The role of communication on employees' psychological well-being:

An exploratory study at Swedish academic workplace

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ABSTRACT

Increasing workplace complexity has been regarded as a significant issue that might influence the psychological well-being of employees. Whilst occupational health research has often tried to explore this well-being, there is a lack of research investigating the issue from the communication perspective. Hence this study aims to find out how communication relates to employees' psychological well-being and how the issue is being communicated in the workplace. For that purpose, six in-depth interviews with employees of an academic organization were conducted. The interviewees consisted of 2 academic staff members, 2 PhD students, an administrative employee and a technical staff member. The interview results were transcribed and analyzed with a mix of inductive and deductive methods.

The study reveals that communication aspects such as social interaction, positive appreciation and feedback are embedded in the psychological well-being of work dimensions. The study also suggests dual roles of communication in employees' psychological well-being: as a challenge in achieving psychological well-being and as a solution for workplace-related problem. Lastly, the study addresses the lack of discussio on workplace well-being among the employees.

Keywords: *Health communication, organizational communication, employee, psychological well-being*

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. The importance of psychological well-being at workplace

Work is an integral part of human life (McDaid, Curran, & Knapp, 2005). People work for various reasons, from extrinsic motives such as financial matters, to internal motives such as self-development (Centers & Bugental, 1996). Most people spend much of their time at their workplace, working and communicating within their environment. As a result, it is most likely that the workplace condition gives significant influence to them, and vice versa.

Work can positively influence an individual's mental health by giving them a sense of social status and identity, as well as time structure (Harnois & Gabriel, 2000). Day and Randell (2014) explain that a good workplace is supposed to be able to encourage positive components such as respect and employee growth. Furthermore, a psychologically healthy workplace may also create the sense of flow and engagement among the employees.

However, work can also give mental health problems such as occupational stress. This issue is becoming more relevant in the current situation where globalization and technological developments have affected the nature of the workplace worldwide. McDaid, et al. (2005) explain that complex organizational structures, demanding job tasks and the influx of highly skilled workforce are common features in the current workplace environment. Employees need to gain more skills and be more adaptive to survive the competition in the workplace. For example, employees nowadays are required to have "effective communication skills". For some people, the situation may lead to the improvement of self-esteem. However, others might develop job-related stress which hampers their psychological well-being. Therefore, it is important for an organization to be aware of their employees' mental state.

Well-adjusted employees tend to be more productive, which leads to optimal output for the organization. This was discussed in a study conducted among middle management workers, by Zelenski, Murphy and Jenkins (2008) who found that workers who report the high level of happiness tend to report higher levels of work productivity. In conclusion, the myth about 'happy workers equal productive workers' has been proven through the said study, which shows a positive correlation between happiness and productivity.

Some organizations are already aware about the relationship between employees' well-being and productivity and have created facilities and policies that promote psychological well-being for the employees. Google, for example, is known for providing fun working infrastructures for the employees because they aim to create the happiest and most productive workplace in the world (Stewart, 2013). Some variations of 'best-place-to-work' ranking created by business magazines often put the employee well-being as important criteria in determining the ranking. For example, the company SAS obtained the fourth rank on the list — after Google, Boston Consulting Group, and Acuity-, and the perks of the company include "generous benefits, everything from onsite childcare, health and fitness centers, a pharmacy, and subsidized meals" (100 best companies to work for, 2015).

On the macro level, the importance of workplace well-being can be reflected through the attention given by transnational and international organizations. In the World Health Organization framework on Workplace Health Promotion/WHP (Burton and WHO,

2010), mental health has been included as one of the most important aspects to improve workplace conditions. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work also has released a report concerning workplace mental health promotion in the European region, showing their concern toward the issue (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2011).

Despite the increasing awareness to promote workplace well-being issues, we can also find a lot of cases where organizations fail to ensure their employees' well-being. A finding on the recent unfortunate incident of Germanwings indicated that the copilot who was responsible for the crash actually had a history of mental health issues, which failed to be recognized by the employer (Blanding, 2015). There is still no evidence that the mental health problem directly correlated with the copilot intention to crash the plane. However, the incident has become a reminder for all employers to be aware about the employees' psychological condition.

While extreme cases such as the Germanwings incident are rare, many findings have shown that mental health issues in the workplace is costly for the employees and the employer. For example, a report from the UK Quarterly Labour Force Survey mentions that employees with mental health problems have five times more probability to be absent from work, compared with employees with the other health problems (Almond and Healey, 2003). Another study shows that occupational stress can lead to socioeconomic consequences for the company such as absenteeism and a loss of the production cost (Jané-Llopis, et al., 2011).

Even though ideally organizations should pay attention to employees' well-being, at the practical level each organization tends to have different views and approaches regarding this policy. A study found that while large organizations tend to provide psychological support to the employee, small and medium scale organizations are still hesitant to do that because of the cost (Hughes, et al., 2011). Even when an employer does provide well-being support, it is often difficult to note whether it includes mental health support since the parameter of mental health promotion is more abstract than physical health. Some actions focus on physical health such as promoting better nutrition and physical activity (Forette, 2014) while other actions may combine physical and mental health promotion as a holistic approach (Jané-Llopis, et al., 2011). Another important issue is when an organization has an initiative to provide psychological support to the employees, there is no guarantee that the support is being promoted enough.

Looking at the gap between the ideal condition and the reality of workplace well-being, it can be concluded that there is a need to examine how issues concerning psychological well-being are being addressed in modern organizations, and to explore the relationship between psychological well-being with other relevant aspects, such as communication. This is important for two reasons. First, understanding employees' experiences and perception on psychological well-being are necessary because they are the main actors in this issue. Second, constant evaluation on the policies related to employees' psychological well-being are also important to ensure that the policies are effective in maintaining employees' psychological well-being.

1.2. Previous studies

Study regarding the employees' state of mind was started in the mid-20th century, along with the growth of industrialization. Herzberg's motivational theory (Herzberg, 1974) is a prominent example, stating that there is a correlation between employee's job satisfaction

and productivity. Since then, there are a lot of studies that have tried to explore the employees' state of mind in relation to workplace conditions. Psychological well-being emerged as an important variable that attracted more investigations.

The term psychological well-being is often used in conjunction with other relevant concepts such as mental health and psychological distress. To avoid possible confusion, definition and scope of the terms should be mentioned in this part. Mental health is the term with the widest scope, defined by WHO as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can copes with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community" (WHO, 2001, p.1). Mental health consists of many factors such as the existence of psychological well-being, social well-being, and the absence of psychological distress and mental illness. According to Ryff (1989), psychological well-being itself is a situation that consists of several constructs: Self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, and positive relations with others.

Research on psychological well-being in the workplace can be categorized into three areas: Construct development, correlational study with other aspects of work, and intervention efficacy. Correlational study and intervention efficacy study seem to dominate the field while the construct development has less proportion.

An example of correlational study has been conducted by Wright, Cropanzano, and Bonett (2007), who found that psychological well-being had a significant moderating role between job satisfaction and job performance. Their study conceptualized psychological well-being as the feeling of happiness that was not tied to any particular situation.

A study that investigates the efficacy of intervention on psychological well-being at workplace was conducted by Umanodan, Shimazu, Minami, and Kawakami (2014). In the experimental study, a computer-based stress management program was proven effective in improving the employees' knowledge of stress management. It also led to the improvement of psychological well-being.

Dagenais-Desmarais and Savoie (2012) were one of a few researchers that tried to develop constructs of psychological well-being at work. They formulated several dimensions based on a mixture of qualitative and quantitative study. Their theory can be found in the theoretical framework section of this paper.

As it can be seen from these examples, many studies regarding psychological well-being at the workplace were conducted within occupational psychology or business fields. However, studies that try to correlate psychological well-being with communication is less explored, even lesser within the context of the workplace. This situation is not surprising, considering the fact that people only started to consider communication as an important aspect in the workplace in 1940s (Pietri, 1974). This area of study has been developing rapidly, much of which revolves around the concept of strategic communication in the organizational setting (O'hair, Friedrich & Dixon, 2011). There are various sub-topics within this study, from the narrative of organization to the use of power. It should be logical to put psychological well-being into the area of communication study.

Interestingly, there are more studies examining the relationship between communication technology and psychological well-being in the workplace. The common assumption is that the advancement of communication technology can either improve or deflate employees' psychological well-being, depending on their level of adaptation toward the technology (O'Driscoll, M. P., Brough, P., Timms, C., & Sawang, 2010).

Considering the previous examples, it can be concluded a study that relate psychological well-being and communication in the workplace context might bring additional information and perspectives to the existing knowledge.

1.3. Purpose & research question

The aim of this research is to increase the knowledge of what role does communication play in the issue of employee's psychological well-being in the workplace. This study also aimed to investigate how do psychological well-being being is being communicated in the organization. To achieve this objective, the research questions formulated for this research are:

1) *How does communication relate to employees' psychological well-being in the workplace?*

2) *How do employees perceive the organization's role in promoting psychological well-being at their workplace?*

The study is expected to provide new perspectives about psychological well-being in the workplace. On a practical level, this study can benefit the organization as a source of evaluation for human resource management and organizational communication strategy.

