



**LUND**  
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Master of Science Program in Service Management Retail

# **Motivated to retain?**

## **a study of motivational factors among trainees in a FMCG company**

**Master Thesis**

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Master thesis, 30 credits  
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## **Abstract**

Talented employees are important for companies, and graduate programs are designed to internal educate talented students to make them a strong resource for the company. A problem is that trainees tend to leave the company after the program. This master thesis investigates how trainees become motivated, during and after the program, to retain within the company and where the perceived expectation gaps are. By finding the factors and the gaps, companies can retain the employees for a longer period of time, which saves both time and knowledge and reduce costs. In order to find an answer to the purpose, ten semi-structured in-depth interviews have been conducted with current and former trainees. Some of the former trainees are today managers, which gives this thesis both an employee and a management perspective. The interviews will be analyzed together with; company documents regarding the trainee program and theories and concepts consisting of e.g. intrinsic motivators, extrinsic motivators, management/leadership and the concept of career and its influence on the personal motivation.

This research revealed that the motivating factors for the trainees are; personal development, change in their work life and advancement in the career. Companies should offer internal education, clear communication and “tools” for the trainees to create a network through mentorship and social connection with other trainees. It is not enough to give trainees economic incentives as high salary and bonus. But it is important to design the reward system in a motivating way throughout the trainees’ career so it does not become demotivating for other employees or trainees. The found expectation gaps have their ground in the communication where the trainees think they will receive a higher position within the company after the program than what they get. They also have expectations to be offered internal courses. By finding and minimizing the gaps, trainees will be more motivated to retain within the company for a longer period of time.

*Keywords:* Intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, personal development, communication, career.

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Research issue

Nowadays, many researchers agree that intellectual and human capital is the key factor and the competitive advantage behind business success in the modern economy (Lathuka 2011, p. 141; Winn 2013, p. 21; Berthon, Ewing & Hah 2005, p. 152). Employees are the human side of the business that creates products and services that attracts customers (Koten & Macioschek 2007, p. 1), which makes the importance of recruiting and retaining talented employees even more apparent. Organizations seek to attract new employees and to retain talented existing employees (Berthon et al 2005, p. 168) by improving the company's image as a great place to work (Winn 2013, p. 20). Lathuka (2011, p. 141) held that a challenging task for Human Resource Management is employee retention that is a complicated process, which involves understanding of the employees' motivation to their work.

Today, *graduate programs* are designed at many big companies and there is a big interest from students to get into these programs. Graduate programs have different designs depending on the company, but in general graduate programs main focus is to give talented students an internal education to gain knowledge and experience within the company to become both a strong resource and the future leaders of the company. According to Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod (2001, p. 7) the price for talent is rising, which is good news for individuals, yet another challenge for companies. Companies will have to work harder if they are going to win the battle for talented employees. Studies show that people who have recently received training, as internal education, are likely to leave the company as they look for opportunities to make better use of the new knowledge and skills (Cappelli 2008, p. 4, 7). This is an issue for organizations since it costs time, money and hopes for the future to educate trainees within graduate programs and then loose them to another company that meets the employees' expectations. Kumar and Arora (2012, p. 259-260) argue that productive employees, such as trainees, are usually looking for a change, and the retention of these employees do not have so obvious factors which are perceived under the usual control of management. It is important to find these factors in order to retain the trainees since efficient and productive workforce makes an organization not only survive, but also flourish. In present days, among manager's tasks is to create an

environment, which motivates people to perform and to stay within the company so that they can foster the organizations' growth. For those reasons, increased emphasis is given to financial and non-financial rewards from both managers and academics (Galanou, Georgakopoulos, Sotiropoulos & Dimitris 2011, p. 484-485). To attract employees Gaddam (2008, p. 47-48) describes that companies go for different types of concepts that motivate people, such as; beneficial compensation, working environment, achievement motivation, work life balance, education for future, professional development, career planning, emotional attachment, challenging work, mental satisfaction etc. These factors will in this thesis be analyzed in order to find the factors that motivate trainees to stay within the company.

Back in the days, people in general changed their jobs fewer times than today where it is a large growing propensity to switch jobs many times during the career (Gaddam 2008, p. 46). Michaels et al (2001, p. 6) found in their research that younger managers are much more likely to leave than older managers. This is an issue for companies since they have hopes that the trainees will be a strong resource and their future managers and play an important part for the company's future. What can companies do to retain employees that have been a part of the trainee program?

In January 2015, in the very beginning of this thesis, I invited myself to a network meeting regarding *employer branding*. In the meeting the representatives from companies discussed issues such as: the importance of communication, education and personal development, motivation through different factors, talent management etc. in order to make it possible to retain and motivate the "right" employees. They highlighted the importance of clear internal and external communication regarding what their company offer, otherwise there is a gap between expectation and promise, which according to them is a reason why employees choose to leave. The network meeting made it clear for me that this is a very important issue for today's businesses and relevant to analyze together with a service organization that want to retain talented trainees. In the thesis I am not going to use the concept of employer branding as a strategic tool, but it inspired me to conduct this research on the selected subject where the aim is to investigate factors as; motivation, communication, personal development, rewards, incentives and job satisfaction.

I conduct this thesis in order to investigate the expectation gap that I know through my pre-understanding (Thurén 2010, p. 58) exists within companies that offer trainee programs. Where is the gap? By finding the expectation and knowledge gap it is possible for companies to keep their talented trainees within the company. If the expectation gap is found and the companies work to minimize the gap, it will result in increased motivation for current and former trainees, which in turn lead to enhanced productivity (Pinders 1998, p. 11; Winn 2013, p. 21), in other words; it is a “win-win-situation” for companies who work with it.

## **1.2 Purpose of the study and research questions**

This research will study how trainees become motivated, during and after the graduate program, to retain within the company. By in-depth interviews I will investigate where the trainees have expectations that is not met by the company and how the company can minimize those gaps by finding the factors that keep the trainees motivated.

This master thesis intends to answer the following two questions:

- 1) *Which factors, during and after graduate programs, motivate trainees to retain within the company?*
- 2) *Where is the expectation gap and how does it affect the motivation and retention of trainees?*

To be able to find answers to the purpose of this thesis I will conduct in-depth interviews with three different groups of trainees in one company. The trainee program for the chosen company used as a case study for this research (Gomm, Hammersley & Foster 2009, p. 25) is a two-year program. The different groups are: 1) newly hired trainees that is currently a part of the program, but in their second year so they have developed an opinion and feeling for the program and the organization 2) former trainees that still is a part of the company where they were trainees before 3) former trainees that has left the company that they were trainees at for another company.

The empirical findings in this master thesis should contribute to the development of existing motivation theory in the theoretical gap regarding motivation and retention of trainees within service organizations that offer graduate programs. And also to derive practical implications for companies that offer trainee programs in order to extend and develop their managerial and organizational work with the trainees, to keep them

motivated and retain them within the company.

### **1.3 Perspective**

This thesis has both a management perspective and a trainee/employee perspective. This is because some of the respondents, that are former trainees, are currently managers within the company. They have the following management positions; Swedish CEO, Marketing director in Denmark, Sales director in Sweden and Brand development director Europe. See table 2.3.7 for further information regarding the respondents. I am interested in understanding their perspective regarding the time within the graduate program and how they as managers are motivating trainees today, and compare this to what the current trainees feel regarding their time within the program. By having the two different perspectives I will be able to gain deeper knowledge and understanding regarding which factors that motivate and where the perceived expectation gaps are.

### **1.4 Chosen area of research**

Previous research regarding graduate programs has mostly investigated trainees within medical education (Slort, Blankenstein, Schweitzer, Deliens & van der Horst 2014; Neale & Basford 2015), social workers (Baginsky & Manthorpe 2015), physical scientist trainee programs (Ballios & Rosenblum 2014) or hospital workers (Ahluwalia & de Silva Chana 2014). The graduate program this thesis is going to investigate is a company within the service sector, more specifically the FMCG industry (Fast Moving Consumer Goods). It is important to have well educated, service minded and motivated employees to be competitive on the market in the FMCG industry. Many of the FMCG companies in the Nordics, as well as the case company for this master thesis, have designed their graduate programs as two-year programs. In these programs the trainees are rotating around in different categories and positions within the company to gain as much knowledge as possible to be a strong resource for the company when the program is finished. The programs often require that the students have a master degree from the university.

Graduate programs are helpful and important for students coming from a higher education to get a chance to get in to a company and show what they are capable of to be able to build their career within the company. It is like a bridge between the academic world and the business world. For companies, graduate programs are a way



to reduce recruitment costs and at the same time educate and increase the number of competent employees and leaders for the future.

# 2 Methodology

## 2.1 Knowledge and understanding

In order to understand how different things and factors are related, as in this case how motivation, expectations and retention are connected to each other, we must be able to describe, explain, and see the consequences of the relationships that exist between different phenomena and actions that individuals do in their lives (Bjereld, Demker & Hinnfors 2011, p. 60). Thurén (2010, p. 7-9) believes that there is no difference between the scientific way of thinking and the casual way of thinking, there is only a difference of degree between the two ways. Scientific issues and questions are all around us in our lives and scientific methods are needed everywhere. Bjureld et al (2011, p. 60) argue that all scientific activities aims at understanding how the different factors in the world are related, and therefore also to be able to lift the results that the researcher reaches beyond the specific case. The point of science is that it goes forward, or at least that it is changing. Change involves adding new facts and knowledge, and that old opinion is rejected (Thurén 2010, p. 7-9). This thesis aims to add new knowledge to theory regarding motivation and retention for trainees within graduate programs.

Bjereld et al (2011, p. 81-82) argue that there is most likely a *pre-understanding* that is the reason of the original "how" question, and it is this pre-understanding that is the source of the scientific study. The choice of the questions, theory, method and materials have limited the answers on a decisively way. That is why these choices are so important to motivate, problematize and reasoning around in the scientific work. We ask scientific questions, not primarily to find out how it is, but to understand why it is as it is.

### 2.1.1 Pre-understanding

I am a master student that during my five years at the university has gained pre-understanding regarding service companies and employee motivation. I conducted my B-thesis and my bachelor thesis on the subject: what is motivating the police within Malmö, so I have pre-understanding regarding motivation as an important factor for employees. I also work halftime at another FMCG company that also has designed a graduate program, so I have pre-understanding regarding how a FMCG-company and a graduate program is working. Thurén (2010, p. 58-61) argue that pre-understanding

means that I do not only perceive reality through my senses but also through interpretation, which affects the way I see reality. It is not wrong to have pre-understanding, because without it I cannot experience, see, hear, think and feel. Bjureld et al (2011, p. 124) held that there is an interaction between scientifically formulated knowledge and the ability to solve societal problems because without science we would not have any pre-understanding of ourselves as human beings in a society. Thurén (2010, p. 62) describe that the hermeneutic circle shows that experience and pre-understanding is connected to each other in a continuous cycle, which is a reason why I see the hermeneutic approach appropriate for my thesis, this is described below. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009, p. 3-4) describe that my experience provides a better pre-understanding, which in turn allows me to perceive the finer nuances to what my interviewees tell me. Incorrect pre-understanding can be called "prejudice" and correct pre-understanding can be called "prior knowledge", what I have is prior knowledge which helps me to understand my respondents in a deeper and more understanding way, it is easier for me to show empathy to their feelings and thoughts.

## **2.2 Interpretive Method**

In order to understand what is motivating my respondents I started the research process by reading previous theory relevant for this thesis; motivational theories, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, career development and theory regarding communication. Then I gathered empirical facts to compare with previous theory in order to find the most relevant theories and models that I chose by the results I got based on the collected empirical data. Some theories that I had chosen from the beginning was removed while new theories, models and concepts were elected to be analyzed together with my empirical findings (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009, p. 3-4). I want to investigate how the company work with motivation and retention in their everyday activities (Blaikie 2004, p. 2-3), in order to keep their trainees motivated and what actions they can do to meet the trainees expectations and transform the collected material to scientific descriptions.

I am seeking to understand and to have empathy with what the respondents are thinking and feeling regarding their experiences within the company and their personal motivation (Thurén 2010, p. 94-95). The procedures through which I understand and interpret their social world are necessary conditions to undertake in my research (May

2011, p. 14) since I am a human that aim to understand my respondents' point of view (Thurén 2010, p. 16-21; Bryman 2001, p. 25-26). Kvale (1997, p. 49) argue that the qualitative interview is a conversation about the human life-world in which the oral discussion turns into texts to be interpreted. Hermeneutics is therefor doubly relevant in this thesis since qualitative interview research throws light on the dialogue that I am having with the interviewees that creates the interview texts that I am going to interpret, and it also clarifies the process of the interview texts that should be interpreted.

## **2.3 Choice of Research method**

The purpose of the thesis is to gain deeper knowledge and understanding regarding how current trainees and former trainees feel motivated within the company. Bryman (2001, p. 249) means that the qualitative method give the respondent the opportunity to give a more profound answer to explain and describe their experiences and thoughts. And it gives me, as researcher for this thesis, a greater opportunity to interpret the answers from the trainees (Ahrne & Svensson 2011). It is relevant for this thesis to have a qualitative method since I want the perspective that my interviewees have, what they see as significant and important provides the point of orientation for this thesis. I want a close involvement with my respondents so that I can understand what factors are motivating them and how they experience the expectation gap (Bryman 2008, p. 393-394).

### **2.3.1 Interviews as a source of data**

To be able to gain insights into the trainees feelings and thoughts I chose interviews as my main source of data because interviews can produce detailed descriptions and accounts that purposefully focus on my research topic (Cresswell 2007, p. 40). Interviews give rich insights into people's experience opinions, values, aspirations, attitude and feelings (May 2011, p. 131). I have chosen to conduct individual interviews to generate in-depth information with help of creating a "safe environment" for the respondents (Buchanan & Bryman 2011, p. 478-479). Some interviews will provide more useful information than others, one single interview cannot offer more than limited insights into general social forces and process. By comparing all of my interviews the significance of them can be fully understood (May 2011, p. 136). I will analyze the materials from the interviews with regard to the life-world as the trainee

has described to understand the sense and meaning of what he/she is describing (Kvale 1997, p. 34-35).

### **2.3.1.1 In-depth semi-structured interviews**

Silverman (2011, p. 131) held that in-depth interviews provide a meaningful opportunity to study and theorize about cultural frames people use to make sense of these experiences and their social worlds. The reason I chose qualitative interviews was to avoid the risk of losing alternative answers (Ryen 2004, p. 14-15). The aim is to get a good picture of the trainees views and thoughts on their personal motivation and what organizational factors and personal factors that have an influence of the trainees motivation in the every-day life during their careers. I had a clear focus from the beginning in this thesis and I have conducted semi-structured interviews so I could address the specific issues (Bryman 2008, p. 439). A semi-structured interview makes it easier for me, as the researcher and interviewer, to understand how the respondents perceive meaning in their social life (May 2011, p. 133-135). The semi-structured interview allows a high degree of spontaneity from my side because the questions in the interview guide (see below) allow an opportunity to ask follow-up questions and find new approaches to the subject (Bryman 2011, p. 413, 419).

### **2.3.2 Interview guide**

I had conducted an interview guide (see Appendix 1) in advance before the interviews. I conducted these questions without being too specific and without asking leading questions, I had written the interview guide in both English and Swedish so I was prepared with both languages (Bryman 2008, p. 441-443). I did not in detail decidedly the order of the questions, so that I had a conversation, with a specific intention, in an open manner with my interviewees (Ryen 2004, p. 46). The questions that were not included in the guide could be asked as I picked up on things said by the interviewees. The aim with the interviews was to understand and interpret what the respondents said and described (Bryman 2008, p. 438). My first questions in the interview guide was standardized (May 2011, p. 133-135) and the first questions answered were; age, education, background, years within the company, position within the company (Ryen 2004, p. 48). I learned the questions by heart so that it would go smoothly during the interviews (Trost 2010, p. 71).

### **2.3.3 Informants**

I got a list with names and information regarding trainees in different position within the company from my informants; the Nordic Human Resource Manager and the Nordic Talent Manager. The Talent Manager is responsible for the trainees and the graduate program. From that list I chose which trainees I was going to interview in order to gain as much understanding regarding their perspective as possible. I chose to interview three different groups of trainees. The different groups are; 1) newly hired trainees that is currently in the program, but in their second year so they have developed an opinion and feeling for the program 2) former trainees that still is a part of the company where they were trainees before 3) former trainees that has left the company. When I had decided who I wanted to interview the Nordic HR-manager sent out an e-mail to them so that they would understand the importance of participating, which was beneficial for me since this gave the interviewees an approval to participate in my study from a higher distance and that they took my research seriously (Ryen 2004, p. 74, 83). The Nordic Talent Manager gave me an introduction and presentation of the company and the program and culture through one whole day at their office in Copenhagen. I was also welcome to join two Nordic meetings to be able to feel and hear how they act and talk within the business to make it easier for me to talk to the current and former trainees during our interviews. Together with the Talent Manager I also had two teleconferences and email conversations to give me all the information needed. I had the chance to experience parts of the organizational culture when I visited the Copenhagen office and the Stockholm office (the office in Stockholm is the Nordic Head Quarters), which was good because I got an even bigger understanding of the employees, trainees, the graduate program and the company (Ryen 2004, p. 83-84).

