

Finding meaningfulness in customer service: job crafting
practices of restaurant workers
Implications for employee well-being at Fazer Food Services

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to contribute to the growing research of meaningful work and job crafting. These topics have attracted interest both in the academia and in the wider public during the last decades. This is due to a growing research in positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship and because increasingly many people want to experience their work as meaningful. My aim is to understand the sources of meaningful work and how do employees actively craft their work to become more meaningful. The target group is customer service employees working at Fazer Food Services staff restaurants. It is an interesting study target as there is no research of this profession and this level of employees related to meaningful work. The perspective of this study is occupational well-being and this study aims to understand how meaningful work and job crafting are connected to employee well-being.

This is a qualitative and constructionist study. The data were collected conducting eight individual semi-structured interviews with customer service personnel in different Fazer staff restaurants mostly in the Helsinki capital region. The method used was Appreciative Inquiry, where the aim is to concentrate on what people value in their work. The objective is to understand the employees' lived experiences at the workplace. Based on the interview data I constructed three narratives: Tanja the Team Worker, Pia the Pioneer, and Sanna the Sales Expert.

This study shows that the fundamental psychological needs for agency (including autonomy, responsibility, competence, and positive self-image) and relatedness (including connection, social identification, and trust) are in the heart of meaningful work. Different job crafting practices (task, relational and cognitive) are a mediating activity that can increase the experienced meaningfulness in work. Thus crafting one's job to be more meaningful is also a way to enhance employee well-being. The practical implication for management is that incorporating meaningful work and job crafting in the organizational development processes could be very beneficial for the company as well as individual employees. It could be applied in the recruiting process, development discussions, employee surveys, and supervisory training among others. Even though it is important to note that meaning should not be managed from top-down but rather by supporting the individual's own process of meaningfulness creation at work.

Keywords meaningful work, job crafting, employee well-being, narrative analysis, Appreciative Inquiry (AI), Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

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All in all, this Thesis journey has taught me a lot about meaningful work and well-being. My aim is to craft my own work to be as meaningful as possible and I want to share these ideas forward and help as many others to craft their work towards meaningfulness.

Annina Piekkari

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1. Introduction

“You can’t do this for the money. You gotta like what you do. You really need to be interested in this field. You want to do good food for the customers, get them on a good mood and be thanked for that.” (Sanna the Sales Expert.)

This is a quote from one customer service person working at a Fazer Food Services staff restaurant. She considers that in order to do her work one needs to have a genuine interest for the work, and one cannot do it just for the money. Interestingly this is just the opposite what previous research, like Baumeister (1991) tell about less educated employees in similar positions as she. So-called lower rank employees are often considered to have an orientation to ‘work as a job’, as a means towards a financial end, where work has only instrumental value in order to do other more meaningful things in free time. Nevertheless there is not much research on meaningful work of employees in lower level positions in organizations (Rosso et al., 2010). My aim in this Thesis is to answer this void in the literature and try to understand in a deeper level what customer service employees consider meaningful in their work.

Meaningful work is a topic that has attracted interest both in the academia and in the wider public in the last decades. Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) researchers among others have been interested in the study of positive outcomes, processes and attributes of organizations and their members. Meaningful work is one important research topic in this field.

The way people see and understand work has changed in the 21st century. Pantzar and Halava (2010) claim that the future model of work life would not be the pursuit of materialistic well-being like in the fast-growing Asian countries but more like the lifestyle of the Nordic consumer citizen that aspires for a life with a meaning. Baumeister (1991) argues that the protestant work ethics as the fundamental relation to work in Western societies has gradually lost its grip. People don’t see their work as a sacred duty anymore; but it has been replaced by the modern focus for individualistic pursuits, self-hood, and satisfaction of individual’s needs as the central motivation.

Wrzesniewski (2003) also claims that money is losing power as a motivator and that after a certain income level, gaining financial wealth does not seem to increase the level of people’s subjective well-being. Thus people are searching for new ways to find meaning in their lives

and work has become a focal area ”in providing meaning, stability, and a sense of community and identity” in people’s lives (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006, p. 202). So finding meaningfulness in work is a crucial driver for increasingly many individuals and it is a topic that has attracted attention in the wider public in Finland (Helsingin Sanomat, 2014) as well.

The importance of occupational well-being has been emphasized in Finland in recent years and there is a nation-wide initiative called Working life 2020, the goal of which is to make Finnish work life the best in Europe by 2020. It is based on a national working life development strategy and the government platform of the former Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen. The goal of the strategy is to improve employment rate, work-life quality, occupational well-being, and productivity (Working Life 2020.) Silvennoinen (2013) argues that the experience of meaningfulness at work is at the centre of the initiative. Also, the connection between the experience of meaningfulness and well-being has been proposed by many researchers (Baumeister, 1991; Klinger, 1998; Martela, 2010).

Companies have also become interested in meaningful work, because meaningfulness at work has been shown to influence several key outcomes like work motivation (Chalofsky, 2003), engagement (Kahn, 1990, May et al., 2004), individual performance (Grant, 2011; Jelinekin & Ahearne, 2010), and less absence at work (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006), among other things. Thus like Martela and Jarenko (2014) claim, thriving employees are more creative and engaged, and in this way create a higher productivity for the company in the long run. Also, the changes in the economy, like the baby boomer generation retiring, will create challenges for companies and societies that want to succeed. It is a competitive advantage for companies to understand what generates meaningful work and to invest in the well-being of employees in order to attract and keep the best talent.

Neal Chalofsky and Liz Cavallaro (2013) emphasize the relevance of meaningful work for Human Resource Development practitioners. They argue that even though meaningful work is highly subjective for the individual, HRD should be familiar with the concept of meaningful work and facilitate the process of creation of meaning. They can help to increase the fit between the self and the work, and in this way support the individual’s quest for meaning.

An interesting and relatively new concept related to meaningful work is job crafting. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) created the model of job crafting, where employees are seen as active agents who craft their work making it more meaningful for themselves. It differs

from the traditional models of job design, where structural features are created and enforced by the managers. There is a growing interest in this topic because it could give more emphasis on the individual employees influencing their own well-being at work and thus providing a more bottom-up approach (Berg et al., 2013.) Chalofsky and Cavallero (2013) also highlight that HRD should understand the concept of job crafting as a pathway to meaningful work and how it could be accommodated in the organization. The topic of crafting your job to your calling and as a way to increase well-being has gained media coverage in Finland as well (Yle Uutiset, 2014; Taloustaito, 2012).

Fazer is an iconic Finnish family-owned company that is in the business of creating taste sensations. The topic of meaningful work is emphasized at Fazer's website and there are small video clips, where employees tell what makes their work meaningful. When I was starting my Thesis process I got a chance to meet some people at Fazer and I considered that studying meaningful work at Fazer could be very fascinating. For me personally the topic of meaningful work is close to my heart, because I want to do work that I consider meaningful and as I have been following the public discussion this is something that is all the more important for increasingly many people, even though it might not be so easy to fulfil. Even though it is the topic du jour, meaningful work as a concept seemed quite vague in practice and I wanted to dig deeper to understand what it is. We started discussions with Fazer and found that an interesting focus group would be a group of customer service personnel who were participating in a special sales training. These are the people who are working directly with the customers and have an important impact on the success and image of the company. Like mentioned above it was also an intriguing study group for me, because there is a lack of research on of meaningful work among the lower-rank employees and there is a need to understand what the differences are.

1.1. The goal of the study and research questions

My aim in this study is to shed light on the concept of meaningful work. I will focus on understanding it from the viewpoint of the individual employee and use customer service employees working at Fazer Food Services staff restaurants as my study subjects. My research question is two-fold, first trying to understand the sources of meaningful work, and

secondly describing how the employees themselves make their work more meaningful for themselves.

Thus the research questions are as follows:

- 1) What do restaurant employees in customer service consider meaningful in their work?
- 2) How do they actively craft their work to become more meaningful?

This research is presented from the viewpoint of the individual employee and aims to give voice to the average worker whose viewpoint can often be forgotten or is not seen by the management of the company. It can offer implications for management and HR of the company by providing a richer understanding of the employees' perspective of meaningfulness and well-being compared to the yearly employee engagement surveys.

1.2. Main concepts of the research

It is relevant to understand and differentiate the main concepts in the research. Their differences are further explained in later chapters.

Meaning of work refers to what work signifies to a person and to the type of meaning associated with it (Rosso et al., 2010, p. 95).

Meaningful work instead refers to the amount of significance that is related to work, and holding a more positive meaning for the individual (Rosso et al., 2010, p. 95). Meaningful work is created in a dynamic process between the individual, organization and the society as a whole (Martela, 2010, p. 15).

Work is defined here as paid employment, which includes self-employment but excludes housework, school work and voluntary work following the definition by the International Meaning of Working team (1987, p. 2).

Job crafting is defined as “the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work. Thus, job crafting is an action, and those who undertake it are job crafters.” (Wrzevsnievski & Dutton, 2001, p. 179.)

1.3. The structure of the thesis

The structure of this thesis will proceed in the following manner: in this first chapter I present the context and background for this work, why this topic was chosen, and what will this study be like.

Chapter two presents the theoretical frame of my research. I first present research on meaningful work, and aggregate the main findings of different sources of meaningful work. Secondly, I cover research on job crafting as a source of meaningful work. Thirdly, I describe how meaningful work and job crafting relate to employee well-being. Finally, I briefly cover the research on restaurant workers and connect these topics and summarize it.

In chapter three I explain more closely the methodology of my study and how I conducted my research in practice. I also evaluate the success of my study and the limitations.

In chapter four I describe the three narratives I constructed on the basis of my interviews.

In the fifth chapter I analyse the narratives I presented in the previous chapter. I answer to both of my research questions from the basis of my narratives and the earlier research.

In the sixth chapter I conclude my findings, consider implications for management and HR as well as evaluate the success of the research and present some possible future ideas for new research.

2. Meaningful work and restaurant workers

In the first subchapter I cover earlier research on meaningful work, job crafting and how they are connected to employee well-being. In the second subchapter I connect these topics to the studies of restaurant workers.

2.1. Studies of meaningful work

I start my study with a review of earlier research in meaningful work. Firstly, I cover the concepts between meaning and meaningfulness and how meaningful life is connected to meaningful work. Secondly, I explain more thoroughly how meaningful work is studied in organizational research and what are the different sources of meaningful work. Thirdly, I present the job crafting model as a mean towards meaningful work and different job crafting practices in-depth. Finally, I cover research on well-being and connect how meaningful work and job crafting relate to it.

2.1.1. Meaning and meaningfulness in work and in life

Meaningful work literature has a long and rich tradition, but like Rosso, Dekas and Wrzesniewski (2010) present in their literary review of the field, it is very scattered in many disciplines and lacks consistency. Because of the overlap and confusion, it is important to consider the definitions when covering the topic of meaningful work. Defining meaning is a surprisingly challenging task. Martela (2010) explains that at the most basic level meaning is a relation and a way of connecting. And that as human beings we create these meaning systems in order to understand our world and act in it. Meanings are also most often shared between other people, because of our common cultural background.

In the introduction of their quantitative study of predicting meaning in work Schnell et al. (2013) highlight that when talking about meaning and work it is very important to distinguish between “meaning of work” and “meaning in work”. They claim that *meaning of work* should be used when work itself is talked about for example in the context of meaning in

unemployment or the work as a social institution. *Meaning in work*, on the other hand, has an experiential focus and refers to meaning as an individual subjective experience in a given work context.

Another distinction, which is often made, is between meaning and meaningfulness. Rosso et al. (2010) explain meaning as what work signifies to the person and the type of meaning that is attached to it. In the meaning of work literature meaning is often considered to be something positive but like Rosso et al. remind us, even if work has some kind of a meaning it does not mean that it is automatically meaningful. Meaningfulness here refers to the amount of positive significance the person has attached to his work (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). This positive inclination and value of the concept of meaningful and meaningfulness is very typical in the literature and this will also be my approach.

Thus in this research I try to understand what is meaningful, that is, positively significant, in restaurant employees work. Hence I use the concept of meaningful work as my core concept, even though when I review the earlier research I use the terms the writers have used in their original research.

Martela (2010) compiled a thorough review of the meaningful work literature and on the basis of that constructed an integrative model of meaningful work. He underlines the view that meaningful work should be integrally linked to the wider discourse of meaningful life. He emphasizes that meaningful work is just one part of meaningful life and that it is tied together with the basic human need for meaningfulness.

This quest for meaningful life has been a fundamental topic for people in the course of history. One of the most famous researchers in meaningfulness is Doctor Victor Frankl, a neurologist and psychiatrist, who survived the concentration camps in the Second World War and created a meaning-centred psychotherapy called logotherapy. From his personal experiences in the death camps he experienced the difference it could make whether an individual had a strong purpose in life or not. He argues that it is a fundamental need for people to experience meaningfulness in their life and that this is something every individual is responsible for. "Ultimately, man should not ask what the meaning of his life is, but rather must recognize that it is he who is asked. In a word, each man is questioned by life; and he can only answer to life by answering for his own life; to life he can only respond by being responsible." (Frankl, 1959, p. 113-114).

Martela (2010) explains that in the field of constructive psychology the topic of meaningful life has gained prominence only in the last twenty years most likely due to the growing focus on psychological well-being and positive human functioning (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Even though there are different approaches to the vast topic of meaningful life, Martela (2010) argue that there are two assumptions, which are shared among researchers in the literature. The first is that meaning is a subjective state and it is constructed by the individual's own sense of meaningfulness. This follows the lines of Frankl (1959) who states that each individual is responsible over his or her own life's meaning. The second assumption that researchers agree on is that finding meaningfulness is a fundamental need that human beings are striving to fulfil. Meaningfulness is also generally defined to be an integral part of psychological well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001), which I discuss more in the later subchapters.

A famous social psychologist Roy Baumeister analyse this need for meaningfulness in his ground-breaking work 'Meanings of Life' (1991). His book, which he wrote over seven years, is based on a wide interdisciplinary literature review and a conceptual structure he has built around the fundamental questions. On the basis of his work he claims that there are four core needs that individuals have to fulfill to experience their life as meaningful. These are the needs for purpose, value, efficacy and self-worth. Usually people have different sources that fulfil these needs in various degrees and those might change in the course of a life. The essential thing would be that people have experiences in their life that contribute to all these four needs satisfied. If a person manages to meet all of these needs, then the person will most likely feel that his or her life has meaning.

Baumeister (1991) devotes one chapter in his book on the meaning of work. He emphasizes that there is no simple answer to the question of work's role in the meaning of life. He argues that the reason people need to work is to fulfil the extrinsic and basic needs of survival and comfort. Work can also be an important way of creating a feeling of efficacy and self-worth for the person. The erosion of religious, moral and traditional certainties created a value gap that has been filled in the modern society with self-identity.

As my research data is in an organizational setting I focus on the meaningful work literature and especially on how it has been studied in the field of organizational research. Nevertheless I think it is very important to understand how meaningful work is connected to meaningful life. Work is one major building block of life but it cannot be considered as a separate entity. It is very much linked to the other areas of life and even more so in today's post-modern

world where work and free time overlap more and more. Next I will cover some of the major perspectives on meaningful work that has been studied in the organizational literature.

2.1.2. Meaningful work in organizational research

Meaningful work has been widely studied in the organizational research from different kinds of viewpoints but it is divided in different silos (Rosso et al., 2010). The research has grown, especially in the last decades, because of the growing interest in positive human functioning in psychology, which has resulted in the increased interest in the psychological aspects of work like meaningfulness (Martela, 2010). This field of study in the organizational literature is called the positive organizational scholarship (POS) and it has gained momentum with the help of other disciplines, particularly positive psychology and appreciative inquiry in organizational development (Cameron et al., 2003.) Most of the research I cover is under this research direction. I want to point out that this is not an exhaustive review of meaningful work literature, but I focus on some of the most common and important themes in this topic that are relevant for this study.

When covering the topic of meaningful work it is convenient to divide the topic in separable dimensions in order to give a clearer picture, due to the vast and fragmented nature of the field. I follow in this the example of Rosso et al. (2010) and Martela (2010), who both did extensive reviews on the meaningful work literatures. Rosso et al. (2010) suggest a division into four sources of meaningfulness, which are the self, others, work context and spiritual life. They also describe seven mechanisms that create meaning, which are authenticity, self-efficacy, self-esteem, purpose, belongingness, transcendence and cultural and interpersonal sensemaking. Martela (2010) proposes instead that meaningfulness-making is a dynamic process where four dimensions interact. The four dimensions are job characteristics, the individual, organization and the wider society. He has built this from Wrzesniewski's idea of meaningfulness as a "dynamic interplay between the individual, the organization, and the work itself" (Wrzesniewski, 2003, p. 297) and added the wider society as a dimension. These two divisions of Rosso et al. and Martela are in many ways parallel to each other and cover the same studies. I focus on the three dimensions both of them cover, which are job characteristics/work context, the individual/self, and others/organization dimensions. It is

important to note that the lines between the categories are not so explicit but it is more comprehensible to divide it in this way.

Job characteristics and work context as a source of meaning

One of the earliest studies that examined the role of meaningful work in organizational research was Hackman and Oldham's (1980) foundational work on motivation. It highlights the influence of work context and job characteristics. The basic idea in their work redesign model is that one can create improved internal motivation through the design of work. Based on empirical research and tests they propose that there are three critical psychological states that create this high internal motivation. Firstly, the person has to know the results of his work. Secondly, he needs to experience some kind of responsibility. Finally, the person needs to experience his or her work as meaningful, which Hackman and Oldham define as something important according to the person's values.

Hackman and Oldham (1980) propose that there are three characteristics that especially influence experienced meaningfulness at work: skill variety (stretching or challenging own abilities), task identity (completion of a task from beginning to end) and task significance (what impact the task has on other people). The emphasis here is on the job tasks and the work context that can influence the experience of work as meaningful. In more recent studies Grant (2008) has also established a connection between job characteristics and meaningfulness with his focus on task significance. In field experiments he found out that after task significance interventions, where the social impact of the work was highlighted for the employees, job performance and job dedication increased. Thus work that is designed to promote a sense of positive impact on others and purpose increases task significance. Task significance again implies greater meaningfulness.

Pratt and Ashforth (2003) also bring forward the influence of the work context in their model of meaningfulness creation in organizations, which they base on earlier research. They consider that the employees should see the work context as purposeful and significant in order to create meaningfulness. There are three different sources they think can create this view, which are the intrinsic qualities of the work itself, the value, or purpose the work is thought to serve or the organizational community of the work. Their approach is centred at the question of identity and there are two questions they distinguish that impact the identity and meaning creation. Firstly, 'what am I doing?' that relates to meaningfulness in work and one's work

role. Secondly, 'where do I belong?' that refers to group membership and meaningfulness at work. I discuss the second question later in the text.

Individual and self as a source of meaning

Other studies emphasize the self and individual as the most important source of meaning. Work orientation is a view that considers individual's own perspective of work as essential. Even though there are as many orientations as there are people, Baumeister (1991) proposes that they can be divided into three distinct categories that are work as a job, a career or a calling. Work as a job means that work is an instrumental activity, and you work merely for the sake of the income that can make other things in life possible that are more important for you. It is a more common orientation in the lower classes. Work as a career means that you are especially interested in advancing your status, and gaining achievement and success. Thus work is means to create, express, and prove oneself. Work as a calling means doing work because of a personal obligation, duty or destiny and may emerge from a sense of responsibility and the will do to do good for the society. It is linked to the idea of self-actualization and from these three orientations the one, which is the most linked to intrinsic motivation. It is important to remember that these are not rigid categories and some people might combine elements of all of them but they are useful prototypes of understanding meaningful work (Baumeister, 1991.)

Wrzesniewski (2003) has also studied widely the calling orientation, where meaningfulness is one essential element. Her perspective on meaning and work is that the most important thing is one's relationship and attitude towards work and not the actual work one does. In one of her studies there was a subsample of twenty-four administrative assistants who were working in the same organization with similar duties, education, tenure, and pay. What was interesting was that this subsample was nearly evenly divided into the three work orientations. Thus each orientation was represented by a third of the administrative assistants. This indicates that even in the same work and in the same organization, the orientation to work can differ. She claims that only for the people who experience their work as calling can the work be a wholly enriching and meaningful activity. This is naturally beneficial for the individual who gets more satisfaction out of his or her work, but also for the organization, as job satisfaction is clearly linked to work performance. Also the workgroups with employees with calling orientation have better outcomes, fewer conflicts, and a healthier group process compared to those with for example more career-oriented employees.

There are also studies that discuss the negative consequences of meaningful work and work as a calling. For example in a qualitative study of zookeepers Bunderson and Thompson (2009) found out that work, which is a personal calling for the zookeepers, can be a double-edged sword. On one hand zookeepers with a calling orientation experienced a broader meaning and significance in their work. On the other hand they felt more like it was their moral duty and they even sacrificed their pay, comfort, and personal time for their work.

Chalofsky (2003) has studied the link between motivation and meaningful work based on his literary review of earlier research. He also emphasizes the role of the individual as a source for meaning. His model of meaningful work is closely connected to intrinsic motivation and focuses on the alignment between individual's competences, values, and purpose. The model is an integrative construct that composes of three elements, which are a sense of self, the work itself and a sense of balance.

Others and the organization as a source of meaning

Other people and the wider organization are also an important source of meaningful work (Rosso et al., 2010). Though one fundamental debate in the literature is whether the meaning is constructed individually from the subjective perceptions of the person or socially influenced by the cultural and social value systems. The sociological tradition proposes the second explanation, where work is considered meaningful when social and cultural systems give value to one's work activities. The organizational view gives primary voice to the individual sensemaking, even though others can be a source meaning for the individual as well. The main focus in the literature is the individual-based perspective, but there is also research that takes into consideration the sociological perspective.

Wrzesniewski, Dutton, and Debebe (2003) share this sociological perspective in their model of interpersonal sensemaking, which is more related to the production of meaning rather than meaningfulness. The model is focused to the sociocultural forces that shape how people experience their work. Wrzesniewski and colleagues (2003) describe this interpersonal sensemaking as a process, where employees take cues from other people at work on how valuable they see their job and their role. They see that these cues are an essential product of a dynamic process where employees make meaning of their selves, their jobs and their roles at work.

Also Baumeister (1991) emphasizes that the human search for meaning is fundamentally a social process and should not be seen as an isolated activity. Martela (2010) too underlines that people need social validation in order to believe in the meaning they have created. He considers the process of meaningfulness making very intertwined with social comparison and social information processing.

Pratt and Ashforth (2003) describe social identification in the work community as essentially related to meaningfulness. When employees find their work groups as valuable and identify themselves strongly with them, it will most likely create positive meaning for employees. Based on his earlier ethnographic research and a review drawn from vast literature Kahn (2007) emphasizes that meaningful interpersonal relationships are a central part of people's experience of their work lives and should not be just in the background, as often happens. He claims that these relationships and constellations determine to great extent employees' attachment to the organization.

Martela and Jarenko (2014) made a summarizing publication of research in intrinsic motivation and well-being at work for the Committee for the Future of the Parliament of Finland. They also propose that seeing the influence of your work on others can be an important driver of meaningfulness. Also, Grant (2011) shares this view strongly. He made experiments with university scholarship fund-raisers and brought a student to tell for the fund-raisers about the difference receiving the scholarship had made on his life and about his gratitude towards the fundraisers. During one month the weekly results, that refers to the calls fund-raisers make, had increased 400 %. Thus the organization can increase meaningfulness of the employees and in the light of this example it is very useful for the organization also.

