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Anu Suomäki

ENGAGING MULTIGENERATIONAL WORKFORCE

DEFINING THE PRECONDITIONS OF WORK ENGAGEMENT FOR REPRESENTATIVES OF DIFFERENT GENERATIONAL COHORTS

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is facing major challenges as generations are blending more and more in working life with simultaneously growing global competition. Work engagement has been discovered to function as a driver for organizational success (Schaufeli 2013, Hakanen et al. 2008), thus offering one solution for companies to improve their performance through employee engagement. This study contributes the current academic research by combining work engagement and generational cohort related studies and examining whether generational cohort is the defining factor in the perception of work engagement. The study clarifies the antecedents of work engagement for the members of different generational cohorts, discusses how multigenerational workforce finds work engagement and whether generation can be considered as a means to segment workforce.

The study is qualitative and provides an insight to the knowledge intense work environment's multigenerational workforce. The results imply, that despite the different emphases, the constructing elements of work engagement are similar for people of all ages. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest, that the perception of work engagement is more individual-centered and workforce engagement measures should not be planned by generational cohorts. The topic is both current and beneficial as it provides new knowledge on both work engagement and generational research and offers guidelines to organizations for engaging their workforce.

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Johtajuus on suurien haasteiden edessä, kun eri sukupolvet sekoittuvat työelämässä yhä enenevässä määrin samanaikaisesti, kun globaali kilpailu kovenee. Työn imun on todettu toimivan organisaatiomenestyksen edistäjänä (Schaufeli 2013, Hakanen et al. 2008), joten se tarjoaa yrityksille ratkaisun parantaa suorituskykyään henkilöstön sitouttamisen kautta. Tämä tutkielma edesauttaa nykytutkimusta yhdistämällä työn imuun ja sukupolviin liittyvän tutkimuksen ja selvittämällä onko sukupolvi työn imun kokemisen määrittävä tekijä. Tutkielma selvittää työn imun edellytyksiä eri sukupolvien näkökulmasta ja kuinka eri sukupolvien edustajat löytävät työn imun sekä pohtii, voidaanko sukupolvia käyttää henkilöstön segmentointiin työn imun osalta.

Tutkielma on laadullinen ja tarjoaa näköalan eri sukupolvista koostuvaan tietointensiivisessä ympäristössä toimivaan työyhteisöön. Tulokset osoittavat, että painotuseroista huolimatta työn imun keskeiset elementit ovat hyvin samankaltaisia kaikenikäisille ihmisille. Täten voidaankin esittää, että työn imun tunteminen on ennemminkin yksilökeskeistä eikä henkilöstön sitouttamistoimenpiteitä tulisi suunnitella sukupolviajattelun kautta. Tutkielman aihe on sekä ajankohtainen että hyödyllinen, sillä se tarjoaa uutta tietoa sekä työn imuun että sukupolviin liittyvään tutkimukseen ja tarjoaa organisaatioille suuntaviivoja henkilöstönsä sitouttamiseen.

FOREWORD

As I am finishing my Master's Thesis and look back on the beginning of my studies, I feel somewhat amazed about what I have accomplished. Working full time, being a single mother, a dog owner and being able to complete a degree amidst all that has not always been a walk in a park. However, I managed and the primary feelings now are pride and joy, but I would be lying if I said I was not going to miss it. Studying has been a perfect fellow traveler, partner in crime, that has given me so much more than I ever thought possible. Oh, what a ride it was!

I want to thank Lappeenranta University of Technology for the interesting and current degree programme and the opportunity to work full time alongside it. I wish to thank professor Aino Kianto for her guidance throughout this project, it has truly been a great pleasure to work with you. I want to thank my current and former employer and colleagues for your support and laughter, all fellow students for the inspiring collaboration and each friend who has supported me throughout these three years, you have made this journey a little easier to travel. I want to express my gratitude to all of the interviewees, who participated in this work and shared their personal feelings with me. Without you this would not have been possible.

I want to thank my dear friend Tarita for her continuous support and for making me believe in miracles and see that everything you can dream, you can achieve.

Last, I want to thank my family. My parents for taking care of my daughter and dog, while I was busy studying. I want to thank my dog, herra Viljo Mainio, who is always happy to see me and especially my brave little champion, my daughter Tiuhti, who I do this all for. I hope I have taught you to dream and work hard and, most of all, laugh at the confusion.

In Lahti 15th April 2017
Anu Suomäki

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1. INTRODUCTION

As the world is changing and different generations are blending more and more in working life, leadership is facing major challenges: How to handle people with different values and views of the world? How to lead employees who have totally different perspectives on life? How to keep functioning productively in a constantly growing global competition without forgetting the uniqueness of one's employees? For years researchers have turned to generational studies while trying to explain the differences in the values, ways of and views on working life between separate generations (Pitt-Catsouphes et al. 2011, Parry & Urwin 2011, Haynes 2011, Hernaus & Poloski Vokic 2014, Kowske et al. 2010). However, simultaneously with the discussion on the generational differences, few researchers (e.g. Giancola 2006, McCaffree 2007, Parry 2014, Tienari & Piekkari 2011) have raised the question whether age is the defining factor when it comes to the diversity of workforce. In Finland, the current retirement age of 63 is going to begin gradually increase until 2025, when it settles at 65 and will be linked to life expectancy after that (Pension Reform 2017). Thus, the age gap between the youngest and the oldest members of the work community is increasing even further. This is yet another reason for clarifying the views of the multigenerational employee group in order for companies to harness their workforce to its full potential.

Engagement is a multiscope concept and a highly subjective feeling, thus it offers a great challenge for leadership in today's multigenerational and multi-dimensional (virtual, remote work, teams, etc.) organizations. It could even be questioned whether it is even reasonable to discuss about engagement, for instance with the concept of virtual organizations, or should it rather be only about the motivation of the workforce? However, engagement has been seen as a driver for organizational success (Lockwood 2007, Schaufeli 2013). For instance, The Society of Human Resource Management reported that employee engagement can be measured in terms of money and even generate profits, which are embodied as less safety incidents and better sales performance (Lockwood 2007). In her work, Lockwood (2007) also pointed out that employees' physical well-being and health, which are critical to employee engagement, are supported by the conditions consisting of teamwork, open communication, positivity in the workplace and mutual trust. This research aims at clarifying other antecedents of the perception of work engagement and how different generations find and experience work engagement.

On one hand, generational research is rather wide-ranging and valid, yet on the other hand contradictory, which illustrates the complexity of the concept. Therefore, it requires critical

examination as well in order to create new ways of thinking about the means of engaging people of different generational groups. The topic has risen from the author's own interests and the research will not be executed for any commissioner.

1.1. Background

The change in the current business environment is inevitable. The ever-progressive technological development forces people to adjust in an accelerating pace of change in a world where Internet of Things, Big Data, digitalization and other terms are becoming more a reality than just fancy words. Organizations are changing as well. Operative work is being switched from human hands to machines and robots, which causes companies to lay-off or alter their ways of working. One can only imagine, how working life will be in twenty or fifty years. What kinds of technologies we will utilize then and whether globalization is still a trend or has it already become a norm in every corner of the world? But the thing that is going to stay the same, are people. Not that us people would be similar as individuals, but that organizations are always formed by people. People who create and shape and live the culture, the living things that feel, think and act as individuals. All the aforementioned trends and current realities, such as fast-moving technological development, are making the competition even fiercer and companies must come up with new ways of operating in order to survive.

As companies are adjusting and streamlining their operations, it is the employees that might become the ones suffering from the consequences of constant changes, layoffs and increasing workload. This, perhaps, is one of the reasons why already in 1970 burnout started to become the focus of interest in academia. In his work, Hakanen (2004) brings out, that over 90% of work well-being and occupational health related research concentrates on the negative sides of occupational health, such as burnout, heart diseases and other sickness'. This, according to Hakanen (2004), is not irrelevant when it comes to occupational health, however, work well-being cannot be solely described as the condition of not having those burdening symptoms. The development of work engagement related research in the beginning of the 21st century can be considered to initiate around the creation of positive psychology –thinking, that examines human strengths, virtues and has a general focus on what works well, what is right and what is improving. (Hakanen 2004).

This research focuses on work engagement that can be regarded as one of the dimensions of engagement. Other well-known dimensions include concepts such as, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, flow and workaholism. WIlmar Schaufeli and Alan Bakker (2010), the developers of the concept of work engagement, reviewed the mentioned concepts in relation to work engagement. According to Schaufeli & Bakker, job satisfaction relates to the affect towards or about work, whereas work engagement is concerned with one's mood at work. Organizational commitment is a psychological state of identification and attachment that is established by the binding force between the individual and the organization, while work engagement depicts the involvement to one's work role or work itself. Job involvement has a similar psychological identification and attachment as organizational commitment, but depicts the importance of work for the person's self-image. Flow in its part is rather close to work engagement due to its characteristics as focused attention, effortless concentration, loss of self-consciousness and distortion of time. However, flow is more of a short-term peak experience, whereas work engagement is more long-term, comprehensive state of mind. And last, workaholism, which is also an overlapping concept of engagement but reflects a compulsive urge for work, while engaged people work hard because it is challenging and fun. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). As can be seen, engagement is a wide concept, that cannot be limited into single one of the aforementioned concepts, rather, it is a hypernym for them. The concepts listed above are dealt more thoroughly in chapter 2.

The generations present in the Finnish work environment come from completely different premises. The senior generations have actual experiences of totally different social structures, securities and means of work than the youngest generations. The generations examined in this research are, Baby Boomers (1945-1964), Generation X (1965-1979) and Generation Y (1980-1990). In earlier research, generations have been divided and defined in different ways, which has caused it to have a controversial reception. The American generational research is detached to family sociology, whereas the European research has its premises on demographic view, which discusses about social historical events, that have impacted people's subjective and objective identities. (Järvensivu 2014a). For Finnish Baby Boomer -generation, the major experiences have been the emerge of ICT within work-life but also the changes in organizational structures that caused friction in social relations. The representatives of Finnish Generation X felt that the factors affecting their work-life experiences circled around the absurdity and hardness of work-life, which they tried to explain and separate themselves from, making it more reasonable and tolerable. However, the accelerating globalization affected the latter representatives of that generation,

forcing them to change reasonability into constant performance in the fear of losing one's job. The final generation examined in this research, Generation Y, is the most divided and most graving for common, shared goals and experiences. They feel lonely and as outsiders in their workplace, perhaps because of the little experience they have on work-life. (Järvensivu & Nikkanen 2014).

1.2. Objectives

The aim of this research is to clarify the rules of engagement for multigenerational workforce. The goal is to examine how generational differences affect employees' work engagement in a Finnish knowledge work environment. The focus is on the premises of work engagement; What sort of conditions individuals from different generational cohorts see as antecedents of their work engagement. The study examines the sources of work engagement for people in higher education institution and discusses how multigenerational workforce should be treated and how generational differences impact especially when it comes to engaging to one's work. This will give some guidance for the case organization and other knowledge work organizations for engaging and inspiring their workforce. This research will also shed some light into the generational cohort - related research, as it will clarify whether generational differences actually exist when it comes to the perception of work engagement or is it more an individual matter.

In order for the research to reach the aforementioned aims, certain research questions have been set. The research problem is formed around the critical view of generational differences and their being of determinants when it comes to the antecedents of work engagement and is thus divided in one main question followed by some sub-questions:

The main question clarifies:

Is generational cohort the defining factor in the perception of work engagement?

Which the sub-questions supplement with:

1. What kinds of preconditions enable and enhance work engagement?

2. How representatives of different generational cohorts find work engagement?

This research seeks to find answers to all the above questions by 1) forming an understanding of the concept of work engagement and its antecedents defined by earlier research. Then the study 2) presents the generational cohorts present in the Finnish working life and introduces the research concerning the differences in work-life -related attitudes earlier research has discovered between them. Finally, the research 3) examines the multigenerational representatives of Finnish knowledge work environment in a certain Southern Finnish Higher Education Institution and clarifies how individuals from different generational cohorts identify work engagement and what kinds of factors they see as preconditions for their work engagement.

1.3. Literature Review and Theoretical framework

For this study, the main research concerns the definition of work engagement. Engagement alone is a wide concept that has been dealt in literature in several forms, such as job satisfaction (Perumal & Dorasamy 2016), organizational commitment (da Silva et al. 2014), job involvement (Singh & Gupta 2015), et cetera. Thus, it was important to form a thorough understanding of the scope, which in this case is work engagement. This has been presented most comprehensively by the work of Wilmar Schaufeli and Arnold Bakker (2003), who describe work engagement as being a positive state comprising three dimensions: Vigor, dedication and absorption. Their work and other definitions on work engagement are presented later in this study, in chapter 2.

The other central part of this study is the generational cohorts -related research. Generational differences have been studied widely, yet the research remains controversial (Järvensivu et al. 2014). This research will look into the three generations present in the Finnish working life, Baby Boomers and Generations X and Y, and the aim is to interview the representatives of all generational cohorts in order to form an understanding on how their views on the antecedents of work engagement vary or whether they vary altogether. Figure 1 below illustrates the theoretical framework for this study.
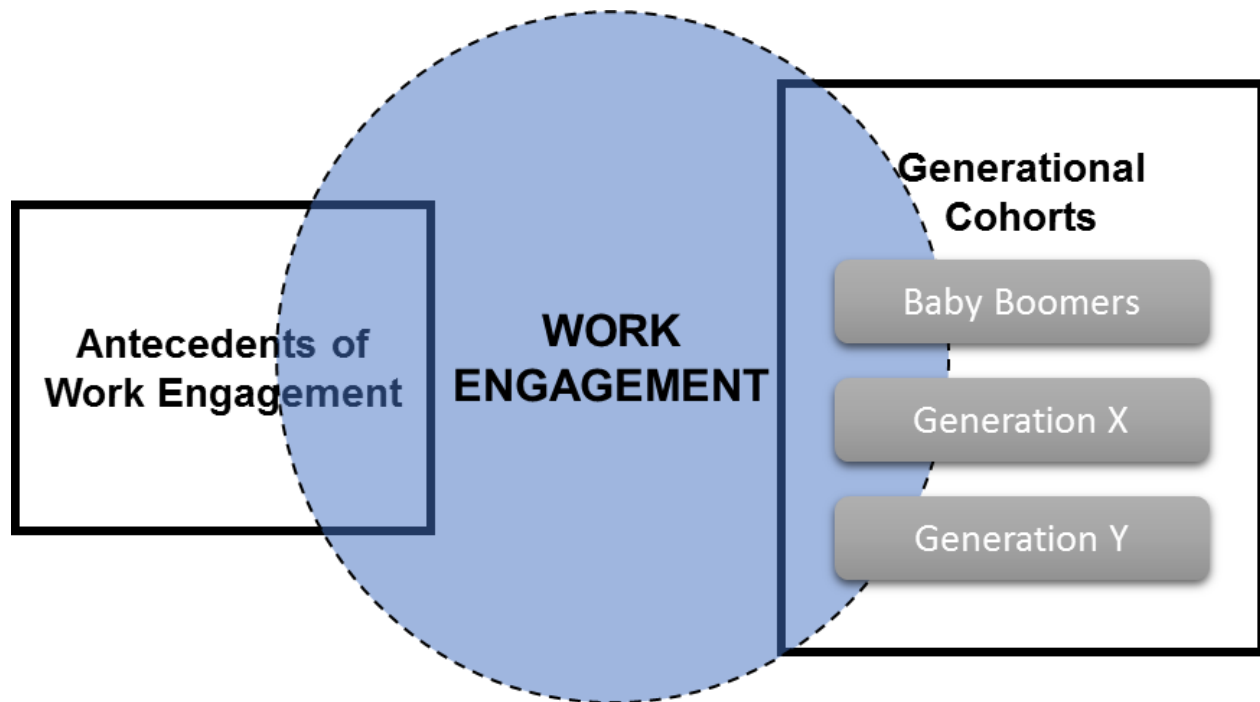
Figure 1: Theoretical framework for this research

1.4. Delimitations

As mentioned earlier, engagement as a concept is wide. It has been examined in research in terms such as job satisfaction, job involvement, organizational commitment, flow and work engagement, to name a few. In order for this research to be reasonable in terms of scope and to have a clear research focus, certain limitations needed to be made. First, the multifaceted concept of engagement has been limited into work engagement. This limitation facilitates the concentration on this particular phenomenon and makes the inter-generational comparison more valid. As a concept, work engagement in Finland is still rather little studied. In his work, Research Professor Jari Hakanen (2004) examined work engagement in Finnish knowledge work environment and this study continues this examination supplementing it with the generational cohort viewpoint.

Second, as generational research is controversial and in reality, has not one correct answer or division technique, certain viewpoint needed to be settled in order for this research to have a clear focus. One example of the multitude of dividing dimensions of generations is presented by Segers et al. (2014) who review the nine dimensions of subjective age originally from a conference paper

by Pitt-Catsouphes, Besen and Matz-Costa. The dimensions comprising subjective age are: Generational (USA-derived generations), physical-cognitive (physical and cognitive capabilities for work environment), socio-emotional (developmental needs and tendencies), relative (comparison of age to others in a particular environment), normative (perception of some stage of some age-appropriate expectations in society), life events (number of past or current major life events in an individual's life), occupational (the career stage), organizational (tenure) and social (the age other people perceive an individual to be). According to Segers et al. (2014), each of the aforementioned dimensions can have an effect to one's subjective age at any point of in time. Referring to the previous, it is reasonable to say that the concept of generation is vague and versatile. This research adopts the birth-year -related viewpoint from Järvensivu et al. (2014) and examines the representatives of Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y accordingly.

The research methodology is qualitative. A method of semi-structured interviews was chosen because of the demographic division of the case organization concerning employees representing different generations. There are so few representatives of Baby Boomers within the research sample that most likely during a mass questionnaire result review they would have been forced to exclude, thus limiting the results for representatives of Generations X and Y. Therefore, as this research aims at examining all the generations present in the Finnish working environment, it was sensible and most beneficial to target specific persons for the interviews. Generation Z was excluded in the research due to their short working life experience and the extensity of other generations present in Finnish working environment.

The author also acknowledges, that with generational cohort -related research, the longitudinal study would be the most informative and provide perhaps the most plausible results. However, it is not possible to execute such a research within the time limits nor is it reasonable for the extent of Master's thesis.

1.5. Research Methodology

As mentioned, this research follows qualitative methodology. Hirsjärvi et al. (2009) see qualitative study as portraying of real life that is complex and diverse. Denzin and Lincoln (2003, 4) describe qualitative research as situated activity locating the observer in the world. The researcher's goal is to make the world visible through interpretations, practices and discourse, to make sense of the

phenomenon in question in terms of meanings people bring to them. According to Eskola and Suoranta (2001, 21), qualitative research has been considered as a subjective means on creating knowledge. In the debate between quantitative and qualitative research method superiority, this might refer to precise and imprecise method discussion. However, the idea of a questionnaire being a more precise means than for instance an interview, is not applicable either. For Eskola and Suoranta, it is more about the point of view; different research methods apply for different purposes even though the research would concern the same phenomenon of social reality. Denzin and Lincoln (2003, 13) bring forward the quantitative research supporters' viewpoint, which states that quantitative research is built from within a value-free framework. That statement is not totally untrue. Varto's (1992) definition of the difference between quantitative and qualitative method sheds light to that as well. According to Varto, quantitative research focuses on natural events whereas qualitative research on meanings. Thus, qualitative research examines the world through meanings, that are illustrated through the ways people and communities act, set goals, build administrational structures and other human-oriented and human-ending events.

Referring to the above, Hirsjärvi et al. (2009) notify, that the researcher utilizing qualitative method must take into consideration the relations and proportions of related events and study the subject as comprehensive as possible. This research follows the typical features of qualitative method, such as Hirsjärvi et al. enlist. The features according to Hirsjärvi et al. (2009) and the explanations concerning this research are illustrated in table 1 below.

Table 1. Features of qualitative research by Hirsjärvi et al. (2009)

1. comprehensive data collection from real-life situations	Data is collected via theme interviews, where the interviewees get to illustrate their own experiences of the studied phenomenon
2. Human experience as an instrument in data collection	Data is gathered through face-to-face interviews where the interviewer depicts the studied phenomenon and the interviewee shares his/her view on the matter
3. Inductive analysis	The research thrives to reveal matters related to generational thinking and suggest certain proposition. Yet, the research does not seek to test any particular theory or hypotheses.
4. Qualitative methods as data collection tools	The focus of the research is on individual experience of each interviewee. And for this focus, theme interview is the most appropriate tools
5. Appropriate target group	The appropriate target group is found in a knowledge work environment where the level of work engagement is usually rather high (Hakanen 2016)
6. Research plan forms as the study proceeds	The research plan has been altered as the research has proceeded. The research questions and the themes have been sharpen as more and more knowledge has been acquired.
7. Each case is unique and data is analyzed accordingly	As the focus is on the individual experience, each case are truly viewed as unique and rich and analyzed with dedication.

Eskola and Suoranta (2001) describe qualitative research as a method that strives to capturing the viewpoint of the examinees of discretionary research sample. According to Eskola and Suoranta, the most utilized qualitative data collection tools is interview, which is an occasion of interaction where the participants affect one another. Hirsjärvi & Hurme (1988) present a concise description of the features of an interview as follows: First, it is premeditated and focuses on achieving information on the relevant research areas. Second, the interviewer is the initiator of the interview and in charge of it. Third, the interviewer must promote and maintain the interviewee's motivation. Fourth, the interviewer knows his/her role but the interviewee understands it as the interview proceeds. And fifth, the interviewer must convince the interviewee on the confidentiality of the handling of the information gathered.