### **2.3.4 Interview Settings**

The next step, after the Nordic HR Manager had sent out an email regarding my research, I sent an e-mail myself to give a brief presentation about myself. I did not tell them about what I was going to conduct the research about and therefor I did not influence the interviewees before the interviews began. It went very smoothly and after one week I had booked all of the ten interviews. Since this research is conducted within the Nordic countries, I was going to have interviews with trainees from Sweden, Denmark and Finland (Norway has a too small office to have the trainee program). The interviews were conducted between 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2015 – 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2015. The interviews with the trainees that still was employees at the company lasted between 60-

90 minutes and the interviews with the trainees that had decided to leave the company lasted 40 minutes, this was enough to gather all the information I needed in order to conduct this thesis and answer the purpose and the research questions (Kvale 1997, p. 97).

The interviews were held in a quite and private settings so no noises or other people could disturb us or over-hear our conversation (Bryman 2008, p. 443) so the interviewees should feel as comfortable as possible (Trost 2010, p. 65). I held two interviews at the office in Copenhagen and three interviews in the Stockholm office. In those five interviews my informants had to book a private conference room for me. The interviews with the two Finish trainees were held over Skype because they were in Rotterdam on a mission; we saw each other via webcam (Ryen 2004, p. 14). I had three telephone interviews, two were with former trainees that have left the company and the third with a trainee in Stockholm that was on sick leave when I was at the office. Telephone interviews and Skype interviews are according to Bryman (2008, p. 457) good to use on “hard-to-reach-groups”, as the trainees that have left the company and the respondents that were in Rotterdam, and also if you are going to ask about sensitive questions.

I asked the interviewees for permission to record, which all of them gave me. I had a good-quality record machine that made it easier to remember the interviews when I was to analyze them (Bryman 2008, p. 443; Kvale 1997, p. 120). I let the recording machine record until the interviewee had left the room so I would not miss out on any comments (Bryman & Bell 2003, p. 356; Ryen 2004, p. 56-60). For ethical reasons, I asked the respondents if they wanted to remain anonymous in the thesis, which none of the wanted. However, I have chosen to keep them anonymous to better reflect their essence (Trost 2010, p. 61), and it is not relevant for this paper to expose their identity or the name of the company.

### **2.3.5 Transcribing interviews**

By transcribing the interviews I could more thorough go through what the trainees said (Bryman & Bell 2003, p. 355). I held the interviews in Swedish with the respondents from Sweden because I did not want to affect the conversation by speaking a language in which they are less familiar when we both were fluent in Swedish (Bryman & Bell 2003, p. 356). I first transcribed them into Swedish and then I translated them to

English before I analyzed the data. Through recording I did not capture facial expression or body language. I did not see this is an obstacle since the purpose is to analyze the words said during the interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009, p. 195, 197). Each interview was analyzed separately in order to categorize the responses. By processing the empirical data in this way I was able to identify keywords in the interviews with the keywords in the theory.

### **2.3.6 Choice of participants**

I got the opportunity to conduct my master thesis with help of this organization, it was a too good opportunity to miss out on. The organization wanted to have information regarding how the trainees were thinking and feeling regarding the trainee program, and I wanted to conduct my thesis within motivation for employees in a service sector (Bryman & Bell 2003, p. 105). When trying to understand a problem it is not possible to conduct in-depth interviews with the entire population, this is the reason why a small sample of trainees is chosen to represent the whole (Ryen 2004, p. 77). Interviews and transcription with this smaller sample of trainees is time consuming, and in the time frame for this thesis I chose one organization to represent the others. The organization I chose is one of the largest companies within the FMCG-industry and started the trainee program around the 1960, so the organization has a well-established trainee program.

I have selected the respondents based on the position they hold in the organization. Since I have chosen to look at trainees' motivations, expectations and retention within the company, I have made a targeted selection of respondents (DePoy & Gitlin 1999, p. 214-215). The purpose of this thesis is to understand how current trainees and former trainees think and feel about their motivation within the trainee program and within the company, so I have made a convenience sample in the Nordics within the organization to make sure that my interviewees had been a part of the trainee program so they could give me deep knowledge and understanding. I thought it was important to have variety in the selection of my respondents to avoid a too narrow selection of interview subjects (Ryen 2004, p. 77-78, 80).

In table 2.3.7, *Table of respondents*, I have compiled information regarding the respondents and the interview sessions. During the analysis I will refer to them as IP1-IP10 (Interview Person). I have ranked them in the table depending on how many years



they have worked within the company, except for IP9 and IP10 because they are ex trainees, so they do not work within the company any longer. IP1-IP4 have been in the company for at least 10 years and have high positions within the company, IP5-IP6 were finished with the program for less than one year ago so they have a assistant position now, I value their answers as they were trainees because they have been trainees for more years than they have had their current position. IP7-IP8 are currently trainees.

### 2.3.7 Table of respondents

Interview Person	Age	Time within the company	Current Position	Education	Country	Interview date	Minutes for the interview	Location for the interview
IP1	44 years old	18 years	Marketing director	MSc marketing	Denmark	160315	80 minutes	Denmark, Cph
IP2	42 years old	15 years	CEO	MSc economics	Sweden	240315	70 minutes	Sweden, Sthlm
IP3	38 years old	14 years	Sales director	MSc business administration	Sweden	200315	80 minutes	Telephone
IP4	34 years old	10 years	Brand development director Europé	MSc social science in economics	Finland/current in Rotterdam	100315	90 minutes	Skype
IP5	29 years old	3 years	Assistant brand manager	MSc international marketing	Sweden	240315	80 minutes	Sweden, Sthlm
IP6	26 years old	2,5 years	Assistant brand manager	Economics	Sweden	240315	75 minutes	Sweden, Sthlm
IP7	29 years old	1,5 years	Trainee	MSc economical marketing	Denmark	160315	90 minutes	Denmark, Cph
IP8	28 years old	1,5 years	Trainee	MSc business administration	Finland, current in Rotterdam	100315	90 minutes	Skype
IP9	36 years old	9 years	ex trainee	MSc international economics	Sweden	250315	40 minutes	Telephone
IP10	28 years old	4 years	ex trainee	MSc marketing	Denmark	260315	40 minutes	Telephone

### 2.3.8 Documents as a source of data

According to Yin (2003, p. 87) documents play an explicit role in data collection when doing a case study, they provide clues for further investigations and documents confirm and enhance other collected evidence. I possess “company’s guidelines for line managers”. The document describes what the company requires a line manager to do for the trainee and what qualification this individual has. Interviews are my main source of data, the document analysis is to learn more how the company operate day-by-day with the graduate program and the managers within it (Silverman 2011, p. 79, 81). Organizational documents can according to Bryman (2008, p. 413-414) offer insights into the organization, but they may not be an accurate representation of how

employees within the organization perceive the situation. The guidelines are internal documents, which I received from my informants. The managers who have written the organizational documents, as the “guidelines for line managers” have a particular point of view that they want to get across. I am going to analyze those documents in order to investigate if that is how the trainees and the former trainees that today are managers perceive that it is ”in real life”.

I am also going to look at a document called “company presentation”, the company shows this as introduction to new trainees and another document that is a flyer, consisting of two slides, that is on the company’s webpage to inform and attract potential new trainees regarding the program. I have decided to include those documents because documents can construct their own kind of reality (Silverman 2011, p. 90), so what the company externally communicate can be understood in a different way of the trainees and potential trainees. The last document I will use in the analysis of this thesis is the company document regarding “salary policy for trainees”, this is used in order to understand and explain how the ratings and bonuses are given to the trainees to get a better understanding of the interviewees’ perception. Since I am keeping the company identity anonymous I will not attach the documents as appendix in this thesis, but I have the documents available.

## **2.4 Case study research**

Case studies explore and study an issue through a case within a specific context or setting (Cresswell 2007, p. 73). In this thesis the setting is one company with a complex social phenomena where the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident (Yin 2003, p. 13). Case study is best used for adding to existing experience and humanistic understanding and empathy is central to the comprehension of social problems (Gomm et al 2009, p. 25). Buchanan and Bryman (2011, p. 468) describe that a case study makes it possible to understand the whole context of social behavior and individuals understanding, in this thesis I want to investigate and understand how the trainees get motivated to retain within the company and how the expectation gap affect their motivation. By collecting data from a range of trainees in the organization and by using both interviews and document analysis as a source of data (Buchanan & Bryman 2011, p. 467) the purpose, that is to improve the

understanding in how trainees get motivated within companies, and the research questions will be answered (Gomm et al 2009, p. 25).

Creating statistical relevance or empirical relevance is not the purpose of this case study, the crucial is how other organizations can make use of the findings in this thesis by being able to transfer the findings from this setting to their setting in order to develop their trainee program and motivational work within their company. By examining one case it is possible to identify causal processes in the organization because this case is studied in depth and over time where the research investigate processes "in the real world" (Gomm et al 2009, p. 5-6). I am conducting the case study with employees in different stages in their careers, and half of the interviews are held at the offices and the others are made with help of Skype and telephone which makes me a part of the organization, and gives me deep knowledge and understanding of my case company and its employees. Case study is a good way to explore understanding, the method has been tried and found to be a direct and satisfying way of adding to experience and improving understanding (Gomm et al 2009, p. 25), according to Glaser (2010, p. 8) it is through discovery that I can understand what is going on.

## **2.5 Literature Review**

In order to gain knowledge regarding my research area I did a literature review. By doing a literature review I found different theoretical and methodological approaches, it helped me with interpretation of my findings and lead me to consider inclusion of variables in the research that I have not thought about if I have not used it (Bryman 2008, p. 95). When collecting articles I used LUB Search, Lovisa and Google Scholar. I search on key words I had found relevant for this thesis (Glaser 2010, p. 2-3); motivation, expectations, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, incentives, feedback, responsibility and career and from these key words I found other relevant materials. After I had seen if the key words worked in this thesis I conducted a theoretical framework with the core categories (Glaser 2010, p. 2-3). The theories guided me during the analysis when they helped me analyze the empirical data and to make delimitations in the thesis (Ahrne & Svensson 2011, p. 194).

## **2.6 Evaluation of Methodology**

The issues of qualitative generalization and validity have been raised in relation to case studies. There are different forms of generalizability of case studies where one matter is regarding personal experience that related to tacit knowledge of how things are related (Kvale 1997, p. 209-210). As described earlier I have experience within the FMCG business and this kind of organization with trainee program, I read and understood the documents that my informants handed to me in advance to have knowledge and understanding of the trainees and the organization. Another matter for generalization is how the researcher has made its selection. For this thesis I have used a non-random selection, which Kvale (1997, p. 210) argue may not statistically generalize to the population as a whole. But random sampling would simply not be possible because of the purpose of the research, it would not be beneficial for this thesis to interview other individuals than those whom been a trainee in the program. So the research results are not generalizable for the whole population, but Bryman (2008, p. 376-377) argue that that is not the purpose of a qualitative research. The last form of generalization that also refer to the validity (Ryen 2004, p. 138-139) involves the researcher to describe how the results of the case study can be used in another setting into more general conditions (Kvale 1997, p. 209-210), as described earlier the respondents in this research is a broad group of trainees in different stages in their career (both within my case company and two that has left the company) this research can be used to study trainees in other trainee program (Bryman 2008, p. 376-377).

I received much information with different perspectives regarding motivation and retention within the organization, and with all the material I collected from the in-depth interviews and the company documents I have the information and the understanding I need in order to answer my research questions (Bryman & Bell 2003, p. 287-288).

### **2.6.1 Limitations of the empirical research**

Bryman (2001, p. 496) argues that it is important to clearly show that the researcher does not consciously let personal values or theoretical orientations affect the performance and the conclusions. During this research period I have tried to be objective to the material I have gathered, however, it is impossible to say that the thesis has not been affected by my background in the field of Service Management or by my pre-understanding. This can be a limitation but I regard my pre-understanding as an advantage since Kvale (1997, p. 209) argue that it is easier to generalize if the

researcher has personal experience and tacit knowledge. Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009, p. 3-4) held that pre-understanding help the researcher to perceive the finer nuances of what the interviewees share with the researcher. May (2011, p. 31) describe that research cannot be neutral because the research has come from a particular interest from the researcher from the beginning, which is correct for this thesis.

Case studies are often criticized for not being able to contribute to a scientific generalization due to the fact that the current phenomenon only investigated in a specific case (Yin 2009, p. 15). The limitation is based on lack of comparable data, the research would have had a higher level of generalizability if it could have been compared to another case study and another organization containing trainee positions. Unfortunately, to in-depth investigate more than one organization is a too big assignment for this thesis. But as stated earlier, this thesis has a broad range of trainees and is by that, more or less, generalizable.

During the interviews with the trainees from Sweden it was an advantage to have the interviews in Swedish, so that their ability to communicate effectively were not impaired. It is also a limitation because it is extremely time consuming to transcribe the interview into Swedish and then translate it into English. And it is also difficult to translate the transcription since there are differences in the meaning of words between two languages. To overcome this I saved the Swedish transcription so I could see the original meaning if I was insecure (Bryman & Bell 2003, p. 356).

By recording the interviews Bryman and Bell (2003, p. 353) describe that respondents may become self-conscious or alarmed that their thoughts and words are being preserved. My experience was that after the standardized questions, both my interviewees and I had forgotten about the machine during our conversation.

I had three interviews through the telephone, which might be seen as a limitation since it is not possible to observe body language to be able to see how interviewees respond in a physical sense (Bryman 2008, p. 457), I did not see this as a problem since my prior interest was to understand and analyse their words and sentences.

## **2.7 How to analyze the material**

I used grounded theory, a method grounded by Glaser and Strauss 1967, to analyze the material from the interviews and documents into findings. Grounded theory refers to a methodology on how to get from systematically collecting data to producing a conceptual theory (Glaser 2012, p. 2-3) where data collection, analysis and theory stand in close relationship to one another (Bryman & Bell 2003, p. 428). Glaser (2010, p. 9) argue that qualitative data is very rich in meaning and rewarding to collect and analyze, and Alvesson and Sköldbberg (2009, p. 61) argue that the focus is on the actor's perspective.

I began to conduct a general research question, this was possible for me because I knew in an early stage what I was going to conduct this thesis about. Then I got in contact with my informants and had a meeting with them to understand the organization and trainee program to start an open coding. Then I started to sample theoretical material to gain knowledge and understanding about what previous researched argued regarding the chosen subject. When I had found the core categories; economical incentives, responsibility and empowerment, management and mentorship, personal development and social connection, communication and feedback, career and culture, I started with the in-depth interviews. I asked them questions with help of a semi-structured interview guide related to the categories that I was interested in (Glaser 2010, p. 2-4). I transcribed the interviews as soon as possible after they were finished and started coding them. Through this constant comparison of concepts, categories are generated and through them I analyzed the interviews with each other in order to understand what the respondents was saying and meaning (Bryman & Bell 2003, p. 432). Using categories in grounded theory not only enables comparisons, but also presents issues in analysis (May 2011 p. 152), in this thesis the analysis follow the six categories: economical incentives, responsibility and empowerment, personal development and social connection, communication and feedback, career and culture.

Transcribing and listening to the conversations was an important part of the analytic process of becoming familiar with the data (May 2011 p. 153), which helped me finding theoretical similarities since I scanned the empirical findings together with theory (Alvesson & Sköldbberg 2009, p. 61).

## 3 Theoretical framework

This research will investigate how trainees become motivated at their workplace, during and after the graduate program, to retain within the company. In this chapter I will present theories and concepts that are relevant for this thesis in order to give answers to the purpose and research questions. The two research questions are: *Which factors, during and after graduate programs, motivate trainees to retain within the company? Where is the expectation gap and how does it affect the motivation and retention of trainees?*

### 3.1 Definition of motivation

To be motivated means *to be moved* to do something (Deci & Ryan 2000, p. 54). According to Bruzelius and Skärvad (2008, p. 289) motivation is a driving force to action and a person is motivated when a personal need affect the actions made in a certain direction. With other words, motivation is the motives that make people act as they do (Kaufmann & Kaufmann 2008, p. 51; Çınar, Bektaş & Aslan 2011, p. 690). People have different amounts and different kinds of motivation. That is, people vary in *level of motivation* (how much motivation) and in *orientation of motivation* (what type of motivation) (Deci & Ryan 2000, p. 54). Baron (1991, p. 1) describes motivation as one of the most primary concern in organizational research and Björklund (2001, p. 1) argue that "how to motivate employees?" has for decades been one of the central concerns for many researchers. This thesis will investigate trainees' motivation at work and Pinders (1998, p. 11) presents a definition of work motivation as a set of energetic forces that originate both within and beyond the person to initiate work related behavior and define its form, intensity, duration and direction.

#### 3.1.1 Motivational factors

To attract employees, companies go for different types of beneficial employment packages in terms of; financial compensation, working environment, achievement motivation, work-life balance, education for future, internal and external support, professional development, career planning, inspiring colleagues, emotional attachment, leave and compensation benefits, social and mental satisfaction, challenging work, secured employment. These are some of the basic issues, which motivate the employees (Gaddam 2008, p. 47-48). According to Winn (2013, p. 21) employee behaviors and attitudes are affected by the extent to which the employees perceive that

these employment packages offer a unique set of experiences, rewards and benefits. The most common reward at work is economic incentives (Shore, Tashchian & Jourdan 2006, p. 2578). Thomson and Strickland (1992, p. 300) argue that there are other forces than the economic factors that motivate employees. These factors are for example, increased independence and the opportunity for promotion. Rewards can be given to the employees in tangible or intangible form; the common factor for both of them is that they should enhance the motivation for the individual in question. During the years many work motivation theories have been presented in the literature and they have provided different conceptualizations of the factors that drive the process by which behavior is directed, energized and sustained in organizational settings. Motivational theories ask a fundamental question: "what moves a person?" (Björklund 2001, p. 1, 10). The theories and definitions I have chosen to conduct this thesis have been analyzed in order to give understanding and answers to "which factors motivate trainees during and after the graduate program to retain within the company?"

