bad situation. Surrounding critique with positive comments is a tactic worth considering.

Further research needs to be conducted to understand why the employees feel they are not all equal in the eyes of management since no open comments were received on the subject. As an outsider, it is hard to guess what could cause this feeling of inequality since none of the employees gets discriminated against or bullied (discussed later). The organization of work also requires further examination because the employees do not seem to have a clear opinion on whether it is rational and good or not.

The employees seem to be relatively satisfied with the overall atmosphere of the workplace. They give and receive help when asked and are able to discuss and solve problems also without management interference. Nobody from the work community gets discriminated against or bullied, and co-operation works alright. The common rules of the workplace should be looked into. It would seem that they are not clear enough or not adhered to by all members of the work community. A similar discussion could be arranged as was suggested in the case of company B. In company C, the work community is so small that one individual can have a great impact on the atmosphere of the workplace. Each employee should remember their own responsibility in maintaining a positive, trusting and open environment.

#### 5.1.4 Company D

The employees of company D seem quite satisfied with their working conditions. They feel safe at work and think they have received the necessary instructions on safety and ergonomics at the workplace. They are pleased with the appliances and equipment they work with but do not feel the same about their work clothes and accessories. The company should look into supplying all employees with proper work wear. Clothes and safety shoes in bad condition need to be replaced with new good quality ones. It is also essential to make sure each employee has access to the necessary safety equipment, such as eye and ear protectors. The employees do not seem to know whether or not the working environment and premises match the needs of them and the work tasks. Further research could be done on this subject.

The employees find their work to be pleasant and meaningful and also feel it is versatile enough for them. The results, however, suggest the work could be more challenging. The employees do not feel they get much joy or experiences of success out of their work. A feeling of accomplishment can be difficult to get out of performing tasks which are too easy. Since the employees feel their work is varied enough and that they have the opportunity to affect the content of their work, it can be difficult to offer them more challenges. Making sure the versatility in tasks is maintained so that the employees do not get bored with their jobs is essential.

The employees feel they are not constantly stressed because of their work and seem to recover from it well enough during their free time. The desire for self-development and career advancement is not as high as it was in companies A, B and C. What could be the cause of this is hard to imagine. One factor could be the fact that the employees do not feel their current workplace enables advancement. They may also like their current work enough to eliminate the desire for a job with more responsibility or a higher status. The employees may also feel developing oneself is impossible if the work does not offer a desirable amount of challenges even with the opportunity to perform different kinds of tasks.

The employees of company D seem to be quite satisfied with how information is passed on within the working community, even though regular meetings are not organized. The employees feel they have the opportunity of bringing up issues for common discussion. Interestingly enough, the employees seem to somewhat feel they can have an impact on common matters but at the same time do not really think their opinions are appreciated. Further research should be done to shed some light on this issue and find out what has caused the contradiction.

The work foreman of company D seems quite approachable and accepts feedback from the employees. He does not, however, offer the employees enough support. This issue requires further investigation to learn what kind of support the employees feel they need, and what has caused them to feel they are not currently receiving it. The employees seem relatively happy with the amount and nature of the feedback given to them. In addition to support given by management, work organization and the treatment of employees should be researched further. Dissatisfaction with work organization can clearly be seen but the results concerning the fair treatment of employees are harder to interpret. The respondents did not seem to have a clear common opinion on this matter.

A couple of matters related to the work community and atmosphere of company D cause some concern. When the respondents were asked to mark whether they agreed or disagreed with the claims "Co-operation between employees works well" and "Nobody from the work community gets discriminated or bullied", the mean values of their opinions on both claims came to be 3.5 (3= neither agree or disagree, 4= somewhat agree). These matters need to be investigated further. There could, for example, be a connection between the result received on the fair treatment of employees and the one on bullying and discrimination. Further research, however, has to be done before drawing any conclusions. Contrary to the Finnish companies, the employees of company D do not feel they can discuss and solve problems independently without management. This can be explained by the somewhat dysfunctional co-operation between employees, but also by Russian work culture. Previously it was discussed that Russian employees do have a tendency of not showing initiative. They like to leave decision-making and responsibility connected to it to the manager.