1.4. Delimitation

According to the research question, this study focused on the perception of the employee regarding their experience on psychological well-being. For that reason, in-depth interview was chosen as the method to gain the data. the All the analyses were drawn from the employees' narrative instead of the other measurement tools. Therefore, the results and analysis are limited to the narrative content given by the interviewees.

1.5. Disposition

This study consists of six chapters; each of them is divided into several sub-chapters. The first chapter describes the background, literature review, the purposes and research questions of this study. Chapter two presents theoretical frameworks which become the basis for the study and analysis. It is followed by the methodological framework in chapter three, which include the description of research design, as well as data collection procedures and analysis. Chapter four presents the main results from empirical data in the transparent and objective way. Chapter five contains a discussion of the results in consideration to the theoretical background and previous research. The last chapter presents the conclusions of the study and suggestion for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Communication theory

Communication has been conceptualized many times by researchers from different perspectives. Shannon and weaver's model of communication is one of the earliest concept of communication. In this model, communication is defined as the process of information transfer from a sender to a receiver through communication channel, which involved the process of encoding and decoding, and can be distracted by noise (Shannon, 1949).

While the previous definition views communication as a one-way process, newer theories view communication as a process. Robert Craig's constitutive model of communication define communication as a process that produce and reproduce shared meaning (Craig, 1999). On the practical level, the transfer of message can be done through verbal and nonverbal communication (O'hair, et.al., 2011).

2.2. The conceptual model of Psychological Well-Being at Work (PWBW)

Ryan and Deci (2001) suggested that the concepts of well-being are divided into two approaches: Hedonic and eudamonic approaches. According to the hedonic view, well-being is a result of happiness, pleasure and life satisfaction. Meanwhile, according to the eudamonic view, well-being is a result of optimal functioning, grasping the meaning of life, and self-actualization. Carol Ryff's (1989) dimension of psychological well-being (self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, autonomy, and positive relations with others) is one of the notable examples of eudamonic view on well-being.

Beside these dimensions, there are other aspects that may come under consideration in determining an individual's well-being. According to Ryan & Dec (2001) these are personality and individual differences, emotion, physical health, social class and wealth, attachment & relatedness, and goal pursuit. Such aspects can be a moderating factor for well-being.

Most theories about psychological well-being were conceptualized within a context-free paradigm, meaning that the concept is applicable in all setting of human life. However, workplace and organizational well-being is a special context given the specific roles and tasks assigned to individuals. For this reason, there is a need to adjust the dimensions to the situation in the workplace. For example, a study from Robertson (2012) hypothesized that psychological well-being holds an equal role with the job engagement in increasing productivity. While many studies have tried to investigate the dimensions of job engagement, there is lack of analysis on what constitute psychological well-being at workplace.

Noticing these circumstances, Dagenais-Desmarais and Savoie (2012) have made an effort to conceptualize PWBW through a mix of qualitative and quantitative studies. They discovered five dimensions, which will be used as the main theoretical framework for this research. These are: **Interpersonal fit at work**, **thriving at work**, **feeling of competency at work**, **desire for involvement at work**, and **perceived recognition at work**. The definition for each dimension is presented in the following table:

Dimensions	Definition
Interpersonal Fit at Work	Perception of experiencing positive relationships with individuals interacting with oneself within the work context
Thriving at Work	Perception of accomplishing a significant and interesting job that allows one to fulfill oneself as an individual
Feeling of Competency at Work	Perception of possessing the necessary aptitudes to do one's job efficiently and have mastery of the tasks to perform
Desire for Involvement at Work	Will to involve oneself in the organization and to contribute to its good functioning and success
Perceived recognition at Work	Perception of being appreciated within the organization for one's work and one's personhood

Table 1: Dimension of psychological well-being at work (adapted from Dagenais-Desmarais & Savoie, 2012, pp.670)

## 2.3. Kincaid's convergence model for organizational communication

According to O'Hair, Friedrich and Dixon (2011, p.13), organizational communication is "the exchange of oral, written, and nonverbal messages among people working to accomplish common tasks and goals". The exchange of messages which happen within the organizational boundaries is called internal organization. On the opposite side, the exchange of messages between the organization and its environment is called external organization. Considering this definition, this study falls into the internal communication category.

There are several communication models that can be used to explain the information exchange process that happens within an organization. Since this study aims to investigate how psychological well-being is being communicated, it iss fitting to choose the convergence model from Kincaid as the theoretical framework.

Convergence theory is a model that stresses effective communication in a group is determined by a mutual understanding of information sharing and an agreement by all group members (Rogers and Kincaid, 1981). There are 3 key themes in this model:

- There is no exclusive role of the information sender and receiver, but instead information is shared by all group members through the participatory process.

- Individual perception and interpretation about the information is important, hence continued discussions are encouraged to promote mutual understanding

- Communication always involve two or more communicators with equal positions that want to reach mutual agreement that may trigger group action

Figure 1: Kincaid Convergence model (source: Roger & Kincaid, 1981)

KINCAID CONVERGENCE MODEL
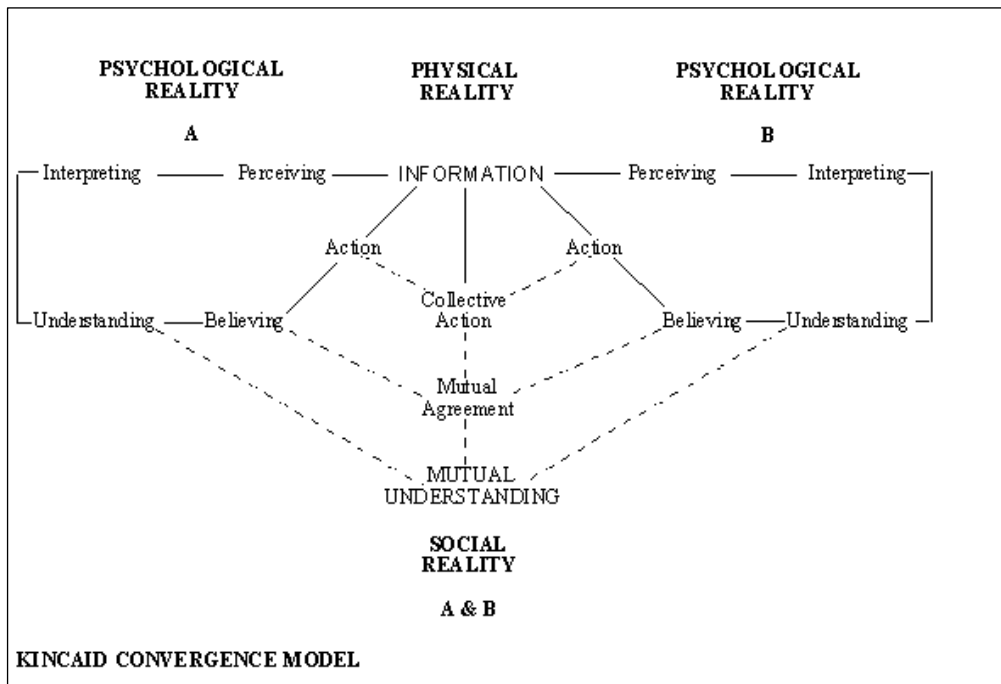
Schiavo (2013) concluded that a convergence model describes communication as a process in which all participants should be aware about each others perceptions. Within the context of this research, the model is relevant to examine the overall communication process of psychological well-being. The application of the convergence model in this study will analyze the employees' role as an active participant that helps the formation of psychological well-being in the working environment.

3. Methodological Framework

3.1. Research design: Qualitative study

This study was conducted based on a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is a method that is used to provide a deep, understanding regarding certain issues by embracing the perspective of the specific population and the context of the subject (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). Hence, to gain understanding about the issue of employees' mental health in the Swedish workplace, and how communication is related to such a subject, a qualitative approach was considered relevant for the objective of this study. This approach has previously been used to research both health communication and organizational communication.

Britten (2010) explains that despite the dominance of the quantitative approach within the medical research field, qualitative research has gained more appreciation. A qualitative method can give several contributions in health communication subjects. For example, to find out what kind of attitudes people had regarding certain health issues, or to help generate new ideas and theories related to health communication. In the end, the result of the study can be useful for action plan development in particular health issues. In this respect, the issue is psychological well-being, which is also a health issue.

In a complex organizational setting, a qualitative method is even more favorable among many researchers. In a paper reviewing organizational communication studies in Sweden, Johansson (2007) explains that majority of the research utilizes the qualitative approach, particularly case study. This results in the availability of realistic images of organizational communication issues that happen in Sweden.

According to the research question of this study, what needs to be explored is employees' perceptions regarding psychological well-being in the workplace and the organization's effort to promote this issue. To achieve the objective, this study utilized in-depth interviews as the main method to collect the necessary data. The in-depth interview is a data collection method that typically involves a profound conversation between an interviewee and interviewer regarding a certain topic (Hennink, et al., 2011). Insights and deep understanding can be explored thoroughly by encouraging the employees to narrate their personal perceptions and experiences related to workplace well-being.