## **3.2 Motivation theories**

Motivation theories can be classified into two different perspectives: content theories and process theories. The content theories described in this thesis are: McClelland's human motivation theory and Herzberg's two factors theory. The process theories described in this thesis are: The expectancy theory and Goal setting theory.

### **3.2.1 McClelland's human motivation theory**

David McClelland presented in 1955 his research into human motivation where he highlighted three motivators that he believed all human beings have: *a need for achievement*, *a need for affiliation* and *a need for power* (McClelland 1967, p. 43). McClelland (1967, p. 43-46) argue that a person who has a need to perform in order to achieve the goals in a better and more efficient way has *a need for achievement*. Such an individual requires regular feedback on the progress and achievements and has a strong need to accomplish challenging goals to continue to feel motivated (McClelland & Burnham 1995, p. 126-127). When providing feedback to those people they want to know what they are doing right and wrong so that they can improve (Rothmann & Cooper 2008, p. 45). A person with *a need for affiliation* favors collaboration over competition and has a strong need to be liked and accepted by their colleagues, those people work best in a group environment (McClelland 1967, p. 44; Rothmann & Cooper 2008, p. 45; Kaufmann & Kaufmann 1996, p. 52-53). A person with *a need*



*for power* have according to McClelland (1967, p. 43-46) and McClelland and Burnham (1995, p. 126-127) a desire to win support for their thoughts and ideas and want to help to shape the development of issues and project and they enjoy competition, winning and status. Those people with a need for power are often divided into two groups: personal and institutional. People who has a personal power want to control other individuals, while people with a institutional power drive enjoy to organize the efforts of a team to further the company's goals – that kind of personality is more desirable as a team member. McClelland (1967, p. 45) argue that regardless to our age, culture or gender we all have those three motivating drives and one of them is dominant.

### **3.2.2 Herzberg's Two Factors Theory**

Herzberg's main point is to distinguish between two needs that affect a persons' motivation in different ways. The theory proposes (in Hackman & Oldham 1976, p. 251) that the primary determinants of employee satisfaction are factors that are intrinsic to the work that is done, so called *Motivators*. Motivators include: achievement, recognition, responsibility, the work itself and advancement. Herzberg identified five factors that most often contribute to employee dissatisfaction: perceived fairness of company policy, pay, working conditions, relations with one's supervisor and relations with coworkers. Those factors are called *Hygiene factors* and are seen as extrinsic to the work itself (Hackman & Oldham 1976, p. 251; Çınar, Çetin Bektaş & Aslan 2011, p. 691). Work motivation is strongly influenced by the extent to which a job is challenging in itself or not (Steers, Mowday & Shapiro 2004, p. 381) and that motivation and satisfaction at the workplace can only increase under the premise that the driving force is designed in the work task and not in hygiene factors (Hackman & Oldham 1976, p. 251-252). This theory implies that in order to advance job attitudes and productivity, managers should identify and concentrate to both sets of characteristics to motivate and satisfy their employees.

#### **3.2.2.1 The content theories**

McClelland's human motivation theory explains what requirements needed to be satisfied for different types of individuals to feel motivated at work. Herzberg describe in his theory that work motivation only can increase under the premise that the "driving force" is designed within the motivators and not the hygiene factors. McClelland's "need for affiliation" includes acknowledgement and acceptance from colleagues.

”Need for achievement” is based in that the individual wants to influence and be responsible for their work. ”The need for power” includes responsibility, feedback and willingness to perform. All these factors that McClelland explains in the three different needs, Herzberg argue belong to the motivators. McClelland’s and Herzberg’s motivation theories are therefor based on the same approach that acknowledgement, responsibility, achievement, promotion and the work itself are needs that have to be satisfied in order for the work motivation to increase. These factors will be analyzed in this thesis in order to answer the given questions; what factors motivate trainees and which factors demotivate trainees?

### **3.2.3 The Expectancy Theory**

In 1994, Victor H. Vroom developed the Expectancy theory through research regarding motivations behind decision-making, a theory relevant to management studies as a general theory of work motivation (Lawler & Suttle 1973, p. 482). The Expectancy theory has held a major position in the study of work motivation and has served as a rich source for theoretical innovations in domains such as organizational behavior, leadership and compensation (van Eerde & Thierry 1996, p. 575). Vroom defined expectancy as the likelihood that a particular act or effort will be followed by a particular outcome or performance (Klein 1991, p. 233; van Eerde & Thierry 1996, p. 576). Porter and Lawler (2000, p. 118-122) developed the Expectancy theory in 1968. According to Porter and Lawler (2000, p. 119-120) the satisfaction comes about when certain of our needs or desires are fulfilled. Job satisfaction is generated when we receive reward from our job situation. Such rewards are of many types and are provided in many ways. Some of them are intrinsic, such as when we feel a sense of accomplishment from having carried out a difficult task successfully. Other rewards are extrinsic, provided by people other than ourselves, such as when the organization reward their employees with a bonus. Expectancy theory proposes a causal relationship between expectancy attitudes and motivation where motivation is only possible when the work performance, and its results, has a clear relation and the results satisfy the personal needs (Lawler & Suttle 1973, p. 486). Klein (1991, p. 230) describes that individuals will choose that level of effort with the motivational force for that action being a function of expectancy. Since my thesis investigates if there is an expectancy gap between trainees and the organization I am going to analyze which outcomes the trainees expect to receive depending on which action and effort they put in to the work

and if they are satisfied, and thereby motivated, by this outcome. I assume that the trainees receive goals from their line managers and therefore I am, as Van Eerde and Thierry (1996, p. 575) suggests, going to analyze the Expectancy theory together with the Goal Setting Theory in order to get a deeper understanding of what is enhancing/decreasing the trainees work motivation.

### **3.2.4 Goal Setting Theory**

Locke and Latham (2002, p. 705-708) describe a goal as the object or aim of an action to attain a specific standard during a specified time limit. They argue that the level of motivation is higher when the individual has specific objectives that are accepted and are offered performance feedback. Locke and Latham (2002, p. 706; 2006, p. 265) held that goals affect performance through different mechanisms: 1) Goals serve a direct function because they direct attention and effort toward goal-relevant activities. 2) Goals have an energizing function. Hard goals are motivating because they require the person to attain more in order to be satisfied than low goals. Feelings of success in the workplace occur when people see that they are able to develop and meet the challenges by attaining goals that are meaningful. 3) Goals affect action by leading to use of task-relevant knowledge into awareness and may motivate people to search for new knowledge.

Sandahl, Falkenström and von Knorrig (2012, p. 118) argue that the leader can encourage participation for the organization by bringing clarity for the goals, aim and the methods. When the trainee understand the relationship between goals and performance they get a bigger understanding and accept the organization's objectives and goals, which will improve their work motivation. For my thesis it is relevant to study the Goal setting theory in order to analyze how the company utilizes its current trainees and former trainees intrinsic motivation through goals, expectancies, responsibilities and feedback regarding the goals.

### **3.3 Self Determination Theory**

In Self Determination Theory (SDT) focus is on human motivation and personality. The theory was developed by Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 55-60) who distinguish between different types of human motivation based on the different reasons or goals that give rise to an action: intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

### **3.3.1 Intrinsic motivation**

The concept of intrinsic motivation refers to behaviors performed out of interest and enjoyment (Miniotaite & Bucioniene 2013, p. 65) and the satisfaction individuals derive from the activity itself (Ankli & Palliam 2012, p. 7). In other words, people are motivated from within because of curiosity or interest (Deci & Ryan 2000, p. 55-56). Yun, Jianqiao, Shudi and Yanhong (2014, p. 733) describe that intrinsic motivation has a positive effect on employees in relation to job satisfaction, wellbeing, organizational behavior and affective commitment. There are three main intrinsic needs that are identified within SDT: 1) The need for competence, refers to individuals need to achieve desired outcomes 2) The need for autonomy, refers to individual's need to experience the initiation, maintenance and control of behavior 3) The need for relatedness, refers to the need of establishment a connection with important others. The optimal outcomes are attained when these three needs are balanced (Miniotaite & Bucioniene 2013, p. 65; Dysvik & Kuvaas 2008, p. 141). Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 55-56) argues that the intrinsic motivations are not necessarily externally rewarded but they can sustain passion, creativity and efforts. Conditions supporting an individuals need for competence and autonomy is argued by Deci and Ryan to foster motivation and engagement where the feeling of competence will not enhance intrinsic motivation unless it is accompanied by a sense of autonomy (Deci & Ryan 2000, p. 60). Dysvik and Kuvaas (2008, p. 141) held that the need for competence could be satisfied when individuals are encourages to seek challenges optimal for their capabilities and to persistently attempt maintenance for skills.

To specify the factors that explain the intrinsic motivation, Deci and Ryan presented *Cognitive Evaluation Theory* (CET) in 1985 that is a sub theory of SDT that looks at how environmental and social factors help or hinder intrinsic motivation. The theory argues that rewards, communications and feedback are factors that promote the need for competence and can enhance intrinsic motivation for the work task. For intrinsic motivation to be maintained or enhanced people must experience perceived competence (self-efficacy) and they must also experience their behavior to be self-determined (Deci & Ryan 2000, p. 58).

### **3.3.2 Extrinsic motivation**

The concept of extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome, which means that people are moved by external factors such as: reward systems, grades or payment (Deci & Ryan 2000, p. 55-57). Individuals with an extrinsic orientation tend to be motivated to work for payment, career achievements and recognition and are less oriented to genuine relationship and value driven activities (Miniotaite & Bucioniene 2013, p. 71). Stynen, Forrier and Sels (2014, p. 186-187) argue that conversely, relatively strong extrinsically oriented individuals are more directed to external incentives (e.g. praise, rewards) than those aspects that are inherently satisfying (e.g. affiliation). Economical incentives will be further described further down in this chapter, as it is an important factor for the extrinsic motivation. Stynen et al (2014, p. 186-187) continue to describe in their research that individuals that are extrinsically oriented are expected to have stronger outward orientation toward impressing others and are therefore toward more likely to set ego-involved demands and indulge in interpersonal comparisons. Feedback is one factor that belongs within extrinsic motivation that is highly important concept for trainees' motivation and will be described further down in this chapter. Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 59) describe that studies have showed that extrinsic motivation as positive performance feedback enhance intrinsic motivation while negative performance feedback decrease it.

### **3.3.3 Intrinsic motivation and Extrinsic motivation**

According to Ankli and Palliam (2012, p. 9-10) individuals are most resourceful and innovative when they feel motivated largely as a result of their interest, their inner satisfaction and challenges of the work itself and not by external pressures or incentives. It is perceived that intrinsic motivation is highly dominant but that both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation are needed to understand and analyze behavior and motivation in organizations (Çınar, Bektaş & Aslan 2011, p. 692). To summarize; Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 59-60) describe that intrinsic motivation is associated with organizational commitment, better work performance, higher levels of satisfaction, work motivation and self-esteem while extrinsic motivation can raise short-lived satisfaction and negatively predicts well-being. One of the issues is the effect extrinsic motivators have on the intrinsic motivators where research has shown that tangible rewards decrease intrinsic motivation. On the other hand, Miniotaite and Bucioniene (2013, p. 68) describe that feedback, an extrinsic motivator, enhance the intrinsic motivation as feedback provide an affirmation of competence.

In this thesis I will analyze Herzberg's two factor theory, McClelland's human needs theory, Expectancy theory and Goal setting theory together with the concepts of internal motivation and external motivation within the SDT since the theories explain: responsibility, performance, personal development, goals as motivation, expectancies, feedback, acknowledgement, incentives and rewards. Hereinafter I will describe extrinsic motivators (economical incentives and feedback) and intrinsic motivators (responsibility and empowerment) since I assume that these four concepts affect the motivation and retention of the trainees.

### **3.3.4 Economical incentives**

Extrinsic motivators, such as incentives, are thought, both theoretically and practically, to affect employee motivation and performance (Björklund 2001, p. 24). Economic motivation is based on factors that directly motivate the economic expectations of employees (Hauser 2014, p. 243). Pay is an important work outcome for most employees and is often regarded as an indicator of the employees' achievements and recognition (Shore, Tashchian & Jourdan 2006, p. 2578). Pay is seen as the means for attracting, retaining and motivating the employees (Björklund 2001, p. 25). Bruzelius and Skärvad (2008, p. 300) argue that rewards are important in order to increase the employee's performance to do a good job. The salary forms the basis, and in addition to the salary the employee should have an incentive and in that way increase the efficiency. Pfau & Kay (2002, p. 7-8) argue that the most successful companies create reward systems that reward good performance. "Pay for performance" works because people do things that are in their own interest. When companies structure their reward systems correctly, it becomes natural for employees to work hard to achieve the company's, and their own, goals. Björklund (2001, p. 24-25) state that pay systems or compensation systems influencing employees' behavior, attitudes, motivation and how they define the relationship they feel towards the organization. In general, financial incentives have a positive relationship to work motivation but money alone is not always enough to motivate high performance (Björklund 2001, p. 25). Arvidsson (2005, p. 19, 23) argue that if the organization only use financial rewards it often leads to employees refrain from long-term goals in order to maximize their rewards on the short-term goals, this way to give incentives is thereby a way to make them lose their motivational force. Kohn (1993, p. 54) claim that rewards typically undermine the processes that they are intended to enhance and Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 59-60) argue

that an excessive focus on the extrinsic motivation might influence the intrinsic motivation negatively as it can affect the employees' job satisfaction. They also argue that the intrinsic motivation is more durable over time and questions therefore if economical reward always is most profitable.

Shore et al (2006, p. 2579, 2590) describe that individuals make pay comparisons with people outside their organization and inside their organization by comparing their salary with colleagues. Perceptions of pay inequity are likely to influence a variety of workplace attitudes and behaviors. The research shows that both internal and external pay comparisons contribute to a variety of work outcomes. The higher an individual's compensation relative to an internal or external referent, the greater was the individual's work motivation, and the lower was the intention to change jobs. Ito, Brotheridge and McFarland (2013, p. 739) made a research regarding tangible and intangible factors related to entry and exit for employees within companies, and they found that the most important factors for people when entering and leaving a company was; development, values, flexibility, security, promotion and pay. Shore et al (2006, p. 2594) argue that there is a relationship between pay equity, personal variables (e.g. self-esteem and self-efficacy) and work motivation.

It is clear in the literature that both financial incentives and non-financial incentives increase the employees' motivation and performance, especially when the incentive system is properly designed. Below I will describe the extrinsic motivator feedback, as an factor that is described as highly important in every work motivation theory.

### **3.3.5 Feedback**

Employee feedback provides important information for the retention and loyalty of employees. This information reflects on what the employee think about the existing leadership style, the frequency of management's presence in employees' actions, of the quality of communication within the organization, of the level of empowerment (Ahmed & Rafiq 2002, p. 36). Dumitrescu, Cetină and Pentescu (2012, p. 12) argue that feedback enables employees' point of view to constantly incorporate the employees' opinions in the organizational culture so that it leads to improvements. Feedback provides information that lets you know how you are doing and how you measure up. As described earlier, feedback boosts the self-confidence if it is connected to a goal. If you are new at a job, as the trainees are, feedback lets you know if you are

learning the new skills that you are required. Many people know that they need feedback but are unsure about how to get it. To get good feedback you need people who are able to observe your behavior, have an interest in your effectiveness and are able to speak to you directly, honestly and specifically (Kirkland & Manooglan 1998, p. 9). Achieving the business goals requires: low employee turnover, high employee moral, ongoing communication with employees, listening to the employees' suggestions in order to create motivation (Dumitrescu et al 2012, p. 11-12).

Miniotaite & Bucioniene (2013, p. 68) describe that feedback enhance the intrinsic motivation and provide an affirmation of competence. Positive feedback enhances the intrinsic motivation by providing a sense of confidence while negative feedback undermines intrinsic motivation leaving a person unmotivated. *Controlling* positive feedback leads to less intrinsic motivation while *informal* positive feedback enhance it. Yun et al (2014 p, 732-734) describe *Developmental* feedback that refers to which extent managers provide feedback for their employees that enables them to learn, develop and improve at work. It is showed that developmental feedback is positively associated with positive employee work attitudes and behavior. Developmental feedback is aimed at facilitating an employee's learning and future development whereby the employee perceives support and concern for her/his future at the organization. Kaymaz (2011, p. 119) argue that through good communication, the employee gets the opportunity to express their expectations, feelings and complaints. In order to develop a mutual understanding, all feedback should be given constructively and in an organized way.

