

UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE
School of Management

**FOSTERING WORK ENGAGEMENT THROUGH
DEDICATION: CASE RAMBOLL**

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ABSTRACT

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The present case study had two main objectives: the first objective was to determine what the prerequisites of work engagement are among the case company's consultants and the second objective was to determine how the supervisors of these consultants foster work engagement through their actions. The case company was Ramboll Finland Ltd. which is a part of an international corporation called Ramboll Group. The company offers engineering, design, and consultancy services relating to buildings, transport, environment, energy, oil, gas, and management consulting.

Work engagement can be defined as a positive and fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption. In this study, dedication was presumed to be the prerequisite of vigor and absorption and thus the main component of work engagement. A dedicated employee is strongly involved in his or her work and experiences a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. The research data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five consultants and five supervisors working in the case company's office in Tampere. The case company's job satisfaction inquiry from the year 2012 was also utilized as an additional source of information. The research data were analyzed via content analysis and approached from a fact point of view.

The findings of the study indicate that the case company's consultants are dedicated and thus engaged in their work. The dedication enhancing themes among the consultants are appreciation, supervisor's work support, social relationships and cooperation, supervisor's genuine interest and caring, innovative activities and thoughts, success, trust, content and quantity of tasks, consultant's personal characteristics, supervisor's own example, significance of tasks, challenging work, and employer. Altogether the findings are in line with previous work engagement studies and hence supported by them.

In order to utilize the findings of this study, the case company should next disseminate them to all of its supervisors in Finland so that they are able to incorporate them into their actions. Although challenges and resources seem to be in good balance at the company, it is important that the supervisors try to identify those challenges that are disabling rather than enabling and buffer their subordinates from these job demands. Additionally, the supervisors should take care that no one ends up being "over-engaged" or "over-dedicated" because it may lead to an imbalance between professional and private life and thus cause detrimental consequences to the individual and company. Taking the different needs and personalities of the consultants into account along with the limited resources supervisors have at their command, this study finds that fostering work engagement through dedication is an ongoing process which requires constant balancing from the case company's supervisors.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the topic

Discussion and exploration relative to the relationship between economical success of companies and well-being of their employees has increased during recent years (Tuomi, 2007, 125; Vanhala & Kolehmainen, 2006, 1–2). According to public opinion, healthy personnel can promote the growth of productivity. Another view claims that the growth of employees' well-being is an outcome of a company's growth and improved efficiency. However, taking care of workforce's well-being is not a reason for or a consequence of a good financial result brought about by the growth of productivity or efficiency, but instead they are each other's parallel objectives. (Mamia, 2009, 20.)

Finland Chamber of Commerce (Keskuskauppakamari) emphasizes the importance of occupational well-being in its report from the year 2009. According to the report, both the management and the personnel of Finnish companies share the opinion that their most important responsibilities relate to their company's products and services, profitability, and personnel's well-being. The most inspiring and motivating factor for the employees was meaningful work. (Keskuskauppakamari, 2009, 21, 34.)

Information on the relationship between a company's success and the well-being of its personnel is needed. Deep Lead (2011), a firm specialized in coaching, made a survey according to which the employees in Finland are worried about coping at work and hope that their employers would invest more in services relating to occupational well-being. Over 40 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that employers do not invest enough in mental coping and stress management. (Deep Lead, 2011.)

In addition to the relationship between organizational success and personnel's well-being, extending the length of working careers has been a public topic in Finland for some time (Helsinki Times, 2014; Työelämäryhmä, 2010). During the debates on the elevation of general retirement age it has been expressed that a higher level of experienced happiness at work would lead to longer professional careers. Creating happier workplaces is possible

because the factors that increase and decrease happiness at work have been identified. Efficiency is pursued in working life through multiple ways but the end result is often a reduction in efficiency instead of the growth of efficiency. (Kauko-Valli & Koiranen, 2010, 104.) In order to extend working careers from the end, occupational well-being needs to be taken notice of since it can be considered one of the most important elements of enjoying one's work and coping with it.

Fostering occupational well-being is a part of successful human resource management. In consequence of enhanced well-being, personnel's work satisfaction, health, and ability to work improves, which further leads to a higher quality of work, to increased client satisfaction, and to improved financial success of the organization. Hence, taking care of occupational well-being is beneficial to both employers and employees, and it is implemented in collaboration with these parties. (Kunnallinen työmarkkinalaitos, 2007.)

Employees' ability to work can be maintained by recognizing the meaning of occupational well-being and by improving it. Consequently, the employees are able to cope with their work longer which enables them to extend their careers. (Kunnallinen työmarkkinalaitos, 2007.) One way to improve occupational well-being is to increase the level of experienced work engagement among personnel.

Maslach & Leiter (1997, 34) define work engagement as a lack of burnout symptoms or as a conceptual opposite of burnout. In other words, employees experience work engagement if they do not have symptoms of exhaustion, cynicism, and low professional efficacy, which are the opposites of energy, involvement, and professional efficacy. (Hakanen, 2009, 8; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, 294.) According to this definition, work engagement can be measured with the same indicator as burnout. (Kangas, Huhtala, Lämsä & Feldt, 2010, 12). However, work engagement can also be comprehended as an independent and distinct concept that relates negatively to burnout. In this case, work engagement is a relative persistent affective-cognitive state that is not focused on any particular individual, behavior, object, or event. It is defined as a positive and fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Figure 1). (Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter & Taris, 2008a, 188; Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006a, 702; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzáles-Romá & Bakker, 2002, 74–75.) Vigor refers to high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, whereas a dedicated employee is strongly involved in his or her work, and experiences a sense

of enthusiasm and significance. Absorption refers to being happily engrossed in one's work with full concentration. (Bakker, Demerouti & Xanthopoulou, 2012b, 15.)

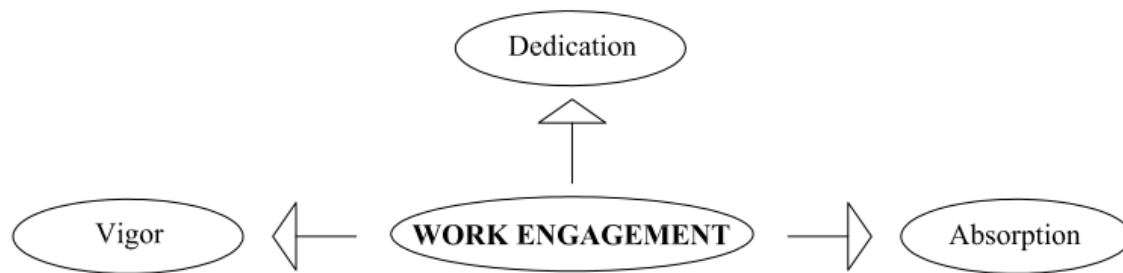


Figure 1 Definition of work engagement

Work engagement is a motivational concept: engaged employees want to succeed, feel compelled to strive towards challenging goals, and commit personally to attaining these goals. The importance of work engagement lies in its far-reaching implications for employees' performance. Those employees who experience work engagement are energetic and focused which allows them to bring their full potential to the job. Additionally, the quality of their core work responsibilities improves. Consequently, they have the motivation and the capacity to concentrate solely on the tasks at hand. (Leiter & Bakker, 2010, 2–4.)

Scientific research relative to work engagement has not begun until the beginning of the 21st century. Hence, the majority of the research rests on cross-sectional data, albeit some longitudinal studies on the prerequisites and outcomes of work engagement have also been published. (Hakanen, 2009, 12.) The studies relative to work engagement and its immediate concepts have highlighted the positive possibilities of working life and occupational well-being (Hakanen, 2009, 4). Positive psychology needs new concepts that explore human resource strengths and psychological capacities from a positive point of view. By way of measuring, developing, and effectively managing the phenomena under these concepts, employees' performance level can be increased. Work engagement is one of these reliably measurable concepts. (Hakanen, 2009, 4; Luthans, 2002a, 59; 2002b, 698.)

Thus far, not much attention has been paid to leadership issues in work engagement research. Leadership styles, such as transformational leadership, which emphasize the importance of interpersonal relationships, are likely act as “energizers” in building engagement. As work engagement is not only an individualistic but also a collective phenomenon, the interaction between a supervisor and his or her employee could provide new insight into how to keep

employees engaged in varying conditions. (Hakanen, 2009, 13; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010, 95.) For this reason, the present study aims to find out how supervisors foster work engagement via their actions among their subordinates in a consultancy company.

The case company in this study is Ramboll Finland Ltd. which is a part of an international corporation called Ramboll Group. Ramboll Group is an engineering, design, and consultancy company founded in Denmark in 1945, and it offers services relating to buildings, transport, environment, energy, oil, gas, and management consulting. The corporation employs 10 000 consultants who work in close to 200 offices in 21 countries worldwide, and its revenue was 1014 million euros in 2012. Ramboll Group is mainly owned by a commercial foundation called the Ramboll Foundation with approximately 95 per cent of the shares. The purpose of the Ramboll Foundation is to ensure the financial and commercial continuance and development of Ramboll Group, in addition to which it supports research, studies, education, charities, and humanitarian aid. The remaining approximately 5 per cent of Ramboll Group's shares are owned by Ramboll's employees. (Ramboll Finland, 2013a; Ramboll Group, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c.)

Ramboll Finland Ltd. has offices in 21 localities and provides employment for around 1400 consultants. The revenue of the case company was 111 million euros in 2012, and its clients include ministries, bureaus, municipality and city organizations, industries, harbors, enterprises (e.g., construction companies), and associations. (Ramboll Finland, 2013a, 2013b.) The subject of this study is Ramboll Finland's office in Tampere where around 200 consultants work.

1.2 Objectives and research questions

The first objective of this study is to find out what are the prerequisites of work engagement among the case company's consultants. Another objective is to determine how the unit managers foster work engagement via their actions as well as what they could do better in order to increase the level of experienced work engagement among their subordinates.

Hence, the objectives of the present study will be fulfilled by answering following questions:

- What are the prerequisites of work engagement among the consultants in the case company?

- How do the unit managers enhance work engagement via their actions among their subordinates? What could be done better?

The company's management makes a difference in terms of work engagement since employees' responses to organizational policies, practices, and structures have an effect on their potential to experience engagement (Leiter & Bakker, 2010, 2). Moreover, supervisors' actions can have an essential role in employee engagement because the supervisors have the legitimate power to influence work conditions (Bakker et al., 2012b, 15). As mentioned in Chapter 1.1 *Introduction to the topic*, not much attention, however, has been paid to leadership issues in work engagement research so far. By focusing on the work engagement enhancing actions of the case company's unit managers, the present study attempts to contribute to filling this gap.

In order to get a comprehensive view of the work engagement enhancing factors in the case company, it is important to explore both how supervisors foster work engagement and what are those prerequisites of work engagement which are not counted as their actions. Because every organization and occupation may have its own specific prerequisites for work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 323; Hakanen & Perhoniemi, 2008b, 6, 46), previous work engagement studies are not able to reveal which factors really contribute to work engagement in Ramboll Finland's specific occupational context. Hence, it needs to be studied separately.

1.3 Methodology

This study is a qualitative case study. Qualitative research is used in sciences that study human beings, and its purpose is to understand the phenomenon under research. Understanding refers to acquainting oneself with the thoughts, emotions, and motives of research subjects. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 28.) The research approach was chosen to be qualitative because, in work engagement research, it potentially generates knowledge of unexpected and organization-specific job resources which may be overlooked by highly standardized approaches (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 323).

A case study is a study in which one or a small number of purposely chosen cases are under research. It is not a data collection method but rather a research approach that pertains to the

way of generating conclusions. The case is normally a company or a part of it such as a department, a profit center, or headquarters. (Koskinen, Alasuutari & Peltonen, 2005, 154, 158.) In this respect, this study does not make an exception; the case is Ramboll Finland's office in Tampere.

The theoretical part of the study is made as a literature review. The purpose of a literature review is to show how and from which perspectives the topic of the study has been studied before as well as how the study relates to previous studies (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara, 1997, 115). Although work engagement is a quite young research subject (Hakanen, 2009, 5), there are enough Finnish and international studies, articles, and other literature available to form a theoretical framework for this study.

According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, 71), an interview is the most common data collection method in qualitative studies along with surveys, observation, and information based on different documents. In this study, the empirical data are collected through interviews, in addition to which the case company's personnel's job satisfaction inquiry from the year 2012 is used as another source of information. The interviewees include five consultants and five unit managers working in five different units in the case company's office in Tampere.

The interviews are carried out as semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview consists of certain essential, in advance chosen themes, and questions which further define these themes. From a methodological point of view, three issues are emphasized in semi-structured interviews: people's interpretations of things, meanings that people give to things, and how these meanings form in interaction. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2001, 48.) The process of how the interviews were executed in this study is presented thoroughly in Chapter 3.2 *Implementation of the interviews*.

The empirical data are analyzed via content analysis. Kyngäs and Vanhanen (1999) describe content analysis as a method by way of which it is possible to analyze documents both systematically and objectively. In this connection, the term document has a very broad definition: books, articles, diaries, letters, interviews, speeches, conversations, dialogues, reports, and nearly any material in a written form can be a document. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi,

2009, 103.) In the present study, the documents under analysis are the ten above-mentioned interviews.

Content analysis is an analysis method that can be used in all kinds of qualitative research. It can be considered a separate method as well as a loose theoretical framework which can be subsumed into various analysis totalities. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 91.) In this study, content analysis is a separate analysis method. More information on how it was used is presented in Chapter 3.4 *Content analysis as the data analysis method*.

The empirical data are approached from a fact point of view. According to Alasuutari (2011, 90), a fact point of view is a modification of empiricism but it has its own particular meaning: it makes sense to apply a fact point of view in a study only when the research data consist of questionnaires, interviews, and/or talk. When a fact point of view is applied, the subject of interest is the information, or the facts, that the documents under analysis disseminate about the topic of the study. The data in the documents can be considered a lens through which a researcher looks at the reality. This does not mean, however, that all information is accepted as a truth and without criticism. The success of a study that is approached from a fact point of view is determined by how well and faultlessly the study's subject is described and explained. (Koskinen et al., 2005, 62, 64, 72–73.)

1.4 Research process

The research process (Figure 2) began at the same time with the master's thesis seminar at the Tampere University School of Management in January 2012. The topic of the study, work engagement, was already familiar to me in consequence of writing a bachelor's thesis about it in the course of the previous autumn. The decision to continue studying work engagement in the master's thesis arose immediately after the bachelor's thesis was completed because I was very intrigued by the topic.

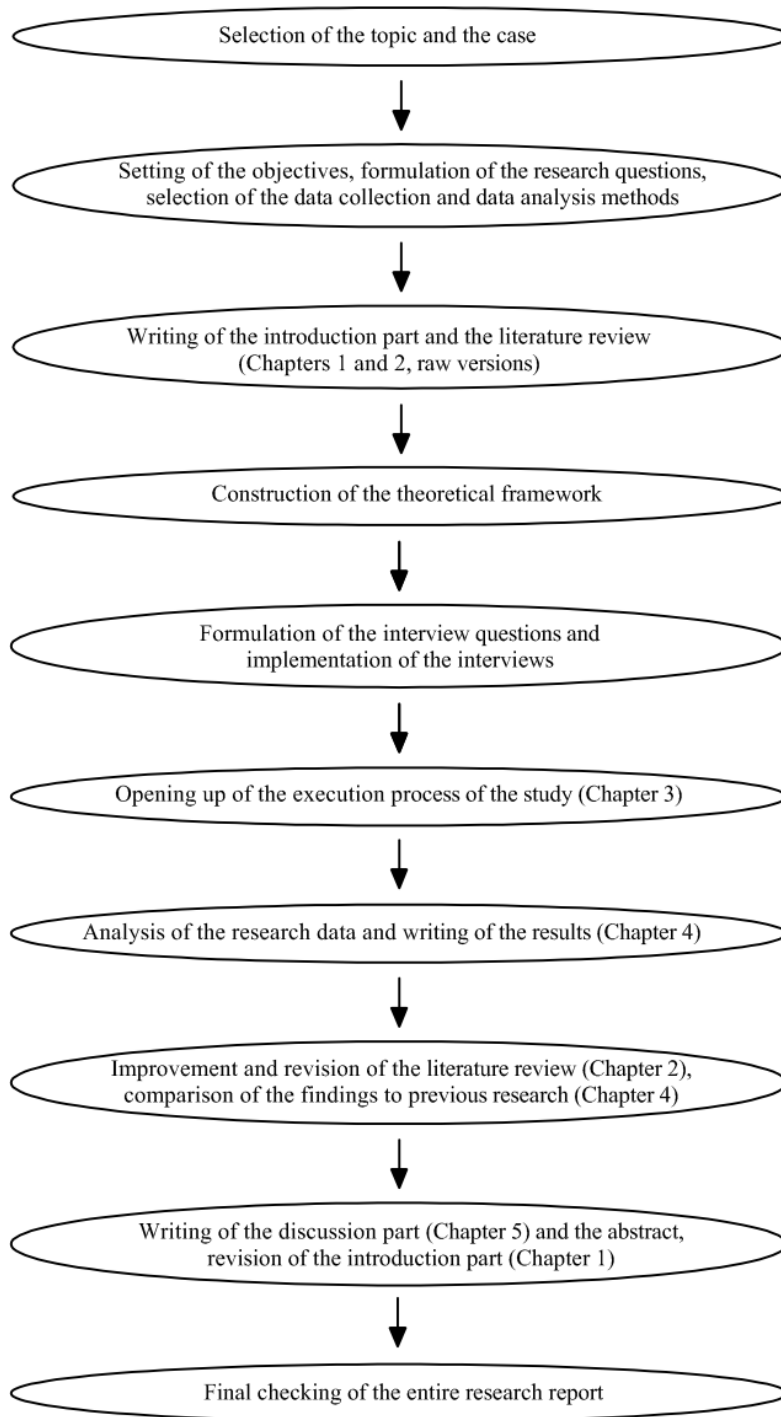


Figure 2 Research process of the study

During the master's thesis seminar, which lasted until May 2012, the objectives of the study were created, the research questions were formulated, the data collection and data analysis methods were selected, raw versions of the literature review and the introduction part of the study were written, the theoretical framework was constructed, and the interview questions were formulated. The case was chosen to be Ramboll Finland's office in Tampere since I had worked there previously and thus had the necessary contacts to arrange the interviews.

The interviews were followed through after the seminar ended: they took place between the end of May and mid-June 2012 and were transcribed word by word between the end of May and September 2012. The execution process of the study was opened up in the research report during October 2012, the analysis of the research data was carried out from November 2012 to February 2013, and the results of the analysis were written during the spring 2013. Thereafter, the literature review was improved and finalized in order that comparing the findings of the present study to previous research would be possible. The final stages of the research process included drawing conclusions from the results, finalizing the discussion and introduction parts of the research report, writing the abstract, and checking the entire research report for possible errors and inconsistencies. Eventually, the study was completed in the beginning of May 2014.

1.5 Structure of the study

This research report consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 includes the introduction to the topic, the objectives and research questions, methodology, and the research process of the study. In Chapter 2, the concepts of occupational well-being, positive psychology, and work engagement are introduced along with the ways how work engagement has been studied and how it can be measured. Furthermore, the prerequisites and outcomes as well as possible dark sides of work engagement are presented before finishing off the chapter by introducing the theoretical framework of the study.

Chapter 3 deals with the empirical part of the study and describes the execution process in detail, including how the interviewees were selected, how the interviews were planned and implemented, and how the research data were analyzed. In Chapter 4, the findings of the study are presented. The chapter ends with a comparison between the findings of the present study and the results of previous work engagement studies, in addition to which potential ways to increasingly enhance work engagement in the case company are discussed.

Chapter 5 includes conclusions, theoretical and practical contributions, and suggestions for future research. Moreover, the way the study was executed is evaluated, and the study's limitations are discussed. Finally, some suggestions for further measures for the case company are offered.

2 WORK ENGAGEMENT AS PART OF OCCUPATIONAL WELL-BEING

Work engagement is one of the most recent concepts to examine and represent the positive sides of occupational well-being, which is why this chapter begins with outlining the definitions of occupational well-being and positive psychology. The literature review continues with presenting the antecedent concepts of work engagement and the concept of work engagement itself. Thereafter, the job demands-resources (JD-R) model, which is the most common theoretical framework to study work engagement, and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which is the most common indicator to measure work engagement, are dealt with. The prerequisites of work engagement including engagement enhancing factors and interventions as well as the role of management in this respect are also treated in this chapter. The literature review ends with a discussion of the positive outcomes and possible dark sides of work engagement, after which the theoretical framework of the study is presented.

2.1 Occupational well-being

Numerous studies deal with occupational well-being, and as a concept it has diverse definitions. The research subject can be an individual, a company, or a society. (Kangas et al., 2010, 9). Occupational well-being has been defined, for example, through Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs. He divided the basic needs of a human being into five components: physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. According to the hierarchy of needs, one is motivated by one's basic needs which are satisfied in the above-mentioned order. (Maslow, 1943.) Levi (1987) defines well-being as a state of mind which is described as a balance between the abilities, needs, and expectations of an employee, and the demands and possibilities of the environment (Kangas et al., 2010, 9).

Occupational well-being may denote occupational safety, enthusiasm for work, physical health and the capacity to work, satisfaction towards one's work and workplace, the relationships and work climate in the workplace, the level of salaries, the avoidance of stress and burnout, and the balance between professional and private life. As a phenomenon,

occupational well-being is multidimensional and multilevel. The concept relates to subjective experiences of well-being and to objective factors. Subjective well-being can be described through a positive and negative dimension. The positive dimension consists of well-being and job satisfaction, whereas the negative dimension is comprised of burnout and stress. The objective factors include material, social, and mental factors associated with well-being. Additionally, well-being has a social dimension which is influenced, for example, by work climate and leadership practices. (Mamia, 2009, 21, 30.)

Böhnke (2005) sees subjective well-being as a crucial dimension of quality of life. According to Böhnke's perspective, the quality of life stands for a subjective experience which is related to an access of material resources, social relationships and social support, perceptions of society, and time use and work-life balance. (Böhnke, 2005, 9, 91.) This quality of life perspective is based on Erik Allardt's (1976) well-known three dimensional welfare model (Mamia, 2009, 25). The dimensions of Allardt's model are made up of three groups of needs (having, loving, and being) which form an objective basis for subjective well-being. *Having* contains needs related to material and impersonal resources, whereas *loving* includes social needs related to love, companionship, and solidarity. Thus, the loving-needs are defined by how people relate to each other. *Being* involves needs denoting self-actualization and the obverse of alienation, or in other words, what an individual is and what this individual does in relation to the society. The having-needs influence the experience of the level of living, whereas the needs of loving and being affect the experience of the quality of life. (Allardt, 1976, 230–231, 236.)

In his study, Allardt highlights the importance of examining subjective well-being, even though he focuses on measuring objective well-being. He divides subjective well-being into satisfaction and dissatisfaction, which are not the extremes of one dimension but represent qualitatively different attitudes, and which are influenced by different factors. The satisfaction attitudes influence subjective experiences of the quality of life, whereas the dissatisfaction attitudes affect subjective experiences of the level of living. Furthermore, the dissatisfaction attitudes are related to social inequality and injustice meaning that they are linked to the standard of living and external flaws in the living conditions (having). The satisfaction attitudes are interlocked with happiness and satisfying social needs, which denotes that satisfaction is a consequence of, for example, social relationships and self-actualization

(loving, being). (Allardt, 1976, 234–238; Mamia, 2009, 25–26, 29.) Allardt’s welfare model is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1 Erik Allardt’s welfare model (Allardt, 1976, 236)

	Welfare	Happiness
Level of living	<p>(1) <i>Having</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Income - Housing - Employment - Health - Education 	<p>(4) <i>Dissatisfaction attitudes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceived antagonisms - Perceived discrimination - Perceived unjust privileges - Income satisfaction
Quality of life	<p>(2) <i>Loving</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community attachment - Family attachment - Friendship attachment <p>(3) <i>Being</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal prestige - Insubstitutability - Political resources - Doing 	<p>(5) <i>Satisfaction attitudes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceived happiness - Perceived need-satisfaction

According to Allardt’s (1976) theory, well-being arises from satisfying needs. Hence, the theory’s approach to well-being is close to Maslow’s theory on hierarchy of human needs (Mamia, 2009, 26). In his theory, Allardt follows the footprints of Herzberg, Mausner, and Bloch Snyderman (1959). They highlight in their motivation-hygiene theory that job satisfaction is created through satisfaction and dissatisfaction, which are influenced by different factors. Dissatisfaction is caused by hygiene factors, or flaws in external working environment. The hygiene factors include supervision of work, interpersonal relations, physical working conditions, salary, fringe benefits, job security, and company policies and administrative policies. If the hygiene factors in a workplace are inadequate or unreasonable, the employees experience dissatisfaction. Satisfaction is brought about by motivational factors which are inherent to work. Motivational factors include self-actualization, responsibility, sense of achievement, work-related success, recognition for one’s accomplishments, opportunities to personal growth and learning, conceptualization of the entirety of one’s work, and comprehension of the meaningfulness of one’s work. The presence of motivational

factors at work produces work satisfaction and occupational well-being, whereupon productivity and succeeding in one's work lead to a higher level of occupational well-being and not vice versa. (Herzberg et al., 1959, 113–119; Mamia, 2009, 29–30.)

According to Diener and Suh (1997, 191), people's subjective well-being can be divided into conscious experiences of hedonic feelings and cognitive satisfaction. Thus, subjective well-being can be defined as one's cognitive and affective evaluations of one's life. In other words, this broad concept includes experiencing positive emotions, low levels of negative moods, and high life satisfaction. (Diener, Lucas & Oishi, 2002, 63.) However, Böhnke (2005, 13) states that unlike her own study, most empirical studies do not distinguish hedonic feelings (happiness) from satisfaction. The motivation-hygiene theory of Herzberg et al. (1959) can be mentioned as one example of these studies (Mamia, 2009, 30–31). Warr (1990, 193–195) considers affective well-being to be the core of subjective well-being at work. Warr's view leans partly on Russell's (1980) circumplex model of affect; well-being is defined through emotional states of pleasure and arousal (Figure 3).

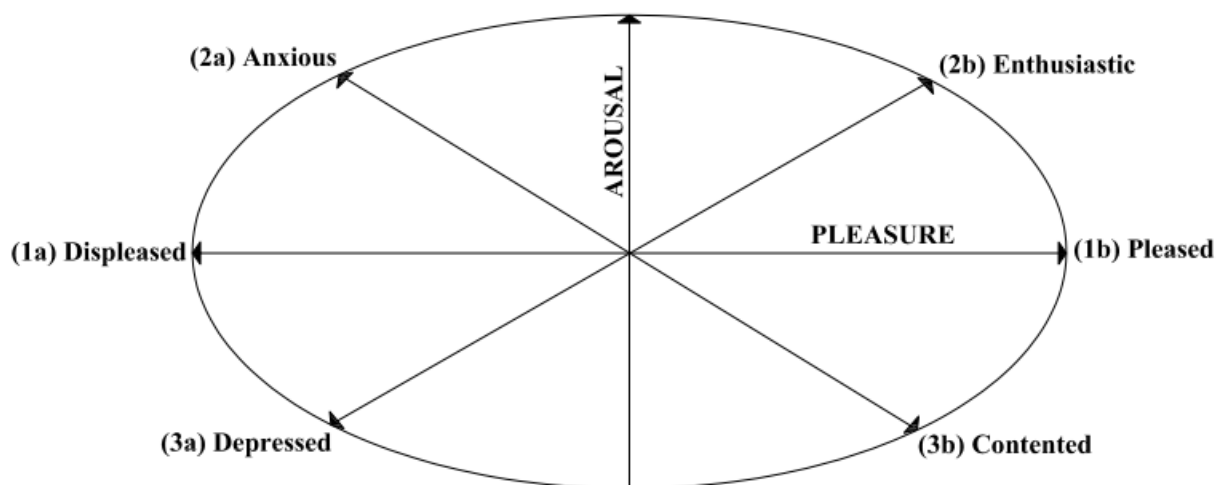


Figure 3 Three principal axes for the measurement of affective well-being (Warr, 1990, 195)

Low pleasure results in poor occupational well-being (1a) and high pleasure in high occupational well-being (1b). The level of arousal divides occupational well-being in half: active well-being is enthusiasm (2b), whereas passive well-being is contentment (3b). According to this perspective, work engagement is experienced in consequence of active occupational well-being and job satisfaction in consequence of passive occupational well-being. (Mamia, 2009, 30–31.)

Experiencing well-being is individualistic. For some people occupational well-being may mainly be based on the relationships in the workplace, whereas for others work itself can be the most important element from the well-being's point of view. In spite of individual variation, occupational well-being is connected in many studies, for example, with experienced balance between different roles, with work and family, and with work and other life. Continuous feeling of inadequacy, constant hurry and uncertainty, an imbalance between challenges and experienced resources, and experienced complexity of life have been demonstrated to be malign to occupational well-being. (Kauko-Valli & Koiranen, 2010, 109–110.)

In the field of occupational psychology, researchers have traditionally concentrated to examine the psychological problems of employees and the reasons for these problems (Mäkikangas, Feldt & Kinnunen, 2005, 56). Attention has always been mainly in workplace malaise such as in stress symptoms, burnout, sleeping disorders, and sickness absences. The studies have focused on already formed risk factors and flaws instead of job resources, whereupon the research has often been reacting. However, the matters related to malaise do not describe which factors promote occupational well-being. (Hakanen, 2009, 4; Mäkikangas et al., 2005, 72.)

The focus of Finnish research in relation to psychological well-being at work changed mainly to workplace malaise during the 1990's recession, when employees' coping at work begun to get more attention than before. The purpose was to prevent work-related stress and burnout problems by various means. In other words, occupational well-being meant avoiding stress or burnout. (Mamia, 2009, 26.) Nevertheless, in the research of occupational well-being a perception, according to which occupational well-being is understood as something else than only as a lack of stress and burnout symptoms, has recently become more frequent (Kinnunen & Feldt, 2005, 13). Consequently, a trend of positive psychology has been born.

2.2 Positive psychology and antecedents of work engagement

Work engagement can be held as a part of positive psychology movement. The research on work engagement began approximately at the same time as the movement of positive psychology arose in the late 1990's. (Hakanen, 2004a, 29.) Positive psychology can be contemplated through a subjective, an individual, and a group level. At the subjective level,

positive psychology denotes valued subjective experiences including well-being, contentment, satisfaction, hope, optimism, flow, and happiness. At the individual level, it relates to positive individual traits such as capacity for love, courage, perseverance, forgiveness, spirituality, and wisdom. Finally, at the group level, positive psychology concerns those civic virtues and institutions which direct people toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, tolerance, and work ethic, among other things. Hence, the movement of positive psychology can make normal people stronger and more productive as well as make high human potential actual. (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, 5, 8.)

According to Bakker and Daniels (2012, 1), positive psychology merges with organizational theory in the new approach called positive organizational behavior (POB). POB can be defined as “the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today’s workplace” (Luthans, 2002a, 59). Work engagement is one of the recent concepts through which it is possible to study POB. However, work engagement is not the first concept to examine the positive sides of occupational well-being: the antecedents of work engagement include concepts such as job satisfaction, job involvement, and happiness at work (Figure 4) (Mamia, 2009, 27).



Figure 4 Concepts of positive occupational well-being

Job satisfaction is presumably the most studied form of work-related subjective well-being so far (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2010, 9). The research of job satisfaction began already in the 1930’s. Job satisfaction denotes both job-related satisfaction and dissatisfaction, meaning to

which degree employees like their jobs and to which degree they do not. Traditionally job satisfaction has been studied through examining its prerequisites and consequences, from which the latter has been surveyed from an individual's and organization's point of view. However, lately the amount of job satisfaction studies has clearly decreased. (Mäkikangas et al., 2005, 59–63.)

According to Locke (1976), the most important prerequisites for job satisfaction are (Pöyhönen, 1987, 137–138.):

- Mentally challenging tasks which are carried out successfully.
- Personal interest in work.
- Work is physically not too exhausting.
- Recompenses are explicit, equitable, and equivalent to the demand level of the job.
- Working environment is in accordance with one's physical needs and supports one in achieving work objectives.
- Employees appreciate themselves.
- Employees share similar basic values and help each other, for example, to reduce contradictions in relation to their work roles as well as to increase their salaries, their possibilities to get promoted, and the attractiveness of their work.

Job involvement is another traditional concept through which occupational well-being has been studied. The research of job involvement began in the 1960's. According to generally accepted definition of Kanungo (1982), job involvement denotes an individual's psychological identification with a particular job or with work in general. This identification is a consequence of the saliency of an individual's needs and the perceptions he or she has of the job's need-satisfying potentialities. The more an individual is able to satisfy his or her salient needs through working, the more he or she is identified with, dedicated to, and involved in his or her work. Hence, when an individual is identified with his or her job, the job role is a central part of his or her self-image and life. (Kanungo, 1982, 342; Mäkikangas et al., 2005, 63–64.) However, a strong orientation to work when all personal goals are related to working life does not lead to enhanced occupational well-being. (Salmela-Aro, 2009, 138).

According to Brown (1996), the prerequisites of job involvement are personal characteristics, job characteristics, and supervisory behaviors. A job-involved individual can be described in

terms of three personality traits: he or she endorses the work ethic strongly and is high in both internal motivation and self-esteem. Job characteristics contain a possibility to use variety of skills, significant and challenging work, task identity and task complexity, feedback, and motivating potential, whereas supervisor behaviors include participation and consideration. These situational characteristics can be conceptualized as perceptions of potential for satisfying salient psychological needs of an employee. One is strongly involved in one's job when the situational characteristics are equivalent to one's needs. The effects of situational characteristics are especially strong for those who seek fulfillment for their needs in greater extent. The consequences of job involvement include positive job attitudes such as work satisfaction and low intentions of leaving the organization. Nevertheless, job involvement does not depend on demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, length of service, or salary. (Brown, 1996, 250–252.)

Happiness at work is the closest to work engagement when it comes to the positive concepts of occupational well-being (Figure 4). Feelings are the basis of happiness at work. They influence both initiating and ceasing action, and they do not preclude rational action. As a matter of fact, taking feelings into account is often a precondition for rational action. Feelings have an effect on our behavior, choices, and priorities. A positive emotional state generates creativity and highlights skills in a better way. (Kauko-Valli & Koiranen, 2010, 100.)

Happiness at work is often linked to job satisfaction because it denotes experiencing the feelings of happiness at work, while satisfaction is based on comparing expectations and experiences with each other. Happiness at work can also be connected with work motivation; motivation is founded on needs and incentives, and experiencing happiness is considered to be necessary and encouraging both in and outside working life. (Kauko-Valli & Koiranen, 2010, 101–102.)

Veenhoven (1984) states that happiness has often been operationalized by one question such as “how happy are you?” (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2010, 8). However, happiness should be distinguished as a specific emotion from other measures that cover a wide range of both positive and negative emotions (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2010, 8). According to Kauko-Valli and Koiranen (2010), the elements of happiness at work are general background factors, organizational factors, factors related to work community and the relationships in it, factors concerning the content and the nature of tasks, and factors associated with personalities of

individuals. General background factors include, for example, an organization's developmental prospects and management policies. Organizational factors contain organizational structure, organizational culture, and motivating practices, among other things. Factors related to work community and the relationships in it are, for example, openness, encouragement, and chemistries between employees, whereas factors concerning the content and the nature of tasks are autonomy, inspiration, and challenge, among others. Finally, factors associated with personalities of individuals include, for example, temperament, optimism, an ability to tolerate and control changes, and an ability to experience psychological ownership towards the job. (Kauko-Valli & Koiranen, 2010, 102–103.)

The probability to experience happiness at work can be increased by re-designing and developing the job itself. The source of happiness at work lies in a job which one can do autonomously and in which the tasks vary in the limits of one's own abilities and skills. This kind of job gives one a possibility to experience moments of success. An experience of psychological ownership and inner entrepreneurship combined to happiness at work enhance efficiency, invention, and quality of work. When one experiences psychological ownership and when the work environment simultaneously supports inner entrepreneurship, one can succeed in one's job, which further produces both personal and shared happiness to the workplace. Happiness at work can be reduced due to boredom, frustration, despair, rancor, exhaustion, cynicism, avoidance of difficult situations at work, and a feeling of worthlessness. (Kauko-Valli & Koiranen, 2010, 101–104.)

Although the perspective of positive psychology is not a new one in occupational psychology, relates positive psychology to a lot more than just to job satisfaction, job involvement, and happiness at work. According to Kauko-Valli and Koiranen (2010), the research subject of positive psychology in a wider perspective is the positive side of a human being. Positive psychology is one psychological trend which endeavors to bring balance to the traditional psychological trends. It examines themes such as well-being or formation of resilience and perseverance as an individual experience. The perspective is new compared, for example, to stress and anxiety, which have been studied by traditional trends of psychology. The research and practical applications of positive psychology endeavor to take notice of those actions of individuals and organizations that make them flourish. The focus is on strengths, positive feelings, and regularities of success instead of problems. (Kauko-Valli & Koiranen, 2010, 105.)

The above presented antecedents of positive psychology along with work engagement have also drawn criticism. According to Mamia (2009), the surveys about job satisfaction, job involvement, and happiness at work contain following problems: job satisfaction surveys do not sort out employees very well, whereas job involvement can be understood as a consequence of occupational well-being (Mamia, 2009, 27; Mamia & Koivumäki, 2006, see Mamia, 2009, 27). Furthermore, Heiskala (2006) states that happiness at work has become outdated as a concept, and that present-day competitiveness society has not adopted it (Mamia, 2009, 27). Arguments against work engagement will be presented later in Chapter 2.6 *Dark sides of work engagement*.

All in all, traditionally there have been only a few analytical concepts available for scholars to understand, assess, and measure the overlapping experiences of arousal and pleasure. During the last years the situation has, however, changed rapidly and especially work engagement has become a central concept for genuine occupational well-being. The first international studies on work engagement were published during the year 2002. (Hakanen, 2009, 4–5.)

2.3 Conceptualization of work engagement

In everyday life engagement is associated with involvement, commitment, enthusiasm, energy, absorption, passion, and focused effort. However, scholars have not reached a total consensus on the definition of work engagement yet, even though many of them have consistently confirmed the status of work engagement when contrasting it with other concepts in organizational psychology. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, 11; Bakker & Leiter, 2010, 184.) Next, different conceptualizations of (work) engagement are introduced before determining what work engagement denotes in this study.

2.3.1 Work engagement – a positive form of work-related subjective well-being

Major human consultancy firms have been interested in work engagement already for some time and adopted it as a part of their business. Practically all of these companies claim finding conclusive evidence that work engagement enhances profitability, for example, through better productivity, customer satisfaction, and employee retention. However, apart from one exception, this claim has not been substantiated in peer-reviewed journals. Thus, the positive relationship between work engagement and a company's profitability has only been stated in reports instead of presenting scientific evidence that supports the claim. The firms have

conceptualized engagement in terms of organizational/affective/continuance commitment and extra-role behavior, which comes close to putting old wine in new bottles. In spite of this, the popularity of engagement among leading consultancy firms has attracted interest among academic scholars towards the concept, in consequence of which scholars have started to study work engagement as a unique construct. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, 11–12.)