A secondary method used in this research is a literature review. Prior (2004) explains that documents can be a good source for social research as it reflects the nature of the organization that created it. For this reason, this study made a review of the terms of employment document provided by the organization where the interviewees work. The review was conducted so a comparison can be made of the available policies provided by the organization with the actual knowledge of the interviewees.

3.2. Participants

This study required participants with the following criteria:

- Employed in a Swedish workplace

- Worked for the organization for more than 6 months

A Swedish workplace is defined as an organization that is founded and located in Sweden. Every organization tends to have different methods and policies on employee's well-being, so it would be complicated to have participants working for different organization. Hence, it was decided that the participants of this study should work for the same organization. The 6 months threshold is used as a way to ensure that the interviewees are familiar with the working environment. It is also important to get employees from different positions in the organization to gain richer perspectives.

After deciding the participant criteria, several organizations were contacted for the possibilities of cooperation to provide participants for this study. Plausible responses were given by a Swedish automotive company, a Swedish government agency, and a Swedish academic organization. Due to the time constraint and long bureaucracy, the researcher decided to pursue the academic organization since it gave the most positive response to the study. Moreover, the complexity of an academic working structure was considered interesting and might give unique findings for the study.

To contact potential participants, the researcher first asked for formal permission to conduct the study from the head of the academic organization. After that, the researcher was referred to a person who was responsible for employee management. The said person gave a contact list of employees that might be able to participate in the study. Then the researcher sent individual e-mails to the people on the list. The e-mail consisted of an explanation about the study, the approval of the head of the organization, and how the person receiving the e-mail is considered as a potential participant that can provide significant contribution to the research.

The recruitment process explained in the previous paragraph can be classified as a gatekeepers method. Hennink, et al. (2011) explains that gatekeepers is a common strategy used in qualitative research, in which the researcher seek for assistance from a prominent and recognized individual from the community, or in this case in the organization. This method is beneficial because support from the authority may encourage the potential participants to join the study.

Of the nine employees that were contacted, six people gave a positive response to the interview and two people did not reply. One person gave a negative answer to the interview, writing that he was "too stressed" with his working and home situation, so he would not have time for the interview. It was such a missed opportunity, since his situation is actually relevant with the topic of this research, so he would have given interesting insights for the study.

The interviewees consisted of four females and two males. Two of them were lecturers, two were PhD students, one was academic staff, and one was a technical staff member. The distribution of research participants are as follow:

No	Code	Working position	Length of work
1.	Em01	Academic staff	5-10 years
2.	Em02	Academic staff	> 10 years
3.	Em03	Academic staff	5-10 years
4.	Em04	Technical staff	5-10 years
5.	Em05	Administrative staff	5-10 years
6.	Em06	Academic staff	1-5 years

Table 2: Participants overview

The number of subjects required for qualitative interviews is deemed enough when the interview (research?) has reached saturation point, a state where the interviewee does not give many new information for the research (Hennink, et al., 2011). In this research, the data started to reach saturation point with the fifth interviewee, who mentioned similar things to the previous interviewees. Therefore, the data collection was ended after the sixth interviewee.

3.3. Interview materials

To obtain optimal results of the interviews, this study used a semi-structured interview approach. Hennink, et al. (2011) mention that the approach is typically used for an exploratory study. A set of open questions relevant to the research questions were developed before the interview, to ensure that the interview would lead to needed information. However, a researcher can give further questions for probing purpose, if the interviewee mentions interesting information that has not been covered in the interview guide. The interview guide[1] consisted of few opening questions, some key questions, and closing questions.

To address anonymity and confidentiality issues, an interview participation consent letter[2] was prepared. The letter consisted of an explanation about the research, relevant contacts, guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity, and lastly an agreement between the interviewee and interviewer about the terms and conditions of the research.

A recording application on the researcher's mobile phone was used to record the interview, after the interviewee gave his/her consent to be recorded. The recorder was used so that the interview can be transcribed later on, which was useful in the analysis process. Moreover, it also helped maintaining the communication flow between the interviewer and the interviewee. Since there was no need to immediately write every words from the interviewee, the interviewer could focus on interacting with the interviewee, maintaining eye contact and giving appropriate verbal and non-verbal responses. This in turn was beneficial to increase bonding between the two actors. Nevertheless, the researcher had pen and paper during the interview to take small notes and reflections during the interview.

3.4. Interview procedures

During the period between 26 March 2015 and 23 April 2015, six individual interviews were conducted and recorded. All interviews were face to face. The location and the time of the interview were determined by the interviewee, to ensure that they were in the most comfortable condition to talk.

The interview session consisted of three sections:

1) Introduction and opening talk: The interviewer re-introduced herself and the context of the research to the interviewee. Interview participation consent letters were given to the interviewee to be read and signed, whereafter each interviewer and interviewee kept a copy of said letter. After that, the recorder was turned on and the interview was started with some opening questions.

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[1]   See Appendix 1

[2]   See Appendix 2

2) Key questions

3) Closing questions

At the end of the interview, all participants received a small gift as a symbol of gratitude for their participation in the study.

In total there were 350 minutes of recording, meaning that the average interview time was 58.3 minutes. The minimum duration of the interview was 37 minutes and 14 seconds, and the maximum duration was 80 minutes and 56 seconds.

Each interviewee received a notification after the interview had been transcribed. They were given the option to review the transcript and make clarifications in case what was written in the transcript was not congruent with what they really meant during the interview. From the six interviewees, three of them requested to see the transcript and gave some comments on it.

3.5. Validity and reliability

According to Brink (1993), validity in research is about the trustworthiness of the scientific finding, while reliability is about the degree of repeatability of the research. While it is more difficult to determine validity and reliability of qualitative research, this research has done several steps to ensure the validity and reliability.

Letting the interviewees chose the place to meet was intended to make them feel comfortable, so they would be more willing to share their personal stories. This in turn can increase the validity of the interview. Also, giving the interviewee a chance to clarify the content within the interview transcript increases the validity of this research. For this reason, there is more assurance that the content of the interview really reflects what the interviewees meant.

The interview guide was reviewed by a supervisor to ensure that the questions were understandable. The first interview was intended as a pilot interview, to test whether the questions were clear. However, considering that there were a lot of interesting answers coming from the interviewee, the pilot interview was included in the analysis. Nevertheless, both efforts were part of establishing reliability. When the questions are understandable and could lead to the intended information, then they can be considered reliable and can be used in future research.

3.6. Data analysis

According to Oliver, Serovich, and Mason (2005), creating a transcription – a written record of an interview, is an important step in the analysis process of qualitative research. There are many types of transcription, and the purpose of the research determines the type of transcription that should be used by a researcher. For this research, the recordings were made into verbatim transcript by Microsoft Word. All words and sentences in the interview were transcribed, along with noticeable pauses or other expressions such as laughter. However, the transcription did not go into more mechanical details such as recording dictions, length of pause, or other such details since it did not focus on the phonetic aspects. The next step after transcribing was anonymizing files. All names were changed into blank columns. After that, the transcript was sent to each interviewee for a review and clarification.

After receiving feedback from the interviewee, the data were analyzed through coding development and analysis. Coding is an analysis method for qualitative research, where the researcher looks for common topics that are discussed by the participants in the interview transcript. By identifying codes, the researcher can find major themes emerging from the data, which can lead to a more focused analysis (Auerbach, 2003). There are two types of coding: Inductive and deductive. Inductive coding is a process where the codes are created based on the interview data. Deductive coding, on the other hand, is a method where the codes are created based on the theoretical foundation before data analysis begins. Although this research had theoretical frameworks, the coding process itself used inductive approach, where the codes were created and identified based on the interview texts.

In this research, the coding process was started by selecting one third of the data to be the sources for making codebook. One third is deemed sufficient to identify variety of codes from reflecting the whole interview process. Of course it was still possible to create new codes from the other interview data when the coding process was conducted (Hennink, et al., 2011). The code development was conducted by highlighting repeated topics in the first two interviews. The topics were grouped into distinct categories and each of them got definitions. Once the definitions were established, all transcribed data were imported to Nvivo software. The codes were input to the system as well. After that, each interview was carefully examined and coded. The results become the basis for interpreting and analyzing the data. The analysis was conducted by comparing the results with the theoretical frameworks and previous studies.

3.7. Ethical consideration

Berg, Lune and Lune (2004) stressed the importance of maintaining ethics in research, for example by making sure that the research participants gave voluntary consent to join the research, as well as guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity. This research has tried to fulfill the ethical concerns through several mechanisms. Firstly, the previously mentioned letter of consent was created and signed by both participants and researchers. Secondly, all the anonymized interview transcripts were secured in the researcher's folder with an encrypted password which was inaccessible for irrelevant actors. For that reason, the interview transcripts were not attached in the complete version of the paper.