### **3.3.6 Responsibility**

Responsibility is facilitated if the employee is involved in the organization, then it is easier for the employee to do the work (Ajvani & Desphande 2013, p. 2). Responsibility generates commitment (Armache 2013, p. 18) and it generates the feeling of positive engagement for the work tasks (Hällstén & Tengblad 2010, p. 99). The leaders role is to develop this capability by helping the employee to get and receive feedback in order to develop their competence, the understanding of the task and his/hers responsibility (Tengblad 2003, p. 178). A leader has the opportunity to improve the employees' hygiene and motivational factors and in that way increase employee motivation and performance. Be designing the work task as whole tasks and by giving the employee personal responsibility for the task, the employee receives



greater control and responsibility from the start until the end, which increases the personal motivation (Kaufmann & Kaufmann 1996, p. 71). Through education, in form of personal development and internal training, the employee can develop new competence and skills in relation to their work tasks, which increases the motivation to take and handle even more responsibility for the future. Möller and Powell (2001, p. 343) held that for many employees, especially younger employees, it is important to develop in their work because it is motivating for individuals, and thereby also for the organization, in order to retain the good employees.

Responsibility can also be assigned to the employee through empowerment, a concept that together with feedback goes hand in hand with responsibility. Empowerment is further described below.

### **3.3.7 Empowerment**

In research regarding intrinsic and extrinsic motivation the concept "empowerment" (to act) is often mentioned as a strategy that enables employees to make their own decisions about their jobs and to take responsibility for their actions (Armache 2013, p. 18). For empowerment to work it is the leaders responsibility to get the employees to be responsible for their work tasks and actions, this can be done by developing internal motivation and a personal commitment for the business. The leader can involve the employees in the work process, for example by setting goals, specifying how their goals will be achieved and define work tasks which will develop the responsibility and empowerment from the employees (Argyris 1998, p. 100-101). The leaders way of creating empowerment can have major impact on the employees satisfaction and motivation, which in turn lead to an improvement of the employees performance and retention within the company (Grönroos 2008, p. 382). Spreitzer (1995, p. 1444) hence that empowerment is a continuous variable where people can be more or less empowered, rather than empowered or not empowered.

Spreitzer (1995, p. 1443-1444) describe empowerment as an increased intrinsic task motivation manifested in four cognitions reflecting an individuals' orientation to his/her work role. 1) *Meaning*: involves a fit between the requirements of a work role and beliefs, values and behavior. 2) *Competence*: (self-efficacy), an individual's belief in his/her capability to perform activities with skills. 3) *Self-determination*: an individual's sense of having choice in initiating and regulating actions. 4) *Impact*: the

degree to which an individual can influence strategic, administrative or operating outcomes at work. Yukl (2012, p. 163-164) describe that to enhance empowerment it requires that the leader must show respect for the employees' competences to be able to take personal responsibility and to make own decisions, in that way there may be mutual trust between the management and employees. Kinlaw (1995, p. 11-12) argue that empowerment means that organizations are moving the decision making as far down the hierarchy as possible so that the employees closest to the problem are allowed to solve them. When employees are able to perform their work tasks without interference from their managers it will increase the sense of participation and responsibility in their work

In order to be empowered, Spreizer (1995, p. 1447) argue that the organization and the managers must have information available to people at all levels through the organization. Good leadership is crucial for sustaining employee empowerment in organizations (Armache 2013, p. 24). Two specific types of information is are important for empowerment: first the information about the organizations mission and second the information about performance without the information, people wont be able to take initiative and the work wont feel meaningful. Armache (2013, p. 20) argue that managers have to help the employees to feel and understand that they are a part of something bigger than themselves in order to empower them. Managers also have to provide frequent feedback so that people know how they are doing in order to develop knowledge and skills. Spreizer (1995, p. 1447) hence that information about performance is important in order to feel competent and valued and to be able to develop and get responsibility.

### **3.3.8 Brief summary of the described concepts**

Economical incentives, feedback, responsibility and empowerment are four motivational factors that affect each other and need each other. Responsibility and empowerment goes hand in hand since the leaders enhance the responsibility through empowerment to the work tasks, which is motivating for the trainee. The leader enhances both responsibility and empowerment through feedback, which satisfy the needs for the employee. If the goals and aims are clearly formulated the trainee has a deeper understanding of what he/she is supposed to achieve in order to get economic incentives and this will also enhance the work motivation for the trainee.

### **3.4 Communication**

Effective communication is very important, both the internal and external communication (Sutherland, Torricelli & Karg 2002, p. 15). Winn (2013, p. 20) argue that a company needs to clearly communicate the corporate values, economic rewards, meaningful work and generally marketing the firm's image in order to attract the talents and retain their employees and trainees within the firm. Srivastava and Bhatnagar (2010, p. 26) describe that in the initial stage of the decision making process the information about the organization is limited. Therefore organizations have to make extra efforts to maintain their image because this is an effective tool for recruitment, employee engagement and retention. Dibble (1999, p. 51-52) argue that when a company communicates with potential employees, advertises and gives presentations to people outside of the company, the organization is being evaluated. What a company communicates must contain a level of consistency. The communication should be trustworthy and credible to the current employees and it should be representative for the culture and values that the company has (Dibble 1999, p. 219). Through external communication, companies can communicate their identity (who they are) their image (what they are) and their culture and values (what they stand for) (Gregory & Weichmann 1998, p. 172). In this thesis I assume that the perceived expectation gap can have its ground in the company's communication regarding what the trainee program is containing and what the outcome will look like for the trainees when they are finished within the two years program. I will investigate how the company communicate the program by analyzing the company documents and by understanding what the trainees thought about the information they received from the company and how it turned out for them to analyze if there actually is an expectation gap resulting from the company's communication.

Internal communication is one of the most important factors for companies to improve competitive advantage (Dumitrescu, Cetină & Pentescu 2012, p. 11). Mishra, Boynton and Mishra (2014, p. 185, 187-188) argue that internal communication reflects the management's ability to build relationships between the employees at all levels within an organization. Internal communication is effective if it is a two-way communication, because then there is an opportunity for informal interaction between managers and employees. Foundationally, communication involves exchange of information and internal communication occurs between employees and managers. Internal

communication can enhance the employee engagement, which is the degree to which an individual is attentive in their roles and performance. Internal communication from the managers is motivating for the employees. Internal communication, as coaching and mentoring, leads to greater employee engagement (Mishra et al 2014, p. 184). Dolphin (2005, p. 174) argue that organizations and management can keep their employees motivated by communicating that they are indispensable and that they need them in the organization. Interaction gives management more credibility with employees, which makes communication an important and critical management process. The internal communication is important for this thesis because the line managers, that has responsibility for the trainees development and learning, need to receive information from their managers in order to handle the trainees in a way so they feel empowered. Then relationships can be built between the different levels in the organization and the motivation, empowerment, responsibility can enhance together with feedback. This shows that managers have an important role for the motivation and personal development for employees and trainees.

### **3.5 Management/leadership**

Among other things, companies must motivate their employees to their full potential, and leadership plays a crucial role in the process (Buble, Juras & Matić 2014, p. 161). Bruzelius and Skärvad (2008, p. 365) argue that leadership can be described as an advocacy process that involves getting other people to voluntarily, and with commitment, act to achieve the business goals. The main task for a leader is to satisfy the employees through giving them responsibility and freedom to make decisions, both at individual level and group level, to ensure that they are motivated to achieve the objectives and that they are satisfied within the organization. According to Timm and Peterson (2000), managers can influence employees' motivation by having realistic expectations, communicating about goals and requirements, create openness between the manager and the employees and also by using the reward system in a correct way. Lu (1999, p. 70-71) held that having a supportive manager at work could make a big difference for the employees work motivation and job satisfaction. Social support from one's manager affect the employees well being. Miles, Patricks and King (1996, p. 288) stated that an open communication between the manager and the employee was a significant predictor of job satisfaction and it affected important organizational

variables such as; turnover, organizational commitment, work motivation and work satisfaction.

Grönroos (2008, p. 402) describes that another aspect of leadership is the importance of developing an open climate and culture for communication. The employees acquire information from their managers about objectives, guidelines and expectations. Buble et al (2014, p. 162) describe leadership as an important factor in directing all organizational components towards effective accomplishment to the goals of the company and it needs to provide interaction between all the members of the organization. A strong leadership role results in increase trust and confidence from the employees, which in turn leads to that the legitimacy of the leader grows (Bruzelius & Skärvad 2008, p. 365). Yukl (2012, p. 132) argues that in order for the leadership to be effective it is important that the leader develop a style that is compatible with the motivational needs of the employees. Buble et al (2014, p. 162) argue that the management must understand what motivation means to its employees in order to achieve the company's goals.

### **3.5.1 Talent management**

Human Resources Management (HRM) is getting more prominent within organizations where one focus is to solve the social problems regarding the increasing mobility of the key talents. Talent management represents a new field within Human Resources Management that is a concept that aims for identifying and maintaining talented employees in the organization (Muntean 2014, p. 300-301). Shaw, Park and Kim (2014, p. 572-573) argue that the focus on human capital as the main force of competitive advantage has intensified the need for retaining talents. But a problem for organizations is that, unlike other organizational resources, employees can leave. When employees decide to leave the company they need to be replaced, which costs the organization money and time. Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod (2001, p. 7) describe talent management as a strategy that has become a crucial source as a competitive advantage. Companies that do a better job of attracting, developing, exciting, and retaining their talent will gain more than their fair share of this critical and scarce resource and will boost their performance dramatically. Talent management is a support to the organizations' objectives, which in businesses essentially amount to making money. Making money requires an understanding of the costs as well as an understanding of the benefits with talent management choices. Cappelli (2008, p. 7)

argue that the talent problems of employers and employees are intertwined. Employers want the skills they need when they need them, delivered in a manner they can afford. Employees want prospects for advancement and control over their careers, which also shows that the mindset in the whole organization need to be set on finding and retaining talents, not only when managers need it. Michaels et al (2001, p. 11) argue that the organization must get a different mindset. To attract and retain talents and to have better talent management, every leader in the company must be committed to that goal.

As Michaels et al describe (2001, p. 7) I am interested to investigate how the trainees perceive that the organization is working with attracting, retaining and motivating them to stay within the business, which is a competitive advantage.

### **3.5.2 Mentorship**

Kram (1985, p. 2) describe the term *mentor* as a "relationship between a younger adult and an older, more experienced adult who helps the younger individual learn to navigate the adult world and the world of work". Zumas (2012, p. 5) argue that when it comes to retaining and motivating employees, compensation is important but communication the key. The mentor plays an important role of the mentees development regarding their self-esteem and work-identity. Mentorship is described as an intense interpersonal exchange between an experienced colleague (mentor) and a less experienced colleague (mentee) that the mentor provides direction, support and feedback regarding personal development and career plans. Research has proved that mentoring affect employees turnover intentions and lower the willingness to quit the company (Aronoff 2004, p. 83-84; Payne & Huffman 2005, p. 161). Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz and Lima (2004, p. 127) hence that mentoring relationships are important regarding individual career development.

Zumas (2012, p. 5) describe that an organization have to make time to communicate on a daily basis, this makes the employees feel connected to each other and it enhances the development among the employees and it is important to not only receive feedback from management. It is also important to encourage mentorship because it is good for the younger employees to get the chance to learn, listen and get training from senior employees. And it is also good for the employees that have been in the organization for a longer period of time to embark on a new challenge. Bergelson (2014, p. 19) argue

that mentorship is about communication and connecting with one another to share knowledge. If it is done right the outcome is that both the mentor and the mentee become more developed and understanding employees as a result of the interaction. Latukha (2011, p. 141-142) hence that responsibility and mentoring is two factors that have a positive influence on employee's motivation and organizational commitment. Payne and Huffman (2005, p. 159) showed that mentees who had mentors that was supervisors showed a higher degree of commitment than mentees who had non-supervisory mentors. Bergelson (2014, p. 19) argue that mentoring can help organizations attract key talents and develop the talents into future leaders and retain their loyalty for the long term. Mentoring promotes the adoption of an organization's values which facilitates identification with the organization. Payne and Huffman (2005, p. 159) hence that mentorship helps the mentee to hold a more positive attitude toward their work environment and mentors are role models, which generates respect between mentee and mentor that also can result into positive work attitudes.

There is another form of mentoring called "peer-mentoring" where colleagues of a similar level of experience mentor each other (Bergelson 2014, p. 19). Zumas (2012, p. 5) describe the "Buddy-system", that is an example of a peer-mentor relationship, which creates accountability for the company and for the colleagues since the employees coach and develop each other within the company. Both mentoring and peer-mentoring involve people in communicating and connecting with one another to share knowledge that may lead to enhanced motivation for the work tasks and organization.

In this thesis I will investigate how the trainees feel about mentorship as a motivating factor. Some of the trainees have had mentors, and some have not. Some of the former trainees are mentors today, which make this form of leadership interesting and important to analyze since it extends throughout their careers.

### **3.6 Career**

All of us, whether we are aware of it or not, have conceptualizations of career. The conceptualizations we have guide our decisions and actions regarding our career. During the different stages and experiences in our work lives we change how we look at the concept of our career (Inkson 2015, p. 21-23, 272-273). Sullivan (1999, p. 457) argues that the way we view careers has dramatically changed. Traditionally, careers

were thought to evolve within the context of one or two firms and were conceptualized to progress in linear career stages. Larsson, Brousseau, Kling and Sweet (2003, p. 8-9) argue that even though people in general seem to have a notion of what a career is, these notions are not similar from one person's perception to another. For example, one person may view a career as one's chosen profession for a lifetime while another may view a career as a climb upward on the corporate ladder. Von Gilow, Driver, Brousseau and Prince (1983, p. 24) mean that since individuals over time frequently move through a series of career stages, *career* should be seen from a temporal perspective. The career stages involve substantive changes in the role requirements, as well as in knowledge, skills, and work orientations that the role requires. Similarly, work expectations and values shift as people move through successive stages in life. Larsson et al (2003, p. 8-9 & 11) describe the importance for organizations to have in mind that there are different concepts of careers since that affect people's view of their own, and others, work life as well as organizational leadership, culture and growth strategies.

Workers outside of the traditional career model, who have "*boundary less careers*", are today becoming a norm rather than the exception. A boundary less career is defined by Sullivan (1999, p. 458) as a sequence of job opportunities that go beyond the boundaries of a single employment setting. A boundary less career includes: portable skills, knowledge and abilities across multiple firms, on the job action and learning. According to Ito, Brotheridge and McFarland (2013, p. 736-737) younger generations are less concerned about job security, instead they prefer a boundary less career focused on employability. Differences in priorities could be confounded with age, since age is related to career status and one's career stage may also influence how employees decide to join or leave an organization.

It is relevant to study how the trainees view the concept of career since it can influence what motivates them to remain within the company through the different stages in their life.

### **3.6.1 Career concept model**

The competence and motivation of the people in organizations are often viewed as key performance factors in both practice and research (Larsson, Brousseau, Kling & Sweet 2007, p. 362). The authors propose that competence and motivation are better viewed



as relationships between different persons and situations. *The career concept model* was developed by Driver 1976 and is a useful tool to relate persons and organizational situations where the career can be seen as the meeting-point of people and organization. Driver suggests that individuals possess different ideas about how their careers should develop (von Glinow, Driver, Brousseau & Prince 1983, p. 23). The model was developed together with Broussaeu to fit issues for various persons and organizations, such as; human resource management, organizational culture, international expansion etc. (Larsson et al 2007, p. 363). The career concept model includes analysis of the frequency of job changes, directions of the job change and the motives that guide the individuals job choice (von Glinow et al 1983, p. 24). It is based on two primary conceptual factors: First, the frequencies of career change (durability in the given field of work) and second the conceptual "direction" of career movement or change. These two dimensions lead to four basic and different career concepts needed by individuals: Expert, Linear, Spiral and Transitory (Larsson et al 2003, p. 9), which are described below

*The Expert career concept:* the career choice is made once for a lifetime with commitment to the organization. This profile wants to master knowledge, skills and work. This concept relate to in-depth competence and security needs. *The Linear career concept* is a career choice that focuses on upward movement in an externally defined "ladder" where upward promotions are desired as frequently as possible. The linear career concept has a need for power and advancement. Linear profiles have attention to efficiency, orientation toward competitiveness and preference for leadership. The linear career concept has similarities with McClelland's need for power (McClelland 1967, p. 43; McClelland & Burnham 1995, p. 126-127) where the individual is competitive and wants to advance at work. *The Spiral career concept* is where the career choice evolves through a series of occupations (with five-to-ten years duration in each) where each new choice builds on past choices in order to develop new skills. This profile wants to have creativity, skill diversity, commitment to teamwork and personal growth. The spiral career concept has similarities with McClelland's need for affiliation where the individual need teamwork and commitment to colleagues (McClelland 1967, p. 44). *The Transitory career concept* is a career choice that involves frequent change of field, organization and jobs (two-to-

four years intervals). Transitory competences highlight a need for quick action, networking and adaptation (Larsson et al 2003, p. 9-10; Larsson et al 2007, p. 362-363).

The career concept model has contributed to concrete the relationships between strategy, structure and reward systems. The rewards systems speak directly to career aspirations and motivations of individuals, which in turn give energy and direction to behavior aligned with operational outcomes (Larsson et al 2007, p. 365). Larsson et al (2003, p. 9, 11) argue that it is important to note that no profile is "better" than another. Career profiles simply reflect individual orientations and motivations regarding one's career and different types of culture will fit and support different types of people and their careers. By defining the profile on the trainees within the organization it is possible to analyze, together with the other motivation theories and motivation concepts, how to motivate them and thereby retain them within the organization.

