**Self-initiated Expatriates (SIEs)
and Job Satisfaction:**

**Impact of the Leader-Member Exchange Relationship**

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by

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**Abstract**

With the rise of an international workforce within corporate enterprises, a lot of research attention has been given to the cultural adjustment of international employees (Black et al, 1991; Shaffer and Harrison, 1998). At the same time, a small group of scholars pay attention to the responsibility of the organization and its social actors to support this new, diverse workforce. Problems might occur in social interaction as expatriates have a different cultural background and might expect something else in relation to interaction with others. It is the researcher’s belief that especially managers play a key role in the process of cultural adjustment and making sure the expatriates is satisfied and has a positive mood when executing his or her job activities. Whether an expatriate perceives the current relationship with his or her manager and whether certain aspects as part of a manager-employee relationship have an impact on one’s job satisfaction, seems then important to understand. By making use of the Leader- Member Exchange Theory of Graen et al. (1982), specifically the characteristics of the Leader-Member Exchange Relationship, this research has the objective to associate findings on perceptions of the various characteristics impact job satisfaction, and whether there is a difference in perceptions between expatriates working with a local manager and those working with a foreign manager. This research begins with analyzing theories on expatriates, job satisfaction and theories on social interaction, in order to get a good grasp of the studied phenomenon. The empirical setting for this research is a cross-sectional design. Primary data was collected by in-depth interviews of a sample of ten respondents working in large organizations in North and Western Europe. By taking a qualitative interpretive approach, this thesis not only provides insight into the perceptions of various respondents on the relationship with their manager and the impact it has on job satisfaction, as well it contributes to research on the impact this relationship has on job satisfaction as perceived by the expatriates.

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1. **Introduction**

**Cause for the study**

The last three decades an increasing amount of awareness arose amongst scholars on the issues the ever-continuing globalization of the corporate world brings along. The ongoing trend of working abroad caused a vast amount of scholars in the field of organizational and management studies to focus their research on the specific individuals working abroad. Issues dealing with these new organizational members are, seen from the eyes of the researcher, probably mainly related to problems caused by cultural differences and a fear of nescience from the side of the corporation as well as from the specific individuals. Related to established concepts and proven theories on e.g. job satisfaction in the domestic field the question was whether created theories and associated findings could be transferred to this group of employees or that it was necessary to be studied separately. Also this study focuses on one such problem due to the increase of a company’s international work force and specifically looks at the relationship between a manager and an international employee.

Several scholars emphasized to ensure proper enculturation into the organization primarily the international employees can be held responsible; they are the ones that need to adjust to this new setting (Black et al., 1991; Shaffer and Harrison, 1998). However, also an increasing group of scholars have taken the stance that a good fit within the organizations is not only up to the expatriate (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2012); also the organization’s social actors play an important role in this and must take action to comprehend what drives such newcomers and what makes them being satisfied with the job they perform in order to establish a long-lasting relationship. Traditional members of the organization can be of great help in supporting the foreigner to adjust quicker (Toh and Denisi, 2007). Managers dealing with international employees might have a crucial role in this as they are often the first reference to the organization and are held responsible for their subordinates’ actions. This means social exchange between the two need to take place.

The departure point of this study was to investigate expatriates’ perceptions of social interaction with their manager within international companies as a moderator for employee retention, consequently employee turnover. As this study and the outcomes of this study rely on the perceptions of the expatriates as well as of that of the researcher, a definition of perception is in place:

‘’the act or process of becoming aware of internal or external sensory stimuli or events, involving the meaningful organization and interpretation of those stimuli. In psychology, perception also applies to evaluations of one's own and others' internal states and beliefs as well as sensory stimuli and a person's perceptions are not necessarily identical to the stimulus object or event being perceived. For example, a person's perceptions of their ability might not match their actual ability.’’ (Dictionary of Sport and Exercise Science and Medicine, 2008)

Continuing, as social interaction involves so many things, the researcher narrowed this to perceptions of the leader-member exchange relationship. Graen et al. (1995) established the LMX-theory in order to understand how high-quality relationship between a leader and follower can be formed. The existence of LMX theory emerged as there was a common understanding that negative relationships between leaders and members predicted employee turnover. The theory assumes that all members in an organization have the equal opportunity to establish a relationship with their leaders. Those leader-member exchange relationships are containing four characteristics which are job role, exchange, influence and interest. The four are intertwined with one another and when assessed jointly can specify in what phase an LMX-relationship is in. Although the characteristics of the theory function in a dynamic environment, the phases however are quite strict set (see page 28-31 of this paper for further explanation). In light of the constructivistic stance this master thesis is built on the characteristics jointly and separately can be used as variables, however the phases cannot. However, the focus of this thesis is not interested in identification of the phase an expatriate perceives the relationship to be in; the focus of the thesis is on the perceptions of an expatriate on the relationship with the manager and whether one perceives this as important on their overall emotional well-being of the job, called job satisfaction.The expatriates’ perceptions of the LMX-relationship they hold with their manager is the studied phenomenon. Furthermore, this study specifically focuses on the perceptions of self-initiated expatriates rather than organizational expatriates. Self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) are international employees who decided themselves to start working in a new country within a new company; organizational expatriates (OEs) are assigned a job abroad by the company they work at. The main difference is that for OEs relocation was proposed by the company, which often affects support of the organization on practical, material benefits and perhaps other behavioral matters (Lo et al. 2010).
As SIEs might value and perceive the importance of the relationship with a foreign manager in a different way than with a local manager (as both are abroad) the researcher finds it exciting to understand whether employees working with a local manager perceive the relationship in a different way than SIEs having a foreign manager.

Little research have yet focused on LMX-relationship between managers and SIEs. Through understanding what characteristics of LMX-relationships are perceived as satisfying the needs of these people, the researcher wants to understand the impact of this dyadic relationship on job satisfaction. Finally, it is commonly understood that job satisfaction can be increased when the relationship one holds with the manager is good as well as by other factors related directly to the manager or the organization like recognition, feedback and support, personal growth (Field, 2008).

**Problem formulation**

Deriving from the understanding it takes two to build a relationship, I am interested in how relationship one holds with a manager impacts his or her job satisfaction. Therefore the problem formulation of this master thesis is: **Taking self-initiated expatriates working at MNCs working either with a local manager or working with a foreign manager, this study investigates the impact of the leader-member exchange relationship on the expatriated employees’ perception of job satisfaction.**

Three sub questions can support this problem formulation:

* To what extent is there a difference in expatriates’ perceptions concerning the leader-member exchange relationship?
* Do expatriates relate these perceptions to their job satisfaction?
* What other factors play a role in expatriates’ job satisfaction according the respondents?

**Overview**

This thesis consists of six chapters, including the introduction. The following chapter addresses the researcher’s methodology. Philosophical stances are elaborated followed by the research design, which show under what conditions theory and interviews were set up and analyzed. Then, the theoretical chapter highlights theory on expatriates, job satisfaction and various theories on social interaction. The theoretical framework shows which theories were chosen. This is followed by the analysis chapter which shows how collected data was analyzed, chosen theory was analyzed as well it answers the questions proposed above.. Continuing, limitations of the study are addressed followed by a concluding chapter which reflects upon this study.

**2. Methodology**

The following chapter explains what elements this master thesis is built on, regarding the philosophy of science and the different elements of the research design. Deriving from specific philosophical stances the researcher attempts to come up with his own view on the research topic, and follows a specific research plan, for the reader to understand exactly under what conditions this study was built.

**Philosophy of science**

The ontological stance this research is built on is relativism. The presentation and reality is depending on the researcher and context of the mental framework. Referring to Guba, “Realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the person who holds them” (1990: 27). The researcher expects throughout the research different interpretations and experiences on one´s exchange relationship with the manager and on the role the latter places on one´s general well-being at work.

As this master thesis relates to different fields in organizational studies like organizational leadership and organizational culture, for the reader it is important to understand those concepts. The sub study organizational leadership still gains little attention to study within constructivism paradigm. The body of literature is becoming bigger since 15 years (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010; Stock and Genisyureck, 2012) and this study is an addition to it. But finally it is understood that leadership and communication as an enabler for practicing leadership is a social and cultural phenomenon. This makes leadership

‘’co-constructed, a product of sociohistorical and collective meaning making, and negotiated on an outgoing basis through a complex interplay among leadership actors, be they designated or emergent leaders, managers and/or followers’’ (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010: 172).

Understanding organizational culture, and organization as a social entity existing in this environment, it is obvious that organization is an adapting, developing object that uses information to make sense of changes in its external surroundings (Choo 1998: 1). The organization can adapts to thrive in this dynamic environment, as the actors can change and revise rules and goals (Bryman 2008: 19-20; Choo 1998: 2). Related to this study the interaction between different human actors is part of that dynamic environment. In this case I want to find out how international employees perceive their relationship with their manager and how this can affect aspects of job satisfaction – job satisfaction an important indicator for retention. High-quality relationships as understood from the leader-member exchange theory (further explained in the theoretical chapter) can affect several positive factors leading to an individual’s higher job satisfaction.

Individuals play a major role in the social construction of reality. People create culture and can change their idea on the organization continuously (Bryman 2008: 20). In order to understand organizational culture one must not only understand what organization is, as well an understanding of culture is necessary. A lot of discussion was on what culture actually consists of. In order to gain a genuine understanding of culture, and in regards to this study of cross-cultural interaction, Triandis and Brislin (1983) wrote a paper about cross-cultural psychology. They analyzed several definitions of culture and found no applicable universal definition to fit for several scenarios when using or referring to culture. An important generalization by Herskovits is ‘’culture is the man-made part of the human environment’’(Triandis and Brislin, 1983; 1006). This environment can involve physical (objects) and subjective (cognitions, attitudes, behaviors associated with the prior) culture. Interaction between people with various cultures in the same area can cause conflicts, as one interprets something different than the other. Triandis and Brislin referring to psychologist Clifford Geertz’ definition of culture,

‘’Culture denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life.’’(Triandis and Brislin, 1983: 1007).

By perpetuating, communicating and developing knowledge and attitudes the creation of culture is an ongoing process. Although Triandis and Brislin refer to cultures as a group of people with a certain mindset thinking and evaluating in similar ways, this definition highlights as well the ability that individuals within a group can have different cultures. Culture can be to some extent a collective mindset and perhaps a national mindset, but at the very same time is something personal. Studies in psychology have shown that persons who have moved from country to country several times in their childhood seems to have no feeling of national identity to hang onto. They often have the feeling to lack roots assigned to a specific geographical area and are not member of a specific country. However, this person shaped a specific idea about and how he/she acts in this world, created through past events and viewed from this individual standpoint. Also Bryman acknowledges the fact that people create culture, and it is the individuals that play an important part in the social construction of social reality. Also, culture relies on history which shapes perceptions of individuals (2006: 20). In regards to the case of this study, constructivism helps to understand the clash of cultures: individual and organizational, as a consequence to find out if there is a harmonic playground to work in perceived by expatriates for them to fit in the organization (Schein in Choo, 85). In this ever-globalizing world one should expect for an organization to hire expatriates the organization and the member of the organization are able and willing to adapt to this happening.

The interpretivist approach is chosen from the epistemological position, meaning that by interpreting actions and behavior, people’s world and how they see it can be understood. Interpretivism seeks to understand the causes of particular behavior. It is important to know that some levels of interpretation take a role in this research: the researcher interprets the respondents’ interpretations of their world, furthermore he construes those in reference to the literature of discipline, concepts and theories. Also I am fully aware that the study is subjective as also knowledge is socially and culturally constructed (Kim, 2001). As earlier explained reality is mentally constructed and the researcher sees a subjective pose as crucial to get to these constructions. The researcher has chosen to follow the deductive approach. Theory is the basis for this social research and serves as a framework to understand social phenomena. In an attempt to answer the problem formulation, firstly an extensive amount of literature have been employed and important concepts in relation to the problem formulation were deduced (see the following chapter) and is followed up by the researcher´s own collected data. Guba illustrates,

“[…] no theory can ever be fully tested because of the problem of induction. There are always a large number of theories that can, in principle, ‘explain’ a given body of ‘facts’. Thus no unequivocal explanation is ever possible. There can be many constructions, and there is no foundational way to choose among them ‘reality’ can be ‘seen’ only through a window of theory, whether implicit or explicit.” (1990: 25).

So also theories can be under constant change of construct. Fairhurst and Grant while explaining why one scholar privileging theory and the other privileging praxis, refer to Artistotle who ‘’identified a unique kind of art, praxis, in which the goal of the study was not truth (episteme), but practical wisdom (phronesis)’’ (2010: 182). Shedding light on this study, the researcher believes that the chosen theories he has taken will evolve and are under influence of change because of interpretation.

**Conceptual framework**

Literature in the field of organizational sciences specifically focused on social interaction and literature on expatriates as a distinct group of employees, which are elaborated in the following chapter. It provides me the background for the creation of concepts. The study deals with three main concepts:

* **Self-initiated expatriates (SIEs):** an employee who applied him- or herself for a job in another country than his home country, with which is not he/she is not familiar with. He or she initiated the expatriation process him-/herself. He/she desired a job in a foreign country and moved thereto or he/she lives in the host country since a short period. In general, a job is not arranged for them by the previous employer (Howe & Schyne, 2001; Froese and Peltokorpi, 2012; Lo et al., 2012). In this master thesis important differences between SIEs working with a local manager (working in country of origin) and those working with a foreign manager (working abroad, like the SIE does) are to be emphasized after the data analysis;
* **Affective job satisfaction:** ‘’satisfaction that is based on overall positive emotional appraisal of the job,’’(Moorman, 1993: 50; Locke, 1976: 1300), and focuses on whether the job evokes a good mood. In relation to this study, when doing interviews, questions relate to a respondent’s feelings, instead of to logical, rational evaluation of the job (Moorman, 1993: 50-51);
* **Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) relationship characteristics:** LMX Theory is‘’a prescription for generating more effective leadership through the development and maintenance of mature leadership relationships’’ primarily with subordinates or followers (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; 220). LMX-relationships consist of four characteristics which are job role; (interaction) exchange; influence, and interest and will be assessed separately and combined.

**Research design**

A construction of certain individuals working in organizations in a specific setting is the social phenomenon to be studied for this study; a cross-sectional design will be used for this study as each case is unique to the other. Although there are many similarities with a case study each respondent is in a specific organizational setting, which makes one case unique to the other. This phenomenon can be explained by using quantitative measures, but explaining this in-depth in this related to this thesis’ topic seems tough as the processes are complex and difficult to grasp (Bryman, 2008: 45-47). Also there is some overlap with a comparative design as the researcher as well studies the difference between respondents with a specific type of manager; one group contains employees with a foreign manager and the other a local manager (Bryman, 2008: 58). However, the study is primarily interested in the perceptions of actors on the various characteristics of leader-member exchange relationships; a qualitative research strategy enables this.

**Interviews**

In order to collect data to answer the research question, the researcher made use of semi-structured interviewing. An interview guide was used with standard, open-ended questions (see appendix XI), so that the interviews and important data deriving from the interviews, occurred naturally. Furthermore, this method gives the researcher room to: address specific ad hoc questions related to the respondent´s answer, for example to get a better understanding of one´s perception on a certain event and to get a better understanding whether the perception is only related to one specific event. In this way the researcher can address new questions which he thinks are worth asking at a certain point in the interview and can clarify respondents´ earlier mentioned answers. On the other hand it gives the respondent the opportunity to elaborate certain topics and he or she is able to influence the interview construction (Bryman, 2008: 26, 48, 53, 437; Stock and Genisyureck, 2012: 3263; Graebner and Eisenhardt, 2004). I collected data on two theories of which one deals with relationships between expatriates and managers: the cases of several expatriates working in various organizations; and the second deals with the expatriate´s emotional state of mind related to the job.