The concept *engagement* has been conceptualized and operationalized in several ways by different researchers (Hakanen, 2009, 8). As mentioned already in the introduction part of this study, Maslach and Leiter (1997, 34) define work engagement as lack of burnout symptoms or a conceptual opposite of burnout. According to them, employees experience work engagement if they do not have symptoms of exhaustion, cynicism, and low professional efficacy, which are the opposites of energy, involvement, and professional efficacy. (Hakanen, 2009, 8; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, 294.) Kahn (1990, 694) describes engagement as harnessing of employees' selves to their work roles. Hence, engaged people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. Rothbard's (2001, 656–657) definition of engagement is based on Kahn's (1990) definition concerning two critical components of role engagement which are attention and absorption in a role. Thus, the key reference of engagement for Kahn and Rothbard is the work role, whereas for those who understand engagement as the positive opposite of burnout it is the work itself, or the work activity of an employee (Bakker et al., 2008a, 189). Britt (1999, 700) refers to a combination of responsibility and commitment as engagement. In addition to these definitions, engagement has been conceptualized from manifold and non-theoretical premises. Hence, some suspicions have arisen if studying (work) engagement really helps to deepen the understanding of occupational well-being and motivation. (Hakanen, 2009, 8.)

Bakker and Oerlemans (2010) approach subjective well-being and thus work engagement by way of Russell's (1980, 2003) circumplex model of affect. According to Russell (2003, 148), a core affect is "that neurophysiological state consciously accessible as the simplest raw (nonreflective) feelings evident in moods and emotions". Thus, it is similar to what various scholars have termed affect, activation, or mood, and what is commonly called a feeling. This conscious experience, a raw feeling, can be conceptualized through two dimensions (Figure 5). The horizontal dimension ranges from displeasure (e.g., agony) to pleasure (e.g., ecstasy) and the vertical dimension (level of arousal) from a low level of activation (sleep) to a high level of activation (frenetic excitement). A feeling is in relation to the displeasure–pleasure

continuum an assessment of one's current condition and in relation to the level of activation one's sense of mobilization and energy. (Russell, 2003, 148; 1980, 1161.) Each affective state is a linear combination of these two dimensions (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2010, 4).

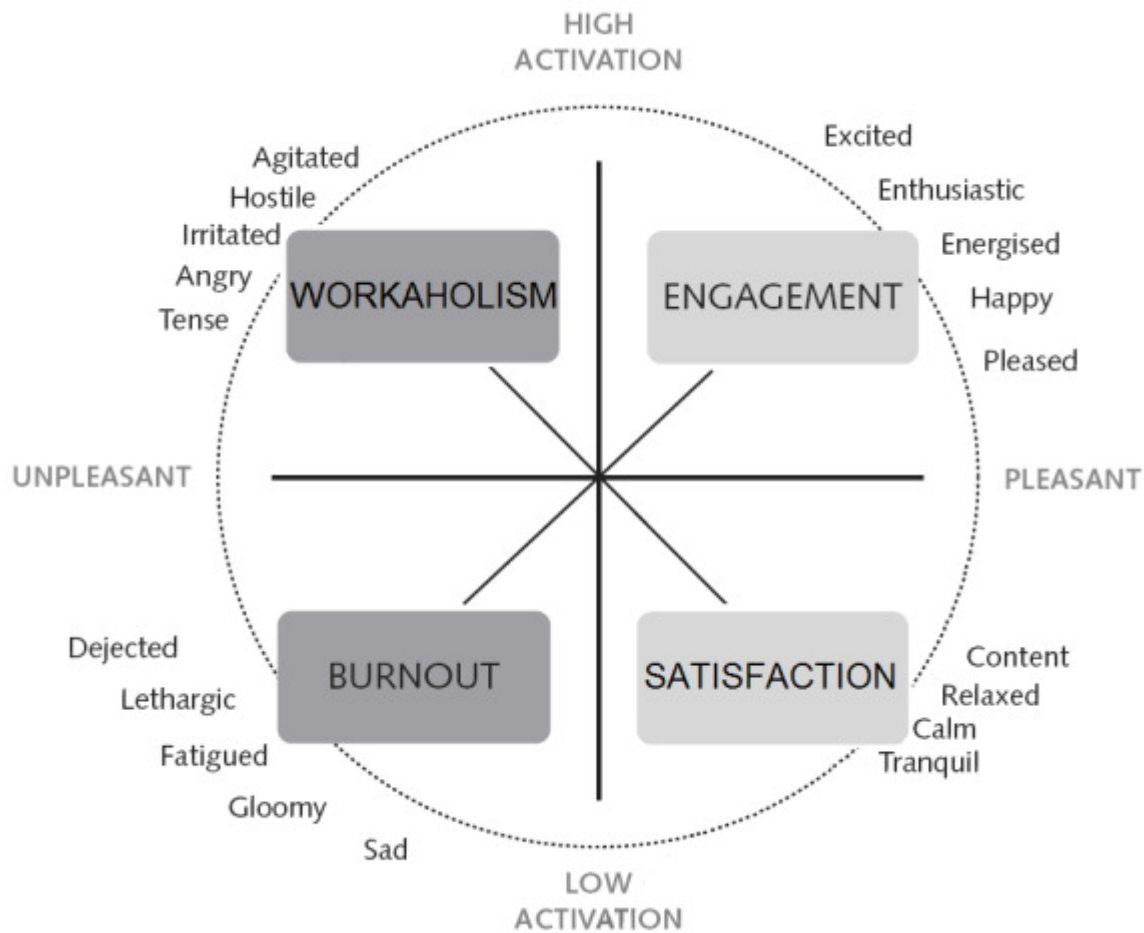


Figure 5 Dimensions of work-related subjective well-being (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2010, 31; adapted from Russell, 1980, 2003)

According to Figure 5, subjective well-being can be divided into four separate sections by way of experienced pleasure and arousal or activation. The classification is similar to how Hakanen (2004a, 27–28; 2009, 8) has described the dimensions of occupational well-being. Workaholism and burnout, which are considered negative forms of work-related subjective well-being, are placed in the left half of the model as both of them resemble low levels of pleasure. The difference between these two concepts is that workaholism reflects a high level of activation whereas burnout reflects a low level of activation. Work engagement is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the model because it is characterized by a high level of pleasure and activation. Happiness at work and job satisfaction, other positive forms of subjective well-being, are also positioned in the right half of the model. However, they differ from work engagement in the level of activation: happiness refers to higher levels of

activation than satisfaction or contentment but lower levels of activation compared to work engagement to which excitement and enthusiasm are typical affects. (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2010, 6, 8, 10–11.) Furthermore, another difference between job satisfaction and work engagement lies in the constructs' relationship with work: work engagement concerns an individual's mood at work, whereas job satisfaction concerns an affect about or toward work having probably more cognitive underpinnings compared to work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, 14).

According to Hakanen (2009, 9), work engagement has become established in Finnish research and discussion to refer to the definition of Schaufeli and Bakker (Schaufeli et al., 2002, 74–75). Also Bakker (2011, 265) states that this definition in question is arguably the most often used conceptualization of work engagement. Similarly as Maslach and Leiter (1997), Schaufeli et al. (2002) state that work engagement is negatively related to burnout. However, unlike Maslach and Leiter, Schaufeli and his colleagues consider work engagement to be an independent and distinct concept instead of a direct opposite of burnout. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, 13.) The popularity of the definition may be due to its aim to conceptualize engagement as “a specific, well-defined and properly operationalized psychological state that is open to empirical research and practical application” (Leiter & Bakker, 2010, 2).

According to the definition, work engagement is a positive and fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption. Vigor alludes to “high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties”. Dedicated employee is “strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge”. Absorption refers to “being fully concentrated and happily engrossed in one's work, whereby time passes quickly and one has difficulties with detaching oneself from work”. (Schaufeli et al., 2002, 74–75.) Vigor is a behavioral-energetic, dedication an emotional, and absorption a cognitive component of work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, 13). In consequence of the established position of the above presented definition, it is used as the definition of work engagement also in this study from this point onward.

Work engagement can be divided into trait-like (between-person view) and state-like (within-person view) engagement. Trait-like work engagement answers questions such as why one employee experiences engagement at work while another does not, and can be considered as a

persistent and pervasive affective-cognitive state. Unlike trait-like work engagement, state-like work engagement can explain why one employee feels more engaged at work on certain days but not every day. This within-person approach is an important complement to the more traditional trait approach, which analyses employees' more general levels of work engagement, because it enables scholars to examine more proximal predictors of work engagement. Investigating state engagement might be even more essential than investigating trait engagement for the reason that trait engagement may be present only when a person actively reflects on his or her past work experiences, whereas state engagement as an experiential state is a constant stream of reflections on an individual's working life and therefore a part of his or her existence. State work engagement is supported by empirical evidence: day-level and week-level studies demonstrate the existence of systematic fluctuation around the individual-specific general work engagement level within the individual, although some longitudinal studies show that the general level of an individual's work engagement is quite stable. (Sonnetag, Dormann & Demerouti, 2010, 26–28.)

Even though work engagement is a personal experience of individuals, it does not occur without other people. A thorough consideration of the experience of work engagement together with its prerequisites and outcomes go beyond the individual to consider the social dynamics among individuals and further the larger institutional dynamics that reflect an organization's culture. (Leiter & Bakker, 2010, 5.)

Work engagement is often linked to the concept of flow, which was developed by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Work engagement and flow are easily compared to each other because the definition of flow is very similar to absorption, one of the three dimensions of work engagement. Thus, the sensations of people are in many respects similar when they experience work engagement or flow. According to Csikszentmihalyi (1990, 1997), flow is a state of optimal experience that is described through clear mind, merging of mind and body, effortless concentration and focused attention, sense of complete personal control, loss of self-consciousness, distortion of temporal experience, and intrinsic enjoyment. In order to achieve a flow state, one should have clear goals, immediate feedback, and tasks that are challenging enough. The level of challenges has to meet one's skills so that one has confidence to perform the tasks. (Hakanen, 2004a, 228; Schaufeli et al., 2002, 75.) The concepts of work engagement and flow have, however, two considerable differences; flow is typically a more complex concept than work engagement and refers to certain, short-term peak experiences,

while work engagement is a more pervasive and persistent state of mind (Schaufeli et al., 2002, 75).

Similarly as absorption can be associated with flow, dedication can be linked to job involvement. According to Mauno, Kinnunen, and Ruokolainen (2007, 151–152), dedication has conceptual similarities with job involvement: dedication is defined as a strong psychological involvement or identification with one's work (Schaufeli et al., 2006a, 702; Schaufeli et al., 2002, 74), whereas job involvement denotes an individual's psychological identification with a particular job or with work in general (Kanungo, 1982, 342). Additionally, both concepts are regarded as fairly stable phenomena, although the difference between the concepts has not been clearly argued. However, dedication appears to be a broader phenomenon than job involvement because dedication contains feelings of enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge, while job involvement focuses strictly on the psychological importance of the job in an individual's life. (Mauno et al., 2007, 152).

Vigor, the remaining dimension of work engagement, is closely related to motivational processes at work (Shirom, 2010, 70). Vigor can be considered as a motivational concept because the definition of vigor is consistent with Atkinson's (1964) definition of motivation (Mauno et al., 2007, 151): vigor consists of "high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, the willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence even in the face of difficulties" (Schaufeli et al., 2002, 74), whereas, according to Atkinson (1964, 2), motivation can be conceptualized as "the contemporary or immediate influence on direction, vigor, and persistence of action" (Mauno et al., 2007, 151). Especially the concept of intrinsic motivation shares conceptual similarity with vigor. Intrinsic motivation denotes a need of a person to perform particular activity because it gives inherent pleasure and satisfaction. Intrinsically rewarding activity does not include extrinsic goals such as better salary or promotion. (Deci & Ryan, 1985, see Mauno et al., 2007, 151.) Moreover, personal initiative (PI), "a work behavior defined as self-starting and proactive that overcomes barriers to achieve a goal" (Frese & Fay, 2001, 133), can be related to vigor. The link between PI and vigor is following: PI denotes the quality of an employee's work behavior and vigor is the behavioral component of work engagement. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, 14.)

Vigor and dedication are held as opposites of exhaustion and cynicism, which are the two core factors of burnout. Vigor and exhaustion are the ends of an *energy* continuum, whereas

dedication and cynicism are the ends of an *identification* continuum. Most researchers agree that the concept of engagement contains these two dimensions. However, there is also evidence that vigor and exhaustion are not each other's opposites but two separate although highly related constructs. Based on in-depth interviews, absorption was additionally included as the third constituting aspect of work engagement, even though it does not have a conceptual opposite in the dimensions of burnout: absorption and reduced professional efficacy are rather conceptually distinct aspects than each other's direct opposites. Hence, engagement and burnout can be considered as opposite concepts which should be measured independently and with different instruments. (Bakker et al., 2008a, 188; Demerouti, Mostert & Bakker, 2010, 218; González-Romá, Bakker, Schaufeli & Lloret, 2006, 172; Schaufeli et al., 2002, 74; Schaufeli et al., 2001, see Bakker et al., 2008a, 188.)

Hakanen (2009) affords empirical evidence to support the claim that burnout and work engagement are separate phenomena, although they are in a reverse relationship with each other. According to him, lack of burnout symptoms does not denote that an employee would experience lots of work engagement. In addition, a low level of experienced work engagement does not allude to serious burnout. For example, in studies among personnel of school authority and dentists, female, young, aged, and temporary employees in conjunction with employees who are parents have been discovered to experience more work engagement than their control group, even though they also have a tendency to experience problems of coping at work. (Hakanen, 2009, 9.)

In conclusion, work engagement is part of subjective well-being, and it has been defined in several different ways. When work engagement is conceptualized by way of experienced pleasure and arousal or activation, it can be separated from workaholism, burnout, and job satisfaction. In this study, work engagement is defined as a positive and fulfilling work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption due to the established position of this definition in the field of work engagement research. Moreover, work engagement can be examined through a trait and a state approach. Presenting the concept itself has not, however, revealed how work engagement is actually studied and measured. Hence, this topic will be dealt with in the two following chapters.

2.3.2 Job demands-resources model

Thus far, the job demands-resources (JD-R) model has been used as the theoretical framework of work engagement studies more often than other theories or models. The JD-R model is a comprehensive framework for understanding the antecedents and consequences of health and motivation. It was introduced for the first time by Demerouti and her colleagues in 2001. (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010, 153; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010, 85–86.) According to the model, job characteristics can be divided into two separate categories which are job demands and job resources. These categories do not depend on a profession or an organization: every job includes job demands and job resources, albeit these demands and resources vary from a job and an organization to another. (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001, 501–502, 508).

Job demands denote “those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (cognitive or emotional) effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, 296). A physical aspect related to job demands can be, for example, noise, a psychological aspect time pressure, social aspects problems of work climate, and an organizational aspect job uncertainty (Mäkikangas et al., 2005, 57). If job demands exceed the employee’s adaptive capability, they may evoke strain (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti & Xanthopoulou, 2007, 275). In other words, job demands are not necessarily negative but they can change into job stressors if meeting these demands requires so much effort that the effort is linked to high costs which cause negative consequences such as depression, anxiety, or burnout. In this case, an employee’s ability to work decreases and health weakens. (Hakanen, 2004a, 255; Mamia, 2009, 28; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, 296.) Hence, job demands can be divided into challenge demands/stressors and hindrance demands/stressors. Challenge stressors (e.g., time urgency) may promote personal growth and achievement as job resources do, whereas hindrance stressors constrain growth and achievement (e.g., role conflicts and role ambiguity). (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010, 95–96.)

Job resources are “those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that either/or (1) reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; (2) are functional in achieving work goals; (3) stimulate personal growth, learning and development” (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, 296). Job resources lead employees to experience

more work engagement, thus making them more committed to their work and organization (Kangas et al., 2010, 10–11). They may be located at the level of organization at large, at the interpersonal level, at the level of organization of work, and at the task level. Job resources that relate to the organization at large include, for example, physical working conditions, salary, good internal flow of information, career opportunities, and job security. Job resources at the interpersonal level involve, for example, supervisor and co-worker support, team climate, and openness of working climate in general, whereas role clarity and influencing possibilities such as participation in decision-making, relate to the level of organization of work. Finally, job resources at the task level include, for example, performance feedback, skill and task variety, task significance, and autonomy. (Bakker, Demerouti, de Boer & Schaufeli, 2003, 345; Mamia, 2009, 28; Mäkikangas et al., 2005, 57.) Although job resources prefigure work engagement, may work engagement also have a positive, reciprocal effect on job resources (Hakanen, 2009, 17). Those job resources that have been proved to foster work engagement are presented in Chapter 2.4 *Prerequisites of work engagement*.

Job demands and resources may evoke two different but related processes (Figure 6). The first process is called energetic or health impairment process in which high job demands may cause burnout and further health problems as well as weakened ability to work. In the second process, which is referred to as motivational process, various job resources help employees experience work engagement that further enhances commitment and work motivation, and reduces withdrawal from work. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 313; Bakker et al., 2003, 345; Demerouti et al., 2001, 502; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010, 89; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, 296–298.)

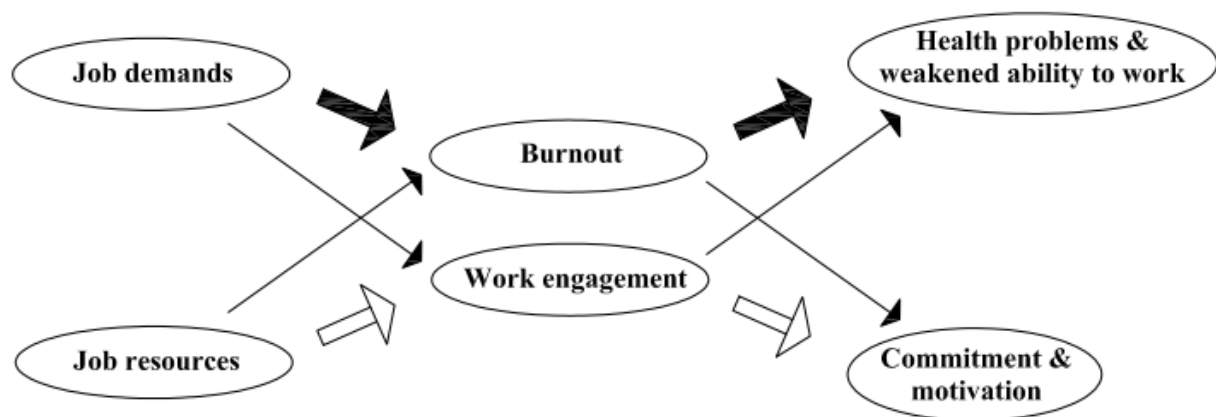


Figure 6 Health impairment and motivational processes of occupational well-being (Hakanen, 2004a, 231; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, 297)

Job resources can prevent burnout similarly as experienced work engagement can prevent health problems and weakened ability to work. Similarly, job demands may reduce experienced work engagement as well as experienced burnout can lower work motivation and commitment. (Bakker, van Emmerik & Euwema, 2006, 483; Hakanen, 2004a, 231; Mamia, 2009, 28.) On the other hand, job demands can also have a positive effect on the motivational process because job resources influence motivation or work engagement particularly when the level of job demands is high (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 315, 318–319).

Even though job resources have been discovered to predict work engagement better than job demands (Mauno et al., 2007, 149), the division of job characteristics into job demands and job resources is not unambiguous: job characteristics may function as demands and resources for an employee at the same time. For example, challenging tasks have been discovered to produce joy as well as cause worries for managers. Hence, it is difficult to divide job characteristics only into job demands or job resources because the effects of job characteristics are always tied to the interpretation of an individual. (Mäkikangas et al., 2005, 58.)

The background presumption of the motivational process (Figure 6) is the positive effect of job resources via work engagement on organizational outcomes such as workplace commitment. Job resources are able to enhance employees' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The effect on extrinsic motivation is due to an instrumental role of job resources in achieving work goals. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, 298.) According to the effort-recovery model of Meijman and Mulder (1998, see Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, 298), workplaces that provide plenty resources forward the willingness of employees to dedicate their efforts and capabilities to a work task at hand. Thus, the task will probably be carried out successfully and the work goal will be achieved. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, 298.) The resources extrinsic to the job were included already in the motivation-hygiene theory of Herzberg and colleagues (1959) who called them hygiene factors. The motivation-hygiene theory was presented in Chapter 2.1 *Occupational well-being*.

Job resources influence employees' intrinsic motivation because they foster employees' growth, learning, and development. The intrinsic motivational potential of job resources is dealt with in Hackman's and Oldham's (1980) job characteristics theory. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, 298.) This theory suggests that those characteristics of a job which increase

intrinsic motivation in a person are skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. Skill variety denotes how wide repertoire of skills completing a task demands, whereas task identity concerns the degree to which a task forms a meaningful whole. Task significance involves the effects of the task on other people either inside or outside the organization. Autonomy can be defined according to the degree an employee can control, influence, and determine the way he or she works. Finally, feedback denotes how job itself produces feedback information that an employee can use to evaluate and direct his or her performance. Three former mentioned job characteristics influence the experience of meaningfulness of a job, fourth characteristic affects the experience of responsibility in relation to the results of the work, and the fifth characteristic influences the knowledge or understanding of the actual effects of the work. (Hackman & Oldham, 1980, see Honkanen, 2006, 165.)

Job characteristics theory assumes that the five job characteristics are connected via so-called critical psychological states to various positive outcomes including job satisfaction, high-quality work performance, and low absenteeism and turnover (Hackman & Oldham, 1980, see Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, 298). When the both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation increases, the probability to satisfy basic human needs or to achieve work goals grows, whereupon the level of work engagement is also likely to increase (Hakanen, 2004a, 258). As well as the hygiene factors, the resources intrinsic to the job (motivational factors) were included in the motivation-hygiene theory of Herzberg and colleagues (1959). In contrast to this theory that stated dissatisfaction to be caused by hygiene factors and satisfaction to be caused by motivational factors, job demands-resources model proposes that both intrinsic resources and those surrounding the employee may enhance work engagement. On the other hand, lack of these resources may lead to disengagement. (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010, 88.)

In addition to job resources, personal resources play a role in work engagement. Personal resources can be defined as “lower order, cognitive-affective aspects of personality; developable systems of positive beliefs about one’s “self” (e.g., self-esteem, self-efficacy, mastery) and the world (e.g., optimism, faith) which motivate and facilitate goal-attainment, even in the face of adversity or challenge” (Van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, 129). Hence, these beliefs are the most proximal drivers of engagement that explain the relationship between job resources and work engagement (Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2013, 2762). Employees’ high level of personal resources lead to more positive self-regard and

further more experienced goal self-concordance, whereupon they are intrinsically motivated to pursue their goals and thus perform at a high level as well as experience satisfaction (Bakker, 2011, 266).

Several theories support the influence of resources on psychological well-being (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010, 88). For example, according to Hobfoll's (2001) conservation of resources (COR) theory, individuals strive to obtain, retain, protect, and foster the resources they value: individuals with fewer resources are more likely to lose resources and less capable of gaining them, which leads to loss spirals, whereas individuals with greater resources are less vulnerable to lose resources and more capable of gaining them, which leads to gain spirals (Figure 7). (Hobfoll, 2001, 341, 349, 354–355.) Therefore, if employees are provided with adequate job resources, they may experience more work engagement. In this case, they are more energized to utilize the existing job resources as well as more motivated to create new ones. For example, in addition to reducing the risk of unemployment, better employability increases the possibility of getting a better job that offers more opportunities for learning and development. Resource gains in themselves have only a modest effect on emotional and functional outcomes but instead acquire their saliency when resource loss has occurred. (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010, 88; Hobfoll 2002, 312; Salanova, Schaufeli, Xanthopoulou & Bakker, 2010, 120.)

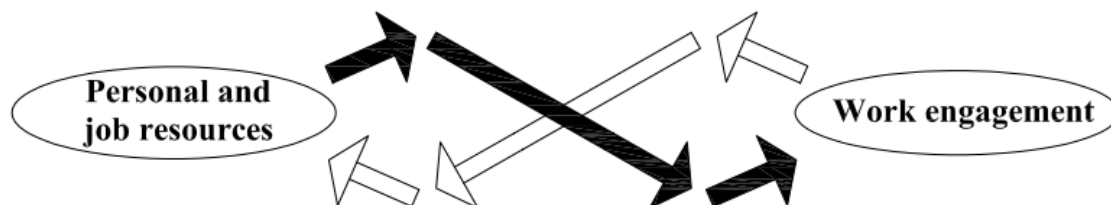


Figure 7 Gain spiral

Fredrickson's (2001) broaden-and-build (B&B) theory is another theory that supports the influence of resources on psychological well-being. According to the theory, experiences of positive emotions (joy, interest, contentment, pride, and love) broaden people's momentary thought–action repertoires, which in turn build their enduring personal resources, including physical, intellectual, social, and psychological resources. These resources function as reserves that help individuals manage future threats. Positive emotions can trigger broadened attention and cognition which should facilitate coping with adversity. The improved coping further predicts future experiences of positive emotions. This upward spiral help people build their psychological resilience and improve their emotional well-being. (Fredrickson, 2001,

218–220, 223.) The upward spiral proposed by the B&B theory relates to work engagement because work engagement may be seen as a positive affective-motivational state, as the initiator of positive emotions, and as the direct or indirect outcome of positive emotions. However, these different functions are not independent of underlying psychological processes of B&B theory. Instead, they are complementary and explain all relationships between emotions, resources, and engagement in the development of upward spirals. (Salanova et al., 2010, 125–127.)

The motivational process of the JD-R model has been developed since it was introduced for the first time in 2001. In the recently updated model of the motivational process, Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) have integrated work engagement with several related and overlapping concepts. According to this model, work engagement is a part of employee motivation that can be defined as a psychological state mediating the impact of job resources and personal resources on organizational outcomes (Figure 8). (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, 20.)

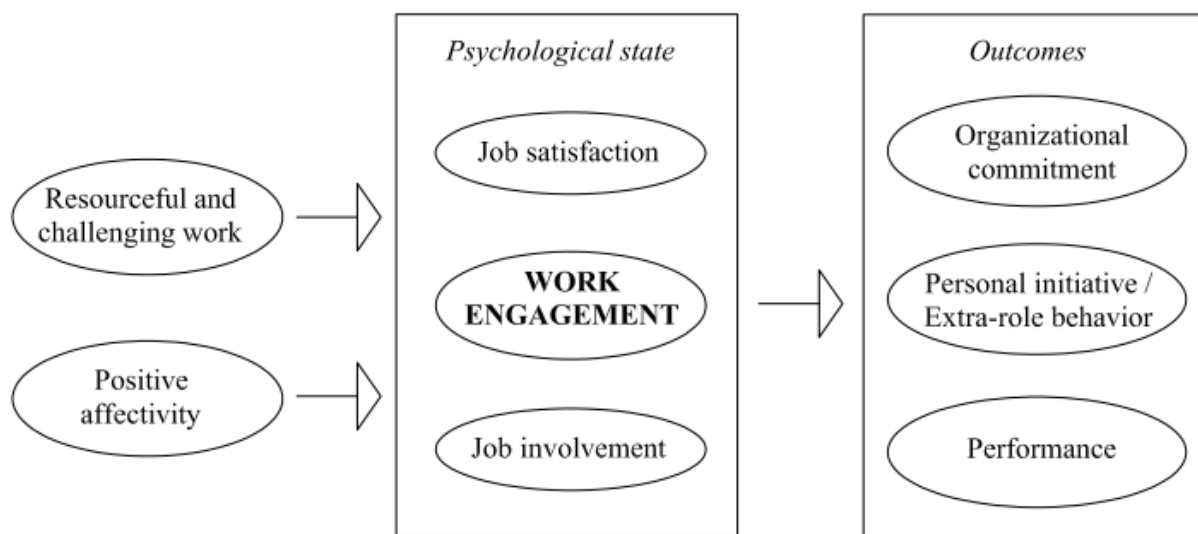


Figure 8 An integrative model of work motivation and work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, 21)

Work engagement is the central psychological state in Figure 8 with its behavioral-energetic (vigor), emotional (dedication), and cognitive (absorption) component. Job satisfaction and job involvement play a similar mediating role in the model as work engagement because of their partial conceptual and empirical overlap with work engagement. Both job satisfaction and work engagement share positive affects, but in the case of job satisfaction they refer to low intensity affect and in the case of work engagement to high intensity affect (Figure 5). The link between job involvement and work engagement is that both are defined in terms of

identification. Hence, work engagement shares some meaning with job satisfaction and involvement but they cannot be reduced to it. Resourceful and challenging work represents job resources and positive affectivity personal resources, which both according to the JD-R model foster work engagement. Furthermore, several studies have shown that work engagement can be distinguished from various organizational outcomes such as organizational commitment, extra-role behavior, personal initiative, and performance. Thus, the results of the studies are inconsistent with the conceptualizations of most major consultancy firms who define engagement in terms of commitment and/or extra-role behavior. In conclusion, this integrative model has three strengths: it identifies an underlying motivational process (theoretical perspective), it allows to formulate and test specific hypotheses (empirical perspective), and based on it specific kinds of interventions can be envisaged (practical perspective). (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, 21–22.)

2.3.3 Measurement of work engagement

Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) have developed a method called UWES (Utrecht Work Engagement Scale) to measure work engagement. Although the UWES is not the only questionnaire that measures engagement (for a review, see Schaufeli, 2012), it is at the moment the most widely used engagement questionnaire and available in 22 languages (Schaufeli, 2012, 143).

The longer version of the UWES includes 17 and the shorter version 9 questions. In the longer questionnaire, vigor is assessed with six items, dedication with five items, and absorption with six items. In the shorter questionnaire, every dimension is measured by three items. The statements in the questionnaire relate to how one feels at work. Before filling in the questionnaire form, one should read each statement carefully and thereafter choose one alternative between zero (“never”) and six (“every day”) to describe how frequently the feeling is experienced. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003, 5–6, 21, 48.) Both versions of the UWES can be found from Appendix 1.

The UWES captures both trait (between-level) and state (within-level, SWE) work engagement when the items of the UWES are adapted to measure also SWE. In this case, the items measure the level of work engagement of a certain day instead of work engagement in general. For example, “I am enthusiastic about my job” is changed to “Today, I was enthusiastic about my job”. In order to measure state work engagement, the adapted version

of the UWES should be filled in every day or every week over a longer period of time. (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti & Hetland, 2012, 308, 310.)

Work engagement seems to be a unitary concept that is constituted by three closely related but still different aspects when it is measured by the UWES. However, because the three aspects are so closely related to each other, it is thus far recommended to use the total score on the UWES as an indicator of work engagement instead of differentiating the scores of the three aspects from each other. The factorial structure of the UWES seems to be invariant according to multiple studies across different nations and various occupational groups. Internal consistency of the UWES has also been demonstrated to be sufficient. Moreover, the scores of the UWES have been proved to be relatively stable across time up to three years. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, 17–18; Schaufeli et al., 2006a, 712.) Since the psychometric features of the UWES are excellent and since it is linked to meaningful organizational and business outcomes, the UWES seems to be the most promising tool to assess work engagement both in academia and in business (Schaufeli, 2012, 149).

2.4 Prerequisites of work engagement

Most scholars consider job resources to be the most important drivers of work engagement. Resources are those aspects of the job that may reduce job demands, are functional in achieving work goals, and can stimulate personal growth, learning, and development. (Bakker et al., 2012b, 15; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2008, 385.) Moreover, personal resources, such as self-esteem, self-efficacy, and optimism, may be the most proximal drivers of engagement that explain the relationship between job resources and work engagement (Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2013, 2762). Since job and personal resources seem to be the most important prerequisites of work engagement, the following chapter will review what kind of job and personal resources have been discovered to enhance work engagement. The chapter will also review briefly how positive emotions and recovery from work are related to work engagement. Thereafter, the role of management in promoting work engagement will be discussed before some interventions through which work engagement can be fostered are presented.

2.4.1 Work engagement enhancing factors

One part of work engagement studies concentrate on examining the effect of job resources on state work engagement and the other part on trait work engagement. Thus, in this chapter, the latest scientific knowledge of engagement is divided into these two groups. Personal resources are often studied together with job resources, in consequence of which they are dealt with in parallel.

Trait work engagement studies

Work engagement studies have revealed positive relationships between work engagement and many different job resources. For example, colleague support has been discovered to enhance work engagement in a study among flight attendants. The results of the study revealed that colleague support had a positive effect on self-efficacy and work engagement. That is, supportive working environment made employees believe that they have adequate resources to complete their tasks successfully. (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Heuven, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2008, 345, 352.)

Psychological contract fulfillment which functions as a form of various job resources (e.g., necessary training, participation in goal setting, autonomy) provided by the employer has also been found to enhance employees' work engagement (Parzefall & Hakanen, 2010, 4, 16–17; see also Hakanen & Roodt, 2010, 92). Moreover, employees working in hotel front desks and restaurants have been found to experience more work engagement when work facilitating organizational resources including training, autonomy, and technology, have been available for them. (Salanova, Agut & Peiró, 2005, 1217, 1223–1224).

Koyuncu, Burke, and Fiksenbaum (2006) found in their study among managerial and professional women working in a major Turkish bank that work experiences are strong predictors of all three engagement dimensions. Especially control, rewards and recognition, and the fit of personal and organizational values emerged as important job resources predicting work engagement. (Koyuncu et al., 2006, 299, 307.) Psychological safety is another job resource that matters to engagement because it reduces the depletion of employee's energy. Psychological safety denotes one's belief that the working environment is safe to take interpersonal risks, whereupon employees are less likely to experience negative emotions associated with failure. (Spreitzer, Lam & Fritz, 2010, 140–141.)

In addition to job resources concerning work and work roles, changes in work status foster work engagement. In a Belgian panel study, external job movers along with employees who obtained promotions in their organization were able to experience more work engagement and increase their job resources (job autonomy, departmental resources) after the change. Instead, employees who continued working in their old positions reported negative changes in their job resources across time. (De Lange, De Witte & Notelaers, 2008, 217–218.)

The relationship between job resources and work engagement is linked with the level of job demands: the more job demands the job contains, the stronger the relation is (Hakanen, 2009, 13). Job resources among Finnish dentists, including positive patient contacts, variability in professional skills, and peer contacts, have been found to reduce the negative effect of job demands on work engagement. Hence, dentists benefit most from their job resources when job demands are relatively high. (Hakanen, Bakker & Demerouti, 2005, 483–484.) Furthermore, a study among Finnish teachers working in elementary, secondary, and vocational schools showed that supervisor support, innovativeness, sufficient information, appreciation, and organizational climate helped teachers to buffer the negative impact of pupil misbehavior on work engagement. In this study, job resources were discovered to be particularly important under highly stressful conditions. (Bakker et al., 2007, 280–282.)

Certain job demands may be beneficial to employees in relation to experiencing work engagement. For example, work pressure has been found to enhance all three engagement dimensions in a study among Dutch constabulary officers. This positive relationship may be due to the content of the officers' tasks (a high level of routine and a low work pressure). (Bakker et al., 2006, 484.) On the other hand, if employees need to face high levels of job demands in their work, they should be provided with enough job resources in order that they are able to benefit the most from the situation. Bakker, van Veldhoven, and Xanthopoulou (2010) showed in their study among over 12 300 employees working in 148 organizations that these employees endorse most positive work attitudes (task enjoyment and organizational commitment) under conditions of both high job demands and high job resources. Job resources included skill utilization, learning opportunities, autonomy, colleague support, leader support, performance feedback, participation in decision making, and career opportunities, whereas the examined job demands were workload and emotional demands. Only two job resources did not act as predicted: colleague support did not interact with workload or emotional demands in predicting organizational commitment, and skill utilization

did not interact with emotional demands in predicting task enjoyment or organizational commitment. (Bakker et al., 2010, 11–13.)

Adequate amount and quality of job resources is important to employees because lacking or negative job resources may cause boreout and waning of experienced work engagement (Hakanen, 2009, 13). Individuals suffering from boreout are bored, understretched, and unmotivated (Rothlin & Werder, 2008, 4). For example, a lacking job resource, perceived job insecurity, has been found to explain low levels of work engagement in a study among Finnish health care staff. Under conditions of high subjective job insecurity employees with permanent contracts showed lower levels of experienced work engagement than fixed-term employees. (Mauno, Kinnunen, Mäkikangas & Nätti, 2005, 209.) Similarly, in a study among cancer survivors, supervisor and colleague avoidance behavior was negatively related to work engagement, whereas good organizational climate and support from one's immediate supervisor and colleagues were positively associated to work engagement. (Hakanen & Lindbohm, 2008, 292).

The majority of work engagement research is based on cross-sectional data because the scientific research of this topic began in the early 2000's. However, some longitudinal studies on the prerequisites of work engagement have already been published. (Hakanen, 2009, 12.) According to Finnish longitudinal work engagement studies, job resources have been found to positively influence work engagement also after controlling for the baseline level of work engagement (Hakanen, 2009, 13; Hakanen, Schaufeli & Ahola, 2008, 236). For example, several job resources showed to enhance work engagement in a follow-up study among Finnish dentists. The most significant job resources included participation in decision making, commitment, short- and long-term results of their work, social and professional appreciation, and collaboration with the assistant. Other examined job resources included self-development with the help of the job, innovative and social work climate, supervisor support, expertise, peer contacts, entrepreneurship, positive patient contacts, and material rewards. (Hakanen & Perhoniemi, 2008b, 41–43.)

Furthermore, a study among Finnish health care personnel showed that the participants experienced work engagement relatively frequently and that the experience was reasonably stable during a 2-year period. In this study, job control and organization-based self-esteem were the best predictors of work engagement. The participants experienced more vigor and

dedication than absorption at work. (Mauno et al., 2007, 149, 164–166.) Another longitudinal study (18 months) revealed the positive reciprocal relationship of five job resources (autonomy, social support, supervisory coaching, performance feedback, and opportunities for personal development) both with personal resources (self-efficacy, organizational-based self-esteem, and optimism) and with work engagement over time. The study suggests that the relationships between job resources, personal resources, and work engagement cannot be considered in isolation. In other words, these psychological processes are dynamic: job and personal resources are mutually related with work engagement as well as with each other. (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2009a, 235, 241–242.)