### **3.7 Culture**

Organizational culture is defined as everything people think and do as members of their society. The organizational culture directs its employees on the daily working relationships and guides them how to behave and communicate, it represent the character of the organization (Valmohammadi & Ahmadi 2015, p. 134). The forces that are created in organizational and social situations deriving from culture are powerful. Cultural forces are powerful because they operate outside of our awareness (Schein 2001, p. 7). There are many different definitions suggested for organizational culture. Researchers agree that organizational culture refers to a system of values, behavior and beliefs shared among employees (Belias, Koustelios, Vairaktarakis & Sdrolias 2015, p. 315). Belias et al (2015, p. 316-317) argue that one of the aspects of organizational culture that has been deeply investigated is job satisfaction. There has been investigations regarding job satisfaction, organizational culture and the employees' attitudes towards their work that have showed that if there is a match between their present and desired culture they have a higher level of satisfaction with the intrinsic aspects of their work. Since organizational culture is everything that the employees think and do as members of the organization, I assume that the cultural environment has impact on the trainees' motivation. It is relevant for this thesis to examine if, and how, the culture affect the work motivation and retention for the trainees and which impact the leaders have on their feelings regarding the culture.

Leaders have an important role in a knowledge-friendly culture. In a knowledge-friendly environment people have the tendency to share knowledge and information with each other. The culture and the leaders way to create a knowledge-friendly environment is important to analyze in this thesis since the trainees have joined the graduate program in order to develop and learn from other individuals within the company. The leader has to create trust among the employees in order to make them feel secure in transferring their knowledge between each other through interaction and change of ideas (Valmohammadi & Ahmadi 2015, p. 134). Claver, Llopis, González and Gascó (2001, p. 247-248) argue that it is a set of symbols, values and rituals that the employees share and this describes the way things are done in order to solve problems within the company. Cultural understanding is important and desirable for all of the individuals in the organization but it is essential to leaders if they want to lead. It is up to management to foster a desired work environment, and this is inevitably linked to organizational culture (King & Demarie 2014, p. 26). This requires that management clearly understand the values in the organization. The management has to figure out what is important by clearly communicating to the employees about which values (e.g. performance, quality, customer service, social responsibility) that is of importance. It is also important to be selective about who joins the company to ensure that they match the culture. Internships can enable for companies to observe the candidates first to see if they are a good fit for the culture and the values within the firm. King & Demarie (2014, p. 27, 30) argue that getting organizational culture right should not be underestimated because successful organizational culture is a competitive advantage.

### **3.8 Summary and conclusion of theoretical discussion**

Employee turnover may result in large financial costs to organizations. Turnover has not only economic impact, it also affects training, organizational development and other human resources-development interventions (Hatcher 1999, p. 365). Over time, organizations invest substantial resources in their employees (Björklund 2001, p. 56) and especially on trainees since they are getting internal training and development during the years the program runs. Motivational factors can be given tangible or intangible and affect the intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. The thesis will analyze the factors that both McClelland, Herzberg and Deci and Ryan describe as needs that have to be satisfied in order for the work motivation to increase: responsibility,

empowerment, feedback and the work itself. In order to analyze if there is an expectation gap between the trainees expectations and the organization I am going to research if the trainees expect another outcome from the organization than they want and if the managers and the organization give clear feedback and communication regarding the program, goals, work tasks and structure and what outcome the trainees will receive.

## 4 Analysis

The purpose of this master thesis is to investigate how trainees get motivated, during and after the trainee program, to retain within the company. This master thesis intends to answer the following two questions: *Which factors, during and after graduate programs, motivate trainees to retain within the company? Where is the expectation gap and how does it affect the motivation and retention of trainees?*

### 4.1 Economical incentives

According to the company document regarding the salary policy for the trainees, the trainee is rated on a scale from 1 to 5 where the rating 3 is a good rating meaning that the trainees have achieved all their goals and core job responsibilities. The trainee get pay increase in percent related to which rating they got on a 5 step latter: 0%, 0-1%, 1-2%, 3-4% and 5-7%. The trainees will also receive an annual bonus that is determined on the performance during the year. IP7 describes that the salary is important and motivating to her, especially now during the two years when she is a trainee. This is because a good salary means that she got good ratings from her managers, which Pfau and Kay (2002, p. 7-8) support with their argumentation regarding the reward system “pay for performance” that works because it is based on the individuals personal interest.

So when I think about it, it is not the salary that is important, it is the feedback from my manager that took me to a good salary that is important. It is that feedback that is motivating because it tells me what I am doing right and what I can improve and this helps me to find my best potential for the future (IP7).

IP9 explain that the salary and bonus is a motivator for trainees, but she argues that the trainees who are getting high ratings do not perform to get a better paycheck. This kind of personality performs in order to get a good reputation to get a nice boost for the career after the trainee program. She does not think that the money plays a great role for trainees motivation, she see economic rewards as a reward and not a “carrot”. With that she means that the trainee performs really well for personal interest, and not to receive money. Björklund (2001, p. 24) has the same opinion as the two respondents that extrinsic motivation affect peoples motivation and Shore et al (2006, p. 2578) held, as the respondents, that pay is used as an indicator of the employees achievements and recognition. Recognition is according to Hertzberg a motivator in

which the work tasks should be designed in order to increase the personal motivation (in Hackman & Oldham 1976, p. 251-252). IP8 describes similar to IP7 and IP9, that the factor that is motivating to him is that he receives pay rates according to his performance. The paycheck for him is more like a "nice surprise" while the motivator is to learn new parts of the company and gain new knowledge. He continues to describe that the basic pay is like a hygiene factor; as long as it is good enough it does not motivate him to perform. On the other hand, "if it was not satisfactory I would not be happy at all and the motivation to develop within the company would suffer". He explains that it is important to have a satisfactory salary, it does not have to be best on the market but you should be happy with it (IP8). IP7, that also is a current trainee, believes that one factor that is demotivating for some trainees is the salary. Trainees that want more pay are not satisfied. Bruzelius and Skärvad (2008, p. 300) argue that rewards are important in order to increase the employee's performance and Björklund (2001, p. 24-25) argue that it is also influencing employee's attitudes and motivation and how they define their relationship towards the organization. IP4, director in Europe, describes that she thinks that she has a good salary, but she had heard that there were many ex trainees that were unhappy with their former situation regarding the salary. She also explain during the interview that this company is not for everyone, it is important for the company to recruit trainees that fit into the culture otherwise it might result in a negative experience for them which is bad for the company.

I think that the factors that are motivating for a person is based on what you value at work. And I think, the more you work the more you realize that there are a couple of things that people look at. First you look at compensation. You look at if you are getting the salary that you are supposed to get for the work you do. Or at least what you perceive that you should get from your work. And how do you do that? You compare with others of course, you talk to friends and you think, "okay, she is doing that job and I am doing this job, is my salary good or not?" But then, at one point you realize that it is not only about the salary, there are a lot more to compensation than salary (IP4).

Shore et al (2006, p. 2579, 2590) describe that people make pay comparisons and that perceptions of pay inequity are likely to influence the attitude and behavior towards work, and this argumentation is supported by IP10 and IP9. IP10 describe that when you are in the program you have so many to compare yourself to. Trainees are looking at; "what do I received in salary compared to the others? What a pay raise did I receive and what did he receive?" When you are a part of the program it is a constant race

against the others, which makes it a little tough. It is so much focus on competition between the trainees and they are comparing themselves in more ways than only in the economical parts. They look at who will get the best position and ask themselves "why did he get that position and why did not I get it?" IP10 describe during our interview that as a trainee you focus too much on the next step in your career and you focus on what others receive, and not enough on what you are actually doing right now. If one trainee get a position that is better than yours you will immediately get upset and unmotivated to perform in your current position. She argues that you get sharper and more eager to perform when you compete against someone. So there is a positive part and a negative part regarding comparing and competing against each other (IP10). This personality that IP10 describe that the trainees have, is according to Larsson et al (2003, p. 3) the personality that belongs within the linear career concept and McClelland (1967, p. 43) argue that it is an individual with a need for power. The authors mean that it is a person who is competitive and wants to advance at work, similar to what IP10 thought about the trainees. This will be further analyzed under the headline *Career*.

IP9 described a problem that she experienced during the years as a manager at the company regarding the trainees' salaries and the comparison that Shore et al (2006, p. 2579) also describe. She said that the skilled trainees increased their salary very quickly because they received a higher salary every six months when they were done with a rotation and the manager rated them. So when they were finished in the program and got their first real position they were already in the top of the range for what that position, as for example a brand manager position, could get in salary so they could not get a raise. Kohn (1993, p. 54) argue that rewards usually undermine the processes that they are intended to enhance, and IP9 continue to describe that this was not motivating for anyone because the trainees were used to get a raise every six months, and now they did not receive any. The experienced employees that had worked many years in their position within the company realized that the trainees received a very high paycheck for being both younger and newer at the company than they were. She argues that it is not right to have bigger focus on money than on personal development. "If you want to make a lot of money you should not work within the FMCG business" (IP9). IP10 thought that the program had a really great focus on the personal

development, her managers had a big interest in who she was as a person and which areas within the business she wanted to develop in.

IP4 argue that there were other benefits at the company than the salary, she got for example a manager role within a year so to her the program symbolize "the rosy days". And IP2, that is CEO at the company today, argues that the personalities, as most of the trainees getting hired at the company have, want to constantly develop and learn new things. It is not enough for them to make money and get extra incentives, they want more in their career. Herzberg (in Hackman & Oldham 1976, p. 251-252) identified pay as one factor that often contribute to employee dissatisfaction because the "driving force" should be designed in the motivators and not in hygiene factors, as pay, if the motivation should increase. IP5, that finished the program one year ago, describe that she is disappointed in the economical part because that goes hand in hand with which position she has within the company, and she wants a higher position than she has today within the company. She said during our interview:

If I had gotten the role as I was promised I would have had another bonus and another salary. But I am still here so I guess those factors are not so important for me right now, I am still motivated without them. The motivating part for me is the future career that I know is promising in this company; it is great to have that opportunity in head of me (IP5).

IP4 has worked within the company for 10 years and she is currently an European director and she describes:

The older I get, I realize that the benefit package, especially with salary in this company, is never going to be best in class. It is a highly valued company, they don't have to pay the highest salaries. And I know that, if I wanted more salary I would go somewhere else. But, the older I get the more the life situation is changing. During my time here I have had 2 maternity leaves and been away 14-16 months for both of them. And that flexibility the company gives me in my life and in my work hours is just priceless (IP4).

Job satisfaction is generated when we receive reward from our job, some are extrinsic and some are intrinsic (Lawler & Suttler 1973, p. 486) and Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 59-60) argue that intrinsic motivation affect job satisfaction, work motivation and work performance while extrinsic motivation can raise short-lived satisfaction and have negative impact on intrinsic motivation, which some of the respondents also described during the interviews. IP3 held that rewards is important and affect the personal



motivation. For her, the driving force is that she has opportunities to influence job matters at the company and the bonus is more of a good instrument for the motivation. IP6 described that "it is wrong to say that I would work here for free" but the biggest motivational factor for her is undoubtedly the people she work with and the feedback they give her, "they develop me" (IP6).

Rewards can be given in tangible form or intangible form, the common factor for both of them are that they should enhance the motivation. There are other forces than the economical factors that motivate employees (Thomson & Strickland 1992, p. 300) and two of the intrinsic motivational factors I found were important for the trainees during our interviews are analyzed below; responsibility and empowerment. According to the company document policy one of the criteria for higher rating was that the trainee took core job responsibilities, and from interviewing the trainees they saw the economical incentives as a reward but that there are other factors that are more important. I will analyze how these two factors affect the trainees' motivation and retention within the company.

## **4.2 Responsibility and empowerment**

According to the company document regarding the trainee program they offer the trainees a real job from day one. It describes that the trainee will have its own areas of responsibilities and they will be expected to contribute to the business results. The program will offer a fast pace development through excellent training and hands-on responsibility. Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 58) meaning that self-efficiency and self-determination is important to maintain the intrinsic motivation and IP5 strengthening their argument by saying "I like to determine and take responsibility, I get immediately motivated when I feel like I am the one who gets to decide and be in charge". She continues to describe that she also get motivated by working, that the work itself and getting good results from her performance are factors that keeps her going. "I don't get as much motivation from bonus and salary as such, mainly work" (IP5). IP3 held that a motivator and a driving force were to have an opportunity to influence in job matters at the company (IP3). IP5 and IP3 feel motivated by self-determination, self-efficiency and to have an impact on both the organization and the employees are motivating for them. Spreitzer (1995, p. 1443) and Armache (2013, p. 21) describe these factors as important in order to empower employees within organizations.

I like when I do something that has a purpose, that it is a part of something bigger and I have the purpose in mind when I work with it, then it is for sure something that is getting more interesting for me to do (IP8).

IP2 state that it is motivating to get the opportunity to do important jobs directly when you get hired as a trainee, and the expectations that IP3 had before the program was to start a proper job at once and to be able to make an impact within the category. That was also the expectation that IP2 had, to get a real job where he was supposed and allowed to deliver and create different work tasks and projects by himself. By designing the work tasks as whole tasks and by giving the employees responsibility from the start enhance the personal motivation (Kaufmann & Kaufmann 1996, p. 71). IP2 describes the culture as a “do it yourself culture”, which is an important mindset to him because he wants as much responsibility as possible. Kinlaw (1995, p. 11-12) argue that when employees can perform on their own at work, the sense of participation and responsibility for their work increase. IP7 describe the importance of responsibility for trainees as:

If you get a lot of responsibility from the beginning you know that you are good and you can handle a position like that, then you are getting more eager to do things because your self-esteem is high because you know that you can take the responsibility (IP7)

IP9 thinks that trainees should be responsible at once by being given major responsibility at an early stage, even if the manager is there to help if it is necessary. She thinks that the company always has been good at giving the responsibility and power to trainees to handle things on their own (IP9). When trainees get the opportunity to have a real responsibility their learning curve will get steeper, and that is a strength. It is important to design the positions as complete substantial tasks (IP3). IP2, the CEO, thought that it was motivating to generate something for himself while he showed the company that they had invested “in the right horse”. According to him it is very explicit that the expectations are very high on the trainees because the company wants to see them in a high position after the program so you have to be able to empower work tasks rather quickly.

This is such a company where you always get intellectual stimulation, there are always new problems to solve. My journey within the company has always been filled with new exciting work that have allowed me to continue to evolve by getting more responsibility

and power over new tasks so I have had challenges all the time. This is really a place where you get opportunities to challenge yourself and that is also why I have stayed for so long (IP2).

IP3, that today has the Sales director position, described from her manager point of view that they give the current trainees positions that are too easy and that they do not include as much responsibility as they should do in order to develop the trainees further when they are finished with the program. “I think we can give them more responsibility, and maybe provide them with more coaching for development, but more responsibility is important“ (IP3). Möller and Powell (2001, p. 343) argue that by giving young employees the chance to develop enhances the changes for the organization to retain them. IP7, that is currently a trainee, think that the company gives her the responsibility and the learning possibilities, which is the factors that she like most about the program. IP3 felt that she worked from day one in the program and for her it was important to have formal responsibility, so for her the personal development curve was really good.

Sometimes I have even felt that I have too much responsibility, when I first hear about some tasks it feels overwhelming, but it is really nice when I have done it and realize that I can do it. It makes me grow so much more each time (IP8).

IP2, the CEO, describes that the responsibilities are very large within this company and you have to take on a lot of responsibility. He continues:

So in order to be able to empower all the responsibility that this organization needs you to handle, you should want to make a career, in my opinion it is an important motivator for trainees and employees (IP2).

Larsson et al (2007, p. 362) argue in a similar way that competence and motivation should be seen as relationships between persons and situation were career is the meeting point between the person and the organization. According to IP2 it is important to give the trainees extra stimulation because they want to show what they can do and they want more new tasks to manage. The company, and the managers, must give the trainees feedback in order to make them understand that they are doing a good job and that the company sees a bright future for them because they are viewed as talents. This is an important task for management to gain a competitive advantage (Michaels et al 2001, p. 7). IP3 argues that her managers has always showed her that

there are plans for her for the future and opportunities for personal development and this has been a very important part of her career within the organization and the reason why she have stayed.

#### **4.2.1 Managers plays an important role**

During the interviews I found that the respondents thought that their managers played an important role. IP7 explain that how much responsibility you get as a trainee is depending on the line manager, but it is also up to yourself to show that you can take it and be in front of things. According to the company document regarding guidelines for the line managers, the line manager is an employee who has special passion for developing people and also has the potential to do so. The company argues in the document that the line managers should realize that he/she has a major role to play in the development of the trainee. The line manager has to enhance the strengths in the trainee and provide attention to areas of improvement. IP8 thinks that some line managers are good and some line managers can be better, he get a lot of responsibility but what kind of responsibility depends on the line manager. IP7 argue that a strong part of the program is that trainees get to experience many different leader styles, so the trainees know how to behave when they are going to have a leaders position later on in their careers (IP7). IP2 describe that when he was a trainee his managers acted like “we throw you out in the water and then we will see if you can swim”. But according to him that is the way it is supposed to be done, he had responsibility and was empowered but he also felt that he had help from his managers during the way if he needed it.