Engagement is another important organizational topic that has been connected with meaningful work by Kahn (1990), May et al. (2004) and Fairlie (2011). Kahn (1990) defines personal engagement as "the harnessing of organizations member's selves to their work roles; in engagement people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively and emotionally during work performances" (p.694). In his vast ethnographic fieldwork he found out that three psychological conditions – meaningfulness, safety and availability – mediated significant positive relations with engagement. May et al. (2004) built on his research and supported the findings in their quantitative field study in a US Midwestern insurance company; in their results meaningfulness had the strongest relation to engagement of these three conditions.

According to his ethnographic studies in different professions, Kahn (1990) proposes that psychological meaningfulness is influenced by three factors, which are: 1) task characteristics, 2) the fit of role with a preferred self-image, and 3) rewarding interpersonal interactions. May et al.'s (2004) study supported the first two dimensions, even though they refer to task characteristics as job enrichment. Interestingly in their study the positive co-worker relations did not enhance meaningfulness in the case company, which differs from the prior research that usually supports the relation between relationships and meaningfulness.

Fairlie (2013) also found strong correlation between meaningful work characteristics and engagement based on a Meaningful Work Inventory (MWI) survey of over 500 respondents in different professions. He strongly advocates that HRD professionals can and should play a critical role in promoting the topic of meaningful work in organizations. Also May et al. (2004) suggest in the light of their findings that managers need to foster meaningfulness in work in order to improve work engagement and other outcomes like job satisfaction and performance.

Also, Chalofsky and Cavallero (2013) emphasize the role of HRD in creating meaningful work in an introduction review of the topic. They improved Chalofsky's earlier model on meaningful work, which was done in 2003. In the improved version they highlight the importance of the fit between the self and the work. They see that HRD and the organization can increase this "fit" between self and work. Thus HRD should be in the role of supporting the individual meaning creation. This brings us to the important question of what is the role of management and organization in the creation of meaning.

Can management create meaning?

An important debate in the meaningful work literature is, whether the management can influence the experienced meaningfulness in work. The managerial and humanistic perspectives have had the opposing views on this topic even though there are different emphases. The growing number of research indicating a connection between meaningful work and various positive organizational outcomes has naturally intrigued the organizations to make use of this, but whether this is good or not can be debated (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009.)

The growing research in transformational leadership suggests that transformational leadership has a positive relationship with experiencing your work as meaningful. Transformational

leadership has been defined to include inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration. Transformational leaders are more motivated to coach and mentor their subordinates to accomplish more than they thought would be possible, and in general appreciate their employees. Thus transformational leadership has been found to positively influence experienced meaningfulness in work (Arnold et al., 2007.)

The study by Jelinekin and Ahearne (2010) favours this managerial perspective. In their study they tried to find out how managers in sales and customer service work can influence their subordinates' meaningfulness in work. The study was conducted with a survey of 160 questions and analysed with regression analysis. According to their results when the leaders explained to the subordinates why their work was meaningful both customer service improved and the experienced meaningfulness was increased in the employees. Also, the traditional job design approach by Hackman and Oldham (1980) implies that the managers are seen to have power to influence meaningfulness in work with job design.

The more humanistic perspectives disagree with this managerial view that meaning could be imposed on people. Based on a literary review Cartwright and Holmes (2006) argue that meaning created by the leaders is easily very superficial when it is not part of the employees' own understanding. This superficiality can actually create even more negative consequences like employee cynicism or total lack of meaningfulness.

Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) also regard the management of meaning with a critical eye. They have studied meaningful work for a decade and collected extensive qualitative interview material from workshops to understand the sources of meaningfulness. They think that prescribing employees with an existential meaning can reduce experienced meaningfulness especially if it focuses on the performance towards which meaning is used. Their perspective is more humanistic; where the general understanding is that meaning making is an intrinsic part of being human and thus subjective meanings like values or vision should not be provided by those who are in positions of power. According to them this kind of normative control from the company should be considered questionable.

Martela (2010) has a perspective that unifies somewhat the two ends of this discussion. He argues that organizations can and should help employees to find meaningfulness in their work but do this in an indirect way supporting their own process. His proposition is: "To be effective the organizational efforts to promote meaningfulness should concentrate on

strengthening the workers own process of meaningfulness-making rather than attempting to impose a form of meaningfulness from the top-down” (p.26).

On a concluding note the two models by Martela (2010) and Rosso et al. (2010) that are based on extensive literary reviews try to illustrate the sources of meaningful work from a broad perspective, trying to present a balanced view of the topic.

Rosso et al. (2010) propose that there are two fundamental dimensions that are essential for meaningful work. Firstly, they claim that there is a motivational mechanism between agency and communion. They explain, “On one hand, humans are driven to separate, assert, expand, master and create (thus pursuing agency), and on the other hand they are driven to contact, attach, connect, and unite (thus pursuing communion)” (p. 114). They argue that this is an essential distinction in how people approach their work. Secondly, they propose that experience of meaningful work changes depending on whether the action is toward the self or toward others. One differentiating factor seems to be whether the experiences are perceived as internal or external to the self.

Rosso et al. (2010) propose that it is in the intersection of these two dimensions that meaningful work is created through four core pathways. *Individuation* refers to self-agency, where defining the self as valuable and worthy are meaningful actions. *Contribution* refers to other-agency, where actions are perceived purposeful and/or done in the service of something greater than the self. *Self-connection* refers to self-communion, where meaningful actions bring individuals closer into alignment with how they see themselves. *Unification* refers to other-communion, where meaningful actions lead people to a harmony with other beings.

Rosso et al (2010) note that even though they highlight in the model both the self and various others as a source of meaning, according to them meaningfulness must go through the self. This means that individuals are the ultimate mediators of their work meaning. Even when considering other-related dimensions of meaningfulness, it results from the interaction of the self and the others rather than the other alone. This follows the lines of other organizational research. Martela’s (2010) model takes more into account the sociological view and the influence of the wider society. He emphasizes that the dichotomies should be forgotten. Meaningful work should be approached as a complex and dynamic process, where both the internal and external influence creation of the experienced meaningfulness in daily life.

Rosso et al. (2010) claim that one taken-for-granted assumption in the meaningful work scholarship is that individuals are seen as fairly passive recipients of their environments, creating meaning from the specific work context and the people surrounding them. They argue that even though this is partly true it would be important to notice the employees' active role in shaping those environments and thus influencing the meaning derived from it. They propose that this should be taken into account more and that the emerging research in job crafting is very promising. In the next subsection I examine this field of research and the concept of job crafting more closely.

2.1.3. Job crafting as a way to create meaningful work

New and growing research in job crafting presents another way to look at meaningful work. Berg, Dutton and Wrzesniewski (2013) present in a recent review of the growing literature on job crafting that it could be a new and powerful way to think about creating meaningful work. It brings the employee to the centre of creating meaningfulness in work and they believe that it can offer exciting new possibilities for practitioners in the workplaces.

Wrzesniewski and Dutton created the original theoretical model of job crafting in 2001. They grounded it in vast qualitative research on how people in different professions like engineers, nurses and hospital cleaners engaged in changing the boundaries of their work. There have become several elaborations in their original model (Berg et al., 2013), but I will firstly describe the motivation the researchers had for creating the model. Secondly I will explain the different parts of the original model and at the same time provide some newer viewpoints and perspectives on job crafting.

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) claimed that the traditional approaches to the question of what composes the experience of a job did not give enough value to the role of the employee in shaping the job. They thought the models were too concentrated on single determinants, like values, or external characteristics, like work tasks. The role of the employee as an active agent was missing. Grounded in vast qualitative studies they created their model of job crafting to fill this void.

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) describe that employees use different elements of their work tasks to construct their jobs and they use the perspective of social constructionism as a

foundation for their model. They define job crafting as “physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work” (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 179). A job consists of different kinds of activities that a person typically performs during a day. Job crafting refers to the ways in which a person changes and redefines these boundaries of the work.

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) explain that the employees who engage in this process are called job crafters. They are individuals who proactively construct physical, social, and psychological aspects of their work by altering their tasks, cognitive conceptions or relationships with others at work. Anyone could be a job crafter and actually they are all around us, because job crafting can be anything from very minor changes to more radical alterations. It can also be an activity that is visible for others or not. What the researchers emphasize is that the person doing crafting is the active agent and the higher-ups cannot impose upon it.

In their model Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) present a comprehensive view of job crafting: the motivations for job crafting, moderating variables, the actual job crafting practices, specific effects, and general effects. The model is illustrated in Figure 1.

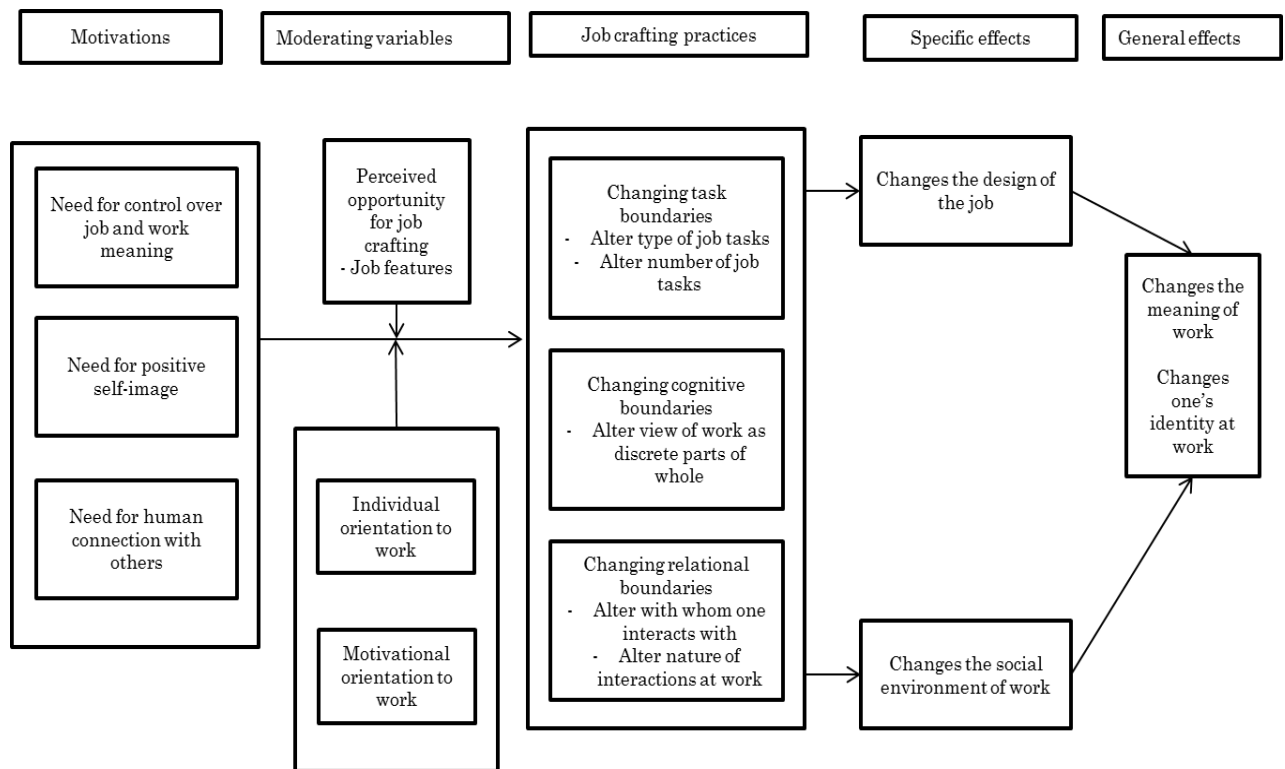


Figure 1. Model of job crafting. Adapted from Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001).

Motivation for job crafting

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) present that there are three individual needs, which are the grounding motivation for people to do job crafting. The first one is the need for personal control over one's job. It is an intrinsic need for a person to have control over his or her environment, so the need to have some control in one's work is expected as well. The lack of control can very easily create work alienation. Thus engaging in job crafting can be a way to gain control in one's work in order to avoid work alienation.

The second motivation for job crafting Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) present is the need for creating a positive self-image of oneself at work. This includes also a pressure to have a positive identity in the eyes of other people. The need to have and create a positive self-image is a fundamental part of the social identity theory created by Henry Tajfel (1981). Through crafting their tasks and relationships at work people can express a more positive sense of self, which can be confirmed by others.

The third motivation for job crafting is the need to form connections with other people. Based on a thorough review of relevant empirical literature of social and personality psychology Baumeister and Leary (1995) argue that the human need for belonging and for interpersonal attachments is a universal, powerful and pervasive motivation. Thus forming connections with other people at work is a motivation to do job crafting. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) wanted to show that individuals build relationships at work to enhance the meaning of work and can hence write different narratives of their lives. One example of this is a hospital cleaner seeing herself as healer, when she is seeking to be in connection with the patients.

Lyons (2008) did a study of 107 outside salespersons in a consumer products firm, who were interviewed with a structured format. He found support for three motivations to do job crafting which are self-image, perceived control and readiness to change. Thus job crafting seems to enable people to feel they have control, help them to feel better of themselves and offer a possibility to make changes they want. The first two support the motivations proposed by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), but the readiness for change was different. Lyons (2008) also did not find results that the need for connections with other people would be a strong motivation for job crafting.

Moderating variables

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) claim that there are moderating variables that can help people to do job crafting. The perceived opportunity of crafting means that a person is more likely to craft a job if there are possibilities to do this. The researchers divide this into two determinant factors, which are tied to the actual job design, that are “(1) the level and form of task interdependence and (2) the level of discretion or freedom to job craft implied by monitoring systems in the job” (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 184).

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) imply that the less an employee has interdependence with her colleagues, the more opportunities she has for job crafting, because she is not as tied in her work to the timing of other employees and thus has more freedom. They suggest also that monitoring systems that are closely following the person at work may diminish the opportunities for job crafting. Thus a greater autonomy increases perceived opportunities and encouragement for crafting. Interestingly, in some other studies the findings are in some ways contradictory. In the study by Lyons (2008), sales representatives who had a lot of autonomy with almost no direct supervision and a high entrepreneurial spirit did not consider they had much opportunities for job crafting. Also Berg et al. (2010b) found out surprisingly that lower-rank employees perceived they had more opportunities for job crafting compared to higher-rank employees. One reason could be that higher-rank employees seem to experience more psychological constraints, because they are responsible for big end goals, their work is more interdependent, and they have more visible roles in the organization.

Other moderating variables that Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) present are the individual and the motivational orientations to work. The three orientations to work, i.e. work as a job, career or a calling, which were already presented before, are likely to influence the degree of job crafting. It might imply that you see different kinds of possibilities for job crafting and probably you will do crafting that fits with your orientation to work. Also your regular work motivation will very likely influence whether you do job crafting or in what kind of job crafting you engage in. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) propose that intrinsic motivation to your work, which means something you value for its own sake, may allow more expansive job crafting. And extrinsic motivations, which mean doing the work apart from the work itself, instead might narrow the scope for task and relational boundaries in your job that decreases job crafting.

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) propose that these kinds of moderating variables are likely to influence to a great degree the actual job crafting that employees engage in. Also what one thinks about one's work and how intrinsically important it is, it will influence one's will to craft.

Job crafting practices

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) divide the actual job crafting practices into three categories, which are task crafting, relational crafting and cognitive crafting. Task crafting involves employees changing the task boundaries of the job by altering the scope, number, and type of tasks at work. Relational crafting refers to employees changing the relational boundaries by modifying the amount or quality of relationships and interactions at work. Cognitive crafting stands for altering the cognitive boundaries of the work and can mean many things, for example changing how you view and approach your job and seeing it as an integrated whole or just separate tasks.

Berg et al. (2013) describe the job crafting practices in more detail and propose more elaborate job crafting methods that could be used at the workplace. In the following subsections, I explain each of them more thoroughly.

Job crafting through changing tasks

Berg et al. (2013) have combined research in traditional job design theory, relational job design theory and job crafting techniques presented by Berg, Grant, and Johnson (2010a) to propose three ways in which employees can craft their tasks to add more task variety, identity and significance, which should enhance the meaningfulness at work.

Adding tasks in one's job or for example new projects is one way of creating meaningfulness in work. An example is a tech-savvy HR recruiter who could add using social media in her tasks in recruiting and attracting talents. She could use the skills she is excited about and also track the efforts. These changes could initiate a deeper feeling of meaningfulness (Berg et al., 2013.)

Emphasizing tasks means that employees can allocate more time, energy and attention to the tasks they see meaningful, for example a dentist spending more time to share information on healthy habits (Berg et al.,2013).

Redesigning tasks is relevant especially when there are time constraints or otherwise difficulties in adding or emphasizing tasks. It means that one can re-engineer one's tasks in order to make them more meaningful, like a salesperson who could coach a new colleague by bringing the person along on sales calls. This way it can be about teaching and helping the other person in an otherwise ordinary task (Berg et al., 2013.)

In another quantitative study by Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2014) employee well-being has been linked to job crafting and intrinsic need satisfaction. I explain the study more closely in the next subchapter but their definition of job crafting is useful here. In their study they defined five statements that described task crafting and participants were supposed to indicate how much they engaged in these behaviours:

- Introduce new approaches to improve your work
- Change the scope or types of tasks that you complete at work
- Introduce new work tasks that you think better suit your skills or interests
- Choose to take on additional tasks at work
- Give preference to work tasks that suit your skills or interests

I think these concretize very well the concept of task crafting. I present the equivalent statements in the relational and cognitive crafting as well because I think they illustrate the concepts very well.

Job crafting through relational crafting

Interactions and relations with other people at work are another important way of job crafting. Berg et al. (2013) emphasize the use of the term connections because it includes also the shorter interactions with people that can develop into deeper relationships. They highlight the importance of these short-term connections, especially those of high quality, which has been proven by Dutton and Heaphy (2003). Relationships with others are a fundamental building block of meaningfulness that can be created through job crafting. Berg et al. (2013) propose three ways of relational crafting that can increase meaningfulness at work.

Building relationships means that employees can create relationships with other people who make them feel worthy or dignified, thus creating meaningfulness. As an example are hospital cleaners who started to interact more with the patients and their families, because this way they felt more appreciated, which increased their sense of meaningfulness (Berg et al., 2013.)

Reframing relationships refers to crafting relationships by altering the type of relationship to be about something more meaningful. An example is a school principal who can reframe the relations with the teachers as being more about them understanding each other better than her just giving orders or evaluating their work. This can change the interactions to be more discussion-like and the principal can explain the reasons behind her actions. This can enhance meaningfulness for both of the parties (Berg et al., 2013.)

Adapting relationships is a way of changing the current relationships at work into something that cultivates meaningfulness. This could be helping others in doing their work better, which can encourage others to give support in return. These adaptations can foster true high quality connections, which deepen and strengthen the work relationships and increase reciprocal feelings of trust and positive regard. This can be an important way of relational crafting when adding or reframing is not possible like in small organizations for example. An example of relational crafting by Fletcher (1998) is “mutual empowering” that happened between engineers, where both parties gave and received help from each other. Another example of adapting relationships is mentoring or coaching by more experienced colleagues, which can be meaningful for both sides (Berg et al., 2013.)

The statements by Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2014) in relational crafting are:

- Make an effort to get to know people well at work
- Organise or attend work related social functions
- Organise special events in the workplace (e.g., celebrating a co-worker’s birthday)
- Choose to mentor new employees (officially or unofficially)
- Make friends with people at work who have similar skills or interests

Job crafting through changing perceptions

Berg et al. (2013) consider crafting perceptions a bit different compared to crafting tasks or relationships, because it doesn’t change anything physical about the work. Instead it is more about a mindset and how employees can alter the way they see their job or rethink their job. Berg et al. (2013) propose three ways employees can use this cognitive crafting to find more meaningfulness in their work.

Expanding perceptions signifies that employees can broaden their perspective of the purpose of their job, often thinking about their job as a whole compared to separate tasks.

Remembering this holistic impact can increase the experienced meaningfulness. As an example is a study by Bunderson and Thompson (2009) on zookeepers and how they saw their work as protecting and caring for animals, even though their main jobs were to clean the cages and feed the animals (Berg et al., 2013.)

Focusing perceptions is the opposite of expanding perceptions. It means that narrowing your perception of the job can be a way to create meaningfulness if you concentrate on specific tasks and relationships that are significant or valuable. For example a software engineer who enjoys creating ideas and not the actual coding process might find useful to concentrate on the creative aspects of the job that are most meaningful for him. It can be a way of mentally dividing the job in different parts and with the help of the more meaningful part as a prize motivating oneself to do the other parts, which are not as interesting (Berg et al., 2013.)

Linking perceptions refers to using the existing components of one's jobs to create linkages between specific tasks or aspects of their identities that are meaningful for them. As an example Berg et al. (2013) describe a customer service employee who can use the customer's situations as possibilities to display his passion for stand-up comedy by cracking jokes. Connecting these experiences can be a way of experiencing them as more meaningful.

The statements by Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2014) in cognitive crafting are:

- Think about how your job gives your life purpose
- Remind yourself about the significance your work has for the success of the organization
- Remind yourself of the importance for your work for the broader community
- Think about the ways in which your work positively impacts your life
- Reflect on the role your job has for your overall well-being

Berg et al. (2013) emphasize that all the different types of job crafting in task-, relational- and cognitive crafting, are not isolated but actually very interrelated and can activate one another.

Effects of job crafting

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) propose that job crafting creates both specific and general effects. The specific effects are the actual alterations in the design of the job and the social environment at work. And these in turn create changes in the meaning of work and in a person's identity as has been mentioned earlier. The focus of this study is how job crafting

influences the meaning of work but it is interesting to also consider the identity at work, which is naturally strongly related. Thus job crafters are shaping their identity at work by trying to establish relationships that can support desirable identities of themselves. It is an active process the same way as creating meaningfulness in work is.

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) emphasize that job crafting is an individual-based activity, but newer research claims that job crafting can happen in groups as well. Leana, Albaum, and Shevchuck (2009) introduced the concept of ‘collaborative job crafting’, where employees in a group redesign their jobs. In their study they conducted performance assessments in 62 childcare centres and surveyed 232 teachers and aides in Pennsylvania and New Jersey in the US. They found out that collaborative job crafting increased the performance of educators, especially those who had less experience.

This brings us to the question of whether job crafting is useful for the organization, as the study by Leana et al. (2009) implies. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) argue that job crafting serves the employee but is not inherently good or bad for the organization. They claim that job crafting that employees engage in can be beneficial for the company, for example by boosting productivity, or alternatively it can cause problems.

In many cases job crafters are invisible and the management is not aware of the job crafting that happens in organizations. Lyons (2008) notes that this can cause some disadvantages. The evaluation systems at work might not be matched with the unexpected work activities and the management might be deprived of some useful information. One solution to this could be to offer incentives for employees for sharing their ideas of useful changes or the job crafting efforts they have used. It is important to highlight that if management starts to control job crafting in a precise manner it might cause negative outcomes. If employees are feeling that they are micro-managed, it can lead to lower levels of job satisfaction. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) note that invisibility of job crafting might be problematic also in that view that job crafters are not rewarded for their beneficial activities for the whole organization.

Despite these possible negative aspects, Lyons (2008) highlights that most of the research implies the positive value of job crafting. As discussed above, it is very beneficial for the individual employees enabling them to have a more positive self-image, develop their skills, and seek to enhance meaningfulness in work. In addition to this it has significant positive effects for the organization. In every job crafting example that Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) present the effects were positive for the organization. The job crafters created better

working conditions, improved customer relationships, smoothed the internal communication and created better quality products for example. Also, in the study of Lyons (2008), all the job crafting episodes the participants were engaged in benefited the customer, the company or the sales representative. Of course the participants might have left out the more self-serving behaviours in their reporting, but in the light of other research Lyons claims that the self-serving or damaging job crafting is clearly in minority. Indeed the results show that job crafting consistently improved the performance and work behaviour of the sales representatives.