After the above presented study of Xanthopoulou and colleagues (2009a), more evidence has been found that the relationship between job resources and work engagement can be mediated by different factors. A study among female school principals showed that their personal resources (self-efficacy and resilience) were related to work engagement they experienced. More precisely, the results of the study suggested that job resources (autonomy, social support, performance feedback, and opportunities for professional development) facilitate individuals' sense of self-efficacy and resiliency, which further leads to increased level of work engagement. (Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2013, 2778.) The relationship between efficacy beliefs (self-efficacy and perceived collective efficacy) and work engagement may further be mediated by positive affect (enthusiasm, satisfaction, and comfort), which form together a gain cycle (Salanova, Llorens & Schaufeli, 2011, 255, 278). Similarly, Balducci, Schaufeli, and Fraccaroli (2011, 486–487) found evidence for a partial mediating effect of job relating positive affect between job resources (autonomy, social support, and promotion prospects) and work engagement.

A tendency to experience work engagement is bound to an individual's personality and temperament: a study among 572 Dutch employees showed that work engagement is characterized by low scores on neuroticism and high scores on extraversion, whereas burnout is related to high neuroticism. Extraverted people are sociable, affectionate, cheerful, talkative, friendly, and warm, whereas neurotic people are characterized by being worrying, nervous, high-strung, insecure, self-conscious, and impulsive. The opposite of extraversion is introversion and the opposite of neuroticism is emotional stability (Costa & McCrae, 1980, 673–675; Langelaan, Bakker, van Doornen & Schaufeli, 2006, 521, 523, 529; McCrae & Costa, 1987, 85–87.)

In addition to an individualistic phenomenon, work engagement is also a collective phenomenon; it can be communicated from a person to another (Hakanen, 2009, 13). In a study among Dutch constabulary officers, individuals working in highly engaged teams reported higher levels of vigor, dedication, and absorption. Evidently, engaged officers communicated their optimism, positive attitudes and feelings (e.g., energy and enthusiasm), and proactive behaviors to their colleagues, which led to the crossover of work engagement and further more positive team climate within these work teams. (Bakker et al., 2006, 464, 482.) In another study among 62 teams in 13 organizations, team social resources (supportive team climate, coordination, and teamwork) led to higher level of team work engagement and further to better team performance (in-role and extra-role) which was assessed by supervisor ratings (Torrente, Salanova, Llorens & Schaufeli, 2012, 106).

State work engagement studies

State work engagement has been studied, for example, via a state-like construct called psychological capital (PsyCap) which consists of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resiliency. Through developing employees' PsyCap, their positive psychological resources increase, which further leads the employees to experience higher levels of work engagement. The mechanisms related to PsyCap include confidence in one's abilities, expectation of positive outcomes, willpower and pathways to achieve goals, and the ability to bounce back and beyond when facing job demands and obstacles. Additionally, PsyCap may enhance work engagement indirectly through positive emotions: contagion of positive emotions among employees can result in increased work engagement in the whole organization. (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010, 58, 65.)

The effect of PsyCap on work engagement has been examined by Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, and Schaufeli (2009b). Their study showed that day-level coaching, autonomy, and team climate enhanced work engagement of employees in a fast-food company during the same day. The effects of autonomy and coaching were fully mediated by day-level personal resources (self-efficacy, self-esteem, and optimism). In addition, experienced optimism mediated the relationship between previous day's coaching and next day's work engagement. Hence, one important finding of the study was that existing resources bring more resources, which leads to a gain spiral: for example, when supervisors give feedback to the subordinates about their performance and suggest better ways to carry out their tasks, subordinates' optimism is boosted, and therefore they feel more engaged as well as are more productive.

(Salanova et al., 2010, 122; Sonnentag et al., 2010, 31; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009b, 183, 196.) The results of another study concerning daily job resources and daily personal resources revealed that the relationship between them is not direct but mediated by positive emotions. In other words, positive emotions predict work engagement through the build of personal resources. The examined job resources included autonomy and psychological climate of cooperation and warmth, whereas the personal resources were self-efficacy, self-esteem, and optimism (Ouweneel, Le Blanc & Schaufeli, 2012, 550; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2012, 489.)

New Ways of Working (NWW) which enable individuals to choose when and where to work while being supported by electronic communication have also been found to relate positively to daily work engagement. In a five-day diary study, NWW was discovered to increase effective and efficient communication as well as enhance connectivity among co-workers, which led to higher levels of daily engagement. (Ten Brummelhuis, Bakker, Hetland & Keulemans, 2012, 113, 118.)

Job resources of state work engagement have been examined also on a weekly basis. Bakker and Bal (2010, 189) studied predictors of week-level state work engagement among Dutch teachers and discovered that week-levels of autonomy, exchange with the supervisor, and opportunities for development increase the week-level of work engagement. Autonomy is an important job resource because it gives people an opportunity to make changes in their jobs (craft their jobs) in order to experience more work engagement (Bakker et al., 2012b, 19). Job crafting can be defined as the physical and cognitive changes employees themselves make in the task or relational boundaries of their work. Changing task boundaries physically means altering the form or number of activities (e.g., an accountant creating a method to make the job less repetitive), whereas changing cognitive task boundaries refers to altering how an employee sees the job (e.g., a hospital cleaner seeing the job as a means to help ill people instead of just cleaning). Moreover, employees can craft their work by altering the nature or extent of their relationships with other people (e.g., a computer technician offering help to colleagues in order to have more social connection). (Berg, Dutton & Wrzesniewski, 2008, 1; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, 179–180.) In other words, job crafting means that employees may increase their levels of job resources as well as increase or decrease their levels of job demands in order to align them with their own abilities and preferences (Tims & Bakker, 2010, 4).

In a study that examined job crafting behavior, engaged employees were found to increase their structural job resources and social job resources. Structural job resources included trying to learn new things at work (opportunity for development) and deciding on one's own how to do things (autonomy), whereas social job resources were increased by asking advice and feedback from supervisors and colleagues. Engaged individuals were also discovered to increase their job demands in order to make their jobs more challenging. For example, they may be willing to take extra tasks although they do not receive extra salary for them. (Tims, Bakker & Derks, 2012, 176–177.) Seeking challenges on a daily basis has been found to relate positively to day-level work engagement, but on the contrary, reducing demands on a daily basis seems to be negatively associated with day-level work engagement (Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli & Hetland, 2012, 1120).

Recovery from work-related effort has been discovered to play an important role in experiencing work engagement on a daily basis. Sonnentag (2003) showed in her study that day-level recovery is positively related to day-level (state) work engagement: when employees feel that they have recovered sufficiently during leisure time, they experience more work engagement during the following workday. (Sonnentag, 2003, 518, 525.) Another study confirmed these results by showing that recovery level and work engagement mutually reinforce each other: morning recovery level predicts work engagement during a workday, which further limits the decrease in the employee's recovery level over the course of the day (Sonnentag, Mojza, Demerouti & Bakker, 2012, 848–849).

Off-job activities, such as social activities, low-effort activities, relaxation activities, physical activities, creative activities, and sleeping properly, help employees to recover because they enable these employees to detach psychologically from work (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012, 450; Demerouti, Bakker, Geurts & Taris, 2009, 96–101). Moreover, high daily recovery in the morning has been found to turn daily job demands into challenges which further have an enhancing effect on the level of experienced work engagement on this certain day (Bakker, van Emmerik, Geurts & Demerouti, 2008b). According to Sonnentag et al. (2010), recovery can be assumed to increase day-level personal resources and thus lead one to be dedicated and get absorbed in the task at hand. Recovery from the previous day's fatigue is important in the case of high job demands so that employees have enough energy reserves to face these demands and take them as challenges. It is also important to note that if these demands last

too long, they “burn” all the energy resources and therefore state engagement cannot be maintained. (Sonnentag et al., 2010, 31–32.)

Summary

In conclusion, variety of job resources has been included in the studies either to test the comprehensive JD-R model or explore motivational processes (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010, 92). Most often examined job resources in the above presented studies were performance feedback, job control and autonomy, social support from supervisors and colleagues, opportunities for learning and self-development (task variety, expertise), supervisory coaching, advancement opportunities, organizational training, communicative and cooperative work climate, innovative work environment, participation in decision making, rewards, and appreciation. Additionally, recovery from work, fit of personal and organizational values, psychological safety, positive contacts with colleagues and clients, access to sufficient information and technology, results of the work, entrepreneurship, and commitment have been found to enhance work engagement.

In addition to the various job resources that are at employees’ disposal, the more efficacy beliefs and self-esteem one has and the more optimism, resilience, and hope one experiences, the more engaged one is likely to be. It is also worth noting for that positive affect has a part in the motivational process of JD-R model between these personal resources and work engagement as well as that personality and temperament have an effect on experiencing work engagement. Because work engagement is a collective phenomenon, personal resources can be communicated from an individual to another.

In order to increase the level of work engagement in the organization, the amount and quality of job resources provided to the employees should be adequate when the nature of the job is taken into account. Moreover, job resources are most beneficial to employees when the level of job demands is relatively high. Employees can influence their job resources and demands by crafting their jobs (increasing job resources and increasing or decreasing job demands). New Ways of Working (NWW) are another way of enhancing work engagement. However, employees have possibilities to affect their jobs only in the limits of their autonomy and in the limits of organizational policies and practices. Hence, the role of management in fostering work engagement will be discussed next.

2.4.2 The role of management

Managers play an important role in employee engagement because of their legitimate power to affect working conditions (Bakker et al., 2012b, 15). Since work engagement is contagious and a collective phenomenon, managers are in a position where they can influence positively the levels of individual and collective engagement (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2008, 394). For example, transformational leadership has been proved to affect employees' engagement (mediator optimism) and psychological well-being (mediator work characteristics) (Nielsen, Randall, Yarker & Brenner, 2008, 16; Tims, Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2011, 121).

According to Bass (1985), transformational leadership consists of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention (Breevaart & Bakker, 2013, 32). Idealized influence means that leaders are role models to their subordinates; employees trust and respect their leaders. When leaders motivate inspirationally, they communicate their optimistic future visions to their subordinates and create a team spirit which transcends their subordinates' self-interest. Inspirational motivation and idealized influence constitute the concept of charisma. Intellectual stimulation means that leaders encourage their subordinates to approach existing problems in a different way and invent new ideas, provide them with individual attention, and delegate tasks that match their needs and abilities. Finally, transformational leaders give their subordinates the individual attention they require according to their unique needs. While doing all above mentioned, transformational leaders give a meaning to the work of their subordinates and make them feel that they contribute to the organization in an important and meaningful way through their work. (Breevaart & Bakker, 2013, 32.)

Managers can learn transformational leadership, for example, through a training program that consists of a 1-day group-based training session and four individual booster sessions. The purpose of the group session is to learn the central concepts of transformational leadership as well as the ways how to implement transformational leadership in one's own work context. During the monthly booster sessions managers get feedback on their past performance in order to make improvements to their behavior for the following month. The actions of the managers are guided by specific and attainable goals. (Barling, Weber & Kelloway, 1996, 827, 829.)

Empowering leadership is another leadership style that has been found to enhance work engagement. Similarly as transformational leaders, empowering leaders may coach and mentor followers. However, the purpose of the behavior for transformational leaders is to consolidate leader charisma and belief in the leader, whereas for empowering leaders the purpose is to teach self-leadership skills. In a study among volunteer firefighters and fire brigade captains, empowering leadership was found to optimize the combination of cognitive job demands and cognitive job resources for followers to achieve at work (a form of extrinsic motivation) and feel fulfilled (a form of intrinsic motivation). Additionally, empowering leadership was able to strengthen the influence of working conditions even if they were already optimal in terms of cognitive demands and resources. Empowering actions of leaders included delegating responsibility, encouraging independent action and team work, and supporting follower self-development, which resulted in better working conditions for workers and in an increase in work engagement. Empowering leadership can be trained in a similar way as transformational leadership (presented above). Moreover, organizations can identify individuals who are likely to act in ways to empower others and give these people leadership roles. (Tuckey, Bakker & Dollard, 2012, 17, 22–24.)

Management has an important role in affecting the potential of employees to experience work engagement because the level of employees' engagement depends on the way they respond to organizational policies and practices. Firstly, when the work environment is stable, the level of employees' work engagement is consistent. Secondly, work engagement thrives in work environment wherein strong connections between corporate and individual values exist. On the one hand, companies promote their values with employees by articulating them clearly and enacting policies to assure that these values direct important decisions. On the other hand, companies consider employees' personal values as assets that assure responsible dedication to work. Thus, the various perspectives of employees converge on major objectives reflecting corporate values. (Leiter & Bakker, 2010, 2–3.)

The employees' values are shaped, for example, by personal experience, family dynamics, cultural background, and professional training. They may pertain to work ethic, ethical codes, or professional roles. When it comes to organizational values, they arise through organization's history and culture, and are enacted through organization's allocation of time, materials, and money. To determine sincerity, individuals evaluate the values they perceive in an organization's actions against its espoused values, and further against personal values to

determine congruence. Value congruity has a broad positive impact on work engagement because it empowers employees by aligning their personal concerns with concerns of a larger social entity. Moreover, congruence energizes employees through the access to organizational resources to pursue personal and corporate objectives which improves the demand/resource balance. Dedication or involvement in work also increases by confirming the importance of work objectives to which employees are personally attracted. (Leiter & Maslach, 2010, 172–173.)

Existing evidence about engagement interventions indicates that enhancing engagement effectively in the organizational level requires an enduring effort from management. Organizational commitment to work engagement requires senior leadership to acknowledge engagement as a core value. Regular employee surveys provide information on variations of engagement across units, and an open communication strategy helps to share this information to leaders who take it into account in their actions. An intervention that signals commitment of management and trains employees to work in new ways requires normally approximately six months of concerted effort before the change is integrated to employees' everyday working life. Statements of good intentions and brief periods of cheerleading will not have a sustainable impact on employees' work engagement. (Bakker, Albrecht & Leiter, 2011a, 20–21; Leiter & Maslach, 2010, 178.) However, management's commitment to work engagement does not make a difference if the implemented interventions are not effective. Therefore, it is important to find out what kinds of interventions have the potential to increase the level of work engagement among employees.

2.4.3 Interventions

Interventions may occur on three levels; individual, workgroup, or organizational level. So far in the course of history, organizations have focused more on individual strategies rather than on social or organizational ones. However, research has found that situational and organizational factors play a bigger role in the workplace than individual ones. When it comes to work engagement, the focus to enhance engagement from an individual perspective would be on ways to influence a person's subjective experience of engagement. On the contrary, the aim from a management (social or organizational) perspective would be to manipulate conditions in the work environment so that it is more conducive to work engagement. (Leiter & Maslach, 2010, 164–165.) Similarly as Leiter and Maslach above, Taris, Schaufeli, and Shimazu (2010, 50) put organizational-level interventions before individual ones: according

to them, work engagement is likely to be enhanced by organizational-level interventions, whereas workaholism is likely to be decreased by individual-level interventions.

Interventions can be divided into energy-focused and motivational ones. Energy focused interventions include, for example, interventions to improve the balance between job demands and resources, and employee health enhancing interventions. The balance between job demands and resources can be improved by increasing resources or decreasing demands. Resource-based interventions include, for example, improving information technology, enhancing reward systems, or hiring additional personnel. The bottom line is that employees would have more resources available to meet all demands they face. However, a risk here is that better control systems or enhanced resources raise expectations. Thus, the demands may also rise in which case the imbalance between demands and resources maintains. (Leiter & Maslach, 2010, 173–174).

Interventions that concentrate on balancing demands and resources aim to reduce the rate at which employees' jobs deplete their energy. Another possibility is to build employees' resilience. Employee health enhancing interventions may include offering educational programs that provide employees with advice on managing stressors in their work, creating systems to evaluate the ergonomic qualities of office furniture, upgrading cafeteria fare, installing fitness centers, and providing on-site child care. In addition to the implications for the energy process of JD-R model, energy-focused interventions have implications also for the motivational process of JD-R model. Being concerned about the demand/resource balance, an organization is able to convey a non-exploitive relationship with its employees: it signals an intention to sustain the capacity of employees for the long run. Moreover, organization's commitment to employee health supports work engagement through avoiding health problems that are associated with burnout. (Leiter & Maslach, 2010, 174.)

When it comes to motivational interventions, the most effective interventions that emphasize resources “go beyond a temporary infusion to an ongoing change in work processes“ (Leiter & Maslach, 2010, 175). For example, a company could change its performance evaluation system from an annual and form-based exercise to a continuous mentoring process that focuses on employee career objectives. Thus, the process of setting objectives, developing strategies, and assessing impact would become an integral part of employees' working life as well as the basis for establishing an enriched relationship with their supervisors. This kind of

intervention would include the intrinsic motivational effect of personal development and also the extrinsic rewards of bringing meaningful progress on employees' career objectives to their supervisors' attention regularly. Additionally, the interventions like this might lead to gain spirals, in which introducing the revised performance evaluation system leads to greater work engagement and thus enables individuals to create new resources (e.g., recognition by colleagues) that further encourage even more work engagement. (Leiter & Maslach, 2010, 175.)

Schaufeli and Salanova (2007, 2008) suggest different Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies in order to foster work engagement. The objective of HRM is to ensure the organization's success by acquiring, motivating, developing, and managing the human resources of the organization. One of their strategies is called assessment and evaluation of employees. An employee development agreement is a part of this strategy and it consists of three steps: assessing employee's values, preferences, and personal and professional goals; negotiating and drafting a contract that embodies some of these goals as well as the necessary resources to accomplish the goals (provided by the organization); and monitoring the contract periodically in relation to goal achievement, including the readjustment of goals and the provision of additional resources. Workshops that augment employees' personal resources including cognitive, behavioral, and social skills (e.g., positive thinking, time management, lifestyle improvement) are also a part of the strategy. (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007, 139; 2008, 391–393.)

Another HRM-strategy consists of training and career development. Training aims to modify the behaviors that are relevant for job performance through changes in attitudes, beliefs, and values. This can be achieved via training programs that include, for example, mastery experiences (practical exercises to provide experiences of vocational success), vicarious experiences (the use of role models of good performance), verbal persuasion (methods of coaching and encouragement), and managing emotional states (reducing fear of rejection or failure). Furthermore, through career development it is possible to optimize employees' work engagement: when an employee's career is carefully planned including selection of those jobs that provide opportunities for professional and personal development, engagement levels of the employee are likely to remain high. (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2008, 394–395.)

Leiter and Maslach (2010) present their own six points for fostering work engagement: collaborate, establish an ongoing process, know your target, be creative, evaluate, and share. First, collaboration is important because enhancing work engagement is done with someone instead of to someone. Therefore, the process to enhance work engagement should encourage the creativity and enthusiasm of involved employees. Secondly, work engagement cannot be considered an ideal state that employees attain. Thus, the process to enhance work engagement requires ongoing monitoring, adaptation, and action. (Leiter & Maslach, 2010, 178.)

Third, knowing the target of the process is pivotal because for some people engagement may, for example, refer to job satisfaction which has different implications for human resource management than work engagement. Fourth, company's specific conditions need to be taken into account while trying to enhance work engagement since they determine to some extent what works and what does not. This requires invention. Fifth, the results of the process should be measured regularly and reliably in order to get information on the effectiveness of the intervention process. Finally, sharing progress reports is essential because these reports provide important performance feedback for supervisors in their efforts to further enhance work engagement in their units. (Leiter & Maslach, 2010, 178.)

Informal meetings are another means for supervisors to receive feedback from their subordinates. During the meetings the supervisors are also able to provide one important job resource, social support, for their subordinates. In the meetings the subordinates are allowed to discuss the problems they face in their work and ask for advice from their supervisors to solve the problems. Moreover, supervisors may encourage their subordinates to work together, whereupon the subordinates divide the tasks themselves. This way social support is increased among employees and workload is divided more equally. The subordinates' opportunities for development can be enhanced by delegating tasks that match the needs and abilities of subordinates as well as involving subordinates in the decision-making process. Feedback can be given, for example, in personal meetings with one employee or also with the entire team. During the meetings the participants discuss what they have been doing, what has gone well, what could have gone better, and what could be done differently in the future. When the meeting is organized to the whole team, several cases can be discussed and thus employees are able to learn from each other. (Breevaart & Bakker, 2013, 33–34.)

As it can be noticed, there are several possible strategies and interventions to increase the level of work engagement among employees. Demerouti and Cropanzano (2010, 159) suggest to use interventions that focus on the empowerment of job resources because they have been found to promote personal resources and further work engagement. The first step is to identify the key job resources the employees need so that they are able to achieve their work goals. Secondly, the extent and nature of these resources should be increased, which leads to improved proactive behavior and organizational commitment. Concrete examples could be redesigning jobs and job rotation because they challenge and motivate employees as well as stimulate their learning and professional development. However, changing work has positive effects only when the change is carefully planned and when the preferences, goals, and personal resources (knowledge, skills, competences) of the employee are taken into account. In addition to improving job resources, work engagement can also be enhanced by increasing personal resources including efficacy beliefs, optimism, hope, gratitude, and empathy. (Hakanen & Roodt, 2010, 98; Salanova et al., 2010, 128; Schaufeli & Salanova, 2008, 393.)

2.5 Individual and organizational outcomes of work engagement

As it has already been highlighted in this study, work engagement has several positive consequences for working life. In order to get a more comprehensive view of this topic, this chapter focuses on the most important outcomes that research has proved work engagement to lead to.

According to Schaufeli and Salanova (2008), building engagement creates synergy between employees and the whole organization, which leads to optimal outcomes for them both. Most of the individual outcomes, including positive job-related attitudes, strong identification with one's work, good mental health and performance, increased intrinsic motivation, and acquisition of job and personal resources (especially self-efficacy), are beneficial also for the organization. Furthermore, positive outcomes for the organization include the retention of talented employees, a positive corporate image, a competitive and effective organization, and positive business-unit performance. (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2008, 391.)

Positive individual and organizational outcomes of work engagement can be classified to following entreties: (Hakanen, 2009, 15):

- Attitudes and intentions in relation to the job and workplace.

- Staying and advancing in the current workplace.
- Performance at work.
- Organizational profitability.
- Motivation towards learning and postgraduate education.
- Health.

Work engagement has been found to relate positively to organizational commitment. According to a research among Finnish teachers, five job resources (job control, supervisory support, information, social climate, and innovativeness) predicted organizational commitment through work engagement. The findings of the study showed also that lack of important job resources may be related to burnout, which may reduce the level of work engagement and further lead to lower organizational commitment. (Hakanen, Bakker & Schaufeli, 2006, 507–508.) In another study, work engagement has been discovered to fully mediate the positive relationship between perceived employer psychological contract fulfillment and employees' affective commitment, which in turn leads to reduced turnover intentions. Moreover, psychological contract fulfillment can enhance mental health of employees via work engagement. (Parzefall & Hakanen, 2010, 4, 16–17.)

Attitude towards work when the retirement age is nearing is becoming an important issue in Finland and in other Western countries. The reasons for this are a constant increase in mean age of population, which is a result of lifetime prolongation and aging of large age groups. Experiencing changes positively in the work context has been found to enhance work engagement among 46–65-year-old dentists, which further predicts both willingness and intentions to continue working even after official retirement age as well as the attitude towards future changes in the work context. (Hakanen & Perhoniemi, 2008a, 30, 39–41). Work engagement is also positively related to job satisfaction and career satisfaction, which was discovered in a study among managerial and professional women working in a major Turkish bank (Koyuncu et al., 2006, 299, 305, 307).

A low level of job resources has been found to diminish the intentions of an employee to stay in the current workplace and position. Especially a high level of job autonomy seems to be an important job resource to “stayers”. In addition to job autonomy, departmental resources can make promoted employees experience even more work engagement and commit stronger to

the organization. Although promoted employees have been discovered to experience more work engagement than other employees already before the promotion, the level of work engagement has been found to increase further after the promotion. (De Lange et al., 2008, 215, 217–218.)

Positive connections between work engagement and various indicators of job performance have been discovered in several studies (Hakanen, 2009, 15). For example, work engagement experienced by Finnish dentists has been found to impact positively on their personal initiative over time, and vice versa. This individual gain spiral further predicted work-unit innovativeness, suggesting that individual job resources may be contagious and therefore transmit to the whole work-unit. (Hakanen, Perhoniemi & Toppinen-Tanner, 2008, 88.) In another study, engaged female school principals were considered as creative by their subordinate teachers. Here creativity refers to creative task performance. The relationship between work engagement and creative performance was validated via intrinsic motivation: if a person is not engaged (intrinsically motivated), he or she is not going to use his or her skills to be creative, even though this person had ability to do so. On the contrary, engaged employees are likely to use their skills or to acquire new skills to be creative. (Bakker & Xanthopoulou, 2013, 2764, 2773–2774.)

Work engagement may also enhance employees' proactive behavior which encompasses personal initiative, action- and goal-directed behavior, seeking new challenges, and persistence in the face of obstacles (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008, 116, 125–127). Reciprocally, proactive personality has been found to increase work engagement via job crafting (Bakker, Tims & Derks, 2012c, 1359), which leads to a gain spiral. According to a study of Bakker, Demerouti, and Verbeke (2004), employees' availability to such job resources as autonomy, social support, and possibilities for professional development, result in extra-role performance via work engagement. In other words, when these resources are available to employees, they are willing to go beyond their personal roles and engage in activities that benefit the whole organization. (Bakker, Demerouti & Verbeke, 2004, 83, 96–97.)

Salanova et al. (2005, 1217, 1223–1224) found in their study that work engagement experienced by employees working in hotel front desks and restaurants mediates the positive effects of training, autonomy, and technology on service climate, which leads to better

employee performance and further to greater customer loyalty. Furthermore, engaged individuals may make less mistakes: highly engaged resident physicians have been discovered to report fewer action and inexperience errors as well as fewer errors due to lack of time compared to not highly engaged resident physicians (Prins et al., 2009, 664).

Connections between work engagement and job performance have been found also in a study concerning daily job performance of flight attendants. According to the results of the study, work engagement mediates the relationship between self-efficacy and (in-role and extra-role) performance. Moreover, colleague support was discovered to influence in-role performance through work engagement. (Xanthopoulou et al., 2008, 345, 353.) In-role performance refers to those activities which are strictly required on the job and includes meeting organizational objectives as well as effective functioning (Behrman & Perreault, 1982, see Schaufeli, Taris & Bakker, 2006b, 211).

Better profitability of companies is one important consequence of work engagement. Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002, 268) found in their study concerning 7939 business units in 36 various firms that employee engagement positively influences the business unit outcomes of productivity and profit as well as the levels of customer satisfaction, employee turnover, and accidents. However, the used measure in this particular study captures actually satisfaction with job resources rather than the experience of work engagement (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2010, 158). Additionally, Xanthopoulou et al. (2009b, 183, 197) discovered that daily coaching in a Greek fast-food company had a direct positive relationship with daily work engagement, which further predicted daily financial returns.

Learning motivation and work engagement are also connected with each other. A study in relation to daily work engagement revealed that work engagement can mediate the effects of recovery on proactive behavior which includes taking initiative and pursuing learning goals (Sonnentag, 2003, 525). A recently made study shows similar results concerning learning behavior: engaged employees high in conscientiousness which is characterized by being hardworking, persevering, self-disciplined, well-organized, reliable, and careful are more likely to engage in active learning behavior compared to less engaged employees (Bakker, Demerouti & Ten Brummelhuis, 2012a, 555, 561–562; McCrae & Costa, 1987, 85, 88). Furthermore, Hakanen (2004b) has found that work engagement relates positively to

occupational postgraduate education as well as to reading professional literature (Hakanen, 2009, 16).

The positive effect of work engagement on health has been discovered in a study among managers of a telecom company. According to the study, work engagement leads to less frequent sickness absences from work. The examined job resources (job control, feedback, social support, and opportunities for learning) created a gain cycle together with work engagement: high initial level of work engagement predicted an increased level of job resources over the next year, which led to even higher level of work engagement at the end of that year. (Schaufeli, Bakker & van Rhenen, 2009, 908–909.) According to another study, engaged employees report fewer sickness days, better health, and more happiness compared to individuals who experience less work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006b, 211). However, it is important to notice that studies examining the relationship between work engagement and health suggest that work engagement is related to better subjectively reported health but not to physiological indicators of health (Bakker & Leiter, 2010, 191–192).

As a whole, the studies on work engagement concentrate on the benefits of experiencing work engagement. Engaged individuals create their own resources, perform better, and have happier clients, among other things. This raises a question if work engagement possesses also a dark side. (Bakker et al., 2011a, 17.) Thus, the following chapter will discuss which kind of negative flip sides work engagement possibly relates to.

2.6 Dark sides of work engagement

The concept of work engagement may imply that a big amount of experienced engagement would be a risk to well-being. Therefore, work engagement has often been compared to workaholism in addition to burnout. However, so far research has demonstrated work engagement and workaholism to be separate phenomena: workaholism has been proved to correlate positively with both burnout and working while being ill, with which work engagement correlates negatively. Additionally, workaholism correlates negatively with self-evaluated health, happiness, and ability to work as opposed to work engagement. From the dimensions of work engagement only absorption has a slight positive correlation with workaholism. (Hakanen, 2004a, 230; 2009, 27; Schaufeli et al., 2006b, 211.) One explanation for this positive correlation is the possible difference in the underlying motivation for being absorbed in one's work: engaged employees experience absorption because working is fun,

whereas the absorption of workaholics is a matter of compulsive drive to work (Taris et al., 2010, 44).

Even though workaholism and work engagement may be defined as separate phenomena, it is possible to experience both of them at the same time. This kind of employees can be called “engaged workaholics”. Interestingly, engaged workaholics experience less burnout than workaholic employees, although they are working more than their workaholic counterparts. Hence, it seems that work engagement buffers against the adverse effects of workaholism and renders engaged workaholics less vulnerable for developing burnout. (Van Beek, Taris & Schaufeli, 2011, 478.)

Engaged individuals and workaholics are not total opposites of each other, even though if they experience only either work engagement or workaholism. Engaged employees work hard (vigor) and are involved (dedicated) to their work. In that regard they resemble workaholics. Moreover, both engaged employees and workaholics devote a lot of time to their work, and report relatively high levels of extra-role performance. Thus, the “positive” forms of workaholism resemble the concept of work engagement. What separates work engagement from workaholism is that engaged employees lack the typical compulsive drive which workaholics possess and which is characteristic of every addiction. Therefore, work engagement can be discriminated from workaholism by defining it as intrinsically good, whereas workaholism is conceptualized as intrinsically bad: workaholics are pushed to work (intrapersonal motivation), whereas engaged workers are pulled towards work (intrinsic motivation). Furthermore, engaged employees evaluate their work positively, whereas workaholics assess job characteristics (control and social support) negatively, although both report high job demands. (Schaufeli et al., 2006b, 195–196, 210; Taris et al., 2010, 41–42, 45, 48–49.)

It may be possible that too high levels of work engagement lead to “over-engagement” and further to negative consequences such as taking work home. The work-life balance literature has shown that work-home interference reduces recovery, which may result in health problems. Additionally, positive affect and high arousal of engaged employees might turn into negative affect and strain, which is related to workaholism. (Bakker & Leiter, 2010, 191; Geurts & Demerouti, 2003, see Bakker & Leiter 2010, 191.) Similarly, although self-efficacy is positively related to work engagement, it may lead to workaholism and further to work

overload and a work-family conflict: the employees, who have higher levels of self-efficacy in work activities than in non-work activities, devote more time to work activities and avoid non-work activities. Thus, they are more likely to become workaholics. (Del Libano, Llorens, Salanova & Schaufeli, 2012, 695–696.) Another flip side of self-efficacy is that it may lead to overconfidence and hence decrease the level of performance (Vancouver, Thompson, Tischner & Putka, 2002, 506).

According to Spreitzer et al. (2010), too much dedication or absorption might have negative consequences for employees as well as for organizations. For example, too high level of dedication to the leader or the organization may create “yes” people who fail in questioning of challenging the status quo. Too high level of absorption may either create so much intensity in the task at hand that employees are not able to sense the changes in their work environment, or contribute to a work-family conflict because employees have a hard time disengaging themselves from the work at the end of the day. (Spreitzer et al., 2010, 141.) When employees may become too immersed in they work, they may forget to rest or maintain personal relationships, which later on leads to health or relationship problems (Bakker & Leiter, 2010, 191). Too much optimism may not be a good thing either because it can result in underestimating task completion times (Buehler, Griffin & Ross, 1994, 366). Moreover, a high level of arousal may hinder performance through its negative impact on cognitive resources if it is not integral to the task itself (Beal, Weiss, Barros & MacDermid, 2005, 1061–1063).

Normally job crafting helps engaged employees to stay engaged or experience even more work engagement, but it may also go wrong. Regardless of the potential of job crafting to promote engagement of a certain employee, increasing one’s own job resources may not be positive for others. (Bakker, Albrecht & Leiter, 2011b, 82.) Crafting jobs by focusing on positive activities may lead to avoiding less desirable aspects of the job, which are organizationally important. For example, an employee could craft his or her job by spending more time developing new ideas because he or she enjoys being creative, while the company would need him or her to focus on their current strategy. (Berg et al., 2008, 7; Halbesleben, 2011, 71.) Furthermore, a service worker might decide to reduce her working hours behind the service desk in order to reduce the emotional demands imposed on him or her by customers. Although this could lead to fewer emotional demands for the employee in question, it also may reduce customer satisfaction because the customers need to wait longer

for the service. (Tims & Bakker, 2010, 7.) In order to avoid the possible negative sides of job crafting, managers should build a shared understanding that job crafting is acceptable and even encouraged as long as it aligns with organizational goals (Berg et al., 2008, 7).

Similarly as job crafting, New Ways of Working (NWW) can have negative effects on employees and organizations. Although NWW has the potential to foster work engagement through more efficient communication and enhanced connectivity among colleagues, it should be noted that NWW increases interruptions during the work process. Thus, NWW may also increase exhaustion among employees. (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2012, 113, 118.)

As this chapter showed, work engagement as well as some prerequisites of work engagement may be related to certain negative consequences for individuals and organizations. However, considering all the scientific engagement research presented in this study it can be concluded that the positives sides of work engagement outweigh its negative sides.

2.7 Theoretical framework

This study deals with work engagement which is a positive form of work-related subjective well-being. Figures 9 and 10 sum up the literature review by presenting an overall model of work engagement as well as how work engagement is placed in the field of occupational well-being.

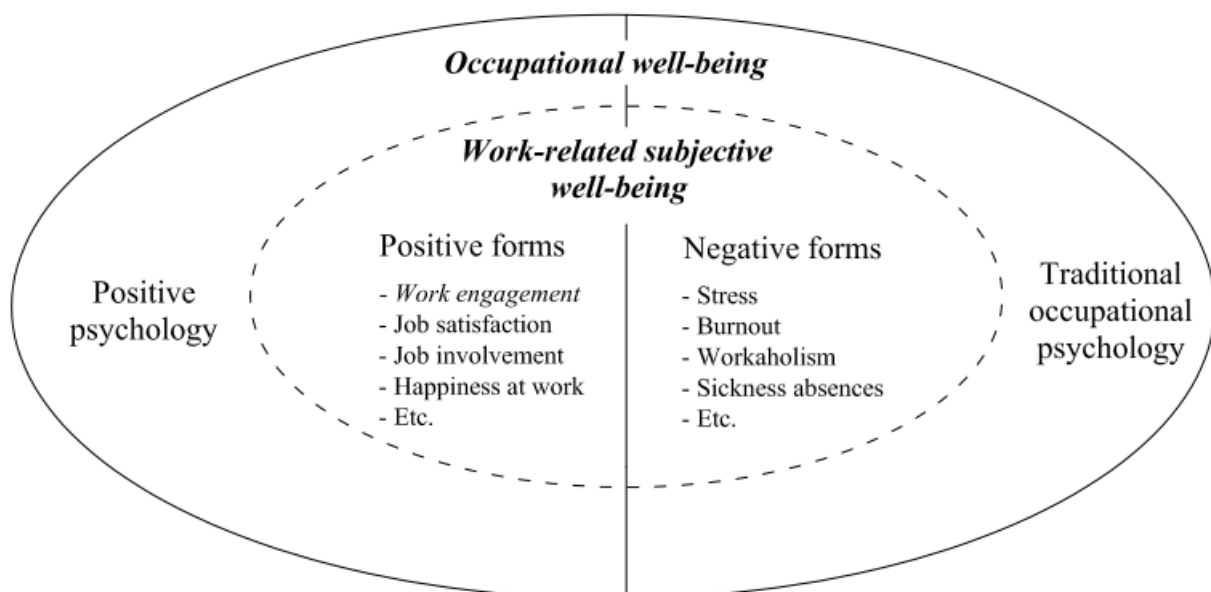


Figure 9 Work engagement in the field of occupational well-being

Occupational well-being can be divided into subjective experiences of well-being and objective factors. Subjective well-being can further be described through a positive and negative dimension. The field of occupational psychology has traditionally concentrated on the negative forms of subjective well-being by striving to find reasons for the psychological problems of employees such as stress symptoms, burnout, workaholism, and sickness absences. On the contrary, positive psychology concentrates on the positive sides of employees instead of topics related to workplace malaise. At the subjective level these positive sides include valued subjective experiences such as work engagement, job satisfaction, job involvement, happiness at work, hope, optimism, and flow. Hence, work engagement is a positive form of occupational well-being, even though in some cases it may lead to certain detrimental consequences like “over-engagement”.

An overall model of work engagement (Figure 10) shows how the motivational process of work engagement proceeds. According to the model, job and personal resources predict work engagement either independently or together in consequence of their reciprocal relationship. When the level of job demands (challenge demands) is high, the positive impact of job and personal resources on work engagement is greater. Work engagement, in turn, leads to various personal and organizational outcomes including positive job-related attitudes, strong identification with one’s work, good mental health and performance, increased intrinsic motivation, and acquisition of job and personal resources. These outcomes are beneficial for both individuals and the organization. Moreover, retention of talented employees, positive corporate image, competitiveness and effectiveness of the organization, and positive business-unit performance are other positive outcomes for the organization. According to Bakker (2011, 267), the employees who perform better in consequence of higher engagement levels are able to craft their jobs (create their own resources), which fosters engagement over time and creates a positive gain cycle.