IP2 describes that a risk with trainee programs is that the company does not trust the trainees enough to give them all the responsibility they deserve and need. According to him, trainees cannot have a too controlled environment because the goal is that the trainees should be able to handle higher positions when they are done, the company have to empower them to motivate and retain them. Grönroos (2008, p. 382) argue that the leaders way to create empowerment for the employees has a big impact on the work motivation. “They did good with me when I was a trainee 15 years ago but I don’t see us working in that way anymore, we are afraid to give them responsibility” (IP2). Another risk is that the company treat the trainees as interns, that the line managers see it as they receive an extra labor for six months and they have not thought through a plan for the trainee, which is demotivating and a waste for the company

because the trainee is there to learn, develop and get as much responsibility as possible. It is the managers' role to take the trainee from point A to point B in six months (IP3), good leadership is crucial for sustaining employee empowerment in organizations (Armache 2013, p. 24). "It is expensive to handle the trainees in a wrong way" (IP2). IP6 describe that she has experienced that the trainees today are put in positions where a trainee have been before, which makes it a "trainee position". She thinks that it is demotivating to inherit a position because a lot of responsibility is lost when they don't receive a proper position where the trainee can make an impact. IP4, Brand development director in Europe, has similar opinions; she think that the reason trainees decide to leave the company is because of poor people management and poor expectation management from the line managers. She continues:

We have line managers who simply don't think how they will get the best out of the trainee, don't think through their work plans properly. Trainees will be given every day tasks instead of well-defined projects to work on. Of course it is demotivating if you are acting like somebody's daily assistant, who wants to work in a role like that? You want to get a proper responsibility over something so you can show people what you are up to. So I think it is poor line management mostly (IP4)

IP7 has a suggestion for improvement, the line manager should get an introduction from the organization before every rotation to get informed about what the trainee needs and how to handle the traineeship. To be empowered the organization must have information available to people at all levels through the organization (Spreizer 1995, p. 1447). IP7 continue to describe the importance of having the right mindset from the managers side, they should reflect over "okay, I am getting a trainee, what is my role here?" and then they should set goals and fit the preparations so the trainee has the right conditions. IP4 was according to herself, one of the lucky trainees because her program was well organized and she thinks that it is the factor that will keep the trainees motivated at first. To get assigned the right tasks at the right time from the line manager helped her learn a lot. This is the challenge for the managers, they need to plan it properly, and in that way they will get a lot out of the trainees. IP6 had a very good manager so according to her it was not hard to get into the company and understand what was expected of her and how everything worked within the organization.

#### **4.2.2 Mentorship**

It is developing for a trainee to have a mentor, a mentor is the one that can tell the trainees what is good for them and how they can develop in the company (IP1). Coaching and mentoring is motivating and it makes people grow. “Mentoring has with the personal chemistry to do, you have to click” (IP4). IP9 thought that it was nice having a mentor that could describe what decisions and choices the mentor had done in the career, and she could ask questions she wanted answers to. IP7 think that it is good to have somebody to talk to besides her line manager. She think that the best idea is to have the same mentor during the whole program who can give advice if she has any challenges with her line managers or just need coaching to develop. It is good if the mentor can escalate things, which require that he/she has a higher position with the firm. Stynen et al (2014, p. 186-187) held that opportunities to learn through social contact are an important factor to enhance the intrinsic motivation. IP2 describes that a mentor should be able to advise its mentee and be able to discuss in order for the mentee to gain knowledge and clarity.

I think it is an advantage if the mentor is a senior former trainee because then they can talk about their journey within the trainee program and their knowledge. But it is more about the personality than about what kind of position they have (IP2).

Payne and Huffman (2005, p. 159) argue that mentees who have a mentor who is a supervisor has a bigger degree of commitment than those who has a non-supervisory mentor. IP1, IP3, IP4, IP5 and IP7 have the opinion that it is of importance for the trainees opportunity to develop and learn within the mentorship that the mentor has been a part of the company for many years and that the mentor has a higher position within the company. According to the company document regarding management and mentors, the trainee will receive a mentor with a very high position within the company. Aronoff (2004, p. 83) and Payne & Huffman (2005, p. 161) argue that it is important that the mentor is experienced because in that way he/she can provide direction, support and feedback regarding personal development and career plans. “I think that is developing to have someone to talk to about thoughts and feelings regarding your career and your traineeship that is higher up in the organization. That is great” (IP5). IP3 think that mentorship is a very good way for trainees to get an intellectual discussion with someone that has interest in their personal development and that has good insight in the company.

The mentors way to communicate with the trainee plays a really important role when it comes to retaining and motivating them (Zumas 2012, p. 5) and it is important that the personal chemistry is there otherwise it is hard to feel trust with each other (IP3; IP6). IP4 did not experience the mentorship as the strongest part of her trainee program because she was signed a chairman that did not have the biggest interest in being a mentor so he was not very active. She think that it is of big relevance for trainees to develop themselves with help of a mentor, she thinks that it is beneficial to have a mentor with a high position but not as high as a country chairman. IP8, that is currently a trainee, thinks that it is very motivating to get ideas and to discuss possibilities for his future career within the company with a senior person. “My mentor is very inspiring and she gives me personal help with what I can achieve and how I will achieve it”. Payne and Huffman (2005, p. 159) and IP8 argue that mentorship provides direction and feedback regarding personal development and careers plans, and Aby et al (2004, p. 127) describe that mentoring relationships are important for the individual career development. IP7 describe that by having a mentor that is a former trainee it is easy to feel more connected to them because they know how it is to be in the trainee program.

One strategy for employee retention and motivation for the organization is to encourage mentorship (Zumas 2012, p. 59) and IP3 finds it better nowadays that there are very formalized requirement for responsibility from senior managers within the company to be coaches and mentors. It is something that has been strengthened and she think that is very good because she lacked this part during her time as a trainee. IP9 finds it important that the mentor has time to be a mentor otherwise it wont be a good relationship between the two parties, (Zumas 2012, p. 5) held that another strategy for employee retention and motivation is for the organization and the mentors to make time to communicate to feel a connection between each other. IP3 describe her current role as a mentor for trainees as an interesting and rewarding part of her job, to keep in touch with new trainees to hear their experience of the organization and the program. Mentorship is also good for employees that have been in the business a longer time to get new perspectives and to embark on a new challenge (Zumas 2012, p. 5).

As a leader, this gives me very good input. My mentee is about to change position within the company and she has talked to me about her future career in a safe environment where

I do not value her opinions based on the organizations best, but from her perspective. I have much insight into the organization so I can give her valuable input (IP3)

#### **4.2.3 Peer-mentoring**

IP4, that has a managerial position, likes the “buddy thinking” in the company and she is a big promoter of that. She promote buddies to all new members entering her teams because she think that it is a good idea when you are new at the company. IP8, who is a trainee, thinks that it is nice to talk to someone about experiences and practical things but it does not give him the same experience as his mentor give him, the mentorship is much more developing. IP7, currently a trainee, think that it is nice to have someone who is facing the same challenges to eat lunch with (Zumas 2012, p. 5). IP6 also think that it was good to be able to talk to each other and she describes the “trainee community” as very good. The trainees in Sweden arranged meetings and conversations and created a culture where they met outside of work.

#### **4.3 Internal education and social connection with trainees**

IP1 expectations regarding the program were to get an extensive, professional education in real life and a professional career. She thinks that education is really important and explained that it is extra important for trainees to learn as many parts of the organization as possible. The organization should expend the trainees’ horizon to make them a part of the company with deep knowledge. Education, professional development and mental satisfaction are basic issues that motivate employees (Gaddam 2008, p. 47-48) and Hertzberg (in Hackman & Oldham 1976, p. 251) named those issues “motivators”. IP3 thought that it was really good to get the chance to get further education during her time in the program, and after the program. She described that during her first years within the organization she was offered to attend really good courses that was much better than the courses that she had during her years at the university. It was very motivating for her to get this opportunity to get knowledge that she could use within the specific areas in the company. IP1 and IP3 have been in the company for 14-18 years, and I realized during the interviews that courses and opportunities for further education is not in the trainee program anymore and that internal courses was a factor the older trainees had appreciated during their trainee period, and the younger trainees would want to have this opportunity today. IP5, that was finished with the program one year ago, described that she would find it more learning to attend to some courses and not only rotate in different positions during the



program. “I thought that it would be more internal education in this company. I expected seminars and training for us trainees but I guess the job market is changing” (IP5). An improvement for the program would according to IP7 be to include the trainees in courses that are held for other employees within the business. She thinks that it is important for the company to be aware of where the trainees are in their rotations so they can offer them the right education. She would want to have more training to really leveraging the development part. Through education, in form of personal development and internal training, the employee can develop new competence and skills in relation to their work tasks, which increase the motivation (Kaufmann & Kaufmann 1996, p. 71). It is important, especially for younger employees, to develop in their work because it is motivating for their future career, so for companies it is an important factor in order to keep them within the organization (Möller & Powell 2001, p. 343). IP7 argue that it would be good for the program to offer courses when the program is finished, to give the trainees learning roadmap even years after the program. This would motivate and keep up the interest for current trainees and former trainees to make them feel special and to enhance their personal development. “Just being invited to development courses to show that you are still an asset and we still want to grow after the training program” (IP7).

The best part of the program according to IP8 was to learn about the whole business. An improvement would be to include more formal training because she thinks that it is developing to learn from managers. Formal courses with a clear structure and a described knowledge goal would take the graduate program to another level (IP8). Locke and Latham (2002, p. 706) held that goals have an energizing function and it affect action by leading to use of task-relevant knowledge. IP8 continue to describe that he want guide lines “I am going to have that course in May in order to learn about marketing to be able to perform in my next rotation and then I will have another course in March to develop skills in sales and so on” (IP8). IP4 agree with IP8 that the beauty with the program is that you develop all the time and get to learn new things about the business. She said, the thing that keeps the hunger and motivation glowing is that there is constant change in the organization all the time that keeps her learning, but this is also very tiring. If the company brings awareness to the employees why there is change and what the goal is with the change, it can enhance the motivation to search for new knowledge, then feedback is important (Locke & Latham 2006, p. 265). IP3 had one

position during the program where she did not have a coach, and her experience was that it was hard to perform because she did not understand why the things she did was important so she did not understand what her goal would result in. While IP6 said that she could adapt and learn really fast in her role because her line manager gave her clear goals and a deep understanding regarding why her work was important. This shows the importance of good feedback and leadership (Dimitrescu et al 2012, p. 12).

IP9 argue that it is important to understand that the younger generation needs more instant satisfaction than her generation needed when they were trainees. According to her, companies should expect that trainees would leave the company when it is not that exiting to be a part of it anymore, as a calculated risk. She also argue that the organization should offer the trainees courses even after the program is finished so they see a future and a development plan within the company, which will keep them motivated to stay. "I think that the current trainees should be able to get this chance of internal education as well because that was fantastic for me" (IP3). IP7, who is a current trainee, describe that when a trainee is not invited to join a course that is held for other employees, the trainee feel left out. "To me this is a bit of a mismatch, if this company wants to invest in me, if I am that important as they say, why don't they see me in this?" (IP7). IP9 gives an extended thought regarding courses and personal development "maybe the trainees can be at an advertising bureau to develop and get new skills. I think that you feel more motivated if your company acts a little different than others to satisfy and develop their employees". IP4 described earlier that, as an employee you look at economical incentives. She continue with describing that:

And then of course you can look at the opportunities that the company offers. So one thing is compensation, one other thing is: do I enjoy my work? What kinds of opportunity does the company give me in developing, in fulfilling my wishes in what I want to do? And that is where this company, with me at least, has been great. And then it is the third thing; do I like to come to work from a social perspective? What do I feel when I wake up? (IP4)

IP7 would like more cooperation with the other trainees in form of face-to-face meetings because it would be useful to meet with the other trainees so they could exchange feelings and thoughts regarding rotations and positions and to create a network throughout the organization. Communication involves exchange of information between employees and it can enhance engagement and it has a motivating

effect (Mishra et al 2004, p. 184). IP5 think that it would be developing for trainees to have more regular contact with other trainees. She would like to have a network with other trainees because she feel that they are stuck in the Nordic countries. IP8 had expectations about a stronger “togetherness feeling” with the other trainees to get more social connections with each other, he also think that it would make trainees stay within the company for a longer period of time if you have relationships with colleagues at the company. Dysvik and Kuvaas (2008, p. 141) relate to this as “the need for relatedness”, that it is important to establish connection with others in the business and Gaddam (2008, p. 47-48) hence that social satisfaction is a motivational factor for employees. IP5 describe that her colleagues and the trainees in Sweden are her friends as well and that a big part of her social life is with the colleagues at work since she has moved from Denmark to Sweden. She is disappointed that she did not get the position that she was promised but because of the people in her team she is happy and motivated at work despite that, which state the importance of having relations with other individuals as a motivator (Deci & Ryan 2000, p. 55-56). IP6 feel that it is mainly the colleagues that motivate her because they are always so filled with energy and that makes her filled with energy as well.

IP7 described that it is not the economical incentives that is her main motivator, it is the feedback from her manager that is important in order to develop and improve within the company. The trainees cannot be empowered or take responsibility without getting information and guidelines from their managers. In other words, all the parts above require communication and feedback, which is analyzed below.

#### **4.4 Communication regarding the graduate program**

Effective communication is important to motivate and retain employees within the company (Sutherland et al 2002, p. 15). IP2 argue that communication is important in order to maximize the full capacity of the program. Both clear communication regarding what the trainee positions should contain and what the management actually expects that trainees will deliver. By communicating specified targets and goals it is easier for the trainees to deliver results, otherwise it is demotivating for trainees to perform (IP2; Locke & Latham 2006, p. 265). Trainees “float in the dark” if they do not get information regarding where they will be in the next rotation, because then they cannot create a relationship with the line manager before it starts (IP6). A more firm

structure and clearer communication during the program would be better for trainees (IP7).

In the company document that the organization send out to students that can be possible future trainees it is written; “we’re looking for future managers of you within two or three years”. IP7, that is a current trainee, had an expression that she would have a manager position after the program. “Now when I have been in the company for 1,5 years I know that a higher manager position is not really on my odds because that is really hard to get here”. She continues to describe that it is disappointing but that she understands it from a business point of view, because the outer-surroundings has degraded many higher manager positions to lower manager positions. “I expected a leading role. But I haven’t given it up, it is still a motivating factor for me but it is a bit demotivating to know that it might not be that way as I thought it would be when I started the program”. She thinks there is an expectation gap towards what they are communicating regarding the leadership part, according to her the trainees expect to get a higher manager position because of what the company communicates from the beginning. “The company told us from the beginning that we are special and that they are investing in us and everything”. IP8 argue that the organization should be clear to not promise anything, instead the organization should communicate what is possible but also what is realistic. He told me during the interview that his mentor helps him with a lot of thoughts and together they have created a future plan for him. He says, ”they should communicate that we also need some luck and some hard work and performance. You need to have a destination but then it is all about the journey that you are having when you are going there”. Miles et al (1996, p. 288) held that open job communication between employee and manager is important for the work motivation and retention. Grönroos (2008, p. 402) argue, as IP2, that it is important to get clear guidelines from the management otherwise the trainees won’t know if they deliver what is expected from them or not and then they will get very disappointed if they do not get a manager position after the program because they have thought that they delivered what they were suppose to. IP3 describe that it is important for the company to describe the reality from the beginning in order to get the expectations correct from the start so no one will get surprised and unhappy with the outcome.

I think that the expectation management is the most important part of it. It is really about being honest about what the program is about. What are you going to get? And what are you not going to get? (IP4)

#### **4.4.1 Feedback**

IP2, CEO for the company, describe that feedback is a crucial factor, it must be as straight and constructive as possible. He describes the organizational culture, as they call an “honest conversation”, which means that they give each other straight and clear feedback as often as possible. Overall he thinks that they have a high feedback culture (IP2). In the company document regarding information about the program you can read following, “future focused feedback and challenging goals drives innovation and ambition within our performance culture and inclusive and informal environment” and the document also describe that the leader should provide feedback to the trainee and the leader is responsible for the trainees’ growth. IP3 think, as IP2, that the company has a very active feedback culture. She describe, similar to the company document, her leadership-role regarding feedback:

As a leader I am very delegating and communicative. I highly encourage feedback and communication in my team. I believe in that model. It is based on informal feedback on a direct responsibility for a performance or meeting and so on. We also have structural feedback, such as monthly meetings, where we talk about the business but also coaching. So as an employee and trainee you have to ask for feedback and give feedback and not only get feedback. I think we have a straighter feedback culture in the company now than we had 15 years ago, which is really good (IP3).