Also the recent study by Petrou et al. (2012) backs up these positive effects of job crafting for the organization. In their study Petrou et al (2012) used a 5-day diary survey that 95 employees of several organizations completed. They found out that daily job crafting behaviour in seeking challenges is positively associated with day-level work engagement. I discuss later come back to the influence of job crafting to employee well-being.

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) want to remind that even though anyone could do job crafting, not all employees should or need to engage in it. They do not mean to imply either that it is solely a person's own responsibility to make work meaningful, but show the freedom employees have and the creativity they can use in crafting their jobs from formal descriptions.

Berg et al. (2010b) suggest that job crafting is a more complex concept than previous research has presented and they have elaborated the original model with two main inputs. Firstly they claim that adaptivity is an important part of proactive behaviour of job crafting. Behaving in a proactive way in the workplace may require adaptive efforts depending on how counter-normative the job crafting practices are in the environment. For example for the lower-rank employees who have less formal autonomy in the work place this might mean putting a lot of effort in adapting the environment to allow engagement in job crafting. Secondly they propose that job crafting is a social embedded process, where, for example, the rank of the employee and social situation in which the employee is in at work influence opportunities for job crafting.

In a later study Berg et al. (2013) suggest that mindset is also one important factor influencing job crafting. Employees' beliefs on whether their jobs are unchangeable and fixed or flexible, vary. Job crafting mindset starts from the belief that it is possible to do job crafting and proactively shape your work. Without this, it is not possible to engage in job crafting. The job crafting mindset also includes a willingness to try out different aspects of one's tasks,

relationships or framing of the job. It is also linked to whether employees believe they have the right to do job crafting and that the changes are positive. Keeping up a job crafting mindset can be challenging and one way to sustain it could be to concentrate on modest and small improvements, which can in the long run grow into more substantial changes in the job.

In the next subsection I cover the relationship between meaningful work, job crafting, and employee well-being.

2.1.4. Meaningful work, basic needs and job crafting as part of well-being at work

In this section I look briefly at how well-being at work is defined and how meaningful work and job crafting relate to employee well-being.

The Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (2014) defines well-being at work as doing work that is healthy, safe and meaningful. Employee well-being is enhanced by good and motivated leadership as well as good climate and the expertise of employees. Good level of well-being improves coping and increases the productivity and engagement in work.

Like I mentioned above, meaningfulness is seen as an integral part of well-being at work. Martela (2010) also emphasizes this view and finds that “employees’ experience of their work as meaningful increases their own well-being and their ability to make a positive contribution to the organization”. He highlights that meaning is commonly seen as a fundamental part of psychological well-being. Baumeister (1991) underlines that people who experience their work as meaningful are psychologically and physically healthier.

Arnold et al. (2007) also confirm the relation between meaningful work and psychological well-being based on two quantitative studies made in Canada. In the first study, there were 319 employees of a long-term care facility, and in the second one, 146 funeral directors and dental hygienists. They all answered in questionnaire surveys, which measured transformational leadership, meaningful work, and psychological well-being. Based on their findings they propose that experiencing work as meaningful is a psychological mechanism between transformational leadership and psychological well-being. Thus transformational leaders can indirectly influence employees’ well-being by providing employees with a sense of meaningfulness and purpose in their work.

Based on a review and summary of earlier research Klinger (1998) looks at the search for meaning from an evolutionary perspective. He describes that the loss of meaning signals psychological deprivation and serious mental disorders. This also implies that meaningfulness is very important for well-being.

Coming back to definition of well-being Ryan and Deci (2001) explain that, put simply, well-being can be defined as optimal psychological functioning. They claim that the issue of well-being is complex and controversial, because there is much debate on what defines optimal experience. How we define well-being has significant implications in practical level in the society and in work life. The research on well-being is increasing fast in all different domains and Ryan and Deci (2001) compiled a review of the main themes to organize the literature. In the limits of this study it is not possible to cover all the key themes of well-being at work so I will concentrate on this line of research as it connects well with the themes of meaningfulness.

According to their extensive literary review Ryan and Deci (2001) suggest that the field of psychological well-being is divided into two separate directions: hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *The hedonic viewpoint* of well-being is often equated with happiness and hedonic pleasure. It has been studied and expressed in many forms from Greek philosophers to Thomas Hobbes. The psychologists who have adopted the hedonic view have focused on a broad view of hedonism, which contains both mind and the body and defines well-being in terms of pleasure versus pain. Most research in the hedonic view uses subjective well-being (SWB) as an indicator. There are three components that make SBW: life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood. This means that anything a person subjectively might consider valuable would increase well-being. SBW is a widely used index of well-being even though there is a concern and debate on if SBW can adequately measure psychological wellness.

Ryan and Deci (2001) explain that the critics of hedonic view, Aristotle himself among them, consider that happiness could not be only in the search of pleasure but in the expression of virtue and doing what is worth doing. Eudaimonia as a term refers to well-being as distinct from happiness and a view that not all desires people might value increase well-being. Thus subjective happiness cannot be matched with well-being. Ryan and Deci (2008) define eudaimonia as self-actualization and a way of living well. Rather than being an end goal in itself, it is a process of fulfilling your true daimon or your true self. In addition to tracing

eudaimonic view on well-being to Aristotle, it is also linked to humanistic psychologists like Maslow (1968).

Eudaimonic well-being is often explained as a multidimensional concept of psychological well-being (PWB). Ryff (1989) created six characteristics of positive functioning to describe PWB, which are self-acceptance, purpose in life, autonomy, personal growth, environmental mastery, and positive relationships with others. His findings were based on earlier research and a quantitative study of 321 young, middle-aged, and older adults, who rated themselves with multiple scales and measures of psychological well-being. His aim was to broaden the understanding of psychological well-being and test it empirically.

Self-determination theory (SDT) created by Deci and Ryan (2000) considers the eudaimonia or self-realization as the core definition of well-being. SDT posits that there are three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness, which are illustrated in Figure 2. In brief *autonomy* refers to being the initiator of one's own behaviour and making choices. It is a behaviour that is self-endorsed and self initiated. If one is fully autonomous one is wholeheartedly behind the thing one is doing. *Competence* is related to attaining desired goals and succeeding at challenging tasks. It includes a feeling of being effective in one's environment and having a sense of mastery of the things that are important. *Relatedness* means having a sense of belonging, and a feeling of being cared for. It consists of having mutual reliance and respect as well as a sense of caring for others. Thus relatedness works in both ways, by people giving to you and by you giving to them. By being able to impact other people's lives is just as important as receiving care from others and it helps us feel connected.

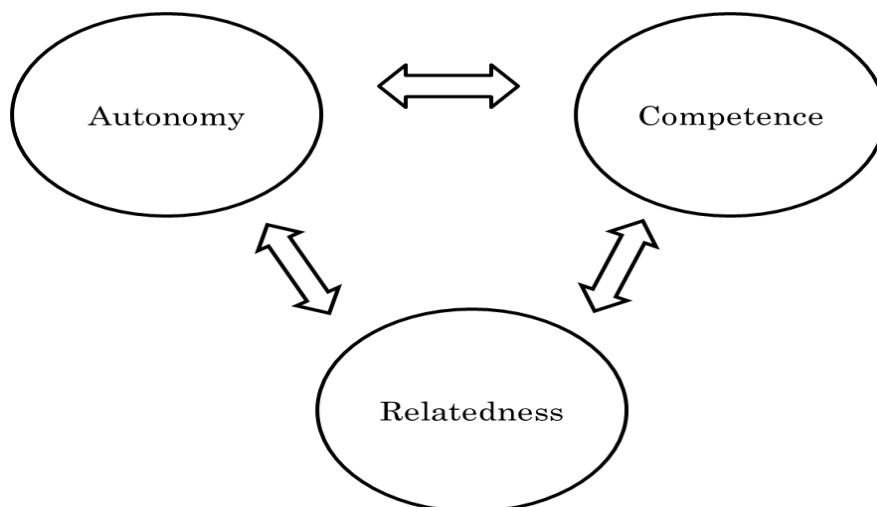


Figure 2. Model of self-determination theory (SDT). Adapted from Deci and Ryan (2000).

Deci and Ryan (2000) argue that fulfilling these three fundamental psychological needs is essential for well-being, both psychological health and life satisfaction, as well as personal growth (e.g. intrinsic motivation) and integrity (e.g. internalization and assimilation of cultural practices). It was actually the studies of intrinsic motivation that led to the finding of the three psychological needs, and it is a core part of SDT. Intrinsic motivation can be defined as something that emanates from one's sense of self and includes activities that are performed out of a genuine interest to satisfy innate needs compared to extrinsically motivated behaviours, which are carried out because they are instrumental. Thus they view people as agentic creatures who are actively seeking to do things that are interesting and meaningful for them.

One way that Deci and Ryan (2000) and others have studied the connection between psychological needs and well-being has been to examine how fluctuations in need satisfaction will influence fluctuations in daily well-being. Several studies showed strong correlation between daily measures of autonomy, competence and relatedness with daily well-being on both within-persons as well as between-person level of analysis. Also, findings in specific settings, like at the workplace, have showed that employees' reports of satisfaction of their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness were related to better health, self-esteem, and other positive variables like performance. Consequently, if people are denied the satisfaction of these needs it might cause negative influence on performance and mental health.

Even though psychological well-being is the fundamental view in SDT, also subjective well-being has been used in SDT as one indicator of well-being. It is important to note also that the concepts of hedonistic and eudaimonic well-being, as well as SWB and PWB, are overlapping in many ways even though different aspects are enhanced by measuring them in differentiated ways (Ryan & Deci, 2001.)

Jarenko and Martela (2014) emphasize the importance of SDT and intrinsic motivation as a basis for understanding well-being at work. They present that the SDT has gained a lot of momentum in the recent years and the key research of Deci and Ryan in 2000, "What and why of goal pursuits" (Deci & Ryan, 2000) was in the list of the ten most cited psychological research articles. The research in SDT has grown exponentially, and Martela and Jarenko (2014) claim that SDT is today's leading theory in human motivation.

It is important to note that Deci and Ryan (2000) make the distinction between two different types of internal motivations. Endogenous or *intrinsic motivation* means that the activity itself is pleasurable. *Internalized motivation* on the other hand means that certain activity feels worthy because it is connected to goals and values that are important for oneself. Considering work life and the goal of persistent performance, internalized motivation becomes important. Intrinsic motivation can sometimes be more difficult to reach and that is why internalized motivation is something that can be supported from the organization in order to guide people towards a common goal.

Martela and Jarenko (2014) emphasize that SDT is in essential ways connected to work life and employee well-being. Employees who have satisfied the three fundamental needs are both better performers and in better health. This kind of active employee well-being is definitely a win-win deal for both the company and the individual person. Vansteenkiste et al. (2007) also showed that all the three needs correlated strongly with employee's vitality, work satisfaction and dedication. Their findings were based on two quantitative studies. In the first study participants were 885 Belgians living in different areas of Belgium, who participated in the third wave of the European Values Study. The second study was improved based on the earlier research and participants were 119 administrative employees of a Flemish community who answered a questionnaire measuring the basic needs work values and both positive and negative job outcomes. They found out that employees were less likely to change work places if their basic needs were satisfied. Based on quantitative questionnaire studies of four different samples of Dutch employees (together 1185 people) Van den Broeck et al. (2010) also found positive correlations of the basic needs with improved self-evaluated performance, drive, and engagement. Also, the employees with high need satisfaction felt less burdened of their work.

This leads us to a recent article by Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2014), who connect SDT and well-being with the growing concept of job crafting. They claim that the three needs of SDT are related closely with the motivations that Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) presented for job crafting and the actual job crafting exercises. Firstly, engaging in task crafting requires a sense of control in your work, which is likely to enhance the satisfaction of the need for autonomy. Relational crafting will impact how much employees establish positive and sustainable relationships with others at work, and thus aligns with the need for relatedness. Cognitive crafting can help employees to reframe their cognitions and self-image at work, and in turn increase the awareness employees have of the potential impact their work has for the

organization, community and their lives. This aligns with the need for competence (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2014.)

The aim of Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2014) was twofold. Firstly to explore the relationship between job crafting and employee-well-being, and secondly expand the theory of job crafting to understand the underlying mechanisms how it predicts employee outcomes. 253 employees participated in the whole study. They worked mainly in a large Australian university (68 %), and in human resources departments within banking (6.4 %), and a health-care organization (6.0 %). They used measures of the Job Crafting Questionnaire, Intrinsic Need Satisfaction Scale, and a comprehensive measure of both subjective well-being and psychological well-being (presented above) to have a comprehensive measure of well-being.

The results of Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2014) show that there were significant correlations between job crafting and need satisfaction, job crafting and well-being as well as need satisfaction and well-being. Their hypothesized model, where job crafting predicts intrinsic need satisfaction, which leads to employee well-being (both PWB and SWB), fits the data better than all the alternative causal models. Education or level of income did not reveal any differences in the results but gender differences were found in relational crafting and the need for relatedness, which were significantly higher for female participants.

Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2014) argue that job crafting can be one important intentional activity that employees can adopt to improve their well-being at work. It can be a way to internalize work behaviour in concordance with their intrinsic interests and values. Thus job crafting makes it possible for employees to satisfy their psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence. Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2014) recommend that job crafting interventions could be an important way to enhance employee well-being.

In conclusion I would say that meaningful work, job crafting and well-being are all connected in fundamental ways and probably by different kind of causal relations. Next I look at the studies of restaurant workers in customer service work and how the concepts of meaningful work, job crafting, and well-being relate to that employee group.

2.2. Restaurant workers, meaningful work and job crafting

Because my aim in this study is to understand how restaurant workers in customer service positions experience meaningful work and how they engage in job crafting, it is justified to cover briefly the earlier research on restaurant workers. My aim in this subchapter is first to set the stage with a general description of restaurant workers and their well-being at work in Finland, with the help of a study made by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. Then I present a few examples of meaningful work and job crafting from related professions or from a similar level of work, because to my knowledge, there is no research conducted on restaurant workers related to these topics. I think this is what makes this study interesting, as it can reveal findings from the perspective of a new profession. In the end of this subchapter I conclude my findings.

2.2.1. Research on well-being of restaurant workers

The choice of restaurant workers in customer service positions as the study subject came from the discussions with Fazer. When we started discussing my Thesis topic, they had just started the ProSales –training program, which was targeted at excellent customer service employees in the staff restaurant business. As most of the trainings are focused on manager level, this time the management wanted to give attention to employees who face the customers every day. These are the people who bring the money in and are a valuable asset for the company. I explain this further in the methodology section. I was intrigued by getting to study employees in so called lower level positions, because as Rosso et al. (2010) note, most of the meaningful work research concentrates on employees' working in more privileged positions or having a higher rank. There is a need to study the possible differences between different levels of employees in their view to meaningful work and processes of meaning creation. I think I can offer interesting insight from the viewpoint of customer service employees in restaurants and reflect and compare my findings to earlier research.

There is no general or common research about restaurant workers or customer service people, but there is a multitude of different studies that have used restaurant workers as participants from a wide variety of perspectives. It is difficult to describe this kind of a research

magnitude in a brief and concise way. This is why I first illustrate the background context briefly with research findings on employee well-being of hospitality workers in Finland.

The Finnish Institute of Occupational Health studies occupational well-being of service sector workers every ten years. Hospitality industry workers is one category of employees of service sector and it includes both travel and restaurant business employees. The last study was made in 2008, and there were 1082 employees working in the hospitality business who answered the mail questionnaire (Kandolin et al., 2009.) Here I summarize the main results of the study, because I think it provides a good general overview of the context of restaurant employees in Finland.

In Finland hospitality industry is dominated by women and young people. Only 13 % of the respondents in the survey were men and 31 % of the respondents were between 25-34 years old. It is also a physically tough field to work in. The economic situation can influence the industry quickly and might cause changes in the demand for workforce. Changes in multiculturalism and providing high quality customer service for more diversified groups are important changes that affect all the different parts of this industry (Kandolin et al., 2009.)

Kandolin et al. (2009) claim that well-being at work means work, which is meaningful and flowing in a safe environment, and a community that advances health and the advancement of work career. According to them it consists of absence from work, the physical, mental and social well-being as well as work engagement (*työn imu*). Work engagement is defined as a condition, where one feels that despite of some challenges and deficiencies in work one enjoys it and it is relatively permanently interesting for oneself. The different dimensions of work engagement are drive, dedication, and absorption. In this study I think work engagement is the most relevant and nearest concept regarding meaningful work, thus I mainly concentrate on explaining how different work conditions are related to it.

Compared to the national level of well-being of employees, the service sector employees experienced their well-being as somewhat poorer than the average. For the hospitality employees the most important background factors that influenced all different parts of employee well-being were hurry and possibilities to influence one's work. Majority (58 %) of the hospitality employees reported that they need to work in a hurry and that the demands are growing. Three quarters of the employees expressed that the reason for this was that there was not enough workforce. Most of the respondents said that they had good possibilities to influence their own work and a majority (81 %) considered that they could influence at least a

little in the decision-making concerning themselves. This was also related to the feeling of work engagement (Kandolin et al., 2009.)

Social support, work community, and managers are seen as essential factors influencing well-being at work. Most of the employees reported that they received help and support from their work colleagues very often or fairly often. Every other employee thought that they got enough support from their managers, but 34 % of the respondents considered that they got very or fairly little recognition from their work even though they thought they would deserve it. Communication at work was experienced as insufficient by nearly 40 %, and fairly sufficient by 49 %. Team spirit in the work community, and the support one got from it, influenced work engagement, because when one gets support, help, and recognition, and the leadership is considered fair employees feel that they can absorb to their tasks with enthusiasm. Also constant positive feedback from customers strengthened work engagement clearly, and the negative feedback didn't reduce it (Kandolin et al., 2009.)

Changes and development projects at work have moderate effect on the well-being of the individual employee. Hospitality employees considered that management style and resting room spaces are the most important areas that need improvement and development. Possibilities to participate in the changes and knowing of them in advance were clearly related to work engagement. The workplaces that had engaged in the most frequent development activities were the ones where the highest work engagement was experienced (Kandolin et al., 2009.)

As a conclusion regarding work engagement among hospitality workers the most meaningful aspect that influenced work engagement was varying duties. If the work duties are varied and meaningful it is easier to tolerate the urgency and the demands. Other aspects relevant to work engagement were clear goals for the individual or the whole team and sufficient possibilities to influence changes in their planning phase. Moderate factors that influenced work engagement were support from colleagues, clear information, just behaviour of the manager and the possibility to influence decision-making that concerns oneself (Kandolin et al., 2009.)

2.2.2. Restaurant workers, meaningful work and job crafting

Next I present a few examples from the literature of meaningful work and job crafting from professions similar to restaurant workers because, to the best of my knowledge there is no exact research of restaurant workers per se.

Fock, Yim, and Rodriquez (2009) studied work meaning of Canadian and Chinese salespersons in telecommunications industry with a survey. The context is not very similar to restaurant workers, but in both jobs sales work is required, so there are some similar elements. Fock and colleagues (2009) claim that sales people are faced with demanding and stressful situations in their daily work. In order to succeed in these challenging situations and buffer job stress, it is important to derive meaning from work. They identified that especially the quality of sales-supervisor relationship is important, because it correlates positively with self-determination and customer orientation. And especially in the case of Canadian salespeople these lead to work meaning. Thus to increase meaning, Western managers should grant personal autonomy for their sales team and highlight the importance of good quality customer service. This has a big influence on the level of customer service and the profitability of the long-term customer relationships.

Martela and Jarenko (2014) also emphasize the importance of employee's enthusiasm and employee's meaningfulness for the customer experience. This requires that the employees working in the customer interface feel well and regard their work as meaningful and positive. Martela and Jarenko (2014) consider that for a company, which is striving to have customer loyalty and good results, this is essential to take into consideration.

Regarding job crafting there are some interesting examples, for example Rafaeli (1989) studied how supermarket cashiers engaged in job crafting and Berg et al. (2010b) studied more generally difference between lower-rank and higher-rank employees.

Rafaeli (1989) studied supermarket cashiers in Israel in six supermarkets. She engaged in ethnographic participant observation and used semi-structured interviews of 30 cashiers and 30 customers. Based on the research she found out that cashiers altered the features of their work by defining the type and level of customer service and controlling the customer interactions. The cashiers used different practices to have control over the service interaction with the customers. They tried, for example, to engage the customer in interaction or reject or

ignore the customers who tried to control and monitor the cashiers and commented negatively of their work. The results show several job crafting practices the cashiers engaged in.

Berg et al. (2010b) elaborate how working in different ranks or in different organizational levels influences job crafting. Their study was based on qualitative research, where they interviewed 33 employees in different organizational levels in a non-profit political advocacy organization and for-profit manufacturing firm in the US. Their findings suggest that ranks do not influence the actual type of job crafting employees engaged in, but it affects how the employees experience challenges in job crafting and what kind of adaptive moves they use to overcome the challenges. The higher-rank employees experienced the challenges in job crafting related to their own expectations, thus they tried to adapt their own expectations and behaviours in order to engage in job crafting. I explain the lower-rank employees' challenges and adaptive moves in more detail.

For lower-rank employees the challenges in job crafting stemmed generally from the expectations imposed on them by others. There were two kinds of basic challenges. Firstly, the job design for the lower-rank employees was very specific with means and ends and this made it more challenging to do job crafting. Secondly the lower-rank employees had less formal autonomy, which limited their power to convince or even ask others to enable job crafting (Berg. et al., 2010.)

There were three fundamental adaptive moves the lower-rank employees used in order to overcome these challenges. Firstly they tried to use their strengths in order to maintain opportunities for job crafting by strategically providing value to others. For example one customer service person utilized his expertise in IT to become the person that others go to when they are in IT trouble. The second adaptive move was targeting specific others who can contribute opportunities for job crafting and are more likely to help or accommodate their job crafting intentions. An example is provided of a maintenance technician who wanted to know more about the machines and reached out to a colleague who could help him in training and learning and they formed a special relationship. The third adaptive move was to build trust and cultivate support that enabled job crafting. For a lower-rank participant working at a non-profit organization building trust with her supervisor provided greater freedom to act and develop her skills to the direction she wanted. In summary, for the lower-rank employees the adaptive moves were mostly directed to changing the behaviours and expectations of others' (Berg et al., 2010.)

Summary

First of all, the meaningful work literature is vast and scattered. Considering the different sources of meaningful work, I divided the most important sources to roughly three categories, which are 1) work context and job characteristics, 2) the individual, and 3) other people and the organization. These are not all-inclusive and lack, for example, the spiritual perspective. Regarding the majority of the meaningful work research, these explain the greater part of experienced meaningfulness in work. One important question is the role of management in creating meaningfulness and whether it is useful or not? I share the same perspective as Martela (2010) who considers that it is the individual who must make up what is meaningful for himself or herself but the organization can support the individual's own process of meaningfulness creation.

Job crafting is a relatively new line of research that has gotten prominence in the last decade. Job crafting is an employee-based activity where the individual alters the task, relational or cognitive aspects of his or her work in order to make it more meaningful. The job crafting view considers employees as active crafters of meaningfulness in work and can be seen as very useful for both the individual and the organization (Berg et al., 2013.)