## 5.2 Research reliability and validity

Heikkilä (2010, 30) states that in order for a research to be reliable, its results have to be repeatable and accurate. If the same research was conducted again, it would have to produce similar results to the first time. The sample size of the research has to be big enough to avoid receiving random results. Conducting a reliable research requires a critical and careful approach to avoid making mistakes in the different stages of the process. A valid research has clearly defined objectives and it succeeds at measuring the things it was designed to measure. Careful planning and consideration before conducting the research will help avoid systematic errors and ensure the study's validity. The questions of the research have to be designed in a way that they address the research problem entirely and measure the relevant things explicitly. Validity can be supported with a high response rate. (Heikkilä 2010, 29-30.)

The questionnaire form was designed with the idea of examining the total satisfaction of the employees working in production. The research problem was approached in its entire scope, not focusing too specifically on little details. In other words, the purpose was not to cover employee satisfaction matter by matter measuring everything related to the subject but to investigate the issue more roughly as bigger entities. The questionnaire was created with the knowledge acquired from job satisfaction theory, and approved by the commissioners to ensure its proficiency.

The research and its purpose were introduced to the target group before implementation to inspire trust and ensure a high response rate. The anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed by using the envelope method. I was the only person to see and read the completed questionnaires and because I do not know the respondents personally, I would have not been able to identify them by their handwriting, for example. The process of entering and analyzing the results was approached with great care. After entering the results to Microsoft Excel, they were checked twice before analysis to avoid mistakes. It was made sure that the

program had counted the formulas and created the figures correctly. The response rate in all four case companies was at least 90 percent, which makes the research likely repeatable with similar results.

The validity of the research is somewhat diminished by the poor design of some of the arguments used in the questionnaire. Going over two different subjects in the same claim was a definite mistake. As an example, the respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed and to what extent with the claim "My co-workers and managers give me the support I need in my work". How were the respondents supposed to mark their opinion if they felt differently about the support received from co-workers and the support received from management? Were they to choose the mean value of their two opinions (3 between 1 and 5) or just one or the other? Some of the arguments addressing two different matters made allocating the results more difficult.

### **5.3 Limitations of the study**

I had designed the research questionnaire form to serve two purposes. In addition to asking the respondents to state their opinion on a scale from 1 to 5 on the made arguments, they were given the opportunity to leave open comments. With this, I aimed to minimize the risk of not discovering something crucial. The claims were intended to measure the amount of dis-/satisfaction, and the open comments were designed to offer the opportunity to explain one's opinions or make improvement suggestions, for example. The form did not work quite as it was intended to, since the number of open comments received was very small. This made analyzing the results quite difficult. It was hard to offer very many concrete pieces of advice on how to make something better if one does not know what is wrong with it.

After the analysis of the results, I felt I was in a situation of having more questions than answers. The research served its purpose in the sense of defining the areas in need of improvement and the ones the employees were currently quite satisfied with. I do not, however, feel this research on its own was enough to help improve

employee satisfaction. More research has to be done on the areas in need of changes to fully understand the reasons behind dissatisfaction. Further investigation will also help find the right tools with which satisfaction can be increased. Nevertheless, I do not feel my work was by any means useless. I was able to determine the current state of employee satisfaction in the four case companies and gather some valuable information with which further research can be conducted. It was also to be expected that a quantitative research alone might not be sufficient enough on its own (discussed previously).

#### **5.4 Learning experiences and professional growth**

In this thesis process, I was able to put to use the knowledge and skills learned in school. I had some previous information and experience in conducting research, and that definitely helped me in this process. Through trial and error, I have, however, learned more about what makes a good research and all the different factors which need to be considered in conducting one. Along the process, I have learned to organize and schedule my work better. I have also realized the tremendous amount of work this kind of project requires. In addition to what is written in the paper, a vast amount of invisible work is included in the process. This kind of project requires thorough planning, a lot of studying and a lot of time spent searching for and gathering material.

I was surprised to learn how necessary conducting this type of research was for the employees. I was not expecting them to take part in it so eagerly, thus the response rates surprised me positively. I feared the employees might not take me or my research seriously because I am a student, not a professional in this field. Professionally, I have learned more about the value employee satisfaction has for an organization. I have also found ways in which I can be a better employee and benefit my work community.

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## RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE ON JOB SATISFACTION

*(Company name)*

Response time: *(Depending on the company)*

Design and implementation: Marianne Turpeinen, Karelia University of  
Applied Sciences  
Tel: +358 45 671 7087

### Replying to the questionnaire:

The questionnaire is composed of claims divided into five different categories. Each category represents one of the main components of job satisfaction.