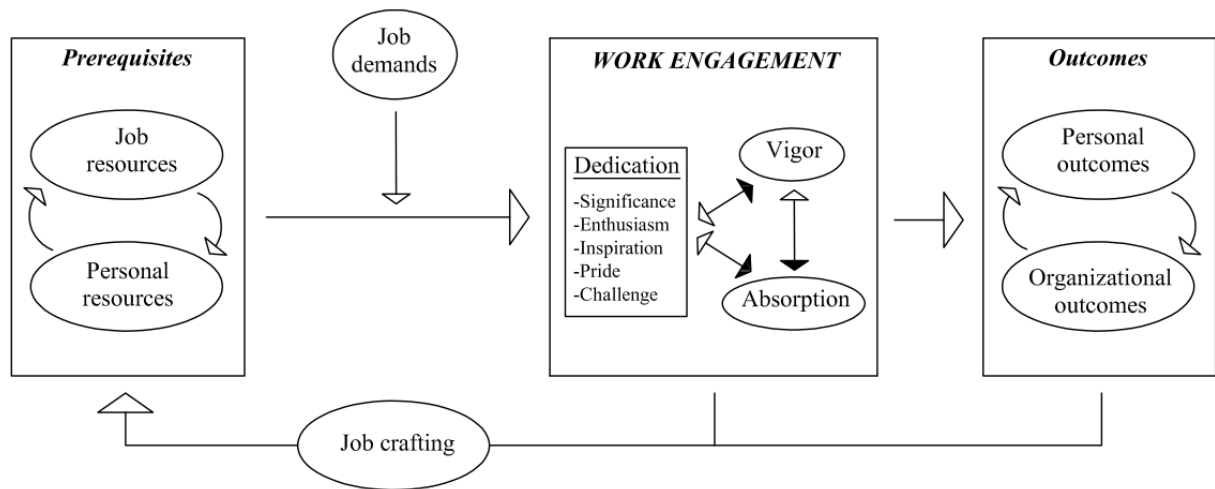


Figure 10 An overall model of work engagement (based on Bakker, 2011, 267; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008, 218)

According to the most established definition yet, work engagement is a positive and fulfilling work-related state of mind that consists of a behavioral-energetic (vigor), an emotional (dedication), and a cognitive (absorption) component. Two of these three dimensions, vigor (or energy) and dedication (or involvement), have been consistently confirmed as the core qualities of work engagement. Hence, it has been proposed that work engagement could be defined only through these two core dimensions. The reason for excluding absorption from the definition is that absorption may on closer examination appear to be an outcome of these two dimensions. (Bakker & Leiter, 2010, 184, 188–189.)

In other words, if one does not experience vigor (e.g., high levels of energy, willingness to invest effort in one's work) or dedication (significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge) while working, it is unlikely that one would get absorbed in one's tasks, whereupon it is hard to notice the passing of time and difficult to detach oneself from work. Moreover, in order to achieve the state of flow which is a very similar state as absorption, one should have challenging enough tasks. Feeling challenged is a part of the definition of dedication, in consequence of which dedication could be understood as a prerequisite of absorption. Thus, absorption is not examined in this study.

Similarly as absorption may be an outcome of vigor and dedication, vigor may be an outcome of dedication as well. It is not likely for an employee to be willing to invest much effort in his or her work, or feel very energetic while working if working is not experienced as significant, inspiring, challenging, or as a source of enthusiasm and pride. Furthermore, employees are

more probably mentally resilient and persistent in the face of difficulties when they feel that their jobs have a meaning and purpose, when the tasks are challenging enough, and when they can be proud of what they do. Hence, vigor is also excluded from this study.

The presumed causalities between the three dimensions of work engagement are illustrated with arrowheads of different colors in Figure 10: dedication is a prerequisite of vigor and absorption, and absorption is an outcome of vigor. However, it should be noted that I did not find any studies which would directly substantiate this above presented reasoning. Thus, the relationships between the three dimensions of work engagement need to be studied in more detail in order to make scientifically tenable conclusions about their causalities.

As discussed in Chapter 2.3.3 *Measurement of work engagement*, it is already known that vigor, dedication, and absorption are closely related to each other and therefore it is not recommended to differentiate the scores of the three aspects from each other when using the UWES as an indicator of work engagement. According to Schaufeli et al. (2006a, 712), differentiation between vigor, dedication, and absorption would be preferred if future research finds different causes and consequences for these three aspects. This study will provide information on prerequisites of dedication in a consultancy company, which may be potentially helpful for future research in comparing the causes of the three dimensions with each other.

3 EXECUTION OF THE STUDY

The empirical data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews, which were carried out in Finnish. The interviewees included five consultants and five supervisors working in the case company's office in Tampere. In addition to the interviews, the case company's job satisfaction inquiry was used as an adjunct source of information. After transcribing the interviews word by word, the interview data were analyzed via content analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to open up the reasons behind the above mentioned choices as well as the execution process of the study in detail, including the stages of selecting the interviewees, how the interviews were planned and conducted, and how the research data were analyzed.

3.1 Selection of the interviewees

In qualitative studies the aim is not at statistical generalizations but, among other things, at describing a certain phenomenon or event, understanding a certain action, or giving a theoretically meaningful interpretation to a certain issue. Therefore, it is crucial that informants have knowledge or experience in relation to the phenomenon which is under research. The selection of informants has to be a conscious choice and suitable for the purpose of the study. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 85–86.)

In this study, the possibility to select informants was limited concerning the supervisors because all of them did not respond to the interview requests. Fortunately, five unit managers answered in the affirmative, in consequence of which the final number of supervisor interviews ended up to be five.

The interviewed consultants were selected by the unit managers and me. The purpose was to interview one employee of every manager. I estimated that this amount of interviewees would be sufficiently big to gather enough data on the essential work engagement enhancing factors among the case company's consultants. Eventually I interviewed five consultants from four different units because there were no volunteers from one unit. The two consultants working in a same unit were selected by me since I knew the unit beforehand: formerly I had worked for the unit altogether for 10 months. However, I let the unit managers select the other

consultant interviewees because I did not know the employees of these units and thus their history in the company. Through this course of action, I wanted to ensure that the interviewees had worked as subordinates of the unit managers already for some time and therefore they would be able to give more information about their supervisors' work engagement enhancing actions. On the other hand, in pursuance of giving the power to three unit managers to select the interviewees, I also gave them the possibility to choose those employees who have a good relationship with them and who therefore would not say anything negative or harmful about them. Nevertheless, I had to accept this possible data falsifying matter because the same informant selection manner guaranteed appropriate data for this study: the interviewed consultants had at least few years long working history in the company as well as a mutual professional past with their supervisors.

Consultants as informants

Two of the interviewed consultants are women and three men, their ages are between 30 and 52 years, and they have worked for the case company for 2 to 18 years. When it comes to their educational backgrounds, two of them are Masters of Science in Technology, two are Bachelors of Engineering, and one has a Diploma in Crafts and Design (college-level training). All of these five consultants work as project managers but they also carry out tasks which demand expertise knowledge from their field of operation. In addition to project manager titles, two of the consultants have a title called group manager and one a title called planning manager.

A group manager acts as a deputy for the unit manager when he or she is absent. In the organizational chart, the group manager is situated between the unit manager and project managers. The tasks of group managers include calling meetings for their group, organizing projects, and allocating tasks. Additionally, group managers procure new projects and conduct consultants' career development conversations together with their unit managers. Marketing can also be a part of group managers' job description. However, they do not have a total status of a supervisor because they do not have the authority to recruit new employees or to make decisions in relation to employees' salaries. Presenting a comprehensive role description of a group manager is not possible because the roles of group managers vary from one unit to another. A planning manager's tasks are mainly similar to the tasks of the group managers and it is up to the unit which kinds of responsibilities are subsumed into the role in question.

The tasks of project managers are very similar to ones of group managers as well. They include procuring new projects, marketing, formulating and monitoring schedules and budgets, allocating resources, coordinating projects, helping planners to make plans, and checking these plans. However, project managers are not in charge of the projects all the time: in some projects they can work as subordinates of other project managers. All in all, the tasks of project managers give them a possibility to conduct projects quite independently.

Unit managers as informants

As mentioned above, the interviewed supervisors are unit managers of five different units in the case company's office in Tampere. Two of the unit managers are women and three men, and their ages are between 30 and 56 years. They have worked as unit managers in the company for 6 months to 17 years, and the total number of their subordinates varies between 8 and 39. When it comes to their educational backgrounds, three of them are Masters of Science in Technology, one is a Master of Science in Architecture, and one is a Bachelor of Engineering.

A unit manager's responsibilities include selling and marketing, tendering activities, coordination of work (together with project managers), client management (contacting, finding new clients), formulation of strategies, quality control, recruiting, budgeting, financial monitoring and reporting (e.g., bill approval), and representing the unit. Additionally, human resource management is an important area of responsibility for the unit managers because they take care of their subordinates' coping and well-being at work. On the whole, the unit managers are responsible for everything that is happening in their units: they are practically running a small company inside a bigger company.

3.2 Implementation of the interviews

This study can be called an interview study as well as a case study because the research data were collected through interviews. An interview's advantage as a data collection method is flexibility: an interviewer can repeat questions, straighten misunderstandings, clarify the phrasing of expressions, and discuss with the informant. This is not possible, for example, in questionnaires. Additionally, the interviewer is able to change the order of the questions during the interview if necessary. The weak points of interviews compared to questionnaires

are higher costs and that interviews spend a lot of the researcher's time. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 73–74.)

According to Koskinen et al. (2005), the most simple qualitative interview study is based on one outline of questions. The questions are asked the same way from all of the interviewees, in consequence of which this method is close to a structured interview. (Koskinen et al., 2005, 128.) In this study, the empirical data were collected approximately in the above mentioned way: I endeavored to ask the same interview questions from all of the interviewees. However, as a result of a different perspective, the questions the unit managers answered differed from those of the consultants. Reasons for the different perspective are explained later on in this chapter.

The interview questions were semi-structured. In a semi-structured interview the researcher decides on the questions to which the interviewees can answer with their own words. The interviewees may also suggest new questions and deviate from the question order. (Koskinen et al., 2005, 76.) A semi-structured interview can be called a theme interview because it consists of certain essential themes and questions which further define these themes (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2001, 48; Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 75). In this study, the themes for the interviews were based on the overall model of work engagement that is presented in Chapter 2.7 *Theoretical framework*. The main theme was work-related dedication which, according to the UWES (Appendix 1), consists of an experience of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge. These five items formed the base of the interview questions since the UWES is at the moment the most widely used engagement questionnaire in engagement research (Schaufeli, 2012, 143). However, because the interviewed consultants and unit managers considered the concepts of enthusiasm and inspiration to be so closely related, and because it was more natural for them to talk about enthusiasm than inspiration in relation to their work, enthusiasm and inspiration were merged into one theme. Consequently, the themes for the interviews were experienced significance, enthusiasm, pride, and challenge while working. More information on how the interviewees understood enthusiasm and inspiration is described in Chapter 4.2 *Enthusiasm*.

As presented in Chapter 2.3 *Conceptualization of work engagement*, work engagement can be divided into trait-like and state-like engagement. In this study, the focus was on examining trait-like engagement because the purpose was to find out which matters make the case

company's employees engaged over time instead of determining how the level of engagement fluctuates within an employee on a daily basis. Thus, the aim was to let the interviewees explain without restrictions which factors lead them to experience dedication.

The purpose of the interviews was to gather enough information in order to achieve the objectives set to this study. The first research question was: What are the prerequisites of work engagement among the consultants in the case company? This question had to be asked primarily from the consultants because only they know for sure what makes them dedicated and experience work engagement. However, it was necessary to discuss this topic also with the unit managers in order to find out how well they know their subordinates. The other research questions were: How do the unit managers enhance work engagement via their actions among their subordinates? What could be done better? These questions were important to present both to the consultants and to the unit managers because they represent opposite sides in the supervisor-subordinate interaction and thus have their own perspectives to different matters.

By way of asking opinions from both parties about the same theme, the aim was to get a more comprehensive view of the phenomenon. Consequently, the amount of mistakes in interpreting the research data is likely to be lower compared to observing: in the interviews, the interviewees can tell directly their conceptions of different themes, whereas as an observer one would be making his or her own conceptions of different matters without asking the subjects of observation if these conceptions are accurate. Other reasons why observation was not used as a data collection method are discussed in Chapter 5.3 *Evaluation and limitations of the study*.

The first step in the interview process was to create question outlines for the consultants and the supervisors. The themes in the outlines were the same for both parties but the perspective in the questions was different for each party: according to the study objectives, the interest of the study was in *the prerequisites of work engagement among the consultants* and in *the work engagement enhancing actions of the unit managers*. As already mentioned, the interview questions based on following themes: significance, enthusiasm, pride, and challenge. In addition to the items that relate to dedication enhancing factors, one question concerned affairs that diminish experienced dedication among the consultants. It was included in the interviews because knowing these affairs enables supervisors to foster work engagement by

planning and implementing actions that diminish the negative effect of these affairs on experienced dedication.

After the interview questions were created, the ones directed to the consultants were tested two times and the ones directed to the managers once through practice interviews. The test interviews were carried out because, according to Koskinen et al. (2005, 128), they allow the researcher to eliminate bad questions and to find new ones. Due to the comments of the test interviewees, some changes to the initial interview questions were made. The final interview questions are presented in Appendix 2 and 3.

The next step was to contact the interviewees and arrange appointments for the interviews. Because the focus of the study was on experienced work engagement of the consultants, I decided to interview the consultants before the supervisors. In the beginning of the interviews, I explained briefly the purpose of the study to the interviewees, although the purpose was already presented verbally to the consultants when inquiring possible interview times via mobile phone and in writing to the unit managers in an interview request sent via email. In addition to the unit managers, one consultant got this information in written form upon request. After explaining the purpose, I asked some background questions (e.g., age, title, career length in the company, educational background) prior to proceeding to the four primary themes. The interviews of the consultants were followed through between 21 May and 29 May 2012 and the interviews of the unit managers between 30 May and 12 June 2012. Durations of the five consultant interviews were 52, 42, 70, 53, and 61 minutes, whereas the unit manager interviews lasted 69, 40, 52, 49, and 56 minutes. Hence, the total time of the interviews was 544 minutes.

3.3 Job satisfaction inquiry

As described in Chapter *1.3 Methodology*, the case company's personnel's job satisfaction inquiry is utilized in this study as an additional source of information. The job satisfaction inquiry is carried out in all of the case company's offices around the country in the end of each year. The inquiry used in this study is from the year 2012 and the respondents include all the employees of the case company's office in Tampere apart from the unit managers.

The answer percentage of this particular inquiry was 85, whereupon it can be presumed that the inquiry's results represent the thoughts of all the employees working in this office. Using the inquiry data in this study as a source of information is reasonable because comparing these data to the opinions of the interviewed consultants helps me to reach a conclusion if the interviewees' opinions reflect the thoughts of the office's whole personnel on average.

The inquiry itself consists of 32 statements in relation to job satisfaction. After reading each statement, the respondents are asked to choose one alternative between one ("I completely agree") and five ("I disagree") to describe their opinions about the statement. However, only a part of the inquiry relates to the topic of this study. The results of the inquiry are therefore utilized in this study only in respect of those statements which concern the dedication component of work engagement.

3.4 Content analysis as the data analysis method

The interview data are analyzed via content analysis which is a basic data analysis method that can be used in all kinds of qualitative research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 91). As this study is qualitative, content analysis is a suitable method to order the data for conclusions.

Research data can be formed to categories, types, or themes. Categorizing is the simplest way to order the data: the first step is to create categories from the data and the second step to count how many times each category is presented in the data. Typing, the second way to order the data, means grouping the data into certain types. The purpose is to condense a group of outlooks relating to certain theme into a generalization. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 93.)

In this study, the research data are ordered into themes. Forming themes is basically similar to categorizing, but its bias is towards what is said about each theme. The main idea is to search all points of view from the data that represent certain themes. In other words, forming themes is a question of dividing and grouping qualitative data into various themes. Thus, comparing the occurrence of certain themes in the data is possible. Dividing the data is relatively easy when the data are collected via semi-structured interviews because the question outline of the interview itself structures the data. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 93.)

According to Eskola (2001, see Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009), content analysis can be divided into a data-driven, theory-bound, and theory-driven analysis. The purpose in the data-driven content analysis is to create a theoretic entirety from the data. In the theory-bound analysis, the researcher tries to combine data-driven and theory-driven reasoning. Theory-driven reasoning is a traditional analysis model in natural scientific research and it leans on a specific theory, certain model, or particular authority's thinking. This model or theory is described in the study and the concepts related to the topic of the study are defined according to this theory. In other words, the phenomenon under research is defined according to something that is already known: data analysis is directed by a framework which is created with the help of existing knowledge of the topic. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 95, 97.)

The research data of this study are analyzed via theory-driven content analysis. The logic of reasoning in theory-driven analyses is often associated with deductive reasoning. When applying deductive reasoning, the chain of reasoning starts from general and ends to single, whereas inductive reasoning starts from single and ends to general. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 95, 98.) The present study includes both deductive and inductive reasoning. To begin with, the components of dedication (significance, enthusiasm, pride, challenge) into which the research data are divided, are outlined in the theoretical framework of the study and further defined in Chapter 3.2 *Implementation of the interviews*. These beforehand defined themes represent the general and the findings from the data the single, in which case the reasoning is deductive. On the other hand, the reasoning inside above-mentioned themes progresses from single to general, whereupon the reasoning at stake is inductive. Even though the theory-bound analysis consists of both inductive and deductive reasoning, the content analysis in this study is theory-driven because the expressions are gathered from the research data according to a theoretical framework instead of connecting the data with a certain theory in the last stages of the analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 117).

The theory-driven analysis begins with forming an analysis framework (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 113). The analysis framework of this study consists of the four above mentioned components of dedication. After the analysis framework is created, the purpose is to gather those expressions and matters from the research data that belong to this framework. More precisely, the aim is to form different themes from the research data inside the analysis framework while following the principles of an inductive data analysis. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 113.)

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the inductive data analysis is a process of three phases. These phases are reducing the data, clustering the data, and abstraction (creating theoretical concepts). (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 108.) However, before the first phase the interviews need to be listened and transcribed word by word as well as read through. The complete process of the inductive data analysis is presented in Figure 11.

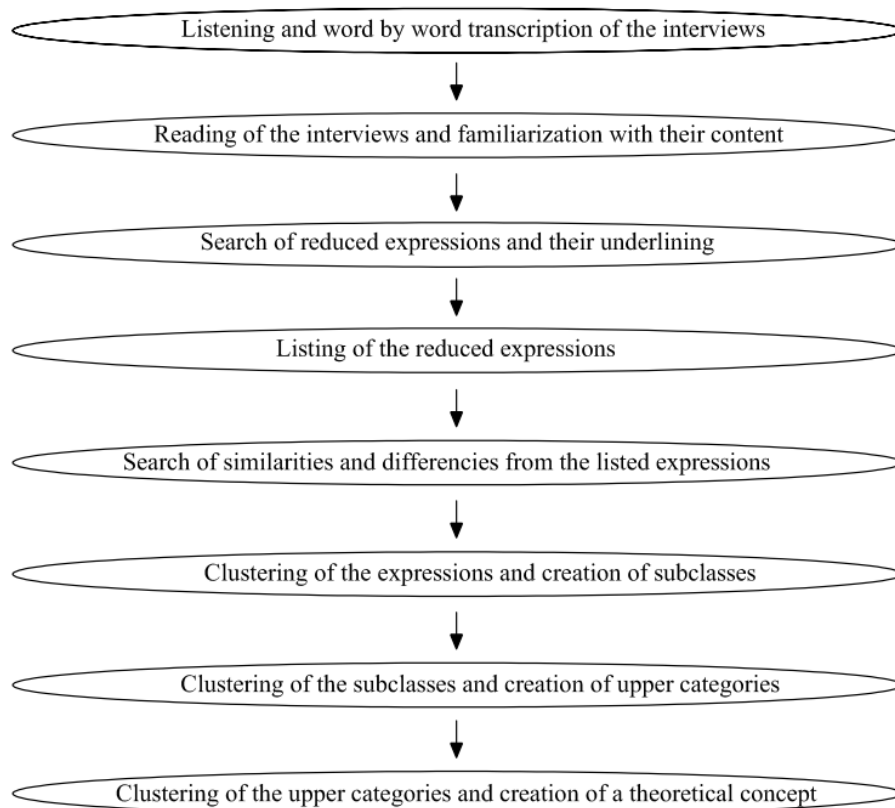


Figure 11 Inductive data analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 109)

The first phase of the process, reducing the data, means that any extraneous matters in terms of the study are eliminated from the data. Reducing can be either compressing information or dividing information into parts, and it is guided by the objectives of the study. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 109.) In this study, reducing the data is implemented mainly through compressing it because the data are already divided into themes in the interview outlines.

The second phase, clustering the data, begins with going through the reduced expressions: the aim is to search for concepts that represent similarities and/or differences. A clustering unit can be, for example, a characteristic, a feature, or a conception. Thereafter, the concepts that are similar to each other are clustered and combined to a single theme. The name of the theme

should illustrate its content. During the clustering phase the data are reduced even more in consequence of subsuming single factors into more general concepts. (Hämäläinen, 1987, see Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 110; Dey, 1993, see Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 110; Cavanagh, 1997, see Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 110.)

The boundary between the second and the third phase of inductive data analysis is not completely clear because clustering can be considered as a part of the abstraction process. In the abstraction phase, the grouping of themes continues as long as it is possible considering the content of the data. Thereafter, theoretical concepts are created based on the uppermost themes. Drawing conclusions is the final stage of the abstraction process. (Hämäläinen, 1987, see Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 111; Dey, 1993, see Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 111; Cavanagh, 1997, see Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 111.) As the content analysis in this study is theory-driven, the theoretical concepts have been defined beforehand and thus do not need to be created: the main concept is dedication which is further divided into significance, enthusiasm, pride, and challenge.

Content analysis can be carried on after forming themes by quantifying the data. In some cases, quantification produces considerable additional information to the study compared to an only qualitative analysis. However, the amount of data in qualitative studies is often so small that quantifying the data does not necessarily bring additional information or different perspectives to the research results. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 120–122.) In this study, the research data are not quantified because 10 semi-structured interviews are not likely to produce enough data to make a further quantification reasonable.

4 WORK ENGAGEMENT IN THE CASE COMPANY: WHAT MAKES A DEDICATED EMPLOYEE?

Work engagement consists of vigor, dedication, and absorption, from which dedication is in the center of attention in this study. In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented. Under the headings of *Significance*, *Enthusiasm*, and *Pride*, the interviewed consultants' and supervisors' points of views on (1) what makes the consultants experience the feeling in accordance with these headings and (2) how do the supervisors foster this experience are explained. Additionally, the matters that diminish the experience of significance, enthusiasm, and pride are described. The fourth component of dedication, challenge, is discussed in relation to the sources of challenges in the consultants' work and in relation to the resources and actions that balance these challenges. How the level of challenges as well as the level of experienced significance, enthusiasm, and pride has changed during the consultants' careers is also described.

The findings are illustrated with comments of the interviewees. In order to guarantee complete anonymity to the interviewees, these comments are written without identifiers. They are divided between the interviewees in a following way:

- Consultant A: 14 comments (significance 4, enthusiasm 6, pride 2, challenge 2)
- Consultant B: 14 comments (significance 5, enthusiasm 2, pride 5, challenge 2)
- Consultant C: 13 comments (significance 2, enthusiasm 5, pride 2, challenge 4)
- Consultant D: 12 comments (significance 3, enthusiasm 4, pride 2, challenge 3)
- Consultant E: 9 comments (significance 1, enthusiasm 4, pride 3, challenge 1)
- Supervisor A: 13 comments (significance 2, enthusiasm 4, pride 5, challenge 2)
- Supervisor B: 11 comments (significance 4, enthusiasm 4, pride 0, challenge 3)
- Supervisor C: 9 comments (significance 1, enthusiasm 2, pride 3, challenge 3)
- Supervisor D: 9 comments (significance 1, enthusiasm 4, pride 2, challenge 2)
- Supervisor E: 9 comments (significance 2, enthusiasm 3, pride 2, challenge 2)

From those parts that it is possible, the findings concerning all the four components of dedication are compared to the results of the case company's job satisfaction inquiry from the

year 2012. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings and with a comparison between the findings of the present study and the results of previous work engagement studies. Furthermore, potential ways to increasingly enhance work engagement in the case company are discussed.

4.1 Significance

The first part of the interviews concerned work-related significance. All of the consultants said in the interviews that they experience their work as significant and meaningful. Moreover, they considered the feeling of significance to be important: *“Yes, it is important because probably I would not be interested in working with something that would get me money but would not make me experience significance.”*

The views of the interviewed consultants can be extended to concern the case company’s whole office in Tampere because the job satisfaction inquiry’s results support these views: the average score for feeling one’s own work contribution significant to one’s own unit was 3,9 on a scale from one to five, and 74 per cent of the respondents chose either four or five. The unit managers believed that their subordinates mainly experience their work as significant, which, according to the answers of the consultants, proved to be true. As the consultants, also the unit managers considered experiencing significance to be important. Noteworthy was that every one of the unit managers related the feeling of significance to motivation and mentioned it to be a source of work motivation. Additionally, they linked significance to commitment and to a group’s activity. *“I believe that the keywords for work going well and for employees being motivated to perform are that the employees experience the work as significant and are then committed.”*

4.1.1 Prerequisites of experiencing work-related significance

Consultants’ perspective

According to the answers of the consultants, the prerequisites of experiencing work-related significance can be divided into four themes which are *appreciation, significance of tasks, challenging work, and social relationships and cooperation*. These themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 12.

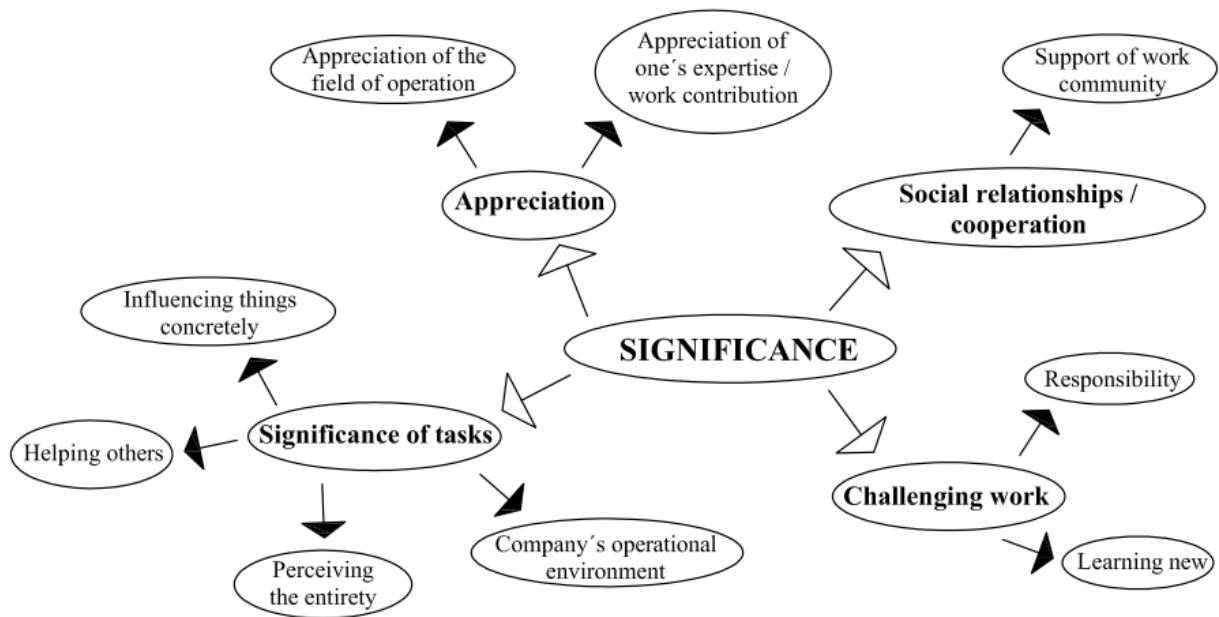


Figure 12 Prerequisites of experiencing work-related significance among consultants according to consultants

Appreciation can arise from appreciation of the field of operation or from appreciation of one's expertise and work contribution. Appreciation of the field of operation occurs when the work of the unit is appreciated either outside the company or in other units of the company. Appreciation of one's personal expertise or work contribution appears when a consultant him- or herself appreciates his or her own work and also when the consultant's supervisor, colleagues, or clients appreciate the work the consultant has done. Additionally, positive and constructive client feedback as well as salary can make a consultant feel that his or her expertise and work contributions are appreciated. *"Money is one of those things. Or let's put it this way: that is the reason why people work, to get salary, to be able to live."*

The second theme, significance of tasks, can be divided into four subclasses which are influencing things concretely, helping others, perceiving the entirety, and company's operational environment. An opportunity to influence things concretely includes getting matters to practice, concrete actions in projects, and giving an own contribution to societal construction. Helping others denotes possibilities to solve people's problems, help clients and colleagues, facilitate the work of clients and colleagues, and possibly save human lives. Perceiving the entirety means understanding the relevance of one's own work as a part of a bigger entirety. Finally, tasks can be found significant because of the company's operational environment, which in the case of Ramboll Finland denotes, among other things, building a

better environment for people or influencing the safety of construction work. *“This operational environment, framework, where Ramboll operates, contains sensible actions. It doesn’t have that commercial world’s or entertainment industry’s ”buy buy” mentality. Instead, we plan and build better environment for people. That is a quite important fact.”*

The subclasses of challenging work are responsibility and learning new. Consultants experience significance when they feel that they are responsible for doing their work well and have a control over the entirety of their own work. Learning new by way of working outside one’s own comfort zone can also be a source of significance. *“This is such a broad field that you always learn new things. That is interesting. I consider myself lucky as for my work because I haven’t had to carry out always the same tasks. Instead, I have done always new things and due to that I have been in tight situations every now and then. I have never been afraid to be outside of my comfort zone.”*

The last significance enhancing theme among the consultants is social relationships and cooperation. It denotes the support of work community owing to which the consultants are able to talk about difficult matters with their colleagues. *“Support occurs when problems arise. When you are able to talk with your colleagues about these difficult matters, it has of course an effect on the feeling of significance at work.”*

Supervisors’ perspective

The unit managers were on common ground with the consultants in relation to what makes the consultants experience significance. Their answers can be divided into five themes from which three are the same as the themes created from the answers of the consultants. The five themes include *appreciation, significance of tasks, content of tasks, social relationships and cooperation, and innovative activities*. These themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 13.

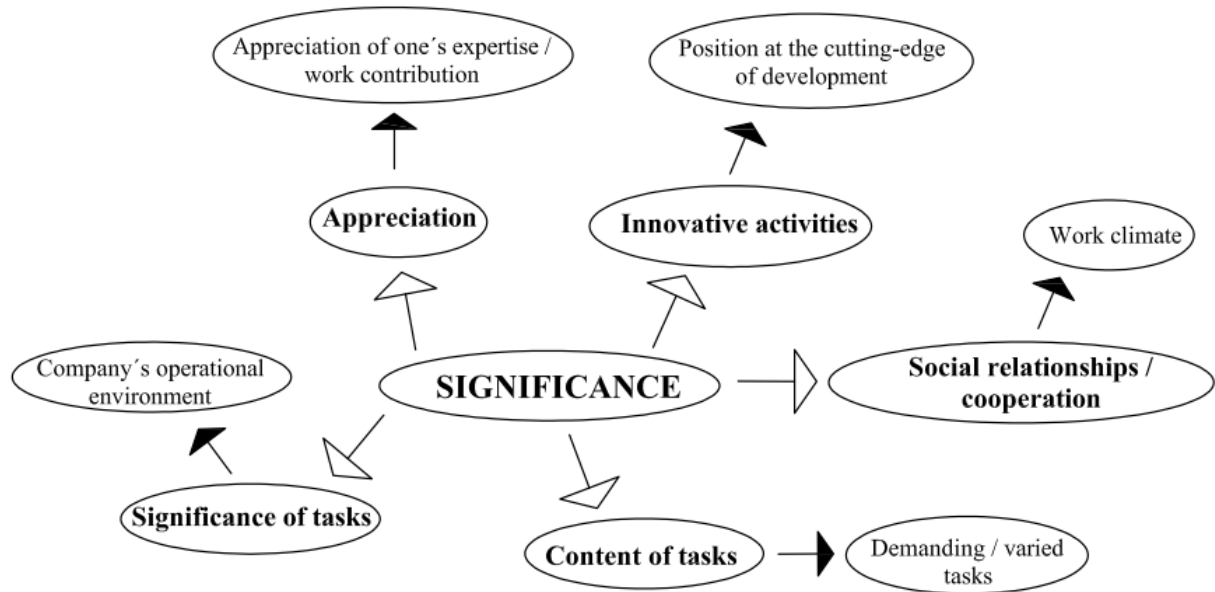


Figure 13 Prerequisites of experiencing work-related significance among consultants according to unit managers

According to the unit managers, it is important to appreciate the consultants' expertise and work contribution in order to enhance their experience of significance. In addition to positive comments from colleagues, client feedback and salary may make consultants feel that their expertise and work contribution is appreciated. These are exactly the same issues which the interviewed consultants described. Moreover, the unit managers mentioned that a possibility to talk in a seminar or to participate in marketing actions could evoke similar results. *"Then of course, appreciation of your work. Some (consultants) place a value on salary but it's also important that your work is appreciated. That your work is important also to others and not only to you."*

The subclass of the second theme, significance of tasks, is company's operational environment. In consequence of the operational environment, the work that the consultants do in Ramboll Finland is important relative to society. *"In my opinion everybody has an understanding of what we do, how important it is relative to society. I think it is a quite big thing that we don't work only because we like it. The job itself has a clear meaning and significance, whichever kind of planning object or whichever stage of planning is in the making."*

Apart from significance of tasks, the unit managers think that when the content of tasks is challenging enough for the consultants, they experience significance. Hence, the tasks should

be demanding and varied enough. Social relationships and cooperation may also be important to the consultants in terms of significance. The relationships and cooperation with colleagues are at a good level when the work climate is good in the unit and in the whole office: in this case working together with colleagues is comfortable and coming to work (to the workplace) is easy.

Innovative activities is the only theme which was not mentioned in any way in the answers of the consultants. According to the unit managers, a position at the cutting-edge of development might be one source of experienced significance among the consultants. This is shown in the consultants' work when they carry out new kind of projects, or projects which have never been carried out before. *“This is kind of a new trade and the cases we carry out are all the time more and more demanding. Additionally, we have to take all sorts of new regulations into account because of European Union directives. So we have been in front planning and carrying out our thing. I suppose that however they (consultants) have felt few years ago, the level (of experienced significance) should be higher now because this trade is advancing all the time.”*

4.1.2 Supervisor's influence on experiencing significance

Consultants' perspective

The consultants' answers in relation to how their supervisors foster the feeling of significance through their actions can be divided into four themes. These themes are named *appreciation*, *genuine interest and caring*, *work support*, and *trust*. They are presented in Figure 14 along with their subclasses.

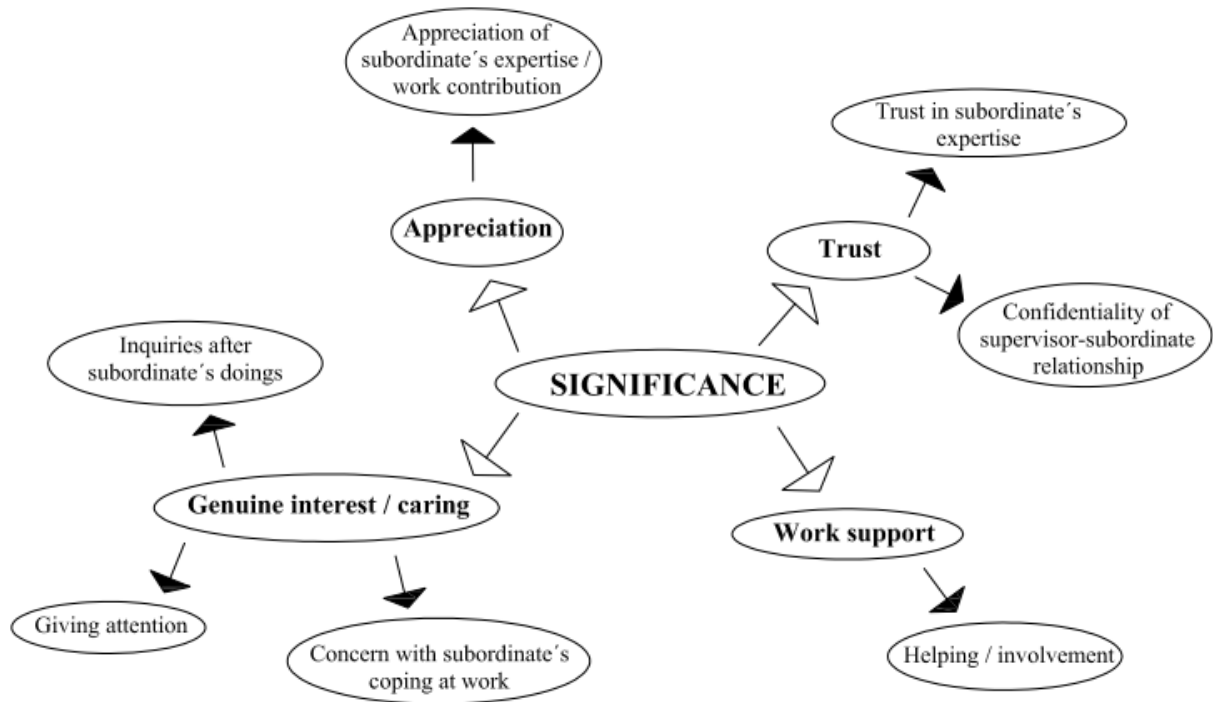


Figure 14 Supervisor's actions that evoke an experience of significance among consultants according to consultants

According to the consultants, their supervisors have an effect on their feeling of being appreciated by valuing their expertise and work contribution. Supervisors show this appreciation through asking and listening to their subordinates' opinions as well as giving constructive or positive feedback. *"If we think about an example, we had a career development conversation for the first time as I was a group manager. It was a new situation also for my supervisor because there were three people present for the first time: the unit manager, the group manager, and an employee. We were discussing how this conversation could be followed through. I suggested that the conversation could also be held between the employee and the unit manager if the employee wanted to talk alone with the unit manager. My supervisor became enthusiastic, because this never came to his/her mind, and thanked me for the suggestion."*

The second theme, genuine interest and caring, consists of three subclasses which are inquiries after subordinates' doings, giving attention, and concern with subordinates' coping at work. When the supervisors inquire after their subordinates' doings, they ask questions in relation to their subordinates' work and private life. Attention can be given by greeting the subordinates as well as really listening to what they are saying. The subordinates' coping at work can be supported by making sure that there is a balance between their work and free

time. When it comes to workload, the supervisors are able to adjust it between all subordinates. By doing so, they can ensure that the workload is not too big or too small for anyone. *“As a matter of fact, the feeling of significance at work arises from small things: greetings, questions about how I am doing, this kind of things that are not related to work itself. They have a big meaning to that how you experience working.”*

Work support includes helping of subordinates and involvement with their work. This can be carried out by inquiring about subordinates' need of help and giving the help on demand, by forwarding important matters that are essential to the progress of the subordinates' work, and by giving ideas which help the subordinates to do their work successfully. *“The supervisor inquires, every now and then, how it is going with the work and if there are certain tasks to be done which some other person could do. He/she helps with that with pleasure.”*

The supervisors' trust in their subordinates' expertise can also foster the feeling of significance. Trust can be shown by giving the subordinates enough responsibility and freedom to work. Moreover, the subordinates feel trusted when they experience the relationship between them and their supervisor as confidential. In this case, they are able to discuss confidentially with their supervisor about both good and bad matters. *“My supervisor doesn't tell or say how we should do our work. When we get a project, we can do the schedules at a project manager level and after that we know the things we should do.”*

Supervisors' perspective

The unit managers' answers in relation to how they try to enhance the feeling of significance among their subordinates were partly similar to the answers of the consultants. However, they also highlighted some matters which the consultants did not mention. The answers can be divided altogether into four different themes from which two are identical to the ones that were created from the answers of the consultants. The themes are following: *appreciation, work support, challenging work, and construction of team spirit*. These themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 15.