Individuals were selected through snowball sampling. The main problem of such sampling method that Bryman addresses is that snowball sampling is not representative of the population (2008: 185), in this case expatriates working at large international corporations, however generalization is also not the aim of this study. Besides, it gives the possibility to understand if and what perceptions of the specific aspects belonging to the LMX-relationship have an influence on job satisfaction. Several people in my personal sphere were either themselves working as an international employee or knew people who were working together with international co-workers. For the reader it must be clear that interviews were conducted with people working at organizations in Northern and Western Europe. Respondents were chosen who worked no longer than three years in a specific country and in a large company, initiated their expatriation themselves and were working at multinational corporations. The oldest one was 34 and the youngest 21. Six employees worked with a local manager, four worked with a foreign manager. Also some questions were addressed and results taken into account to find out if the people indeed fit to a specific profile and, perhaps, if there was a difference to be found between several employees in their evaluation of the exchange relationship with their manager. These questions functioned as background information in order to understand a little bit more about the respondent related to this topic. Also it could be possible that they are to be identified as important variables, at a later stage in the research process. The following questions were asked before the interview could take place: age; experience abroad; period already living in the country; period already working for the company; position in the company; whether the manager was working with more internationals; nationality of the supervisor; reason to work for this company, and reason to work abroad.

Within this study´s paradigm there is room to address questions related to past experiences, current experiences and address questions related to fictive experiences or to experiences which did not yet occur (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 114; Obembe, 2007: 95), like ‘According to you, how should the best possible relationship look like, between your manager and you?’, ‘Suppose you would want to work much longer with your manager, what things within the relationship you want to see changed?’ or ‘Suppose you will change your job, what important elements in the relationship with your current manager do you want to see in your relationship with a future manager; what things not?’

Table 1 shows the finally selected sample of respondents, followed by table 2, which shows answers related to background information of the selected respondents.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respondents working with foreign manager | 4 |
| Respondents working with local manager | 6 |

Table 1. Sample of selected respondents with local or foreign manager

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Res-pon-dent** | **Age** | **ProfessionalExperience abroadin countries (C) and years (Y)** | **Amount of time in the country, in months (M)** | **Time working for the company** | **Manager working with more internationals** | **Supervisor Foreign (F) or Local (L)** | **Why this company** | **Why working abroad** |
| 1 | 26 | 2C; 2Y | 1 y | 10M | Yes | Local | Attractive brand | Career perspectives |
| 2 | 24 | 3C; 40M | 1 ½ y | 3M | Yes | Local | Interesting assignment | Career perspectives |
| 3 | 26 | 10M | ½ y | 5M | Yes | Foreign | Salary | Experience; career perspectives |
| 4 | 28 | 3C; 36C | ¾ y | 9M | No | Foreign | Large organization in transition phase | Experience, cultures, languages |
| 5 | 25 | 2C; 1,5Y | ½ y | 6M | Yes | Foreign | Creative job | Country; adventure |
| 6 | 21 | 2C; 4Y | 2 ½ y | 5M | Yes | Local | MNC; Job description | Experience; career perspectives |
| 7 | 32 | 2C; 4Y | 2 ½ y | 31 M | No | Local | Dream | Job and company |
| 8 | 34 | 1C; 2Y | 2 y | 9M | Yes | Local | Nice work environment | Work-life balance |
| 9 | 26 | 2C | 2 y | 9M | Yes | Foreign | Future career | Financial rewards |
| 10 | 25 | 1C; 3Y | 2 ½ y | 32 M | Yes | Local | - | Career perspectives |

 Table 2 Background information of selected respondents

**Research steps**

The table on the following page shows the methods used throughout the master thesis, starting with. literature analysis which gave dimension to this study, followed by collection of data through interviews which had to be analyzed. In order to analyze, interviews were transcribed and are found in the appendices (I-X). The constructivist approach recognizes that theoretical level of analysis emerge from the researcher’s interaction within the field and questions about the data, therefore an inductive direction of the deduction must be noticed as well. In step three of the research, implications of the outcome for the chosen theory and associated findings within the research field, are concluded (Bryman, 2008: 9, 549) (Vogelezang and Pazeraite, 2012). Table 3 shows the steps for this master thesis.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Steps** | **Objectives** | **Data sources** | **Analysis tools** |
| 1. Conceptualizing leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships in relation to job satisfaction
 | Building a cognitive background for the study;Creating a clear and general understanding of the phenomenon. | Corresponding literature to the field of the research | Literature analysis |
| 1. Empirical review of the conceptualization
 | Collecting relevant data, transcribing and analyzing relevant data | Reviewing primary data on the perceived characteristics of LMX-relationship s and its impact on job satisfaction | Qualitative content analysis |
| 1. Revision of the theory
 | Verify chosen theory with set concepts | Outcomes of the step 1 and step 2 | Findings analysis |

Table 3 Research plan

**Ethical implications**

Ethical aspects must be taken into account as people are being studied for this thesis. To get as relevant and transparent information as possible, the participants were informed about who the researcher is, and the general theme was also presented to them. Thus, to ensure that their responses were sincere and not made to suit the research or hide any negative opinion, the researcher promised confidentiality meaning that their names are erased from the transcriptions as well as company names. In case the researcher thought department or product names or any other specific information about a certain environment could be traced back to a respondent, this was discussed with the respondent and erased from the interview. As well during the interview there sometimes were moments of talk which were not critical to the study, those are deleted and in some cases called [social talk]. To protect the participants, they were informed that they could refuse to answer a question at any time if they did not feel comfortable or withdraw their data within two weeks after the interview took place. So, respondents’ answers are treated anonymously and response cannot be traced back to the respondent ( Bryman 2008: 118-124).

**Criteria for assessing qualitative research**

Qualitative research cannot be evaluated with criteria used in quantitative research as these two exist in different paradigms. This study written within the constructivism paradigm makes me, a subjective entity, part of the data creation process (Guba: 1994, 109). Assessing qualitative research is widely embraced to take parallels with assessing quantitative research, which is odd, as the two are in two different paradigms. Still, a lot of scholars refer to this as the best way for evaluation (Bryman, 2006: 376-377; Guba and Lincoln 1994: 114; Hirschman; 1986). Two main criteria are trustworthiness (with the four criteria credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) and authenticity (fairness, ontological, educative, catalytic and tactical authenticity). Trustworthiness is widely embraced as supportive for assessing qualitative research. The latter, the authenticity criteria is doubtful. However I will explain them as this researcher sees the relevance of it, but first starting with the criteria for trustworthiness:

* *Confirmability* is concerned with that the researcher acted in good faith. Although within social research it seems impossible to ensure full objectivity, confirmability must make sure the study was not obviously steered in certain direction or by personal preferences of the researcher. Therefore, a friend of mine reviewing more social qualitative research, a fellow student and a professional supervisor have read, made suggestions and critique where necessary (Bryman, 2006: 379; Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 109).
* *Transferability:* as this study focuses on a small group of individuals who chose to work abroad. Results of qualitative research need to be placed in a certain context, and therefore depth instead of breadth is more important as the researcher tries to understand a phenomenon within the social world. This study is transferable and could have been done somewhere else with other people, however the opinions and responses will be different as these are always in construction, and people have different beliefs and attitudes, therefore I cannot tell if the results would be the same as the outcome of this study (Bryman, 2006: 378; Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 109).
* *Dependability:* this portfolio is conducted by one person, which has the weakness of not being able to compare the subjective interpretations made by the researcher to other interpretations. The fact that it has not been possible to constantly compare elements and therefore determine what elements are consistent across interpretations makes this portfolio less dependable, compared to studies done by more researchers (Bryman, 2006: 378; Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 109).
* *Credibility:* as constructivist, I derive from the belief people really are as they appear to be. If I had any doubt about what an interviewee mentioned, I asked for clarification during the interview as well as sometimes I summarized what the interviewee said in order to check my perceptions. Further, I am not able to discover if any of the respondents purposefully lied or manipulated their ‘true’ opinions.

Followed by the four criteria related to authenticity:

* *Fairness* deals with whether the researcher represents different viewpoints among the different respondents. The researcher tried to understand as good as possible the different social settings in which the respondents were in. also during the interview the researcher adjusted questions where necessary on specific notable elements related to respondents’ social setting;
* Simultaneously in this study, it deals with *educative authenticity* as the researcher not only tries to understand the respondents, but sometimes to help them look from a different perspective related to a specific situation in which their superior could be in;
* also, try to help them to understand the social setting they are in and enlarge their social construction, which relates to *ontological authenticity* (in the case of R3 (see appendix (app.) III);
* It may be said that the researcher supported some respondents, for example in the case of R2 (app. II and R9 (app.IV), by proposing questions on why he or she did not follow up on and discuss a certain happening which he or she perceived as negative in relation to the manager: this can be referred to as *catalytic authenticity*. Through not just creating a formal relationship the researcher tried, by creating a more informal relationship during the short-time dyadic interview which sometimes gave the researcher the possibility to indeed empower them to go into action (*tactical authenticity*) (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 114). In the case of R9 who was one of the respondents who was affected hugely by her relationship with the manager, R9 send the researcher a week later a note that she was trying to stay within the company. The researcher replied whether the interview had to be done again, but she mentioned that the elements that affected her happiness were not changed.

 The authenticity criteria are not widely embraced by researchers, as it is not clear whether it indeed is an add-on for outcomes in social research (Bryman, 2008: 380; Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 114). However, whether it indeed has or hasn’t got an impact on the outcome, the researcher of this social study understands his role. In fact, he places his interview at the same importance of any other social conversational interaction and he understood in advance that this role could be a stimulus for respondents to change attitudes or behaviors because of the addresses issues within the interview. Respondents have the ability to reflect upon and evaluate their own satisfaction within their job, which could influence their future actions.

**Theoretical background**

The aim of this study is to investigate whether the relationship between an expatriate and a manager influence the expatriate’s positive emotional appraisal of the job. This study does not seek to generate new theories as earlier mentioned. This literature background provides the basis for the presented chosen concepts and assures that the reader understands it correctly. Following in order, first literature on expatriates is discussed, secondly job satisfaction is elaborated, followed by several theories on social interaction between manager and employee. Finally a summary of chosen theories are explained together with the presentation of the theoretical framework.

**Expatriates**

Expatriates are a group of employees working abroad, either assigned by the company to work at a location in a new country or initiated their process themselves to work in a new country. They can be distinguished in two groups: the first group are organizational expatriates and (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2012: 4) work for a corporation or a (non)governmental institution in which part of the job is to work in a different country; the second group is a group of international employees who decided themselves whether they start working in a new country. Especially now that mobility is at a tipping point together with the vanishing of national boundaries in Europe (reference Worldwatch, 2004: 41) it seems to only become easier to move abroad. Because of this, the second group of expatriates becomes more and more interesting to be studied on by various scholars like Howe and Schyne (2010), Liu and Ipe (2010) and Lo et al. (2012). Froese and Peltokorpi define the two types of expatriates, as ‘’organizational expatriates (OEs), who are dispatched by their companies to international posts, with self-initiated expatriates (SIEs), who by their own volition move and work abroad have various differences and implications for HR departments’’ (2010: 53). OEs most of the time remain ties with the home country office or the head quarters, are abroad for a specific period (time- or assignment-related) and often receive support from the local and global HR department, like extra material compensation, help in searching for accommodation, schools and a job for the partner, free language courses and pre-departure preparation. SIEs on the other hand are not supported in material compensation and other extra benefits, prepared their departure themselves and in general do not apply for a job which is to be finished within a specific time-frame. The SIE applies for a job in another country than his home country. One could have applied for the job before leaving the home country but as well can it be that one applied while already living in the host country (e.g. finished study abroad, followed the love of his life) (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010: 53; Howe and Schyne, 2010: 262; Lo et al., 2012; 4211). Referring to Richardson and McKenney SIEs can be distinguished into four types, which are:

* the explorer, who is chasing adventure by moving abroad and working in a new culture;
* the mercenary, who works abroad primarily for financial improvement;
* the architect, who builds a plan related to chase and grow career wise;
* the refugee, who is more interested in leaving instead of arriving somewhere new (these can be political or economical refugees in the traditional idea - moving from poor country or country of which one is frightened for his or her life to first-world country. As well can this be because of other, more personal, circumstances and could involve e.g. an Englishman moving to The Netherlands (Howe and Schyns, 2010: 264).

Most research on expatriates, however, focused on OEs instead of SIEs. Several scholars studying expatriates and its implications for the organization focused on how to maintain expatriates. Especially emphasis was placed on how expatriates could adjust in the new country (Black et al.1991). Organizational, job and individual culture and non-work factors are influencers of cultural adjustment. ‘’Individual adjustment refers to self-efficacy and skills (relation perception). Job antecedents include role clarity, role discretion, role novelty, and role conflict. Organizational antecedents comprise organization culture novelty, social support, and logistic help. Non-work factors include culture novelty and family-spouse adjustment’’ (Black et al. 1991: 303), and is supported by many scholars among which Toh and Denisi (2007: 289). Black et al. distinguished expatriate adjustment in three facets, namely: work adjustment (dealing with work-related facets and could be used for measuring job satisfaction and job performance), interaction adjustment (e.g. feeling at ease in interaction, cooperating with locals), and cultural adjustment (e.g. not feeling alien, having social life and new accommodation) (1991: 301-304).

Shaffer and Harrison mention cross-cultural adjustment, only then as an important factor in their study on OEs’ reason to withdraw from the job. Referring to other scholars like Locke and Latham, and Conlond and Garland, they mention that there are some factors especially important when researching expatriates and their withdrawal cognitions within the international HR literature besides cross-cultural adjustment. These factors are the degree of assignment completion and non-work satisfaction. They refer to OEs as organizational expatriatess are assigned for a certain time and when completed the task, the expatriation project is done. However, it is worth elaborating as it addresses factors which also SIEs deal with. Changes in life outside work are relevant for the expatriate as a lot of things can be different, like housing, tax rules, and also the physical and social environment. Negative experience with such non-work factors impacts one’s satisfaction and can make them decide to leave the country and so quit the job. Cross-cultural adjustment is explained earlier in this paragraph. In the study of Shaffer and Harrison it was found especially that a lack of cross-cultural adjustment, lack of work adjustment and lack of satisfaction experienced by the spouse were most important reasons to quit the job. However, interaction adjustment seemed of less importance (1998: 92-93). Continuing, Wu and Ang suggest that an expatriate’s cultural intelligence is positively related with the received support he or she gets from the organization, which in its way impacts an expatriate’s cultural adjustment. According them, cultural intelligence also has an impact on job performance. Cultural intelligence, also abbreviated as CQ is ‘’the ability of individuals to acquire, store, and use cultural knowledge’’ (2011: 2683,2684, 2697). Lo et al. found that the level of embeddedness within an organization mediates between an SIE’s emotional attachment to the home country and willingness to go home and to extend the expatriate assignment by SIEs. They also mention social support from the organization as a moderator for higher retention rates (2012: 4227-4228). They studied CQ in an expatriate-dominated sector of tourism in Asia. So, not only is it important that the expatriate needs to adjust, a lot depends as well on the organization to support, keep and maintain expatriates.