In this research, the chosen data collection tools is semi-structured interview. According to Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2010), semi-structured interview, or theme-centered interview as they call it, is

an intermediate of a structured and an open interview. This type of research method is an excellent tool when it comes to examining sensitive, individual feelings and experiences that might be weakly recognized. The features of theme-centered interview are dealt more thoroughly in chapter 5. The data collected are analyzed through content analysis. The aim is to compile themes according to the interview and then, if possible, to proceed by composing them into more general types. The analysis is the key when answering to the main research question of the research that seeks to discover whether generational cohort is the defining factor, when it comes to the antecedents of work engagement. The results will indicate if people from different age groups and different experience base of the world feel work engagement and its preconditions similarly or not.

1.6. Research Design

The research consists of eight main chapters. The core structure of the work comprises the discussion on the key concepts of the research: Work engagement and generations and the empirical research related to these two. The first chapter introduces the topic to the reader. It explains the meanings of central concepts and the reasons behind this research. It explains why and how the research has been delimited and presents the used research methods. The second chapter presents the discussion on the first core element of this research: Work engagement. It begins by explaining the multiform concept of engagement and examining the origins and the development of the more focused concept of work engagement. There are several overlapping concepts closely related to engagement, which are shortly covered in this chapter. By the end of the second chapter, the concept of work engagement has been explained to the reader and the antecedents and the consequences of work engagement found in earlier research are presented.

The third chapter is dedicated to the second core element of the research: Generational studies. The chapter presents the generations in the Finnish work environment, which are Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. It discusses the complexity and controversy surrounding generational research and goes through the characteristics of each generational group defined by the earlier research and finally concludes the third chapter by depicting the differences between these generational groups. The fourth chapter concludes the theoretical section of this research and discusses the antecedents of work engagement for representatives of different generational groups. It ponders the possibility of different work engagement preconditions for representatives of different generations and sets subtle propositions for the empirical research.

The fifth chapter presents the research methods used in the study. It explains how the data collection process is executed and discusses the means of analysis. The third core element of this research, the empirical research, is covered in chapter six and the results are discussed in chapter seven. And finally, chapter eight concludes this research with closing remarks. In the end of this study, all the references utilized for this study are listed and the appendices are attached.

2. ENGAGEMENT

> *"Engagement is above and beyond simple satisfaction with the employment arrangements or basic loyalty to the employer--characteristics that most companies have measured for many years. --Satisfaction is about sufficiency--enough pay, benefits, and flexibility to work and live, and no major problems or sense of unfair treatment to sour one's attitude toward the employer. Satisfaction is the cost of entry into the business environment of the future. Engagement, in contrast, is about passion and commitment--the willingness to invest oneself and expend one's discretionary effort to help the employer succeed. For engaged employees, time passes quickly; they identify with the task at hand, resist distractions, spread their enthusiasm to others, and care deeply about the result."*
> **-**Tamara Erickson (2005, 16)

This chapter begins with the overlook of the concept of engagement. First, the research will present a short history of today's concept of engagement and then name and shortly discuss the overlapping concepts related to engagement. Second, the research digs into the concept of work engagement, its origins and its current form. In the end of this chapter, the antecedents and the consequences of work engagement that have been found by the earlier research are presented and discussed.

2.1. The Multiform Concept of Engagement

Engagement is a wide concept that can be defined in several ways. The digital dictionary Merriam-Webster defines engagement as *an emotional involvement or commitment* and as *a state of being in gear.* However, in academic research several concepts have been defined within the concept of engagement. Kahn (1990) was the first academic to develop the term engagement to its current direction in research by describing the pushes and pulls of people's self-in-roles resulting from the varying attachments to and detachments from their work roles. Kahn used the concepts of personal engagement and personal disengagement to depict the measure of personal self one brings in or leaves out during his/her work role performance. Kahn (1990, 694) defined engagement as a behavior were a person, while performing in work role, expresses and employs oneself physically, cognitively and emotionally. He also discovered three psychological conditions

that influenced a person's engagement, which were meaningfulness, safety and availability. According to Kahn (1990, 703), people seemed to ask themselves the following three questions before engaging or possessing resources to tasks at hand: "How meaningful it is to for me to bring myself into this performance? How safe it is for me to do so? and How available am I to do so?". Kahn pointed out, that people's personal engagement varies according to their sentiment about the situation, how beneficial it is for them, are there any guarantees and what are the person's own resources for accomplishing the work role offered (Kahn 1990, 703).

The concept of engagement has thereafter been dealt widely in research. Erickson's (2005) statement quoted in the beginning of this chapter depicts the difference between satisfaction and engagement. According to her, the success behind employee engagement is in the meaningfulness of the work itself. A job where an employee gets to utilize his/her best abilities and strengths and that is interesting and meaningful feeds the willingness to invest more personal resources in it. (Erickson 2005). Macey et al. (2008) concluded that the trust in a person's surroundings, the organization, the leader and in the team, is an essential promoter of one's engagement. According to Macey et al., engagement is a mix of trait, state and behavioral constructs, which together with organizational and work conditions enhance state and behavioral engagement. The constructs are illustrated in table 2. Macey et al. (2008) define state engagement forming from positive affectivity towards one's job and the work setting that leads to the sensation of persistence, enthusiasm, energy and pride. State engagement thus has elements of organizational commitment, job involvement and job satisfaction. Behavioral engagement is the consequence of state engagement and occurs as adaptive behavior. The sort of behavior that goes beyond performing current tasks at hand, but rather initiating and fostering change and being active in doing things differently. Trait engagement consists of personality attributes, such as consciousness, proactivity and meaningfulness that suggest a person's viewpoint towards work is positive and energetic and the willingness to do more than carrying on status quo. Thus, it would also be a direct consequence of state engagement and indirectly related to behavioral engagement as well. (Macey et al. 2008, 22-24.)

Table 2. Elements of engagement according to Macey et al. (2008)

Trait Engagement:	State Engagement:	Behavioral Engagement:
personality attributes such as consciousness, proactivity and meaningfulness	positive affectivity towards job and work setting → sensation of persistence, enthusiasm, energy and pride	consequence of state engagement occurring as adaptive behavior that goes beyond performing current tasks at hand

The most studied concepts related to engagement can be named as job satisfaction, job involvement, flow, workaholism and organizational commitment. The research presents next the viewpoints of Schaufeli and Bakker (2010, 14), who in their work clarified some of the aforementioned related notions of engagement. According to them, job involvement is the opposite of cynicism. Schaufeli and Bakker use Lodahl and Kejner's (1965, 24) definition: "the degree to which a person is identified psychologically with his work, or the importance of work in his total self-image". By inferring to the previous, Schaufeli and Bakker state that job involvement is closely related to the construct of engagement but not equivalent to it. Scrima et al. (2014) reviewed job involvement to be the degree to which one's work affects one's self-image or the level one participates to one's work. Organizational commitment, according to Schaufeli and Bakker, is similar to job involvement as a psychological state of identification and attachment, but the diverging factor is the binding force between the individual and the organization. When compared to this research's focus area of work engagement, it can be noted that work engagement in its part, is the feeling of being involved in one's work role or the work itself.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2010, 14) cite Locke's definition of job satisfaction from 1976 as the most suitable one, which states that: it is "a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job". Engagement is concerned with one's mood at work whereas job satisfaction relates to the affect towards or about work. Thus, job satisfaction has a more cognitive foundation and underpinning to the concept. Additionally, satisfaction connotes contentment, serenity and calmness, satiation altogether when engagement connotes excitement, enthusiasm and overall activation. Fu & Deshpande (2013, 341) studied caring climate, job satisfaction and organizational commitment in their research and reviewed that job satisfaction is created through the pleasure from the appraisal of one's job or an enjoyable job experience. Their research confirmed that job satisfaction has a positive effect on personal task performance and

organizational commitment. Furthermore, they found that age, experience at work, gender, education or type of job have no influence on the employee perception of caring climate at work (Fu & Deshpande 2013, 346-347).

The state of flow can often be mixed with job satisfaction. However, Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) explain it as follows: Flow is the state of optimal experience characterized by clear thinking, effortless concentration, the unison of body and mind, focused attention, distortion of time, complete control, loss of self-consciousness and intrinsic enjoyment. Even though flow is very close to being fully absorbed to one's work, it refers more to particular, short-term experience, whereas absorption is more persistent of its nature. Finally, workaholism can also be regarded as an overlapping concept of engagement. Schaufeli and Bakker state, that workaholics have many similarities with engaged employees, but it might be argued that engaged employees lack the compulsive drive typical for work addicts. The key is, that engaged person works hard because work is challenging and fun, not because of some inner urge irresistible for them. According to Schaufeli and Bakker, there are partial overlaps between the engagement-related concepts, yet not enough in order to reduce the concept of engagement to single one of those. There are also conceptual differences between certain concepts, for instance organizational commitment and job satisfaction, thus it can be stated that work engagement adds value beyond the discussed related concepts (Schaufeli & Bakker 2010).

2.2. Work Engagement - Origins and Development

It is of essence to see the connection of burnout -related research to work engagement. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) there are two views on engagement-burnout relationship. The first is the one directed by the work of Maslach and Leiter (1997), according to whom burnout and engagement are the opposites of the same measurement of work well-being, burnout being at the negative end of the scale and engagement at the positive end. To be more precise, they speak about burnout as the erosion of with the job. For Maslach and Leiter, burnout can be described as exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficacy whereas engagement has to do with energy, efficacy and involvement. For Maslach and Leiter, these are the opposing constituents of the measuring scale which they call the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). Thus, for the supporters of this view, the opposite scoring of the three aspects of burnout, exhaustion, cynicism and reduced professional efficacy, implies work engagement. In their work, Schaufeli and Bakker

criticize Maslach and Leiter's view in that it cannot be assumed that the employee that is not burned-out still to feel engaged to his or her work and vice versa not necessarily burned-out when low-engaged to the work. This brings Schaufeli and Bakker to present the other view on engagement-burnout relationship, in which burnout and engagement are two distinct concepts that are advisable to evaluate separately and by using different instruments. (Schaufeli & Bakker 2003).

Demerouti et al. (2001) studied the origins of burnout and created the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Figure 2) on the basis of MBI and another measure of burnout, the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI), to test the reasons and interrelations of different factors related to burnout. The relevance of this model to work engagement is, that the factors enhancing engagement relate to health promotion and maintenance, which in turn are affected by the health-protecting resources. In the model, job demands refer to social, psychological or organizational aspects of work that require sustained physical or mental effort, whereas job resources are those psychological, physical or organizational aspects that are functional in achieving work goals, reduce job demands at the associated physiological and psychological costs or stimulate personal growth and development. (Demerouti et al. 2001).
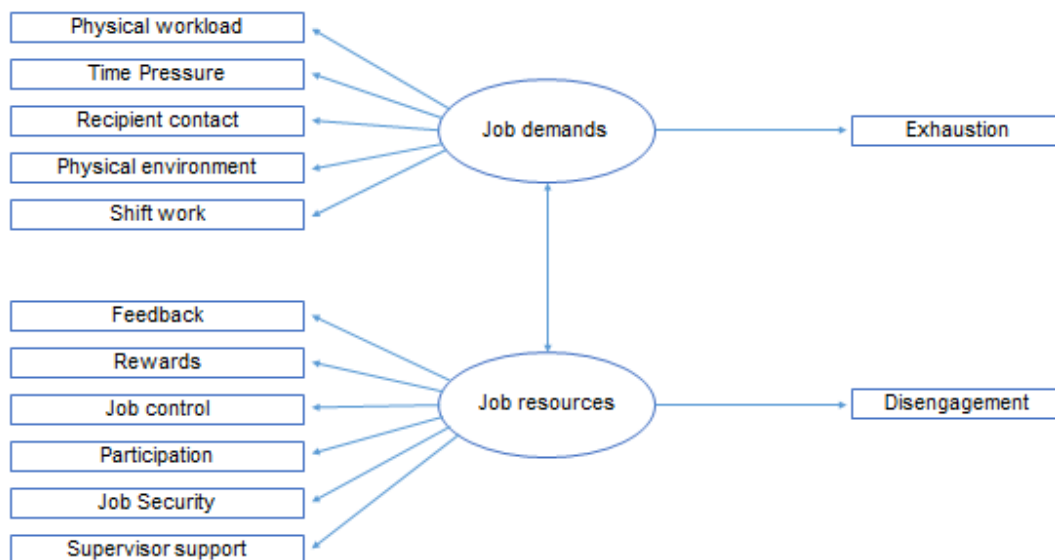
Figure 2. The Job Demands-Resources model of burnout (Demerouti et al. 2001)

As mentioned earlier, Schaufeli et al. (2002) considered work engagement to be a distinct concept from burnout. They define work engagement as a fulfilling and optimistic view on work that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption (figure 3). Therefore, it also implies to a positive, longer-scale affective-cognitive state towards all work-related functions and operators. By vigor, Schaufeli et al. mean an energetic and resilient state of mind with the willingness to invest time and effort towards work, even in times of haste and under pressure. They describe dedication by feeling enthusiastic, inspired, significant and proud with the positive outlook on challenges. According to Schaufeli et al., dedication goes beyond involvement, being a remarkably strong attendance. Absorption can be described by a deep concentration to one's work, which makes time fly by and the person has difficulties in detaching oneself from the work. (Schaufeli et al. 2002, 74-75.)
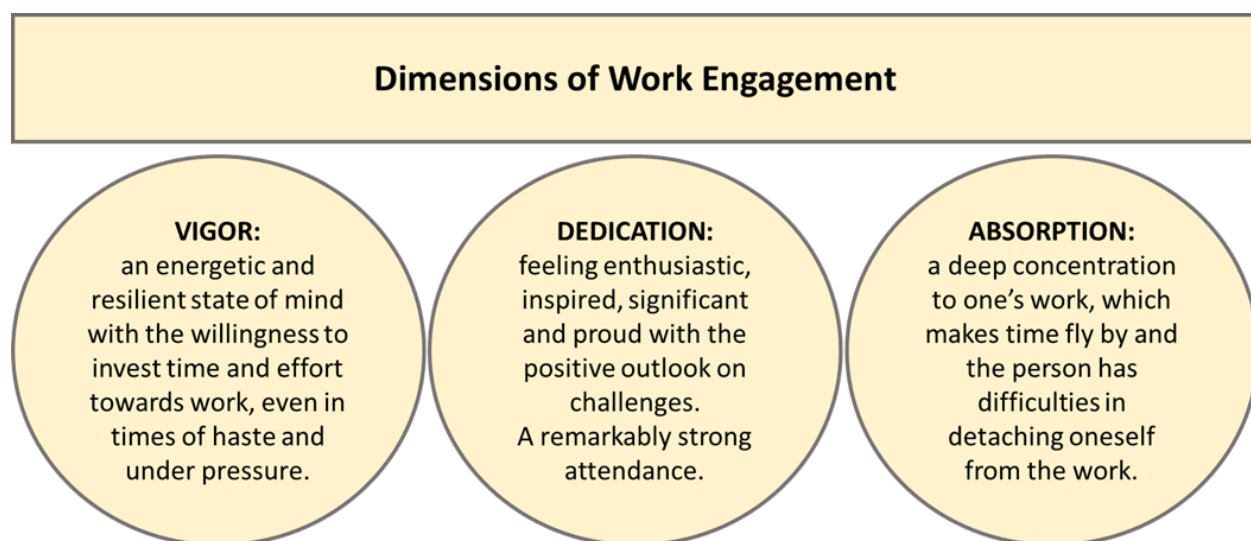
Figure 3. Dimensions of work engagement according to Schaufeli et al. (2002)

For the measuring of the presented constituting aspects of work engagement, Schaufeli & Bakker (2003) developed a self-report questionnaire called the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). The questionnaire is presented more thoroughly in chapter 5. Bakker and Demerouti (2007) developed the aforementioned JD-R model to a more flexible direction and demonstrated the usage of the model to a more optimistic viewpoint of work related stresses and conditions. According to Bakker and Demerouti (2007, 310) the JD-R model is applicable in several fields of business and it can be utilized in the processes of improving employee performance and well-being. As an outcome of their research, Schaufeli and Bakker (2010, 21) formulated the JD-R model (Figure 4) to depict the motivational process of the jobs demands-resources which

illustrates how high work engagement and excellent performance are the result of motivational potential of one's job resources.
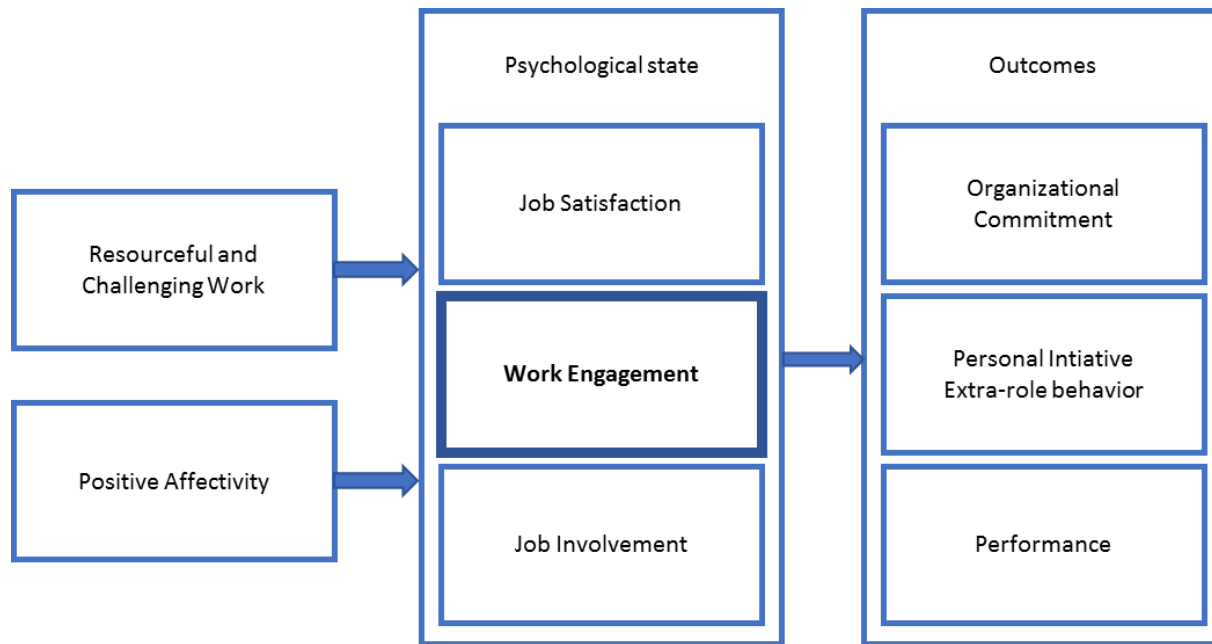
Figure 4. Schaufeli and Bakker's (2010) integrative model of work motivation and engagement

In their refined model, Schaufeli and Bakker focus on the psychological state that leads to higher employee performance and organizational commitment. The psychological state includes the concept of work engagement that is accompanied by the earlier defined job satisfaction and job involvement. (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010).

2.3. Antecedents of Work Engagement

Saks (2006) was one of the first academics to review the antecedents of work engagement. In his work, he talks about employee engagement, yet defines it in similar terms as work engagement in this study. According to Saks (2006), there is little research on the preconditions of employee engagement, yet finds potential antecedents from Kahn's (1990) and Maslach et al's (2001) models. The potential antecedents of employee engagement, that are illustrated in table 3, are: Job characteristics, Perceived organizational support, Perceived supervisor support, Rewards and recognition, Procedural justice and Distributive justice. (Saks 2006).

According to Saks (2006), job characteristics are the factors enhancing psychological meaningfulness, such as variety and the utilization of different skills, opportunity for important contribution, challenging tasks, feedback and autonomy. Perceived support from organization and supervisor relate to the sense of psychological safety, where a person feels at ease when employing one's personal self at work. This can be affected by the amount of care and support employees receive from their organization and direct supervisors. Psychological safety can also evolve through trusting and supportive relationship between colleagues, as well as with management. All in all, if the working environment supports openness and supportiveness, where employees can experiment novel things and failure is not seen as a sin, psychological safety emerges. Perceived organizational support refers to the feeling of genuinely being taken care of and valued by the organization. Additionally, the lack of perceived supervisor support has been studied to enhance burnout and disengagement, thus it too is a central precondition for work engagement. Rewards and recognitions is the dimension in which people vary the most according to their perceptions of the benefits they receive from performing at their work. The feeling of giving something back can either be affected by the external or the internal rewards and recognitions. Finally, Distributive and procedural justice refer to the predictability of the organization's fair decision outcomes and to the fairness of the processes and means used to determine the amount and distribution of resources. This too has a psychological effect on employees; when having a sense of high justice in one's organization, an employee is more likely to act fairly towards each other and the organization. Finally, Saks concludes, that the psychological conditions leading to work and organizational engagement are not the same, thus there exists a meaningful distinction between the two. His study revealed, that the thing that mostly supported work engagement, was job characteristics followed by perceived organizational support. (Saks 2006).

Table 3. Antecedents of work engagement according to Saks (2006)

Job characteristics	Perceived organizational support	Perceived supervisor support	Rewards and recognition	Procedural justice and Distributive justice
factors enhancing psychological meaningfulness	sense of psychological safety, where a person feels at ease when employing one's personal self at work	the feeling of genuinely being taken care of and valued by the organization	dimension in which people vary the most according to their perceptions of the benefits they receive from performing at their work	predictiveness of the organization's fair decision outcomes, of the fairness of the processes and means used to determine the amount and distribution of resources

Sarti (2014) examined the antecedents of work engagement in her work, and found that job resources are the most influencing factors in work engagement. She discovered that four elements of job resources had the biggest impact and those were learning opportunity, coworker support, supervisor support and decision authority. According to Sarti, another two elements studied in her research, financial rewards and performance feedback did not have a similar impact on work engagement as the other aforementioned four. Her study was conducted among caregivers in long-term care facilities which might have an effect on the aspect of financial rewards being on a lower level than other elements. In her study, Sarti found that learning opportunity was significantly the highest anticipator of work engagement. Coworker support was the second most relevant predictor of work engagement and supervisor support the third. Decision authority had a slight negative impact on work engagement due to unclear responsibilities and expectation, thus specific guidelines were needed in order to clarify the procedures and measuring one's work. (Sarti 2014).