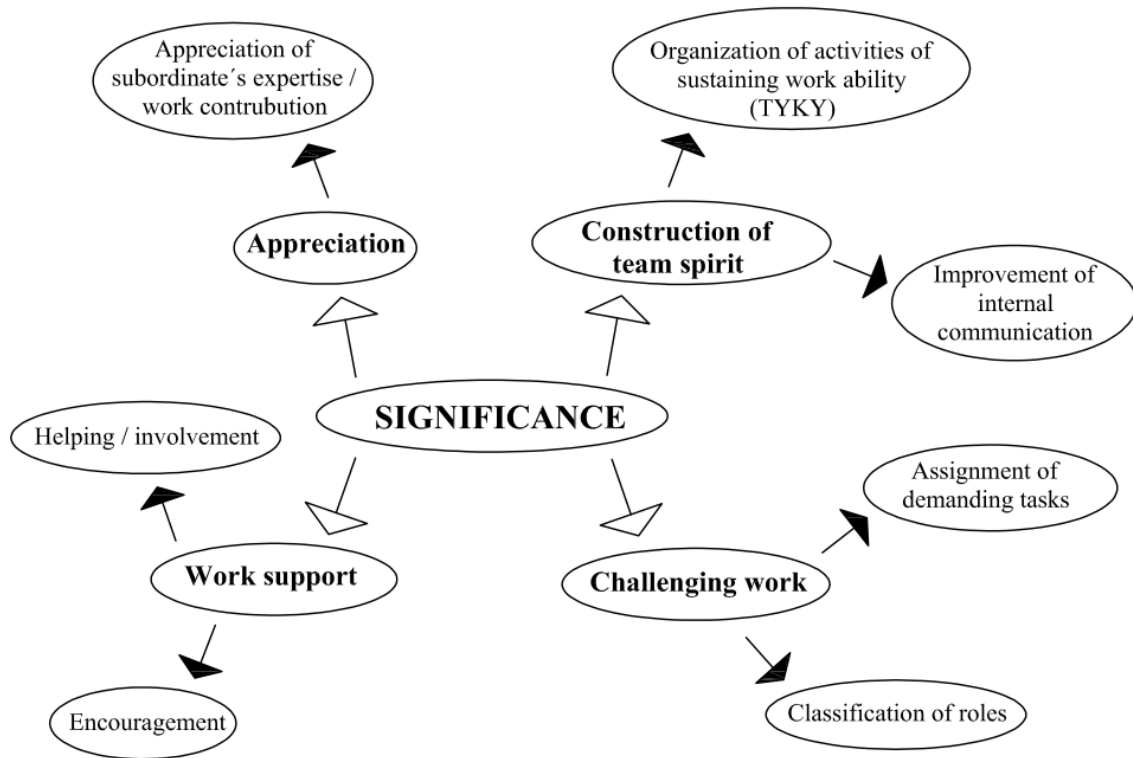


Figure 15 Supervisor's actions that evoke an experience of significance among consultants according to unit managers

Similarly as the consultants, the unit managers replied that their subordinates feel appreciated when their expertise and work contribution are valued. The unit managers' actions of expressing appreciation include highlighting the importance of every individual's work contribution, giving positive feedback, telling positive client feedback further, paying monetary project bonuses, and increasing responsibility in consequence of personal success. *"We highlight the importance of our work so that everyone is able to appreciate it. That is one thing. Yearly career development conversations are of course definitely one way to forward the feeling of significance. There we highlight that "hey, your work is really important and an important piece of this jigsaw". These things are certainly a part of my role."*

Work support is another theme that was mentioned also by the consultants. The ways the unit managers support their subordinates' work contain helping, involvement with their subordinates' work, and encouragement. Helping and involvement denote supporting subordinates after mistakes they occasionally do, which is carried out by discussing the current problem with the subordinate and the client in question as well as by going to project meetings with this subordinate after the mistake is done. In other words, the supervisors try to

settle the conflict together with the parties who are involved in the conflict. Encouragement can focus on different matters: the supervisors can encourage their subordinates to acquire new projects, market their own expertise, move forward after mistakes, and achieve financial objectives. *“I have really tried to encourage people to be active and that they understand themselves that they have a possibility to influence their own work; its contents, amount, and quality.”*

Challenging work was not mentioned by the consultants in this connection. According to the answers of the unit managers, the components of challenging work are assignment of demanding tasks and classification of roles. When the unit managers assign demanding tasks to their subordinates as a counterbalance to routine tasks, the subordinates have more challenges in their work and thus experience it as more significant. Classification of roles means finding right roles for the subordinates and directing the subordinates consciously towards their potential. *“Different people act in different ways, have different orientations, and want to develop themselves in different ways. That’s why I have tried to make it possible that everyone could work there were they are at their best. When one can work in one’s own core know-how area, the best work motivation as well as the best results can be achieved.”*

Construction of team spirit is also something that the consultants did not refer to in their answers. According to the unit managers, the team spirit in the units can be improved through activities of sustaining work ability (TYKY-activities, the abbreviation for “työkykyä ylläpitävä toiminta” in Finnish). These various events are open either to every employee in the unit or in the whole office and they include, for example, sport events (e.g., golf, climbing, paintball, floorball, bowling), collective lunches (e.g., Christmas lunch), and relaxing in a sauna. Moreover, good internal communication is important for the team spirit. Internal communication can be improved by creating an honest and open conversation climate inside the unit and encouraging the consultants in giving more peer feedback. *“If everything goes well, if we have done a good job, we do all kinds of things together such as go to eat. I inform already in advance that if certain goals are achieved, we will go to have a lunch together after the month has turned. In a week we will go golfing, eating, and to a sauna, which unifies the group and builds solidarity. That kind of TYKY-activities I try to maintain.”*

4.1.3 Reasons for the diminution of experienced significance

Consultants' perspective

The affairs that diminish the feeling of significance among the consultants can be divided into five different themes. The themes are *lack of appreciation*, *insignificance of tasks*, *challenges in work management*, *problems in social relationships or in cooperation*, and *lack of trust*. These themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 16.

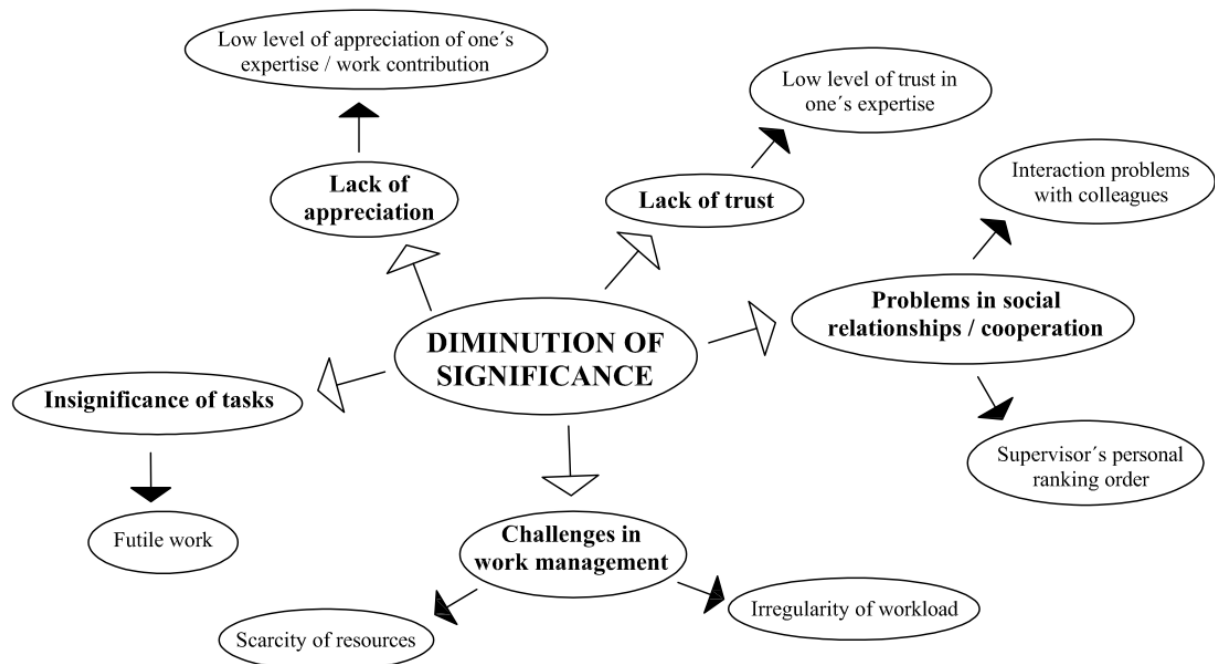


Figure 16 Causes for the diminution of experienced significance among consultants according to consultants

According to the consultants' answers, a low level of appreciation towards their expertise or work contribution results in a decrease in experienced significance among them. For example, the consultants may feel underappreciated when they receive negative feedback about their work. *“Negative feedback doesn't warm anybody. Sometimes when a client trashes you and you know that you have done the project exactly in the same way as some other project before, you have to lick your wounds a bit. Those are the bad moments in this job but it surely concerns every job.”*

Insignificance of tasks and challenges in work management are another sources of reduced significance. Insignificant tasks often contain futile work such as making reports or tables which end up in a desk drawer after they have been finished. Challenges in work management

arise from scarce resources and irregular workload. When there is a shortage of time compared to the amount of work and resources in a project, the consultants are practically forced to do only a “good enough” end product. This can have a negative effect on the level of significance they experience. Irregular workload is a part of every consultant’s job because, according to the interviewed consultants, it is virtually impossible to keep the amount of work equal in a line of business wherein working is project-orientated for the most part. Thus, the workload is periodically too heavy, which may diminish the feeling of significance. *“In our trade, it is possible to receive lots of projects in a short period of time. Momentarily you may have awfully much work without a possibility to delegate some of the work further. It happens sometimes but you just have to accept it.”*

Problems in social relationships or in cooperation can arise from interaction problems with colleagues or from a supervisor’s personal ranking order. Interaction problems with colleagues often relate to unpleasant comments or lack of understanding, whereas problems arising from the supervisor’s personal ranking order concern prioritization: a consultant’s feeling of significance may diminish when the supervisor puts more importance on his or her own plans and matters than on matters which are important for the consultant. *“In some cases the supervisor has not finished an ongoing conversation because of his/her own rush. But when I have been in a hurry, I have had to stay and finish the discussion. Why do I have to be late if my supervisor doesn’t need to be? This has happened a couple times and it galls me. Why is my matter not as important as my supervisor’s?”*

Lack of trust, more precisely a low level of trust in one’s expertise, is also related to diminution of experienced significance. A typical situation when a consultant does not feel trusted occurs when his or her know-how is underestimated by one or more colleagues. *“In this sector where I work, I am already used to receive negative feedback from other stakeholder groups, even though the matter itself would be good. But if my own colleagues downplay or underestimate, a lack of trust arises and it brings me down. This may not affect the work itself but it has an effect on the atmosphere to come here.”*

Supervisors’ perspective

The answers of the unit managers were mainly similar to the consultants’ answers in this connection. They can be divided into three themes which are *lack of appreciation*, *insignificance of tasks*, and *poor success*. The first two themes are identical to the themes

created from the answers of the consultants. The three themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 17.

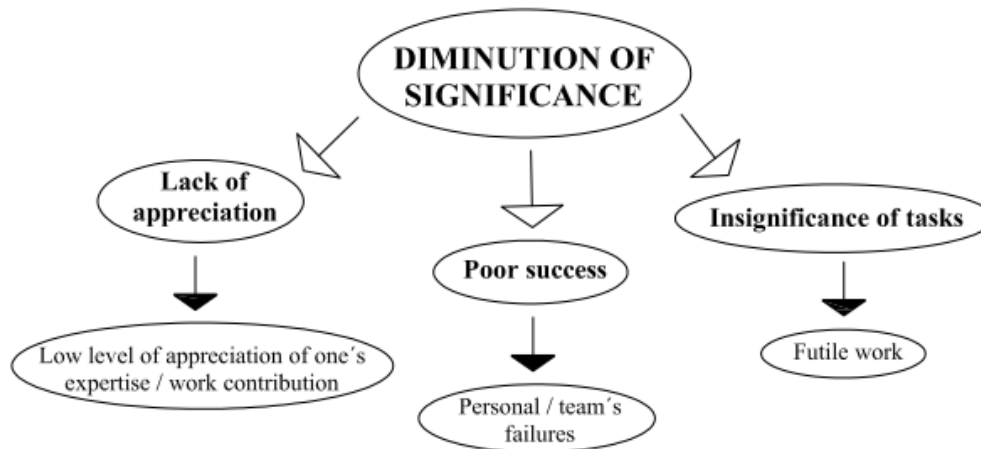


Figure 17 Causes for the diminution of experienced significance among consultants according to unit managers

When it comes to the first theme, lack of appreciation, the unit managers did not mention negative feedback in their answers as the consultants did. Instead, they highlighted the consequences of a rejected wage claim and a lack of work on the diminution of experienced significance. *“For example, a lack of work, which a couple of employees have experienced momentarily, eats work motivation a lot. It can make you feel that you are useless if you don’t know what you are doing here. Luckily it is only temporary.”*

Poor success is a consequence of personal or team’s failures. These failures involve planning mistakes or some other kinds of mistakes, which take place in different stages of projects. In relation to the third theme, insignificance of tasks, the unit managers reached the same conclusion as their subordinates: futile work, such as making reports or tables which end up straight in a desk drawer, can cause a decrease in experienced significance among the consultants. *“For example, a project has been carried out for one reason or another, even though we know that it doesn’t lead to anything. The project material ends up in a desk drawer; we know it and probably the client knows it, too. The project is executed because the decision to execute it has been made at some stage. The purposelessness of the project affects the level of motivation: why are we doing this on the whole? Luckily it happens seldom.”*

4.1.4 Changes in experiencing significance during career

The consultants were unanimous in their answers concerning the changes in experiencing significance during their careers. All of them estimated that working feels more significant now than when they entered working life. According to the consultants, the main reason for this shift lies in understanding. When they began their careers, they did not completely understand the entirety they were in touch with. However, in the course of time the consultants have gained more experience and responsibility, which has helped them to build their perception and understanding of the entirety. *“In the beginning I was not able to understand a lot; I was given some tasks and then I just did them. I did not think more deeply about it but now as I have received more responsibility, I have learned to understand better that it really has a big meaning how things are done in our unit.”*

Another reason for the higher level of significance relates to appreciation and respect. *“A few years backwards our trade was not considered important at all. The people working in this trade were not respected, so you were not an expert, you were a burden. But now it has changed; you are appreciated and one expert among others.”*

4.2 Enthusiasm

The second part of the interviews concerned work-related enthusiasm and inspiration. According to the definition of work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006, 702), enthusiasm and inspiration are components of dedication. However, as described in Chapter 3.2 *Implementation of the interviews*, the concept enthusiasm presents both itself and inspiration in this study. There are two reasons which support this decision: the interviewees considered enthusiasm and inspiration to be closely or very closely related, and it was more natural for them to talk about enthusiasm than inspiration concerning their work.

The responses in relation to how the interviewees understood enthusiasm and inspiration can be divided in two: five interviewees did not separate these concepts from each other, whereas five saw a difference between them. For those who saw a difference, inspiration was understood as getting new kind of ideas or points of view, whereas enthusiasm meant becoming enthusiastic about something. Additionally, one interviewee associated inspiration more with artists and enthusiasm more with the work of consultants, whereas one other

defined inspiration as a shorter-term emotional state than enthusiasm. Inspiration was also seen as a consequence of enthusiasm and vice versa.

As it can be noted, the interviewees' understanding concerning these concepts varied somewhat. Hence, through combining the concepts it is possible to gather all the essential information on work-related enthusiasm and inspiration together without having to suspect how a certain interviewee grasped these concepts and was this interviewee talking about the prerequisites of enthusiasm, inspiration, or both.

Four out of five consultants stated to experience enthusiasm at work. Three of these four consultants considered it important because otherwise they could not cope with their busy work. *“So far it (the work) has made me enthusiastic. In some way I can fulfill myself through my work so that I manage to do longer workdays.”* However, the remaining two consultants did not consider enthusiasm a requisite for working. *“Experiencing enthusiasm at work is important but not compulsory. I would be able to work also at an assembly line. Work doesn't have to be inspiring so that it could be done.”*

The views of the interviewed consultants about experiencing enthusiasm are percentagewise almost similar as the case company' job satisfaction inquiry's results: the average score for being enthusiastic about one's own work was 3,9 on a scale from one to five, and 74 per cent of the respondents chose either four or five. Thus, the answers of interviewed consultants can be extended to concern the case company's whole office in Tampere.

The unit managers believed that their subordinates are mainly enthusiastic about their work. However, they were conscious of possible exceptions: for example, some people may just work to get money for living. Moreover, they stated that the level of enthusiasm fluctuates in the course of time. The beliefs of the unit managers are correct if they are compared to the above presented answers of the consultants and to the results of the job satisfaction inquiry. Unlike the consultants, the unit managers were however unanimous in relation to the importance of enthusiasm: all of them considered work-related enthusiasm important. As in the case of significance, some of the unit managers linked also enthusiasm to work motivation. *“In my opinion, it is important that you like your job, you do it willingly, and you are enthusiastic when you work. It has a big importance. We would not have any employees here if they weren't enthusiastic at all.”*

4.2.1 Prerequisites of experiencing work-related enthusiasm

Consultants' perspective

According to the answers of the consultants, the prerequisites of experiencing work-related enthusiasm can be divided into seven themes which are *appreciation, content of tasks, success, social relationships and cooperation, innovative activities and thoughts, trust, and consultant's personal characteristics*. These themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 18.

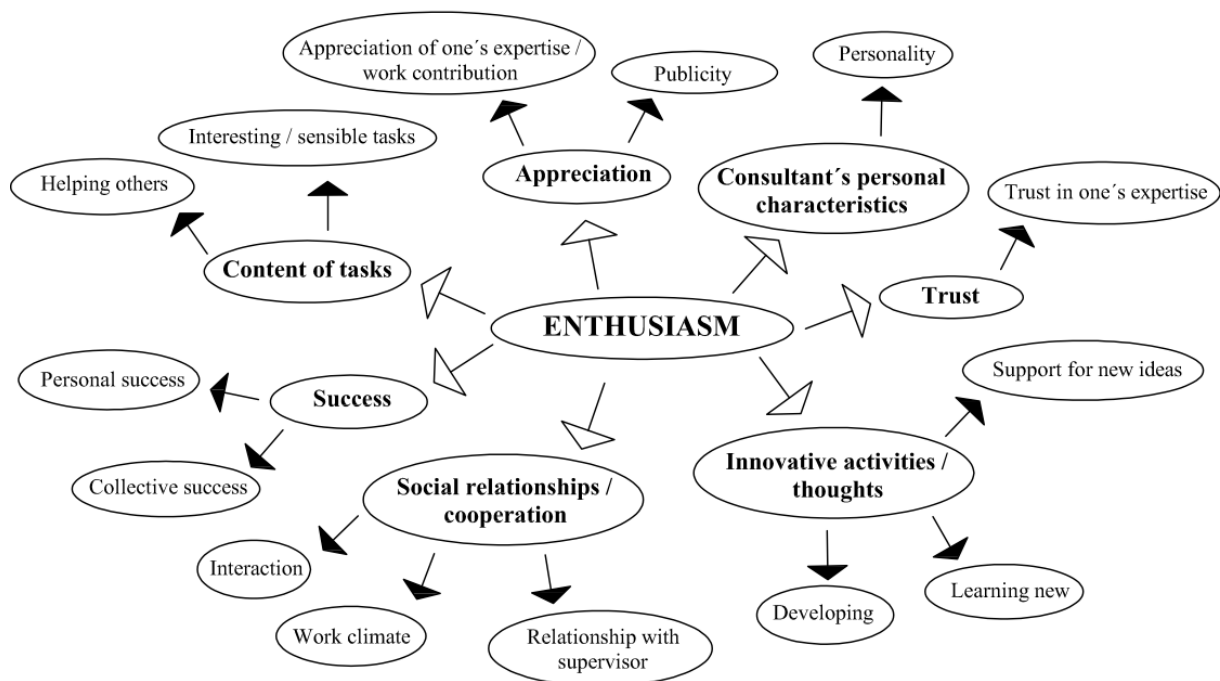


Figure 18 Prerequisites of experiencing work-related enthusiasm among consultants according to consultants

Appreciation can arise from appreciation of one's expertise and work contribution or from publicity. Work-related positive feedback is one effective way to make the consultants feel that what they have done and how they have done it is appreciated. Publicity concerns visibility of the consultants' projects as well as people's awareness of these projects both inside and outside the company. *"Informing people outside the unit through news and other media; that kind of visibility and awareness to the projects instead of carrying them out in silence would surely bring more enthusiasm to my work."*

The second theme, content of tasks, concerns the ability to help others by carrying out one's tasks. This helping includes solving colleagues' or clients' problems as well as answering to their needs. Additionally, the tasks do not make the consultants enthusiastic unless their

contents are interesting and sensible. According to the consultants, challenging and varied tasks bring interest and further enthusiasm to their work. *“Enthusiasm originates from interacting with people, solving their problems, answering to their needs, and helping. If we think about a work at an assembly line, that a circuit board would pass me and I would install one fly’s poop more in it, there is nothing stimulating there. I would just make money for others.”*

Success can be collective or personal. Enthusiasm evoking collective success is experienced when the unit or even the whole company has a forerunner’s role in development compared to competitors. Personal success can be experienced when: a consultant is progressing in his or her project; a consultant is capable to rise to challenges; a consultant fulfills his or her own promises; a consultant’s own ideas result in getting new projects or orders from clients. *“Ability to rise to challenges feeds you surely. So far it has been a so-called good virtuous circle for me: always when new challenges have come, I have pulled through, sometimes well, sometimes even a little bit better. A couple of times my shoes have got wet but I have survived. Because of that I’m still enthusiastic.”*

Social relationships and cooperation can be divided into three subclasses which are work climate, interaction, and relationship with supervisor. Work climate that supports enthusiasm is based on a pursuit of common good instead of individualistic thinking. Moreover, the order in the unit in this case is free and fair for everyone. Interaction with people in general has also a tendency to make the consultants enthusiastic. The supervisors can have the same effect on their subordinates as interaction when they are so-called “good bosses”: they take their subordinates into consideration and do not demand unreasonable things. In addition, good chemistry and confidential relationship with one’s supervisor may be essential factors in terms of experiencing enthusiasm. *“We hit it off because we understand each other and taking care of things just runs smoothly. It is that famous chemistry.”*

Innovative activities and thoughts are another source of enthusiasm for the consultants. The subclasses of this theme are developing, learning new, and support for new ideas. Developing can be carried out in certain development projects as well as in brainstorming or meetings where main focus is on collective pondering. Learning new things at work denotes normally getting new ideas, thoughts, or perspectives from other people or from some other source. However, it may also mean learning to use new methods or systems, and applying them to one’s work.

In addition to everyday work, new things can be learned in different employee trainings. Support for new ideas presented by a consultant is also an important source of the consultant's enthusiasm: when the consultant's team or clients become enthusiastic about his or her ideas, the consultant becomes enthusiastic as well. *“When you are inspired, you get enthusiastic. But if your mind is a total blank, you don't get any new ideas. It adds to the enthusiasm when you suggest your new ideas to a client after a certain project is finished and the client becomes enthusiastic about your inspiration. It results in new projects, means more work.”*

The supervisors' trust in their subordinates' expertise may also lead to an increase in enthusiasm. The consultants stated that they become enthusiastic when they have power over and responsibility for the content and control of their own projects as well as freedom to make decisions. *“What has helped (in terms of enthusiasm) is various tasks and freedom to make decisions or be a part of decision making. I want to emphasize that freedom doesn't mean doing things in whichever way. Of course I must do succeed in the way that others do.”*

The last theme in this connection is consultant's personal characteristics. According to the answers of the consultants, an ability to feel enthusiasm at work depends at least partly on the personality of a consultant: those consultants, who have a bigger tendency to become enthusiastic, experience enthusiasm easier. *“It is a little bit a question of your character. I have heard that some people become very enthusiastic while carrying out some small tasks. Probably that is not a part of my personality.”*

Supervisors' perspective

The unit managers were on common ground with the consultants in relation to what makes the consultants experience enthusiasm. Their answers can be divided into six themes which are *appreciation, content and quantity of tasks, social relationships and cooperation, innovative activities and thoughts, trust, and consultant's personal characteristics*. All of the six themes are included in the themes that were created from the answers of the consultants. These themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 19.

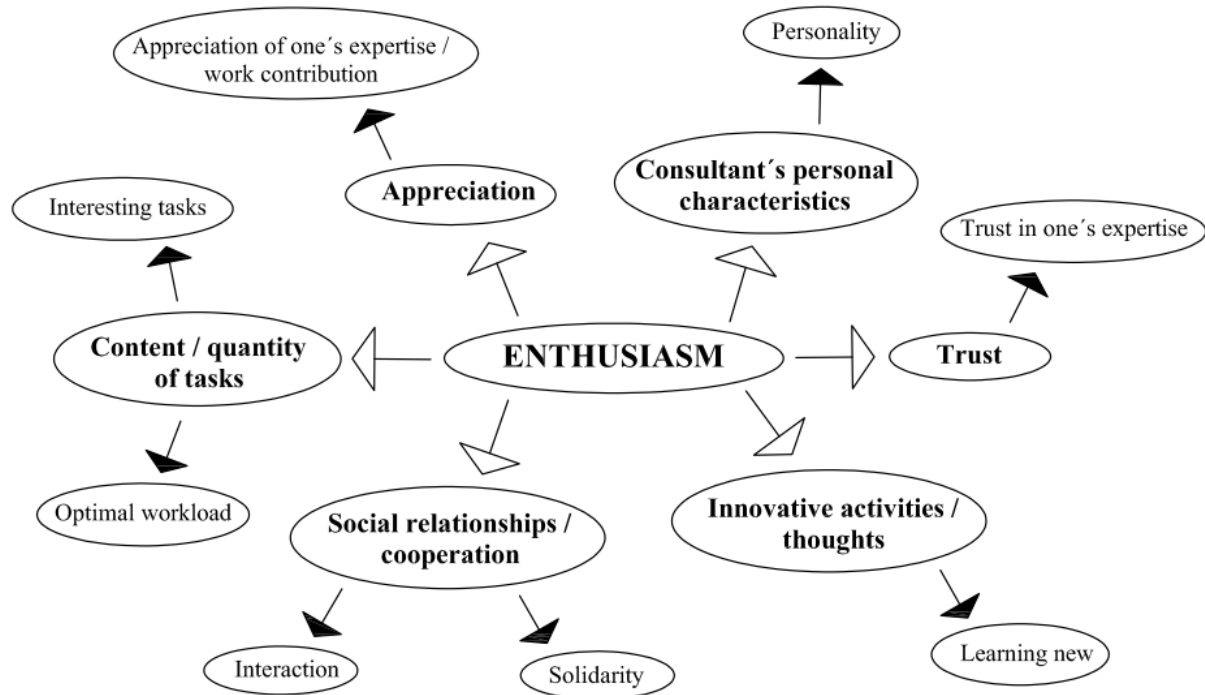


Figure 19 Prerequisites of experiencing work-related enthusiasm among consultants according to unit managers

According to the unit managers, appreciation of consultants' expertise and work contribution is important in terms of their enthusiasm. The sources of appreciation include acknowledgements, rewards, and positive feedback. Furthermore, it is important that the clients place a value on the projects they have ordered. *“Well, what probably reinforces that feeling is giving small rewards. Maybe I should do it more often. When something has gone well, it should be reinforced in which usually, for example, a bottle of liquor could be enough.”*

The content and quantity of tasks can also make the consultants enthusiastic. Similarly as the consultants, the unit managers stated that the content of the tasks and the projects their subordinates carry out should vary enough. Hence, the work would be more interesting and inspiring for them. Additionally, the quantity of work should be at the right level for every individual; the workload should not be too big but not too small either. *“So that the drive arises, you clearly have to have enough work. I don't know anyone in our unit who could do some extra pondering, invent something new, if the workload is small. In my opinion, the thoughts come when the working pace is good, is it then flow or what. But you can't have too much work either, the optimum should be found.”*

The third theme, social relationships and cooperation, can be divided into two subclasses which are interaction and solidarity. When a consultant is interacting with his or her supervisor, colleagues, or clients, he or she is able to absorb enthusiasm from them. Moreover, interaction with sympathetic and responsive clients as well as with pleasant colleagues can invoke enthusiasm. When it comes to solidarity, the consultants are more likely to become enthusiastic when the level of solidarity in their company is high enough. A sense of solidarity is bred by shared working and by collective events, such as activities of sustaining work ability (TYKY-activities) and other recreational activities. *“On the other hand, collective events are important. We just had a recreational day and several people have told me that it was a nice day. I hope that, among other things, people got energy to work from there. During the two-hour bus trip we dealt with the matters concerning the unit, quite nice things as such, and then we just spent time together, talked about other stuff. In my opinion, these things are very important.”*

As the consultants, also the unit managers mentioned in their answers that innovative activities and thoughts in terms of learning new may inspire the consultants. Employee training is one example of the activities during which the consultants are able to learn new things and have new ideas. In addition, new skills acquired while working in various projects can evoke enthusiasm. *“Generally people and also my subordinates seem to get enthusiastic when they are in charge of something new and they can develop something from it. It is nice and motivating.”*

The last two themes to deal with are trust and consultant's personal characteristics. The unit managers believed that giving enough responsibility to their subordinates, which can be considered as a sign of trust in one's expertise, may result in increased level of enthusiasm. In this connection, their answers were in line with the answers of the consultants. Moreover, similarly as the consultants, the unit managers stated that personal characteristics may have an effect on the feeling of enthusiasm. According to their answers, an ability to get enthusiastic depends on the personality of the consultant: some individuals experience enthusiasm more often and more intensely than others. *“Well, probably it (enthusiasm) varies like work motivation. People show it in different ways and everybody doesn't speak about it. It is not necessarily possible to notice it from everybody.”*

4.2.2 Supervisor's influence on experiencing enthusiasm

Consultants' perspective

The consultants' answers in relation to how their supervisors foster the feeling of enthusiasm through their actions can be divided into six themes. These themes are named *content of tasks*, *genuine interest and caring*, *work support*, *innovative activities and thoughts*, *trust*, and *own example*. They are presented in Figure 20 along with their subclasses.

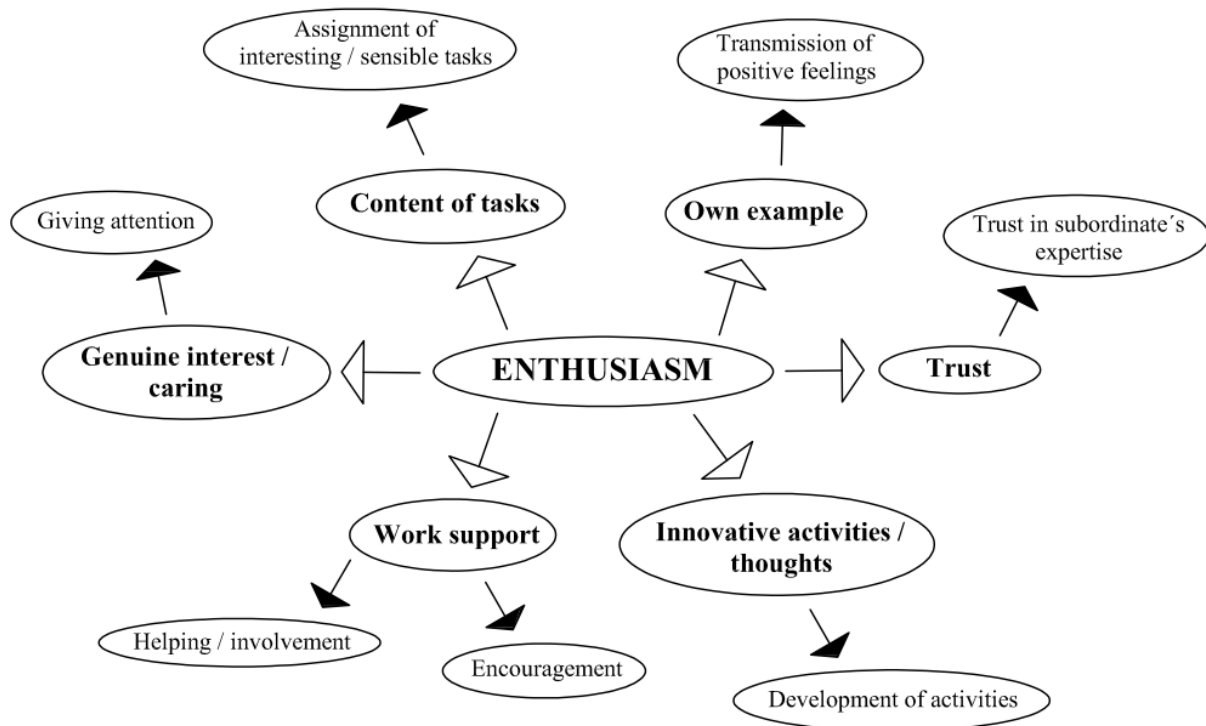


Figure 20 Supervisor's actions that evoke an experience of enthusiasm among consultants according to consultants

As mentioned earlier, the content of the tasks the consultants carry out in their work is important in terms of getting enthusiastic. The supervisors have some power to influence these tasks in order that they would be as interesting and sensible as possible for the consultants. Hence, the supervisors can promote enthusiasm by assigning inspiring, challenging, and diverse tasks that are in accordance with their subordinates' preferences. *"My supervisor knows that I like challenging tasks and that's why I always get to do something new and different and bigger. But of course there is a limit. Every task can't be like that."*

In order to become enthusiastic, the consultants also want to feel that their supervisor is genuinely interested in them and cares for them. The supervisors can convey their interest and

caring by giving attention to their subordinates which includes being present in a situation of interaction, listening carefully what the subordinates are saying, and being available for them. *“My supervisor is always available. If I have something in my mind, he/she is reachable even though he/she wouldn't be in the office at that moment.”*

The third theme, work support, includes helping of subordinates, involvement with subordinates' work, and encouragement. As in the case of significance, helping and involvement can be carried out by giving practical hints to the subordinates which helps them to do their work successfully, and by forwarding important matters that are essential to the progress of their work. Encouragement is either verbal or physical. When encouraging verbally, the motivator can be financial success of the unit, or fame and honor, whereas physical encouragement refers, for example, to incentive bonuses. *“In the end of the winter we had some busy projects going on and then one important client sent us an invitation for bid. We looked at that with my supervisor and figured out a price and a period when we would probably be able to do it. Later they informed us that we got the project but the schedule was really tight. My supervisor told me that if I can keep up with the schedule and budget, I will get a bonus of a thousand euros. Now the project is ending and we are on schedule and quite well under budget. So it is possible to get a bit more (enthusiasm) with that kind of additional incentives. Although they may have pretty small effect on this totality, I'm always interested in additional incomes.”*

The subclass of innovative activities and thoughts is development of activities. According to the answers of the consultants, their supervisors can facilitate the development of activities in their units by becoming enthusiastic about their new ideas, by supporting them to put these ideas into practice, and by procuring new software or equipment for their units if needed. *“Yearly quite a lot of money has been used to the development so that the equipment remains in order and we manage to run our operations. It originates from higher management levels. Actually all of the unit managers and their supervisors think in a way that lack of equipment cannot prevent us and that we have to have enough money in the account to procure the needed equipment for everyone.”*

When it comes to trust, the supervisors have many ways to show that they trust their subordinates' expertise. They can give them responsibility and stand by their side through supporting their solutions. Moreover, they can give them freedom to make decisions and let

them focus on the essential. *“Roughly speaking, my supervisor says ”just go for it”. He/she doesn’t hold me back.”*

In addition to above presented actions, the supervisors in the case company are able to evoke enthusiasm through their own example, because positive feelings can be communicated from a person to another. In practice, it means showing enthusiasm towards new ideas presented by the subordinates and having a positive and lively attitude in general. Hence, if an individual’s personality affects his or her capacity to become enthusiastic, a supervisor’s personality has an effect on the probability of experienced enthusiasm among the subordinates of this supervisor. *“My supervisor is a social person so maybe he/she has an ability to communicate his/her positive attitude and vivacity, which invokes enthusiasm.”*

Supervisors’ perspective

The unit managers’ answers in relation to how they try to enhance the experience of enthusiasm among their subordinates were mainly similar to the answers of the consultants. The answers can be divided into eight themes from which six are identical to the ones that were created from the consultants’ answers. The themes are following: *appreciation, content of tasks, genuine interest and caring, social relationships and cooperation, work support, innovative activities and thoughts, trust, and own example.* These themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 21.