4. Results

4.1. Brief overview of the organization's well-being policy

The workplace where the participants work is a higher education institution located in the municipality of Gothenburg. The institution consists of hundreds of employees. The benefit given for the employees, according to the explanation provided in the employee's terms of employment (N/A, 2014) are as follow:

Policies	Explanation
Salaries	Monthly salary
Working hours	Working hours quota is decided for each function. Some units apply a local agreement on flexible working hours: employees have the option of selecting working hours within a certain set of parameters. Overtime payment is available. Yearly paid holiday is available.
Benefit and insurance	Employees who are injured at work can get a compensation from occupational injury insurance Employees are included in an occupational pension scheme
Skills development	Each department provides skill developments training for the employees, according to their function in the organization
Equality	There is an equality coordinator in every faculty
Introduction of the workplace for the new staff	There is a system to introduce new staff to the workplace
Leave and absence	Quota for sick leave, parental leave, and other paid leaves are available
Occupational health and safety	Reimbursement for medical expenses Monthly reimbursement for fitness activity Support group for employees who are facing difficult situation (i.e. involved in 'messy situation', had accident, etc)
Union	Contacts in labor unions are available

Table 3: Policies overview

4.2. General perception on workplace

All participants express fairly balance assessment about their workplace. 'Balance' means they gave proportional answers concerning both the positive and challenging sides of their workplace. Asking questions regarding positive and challenging sides of workplace was an indirect way to find out what factors affected employee's emotions at work, positively and negatively. Those things might be connected with well-being. The following table summarizes the participants' opinions regarding their workplace:

Figure 2: General perception on workplace

Perception on workplace

☐ Positive aspects　▨ Mixed aspects　■ Challenging aspects

Positive aspects	Mixed aspects	Challenging aspects
• Variety of working assignment • Sense of enjoyment • Flexible working hours • Self development	Social interaction in workplace Physical working environment Organizational change Organizational culture	Information flow & knowledge transfer Privacy & constant connectivity to work Specific job-related problem Time pressure

1) The positive aspects of workplace

Despite the differences in on job position, almost all participants have similar view regarding their working assignment. They express satisfaction at the **variety of working assignment**, mentioning that they rarely get bored with their everyday task.

> *"I enjoy the fact that my work is very varied, so I never have two days the same. Every day is different, it depends if I'm teaching or not, what meeting I have, what... Yea, everyday is different, every month is different."*

The statement from the lecturer above is supported by another interviewee with a more technical job:

> *"It's not the same job every day. It's a lot of different jobs. In that day we do that and next day something completely different. So it's a challenge."*

Some interviewees believe that the reason why they like their workplace is because of the job itself. They get a **sense of enjoyment** from doing their task, be it as a lecturer, PhD student, or supporting staff member.

> *"Uhm.... It's fun being in academic setting."*

Another aspect that was often mentioned as a good feature within the workplace is the **flexible working hours.** There is no strict requirement about what time the employee should arrive and leave from the workplace, as long as they fulfill their working hours quota. It creates opportunities for the employees to optimize their own time. For example, an interviewee who is a parent often comes a little later to the workplace, after taking the children to school first. Another employee also had a preference to come later, to avoid heavy traffic.

An interviewee specifically explained how the *flextime* system works at the workplace:

> *".... It's not that often that I work after 6 o'clock in the afternoon, but I can decide myself because we have this flex system, so you can collect hours so to speak, you can save up and you can for instance go a bit earlier on Friday if you have plan or something, but then you have to work longer hours the other days."*

Self-development was mentioned by some interviewees as the reason they liked their workplace. All of them believed that through work, they gained opportunities to learn and improve their skills. Self-development can be gained through the working task itself, like researching and reading journals, or through interactions that happen at the workplace with students. An interviewee explained that working for a Swedish working environment correlates with this sense of self-development:

"I'm happy that I got an opportunity to know the Swedish working environment, you know, in person. It's a hands-on experience, so how does it work, and how does it go.. I think this amuse me much.. [...]. This has provided me as a platform to notice all system and how do they engage the students, how do they hold meeting, how do they write papers, how do they teach, hold relationship from staff perspective..."

Lastly in this category, the sense of **autonomy** was mentioned in a positive light by three interviewees. They appreciated the freedom they receive at work, where the boss does not dictate to them how to do their jobs and in which manner. As one of the interviewees stated,

"There is no interference from my bosses on everything. They know what we're doing and we're doing well. So, yeah"

2) The challenging aspects of workplace

Almost all of the interviewees mention that they experience some challenges related with **information flow and knowledge transfer.** The challenge comes in two forms: gaining information and transferring information. In other words, there is a challenge in the communication process, in this case is the transfer of information within the organization.

Both PhD students have difficulty in gaining information related to their rights and responsibilities as a worker/student, and they feel that the flow of information is unclear. As a consequence, they had to do extra efforts to find the necessary information to survive in the working environment.

"Hm, so fussy borders, and unclear rules.. Uhm, and also, what do we call them.. Rättigheter och skyldigheter, rights and duties. So what you have to do it's not clear."

Meanwhile, the lecturers and the administration staff see the challenges in the process of conveying information to other actors, be it students, colleagues, or other people related to their job.

"The challenging thing here is... (Pause). To make people see. To make people understand. How do the students think? How do the students view this, like maybe something in the course that they know or they don't understand... And you have to explain things, and you have to explain things to colleagues, you have to explain things to administrations..."

Despite finding it challenging, they acknowledged the need to understand the other actors involved in the knowledge transfer process. But this understanding did not excuse failure of information transfer.

"...But sometimes they are just busy with lecturing and teaching, and that's of course their main purpose, and they can... When they are a bit stress, they can think that, 'Oh, there's so much administrating rules!', and I can understand that as well. And

we on the other side, we think that the rules are very important, because we work on them... That's our job to make sure that the teachers knows about them and that the rules are followed..."

Interestingly, the technical support interviewee had a more neutral view about the knowledge transfer process. This person does not have difficulties in conveying a message to the client.

"We take the complaint and we tell them... You know how long it takes to fix it, so you can tell your customer, 'it takes two days. But we will do our best'. We don't give any promises. We tell them, yes we fix it today, tomorrow, or this thing we have to take in some outside help, maybe takes one week. But we are very, very specific to the customer that this will take two days, this will take one week."

Nevertheless, the interviewee did not regard this as a positive aspect; hence this category is put in the challenging one.

Privacy and **constant connectivity to work** are viewed by three interviewees as challenging aspects at work. These are other topic related with communication. All of them consider privacy an important issue; that sometimes they need space to be alone. However, this condition is not always possible. Some interviewees have (or used to have) a work room that are shared with a lot of colleagues.

"I could not share a room with a lot of other people because I have a lot of personal stuff that I have to do, I have to talk to different people, and call a lot..."

Other interviewee thought that despite having an individual room, it was difficult to get privacy at the work place at all because of the constant interaction in the workplace, which is connected to the open-door philosophy in the workplace.

"So here we have teachers and students and everything much closer. And it's good. And it's a bit bad. Cause sometimes, that is why, there is always knocking on my door, which is a good thing. But if you don't want that, if you want to be quiet then you need to go somewhere else, but then I can move, so that's ok (laugh)."

However, leaving the workplace is not always the solution to be disconnected from workplace. An interviewee mentioned the influence of technological development toward the constant connectivity to workplace:

"I think because one has smartphone, even if you don't want to check or you don't want to work, for example in Saturday... You still see this information coming in, and sometimes you think, 'Ah I really need to do something about this, I need to answer this...' But I think this is an issue in our modern society, to make a different between work and home,"

Some interviewees mentioned a challenge that is specifically linked to their **job status or function**. For example, the mixed status of being an employee and a student is sometimes difficult for the PhD students. Wherein they lack the sense of belonging to either status, or even in the more practical term such as visa making and financial issue.

"PhD students, mostly we are being hired as employee... But we get a title PhD student. So student means you are student, either you are student, you are in this board. But you are employed, that means you are also a staff... "

Lastly, two participants mentioned **time pressure** as a challenging factor in the workplace.

> *"There is never enough time and a lot of pressure to balance everything, so you need to make sure that you're keep in track with teaching, and with a lot activities there, you need to make sure that you're keeping up with your project, you need to make sure to keeping up with the administration and important tasks there, so.. You never feel that you have enough time."*

3) The mixed reviews

Social interaction was the most recurring topic that emerged from all the interviews. This aspect is also relevant with communication, since an interaction always involves the exchange of message between people through various means, from verbal messages to non-verbal messages.I nterestingly the opinion regarding this aspect was mixed. All participants regarded social interaction as an important aspect, and many of them mentioned they enjoy the interaction with coworkers and other people at their workplace.

> *"So when I come here, I think, I tend to describe my life at the working place as very social. I meet a lot of students. I meet with my colleagues. We discuss, we argue, we laugh."*

Some participants associated the positive social interaction with group size. Working in a small circle made them feel closer with their coworkers.