This study is made from the viewpoint of employee well-being and aims to understand how meaningful work and job crafting influence employee well-being. This is why I provide a brief review of well-being research from the viewpoint of meaningful work. Several researchers connect meaningfulness in work as an essential part of well-being. Well-being is understood by Ryan and Deci (2001) as eudaimonic or self-actualized well-being, which includes also subjective well-being. The three psychological needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness are defined in self-determination theory (SDT) as essential building blocks of employee well-being. Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2014) combine SDT, job crafting and well-being in their study, and thus claim that job crafting is a way to satisfy these three psychological needs, which in turn creates well-being.

As to my knowledge there are no studies on restaurant workers and meaningful work or job crafting, I chose to present findings from a study on well-being of Finnish hospitality workers to give an overview of the target group. Work engagement was the nearest concept of meaningful work in this research. The main findings conclude that varied duties, clear goals and sufficient possibilities to influence changes at the workplace were the most important

things influencing work engagement. Also supportive colleagues, clear information, a just manager, and the ability to influence decision-making that concerns oneself moderately influenced work engagement (Kandolin et al., 2009.) Also studies of similar work contexts in sales and customer service imply that both meaningful work and job crafting are relevant topics for restaurant workers in customer service.

As a conclusion of the literature review, meaningful work, job crafting, and employee well-being seem to be clearly linked to each other. Next I describe more closely the methodology of this study.

3. Methodology

In the next section I present the research context and methodology of the study, explaining in detail how I conducted the research. I first present the context and company background of Fazer and Fazer Food Services. Next I present the ProSales training and the focus group of customer service employees, who had been chosen to participate in the training. Next I discuss the philosophical positions of the study, present the Appreciative Inquiry method and explain how the data was collected with semi-structured interviews. I also evaluate the validity and reliability of the research and lastly present the narrative analysis as my method of analysing the data.

3.1 Fazer Food Services and Finnish staff restaurants as a study context

Fazer is a leading international confectionary, bakery and food service provider

Fazer is a Finnish family-owned company, which was founded by Karl Fazer in 1891 when he established his first café in Helsinki. Since then it has become a market leader in Finland in confectionary, bakery and food services as well as a beloved brand to the Finns. Together with its favourite product, Fazer Milk Chocolate, they have been ranked as Finland's top rated brands for the fifth time in a row in 2013. In the last decades Fazer has also grown extensively outside Finland and operates in Sweden, Russia, Denmark, Norway, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Over half of its earnings come from abroad. In 2013 Fazer's net sales were 1,696 million euros, which had risen by 2,3 % during the last year. Despite the challenging economic situation Fazer has continued to grow. Especially the layoffs and cost cutting in customer companies in the food service sector and volatile raw material prices in bakery products had an impact on profitability. There are over 15 000 employees working at Fazer (Fazer, 2013.)

The vision of Fazer is to be the best choice and its mission is to create taste sensations. Strategic emphasis is on profitable growth through leading brands, winning operating model and expansion. There have been some changes in the organization as a new CEO, Christoph Vitzthum, was appointed in October 2013 as well as a new organizational structure was launched. From March 2014 onwards there are three Business Areas: Fazer Bakery, Fazer

Confectionary and Fazer Food Services as well two Business Units that are Fazer Cafés and Fazer Mill & Mixes (Fazer, 2013.)

Fazer's values are passion for customer, quality excellence and team spirit. Group wide value discussions were completed within 2012 and 2013, where every team discussed Fazer's values and evaluated how well they are used in practice. The results showed that 9 out of 10 employees have incorporated the company values. Values that employees consider most important are customer focus, quality mindset and open and helpful atmosphere (Fazer, 2013.)

Occupational well-being and meaningful work is part of responsible HR at Fazer

Responsible human resources and well-being are an important part of Fazer's strategy. "Fazer aims to be a responsible employer, which provides people with jobs that are meaningful, challenging and fulfilling." (Fazer's Annual Review 2013, p. 32) A new well-being strategy that was created in 2011 and 2012 was incorporated in 2013 into management systems and other functions. It consists of eight main drivers that are leadership, work fluency, safety, health, competence, meaningfulness, fellowship and employeeship, and work lifecycle management. In 2013 the yearly employee survey response rate was record high (80, 4%) and both the overall People Power Index and the Well-being Index grew. Fazer's results in both surveys are above the European norm (Fazer, 2013.)

Mika Videman, the Senior Vice President of Human Resources, emphasizes that every employee should find his or her work meaningful and have opportunities for growth in addition to understanding his or her role in achieving business goals. He also highlights that developing employeeship in addition to leadership is crucial at Fazer: "The objective is to foster an open atmosphere, where we not only respect differences in opinions but are also able to constructively challenge each other. This way we can create a culture of continuous improvement, which increases efficiency as well as well-being" (Fazer's Annual Report 2013, p. 32). As an example initiative that has been done towards this is concrete instructions how to prevent workplace bullying (Fazer, 2013.)

Thus, at Fazer meaningfulness at work is considered an important and integral part of occupational well-being. Because of that, this study will be considered especially from the well-being perspective. The timing of the study being relatively quickly after the new well-being strategy has been launched, it enables that we can evaluate and get deeper

understanding how the new well-being strategy has been implemented and how the employees have reacted to it.

3.1.2 Fazer Food Services and Finnish staff lunch restaurants as a study context

Fazer Food Services provides catering services in the Nordics and Baltics. It focuses on workplace lunch restaurants, student restaurants and in the care service sector. It represented 32 % of Fazer Group's net sales in 2013. There are 4100 employees currently working at Fazer Food Services, of which 3900 works in restaurants. The employments are relatively long-term as two thirds of the personnel have worked there for at least five years and 95 % of the employment contracts are full-time (Fazer Food Services, 2013.)

In Finland Fazer Food Services has kept the market leader position in spite of the tough economic situation. In 2013 it was rated as Finland's best-known operator in the sector as well as for the best product quality and service offering among food service providers. New initiatives are created and developed all the time in the food service business; in 2013 for example there was the takeaway concept and a big acquisition in Norway. Focus for 2014 is to strengthen the operational excellence in the service and concentrate in sustainability, well-being and health initiatives. Occupational well-being at Fazer Food Services consists of healthy communities, good leadership and versatile HR development tools. Occupational healthcare is also very important. At Fazer Food Services there are several possibilities to develop your skills through work rotation and different trainings among other things (Fazer Food Services, 2013.)

Staff restaurant business in transformation

Maarit Kero, an operative manager who has been at Fazer Food Services for over 10 years, tells that staff restaurant business is in transformation. The Finnish economic situation has changed, and after certain companies have moved outside the Finnish borders it has changed the staff restaurant business as well. The number of personnel in companies has reduced and whole factories have been closed. This means that the staff restaurant business is in a turning point and you need courage and skills to search for new possibilities to sustain the competitive advantage and the market leader position. Thus there is a need to innovate new solutions for growth. One answer to this is the sales training program that Fazer has initiated to fuel the sales, which will be described more in detail next.

ProSales –training program

ProSales is a training program created inside Fazer that has been tailor-made for the customer service personnel in the staff restaurants. Because this is a very business driven training the operations team is in charge of it, even though it was carried out in collaboration with the training department. Fazer is a very training-oriented company and there is a lot of training offered to managers, teams etc. This time the company considered that investing in sales skills of the customer service employees who are in direct contact with the customers is especially important. The operative managers saw that there is a need in staff restaurant business to develop the sales, because the traditional view of selling as something negative has become out-dated. World has changed and now the business needs to change as well. ProSales training is one idea that has been developed to answer this need (Kero, 2014.)

The program includes 5 separate days of training within a year, with different themes each time. The topics cover customer insight, the offering, display of products and natural courage for service among others. The goal is to increase sales and even though there are individual participants the whole work team can be part of it, because there are always exercises between the sessions when the restaurant teams are supposed to do big campaigns and other tasks. The percentage increase in sales, compared to last year, is used as a measurement, in addition to the creativity of the idea. The winning team will get a trip abroad as a prize. The operative managers together with training and development created the program and most of the content has been created inside the company. There are two outsider professionals who tell about presentation skills for example but Kero (2014) emphasizes that it is very important that people from inside the company are contributing because they know the restaurants and speak the same language as the employees. The restaurant group managers and restaurant managers are the key people who enable the training to succeed and ensure that the employees have enough time for planning the campaigns (Fazer, 2014.)

The operative managers and restaurant group managers chose individual participants from specific restaurant teams, which are the biggest and considered to have the most potential for increasing the sales. They chose 57 employees as participants, who were mostly service personnel who are in direct contact with the customers and who have been especially motivated and enthusiastic about their work. The chosen employees have been described as customer-oriented salespeople, imaginative, listening the customers, excited about selling and making both colleagues and customers in good spirits. Kero (2014) explains that according to

her an ideal customer service person is his or her own personality. She should be friendly and with a twinkle in the eye. She should be able to know what customers want, create demand and have the courage to recommend products. It is important also to look positive and happy. She says that it should start from the inside and forced one-liners just make you irritated if you see that the person doesn't want to sell. It is also important to acknowledge if the customer says no.

At this moment four training sessions of the five have passed and the sales development is being monitored all the time. Kero (2014) explains that another important goal of this training is the increase of occupational well-being for the participants and for them to learn from their peers. The customer service personnel usually don't have the chance to meet with their colleagues from other restaurants and share experiences so this training can be a good possibility for that as well. If the program is a success it will be copied and used elsewhere at the company as well. So far the program has carried out well and the average numerical feedback from the first session was 4.3 out of 5, which was very positive (Kero, 2014.)

3.2 Conducting the interviews from a positive perspective

I collected the data conducting individual semi-structured interviews with Appreciative Inquiry method. I first describe my philosophical position before explaining more in detail what AI is about, why it is a useful method in this case and how I use it in my study more concretely. After I also evaluate the reliability and validity of the research method. Finally I explain how I use thorough thematic coding and narratives as my analysis method.

3.2.1 A qualitative and constructionist study

According to Rosso et al. (2010) most of the meaningful work research is done either with quantitative questionnaires or literary reviews, and that there is a real need for a qualitative approach. Also Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) argue that questionnaires do not identify between specific sources of meaning that might contribute to a sense of significance and thus different methods like stories of potential inspiration are needed. My aim in this study is to

respond to this void and try to picture a deeper, though narrower, understanding to the concept of meaningful work and how employees actively seek to it.

As this is a qualitative research, the research philosophy differs from the often positivist world view in quantitative methods, even though there are various traditions also among different qualitative researchers. My philosophical perspective in this study is constructionism, because my research questions aim to understand the subjective meanings people have about their work. I believe in the constructionist view that the reality is socially constructed in a dynamic and changing pattern and what is important is how individuals and groups understand and interpret it. That is why interviewing can be a relevant method to understand the shared meanings, as in this view knowledge can be obtained only from social actors. This also implies that various interpretations can be meaningful and reflexivity is important. An essential aspect is also that as a researcher I am not objective or distant but part of the knowledge production, and influence all aspects of the research from conducting the interviews to interpreting the data (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008.) I evaluate the influence of this in a later subchapter.

As I want to understand the subjective meanings people have about their work, I think that conducting face-to-face interviews is relevant because the topic can be personal for many people. Talking in a one-to-one discussion can enable the person to talk about more private thoughts or go deeper than for example in a focus group or answering in a structured form. There are many ways to conduct interviews and I chose to use the semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews, like the name already implies, is a method between a structured interview and an open interview. It is not as flexible as open interviews but not as structured with specifically modified questions as structured interviews. The idea in semi-structured interview is to have certain principal thematic areas that the interviewer will make sure to be covered but otherwise the discussion can go forward openly and without a specific order. It is emphasized that the interviewee's voice should be heard and that they can answer with their own words. The meanings and interpretation of the interviewees are important as well as the notion that it is created in interaction (Hirsjärvi & Hurme, 2008.)

I chose to do semi-structured interviews because of several reasons. One important consideration is giving voice to the real person behind and seeing him or her as an active subject, who creates meanings. This means also giving them the opportunity to talk about matters that are close to them in their own way (Hirsjärvi et al., 2009.) I think this is essential

for the topic of meaningful work, which I see is very subjective and personal. It can also be abstract and difficult to define for people so I think it is especially relevant to give them the possibility to explain it in their own words. I made the thematic areas for the interview following this logic of Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008). They can be found in the end of this Thesis.

3.2.2. Appreciative Inquiry

Reed (2007) explains that in simplicity Appreciative Inquiry is a technique that concentrates to the positive evaluations people have about what they do. It is an action research process that is most often used in organizational development. Cooperrider and Sekerka (2003) describe it as a “process of search and discovery designed to value, prize and honour” (p. 226). It starts with an assumption that all organizations are networks of human relatedness. The aim is to access the positive core of organizations by asking positive questions. The positive inquiry itself already shapes a more desirable tendency and perspective, especially when everyone in the organization recognizes it. They claim that in an opposite way the same mechanism of sensemaking in the traditional problem-based interventions and concepts limits the way we make sense of the world. Weick (1984, ref. Cooperrider & Sekerka) claims that social problems rarely get solved because they are framed so overwhelmingly that people consider they're impossible to solve.

David Cooperrider discovered AI in 1980's when he was doing his doctoral thesis in organizational dynamics in health care. He found out that the deficit-based change models didn't seem to work and when questioning people about the things they value encouraged them to talk more openly. This resulted in breakthrough findings in his research. From then on both Cooperrider and others have been developing the model and other similar minded studies on learned helplessness, placebo effects and emerging work on social constructionism speeded up the growth (Reed, 2007).

Since then Appreciative Inquiry has become widely used in organizational development around the world. It has both a wide theoretical foundation with hundreds of publications published since 1988 as well as a growing community of active practitioners and consultants using it in their work. It has also created public initiatives helping to foster positive change like Imagine Chicago, a civic innovation project (Ludema & Fry, 2008).

I think AI is a very relevant method for my research due to many reasons. Naturally in my Master's Thesis I am not using it as an organizational development tool and I can't follow strictly all the rules of AI. But I consider that AI's principles are important and it gives also a suitable lens to view the positive aspects people consider meaningful in their work. Though it is interesting that from the AI perspective asking positive questions can already engage people for change and new perspectives and from this viewpoint my interviews can have some kind of a positive influence in people. I think this is important because I want to leave a positive footprint to the people I interview and not just take their time. Also the way people think about their future shapes the way it is practically realized, and if I can with my positive questions direct attention to a more positive outlook of future I think it is worth it. For me AI's constructivist principle is also very important, because I believe in the social constructionist theory that people interpret and modify their understandings of the world all the time and together with other people. There is no real and factual "truth" out there. Understanding of the world is created together with people (Reed, 2007.)

The core assumption of human relatedness and organizational connectivity in AI is also relevant from the perspective of my study. I also think it is important that AI has an inclusive approach that considers that the whole organization should be a part of the change, which is often not the case in traditional organizational development, which is done by small groups higher in the organization. This is an important aspect because I am interviewing people on the lower levels of the organization, trying to really give a bottom-up perspective to well-being at work and possibly some new perspectives to HRD at Fazer.

In practice using AI means I will prepare my questions following the principles of AI. Reed (2007) explains that the general principle of Cooperrider is to make the questions two-fold; the first part evoking person's real experiences or narratives of best learning's in the past and the second concentrating to all the positive future possibilities. Some examples include concentrating to peak experiences and your core values. I have also followed the example of Karhu (2013) in her study of meaningful work of Finnish development work expatriates, where she used AI successfully as a method.

In addition to formulating the questions according to AI principles it is important that people are interviewed in a way that is most comfortable for them, this means that my questions are formed loosely and flexibly so that the discussion can develop naturally and the person may

feel as relaxed as possible. It is also essential that they enter to it in their free will and are not forced to it (Reed, 2007.)

3.2.3. Preparing for the interviews

In order to conduct the interviews I took part in the second session of the ProSales training program at Fazer premises, where I had the opportunity to present my research to the participants and try to acquire interviewees. The group was divided in two, so both Thursday 22nd of May and Friday 23rd of May I presented for about 5 minutes what my study was about and that I wanted to interview them. I explained the anonymity of the study and how they were allowed to use their work time for it. It was fully voluntary and the people who got interested could return an enrolment paper, where they would give their contact information either to me or other organizers of the training.

The first day I participated to the whole training program and talked with some of the participants. I listened to the program, made observations and even commented in one discussion for a particular question concerning the student restaurants. The second day I mainly participated in the beginning to present my research topic and to deal out the enrolment papers. From the first group six people enrolled to be interested in the interview and from the second group four people. I was right away in contact with them by e-mail trying to organize a suitable meeting time.

Interviewees

All the enrolled interviewees were female and aged between 30 to over 50 years old, though majority of them were under 40. They were working in customer service roles in the restaurants, and three of them were shift managers (“vuoroesimies”) or in training to become one. The interviewees had been working at Fazer from less than one year to over 10 years.

Conducting the interviews

All the interviews took place within three weeks of the training session where I presented the research. Finally I interviewed eight people, because one quit working at Fazer during that time and the other was too busy to meet. I conducted six of the interviews at the employee’s own workplace in the dining room area, which was mostly empty at that time, because it was either in the morning before most of the customers had arrived or in the afternoon when the

restaurant was closed. From the remaining two, the other was conducted in a close room in a library near the employee's workplace, and the other was a phone interview. The interview time varied between 55 minutes to 1h 22 minutes, the average time was about 1h 10 minutes. Together there were about 9 hours and 25 minutes of recorded material and 186 pages of transcribed material.

3.3. Reliability and validity of the study

Next I evaluate the trustworthiness of this qualitative study. When evaluating how the study has been made, the usual ways in quantitative research are reliability and validity. But as Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008) argue the situation in qualitative research is in many ways different, because the basic premises about humans and their relation to reality are different. The traditional concepts of validity and reliability are grounded on the researcher being able to find objective results and finding the objective truth. But as my viewpoint in people is socially constructive there is no actual or objective truth, but the reality is our subjective interpretation what we have learned in the community. The idea is not to find general causal relations because people change in time.

Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008) suggest that the reliability in qualitative research should be concentrated to the reliability of the actions of the researcher, referring to whether all the relevant data is taken into account and is the transcribing done well. It is also important to remember that the results of the interviews are the result of the interaction of both interviewer and interviewee. I have kept these issues in mind when doing my research and I have been following the same logic and principles in the transcription and other phases of my research in a systematic way. Regarding these points I think I have carried out the research in a reliable way, but there are some points that I would like to mention.

In most cases the interviews went well and without interruption but it is important to note some issues that might have influenced the interviews. More than once there were some people walking past the interview situation and two times the manager of the person also passed the place. Nobody could have heard the discussion in any of the interviews but it might have influenced the interviewee and how she talked. In one of the interviews another colleague disturbed the discussion by taking the dishes and cleaning very loudly. This

disturbed the discussion and listening for about 10-15 minutes, but after that we had a very private and fruitful discussion and it didn't seem to bother the interviewee more than with slight irritation. In the phone interview there were few occasions when it was difficult to hear the interviewee and I noticed that the phone interview wasn't nearly as fruitful as the face-to-face discussions. Otherwise the discussions went in a very relaxed, pleasant and mostly open atmosphere. Most of the interviewees laughed when they told stories and I think it is a concrete example of their relaxation and openness. For some people it was more difficult to tell about the positive parts of their work and I gave them the possibility to explain about the more negative feelings or problems in their work as well. Thus I wasn't too tight with the principles of AI, because I considered it was more important to be flexible for the interviewees and give them a chance to talk about what they consider meaningful.

Regarding validity the traditional concept of validity as something that is well-founded and corresponds accurately to the real world. It can be evaluated in two different ways in qualitative research according to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000). Firstly triangulation is where you try to seek support for the interview data comparing it to other sources. In my case the theoretical framework and earlier research on the topic answer to this. A second validation mode is to check the correspondence between the researchers interpretation with the subjects of the research. I didn't have the possibility to do this in the scope of my research and regarding the social constructive nature of my study the objective truth is not the aim, but rather the underlying feelings and meanings attached to different issues.

It is difficult to say definitely if the interviewees were telling the truth, but I believe so because they told openly about the more sensitive topics as well, and about things they were disappointed with at the workplace. It might have influenced in their responses that they knew that I was doing this research for the company. But I think they felt that they could talk with confidentiality as I emphasized the anonymity of the research. It is also important to note that this was a special group that was chosen by the managers to participate in this training. This might have also influenced the results and not illustrate the situation of the average employee working in these positions.

I need to remark also that in the start of the research the topic of job crafting wasn't part of my research question but my focus was to concentrate especially on how other people influence meaningful work. In the data analysis phase the examples of job crafting emerged from the data so powerfully that I decided to include it as a research question. This means that

I didn't ask the interviewees anything related to job crafting in the interviews and it might be that they don't recognize this concept or know that they engage in job crafting consciously. As my approach was to be as open as possible to the data I think this just strengthens my study.

One issue that is considered important in evaluating the trustworthiness of the research is the coverage. Are my eight interviewees of restaurant workers enough? Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009) claim that the coverage of a study is sufficient when the interviewees' answers saturate. This means that the same themes and topics are repeated. I think I reached saturation, because in the final interviews there came up same themes that had come up in earlier interviews. Also all of the interviewees are working in almost the same role and in similar tasks inside the same organization, which gives coherence. Due to these reasons I think the coverage of the study is good.

It is important to remark that the fact that I did my interviews in Finnish, and later translated it in English have naturally influenced the quality of my study in some ways. The language is not as rich as in the original language and some meanings might have been lost, because some of the Finnish expressions might not be found exactly the same way in English. I tried to be as loyal as possible to the original data. Using English was also a way to protect the interviewees and their anonymity when the results are presented in the organization.

3.4. From a thorough thematic coding to a narrative analysis

As I started to analyse my data I had gathered from the eight interviews I made, I hadn't written the theoretical framework yet due to practical constraints as well as my wish to be as open as possible to the data. Naturally my knowledge in the literature and the use of AI as my data collection method guided my interview process but I tried to give space for the interviewees to talk about what they consider meaningful. In the analysis stage I also wanted to dig to the data with not too many pre-given thoughts and theories in my mind. I firstly decided to do a thematic analysis, which is a method that helps to identify, organize and analyse patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As Braun and Clarke (2006) explain it is a flexible method that can be used in different theoretical frameworks and positions,

which also means that it is essential to make clear your choices in the analysis process, which will follow.

I chose to follow an inductive approach in my analysis, because it links the identified themes very closely to the data and it fits to the constructionist worldview. In this way it is similar to grounded theory and I actually used as a guideline and inspiration in my coding Charmaz's (2006) grounded theory-coding guidelines, even though this isn't a grounded theory work. It was a useful tool in order to help the coding process and keeping myself open to the data, as I am a novice researcher.

After doing the thorough coding I started to notice certain narratives emerging in the data as well as main categories of meaningful work. I decided to present my analysis through narratives, because these seemed to come up in the data in many ways and it seemed to fit well with my research methodology in general. Firstly narrative analysis is grounded in social constructionism (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) and as this is my philosophical position they support each other very well.

Secondly narratives are one of the fundamental ways human beings understand and explain their lives (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). I thought that narrative analysis could be an interesting way of explaining how the people I interviewed create their work to be meaningful. I consider them as active agents of their own life and this is why a narrative can be a more concrete way show people's own influence and lens to their story. Also Amanda Coffey and Paul Atkinson (1996) consider that using stories can be a very creative way of analysing data from the viewpoint of the informants. Stories are used in everyday interaction to explain the key events of people's lives and stories can also tell a lot about cultures in organizations. Stories can also give a deeper understanding of people's lives and let the reader empathize with their situations. Thirdly narrative analysis seems to fit well with AI-methodology like Van der Haar and Hoskings (2004) highlight, because it is also grounded in social constructionism and enables to illustrate the stories of individual people's lives.