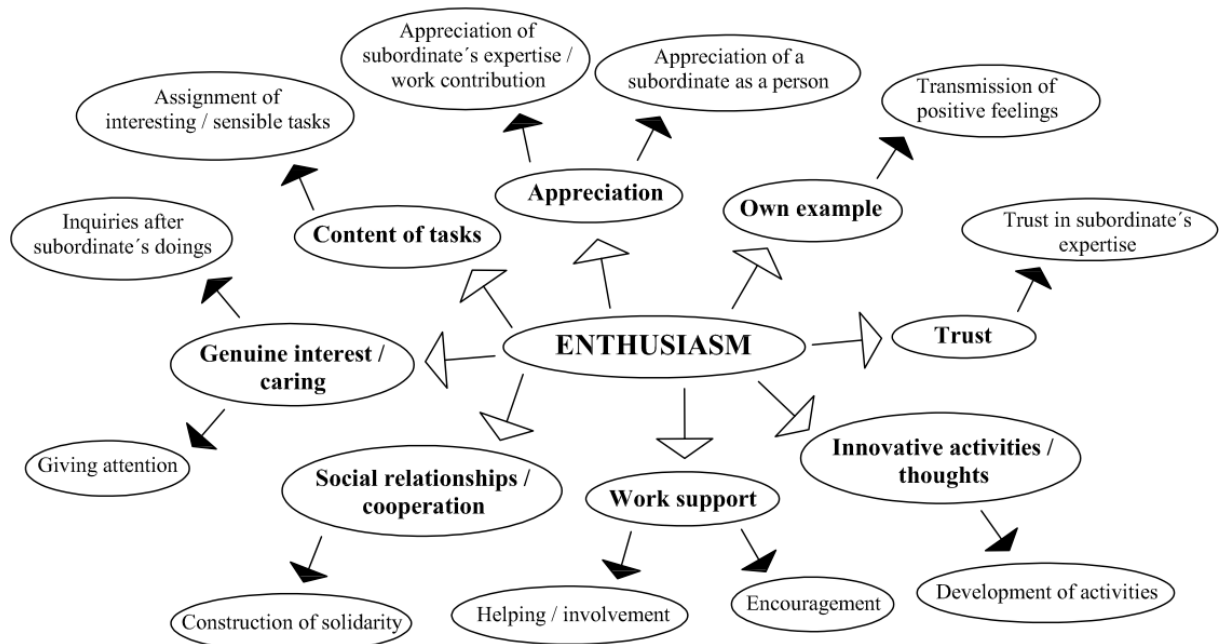


Figure 21 Supervisor’s actions that evoke an experience of enthusiasm among consultants according to unit managers

Appreciation can fasten upon subordinates' expertise and work contribution or upon subordinates as persons. The unit managers try to show that they appreciate their subordinates' expertise and work contribution by recompensing them for well performed work (e.g., giving responsibility and rewards), by giving positive feedback, and by asking development ideas from them. When it comes to appreciating the subordinates as individuals, the unit managers remember their subordinates by giving small rewards when something significant takes place in their personal lives. *"As a matter of fact, we have all kinds of everyday rewards that we try to give collectively. That is one way. If you marry, you get towels, which is a positive thing for many. Or if a baby is born in your family, you get flowers. It is a tradition here."*

The unit managers also pay attention to the contents of the tasks in order that they would be as interesting and sensible as possible for each subordinate. Therefore, before handing out certain tasks to certain consultants, the unit managers have to know which kind of tasks the consultants are interested in. These personal interests can be canvassed, for example, during career development conversations. *"Well, the allocation of work, meaning what kind of tasks can be given to each employee, has an essential importance."*

Genuine interest and caring are communicated through inquiries after subordinates' doings and through giving them attention. More precisely, the unit managers inquire after the subordinates' current condition and ask questions in relation to their work and private life. Essential is to be interested in the subordinates' doings on the whole. Giving attention consists of actions such as greeting subordinates and listening to them when they have something to say. *"I move around and go to talk a little bit with everyone, also about other things than just about work. I try to use the model of early caring: I want to know every employee more deeply than what they are just as employees because if you have problems in your personal life, it always reflects to your work community as well. I'm truly interested in everyone personally as individuals and how it is going with them. That is probably my operations model. If I see that someone's nerves are on edge or workdays are getting longer, I try to talk in private with him or her in order to figure out what we could do about it. Many times only having a conversation helps, although nothing else happens."*

As presented earlier in this chapter, solidarity is a subclass of social relationships and cooperation and thus one prerequisite of enthusiasm. The unit managers try to further the

sense of solidarity in their units by sharing information, having open conversations, interacting openly on the whole, and being available for their subordinates (e.g., keeping the door open while working in the office). In addition, they organize occasionally collective events such as activities of sustaining work ability (TYKY-activities) and other recreational activities for their subordinates. Calling collective meetings can be counted in as one of these events to enhance the sense of solidarity as well. *“Once a month we have unit meetings where we deal with the matters of the unit and share information. I think that this kind of solidarity is quite important. Then, every month we have separate group meetings, where we deal with our projects more precisely; we check the situation of the projects and allocate tasks meaning who will do what. In my opinion, this kind of culture and courses of action with certain systematics are very important.”*

Similarly as the consultants mentioned in their answers, the unit managers themselves stated to support their subordinates’ work via helping them, getting involved with their work, and encouraging them. Helping and involvement include actions such as reading and commenting written material made by the subordinates. In relation to encouragement, the unit managers mentioned that they try to express the importance of their subordinates’ tasks by way of verbal encouraging. This is especially important in terms of enthusiasm if certain tasks happen to be less interesting for some subordinates. *“I can inspire and guide a person by saying that this is an important and interesting task and I give it to you. Communication is quite an important matter in this case, too.”*

The relevance of innovative activities and thoughts to experiencing enthusiasm is recognized also from the unit managers’ side. They endeavor to further the development of activities in their unit, for example, by asking new development ideas or thoughts from their subordinates. *“For instance, today I was having conversations with three people about how we could improve the action in our unit, how we could take a leap further. Next week we’ll have a meeting about it in order to invoke some more thoughts. Additionally, someone could, for instance, go to check some other company’s websites in order to find out if we could do something a little bit better than some other consultants.”*

Trust and own example are the last two themes concerning the unit managers’ actions to enhance the feeling of enthusiasm. The subclasses of these themes are exactly the same as in the case of the consultants’ answers. Own example denotes passing on positive feelings: when

the unit managers express their own enthusiasm, they hope to communicate this positive feeling to their subordinates. The trust in the subordinates' expertise can be shown, for example, by giving responsibility to them. *"You can make some people enthusiastic when you give them more responsibility."*

4.2.3 Reasons for the diminution of experienced enthusiasm

Consultants' perspective

The affairs that diminish the feeling of enthusiasm among the consultants can be divided into five different themes. The themes are *wrong challenge level in one's projects, challenges in work management, problems in social relationships or in cooperation, lack of support for innovative activities or thoughts, and poor success*. These themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 22.

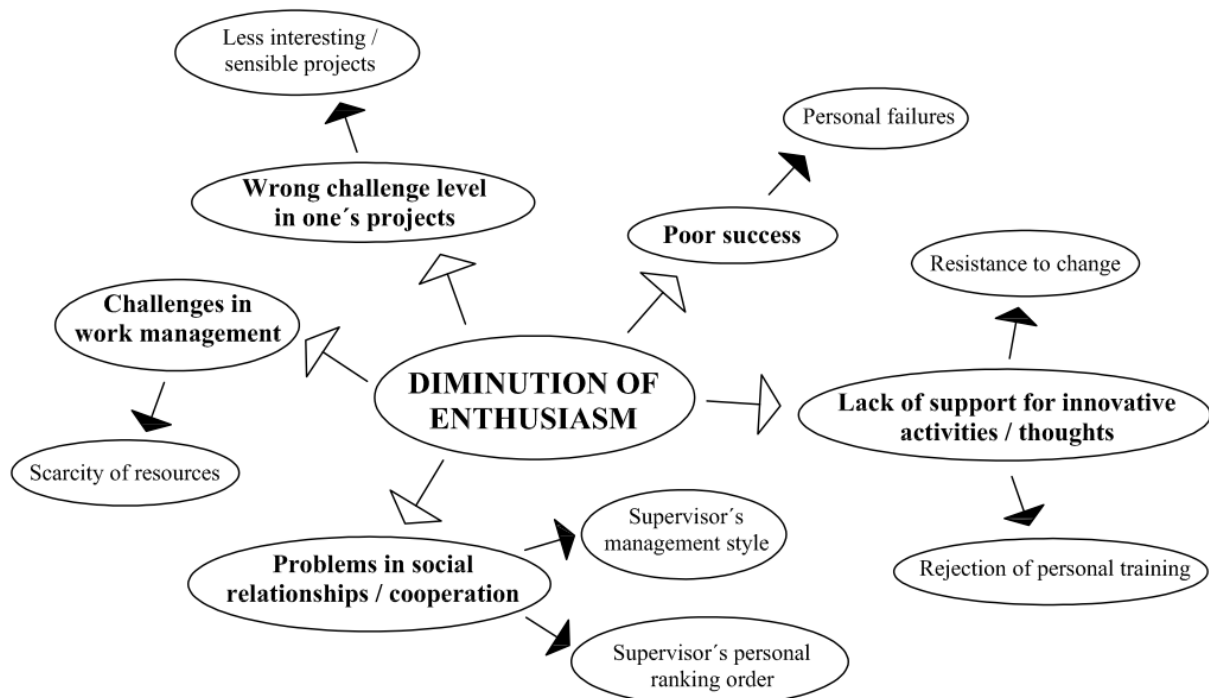


Figure 22 Causes for the diminution of experienced enthusiasm among consultants according to consultants

When the challenge level of certain projects is not correct for a consultant, they are experienced as less interesting and sensible. According to the answers of the consultants, these kinds of projects contain too much routine-natured work or their challenge level is too low for some other reason. *"As a rule, I have been enthusiastic. However, we also have projects which are not interesting but they have to be done. It is not the worst thing in the world."*

Challenges in work management come from scarcity of resources as in the case of experiencing significance. The schedules are often so tight that the consultants may occasionally have a chance to do only a “good enough” end product. *“I want to say as a general comment about inspiration that these schedule pressures and hurry involuntarily tend to numb the ability to do that kind of... When you have to work all the time flat-out, you don’t have time to stop and think about these things. It is nobody’s advantage that basically the possibility to innovative actions is taken away from us. At the worst, it leads to taking the path of least resistance, so to say. That we cross the bar but...”*

Problems in social relationships or in cooperation can also diminish the experience of enthusiasm. If a supervisor does not take his or her subordinates into consideration and demands unreasonable things, the subordinates do not feel very enthusiastic. Moreover, when a supervisor’s personal ranking order differs from the one of his or her subordinate, the subordinate can become at least momentarily less enthusiastic. It occurs, for example, when the supervisor prioritizes his or her own schedule or plans over those of his or her subordinate. *“Well, probably my enthusiasm reduces when the supervisor reiterates his/her own schedule and belittles the plans of others.”*

The fourth theme, lack of support for innovative activities or thoughts, may be experienced when the supervisors reject their subordinates’ requests for personal training. Especially no-substance trainings are easily declined by the supervisors, even though they might create more enthusiasm among the consultants. Additionally, lack of support for innovative activities or thoughts can arise from resistance to change when new ideas presented by a consultant do not get support from his or her supervisor or colleagues. *“Resistance to change may diminish enthusiasm. For instance, you have figured out a nice idea and you share it with others but then nobody talks more about it and it withers away. Of course that lowers the level of enthusiasm a little bit.”*

Finally, poor success in the shape of personal failures can be one of the most ordinary things that has a negative effect on the feeling of enthusiasm. According to the consultants, these failures include all kinds of mistakes which occur during working hours, such as planning mistakes. *“Everybody understands that you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs. If the pace is intensive, something that you should have noticed or checked more carefully may get through. Those are weaker personal moments when a mistake has happened and when we*

receive some claims because of it. But then we just look it through, try to learn from it and continue forward.”

Supervisors' perspective

The answers of the unit managers were mainly similar to the consultants' answers in this connection. They can be divided into six themes which are *lack of appreciation, wrong challenge level in one's projects, challenges in work management, problems in social relationships or in cooperation, lack of trust, and poor success*. Four of these themes are identical to the themes created from the answers of the consultants, albeit the subclasses of the themes differ from each other somewhat. All the six themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 23.

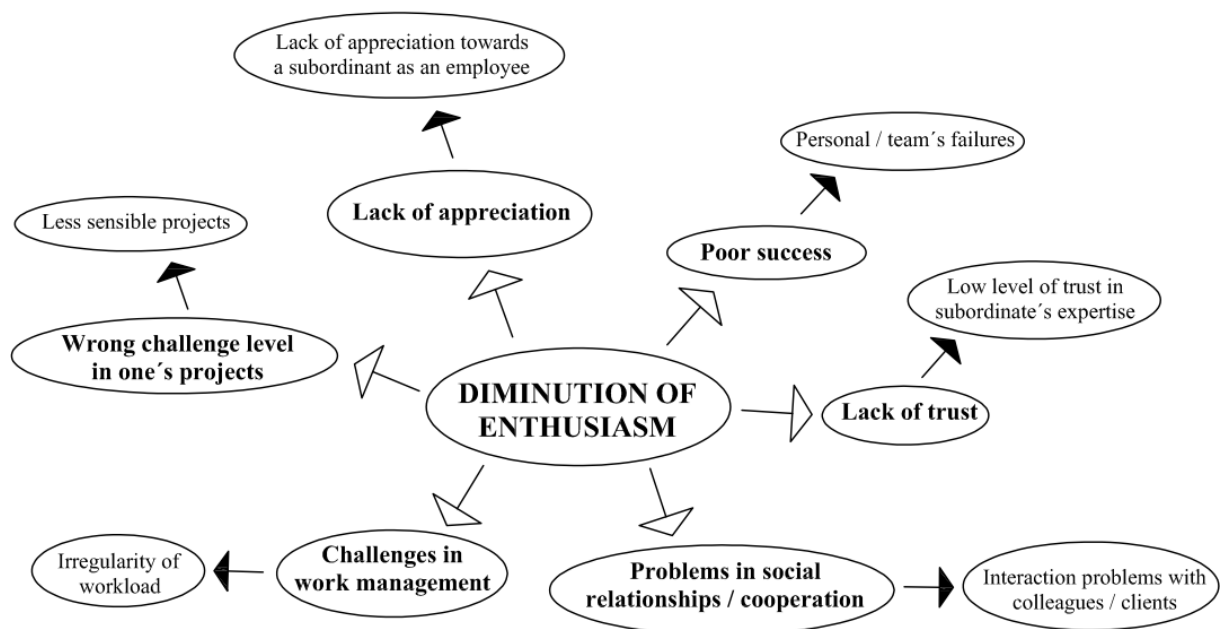


Figure 23 Causes for the diminution of experienced enthusiasm among consultants according to unit managers

Lack of appreciation may inhibit consultants from becoming enthusiastic if they experience that they are not appreciated as employees. According to the unit managers, this feeling of not being appreciated can arise when an individual faces a rejection of personal procurements. Furthermore, a wrong challenge level of certain projects may make these projects less sensible for a consultant and hence decrease the level of enthusiasm. The unit managers stated that this kind of situation might occur when a consultant is transferred to continue originally someone else's project and the consultant does not know what to do and where to begin. "For example, if someone has planned something until a certain point and but cannot continue with

his or her work because of a sick leave, someone else needs to continue from that. This situation clearly demands sparring so that the task would be taken in the same way as it had been the consultant's own from the beginning. The attitude is easily like: "I don't know what that previous person has done here. How should I continue this, this is not going to work." That is a situation which I have noticed. "

Unlike the consultants, the unit managers described irregularity of workload as a challenge of work management instead of scarce resources. According to the unit managers, it is difficult to become enthusiastic if the workload is either too big or too small. Sometimes they have to delegate additional tasks to their subordinates, and if these tasks are received in a backlog of work, the level of enthusiasm may diminish. Furthermore, uncertainty about a sufficiency of work, which is a consequence of the ever changing global economic situation and tough competition for projects, may cause reduction in experienced enthusiasm. *"Basically, this competitive situation and a small uncertainty in relation to how much work we'll have in the future, create a challenge here. It probably reflects to the personnel. Well, it could of course result in a bigger amount of trying but, however, it is easily a bit negative thing. You can't highlight that it's not going well but let's work flat-out. Many times people bemoan that the future seems to be a bit uncertain at the moment."*

Problems in social relationships or in cooperation and lack of trust are other possible sources of reduced enthusiasm. According to the unit managers, interaction problems with others, such as arguments or disagreements with colleagues, or a transmission of disinterest from a client, are typical problems in social relationships and in cooperation. Lack of trust in one's expertise may be experienced, for example, in a situation where a supervisor has to do some changes to his or her subordinate's plans. *"One example is that someone has made a budget plan, which is very good in his or her own opinion. However, when I look at it I notice that this budget can't come true. Then I have to talk with this person about it and say that the plan can't be fulfilled in this way, it has to be changed a bit. For instance, it is not possible to use five persons for five weeks so that the budget withstands it. I'm not sure if that lowers the level of enthusiasm but I try to bring it up in a good way."*

Poor success in terms of personal or team's failures is the last enthusiasm diminishing matter in this connection. These failures involve any kind of mistakes occurring during working hours, failures in achieving project's objectives such as exceeding the schedule or the budget,

and receiving negative feedback after the above mentioned failures. *“For example, a week’s work has been done totally wrong and then I need to tell this person that the work has to be done again. That the person should have talked about this with us. It is difficult to deal with that matter. Probably during that moment the negative feedback and the fact that the work has to be done again doesn’t get you enthusiastic.”*

4.2.4 Changes in experiencing enthusiasm during career

The answers of the consultants concerning the changes in experiencing enthusiasm during their careers varied somewhat. Two consultants stated that their work has made them enthusiastic during their whole careers in general, if the occasional changes are unheeded. The remaining three consultants estimated to be more enthusiastic at present than during earlier stages of their careers. The reasons for the increased level of enthusiasm included a better supervisor, more varied work as a whole, and a bigger amount of challenges.

“The supervisor has an effect on enthusiasm. If the supervisor is not good meaning that he/she does not take others into consideration and gives commands and instructions with a short and impossible schedule, in which case one has to stretch oneself to excess, the work is not necessarily inspiring. Even though the work itself would be pleasant, that (behavior) leads to a feeling of incapability, which reduces the enthusiasm level. Because of above mentioned the work has not always been inspiring for me. It has a big importance. But now the management style (of the current supervisor) is good.”

4.3 Pride

The third part of the interviews concerned work-related pride. All of the interviewed consultants mentioned that they are either all the time or most of the time proud of their work. Furthermore, they stated that taking pride in one’s work is important because pride has a positive influence on one’s motivation, energy level, self-esteem, and self-confidence, and because it makes one to do one’s work well. *“The work has to be done so well that you can be proud of it and put your name under it. You should dare to shout from the rooftops that you have done it.”*

The case company’s job satisfaction inquiry did not include questions concerning pride and therefore it cannot bear out the views of the interviewed consultants. When it comes to the

interviewed unit managers, their answers were similar to the consultants' answers: the unit managers believe that a majority of their subordinates are proud of where they work and what they do. However, they also think that all of the subordinates might not experience pride in the same way because of differences between people. The thoughts of the unit managers in relation to the importance of experiencing pride were also in line with the thoughts of the consultants. As the consultants, some unit managers saw pride as a prerequisite of doing one's work well: "People react to that (work-related pride) in different ways. I personally appreciate it if I see pride. I want people to be proud of their work because in my opinion one precondition for doing your work well is that you can appreciate what you do and be proud of it."

4.3.1 Prerequisites of experiencing work-related pride

Consultants' perspective

According to the answers of the consultants, the prerequisites of experiencing work-related pride can be divided into three themes which are *appreciation*, *social relationships and cooperation*, and *success*. These themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 24.

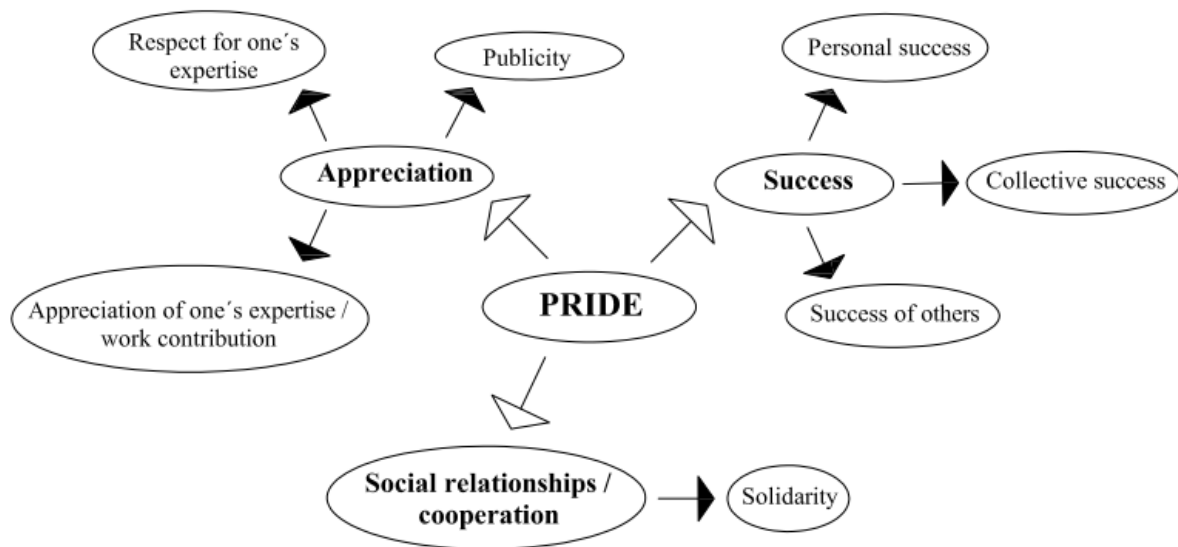


Figure 24 Prerequisites of experiencing work-related pride among consultants according to consultants

The subclasses of the first theme, appreciation, are appreciation of consultant's expertise and work contribution, respect for one's expertise, and publicity. Hence, the first and the third subclass of this theme are the same as they were in the case of work-related enthusiasm. The consultants sense that their expertise is appreciated when they receive positive feedback or

thanks due to their work contribution. In general, positive feedback makes them feel proud regardless of who gives it: colleagues, clients, supervisor, “big bosses”, or in some other way recognized people. *“I remember when I conducted an internal training a couple of years ago. Then I sent the presentation to the boss of my boss. He gave me immediately positive feedback and said that the presentation was very good and that I should send it to wider distribution inside our company. Although giving this kind of feedback was very typical from him, it evoked a feeling of pride in that moment.”*

Constructive feedback from a client may have a similar effect on the feeling of being appreciated as positive feedback because it shows that the client has invested his or her time and effort in acquainting him- or herself with the consultant’s work and thus values the consultant’s work contribution. Another reason for a consultant to feel proud is when colleagues from other units acknowledge the expertise of his or her own unit. Furthermore, when a consultant gets a chance to represent his or her own unit or company in some event, he or she may feel appreciated and proud because the opportunity was given to him or her instead of someone else. Finally, the feeling of being appreciated is evoked within consultants when they are able to help their colleagues personally with their own expertise. *“I’m in a role of an expert in our unit and not as a planner, even though I sometimes have tasks of a planner. These tasks are smaller things which my colleagues ask for when they need an expert’s help in their own projects. All of this evokes a feeling of pride in me because I can help others with my expertise.”*

Respect for one’s expertise is another source of pride for the consultants. When they manage to gain respect from other people for their own know-how, or when they notice that they have the respect of the “big bosses” as a result of carrying out successful projects during a long career, they feel appreciated and are overcome by pride. *“It is nice to go to a construction site to look at the results of my plans. Because so far everything has gone mostly well and I have collaborated with some of the people working in the construction sites, they have begun to show some respect for me. We have planned things well and right so we haven’t received any noteworthy comments from the construction sites such as “Why are the things planned in this way?”. Because of that it is possible to feel some pride.”*

Publicity’s influence on appreciation and further on pride is a consequence of people’s awareness of a consultant’s own projects outside his or her unit. Hence, open discussions on

these projects in public as well as their visibility (e.g., in the news or in some other media) to external quarters have an enhancing effect on pride. *“If a plan that we have been doing is presented in a magazine, for example even in the first page of Aamulehti (regional newspaper in Finland), you feel proud, although the text might be written in a negative tone. The feeling of pride does not go away, even if you receive criticism. Then you can develop the plan further.”*

The remaining two themes are social relationships and cooperation, and success. Solidarity, which is the subclass of the first-mentioned theme, arises from reciprocal helping of others (shared working). Success can be divided into personal success, collective success, and success of others. According to the consultants, they experience personal success when: they are watching the end results of their own plans; they accomplish a high-quality end product; they achieve objectives (e.g., keep to the schedule and budget); they rise to challenges; both they and the client are satisfied after the project is finished. *“When you have almost an impossible schedule and when you manage to make it work, you can be proud of yourself because you were able to rise to that challenge.”*

Typically, collective success is experienced when one’s own project team achieves objectives (e.g., schedule, budget) or when the project team receives positive feedback from the clients. One can be proud of others’ success when those employees, which one has recruited and trained, succeed in their work. However, success is also somewhat personal in this case because the feeling of pride is a consequence of the effort one has invested in developing the skills and knowledge of these above mentioned employees and thus helped them to be successful. *“Recently I have really noticed that the employees I hired once, who I have trained for years, given instructions, and been there for, are beginning to get along well, manage on their own with clients, and receive thanks and feedback. So I have also developed that side and not only my own career.”*

Supervisors’ perspective

The unit managers’ answers in relation to what makes the consultants experience pride were partly similar to the answers of the consultants. The answers can be divided into five themes which are *appreciation, success, employer, innovative activities, and consultant’s personal characteristics*. The first two themes are identical to the ones that were created from the

consultants' answers. All the above-mentioned themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 25.

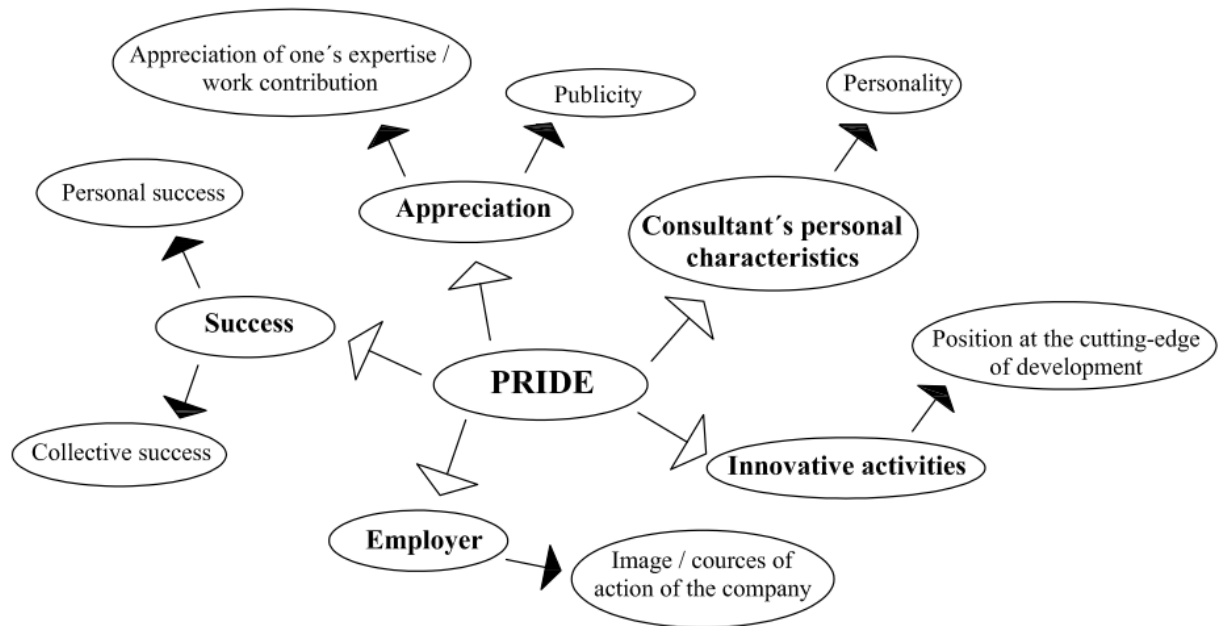


Figure 25 Prerequisites of experiencing work-related pride among consultants according to unit managers

As in the case of the consultants' answers, the subclasses of appreciation are appreciation of consultant's expertise and work contribution, and publicity. According to the unit managers, publicity is essential in terms of pride because the consultants tend to become proud when their successes are made public. When it comes to the first-mentioned subclass, the consultants may feel that their expertise is appreciated if a client orders a project directly from them without a competitive bidding, or if they receive material rewards in consequence of their success. Moreover, the unit managers stated that their subordinates feel appreciated when a client values the project they are working on. Especially positive feedback and thanks from clients, but sometimes constructive feedback as well, give a chance for the consultants to be proud of their efforts. The unit managers believe that a direct reference from a client to a consultant via phone call or e-mail is a more effective way to enhance the feeling of pride than the case company's official client feedback form. *"When it comes to pride, I think that my encouragement has some value but if the clients give positive feedback to an employee who has done a good job, it has a bigger effect."*

Success can be divided into personal and collective success. According to the unit managers' answers, personal success includes all kind of success that an individual has accomplished

with his or her own effort. Collective success is experienced, for example, when the unit or a team wins a competitive bidding with quality. Furthermore, a good financial result of one's unit or the whole company is another possible source of experienced collective success. *“The experience of success probably leads to being proud. In the long run, if success concerns a good financial result or something else that has gone well, of course people are proud of themselves.”*

The third theme, employer, refers to the company's image and courses of action. The unit managers consider their company's image and courses of action to be very good in consequence of which they presume that their subordinates should be proud to work there. Furthermore, the unit managers believe that innovative activities, due to which the company has at least in some sectors a position at the cutting-edge of development, evoke pride among their subordinates. *“In my opinion, the company is good and the employees are proud of working here. Our reputation is also good. At least the employees should be proud of their work because we are bringing this matter forward in kind of a new spearhead trade.”*

Unlike the consultants, the unit managers mentioned in their answers that personal characteristics may have an effect on the feeling of pride. Thus, if different personalities become proud in different ways and during different moments, a tendency to experience pride depends on the personality of an individual (as in the case of enthusiasm). *“I have a feeling that everybody doesn't feel pride in the same way. People are different. For instance, some are even-tempered and it is the same for them if working is pleasant or if it makes them proud or not. They just work. But then some others are not like this.”*

4.3.2 Supervisor's influence on experiencing pride

Consultants' perspective

The consultants' answers in relation to their supervisors' influence on experiencing pride can be divided into four themes which are *appreciation, work support, genuine interest and caring, and trust*. These themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 26.

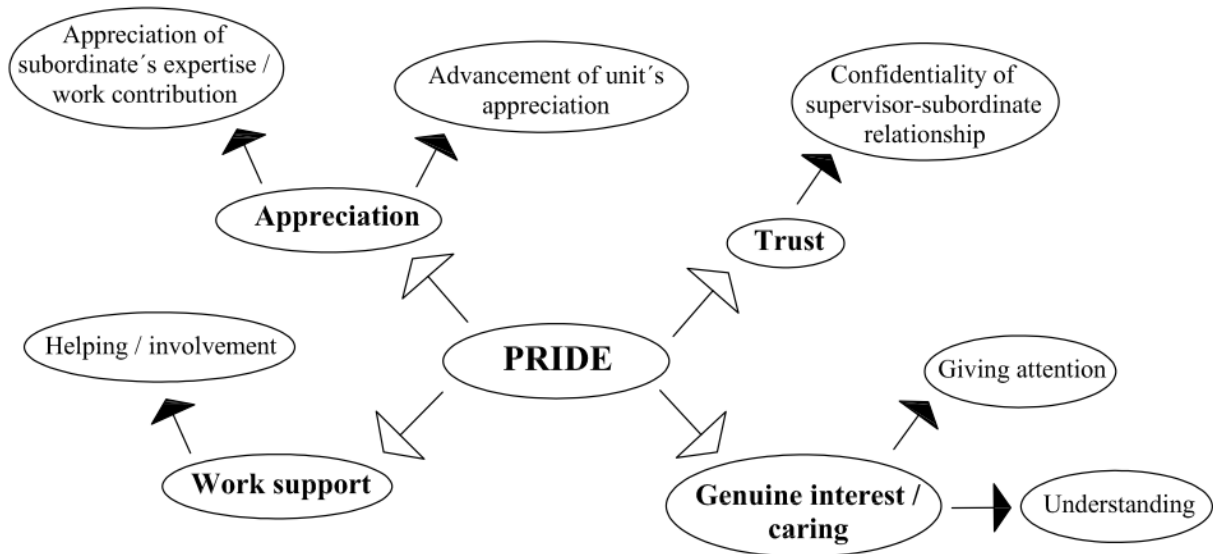


Figure 26 Supervisor's actions that evoke an experience of pride among consultants according to consultants

The actions of the supervisors in terms of appreciation can be divided into two subclasses which are appreciation of subordinate's expertise and work contribution, and advancement of unit's appreciation. According to the consultants, the unit managers show their appreciation in relation to their subordinates' expertise and work contribution by giving the subordinates both positive and constructive feedback, and by asking their opinions. Additionally, the consultants feel appreciated and are proud of themselves when their supervisors ask them to present a project to a bigger group of people, to go to a seminar and report the matters discussed in the seminar to the rest of the unit, or to represent the unit or the company in certain event. The actions concerning the advancement of a unit's appreciation contain creating contacts to other units inside the company by negotiating and conversing as well as pushing the unit's interests outside the company. *"In my opinion, the supervisor especially promotes our expertise outside and inside the office and pushes the interests of our unit very strongly and broadly. I think it is not possible to do more (in order to enhance appreciation) as a supervisor."*

The actions of the second theme, work support, include helping of subordinates and involvement with subordinates' work. In practice, this means, for example, standing up for the subordinates when needed and supporting them in problematic situations. In addition to work support, it is important to the consultants that their supervisors are genuinely interested in them and care for them. According to the consultants' answers, their supervisors show this by understanding them and by giving them attention. Understanding is needed when the

consultants are having a bad day and nothing seems to work out. During these moments they wish to have some space for themselves and hope that the supervisors would not demand too much from them. When it comes to giving attention, concrete actions include being present and available to the subordinates at the office as well as listening to the subordinates when they have something to say. *"My supervisor supports me if something doesn't go as planned. Helps, is truly present, and listens. If I have had a possibility to represent my new thoughts to my supervisor and he/she listens, I have a feeling that I did the good deed of the day and therefore this day was a good day."*

The fourth theme, trust, relates to the confidentiality of the relationship between a consultant and his or her supervisor. When the consultants are able to have conversations about confidential topics with their supervisor, they feel that they are worth of their supervisor's trust, which makes them experience pride. *"When I'm talking with my supervisor about matters related to our personnel, he/she asks my opinion. The conversation is, so to say, confidential. And we also talk about those matters related to the office that concern me in one way or another so that I'm aware of these things. So I'm worth my supervisor's trust. But he/she doesn't tell me everything because he/she knows that I'm not interested in everything."*

Supervisors' perspective

The unit managers' answers in relation to how they try to enhance the experience of pride among their subordinates were partly similar to the answers of the consultants. The answers can be divided into three themes which are *appreciation*, *work support*, and *significance of tasks*. The first two themes are identical to the ones that were created from the consultants' answers. All the above-mentioned themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 27.

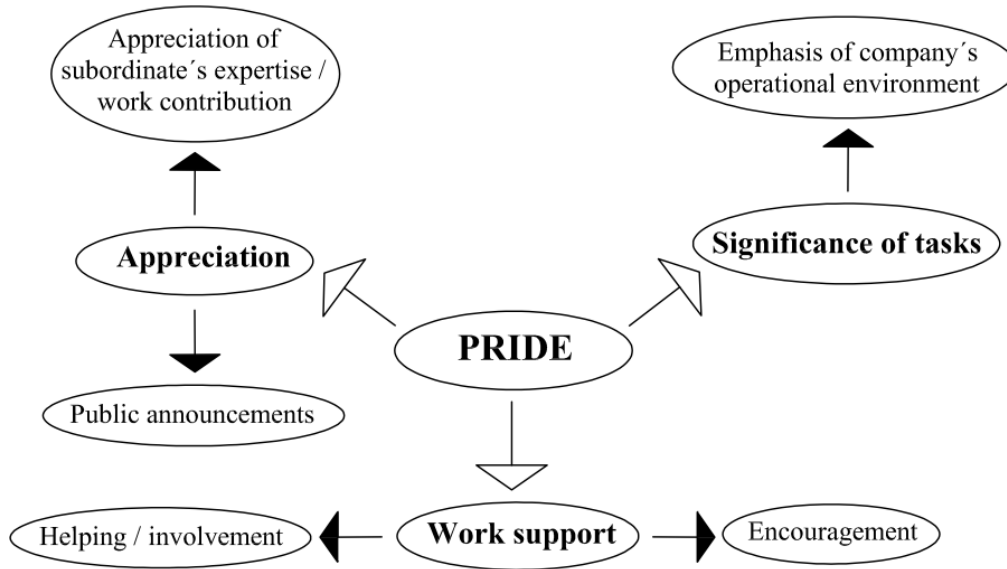


Figure 27 Supervisor's actions that evoke an experience of pride among consultants according to unit managers

The actions of the unit managers in relation to appreciation can be divided into two subclasses which are appreciation of subordinate's expertise and work contribution, and publicity. According to their own words, the unit managers endeavor to show that they value their subordinates' expertise and work contribution by giving positive feedback and praising. They also try to give constructive feedback when they consider it needed. In order to do this on a regular basis, at least one unit has an established practice, a meeting that takes place after every project, to deal with those matters which could have been carried out more successfully during the project.

Telling positive client feedback further is considered to be important in terms of appreciation because sometimes clients give the feedback only to a unit manager. If the unit managers kept this information to themselves, it would not have pride enhancing effect on the consultants since they would not know the client's opinion on how the project has been carried out. When a project is finished successfully, it may be celebrated through offering coffee and cake, or sparkling wine to the consultants. Rewarding can also be immaterial such as offering those kind of tasks to subordinates which they are interested in and which feel sensible for them. *"It is actually possible to reward also with something else than with feedback. What can one do for the feeling of pride? Well, recognize which kind of tasks people are interested in and give these tasks to them."*

Furthermore, the unit managers try to indicate their appreciation by being proud of every subordinate, and by showing that everyone with his or her personal expertise and work contribution is important and needed. One measure for this is to provide employment constantly to every subordinate and another one is to make the subordinates feel that all of them are important parts of the entirety. *“Well, I would say that one thing is to be proud of them and their expertise. I have tried to tell everybody that they are important. For example, we were planning our unit’s recreational day and one person was not sure should he/she go or not. There were not any clear reasons for this person not to go. That’s why I said that everyone here is equally important and I hope that everyone comes. When we all go, we form the complete group.”*

According to the unit managers’ answers, public announcements as a form of appreciation are also essential in relation to the feeling of pride. Therefore, the unit managers attempt to regularly make their subordinates’ moments of success public either within the unit or within the whole office depending on the matter. The above mentioned material rewards, such as offering coffee and cake to everyone, are often a part of these events. Additionally, the successes are many times published in the company’s intranet. Another way to make moments of success public is to announce positive client feedback within the unit or within the office. The subordinates are also encouraged to make their own successes public themselves. *“We carry out client satisfaction surveys from our projects and if the feedback is good, I try to make it public that we succeeded in this project. Sometimes we celebrate the successes with coffee and cake, and sometimes with sparkling wine. If the project is big enough, the whole office gets a glass of it. That is a common practice. In our own unit meetings I try to make well done projects public, which may give a reason for pride.”*

The actions of the second theme, work support, include helping of subordinates, involvement with subordinates’ work, and encouragement. As in the case of the consultants’ answers, helping and involvement relate to standing up for subordinates when needed and supporting them in problematic situations. Encouraging involves imprinting the will to win oneself as well as the will to be better as the competitors (other firms) on the subordinates’ minds. *“As I said before, you have to be proud of what you are doing. You have to have a winner’s mindset meaning that you want to be the best instead of just being, for instance, a technical assistant or a planner. We are a winning team and Ramboll wants to be the best in Finland, even though it is not a part of basic Finnish mentality to say out loud that you want to be good in*

something. I'm trying to get this scheme of things in every employee's head so that everyone would want to be a winner or at least try to win him- or herself as well as give 110 percent."