The company document also inform the leader to provide regular feedback to ensure smooth learning and progression, something that IP4 during the interview described that she works with every day. IP4 does not think that people can get enough feedback because it is essential for personal growth. Her opinion is that most companies take feedback way to formally. She also describe her leadership-role regarding feedback:

Ever since I first got teams, I launched a positive-feedback-culture-program, so that is a challenge for everybody to make sure on Fridays that they have given at least one set positive feedback to somebody during the week. I think personal growth has a lot to do with understanding what your strengths are instead of focusing in weaknesses, that is a very negative way of looking at yourself (IP4)

Her opinion is that it is the strengthening that will keep peoples self-confidence up, which is why it is important for them to get regular feedback even if it is quite much the same things that will be said, she gives an example: "great presentation this week". Even if she gives the same feedback to her trainees and employees, at least they will know what they are good at, which will give strength, power and energy so that they have motivation to develop and be great at all areas. "I am a very strong advocate of regular and casual positive feedback culture". She argue that casual, constructive feedback culture create trust. If organizations don't have trust between the employees everything will be taken as critique instead of "I am trying to help you develop here" (IP4). Developmental feedback is positively associated with positive employee work behavior and motivation (Yun et al 2014, p. 733) and good regular feedback should come from people that can observe you (Kirkland & Mangooglan 1998, p. 9). IP1 also believe in looking at people's strengths because that is what people grow of. IP7, that is currently a trainee, perceive the culture in the organization as straight forward and honest. He receives continuously feedback from his current manager to be able to perform according to the rating he aims for. But he has asked a lot for feedback in the past, because it depends very much on the line manager how much regular feedback you will receive. It is important for him to get honest feedback otherwise he cannot change to the better. "I want the feedback, in a nice tone but I want it to be given openly and freely" (IP7). IP4 mean that it completely depends on the line manager if the trainee receives regular, casual feedback. But she thinks that the trainees expect too much. In her opinion, everyone should ask for feedback actively themselves. As a manager, she ask her teams regularly; "how can I help you? Help me help you, because I can help them in my role". IP6 has noticed that if you ask for feedback you will get good feedback. Her opinion is that as a trainee you cannot afford to work with a project for four months and then go to your manager and get the news that it won't work, you need feedback from day to day to be able to develop and deliver what is expected from you. As a trainee she thought it was important to be able to give feedback, take feedback and ask for feedback. The point of the program is development and gaining knowledge, you wont achieve that without conversations with your managers. IP8 knows that he can learn a lot from feedback so he prefers to get it constantly. IP6 has weekly meeting with her manager where they talk about business-related subjects and personal development. It is a feedback culture in this organization that she appreciates very much.

IP1 thinks that it is of importance that you hold on to yourself and take the feedback with a grain of salt because the feedback that you are getting is a reflection about what your line manager think. The feedback that she gives her trainees is a reflection of her thoughts regarding right or wrong. She describes a scenario:

For instance, I had a line manager that said "you need to do this and that" and then after six months I got a new line manager saying "no no no that is wrong you need to do this and this", so it is important to hold on to yourself (IP1).

IP2, CEO of the company, describes that the feedback at the company 10 years ago had a bigger focus on personal development than on the performance. He explains that today, it is more output oriented within the organization and he think that this affects the trainee program. "I guess that the trainees receive feedback that is centered around their results and what they deliver and not so much how they deliver it on a personal basis". IP2 argues that it is the behaviors that deliver the results, so it is the behaviors that need feedback because otherwise you cannot help the individual to improve their performance. He says: "If the manager only give feedback on the results, well I mean, all employees can read the results themselves. I think the behavioral-feedback-culture have to come again". IP7, who is a current trainee, has the similar opinion as IP2, she argue that ratings is nice if the feedback has been given on a daily basis. As a trainee you have to know how you are doing, otherwise the rating in the end is just a number. If she has received good feedback during the period the rating is more of a receipt that she has learned and understood what she was doing, and that is really motivating to her (IP7).

#### **4.5 Career, change and personal development**

IP2, the CEO, argue that as a trainee you are expected to make a career after the program. He means that everyone has different expectations of what the concept of career means to him or her and how fast it will go, and that is a motivational factor. He thinks that the expectations are too high when the trainees come into this kind of opportunity in a big company. He has seen that "some trainees think that they are going to be CEO after 5-10 years, but that it is not the way it works". IP9 knew that it was going to be good for her career to join the program since it was "the place to be" if you wanted to work with in marketing. She did not aim for a specific position, she

wanted to learn as much as possible because that was the factor that was going to help her in her future career (Inkson 2015, p. 21-22).

IP1, marketing director, describe that career to her is about personal development and moving up in positions, Larsson et al (2003, p. 9-10) describe the need for upward movement, advancement and preference for leadership as the Linear career concept. IP1 continue to describe that when she has been bored at one position there has always been a new position for her that was exciting and that did move her upwards in the organization. She likes to have different challenges because that is motivating for her to have different roles in different categories in different areas. "I have had 14 different positions and two maternity leaves in 18 years, so I have seen many parts of the company, which is nice" (IP1). IP7, who is currently a trainee, wants to be able to develop and have responsibility in different challenging positions all the way through his work life. He describe that he does not want to stop his development by getting stuck in one position, he wants to see different categories and he also want to have a constant change and move up within the organization. If he cannot do this he does not see himself stay, this part is very important for him (IP7). "I would not have stayed in this company if I had not been in a constant progression in my professional life. And as a trainee you have to go in with that attitude and that personal drive" (IP1). IP9 argues that; "I am a person who wants very much and want to take greater responsibility. My career has been to build skills and develop myself constantly" (IP9). IP8 describes that he finds it motivating to see his own results within the market, and if he had a role where he only repeated himself he would be unmotivated. IP10 analyzed the personality of the trainees earlier under the headline *economical incentives* by describing the "trainee personality" as competitive and that it has a strive to advance at work, which all the trainees above explained that they have fragments of.

IP5 mentioned that she wants to go upward in the organization and that it cannot go as fast as she wants, but now she is gathering knowledge and the experience of different categories and jobs to be able to move up in the organization at a later stage. IP6 has the similar view on her career, she also want to go upward. "The best feeling at work is when you have worked with something for very long and everyone thinks that is good when you present it". She continue to describe that; that makes her want to perform even better next time because she wants to get recognition for doing a good job, "in



this way feedback is very important from my manager”. IP6 finds it motivating to be told that she is doing a very good job when she has fought for it. IP8, a current trainee, cannot see himself work in the same role for 10 years because he needs variety. IP6 does not want to do things too quickly because she wants to take her time to really learn. She wants to go “all in, and during the time in that specific position you also get to know many employees and you get to learn a lot about leadership, which is a good thing for my future”. According to Larsson et al (2003, p. 9-10) and Larsson et al (2007, p. 362-363) all the trainees described above belong to the Linear career concept except for IP6 that also has influence from the Expert career concept where she focus on quality and knowledge. According to IP4, director in Europe, her career strategy has led her quite far. Her attitude was to do her best in whatever work task she got. She has focused on one thing at the time;

I am trying to tell my trainees not to plan too much. Do your thing now and show what you are capable of and there will be opportunities for you. That is my experience of this company anyway (IP4).

IP6, who was described above as having both a Linear- and Expert career concept, chose to test one category during her time in the program to specialize herself in one brand, which has helped her in her career now when she has gained a lot of knowledge in this category (Larsson et al 2003, p. 9-10).

IP10 argue that the reason trainees decide to leave for positions at other companies is because of the kind of personality that the company is recruiting. According to her they are seeking for competitive individuals that are really focused and “just want to go forward, forward, forward”. The trainees that they are looking for will leave if they get a better offer elsewhere because this type of personality does not look for loyalty or stability. IP1 think that trainees have expectations regarding their career that cannot be fulfilled here because of the structure in the Nordic countries. If you want to move further up to become a director you need to be flexible. IP10 describe further that trainees within the company is eager to be the best. This extreme career focus is not motivating for her in the same way today (Inkson 2015, p. 21-23). IP5, who was finished with the program one year ago, confirms what IP1 and IP10 are reasoning about. She describes herself as a restless person who constantly needs things to happen. Now she has been in her role for one year and she is beginning to feel bored,

she means that something need to happen soon, but her manager does not agree. IP5 argue that she has always been like this, and the trainee program enhanced this part of her personality since it gave her a constant change for two years during the program. “I want to get to the top quickly, because that's where my restlessness comes in” (IP5). IP4 think that young people are incredible impatience and they lack experience. The energy the trainees possess can sometimes work through the lack of experience, but not always and that is why trainees need to learn before they can move up. From what IP4 has seen it is not advantageously to change role every year from a longer-term perspective.

During the first year you learn how to do things. The second year goes in putting structure in place, being on top of things. The third year is when you actually make a difference, you are a bit bored with your basic stuffs so you kind of start the learning you have from inside the category. To make a difference you need to give the tasks experience and time, so the challenge with building career is that it requires patience”(IP4).

IP2, the CEO, thinks that trainees might leave after the program because they have the wrong expectations, and that risk has according to him always been there. If a trainee gets a role that is too low, that trainee will most likely leave because he/she had bigger expectations and wanted to get a chance to use their knowledge elsewhere. The trainee might get the feeling that “the grass is greener on the other side” and try another company where their career hopefully will develop faster. IP5 argue that trainees often want better positions than they receive. And by having a better position the bonus and salary are getting higher, so according to IP5, those two factors can both motivate and demotivate very much and goes hand in hand (Deci & Ryan 2000, p. 59-60). IP3 thinks that when she was finished within the program 14 years ago and got her first manager role, the trainees got higher positions than the trainees get today. The reason for this is because, as earlier mentioned, the outer surroundings. The higher positions in the Nordics today are more senior positions, which makes it hard for trainees to get “what they want”.

Some companies work with 20-year plans for how the employees will be channeled in their careers, but that is not for me because I would feel smothered and unmotivated to continue to perform. I make a mental closing for each year in which I see if I am motivated to

continue or if I want to move on elsewhere with new challenges. There is a limit where I get tired and want something new to happen (IP2).

IP5, who was finished the program one year ago, described her disappointment. She argue that when she started the program, she was promised a higher manager position than what she received and this made her very disappointed. She understand it from a business point of view, but she thinks that it is wrong to promise trainees a good position that is not given to the trainee after the program. IP2, the CEO, describes that if a company set guide lines where the trainees will be in a couple of years, chances are that it can never be motivating or a pleasant surprise. Maybe the trainee won't work hard enough because he/she sees it as a certainty and not as a reward for hard work. So it is a big risk that the trainee only gets negatively surprised if he/she fails to get the position he/she was "promised" and according to IP2, that is a strange motivator. "Because then you are driven by fear of failure instead of being driven by the feeling of competence and success" (IP2). IP4 is motivating her trainees by challenging them to make the best out of this company in different categories and functions to gain experience. When the trainees have done a great work they will get promoted and they will get bigger opportunities to grow, according to Porter and Lawler (2000, p. 118-122) this will enhance the job satisfaction since the reward, to get promoted, is an outcome for the trainees' performance.

## **4.6 Culture**

IP8, a current trainee, describe that he can speak about everything and his managers and colleagues are very encouraging. He was worried before he started the program that it was a competitive organization but when he started he experienced a nice surprise because the climate was very transparent and open. He said during the interview that he thinks the company has a helping environment where it is enjoyable to work because people help him even if it is not their responsibility. A culture like IP8 describe has according to Valmohammadi and Ahmadi (2015, p. 134) a positive tendency to share knowledge between the employees and enhance the job satisfaction (Belias et al 2015, p. 316-317).

It is the people that makes this company, it's all about us. It is culturally a fantastic place to work at. Because of this I felt instantly at home, I felt trust from the organization the moment I came in (IP4).

Trust is important in a knowledge friendly culture since sharing knowledge requires interaction (Valmohammadi & Ahmadi 2015, p. 134). IP4 describes that the culture is a strong delivery and performance culture and this drives trust among colleagues.

I need to trust you to do your work, and you have to trust me to do my work so that we together can deliver the best results. That is essential because no one is going to run the business alone. We have to do our parts, and then we have to motivate others to do their parts. So this “guiding others” is important here, we have a “I always have time to help others” culture, and to me it is fantastic (IP4).

IP4 continues to describe that there has been head hunters calling her but she has not left the company because she value the culture and the flexibility within the company too much to change job. It is not enough to offer her a great compensation because culture is really high values in her life situation right now. IP3 see the culture more as “possibility thinking” and “forward thinking” than problematizing. She thinks that she has a high degree of freedom and high flexibility to be able to deliver the demands and goals the organizations puts on her. The tough requirement and goals are motivating because the organization is giving motivational rewards for it and creates freedom to deliver (Thomson & Strickland 1992, p. 300). IP3 think that the organization has a very human and social culture with a warm and good atmosphere. She thinks that there is a genuine interest in leadership and in developing people. The organization encourages its employees to work in teams that support each other. Teams and groups are according to Schein (2001, p. 22, 197) the strength of culture and leadership is a part of the organizational culture. IP7 also perceive the culture as having a helping climate where you can ask anybody everything and that they will tell you if they do not have time to help you. What she likes the most is that the employees are ambitious and strive to be the best, but they never step on each other on the way. IP2 appreciated that the company showed him that they wanted to develop his skills and there was a high acceptance within the company that people was different so the feeling of freedom for personal development was a motivator for him to stay for 15 years and become CEO of the company. IP1 described, like IP2, that it is much freedom in the organization. You can spend your hours as you like, as long as you deliver your goals. And it motivates her to deliver results that she is responsible for, because she likes to be in charge. IP6 describe the open relationship they have in their team and with the manager. If

someone is sad or is having a hard time they talk about it and she think that it is wonderful to have a culture like that.

## **4.7 Summary of the analysis**

The summary will highlight the main findings in the analysis and it will follow the same order as the analysis; economical incentives, responsibility and empowerment, management and mentorship, personal development and social connection, communication and feedback, career and culture.

### **4.7.1 Economical incentives**

No one of the respondents had economical incentives as their main motivation, and it has not been the reason why the ex-trainees decided to leave the company and it was not the reason why the other respondents have retained within the company. The salary was important to the current trainees because it was an indicator that they had received a high rating. Trainees wish to learn and develop constantly, it is not enough to give them extra economical incentives. The trainees delivered good results because of personal interest and to gain good reputation for their career and not to receive money and saw the economical incentives as a reward for performance, and not a “carrot” to perform.

### **4.7.2 Responsibility and Empowerment**

The former trainees got motivated from having influence in job matters, being the one to decide and to have impact. Kaufmann and Kaufmann (1996, p. 71) and the respondents explained the importance in designing work tasks as whole tasks and to empower the trainees to take responsibility from the start. It is important in this ”do it yourself culture” because when a trainee gets trusted to have responsibility it enhance the self-esteem. The drive to make a career is crucial in order to be able to empower all the responsibility the organization need the trainees to handle. All of the trainees thought that the organization gave the trainees a lot of responsibility during the program, but the problem arises when the trainees are finished within the program. Some of the respondents argue that the company gives the trainees positions that do not include as much responsibility as they should in order to develop the trainees further. The trainees find it disappointing not to be given higher managers positions after the program since they are used to be given a lot of responsibility, this created a feeling of under stimulation.

#### **4.7.3 Managers role and mentorship**

Managers play a crucial role in empowering their trainees, which result in work motivation. According to the trainees there are managers that are good and there are managers that can be better. The ones that had a good manager have benefit from that during their trainee program. Some respondents argue that they should get an introduction before the trainee arrive to get a greater understanding of how to handle their role as line managers. The company document confirms that the organization think that the managers have to realize that they are responsible for trainees development and are to enhance the strengths in the trainee. All the respondents thought it was beneficial to have a mentor, and those who were managers thought that it was beneficial to be a mentor. The mentor should give advice how to take your next step in your career and how to develop you in your trainee-role. It was positive if the mentor had a higher position, but not too high because then it was hard to have a continuous relationship.

#### **4.7.4 Internal education and social connection with other trainees**

The organization should expend the trainees' horizon through internal courses that would educate them further within the company. The younger trainees had expectations that it would be more courses and they would like to have more of that and not only learn in their rotations. Former trainees, that had internal courses when they were in the program, saw that as a strong part of the program since it was motivating to get an extensive, professional education. An improvement would be to include trainees in courses that other employees were offered, both during and after the program, to keep them "special" and motivated to retain. The trainees would also like to develop through cooperation with other trainees, both within the Nordics but also together with international trainees to get a bigger perspective. The trainee-community was strong because the trainees had created it themselves. All of the trainees would like the organization to take a greater responsibility in this matter and create a "togetherness-feeling".

#### **4.7.5 Communication and Feedback**

Communication regarding targets and goals is important in order to clarify what the organization expects the trainees to deliver, otherwise it is demotivating to perform. The younger trainees thought that they should receive a higher management position after the program than what they get because that is what the company communicated regarding the program when they entered the organization, so their expectations were

not met. All respondents saw feedback as a crucial factor for personal development and without feedback it was impossible to be able to take responsibility or to deliver good results. The former trainees explained that in their management-role they provide regular feedback to ensure progression by strengthen the trainees, otherwise feedback would be taken as critique. The respondents also described that the organization had a big focus on results and they thought that focus should be on behavior instead because it is the behavior that deliver the results.

#### **4.7.6 Career**

All respondents joined the trainee program because it would be good for their career. Career was a driving force and included progression and personal development to be able to take more responsibility in higher positions. The trainees got motivated by constant change in their career to learn new parts of the organization. This is a problem in the Nordic countries that do not possess that many higher management positions. The concept of career was a motivator to all the respondents and a drive to perform.

#### **4.7.8 Culture**

The respondents described the culture as; transparent, open, knowledge-friendly and as a delivery-and performance-culture, which made it easy to learn from each. All of the respondents liked the culture. Trust was described as important to be able to guide others. The culture was described as “fantastic”, “enjoyable”, “possibility thinking”, “supporting” and seemed to be the reason the trainees could work in this stressful business.