> *"....nice people and my colleagues are really nice, because they are only three. We start every day at talking to each other and then we plan the day..."*

However, not everyone felt that they could get adequate social interaction from their workplace. It should be noted that the participants who mentioned the lack of social interactions were both PhD students, whose job description does in fact, not require a lot of interaction with other people.

> *"So, it's a little bit tough, to be working on your own, you're quite lonely. You have to work out your own relation to other students..."*

Another interesting thing to note is that some participants mention that interacting with more people does not always bring positive output. Rather, the interaction may lead to either positive or negative emotions, depending on the content of the interaction.

> *"So I think because we have contact with people all the time, that contact, or at least for me that contact with people effects how I feel. So it can effect whether it's a good day or bad day at work."*

Interaction with manager also gets a mixed review. Some interviewees claim a good relationship with their respective manager or supervisor, mentioning supports and respects given to them. A few of them express neutral or dissatisfaction toward the interaction, mostly because there is lack of interaction with the respective manager.

Interaction with managers also received a mixed review. Some interviewees claimed a good relationship with their respective manager or supervisor, mentioning support and respect given to them. A few of them expressed neutral or dissatisfaction toward the interaction, mostly because there is a lack of interaction with their respective manager.

Physical working environment also gained a mixed review. The building location is considered good, particularly because it is close to a river and a ferry port. There are a variety of restaurants located near the workplace where the employees like to have lunch with their colleagues. However, the remoteness of the area can be a hassle for some people, especially for employees with high mobility, who sometimes need to work at different parts of the university.

Workplace space and facilities also received mixed review. Generally employee feel that they have a nice working space, and comfortable working area.

> *"Yes, yes. This is one of the best thing, they are very supportive in this way. They give you facilities, a very comfortable nice chair, big screen, laptop, nice wi-fi, and then printing facilities, both color and black-white."*

For many interviewees, the staff room is considered as a good place to socialize with their colleagues during *fika* –coffee break time- or lunch.

> *"There is a long balcony, to sit in the spring time. There are sofas and chairs, we can sit there and discuss thing. We have tables for lunch, and if you have like workshop, serve coffee and things..."*

Nevertheless, there were also aspects that the interviewees hoped would improve, such as the heating and ventilation system.

In some interviews, the discussion about physical working environments correlate with **organizational change**, which is the next aspect that received mixed reviews. They acknowledged that there were efforts from the management to improve the situation within the workplace, and the state of their working environment is the result of that effort. For example, the building used to be located in the town center but had scattered rooms located in different buildings, which made a little annoyance for the staff in moving around. Right now, the rooms are much closer and centered in one building so it is easier for the people to move around.

While the physical change received mostly positive reviews from the interviewees, the system change in the organization is considered a challenge by most of them. For some interviewees, the organization does not have a strong will to create changes in certain system, such as the information flow for new employees. However, when changes happen, it can also create confusion and uncertainty for some people. As one interviewee commented regarding a big structural change in the organization they experienced a few years ago,

> *"...And we all were angry and we were upset because we didn't quite see the point and we didn't know everything.."*

The last point in this section is the **organizational culture.** Some interviewees felt happy about the organizational culture, such as the *open door philosophy* where interactions between lecturers and students outside classes are encouraged. Some others felt that the organization's reluctance to change in some aspects was not a favorable feature.

> *"...in Swedish, 'det sitter i väggarna', it's in the walls, meaning that it's not written anywhere, but it's a tradition and that's the way we always done it."*

A more neutral view came from one interviewee who said that because of the fast pace of new employee influx, the organization has not established a fixed system for knowledge transfer.

> *"...Because we have had quite a few, uhm, changing people quite a lot... Rherefore we haven't had chance to create that many routines, but we are getting there..."*

Another interviewee also expressed a concern about the challenge of maintaining the positive culture and establishing the new ones during the regeneration of the employees.

4.3. Perceived relationship between psychological well-being and workplace

When the interviewees were asked about the relationship between psychological well-being and the workplace, all of them gave a similar answer. Generally, they thought that psychological well-being is important, and there is a significant connection with the workplace conditions. Most of the interviewees described the connection as causal relationship, that psychological well-being determine the outcomes of work.

> *"I think it's extremely important. I don't think it's possible to do a job if you... Psychologically you're not feeling well. Or maybe it's possible probably but it is a lot more difficult."*

Another statement was expressed by an interviewee who thought that psychological well-being can trigger creativity and productivity:

> *"So this psychological things, and issues, of course, very directly correlated and.... Interrelated things. It's inseparated... [.....]. If you are really in a comfortable supportive and healthy environment, you are ten times more productive, ten times more creative, and maybe hundred times more... Fun loving, and you know, job loving, loved person. This makes really, distinct, different."*

What is interesting to note is that there were more varieties of opinion regarding factors that can influence employees' psychological well-being. There is an essence of communication within those factors. The following table describes the summary of the psychological well-being factors derived from the interviews.

Figure 3: Facilitators vs barriers for psychological well-being
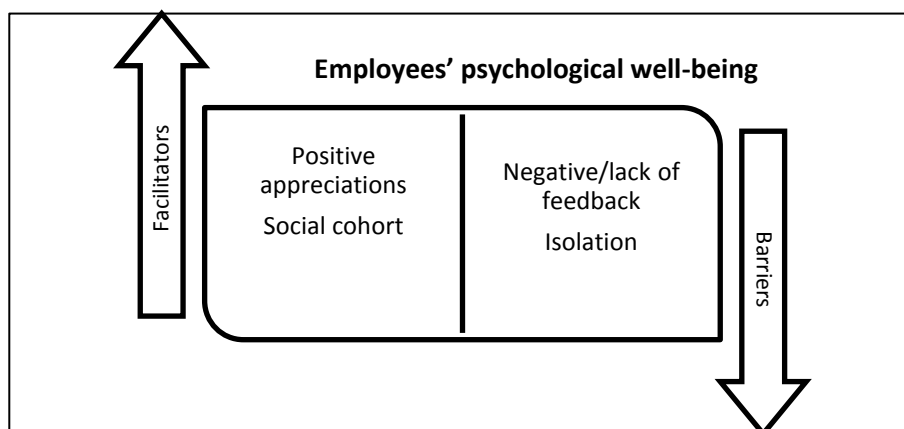
1) Positive appreciation versus negative feedback

The majority of the employees mentioned appreciation as an important factor during the discussion on psychological well-being. Being appreciated was considered good for

psychological well-being. Consequently, a lack of appreciation was considered a barrier for achieving the state of well-being.

> *"It can be problems like... That you feel you're not appreciated, for instance, then of course I think it can influence your job very badly. And like the opposite as well, if you feel that you're appreciated, it shows also, and it's more fun to go to job, to work..."*

Appreciation is an abstract concept, so the interviewees gave different elaborations on this concept. For one person, appreciation means that getting the being told by other people that what one has done at work is meaningful and worth.

> *"You need to feel that what you're doing is meaningful, and what you're doing is appreciated and what you're doing is, uhm, yeah, it's worth it. [...]. it makes a lot big difference to motivation, to your, uhm, how much you prepare, how many hours you're prepared to put in..."*

Another interviewee thought that appreciation could be given through the simplest way, such as every day's greeting.

> *"I mean, there are a lot of small improvements that could be made. Just asking, 'How are you? How can we help you? Would you like to see someone?', I mean, just checking on people."*

On the other side of the spectrum, interaction with people at work could also generate negative feedback. The source of the feedback could be students, a supervisor, or colleagues. Whoever the sources were, negative feedback may result in negative emotions and a decline in motivation.

> *"That you can get, sometimes you can get a terrible course evaluation, and students are very... Uhm, they don't like the course, don't like the activities, and that's... Any course take a lot of times and energy, and of course it's very... It's difficult to get that kind of feedback, if people aren't.. If it's bad feedback, if they are not happy with it."*

2) Social cohort versus isolation

Social environment is viewed as an important aspect by some interviewees. Being part of the group tends to create the feeling of satisfaction and being accepted, which in turn lead to well-being. On the opposite side, not having many colleagues at the workplace can lead to the feeling of isolation and loneliness, which hampers psychological well-being.

An interviewee elaborated her perception about the importance of group dynamic on psychological well-being:

> *"Oh yeah, definitely. I think if people like each other and that they work well together and they are happy and if they can laugh during the coffee break, the work is definitely gaining on that. I think so. And if you're a strong group, it's easier to take the down, as well as the ups. Because if you're a group of people that can rely on each other, trust each other, it's easier when you have difficulties to solve them, I think. And everyone is more willing to... How do you say that... Put in extra gear, to make an effort, because it's... The group is gaining for it."*

As it can be seen from the description, having a strong social cohort is considered beneficial. There are trustworthy people that they can rely on, in case work related problems arise.