Kühnel et al. (2012) examined day-specific work engagement in the light of the aforementioned Job Demands-Resources -model and discovered, that work engagement was best promoted when job demands and job resources correspond. In other words, when an employee gets the resources needed in order to correspond to the demands of the job, one not only performs better, but gets a positive emotional gain as well, thus the sensation of work engagement deepens. For Kühnel et al.'s research, the focus was on day-level work engagement and their research clearly suggested, that job control was essential in handling with time pressures of the work on daily basis. Therefore, they concluded that in order for work engagement to emerge, the employee's job control needs to co-occur with job's time pressure. To support this, Kühnel et al. discovered that on high time pressure days, people who had control over their job, time pressure was seen as a positive challenge that triggered better and faster problem-solving skills and higher level of energy whereas low job control caused even withdrawal from tasks, thus disengagement. Kühnel et al. pointed out, that although high time pressure can promote energy and performance, it is essential to have periods of low time pressure as well in order to restore the employees' motivational resources. (Kühnel et al. 2012).

Christian et al. (2011) studied the antecedents of work engagement and found that job resources are essential for one's work engagement. They defined that the antecedents consist of three elements: Job characteristics, leadership and dispositional characteristics. Job characteristics included motivational, social and contextual components. The motivational factors related to

engagement, according to Christian et al. were autonomy, task variety, task significance, feedback, problem solving and job complexity. By social component, Christian et al. mean social support received from supervisors and coworkers and by contextual components they refer to the physical demands and work conditions related to one's tasks. The second element of antecedents in Christian et al.'s research was leadership, especially transformational leadership and leader-member relationship. And the final, dispositional characteristics, included personality traits such as, conscientiousness, positive affect and proactive personality. According to their research, all elements were essential for work engagement, but the especially critical elements were the two job characteristics: task variety and task significance. (Christian et al. 2011).

2.4. Consequences of Work Engagement

In his work, Saks (2006) also ponders the consequences of employee engagement. It has been believed, that work engagement has an effect on business performance. Yet, one must understand, that as employee engagement is an individual state, thus must the results be of individual-level at first. He brings about both Kahn's (1990) and May et al.'s (2004) propositions of individual outcomes for engaged employees, which included the quality of work and the experiences related to the execution of that work, as well as the organizational outcomes, that consisted of growth and productivity of the organization. Other consequences of work engagement Saks discovered, were the employee's likelihood of greater attachment towards the organization and a smaller intention to quit. Additionally, engaged employees probably have trusting and high-quality relationships with their supervisors, thus the likelihood of spreading positive attitudes and intentions towards organization enhances. Hence, according to Saks, work engagement has a positive effect on the elements of engagement, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment and organizational citizenship behavior. (Saks 2006).

Schaufeli (2013) reviewed the concept of engagement further and again pointed out the extensity of viewpoints related to it. For scientific definition of engagement, he used his and Bakker's (2010) description, presented also in the previous chapter, of work related state of mind that can be characterized with vigor, dedication and absorption. As an enhanced viewpoint, Schaufeli pointed out the business side of engagement that includes employee behaviors that follow organizational goals (Schaufeli 2013, 25). In other words, a person might be highly attached to his job, yet not feel engaged to his organization. Scrima et al. (2014), however, found that that it is more likely for

the person engaged to his work to be engaged to the organization as well. Scrima et al. (2014) also discussed the role of work engagement in the relationship between job involvement and affective commitment in their work. According to Scrima et al., personal resources play an essential role when it comes to engaging to one's job. They too, like Schaufeli and Bakker (2010, 21), found that engaged employees have a more positive view of the work, better self-esteem, perseverance and generally cope better than the ones who lack engagement. They also discovered that employees with high level of job involvement invested more emotionally in their work and felt strong identity not only towards their work role but the organization as well. (Scrima et al. 2014, 2169-2170).

Hakanen et al. (2008) studied the consequences of positively energizing job resources and the following reciprocal process of them leading to work engagement and work engagement leading to personal initiative and further to work-unit innovativeness, which again leads back to personal initiative resulting as work engagement, thus creating a spiral of positive outcomes. As personal initiative, Hakanen et al. mean a behavior that is initiative-taking and beyond regular expectation at the task at hand. A behavior that follows the organization's mission, is oriented with actions and directed with goals and long-term focus and can be described as proactive, resilient and self-starting in both formal and informal tasks. In their study, Hakanen et al. claim that personal initiative also leads to increased work-unit innovativeness. Their research showed that an engaged employee most likely mobilizes and develops new job resources. They also proved the spiraling relationship of personal initiative and work engagement: By experiencing all three dimensions of work engagement, extra-role behavior becomes natural, thus initiative-taking grows. (Hakanen et al. 2008).

Alongside the antecedents of work engagement, Christian et al. (2011) examined the consequences of work engagement as well. They claimed that work engagement improves employees' task performance through persistence and intensity. Additionally, contextual performance should improve through work engagement, as employees are more willing to help the organization move further and support coworkers as well. Their research confirmed the positive relationship of both task and contextual performance to work engagement. Task performance is promoted by the fact that engaged employees are highly connected to their tasks and thus to the task-related goals. In addition to this, Christian et al. discovered that extra-role behavior is likely to occur amongst engaged employees because of efficient manner of working. The efficiency allows them to use the gained resources to activities that are not part of their job

description as well. Christian et al. also suggested that employees experiencing work engagement might have a stronger sense of joint liability towards the all aspects of their work, thus enhancing the common goals through coworkers and the entire organization. (Christian et al. 2011).

Antecedents	Consequences

❑ Job characteristics
  ❑ autonomy, task variety, task significance, opportunity for important contribution feedback, problem solving and job complexity
❑ Organizational support
  ❑ Psychological safety
❑ Rewards and recognition
❑ Procedural justice
❑ Distributive justice
❑ Learning opportunity
❑ Coworker support
❑ Supervisor support
❑ Decision authority
❑ Job control
❑ Balance of high and low time pressures
❑ Leadership
  ❑ Leader-member relationship
❑ Dispositional characteristics
  ❑ conscientiousness, positive affect and proactive personality
	Work Engagement	❑ Likelihood of greater attachment towards organization
		❑ Smaller intention to quit
		❑ Improved personal and business performance
		❑ Better end quality
		❑ Better mood at work
		❑ Trusting and high-quality relationships with their supervisors
		❑ Job satisfaction
		❑ Organizational commitment
		❑ Organizational citizenship behavior
		❑ Better self-esteem
		❑ Better perseverance
		❑ Better coping mechanisms
		❑ Higher personal initiative
		❑ Improved work-unit innovativeness
		❑ Larger willingness to help
		❑ Stronger sense of joint liability

Figure 5. Antecedents and consequences of work engagement

Figure 5 above illustrates the antecedents and the consequences of work engagement discovered by the earlier research. The next chapter introduces the second central element of the research, generational studies and in the end of that chapter, these matters are brought in the discussion, when pondering the possible, different antecedents of work engagement for different generational cohorts.

3. GENERATIONAL STUDIES

The following chapters clarify the characteristics of different generations. First, the overall image of generational research is cleared and the generational cohorts are defined. Second, the generations present in the Finnish work-life are each depicted. And last, their differences are shortly summed up. By the end of this chapter, the reader should have a rather clear picture on the main generations present in the Finnish work-life and on their characteristics.

The issue that needs to be taken into consideration when discussing generations, is that there are different views on how the division of generational cohorts is defined. Thus, the persons born around the years of generational transition might belong to either one of the colliding generational cohorts. The characteristics are not the absolute truths about the representatives of different age groups and even though there are certain worldwide events and trends that have influenced the representatives of different generations, there are also cultural and environmental factors that affect the people in them. Thus, an American 50-year-old woman will most likely have a totally different view of the world than a 50-year-old Chinese woman. Oyler and Pryor (2009) bring forward the cultural effects of generational experiences: In the United States, Baby Boomers experienced new directions on civil rights, similarly as in Finland with gender-related matters, however, in America the experiences concerned, in addition to gender, the end of racial segregation in schools, public places and the rise of Martin Luther King. These matters had severely higher impact on the American Baby Boomer than Baby Boomers from other nationalities. This study deals with a Finnish target group.

Lub et al. (2014) describe generation by quoting a Dutch sociologist Becker, who saw generations as groups of people born during a certain period of time and marked by specific historical events, having common individual traits such as behavioral patterns and values but also having similarities at a system level such as generational culture and organizations. Becker's definition was built on the work of Karl Mannheim, who, according to Lub et al., has been widely accepted as the initiator of contemporary thinking related to generations. Lub et al. explain Mannheim's three analytical elements according to which the generational division is done. Those elements are 1) generational position, that deals with people born and raised during the same period of time, 2) generational context, that describes the common experiences the people have shared during their lifespan and 3) generational unit, that refers to organizations or informal cooperation that depict the style of the generation involved. (Lub et al. 2014, 39.)

3.1. Generational Cohorts

Generation is defined as, for instance, "an identifiable group that shares birth years, age, location and significant life events at critical developmental stages" (Kupperschmidt 2000, p. 66). Parry & Urwin (2011) cite the popular Strauss & Howe's (1991) age distribution of different generations which consist of Veterans (birth years 1925-1942), Baby Boomers (birth years 1943-1960), Generation X (birth years 1961-1981) and Generation Y (birth years 1982-). Another popular viewpoint on generational division is offered by Tapscott (2009, 16), according to whom Baby Boomers were born between 1946-1964, Generation X between 1965-1976, Generation Y between 1977-1997 and Generation Z starting from 1998. These two views already illustrate the vagueness of academic research base concerning generations. Additionally, it must be taken into consideration, that both of the previously mentioned generational cohorts' divisions are made according to American civilization. In Finland, Järvensivu et al. (2014) have studied the change resilience strategies of generational groups present in the Finnish working life. According to their work, the aforementioned divisions do not apply in the Finnish context per se, since there are also cultural and societal changes that have affected the Finnish population differently when comparing to Americans. For instance, the Finnish representatives of Baby Boomers were born in much shorter time interval than the fellow Americans and neither are the Generation Xers in Finland the children of Baby Boomers, as for example Tapscott describes them. (Järvensivu et al. 2014).

Järvensivu et al. (2014) understand the problematic concept of generation and that in addition to the cultural difference between the American and Finnish population, the generational cohort includes people from different social classes and especially different personalities with different ways of reacting to significant experiences. There will always be a dissenting opinion on the best practice on dividing groups of people, thus one has to make a decision about the research aim in a situation, where another alternative always exists. However, as aforementioned Mannheim noted, Järvensivu et al. (2014) also conclude that certain commonly passed experiences or large shifts in society might not necessarily connect people in generational awareness, but everyone is able to recognize those as key events and processes affecting their generation. Therefore Järvensivu et al. (2014) define the Finnish generations based on economic cyclical fluctuations, since those have been comprehensively recognized and experienced, especially recessions. They add, that even though economic fluctuations have an impact on people of all ages, they especially

affect a person around the age of 17. This age has been suggested also by Mannheim to be the most influential when it comes to work-life, since around this age people start making decisions and create conceptions regarding their own career and work-life in general. Therefore Järvensivu et al. (2014) base their division of Finnish generational cohorts, with the emphasis on work-life, by placing in the same cohort the people who were around 16-18 years of age during large economic transitions in Finland. (Järvensivu et al. 2014.) The generational division, that this study will utilize, is presented more thoroughly in the following paragraph.

According to Finnish Center for Pensions (2016), the average retirement age in Finland is 67-68 years. Hence, the generations present in the Finnish work environment, also according to Järvensivu et al. (2014), are Baby Boomers (1945-1954), Generation of Oil Crisis (1955-1964), Generation of Well-Being (1965-1972), Generation of Recession (1973-1979), Generation Y (1980-1990) and Generation Z (1991-). This study customizes Järvensivu et al.'s (2014) generational division by grouping Baby Boomers with Generation of Oil Crisis. Generation X is formed from Generation of Well-Being with Generation of Recession, yet their disparities are taken into consideration in the analysis. Generation Y is similar to Järvensivu et al.'s (2014) and the representatives of Generation Z are not included in this research because of their small amount and experience in knowledge work environment. The differences between the three larger generations have been studied in several fields of academic research for several years (Wong et. al. 2008, Haynes 2011, Cennamo & Gardner 2008) and even though the majority of research concerns the American population, is it still valid and an interesting point of reference when it comes to this research.

In literature, the generations have been found to have certain determining factors and characteristics. Wong et al. (2008) concluded in their work that Baby Boomers value stability and security in their career and tend to stay in the same job and organization with driven and optimistic attitude. Haynes (2011, 100) noted that Baby Boomers usually own a strong work ethic and like to be involved in decision-making. They are also described to have great mentoring skills (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Generation X instead is illustrated as pessimistic and individual and less loyal to one's employer than the representatives of Baby Boomers (Wong et al. 2008). Haynes (2011, 100) depicted Generation Xers as having an entrepreneurial attitude towards work yet eager to receive feedback on their work. Generation Y, the Millennials, are the generation of technological revolution, constant skill development, optimistic view and high level of confidence

(Wong et al. 2008). The following chapters will present the descriptions of each generational cohort studied in this research.

3.1.1. Baby Boomers (1945-1954) and Generation of Oil Crisis (1955-1964)

Heiskanen (2014) describes the Finnish Baby Boomers (1945-1954) as the generation of excess. The representatives of this generation have faced their extent in every stage of their life; Starting from birth to school years, army and when entering the labor market. At the moment, they are beginning to retire and again face similar issues. Thus, the size of the generation plays some role within the description of this generation. For Baby Boomers, work can be seen as a central determiner of social existence. They seek meaning in the work, not only for themselves, but for others as well. They feel strong responsibility for the quality of their work and find it disturbing if they cannot control that by themselves. They also feel that they cannot perform as well in their work as they would like to. Their viewpoint on continuous change is that it is hurting their performance and even breaking social connections. They face more difficulties concerning technical equipment and systems compared to other generations, perhaps since they have had a concrete life-long learning experience as the knowledge acquired during school years has not been applicable throughout their whole career. (Heiskanen 2014). Heiskanen also found, that Baby Boomers is the first generation to witness gender equality when it comes to working. For them it has been obvious that both men and women have equal opportunities for working. They have also seen the improvements, for instance, in daycare arrangements and other matters facilitating gender-equal working conditions. Vast changes throughout their career caused this generation to view continuous change more constructively than rebelliously. Therefore, the loud and the even the silent opposition in organizational changes can more likely be found within the representatives of other generations. Baby Boomers are the generation of sense and meaningfulness, flexibility, readjustment and realism. (Heiskanen 2014).

Lähteenmaa (2014) describes the Generation of Oil Crisis (1955-1964) as the generation of uncertainty. During their teenage years, they heard that the decisions affecting Finnish nation are done in some countries far away. The recession however did not have a similar massive impact on Finland at this point as it had in some other countries. Most representatives begun their working careers with positive expectations, after all the famous oil crisis did not hit Finland. On the contrary, the 80's boom was raising the standard of living, the urbanization increased and certain industries

even faced a shortage of labor. Internationalization and the increase of machinery at work place were ever-progressive. According to Lähteenmaa (2014, 223), the recession and the consequent mass unemployment in the 1990's therefore hit like a lightning. Several representatives of this generation who had just begun their professional career lost their jobs meanwhile large student loans needed to be paid off, not to mention the even larger mortgages. As a consequence, this generation learned that nothing is certain in labor market, whereas for the next generations this is common knowledge. The representatives of the Generation of Oil Crisis can be described as flexible and agreeable, yet the reason is not their willingness by heart, but more on the fear of losing one's job. However, the collective resistance, such as mass walkouts, started to raise their heads amongst this generation. This generation had to adapt, stay lavishly flexible and still fear for their jobs. (Lähteenmaa 2014).

In their work, Hoole & Bonnema (2015) depicted Baby Boomers as an ambitious and work-driven and having a strong competitiveness in their work attitude. They reviewed the representatives of this generation as most loyal to one's employer and most likely to work for the same employer for their entire career. Hernaus & Poloski Vokic (2014) studied the personal and work values of different generations and also found that Baby Boomer generation has a competitive nature and a "live-to-work" -attitude. Similarly, with Lähteenmaa (2014), Hernaus & Poloski Vokic (2014) found, that Baby Boomers find their identity through work and seek meaningfulness in it. They are self-improving and materialistic, thus they value titles, reserved parking spaces and other status symbols yet dislike authority and rules. Baby Boomers appreciate monetary forms of acknowledgement and are even overly sensitive to feedback. (Hernaus & Poloski Vokic 2014). According to Haynes (2011), Baby Boomers value a consensual leadership style and prefer to work in teams. They have witnessed the considerable alteration of work-life during their career which has had an impact on their preference on personal communication in office-based working in contrast to industrial, hierarchical working.

3.1.2. Generation X - Generations of Well-Being (1965-1972) and Recession (1973-1979)

Nikkanen (2014) characterizes the generation of well-being as a positive generation between the two less optimistic ones, the generations of Oil Crisis and Recession. In work-life, the representatives of the Generation of Well-Being feel that they have more influence on their work than other generations and see that certain flexibility related to work enhances their

innovativeness. This generation has fewer days off work than others and seeks to find compromises and educate themselves on professional matters. Generation of well-being can be described as a generation that ponders their own values and ways of living, yet not as willing to do charity work, for instance, as some other generations. They want to enhance their own advantages at workplace and do it even quite loudly. Also, social well-being and services can be seen as a common, deserved advantages by the representatives of this generation. Thus, the optimism of this generation is more an individual basis than common welfare seeking. (Nikkanen 2014).

Järvensivu (2014b) depicts the members of Recession Generation as people who care more about the expectations other people place on their work and still feel that they do not get enough feedback on their performance. They find it difficult to limit work into working hours and feel that a project-natured construction of work enhances others' control over their work. This generation feels that the best asset in work life is their own competence, thus they are also the ones at workplace who withhold information and use it for their own advantage. However according to Järvensivu (2014b), this generation volunteers for charity work more than others, thus it seems they rather support others than accept help from others. The representatives of the generation of recession are the ones threatening to leave the job, openly questioning the modes of operations and changes. As a result, they actually do change work and even the field of industry more often than other generations. They also react by detaching or totally disengaging from their employer. Järvensivu (2014b) underlines the generation of recession's abilities to master the coping mechanisms in work life when compared to other generations. In Finland, this generation's childhood was built around the 1990's economic crisis, which has left the generation to see work-life as merciless and hard environment where you either win or you lose. Nothing is certain and if you do not try hard enough, the shame is almost unbearable. (Järvensivu 2014b).

As mentioned before, the American viewpoint on Generation X is that they are the offspring of Baby Boomers. Hoole & Bonnema (2015) view them as such as well, and bring out that this generation most likely are highly independent as their parents were working a lot during their childhood. They also refer to this generation as the one who grew up during the technological development. This generation is the largest one present in today's work life, they have adopted some of their parents' traits and beliefs, however, they strive for work-life balance and informality at work. In general, they are seen more flexible than Baby Boomers. (Hoole & Bonnema 2015). Hernaus and Poloski Vokic's (2014) also found Generation X to be individualistic, cynical and yet

flexible on their personal traits. At work, they value independence, quality over quantity and leadership by competence. They are disloyal due to low job security expectations and perform poorly in teams because of their distrust in authorities. They rather work to live than live to work, hence the desire for flexible work arrangements such as telecommuting. (Hernaus & Poloski Vokic 2014). Haynes (2011) too illustrated Generation Xers as self-reliant and unwilling to stick to the rules set by authorities, which in turn is shown as challenging and questioning the superiors.

3.1.3. Generation Y (1980-1990)

This generation is today's hot potato and the Internet is full of video clips, blogs and articles about Generation Y and how they should be treated. Syrjä (2014) described them as a generation driven by the opportunity for lifelong learning and with the best resilience for changes and interruptions at work. The representatives of this generation felt the least burdened by work compared to others and are the most willing to bend the rules, when it comes to the content of work for instance. Some Y's are intrigued by the big salary whereas others by the meaningfulness of the work. They are accustomed social media users, for business and for pleasure and they tend to drift away in their reveries during the work day. They feel uncertain outside their own professional competence box and feel incredulous towards multi-talents. Generation Yers are eager to learn and willing to change work in order to increase the learning opportunities. They do not expect or even wish to stay in the same workplace throughout their career. (Syrjä 2014). Järvensivu & Nikkanen (2014) discovered, that this generation felt loneliness in work more than other generations. This generation also felt lost and unresourceful, chaotic and as outsiders more often compared to others. This could imply, that despite all the virtuality and networking, this generation's work-life might be defined by some sort of loneliness. (Järvensivu & Nikkanen 2014, 195).

Hoole and Bonnema (2015) depict generation Y as team players with a high need for belonging to a group. Thus, the loneliness Järvensivu & Nikkanen (2014) described, might be a result from not belonging to any. They seek respect and wish to be acknowledged at work on their efforts. Additionally, they wish to evolve and learn constantly. They do not feel a sense of duty towards their employer, rather, they seek new opportunities if their need for constant development is not answered within their current employer. This generation has grown into the world of cyberspace and social media and are thus highly more technologically savvy than the previous generations. (Hoole & Bonnema 2015). Generation Y, according to Hernaus and Poloski Vokic (2014), consists

of ambitious and confident, optimistic, idealistic and socially aware persons who value meaningful work with personalized career development, clear goal-setting and collaboration in all dimensions (teamwork, leadership, ethics). They feel loyalty towards their career rather than employer and they are the most educated and technologically savvy when it comes to the generations in work-life. (Hernaus & Poloski Vokic 2014). Haynes (2011) found, that for Generation Y, work is a means to an end and the balance between work and family life is crucial. Other creative people motivate them, they prefer a working style of collaboration and participation and technology plays a central part in their lives 24/7.