# 5 Concluding discussion

This chapter is dedicated to the findings and results of the empirical analysis. The purpose of this master thesis has been to investigate how trainees get motivated, during and after the trainee program, to retain within the company. To be able to accomplish this, the research questions will be answered.

## 5.1 Answering the research questions

1) *Which factors, during and after graduate programs, motivate trainees to retain within the company?*

- The research revealed that both current and former trainees found *economic incentives* motivating, but no one saw it as a main motivator. During the interviews I understood that in some cases the salary started as a motivator for the trainees but became demotivating for some trainees and employees after the trainee program was finished (Kohn 1993, p. 54). This shows the importance for companies to design the reward systems in a way that is motivating for the trainees and employees during the different stages in their careers.
- *Responsibility and empowerment* were two factors that were large motivators for the trainees because they all had the personality that they wanted to be in charge of projects, be empowered to take responsibility and they wanted to become managers in the future. Companies should have this in mind when designing graduate programs, both during and after the program, so that current and former trainees feel responsible and empowered to their work.
- *Managers* have an important role, since they can both motivate and demotivate the trainees in their career. The basic thought described by respondents is that managers are a factor that is motivating. Some managers need education and information in how to develop and strengthen a trainee and how to develop goals that are realistic and hard enough for the trainee during the rotations. It is demotivating to get an assistant role, and that is a risk that the company needs to eliminate in order to retain the trainees within the company. By designing the work tasks as whole tasks where the trainees are given responsibility and empowerment, the manager motivate the trainees by development and a feeling of competence and self-efficiency.



- *Mentorship* was motivating for all the respondents and they thought, as Payne and Huffman (2005, p. 159), that the mentor should have a higher position and experience within the company. The former trainees that were managers and mentors today, found mentoring as motivating because it helped them to get new perspectives to continue to learn and develop. It would be even more motivating if the mentorship parts were more developed so the trainees could have a mentor even after the program was finished.
- A demotivating factor is that it is harder nowadays to get a manager position after the graduate program since there are not as many high manager positions within the Nordic countries, and the trainees that are finished within the company is given too easy positions. An improvement is to give the trainees a lot of responsibility and provide them with coaching to help them develop within the company to retain them for the future. Another improvement is to change the company's communication to set realistic expectations regarding the program.
- All of the respondents described a need for change in order to feel motivated. They talked about their *career* as a positive and crucial factor to retain within the company. For current trainees, career was important, especially for the trainees that were disappointed in not receiving the position they wanted but they were still motivated because they saw a great future career within the company. The former trainees that have stayed within the company have mainly stayed because they have had an exciting, developing and changing career. And the former trainees that have left the company did leave because they wanted to try something else in their career.
- The research revealed that *feedback* was a concept included in all concepts that were analyzed, because feedback makes it possible to develop, get empowered, feel responsible, reach goals, etc. Feedback is today more output oriented based on results instead of personal behavior, which some respondents described as demotivating. The former trainees thought that the organization should go back to the behavioral-feedback-culture. And the current trainees thought the same because if they did not get feedback during the rotations the rating was just a number, otherwise it was a receipt that they have understood and delivered what was expected.

2) *Where is the expectation gap and how does it affect the motivation and retention of trainees?*

- An expectation that the trainees had was to have *internal courses and education*. It would be good for the organization to offer courses after the trainee program is finished to give trainees a learning roadmap that would keep up the interest to stay.
- The trainees thought that they were going to have *cooperation with the other trainees* to exchange feelings and thoughts regarding rotations and positions, and to create a network throughout the different countries in the organization. Some trainees thought that social connection with other trainees would enhance the motivation to retain if you had a strong “togetherness-feeling” and created a network to each other.
- Company document describes that the company is looking for future managers and the trainees have the expression that they will receive a manager’s position when they are finished within the program. This is depending on the communication; the trainees expect to receive positions that in some cases won’t be fulfilled. Because of this trainees have a career focus that is not realistic. This might affect the trainees’ willingness to stay because they want to get use of their knowledge somewhere else. It is important for companies to communicate realistic information from the beginning.

### **5.1.1 Discussion**

As described in the introduction, companies will have to work hard if they are going to win the battle for talented employees (Michaels et al 2001, p. 7). During the interviews I understood that the trainees applied for the trainee program because it was an interesting FMCG company with a well-established trainee program. Graduate programs are highly interesting for students, so for the companies it is not that much to attract the trainees, it is to retain them when they are finished within the program. To retain employees, organizations are using financial and non-financial rewards (Galanou et al 2011, p. 484-485). It is important, especially for younger employees, to develop in their work because that is motivating for their future career (Möller & Powell 2001, p. 343). This research revealed that personal development and moving upwards in the organization are two factors that are motivating for the trainees, and a factor that I believe would affect the motivation for the trainees are to offer them internal courses

where they can gain new knowledge and develop further within the company. If the company offer internal courses, the trainees feel a sense of personal development even after the program, then I believe that it would not become that big of a disappointment when they do not receive the high manager position they wish for right away. So, through communication that describe reality (Dolphin 2005, p. 171-172) where the company communicate that the trainees are getting internal training through the program and internal education through specified courses, the company has a bigger chance to be able to retain the employees even after the program is finished.

During the interviews I understood that all the expectation gaps are in one way or another outcomes from the communication, especially the expectation gap that according to me was the biggest gap: trainees expect and want higher manager positions when finished in the program. Companies should, in their flyers and introductions regarding the program, communicate what is realistic so that the expectations are correct when entering the graduate program. Through correct communication and recruiting that expectation gap can be minimized. Trainees are often productive employees who are looking for a change (Kumar & Arora 2012, p. 259-260) and during my interviews the respondents showed that they get motivated by change in their work life, so organizations that offer trainee programs should have that in mind when designing the program. By offering courses and giving the trainees “special treatment”, such as offering them a mentor even after the program, I believe that the trainees will stay longer. My perception after conducting interviews and analyzing the material is that trainees already have a strong intrinsic motivation that has its ground in that they want to succeed in their career by doing great work in service organizations. So the organization have to work with factors that make the trainees want to stay and develop in the organization by minimizing the gaps through; correct communication, give the trainees the right conditions to enhance the feeling of competence and development through internal education. By education the trainees feel a greater sense of responsibility and empowerment, which in turn increase their performance. And it is through performance trainees feel personal motivation because they like to be the best in what they do so they can get higher manager positions and recognition during their careers.

## **5.2 My reflections**

This thesis have studied; current trainees, former trainees (where some of them are having manager positions today) and former trainees that have left the company. All of the ten respondents have described their feelings and understanding from one specific company and their graduate program. This research has surely been of great use for the case company, but the intentions with this master thesis have been to provide knowledge to other companies in order to make it possible to develop their work with trainees in graduate programs. As described in the introduction; talented, younger employees that have received internal education are more likely to leave the current company for new opportunities to make better use of the new knowledge if they are not motivated enough to retain (Cappelli 2008, p. 4, 7). This makes the findings in this thesis important and useful for other businesses within the service sector, and the FMCG industry, to understand and work with in order to retain trainees after the graduate program.

## **5.3 My contribution**

There are certain factors that organizations should understand before designing a trainee program. Trainee programs are getting more common, and employees change jobs more frequently today than before (Gaddam 2008, p. 46). That is why this research can be of importance for service companies planning to offer trainee programs, or for companies where former trainees leave the company. As described in the beginning of the thesis, by finding and minimizing the expectation gaps organizations increase the employees motivation, which in turn lead to enhanced productivity (Pinder 1998, p. 11; Winn 2013, p. 21). In other words, it is a win-win-situation for the organization. This thesis contributes inside knowledge regarding trainees' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Trainees want to feel constant personal development, and they want to gain new knowledge from internal courses. Together with feedback that enhances the feeling of competence and responsibility, trainees are getting motivated by feeling that they are building up their career. Through the investigation I understood that the trainees wanted tools, such as creating a network through connection with other trainees and the opportunity to have a mentor. This will give the companies an understanding of what the trainees need in order to be motivated and retain within the company. It is also of importance for companies to design the reward system in a motivating way throughout the trainees' career so it does not

become demotivating for other employees or trainees. It is also relevant for companies to get the communication right from the start by giving information that is realistic for the trainees, otherwise this will be a demotivating factor during their time within the company.

## **5.4 Future research**

Due to the lack of previous research in this specific field, this thesis could not compare its results with other, similar research in the service sector. The thesis would have higher level of generalizability and greater impact if it could have been compared with other service organizations that also have designed trainee programs. Another research could be done on another company's trainee program within the service sector, and then compare it with this investigation. A conclusion in this thesis is that it is the external communication that is the reason for the expectation gaps. Another future investigation is to conduct a research regarding the company communication. By investigating how students from universities, the future trainees, perceive what companies are communicating and compare these results with what the company want to communicate. It would make it easier for companies to design the communication in a way so the future trainee has the same expectations as the company has, which will minimize the expectation gaps and demotivating factors from the beginning.

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# Appendix 1

## Semi-structured Interview Guide

### BAKGRUNDSFRÅGOR/BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

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Namn & Land & Ålder? *Name, Country & Age?*

Vad har du gått för utbildning? *What kind of education do you have?*

Var du aktiv under skoltiden? (Föreningar/jobb etc) *Where you active (extra job/associations/volunteering etc)?*

Position inom företaget idag? *What's your current position at Unilever?*

Hur länge har du arbetat hos Företaget? *For how long have you been at the company?*

### FÖRE/BEFORE

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När startade du på programmet? *When did you start at the program?*

Varför sökte du in till programmet? *Why did you apply to the program?*

Sökte du även in till andra Graduate Programs/Tjänster? *Did you apply into other Graduate Programs or other available jobs?*

Var detta programmet ditt förstahandsval? *Was this company your first choice?*

Visste du att du var intresserad av FMCG branchen? *Did you know that you had interest in the FMCG industry?*

Vad var din förförståelse för företaget? Vad attraherade dig till Företaget? *What was you prior understanding of the company? What attracted you to the company?*

Berätta om dina tankar och förväntningar på vad programmet skulle innebära för dig. (Vad de trodde om lärandet, hur programmet var uppbyggt, vilka utvecklingsmöjligheter som fanns, vad de önskade att de skulle få göra under programmets gång, vad det skulle leda till, vilket slags ägandeskap de ville ha etc) *Tell me about your expectations and thoughts regarding what you thought that the program would mean to you. (What you thought about learning opportunities, how the program was structured, what development opportunities there was, what they hoped they would do during the program, what the program would lead to, what kind of ownership they wanted etc)*

Vart hade dessa förväntningar kommit ifrån? *Where has the expectations come from?*

Vilken slags kontakt hade de haft med företaget sedan tidigare? (Hemsida, mässor, anställda, skolan, föreläsningar, tidningen etc?)

*What kind of contact did you have with the company before the program? (Webpage, fairs, employees, studies, presentations/lectures, newspaper etc?)*

Visste du under utbildningen att du skulle söka till ett Graduate program eller hur kom det sig att du hittade detta graduate programmet? *Did you know from the beginning that you were going to apply for a Graduate program or how did you end up at the UFLP?*

Vad motiverade dig som nyexaminerad student? *What motivated you as a newly graduate?*

Hur tänkte du på begreppet "karriär"? *How did you feel about the word "career", what did that mean for you?*

Hur tänkte du att detta programmet skulle hjälpa dig i karriären? *What did you think about the program, how it would help you in your career?*

Var programmet starten på din karriär? *Was the program the start of your career?*

#### UNDER/DURING

Fick du all information du behövde innan programmet startade? *Did you receive all the necessary information that you felt you needed before the program started?*

Vad fick du göra för uppgifter under programmet? *What kind of tasks did you do during the program?*

Berätta – vad tyckte du om dessa uppgifterna? *What did you think/feel regarding those tasks?*

Hade du velat ha mer/mindre av något under programmet? *Had you wanted to have more/less of something in the program?*

Fick du det ansvaret du hade önskat? *Did you get the responsibility for work tasks that you wished for? (felt important with tasks that developed you...)*

Hade du någon mentor/handledare under programmet? *Did you have a mentor/supervisor during the program?*

Hur var er relation? *How was your relationship?*

Hade du någon "buddy"? *Did you have a "buddy"?*

Var det en bra person att ha? *Was that an important person to have during the first time at the program?*

Har du varit en buddy? *Have you been a buddy?*

På vilket sätt utnyttjade du den möjligheten? Är denna delen bra som den är, eller har du tips på utvecklingsmöjligheter? *In which way did you use that opportunity, to be able to help a new trainee? Is this something that is alright the way it is or do you have any suggestions for improvements?*

Hade du velat ha detta annorlunda? (närmare kontakt, någon utanför programmet, samma under hela/olika under hela programmet, hade detta kunnat vara utformat på ett sätt som hjälpt dig under utvecklingen?) *Would you wanted to have any of that different? (Closer contact, someone outside/inside the program, could it have been designed in a way that helped you during the the time in the program?)*

Hur var din känsla under programmets gång? (Utvecklande, var du sedd, lyssnade någon på vad du ville, gav någon tid feedback på vad du kunde utveckla/var bra/hur du utvecklades under programmets gång)? *How was your feeling during the program? (Was it developing, did you feel seen, did you feel that you were listened at, did you receive feedback etc?)*

Hur ser du på feedback? Utvecklande? Ger du feedback? Vill du ha feedback? *How do you feel about feedback? Is it developing? Do you give feedback? Do you want more feedback?*

Var känslan att du och företaget hade samma syn på programmet, vad målet för dig/dem var med programmet, utvecklingsmöjligheter i programmet och efter programmet? *Did you feel that you and the company had the same view regarding: the program, development opportunities when you were a part of the program and after the program?*

Hur motiverades du till att fortsätta prestera? *What motivated you to continue to perform?*



Din Line manager under programmet, hur upplevde du den relationen? *Your line manager during the program – how did you experience that relationship?*

Har/är du Line manager idag? Hur upplever du den rollen?  
Utvecklingsmöjligheter?

*Have you been/are you a line manager? How do you experience that work?*

#### EFTER/AFTER

Berätta, vad har du för position idag? *What is your position at Unilever today?*

Hur länge har du haft din nuvarande tjänst? *For how long have you been in that position?*

Hur gick du från Graduate Program till en tjänst i företaget? *How did you go from the program to your position within the company?*

Blev det som du hade tänkt dig? Blev dina förväntningar uppfyllda? (Hade du från början förväntningar på en annorlunda tjänst?) *Did it turn out like what you had in mind from the beginning? Was your expectations met? (Did from the beginning have expectations in a different part of the company/other level and so on...?)*

Hur var det att få en tjänst gentemot att vara en trainee? (Skillnad i utveckling, fart på arbetet, arbetsuppgifter osv) *How was your feeling regarding getting your position versus being a trainee? (Difference in development, change, speed, work, work tasks etc?)*

Vad motiverade dig på din nya tjänst? *What motivated you on your new position?*

Vad motiverade dig till att stanna kvar i företaget? *Reasons for staying with in the company?*

#### IDAG/TODAY

Berätta hur din resa inom företaget har sett ut. *Describe your journey within the organization?*

Jag frågade innan hur du såg på ordet "karriär" innan du startade på företaget, Hur ser du på "karriär" idag? Hur ser du på din karriär? *I asked you earlier how you looked at the word "career" when you first came to the company, How do you look at the word "career" today? And your own career?*

Vad håller dig motiverad idag? *What keeps you motivated today?*

Har du gått någon annan utbildning efter graduate programmet? *Have you participated in another education within the company after you finished the program?*

Tycker du det är motiverande med lärande? *Does it motivate you to learn new things and develop yourself with help of internal education?*

Vad anser du om utformningen av programmet? Har du behövt komplettera med kunskap för att nå dit du vill/är idag? *Tell me about the program regarding the knowledge you got from it. Have you been in need of more knowledge in order to get to where you want to be or..?*

Har du en annan syn på företaget idag än när du började? *Do you look at the company in the same way today as when you started at the program?*

Vad tyckte du var bra med programmet? *What did you like about the program?*

Vad hade du önskat var annorlunda?

(Annorlunda i de olika stegen: hur det informerades från starten (kommunikationen), om företaget hade satt förväntningarna för höga/låga på lärande/utveckling/tjänst när programmet var klart, hur du togs omhand när programmet var färdigt osv)

*What had you wished were different?*

*(Different in the different steps of the program: of how it was informed from the start (Communication), If they company had set the expectations too high / low on the learning / development / position when the program was finished, how you were taken care of when the program was finished, etc.)*

Mentorskapet (har detta varit bra att ha? Utvecklande och hjälpande att ha en handledare? Berätta hur du anser att det skulle kunna utformas?) *Mentoring (Was it good to have a mentor? Would it have been better to have someone outside of the program? Developing and helping to have a mentor? In which way do you think this would be designed?)*

Varför tror du att andra traineer lämnat företaget? *Why do you think that other trainees have decided to leave the company after the program?*

Har du funderat på att lämna? Vad har motiverat dig till att stanna? *Have you thought about leaving? What has motivated you to stay?*

Vilka förbättringsmöjligheter har programmet som du tror skulle göra att fler motiverades till att stanna i företaget? *Which opportunities for improvement does the program have that you think would make trainees more motivated to stay within the company?*

Finns det något annat du vill lyfta gällande programmet? *Do you have any other comments or something you would like to say regarding the program?*