The subclass of the third theme, significance of tasks, is emphasis of company's operational environment. As mentioned already in Chapter 4.1.1 *Prerequisites of experiencing work-related significance*, the consultants' work in the case company is important relative to society in consequence of the company's operational environment. Because the significance of the consultants' tasks potentially evokes the feeling of pride among them, the unit managers try to emphasize this point to their subordinates. *"Well, I try to highlight the significance of our work in our unit meetings and other situations."*

4.3.3 Reasons for the diminution of experienced pride

Consultants' perspective

The affairs that diminish the feeling of pride among the consultants can be divided into four different themes. The themes are *lack of appreciation*, *challenges in work management*, *problems in social relationships or in cooperation*, and *consultant's personal characteristics*. These themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 28.

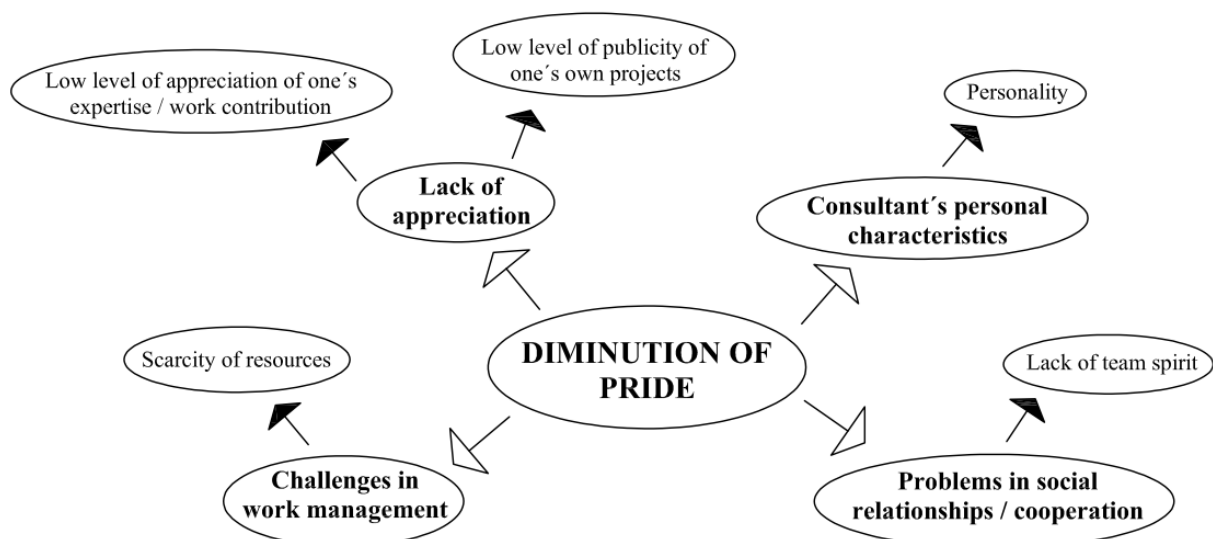


Figure 28 Causes for the diminution of experienced pride among consultants according to consultants

The feeling of not being appreciated evokes if the consultants experience that their expertise or work contribution is not appreciated, or if their projects do not gain publicity. According to the answers of the consultants, the amount of publicity which their projects get outside their

own units could be somewhat higher. One reason why information on these projects is not openly spread is that some of them are concerned as trade secrets before they have ended. When it comes to the low level of appreciation of one's expertise or work contribution, the consultants mentioned that they feel undervalued and thus less proud if the work of their unit is underrated in the other units. *“What does not get me proud is underestimation of our work. We are not included in some projects of the other units, even though we would have a role there. Or if we are involved in a certain project, our work is budgeted very low, although it is handwork-intensive and requires time-consuming interviews, writing, and revising. In my opinion, taking away the resources from us is dismissive. Our work does not seem to be appreciated by all quarters in this organization.”*

Problems in social relationships or in cooperation and challenges in work management can also result in the diminution of experienced pride. The consultants stated that when a member of a project team avoids his or her responsibilities, the team spirit becomes weaker and thus the interpersonal relationships and cooperation in the team suffer. Challenges in work management originate from scarcity of resources as also in the case of significance and enthusiasm: the schedules are often so tight that the consultants may occasionally have a chance to do only a “good enough” end product. *“I suppose that project resources at times force you to work in a way that the end result is only acceptable, good enough. Every now and then we are making a Mercedes-Benz with a cost of a Volkswagen Beetle. In some way it irritates me that we are doing a very good end product partly with our own money. But at the same time I'm proud of achieving something of a high quality.”*

In addition to potentially having an enhancing effect on pride, consultant's personal characteristics, or more precisely their personalities, may cause a reduction in the level of experienced pride as well. For example, some consultants do not value themselves when they occasionally feel lazy because during these moments they are not as effective as they could be. *“My own laziness doesn't make me proud. I am just not able to run errands. At times you have those days when simply nothing is working.”*

Supervisors' perspective

The answers of the unit managers concerning the affairs that diminish the feeling of pride among their subordinates can be divided into two themes. The other theme, *lack of*

appreciation, was included in the themes created from the consultants' answers. The other theme is *poor success*. Both themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 29.

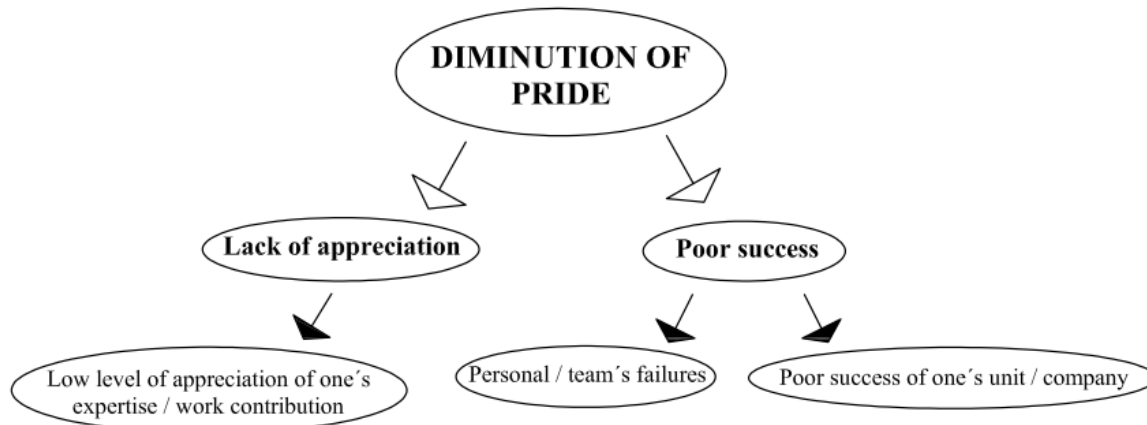


Figure 29 Causes for the diminution of experienced pride among consultants according to unit managers

As in the case of the consultants' answers, the subclass of the first theme, lack of appreciation, is a low level of appreciation of one's expertise or work contribution. According to the unit managers, this feeling can overtake a consultant if he or she does not have enough work to do. *"It could have a pride reducing influence on somebody if there was not enough work to do. If I told someone to play solitaire because there is nothing else to do, it would probably make you wonder if you are a good employee and in a good company. We haven't had this kind of situations in a while but we always need to swing between our tasks as it has already come up several times during this interview. The variability of workload is big. But we try to find something to do for everyone instead of suggesting playing solitaire. At least undone office work in the back pocket if nothing else."*

The subclasses of the other theme, poor success, are personal or team's failures, and poor success of one's unit or company. The unit managers assumed that poor financial success of one's unit or the whole company can be counted as one source of diminished feeling of pride. When it comes to failures, they can involve, for example, failures in achieving project objectives such as staying on schedule or on budget. Failure-related negative feedback from the supervisor, such as an overreaction or criticism when the consultant's colleagues are present, might also have a negative effect on his or her feeling of pride. On the whole, negative feedback in general from the supervisor, clients, or other stakeholders has a tendency to make the consultants less proud of themselves. *"Well, I may have overreacted a few times while giving feedback. I mean, I may have said something in a bit too harsh way. Giving*

negative feedback in a constructive way, so that nobody is devastated, is difficult. That is one thing I could have done somewhat better.”

4.3.4 Changes in experiencing pride during career

The answers of the consultants concerning the changes in experiencing pride during their careers can be divided in two. Two consultants stated that the level of pride towards their work has not changed, whereas the remaining three consultants estimated to experience more pride at the moment than in earlier stages of their careers. The reasons for the increased level of pride varied from a greater level of received appreciation and respect to a growing amount of experiences of beaten challenges at work.

“I would say that all kind of success raises your self-confidence and self-esteem. If we think about planning, you begin as a young planner and you rise all the time higher in your organization until you reach the top. Then when you have a couple of successes behind, you can talk, so to speak, normally with the big chiefs because you are at the same level with them. As a younger guy the same thing is more uncomfortable. Self-confidence is a good thing as long as it stays under control in a healthy way.”

4.4 Challenge

The last part of the interviews concerned work-related challenges. According to the overall model of work engagement (Figure 10), feeling challenged at work can be seen to originate from job demands, which increase the positive impact of job and personal resources on work engagement. As presented in Chapter 2.3.2 *Job demands-resources model*, job demands can be divided into challenge demands which enhance work engagement, and into hindrance demands which constrain work engagement. However, a job demand may also be a challenge demand for one person and a hindrance demand for another one: for example, one consultant may experience more work engagement while carrying out varied and challenging tasks, whereas his or her colleague might prefer routine-natured work and suffer from stress instead of experiencing work engagement if the tasks vary a lot. Hence, the demands (or challenges) discussed in Chapter 4.4.1 *Challenges at work* are not divided into challenge and hindrance demands but are dealt with as one cluster. Chapter 4.4.2 *Challenges balancing resources and actions* concerns balancing work-related challenges in order that they would promote work engagement rather than hindrance it.

All of the interviewed consultants stated that their work is quite challenging but not too challenging. In other words, they were fairly satisfied with level of challenges they face at work. *“Challenging enough, I would say. There are no two similar days or projects. All of them have their own challenges: some are easier but every now and then you face projects which make you horrified and wonder that what you are able to do here.”* Furthermore, all of these consultants were in the opinion that work should include challenges. *“It (challenging work) is important because otherwise you get bored. I call it a “factory effect”: you only move that one nut and because you are doing the same thing all the time, you can’t develop yourself.”*

The views of the interviewed consultants can, for the most part, be extended to concern the case company’s whole office in Tampere because the job satisfaction inquiry’s results support these views: the average score for experiencing one’s own tasks and projects challenging was 4,1 on a scale from one to five, and 82 per cent of the respondents chose either four or five. When it comes to the opinions of the five interviewed unit managers, four of them believed that their subordinates’ work is mainly challenging. Some of these four unit managers stated that certain projects or tasks might be even too challenging for newly graduated employees. The remaining one unit manager considered the work in his/her unit too much routine-based. However, the all five unit managers agreed that in general their subordinates are able to influence their own tasks and thus challenge themselves.

Similarly as the consultants, the unit managers considered challenging work to be important. According to their answers, work without challenges is not motivating or sensible and it does not further an individual’s personal development. *“It (challenging work) is important. If you carry out routine-based tasks all the time, you can’t cope with it. The work has to be varied and equivalent to your own know-how. When you have experience, you have to get more challenging tasks. It might suit some people that they do the same thing throughout their lives but they are few and far between. The tasks have to be at least slightly varied.”*

4.4.1 Challenges at work

Consultants’ perspective

According to the answers of the consultants, the sources of work-related challenges can be divided into five themes which are *work management, challenging tasks, competition in the*

field of operation, social relationships and cooperation, and consultant's personal expertise.

These themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 30.



Figure 30 Challenges which consultants face in their work according to consultants

The subclasses of the first theme, work management, are project management and irregularity of workload. When consultants are managing multiple projects simultaneously, the challenges they face relate to balancing between scarce resources (e.g., budget, schedule, know-how). For example, if they are projects managers, they need to allocate employee resources to the projects they are responsible for. Irregularity of workload is another work management challenge for the consultants because sometimes they have to balance with the amount of work. Hence, they may have a fear of having a too heavy personal workload or, on the contrary, a fear of not having enough work. One major reason for irregularity of workload is a relatively thin order book. *“Every now and then you need to know how to balance between a too big and a too small amount of work. We are sending offers all the time and hoping that we are able to get a part of those projects. But then again, you have all the time a little fear that what if we win too many projects, what then. At the same time there’s a fear that what if we don’t win enough projects. That’s not good either. We have a quite big unit and therefore we need to get new projects with regularity so that we can always provide employment for everybody.”*

Challenging tasks originate from demanding projects as well as from changes in the field of operation. In order to be able to finish demanding projects successfully, the consultants need to have knowledge of every sector of their own area of operation. Moreover, some consultants

have to learn new things continuously because they are facing a growing amount of completely new kind of projects with new actors and branches of activity at their work. Hence, on a large scale, changes in the field of operation influence the level of challenge in certain tasks: the challenges become bigger along with the size and diversity of the projects. *“Projects get all the time more difficult. Because of this financial situation, big and various theme projects with several clients are being carried out. This sector is changing. Our field of operation is going through a turning point where public administrations are merging and cities are having client-producer models. Additionally, new fields of operation, such as wind power industry, are arising and European Union gives more demands whose contents and meanings we constantly need to study. It doesn't seem to be so stable at the moment.”*

Tight competition for projects in the case company's field of operation also evokes more challenges to the consultants' work. Consequently, offers are planned and priced tightly, which further leads to tight budgets and schedules. *“We offer all projects with a relatively tight price because the price competition is quite tough nowadays. It means that if we win one project, the budget is not so big, which again means that the project team can't be too big in order that we don't exceed the budget. And because the schedules are relatively tight, we need to make the most of everybody in relation to efficiency so that these projects would be profitable for us.”*

Social relationships and cooperation with different parties is another source of challenges for the consultants. They remarked that interacting with people who have different kinds of personalities compared to one another is not always easy. For example, some clients need more time to contemplate than some others before making decisions. Hence, the consultants have to adjust their behavior to every situation separately. Furthermore, client organizations have various workings and thus collaborating with them might be challenging before one learns their operational ways. *“Interaction is quite challenging. We have lots of clients in different organizations, and every organization has its own operational ways. If you haven't collaborated with a certain company before, you have to guess how things are working there and who might be the boss who says what to do.”*

The last challenges causing theme from the consultants' perspective is their personal expertise. The consultants are pushed to the limits of their expertise if the amount of responsibility they receive grows rapidly. Moreover, lack of certain professional skills has a

tendency to make their work more challenging. The consultants mentioned in their answers that they have experienced lack of skills, for example, in selling, asking for help, and saying no to job offers from clients during a backlog of work. *“It has something to do also with me. I could ask for help sooner instead of trying to get everything done by myself. Only if it seems in the last moment that I’m not going to make it, I ask for a little bit of help. Well, I’m not that good either in saying to a client that we don’t have time to do your project, that we have already enough or even too much work. But then if I don’t say no and if we get one more project, I don’t want that the project will be unsuccessful because of me. This is a bit bad equation, which results in the fear of too long working days.”*

Supervisors’ perspective

The unit managers’ answers in relation to the sources of work-related challenges among the consultants were mainly similar to the answers of the consultants. The answers can be divided into six themes which are *work management, challenging tasks, competition in the field of operation, social relationships and cooperation, consultant’s personal expertise, and consultant’s personal characteristics*. The first five themes are identical to the ones that were created from the consultants’ answers. All the above-mentioned themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 31.

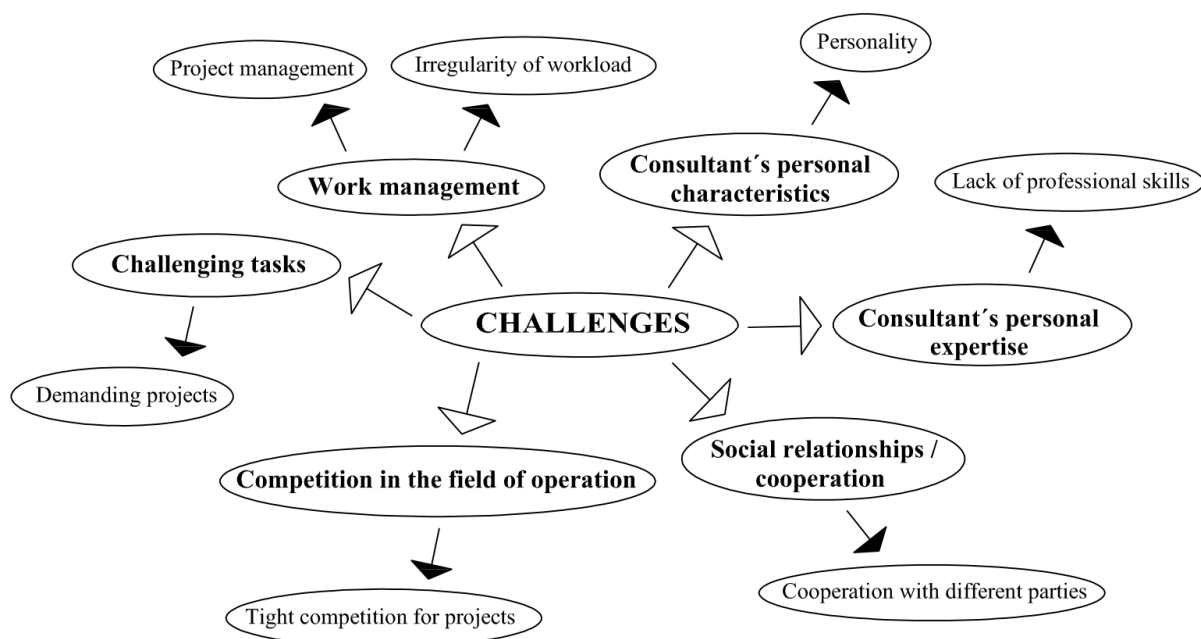


Figure 31 Challenges which consultants face in their work according to unit managers

As in the case of the consultants’ answers, the subclasses of work management are project management and irregularity of workload. According to the unit managers, scarce resources

(e.g., budget, time, know-how) inflict challenges for project management and thus the consultants need to have an ability to balance between them. Furthermore, conflicting project objectives from different stakeholders may produce an extra challenge for the consultants. Irregularity of workload causes a balancing challenge between a too big and too small workload. *“Last year our unit was very busy but this year has been easier. Then again, when you are not that busy, you begin to think where to get enough projects. That is the other side. When you are busy, there are surely enough projects to do but when you are not so busy, you worry if there’s enough work for everyone. This is with what we always balance here in the consultant world. It is not only in our unit but everywhere. Sometimes there are projects coming in from doors and windows, and sometimes you will have a more peaceful moment.”*

The unit managers were on common ground with their subordinates also in relation to challenging tasks. The projects on which the consultants are at work can be demanding and diverse, which leads to having a wider area of operation. Hence, the consultants need to learn new things continuously because they should have knowledge of their whole area of operation. *“It (the work) is demanding because you need to travel a lot and do long days. On top of that you should also know a bunch of abbreviations, European Union directives, and legislations. It is a quite high standard.”*

Competition for projects in the case company’s field of operation is tight, in consequence of which all the projects that are won in competitive biddings are taken. Hence, affecting the contents of projects is challenging. *“If you think about our tasks, the basic work we do, we can’t choose which kind of projects we take. We do what we get and are able to do. Therefore, it can be difficult to provide varied and new kind of tasks.”*

Social relationships and cooperation with different parties can be challenging for the consultants because of various reasons. The unit managers mentioned unworkable chemistry with a client as one example. When it comes to the fifth theme, consultant’s personal expertise, the unit managers stated that a shortage of certain professional skills may make their subordinates’ work more challenging. More precisely, they talked about a lack of experience, a difficulty in asking for help, and deficient social skills, which are especially important in the customer interface. Additionally, insufficient educational background can be a source of scarce professional skills and it may preclude a person from advancing in his or her career. *“Some people are in the opinion that they don’t have challenging enough tasks.*

For example, a technical assistant might want to be a planner and could have a tendency towards it. But we have to remember the realities; some tasks require certain educational backgrounds. Wanting is not enough. That's why we have a somewhat bureaucratic system according to which you need to be practically an engineer so that you can be a planner. Due to their educational backgrounds, some people can't advance from their present roles. They need to consider postgraduate education if they really are enthusiastic about it."

Consultant's personal characteristics is the only theme which was not mentioned in the answers of the consultants in this connection. According to the unit managers, some consultants lack real willingness to change, which results in a rejection of challenging tasks as well as in avoidance of searching challenges. Hence, due to the personalities of these consultants, their work can be routine-natured and not challenging enough, whereupon they might get bored in the course of time. *"Some people do same kind of work for a long time and would like to have more various tasks. But finding means for it is difficult because our work is routine-natured on average. Easily it remains in the level of talking. It is also convenient to continue what you are doing when you can come to work at eight in the morning and leave at four in the afternoon. Having new type of tasks would mean that you really jump over your comfort zone. In the end, maybe it is self-indulgence what prevents you (from doing changes). But those who really want demanding tasks, they stand out and find their way of doing them."*

4.4.2 Challenges balancing resources and actions

Consultants' perspective

The consultants' answers in relation to which resources and which actions of their supervisors balance the challenges they face in their work can be divided into four themes. The themes are *supervisor's genuine interest and caring, supervisor's work support, social relationships and cooperation, and consultant's personal characteristics*. These themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 32.

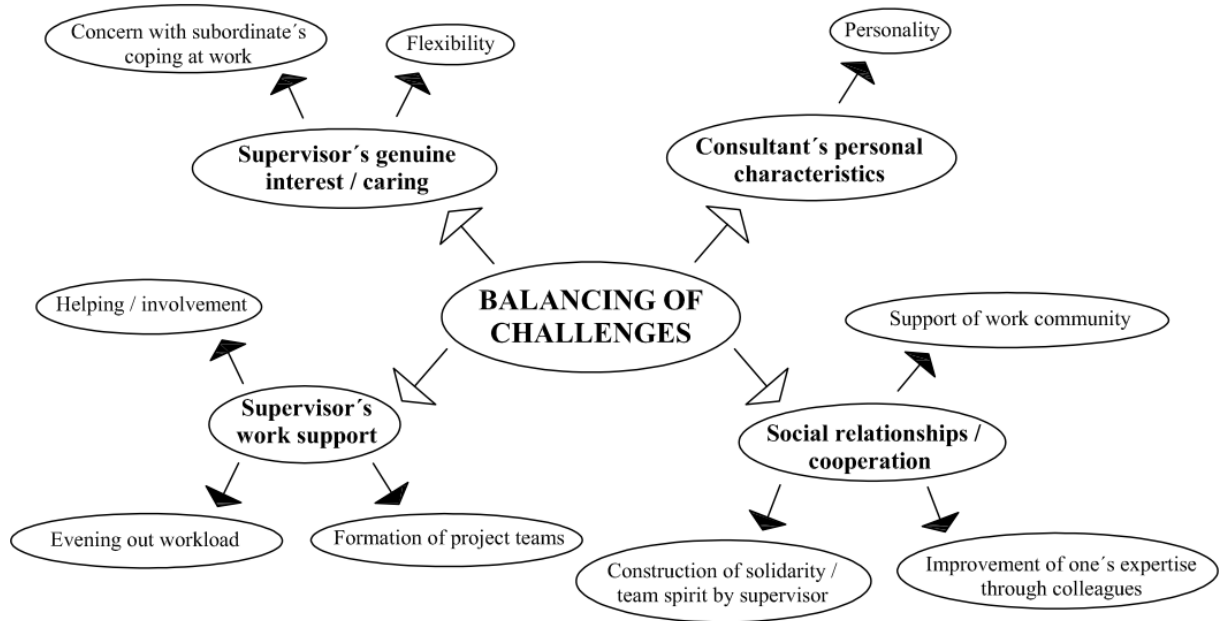


Figure 32 Challenges balancing resources and supervisor's actions in consultant's work according to consultants

The challenges balancing actions of the supervisors in terms of genuine interest and caring can be divided into two subclasses which are concern with subordinates' coping at work and flexibility. According to the consultants, their supervisors look after their coping at work by taking care of the balance between their working time and free time as well as by adjusting the workload between their unit's employees. Flexibility is offered through giving the consultants a chance to affect the dates of personal vacations and to fit private plans and working time together. "We had a meeting on Friday where we dealt with the materials of the meeting which took place on following Monday. During the meeting it was noticed that certain changes should be made. Is it possible to find time to do these changes? Of course it is possible but there were not any workdays left before the Monday's meeting. If you are flexible, also the supervisor is which means that you can choose the days when to take your vacations and so on."

In addition to genuine interest and caring, the consultants mentioned that their supervisors try to support their work in different ways in order to make work-related challenges more manageable. These actions can be divided into three subclasses which are helping and involvement, evening out of workload, and formation of project teams. Helping and involvement relates to actions such as inquiries about subordinates' need of help, support in initiation of demanding projects, and pondering of solutions together with the subordinates.

The supervisors try to even out their subordinates' workload by allocating work to the subordinates, for example, in project manager meetings and by recruiting additional workforce if needed. Formation of project teams as an action concerns the selection of available consultants to project teams according to their expertise. *“The supervisor can choose certain people to the projects teams of big and demanding projects because he/she is generally procuring these projects and deals with them. Additionally, the supervisor can help to initiate these projects.”*

Social relationships and cooperation can also balance work-related challenges. The interviewed consultants stated that their supervisors enhance cooperation in their units by constructing solidarity and team spirit. For example, this has been carried out through activities of sustaining work ability (TYKY-activities, examples in Chapter 4.1.2 *Supervisor's influence on experiencing significance*). In addition to the supervisors, co-workers play a role in balancing the influence of challenges in the case company. When experienced consultants share the information they have gained during their careers with their younger and less experienced colleagues, these latter mentioned individuals are able to improve their expertise faster and thus be more prepared to face new challenges. Altogether the consultants form a work community which functions as a safety net for them all; they support each other by pondering solutions together in order to work out problems more easily. *“Some projects seem to be so challenging that they frighten you at first. But we have expertise and knowledge here, and we ponder problems as a group so that nobody needs to try to solve them alone. Together we can find solutions to move forward. It is extremely rewarding when you are able to accomplish a difficult project well.”*

The subclass of the fourth theme, consultant's personal characteristics, is personality. Thus, the ability to cope with challenges originates partly from within: those consultants who experienced themselves as conscientious and persevering stated that their traits help them to tackle challenges at work. *“For me work has always defined things quite a lot. The main point has been that tasks just need to be done. If a task is unfinished, you will first finish it off and only after that you look what time it is.”*

Supervisors' perspective

The unit managers' answers in relation to which resources and which actions balance the challenges their subordinates face at work were partly similar to the answers of the

consultants. The answers can be divided into six themes which are *content of tasks, supervisor's work support, social relationships and cooperation, improvement of consultant's expertise by supervisor, classification of roles and tasks by supervisor, and consultant's personal characteristics*. The themes number two, three, and six are identical to the ones that were created from the consultants' answers. All the above-mentioned themes along with their subclasses are presented in Figure 33.

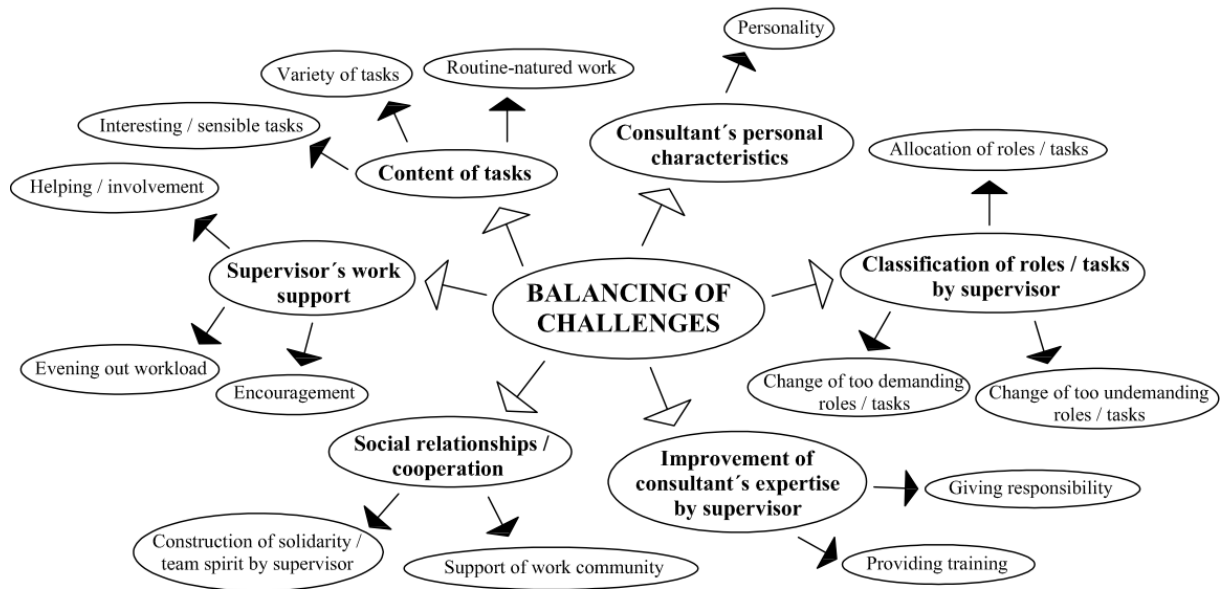


Figure 33 Challenges balancing resources and supervisor's actions in consultant's work according to unit managers

The subclasses of the first theme, content of tasks, are interesting and sensible tasks, variety of tasks, and routine-natured work. According to the unit managers, challenging tasks are less stressful to carry out when they are interesting and sensible to the consultants. Hence, the unit managers try to find out which tasks their subordinates are interested in (e.g., during career development conversations or other informal conversations). Once the unit managers are aware of these tasks, they try to procure them in conjunction with the project managers. Eventually the tasks are allocated to the subordinates according to their wishes in case it is possible.

In addition to interesting and sensible tasks, variety of tasks as well as routine-natured work can balance work-related challenges. Varied tasks inhibit the consultants from getting bored, whereas some routine-natured work among challenging tasks prevents the work becoming too challenging. However, if one's projects are very similar to each other, the work might be too one-sided and thus one is more likely to become bored. *"It is quite motivating for the*

employees when they come to tell me their interests and we are able to find that kind of tasks for them which are in line with these interests. A good thing is that we have many kinds of projects and several groups in our unit, due to which the tasks vary pretty much. The purpose of a career development conversation is to discuss these matters. Quite many employees have said during the conversation that they like their current tasks and just want to deepen their expertise. Therefore, changing the tasks of these people is pointless.”

The challenges balancing actions of the unit managers in relation to the second theme, work support, can be divided into three subclasses which are helping and involvement, evening out workload, and encouragement. Helping and involvement is carried out by cross-checking the subordinates' offers and reports, by tutelage and guiding, by arranging pair work, and by urging on the subordinates to ask for help when needed. The unit managers' answers concerning the second subclass are identical to the ones of the consultants: workload is evened out through allocating work to the subordinates (mainly in project manager meetings), and if the average workload per one subordinate is too big, additional workforce can be recruited. When it comes to encouragement, the unit managers try to motivate their subordinates, for example, by highlighting the importance of routine-natured work, even though it might feel boring sometimes. *“We need basic, not so creative projects, which someone has to do. These projects bring financial security and guarantee that we have enough work. Because of the basic projects we have money to pay the salaries, people understand also this side. It is not necessarily a negative side.”*

Similarly as the consultants, the unit managers mentioned in their answers that social relationships and cooperation can counterbalance work-related challenges. They try to enhance the quality of social relationships and cooperation in their units by constructing solidarity and team spirit. This is implemented by creating and maintaining an open workplace atmosphere which consists of open conversations and open informing. In addition to the supervisors, co-workers play a role in balancing the influence of challenges at work. According to the unit managers, the consultants support each other by pondering solutions together when needed. Thus, they do not need to face demanding problems alone. *“Nobody should work alone, that is inadvisable. I think we have a quite good culture in our unit concerning the ability to ask for help. If help can't be found from the neighbor, it should be and it is searched for from another unit or another office. Although one would have a challenging task, support and expertise can be found from the company. But of course, the*

individual should also confess that he or she needs help because noticing it from outside is not always easy.”

Improvement of consultants' expertise reduces the negative effect of those work-related challenges which are caused by lack of professional skills. The unit managers endeavor to improve their subordinates' expertise through providing training and giving responsibility. Training includes actions such as preparing the subordinates for new positions, tutelage, guiding, and arranging pair work. In addition to training, the unit managers offer their subordinates a possibility to learn more and thus to improve their professional skills by giving more responsibility to them. However, the additional responsibility should be given gradually in order that the consultants are able to cope with the increased level of challenges. This is taken into account in the case company, for example, via a career path (summer trainee / technical assistant, planner, project manager, group manager, unit manager) along which the responsibility grows level by level. Moreover, the supervisors can increase the difficulty level of their subordinates' tasks, even though the titles of these subordinates would remain changeless. *“Well, we offer training and guiding. And then we have to see how the tasks are distributed to the employees and that they aren't changing all the time. At first the tasks should be channeled into a certain section and later this area can be expanded little by little. In this case, one can learn new things piece by piece instead of having to learn everything at once. Some people can control only a part of a larger whole when others are able to look at the world from a wider perspective.”*

According to the answers of the unit managers, one way to counterbalance work-related challenges is classification of roles and tasks. Roles and tasks can be allocated for the consultants as per their expertise and as per SKOL-categories. SKOL is a “professional and employers' organization for independent and private consulting companies” (SKOL ry 2013a). According to the SKOL-categories, personnel can be grouped into eight different clusters: the range stretches from leading specialists to assistants and trainees (SKOL ry 2013b). If the roles or tasks turn out to be too demanding for certain consultants, the unit managers try to alter the situation by changing the work pairs or tasks, or by transferring these employees from one unit to another inside the office in order to find roles and tasks which would fit them better. Sometimes the roles or tasks can also be too undemanding for someone, in which case the unit managers try either to change the tasks of these consultants or to support them in the search of new challenges. The latter includes actions such as support in

the search of new clients, support in learning and implementation of new systems, and generally support concerning all kinds of development. *“In our company, developing new is not prevented in any way. For example, you have free hands to work more in the customer interface if you have abilities and will for it. Just come to talk and let’s start doing it.”*

Finally, personal characteristics can help consultants to find more challenges or to protect themselves against additional challenges. The unit managers stated in their answers that the personalities of their subordinates differ from each other: some subordinates constantly look for challenges and thus have more of them in their work, whereas some others try to avoid challenges and want to work with the tasks they are already familiar with, which results in having to face less challenges at work. However, both kinds of subordinates are presumably similarly satisfied with the situation as it is because of the desired level of challenges. *“I have always wanted to have more demanding and challenging tasks because they give me a chance to learn something new. If I had the same kind of projects all the time, I could not develop myself and my work motivation would not be that good. But it has been interesting for me to notice that people are different. Some individuals only want to do what they know they can; familiar and safe tasks. For them it is not a bad thing if they have to carry out easy and less demanding tasks. This has been an awakening experience for me because I have always taken these matters in a totally different way.”*

4.4.3 Changes in the level of work-related challenges during career

The answers of the consultants concerning the changes in the level of work-related challenges during their careers were mainly in line with each other. Four consultants stated that work has become more challenging in pursuance of the growth of responsibility. For one consultant the level of challenges has remained quite stable throughout the career; only the sources of challenges have changed. Additionally, some consultants considered their present roles with bigger amount of challenges better than their previous roles with less challenges, whereas some consultants saw good sides in both situations.

“Before as a planner the challenges were not that big. Now the work is more challenging because I have to procure projects and allocate tasks for others. But both (previous and current role) have their sides. Before I did not have so much influence over how things are carried out.”

4.5 Research results

The findings of the study indicate that the case company's consultants are dedicated and thus engaged in their work: all of the interviewed consultants stated that they experience their work as significant and challenging, and that they are either all the time or most of the time proud of their work. When it comes to enthusiasm, four out of five consultants mentioned their work to be a source of enthusiasm for them. These findings can be extended to cover the whole office in Tampere because they are supported by the job satisfaction inquiry's results from the year 2012 as well as the views of the interviewed unit managers.

4.5.1 Summary

The prerequisites of dedication (significance, enthusiasm, and pride) and hence the prerequisites of work engagement among the consultants in the case company can be divided into 10 themes. These themes along with their subclasses are (the most often mentioned presented first, C = Consultants, S = Supervisors, B = Both):

- Appreciation (appreciation of one's expertise and work contribution (B), respect for one's expertise (C), publicity, appreciation of the field of operation (C)).
- Social relationships and cooperation (work climate (B), interaction (B), solidarity (B), relationship with supervisor (C), support of work community (C)).
- Innovative activities and thoughts (learning new (B), position at the cutting edge of development (S), support for new ideas (C), developing (C)).
- Success (personal success (B), collective success (B), success of others (C)).
- Content and quantity of tasks (interesting/sensible/demanding/varied tasks (B), helping others (C), optimal workload (S)).
- Consultant's personal characteristics (personality (B)).
- Trust (trust in one's expertise (B)).
- Significance of tasks (company's operational environment (B), influencing things concretely (C), helping others (C), perceiving the entirety (C)).
- Challenging work (learning new (C), responsibility (C)).
- Employer (image and courses of action of the company (S)).

The supervisor's actions that evoke dedication (significance, enthusiasm, and pride) among the consultants can be condensed into 10 themes. These themes together with their subclasses are (most often mentioned presented first, C = Consultants, S = Supervisors, B = Both):

- Work support (helping and involvement (B), encouragement (B)).
- Appreciation (appreciation of subordinate's expertise and work contribution (B), appreciation of a subordinate as a person (S), advancement of unit's appreciation (C), public announcements (S)).
- Genuine interest and caring (giving attention (B), inquiries after subordinate's doings (B), concern with subordinate's coping at work (C), understanding (C)).
- Trust (trust in subordinate's expertise (B), confidentiality of supervisor-subordinate relationship (C)).
- Innovative activities and thoughts (development of activities (B)).
- Own example (transmission of positive feelings (B)).
- Content of tasks (assignment of interesting and sensible tasks (B)).
- Challenging work (assignment of demanding tasks (S), classification of roles (S)).
- Social relationships and cooperation (construction of solidarity and team spirit (S), organization of activities of sustaining work ability (TYKY-activities, the abbreviation for "työkykyä ylläpitävä toiminta" in Finnish) (S), improvement of internal communication (S)).
- Significance of tasks (emphasis of company's operational environment (S)).