After mapping the important themes of my analysis I needed to divide the interview data in different parts and organize it again in order to form the narrative analysis. I wanted to be as open as possible for the data, but naturally the knowledge of the earlier research might have guided my analysis in some ways. I built three different narratives grounded to the eight interviews I made. This means that the narratives don't present the story of a certain person

but it is collected from different people. Dividing the data is also a way to protect the study participants and make them more anonymous, because stories are mixed in some ways.

I think the three stories offer a view that both summarizes the main themes that emerged from the data as well shows the differences inside the group. By dividing the data I have used my authority as a researcher to create the stories. Thus these are mere reconstructions, but I have tried to be as loyal as possible to describe the interviewees' viewpoint and adding their real quotes to ensure that their voices are heard. It is important to note also that when I built the narratives I wrote them in English but kept the quotations first in the original language. Thus in my analysis phase I used the original Finnish material until only in the last phase I translated the quotes in English.

4. Three narratives of restaurant workers and meaningful work

4.1. Tanja the Team Worker

Tanja is a true team worker. For her meaningful work is created with the close-knit work community. She knows her colleagues personally and wants to be an emphatic and loyal team member. She enjoys being able to use her talents creating good quality offerings like baking excellent cakes or preparing special coffees. She is satisfied in her work situation and appreciates a good work-life balance.

Feeling at home working in a group

Tanja went to restaurant school straight after school. It was a clear choice for her. “Yes, it was straight from school. Actually it was quite self-evident for me.” She had always been interested in food. “I have always liked cooking, it started from mom always baking at home, and then in the seventh grade when I had home economics in junior high, then it started even more. Since the confirmation party cakes I have been baking everything to our family parties.”

Tanja wanted to work with people and to combine this with her passion for food as a hobby. “Some kind of selling, being with customers, that is still my ”thing”. But food has always interested me, as a hobby and as a career.” In her current role in customer service and as a jack-of-all-trades in the work place she is content, because she can combine both working with food and with people. “I need the customer service side too even though I like cooking and making salads. In this work there is just half and half.”

Before starting to work at Fazer, Tanja used to work in small cafes and shops, working often alone during her shifts. Sometimes she got frustrated that there wasn’t enough work or anyone to talk to. “It is really difficult to pass the time. There is nobody to talk to. No work. It is just like that I just hang out there and it seems that the time just stays still.”

As she has started to work in the lunch restaurant in bigger groups she noticed that she liked the change and she wouldn’t change back to solitary work. “Now when I have been working

in group work I wouldn't change back to working alone. Of course the customers are there, but you don't have colleagues working together with you. I wouldn't change back to it."

She worked in different restaurants before she came to her current one and when she came she was very happy because she was so well received. "It was just like coming home for me". This feeling of belonging in the community felt very important for her.

Knowing your colleagues personally and spending time with them outside work

Tanja wants to know her colleagues personally. If there starts a new colleague or there comes someone to replace a shift she makes sure she asks personal questions from them and wants them to feel welcome in the community. "Just right away, even though there would be someone new, we are after couple of hours talking about personal things, like do you have kids, and we ask a lot. We are interested in the new person."

For Tanja it feels it is important to really care about your colleagues and she feels they are more friends than colleagues. "We truly care about our workmates, they are more than colleagues. Actually we have such a close bunch that you might find your spouse in another Amica restaurant. That happens a lot here." You share personal stories with them as well and meet them outside the work. "We have talked about quite private things, and I have gone to visit one with the kids couple of weeks ago, so it is also in the free time, it is not only at work."

She feels that she knows some of her colleagues so well that they don't even need to use words in order to communicate, because they think so alike. "You only need to glance at the other one and you know what they mean. Haha. We just think so alike."

Because Tanja knows her colleagues so well, she emphasizes that meeting with them in her free time is important. "And for that matter we are spending free time with workmates as well. We have become so close." Often they go out partying together with colleagues of same age to have some fun. "Mainly we go to bars...Especially with these thirtysomethings who have kids, sometimes we hit the town together."

When they are back at work they can discuss and laugh together about these funny moments they have had together during coffee breaks or silent moments during the work day. "You can talk about what funny things you have done outside work, you can talk about it at work." This is also a way to relax in the middle of a busy work day.

Tanja, an older colleague of Tanja knows that the importance of free time activities diminishes somewhat when you get older. The life situation influences how much time you spend with your colleagues. It was essential for her too when she was young and she moved to the city and she didn't know anyone. "Well then when I was young and wild, every night we went for drinks to some terrace after work. Haha. Luckily I don't need to do it anymore, it was surprisingly tough."

Tanja keeps contact with her former colleagues as well and thinks it is good that they stay in your life. "I think it is nice that they are not just people somewhere. They are really familiar to you. This café where I used to work, I live just nearby. I go there almost every day to say hi and have a coffee and catch up. So they stay as friends."

Preparing high quality food and getting customers' appreciation creates a feeling of independence and competence

Tanja has always been into cooking and cakes are her speciality. Cakes have been a hobby for her for a long time. "I have always been interested in cooking, but cakes are my bravura. -- What would I say, maybe I have been doing cakes as a hobby for about fifteen years." When coming to her current work she told about her skills. "When I was just doing the salads and dishes I tried to talk that I can do cakes and I have this background you know, I can help in other things." And nowadays she is responsible for baking all the cakes that customers have ordered for their parties at home. Though these cakes are much simpler than the ones she makes at home, because at work there is not so much time to do them. "I take care of all the ordered cakes. Even though those are much easier than the ones I make at home. You don't have eighty hours here to use for it."

She feels proud that the customers come to negotiate directly with her. "As a matter of fact they come and negotiate directly with me, and only then place the order in the system. They don't just order it from somewhere, but come to ask specifically from me." She feels satisfied that during her time in this restaurant the number of cake orders has grown. "So it was maybe like one cake in a month here when I started, now it is almost every week. -- Thanks for the customers, who have ordered cakes for their home parties, when they have discovered in some meetings that the cakes are good." For Tanja it feels important to get the customers satisfied with her services. "And just that you can make the customer happy, you have done your work well, and you really do something concrete and you can show what you have done."

In a previous work place she had her own project of taking care of all the Christmas cakes that customers ordered. She kept a list of all the orders, produced the cakes and gave them to the customers. One week before the giveaway day she concentrated solely to this and was proud of having her own project. "So I just focused on doing the cakes, packing them and handing them over. It was like my own project there."

Another example of this is Tanja's passion and skills in coffees. Because of her history of working in cafes Tanja has gained expertise in coffee making. She was very proud of having responsibility of a café and the high quality coffee that was made there. "It was so unbelievable when I was responsible for the café, and I was in charge of the quality."

It felt good when customers came to thank her and when she was able to provide something that the customers truly appreciated. "And I think it was so lovely when they came to say that this is exactly what we want. -- This is not almost, but just right. Keep that."

When she came to her current work place she cleaned and maintained all the coffee machines very carefully until late nights. "It was great when I came here as a first thing I maintained all the coffee machines, I was rubbing all evenings the pipes and disentangling all the taps, and all." The best thank you was when the customers noticed it. "And next week it was written in the feedback that how is your coffee so good nowadays."

Bad climate reduces well-being and meaningfulness at work

For Tanja the work community is the most important part of well-being at work. "I think the people at work is very important, because it affects do you have fun at work." And getting friends from colleagues is an essential part of well-being also. "I count it as part of occupational well-being that you really get friends here." In a bad climate and in mental stress it is totally horrible to work, she shivers even in the thought of it. "The hurry is not nearly as bad as the mental stress. If there is an oppressive atmosphere it is totally horrible to work in it."

Tanja knows what she is talking about because she has also felt very alienated in her previous work environments, at one place nobody talked at all and the atmosphere was icy. This often leads to that that you go home in a bad mood as well. "I was in this trainee place once during bakery school. -- Nobody talked anything during the whole day. It was totally quiet. I think it was incomprehensible that we are a young gang and nobody talks anything unless it was

something that was related to work. The atmosphere there was fraught, and then when you go home you have ants in your pants, it wasn't nice at all."

Other things that Tanja thinks have caused bad climate are cliques, gossiping and the competition among colleagues. "Well for example the previous place where I was. There was a lot of these, these circles and gossiping behind your back. And senseless competing against each other. If a colleague does something well, it is not away from me. I don't need to slander them."

In one of the worst cases some of her former colleagues used to speak ill of other colleagues to customers or even the company's products. "In the other place some people were complaining about their colleagues, the firm, products, the bosses and so forth. I think it is like smearing your own nest, and I think it is the opposite of well-being at work."

Surviving challenges and releasing stress with colleagues

In order to cope with work stress and hectic days Tanja seeks herself in the company of colleagues. For Tanja a good team can save even the worst chaos days at work. "If you have a nice gang at work and you have a total chaos you still have fun at work. You can laugh it off afterwards."

In stressful situations she gets relaxed or copes with the situation by laughing hysterically with her closest colleague. "It is often that if you are in a horrible hurry and everybody is a bit like this and that and then it happens something stupid. And it is like this hysterical giggling. - - We are both like that, we never get nervous of anything but the busier it gets the more we giggle. We don't lose our nerves like many who take it as stress and curse the whole day. We just start to laugh hysterically."

When there are difficult customers or other challenging situations at work Tanja goes to release the irritation with her colleagues in order to continue with the work. "Then when you have the colleagues, and there comes some really irritating customer to yell at you, you can just go and offload it to your colleagues so you can continue from the same situation." Usually she tells her colleagues if it is a bad day so they wouldn't mind her behaviour. "And then if I have a bad day I usually say that I have a bad day so please don't care now." But staying positive for customers doesn't cause any problems for her. "But for customers I have always been a proper customer servant. From the start. So there is no problem."

Tanja believes that a good team spirit is a better way of serving the customers and showing a happier and better image to them as well. "If there is a tense atmosphere at work and everyone is doing customer work with reluctance it will influence customer service also if we are irritated with one another here."

Being a well-liked and loyal colleague for others

For Tanja it is important to be liked among her colleagues, and it has a significant impact to the joy of going to work every day. "I don't feel like nobody likes me, but more the opposite. That I can be a good colleague and that increases the fact that it's nice to go to work. You feel that you are liked."

She highlights also that she wants to be flexible towards her colleagues. If a colleague needs to go earlier from work to watch a kid's play at school, she is more than willing to stay longer to help her. And this is done reciprocally in the community. "You really care about your colleagues. You can be flexible with friends. Some colleague says that damn his kid has a show at school. No problem, I will be longer today, I'll come tomorrow earlier so that he can go there."

Tanja considers that it is important to try to organize opportunities for colleagues to live their lives outside of work as well. "We are in this respect more, we do more than just work together. We are trying to organize that colleagues can go and do what they want."

This kind of reciprocal flexibility is also something they have been thanked for by the managers. "We have got recognition that we care for each other. And if someone needs to go earlier to work, so fine I can do a longer day so you can leave. Being flexible on both sides."

Tanja is also very loyal to her colleagues and she is willing to speak up for them if they are treated badly. She tells about a case where two younger girls were forced to work in wet conditions and nobody took them seriously before she came to the rescue. "I feel that nobody took them seriously until I went to the kitchen and said that now you must -- for real the girls have been standing there for three weeks in wet socks. Now we just need to do something and it needs to be taken care of."

Being proud of work colleagues

Tanja is very proud of her work team, their competence and motivation. She puts them on a high pedestal, because everyone in their group really works hard and wants the work to

succeed. "We have such a loyal and true group. Everyone are really interested in that the work is done well and everything is taken care of."

She feels that their team has a very special atmosphere, "it is this funny bubble, where we are all inside". And even in the whole house there is a climate of trust and openness where you can ask anyone anything and the communication is easy. "I think here is such a good atmosphere. In the whole house I mean. It is in our work group but also if you include the customers. We have a really confidential climate and it is very pleasant to work in. You dare to ask questions, even from the customers you can ask if something is bothering you."

Tanja appreciates that everyone is very helpful towards each other and competent in different skills so that they can substitute others in different tasks. "We help everyone if they are in trouble and somehow we are all so multitalented. Everyone can see if someone is in a hectic place, so let's go and help." She feels very proud of her colleagues also, because they are very eager to start on new things even though it creates more work. "It is amazing how people start to work eagerly despite it creates more work. Nevertheless people are like 'cool, let's do this'."

Sometimes this proudness can mean that when she compares her team to outside extra workers, she can be critical and suspicious. She believes they are often unskilful and can't use the equipment properly, which creates chaos at the work place. "You never know what you get. On one hand you can get people who can't separate a carrot from potato, and it is a bit difficult. -- if there comes someone to do the dishes who can't handle it, it will create quite a chaos."

Being proud of the success of the workplace

In addition of being proud of her team, Tanja is also similarly proud of the success of the whole restaurant and the quality service they provide. "For us there comes so much good feedback from the customers. Something like 'you can always be trusted. And 'when I order a cake for a birthday party I can trust that I can put it on serve'. The quality you know. It feels like it is the biggest thing."

One example that Tanja likes to share is how customers from another building, where there is a competitor's restaurant, come to their restaurant instead.

”Well one good example is another office, where there are about hundred people working and there is a competitor’s restaurant. But still they come and eat with us. Sometimes even a courier is taking sandwiches and other food from our place to the other. I think it tells something about our company. I wouldn’t say we are in a bad situation.”

Also the new take away solution has taken off very well in their place compared to many other Fazer restaurants. ”And I have heard from surprisingly many that it hasn’t started off as well as for us. We just need to thank the customers.”

Sometimes Tanja has heard when their customers have praised their service for their own customers who are from the outside. That their restaurant is something to be proud of for their customers as well feels very good. ”Well if a customer is complimenting us for their own clients. That feels great. -- It is a source of pride. -- And it creates a good feeling for me.”

Tanja wants a manager who knows how the kitchen works and takes responsibility

Tanja considers that it is essential that the manager has some kind of background in the kitchen and that he or she understands for example how many people are needed to work. “It would be really important that the boss understands and has some kind of a background in the kitchen. -- A person without a background in kitchen can’t understand how much work there is and how many people are needed to do it.” Tanja’s ideal manager is also present in the daily routines of the team’s work. ”Comes often here in the dining room, knows what is happening even though their booth is a bit further. Comes a lot here and listens to our ideas.”

She thinks it is also very important that the manager takes responsibility and is in control. ”Well someone who is listening and takes matters in his or her hands. Not like ’yeah yeah, let’s do it next week’ and then everything just remains the same. Someone who really takes responsibility and takes care of them.”

It is important that the manager is fair and friendly to all but she feels that the manager should not be too friendly, because then it can become more difficult to say anything negative. “And not be too friend-like. If you go too much on the friend level it will be more difficult to say about anything. You need to be friendly and listen, but not go too deep.”

Tanja appreciates that her manager is always flexible in organizing changes to shifts and free days from work if it’s needed. “That is really great. If you need free days from work it has always worked out.” Also the manager’s skill to celebrate the good results accomplished at

work together with the team feels important. “Well at least our boss knows how to do it. When things has gone well, we take some sparkling wine after work on Friday before we go home. This is really nice, or wine. -- I think this is a good thing.” This kind of celebration of small accomplishments creates a feeling of union and togetherness in work, which is important for Tanja.

Tanja enjoys working one day at a time and it creates a balanced life style for her

Tanja has never been interested in a manager position herself and she thinks she would have done it earlier if she would have liked to choose this path. “It’s weird but nothing like that I’ve never had. I would have gone and done it already. I’ve been here for that long already.”

Tanja likes that there is a reasonable amount of work every day to keep her work separate from her free time. “There is enough work, but the load is not too big. And then in the morning it feels nice to go to work.” She enjoys that she can work one day at a time and not to take work home. “I don’t have homework. When I leave work then starts my free time.” When she compares her work to the customers they serve she feels content. “Here you can see that many customers are stressed out, and they need to work at home. Then you start to think that actually I have a nice work. I do it here and then I go home.”

This means that Tanja’s work can’t pile up. Every day is a new day and you can take care of one thing at a time. Tanja considers that it is important not to think about work matters at home and do your work as best as you can. “You have to take it so that you do what you can, and you can’t do more. Close the door and go home. You shouldn’t think about it too much, that day was that.” She feels that she doesn’t want to make too big sacrifices at work because her kids and her family comes always first. This was also why she finished working in three-shift-work and prefers the day work. “Just because of my boy I needed to get a daily work in the first place, just because of him.”

Tanja hopes that her good team will be lasting, because now she feels they have managed to create a good atmosphere where they work well together. She enjoys that her colleagues are close to her and she can always share with them all the important things. If this team would change and not be this pleasant it might diminish Tanja’s enjoyment at work.

4.2. Pia the Pioneer

Pia is an independent and ambitious reformer who is excited about driving change at work and serving the customers as well as possible. She has always wanted to have more influence at the workplace and she has advanced to a shift manager position and takes her role very seriously. She enjoys when she can see that the work community and customers are using the reforms she has initiated and she has earned their trust.

Striving to have an influence

Pia ended up in the restaurant world by a coincidence. After the secondary school she ended up doing various jobs in restaurants and noticed that it was something she liked. “Well it was when I was doing some shifts in restaurants when I started to think that this is something I could do for a longer time. This is how I ended up to study this.” She studied in a restaurant school, where they worked a lot as a part of studying. “Studying was more like a combination of working and studying. It was this apprenticeship deal we were doing at the school. Even though it was school it was focused on work.”

After working in different customer service positions Pia started to get frustrated with the fact that she was supposed stay aside and just perform her work “in many places it’s just like ‘be quiet in the corner there and take care of your duties. And that’s it.”

She felt that she wanted to have more influence at work. “Probably it’s because I have always wanted to get my voice heard, and then have an influence on things.” Becoming a manager had been her goal since she studied at the vocational school “since I graduated from vocational school, I have wanted to study to become a supervisor, I have only the basic degree you know.”

When she came to work at Fazer she had heard that there were schooling possibilities to become a manager. “When I came to Amica I had already read that they do these kinds of things, and they have their own groups and apprenticeships. It was already then when I asked that could I do it.” She was promised to get this apprenticeship possibility to become a manager “and already then they promised it would be possible”. But it didn’t seem to happen very easily, and she needed to ask for it very actively several times. The current group

manager then organized it and today she works as a shift manager. She is very content that she got her papers and is going to the right direction. “Not straight anywhere. But kind of a supervisor position.”

As a shift manager Pia is responsible for the dining room area in the restaurant and the employees working there. She is content, because she feels she can finally have an influence and that it is expected of her. ”Here it feels like I can really have an influence and I am expected to have opinions. And I have ideas, and people really listen to them. And I have a chance to really have an impact.”

Pia is focused that the whole restaurant functions and serves customers the best possible way

For Pia it is very important to see that the whole restaurant is functioning well. A successful day for her means that everything runs smoothly and that the customer’s experience at the restaurant is as pleasant as possible. ”It is just that when customers can find their way, and find everything as logically as possible. So that going to lunch is not something horrible or a difficult task for the customer. The customer just walks in, okay here is this and here is the selection, there is the dessert. So that everything runs smoothly.”

Pia is solutions focused and she wants that customer’s needs are answered when they come to the restaurant. “Everybody has a need when they come here in a way.” And when she herself is able to solve this need creates a feeling of success and content. “And when you’re able to take care of it, and you can settle the need. And everybody is in a good mood“. It feels good if she can help the customers to relax and distance them from their work routines for the lunchtime. “So that they for lunch would just forget everything. Now let’s get relaxed and eat for a moment and then carry on”.

When she comes to the work place she is always thinking ahead of the day that is coming. “And many times I just think ahead for the coming day all the time.” She tries to consider how the day will come to look like and how to be prepared for anything that could happen. She is very committed in her work and wants to do everything in the right and proper way.

Pia highlights her genuine interests towards the customers experience and that it is important that the customers know that she will take things forward. “And they know that I take care of certain things, and they know that I will take their feedback and comments seriously, and really care what they are saying to me and not just say ’yes, yes’.”

Reform and change are the keys for enabling success

In order to provide the best possible service Pia is willing to do reforms and changes that are needed. She actually believes that making changes at work is the prerequisite for development. "If there is never change there is never development either. Otherwise we would be counting with abacus and pay with squirrel skin."

Even though the changes might be a bit tough or unpleasant it is a way forward. "I really think that although the changes sometimes feel a bit unpleasant, it is still for the better direction and progress forward."

For Pia it is also very important that her own work place is following the trends and gives a good image to the customers. "I think that our customers should have a feeling that we are trendy, and that we know things and we follow." Otherwise these customers might be lost and for real "we can't live in the Stone Age for ever."

She thinks it is important to accept that change is inevitable and constant. It is no use in trying to go against it. "Until this day we have developed this far and then we change and advance forward. But it means it is change all the time and if you try to hinder it, I don't think it is very useful. If you are trying to stick to it with tooth and nail, that this is what we have always done, it's not good."

Pia is trying to be patient in her improvements and little by little take her own ideas and customers wishes forward. "I try to think that it is little by little that I can get my own ideas and customer's ideas forward". It is a part of everyday work, which can be accomplished with small practices.

Improving the workplace by introducing new practices

One method Pia has been changing and improving the workplace is by introducing new practices. When she started in her current place she introduced a scale to improve the take away sales. When using the scale customers can themselves choose the food they want in a plastic box, weight it with the scale and pay it accordingly.

She thinks this is a better solution, because you get a better price for the product and it is easier and more efficient for the staff. "I think the current system is better, and we can get a more realistic price for the product. And when it happens during the lunch the kitchen can

start to clean all the equipment at the same time and we don't need to start packing the food. And we get a better price from the customer.”

And for customers this creates a better selection of food also for the lunch time, for example if you want to eat less and take only a salad along you can scale it and you don't need to pay as much. ”It broadens the selection for the customer in a way. There is not only two options but one can buy anything one likes, and the price comes through the scale, because everything has their own price per kg. This enables the customers to get what they pay for.” Being fair to the customers is an important value for Pia.

To bring this new practice wasn't easy, because at first both the customers and colleagues opposed the new idea that seemed difficult and strange compared to the old ways that had been used for years and years. ”Then from both ends there were resistance. It wasn't easy in the beginning.” But she was persistent. “And I tried with all my powers. I had just come there as a new person.” Patiently she taught all the customers who doubted the system by showing concretely how to use it. “We have taught them and accustomed them. -- So by showing very concretely how to do things as long as they noticed themselves how easy it was.”

Afterwards she was happy because now people are using the new system and are content. “But today customers are saying that this such a good system.” She thinks it is important to use these new systems and equipment. “We need to get people to use the things we have, we can't let the scale just stand there if nobody uses it.”

Another new introduction she has brought is a feedback book, where customers can write their comments about what did they like about the food and what kind of improvement ideas do they have. Pia is always checking the book and answering customer's comments. ”And then I always comment there something and give feedback so that the customers know that it is read.”

Sometimes she feels her colleagues don't appreciate or care about feedback. “Sometimes people take the feedback well, but sometimes they say it's only the opinion of one customer or something like that.” Pia thinks it is underestimating the customer. ”It is a little, I think it is undervaluing the customer. If they give feedback we should deal with it and take it seriously.”