Another interviewee illustrated a practical example on why not being involved in a social group could influence individual's emotion:

> *"Because you don't get the gossips, and you don't get the information what's happening in the house, what's going on…"*

4.4. Problem solving approach

When being asked to share the experiences related to issues of psychological well-being in the workplace, the interviewees gave various answers. Some interviewees had personal stories related to the issues explained in the previous section, such as relationships with people at work or time pressure. Others mentioned that they heard about colleagues who experienced difficulties at the workplace. None of the interviewees claimed to experience workplace problems that seriously hampered their psychological well-being, even though there were some close cases. For example, one interviewee mentioned they took sick leave as a result of a conflict with a colleague.

In conclusion, all of the interviewees were aware about the risk of bad experiences at work, which might hamper their psychological well-being. They also had a set of problem solving mechanisms, ready for use when they experienced issues at work.

Personal management is a problem solving that are prepared especially for issues related with time pressure and overloaded work. A separation of work and home activities was mentioned by an interviewee:

> *"For example I try to have at least one day in a week, where I don't touch work. And to me that's Saturday, when I don't check e-mails, when I don't do anything unless there's something, a big deadline coming up. So that's one way. Uhm.. I try to come to work, mostly, even if I'm not teaching, so that... Again you can make a different between home and work, cause I think it's very easy that home become a workplace, and then it's difficult to relax."*

Sharing and consulting the problem with other people was considered important for all interviewees to alleviate burdens. There were two different patterns here: Some people preferred to talk with colleagues first, and then bring it to the boss if the problem still existed. Others prefer to directly approach the boss and discuss a solution.

> *"If it got the point when I felt it was too much at work, then I'd rather talk to colleagues. Or if it really really got the point where I felt it was too much, I'm going to talk to my boss..."*

Some interviewees mentioned the importance of **trust building**, especially for conflict resolution within a group. Their reasoning being that by developing trust, people are more willing to hear each other's opinion, and developing solutions together.

> *"So, I mean... Challenges are there, but students are there and colleagues are there. And if you built a relationship with colleagues and students, if you can gain trust, then challenges, of course they are there. But if you have trust, and you have*

previously sort of proved yourself that you are willing to sort of help to solve things, then... People can be upset, but then maybe they will also listen to you. "

Cutting connection was seen as the last resort for some interviewees. As it has been mentioned in the beginning of this section, an interviewee mentioned that an uncomfortable working environment become one of the reasons for taking sick leave.

"I need a lot of things to do, worries and stuff... But I don't think I would had been in a sick leave if it wasn't for the chaos at work... So it has been really really bad."

Another interviewee spoke in hypothetical manners. If the workplace condition going bad and talking with manager do not solve the problem, than quitting is the solution rather than dwelling in anger and disappointment.

"I can't think about all the bad things all the time... It's better to tell it, and if I can't do anything about it, where I am, then I have to quit..."

Some interviewees show high **concern for colleagues' problem.** They realize that workplace problems may impact anyone, including their colleagues. Thus, they develop a resolution to help colleagues in need, using problem solving mechanism that they have.

"And I will also do the same for my friends if he or she is having trouble at work, I don't want my friends experiencing horrible thing at work..."

4.5. Perception on well-being support policy from the organization

The last part of the interview was a discussion about the organization's policy related to psychological well-being. The themes that emerged from the discussion were: awareness, distribution method, clarity, and policy discussion.

1) Awareness

In the discussion, the interviewees were free to mention any physical or mental support policy provided by the organization that they thought was relevant to psychological well-being. There were various answers. Some of the answers came up from interviewees' own experiences, that they had been involved in the policy activity. Some others came from interviewees' knowledge; they know the policy exist but never really experienced it.

Summary of the policies and services mentioned by the interviewees (numbers in bracket indicate the numbers of interviewee that mention the policy):

Policy/Action	Excerpts from interviewee
Occupational health service (*Företaghälsovard*) – (3)	*"I know that there is... That we have an organization that is called '[program name]', and I know that, if there are problems, either physical or psychological, we can book a time and make an appointment with somebody at '[program name]'"*
Ergonomics workshop – (2)	*"For example, last year there was a visit by Ergonomics, it's a team, they came and they see if the light is appropriate and if it's sufficient or not, if the table height is ok, if the chair position is ok... They give you some tips..."*
Wellness benefit (*Friskvårdbidrag*) – (2)	*"...We have this Friskvårdbidrag. [.......]. Ok, anyone that is employed gets 2000 crowns worth of, when you pay for*

	gym card or something, you can send in the bills and they give you back money up till 2000 crowns. So that's one thing."
Work environment & equality representative – (2)	*"Mm... As I said, I know there are formal representative, for equality, and for the work environment. And this people change all time..."*
Questionnaire on work quality – (2)	*"Every year we do that... [....] Yes it's a lot of questions; we do it on the internet. How we feel and how we think about the boss and the colleagues and the physical environment, and everything like that. I don't know the name in english... Medarbetarundersökning, pa Svenska."*
Group training – (1)	*"...they are giving us a course, or training day something like that, how to develop our group. [...]I guess it's going to be to find out what kind of person you are, and then they gonna look at the group and see, I guess, what type of personality you have in the group, and what kind of difficulties the group can have, and what the good things might be as well."*
Union – (1)	*"We have the union"*
Readjustment to work – (1)	*"The university has an employer that can provide medical care for you, you can have, make, sort of help you, to come in contact, if you need psychological assistance, for instance, or if you need to talk... If you get serious ill, and it takes a long time before you get well again, and then you need to come back to the workplace"*
Fruits provision at work – (1)	*"And we get free fruits..! [...]. Yes (laugh), for the employees. I mean, there comes a basket once or twice a week to the staff area."*

Tabel 4: Policy knowledge of the interviewees

In conclusion, the interviewees were aware about organizational initiatives in supporting employees' well-being, yet they had different knowledge about and experiences related to the initiatives. Only half of the interviewees mentioned specific policies on employee well-being –as mentioned in the terms of employment-, such as the occupational health system. This does not mean the other interviewees have no knowledge about the policies, but that they did not come to their mind during the interview. This indicates that the policies were not memorable enough for them.

2) Distribution method & clarity

Generally the interviewees thought that the organization made efforts to spread information, but they were not sure about the efficacy of this information reaching all employees. There were many factors that might influence the efficacy.

An interviewee who mentioned the environment and quality representative policy explained that knowing the information was part of her/his own responsibility as a program coordinator. The other interviewee who mentioned the same policy has different view:

"So I think I have been informed when I started it, in 2006, that there's also a person like that. But of course, they can be more or less visible, depending on the leadership I guess."

Information overload is an issue mentioned by some interviewees as the possible reason why some people may not be aware about the policy. The employees receive a lot of general information via e-mail or other online communication tools (i.e. employee internal communication system), to the point that necessary information might get overlooked.

"It's a problem with the information flow. We get too much information than we can do. So I don't think it will help to e-mails."

Another issue about distribution method is the clarity of information given to the employees. Many employees expressed their confusion about the scope of service given by the employee well-being support.

An interviewee who mentioned about the occupational health service explained,

"I think what I am very unclear is the limit of "[program name]" and going to my regular doctor. So what's the difference? So for example if I fell from the stairs at work, do I book a time at Feel good or do I book a time at my doctor? I mean that kind of division is unclear. If I can't sleep at night because I am stressed, do I book a time at... Where, who should I book a time with? So that's kind of unclear and I probably would just go to my regular doctor and not go to "[program name]", because doctor, you know who it is and you know how it works. "

Another employee narrated an experience with receiving a suggestion to go to the service during a stressful time at work:

"I was told that I could go to talk to someone at [Organization name], the healthcare, but that was like... Only related to work. And when you have a hard time at home, I mean your psychological difficulties can arise from whatever, at home. They don't have to be work-related but you still have to be on sick leave. But to come to psychologist or any talk person and only have to talk about work issues, that doesn't help."

3) **Policy discussion**

Of all the interviewees, only one person admitted to ever discussing well-being policy with colleagues. The interviewee who mentioned the workplace quality questionnaire narrated:

"We talked about what we feel about some questions. And then we are really open to each other. I tell them I feel like that and I feel like that... And they tell me too. I think that's because we don't have many problems with my three colleagues here. We talk about it."

Some interviewees expressed a similar reasons for not discussing the policies with their colleagues: Psychological well-being policies are expected to be available, but people think that there is no need to talk about it when it is there.

"It's just one of those things, it's sort of need to know basis and it hasn't come out. But if, if somebody is having problem then we might talk about it, but otherwise no."

Another interviewee elaborated a similar view, that well-being support is something that has been normalized in the workplace and the discussion might emerge only if the policy does not exist.