Toh and Denisi (2010) acknowledge that in studies on expatriate’s well-being and performance in the organization too much emphasis is placed on the expatriate to adjust, and that also instrumental and emotional support and proactivity from the organization’s side on interaction between expatriates and human actors of the organization is insufficiently studied (2010: 281). That is in line with the researcher’s idea that it makes two to create a pleasant work relationship. Toh and Denisi found that socializing agents were much welcomed by expatriate managers and functioned as an accelerator for expatriate adjustment, whether this is a co-worker or a supervisor, and whether this person was assigned or not assigned to support socially and support in e.g. role information. Stress levels declined for those expats who were experiencing social support, friendship and mentorship among the host country nationals (2010: 282-284). They address theories of social identity theory and the leader-member exchange theory (LMX) (2010: 283-285). Liu and Ipe studied the moderating role of LMX in relation to an OE’s perceived organizational support (POS) of the parent company and to an organizational expatriates’ perception of organizational support of the local department and the role of an OE’s organizational commitment. They found that LMX especially played a role in an OE’s POS of the parent company. LMX and POS are explained later in this chapter as both of them deal with perceptions of support, interactions and relationship between several actors of an organization like management and expatriates.

**Job satisfaction**

According to former studies of various scholars, an employee’s satisfaction with his or her job is impacted by various job aspects. For example, communication and interaction between a manager (or supervisor) and employee seems to be a very important factor on employee job satisfaction (e.g. Jablin, 1979; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995; Eisenberger et al., 2010; Teven, 2007; Froese and Peltokorpi, 2012). The manager is often seen as the first and closest embodiment of the organization and acts as a socializing agent of the organization (Toh and Denisi, 2010: 281). The manager has to manage responsibilities which affect the employee and can influence e.g. the employee’s job role, rewards, support, guidance, supervision, and progress, but as well his general well-being and happiness at work.

The most broad definition of job satisfaction embraced by many organizational culture scholars (among Saari and Judge, 2004: 396; Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010: 50) is the one of Locke, who states job satisfaction is ‘a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences’ (1976: 1304). Job satisfaction is affected by job aspects, e.g. communication with colleagues, supervision by one’s manager, corporate social policies, salary and rewards, job conditions, workload, personal interests, et cetera. Job satisfaction is to be divided by affective and cognitive elements. There are two common types of job satisfaction, namely *global job satisfaction*, which refers to the overall feelings regarding the job; and *job facet satisfaction*, which looks at specific factors influencing one’s feelings on the job and what aspects can be improved for a higher job satisfaction (Saari and Judge, 2004: 396). Saari and Judge (2004), Moorman (1993) and also Thompson and Phua (2012) make a clear distinction between the cognitive side and the affective side of job satisfaction. For example, Thompson and Phua in a response paper on criticisms of quantitative and qualitative measurements of affective and cognitive job satisfaction, where many scholars use qualitative and quantitative measurements of cognitive and affective aspects of job satisfaction in the wrong way, they come up with a new job satisfaction measure including cross-population invariance like nationality, job level and job type (2012: 275). They also come up with a clear distinctive description between the affective and cognitive job satisfaction. According to Thompson and Phua, affective job satisfaction is defined as

‘’a “unitary concept” (Kallenberg, 1977, p .126) embracing an “overall positive emotional” (Moorman, 1993, p. 761) response to a job as a whole or in general. In this affective sense, “job satisfaction can be considered as a global feeling about [a] job” (Spector, 1997, p. 2). Affective job satisfaction is thus synonymous with what researchers sometimes term general, overall, or global job satisfaction, and is appropriately measured with items tapping how much people subjectively and emotively like their job as a whole.’’ (2012: 277)

and cognitive job satisfaction as defined by Thompson and Phua is based on

‘’ “a more logical and rational evaluation of . . . job conditions” (Moorman, 1993, p. 761), … “is a judgment [that] entails relating an existent to a cognitive . . . standard” (Locke, 1969 p. 316) with respect to what can be “a constellation of attitudes about various aspects or facets of [a] job” (Spector, 1997, p. 2). Cognitive job satisfaction, therefore, is “based on comparisons which do not rely on emotional judgments, but instead [on] evaluations of conditions, opportunities or outcomes” (Moorman, 1993, p. 762). As such, cognitive job satisfaction is appropriately measured with items tapping assessments of remuneration, opportunities, or numerous other discriminable job facets calculable in comparative or other reasonably objective terms (Locke, 1969)’’ (2012: 277-278).

The study of Saari and Judge focused on HR practitioner knowledge gaps on assessing job satisfaction and employee attitudes. They state that often, when investigating one’s job satisfaction, the perception of the work itself is overlooked, referred to as ‘’intrinsic job characteristics’’ (2004: 396-397; ). Self-evaluation, extraversion and conscientiousness are as well influencers on one’s job perception (2004: 397).

In order to better understand which factors can increase one’s job satisfaction and which factors can increase one’s job dissatisfaction, the model on the next page shows The Job Satisfaction Model of Field (2008). In regards of this master thesis especially the right sife of the model is important. Related to increase in job satisfaction the model shows that good leadership practices, good manager relationship, recognition of and advancement in the job, personal growth, feedback and support, and clear objectives are moderators to increase one’s job satisfaction. Interesting is that almost all of these factors in some way relate to an employee’s interaction with one’s manager. Good leadership practices and good manager relationship need no explanation, but e.g. recognition, feedback and support and clear objectives can be understood as part of these leadership practices, (Aube, 2011: 16). Also an employee’s personal growth and advancement can be stimulated by the supervisor/manager or not stimulated.. This is in line with studies by Jablin (1979), Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995), Eisenberger et al. (2010) Teven (2007),Froese and Peltokorpi (2012) and many more. Suppose one does a low-level job like packing shrimps in a factory. The job role is described and fixed. There is no room for people to grow in the job ,to take up extra-role activities which they are interested in or to be promoted, then personal growth and advancement is not much welcomed, either by the manager or the organization. which can result in job dissatisfaction. As the model shows, factors influencing job dissatisfaction do not necessarily have to influence one’s job satisfaction. This model shows the complexity of job satisfaction. However, this is quite a rigorous distinction and seen from the research paradigm this study focuses on, this can’t be taken for granted. Also, whether factors stimulating job satisfaction are similar for expatriated employees have not been investigated, however it gives a good direction what factors in general increase and decrease one’s satisfaction with the job.



Figure 1. Job Satisfaction Model according to Field (2008)

Compared to domestic work settings, little research has been done on job satisfaction in the international arena, on expatriates (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010: 49). As expatriated employees can be seen as a distinct group compared to the traditional employees (e.g. due to cultural encounters) as highlighted previously in the literature about expatriates, and in this ever-globalizing world, more research can be done on this field. Referring to Black et al., expatriate job satisfaction is described as ‘’the successful adjustment to overseas job requirements and the formation of relationships with the host country’s workforce and customers’’ (1991: 294).

However, there are studies focusing on job satisfaction from this group of employees which are beneficial to the literature on job satisfaction. For example, Froese and Peltokorpi (2010) studied the cultural distance perspective in relation to expatriate job satisfaction. The cultural distance perspective includes national cultural distance, supervisor’s nationality, host-country language proficiency, expatriate type (OE and SIE), and company nationality (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010: 51). They found that national cultural distance, supervisor’s nationality and expatriate type have a significant impact on perceptions of job satisfaction, whereas host-country language proficiency and company nationality had not. Expatriates having a foreign supervisor showed higher job satisfaction compared to those with a host-country supervisor (Benson and Pattie, 2009: 50); self-initiated expatriates show lower job satisfaction than organizational expatriates, and the differences in culture brought along more stress which cause lower job satisfaction (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010: 55-56). In another study Froese and Peltokorpi found that SIEs often have more interaction with local employees, because of better language proficiency and longer stay, and often have host-country (local) supervisors, the latter which seemed to impact job satisfaction . In general SIEs seem to adjust better to new culture settings than OEs (2012: 7-8).

**Theories on employer-employee interactional exchange relationships**

This study studies an employee’s perception on the interaction and in general the relationship between a manager and an employee. For this reason this paragraph discusses some theories which could be used to study the interaction and communication within this dyad. The superior-subordinate communication, the organizational support theory (OST) and the leader-member exchange theory (LMX) are explained.

***Superior-subordinate communication theory***

Continuing with the relationship between managers and employees, and reviewing literature on communication between the two actors, first one must understand what superior-subordinate communication (or as others could call it, supervisor-subordinate, leader-member or manager-employee communication) may consist of. Jablin came up with this theory in which two aspects play a main role:

* downward communication;
* upward communication.

Downward communication consists of five main facets, which are job instructions, job rationale, organizational procedures and practices, feedback about subordinate performance, and indoctrination of goals. Upward communication consists of four facets which are information about the subordinate him- or herself, information about co-workers and their problems, information about organizational practices, and information about what needs to be done and how can it be done (Jablin, 1979: 1201-1202). Furthermore, he emphasizes the role of openness in communication, in message sending as in receiving. Openness in communication is important in the relationship between a manager and an employee, as it impacts employee’s self-esteem, satisfaction and supervisor credibility (Tevens, 2007: 156). In general, Jablin puts as? much emphasis on the side of the employer as of the employee in interaction back and forth. One important element is missing in this theory as nowhere is the personal aspect included.

***Organizational Support Theory and Perceived Organizational Support***

Using primarily literature review studies of Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) and Baran et al. (2012), Organizational Support Theory and Perceived Organizational Support are explained below. Where Rhoades and Eisenberger reviewed some 70 studies concerning POS (up till 2000), and revealed the impact that POS has on several employee-favored attitudes (like job satisfaction and motivation) and organization-favored attitudes (organizational commitment and withdrawal cognitions), Baran et al. review literature from 2000 to the present and discuss new angles which benefit and advance the theory.

According to Eisenberger, founder of the theory, Organizational Support Theory supposes that

‘‘to determine the organization’s readiness to reward increased workeffort and to meet socioemotional needs, employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being’’ (Eisenberger, 1986: 500; Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002: 698; Baran Shanock, 2012; 123).

Perceived Organizational Support is part of this theory and ‘’is also valued as assurance that aid will be available from the organization when it is needed to carry out one’s job effectively and to deal with stressful situations’’ (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002: 698). So, ‘’OST can be understood as the development, nature and outcomes of POS … OST maintains that, based on the norm of reciprocity, workers trade effort and dedication to their organization for such tangible incentives as pay and fringe benefits and such socio-emotional benefits as esteem, approval, and caring’’ (Baran et al., 2012; 124). Three prime topics affect and increase employees’ perceptions on favorable treatment from the organization, which are - in order of importance of impacting POS -:

1. Fairness;
2. Supervisor support;
3. Organizational rewards and job conditions.

*Fairness* to determine distribution of resources can be understood as procedural justice, and there is a distinction to be made between structural and social aspects. The structural side emphasizes the space there is for employees to be involved in the decision and implementation process of formal rules and policies which affect the organization and its employees. The social side is often called interactional justice; it emphasizes interpersonal treatment like the way to treat employees in general, but also relates to information distribution and openness in communication (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002; 700). Several scholars like Toh and Denisi (2007), Liu and Ipe (2010) suggest that *supervisor support* takes a special place in the quality of exchange between organization and employee. Supervisors function as socializing agents and take an important place in POS. The relationship with one’s supervisor, good or bad, is by most employees directly linked with the organization (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002: 701). Also HR practices take an important position in POS. Shore and Shore found that *rewards and job conditions* like recognition, promotions, job certainty, independence and training affect POS. Recognition and promotions are linked positively to perceived organizational support as well as job certainty; role ambiguity and role conflict decreased POS significantly. Also the size of the organization matters; in general in large organizations people feel less valued. There is little flexibility due to formal rules and it can then be difficult to meet the employees’ needs (Eisenberger and Rhoades 2002: 701).

Baran et al. reviewed studies on OST and POS from 2001 and found that certain themes impact the traditional OST. These themes are important in development of the theory (2012: 124-126). Four themes are especially impacting e theory. They are:

* Globalization issues;
* Changes in employee-employer relationships;
* Emphasis on, new factors influencing the view on organizational support;
* Employee well-being.

*Globalization issues:* An example is a study done by Liao et al. (2004). Results of their study indicated that if supervisor and employee have a different ethnicity than the organization, both of them bond less with the organization. Moreover they seem to put less emphasis on establishing a good relationship with the organization, or connecting and identifying with the organization. Where the supervisor functions as a socializing agent and identifies less to the organization, he seems less to affect employees with the organization’s unique attributes (values, norms, culture, etc), which lowers perceptions on organizational support (Baran et al. 2012: 135-136).

*Changes in employee-employer relationships:* ‘Nontraditional work relationships’, referring to Kallenberg (2000), include employees not working at one office location, having short-term contracts compared to the traditional, long-term contracts, working different hours or part-time, or working for a staffing company and assigned to a different company. Such change factors are important when it comes to organizational theories and impact outcomes of studies using such theories (Baran et al., 2012: 132).

*Emphasis on multiple factors found to influence the view on organizational support* like co-worker relationships, relationship with the supervisor, POS experienced by teams or departments and the consequences of supervisor’s POS reflection. For example, Erdogan and Enders found in their study (2007) on supervisors’ perceived organizational support and subordinates having good relationships with the supervisor, that high POS of the supervisor is reflected on and positively linked to the subordinate’s POS, which is also supported by Tangirala et al. (2007) who did a similar study and also found that the relationship between the supervisor and his or her boss also affects subordinate’s POS (Baran et al., 2012: 136).

*Employee well-being.* While the Organizational Support Theory primarily looked at reciprocity as the explanation between POS and its outcomes like effort, motivation and well-being of the employee, these can be distinguished. Extra effort and motivation are important factors to solve felt obligation, whereas employee well-being cannot be directly related to felt obligation (or at much lower level). POS is still important for employee well-being in a way that employee-felt stressors (like burnout, anger, organization-base self-esteem) can be reduced and POS serves a buffering role. Secondly POS influences employee well-being perhaps as it makes sure the socio-emotional needs are met and provides a means of both informational and instrumental support (the first referring to providing the right resources and assistance, the latter referring to providing clarification or advice). Also work-life balance and features like dependent care assistance and flexible working schedule increase one’s well-being and POS, resulting in higher job satisfaction. (Baran et al., 2012; 126-131). POS is also related to job satisfaction, in a way that it should contribute to one’s satisfaction at work by increasing socio-emotional needs, availability of support and increase in reward expectancies. In the following figure, what is described above, the relationships suggested by OST are presented.

***Leader-Member Exchange Theory***

The leader-member exchange theory (LMX) is another way to investigate the manager-employee dyad. The theory originated from the Vertical-Dyad Linkage as an alternative to Average Leadership Style. Through the decades the theory was further developed by support of other scholars like Dansereau et al. (1975), Vecchio et al. (1986), Sherony and Green (2002), Lin and Ma (2003),Eisenberger et al. (2010), Erdogan and Bauer (2010) and Volmer et al. (2012). The LMX study has grown into a mature sub study within and crossing the fields of leadership and organization studies, and evolved into ‘’a prescription for generating more effective leadership through the development and maintenance of mature leadership relationships’’ (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995: 220), foremost with subordinates or followers. Other exchange theories related to organizational settings have arisen from this like co-worker exchange theory, team member exchange theory and work group exchange theory. Studies using such theories, built the LMX study, have focused on links between the different exchange processes and the effects these have on the several stakeholders (Sherony and Green, 2002: 542-543). The existence of LMX theory emerged as there was a common understanding that negative relationships between leaders and members predicted employee turnover. But why and which social phenomena were impacted by it was yet unclear (Graen et al. 1982; 868). Looking back on the last twenty years from the emergence of the LMX theory up to 1995, in a literature review scholars Graen and Uhl-Bien describe the most important progress the theory has made.