3.2. Generational Differences

When discussing the differences between generations, one must keep in mind, that the above characterizations are generalizations, which naturally do not apply to each individual. However, if we consider the three generational groups we can state based on the earlier research, that Baby Boomers and Generation Y share the similar positive outlook on work, yet the basic attitude towards work comes from different premises. Both generations seek meaningfulness in work, but for Baby Boomers, work equals social existence whereas Generation Y sees work as an opportunity for lifelong learning. The representatives of Generation X are found to be more critical and even cynical, in both Finnish and American research, than the other two generations. The independency of Generation Xers is also visible compared to the other two generations, that seek social connections and cooperation. The changes during Baby Boomers' work career have been so vast, that it has caused them to see changes constructively, even though they do not like their effects on their work. For Generation Yers, who have been accustomed to the rapid development of technology and other matters, the resilience for changes is on high level. For Generation X, the changes in work-life illustrate yet another reason for uncertainty, thus they are the ones most likely to resist them and question the need for them.

The loyalty towards one's employer is the matter that varies most between the different generations. For Baby Boomers, it is an honor to work for the same employer throughout one's career and since work is the embodiment of one's social existence, the courage to change to another employer is low. The representatives of Generation X are disloyal and question the employer. They view work-life in terms of their own personal interests and are not afraid to speak out loud when they feel they are not taken care of by the employer. They also show courage to

leave. Generation Y has altogether different approach for their career. They are mostly loyal to their career, but see career development as their own responsibility and thus seek opportunities to enhance it. Hence, Generation Yers do not see themselves working under the same employer for a long time and are not expecting that either.

4. ANTECEDENTS OF WORK ENGAGEMENT FOR DIFFERENT GENERATIONS

This chapter concludes the theoretical background for this research. It presents the main findings from the earlier research and prepares the reader for the following introduction of the empirical data in the following chapters.

As the previous chapters have illustrated, engagement is a multiform concept which had been dealt in research by several different meanings. Kahn (1990) initiated engagement related research towards work engagement's current definition. For Kahn, engagement was a human behavior where one expressed himself/herself physically, cognitively and emotionally (Kahn 1990, 694). He discovered there were three dimensions of engagement based on the questions people tended to ask themselves before engaging to any work task, which were: "How meaningful it is to for me to bring myself into this performance? How safe it is for me to do so? and How available am I to do so?" (Kahn 1990, 703). Macey et al. (2008) defined engagement to be built around personality attributes - trait engagement, positive affectivity towards job and work setting - state engagement and adaptive behavior going beyond expected performance - behavioral engagement. There have been different concepts related to engagement that have been discussed in research widely. These include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job involvement, flow and workaholism, to name a few. The explanations for these concepts were presented in chapter 2.

Originally, the concept of work engagement was brought about concurrently with the development of positive psychology, by Wilmar Schaufeli & Alan Bakker in the beginning of the 21st century. According to Schaufeli & Bakker (2003), work engagement that had been understood as an opposite of burnout (Maslach & Leiter 1997), was as a matter of fact a distinct concept of burnout and thus advised to evaluate by different instruments. However, the research concerning burnout had a strong impact on the development of work engagement theories, thus it is essential to see their connection when dealing with the origins of work engagement. Schaufeli et al. (2001) defined work engagement as a fulfilling positive state of mind characterized by three dimensions: vigor, dedication and absorption thus implying a positive, longer-scale affective-cognitive state towards all work-related functions and operators. During the years, the concept developed from Job Demands-Resources model (Demerouti et al. 2001) to an integrative model of work motivation and engagement (Bakker & Demerouti 2007), where resourceful and challenging work and

positive affectivity lead to work engagement resulting as organizational commitment, personal initiative, extra-role behavior and better performance.

Saks (2006) found that the preconditions of work engagement related to job characteristics, perceived organizational support, perceived supervisor support, rewards and recognition, procedural justice and distributive justice. Sarti (2014) discovered, that the elements of job resources that impact work engagement the most were learning opportunity, coworker support, supervisor support and decision authority. And Sarti's (2014) decision authority section was supported by Kühnel's (2011) earlier work that which found that employees with job control performed better than the one's with limited control. Christian et al.'s (2011) research revealed that job characteristics, leadership and dispositional characteristics were also central antecedents of work engagement. As consequences of work engagement, earlier research discovered a stronger likelihood of organizational commitment and trusting, high-quality relationships with leaders and co-workers (Saks 2006, Scrima et al. 2014), better perseverance and self-esteem (Scrima et al. 2014, Schaufeli & Bakker 2010), higher personal initiative and work-unit innovativeness (Hakanen et al. 2008) and overall task performance and joint liability (Christian et al. 2011).

Generational research too has been diverse and complex. However, in order to reach valid results, this research was delimited to three generations, Baby Boomers (1945-1964), Generation X (1965-1979) and Generation Y (1980-1990). The research had found Baby Boomers to be a generation of excess (Heiskanen 2014) who are still optimistic by nature and value stability and security in their career (Wong et al. 2008). Generation X was depicted as a mix of, on one hand optimism, and on the other hand mistrustful of organizations due to the 90's recession in Finland, which hit this generation particularly hard (Nikkanen 2014, Järvensivu 2014b). Generation Y, the Millennials, were discovered as being tech-savvy, driven by the opportunity to learn and most accustomed to the idea of not working for the same employer a multitude of years (Syrjä 2014). Additionally, their team player desires and abilities were noted (Hoole & Bonnema 2015). Despite collaboration, they were also discovered of suffering a sort of loneliness in work life even though virtuality and networking depicted their careers considerably more than other generations' (Järvensivu & Nikkanen 2014).

In this research, the main focus is on the antecedents of work engagement. Earlier, in chapter 2, the integrative model of work motivation and engagement by Schaufeli and Bakker (2010) was

presented (Figure 4, p. 25). As said, according to Schaufeli and Bakker, work engagement is the consequence of resourceful and challenging work and positive affectivity (Figure 6). The remaining part of this chapter discusses the antecedents of work engagement for different generations and already begins to ponder whether these preconditions are different for representatives of different generations. It is a short discussion based on the above theory and aims at setting tentative propositions for the empirical research.

Figure 6. Antecedents of work engagement by Schaufeli and Bakker (2010)
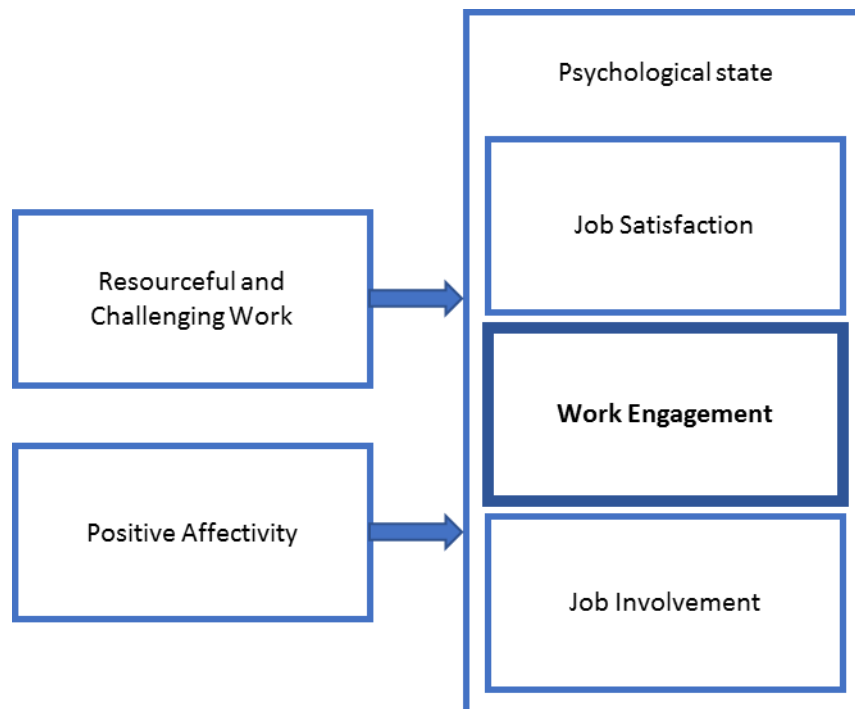
When considering the generational groups dealt in this research and the three dimensions of work engagement, we might assume that the representatives of different generations possibly find those elements from different sources. For instance, if Generation X is described as cynical and mistrustful, it might be that the surrounding of steady, slow-changing environment might offer them the best prerequisites for feeling dedicated and absorbed, even energetic towards work. Their work engagement probably enhances further, if they get the feeling of self-reliance and making their own rules. Whereas for the representatives of generation Y, the antecedents of work engagement might be fulfilled by constantly evolving, fast-moving environment, which enhances their personal growth. Baby Boomers perhaps find work engagement after several years of serving the same company or perhaps just from working, after all, the research describes them as

identifying through work. For generation Xers, the feeling of work engagement might best emerge when doing independent work while Millennials could find it even better in teams.

In the next chapters, the research will clarify what are the determinants of work engagement for the representatives of different generations and discuss the results.

5. RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter presents the research methods utilized in this research. First it will clarify the approach to the matter. Then the process of data collection will be explained and the target group introduced. Finally, the research and analysis methods are defined and explained.

5.1. Approach

The study will utilize the three-dimensional Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) and the questionnaire Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) developed as tools to define employees' work engagement. The original questionnaire includes 17 questions in three work engagement constituting themes: vigor, dedication and absorption. These questions are listed in table 4 below. However, this research is not measuring the level of work engagement of the target group. Rather, it seeks to clarify the preconditions for their sense of work engagement. Thus, the questionnaire has been used as a framework for one of the themes in the interviews.

Table 4. UWES questionnaire. (Schaufeli & Bakker 2003)

VIGOR	DEDICATION	ABSORPTION
1. At my work, I feel bursting with energy	1. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose	1. Time flies when I'm working
2. At my job, I feel strong and vigorous	2. I am enthusiastic about my job	2. When I am working, I forget everything else around me
3. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	3. My job inspires me	3. I feel happy when I am working intensely
4. I can continue working for very long periods at a time	4. I am proud on the work that I do	4. I am immersed in my work
5. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally	5. To me, my job is challenging	5. I get carried away when I'm working
6. At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well		6. It is difficult to detach myself from my job

Additionally, the antecedents and also the consequences of work engagement discovered by the earlier research are considered when building up the interview.

5.2. Data Collection

Data for this research was collected during February - March of 2017. The data was provided by the personnel and the students of Southern Finnish Higher Education Institution. The target group represents the Institution's Faculty of Business and Hospitality Management and consists of the representatives of different generational cohorts: Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. The number of representatives of different generational cohorts is kept equally large throughout the research, in order to maintain reliability of the results. Data was collected via individual theme-centered interviews, which were recorded and afterwards transcribed. Altogether the amount of transcribed material was approximately 71 pages.

The total number of executed interviews is eighteen and the amount consists of six interviews per generational cohort and in the end, altogether 8 men and 10 women were interviewed for the research. The interviewees represent generational members from different birth years, the earliest from 1953 and the latest from 1990 and their education varied from vocational education to doctorate. In order to retain the anonymity of the respondents and the confidentiality of the matters revealed in the interviews, the interviewees titles or the level of education are not presented more specifically. The target population was first approached via general email. Some of the interviewees volunteered without an additional personal email and some were approached personally by the researcher, in order to keep the balance between the number of respondent per generation. The interviews were executed in Finnish and they took place on the premises of the case organization in quiet meeting rooms. The average length of an interview was approximately 26 minutes. In the beginning, the interviewer explained the concept of work engagement and its dimensions (vigor, dedication and absorption) to the interviewees. After that, the interview begun. First the interviewees were asked to characterize a work task or situation in which they had felt work engagement and to describe the feelings and situations that related to the three dimensions of work engagement. After that, they were asked about the factors that had enabled the perception of work engagement and later, what could be the matters enhancing their work engagement even further. Finally, the interviewees were asked to present their evaluation about the consequences of their work engagement, related to the quality of work, their own well-being and organizational commitment. They were also asked to evaluate the state of their current work engagement and how the saw it could be improved. The themes and the body of the interview are presented in appendices 1 & 2.

5.3. Analysis

The utilized research method in this study is theme-centered interview. As mentioned in chapter 1.5, according to Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2010), theme-centered interview is a semi-structured interview. It is semi-structured because the theme is known beforehand, however, the structured interview's precise shape and order of questions is missing. In their previous work, Hirsjärvi & Hurme (1988) describe the intention for using theme-centered interview as to collect data of which the researcher can make solid, studied phenomenon related conclusions. Therefore, it is of essence to plan the interview themes carefully. The themes ought to be broad enough in order for the diversity of the phenomenon related reality to be exposed. According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme, the careful selection and motivation of data sample is also essential for the valid results. One must also remember, that an interview is a two-way street, where both the interviewer's and the interviewee's abilities and style vary in each case. Hence, the interviewer should maintain flexibility throughout the interview accordingly, in other words, ask questions in different order or ask more precise questions if the interviewee does not understand what is meant. For theme-centered interview to be successful, the interviewer must listen to the responds the interviewee is giving and correspond to them. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1988).

According to Hirsjärvi & Hurme (1988), the amount of collected data in theme-centered interviews is massive and the deeper the interview has gone, the more plentiful the data. The interviewer has been deeply in touch with the empirical section of the research during the interviews thus experienced much more, than what is heard on the recordings. The vast amount of data makes the analysis interesting yet laborious. Therefore, it is advisable to begin the processing of data and its analysis as soon as possible after the collection. The data from theme-centered interviews is transcribed and then the deconstruction of the data in themes begins. Hirsjärvi and Hurme (1988) sum data processing up to analysis and synthesis. Within the analysis, the data is specified and classified whereas in synthesis, one strives to create an overall picture and bring new perspective on the matter. The analysis consists of three elements: Description, classification and combination. Finally, the data is interpreted in order to find the big picture and enrich the perception on the research topic. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 1988).

For the analysis, the method of content analysis is utilized. Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2009) describe content analysis as a basic analysis tools for qualitative research that is used for describing the research phenomenon in summarized and generalized form. However, Tuomi & Sarajärvi remind

that content analysis only offers a means for organizing the data for conclusions. Thus, the outcome is up to the researcher ability to make correct interpretations and conclusion based on the data. The analysis used in this research is abductive, which is a mix of inductive and deductive analysis. In abductive analysis, the empirical findings are combined with the earlier discovered theoretical context. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009). According to Syrjäläinen (1994), the stages of content analysis are: 1) a thorough knowledge on the data, 2) digesting and theorizing of the data, 3) classification of data and depicting the central themes and types, 4) qualification of research and concepts, 5) detection of the frequency of phenomena, exceptions and new classification, 6) cross-validation, where classes are defended and undermined through data and finally 7) making conclusions and interpretations into bigger framework. The aforementioned steps were the ones this research took during the analysis of the collected data in order to complete the research in an appropriate manner.

In order to have reliable results, the analysis of the data needed to be executed thoroughly. First the researcher transcribed the interviews and oriented herself profoundly on the matters revealed by the interviewees. With this data, it was essential to digest and theorize it to both generational studies and work engagement related research. After that the central themes and types started to form and the qualification of theme related concepts initiated. The researcher found frequencies but also exceptions from the data which were investigated and finally brought about as valid notions for the analysis. For example, autonomy came about in each interview whereas time pedantry was highly visible only among Baby Boomers. The next chapter will discuss the reliability further and after that chapter 6 introduces the results and chapter 7 discusses the findings of this research and answers the research questions accordingly.

5.4. Research Validity and Reliability

In order for a research to reach sufficient validity and reliability certain preconditions need to be fulfilled. According to Varto (1992) validity can be determined via the entity where the research results correspond to the research aims and target. In other words, in case the results do not answer to the set questions, the validity cannot be established. Especially with qualitative research, in which the research is supposed to create certain generalizations, it is essential to look after the validity of the research. (Varto 1992, 103). Hirsjärvi et al. (2009) explain validity as the ability of the chosen research method to measure exactly the matter that it is supposed to

measure. For example, the questions can be misunderstood or simply thought differently about from the researcher and in case the researcher is unable to expand his/her thinking, the validity of the results is questionable. On the other hand, the validity is always questionable when considering qualitative research, because the usual research targets, humans and culture, are unique by nature, thus valid generalizations are vague. Therefore, the most reasonable validity of qualitative research is reached when the researcher is able to consolidate the description of the research problem with the related explanations and executed interpretations. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009).

Tuomi (2007) explains reliability as the used method's ability to produce systematic results, meaning the repeatability and the stability of the results. However as with validity, reliability also offers a reason for debate when it comes to qualitative research. According to Tuomi, with anthropology and qualitative research there is not one single guideline to follow. Later, Tuomi & Sarajärvi (2009, 140) presented certain measures one can be utilized when assessing the reliability of the research. Those measures and the reliability concerning this research are presented in table 5. Related to Tuomi & Sarajärvi's directory on the reliability measures, Hirsjärvi et al. (2009) agree that qualitative research's reliability can be enhanced with a specific explanation on the execution of the research concerning each step of the process. It is essential to describe the time and place and the surroundings where the research data was produced. It is also essential to classify the data and describe how the classification was executed. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2009).

The reliability of this sample might be affected by the co-operation negotiations and the following redundancies in the case organization in the fall of 2016. This might have an effect on the interviewees' attitudes and answers even though none of the interviewees have been on the list of redundants. However, these processes and the uncertainty surrounding them affect all members of the organization some way. Thus, it is essential to consider this matter when discussing the reliability of the current research. In addition to this, table 5 in the next page illustrates how this research follows Tuomi & Sarajärvi's (2009) reliability measures.

Table 5. Directions on assessing research reliability (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 140-141) and the demonstration of the reliability of this research

Category	Question	Demonstration
Research topic and purpose	What is being examined and why?	The focus of the examination is on generational differences concerning the perceptions on work engagement and the reason behind the topic is the current, changing work environment which forces companies to increase their performance.
Researcher's liability in the research	Why is the topic relevant? What were the expectations and have they changed?	The relevance of this topic is related to the controversial generational research in academia, that segments people with different means and emphases. This study wanted to clarify, whether age is an appropriate means in segmenting workforce, thus this study focuses on the birth year-related division and questions, whether generational cohort is the defining factor when it comes to the perception of work engagement. The expectation was, that age is not a determinant and the results are two-fold. The research implied, that generational differences do exist, yet the premises of work engagement are rather similar for all people. These results are presented in the next chapter.
Data Collection	How the collection was done with regards to the method and to the means? Possible problems and other matters relevant according to the researcher?	Data collection was done via semi-structured interviews and the number of the representatives of different generations was kept equal. Altogether eighteen interviews were executed, six from each generation.
Research informants	How the interviewees were chosen, contacted and what is the final amount?	The interviewees represented a Southern Finnish Higher Education Institution, where the researcher used to work. They were contacted via email and the interviews were done at the Institution's premises.
Researcher – informant relationship	How the relationship functioned?	The relationship between the researcher and the interviewees functioned well and was positive and trustful due to the researcher's 6-year-long career in the Institution.
Research duration	What was the research schedule?	The duration of the research was comprehensive, initiating in the end of August 2016 by the collection of theoretical information and tightening in the beginning of 2017, when empirical data was collected between February and March. The analysis of data was done during March and the finalization of the research took place in the beginning of April 2017.
Content analysis	How data was analysed? What where the conclusions and how they were reached?	The data were analyzed by the means of content analysis. The researcher transcribed the interviews and highlighted the matters in transcriptions that were of similar emphases and formed themes accordingly. As a conclusion, it can be said that the interviewees often reflected similarities with the generalizations of their own generation, however, with the perception of work engagement, all people seemed to have rather similar opinions and expectations and it was more the emphasis that varied.
Research Reliability	Why the research is on high ethical level and why the report is reliable?	The research can be considered to be on high ethical level, because the interviews were executed in a trustful cooperation and each interview was trascribed and considered when analysing the data and building the common themes. None of the interview material were given to an outsider and none of the interviewees are named in the research or when quoting them. The steps of the interviews and the analysis are also described clearly.
Reporting	How the research report has been gathered and analyzed?	The research report has been gathered solely by the researcher in question. The process begun in the autumn 2016 and end in April 2017. The researcher has transcribed all the material by herself and analyzed the data using content analysis. The report has been written on the basis of the previous theory and the empirical data and the report presents several direct quotations from the interview, since those are considered the most reliable and interesting source of analysis.

6. RESULTS

This chapter presents the data collected via theme-centered interviews. It goes through the data according to generational cohorts.