> *"I mean, if we didn't have that, then we would talk. Cause it is such a natural thing to have in a working place in Sweden. [....] So that is why it's not causing a discussion, but if we didn't have it then we will discuss it. But now we have this, and you sort of forget, you just know that it's there so you don't pay attention."*

5. Discussion

5.1. Employees' state of psychological well-being at work

The themes that were inductively derived from the interview seem to be coherent with the dimensions of PWBW mentioned in the theoretical frameworks (Dagenais-Desmarais & Savoie, 2012). Based on the definitions, the PWBW dimensions can be divided into two categories: *individual* and *social* dimension. The individual dimension is about achieving a sense of happiness at work through individual activities or achievement. Meanwhile, the social dimension is about achieving a sense of happiness through a certain degree of interaction with other people at work (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Proposed relationship between PWBW and identified themes
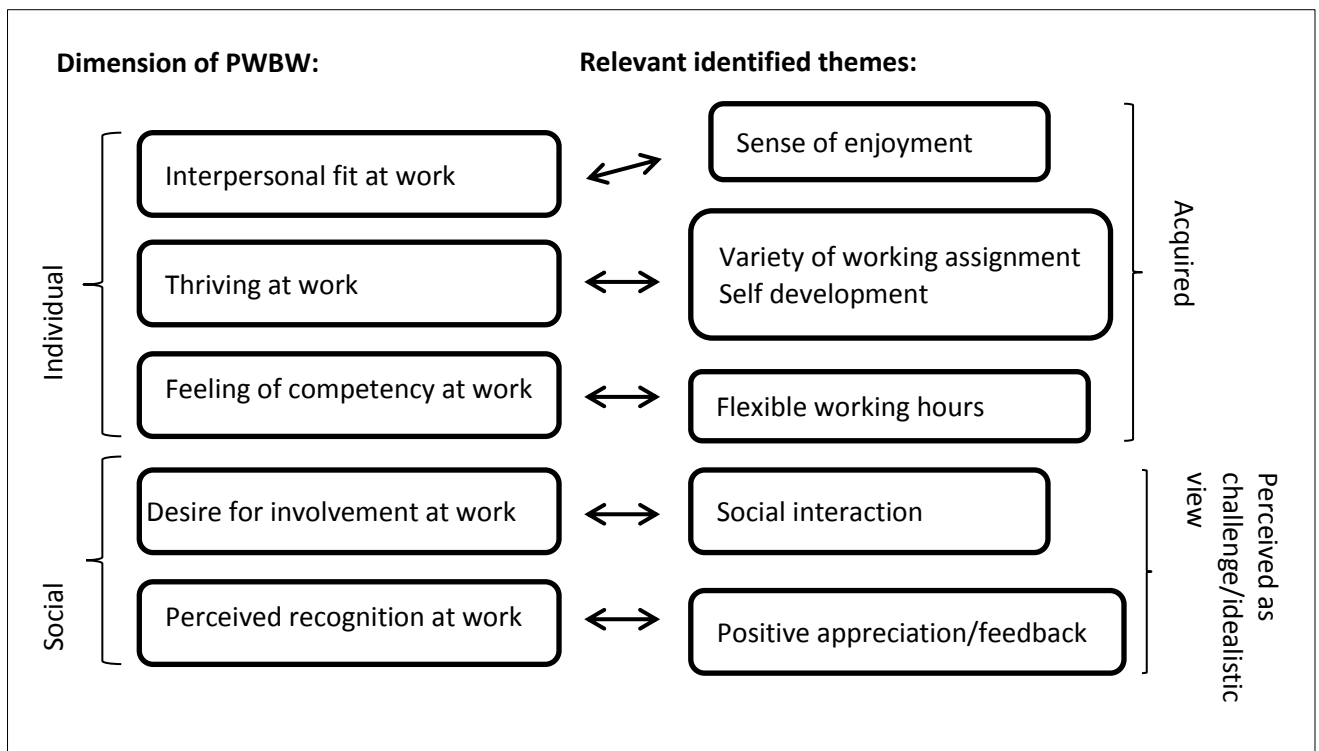
The majority of the workplace's positive aspects mentioned by the interviewees possess similarities with the description of PWBW's individual dimension. For example, the interviewees' description for achieving a sense of enjoyment from work, matches the description of *interpersonal fit at work*. This assumption is relevant (similar to?) with a study about enjoyment from Siddiquee, Sixsmith, Lawthom and Haworth (2014). They

found that workers can experience various degree of enjoyment or 'flow' from working, which results in a greater state of happiness and well-being.

A variety of work assignments and self-development seem to fit the description of the *thriving at work* dimension. After all, self-development is often mentioned in the eudamonic approach of psychological well-being (Bauer, Park, Montoya, & Wayment, 2014). The positive view on flexible working hours seems to fit the *feeling of competency* dimension. In this case, the sense of task mastery can be achieved because having an authority over working hours has been proven to be a positive determinant of employees' well-being (Hughes & Parkes, 2007).

Based on the previous explanation, it can be concluded that the workplace has been able to facilitate the need for psychological well-being at the individual level. However, it is a different case for the social aspect of PWBW.

Looking at the definition of *desire for involvement at work*, the social interaction theme seems to fit this dimension. It strengthens other studies that suggest the importance of social interaction for job satisfaction and well-being (Tschan, Semmer & Inversin, 2004). However, as it can be seen in the result section, the interviewees talked about social interaction with a mixed attitude. They thought social interaction in the workplace was important for well-being. Positive experiences on social interaction were mentioned. Nevertheless, some of them could not always get enough interaction. In some cases, the interaction led to undesirable outcomes such as negative emotions, which led to demotivation in the workplace.

Similar situation applies to the last dimension, *perceived recognition at work*. Recognition and appreciation of supervisor at work has been considered as an important aspect for employees' psychological well-being (Gilbreath & Benson, 2004). In congruent with the statement, some interviewees stressed the importance of getting acknowledgement for psychological well-being. However, although some positive experiences on being respected were mentioned, there were also some comments about not receiving enough appreciation.

The above situations lead to a conclusion that the employees are having a constant struggle to fulfill the social dimensions of psychological well-being at workplace. It is within every organization's interest to maintain all aspect of employees' psychological well-being. Yet the road to fulfilling the social dimensions could not be as smooth as fulfilling the individual dimensions. The author suggests some factors to support the claim: 1) The tangibility of supporting tools to facilitate the dimensions of well-being, and 2) The unpredictable nature of social interaction.

1) The tangibility of supporting tools to facilitate the dimensions of well-being

On one hand, creating a variety of working assignments or determining the working hours policy is something that can easily be managed by the organization. Clear regulations and measurements can be determined easily. Hence, tools to support individual dimensions of psychological well-being are tangible. On the other hand, it is more difficult to create a regulation to support the social dimension. For example, an organization cannot arbitrarily oblige all supervisors to constantly give appreciation or feedback to the employees. It is also difficult to determine what kind of appreciation or feedback are considered enough and appropriate for all employees, because it is less tangible compared to the previous tools.

But perhaps it does not take a hard policy from the organization to encourage supervisor to give appreciation and positive feedback. Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) found that supervisors with a high degree of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) tend to reciprocate the sentiment by giving more supportive treatment to the employees. So in the end it becomes a continued effort. If the organization can make the supervisor feel supported through intangible acts, then the supervisor might also follow the sentiment by giving more feedback and appreciation to the employees.

2) Unpredictable nature of social interaction

The second factor is more correlated with the communication aspect. Social interaction has been recognized as a factor that correlates with psychological well-being. Negative social interaction tends to hamper psychological well-being, while positive interaction tends to increase well-being (Rook, 1984).

In the context of this study, the individual dimensions require the employee to only interact with the task. Therefore the efficacy of well-being policies only depends on individual characteristics. Meanwhile the social dimensions require employees to interact with other people, meaning that more variables are involved. There are more unpredictable reactions coming from the people involved in this dimension, which complicate the result. There is possibility of employees to engage in positive social interaction as well as negative interaction. Thus, it is a greater challenge for the organization to fulfill the dimensions.

5.2. Communication as a challenge for psychological well-being

Besides the social interaction, there are other challenging aspects of work which contain communication processes in it. These are information flow issue, knowledge sharing, privacy and constant connectivity to work.

Information management and knowledge sharing have been regarded as important aspects of organizational communication. However, when the researcher attempted to identify a trend within information management studies, many of the studies focus on the relationship between information management and knowledge sharing with organizational goals or results (Kirk, 1999; Widén-Wulff & Ginman, 2004). There is a lack of study that includes employees' well-being in the information management and knowledge sharing process in the organization. One of the exceptions is a recent study from Chumg, Cooke, Fry, and Hung (2015), that describes a moderate effect of employees' well-being toward the intention of knowledge sharing.

Therefore, this study suggests a new perspective on viewing information management and knowledge sharing in organization: that those aspects are correlated with employees' psychological well-being. Based on the narrative shared by the interviewees, it can be concluded that fuzzy information flow can lead to discomfort at work, which may lead to psychological distress. Correspondingly, problems in knowledge sharing can also affect employees' well-being. Thus, addressing the information flow system and knowledge sharing will be beneficial for the organization not only to achieve goals, but also to improve employees' well-being.

Some interviewees expressed the need for privacy in the workplace. It seems that they shared a similar sentiment: Having a private office is more preferable than sharing a

room with colleagues. This sentiment is actually coherent with studies about open plan office design. Open plan office aims to provide accessibility for the employees by placing them in a large room together. However, a lot of studies actually found that generally, workers prefer privacy over accessibility. For example, a longitudinal study from Brennan, Chugh, and Kline (2002) found that there is a significant correlation between open plan office design and job dissatisfaction.