Pia is also trying to improve the daily communication at work. At her restaurant they don't have any official information sessions and she considers it would be important. She is trying to advance this by sharing things she considers are important when they are eating. "When we

are all together eating, at that point I try to say things I have heard from the customers. If they have said something about food, whether it is positive or negative. So at that point I say that now there came this and that.” It is nothing official but she hopes it can get things forward and spread the information. “Maybe it assists even a little even though it is not an actual morning or afternoon information session, but it is still something. At least it touches lightly the objective.”

Getting people along

In order to get the changes forward that Pia thinks are important, she knows that she has to get the people along as well. Sometimes, like presented above, it is more challenging than other times. She feels she has at least in some ways succeeded in it and having good people skills are essential in that.

Pia’s direct manager Anne is not as excited about all the new ideas and changes Pia has in mind. In fact Pia says she is sometimes very resistant. ”Very powerful personality, headstrong and against changes”. She is doubtful from the start and ”when I start a sentence she says no before she has heard the end of the sentence”.

But Pia is not defeated this easily and she knows that they have same goals even though they are trying to reach them in different ways. “But I feel that we have so similar goals, and in the end of the day agree on many things.” She thinks she has learned how to handle her and little by little convince her to get customer’s wishes or her own ideas through. ”I find that many times, even though we are so different I have learned to handle her. And I can get my own ideas or customers’ ideas persuaded so that in the end she admits that we could do it in that way as well.”

In her own work team and colleagues it hasn’t been that easy either, but Pia believes that with her soft management style she has created a good contact with the colleagues. “Although it has been a bit challenging at times I feel that I have with my kind management style been able to create good contact with our girls and ladies. Even it has been a little difficult at times, I think I have won them over.”

Pia believes that her people skills are also essential when working with the customers. They are from various backgrounds and getting along with them and being able to provide the best service you need to be flexible. ”And in our work, and in my work especially, you need to get

along with very different kinds of people. -- You know you need to handle the situations. -- And I think I am that kind of a person who can handle them.”

Pia feels competent when she has earned trust from other people

It is not all about influencing and getting her own ideas forward, it is important for Pia to get positive feedback and earn the trust of other people in order for her to succeed. In fact this is one of the most important sources of meaningfulness for her.

”I feel that I have gotten a certain trust from both the customers and colleagues. And this is something fundamentally important for me. I don’t want to do any work so that I just do it, so that I just go there for eight hours a day. I want to feel that I can succeed in it.”

When customers take more contact and show their trust, it feels significant for Pia, because that is what she has been striving at. ”Then the same thing with the customers, I have gained confidence from them as well, like I have wanted. And they know, that I am the person here who is responsible for the dining room area and certain things, and they have taken contact very nicely.” She considers that it is important that the customers know her duties and that she takes their feedback seriously. “And they know that I am responsible for certain things and they know I take their feedback seriously.”

She feels customers have also started to give more feedback during her time at the work place. She hopes to create an atmosphere, where people can say anything, whether it is negative or positive. ”I find that customers have started during my time here to give more spoken feedback, because they have noticed that I want to know and that I ask all the time. It is easier to tell maybe, because this person really wants to know if they’re alright. And they know that they can say it whether it is negative or positive. I really want to know.”

Pia tells about a moment when she felt especially good when a customer had noticed her influence. This happened once when an outside trainer had eaten breakfast in their restaurant before keeping a training session and she had told about Pia’s excellent service attitude as a very positive example to the audience. She heard this feedback through the restaurant group manager and she was pleased of this. ”Good if they have been happy. If they wouldn’t be satisfied I guess they wouldn’t have mentioned it. It had stuck in their minds, and it feels very nice for me.”

When Pia gets positive feedback she knows she has done something right and she has much more will to carry on. “If you hear positive feedback from someone else it is much easier to believe, I guess I have succeeded. It makes you feel more certain afterwards. And then you carry on and try to succeed and push a little more.”

Pia sees herself innovative and open for new things

Another important part of doing those changes is Pia’s own personality. She feels she is a person that can take new things forward. This is also why she thinks she was chosen to participate to the ProSales –training as well, because she truly wants to make those changes and get better results. “I could be a person that fits well to the ProSales –training, who really wants to create those additional sales and changes. I don’t stick to the old.”

In general Pia is open for more modern systems at work and new work methods, for example work rotation in different restaurants is very natural and refreshing for her. ”Yeah. I’m part of that generation and anyways this kind of rotation is normal and refreshing at times.” But she knows that everyone is not the same. “But for some people there is a higher threshold.”

Pia is trying to keep her eyes open for new ideas and viewpoints in her work. She is trying to encourage others to do this as well. “And it is good to keep yourself and anyone else alert to look at things from a new angle.” This is a way for her to stay alert in the constant changes and being prepared for new things. She is also always eager to start new things and go along when there are new ideas to be accomplished. ”And they know that I will come along to everything, there are no obstacles to that.”

Positive attitude and humour with colleagues keeps her going

Pia’s workdays are often hectic and sometimes she stays longer in order to get everything ready. Getting the changes and new practices forward as well as getting the people along can be challenging. In order to cope with difficulties Pia emphasizes the need to stay positive, “so you don’t remain in the negative that oh no I can’t do anything.”

Pia thinks it is your own responsibility to decide what kind of attitude you have when you are handling a stressful day. ”It is your own attitude that makes the difference, if you take that stressing attitude that everything will be ruined or you take the attitude that everything might not be perfect but we will go with this the best we can.”

Pia is also trying to be lenient towards herself with her goals, and not taking things too seriously: “what you can’t handle, you put it away.”

She considers that well-being at work is also a two-way thing; both well-being at home and well-being at work are two sides of the same coin. “You need to be well yourself to be well at work. It works both ways.” She thinks that people have control of their own well-being. “I think it is a lot about yourself, I think it is the key to it.”

Another thing, which reduces stress and creates better well-being for Pia are good days and humour with the colleagues. She likes the atmosphere of laughing and telling jokes and stories. “On a good day humour, and everyone laughing at themselves and each other, a lot of inside jokes and so on. Always when there are days like that it makes the atmosphere pleasant and customers can see it too.” In this kind of a relaxed atmosphere it is easy to work in but also much nicer for the customers.

When Pia gets frustrated with some people at work she gets into the company of younger guys with whom she can be in a more relaxed manner. “And at times when the certain older ladies are too much, then I can hang out and joke with the guys. I don’t need to be nervous about what kind of mood they are coming to work. It is somehow easier.”

Working in an atmosphere where everybody helps everybody and where people are doing their work well is important for Pia. A happy, helpful and efficient working culture is her ideal. “Well for me it would be important that the climate at work is good and open, and that we help everybody when we see that someone needs help. And everybody does everything and the atmosphere would be cooperative, relaxed and joyful, you know.”

She is trying to be an encouraging team member and a manager as well. When a younger colleague is very shy of talking in English with foreign customers she is trying to encourage her to try and not be so strict on herself. “I told her to hold up her head, they will understand.”

Pia wants to have both autonomy and support from above

Pia works as a shift manager so she has quite a lot of independence in the dining room area, where she is the main responsible person and supervises two waitresses. Her direct supervisor is responsible for the kitchen and the whole restaurant. As mentioned earlier she has sometimes quite differing opinions with her manager about the changes and reforms that are needed at the workplace.

Sometimes Pia takes the matter into her own hands if things are not happening like she would hope. Once there was a shelf missing from the dining room area and the manager did not do anything about it. "Well then I went to buy it. Yes, during my own free time I went to take care of it and took it to work." The essential thing for her is to get things forward and if it means staying later at work or doing something extra, this is not a problem.

Sometimes she feels bad about the manager's indifference and that she does not appreciate the work she is doing. "It feels like she doesn't appreciate what I am trying to do." Luckily the restaurant group manager knows this. "Our group manager knows it." Pia feels thankful that she has good relationship with the restaurant group manager, who is the supervisor of her manager. The restaurant group manager usually understands and supports her reforms and changes, and is often excited about her ideas. "But from the RRP I have gotten a lot of support in this work. -- Yes, she has stood behind my ideas and said yes." Many times she can be directly in contact with her related to the dining room issues. When her direct manager is difficult this gives an important feeling of support. Though sometimes Pia would hope she could tell her supervisor that she needs more time in order to implement the ideas. "But in a way one thing, which is missing is that she could say to the boss that I need time. Time management has still been a bit problematic."

Despite of these challenges Pia feels their overall goal of making the restaurant succeed is the same with her manager and she thinks they can work together towards that. She considers that she has also learned how to deal with her manager and take her ideas patiently forward.

In the future Pia wants to learn her tasks even better and improve things at the current work place. "I dream that I would be here and learn to be better in this job and achieve things. Changes and reforms. So those kinds of dreams." Continuing the advancement to become a manager in the future is a possibility. "Not yet in a manager's seat, but in that direction. With little steps forward."

4.3. Sanna the Sales Expert

Sanna is a natural sales person who truly enjoys selling and talking with people. She emphasizes the importance of reciprocal human encounters with customers and wants to know her customers well, even become friends with them. Sanna enjoys her work very much and gets satisfaction from seeing the concrete results of her work.

Doing a concrete work together with people

Sanna didn't have clear career goals when she was young but she always knew it has to be something concrete. She went to high school but university studies weren't for her. "I really need a physical work, where you are doing with your hands. That is why I never even thought about university or anything. If my hands stop moving I will fall asleep. I need something to do all the time."

Earlier she was working partly in an office with computers and she noticed that it didn't suit her at all. "It was so boring, you just sit there and watch the screen and tap something on the computer. There is nobody to talk with, and everything goes in bitspace. You never see the person who does anything after it."

She noticed that working in the store was much more meaningful when she was together with the customers seeing the results of her work. "In the store you do something concrete. And you're dealing with the customers. And nice customers cheer up your day."

This feeling of joy of being with people made her choose this career path. "That is what has driven me in this business. To be in the customer service and in contact with people." She went to study in a restaurant school, graduated and has now been working for several years as a waitress in Fazer lunch restaurants. Sanna's responsibilities at work have varied in the dining room area, she has been doing customer service tasks but also organizing different foods to display for example. Today Sanna is working in a bigger restaurant where she has had a chance to do more work duties that are related to selling and she works in the café of the restaurant. She is really excited that now she can spend more time with the customers and get to know them better.

”When I got the chance to be amongst customers. No, you don’t have time in the food counter, only a few words, it’s so busy. Now I have gotten to know the customers in another level, and they talk a lot. -- Many people have said that it has been a lovely change.”

Sanna enjoys being with the customers and she feels it is her passion. ”Then the customers of course. -- It is ‘my thing’.” Being together with the customer is something she enjoys truly, which gives her energy and meaningfulness in her days. ”And when the customers come to say it was so good and how she just liked it. That kind of being with the customer. That is fun. And it gives strength, strength and a feeling of flow.”

A natural sales person

Sanna likes selling and she feels it is very natural for her. She believes it is more or less a skill where some people are good at and others are not. “I feel that maybe it is more like a personality question for me.” She feels she has this ability and it is important that she can use her skills. When she was earlier working mostly with food she felt it was a pity. ”Then I was long working in the food counters, and it was a bit like, I felt that my potential was lost you know.”

It is easy for Sanna to be with customers, she is not shy and she is used to spending time with them. In her personality Sanna considers herself very talkative and open personality. ”It must be that I spend so much time with the customers here you know. I know them, and I talk and I babble. And I’m not afraid of the customers or nervous around them. I think it must be, I know how to be with them.” This means that she really appreciates this kind of contact with people and having someone to talk to at work. ”I’m talkative and social so I miss it, I need to have contact.”

Sanna believes that her natural sales ability and long experience in customer service is the reason she was chosen to participate to the ProSales –training program as well. ”Maybe it is because I have been so long in this field. Anyway over ten years in customer service work. They wouldn’t put anyone who is just a beginner.”

Sanna enjoys promotion and busy sales events

Sanna is not afraid of taking contact with people but instead seeks in these kinds of situations. Always when there are bigger promotion events like Easter or Christmas or other weekly markets Sanna is the active organizer. She plans the tables and the offerings in this market

place and is also doing the actual selling with the customers. She enjoys that she can encourage people "and you can be there: come, come and buy!" It feels important that she can have an active role and influence the actual sales situation and what the customers will buy.

"If you just stand there tongue-tied nobody will come and buy from you. But that you can really influence in it. What people will buy, will they come and look at the products and so on. It feels important somehow. It has an effect."

These kinds of big events, with challenges and many people are exciting for Sanna and they make the work interesting. "In general in the big events there are a lot of customers. And there are many questions and problem situations. -- Yeah that is what makes me tick. You have to stick your neck out and there are challenging situations." Quiet days when nothing is happening feels very boring for Sanna. "When it is a quiet day, the hours just drag on, and one day feels like a week," she says with a grin.

Also during more normal work days Sanna is eager to seek in contact with people and with little things increase the sales. When there are food tastings on the table on serve and nobody is taking them, she takes the plate and starts to go around in the dining room area offering these to the customers "want to taste, here would be Marianne quark or pasha quark."

Sometimes the work environment doesn't encourage Sanna to be so active and some colleagues might not like her eagerness so much. She tells about a situation when there was a group of customers sitting in the restaurant. Sanna saw that this might be a perfect opportunity to sell but "I thought two times that would I make a go at it, because usually here people don't do it like that." But then she went to promote some new chocolate products they had in selection. Afterwards the people came to buy eagerly and Sanna felt good that she got extra sales. Most importantly it was a sign for her to keep going in her own style and continue selling. "But above all it was important for me, maybe I should just be who I am. I feel that I can bring more sales and they will be pleased and remember this place positively."

Knowing customers' preferences and seeing the results of your recommendations

Sanna is proud that she knows the customers that come to their restaurant very well. She knows and remembers almost all of them personally. "I can say that I know the whole house to the core. If I don't remember everyone by the name, at least roughly I do. I know their families and what they do. Who has what kind of hobbies and so on."

She is pleased that she knows customer's preferences in food and beverages as well. "I know who comes to get a latte, who is up for a cappuccino and so forth. And who takes tea and a croissant." And she has made sure that she remembers them. This makes selling and making recommendations easier as well. "You know what they like, and well if you're selling cakes and toasts you know what to suggest."

And when the customer likes what Sanna has recommended she feels good. "And when the customer comes to say that 'wow this was really good and I just liked it a lot'." This creates a feeling of success in her work, to be able to recommend something they will like.

Recommending in general is a way of communicating with the customers for Sanna. This way she can also give new ideas of foods and drinks for the customers to try out and she has for example managed to attract new special coffee drinkers. "Then there has come these new people who drink special coffees after I have suggested it for them. What if I would make cappuccino for you, just try it out. I think they've grasped these offers quite nicely." Customers seem to seize these offers quite often.

When customers grasp these offers and recommendations Sanna is able to bring in more sales, which makes her feel competent. When she likes the product herself she can recommend it very easily in an authentic way. "Then you know, we had a dessert for example, this yoghurt panna cotta and strawberry melba, and I tasted it and it was really good. Then at the cash I was trying to say to whomever I could that it is such a good dessert, you should really take it if you don't usually do it. And I sold quite many of them. -- And really it was so easy to sell because I knew it was so good." When Sanna believes in the products she is selling, it makes selling so much easier.

Small innovations and creativity to boost the everyday life

Sanna enjoys throwing ideas around on how to improve sales or create some new ideas for campaigns. "I am a pretty innovative person if I can say so. Just give me a stick and a pencil and I will develop something out of it," says Sanna laughing with a twinkle in the eye.

At the moment she is developing one idea together with some customers she knows. "Here are couple of customers who are my pottering friends and we talked sometimes that we should organize some kind of a course in the afternoon after work. We thought a little, that maybe in the fall we could do some kind of a combination." The idea would be to organize an evening program at the restaurant where people could do arts and crafts and the restaurant

would serve coffee and pastry. They could provide some materials and people could do Christmas cards or decorations for example. Sanna is very excited about this and you can see it in the way she explained it with her hands in the air. Arts and crafts is her hobby as well and she is thinking if she could bring her own materials and equipment along. She is now discussing this with the restaurant manager on how to proceed, but he seemed to be positive about it as well.

Sanna enjoys using her creativity in everyday situations. When the sandwiches are finished for the afternoon and the customers are at lost what to have, she likes to think of different combinations to suggest and this way suggest new flavours and products to them. If there is a chance Sanna likes to do little special services for the customers like serving to the table, which are not part of her normal task. "I always say that just go and sit, I will bring it to the table."

Authentic and reciprocal connection with the customers

The best and most meaningful part of customer work for Sanna is the authentic encounters with people. It feels important that the customers see you as a real person behind your role.

"So the biggest thanks I would say, is that you're not just somebody who gave them the bread but they remember you as a person."

Being able to show the familiar customers that you remember them and ask personal questions from them feels important for Sanna, because she can see that they like it. "I have noticed that when there are those more familiar customers and you know that they have kids, and someone has said they have fever. Well after couple days when that person comes and you ask how the kids have recovered. Then when you can see that it in their eyes how it feels nice when someone remembers and asks."

She is also trying to make little compliments for people. Once there was an older lady, who was very stylishly dressed and Sanna complemented of her nice style. She was flattered and told Sanna that she has been working with fashion. Afterwards she started to greet each other and they created a bond.

"And it has gone around some barrier. I always try to say if there is something nice to say about anything. Not of course over the top, but anyhow. And maybe even a little over rather

than being cold and indifferent and that sort. Just that you show some kind of feelings that there would more humanity in this thing. So that this wouldn't be just some assembly line."

Thus a successful day for Sanna is when customers can leave the restaurant with a positive feeling. "I'd love that people could leave from here with a good mood, and this place would stick in their minds in a positive way. That is a successful day for me if I can leave that kind of a feeling for someone."

Sanna thinks that it is important that these encounters with people are reciprocal, and that customers treat them as real people as well and see them behind their work roles. "Of course we are expected to have a personal touch, but also customers should take us personally. We are not just sales people or waitresses or whatever. But we are for them humans the same way as they are for us."

This in mind Sanna has also been changing the communication culture at her workplace. When she came there people didn't even say hello or look into the eyes. "Quite many just walked past with the tray, they didn't even look when they had this badge. They didn't look at you, let alone say hello." Sanna took this as a challenge and started to say hello and talk to people in a persistent way. "I started to say for literally every person. -- Now they wait as anything so that our eyes meet, and you can say hi."

Customers gratitude and personal acknowledgement is important

Being an emphatic person and encountering with people in a genuine way has been noticed. "Well very personal things like lovely that you have come here, and how nice that you are here. One younger woman said that they have been talking with their colleagues that you are such a sunshine, even if it would rain outside it is always sunny in here."

Customer's gratitude and personal acknowledgement warms Sanna's heart. It feels good that the customers know her personally. Once when she was on a sick leave and when she returned there were many who came to ask questions and telling how glad they were that she was back. "And it was so lovely when I had been on a longer sick leave, then the most familiar ones came to ask what has happened, and had a lot of questions. -- And when I came back to work, 'how nice that you're back' and so on, they had really noticed that I had been away." And even when she is shorter time away the most familiar ones will notice that she has been away.

In an earlier place where she needed to leave she started to cry when some customers brought her flowers. "Yeah there were couple of oldies who brought me flowers. And one said that I had been like her own girl. Well I started to cry. I didn't want to leave these lovely customers." This warm connection and gratitude from the customers makes her feel welcome in the workplace. "But this what customers say, at least from their side I feel welcome to this place, that is it is nice that I'm here."

Becoming friends with customers

Some customer connections of Sanna have even developed to become friendships. "Many customers stay as friends." One of her customers she met in a free time event and now they always talk about their hobbies and interests when they meet.

Another customer Sanna became friends with was an outside consultant she met first through their daughter's football group. Then she came to the restaurant when she was doing her consultant work. They had a good connection and since then they have met in their free time and even their daughters have been playing together.

Sanna thinks it is great to form real relationships with customers and that these people really stay in her life. "It is lovely, I think it is so cool that they are something more than just someone who bought a coffee from you. They become friends. -- And they stay, you know."

Well-functioning and open work climate

Sanna wants to work in a well-functioning work community. It is important for her that the organizing of the everyday with the colleagues goes nicely and that everyone takes care of their own tasks, leaving the place clean for the next one.

"And the change of shifts goes very well. And we have substituted the lunch for each other, then the other gets to go and eat. It goes really straightforward and easy. Everybody knows that when you leave from work it will be clean for the other one. It goes nicely and we get along well."

At the moment it seems to be like this most of the time. The stability of the work community feels important as well and that there is always someone to ask if it is needed. "Then when we have this good gang. It is not patchy and somebody coming and going all the time. You know that someone is there if I need anything from them." The roles are clear and you can always ask help from others if it is needed.

Even though Sanna wants to have good relations with her colleagues, the work community is not so important for her like Tanja for example. Sanna emphasizes the role of customers. “Well customers are the primary thing for me, cause it’s they who we serve.”

Sanna doesn’t need to meet with her colleagues in her free time either. “I don’t think it is a necessity, and I don’t need it so much.” Being already seven and a half hours with them in the workplace is enough and afterwards Sanna wants to go home and spend time with her family.

Sanna wants to be emphatic towards her team members. She feels for example that it would be important to know if some of the colleagues have worries or cares in their family because it would be easier to understand their behaviour. “People have their troubles and their grief’s, but it would be good to know about them. You don’t need to tell more than that, but people could say if there is some family situation and they don’t have energy to be themselves or go full speed. If people tell it, others can understand better.”

Sanna gets satisfaction from seeing the results of her work

As mentioned earlier, Sanna likes her work to be concrete and this is one reason she ended up in this career. She feels that working with customers she can see the results of her work right away. “I have always liked to work with people. And making customers satisfied. You know you have done your work well when you do something concrete and you can show what you have done.” You know when customers liked the food or not. “In this you can see it in a way, did it taste good or not.”

To be able to create a relaxing lunch moment for the customers away from work routines feels nice. Also working in bigger events, where Sanna can see when people are enjoying themselves creates satisfaction. “Then if there’s some events where everything goes well and succeeds, and you see that everybody is enjoying themselves. That is nice. And you can see the results of your work.”

As a consequence of her wanting to do concrete work Sanna is sometimes very restless and she simply can’t sit still. “I can’t stay put.” Doing work that is physical is something she enjoys and she feels that she is lazy if she is forced to stay put. This happened in the ProSales –training event, where they were listening the most of the day lecturing. “I felt so lazy, I didn’t do anything. -- I just sit there and listen when the trainer talks there and they pay for me when I don’t do anything. Haha. So I felt quite lazy. I felt I needed to get going and do some real work to earn my wage.”

A caring manager who is at the same level

Sanna wants a manager who is at the same level with the colleagues and not above other people. "Not like so that you are a boss and I'm under. I think we are all the same." She feels that her current manager is very much like that. She is emphatic, helpful and cares for the whole team. "Such a desire to help us. She is so worried about us all, and do we manage and is everything alright." She is a bit like a mother for the whole team.

It feels important for Sanna that the manager is interested in what is going on and is present in the daily work. This creates a feeling of trust. "And that I know that our manager is interested in what we do here, and how we have it here in our side. So that it's not just sitting in the booth. It creates a safer feeling."

When there are tough situations at work the manager is joking and trying to create a relaxed atmosphere. The stress releases in the group with the hysterical laughter. "Everybody is laughing their heads off, tears are falling you know. She builds the spirit here anyway." Sanna thinks that it is important that the manager is there to build the trust and a good feeling in the community.

Another thing Sanna emphasizes is the manager's presence with customers. As she is a devoted customer service person she feels it would be essential that the customer's meet and interact with the manager. If the manager has good relations with them it creates a feeling of credibility and she thinks she can serve the customers better this way as well.