6.1. Baby Boomers

> *"I start looking for work engagement myself. I am a strongly solution-oriented person. -- in that sense this kind of work community or the scope of work has been most ideal, there have been diverse tasks and one sort of seeks to a certain direction and starts working towards it. It has been very interesting. All in all, it has been highly interesting, my career."*

The previous quote comes from a member of Baby Boomer generation and depicts the sample rather well. The collected data concerning Baby Boomers consists of interviewees born between 1953 and 1960. For each interviewee, work engagement was a familiar sensation and the dimensions of work engagement, vigor, dedication and absorption, were recognized by all of them. With baby boomers, working with students and helping them, feeling appreciated and valuable for the task at hand and having a good team but also working alone in their own schedule were the matters offering the best preconditions for work engagement. For Baby Boomers, the meaningfulness arose mainly from the feeling of being able to help someone. For one interviewee, it was about altruism and the reciprocity of the relationship with students whereas for another it was about team effort alongside helping others:

> *"When I think or notice that the students are gaining something from my lectures, especially if the benefit is immediate and it results in a happier student, then I am happier when the student is happy."*

> *"A situation where I have been able to enhance some matter and my knowhow has been especially valuable. And I have felt proud and most joyous, when instead of individual performance it has been a team effort and success. -- on individual level I sense it when I have been able to help someone, when I feel that the input I have given has been meaningful to another person."*

Cooperation with students or a team occurred in each discussion. It was the matter making the interviewees feel vigorous and dedicated. Also, the feeling of being competent and able and the moments of success drove work engagement forward. Each interviewee felt that the sense of being useful and enhancing some common goal or an individual person offered the greatest pleasure and antecedent for work engagement. However, a contrast for this sort of altruism occurred in a couple of interviews, which was the fact that the impact of the lack of motivation was strongly expressed. One might call it as a sort of absoluteness. This sort of attitude was related to interaction with students or to the relationship with one's supervisor:

> *"--it is reflected to the amount of work I use for preparation. If I have a nice group of students, then I want to prepare more thoroughly. Honestly, I might use three times more time on a group I like than on a group I am not particularly excited about. And part of it is because I want to do that for the students I like. If I feel that they don't like me so much, I am a bit sensitive to that, it shows in the amount of work I want to invest in them."*

For another Baby Boomer, a central part of work engagement was the freedom to decide when and how the work was executed. For this interviewee, dedication was thus affected by the manner of leadership:

> *"If authority becomes prevalent and the sense of freedom disappears, it kills work engagement and that's when I leave."*

On the other hand, the interviewees' dedication was sincere and deeply felt. There were interviewees that had felt work engagement throughout their career and wanted to affect, participate and constantly develop their work. Dedication also came from the meaningfulness created by the work with students which was also the promoting factor, when other parts of work were not as inspiring.

> *"I am as deeply dedicated to this job as is humanly possible. I am actually rather good at dedicating to pretty much anything. If I think about my career, in fact each job has been easy to dedicate myself to. I have had the ability to choose. I truly like my job very much."*

"I do feel that this job is meaningful. After all, we are here to help develop these young adults forward with their lives. -- in my previous jobs meaningfulness has not been fulfilled as well as here and that's why I have stayed here for so long. Even though things have not always been good here either, but the students have always been the source."

When the interviewees faced obstacles, the solution-oriented view arose in several discussions. Mainly, obstacles were not considered anything serious when in the sensation of work engagement, rather as minor setbacks that did not bother too much. However, when the matter was larger, several interviewees wanted to solve them fast rather than ponder upon why and how this matter emerged. The urge to solve matters was due to the unwillingness to carry problems no longer than needed and the desire to move on to the more positive matters. All interviewees could recognize the downsides of their job, but felt that the amount of positive, engaging matters was larger. One interviewee took a fatalist viewpoint and believed that what is meant to happen will happen. For this person job was something not to be taken too seriously.

Absorption also took place within Baby Boomers. It was during the process of acquiring new knowledge, making research or writing. For one of the interviewees it was a positive, constant problem, which emerged from several development projects this person was taking part of. Another one also felt absorption, but could not imagine being particularly happy during the period, rather for this interviewee, it was more about "just getting it done". One notable issue that arose in many discussions with Baby Boomers was the usage of time. Many interviewees felt absorbed and intrigued by several matters, yet were not willing to let themselves get absorbed in the depth of forgetting the time. They saw time outside work so valuable and important, that even though there were attractions for absorption, the time limits were still looked after. One interviewee felt happiness during the state of absorption and got lost in time, however brought about the problematic monitoring of working hours. Thus, time and the usage of time seems important to Baby Boomers.
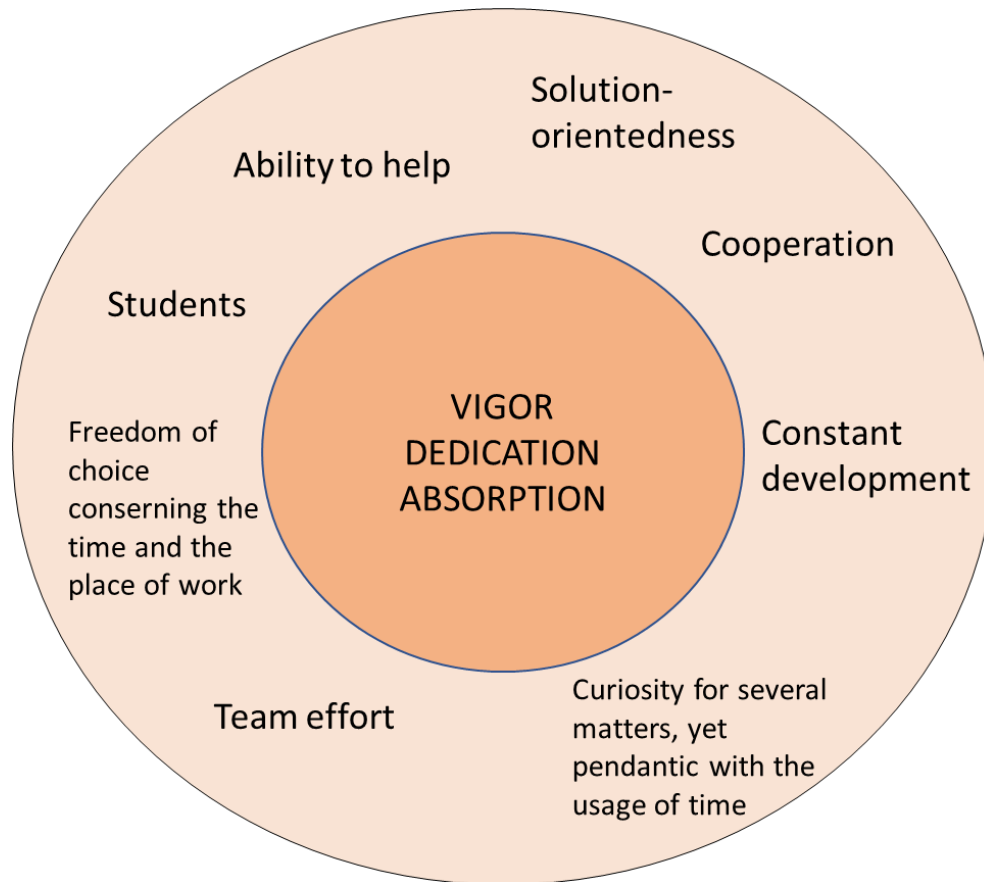
Figure 7. Determinants of Baby Boomers' work engagement

Enablers and Promoters of Work Engagement for Baby Boomers

As an enabler of work engagement, work characteristics arose multiple times in the discussion. For one interviewee, it was the joy brought about the preparation for lectures, the acquiring of new information and sharing the gained knowledge forward. For another in was the high meaningfulness and importance of the work. For the third interviewee, it was the students, communicating, cooperating with them and being able to help them, the sort of customer orientation. And for the fourth interviewee it was the versatile scope of work. The meaningfulness for the organization was also a factor enabling the feeling of appreciation and work engagement:

> *"And I think that the attitude -- that this work is being appreciated by the organization. Of course, it is very important that the work is of high importance to*

the organization as well. After all, I'm not doing this for myself. Rather because I want this to carry on in the future too."

Additionally, another often mentioned enabler was teamwork, especially well functioning team work. The interviewees felt, that either team lecturing or other kind of team work with the right people was beneficial in several levels.

"When we're on common grounds with other lecturers, and get along well, one feels that the other part is also bringing something to the table. -- you must admit that two heads are better than one. And you start seeing things from another perspective when you cooperate. And that's rewarding."

"For the best team, trust is important but you see I don't really trust no one so that is not the primary thing. Instead it is the equal input from each team member. That there are no free riders and it's a common effort. Everyone contributes and the work is a joint liability."

One interviewee felt that work community was the most significant enabler of work engagement. For this person, teamwork was the best possessed strength and the best teams were born when the aimed target was made clear for everyone and each member was given the space and the time. The same interviewee felt that joint liability was also important, the feeling that one could not manage it on their own. Another interviewee also brought out the importance of an open, trusting and safe work community where one can express their opinions without the fear of getting cut down. Leadership and supervisors were also commonly discussed as both enablers and promoters of work engagement. It was seen important that supervisors encourage, support, motivate and give the freedom to manage one's own work the way one sees fit. However, supervisor was also wished to be present in supporting the decision-making and managing competencies. Supervisors were considered as enablers, providing the freedom of choice when it comes to work time and place and pushing you to deliver your best effort by recognizing your strengths.

"In my opinion the supervisor is rather often the enabler. He must, he must know his subordinates, there must be a desire to know the people and ability to see who work well together. That way he gets the best out of them. -- a supervisor should

be encouraging, supporting and in a way, push you forward. A good supervisor pushes you out of your comfort zone."

"This has been a perfect solution for me, being able to work very much from home. You don't get distracted, in a positive way either, but you get to maintain your own rhythm. That's when productivity is at its best and the mood as well."

The below figure summarizes the enablers of work engagement for the representatives of Baby Boomer generation.

Customer orientation

Acquiring of new informantion

High meaningfulness of work

Sharing of knowledge

Meaningfulness for others

Well functioning cooperation

Sense of freedom

Open, encouraging and supporting work community and leadership

Figure 8. Enablers of work engagement for Baby Boomers

The adequate resources, sufficient amount of work and suitably challenging tasks were also seen as promoters of work engagement. The versatile scope of work had for some lead to the feeling of being overloaded, however many brought about their learned skill to decline or postpone new

tasks. The sufficient amount of work was also seen as the resource for the feelings of success. It was seen as an important promoter of work engagement to see things move forward, get the needed support, appreciation and attention from one's supervisor. A few representatives of Baby Boomers also pointed out the working environment, which they preferred to be modern, inspiring, colorful and energizing in order to promote work engagement:

> *"It is important for me to feel surrounded by contemporary activities, modern and current operations."*

> *"Naturally the working environment, -- it should be smartly planned; with colors and design. I do become inspired if the environment is invigorating."*

Baby Boomers were highly independent yet craving for acceptance from both management and the surrounding environment. For one interviewee, the acceptance and the positive attitude from the organization towards one's work was an important promoter of work engagement. With that being said, the same person felt it obvious, if resources were allocated to that particular task and it had not even crossed the interviewee's mind that it was not appreciated, recognized or valued. Even when facing hardships in the earlier career, the interviewee always found the job interesting. This person believed it had to do with the possessed personality:

> *"I believe it is also a personality trait. To kind of be always positive. I simply can't be negative. Even though I really try, I can't manage it. It is in my personality. So, I think that it (independence) has been so more or less since the beginning of my career."*

On the other hand, there were contradictory views on work that depicted Baby Boomers' crossing attitudes towards work:

> *"As I said, I am a fatalist and I settle with what I'm given. For me, work is first and foremost work, when you got to do something for living. It is not a calling for me, you know if I had a lot more money, I could give up work. It's not that important to me. Well, at least I'm saying this now, I might miss this after a while. I don't want to be cynical, but to me work is work that needs to be done. Sometimes it's very nice and sometimes less, but that's life."*

"I have days when I don't go to work and days when I do go to work. And both are good days. I sincerely love leaving for work now that it's not an everyday thing. But for me, a workday is absolutely invigorating. I really need this work, for my own self."
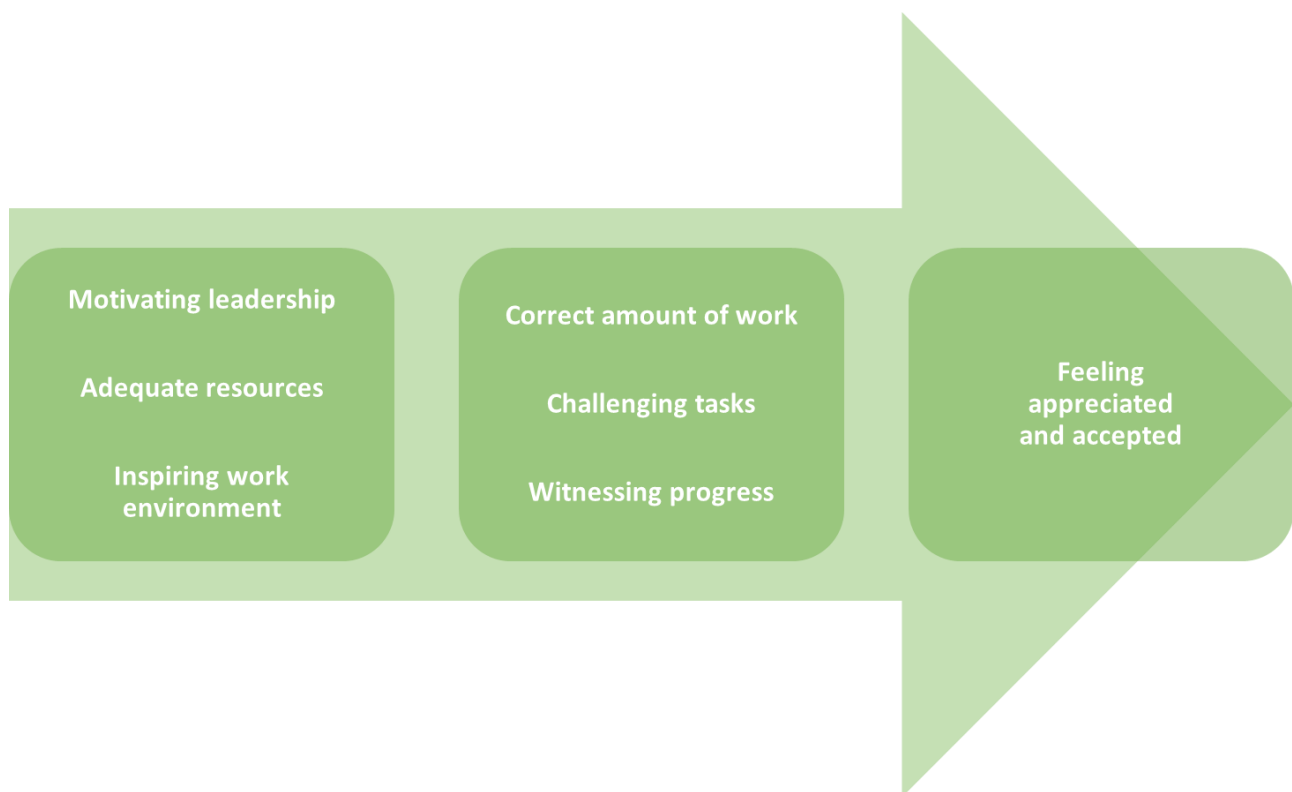

Figure 9. Promoters of work engagement for Baby Boomers

Consequences of Work Engagement for Baby Boomers

Each interviewee in this generation felt that the sensation of work engagement had an impact on both the quality and the quantity of work. Mainly the interviewees felt that one simply makes more effort when there is a certain pull towards the task. However, it had a negative side as well. One interviewee had experienced a situation where the growing quantity of work done during the sensation of work engagement had grown too big and as a result become exhausting. This had had a lessening impact on work engagement and that is why, again, life outside of work was brought out as an important factor. However, the energizing effect of work engagement was seen

as a positive contributor to personal life as well. For another interviewee, it was clear, that a good day at work had an absolute impact on overall satisfaction.

Baby Boomer interviewees talked a lot about the organization. As explained earlier, the case organization has gone through a lot of changes and even cooperation negotiations and the impacts were brought about by the representatives of this group. When discussed about the current level of work engagement and whether organizational commitment was impacted by work engagement, one interviewee felt that work engagement was not currently present because of the complexity and chaos within the organization. For another interviewee, the situation within the organization had caused mistrust towards management, however, it had not had an impact on the work engagement this person was feeling. Organizational commitment on the other hand had suffered:

> *"My work engagement is connected to my work tasks, so I'm not necessarily as committed to the organization as they might wish here. There are several kinds of engagement and my engagement is for my tasks."*

The same individual did not see changes as a negative thing. On the contrary, for this person, that was the thing creating the feeling of security and enhancing work engagement:

> *"I believe that it is essential for my work engagement, that the organization is dealing with current matters and the organization is getting on well. It's following it's time and making contemporary strategic decisions, networking and making the employee feel that the management is up-to-date on the next move. -- For me, the sensation of security comes from not stability but constant changes."*

The importance of organization divided the interviewees. On one hand, organization and its current situation was brought about in every discussion, yet for the majority of interviewees, the organization per se was not a defining factor when it comes to their work engagement.

> *"I don't think work engagement can be created from the outside, you know by dictating. They can create the conditions, I can't say what they might be, but it's more of a thing rising from within. For example, in a lecturer's job, it's the*

relationship with the students, how rewarding you see it and how rewarding you believe they see it."

"For me, the organization doesn't matter. My work engagement is not affected by the organization, it can be whatever. It is the job, the people I work with and the job characteristics. They can be relocated in any organization."

For the other two interviewees, organization did play a role in their sensation of work engagement and they saw themselves as members of some entity.

"Today I see this organization as a holistic partner in this ensemble."

"I have always been rather committed when I have had the team spirit and the sense of joint liability, I could say that I have been committed to the organization. I see it as an entity. What's my role in the entity, in the organization, what are we doing, where are we heading."

6.2. Generation X

"First of all, I believe, and this is a highly personal sensation, that work engagement shouldn't even be an everyday-matter. I would keep it as a special treat, that will carry me through everything else. If you have one great thing in six months, it'll get you through the rest of it."

The sample of Generation X consists of interviewees born between 1964 and 1979. Each interviewee could recognize the feeling of work engagement and was experiencing it more or less in their current position. All interviewees could recognize the three dimensions of work engagement, vigor, dedication and absorption, in their current or previous work tasks and they were found most clearly when one was either planning, developing, teaching or accomplishing something. The situations where they actually experienced it the most varied according to the respondents. The most energizing element of the sensation of work engagement came from interaction. Was it with students or a good team, nonetheless, cooperation was the key element of vigor. One of the interviewees described it as follows:

> *"-- a situation in classroom when you feel that gee now it's working! You know the feeling that some common energy is created and enthusiasm starts to return (from the students)."*

Another one associated vigor also to a classroom situation from one's own perception of being well prepared:

> *"Vigor is a great word, it consists of rather many fragments. The most wonderful feeling I get is when I go to a class feeling perhaps not thoroughly prepared, that I would know exactly what's going to happen each minute, but rather that I have internalized the topic well and prepared for the matter in that sense.*

The other forms of interaction, such as talking about the things that feel important to someone and relate to one's work were also considered energizing. As mentioned before, teamwork came out in each interview as an important element of work engagement. For some it was the energizing factor, while others saw functioning teamwork as an enabler of their work engagement. One felt that team effort was the most energizing element:

> *"When a team has a good spirit and you can see people getting enthusiastic about the matter. That brings along energy and inspiration and you notice that you are eagerly moving onwards."*

Most interviewees felt, that during the sensation of work engagement, setbacks did not feel insurmountable, on the contrary, they were just one part of the regular tasks. One of the most descriptive statement went as following:

> *"Well if there's enough pull (work engagement), it will override everything, and then those setbacks, they are minor things that are manageable. On the other hand, when there is no pull, those minor things grow major and you feel like nothing's working."*

Dedication was most powerfully connected to the meaningfulness of the job. The fact, that one is able to help and advance a student's or the organization's journey onwards offered a great sensations of work engagement. On the other hand, it was not only that the person him-/herself

would be meaningful to someone but also the entire event of collaboration where the whole group reaches common understanding:

> *"It is created very strongly in those situations of interaction, when you notice that something clicks within the group, the sensation of meaningfulness. Not necessarily so that I am the meaningful one, but rather the matter and the collaboration. That's how I'd like to see it, that it's not about the person."*

Feedback was also considered to be an important factor influencing dedication whether it was positive or negative. One of the interviewees felt it especially rewarding, when students were giving critical feedback. This interviewee always encourages students to express their criticism, because for this person, it offered a great opportunity of development and self-improvement. Another interviewee felt that feedback from both supervisors and students makes one more willing to work better:

> *"When you're working or teaching and get good feedback from people attending the session or when your supervisor gives you positive feedback on your work, you just somehow know while accomplishing the task that this is going to work out well. And that's what gives you the extra boost, makes you try even harder."*

Other aspects influencing dedication were the feeling of being heard and the possibility of affection. In other words, being able to affect and at the same time feeling appreciated and valuable. For several interviewees, an important enhancer of dedication was to be able to affect both work in general but also having a personal affection, which in general was created in situations where a person felt he/she was being heard. One of the interviewees actually felt, that the task itself was not a central factor, rather it was the personal appeal of the task or the theme and the ability to affect, bring some input, benefit others and being appreciated for it.