But first, understanding how LMX theory belongs to the field of study called organizational leadership is essential. Arguing that leadership is still genuinely referred to as the characteristics of a leader (trait, behaviors, styles, etc.) and which are to be effective or ineffective in specific situations, Graen and Uhl-Bien mention there are more domains in the field of leadership than solely the leader side. Other scholars acknowledge for one to fully understand the leadership concept one should take into account other levels involved in leadership, like the follower and the dyadic relationship between the leader and the follower (or dyadic linkage between superior-subordinate or manager-employee). The LMX model does not look at personal characteristics; it does not put emphasis on merely the leader as the domain, nor does it merely look at the follower as the domain, but on a third domain which is the relationship dyad, in which a leader and member participate (Graen et al., 1995: 221; Jablin, 1975: 1209). Whereas the leader-based domain focuses on a desired outcome through leadership styles and techniques in combination with a leaders’ personal behaviors, attitudes, traits, personality variables etc. and the follower-based domain on the same issues, together with e.g. followers’ expectations, the relationship-based domain focuses on issues like the identification of dyadic relationship characteristics (as mutual trust, mutual respect and sense of obligation to help the other) (Graen et al., 1995: 223).

*Evolution of theory of the relationship-based domain of leadership*

The evolution of LMX occurred in four stages. Referring to Graen and Ulh-Bien, in the following order, understanding the leader-member relationship occurred in four stages, which are

‘’stage 1 is the discovery of differentiated dyads; Stage 2 is the investigation of characteristics of LMX relationships and their organizations implications (e.g., outcomes of LMX); Stage 3 is the description of dyadic partnership building; and Stage 4 is the aggregation of differentiated dyadic relationships to group and network levels.’’ (1995; 225)

In stage 1, ‘’the discovery of differentiated dyad’’, was found that leaders do not hold an average leadership style but change their communication and manners of interaction when relating to followers. Through conducting own research and reviewing other scholars’ findings, they found that managers prefer to establish a group of people among them with which they hold ‘high-quality exchanges’ and the majority of people with which they hold low-quality exchanges. These exchanges are characterized by mutual trust, respect and obligations. However, the quality of the exchange is much lower with the majority of people with which they need to interact and communicate. These relationships are characterized by low levels of trust, respect and obligation, and managers mainly hold contractual agreements with this group. From this viewpoint employees are either perceived as an *in-group* or an *out-group member*. The first group not only does what is necessary for them to hold a position but acts beyond their responsibilities to do what is necessary for the company without being compensated materially. The second group is perceived as a necessity for the organization, department or team to keep on functioning (Graen and 1995; 226-227). Still, in this stage, the focus was on leader behavior and how leaders could make use of in-group and out-group members, because of leaders’ lack of time and lack of resources to develop the organization further. Various scholars up till today study LMX in this stage (Eisenberger et al., 2010; Erdogan and Bauer: 2010).

In stage 2 which is called ‘’the investigation of characteristics of LMX relationships and their organizations’ implications’’, the theory left the leader-based domain and made a shift towards the relationship-based domain. Not only did it build on extra findings supporting the first stage - differentiated relationships in a work unit -, knowledge was gained about how exactly relationships are formed .Research in this stage provides valuable information on the importance of high-quality relationships as beneficial for all stakeholders (e.g. for the management, the organization, teams and the individual actors); secondly it takes the development of behavior and characteristics of leaders and members into account when it comes to a developing LMX relationship : both which change through the role-making process. (1995: 227-228).

Stage 3, ‘’the description of dyadic partnership building’’, not only focuses on the relationship between a leader and a follower, but more on how partnerships are established (Graene et al, 1995; 229; Cogliser, 2009: 453). All employees should have the opportunity to establish high-quality relationships with their superiors. Moreover, through establishing more qualitative relationships, partnerships, it can result in more effective leadership and ensure solvability for the organization to grow. Instead of taking a descriptive stance towards establishment of relationships with employees, a prescriptive opportunity is offered which enables a more practical model of leadership development. Studies focusing on this stage – the possibility for all employees to establish a high-quality relationship with their manager – showed that those employees confronted with this opportunity performed much better. The process towards establishing a high-quality relationship occurs in three phases:

* the stranger phase;
* the acquaintance phase;
* the mature partnership phase.

*The stranger phase*, in which the exchange is based on contractual terms, meaning one does only what needs to be done for the job and has the opportunity to explore within fixed tasks; for the manager this means he or she only supplies the employee with what one needs to perform the job; the employee in general has no influence on changing the job role and there is little, but immediate exchange, especially when one starts the job.
*The acquaintance phase.* Transition to this phase commences with a career-oriented offer which could derive from either parties when an employee is tested on the job they need to perform. This phase is characterized by more social exchange, work- and nonwork-related, but there is slower exchange related to the job execution. The employee’s interest will include meeting the goals of the manager and getting to know the manager on a higher level.
*The mature partnership phase.* Transition to this phase can take a long time. It occurs when an emotional and behavioral relationship is built and both parties can rely on each other; employee’s influence on the manager is high, and influences and activities to maintain this ‘partnership’ are perceived as reciprocal. The employee has not only a (inter)personal centred interest, but goes as far as supporting in achieving goals of the whole team or organization.

It does not always occur that employees move from the stranger to the acquaintance phase, let along to the mature partnership phase (Graen et al., 1995: 229-231; Cogliser et al., 2009: 454). Think of a call center support department with clearly fixed tasks and no room and/or necessity for input of employees. Downward influence is then enough as also employees are not more active than necessary for the fixed role. Extra-role performance is not expected.



Figure 2. LMX Model

The model above explains the phases towards building high-quality relationships with a manager. This model shows quite a strict setting. Perhaps one could imagine not all manager-employee relationships have to go through all of the characteristics of each phase in this ordered manner. For example, think of a marketing expert starting a business development job in an organization, who has the task to explore innovative ways to market the organization in certain areas. The job role could be , but presumably the influence the intern has can be high in a short time frame, and the exchange can be of high quality. Or think of a personal assistant working for years for the president of a country. The president probably can rely on the PA but negotiating change in the job activities will be rare. Her interest can grow beyond her manager and herself and support the whole political party or delegation. The exchange between the two will probably be really high and perhaps the influence the PA has on her superior can be big. These are two extreme examples, but this just shows that looking at this model strictly is not possible. In light of this study’s research paradigm, . Furthermore looking at this study’s problem formulation, it is assumable that respondents when referring to, for example, their job role, they will as well mentioned valuable information about what they like and what they don’t like. This will not stop with their perception on the ability to negotiate their role or perform their ‘scripted’ role. Perceptions are the main ingredient to answer the questions, therefore widening the characteristics and let go of the fixed characteristics belonging to a phase. Perceptions can be understood as (uitleg perceptions). They are subjective in nature. Also Black et al. mention that elements related to a job involved e.g. role clarity, discretion and novelty. Taking a broader stance while understanding perception on job role, and in light of Black et al., Also, the revised theory on LMX-relationships do not explain exactly when a role is tested or in the ‘tested’ phase. As the model shows the researcher understands the LMX-characteristics as intertwined with the others, and therefore put together can impact job satisfaction. Although one of the characteristics can be dominant over the others and so, impact the other characteristics.

Relationships are dependent on interpersonal skills and a fit between two people which can cause certain characteristics of the model to be ahead of the other characteristics. However, the model supports me with a view of what an acquaintaince phase relationship ideally would look like according Graen’s theory..

Stage 4 called ‘’the aggregation of differentiated dyadic relationships to group and network levels’’ goes beyond the relationship between a leader and a follower and emphasizes on network levels within organizations, like cooperating teams which work cross-functional or cross-divisional. In most large organizations with complex projects and assignments it is realistic that projects occur in this manner. The earlier described differentiated dyadic relationships also are existent within such cross-sectional teams and with constructed teams crossing organizations. And then important issues come around the corner (Graen and Uhl-Bien,1995: 233-234). Before, LMX theory focused on establishing high quality relationships, but now, because of the amount of differentiated relationship in such groups or networks, questions arise as: should all members have high LMXs with all other members?, is there an amount of necessary low LMXs? etc. Although the review of Graen et al. (1995) dates already almost 20 years back, little research has focused on the fourth stage of LMX. It could be that the evolution of the theory in this stage is perceived as too difficult to grasp or too complex with all its variables.

Various scholars studied LMX. Stringer (2006: 134-135) and Cogliser (2009: 460) among others found in their quantitative studies that a high LMX relationship affects job satisfaction, while Cheung et al. (2012) found that job satisfaction can function as a mediator between LMX relationship and work outcomes. Vidyarthi et al. (2010) studied not only the LMX relationship, but as well looked at related theories like the effect coworker exchange (CWX) had on LMX and Yousaf et al. (2011) focused on the phenomenon some employees deal with, that is having two managers instead of one. Eisenberger et al. (2010) try to find a link between his created Organizational Support Theory and the effect LMX has on organizational commitment by introducing the concept of supervisor’s organizational embodiment (SOE). SOE can be explained as ‘’the extent to which employees identify their supervisor with the organization’’. In their studies they found that the more supervisors identified with the organization, the more they reflect this towards subordinates which affected a subordinates’ perception of SOE (2010: 1085). Making a long story short, no focus has been on LMX relationships between managers and international employees, whether those are OEs or SIEs, and in relation to job satisfaction.

**Summary of chosen theory**

In this chapter theories on the aspects of social interaction between managers and employees and job satisfaction were explained. In addition studies on and concepts of expatriate types were explained to get a better understanding of the specific phenomenon which this study focuses on.

This thesis studies job satisfaction experienced by an expatriate and the impact the Leader-Member Exchange relationship has on it. With regards to collecting data this thesis relies on perceptions of self-initiated expatriates (SIEs). SIEs are expatriates who initiated their expatriation themselves, either for career-building, adventure, personal improvement in financial or material terms or otherwise improving one’s personal emotional state of mind. This study does not focus on respondents’ various reasons to work abroad. Moving on, besides that SIEs need to adjust to the new culture proactively, also social support from the organization seems an important and appreciated element in order for him or her to adjust better and be happier in the job they execute. A supervisor or a manager functions then as a socializing agent (Toh and Denisi, 2007). In relation to this study Benson and Pattie (2009) and Froese and Peltokorpi (2010) found that SIEs having a foreign manager seemed to have a higher job satisfaction. The reason for this is, however, not explained in both their studies. This master thesis tries to find if there are in general perceived differences between the two groups. Moreover, the main theory of this master thesis is the LMX-theory. LMX-theory challenges the assumptions that leaders need to treat members in a collective way. After analyzing various theories, related to social support and interaction between employees and managers, this theory seemed the most salient theory to use. Leader-Member Exchange Theory of Graen et al. (1982) is a complex theory and deals with four main concepts in relation to the relationship between a manager and an employee which are: job role, exchange, influence and interest. The four characteristics seem intertwined according Graen’s model which shows the complexity of such a relationship. Because this study is primarily interested in the relationship between the manager and the international employee, so the relationship-based domain within leadership, the LMX theory seems suit this best. The third stage of the LMX theory, the focus on dyadic partnership building, complements the study’s advancement most. Dyadic partnership building can be explained as a relationship in transition, from not knowing each other wherein job roles are scripted, social exchange is low and one’s interest lies on oneself, up to some kind of partnership formation in the relationship between an employee and a manager in which equality, knowing each other and one’s interest lies on the team or the group, besides on oneself. Black et al. (1991) came up with a definition of expatriate job satisfaction, however this study relies on the definition of Locke (1976) as it better embraces the studied phenomenon.

With the researcher’s understanding that job satisfaction is not only increased by a relationship between a manager and an employee, as well as the master thesis addresses the impact of the LMX-relationship on job satisfaction, it means that as well other factors may have an impact. Below, the theoretical framework is presented.

Figure 3. Theory-based framework

**Analysis**

This chapter deals with the analysis of conducted data. The way the analysis occurred and was put into practice as well as how this chapter is constructed as a funnel. This means that the researcher worked from broad to narrow to come to a properly constructed conclusion. As earlier explained this study relies on data deriving from conducted interviews with ten self-initiated expatriates done by the researcher. In the following order data will be analyzed: first of all, respondents’ perceptions on the four LMX-relationship characteristics are explained in order to answer the first sub-question ‘To what extent is there a difference in expatriates’ perceptions concerning the leader-member exchange relationship?’; secondly, data deriving from the interviews on the LMX-relationship characteristics will be related to job satisfaction if possible, which answers the second sub-question ‘Do expatriates relate these perceptions to their job satisfaction?’; thirdly, other variables which have an impact on job satisfaction according the respondents will be mentioned and answers the third sub-question ‘What other factors play a role in expatriate’s job satisfaction?’. Finally, short summaries of the single interviews are created containing personal profiles according what the researcher thinks is most important related to what is mentioned by the respondents. This includes perceptions on the LMX-relationship characteristics and in some cases other variables that seems to impact one’s job satisfaction. This chapter is important for the reader to understand what data is perceived as most important according the researcher in relation to this thesis’ problem formulation.

**Perceptions on LMX-relationship characteristics**

In the following sub-paragraphs the perceptions on the four characteristics of the LMX-theory according the respondents are described. As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, the separate characteristics are intertwined with the others. When quoting certain respondents on their perception of one of the characteristics it is possible that the reader perceives elements within the quotes which can be related to one of the other characteristics. This is done unintentionally, except if it is mentioned in the context of the analyzed quote. Moreover, the researcher has chosen to avoid using a quote twice, where possible. Also, he has chosen to use an abundance of quotes in order to not lose important data. The researcher tried to best address the LMX-characteristics apart from one another, although as just highlighted he comprehends the connectedness between the various elements.

***Perceptions on the job one does***

Respondents perceive their job role in a different way, as this sub-paragraph will elucidate. Some speak very broadly about their experience of the job, others just briefly mention what is important for them to do the job and speak in general terms. It seems the more diverse or the more complex tasks one perceives, the more one speaks of various elements of the job, throughout the interview. Respondents who experience their job as a fixed, clear assignment, do not speak so broadly about all the feelings associated with the job. To begin with R3, when the researcher proposed a question related to whether he has the possibility to investigate and implement new ideas, R3 illustrates:

*‘’(…) if I have any ideas which I want to investigate myself, that is perfectly fine, as long as I stick to the job and achieve my goals. My target is main priority, and my target I can do wherever I want to do. But if I want to do a class on how to play football, than I can do a class on how to play football. (…) the thing is as long as you are able to reach your targets, you can achieve whatever you want.’’ (app. III, respondent 3, page 2)*

R3’s main task is achieving his sales target and this sales job is the reason why he works for this company. As described in the theory chapter with the example of a call center agent, the job tasks seem quite clear and specific. R8 is in a similar situation in which the job activities she needs to perform are clear. She knows the job well, but she starts to feel less satisfied with her job. She mentions, while speaking in address (or second person as it is often called):

*‘’ (…) you want to learn new things, you want to discover new things. You want to have new responsibilities and I think here is the issue.’’ (app. VIII, respondent 8, page 4)*

At the moment R8 is not in the position to assume new activities, because she is unsure whether her contract will be renewed. However, she experiences she needs some new challenges. Another respondent, R5, experienced that the job she was hired to do, analyzing and finding new marketing strategies for an internet company, was never put into practice. She had the feeling her managers seemed more convenient with giving her clear, scripted tasks and not the strategic activities which she was hired for. R5 illustrates that throughout the months

*‘’… I started to get the feeling that what I was doing was quite boring. (…) I started there because of a project but it seemed more, I more and more came to do those operational activities. And it seemed like there was no time for me to really work on the project what needed to be done. (app. V, respondent 5, page 2)*

Also management knew she was hired for something else, and she says

*‘’ (…) I had meetings with, ehm… manager for the content department and it was a bit difficult because also he couldn’t tell me how far I can go in my project. (...) and I couldn’t get to be creative so much’’ (app. V, respondent 5, page 3)*

Her managers did not clearly indicate what she could and could not do. She mentioned that she was in doubt. A little later in the interview related to her perception on the job, she mentions she could not fully express herself in the job and missed freedom:

*‘’you have to be creative when you are in marketing, let’s face it. You have to, I don’t know, take your own opinion, and especially if you are the one who knows the target than you should have the freedom to… try to adjust everything they do on global level to your own target.’’ (App. V, respondent 5, page 3)*

Unlike R5, other respondents were fortunate to perform they job they were hired for. R1, R2, R4 and R6 experienced their job as challenging and dynamic and perceived they had freedom to perform the job and felt responsible for their activities. Some quotes:

 *‘’ (…) I am definitely, well, not leading, but in charge of this project, but I am responsible. If I don’t do anything there is nothing going to happen. But in that sense of course I can also steer in that a little bit the direction within certain boundaries, because at the end of the day there is a goal. But, how I get to this goal and what techniques to use, I am free to use them.’’ (app. II, respondent 2, page 5)*

*‘’We [the manager and he] both know that the project is not that easy and ehm… You know he set initially a goal what we want to achieve in the end and this is quite ambitious I think… and the working towards it (…) And he says if we only reach half of the project than this is already still a very big step for the company.’’ (app. II, respondent 2, page 2)*

*‘’ (…) with everyone in the team he [the manager] asks us to do something, but he gives the whole responsibility to us. It doesn’t matter how we do it, when is it going to be finished, but it has to be finished in … well, it has to be finished, but he gives us a lot of freedom, freedom to do whatever we like and I think that’s really nice… because I don’t really like a manager who kind of dictates you what to do and tells you exactly how you should do it.’’ (app. VI, respondent 6, page 2)*

*‘’ (…) if people giving you responsibility, instead of following the rules, or whatever that is, so… (W: Yeah) For me it gives me a good feeling, it gives me more confidence, more self-esteem and that kind of stuff.’’ (app. VI, respondent 6, page 2)*

*‘’… I just do it and do everything by myself, I have to reach the proper person to get information, I will come up with a proposal and I will send it to him’’ (app. I, respondent 1, page 2)*

So, R2 and R6 clearly mention freedom and responsibility is very important to do their job. R6 tells that it gives her confidence and self-esteem. R1 also perceives freedom. R1 works close with the Chief of HR and a second HR officer. Later in the interview, when she speaks about one of her job activities, R1 relates the perceived freedom to trust from the manager:

*‘’(…) they started giving me assignments and stopped guiding me (…) if there wasn’t trust I wouldn’t be able to do that without being told what to do. Every single step what I have to do (…) if your supervisor or the line manager doesn’t have enough trust in giving you the right assignments or stretching your assignments, you’re never able to develop yourself and deliver the right results.’’ (app. I, respondent 1, page 6)*

Respondent 4, while evaluating the job she does, mentions

*‘’I think I get what other assistants do not get. They only work with one manager on one task. And I have to do so many things. I work with a lot of people, learn a lot of everything. And that creates an extra bond with all various people. So that makes people really happy and grateful to you.’’ (app. IV, respondent 4, page 7)*

So respondent 4 does not only look at her own job, she also perceives her job as different as other people with a similar positions. R2 mentions that comparing with other people in the organization he likes his job. He sees so many different things and it is really difficult, but challenging (app. II, respondent 2, page 4). So when one evaluates the job, he or she does not merely look at his own job role, also do they compare it with jobs of other people. R7 also makes a comparison. He compares his job at the company he works for with another company:

*‘’I am coming from some technologies that are open source, that are really dynamic, that we can build as fast as possible, a good product (…) our development for a new product can take half an hour, a small modification towards one or two weeks max. There, starts at three weeks, a small modification that I can ask. And sometimes you see a difference between the mindsets of a company.’’ (app. X, respondent 10, page 6)*

R7 and R10 seem to really like what they do and the company they work at. Both of them have a designer-developer job and work for almost three years for a company. R10 on his software developer job, and R10 on his toy designer job, mention:

*‘’Ehm… even now, after a while working here, I have almost three years here, the job is challenging. The job is challenging with this amount of database, and this amount of users, and eh… also really interesting information, that I can extract all the data, and that I can see, and work everything related to their information in a global way, makes it challenging.’’ (app. X, respondent 10, page 2)*

*‘’I mean I always like to work with [company´s product] outside my work.’’ (app. VII, respondent 7, page 2)*

Respondent 7, when referring to the fact he will skip his regular designer tasks for a week to join a global public event of the company,

*‘’That kind of event does so many things for the company I think. Yeah, and that should be a priority, as opposed to just work on projects, and that’s the kind of reason that makes you happy to do other projects working, where you can interact with kids, and all of the best teachers in the world. So, and if that’s not something that is important we are not working for everything’’. (app. VII, respondent 7, page 4)*

For R7 and R10 they look at their job as something which they have great affinity with, and also with the company and the product.

So one can already see that speaking about the perception one holds towards his or her job is related to other elements, apart which is of influence by the manager, like one’s responsibility, feelings of trust, confidence – as R1, R2, R4, R5 and R6 have described. To complement, R9 relates the job she does to the relationship with her new manager, as illustrated below:

*´´W: So, in general the job which you do right now (R9: Yeah) Would you say, is that challenging enough, for you the job itself, or eh…?
R9: Well it used to be. It used to be very inspiring. But eh… now… I feel like I need new challenges.
W: Why is that?
R9: Maybe it’s because the relationship I have with my new manager.´´ (app. IX, respondent 9, page 3)*

Where she used to experience a lot of interaction with her previous manager which kept her motivated and inspired, now R9 perceives clearly that her job role has some fixed elements in it. She needs to perform, needs to impress her manager weekly with new solutions and didn’t mind this when she had such a good relationship with her manager, but now things are changed. Furthermore, R8 for example likes the flexibility which is offered by the organization and mentions

*‘’I think the work environment is very nice, and you are very flexible. And for example you can work one day from home, and if you have a doctor appointment you can go, or whatever. There is very much flexibility… As long as you are doing your job, than nobody is chasing you.’’ (app. VIII, respondent 8, page 8)*

Respondent 2 likes the flexibility and perceives that as trust, which the company and his manager have in him. He can work at every moment of the day on his job, work at home or can walk in at every moment and pick a desk (app. II, respondent 2, page7). Like R2, also R4 mentions the flexibility in working hours and the fact that there are no fixed desks (app. IV, respondent 4, page 6). Both work at the same organization.

***Perceptions on exchange with the manager***

 *‘’I think it is really good that you first of all relax at work, not necessarily friends with your manager, but you have a normal relationship. You have respect, understanding. You know your manager tries to understand your ideas and not just say no because your ideas are different from his ideas’’ (app. V, respondent 5, page 4)*

This quote above explains good how much respondents looked at the interaction exchange between the respondent and the manager.

After addressing the importance of the perception on one’s job role and ending with R9 who depends on the positive interaction with her manager related to her experience of her job, this paragraph elaborates respondents’ perceptions on the exchange between manager and employee. Recurring and striking items mentioned by the ten respondents are mentioned.

Starting with R3, R3 does not experience much interaction. To him it is a formal relationship and the main priority is to perform the job as good as possible. Also the interaction with her is not specifically good or bad. He mentions

*‘’… people who are already for a longer time part of Google, also know her for a longer time, and that changes the personal relationship. For me it is still a bit formal, I would say, and for my colleagues it is less formal.’’ (App. III, respondent 3, page 2).*

Also he mentions that there are ways to perhaps improve the interaction exchange relationship by sometimes going to her office hours, but R3 prefers to sort out everything himself or ask a colleague (app. III, respondent 3, page 5-6). R3 expects the interaction to change, the longer he will be working there:

*‘’…If you’re there for a longer period, than you get to know your manager and you can talk about other things of life, outside of work. And second of all, there will be more trust, you know more what to expect. And lastly, you would get much more respect, that is not there yet.’’ (App. III, respondent 3, page 3)*

Something that can change one’s perception on the exchange with his or her superior seems to be a change in management. R8 and R9 compare the interaction exchange with the previous manager with that of the current manager. R8, in this situation, emphasizes very much on the team throughout the interview. She is not really mentioning the exchange between the manager and her. R8 mentions she can function very well without her manager (app. VIII, respondent 8, page 5). When she does speak about the manager, she feels controlled (app. VIII, respondent 8, page 2). R8 illustrates

*‘’the thing is your manager doesn’t have to be necessary your shadow, because when he has to be your shadow, and he or she has to know everything you do, than he or she could do your job; you don’t have to be there.’’ (app. VIII, respondent 8, page 3)*

Also R9, as earlier described, had a shift in her direct manager. The interaction exchange seems quite OK, as the following conversation between researcher and R9 shows:

*‘’W: And in what way does you manager support you in the assignment, you have to do?
R9: She is actually the one who takes the decision. I have eh... two or more concepts, which I present her. And she tells me what she likes and what she doesn’t. And then she chooses the final one. And ehm… yeah, that’s it.
W: How in general would you describe the interaction between you and the manager?
R9: I would say it is professional, so… it is just work related (W: yeah) but it is really fruitful I would say. She knows what she wants, and she really supports what I do.
W: And how can you say she’s helpful, supportive?
R9: Because she tries to understand what I show her. And she tries to see what I propose the concepts. And she helps me that if in the past she tried something similar and if that worked or not. (W: yeah) And to form the targets… of what we want to achieve, by using a concept like this.
W: So basically it is a kind of constructive feedback she gives you, which is the main importance in interaction or…
R9: Yeah, yeah. I would say that.
W: And how does the way she interacts with you affect your feeling on the work you do?
R9: well I feel like, kind of pressed, because I have to impress her every week. (W: Yeah) Sometimes I feel like kind of afraid and quite stressful, but after our meeting happens she is totally fine with what I do, and in the end I feel relieved.’’ (app. IX, respondent 9, page 1)*

So, also she mentions that the job she does she perceives as stressful and fears for what her manager would think. Although they are sitting close to each other, she prefers to address questions only in their weekly meeting. With her last manager this was somewhat different. She misses the personal, informal relationship with her last manager and more interaction:

*‘’R9: I like the relationship I had with my previous manager, (…) she was kind of a role model. I really liked the way she worked. And we had a good relationship. She was sitting right next to me. And I could basically ask her everything. ’I think about this. I have an idea.’ And she was really supportive and she supported the ideas (…) I have a new manager (…) It is just professional. I don’t feel like we work together, I feel like I have to report to her. ‘’* *(app. IX, respondent 9, page 2)*

Although she made some attempts to get closer, the manager was not really willing to have a closer relationship (app. IX, respondent 9, page 4-6). For R9 the relationship with the manager is already set in stone, and she will not make a new attempt to come closer. So, although the professional exchange can be good, also a click between two people seems important. She mentions throughout the interview that she experiences unfair treatment towards her and also that managers openly discuss that they like a certain new applicant or not. She refers to matching characters as an important indicator for also having good interaction exchange and building a quality relationship (app. IX, respondent 9, 1-3). Also R7 speaks of matching characters and understanding each other is an indicator for perception of good or bad exchange, and finally being happy in the job one performs (app. VII, respondent 7, page 5). As well he mentions

*‘’I have a pretty good relationship with my manager, he is the one who hired me and pulled me in, so pretty loyal towards me. And he really takes care of me and is pretty protective to the time that I spend doing certain things.’’ (app. VII, respondent 7, page 1-2)*

When referring to meetings with clients, R10 says

*‘’I was really glad when I first arrived at the company, because he trusted me and he trusted my skills a lot. At that moment I was still a trainee, Being near me, supporting me the moment I had a little bit of support including the meeting (…)He just put me on the right path at the moment, and that gave me a lot of confidence.‘’(app. X, respondent 10, page 3)*

So R7and R10 feel supported by their manager. The following quote shows the managers also tries to understand them:

*‘’I really like my manager, the communication between us is really good. He tries to understand some of my technical difficulties (…) I can see that sometimes, us as foreigners we explain some words, how we feel usually, a little bit different than the Dutch people. And he knows to understand that. He knows when to push, when to stop pushing.’’(app. X, respondent 10, page 2)*

*‘’ (…) he is also quite supportive in other work that I like to do. I like to build also outside projects, and he will give me the time and sometimes the resources to build large robots if I want to... and also some things that nothing have to do with my projects(…)’’ (app. VII, respondent 7, page 2)*

Not only understanding is important according the respondents. R2 and R6, for example, perceive their job role as pretty challenging and mention that they need a lot of support from the manager at times. A manager who is there, who is available, who is friendly and open to this ad hoc request for interaction seems very valuable at such moment. R2 and R6 illustrate

*‘’ I think he’s always trying to be there when I have questions (…)He really has a nice approach to everything (…) Last week I wanted to arrange a meeting with him somewhere this month, and in his agenda there is already something. And I ask him ‘I want to arrange a meeting with you, but I see you already have something’ ‘Oh, I will reschedule it.’ I think it is that kind of response which makes you feel that you are valuable (…)’’ (app. VI, respondent 6, page 6)*

*‘’he [the manager] is managing a lot of overall activities (...) If I want to talk to him over lunch, that’s usually not a problem. I can always schedule in an appointment in his agenda (…) I can always address questions and suggest ‘Hey we have a meeting on Monday but I feel I need your help decision right now’ (…) He doesn’t want me to sit and wonder. ‘If I am not available immediately, than one hour later. If that’s still fine, right’. (app. II, respondent 2, page 2)*

On the other hand, there are also respondents like R1 and R5 who perceive little interaction of their managers although they need it. If the interaction is there, than still it does not always have to be that good, as R9 earlier described. To illustrate what R5 experienced, starting from the beginning, when she was not guided:

*‘’nobody had time to explain the work to do, So it was just doing things without knowing if it was wrong or right. I was just hoping it was the right thing (…)’’ (app. V, respondent 5, page 2),*

When she had interaction and received a compliment, it was about the wrong thing,

*‘’(…) she [the manager] was telling me sometimes when I did some good things: ‘Oh this is so good, and I really appreciate what you did’ while in my eyes, it was mostly things I was not proud of. And things I was really proud of she wasn’t appreciating me’’ (app. V, respondent 5, page 3),*

if she made a mistake, there was no reply,

*‘’But they weren’t criticizing me; they were not tough on me. Because I made some small mistakes, and I was mad about doing that, because if someone would have spent at least two hours I wouldn’t do those mistakes. So, eh... there were no moments when they paid attention to what I was doing (…), but to know that my work is critical and learning more and getting more feedback. I was never criticized on my work (app. V, respondent 5, page 5),*

and if she proposed an idea, again, no reply,

*‘’If I come up with an idea which is different than my colleagues’ ideas, my managers, I mean, at least to know, that they are thinking of this (…) (app., respondent 5, page 6)*

So, honest feedback and feedback in general is appreciated and seems very important. R9 mentioned it earlier on and also R1 and R4 miss direct response or clear feedback at times. R1 in the beginning perceived a lack of interaction with her manager and only received e-mail to work on something (app. I, respondent 1, page 1-2) To illustrate, R1 has a formal relationship and mentions that she sometimes needs the manager’s approval in order to continue in the job, which frustrates her:

*‘’Usually it does not impact really, but there are items which I await for his approval (…) For example I sent an email to my manager a couple of days ago which he needed to send to the proper person. It was about the change within the organization management, and I am still waiting for the reply on his parts. So as long as he cannot give me an answer I am hanging in the air and I cannot close up that project.’’ (app. I, respondent 1, page 4)*

R4 is the assistant of a manager which is based in a different country and has mainly conversations by email with her manager. She as well helps other departments out, when requested. Although she needs to communicate virtually she perceives the right support at the right moment and also mentions that she sees it as a kind of partnering, as her job is to constantly help out the manager (app. IV, respondent 4, page 5). She illustrates:

*‘’ (…) I send an email to my manager and ask ‘What do you think? It is not a nice reaction, what should I do?’ And then she gives me feedback and support (…) So she takes time to read my email and reply in a sincere way to it, as you know you are struggling with something.’’ (app. IV, respondent 4, page 6)*

***Perceptions on influence***

In the previous two paragraphs respondents’ perceptions on job role and exchange with the manager were discussed. At some places there was already addressed that some respondents perceive influence or perceive no influence with the job they have, or seen from the perceived exchange they have. This paragraph addresses the perceived influence the respondents experience more extensively.