In an earlier workplace Sanna had a manager who was distant. He was often calling her home to come to work even though she was taking care of a sick kid at home. Sanna felt that this kind of treatment was inhuman and reduced her work motivation. "It can cut down motivation for quite a long time. -- Like you would be some kind of a machine that should always just slog away. All the decency and humanity is gone. You didn't come here to talk about family or kids."

Not having enough time and support for sales work diminishes meaningfulness at work

Sanna is annoyed sometimes in the fact that she doesn't have enough time to do selling from her other duties. "I would do so much and put myself out there so much more, but this normal work takes all the time what there is. There is not enough time."

Sanna gets frustrated when she sees chances to sell to customers and she can't act upon it, because she is so tied to the cashier for example. "I was there at the cash when we had a take away as well. I could see that people are walking around and looking and touching them. And I was tied to the cash. I thought that now I should jump in there, now, now, now. But I couldn't do anything when there were people coming all the time and you try. I was looking one eye on it how good chances are just going past. When there wasn't enough time."

She knows she could do much more selling if she could devote more time to it. "But I know if we would have put our mind to it more, and I'd have more time, I know I could sell more."

Sometimes Sanna feels annoyed when she doesn't get support for the sales work from the work community. The manager doesn't provide enough concrete help to put her ideas into action. "It feels like our boss, she easily throws ideas for me. But then for the realisation, I would need time and equipment and stuff." She feels bad when her colleagues act in a colder manner towards customers and are not as customer centric as she thinks should be necessary. Sanna cannot understand this because "our job would be nonetheless to sell".

If there are more of these experiences and she feels she can't use her potential it might lead that Sanna's experience of her work as meaningful diminishes.

Sanna is content with her work situation and hopes her physical health remains

She enjoys her work very much as it is and she is surprised sometimes how quickly her workdays pass. "The days just go so fast. Weeks are just flowing. Work is meaningful, it is fun. You could almost say that work doesn't feel like work anymore." She feels competent in her work and that makes the working almost easy. "It is easy, if you can say it like that but work is easy and smooth and it can be fun as well."

Sanna is content in her work, because she feels she can do quite a lot of selling and customer work, which is her passion. In the future she sees there are also other career possibilities. She still wants to work with people but the restaurant environment is not a necessity. One possibility would be to work with kids in free time guidance for example. "Free time tutoring. This kind of club activity for kids would be nice. It could be something that I like."

In the future she hopes that her passion at work and her physical health stays as long as possible. "Of course you hope that drive and passion to work stays as long as possible. And above all that I stay in good physical health. This is a physically tough field." She

acknowledges that her work is tough and it might cause physical problems. “It is all the time carrying stuff around, tables, chairs and so on. Oh well. Whatever there is? It might be that the limits of my body that become an obstacle at some point.”

5. What makes work meaningful and how do employees actively make their work meaningful?

The narratives of Tanja, Pia and Sanna illustrate quite well the meaningful parts of their work. Nevertheless it is important to analyse them more thoroughly in order to answer the two research questions, which are:

- 1) What do restaurant employees in customer service consider meaningful in their work?
- 2) How do they actively craft their work to become more meaningful?

I first analyse the first question and what are the sources of meaningful work through the three narratives. Secondly I examine the second question and what are the actual ways Tanja, Pia and Sanna craft and alter their work for it to become more meaningful. Thirdly I try to summarize my findings. I analyse my findings mostly grounded in the data but I also use the relevant main themes from the literature as a support.

5.1. Agency and relatedness create a sense of meaningfulness in work

From a thorough data analysis and coding there seemed to come up two broad categories that created a sense of meaningfulness in work for the interviewees. Firstly, the feeling of relatedness and communion that was created together with other people. And secondly, the feeling of agency that is created from a sense of independence, control and competence in your work. Most of the meaningful parts of the interviewees work experiences were under these two broad categories. Even though it is important to note that they are in constant dynamic process and many experiences and feelings included both agency and relatedness. This is illustrated as an evolving circle in the Figure 3.

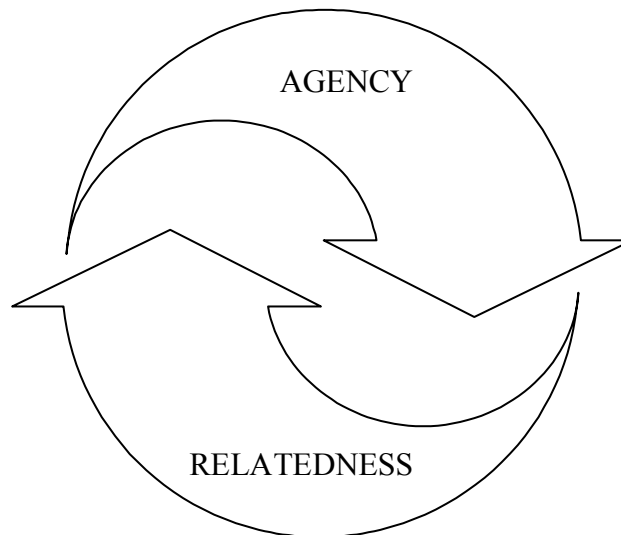


Figure 3. Sources of meaningful work.

I first explain about these concepts in brief and after I explain more in detail what Tanja, Pia and Sanna consider important and meaningful in their work.

5.1.1. A feeling of agency as a basis for meaningful work

Agency is a broad concept, which can include many things. Here I understand it as Rosso et al. (2010) describe it as a “drive to differentiate, separate, assert, expand, master and create” (p. 114). It includes the feeling of self-efficacy, autonomy, control, competence, perceived impact and self-esteem among others.

Chalofsky (2013) defines self-efficacy as personal mastery and a feeling of being in control of your life. People with high self-efficacy have learned how to deal with challenges in life and they believe in their own success. Self-esteem instead refers to positive self-regard and is an individual’s evaluation of his or her own worth. Both self-efficacy and self-esteem can be triggered by accomplishments but they differ in the sense where self-esteem promotes a sense of oneself as worthwhile as a way towards meaningfulness and efficacy instead refers to meaningfulness by being in control over one’s environment (Rosso et al., 2010.)

Perceived impact instead refers to a sense of making a difference or having a positive impact on something that is beyond the self. When you can positively impact others it stimulates greater level of meaningfulness in work (Grant, 2008.)

Autonomy and competence are important drivers of agency and are the two basic psychological needs in addition to relatedness that Deci and Ryan (2000) have proposed. They define autonomy as a universal tendency towards self-organization and self-regulation. It is related to an experience of volition, integrity and vitality. With the help of autonomy individuals can better regulate their own behaviour towards their needs and capacities, and towards self-cohesion and self-maintenance. The need for competence refers to engaging in optimal challenges and mastery, thus being skilful in the tasks you need to do. These two point out to the self-determining and agentic nature of human beings.

For Tanja, Pia and Sanna the feeling of agency creates meaningfulness in work but it occurs in different ways and with differing emphasis. I divided the need for agency in two categories, which are 1) having autonomy and responsibility, and 2) being competent and having a positive self-image. Next I explain how these were emphasized in the different narratives.

Having autonomy and responsibility creates agency

Seeking autonomy and being initiator of what you do is a core psychological need for people, and an essential part of agency as a source of meaningfulness. This need to have responsibility and be self-organized was clearly strongest for Pia in the three narratives. When she was working as a cashier she noticed that she got frustrated that in her position nobody listened to her ideas and she could not have an impact or take those decisions. This made her aspire to become a manager and now as a shift manager she feels she is in the right place, where she is expected to have ideas and have influence at work. She likes that she has responsibility and that she can modernize the workplace with new practices like the scale for take away food and collecting feedback from customers to a diary. It is important that the improvements create better solutions and that they are used. She is not scared for changes but actually thinks they are a necessity for improvement. She thinks that they need to stay ahead of the trends and new developments in order to give a better image for the customers.

Also Tanja and Sanna require a certain amount of autonomy in their work in order for it to be meaningful even though it is not as important for them as for Pia. Tanja likes that the manager is in charge at the work place and has overall responsibility. In fact getting too much

responsibility could diminish meaningfulness at work for her, because she has never herself wanted to become a manager or in a higher position at work. Nevertheless she enjoys sometimes that she can be responsible for the quality of the foods she prepares, like being responsible of making good coffee and when she has had some little projects of her own, like taking care of the Christmas cakes ordering in a previous place.

Sanna enjoys having autonomy in big sales events where she can influence what the customers will buy. Thus making recommendations makes her feel powerful. She likes busy days, the excitement and when she can solve customers' problems in hectic situations. She also seeks to do work that is concrete, where she can see the results of her work quickly and thus be responsible for excellent customer service.

Being a competent professional enables a positive self-image and creates agency

Feeling competent means that you feel that you can attain desired goals and succeed at challenging tasks in your environment. Feeling yourself competent is very often linked to a positive self-image as well. This feeling of competence in your profession is an essential source of meaningfulness in all the narratives.

Tanja feels herself competent in her work when she can offer high quality food and services for customers. Working with food has always been important for her and a dear hobby. She is very proud of her baking skills and that customers have started to order more cakes during her time at the work place. Coffee making is another of Tanja's expertise that she has gathered during her previous work places, of which she was highly praised by satisfied customers. Knowing that you are good in your work is important and it creates a positive self-image for Tanja. Customers have also a critical role in enforcing this feeling of competence and positive self-image by giving personal thanks and appreciating the high quality products that she can offer.

Another way of feeling competent for Tanja is to be part of a competent team. She thinks very highly of her colleagues and thinks they are talented in multiple areas, and always willing to help each other. She believes that because they work so well together that they can provide better service for customers as well. This proudness of the work team creates a collective feeling of competence. It also makes Tanja see herself as competent when she is part of this team and she considers herself as a very flexible and loyal team member, which enhances her positive self-image and self-esteem as well.

This feeling is enforced and linked to the feeling of proudness Tanja feels about the success of the whole restaurant. She likes to tell when customers choose their restaurant instead of others and when they have been able to implement new solutions better than other restaurants. She thinks it is important that their customers are satisfied and that they can offer high quality food and services.

Feeling competent in her work is important for Pia as well. Pia thinks she has good people skills and she feels she has learned to deal with her change-resistant manager and colleagues with a soft and emphatic style. He has also taught the customers to use the new improvements. It feels important for her that she has earned the trust from her colleagues and customers for doing her work. She feels that this is a sign that she has succeeded in her work, which she thinks is highly meaningful. It is also a way to have a positive self-regard in the eyes of others. This is something that is related to both the feeling of agency and relatedness.

Pia gets a feeling of competence and self-efficacy when the whole restaurant is functioning well and when she is able to answer customer's needs and provide the best possible service for them. She is trying to think ahead of the coming day and be prepared for anything that could happen. Pia feels it is her personality and openness for new things that helps her succeed at work. When she is able to establish new practices that work well that both the work team and customers acknowledge as good it enforces her feeling of competence.

Also Sanna sees that her personality is linked to sense of being a competent professional. She feels that her talkative and open personality suits her work role. She feels she is good in selling and it creates a feeling of success when she can see that she can accomplish results. She also considers herself as an innovative person who can come up with good ideas for campaigns or other extra events. She feels she is a professional in her work and this gives a positive self-image for her and a feeling of competence. Earlier when she didn't have as much chance to do the selling she felt that she didn't use her full potential.

Sanna feels proud of her initiatives with customers. When she started to change the communication with the customers towards being more social and authentic she was content when other people came along. She is proud that she knows many customers personally and that she knows their preferences. This makes recommending easier as well. When customers appreciate her service attitude and seize her offers it enforces a feeling of competence in her work. Sanna thinks that her workdays pass very quickly because she is in a work that she enjoys a lot.

I have summarized how the need for agency is divided, and what are the sources of agency in each narrative in Table 1.

	Agency	
	Autonomy and responsibility	Competence and positive self-image
Tanja the Team Worker	Being responsible for preparing quality food Having own projects like taking care of cake orders	Being proud of own cooking skills Getting appreciation from customers Being part of a competent team Being proud of the success of the workplace
Pia the Pioneer	Desire to have influence at the workplace Seeking to a manager position Initiating changes and improvements	Accomplishing improvements at work Seeing that the whole restaurant works Influencing others and having good people skills
Sanna the Sales Expert	Influencing what customers will buy Doing concrete work and seeing the results	Feeling oneself as a competent and natural sales person Knowing customers and their preferences personally

Table 1. The sources of agency.

5.1.2. A feeling of relatedness and communion as a basis for meaningful work

Like Baumeister and Leary (1995) explain humans have an intrinsic need to connect with other people. The need is for an on-going social attachment that is frequent and non-aversive, and it is more satisfactory if it happens in a stable and enduring context. People create social bonds in almost any kind of conditions and resist the detachment of existing bonds. Lack of this belongingness can cause many ill effects on well-being and health. Thus the drive for interpersonal attachment is very universal and powerful.

The need for relatedness and belonging is also one of the three fundamental psychological needs that Deci and Ryan (2000) have elaborated in their famous self-determination theory. They explain the need for relatedness as the tendency for connection, caring and to cohere with one's group. It also consists of internalizing the values and needs of your group in order to coordinate with others.

To have an acceptance and belongingness is very important for all humans and this is no exception for Tanja, Pia and Sanna. Thus the basic need is the same but the emphasis and how it is fulfilled is shown in different ways. I divided the need for relatedness in two categories that are 1) connecting with others and nurturing authentic bonds, and 2) social identification and mutual trust. And next I explain how these are presented in the narratives.

Connecting with others and nurturing authentic bonds creates relatedness

The need for relatedness is developed together or by the influence of other people in the work context. This is enforced by connecting with and getting to know the people at work. For Tanja the need for relatedness at work is an important source of meaningfulness and she has satisfied this need by getting very close with her colleagues and community. She enjoys teamwork in great deal, which she noticed especially when she came to work in the bigger restaurants compared to the little cafés where she used to work alone. Now she enjoys when she knows her colleagues well and she can share personal stories with them. She really cares about her colleagues on a deeper level and she has become friends with them. It feels like they understand each other so well that they don't even need words. Being friends' means that it is important to spend time with colleagues outside work as well and go out partying for example. She also likes to keep contact with her older colleagues even if they have changed work places.

For Sanna the need for relating and connecting with others at work is quite similar to Tanja even though for her connecting with customers is more important than with the colleagues. It feels important for Sanna to know customers personally. She can ask them personal questions and likewise the customers are eager to hear her news if she has been away from work. This kind of a warm feeling of communion and relatedness with the customers feels essential for Sanna and makes her feel welcome at the workplace. There are even some customers that Sanna has become friends with and meets with them in her free time.

For Sanna advancing humanity and authenticity at work are important values and advancing this is something that is an important source for meaningfulness for her. To answer this she

has changed the communication culture towards this by talking with everyone and encountering them as real people. In general she thinks that showing emotions at work is important whether it is with customers or colleagues.

For Pia the need for relatedness with others takes a different form and it is not as important in her work compared to Tanja and Sanna. For Pia it is important to create good relations with the customers so she can serve them the best way as possible. She emphasizes that she is genuinely interested in customer's opinions and feedback, in order to improve the whole work place. It feels meaningful for her that during her time the customers have started to give more feedback.

Even though the work team is not as important for Pia, she appreciates that she can joke and laugh with them and there is a culture where everybody helps and supports each other. She is also trying to encourage her team members in their work. Sometimes she seeks to the company of younger or more relaxed colleagues when she feels frustrated with the older ladies of the work place. The feeling of communion can be diminished sometimes when the colleagues are not so eager about her ideas or changes and when the manager is indifferent. This can make her sad and alone with her ideas. Luckily the restaurant group manager offers support from above and she feels that she has a good relationship with her.

Social identification and having mutual trust creates relatedness

In brief social identity refers to the portion of individual's self-concept that is derived from a perceived membership in a relevant social group. Thus social identification is the process where the person sees herself/himself belonging to a certain group in order to strive for a positive distinctiveness and self-concept (Tajfel, 1981.)

For Tanja social identification to her work community is very strong. She believes they have a very special atmosphere at her current restaurant and she appreciates the expertise of her colleagues. It is clear she has in-group favouritism for her team, which means that people give preferential treatment to others when they are perceived to be in the same in-group (Tajfel, 1981). It brings her strength and positive self-image as well. She also thinks that it is great that the manager has celebrated the good results with the team with a bottle of champagne from time to time. This can be a way of creating the community feeling as well. When there is a chaos day at work it is not so bad with the good team.

Even though the customers and authentic relations with them is the core of meaningful work for Sanna, it is important also that the work community is working well. It is important for her that everyone knows their duties and takes care of their tasks. Sanna appreciates her manager, who is close with customers as well and as a person caring and emphatic. It feels it is important that the manager is at the same level with the whole team and that she has built the team spirit. Social identification to a caring and good manager and a well-functioning team is important.

A feeling of trust in the work community also enforces relatedness. For Tanja it is important that she is a trusted and helpful colleague for others. It feels important for her to be able to help her colleagues and substitute for them for example if they have busy. It is also important that she is a liked member in the community. And this way the community supports her positive self-image as well.

For Pia trust is important especially as the trust she can have from others. It is essential for her that she has earned the trust from customers and colleagues, and that they appreciate her work. It is of great worth to her that she has gotten along well with her colleagues and her manager, and that they are striving towards same goals despite some challenges.

For Sanna creating trust and rapport with customers is an essential source of meaningfulness. She has made efforts to get to know the customers personally, she knows their preferences and enjoys when she can offer good quality service and recommend different products as well. She has also built trust by complimenting the customers and make them feel good.

I have summarized how the need for relatedness is divided, and what are the sources of relatedness in each narrative in Table 2.

	Relatedness	
	Connection with others and authentic bonds	Social identification and mutual trust
Tanja the Team Worker	Enjoying teamwork Friendships with colleagues Spending freetime with colleagues	Being part of a competent and caring team Working in a succesful restaurant Being a trusted colleague and a liked member in the work community
Pia the Pioneer	Having good relations and honest communication with customers Encouraging colleagues Humour with colleagues	Earning trust from colleagues and customers
Sanna the Sales Expert	Building humane encounters with customers Forming friendship and deeper connections with customers Expressing authentic feelings	Appreciating a caring manager and a functioning work community

Table 2. The sources of relatedness.

5.2. Job crafting as a way to create meaningful work

What was clear from the interview data and the stories of Tanja, Pia and Sanna, is that all of them did actively things in their work that created a sense of meaningfulness for them. They used different kinds of concrete ways to create more meaningfulness in their work and I could say that they all engaged in job crafting practices. It is important to note that they didn't know about the concept of job crafting per se in advance and in all the cases it might not have been a conscious choice for them to alter their jobs, but it was something that occurred naturally towards their own interests.

In the Table 3 I have collected all the job crafting techniques (task crafting, relational crafting, cognitive crafting) that Tanja, Pia and Sanna each used. Next I elaborate a bit further these practices they engaged in.

	TANJA THE TEAM WORKER	PIA THE PIONEER	SANNA THE SALES EXPERT
TASK CRAFTING	<p>Making your skills and interests known (baking) and using them</p> <p>Doing extra work like cleaning the coffee machines</p>	<p>Bringing new practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale, feedback book <p>Improving the daily life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding daily communication <p>Teaching customers</p>	<p>Organizing extra events</p> <p>Planning campaigns</p> <p>Doing extra promotion</p> <p>Knowing customers preferences</p> <p>Making recommendations</p> <p>Bringing own interests to work</p>
RELATIONAL CRAFTING	<p>Getting to know colleagues personally</p> <p>Becoming close friends with colleagues</p> <p>Spending free-time with colleagues</p> <p>Releasing stress with colleagues</p> <p>Helping colleagues (substituting them etc.)</p>	<p>Building trust in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphatic communication style • Encouraging colleagues <p>Open and caring communication with customers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requesting honest feedback 	<p>Getting to know customers personally</p> <p>Creating authentic connection</p> <p>Becoming friends with customers</p> <p>Complimenting customers</p>
COGNITIVE CRAFTING	<p>Being part of a competent team and a successful organization</p>	<p>Understanding how the whole restaurant works</p> <p>Seeing own influence in improving the work place</p> <p>Positive attitude</p>	<p>Seeing the impact of authentic encounters with customers</p> <p>Seeing the creativity in the work</p>

Table 3. The job crafting practices.

First of all I have to point out that the clear division between the different job crafting practices is a bit artificial because in reality these activities are all connected and merged. Especially task crafting and relational crafting are in some parts very linked. For example teaching customers could be seen as both a way to add a new task as well as relational crafting because you are engaging in deeper interaction with the customers to really help them. Also for example getting to know customers personally and making personal recommendations to them is both task crafting and relational crafting. Even though all of them are mixed it is clearer to cover them in their own sections.

It seems that task crafting and relational crafting were much more common activities for the interviewees compared to cognitive crafting. For Tanja relational crafting was the most common crafting method she used. For Pia it was either task crafting or cognitive crafting. And for Sanna both task and relational crafting were possibly equally used.

Regarding **task crafting** one major way of crafting the work tasks was to add new tasks that weren't part of their original jobs. It was most probably the most common way of task crafting. For example Tanja made her skills in baking known so she could add baking as a part of her work duties. Pia initiated for example new practices at the work place that weren't used before like the scale and the feedback diary so she could go towards her meaningful goal of making the restaurant function better as a whole. Sanna used several ways of adding tasks in her work, because she organized extra events, did extra promotion and planned campaigns even though those weren't part of her defined duties.

Another way of task crafting was improving the actual tasks. For example Pia improved her task of customer service by helping and teaching the customers to use the new systems. Also improving the communication culture with informal information sessions at work was both an improvement of the task of communication and an adding task, because it was something that hasn't been done before. Also for Sanna making extra promotion and offering a little better service that was needed was a way to improve and emphasize the sales and promotion activities towards a more meaningful way for her. The way Sanna wanted to know customer's preferences and make personal recommendations was also a way to improve the task of selling products to customers.

Relational crafting was very typically among all of them. For Tanja and Sanna relational crafting was especially common and they had very similar practices even though they were directed at different groups of people at work. For Tanja relational crafting was done

especially towards her colleagues and the work community. Sanna instead directed her relational crafting mostly towards customers. They engaged in adding relationships because they started to form connections with people they didn't know from before and wanted to get to know them on a more personal level. They also reframed and adapted the existing relationships. For Tanja colleagues were something more than people at work, they were real friends she could meet in her free time and share her personal life with. Sanna reframed the relationship with customers so that there would be real authentic encounters with people and leaving a positive impact on other people, not just selling the food or the products they had. A way of adapting the relationships for Sanna was to compliment the customers as a part of the sales interaction, as she could see the positive feeling it created for the other person it was a way to make the interaction more meaningful. Tanja's story of releasing the stress with colleagues was also a way of adapting the relationship with colleagues to support one another in difficult situations and cope in their work. She also wanted to offer her help to substitute her colleagues when they needed to be away from work for example.

For Pia relational crafting was especially about building trust in the community. She wanted to have good relations with the manager, colleagues and customers in order to be a valued member in the community and to be able to improve the work place. Without the trust of other people she wouldn't get them along. In reality one could say that this kind of relational crafting was more like an adaptive move that Berg et al. (2010b) propose than actual job crafting. As it was sometimes a bit challenging for Pia to engage in job crafting, because of the opposition of her manager for example, she needed to use these adaptive moves of building trust in an emphatic style in order to be able to do job crafting and the improvements she was excited about. Thus she used adaptive moves in order to change other peoples' expectations of her the same way as Berg et al. (2010b) proposed was typical for lower-rank employees.