Absorption was the dimension of work engagement similarly well recognized as other dimensions yet less experienced. For one interviewee, it happened mostly in teamwork situations, where the whole team was planning things together. For another interviewee, it was the exploring or writing related work done individually where the time went by unnoticed and the detachment was difficult. Yet the combining factor was the personal appeal towards the matter. Several interviewees felt that they simply did not have enough time to really immerse themselves into any subject, no matter

how interesting it was. This was especially common among lecturers. Many felt, that even though the diversity of work tasks is a positive aspect of work, it often made it impossible to deeply absorb oneself into any particular matter. The respondents felt that it was the hastiness and the fragmented scope of work that forced to detach themselves from one task and move into another. One interviewee feeling rather overloaded with tasks summed it up as follows:

> *"My mind is constantly organizing everything and I have a schedule in mind all the time. In that sense, in order for me to absorb into anything would require a time and space where no one is expecting anything from me anywhere."*
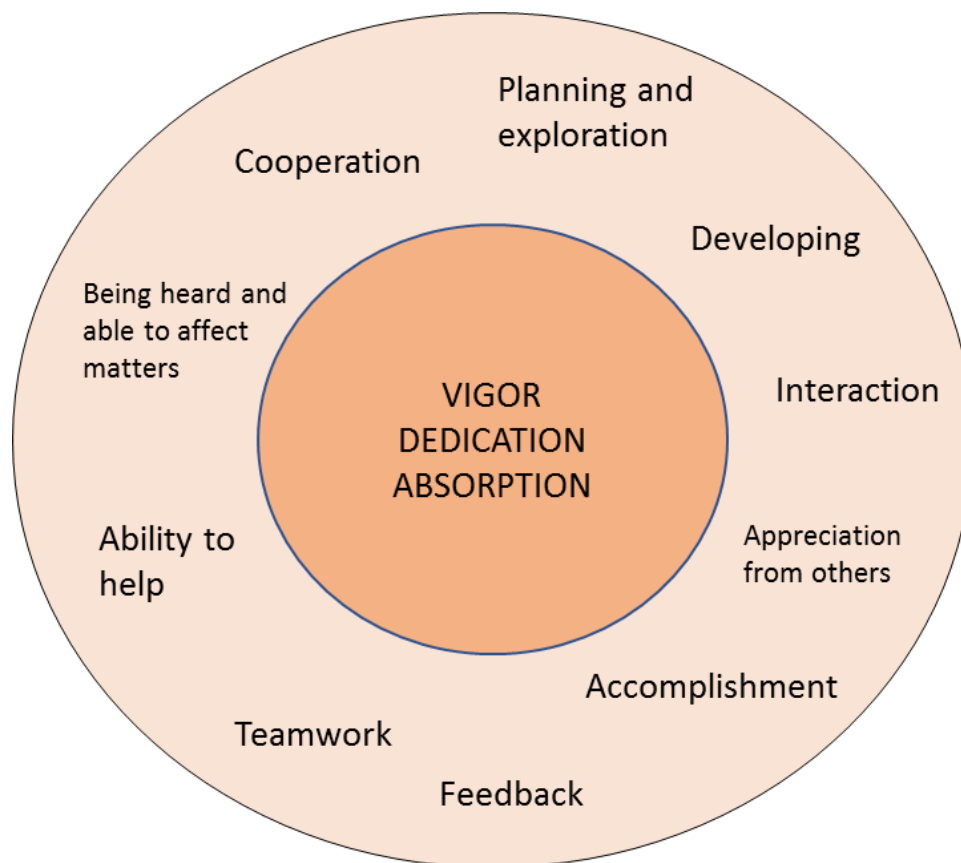
Figure 10. Determinants of Generation X's work engagement

Enablers and Promoters of Work Engagement for Generation X

For the representatives of Generation X, the matters concerning the second theme of the interview, the enablers of work engagement, consisted of sufficient time resources, peaceful surroundings, functioning machinery and systems, reasonable amount of work, well-functioning team and most frequent of them all: The freedom to operate in a manner most suitable for oneself at the most suitable time. The role of supervisor in work engagement was twofold. For some, it was important to have the supervisor rather close, supporting in decision-making and otherwise reachable when needed. For others, the relationship with the supervisor was only an administrative one and nothing more. However, most interviewees felt that the sensation of being trusted by the supervisor was a crucial factor enabling work engagement. In other words, supervisors were expected to know that the subordinate was doing and support that but not to interfere or dictate how and when those things were executed. One interviewee described it as following:

> *"I don't see this work as such where the supervisor is very close. I mean that in this job, one must trust that the people are executing the work they are assigned to and let them do it the best way they see fit and that's the precondition for my work engagement. -- However, the relationship with my supervisor is very important to me because my work includes issues where I need help. It might involve a third party, in which case I feel that it is not my job to deliver a message or I can forward certain matters if a supervisor backs me up."*

Another supervisor related matter that occurred, was the common understanding of goals and targets and the encouragement and appreciation from the supervisor. For the interviewees, the emergence of work engagement was not time or place dependent per se, rather that it could take place whenever and wherever. The matters influencing the emergence in teamwork were the positivity and enthusiasm of group, where negativity has no grounds and everyone has an attitude of moving things forward. The below figure 11 depicts the enablers of work engagement for the representatives of Generation X.
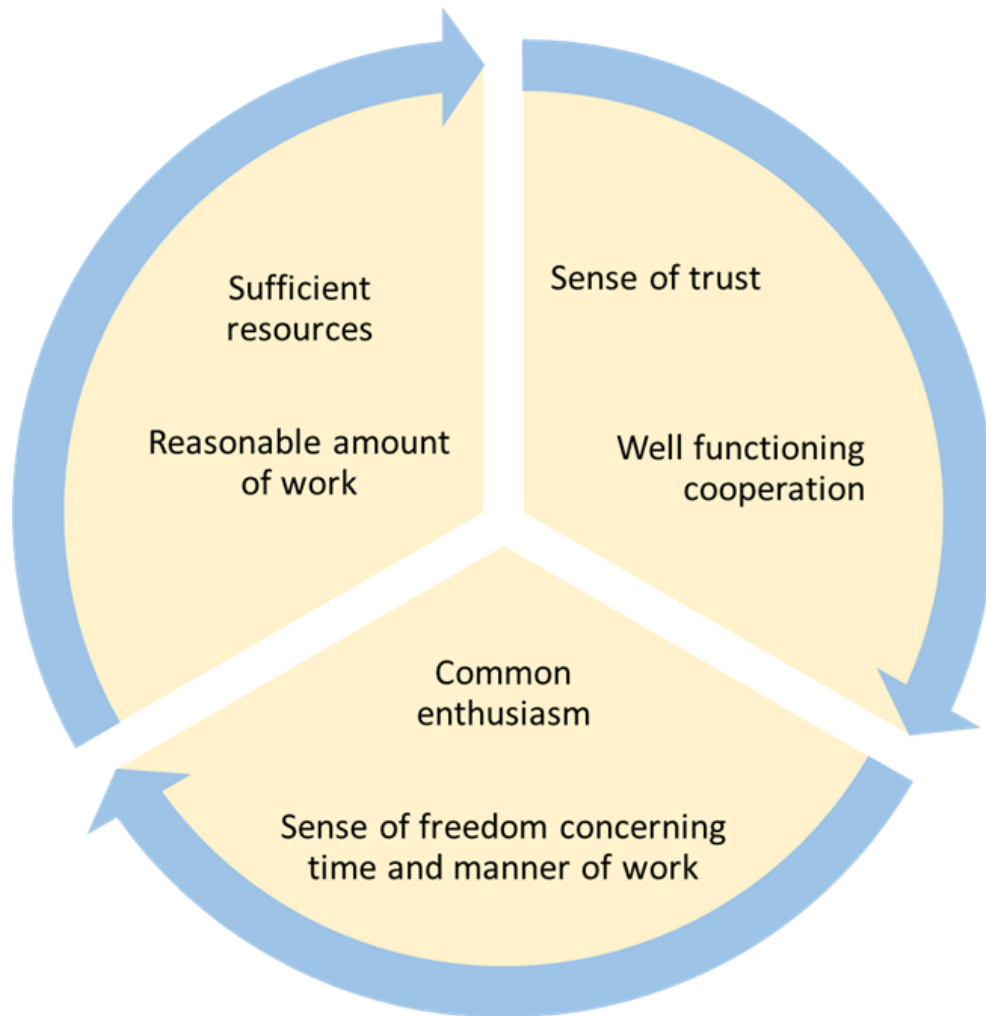
Figure 11. Enablers of work engagement for Generation X.

The third theme of the interview were the promoters of work engagement. The interviewees saw sufficient time resources and reasonable workload as the most enhancing factors of work engagement:

> *"There's an expression in Finnish: Give time to think, and that applies here as well."*

> *"I think that quite many of us are balancing with the allocation of time resources. I think that's my main promoter, that I could use the time where it's designated."*

> *"Absolutely by giving me time to develop those things that I see valuable from my work's perspective, that I see adding value to this organization."*

The discussion on workload concerned not only the amount of work but also the clarification of job description. When it comes to the amount of work, one interviewee saw that the amount should not be excessive yet not insufficient either, but that the balance is important. This person also felt, that work engagement as such should not even be a full-time sensation but rather a special treat that carries one over the disengaging matters. Clear job description was seen as a promoter of work engagement as well. Several interviewees explained about the altered scope of work and felt difficulties with the tasks that did not have a clear focus. One interviewee mentioned, that the unclear target made it impossible to know when something is executed well enough and felt that it had an impact on the dedication to the matter.

Colleagues and work community, when being open, tolerant and inspiring were seen as definite promoters of work engagement among generation Xers. Cooperation and planning together were considered as enhancers as well as playing by the rules. That despite everyone handles matters in their own way, everyone still follows the common courtesy, feels the sense of community and trust. Additionally, openness and humor and the intolerance for any kind of drama within the work community were seen as promoters of work engagement as well as the openness in decision-making. Freedom of work time and place also rose into discussion when the interviewees thought about the promoters of work engagement. The possibility to arrange schedules and lecturers on one's own way enhanced work engagement and vice versa, disengaged when that possibility was felt missing. One interviewee described it as a form of exploitation:

> *"If I'm given a certain resource to fulfil a course and other confusing matters have taken time away from teaching that is the main source of my work engagement, then I feel that I have not been able to invest as much as I would have liked to and I feel exploited."*
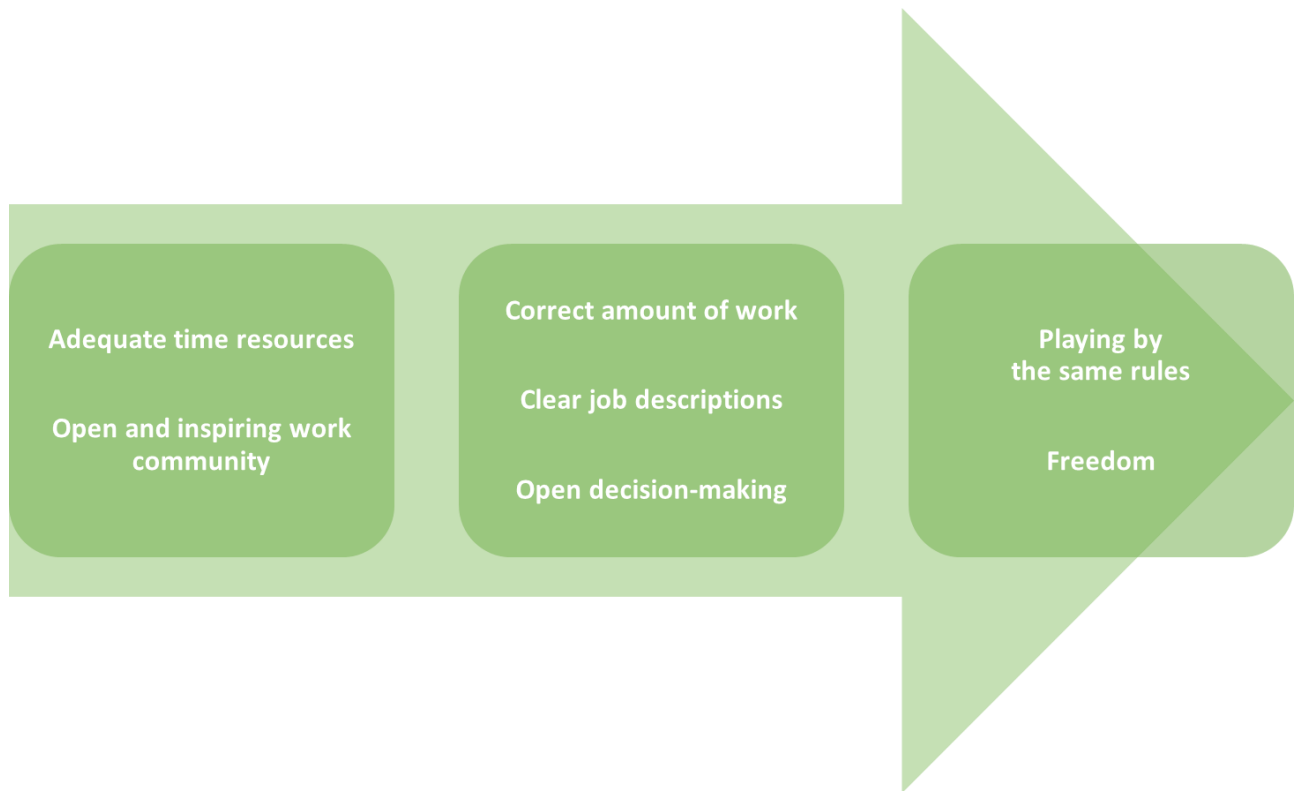
Figure 12. Promoters of work engagement for Generation X

Consequences of Work Engagement for Generation X

The final theme of the interview, the consequences of work engagement divided interviewees in terms of organizational commitment. Otherwise the theme was quite similarly pondered amongst the members of generations X. Each interviewee felt that work engagement had an impact on both the quality and the quantity of work when compared to the situation of not having the pull to work. It was described by one interviewee as a state when motivation is high, the quality, the pace and the ability for decision making are better and it feels effortless. For people who spend much time in classroom situations, it was felt in times of interaction:

> *"This job is based on interaction. For example, in classroom, both parties are sensing each other, is there any pull and can we create it? And you can recognize if it is not there. -- So yes, work engagement and quality go hand in hand."*

One interviewee felt that no matter the measuring device or scale, the creativity and the positive effect on how one gets things done are highly dependent on the sensation of work engagement. Another interviewee also felt that the impact of the sense of work engagement is remarkable. This person had done a lot of writing throughout the work career and saw that for instance in writing tasks, the whole language changed to better and felt effortless, when it was done in the state of vigor, dedication and absorption.

One's own well-being was also considered being influenced by work engagement. One interviewee felt that it had had an impact throughout the career. The personality traits this person possessed had caused the interviewee to drift away with work almost on a daily basis. But for the interviewee, it was not a bad thing, even though it was recognized that the social circle might have become smaller as the years had gone by. Another interviewee felt that as a consequence of the positivity of work engagement, one is also more flexible than if feeling disengaged. For most interviewees, it was a definite fact that having work engagement impacted on their well-being in other sections of life as well:

> *"I feel enthusiastic and vital and I am just a much nicer person at home and in general. When a person is inspired one gets another kind of initiative to do things, whether at home or at work, and just enjoy the feeling."*

It was common for the interviewees to compare the day when work engagement had not been reached to a day with the sense of work engagement.

> *"I am rather loaded with work at the moment, so it's hard for me to say whether work engagement is visible at home. I am quite tired when I get there -- however after a meeting where we have accomplished a lot together, it feels totally different to go home. You sort of float on top of a cotton candy cloud."*

Each Interviewee felt that the sensation of work engagement was present in their current job. However, some felt it more than others. Each person could also name things that could enhance their work engagement at the moment. The changing working environment impacted several interviewees' work engagement, for instance, the class sizes that are getting bigger, the ambiguity of job descriptions and tasks and the large workload with some distrust among the colleagues.

The interviewees saw the clarification of common targets and goals, the better allocation of resources and the growing teamwork as the answers in enhancing the current situation.

Organizational commitment divided the interviewees. One felt, that rather it was the long career in the same organization than work engagement that impacted the level of engagement. The interviewee admitted that naturally, when there were times of not feeling any work engagement, the frustration towards the organization grew and thoughts of leaving emerged. However, during the times of high work engagement, this person does not think about it but just moves forward and enjoys the feeling and does not consider other options because there is no reason for it. Another interviewee felt that the organization is indifferent when it comes to work engagement. Of course, in case the organization is preventing or otherwise complicating the work, then disengagement takes place but otherwise, if everything goes smoothly and feels effortless, it does not matter in which organization the work is executed.

> *"When the work is meaningful and everything works, the organization does not matter at that moment, I mean which organization you work for. It is more important to being able to do what is meaningful than who you do it for. Appeal and meaningfulness are more important than the organization."*

One interviewee could not really tell whether the organizational commitment was impacted or not, but the interviewee's organizational commitment emerged more when the sort of tasks which enhanced the whole organization were offered to and accomplished by the interviewee. For three of the interviewees the organizational commitment was highly impacted. For these people, it was the meaningfulness of the job that made the organizational commitment increase. Ethics played a part as well:

> *"I see working somehow ethically as well. I could not be working wherever. It has to be a business I can underwrite. That this is important, useful and it gives something to me and probably to someone else too. An educational institution as a whole makes this sort of reasoning easy for me."*

6.3. Generation Y

> *"I don't particularly see myself needing a lot of guidance Of course, it's good to talk with your supervisor and find the common direction. But I don't need to be told to do this and that. Then I feel like I'm not the one in control and the meaningfulness of the job disappears, if I'm being commanded to do something."*

The above statement depicts Generation Y well. The representatives of this Generation, the Millennials, in this sample are born between 1981 and 1990. This generation is the most divided when considering their profession. Two of them are lecturers, two of them are students and last two represent other staff in the organization. Each interviewee could recognize the sensations of work engagement and the dimensions related to it. Work engagement was mainly felt during new, challenging tasks that demanded investigating and research, when the task pushed one to the limit of existing competence or when the task at hand was of deep personal interest. Team and the cohesion of the team were also seen as central building blocks for work engagement.

> *"For me it's the team I have worked with. It is not necessarily about the task, but about the joint effort. The fact that each person had been recruited to a right position and we shared a common understanding on what we were doing and all of us were reaching for the same target."*

> *"I think it was strongest when I first started in my new task. In a sense that things were new, I had a lot of responsibility and ability to develop new things. That's what made me feel positive, vigorous, creative and even losing time."*

> *"The last time I can think of a longer period of feeling work engagement was when the job characteristics changed. When I got new tasks to do and I got to learn all the time. During the first three months time just flew by. -- I had a lot to do but it was fun because I acquired new skills all day long."*

As seen above and what came out in other interviews as well, challenges were highly welcomed by this generation. The feeling of work engagement was related to a new position or some new task, which was unfamiliar, even oppressing in the beginning. In a situation, where one had to push himself/herself to the limits of own competencies and comfort zone and survive even against

all odds, that is what created work engagement for the generation born between 1980-1990. A few interviewees saw it as the challenge one had to solve or as a thing one had to clarify. In many discussions, it was about a project that had to be completed. The beginning and the end had been defined, but the means were left to discover by the interviewees. In addition to the previously mentioned, for one interviewee it was also about the contents of the task that were of this person's personal interest:

> *"The first thing that comes to mind is when I was working as a project manager and I had to develop a concept for a charity event. It involved carrying through the entity from the initial idea to a continual concept and when the theme involved music, coordination, leadership and organization and all that, I believe it created a sense of being involved in something even larger than life itself."*

Another interviewee also brought about the importance of the belief in the work, the sense of creating something meaningful. For this person, dedication had been central for all jobs attended, and the joint belief in the work was a major factor. And the strong dedication made absorption possible and even desirable. One interviewee associated work engagement in the situation, where something needed deeper research or investigation. That was when this person got carried away with time, materials start to pile up on the table and several tabs start to emerge on the computer. For the interviewee, it was the appeal of the new matter and the acquired knowledge, that constitute work engagement. Another person also associated work engagement in a situation that demanded investigation, felt almost impossible and in the end, works out well:

> *"It is usually created in a situation where you are, not necessarily on the limits of your competence, but the situation is new and you haven't known beforehand how you're going to solve it. It might even include a small moment of desperation, you know this is not going to work -mood. But then it just sort of starts to develop. -- as such it's not about performing perfectly but more like barely hanging in there. And then the feeling of joy, yes, this is how it was supposed to go!"*

Figure 13. Determinants of Generation Y's work engagement

Enablers and Promoters of Work Engagement for Generation Y

As enablers of work engagement, the Millennials named well-functioning team work, constantly challenging job characteristics, the freedom to work without being stalked by the supervisor, sufficient time resources to concentrate on certain matter, properly allocated responsibilities and freedom, trust and appreciation, meaningfulness and inspiring work environment. When discussing teamwork, it was important that the whole team was equally enthusiastic and dedicated to the task at hand. The equality of the team mattered and the open knowledge sharing was central for work engagement. It was crucial, that each member of the team was trustworthy and moving towards the common goal and that the cohesion of the group is strong:

> *"I think the primary thing is trust, enthusiasm, good common drive and a nice synergy. That we get a joint intent on and we encourage each other and move forward as a group."*

Time resources came out also with Millennials, though not as often as with the previous generations. Lecturers' versatile scope of work was at times criticized and instead one interviewee hoped for more time with a particular task.   As mentioned earlier, each Millennial enjoyed challenging situations at work, and one of the interviewee discussed about the importance of constant challenges, the need for constant external impulses for adequately challenging tasks.

> *"At the first time, the adequately challenging task is the most difficult. The next time you already know which way to approach the challenge. And if the tasks stay the same for too long, the challenge is not generated and neither is work engagement."*

The relationship with the supervisor was also seen as an enabler when it was trusting, open and encouraging. Freedom was important and the fact that even though the supervisor was not constantly close but was still approachable. However, one interviewee felt, that good team spirit can outrun a bad supervisor relationship.