Lastly, constant connectivity to work was mentioned as a challenging aspect. Smartphone and e-mail were mentioned as the major cause of constant connectivity. This is also consistent with findings from research about the impact of Information Communication Technology (ICT) at workplace. O'Driscoll et.al (2010) argued that communication technology such as e-mails may blur the boundaries between work and home matters, which can be detrimental for psychological well-being. They claimed, "...ICTs may therefore contribute in significant ways to workers' feelings of being overstretched, with potentially serious consequences for their mental health." (pp. 305). The issue of ICT usage should be carefully addressed by the organization. Afterall, ICT has a lot of potential to improve employees' performance and well-being as well. Take an example of the study from Umanodan, et al (2014) that succesfully utilized computer-based stress management program to improve employees' psychological well-being.

5.3. Communication as the solution for psychological issues at workplace

Communication does not always become a challenge. In fact, communication is also embedded in the problem solving behavior for work-related problems. First and foremost, the interviewees stated an intention to consult with family, colleagues, or supervisor if they experienced workplace problems. They also showed firm intentions to help coworkers who might experience workplace problems. This is relevant with current conceptions about the positive role of social support on solving job-related stress (Ganster, Fusilier & Mayes, 1986). Aside from that, this study also confirms the importance of trust building for conflict resolution in the organization (Sanders & Schyns, 2006).

As an interesting note, cutting communication channels was also considered a last measure to solve workplace problems for some interviewees. Generally, absenteeism and withdrawal from workplace is viewed as a negative outcomes in the workplace (Carmeli, 2005). However, according to appraisal theory from Lazarus (1984), withdrawing from a conflict is one of coping mechanism style. His explanation about this was,
"...the retreat phase is viewed as an important, natural means of preventing breakdown by allowing temporary withdrawal into safety. When the coping process has been successfully completed, the cycles occur less frequently and virtually disappear. The coping process outlined above is considered by Shontz to be a necessary precursor to psychological growth, in which there is a renewed sense of personal worth, a greater sense of satisfaction, and a lessening of anxiety" (pp.145). Considering the theory, perhaps in some cases where the employee's psychological well-being is at stake, taking a break from workplace is the wisest solution for the employee.

5.4. The lack of well-being policy discussion

According to Kincaid's convergence model (Rogers & Kincaid 1981), psychological well-being policy should ideally be constantly discussed by all actors in the organization in order to create a significant impact. It can be assumed that the more all members of the organization share and discuss workplace well-being issues, the bigger the chances of

success in well-being policies creating positive changes. However, based on the interview result in this study, the employees rarely discuss the policy with their colleagues, despite their high awareness of the relationship between psychological well-being and the workplace. Consequently, it is difficult to find out the degree of mutual understanding between the employees and the organization regarding the organization's effort of improving psychological well-being. It is therefore not surprising to see that some interviewees expressed satisfaction toward the organization's policy while others expressed dissatisfaction. The researcher suggests several explanations concerning the lack of discussion.

Firstly, clarity problems might discourage employees to discuss the policy. Some interviewees admitted their confusion regarding the scope of service given by the workplace well-being support. Riege (2005) explains that there are a lot of possible barriers for knowledge-sharing intentions among employees; unclear organizational strategy and goal become one of the example. While communicating and discussing the policy can help clarifying the issue, it become undesirable if the employees are not sure about the level of knowledge of their colleagues.

Secondly, there is a possibility that information on the well-being policies might be stored as tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is a kind of knowledge that is considered common sense and difficult to be expressed due to its nature (Smith, 2001). Some interviewees stated that having well-being support is considered natural, and there is no need to talk about it unless there is an obvious issue happening. Based on this understanding, it made sense that the interviewees provided various answers when they were asked about the psychological well-being policy provided by the organization.

As a last note, the lack of discussion on the policy may indicate a lack of problems within psychological well-being. However, since there were only a few issues reported, it does not mean discussion becomes unnecessary. Constant evaluations are still needed to guarantee optimal protection of employees' psychological well-being at the workplace.

6. Conclusion & suggestion for future research

This study investigated issues connected to employees' psychological well-being by applying a qualitative method. The results and discussion section have provided findings that answer the research questions and generate further assumptions:

1) *How does communication relate to employees' psychological well-being in the workplace?*

Communication holds an important role in determining the social dimensions of psychological well-being at the workplace. Due to the dynamic nature of human interaction, it can be concluded that employees are always in constant struggle in maintaining the social dimensions of psychological well-being.

Furthermore, communication also holds a double-edged role on the overall issues of well-being. Information management, knowledge sharing, privacy, and constant connectivity are a prominent example of challenging issues related with communication that might lead to psychological distress. However, communication is also part of the solution for workplace-related problems, for instance through problem sharing and trust building.

This study also suggests new perspectives on existing issues. Information management and knowledge sharing have been seen as important tools in acheiving organizational goals. However, results from this study imply that both issues might correlate with employees' psychological well-being.

2) *How do employees perceive organization's role in promoting psychological well-being at their workplace?*

Employees' perceptions regarding the organization's role are multidimensional. In general, they acknowledge the organization's effort to improve employees' psychological well-being despite the confusion here and there. Ability to mention some policies -such as the occupational health service and wellness benefit- from the organization also indicates that some policies were remembered by the employees. However, there seems to lack discussion regarding the contents and the promotion of well-being policies.

As a suggestion for future studies, it would be interesting to test the conclusions that have been drawn from this study. Since this study was conducted qualitatively in a specific working environment, generalization toward overall organizational context cannot be made. Thus, as another suggestion, different type of organizational contexts could be used to examine the role of communication on psychological well-being at the workplace.

The study can also be improved by adding social-demographic factors such as age and gender, or by evaluating cultural aspects of the organizaton and the employees.

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Appendix 1: Interview guideline

Interview Guide

Opening question
1. What is your position in the organization?
2. How long have you been working for the organization?
3. Can you describe your usual day at work?

Key questions

1. What do you like about your job?
   *Probe: **Job tasks, job characteristics***

2. What kind of challenges that you usually get when you are doing your job?
   *Probe: **Stressor materials, problem solving method***

3. How do you feel about your working environment?
   *Probe: **Physical, psychological, and social environment***

4. What is your experience related with psychological well-being in workplace?
   *Probe: **Where to seek help, is there any hesitance to seek help or not***
   (if the answer is never, ask why, and still, give an 'even if' scenario)

5. If you feel overwhelmed with your workloads, with whom will you talk?

6. What is your opinion about relationship between psychological well-being and workplace?
   *Probe: **the chance of getting stressed at work, how bad mental health problem could influence their performance***

7. Are you familiar with how your organization deal with physical and mental health empowerment?
   *Probe: **Since when they have been implemented, who proposed the policies***

8. What do you think about the policies that your organization have (on well-being empowerment)?
   *Probe: **Level of participation, positive-negative aspect of the policies, the communication strategies, employees' involvement (one way or two-way?)***

9. How do you discuss this policies with other employees?

10. What do you think can be improved from current policies?

Closing Questions

1. What do you think about this interview?
   (Is there anything new that you have learned/noticed from this interview)
2. Do you have more opinion/stories related with the issue?
3. Is there a question that I should have asked?

Appendix 2: Letter of consent

INTERVIEW PARTICIPATION CONSENT

Title of Research Project
Promoting psychological well-being at workplace in Sweden: An explorative study

Details of Project
This project is part of thesis writing conducted by Tanti Kostaman, a student in Master in Communication program, Department of Applied IT, University of Gothenburg, supervised by Åsa Fyrberg, PhD candidate in Cognitive Science, Department of Applied IT, University of Gothenburg. The research aims to understand how psychological well-being is being promoted and communicated in workplace setting.

Contact Details
For further information about the research or your interview data, please contact:
    Tanti Kosmiyati Kostaman, Department of Applied IT, Gothenburg University
    Tel 0765612423, tanti.kostaman@gmail.com
If you have concerns/questions about the research you would like to discuss with someone else at the University, please contact:
    Åsa Fyrberg, asa.fyrberg@vgregion.se

This study has gained approval from the Head of Department of Applied IT, Gothenburg Unversity, Urban Nuldén.

Confidentiality
Interview tapes and transcripts will be held in confidence. They will be stored in researcher's private storage data with encrypted password. They will not be used other than for the purposes described above and third parties will not be allowed to access them. However, if you request it, you will be supplied with a copy of your interview transcript so that you can comment on and edit it as you see fit (please give your email below).

Anonymity
Interview data will be held and used on an anonymous basis, with no mention of your name.

Consent
I voluntarily agree to participate and to the use of my data for the purposes specified above. I can withdraw consent at any time by contacting the interviewers.

TICK HERE: ☐   **DATE**…………………………....

Note: Your contact details are kept separately from your interview data

Name of interviewee:..
Signature: ....
Email/phone:...
Signature of researcher……………………………………………………

2 copies to be signed by both interviewee and researcher, one kept by each