She also adapted the customer relationships in engaging in real conversations with them and requesting honest feedback to be able to improve their service, which made her work more meaningful. Having relaxed and fun moments with colleagues was also a way of making the relationships with colleagues more easy-going.

Cognitive crafting seemed to be less common among the respondents. Changing the concrete limits of the job might be easier than changing the thought patterns. This is also something

that might not come up so easily in the interview conversations when at that point the theme of job crafting wasn't yet in the focus.

With Tanja and Sanna the cognitive crafting was mostly related to other people. For Tanja it was being part of an excellent work team and seeing her impact in making the organization successful. For Sanna it was seeing her own impact in customer's lives and bringing humanity and authenticity to work life. Seeing your own impact for other people is something that Grant (2008) also suggested to be important for the experience of meaningfulness in work. More self-related job crafting for Sanna was to emphasize the creative part of her work and seeing herself as inventive and full of ideas for campaigns and quick innovations during the day.

For Pia cognitive crafting was more related to herself. She wanted to understand how the whole restaurant works and she saw her role in improving the whole work place as essential. Also keeping a positive attitude and being lenient towards her-self could be smaller ways of cognitive crafting. Being lenient towards one-self is one adaptive move Berg et al. (2010b) proposed to be typical for higher-rank employees when they they are trying to do job crafting. In general it was more typical for higher-rank employees to do job crafting that was connected to adapting their own expectations rather than some other people. However Pia is already a shift manager and she is aiming to higher positions, which can imply that her adaptive moves regarding job crafting are going to that direction even she also uses the adaptive move of adapting the expectations of others.

Summary

To summarize my findings the two broad categories of sources of meaningful work among restaurant workers I interviewed were the feeling of relatedness that is created with other people as well as the feeling of agency in your work. In all of the three narratives these broad themes came up even though they had a bit different emphasis and perspective. Also all three job crafting practices of task, relational and cognitive crafting by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) were used by all of them but in different manners. Task crafting and relational crafting were more common than cognitive crafting.

It is interesting but maybe not so surprising that the sources of meaningful work and the job crafting practices interviewees engaged in were very much linked and intertwined. What you consider meaningful and the way you are trying to pursue it are naturally connected. In order

to have a sense of belonging and relatedness the employees engaged mostly in different relational crafting practices. In order to have a feeling of agency they engaged mostly in task and cognitive crafting.

For Tanja the feeling of relatedness with a close work community and showing her competence in creating high quality offerings were the most important parts of meaningful work. Thus she engaged in building and adapting her relationships at work for example by getting to know the colleagues personally, sharing with them and trying to help them in difficult situations. In order to do tasks that she was good at and interested in she engaged in adding tasks like cleaning the coffee machines and taking responsibility of baking the ordered cakes.

For Sanna the most meaningful part of her work was the feeling of relatedness and authentic encounters with the customers and being a competent and innovative sales person. She engaged in adding and reframing her relationships with customers in order to derive more meaning of them. She also added interesting tasks like campaign and event planning as it was something she enjoyed and improved her tasks of promotion and recommendation for customers to be in a level she was content in.

For Pia the sources of meaningful work were especially related to initiating changes and improvements to make the work place better and building trust inside the community. She engaged in adding work tasks like bringing new initiatives and cognitive crafting of seeing the whole impact of her work. These were the ways she could make the work place run better than ever and give the best possible service for customers. As an adaptive move she engaged in building trust inside the community to be able to continue with these practices and getting the people along in the improvements.

It is important to note here why the concrete work characteristics and tasks the employees do weren't emphasized as important sources of meaningful work. First of all job characteristics are a source of meaningfulness but here I see them rather as a mean to an end, sort of like an instrumental value. For example working with food and preparing high quality cakes is something that Tanja enjoys but it is especially the feeling of competence and positive self-regard she gets from doing it well that is the fundamental thing that creates meaningfulness for her. Thus the different tasks, contexts and relationships are ways and means to create those fundamental needs, which are in the heart of meaningfulness creation.

One can see that the sources of meaningful work are actually the motivating factors behind doing job crafting. If the feeling of relatedness and communion with others is meaningful for you, you are more likely to engage in relational crafting and so forth. My findings of the sources of meaningful work are very close to the motivations that Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) present as a reason to do job crafting. Their propositions as the three motivating factors behind job crafting are the need for personal control over one's job, the need for creating a positive self-image of oneself and the need to form connections with other people. These are very close to the needs proposed by Deci and Ryan (2000), which are the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness. Thus I consider that fulfilling these needs are in the core of meaningful work.

Next I conclude my findings, compare it to earlier research of these topics and suggest implications for management.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Reflecting on the findings

My research question was two-fold. Firstly, I wanted to understand what customer service employees in restaurants consider meaningful in their work. Secondly, I wanted to understand what kinds of concrete things they engaged in to make their work more meaningful.

My findings suggest that sources of meaningful work are derived from the feeling of agency and from the feeling of relatedness. These are broad categories, and the actions, which enforce these feelings, vary greatly within individuals. It is interesting that for employees who work with almost exactly the same duties and work tasks, the meaningfulness can be derived from different sources. This is connected to the finding by Wrzesniewski (2003) regarding work orientation and the study of administrative assistants who had very different orientations to work despite their duties were the same. My study backs up these findings clearly. It seems that the relationship towards one's work is much more defining than the actual duties. The three classical orientations to work were implied in these narratives. I consider Pia the Pioneer to have mostly the career orientation, because she wants to advance her influence and status at the workplace. For Tanja the Team Worker work is more like a job and the balance between work and free time is especially important. For Sanna the Sales Expert, work is, at least in some ways, nearer a calling. For her cultivating authenticity and humanity in human encounters seems to be a core value she needs to contribute to.

The individual orientation is connected to the concept of job crafting, which is a very personal endeavour. In job crafting, the view is that the person is an agent going towards the goals the person values. This is something that was clearly present in the data. All the narratives confirm that certain goals and values are important for the people, and they are trying to craft their jobs towards those goals. This study supports the view that people are self-determining creatures, who will reshape the boundaries of their work to the direction they want to, even with small changes.

Even though meaningful work is a very personal endeavour, I think that the basic needs behind the sources of meaningfulness are the same. Fulfilling these fundamental needs of relatedness and agency, is at the core of meaningful work. Other influencing factors that

enforce these fundamental needs are work context (including job characteristics), the individual, other people, and organization. Job crafting practices are a mediating activity that can increase the experienced meaningfulness in work. Because well-being was experienced so close or similar to meaningfulness by the respondents, I suggest in the light of this study that meaningfulness creation is an integral part of well-being. This is supported by earlier research by for example Baumeister (1991) and Martela (2010).

I propose a model of meaningful work, where meaningful work, job crafting and well-being are connected, which is illustrated in Figure 4. I want to emphasize the word process, because I see that the elements are in a constant interplay with each other while their weight varies. The different job crafting practices are concrete ways that an individual can utilize to increase the experienced meaningfulness, which is in the circle in the centre. The fundamental needs for relatedness and agency are in the heart of meaningfulness. In the outer circle there are four sources. One is ‘individual’, which can refer to for example personality and motivation. ‘Others’ refers to other people like colleagues, managers, and family. ‘Work context’ refers to the environment at work and the characteristics of the job. ‘Organization’ refers to the actual organization and the culture there, for example. These things influence meaningfulness a great deal, but also have a more instrumental value generating in the fundamental needs.

It is important to note that the fundamental needs and sources of meaning can also be seen as the motivating factors in making the individual engage in job crafting. Thus it works in both ways. Lastly, the outcome of the whole meaningfulness process is employee well-being. Well-being is naturally a broader concept, but from the viewpoint of this research experiencing work as meaningful enhances also employee well-being. Thus, job crafting makes work more meaningful, which enhances employee well-being.

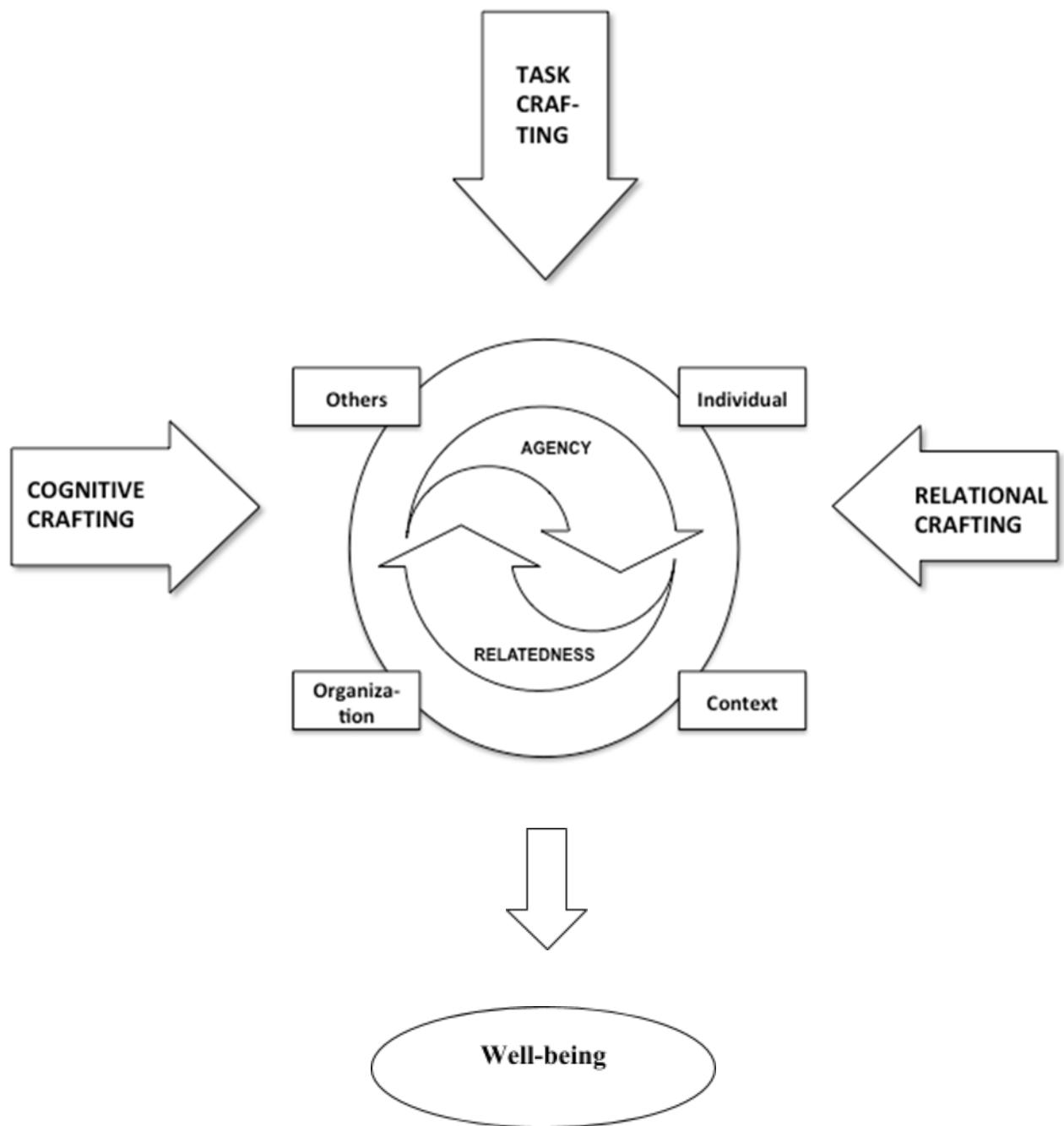


Figure 4. Model of meaningful work.

One of the important debates in the meaningful work literature is between the organizational psychology and the more sociological view on whether meaning is derived more from the self or from the other people and the values in the society. I think this confrontation is not necessary, because both are clearly important. Even though my approach in this study has been focused on the individual, and how an individual crafts meaningfulness in her work, I see that it is very much an on-going process. Encounters with other people and their reactions influence the experienced meaningfulness in all of the narratives. Like my model shows, I consider that it is in the mix of these both where true meaningfulness lies, in the continuum from agency towards relatedness. This kind of a continuum is something that both Rosso et al. (2010) and Deci and Ryan (2000) suggest. In their model Rosso et al. (2010) explain that agency and communion are on a continuum, which is highly significant considering meaningfulness in work. Also Deci and Ryan (2000) claim that there is an interesting interplay with autonomy and relatedness, thus individual integration and integration of the individual to a larger social whole. These needs can be sometimes competing and complementary to each other.

6.2. Comparison to the earlier research

My findings of the sources of meaningful work and job crafting methods are in accordance with the earlier research in these topics. Nevertheless, it offers some interesting perspectives that has not been covered before.

First of all my study subjects were customer service employees in restaurants, which is a target group that to my knowledge has not been studied before from the viewpoint of meaningful work or job crafting. This study was also able to bring depth to this quite defined group of professionals with intensive interview discussions.

There is also a lack of studies on meaningful work among lower-rank employees, and thus this study can shed new light to this topic from the viewpoint of blue-collar workers. It seems that rank or status of the employee does not really influence much what people consider meaningful in their work. This study shows that the needs for relatedness and agency are at the core of meaningful work, which is very similar to the findings compared to research in other professions. Although possibly the need for autonomy and control in one's work under

agency was not as important for Tanja the Team Worker and Sanna the Sales Expert. This might be due to their lower level of education and lower status in the organization implying that they might not have so high aims in their career. Also, their job descriptions do not require it so much. Nevertheless it is very different kinds of aspects that create autonomy for different people. For one person even having a little responsibility in making high-quality food creates a feeling of autonomy and for the other it means that they are the one driving bigger changes and new ideas forward inside the organization.

My findings are in many ways similar as the earlier research on job crafting and most of the different job crafting practices were presented in the data. There are conflicting views in the literature on whether formal autonomy increases the perceived opportunities for job crafting. Original research by Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) propose this, but the study by Berg et al. (2010b) actually showed the opposite. According to them, employees in higher-ranks had more psychological constraints on engaging in job crafting than the lower-rank employees, who were more proactive and went on to alter their environments and the expectations of others to create opportunities to job craft. In my study I did not do a comparison with different level of employees, but even though study participants had very little formal autonomy it seemed that they engaged in very active job crafting practices. This supports the findings by Berg et al. (2010b).

Another important addition to the earlier research was to combine the concepts of meaningful work and job crafting with fundamental psychological needs and employee well-being. Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2014) made a proposition where job crafting was a way to satisfy psychological needs, which in turn increased well-being. I added meaningful work to this equation, which offers an interesting new lens to this topic that combines many elements that have been studied in this area. Further research is needed to verify the connections between these elements and how they support each other.

Regarding the research of occupational well-being of Finnish hospitality workers I think my findings offer some interesting points. Meaningful work is a construct related to work engagement and many elements like positive feedback from customers, supportive work community and manager, and participating in the changes at work are important drivers for both meaningfulness in my research and for work engagement in the study by Kandolin et al. (2009). My study offers a deeper understanding of the influence of the need for relatedness and agency as the driving forces behind more concrete things that influence well-being. The

job crafting practices that the employees engaged in shows how employees actively influence their well-being rather than being passive recipients.

6.3. Implications for the management and HR

My findings have some important implications for management and human resources. Firstly, meaningfulness and fulfilling basic psychological needs should be seen as a fundamental part of employee well-being. If employees experience their work as meaningful, it will increase their well-being, and thus enable them to perform better their work tasks and improve results. Also the concept of job crafting as a mean towards meaningfulness is a useful method for practitioners to know.

The notion of meaningfulness should be taken into account already in the recruiting process. It is essential, because like May et al. (2004) claim, selecting the right employees for particular work roles will improve meaningfulness. Thus it will be better for both the employee and the company in the long run if the work is able to provide meaningfulness for the employee. The employee will most likely be more satisfied, stay longer, and perform better. Meaningful work can also be important to take into consideration from the employer branding point of view in order to attract the best talent, which is already in use at Fazer's website. Although it is important to be careful so that people do not consider the marketing just as empty words.

Another practical suggestion is to add the concept of meaningful work to development work in the organization. For example, meaningful work could be added to development discussions with the managers. The employees could have a chance to think about what they consider meaningful before the discussion and tell about it if they so choose. It can be quite a personal topic for people so it is not wise to force people to tell about it. But this kind of a one-on-one discussion could be at least quite a private way to discuss this. It would enable the manager to know the employees in a more personal level and when possible to help the employees engage in work tasks that the person finds meaningful. Also, adding more questions related to meaningful work and job crafting in the yearly employee surveys would be interesting. Fairlie (2013) suggests that topics like self-actualizing work, realization of

purpose, goals and values, social impact, and feelings of personal accomplishment could be added in the surveys. With the help of this the concept could be understood better.

Meaningful work and how to enable it should be a part of the development of supervision. It could be a topic in the supervisor trainings for example. It is important that it is part of everyday leadership practices and as a part of normal work routines. My findings reveal also that it is important for managers to remember how different kinds of things are meaningful for people working in almost the same work. The managers should try to keep this in mind and understand the different perspectives employees might have, and when possible, enable different job design opportunities. I think it is good to remember that even very small changes that are very easy to carry out can have a huge impact.

Introducing job crafting practices in companies could be another practical implementation. Berg et al. (2013) claim that job crafting could be used as a practical tool to help employees make their work more meaningful. They have created a Job Crafting Exercise based on their research to find ways for employees to craft their work to better suit their strengths, motives, and passions. The idea is to see one's job as consisting of flexible building blocks rather than a fixed set of duties. This exercise aims to establish a job crafting mindset so that employees see that their jobs are changeable. Also Petrou et al. (2012) explain that job crafting mindset is especially valuable when there are changes happening inside the company. Considering the current turbulent times in the economy, it is a skill that everyone needs.

It is important to notice that management should be careful when the topics of meaningfulness and job crafting are used, because like Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) claim, the management of meaning can have negative implications. Meaning should not be imposed or forced upon people, it must come from the individual. Regarding this, the concept of internalized motivation that Deci and Ryan (2000) proposed could be handy. If the company can create a value-base and a mission that the employees themselves consider their own it can be a powerful motivation. How to do it is a question for another study, but personally I think that the employees should participate in the creation of them.

In general I think one answer to increase employees' experienced meaningfulness in work is to create an environment and a culture that supports it, where the individuals themselves can find what is best for them. Regarding this I want to requote Martela (2010), because I think his point is crucial: "To be effective the organizational efforts to promote meaningfulness

should concentrate on strengthening the workers own process of meaningfulness-making rather than attempting to impose a form of meaningfulness from the top-down” (p.26).

6.4. Evaluating the study and ideas for further research

My study aimed to understand the concept of meaningful work and job crafting from the perspective of customer service employees in restaurants.

I interviewed eight employees working at Fazer Food Services and I think the focus group well represents this profession for a qualitative study that aims to go to a deeper though narrower level of understanding. All of the interviewees were part of a sales training program, where they had been chosen due to their enthusiasm and good work attitude, so this might have certain impact on my results, which might highlight especially the positive parts of the work. This supports my aim, because my research questions tried to understand meaningful work, which is defined here as work that is holding a positive significance to the individual (Rosso et al., 2010). It also supports well the use of Appreciative Inquiry as my method of data collection, where the focus is on the positive aspects of work.

However, even though the emphasis was on the positive I want to highlight that the authenticity of the answers was the most important thing I was after and I wanted to encourage the interviewees to talk openly about anything that was meaningful for them. I think everyone talked in an open manner, and they told about both the inspiring and less inspiring parts of their work. In the narratives I lifted up also some of the things that diminished meaningfulness in work. In the analysis phase I nevertheless concentrated especially on the positive sources of meaningfulness, because it was the core of my research question, and it would have been too wide a topic to include what decreases meaningfulness in the scope of this study. However I think it is vital to understand also the things that diminish experienced meaningfulness in work, especially for management and HR and this is something that should be studied further.

Building narratives of the interview data could be seen as both an asset and a weakness. Narratives make the interviewees’ situations more real and give the reader a good grasp of what their work is like. Using the real quotes enforces this. I also think the narratives show vividly the real situations where employees engage in job crafting. Nevertheless, I have built

the narratives from their original sources, thus they are mere reconstructions of reality. Also, translating the quotes from Finnish to English might have changed the tone and the richness of meanings. However in the analysis phase I kept the data in the original language until the end of the process.

Regarding the interplay of the individual and the social elements in meaningfulness, I think further studies are needed to understand how the society and social appreciation of one's work influence meaningfulness. Customer service employees in restaurants are not especially appreciated in the society but not very stigmatized either. Due to the lower level of education and physical nature of their work it might not be a profession that is seen very meaningful by the common public. In the words of one of the interviewees: "even though my work is not important at all, I mean in that way that I don't cure the AIDS victims or anything as significant as that, yet it is for me -- the work is meaningful for me." Thus meaningfulness needs to be constructed in a different way, and maybe because of this, the higher purpose of the work was not mentioned so much as a source of meaning in this sample, as could be anticipated in a profession of hospital nurses for example. It would be interesting to study in more detail how the societal link towards certain professions influences the experienced meaningfulness in work and how do the employees craft their jobs in order to have a more positive self-image.

Also job crafting, which is seen as a very individual activity, would be interesting to study from a more social perspective. My findings show that other people are an important part of job crafting, not only in relational crafting, but also enabling task and cognitive crafting. For example when customers encourage Sanna the Sales Expert in her job crafting of authentic encountering, the customers are part of this process. This why I think that a newly proposed concept of collaborative job crafting (Leana et al., 2009) could be something that would be very interesting to study further and see how social elements of job crafting are illustrated.

I also think that further studies are needed to test empirically the connection between meaningful work, psychological needs, job crafting and employee well-being. The model is a little complicated even though the different elements are clearly linked in the basis of earlier research and this study.

In conclusion I propose a model of meaningful work, where the fundamental needs for agency and relatedness are at the core. Other factors influencing meaningful work are individual, work context, others, and organization. Different job crafting practices (task, relational and

cognitive) are a mediating activity that can increase the experienced meaningfulness in work. Finally the experienced meaningfulness increases employee well-being. The findings are in line with previous research, but propose also some new insights. Restaurant workers in customer service is a target group in a lower level in the organization, which has not been studied before. It seems that the rank does not influence a great deal the sources of meaningful work. Also despite the quite low formal autonomy, all the participants engaged actively in different job crafting practices. Connecting meaningful work with basic psychological needs, job crafting and employee well-being in a comprehensive model presents also a new perspective in the meaningful work research.

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8. Appendices

The thematic frame for the interview (translated from Finnish to English by Annina Piekkari)

Background

- age, family, education
- work history
- reason for settling in this profession

The current job

- work tasks
- responsibility and influencing at work
- experience of knowing your work
- a successful work day
- the best thing in your work, how has it changed in the course of work history

Occupational well-being

- what does it mean for you, what it consists of
- the level of occupational well-being
- how could it be improved

Work community and colleagues

- members of the work community, atmosphere and the time worked together
- the best thing in your work community
- friendships, free time
- giving and receiving support
- peak experience with the colleagues
- the importance of work community considering meaningfulness in work

Customers

- typical customer base, regular customers, the relation to them
- best in customer work
- a successful customer experience
- customer's influence on meaningful work

Managers

- the role of the manager in the work community
- the support of the manager
- the best leadership practices
- the importance of managers in meaningful work
- appreciation of the company towards your work

ProSales -training

- the person's own evaluation why she was chosen to the program
- how has it succeeded and feedback
- ProSales community?
- how has ProSales influenced own work and the community