> *"Well I get the good vibes going on better when I can define myself what am I going to do and when will I do it. You know, that there's not anyone breathing on your neck but rather they trust that the job will get done without constant lashing."*

> *"I don't want to work for a supervisor who is watching my every step and has a saying in each step. On the other hand, I do not want someone who is distant and seldom seen and to whom I wouldn't have the courage to go talk to. So, something in between. Maybe even more caring than distant."*

> *"Yes, the support and trust from the supervisor, but I still believe that in different work places your own team is the biggest factor. You know you might have a trickier relationship with your supervisor in the organization, but if you have your own team in which the communication is good and you're at the same level and your values are equal, it creates good spirit and sort of enhances the positive circle."*

In the next figure, the enablers of work engagement for Millennials are summed up.
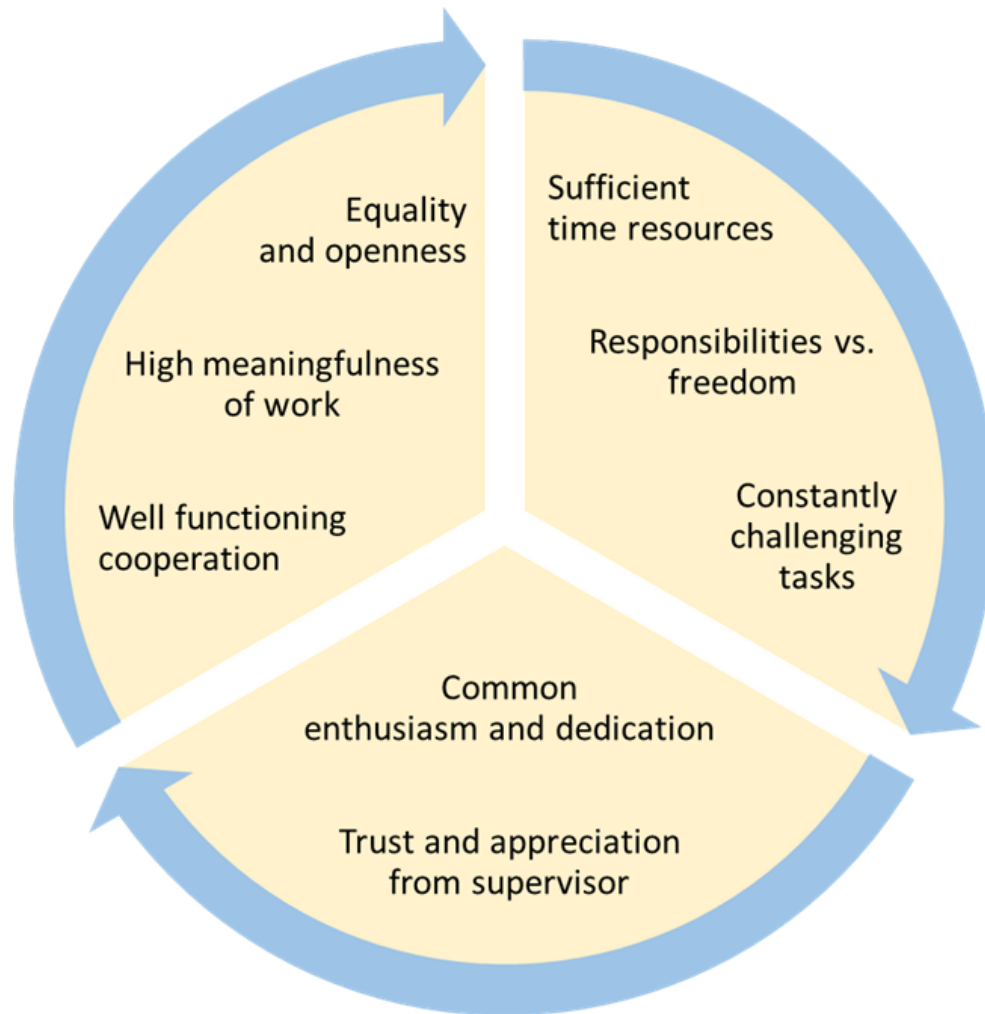
Figure 14. Enablers of work engagement for Generation Y

As promoters of work engagement, the Millennials named the mission why the work was being done, right allocation of resources, positive and critical feedback, freedom of choice concerning the time and the place of work, time resources, teamwork, functioning systems and clear organizational structures, open work community and challenging tasks. For the person who believed that the mission was the primary enhancer, it was because earlier experience had shown that the clearer the mission the easier it was to get excited.

> *"Most important is the mission, what we're doing. You know when you feel that the work you're doing is meaningful in many different levels, you just get differently excited about it. For instance, this charity concert, although it was about conceptualization, it included a lot of personally important stuff, like music, charity and so on."*

Teamwork was seen as a promoter of work engagement by several interviewees. It was seen essential for trust and openness, that the team should be given time to get to know each other and be more willing to share ideas. One interviewee believed that the team's inner competencies would be harnessed the best after knowing each other and each other's knowledge. For another interviewee, social encounters outside work as well were the matters enhancing personal development. For this person, it was also an organization's responsibility to clarify what kinds of competencies the employees possessed and to support competence development of an individual. Competence management all in all was brought about rather often with Generation Y. Third interviewee saw teamwork as an advantage yet as a threat too, because according to this person, it only needed one person to deteriorate work engagement.

> *"-- because if there are people, who don't further your well-being or the fact that you are doing a good thing, rather people who are less excited and don't believe in the purpose, they can turn out to be a liability for your well-being and enthusiasm."*

Leadership arose into discussion several times when the interviewees were asked to describe the promoters of work engagement. A supervisor, that enabled both personal growth but also organizational development was seen as a promoter of work engagement. Also, a supervisor offering opportunities for remote work and trusting overall to one's subordinate to deliver one's duties. It was important for interviewees to have space and freedom to execute their work in a time, place and manner most suitable for them. It was also seen as a central promoter of work engagement to have clear job descriptions and goal setting in order to understand the big picture and one's own role in the organization. Feedback was also mentioned, especially the critical one. One interviewee felt that it offered a best opportunity for personal development:

> *"I wish that all feedback would be given to me straight. Also, the critical one, that it would be delivered openly. If I only her positive feedback it doesn't offer a similar chance of personal development. So, I welcome critical feedback as well."*

Partly related to previously handled leadership and competence development, sufficiently challenging tasks were seen as an enhancer of work engagement by many interviewees.

"I feel, that work tasks need to offer challenge in order for me to get excited about them. If something is too easy, it is going to be invigorating just as long as you get into the matter and after that you get the urge to do something more."

"-- the effective utilization of the personnel potential in the form of sufficiently challenging tasks. I think that one reason for personnel frustration is a result from mistrust and not assigning tasks that are challenging enough."

"The job must be challenging enough, not too easy, but the sort that challenges you on a daily basis and so gives the opportunity to succeed and feel joy. In a way that you have certain set goals and you reach them."

One interviewee saw open and low-hierarchy work community as an enhancer of dedication. The fact that all members of community were equal and that one could freely be himself/herself, was of importance for this person. Another interviewee brought about the personal responsibility in all dimensions of work engagement. Vigor was evolved by looking after one's own well-being in terms of getting enough sleep, having physical hobbies as a counterbalance for mental work and also whereas dedication was about having the curiosity to develop oneself outside work and acquire new knowledge as well. One more thing that came out as a promoter of work engagement were the functioning IT systems and organizational processes and structures.
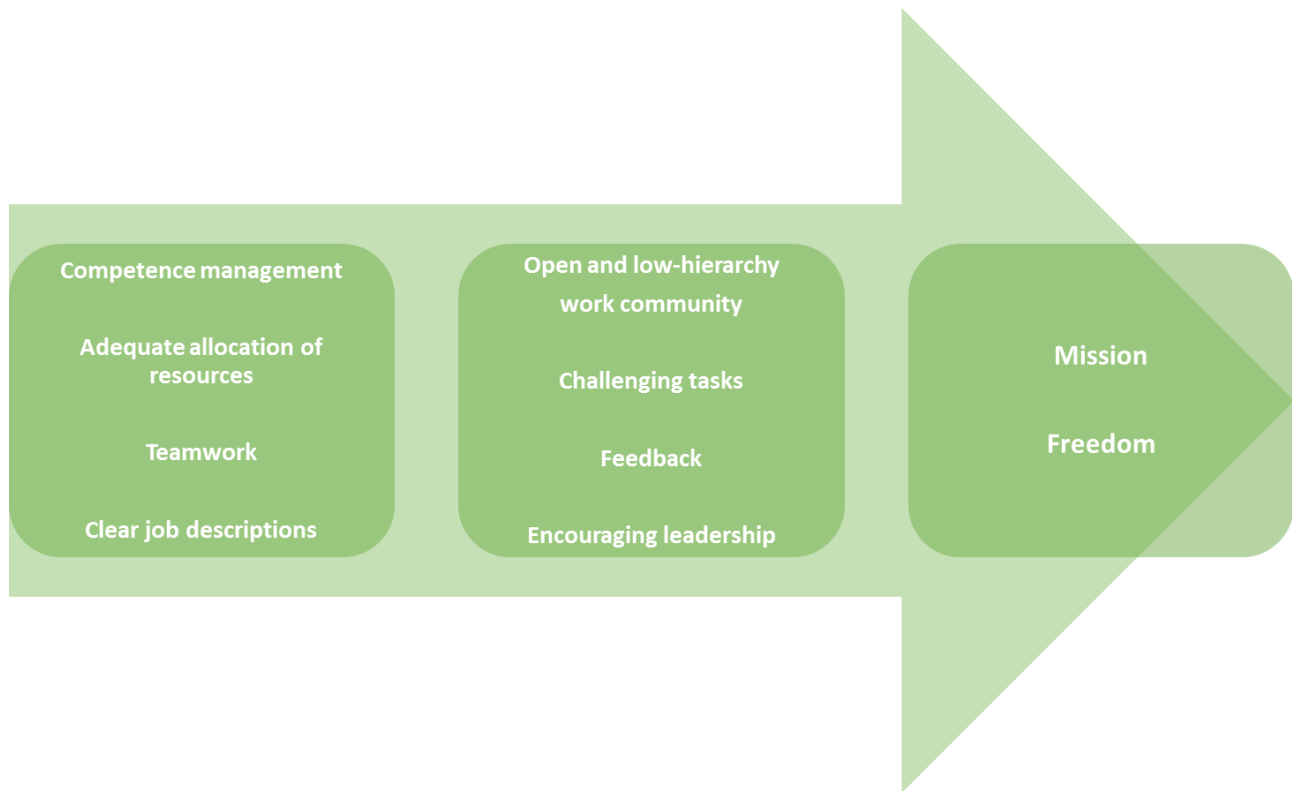
Figure 15. Promoters of work engagement for Generation Y

Consequences of Work Engagement for Generation Y

The interviewees in Generation Y as well could see and feel the consequences of work engagement in the quality of work. Generally, it was felt that one was able to achieve more during the state of work engagement, learn things more comprehensively, being able to perform better for instance in customer service situations and endure the routine tasks more easily.

> *"I have felt that I can achieve more during the sensation of work engagement. And it can actually be affected by the fact that you are making more hours, because you're so excited and you want to continue with it and not to stop. -- So, when you're like into it, the numbers do speak for themselves."*

> *"I believe that I am a much nicer person, when I want to do the work and I like it."*

"I would point out the learning side. You know when you get deeply absorbed into some matter and you're interested in it, you can learn new things fast and you're able to remember them for a long time."

"From the customer service work's point of view, when one's feeling work engagement, the service is notably better. From my own experience as well. And when you're having those times of disengagement or you're having another kind of down point in working life, then it shows in the service quality."

"You do achieve more in the state of work engagement and the routine tasks too start to proceed effortlessly, whereas in a not-as-effortless state of mind the routines feel overwhelming. So, the sense of work engagement and the vigor do carry you through the nasty parts."

Work engagement was also having an impact to the interviewees' personal life. They felt that the positive vibes were carried out to home environment too, that for instance a normal grocery store visit during rush hour was handled better than after a bad day. One interviewee felt that there was more vigor in free time as well, when work was going smoothly and being invigorating and even willingly executed extra hours did not have a negative impact, rather if the overtime work was defined externally, that had an impact on work engagement. Stress was also felt less when work engagement was strong.

When it comes to the interviewees' current state of work engagement, each were feeling it yet were craving for certain improvement. A few interviewees had a situation where their job description was not entirely planned or at least not clarified yet. Management was hoped to understand the amount of work laid upon the employee, in order to keeping it motivating. Somehow a sort of mistrust between the employee and the employer was shown in some discussion:

"And I am craving for being trusted more. If a decision has been made to recruit me to a certain position, the management should also trust me to be fit. And that this person is capable of performing in the position without pushing certain ready-made solution models, but rather letting the employee to solve the challenges in a way one sees fit."

Some interviewees were very happy with the versatile scope of work, whereas some were not particularly sure whether they would enjoy staying in a task like that throughout their career. On the other hand, versatility was seen as an asset regarding personal development and understanding entities. For one interviewee, work engagement was felt every now and then, however, this person had realized the need for change and gravitated towards strong personal development.

> *"I feel work engagement occasionally. On the other hand, I think that now it's a time for change, so in that sense work engagement is not as strong as in the beginning if my current job. -- I believe that enhancing work engagement is up to me. I don't believe, well of course a supervisor has a large impact and whether you are trusted and all. But if the basics are in good condition, I believe that it's my own duty."*

Personal effect and traits were seen as a central factor in work engagement by another interviewee as well. This person believed, that it depended on the activity and the fearless attitude towards challenges whether one finds work engagement or not. One interviewee was currently feeling work engagement and saw the current situation of the organization and the changes as a source of the sensed engagement:

> *"I think that my work engagement is on a good level. And now that I know that there are new changes coming on all the time. New projects are emerging and I have to attend trainings and take courses, that keeps the interest going on. For me, work engagement is built upon the fact that new things are emerging and I have to learn new things."*

Four out of six interviewees felt their organizational commitment was being affected by work engagement. For one interviewee, it was important that the organization was delivering values and attitudes similar to this person. The work task had also been highly connected, even branding into the organization, thus it had a large impact. Another person felt that the external impulses affecting positively to work engagement were often coming from the management or the organization, thus making the role of the organization even more central. The two people who did not see the importance of an organization very large, felt that it was either more about the task, that could be transferred into any other organization. The other one felt more committed to the

team and unit this person was leading. On the other hand, if the organization managed to offer challenges it had a major impact on a person, even though this interviewee felt committed already:

> *"I think I'm rather committed here. And now that I know about the stuff that's going to happen in the future, so I try to commit as well. I believe that this change took place in the right time. I was starting to feel a little bored with my tasks, when I knew I had no change of forwarding my career. This new position happened at a very good time."*

The discussion on the perceptions of work engagement concerning the entire research sample of the representatives of different generational cohorts takes place in the next chapter.

6.4. Generational Differences in the Perception of Work Engagement

As seen above, the matters that made the representatives of different generations feel work engagement were actually often rather similar but the emphases varied. Table 6 below illustrates the generational perceptions on work engagement. It depicts the similarities and the variation in the emphases between different generations. Additionally, when considering the enabling and the promoting factors of work engagement, it becomes clear, that those were mainly built on the matters the interviewees had described during the discussion on the perception of work engagement. The consequences of work engagement are dealt more thoroughly later in this chapter as the research implied, that work engagement had a similar, positive impact on the performance and the well-being of each interviewee but organizational commitment as a result of work engagement divided the sample on an individual level, thus offers no opportunity to generalize any result according to generational cohort.

Table 6. Generational perceptions on work engagement

Work engagement / Generations	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y
Determinants	❑ Solution-orientedness ❑ Cooperation ❑ Constant development ❑ Curiosity for several matters, yet pedantic with the usage of time ❑ Team effort ❑ Freedom of choice concerning the time and the place of work ❑ Studets ❑ Ability to help	❑ Planning and exploration ❑ Developing ❑ Intercation ❑ Appreciation from others ❑ Accomplishment ❑ Feedback ❑ Teamwork ❑ Ability to help ❑ Being heard and able to affect matters ❑ Cooperation	❑ Deep personal interest ❑ Teamwork ❑ Constant challenges ❑ Being on the limit of existing competence ❑ Personal development ❑ Control over time, place and manner of work ❑ New tasks ❑ Joint belief and joint liability
Enablers	❑ Sharing of knowledge ❑ Meaningfulness for others ❑ Well functioning teamwork ❑ Sense of freedom ❑ Open, encouraging and supporting work community and leadership ❑ High meanngfulness of work ❑ Acquiring of new information ❑ Customer orientation	❑ Sense of trust ❑ Well functioning teamwork ❑ Common enthusiasm ❑ Sense of freedom conserning time and manner of work ❑ Reasonable amount of work ❑ Sufficient resources	❑ Sufficient time resources ❑ Responsibilites vs. freedom ❑ Constantly challenging tasks ❑ Common enthusiasm and dedication ❑ Trust and appreciation from supervisor ❑ Well functioning team work ❑ High meaningfulness of work ❑ Equality and openness
Promoters	❑ Motivating leadership ❑ Adequate resources ❑ Inspiring work environment ❑ Correct amount of work ❑ Challenging tasks ❑ Witnessing progress ❑ Feeling appreciated and accepted	❑ Adequate time resources ❑ Open and inspiring work community ❑ Correct amount of work ❑ Clear job description ❑ Open decision-making ❑ Playing by the same rules ❑ Freedom	❑ Competence management ❑ Adequate allocation of resources ❑ Teamwork ❑ Clear job description ❑ Open and low-hierarchy work community ❑ Challenging tasks ❑ Feedback ❑ Engouraging leadership ❑ Mission ❑ Freedom

If we first consider the similarities with the generations, each generation saw functioning teamwork as a source of Schaufeli et al's (2002) work engagement dimensions. The interviewees often described situations where a team was developing something together as invigorating, meaningful and absorbing. Time flew by and even though those situations were intense, the feeling afterwards was not drained, but rather joyous and energetic.

> *"-- I feel most pride -- most joyous when the team succeeds."*
> -representative of Baby Boomers

> *"Absorption never happens to me when I am alone but always when there's a team or a collaboration group where we plan something. That's when I lose track of time."*
> -representative of Generation X

> *"Dedication is very important to me. Especially the project I took part in, the common belief within the team on the matters we were contributing into, that we were organizing a good event for the youngsters."*
> -representative of Generation Y

For Generations X and Y, common enthusiasm was a major enabler of work engagement whereas for Baby Boomers, customer orientation was emphasized and especially one's own meaningfulness for the customer (mainly a student).

Constant development was something that came about within each generational cohort. It was essential for work engagement to feel that one was moving forward and developing one's own competence. Baby Boomers and Generation Y considered job characteristics also as enablers of their work engagement. Especially for Baby Boomers, the tasks that required acquiring of new information and for Generation Y, the tasks that included constant challenges enabled engaging. The challenging tasks were brought about most often by Generation Y. For them, work engagement was mainly born in situations where they were on the limits of their existing competence and working on matters that were novel to them. It was important to have constant challenges in order to keep up the positive feeling at work. One interviewee described it well in the earlier presented quotation:

> *"At the first time, the adequately challenging task is the most difficult. The next time you already know which way to approach the challenge. And if the tasks stay the same for too long, the challenge is not generated and neither is work engagement."*
> -representative of Generation Y

Baby Boomers and Millennials both brought about the high meaningfulness of work as a strong enabler of work engagement as well. For Baby Boomers, meaningfulness came from the aforementioned customer orientation and the feeling of benefiting someone whereas for Generation Y it was built on the mission and joint liability. With Generation X, even though they too felt high meaningfulness, the matter that was most present in the discussions was the amount of work. However, the members of Generation X brought about the ability to help as a source of meaningfulness. The uniting factor here might be that all Baby Boomers and Generation Xers were staff members in the case organization whereas Generation Yers were a mix of staff and students. Anyhow, for the representatives of Generation X, the sense of contributing a student's

or a group effort was an essential factor in meaningfulness. Interestingly, for Generation Y the source of meaningfulness was a deep personal interest to the matter and the joint belief in it. All in all, in a similar vein, team effort brought meaningfulness for all generations, but the resources varied. For Baby Boomers, the source was the importance of their own presence that enhanced the team, for Generation X it was the common effort that enhanced the other parties of the team and for Generation Y it was the joint liability that aimed for the common goals:

> *"Work engagement has emerged in situations where I have experienced that my particular knowhow has been truly needed. That with my own actions I can really enhance some matter and especially my competence has been meaningful."*
> -representative of Baby Boomers

> *"It's not about me being the meaningful one, but rather the matter and the collaboration in the situation. That's how I'd like to perceive it, that it's not about the personality."*
> -representative of Generation X

> *"One of the most important elements is enthusiasm. That you get a good intent going on as a team, you spur each other and move forward, together."*
> -representative of Generation Y

This research implied, that autonomy granted by supervisors was a strong promoter of work engagement for all generations and especially for Baby Boomers. Related to leadership, many Baby Boomers also saw support and appreciation from supervisors as enablers of their work engagement, however, not in the means of public appraisals, but rather as support and motivation. For Generation Y, appreciation from supervisors was also a common nominator in enabling work engagement. Trust played a major part with Millennials as well, since they wanted supervisors close yet allowing space to solve work challenges by themselves. Millennials also appreciated open work community and low-hierarchy and thought of them as promoters of their work engagement.

Despite the similarities, there were differences between generational cohorts as well. For instance, the members of Generation X felt most loaded with work. This came about in several interviews with them and the interviewees saw the overload as a preventer of absorption. On the other hand,

Baby Boomers did not allow themselves to get absorbed into the interesting matters because of their pedantry with time, meanwhile Generation Xers were longing for absorption but did not have the opportunity to get in that state. The Millennials, on the contrary, were able and allowed themselves to get absorbed during the times of investigating something and having a personal interest in something.

Sufficient amount of work and the content of work divided the sample a bit. For Baby Boomers and the members of Generation X, work engagement was created through a satisfied target of the tasks were it a student or a team. Thus, perhaps a conclusion can be drawn that customer-orientation is a higher factor in work engagement for Baby Boomers and Generation X amongst this sample than for Generation Y. However, certain work amount -related matters combined the generations too, when it comes to the promoting factors of work engagement. For instance, when considering the amount of work and allocation of resources, each generational cohort thought it was highly enhancing for work engagement to have a sufficient amount of work and adequately pointed resources. Especially for Generation Y, the importance of clear job description was remarkable.