Perceptions on influence are perceived in various ways. For example, R7 in relation to influence needs someone he has a lot of interaction with, and which he can have competitions with related to his developer job. He mentions

*‘’ it’s more of a partnership, like subordinate-boss-subordinate. ‘Can we do it this way?’ [imagining proposing question to manager] And sometimes it’s going through and you have to pick your battles. If you are building something he is able to trust you with it. And also put you under the bus if it doesn’t work.’’ (app. VII, respondent 7, page 3)*

In a conversation with the researcher about his initiative to speed up certain work processes, R10 mentions

*‘’ He [the manager] is open to discussions. Only sometimes these kinds of changes happen over a long period of time. Eh… now I already implemented some things in the workflow (…) and creating a project management tool, just for the technical cases, and also documentation throughout the company for other employees.’’ (app. X, respondent 10, page 3)*

So, R10 perceives his own created tool as valuable and influential not only for himself, but also for the whole organization. This example shows he gets the chance from the manager to work on something which is not set in his job role and does it. As well all the things he does are influencing the company he works at. He develops software and this is the key product the company sells.
A respondent who does not experience much influence, is R3. He started the job a couple of months ago, has a formal relationship with his boss, and the job is a clear, fixed job.

*W: Suppose your manager has at a certain moment too many things at hand or has a hard time, doing all the things she needs to do… Seeing from the relationship you have with her… In what way do you think could you support her?
R3: There’s only one way... to not ask too many questions. So make sure not to bother her too much. That’s probably the only thing that I could do for her. (app. III, respondent 3, page 3)*

Also, earlier on in the paragraph about interaction exchange R3 mentions that his manager is also not of huge influencer on him in his activities. Asking a similar question to R9,

*R9: Ehm… I am trying to support her by my work. And ehm... usually in our meetings, I ask her ‘What are you doing now?’ ‘What are you working?’ and she shows me and I tell her ‘Ok I have an idea, because I have worked for this couple of months ago, with the previous manager’. And she is open to that. But I don’t think she really considers it.
W: So she is open to that in the moment…
R9: Yes, so she is open and after that ‘nothing happens’.
W: Ok and how does that make you feel?
R9: It makes me feel good in the beginning, that she is interested in the thing that I have worked on, but then it makes me kind of disappointed, maybe she didn’t like it, because sometimes during meetings she forgets some things that I showed her. (app. IX, respondent 9, page 6)*

For R9, part of her negative perception also seems to relate to the fact that her manager is not acknowledging how good her ideas are and that they will be implemented. Throughout the interview she mentions a few times that she appreciated it that she was recognized by her previous manager, that she experienced she had a big influence, but with the current manager she experiences this much less. R5, who already had a bad relationship with her manager, R5 thought that she could help her manager as she was always really busy:

*‘’I tried to take some responsibilities from her. But she was ehm… really… not really wanting me to be more involved than I was involved. Of course she tried to share responsibilities with some people, but she actually didn’t want it.’’ (app. V, respondent 5, page 6)*

Also, R5 when speaking of a discussion with a second manager:

*I asked him one time ‘What can I do and what can’t I do? Because sometimes I don’t know when I am crossing a line’. And he said to me laughing. You can get as creative as you can be, because here we really appreciate and love people making a difference’. (…) when we got to implement things he was always saying no to everything, to my ideas. (…) and I am getting too sharp with being creative and ehm… that it was not in my in my responsibility, while it actually was. (app. V, respondent 5, page 3)*

So, R5 didn’t have the best place to work. She perceives managers working against her, and - related to the last paragraph when several respondents mention about feedback - giving her the wrong feeling by interacting in an insincere way. R1 and R8 both had not a lot of interaction with their manager yet, but perceive that their activities are influencing the manager, which is illustrated below:

*(…) then he [the manager] calls me and asks ‘Oh [name R1], did you fix that one?’ ‘I would have, but I am still waiting for your confirmation and than he says ‘O, Ok, I will do that straight away’. But in the end I know he is extremely busy and in the end he will bump into that error, and he will be the one calling me like ‘Did you do that?’ and then I say ‘No you have to say yes first’. (app. I, respondent 1, page 4)*

*‘’I think that if my time is up it will not be good for my manager. (…) And if I would not do my job, he or she would be impacted as well. But it was not the case, so far.’’ (app. VIII, respondent 8, page 6)*

R2 has a quite exploratory, strategic task. He mentions throughout the interview that he sees the project as difficult and often asks for support from his manager. Although R2 has a lot of interaction exchange, as earlier mentioned, sometimes he has the idea his manager is not really listening to what he wants to say. In the example below he relates to this and mentions his influence:

*‘’(…) I have the feeling he is not turning me down or something. Then I would just address it again. But I do ask in a next meeting, ‘why is this not important to the project? For me this is not really clear’. And then, to be honest, it happened a couple of times, it turned out that the thing I thought of was actually not that wrong, and was actually quite valid.’’ (app. II, respondent 2, page 9)*

*‘’(…) The report I created on Spending and Compliance is every quarter. And that is something that my manager needs to present to the CPO… so the Chief Procurement Officer, so in that way it’s kind of big. My project itself is a so-so. It’s the next steps that are required by the team to be done, but it doesn’t have any high urgency. If it is done within two months later, it is still fine. But the report, the quarterly and annual report, that’s a serious matter.’’ (app. VI, respondent 6, page 4)*

In general R2 and R6 don’t experience they have a high level of influence, as they have the feeling their managers don’t directly depend on them in their activities, and as the manager can do it himself probably if he wants to. In the situation of R4, this is different:

*‘’I am the link between those people, and have to deal with organizing all the projects and make sure it happens, so… they know if they have an hour with a certain person (…) so they appreciate that you do your work and found some time and worked on the logistics to make the meeting happen. (app. IV, respondent 4, page3)*

So, R4 does not depend on the manager to experience influence. Everyone who wants to have a meeting with certain managers, she is of influence on. And on the question ‘In what way does your manager depend on you?’, R4 mentions

*(…) they [the managers] depend a lot, we need to make meetings happen. They have meetings scheduled through all the year, so you have to help them achieve those objectives. So some meetings have to happen before a date or before another meeting, so… we have to take care which meetings they have to accept, where do they have to commute, all the time. (app. IV, respondent 4, page 4)*

***Perceptions on interest***

Related to the interest of the respondent, whether on themselves, their manager and or the team or company, no specific questions were addressed in the interviews. People could give other answers than they actually would mention throughout the interview. This is not related to the question which, according the researcher, can steer one’s thinking. For example, they have the interest in themselves, but now, due to the question, think from a company´s perspective. Or vice versa: they could place emphasis that they solely look at their own position and specifically do not want to place something or someone else in the middle as well and therefore do not think from the company´s perspective. Therefore all interviews, from beginning to end, were analyzed whether a respondent for example emphasizes on the company when addressing certain themes and often speak in terms of ´we´, and relate to the company.

What the researcher got from the interviews is that clearly R3, R5 and R9 have interest in themselves. The following quotes show this:

 *‘’I want to sort out everything myself. I am not the kind of person who constantly asks for help. I would say. In general, I would rather ask somebody else than my manager. I don’t need anyone to hold my hand, I would say.’’ (app. III, respondent 3, page 6)*

Throughout the interview R3 often speaks about himself. At some places in the interview it was not clear whether this was because of the characteristics of his sales job (app. III). R5 mentions that she wants to do what is best for the company and wants to contribute to the overall objectives of the company. This is also emphasized in some of the quotes mentioned in the previous paragraphs. However, as R5 experienced she never experienced any rapprochement from the company’s social actors (in this case, the management) she started to think more in her own interest. The following two quotes show this:

 *‘’I didn’t know exactly what I can and what I can’t do. So because of this, I turned to other departments (…) I started to go more internationally and to learn from strategies internationally, and less for Romania (…) ’’ (app. V, respondent 5, page 2)*

*‘’(…) it didn’t work out well. You know that moment, like ‘From now on I am not going to come up with any ideas, I will just do what he says... because I work here and it is my obligation. And I don’t care about the performance. I just work …out.’’ (app. V, respondent 5, page 3)*

The interaction exchange between R9 and her current manager affects the interest she used to have, like R5. Also she likes to be recognized, and several times in the interviews she mentions she misses the influence she used to have on and misses positive approval from the previous manager. R9 experiences this much less with the new manager:

*´´R9: First manager I could see from her reactions and what she said that I did a good job, and she was always giving good feedback to other people about me. And from the current manager I see she tells me sometimes ‘Ah that’s a nice idea’ and ‘Yeah, you did a good job’. And there are sometimes that she is not like that. And then I am not quite sure whether I am doing a good job or not.
W: So you experience, she is not always really direct to you…
R9: And she is not always convinced.´´ (app. IX, respondent IX, page)*

R6 and R1 seem to primarily speak about themselves, enjoying the job they do and the people they meet. R6 perceives a distance between her and the people in her team. The department is a stressy, tense place (app. VI, respondent 6, page 4 and 5). Although R1 speaks a lot about the company and what is best for the company in the end she mentions that she needs recognition, wants to be appreciated by the manager and supervisor. She also seems to identify working on such a high level in the organization (app. I, respondent 1, page 1; page 5).

R4´s job is a big influencer of her manager’s activities. She does everything with eye on the manager’s job. Besides this, her interest is on making sure the extra job activities she attracts, help other people and departments:

*‘’ It also has to do with the nature of my job. People have a lot of things which they can be helped with, like events like Mothers Day, that are not part of my job exactly, but if there is time and I can help them, than that’s possible. (…) So, you do have the normal work load, but if it is not busy, than you can still help other people. But you are normally not supposed to, but if they are asking you and you can help, why not.’’ (app. IV, respondent 4, page 7)*

R2 feels obligated to perform very good because of the high quality exchange he has with his manager. His interest is clearly on him and his manager. He is not working in a team and only has his manager to basically address work-related issues. He mentions,

*´´He’s putting a lot of confidence in me which then automatically drives me to work a bit harder, because I don’t want to disappoint him.´´(app. II, respondent 2, page 2)*

R7 and R10 seem think of the company and what is best for the company. Their skills are valued, they work for several years in the company and love the company’s product. They do what is best for the company as well as what seems most important for the company’s customers. R10 and R7 illustrate

´*´For example, projects, everything that I get, is made by our company, a product by us. And we get everything based on the customer requirements.
W: So it’s pretty unique and pretty …
R10: Yeah, and what we are really proud of, it is really custom. So if the client wants some the product is developed easily so that we can easily, in a couple of days make that thing.´´ (app. X, respondent 10, page 1)*

*´´Working for [company name] doesn’t mean we just build models. It means that we create educational solutions. I have to create a robot that for the child is the first robot they may build... in a class room.´´ (app. VII, respondent 7, page 1)*

Both of them also mention they have focus on the manager which, looking at below and the previous paragraphs, seems to pay off:

*‘’ (…) at the same time I try to help him to understand some of my technical problems, and also my technical tools, how to use them… because that can have a high efficiency. (…) Especially, after establishing that in two months, he teaches the rest of the company. And now we have eh… full workflow based on that.’’ (app. X, respondent 10, page 4-5)*

*‘’If we can support him, we will. If we need to build something outside of the projects, we do that. He knows that his time is small. We try to do what we can. We help him in setting up presentations. And if it is taking care of some small things, we know he doesn’t really have time for, than we will help him.’’ (app. VII, respondent 7, page 4)*

R8 nowhere mentions her manager. The interest seems to be on herself as well as how her team functions. Although she works in an international company which everyone in the world seems to have affinity with, R8 never mentions the organization. Her focus is neither on what is best for the company nor the manager; she is primarily interested in herself and that she works in an attuned team. So one can see, the interest of several respondents are very diverse.

***The answer to the first sub-question***

To conclude, this paragraph dealt with differences in respondents’ perceptions concerning the leader-member exchange relationship. As shown on previous pages it can be said that respondents mention various things related to the four LMX characteristics. This means that that there are indeed differences in perceptions related to the characteristics. On job role some respondents speak purely about the fixed tasks they are responsible of (e.g. R3), others also speak of: what they need in order to execute their activities, like a certain amount of freedom to do the job (e.g. R1, R2, R4, R5 and R6); or , that they need new challenges to still be inspired and be motivated to execute the job (e.g. R5 and R8), or the opportunity to negotiate what to focus on (e.g. R7). Some respondents mention they need formal approval from the manager to continue which sometimes takes a while (e.g. R1, R4, R10) and some also compare their job with those of others (e.g. R2 and R4). Related to the perceptions on exchange besides R3 and R8 the other respondents mention that good exchange with their manager is important to them. Some respondents perceived the amount of time which they can spend with the manager as positive (e.g. R2 and R6) and others, often who have little possibilities to interact with the manager, value the quality of the exchange as they understand their manager is really busy (e.g. R1, R4 and R7). In much interviews it goes deeper and respondents speak of what is important to them in a relationship with a manager. Respondents mention trust from their manager is important (e.g. R2, R5, R6, R8) as well as getting support on the job (e.g. R2, R5, R6), being there for the respondent when in need (e.g. R1, R4, R10) and a manager who is open for discussions (e.g. R7, R9 and R10). So a form of mutual respect and understanding is important. One respondent (R9) even mentions it is important to be friends with the manager. Moving on, when looking at influence in the pages above, respondents mention primarily whether they do or do not perceive they have influence on the manager. Some respondents say for them it is really important to be of influence on the manager’s activities and vice-versa (e.g. R7 and R9); others speak of how big or small they perceive their influence on the company or on social actors within the company (e.g. R4 and R10); that they are not sure whether management appreciates one’s being within the company (R5 and R9), or are not aware whether they still are of influence, due to new management (R9). Related to the last LMX-characteristic, the interest one has, as earlier mentioned in the sub-paragraph, questions did not address this. So the whole interview was analyzed and some respondents had a focus on themselves as well as they related to the company, the manager or peers (e.g. R4, R8) or only were interested in themselves (R3, R5, R9).

**Answering the second sub-question - Perceptions on LMX-relationship characteristics in relation to job satisfaction**

This paragraph deals with the interrelatedness between the LMX-variables and job satisfaction and answers the second sub-question in-depth. The variables are discussed individually just like in the previous paragraph.

Related to the first characteristic it can be stated that perception on the job role impacts job satisfaction. For example, seen from the previous pages and in the appendices II, IV, VI, VII and X R2, R4, R6, R7, R10 clearly relate their perception on the job role to job satisfaction. In the cases of R2 and R6 they execute primarily exploratory tasks. R6 mentioned she likes her project, when proposing the question what satisfies her most working at this company (app. VI, respondent 6, page 6) and R2 mentions that he would get bored easily with a job with fixed tasks (app. II, respondent 2, page 8). R7 and R10 with their designer jobs and R4 with her overall diverse and dynamic job mention they like their job very much throughout the interview, as well as that they like that they sometimes can choose what they work on (app. IV, VII and X). With other respondents like R1 and R3 it was less clear whether their job role could be related to their job satisfaction. However, R3 mentions that

‘’ (…) first of all, your job must be interesting, you should like whatever you’re doing, second of all, my colleagues and my manager, and I like the team I work in.’’ (app. III, respondent 3, page 4).

This example already shows that people, when speaking of job satisfaction, relate several variables to one element. R5, R8 and R9 are clearly not positive about the job role. R5 never got the chance to perform her job (app. V, page 2), R8 says she needs new challenges (app. VIII, page 5) and R9 doesn’t relate the perception of her job role to her job satisfaction. R9 more relates her job role to the exchange with her manager (app. IX, page 3).