As challenging work was considered to be one prerequisite of dedication by the interviewees, and because the level of challenges may need to be decreased instead of being increased (which normally does not apply to other components of dedication), the sources of challenges along with the resources and supervisor's actions that balance the challenges are presented here separately. These challenges include the following six themes and their subclasses (C = Consultants, S = Supervisors, B = Both):

- Work management (project management (B), irregularity of workload (B)).
- Challenging tasks (demanding projects (B), changes in the field of operation (C)).
- Competition in the field of operation (tight competition for projects (B)).
- Social relationships and cooperation (cooperation with different parties (B)).
- Consultant's personal expertise (fast growth of responsibility (C), lack of professional skills (B)).
- Consultant's personal characteristics (personality (S)).

The challenges balancing resources and supervisor's actions can be divided into the following seven themes and their subclasses (C = Consultants, S = Supervisors, B = Both):

- Supervisor's work support (helping and involvement (B), evening out workload (B), formation of project teams (C), encouragement (S)).
- Social relationships and cooperation (construction of solidarity and team spirit by supervisor (B), support of work community (B), improvement of one's expertise through colleagues (C)).
- Consultant's personal characteristics (personality (B)).
- Supervisor's genuine interest and caring (concern with subordinate's coping at work (C), flexibility (C)).
- Improvement of consultant's expertise by supervisor (providing training (S), giving responsibility (S)).
- Classification of roles and tasks by supervisor (allocation of roles and tasks (S), change of too demanding or undemanding roles and tasks (S)).
- Content of tasks (assignment of interesting and sensible tasks (S), variety of tasks (S), routine-natured work (S)).

All of the interviewed consultants and unit managers considered it to be important that work feels significant, that it is challenging enough, and that it makes one experience pride. Enthusiasm was perceived as important by three of the five interviewed consultants and by all five unit managers. Altogether the interviewees associated the components of dedication with work motivation, commitment, energy level, self-esteem, self-confidence, personal development, a group's activity, an ability to cope with work-related hurry, and a will to do one's work well.

In relation to the changes in experiencing significance, enthusiasm, and pride as well as the changes in the level of work-related challenges during the consultants' careers, the experiences of the consultants varied more. Three consultants stated to be more enthusiastic, three to experience more pride, and four to have more challenges at present than during the earlier stages of their careers, whereas for two consultants the level of experienced enthusiasm, for two the level of experienced pride, and for one the level of challenges has remained quite stable in general throughout the career. Significance was the only component of dedication which all of the consultants estimated to experience more at present than before.

4.5.2 Dialogue between previous research and the present study

The findings of this study are mainly in line with previous work engagement research. Most of the job resources that have been found to enhance work engagement in previous studies were referred to also in this study. For example, matters related to appreciation, such as performance feedback and rewards, were mentioned often in the interviewees' answers both in relation to the prerequisites of dedication and in relation to the dedication enhancing actions of the supervisors. Other job resources which were found to foster work engagement in both previous studies and the present study included (the corresponding themes from this study are given in brackets): social support from a supervisor and/or colleagues (social relationships and cooperation, work support, genuine interest and caring), opportunities for learning and self-development (innovative activities and thoughts, content of tasks, challenging work, improvement of consultant's expertise), supervisory coaching (supervisor's work support), organizational training (improvement of consultant's expertise), communicative/cooperative/innovative work climate (social relationships and cooperation, construction of team spirit, innovative activities and thoughts), positive contacts with colleagues and clients (social relationships and cooperation), access to sufficient information (supervisor's work support), and results of the work (success).

In addition to above-mentioned job resources, participation in decision making, job control and autonomy, entrepreneurship, access to sufficient technology, psychological safety, fit of personal and organizational values, and recovery from work were referred to in this study. Participation in decision making as well as job control and autonomy are included in the theme *trust*; when consultants are trusted, they get more responsibility, which further leads to having more control over their jobs and more freedom to make decisions. Entrepreneurship can also be included in the theme *trust*: some consultants considered themselves entrepreneurs within the company due to the level of freedom they have in their positions.

Access to sufficient technology is connected to the theme *innovative activities and thoughts* because the supervisors are ready to procure new software or equipment for their units if needed. Psychological safety is included in *supervisor's work support*: the case company's consultants are less likely to experience negative emotions associated with failure since their supervisors support them after mistakes they occasionally make. The fit of personal and organizational values relates to the theme *employer* as the consultants are unlikely to be proud

of their company's courses of action if these courses of action are not in line with their own values. Finally, recovery from work can be connected to activities of sustaining work ability (*social relationships and cooperation*) because these TYKY-activities help employees to detach themselves psychologically from work and thus increase their energy levels. Even though recovery from work was not directly mentioned as a prerequisite of dedication in the interviews, it was stated that without recovery one cannot sleep so well and begins to feel tense in the course of time. This leads to a difficulty to perceive demands as challenges, which has a decreasing effect on the level of experienced dedication.

Advancement opportunities, New Ways of Working (NWW), and commitment were the only job resources that have been connected to work engagement in previous research but which were not included in the interviews of this study as prerequisites of dedication or in relation to the supervisors' dedication enhancing actions. One reason why advancement opportunities were not mentioned might be the fact that all of the interviewed consultants have already taken some steps forward in their career paths and hence do not necessarily need more responsibility or freedom. On the other hand, advancement opportunities may just not be important to the interviewees in terms of dedication or they could be more related to other components of work engagement. Similarly, for the interviewed consultants the advantages of NWW may not outweigh their disadvantages in order to be important in relation to the components of dedication or then NWW is more related to vigor or absorption. When it comes to commitment, the interviewees considered it to be a consequence of significance and not as its prerequisite.

Significance of tasks was the only theme which was found to be a prerequisite of dedication in this study but which was not referred to in previous work engagement studies. One reason why this theme is not included in previous research as a separate job resource might be that it is already included in the second statement of the UWES (Appendix 1): "I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose". Moreover, it is possible to connect significance of tasks to the job resource *results of the work* because the outcomes of the tasks often determine if the tasks are experienced as meaningful or significant.

In addition to several job resources, the role of personal resources in relation to experiencing dedication came up in the interviews. Similarly as previous studies have found that communicating positive attitudes and feelings from one person to another can lead to the

crossover of work engagement, the supervisor's own example in terms of communicating enthusiasm to his or her subordinates was brought out as one dedication fostering action in this study. According to Spreitzer et al. (2010, 139), supervisors should emulate what they expect from their subordinates because if leaders lack vigor, dedication, or absorption in leading their followers, it is likely that followers also take a more lackadaisical approach to doing their own work.

In addition to communicating work engagement to others, the consultants' personalities were found to affect the degree to which they experience dedication (enthusiasm and pride). Personality has also an effect on a consultant's tendency to search for challenges or avoid them as well as on how a consultant copes with these challenges: those consultants who experienced themselves as conscientious and persevering stated that their traits helped them to tackle challenges at work, whereas being able to rise to challenges was further mentioned to lead to stronger self-esteem and self-confidence. The study of Bakker et al. (2012a, 561) provides support for this statement because according to it, individuals high in conscientiousness translate their work engagement in increased job performance. Furthermore, according to Salanova et al. (2010, 123), employees with strong efficacy beliefs think that they have the capability to control their environment effectively and thus are more probable to perceive job demands challenging and job resources abundant. Consequently, conscientious individuals with strong efficacy beliefs are likely to find themselves in a gain cycle of work engagement.

Apart from conscientiousness, perseverance (or resilience), self-esteem, and self-confidence (or self-efficacy), extraversion and emotional stability as well as optimism and hope have been related to work engagement in previous studies. On the strength of one semi-structured interview per interviewee, it is practically impossible to take a stand on if the interviewees are extroverts and emotionally stable or not. That should be examined separately in another study. When it comes to optimism and hope, they were not mentioned directly in the interview data of this study. However, the degree to which the consultants experience them may have something to do with their personalities as in the case of enthusiasm and pride: some individuals tend to be more optimistic and hopeful about the future than some others. Furthermore, optimism and hope may mediate the relationship between certain job resources and dedication also among the case company's consultants because, for example, past personal success – one prerequisite of dedication – potentially makes one believe in

forthcoming successes. Hence, one is more optimistic and hopeful about the future, which leads to enhanced dedication.

4.5.3 What can be done better?

Fostering work engagement optimally through dedication requires minimizing the factors that diminish it. According to the findings of the present study, the affairs that diminish the experience of dedication (significance, enthusiasm, and pride) among the case company's consultants can be divided into nine themes. These themes together with their subclasses are (most often mentioned presented first, C = Consultants, S = Supervisors, B = Both):

- Lack of appreciation (low level of appreciation of one's expertise or work contribution (B), low level of appreciation towards a subordinate as an employee (S), low level of publicity of one's own projects (C)).
- Challenges in work management (scarcity of resources (C), irregularity of workload (B)).
- Problems in social relationships or in cooperation (interaction problems with colleagues or clients (B), supervisor's personal ranking order (C), supervisor's management style (C), lack of team spirit (C)).
- Poor success (personal or team's failures (B), poor success of one's unit or company (S)).
- Insignificance of tasks (futile work (B)).
- Lack of trust (low level of trust in one's expertise (B)).
- Wrong challenge level in one's projects (less interesting or sensible projects (B)).
- Consultant's personal characteristics (personality (C)).
- Lack of support for innovative activities and thoughts (resistance to change (C), rejection of personal training (C)).

Could the supervisors then do something even better in addition to their present actions in order to promote dedication among their subordinates? When the interviewees were asked this question, they mentioned the following matters in their responses (C = Consultants, S = Supervisors, B = Both):

- Content of tasks; the supervisors should
 - procure more projects in which subordinates are interested (S);
 - assign tasks according to subordinates' expertise more often (C).

- Work support and helping; the supervisors should
 - influence the subordinates' workload more (C);
 - forward more matters relevant to their subordinates' work (C);
 - lower the threshold of asking for help (S).
- Genuine interest and caring; the supervisors should
 - listen more and give more attention to their subordinates in spite of their own hurry (C);
 - highlight their own schedules less and have more consideration for others' schedules (C).
- Communication and cooperation; the supervisors should
 - have more communication and open conversations with their subordinates (S);
 - promote internal flow of information in their units (S);
 - construct more solidarity and openness between different groups in their units (C);
 - take a better care that all subordinates carry their responsibilities (C).
- Feedback; the supervisors should
 - give more positive and constructive feedback (B);
 - learn how to give constructive feedback (without devastating the subject of criticism) (S);
 - encourage subordinates to give more feedback to their colleagues and supervisor (S).
- Appreciation and rewarding; the supervisors should
 - attract more publicity to the unit's projects (C);
 - make the subordinates' successes public more often (S);
 - give more small rewards (S).
- Development and improvement of expertise; the supervisors should
 - have more short career development conversations with subordinates (S);
 - provide more training (e.g., related to project management) to subordinates (B);
 - tell financial facts about consulting business to every new employee (C);
 - organize more collective brainstorming (B);
 - remodel operations models, behavioral models, working methods and tools (S).

Even though supervisors may have a considerable impact on their subordinates' work engagement, there are some things they do not have much control over. According to their own words, the case company's unit managers are not able to influence schedules and resources (budget) a lot because they are determined by the competition in the field of operation. Furthermore, the lack of time and tight budget, which are due to tight competition and tight schedules, make it challenging for the unit managers to organize additional brainstorming or meetings in order to develop the unit's activities. When it comes to the content of work, every project cannot be chosen by the unit because of the above-mentioned competitive situation. Hence, all the projects that are won in a competitive bidding or given to the unit through some other way are taken, in consequence of which some projects are more interesting than others for the consultants. The unit managers are also aware that it is hard to become enthusiastic if the workload is too big or too small. However, uneven workload is one of the features of consultants' work that cannot be totally eliminated. It is something that consultants just have to learn to live with.

5 DISCUSSION

The final chapter of the study includes the conclusions from the study's findings, the contributions of the study, and some suggestions for future research. Furthermore, the way the study was performed will be evaluated and the study's limitations discussed. The chapter ends with suggestions for further measures for the case company.

5.1 Conclusions

The present study provides detailed information on (1) the prerequisites of work engagement among the employees of a consultancy company called Ramboll Finland Ltd. as well as on (2) the work engagement enhancing actions of the company's supervisors. In this study, dedication (components significance, enthusiasm, pride, and challenge) was presumed to be the main component of work engagement. According to the findings, the prerequisites of dedication as well as the dedication enhancing actions of the supervisors consist of 10 different themes, or groups of job and personal resources. Moreover, the challenges the consultants face in their work are divided altogether into 6 themes and the challenges balancing resources and supervisor's actions into 7 themes. All of these themes are summarized in Chapter 4.5 *Research results*.

The interviewed consultants and supervisors largely agree on what are the prerequisites of significance, enthusiasm, and pride in the case company as well as through which actions the supervisors foster dedication among their subordinates. The same concerns also the challenges the consultants face in their work and the affairs that diminish the experience of dedication among them. However, some variation existed inside the themes and, additionally, some themes were mentioned only either by the consultants or by the supervisors. It suggests that the supervisors are not completely aware of their subordinates needs in terms of work engagement. This is highlighted in those answers which pertain to the challenges balancing actions of the supervisors and especially in those comments that relate to the matters the supervisors could do even better in order to promote dedication in their units. Hence, as suggested by the interviewees, the supervisors could try to communicate more with their subordinates to get to know them better. This would enable them to answer the divergent needs of their subordinates even better and thus to increase the level of their performance

through an enhanced level of work engagement. Moreover, the supervisors could also communicate more with each other because some of them mentioned in the interviews that they were not highly aware of each other's actions. Through having regular conversations with other supervisors one could be able to learn new practical, dedication enhancing leadership skills.

Challenges and job resources seem to be in good balance in the case company. The level of challenges (or demands) among the consultants can be presumed to be relatively high because the interviewees evaluated their work as challenging and brought out several kinds of challenges they need to face in their work. However, the consultants also mentioned that their jobs are not too challenging on average, which suggests that they have an access to an adequate amount of job resources. The wide range of challenges balancing actions of the supervisors which were brought out in the interviews supports this conclusion.

When it comes to the differences between single job demands, it is important that supervisors try to recognize those job demands that are disabling rather than enabling (e.g., role ambiguity) and thereafter buffer employees from these job demands (e.g., defining roles and responsibilities clearly) (Spreitzer et al., 2010, 140). In the case of Ramboll, irregularity of workload and interaction with certain parties, among others, might be disabling job demands at least for some consultants because they were mentioned in the interviews as challenges and also as dedication-diminishing factors. Thus, recognizing these factors and buffering subordinates from them in the best way possible is one way to have a more dedicated workforce. Furthermore, it is equally important for Ramboll's supervisors to continue providing their subordinates with a lot of (enabling) challenges as well as giving them an access to enough job resources of an adequate quality to meet these challenges. By acting in such a way, it is possible to keep the employees dedicated and engaged in their work also in the future.

The affairs that diminish the experience of dedication (significance, enthusiasm, and pride) among the case company's consultants are for the most part the opposites of the prerequisites of dedication (e.g., lack of appreciation and trust, problems in social relationships, insignificance of tasks, poor success). This indicates that the degree of feeling appreciated and trusted, for example, can lead either to a higher level or to a lower level of dedication. Hence, it can be concluded that the degree to which the prerequisites of dedication exist in the case

company determines the degree to which dedication and further work engagement is experienced among the company's consultants.

The desired improvements in the supervisors' actions are included for the most part in the dedication enhancing actions of the supervisors. One reason for this might be that none of the supervisors has all of the dedication enhancing actions in his or her repertoire. Therefore, single supervisors could potentially improve their leadership style by adding certain actions to their repertoire in order to make their subordinates increasingly dedicated and engaged. If a supervisor is not completely lacking in some of the dedication enhancing actions mentioned in this study, it is worth considering if these actions are balanced in the most optimal way in his or her leadership style. For example, a supervisor might be concentrating on rewarding his or her subordinates more materially than giving them feedback, when some subordinates would actually prefer more personal feedback and less material rewarding. Thus, the supervisors should know their subordinates personally in order to enhance work engagement among all of them because, according to Spreitzer et al. (2010, 141), what engages one person might disengage others.

Although supervisors are able to influence the level of their subordinates' work engagement in many ways, it should also be recognized that limited resources (time, money), which are caused by a tight competition for projects, set a framework for the case company's operations in terms of what is possible and what is not. Hence, the supervisors have to contemplate what kind of training or collective brainstorming would benefit both the consultants and the unit most, both in financial terms and in relation to work engagement. They also need to consider when and how often each training and brainstorming can be put into action. Because changes in the competitive situation lead to irregular workload, sometimes the workload is so heavy that there is no time for additional developmental activities. However, it can be risky to hire new employees during these moments in order to even out the workload as after passing this peak there might not be enough work for everybody anymore. And if the unit is struggling to provide work for all of its employees, the supervisors cannot afford to be selective in relation to the projects the unit accepts, in which case some projects are not the most interesting and challenging ones for the consultants. Consequently, fostering work engagement while keeping the unit profitable requires constant balancing from the supervisors.

In addition to supervisors, employees themselves are able to affect the degree to which they experience dedication and work engagement. The research data revealed that the case company's consultants have good possibilities to craft their jobs: for example, they can try to increase their job demands by searching new clients and procuring new kinds of projects if they feel that their tasks are not challenging enough. Similarly, if sometimes they work to their limits time-wise or in terms of their expertise, they can increase their job resources by asking for help from their supervisor or colleagues. Another possibility in this case is to ask for more routine-natured work, whereupon the level of job demands decreases. In order to avoid the possible negative sides of job crafting, the supervisors' role is to make their subordinates understand that job crafting is acceptable as long as it aligns with organizational goals (Berg et al., 2008, 7).

Some consultants in the case company seize these job crafting opportunities, whereas some others concentrate more on talking about them. The supervisors can endeavor to encourage their subordinates either to influence the content of their own jobs or to ask for help when needed but often it boils down to the characteristics of the consultants: some of them have a higher tendency and some others a lower tendency to alter the current situation if they are not satisfied with it. The supervisors do not have tools to alter these tendencies more than they are able to alter their subordinates' tendencies to experience enthusiasm or pride. Hence, they should not even try to change the personalities of their subordinates (Bakker et al., 2012a, 563) but instead accept them as they are.

The leadership styles of the case company's supervisors have resemblances with both of the leadership styles (transformational and empowering leadership) that have been found to enhance work engagement in previous research. Their actions are consistent with transformational leadership especially in relation to intellectual stimulation: the supervisors are ready to provide their subordinates with individual attention, encourage them to invent new ideas, and try to delegate those tasks to them that match their needs and abilities. The empowering actions of the supervisors include delegating responsibility to the subordinates and encouraging the subordinates to seek out learning opportunities. From these two leadership styles the actions of the case company's supervisors may be more congruent with empowering leadership because, in addition to giving responsibility and freedom to their subordinates and supporting their self-development, the supervisors encourage their subordinates to influence their own job resources such as searching for help when needed.

Hence, they try to teach their subordinates self-leadership skills what is typical of empowering leaders instead of consolidating leader charisma and belief in the leader what is typical of transformational leaders (Tuckey et al., 2012, 17). According to Spreitzer et al. (2010, 141), empowering subordinates to shape and influence their work context, which allows them to craft their jobs, is important in terms of fostering work engagement because individuals have different needs and priorities.

While the supervisors try to foster work engagement, they should take care that no one ends up being “over-engaged” or “over-dedicated”. When a consultant is very enthusiastic about his or her work and constantly searches for new challenges, he or she may end up working longer hours after taking all the time more and more tasks. Two consultants mentioned in the end of their interviews to have experienced the foregoing to the extent that it interfered with their family lives. Avoiding these kinds of situations is important because work-home interference has been found to reduce recovery and further lead to detrimental consequences to the individual as well as to the organization (Bakker & Leiter, 2010, 191). Hence, the supervisors should be at least roughly aware how their subordinates’ professional life and private life are balanced (time-wise) in order to keep the situation in hand and to be able to step in when needed.

5.2 Contributions and suggestions for future research

The present study makes three theoretical contributions. First, this study supports previous work engagement studies in terms of the prerequisites of work engagement. Although the only component of work engagement under research was dedication, the findings were in line with previous work engagement research. Dedication has been found to be closely related with vigor and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010, 17–18; Schaufeli et al., 2006a, 712), which could explain why the findings of this study are similar to other work engagement studies. An alternative explanation can be searched from the truthfulness of the presumption of the present study according to which dedication is the prerequisite of vigor and absorption and thus the main component of work engagement. Bakker and Leiter (2010, 188–189) have already conveyed that absorption may appear to be an outcome of vigor and dedication, in addition to which dedication was mentioned to have a positive influence on one’s energy level in this study. Because vigorous individuals experience typically high levels of energy, vigor could be an outcome of dedication as well. Hence, if vigor and absorption cannot be

experienced without dedication, the prerequisites of dedication would be the fundamental prerequisites of work engagement. This should be studied in more detail in the future.

The second theoretical contribution of this study concerns the overall model of work engagement (Figure 10). According to the model, the prerequisites of work engagement (job and personal resources) predict work engagement, which in turn leads to various personal and organizational outcomes. The relationship between the two groups of resources and work engagement can be mediated by job demands. Furthermore, job crafting enables this process to be a gain cycle.

The present study provides support to the model but also brings out information on how different factors in the model influence each other directly and indirectly. The interviewees stated that conscientiousness (a personal resource) results in an ability to rise to challenges, which in turn was mentioned to lead to stronger self-esteem and self-confidence. In other words, job demands challenge conscientious consultants who eventually manage to tackle these challenges with the help of their trait. This leads to a feeling of success, which boosts their self-esteem and self-confidence as well as the feelings of enthusiasm and pride. Because enthusiasm and pride were stated by the interviewees to influence work motivation and the will to do one's work well, the end result is better job performance. Moreover, success and better job performance are likely to attract more appreciation and trust from one's supervisor and colleagues, which again are prerequisites of significance (in addition to pride and enthusiasm) and lead to even higher work motivation and commitment. When it comes to boosted self-esteem and self-confidence, they along with enthusiasm move consultants to craft their jobs in terms of searching for new challenges and job resources. The foregoing is presented in Figure 34.

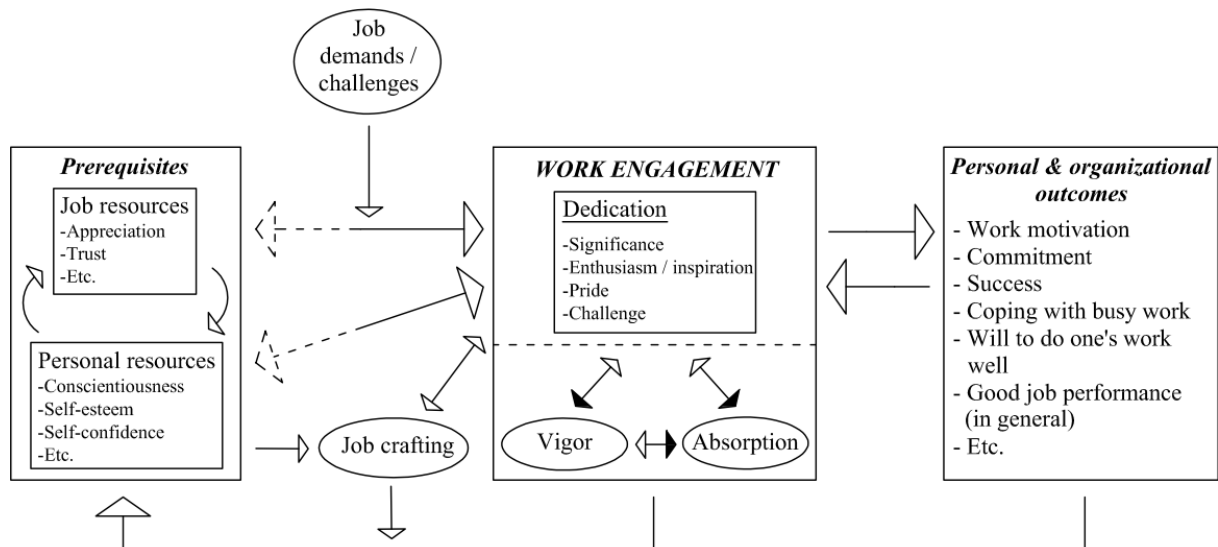


Figure 34 A modified overall model of work engagement (based on Bakker, 2011, 267; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008, 218)

In Figure 34, the influence of work engagement on both job and personal resources is drawn with a dash line since these relationships have been found to exist in previous studies (e.g., Schaufeli et al., 2009, 908–909; Salanova et al., 2011, 255). Furthermore, success is presented as an outcome of dedication instead of as a prerequisite because it occurs after achieving a goal, not before. Although the concepts in this modified model are familiar to previous work engagement research, the relationships between them are more complex than what they were in the original model. Hence, this would be another topic for future work engagement research to continue looking into.

The third theoretical contribution relates to studying motivational processes of the job demands-resources (JD-R) model. According to Hakanen and Roodt (2010, 92), often the job resources included in the studies that have used the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) to explore motivational processes of JD-R model, have been chosen on the basis of prior qualitative interviews in order to reach an understanding of the most salient resources in the specific occupational context. Thus, the results of this study enable conducting a more elaborate study of motivational processes in the case company's occupational context.

The main practical contribution of the present study is that it provides the case company with specific information with the help of which the company is able to foster work engagement among its consultants. By appreciating their subordinates, being genuinely interested in them, trusting them, supporting them, giving them challenging tasks they are interested in, and

showing them a positive and an inspiring example, the supervisors are on the right track to have dedicated and engaged employees. The findings of this study can also be applied by other organizations in various lines of business (consultancy firms in particular) because they were supported by previous work engagement research. However, these organizations should take account of the fact that the prerequisites of work engagement in their own organizations might differ somewhat from the ones of the case company: although some job resources strengthen work engagement irrespective of the organization or the type of occupation, every occupation may have its own unique job resources, in addition to which they can vary with different times and situations. (Hakanen & Perhoniemi, 2008b, 6, 46; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 323.) Therefore, it is advisable that other organizations conduct a study of their own in order to be completely sure, which are the most salient prerequisites of dedication in their own specific work climate.

5.3 Evaluation and limitations of the study

According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009), inner consistency, which becomes concrete in argumentation, is a significant criterion for a good qualitative study. One important part of a good argumentation lies in the usage of references; how and what kinds of references are used. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 127.) The literature used in this study is extensive: it includes altogether around 170 references, from which the most deal with either work engagement or other concepts to which work engagement is closely related. This diverse source material enabled presenting work engagement from various perspectives and describing its relationships with numerous related concepts. What adds to the reliability of the used literature is that it included both longitudinal and cross-sectional work engagement studies conducted among different occupational groups in various countries. Moreover, the literature is valid because it encompasses the most relevant theories and concepts related to work engagement as well as studies throughout the existence of the concept work engagement. The results of the present study substantiate the quality of the references by being mainly in line with their findings. When it comes to the question how the references were used, the purpose was to validate the decisions and arguments made in this study with the help of the references. In this connection, the credibility as well as the reliability and validity of this study lie in the hands of the reader.

Minimizing mistakes in the research data is another criterion for a successful study made from a fact point of view. In addition, questions concerning generalization are essentially important in terms of reliability and utility of the study. (Koskinen et al., 2005, 72–73.) In order to minimize mistakes in the research data, the interviews were transcribed word by word. This enabled extracting all essential information from the data in terms of the objectives of the study and thus performing a careful and detailed data analysis. When it comes to generalization, the findings of this study cannot be generalized across other organizations or even across other consultancy companies similar to the case company because different organizations, occupations, and work roles may have their own unique prerequisites for experiencing work engagement. It is also noteworthy that the findings are comprised of answers of single interviewees whose experiences differ from each other. In other words, the consultants want different things from their jobs, and the supervisors are not acting in the same way compared to one another.

According to Yin (2003), researcher's chain of reasoning should be visible for an external observer to follow because it improves the reliability of a study (Koskinen et al., 2005, 159). Therefore, the whole research process of the present study has been illustrated step by step in this research report in order to allow duplication. Additionally, all the decisions and conclusions have been endeavored to validate accurately, in consequence of which the reader should be able to follow the path from the study's objectives and research questions all the way to the conclusions. The validity of this study is supported by a fact that the research results answered to the research questions and thus the objectives of this study were achieved.

Observation could have enriched the research data because, according to Grönfors (2001), it enables a researcher to gather more diversified information on the topic of his or her study. Moreover, observation may help the researcher to see various issues in their "real" relations as well as it can reveal inconsistencies between norms related to a certain issue and real behavior related to these norms. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 81.) In this study, observation might have given a different view to the scrutiny of the research data since by way of observation it could have been possible to understand in a different way how the consultants and the supervisors experience the interaction between each other. However, it was not used as a data collection method because of the following reasons. First, the consultants and the supervisors were interviewed in private, in which case information on the research topic was received from both parties of interaction. Accordingly, observing interaction between the unit managers and

their subordinates would presumably have not provided more vital information for answering the research questions because this study aimed to find out how consultants experience the actions of their supervisors and not how the researcher as an observer thinks they experience them. Second, as I was not an employee of the case company and because following the supervisors throughout their day would have disturbed their work, observation did not come in question. Third, observation is a reasonable data collection method if there is very little or no information at all available on the phenomenon under research (Grönfors, 2001, see Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 81), which was not the case in this study.

Human rights create the ethical basis of a study that focuses on human beings. Hence, it is a researcher's duty to tell the participants the objectives and methods of the study, and that they have full freedom to contribute or decide not to contribute to the study. Moreover, all participants must remain nameless unless they have given their permission to reveal their identities: the data should be organized in a way that anonymity is guaranteed. (Reynolds, 1987, see Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 131.) These ethical rules were adhered to in this study: The interviewees decided themselves to participate in the study and the purpose of the study was explained to them before the interviews. In order to guarantee anonymity to the interviewees, their names are not mentioned in this research report. Moreover, their comments are written without identifiers so that it would not be possible to find out what a certain interviewee has said and thus to use it against him or her.

Questions about sensitive topics may cause people to “sugar-coat” their answers (Alasuutari, 2011, 142). Therefore, it has to be taken into consideration that the consultants may have not felt completely comfortable while answering questions in relation to the downsides of their supervisors' actions. This applies also to the answers of the supervisors. Consequently, this has to be regarded as a potential source of error in the results of the study. The problem could be solved, for example, by interviewing the same people more than once in order to create trust between the interviewer and the interviewees (Alasuutari, 2011, 97, 142–143). However, this was not reasonable in the present study because it was possible to cover all the research questions in the course of one interview. During the interviews there was also enough time for the interviewees to contemplate the questions and give their answers at leisure.

Finally, this study has certain limitations that should be noticed. As mentioned above, differences among organizations, occupations, roles, and individuals restrict the

generalizability of the study's findings. Furthermore, the interviewee sample has an effect on the generalizability of the findings as well: even though the ages of the interviewed consultants varied between 30 and 52 years, and both women and men were represented in the sample (as in the case of the supervisors), the consultants were already planning, group, and/or project managers. Hence, the results should not be directly generalized to concern employees in the lower hierarchy levels, such as summer trainees, technical assistants, and planners. Another limitation is that three of the five interviewed unit managers chose one of their own subordinates to be interviewed. Similarly as Bakker and Xanthopoulou (2013, 2774) conveyed in their study among female school principals and teachers, although the unit managers were asked to choose randomly a subordinate with whom they interacted regularly, the possibility that they asked a subordinate they liked to participate in the study cannot be ruled out. Therefore, mutual liking may also have an effect on the findings of this study.

5.4 Further measures

Due to the present study, the case company is now aware of the factors conducive to dedication among its consultants. In order to capitalize on the study's findings, the company should disseminate them to all of its supervisors in Finland so that they are able to take them into account in their actions. Long-lasting effects are more probable if the company's management acknowledges work engagement as a core value and thus shows commitment to advancement of work engagement (Bakker et al., 2011a, 20–21).

The company could also conduct similar studies to this one among those employee groups (e.g., new employees, summer trainees, graduates, technical assistants, planners) that were not included in this study and widen the sample to other offices as well as to other countries. After gathering more information on the prerequisites of work engagement, it would be possible to operationalize these prerequisites in items and scales and incorporate them in a tailor-made questionnaire, as Bakker and Demerouti (2007) suggest. This questionnaire (filled out by all employees) would enable a quantitative analysis by way of which differences (strengths and weaknesses) between departments and job positions can be noticed and tailor-made interventions planned and implemented in order to reduce job demands and increase the most important job resources. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 323–324.) When these interventions are put into practice, the effects of the supervisors' actions on their subordinates' work engagement should be measured regularly and reliably, not forgetting to

disseminate the progress reports to every supervisor because these reports provide them with essential performance feedback necessary in their efforts to further enhance work engagement in their units. (Leiter & Maslach, 2010, 178.)

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)

The following 17 statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, cross the '0' (zero) in the space after the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by crossing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

	Almost never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often	Always
0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Never	A few times a year or less	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

1. _____ At my work, I feel bursting with energy* (VI1)
2. _____ I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose (DE1)
3. _____ Time flies when I'm working (AB1)
4. _____ At my job, I feel strong and vigorous (VI2)*
5. _____ I am enthusiastic about my job (DE2)*
6. _____ When I am working, I forget everything else around me (AB2)
7. _____ My job inspires me (DE3)*
8. _____ When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work (VI3)*
9. _____ I feel happy when I am working intensely (AB3)*
10. _____ I am proud on the work that I do (DE4)*
11. _____ I am immersed in my work (AB4)*
12. _____ I can continue working for very long periods at a time (VI4)
13. _____ To me, my job is challenging (DE5)
14. _____ I get carried away when I'm working (AB5)*
15. _____ At my job, I am very resilient, mentally (VI5)
16. _____ It is difficult to detach myself from my job (AB6)
17. _____ At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well (VI6)

* Shortened version (UWES-9); VI= vigor; DE = dedication; AB = absorption

Reference: Schaufeli & Bakker (2003, 48)

APPENDIX 2: Interview questions for consultants

1. Background information

- What is your position/title in the company? What are your tasks/responsibilities?
- How long have you been working in the company?
- What kind of educational background do you have?
- How old are you?

2. Significance

- Do you feel that your work has a purpose? / Do you consider your work to be significant? How significant? Is it important to you? Why?
- Has the level of experienced significance changed during your career? How?
- Which factors or matters make or have made you experience significance? Examples?
- What does your supervisor do or what has he/she done in order to make you experience significance? Examples?
- Which factors or matters make or have made you experience less significance? Examples?
- What does your supervisor (not) do or what has he/she done to make you experience less significance? Examples?
- What else could your supervisor do in order to make you / your work feel more significant?

3. Enthusiasm / inspiration

- Does your work make you enthusiastic? How enthusiastic? Does your work inspire you? How much? Is it important to you? Why?
- Has the level of experienced enthusiasm/inspiration changed during your career? How?
- Which factors or matters make or have made you experience enthusiasm/inspiration? Examples?
- What does your supervisor do or what has he/she done in order to make you experience enthusiasm/inspiration? Examples?
- Which factors or matters make or have made you experience less enthusiasm/inspiration? Examples?

- What does your supervisor (not) do or what has he/she done to make you experience less enthusiasm/inspiration? Examples?
- What else could your supervisor do in order to make you experience more enthusiasm/inspiration?

4. Pride

- Does your work make you proud? How proud? Is it important to you? Why?
- Has the level of experienced pride changed during your career? How?
- Which factors or matters make or have made you experience pride? Examples?
- What does your supervisor do or what has he/she done in order to make you experience pride? Examples?
- Which factors or matters make or have made you experience less pride? Examples?
- What does your supervisor (not) do or what has he/she done to make you experience less pride? Examples?
- What else could your supervisor do in order to make you experience more pride?

5. Challenge

- Do you consider your work to be challenging? How challenging? Is it important to you? Why? How challenging would you want your work to be?
- Has the level/amount of challenges you face in your work changed during your career? How?
- Which factors or matters make or have made your work challenging or less challenging? What is the role of your supervisor in this respect (his/her effect on these challenges)? Examples?
- Does the current level/amount of challenges you face in your work correspond to the level of those (e.g., physical, psychological, social, organizational) resources you have access to? Why / why not? What are these resources? What is the role of your supervisor in this respect (his/her effect on these resources)? Examples?
- What else could your supervisor do in terms of the challenges, resources, or their balance?

6. Ending

- Is there something you would like to add? Did I forget to ask something essential?

APPENDIX 3: Interview questions for unit managers

1. Background information

- What is your position/title in the company? What are your tasks/responsibilities?
- How long have you been working in the company? How long in the current position?
- How many subordinates do you have? Which kinds of tasks do they carry out?
- What kind of educational background do you have?
- How old are you?

2. Significance

- In your opinion, do your subordinates feel that their work has a purpose? / Do they consider their work to be significant? How significant? Is it important? Why?
- In your opinion, which factors or matters make your subordinates experience significance? Examples?
- What do you do or what have you done in order to make your subordinates experience significance? Examples?
- In your opinion, which factors or matters make your subordinates experience less significance? Examples?
- What do you (not) do or what have you done to make your subordinates experience less significance? Examples?
- What else could you do in order that the work of your subordinates would feel more significant for them?

3. Enthusiasm / inspiration

- In your opinion, does the work of your subordinates make them enthusiastic? How enthusiastic? Does their work inspire them? How much? Is it important? Why?
- In your opinion, which factors or matters make your subordinates experience enthusiasm/inspiration? Examples?
- What do you do or what have you done in order to make your subordinates experience enthusiasm/inspiration? Examples?
- In your opinion, which factors or matters make your subordinates experience less enthusiasm/inspiration? Examples?
- What do you (not) do or what have you done to make your subordinates experience less enthusiasm/inspiration? Examples?

- What else could you do in order that your subordinates would experience more enthusiasm/inspiration?

4. Pride

- In your opinion, does the work of your subordinates make them proud? How proud? Is it important? Why?
- In your opinion, which factors or matters make your subordinates experience pride? Examples?
- What do you do or what have you done in order to make your subordinates experience pride? Examples?
- In your opinion, which factors or matters make your subordinates experience less pride? Examples?
- What do you (not) do or what have you done to make your subordinates experience less pride? Examples?
- What else could you do in order that your subordinates would experience more pride?

5. Challenge

- In your opinion, do your subordinates consider their work to be challenging? How challenging? Is it important? Why? How challenging should it be? Is the level optimal?
- In your opinion, which factors or matters make or have made the work of your subordinates challenging or less challenging? What is your role in this respect (your effect on these challenges)? Examples?
- Does the current level/amount of challenges your subordinates face in their work correspond to the level of those (e.g., physical, psychological, social, organizational) resources your subordinates have access to? Why / why not? What are these resources? What is your role in this respect (your effect on these resources)? Examples?
- What else could you do in terms of the challenges, resources, or their balance?

6. Ending

- Is there something you would like to add? Did I forget to ask something essential?