The last significant difference between the generations was the Generation Xers' strong desire of being heard and able to affect. This desire came about most clearly within the interviewees of this generation.

> *"The state of dedication is impacted by affection concerning your work and personal development and that if you express or say something, that it becomes heard."*
> -representative of Generation X

> *"With a more open attitude or actions, you could influence work engagement. That you'd feel you've been able to affect what you're doing. Or discuss with coworkers that if you do this then I'll do that."*
> -representative of Generation X

For Baby Boomers, appreciation was not as quested, however, it was seen as a promoter of work engagement. Mainly it was the attitude towards appreciation. For example, one Baby Boomer interviewee even considered it as a matter of course if the tasks had been pointed resources to:

> *"Absolutely the environment must be supportive, that the work you're doing is appreciated. But of course, it's appreciated if they allocate resources for it. It hasn't even crossed my mind that they wouldn't appreciate it if it has been allocated resources to, that it wouldn't be recognized and appreciated, it goes without saying."*
> -representative of Baby Boomers

Somehow the Xers did not feel the same way. Generation Y again did seek support from their supervisors and saw appreciation as an enabler of work engagement. These different perceptions might be due to Baby Boomers' self-esteem consolidated by the long career and to Generation Y's deep concentration on building their own one. Whereas Generation Xers might feel at the point in their career, where they have a desire to develop the surroundings alongside with own career yet feel unheard.

When looking at the consequences of work engagement, the interviewees from all generations agreed on the fact that the sensation of work engagement had a positive impact on personal life as well. As shown in the previous chapter, one person from Generation X had experienced the results while making writing-related tasks in both quantity and quality. Another member from Generation X used almost the exact same sentence as a ten years' younger member of Generation Y when describing the impact of work engagement, which was being a nicer person altogether during those times. On the other hand, organizational commitment divided the sample, not just by generation but also on an individual level. As the data showed, there were people in each generation who were absolutely sure about the increased organizational commitment following work engagement and, on the contrary, people who thought that organizational commitment had nothing to do with their feeling of work engagement.

> *"For sure it has an effect. There were times when I wasn't able to feel work engagement and then I was just doing my job at the minimum level, what was acceptable and that's it. It was only about the payday and then I tried to concentrate on other aspects of life. Today I see this (organization) as a holistic partner in this entity."*
> -representative of Baby Boomers

"My work engagement is related to my tasks so I am perhaps not as committed to the organization as they would like here. There's many sorts of engagement and my engagement is towards these tasks."
-representative of Baby Boomers

"Yes it (organizational commitment) grows and in a way for me it's a no-brainer. Work engagement increases commitment and devotion to the organization because it also increases meaningfulness."
-representative of Generation X

"Organizational commitment has no meaning. -- It's more important to be able to do what's interesting than who you're doing it to. It's the appeal and meaningfulness that are more important than the organization."
-representative of Generation X

"Organizational commitment has been effected, increased. During work engagement, you feel pride and contentment about your organization, whereas if you were irritated about your job and your own thing, would that be such a flattering image? During work engagement, I would recommend my organization, in irritation I wouldn't. -- there have been tasks that I would've been able to execute in any organization. But for me, the organization is important. You know, the thing that the organization is doing, that I can support its values or the task itself."
-representative of Generation Y

"In my opinion, work engagement has no effect on the organizational commitment, rather it effects my own unit, team. I am more committed to that."
-representative of Generation Y

As we have seen, the empirical data suggests, that although generational differences exist, the matters enabling work engagement and the matters particularly enhancing it are rather similar between all generations but the emphases vary. The next chapter discusses the matters further and finds theoretical reasons for them.

7. DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results of the empirical research that were presented in the previous chapter. It goes through the themes that have come about in the interviews of the representatives of different generations in depth and seeks theoretical reasoning behind them. At this point it is beneficial to revisit the research problem. As presented in the beginning of this work, the main question of this research was: Is generational cohort the defining factor in the perception of work engagement? The supplementing questions wanted to clarify what kinds of preconditions enhance work engagement and how representatives of different generations find work engagement. The discussion is built in accordance with the interview, thus the matters discussed are the way different generations perceive work engagement, which factors they see as the enablers and the promoters of work engagement and last, the discussion concentrates on the consequences of work engagement brought about by the representatives of different generations. In this section, the differences in the previous generational research are also discussed, as they offer an interesting supplement for the analysis.

Similarities Between Generational Cohorts in The Perception of Work Engagement

The interviews revealed that certain generational differences exist and that the interviewees were mainly epitomes of their own generation yet on the contrary similarities between generations and individuals were discovered as well. As Heiskanen (2014) and Hernaus and Poloski Vokic (2014) discovered, Baby Boomers found it disturbing if they did not have control over their work and disliked authority and rules. This research confirmed this by finding Baby Boomers to be the most autonomy seeking generation, although it was a central element for all studied generations. Lähteenmaa's (2014) description of the Generation of Oil Crisis was not as visible in this sample as the earlier Baby Boomers' depiction by Heiskanen (2014). However, the representatives of Generation X did portray the division of the Finnish generational context. The generation of well-being in all its positivity, for instance as Nikkanen (2014) described, by feeling able to influence their own work and, on the other hand, the Generation of Recession, who according to Järvensivu (2014b), cares highly about how other people view them and feels unable to get enough feedback. Both of these views were present in the collected data, hence confirmed the division of this generation. When considering the Millennials, Syrjä's (2014) description of the lifelong learning driven generation was enhanced by the most challenge -seeking research sample.

If we begin with the similarities that were found throughout the entire research sample, then for instance, common enthusiasm was considered as a central element in the formation of work engagement. Here Heiskanen's (2014) notion about Baby Boomers seeking meanings from work for others aside themselves becomes reinforced. Also, Haynes' (2011) discovery of Baby Boomers' preference of working in teams becomes supported. Thus, referring to the previous paragraph, it can be noted that Baby Boomers are a strong mix of autonomy and altruism. On the other hand, the members of Generation X did not portray as epitomes of their own generation, who were described as individualistic and independent (Nikkanen 2014, Hoole & Bonnema 2015) and withholding information for their own benefit (Järvensivu 2014b). On the contrary, each member expressed open and trusting teamwork as a strong enabler or promoter of work engagement. This research also proved Hoole & Bonnema's (2015) notion on Generation Y's as team players and with a high need of belonging to a group.

Additionally, in line with Sarti's (2014) research results that implied learning opportunity to be the most influencing enhancer of work engagement, this research also discovered that constant development and opportunity for self-improvement drove work engagement further for each generational group. Interestingly, generational studies imply that Generation Y is the one with high skill development desire (Wong et al. 2008, Syrjä 2014). However, Nikkanen (2014) too found that especially the earlier Xers, in the Finnish context the members of the Generation of Well-Being, were eager to educate themselves in professional matters. Hernaus & Poloski Vokic (2014) on their behalf discovered that Baby Boomers too have self-improvement desires, thus all in all, the result of the current study is not a surprise, but rather confirming the aforementioned discoveries from earlier research. The previous research confirms the need for challenging tasks as well. For Instance, Christian et al. (2011) found that amongst important enhancers of work engagement were matters such, task variety, job complexity and task significance. Saks (2006) too discovered that the variety of challenging tasks and the utilization of different skills were important for work engagement.

Kühnel et al. (2012) found that an important element of work engagement is the perception of control over one's job. This research strengthens this finding, as the third common element of work engagement was the desire for autonomy. As mentioned earlier, it was an especially critical enabler for Baby Boomers yet it was essential for other generational groups as well that the employees were able to decide the time and the place of work by themselves and that the supervisor allowed this wholeheartedly. The members of Generation Y had most obviously had

the experience of being commanded, since they were the ones bringing about the autonomy concerning the manner of work as well. This, however, might be the result of them wanting the supervisor to be closer, or wanting more support and collaboration from the supervisor than the other generations and finally ending up with a supervisor, who has not realized the manner of guidance the Millennial was expecting. After all, both Poloski & Vokic (2014) and Haynes (2011) presented this generation as the seekers of collaboration both with coworkers and leaders.

Generation Xers also seeked control over their job, but spoke mainly about the amount of work. Here we come back to Kahn's (1990) third element of engagement: availability. As Kahn discovered, before engaging to some task, people seemed to ask three questions from themselves, which concerned the meaningfulness and the safety of the task surroundings and the person's availability to execute the task. This research implies, that if a person due to excessive workload feels unavailable to possess recourses to some task, work engagement is hindered and this, unfortunately, was visible in the research sample when it comes to the representatives of Generation X. If we consider autonomy and control over one's job, that are strongly connected to the common trust between the employee and the employer, then Macey et al.'s (2008) discovery that the trust in the leader, organization and the surroundings is an essential promoter of work engagement, becomes reinforced in the research.

Meaningfulness was also named by each generation as a major element of work engagement. As Heiskanen (2014) discovered, Baby Boomers seeked meaning in work for not only themselves, but aimed at enhancing other members as well. This research proved, that meaningfulness was born in situations where the interviewees were able to help and enhance some matter and where particularly their competence was needed. According to Saks (2006), job characteristics provided meaningfulness and this research supported this. For example, the representatives of Generation Y found meaningfulness from cooperation again depicting the generalization of their generation and Generation X on the other hand related to it in similar vein as Baby Boomers, by enhancing others with their personal input.

Differences Between Generational Cohorts in The Perception of Work Engagement

The differences between the generations were mainly a matter of emphasis and concerned factors such as supporting leadership and the desire for appreciation. For instance, whereas Baby Boomers and Generation Y saw support and appreciation from the supervisor as promoters and

enhancers of work engagement, Generation X seeked appreciation and openness from coworkers and affecting opportunities from the supervisor. With the matter of support, we can see a connection to Saks' (2006) defined antecedent of perceived organizational and supervisor support. These included the feelings of psychological safety where the person is at ease when employing oneself in the tasks, which can evolve a trusting and supporting environment for the workplace. However, as Saks implied, perceived organizational support should make a person feel genuinely taken care of and valued by the organization. This sensation of organizational support perhaps was not as present with the members of Generation X as it was for the representatives of other generations. This sort of behavior on the other hand is also related to Saks' (2006) other antecedent, distributive and procedural justice, which deals with the perception of the fairness of the processes and distribution of resources. And thus, perhaps slightly depicts the image of Generation X by Hernaus & Poloski Vokic (2014), as being cynical and distrusting of authorities.

The ability to help was considered as an enabler of meaningfulness by Baby Boomers and Generation X, even though Generation X felt, that it suffered due to the excess amount of work. The ability to help is connected to job satisfaction, that according to Schaufeli & Bakker (2010) is strongly related to work engagement and provides contentment and serenity. Hence, this research might imply, that Generation X has some difficulties in finding job satisfaction due to the amount of work. Concurrently with meaningfulness and the desire to help, Baby Boomers were the most conscious about the usage of time. According to Heiskanen (2014), Baby Boomer generation is depicted by sense making, realism and flexibility. Thus, even though they got excited about something their pedantry with time often prevented deep absorption. On the other hand, this research showed that some members of Baby Boomers did get absorbed and were happy to do that, however, did bring about the discussion on the difficulty of following working hours during the times of absorption. The element of time and pedantry concerning it was only brought about by Baby Boomers. Generation X did suffer from the excess of work, but for them, the amount was the hindering factor of work engagement not pedantry with time. In the Finnish context, Lähteenmaa (2014) depicted the latter Baby Boomers as the Generation of Oil Crisis (born between 1955-1964), and described them as being flexible because of the fear of losing one's job, however this was not evident in this research.

Christian et al. (2011) described the consequences of work engagement as improving task performance, and an increased willingness to enhance the organization. Kühnel (2012) on the

other hand, found that people with job control and thus feeling engaged to their work, had better problem-solving skills. Additionally, Hakanen et al. (2008) had discovered earlier, that work engagement has a positive effect on the innovativeness of working units as well because of the increased personal initiative. These matters were all substantiated by this research by discovering that one simply makes more an effort (Baby Boomers), has a better decision-making ability (Generation X) and learns and adopts new things more profoundly (Generation Y) while in the state of work engagement.

Organizational commitment on the other hand divided the sample, which reflects the two-fold earlier research as well. For example, Schaufeli (2013) found that a person might be strongly engaged to one's tasks yet not to the organization, whereas Saks (2006) and Scrima et al. (2014) found that a person is more likely to attach to the organization when experiencing work engagement. Thus, this research confirmed the individual-related relation of work engagement and organizational commitment.

The research found differences between generations but also between separate individuals within the generational cohort. For instance, for some individuals the adequate amount of work was an enabling factor whereas others felt it had a promoting effect for their work engagement. The enablers are something that make the perceiving of work engagement possible and the promoters are factors that push it even further. Hence, it is visible in the data that the expectations laid on work surroundings by different generational cohorts and by individuals within the same cohort are emphasized differently. Thus, it might also be reasonable to suggest, that the formation of the sensation of work engagement is not generation related.

As illustrated above, the research showed that generational differences do exist when it comes to the attitudes and perceptions on the enabling and the promoting factors of work engagement. However, the frequency of certain themes would suggest that the constructing elements of work engagement are similar, yet with distinct emphases. Hence, the answer to the main research question would state, that generational cohort cannot be regarded as a defining factor when it comes to work engagement. The matters discovered as antecedents and consequences of work engagement despite generational cohort were: Functioning teamwork, constant development opportunities, autonomy, high meaningfulness of work, sufficient amount of work and work engagement's positive impact on personal life. While the following elements divided the sample: Support and appreciation from supervisor, which was considered as work engagement

precondition by Baby Boomers and Generation Y. Generation X, in turn, felt the ability to affect and the feeling of being heard as their preconditions of work engagement; The ability to help, that for Baby Boomers and Generation X was pretty similar, whereas Generation Y related more on the common purpose; Time pedantry, which was most frequent with Baby Boomers; Organizational commitment as a result of work engagement, that divided the sample altogether, not just by generational cohort but within generations as well. The above results answered the supplement research questions on the antecedents of work engagement and through which the representatives of different generational cohorts find it. Therefore, it might be reasonable to suggest, that the sensation and the formation of work engagement is a highly individual matter which might have common denominators with other people's perceptions, yet generational cohorts should not be regarded as a means to segment workforce.

8. CONCLUSION

This chapter concludes the research. It clarifies the answers to the research questions, presents the research contributions and finally, discusses the limitations and suggests directions for future study within this research scope.

8.1. Concluding Remarks and Research Contribution

The aim of this research was to discover whether generational cohort is the defining factor when it comes to the perception of work engagement, which matters enable and enhance it and how people representing different generations find it. The interviews revealed that all respondents had experienced work engagement at some points or even throughout their careers. The feelings of being energetic or vigorous, having a highly meaningful task to dedicate to and absorbing so thoroughly that the time went by unnoticed were all familiar to each interviewee. The antecedents through which the interviewees found work engagement, thus answering to the supplement research questions, are presented in the next paragraph.

The building blocks of work engagement had similarities and differences between and within generational cohorts. The similar antecedents and effects of work engagement for each generation were: Functioning teamwork, constant development opportunities, autonomy, high meaningfulness of work, sufficient amount of work and work engagement's positive impact on personal life. Whereas the matters dividing the sample were: Support and appreciation from supervisor, that was a precondition of work engagement for Baby Boomers and Generation Y, while Generation X felt that the ability to affect and feeling of being heard were the preconditions for them. The ability to help was a rather similar antecedent for Baby Boomers and Generation X, whereas Generation Y felt more strongly about joint liability. Time pedantry was most frequent with Baby Boomers and not brought about as much by other generations. And finally, organizational commitment as a result of work engagement divided the sample altogether, not just by generational cohort but within generations as well. Thus, this research implies, that even though the matters that were brought about as enablers and enhancers of work engagement are rather similar, it is the emphasis that varies in the sense that certain matter that is enabling work engagement for some, others see as promoters. Thus, there exists a slight difference in them but the elements of work engagement are similar for people of all ages.

Last, if we consider the research problem and the main research question: Is generational cohort the defining factor in the perception of work engagement, the answer is no. Referring to the results of this empirical research, generational cohort cannot be considered as a defining factor of the perception of work engagement. The members of different generational cohorts can have different emphases on some matters, but again, the constructing elements of work engagement are of individual basis for all people. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest, that work engagement is a largely individual matter and no presumptions should be done according to an individual's birth year.

If we consider the academic contributions of this research, it can be stated, that it offers a new perspective on the research concerning work engagement as it combines it with generational research and brings forward the empirical results reinforcing the fact, that age should not be the defining factor, when planning human resource management means and methodologies. Hence, it also reinforces generational research complexity and recommends organizations to not over-generalize their workforce, but rather consider the individual needs of staff members. And finally, this research offers guidelines for human resource management methods and leadership style through the good empirical insight of the workforce in a knowledge work environment.

8.2. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

As several other studies, this too had certain limiting factors that cannot be left unnoted. First of all, even though after the eighteen interviews the data begun to saturate, it cannot be considered entirely sufficient to draw generalizations about. In order to do that, the researcher would suggest a quantitative research with a notably larger target group that might reinforce the results of the current study. However, qualitative method was chosen because the intention was to clarify deep emotional matters, through interpretations and discourse. The method that was found most suitable for this sort of investigation was a semi-structured interview, or, according to Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2010), theme-centered interview. Theme-centered interview was reasonable also because of the demographic division on the target organization. For instance, a quantitative method would have demanded such a large amount of data, that the population of the target organization would not have been sufficient by the equality of the number of the representatives of different generations, thus might have forced to exclude the data concerning a single cohort, most likely Baby Boomers. For this reason, it was adequate to use theme-centered interviews as a means of examination, in order to remain the equal samples from each three generational

cohorts. Another matter with theme-centered, or any kind of interview and the interpretations one makes out of them, concerns the fact, that the time of the interview, the place of the interview, the interviewee's personal matters and the interviewer's level of energy might all affect the result of the interview (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2010).

Second, the interviews were executed on the members of a Higher Education Institution, thus representing a knowledge intense surroundings. Therefore, the results cannot be considered comprehensively extend to the entire population. It does however shed light to knowledge work environment and to the people working in such surroundings. Third, it might be that the reason behind the varying perceptions of people is not related to one's age, but rather to the point of one's career. Therefore, the researcher suggests longitudinal studies to examine further whether certain perceptions are due to one's age, life events or current life situation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview structure in Finnish

Työn imua on kuvattu mm. näin: työn imu on henkilön työhön liittyvä tunnetila, jolle on ominaista energisyys, omistautuneisuus ja kokonaisvaltainen syventyminen. Tunne liittyy eritoten työhön, eikä välttämättä niinkään organisaatioon, jossa työ tapahtuu. Työn imu on enemmän kuin työpahoinvoinnin vastakohta, se on todellinen positiivinen, psykologinen tila, jota edeltävät tietyt tekijät ja joka johtaa parempaan suorituskykyyn.

Taustakysymykset:
Syntymävuosi (mihin sukupolveen kuuluu?)
Tehtävä organisaatiossa
Koulutus

Teemat:

Oman työn imun tilan tunnistaminen - haastateltava kuvaa tunnetilaansa ja mahdollisesti työtehtäväänsä, milloin arvioi tunteneensa työn imua?
   a) Elinvoiman ilmeneminen → onko olo, että aamulla herätessä on upea lähteä töihin? Palaudutko työhön liittyvistä vastoinkäymisistä nopeasti?
   b) Omistautumisen ilmeneminen → tuntuuko työ merkitykselliseltä? Innostaako se? Oletko ylpeä siitä?
   c) Syventymisen ilmeneminen → kuluuko aika huomaamatta? Oletko onnellinen kun syvennyt työhön? Onko työstä vaikea irrottautua?

Aiemmin/tällä hetkellä tunnetun työn imun tunteen mahdollistavat tekijät?
   a) Millaisessa ympäristössä tunne on mahdollistunut?
   b) Mitä ympäristöön on liittynyt? Materia, henkilöt, aika, paikka?

Työn imun tunnetta edistävät tekijät?
   a) Millaisin tavoin työn imua voisi haastateltavan mielestä edistää
   b) Mitkä koet erityisesti sinun työn imuasi edistäviksi tekijöiksi?

Työn imun seuraukset - tunnistaako haastateltava työn imun seurauksia omassa toiminnassaan?
   a) Työn laatu? Määrä?
   b) Oma hyvinvointi
   c) Nykytehtävässä kokeeko työn imua? Ja millä tasolla ja miten sitä voisi edistää?
   d) Onko sitoutuminen organisaatioon kasvanut työn imun myötä?

Appendix 2: Interview structure in English

Work engagement has been described as a person's affection related to work, that can be depicted by vigor, dedication and absorption. The sensation is particularly related to work itself and not necessarily to the organization where the work takes place. Work engagement is more than the opposite of burnout, it is a true positive, psychological state that is preceded by certain factors and that leads to better performance.

Background questions:
Birth year (which generation)
Position and title in the organization
Education

Themes:

Recognizing work engagement – the interviewee depicts the sensations and possibly the task in which work engagement has taken place
   d) Vigor → do you feel marvelous about going to work in the morning? Do you recover from hardships fast?
   e) Dedication → is your work meaningful? Does it inspire you? Are you proud about your work?
   f) Absorption → do you lose track of time? Are you happy when you get absorbed? Do you find it difficult to detach from work?

The enablers of work engagement
   c) In which kind of surroundings work engagement has been enabled?
   d) Please describe the surroundings, materials, people, time, place?

The promoters of work engagement
   c) In what way your work engagement could be enhanced?
   d) Which things you feel particularly enhancing your work engagement?

The consequences of work engagement – Can you recognize consequences in own performance?
   e) Quality and quantity of work?
   f) Personal well-being?
   g) Do you feel work engagement in your current task? In which level and how it could be enhanced?
   h) Has your organizational commitment increased through work engagement?