For some respondents the relationship with their manager is very important for their job satisfaction and for others less. One respondent , R8, mentioned the interaction with her manager was not affecting her job satisfaction. She perceives the manager as controlling, but as well this does not impact her level of satisfaction according her (app. VIII, respondent 8, page 2, 5). The relationship and the LMX-relationship which she had with her previous manager somehow she perceived as good, but nowhere throughout the interview she mentions this impacted her job satisfaction in the past. R8 kept speaking in general and collectivistic terms and having analyzed the interview it can be said that only the challenges of her job role have some impact on her job satisfaction (app. VIII, page 2-3)

The second LMX-characteristic seems to be a characteristic which can be related to job satisfaction. R7 really likes the product and the company he works for and also the relationship with his manager, and mentions

*‘’ I don’t know if I would have had the same experience if I had, if it was a different relationship. At this point it is quite an important one. I have seen so many different other types of relationships, and you are just not happy with the job. I have had that happened to me. Even though you really like what you do. If you are not happy, than you are not happy. You have to come up with another way or another person to work with.’’ (app. VII, respondent 7, page 5)*

R9 seems to depend on a high-qualityexchange with her manager when it comes to job satisfaction. She was happy with the interaction with her previous manager, but definitely not with the current one. R9 had enough interaction related to the job activities (app. IX, respondent 9, page 1-2), but besides that no personal click with the manager. She mentions, like R7, that a match in characters is important (app. IX, page 2, 8). R5 wanted to have a voice, but never experienced this. In fact she didn’t have much good interaction with her manager at all, and this, according R5 had a huge impact on her job satisfaction:

*‘’(…) If I come up with an idea which is different than my colleagues’ ideas ,my managers, I mean, at least to know, that they are thinking of this,* and that I know that I do not cross the line, and that they trust me.*’’ (app. V, respondent 5, page 6)*

R2 and R6 throughout the interview mention they are satisfied with the amount of time which they get with their manager (app. II; app. VI). Although R1 doesn’t really have much interaction with her manager, she mentions she needs the recognition of the manager.

*‘’… in the end his recognition matters a lot. And seeing him, using my product, the end results of my tasks, really makes me happy.’’ (app. I, respondent 1, page 5)*

This shows, having influence is as well very important for some respondents. Not only R1 perceived she had influence on her manager. Other respondents mention having influence is part of their job satisfaction, like R7 (app. VII, respondent VII, page 5). R9 didn’t experience her influence on the manager, but throughout the interview it seems this is something to her important as well (app. IX, respondent 9).

The last LMX-characteristic, one’s interest can’t be directly understood as an influence on job satisfaction, due to the answers given. However, that’s also not the main point of this study’s topic. The LMX-theory as a whole does or does not impact one’s job satisfaction and the characteristics are intertwined. Anyway, what the researcher could find was that three of the six people who mainly put emphasis on and have interest in themselves in the interviews (due to whatever circumstances), seem to not be satisfied with their job. R1, R3, R6, R5, R8 and R9 have a clear interest in themselves; the latter three seem not satisfied. Respondents who place emphasis on oneself and the manager like R2 and R4 and the two respondents whose interest it was to support the company in the best way possible like R7 and R10 all seem to be very satisfied with their job.

This paragraph has answered the second sub question ‘Do these expatriates relate these perceptions to their job satisfaction?’ It can be positively stated that respondents’ perceptions on the LMX-related variables have an impact on one’s job satisfaction. As this master thesis focuses on the impact of perceptions on the LMX relationship, then the question is what are other variables impacting one’s job satisfaction according the individual respondents? In the following paragraph this will be thoroughly addressed.

**Answering the third sub question - Perceptions on other variables in relation to job satisfaction**

Respondents did not only speak of perceptions on the LMX-characteristics. Also they mentioned other variables which impact their job satisfaction like: working together in the team; the work environment; the international ambience; the importance of working in that specific company; the work-life balance, and cultural differences. Below is explained which respondents relate which variables to their job satisfaction.

R3 and R4 put emphasis on the colleagues and working in the team, besides their perception on the importance of the job they execute. They mention

*‘’(…) first of all, your job must be interesting, you should like whatever you’re doing, second of all, my colleagues and my manager, and I like the team I work in …’’* (app. III, respondent 3, page 4)

 *‘’ (...) it’s really important that I feel comfortable with my manager and with the team (…) if there is something which you are not doing fine, than they tell you right away. Like I say it is overall a trust environment. And they, people … people trust you,’’ (app. IV, respondent 4, page 6)*

Also R4 mentions that working with a lot of different people outside of her team as well as learning different things which all belong to one department are really important elements for her (app. IV, respondent 4, page 7). To continue with the importance of the team, working in teams instead of doing everything individually is for R5 also an influence on her job satisfaction. Unfortunately she didn’t experience it. Referring to the desired situation,

*‘’ehm... not maybe family, but surrounded by people who want to do good things together, and also to have the freedom to say what I have in my mind‘’ (app. V, respondent 5, page 6)*

Mentioning the importance of colleagues and peers, some respondents also mention social interaction with co-workers which they not necessarily have to work closely with.

*‘’I hang out with a bit younger employees within [company name], and it is also that motivates you a lot, when you interact with the people your age.... and when you experience the same things, and yeah… it’s a combination of both. Challenging work, the international environment, and also your friends in the office.’’* (app. VI, respondent 6, page 7)

R1 also addresses her colleagues, the associated social events and the international atmosphere (app. I, respondent 1, page 4). As well she highlights the overall positive environment in the company. R9 mentions something similar related to the question what makes her happy at work:

‘’… the environment at work, if it is a nice place to work. Ehm… the relationship I have with the other employees. Hm… and the success I had so far by doing what I was doing.’’ (app. IX, respondent 9, page 7)

Related to the work environment according the respondents this does not only have to be related to the social actors in the organization.

Also some cultural differences are perceived which are positively associated with job satisfaction, according some respondents:

 *‘’I think in general the Dutch culture is more open than the German. German people are much more closed, strict in the beginning: very professional relationship only. That could be a bit more different. Much more open, communicative. There’s that word ‘gezellig’, right (W And R2 laugh). And you can also feel that at work, not just when you go out. (app. II, respondent 2, page 7)*

R8 mentions,

*‘’maybe what is different than what I used to, things are happening very slowly here. So I am used to higher speed somehow. But this is on the other hand good, because you have time to think, and rethink and really rethink (W and R8 laugh) I am used to work faster, and find out things a bit, and to be informed about things and so on. But this is a cultural difference maybe.’’ (app. VIII, respondent 8, page 7)*

R10 mentioned also the cultural differences (app. X, respondent 10, page 2) but this in retrospect of the cultural knowledge of his manager and is illustrated in the previous paragraph when the LMX-characteristic exchange is discussed. Further, R1 (app. I, respondent 1, page 5), R4 (app. IV, respondent 4, page 5) and R6 also relate the international environment to their job satisfaction. R6:

*‘’I always wanted to work in an international company and [company name] is a good company…’’ (app. VI, respondent 6, page 7)*

Besides that R6 relates to the international aspect of a company, for her it is also important that she can experience her company as a good, international company. Other respondents like R7 and R10 mention the status of the company in positive association with their job satisfaction:

 *‘’I came here as I have some kind of affinity with [product name] bricks and how I express myself with this product and being able to work here kind of helps me in so many different ways, so… Now official products and infinite access to bricks and resources, and whatever I built in whatever time I have, so…’’ (app. VII, respondent 7, page 1-2)*

 *‘’…we can build as fast as possible, a good product. And a link between me and another company, a different IT company, of course it is offering different products of my client, but still I need to have a strong connection with that company, and that company is working in a totally different way than my company. So usually they use closed programs, not so dynamic, of course… really good, but for example, our development (…)
W: So in general, you could say the relationship between you and the manager is first of all pretty good, and important and your happiness at work is being influences by the relationship and by the clients which you work at, right?
R10: Yeah, the clients and the projects that I am working on.’’ (app. X, respondent 10, page 6)*

To finish, R3 and R8 mention that the work-life balance is also important for their job satisfaction. Whether not clear if she speaks in third person or she actually refers to others, R8 also thinks it is important to mention that other employees at the organization (as shown in app. VIII) care for her job satisfaction:

*‘’And for them [Danes] it is also really important that you have your own life. And that you have time for your life, and do whatever you like in life, and not work just so much hours a day.’’ (app. VIII, respondent 8, page 8)*

A quote like this cannot be perceived as valuable. Therefore the researcher refers to page 1 where R8 mentions that she first of all started working for this company in this country as the work-life balance seems really good (app. VIII). A quote from R3 to finish this paragraph,

 *‘’And the last thing would probably that you’re done at a certain moment (…) sometimes there is some extra work, but in general you are done at six or something.’’ (app., respondent 3, page 4)*

**Differences and similarities in perceptions between respondents working with a foreign manager and respondents working with a local manager**

The short summaries of the interviews on the following pages give a clear view of what the individual respondents perceived related to the different LMX characteristics and their job satisfaction. They are divided into the group having a foreign manager and those having a local manager.

***Similarities and differences between people with a foreign manager***

R3, R4, R5 and R9 were the ones working with a foreign manager. Already can it be said that all of the four respondents perceived little interaction exchange with their managers. Whether this is also an important factor in relation to job satisfaction is to be defined as this factor deals with just one of the LMX-relationship characteristics. Below briefly the perceptions of the respondents with a foreign manager on the LMX-characteristics are described, followed by a brief description of the respondents working with a local manager which can be derived from the interviews in appendices
I -X.

R3 perceived little exchange with his manager and mentioned he doesn’t have the relationship yet which he desires to have. According to him this is due to his short stay within the company. He experiences his colleagues who work there for a longer time, have better interaction with the manager. The influence on his manager is also low, e.g. in the paragraph on perceptions of influence in this chapter R3 mentions he can better leave if her manager is really busy. He could better not interfere in her activities or offer help. His job role is clearly fixed and his interest is mainly on himself. Besides a manager he has a coach who evaluates regularly R3’s results, but does not have any managerial activities. He mentions that his job satisfaction is not hugely impacted by the relationship with his manager, nor can his answers be related to any of the other LMX-characteristics as an influence on job satisfaction.

R4 has a foreign manager working in England and R4 and her manager primarily have e-mail conversations. However, she mentions the interaction with her manager is important to her. She needs her support now and then and she is happy that she receives this when necessary. Related to her job role her main job activities relate to the job of being an assistant of her manager. As well she experiences she can attract all kinds of other activities and help out other people within the same department. Her job satisfaction is primarily impacted by the trust her manager has in her, the sharing of some work-related experiences with the manager and having a diverse. The influence she has on her manager is high as she is managing the manager’s agenda. She places interest in herself, her manager and other people in the same department.

R5 works in Germany with a French manager. The manager seems really busy all the time. In the beginning there was no time to guide and support R5, which R5 clearly missed. She mentions that it was probably also unexpected that her manager had to deal with her as the previous manager just quit the job. Due to the busyness of the manager, R5 tried to help her manager several times by offering her support on certain activities, which was waived. R5 also mentioned that she was hired to execute a strategic role in the field of marketing, but soon she experienced that her managers wanted her to execute operational activities She pities she could not execute her strategic role and could be of more importance to the company. Further, R5 mentions in the interview as well that she doesn’t like the German work attitude, as people seem to interact more professionally instead of emotionally. In general R5 is emotionally affected by the lack of exchange with her manager: she became more and more interested in surviving, doing what her managers asked her to do and in learning from other departments which were not related to activities which she was expected to do.

R9 first worked with a local manager, with whom she had a very good relationship. From the moment that manager left R9 didn’t like her job anymore. Also she mentioned the new foreign manager all of a sudden had to deal with R9. The manager interacts purely in a professional way with R9, which frustrates R9 somehow. R9 felt she had to report instead of work together with her manager and because of this also the perception on her job role changed. Also R9 misses that her ideas are being followed up by the manager, which was the case with her last manager. R9 has shifted her interest from herself and the manager purely to herself. As well R9 perceives unfair treatment of the manager compared to other colleagues. For example, she didn’t get a day off while a peer actually got a day off, under the same conditions. She relates it to a mismatch of characters. Her job satisfaction is impacted heavily by the low quality exchange with her manager, which impacts her perception on her job role and her perception on the influence she has as well as she is only interested in herself.

***Similarities and Differences between people with a local manager***

To elucidate, also the perceptions of R1, R2, R6, R7, R8, R10 on the LMX-characteristics will be described. These respondents all worked with a local manager. R1 and R8 are the respondents who perceive, like what the respondents working with foreign managers perceived, little interaction with their managers.

R1 perceive little interaction with her manager. Her manager is a Chief HR officer. She is also assigned another manager who functions as a supervisor and basically acts as a building bridge between the two. Although R1 doesn’t experience much interaction with her manager, it is of high quality and he really seems to support her in some cases which she appreciates. R1 perceives her job role as pretty important as she reports to the global Head of HR. She experiences her influence, e.g. if her manager needs something from her, R1 mentions that he first needs to approve certain things. Her interest seems mostly on herself, but in relation to job satisfaction her manager’s recognition matters a lot.

R2 has a lot of interaction with his manager. In general he perceives this as good. His job is a strategic and exploratory one and is created in light of the company’s global transition to increase collaboration between departments. R2 mentions he doesn’t really see his influence, but now and then because of certain events between the two he perceives his influence on his manager. His interest is not solely on himself, but he wants to perform the job as good as possible for and feels obligated to his manager. R2’s job satisfaction is impacted very much by the positive vibe of his manager, the fact he is always there for him and the challenging job.

R6 also has a lot of high quality interaction with her manager. She works in a compliance department and her job has some exploratory activities as well as some fixed activities like the writing of quarterly reports. She thinks her influence on her manager is quite big. Her interest seems mostly on herself. R6’s job satisfaction is impacted by the trust she gets from her manager and the amount of time she can spend with her manager, but also working for a big international company seems important.

R7 has a toy designer job. His job is really important to him as he can work every day on toys he is passionate about. He perceives the relationship with his manager as a partnership. R7 perceives the exchange with his manager as neutral and sometimes low quality, but they seem to understand each other. Also he perceives his influence on the manager, something which is also supported by his manager. R7 describes everything in light of the company and is passionate to create the best toys in the world. The relationship with his manager helps him in this. His job satisfaction is to a large extent impacted by his manager, but first of all it is the product he is so passionate about.

R8 works on a global HR department and for the same company R7 works for. Related to her job she needs some new challenges, as at the moment she cannot move on in the job. This is strained by the fact she is not sure if she will get a new contract. The exchange with her manager is in her eyes not important and should be minimized. R8 emphasizes constantly on the importance of the team. Related to the influence she has, R8 mentions that without having R8 in the team it will be quite difficult to let the team keep on functioning in the way it does now. Her interest is on herself and the team. Her job satisfaction is primarily impacted by the work-life balance which she perceives as good, but she also mentions she can do her job in every company. R8’s job satisfaction is not impacted by any of the LMX-characteristics.

 R10 is a software developer, creates and implements software. R10 likes the job he does and he is constantly motivated to come up with new solutions. The interaction with his manager is of high quality and they can support each other in several activities, which in case of R10 is sometimes for the good of the company. His focus is also to constantly evolve; the company’s interest is his interest, but he mentions that he also looks for other job positions. R10 perceives his influence as big on the manager as well as the clients. His job satisfaction is mainly impacted by his job, the difference he makes for his clients and the relationship with his manager.