By ticking a box, choose the response option best suited for describing your opinion, view or attitude. Try to respond to every claim.

Each category of claims ends with an “Open commentary” section. In here You can disclose opinions, views, suggestions *related to the topic of the claims you just finished responding to*. You can, for example, explain your choices of response to the made claims. These comments are extremely helpful in the analysis part of the research, and thus we highly encourage You to describe your opinions and views etc. in your own words.

Responding to the questionnaire happens completely anonymously. Return the filled-out form to the designated box in a closed envelope by the end of week *(depending on the company)*.

Start the questionnaire on page 2.

**WORKING CONDITIONS AND WORK SAFETY****1. I feel safe in my work and at the workplace.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**2. I have up-to-date appliances and equipment in use, which enables me to do my job as well and safely as possible.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**3. I have decent work clothes and accessories in use.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**4. The working environment and premises match the needs of the work tasks and the employees.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**5. I pay attention to ergonomics while working.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**6. I have gotten the necessary instructions on safety and ergonomics at the workplace.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**7. Open commentary:**


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**WORK ITSELF AND ITS CONTENT****8. I find my work to be pleasant.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**9. My work gives me joy and experiences of success.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**10. I find my work to be meaningful.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**11. I have the adequate level of know-how to be able to do my job well.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**12. I want to evolve in my work and advance in my career.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**13. I feel I have the possibility of evolving in my work and advancing in my career.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**14. I find my work to be variant enough.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**15. I find my work to be challenging enough.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**16. I feel I can have an impact on the content of my work.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**17. My coworkers and managers give me the support I need in my work.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**18. I do not find my work to be too heavy physically.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**19. I do not find my work to be too heavy mentally.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**20. I am not continuously stressed because of my work.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**21. I recover from my work well enough on my free time.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**22. Open commentary:**


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**COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION****23. Informing about the workplace's joint matters works well.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**24. We organize, or for us there are organized, regular joint meetings, in which we discuss current matters at the workplace.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**25. I feel it is possible for me to bring up issues to be discussed together.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**26. I feel I am heard.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**27. I feel I can have an impact on common matters.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**28. I feel my opinion matters and it is valued.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**29. Open commentary:**


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**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**30. Management's expectations towards me are clear and realistic.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**31. I feel I get the support I need in my work from management.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**32. I feel I can approach management and discuss all things occupying my mind.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**33. I feel all employees are equal to management.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**34. I feel management treats employees fairly.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**35. I get enough feedback on my work and its quality.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**36. The feedback I get is constructive, both positive and negative.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**37. I feel I can give feedback to management.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**38. I feel my work is rationally and well organized.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**39. Open commentary:**

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**WORK COMMUNITY AND ATMOSPHERE**

**40. The general atmosphere at the workplace is good and positive.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**41. Co-operation between employees works well.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**42. When asked, I receive help from coworkers and also give it back.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**43. Between coworkers, we can give each other constructive feedback.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**44. The common rules of the workplace are clear and adhered to.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**45. At the workplace, I feel comfortable and like I belong.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**46. Nobody from the work community gets discriminated or bullied.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**47. We can discuss problems and solve them together also without management.**

☐ Completely agree ☐ Somewhat agree ☐ Neither agree or disagree ☐ Somewhat disagree ☐ Completely disagree

**48. Open commentary:**

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Liekka 25.11.2014.

## **JOB SATISFACTION SURVEY AT (*company name*)**

**We ask You to take part in a research concerning job satisfaction and well-being at work**

The aim of this research is to improve the satisfaction and well-being of the employees at (*company name*). With your participation, we can determine what is positive at your workplace and what should be improved on. All employees have an equal opportunity to make their opinions heard.

The research will be implemented in the form of a multiple choice questionnaire. Taking part is quick, easy and most importantly, completely anonymous. No names or any background information is asked. After completing the questionnaire, the respondent returns the form to a designated box in a closed envelope. The only person seeing and reading the answers, is the executor of the research, Marianne Turpeinen. After gathering the results, the questionnaire forms will be destroyed.

The research will be implemented on week (*determined later*). Each employee will be given one questionnaire form and one envelope. The response time is 7 days after which the filled out questionnaire forms will be delivered back to Liekka, Finland for analysis.

Taking part is voluntary but highly encouraged.

In co-operation with (*company name*),

Marianne Turpeinen, a business student of Karelia University of Applied Sciences