Seen from the content of this paragraph, it can be said that there is no difference in perceptions looking at the two groups. Although there are no significant differences between the two groups related to the perceptions of the LMX-relationship, however there is a similarity within the group of respondents working with foreign managers found: they all (R3, R4, R5, R9) seem to perceive their exchange with their manager as insufficient. Within the group of respondents working with a local manager there is no similarity found which is carried by all the respondents. One respondent (R1) in this group mentions that the exchange with her manager was not good. Positive or negative perceptions on the other LMX-related variables are not carried unanimously within one of the two groups.

**Impact of the perceptions on leader-member exchange relationship variables on job satisfaction**

Finally, this chapter dealt with the analysis of the interviews on several topics. Perceptions on the four LMX-variables job role, exchange, influence and interest have been addressed. This was the first step for answering the research question correctly. Secondly, perceptions on job satisfaction according the various respondents have been addressed which could be linked to either one of the LMX-characteristics functioning as variables or to other identified variables. Finally, the expatriates were grouped in the last paragraph into ones who were working with a foreign manager and a local manager. This distinction was made as Froese and Peltokorpi (2010; 2012) and Benson and Pattie (2009) found that self-initiated expatriates (SIEs) who were working with a foreign manager, by them named host-country managers, seemed to have a higher job satisfaction compared to SIEs working with a local manager, by them named home-country managers. As earlier mentioned, the scholars addressed this, but didn’t explain clearly what exactly caused it. Moreover, this study did not find such results as what Froese and Peltokorpi found and the respondents working with a foreign manager seemed more negative than positive when speaking of the exchange with their manager.

Furthermore it can be stated that the negative or positive perceptions of the various LMX-variables have indeed an impact on one’s job satisfaction. Besides for one respondent (R8), especially the perception on the exchange with a manager seems important. Whether one has a lot of interaction with their manager or whether this is minimal, the respondents seek for a manager which shows trust in the employee, who is there when in need, shows respect and which they often can have discussions with. Furthermore, most respondents acknowledge they want to be recognized for what they do and want their influence on the company or the manager’s activities. Related to perceptions on the job role, people value it that they are responsible and are free to execute the activities, but most of them want to be recognized for what they do. Then the interest of the respondents goes beyond themselves and grows due to a sort of obligation towards supporting the manager the best they can, supporting the team and doing what is best for the company. Other elements mentioned by the respondents which had partially an impact on their job satisfaction were working together in the team; relating to young, international peers in the company; the international ambience; the importance of working in that specific company; the work-life balance, and cultural differences. Besides R8 according the other nine respondents the LMX-relationship has a sincere impact on one’s job satisfaction which is almost unanimously embraced.

For an in-depth answer to the sub-questions, see the first three paragraphs (with emphasis on page 48, pages 49-51, pages 52-54) where an answer to all three sub-questions is elucidated. The fourth paragraph elaborates the differences of the respondents plus a short description of the overall findings within each interview. The respondents are grouped in respondents having a foreign and respondents having a local manager.

Now that the researcher has analyzed all data and draw findings from it, it is now time for some limitations.

**Limitations**

This section focuses on limitations the researcher encountered during the process of collecting data.

To start, the researcher preferred to do his study within one company. However, as he encountered with three other research topics, he soon decided to put this problem aside and found a way to still gather data, with a specific difference in the design method, as it was no longer a single case to be studied on. However, the researcher understood in regards to the research topic he might not need access to an organization as this was not part of the study’s topic per se. Employees working at various large organizations are chosen and were either working with a manager who is native or who is a foreigner, like the employee is. A serious limitation, however, was the fact that the researcher could not collect ten people with a similar job profile. During the interview with the third respondent he experienced that the respondents’ job could be affecting his perception on the elements impacting job satisfaction. This respondent had a sales job and seemed in the first instance primarily influenced by reaching his sales target. The researcher added and changed some questions during the interview so relevant information still came. Also there was another respondent who spoke in second, in third and in third-plural person which was sometimes hard to understand plus this respondent tried to avoid questions which could show emotion or sensitivity by addressing such questions to the team she works in (imaginary) and answered it in this way. Finally it would have helped if there was more time so a bigger sample of respondents could have been picked as well as quantitative research could have been done, followed up on the ten interviews. However, the findings gain insight in respondents’ perceptions about the LMX-characteristics and about their job satisfaction, which sometimes differed to a certain extent. However, the analysis was done properly in order to come to clear findings. Related to the sample size there was no room to look at other employee types like organizational expatriates and local employees. However if it was a bigger sample it would be interesting to as well investigate perceptions of such employees. So one can see whether the perceptions about the phenomena vary within created groups or these perceptions vary similarly as it varied in this study. Also this study has geographical boundaries, because all respondents worked in North and Western Europe. All interviews were conducted with young people; the youngest 21 and the oldest 34. Moreover due to distance limitation all interviews were conducted via Skype, although with four respondents he could have conducted it face to face. The researcher has chosen to use one method to conduct data.**Conclusion**

This master thesis explored job satisfaction and the impact the leader-member exchange relationship has on this unitary concept (Kalenberg, 1977: 126) from a unique standpoint. As well did it take a special group of employees namely self-initiated expatriates (SIEs): employees who decided to work abroad and due to this are facing cultural differences compared to that what is familiar to them. The interest of the researcher on this topic was that a lot of research done by scholars in the field of expatriate literature focused on the phenomenon of cultural adjustment of SIEs. SIEs’ cultural adjustment was to them the core for an expatriate’s job satisfaction (Harrison and Shaffer, 1998: 90) besides task-related factors (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2010: 49). However, other scholars emphasized that for expatriates to be able to adjust and to accelerate their adjustment process to the organization and to their job role, the organization’s social actors play an important role in an expatriate’s job satisfaction as well (Toh and Denisi, 2007: 293). Furthermore, Froese and Peltokorpi and Benson and Pattie some scholars found that expatriates working with a foreign manager seemed to experience higher job satisfaction compared to those working with a local manager (Froese and Peltokorpi, 2012; Benson and Pattie, 2009).

In order to answer the research question properly and get a better understanding of if SIEs, and if so, what elements of a relationship with their manager has/have an impact on job satisfaction, the research focused on separates cases for the empirical work, and collected data were analyzed with an interpretive methodology.

Referring to the outcomes of the analysis, the role of the manager seems to play a great role in job satisfaction as perceived by the ten respondents. However, in contrast to what other scholars found explained above, it cannot be stated that respondents who worked with a foreign manager had a higher level of job satisfaction. In fact, within the sample of respondents of this study, this is rather the opposite. The cause of this could be due to the findings of one perceived similarity within this group. This similarity is related to the LMX-characteristic ‘exchange’ (interaction between manager and employee): the four respondents working with a foreign manager all perceived little exchange. For two of them this had a huge impact on their job satisfaction; for one it had none, due to his short stay within the company and he expects it will change; the other this affects to a small extent, as her manager is based abroad. In the group of SIEs working with a local manager this was found at one of the six respondents.

The LMX-relationship characteristics have been individually assessed to better understand them and to better understand how people relate certain experiences and how these perceptions can be analyzed and put into themes. As the characteristics do not function as independent elements in the theory, also the joint characteristics have been assessed. In general, the LMX-characteristics job role, exchange, influence and interest jointly have a sincere impact on job satisfaction. Just to elucidate, for example in the case of R2 the perceived exchange with his manager is good according him. His manager is open to him, trusts R2; R2 than is confident to perform his job role. The job role he really enjoys as it is dynamic and exploratory and of big impact on the company’s strategy which then affects his perception on the influence he has. As well he mentions because of the support he gets of his manager he is also more willing to end up with a result his manager would appreciate and feels obliged to execute his role as good as possible. This description about R2 and his manager acknowledges the findings of Toh and Denisi (2007) that an assigned manager or supervisor is indeed an important reference for the employee to the organization. More such descriptions can be found in the last paragraph of the analysis chapter, as not for all respondents the relationship with the manager played such a big role on job satisfaction. Furthermore, this research shows that if a manager acts in a certain way towards an employee, the employee acts in return in a similar way, whether positive or negative. For example, if a manager does not pay interest in an employee, it cannot be expected that this employee will pay a lot of interest in his or her manager, or in the company he or she works at. The interview in appendix V illustrates this in a clear manner. This research can help in understanding what an individual SIE needs to be satisfied with regards to the relationship with a manager. Although this is based on a small sample of respondents, this small sample shows that this will always remain a new challenge within each individual manager-employee dyad.

Graen et al.’s LMX-theory has still minimally been used by scholars taken a constructivistic stance . Often the theory functions as an object to work out other theories (e.g. Stock and Genisyureck, 2012). However, when deconstructing the characteristics within the theory it has been possible to find that the separate LMX-characteristics impact job satisfaction. Also it showed that one of the characteristics can affect the other to a big extent. Although it was not within the study’s objectives, this study shows that when investigating people’s perceptions on leader-member exchange relationships in an organizational setting, the characteristics of one’s day-to-day job activities can be associated with one’s appreciation of a certain relationship with a manager: one who has a sales job will probably have different expectations than a personal assistant. Other scholars have to keep this in mind when studying manager-employee relationships. This association can also open undiscovered doors to generate new theory within the field of management and organizational studies. As earlier discussed this research has not shown that expatriates’ job satisfaction is positively impacted by the manager’s nationality and merely the opposite; in this way it is a contribution to the field of expatriate literature.

 More and more employees work abroad. This doesn’t seem to stop, if one listens carefully to others in his or her own environment, reads the news or searches the web than this will not have passed the ears or eyes. Because of this increasing group of employees, corporations and managers should take into account the role they have and how this role could be perceived by this group of employees. The various experiences of the respondents show that some companies have already picked up on this and others still struggle with meeting the needs of individuals. So when assigning a foreign employee one could think of this study, and keep in mind: it makes two to establish a pleasant relationship, as it is not only the employee who is confronted with a new setting; also the organization and its social actors belonging to it.

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Appendix I: Interview R1

W: First of all, could you describe your job activities?

R1: Ok, so right now I work as a trainee within the markets HR and Corporate, which means I am supporting the activities of the Chief or HR in the market departments. This is the commercial part of the organizations. Among my tasks I have Head Count Management. This means I have an eye on the couple of thousand employees within this department to see there are many fluctuations from one department to another.

W: Is that related to turnover?

R1: It is part of turnover but that’s a different assignment, more for the Fit To Grow program. This one is… I will try to explain the design of the company, than you understand what I do. There are three sectors, and there is a fourth sector which is overall. There are around 10,000 employees within this fourth part, the commercial part. But, sometimes there are errors in the systems. Or people make mistakes and change whole departments under our umbrella moving to one of the sectors. Then you have movements in the payroll. So practically I look at ‘Wow, there are 9,000 people in the system, but we have 10,000. Where are the other thousand employees?’ and I have to investigate where they disappeared. And then we have a Fit To Grow program which means we let go of people, to over Head Count, people who not bring profit will have to leave. This is the management of the employees, combined the two. Another task to the market blueprint is how each market is constructed, what type of employees would they need, what kind of leadership should they have in these markets, and what should the Head of HR do, what are their KPIs. What is the standard control within the market. Actually another project dealing with organizational design, is practically building the company, rebuilding it at the moment.

W: Sounds really cool.

R1: It is really interesting. I am working on a project ‘Best Place To Work For’. So the goal of [company name] is to reach top 10 of Best employees. But we are not there yet. Practically what I am doing there is tracking information, build presentations for country leaders, of how important and the benefits of such a competition is.

W: It sounds pretty challenging and you sound really enthusiastic.

R1: It is challenging and I am extremely enthusiastic.

W: Because of course you will finish this assignment in approx. 2 months. What did you do to move on in the job itself? And attract more assignments?

R1: At the first day I worked here, working at such a high level with the Chief HR director, I had to start building the network. I need different information. I start reaching information from Heads of HR from special departments and markets as from the global office here, to the Talent Acquisition market, and from this getting different information and them seeing me working and seeing me delivering they started asking me, ‘Ok, I have this small project. Would you be interested or you need like a couple of weeks ago when I went for the job grading, I had, eh… presentation on an online platform where you could see the movement of HR managers within the company, I needed to ask him for feedback, what his perspective was, he had a look at it, and he said ‘This is really nice. And well, we are trying to build something similar at the global level. Would you be interested in this?’

W: So what I understand is that you take different assignments because that you are constantly networking with people and proactive, and you started with one manager. Through the last 8 months did you have different managers, or was there one manager you worked with?

R1: So … it is a bit more complicated in this situation here, so I have my line manager here, who is the chief HR officer… and my supervisor who is an HR officer, working for the chief HR officer. So practically, I am working close with both of them. So basically when I started I supposed to work fifty percent of the time with the HR manager responsible for the transformation and I worked for him for three months. And then I stopped working for him. Since then I have been working on this small project with other employees but basically I work with them mostly… One supervisor and one manager.

W: I understand you have a quite good formal relationship with the manager, the Chief HR Officer, so what is your experience in the way your direct manager, not the supervisor, gives you feedback?

R1: So now I need to be sure if this is good… you are interested in the relationship with the line manager.

W: Yeah.

R1: Because here we will be a different… that was the reason for introducing the supervisor. Because my manager is really busy, and he doesn’t have time for the proper feedback or proper communication a trainee would need.

 W: Ok, then I will only use the word supervisor to make no mistakes, and if I say manager, than I mean your manager. Shall I propose the question again? What kind of relationship did you build up with your supervisor?

R1: Ok, he is quite young, 32. He started after I started. I started in June, and he started in October. So in the beginning it was a bit weird because he was my supervisor but I knew a bit more about the department than he did. So we started kind of a relationship of friendship, let’s call it, but it is quite an honest and open relationship, because we are both here shortly from the beginning. We both have the same age level. So [changes voice as if it were the supervisor] ‘You are here to learn. I am going to be as honest as possible, even though this can sometimes be a bit cruel in my feedback’. ‘[changing voice] ‘Ok no problem I do not mind that. Please let me know, if you see anything that you think I should change or to correct me, do so. Don’t be afraid to hurt my feelings’. So in the beginning, the first two months let’s say , he tried to be as close as possible and try to monitor my tasks, how I would proceed etcetera, like that and that and that, and then he understood he doesn’t have to see my, every single move, and then in December I was more by myself. So he sends me an e-mail and saying ‘[name R1], I need this. Could you do this within two days?’ Then I just do it and do everything by myself, I have to reach the proper person to get information, I will come up with a proposal and I will send it to him.

W: Ok and what is your experience related to how your supervisor supports you and gives you feedback?

R1: Well, we do have weekly one-on-one. It’s the only time we see each other more or less, because he is working from Eindhoven and I am based in Amsterdam. So during Mondays he is here. And on that day in that hour that’s the time when I receive the feedback, so let’s say that during the past week, I send him two answers to different projects, and then he says ‘Well Ok that is good, and that should be more like that’. Because usually all the projects end up in the inbox of the CHR officer. So, of my manager…

W: how does your manager, so your manager, show you you did a good job?

R1: how I would appreciate the skills of my boss, or my supervisor.

W: Of your boss. How he evaluates you and what you think of the recognition you get from him?

R1: Well, he is really mild. Ok, we had a pure feedback session a couple of months ago, where we took that one hour, where he simply gives me feedback of ‘Ok, so I like how you do that and you do that and I like that, for example like the way you work independent’. It wasn’t feedback on the project, but in general feedback, ‘Would you really help me cause at the moment I am still a bit uncertain about how to reach out to certain stakeholders, they ignored me’, for example. ‘So you do have this issue, let’s see how we can work on that, how can we make your voice heard in a very high level environment and how we can improve that.’

W: Ok, that’s good thing. And related to your activities, do you more work in a team or independently? Or do you have direct other colleagues?

R1: Well eh… starting from February we have a new intern, a new trainee, so practically for the past few months I am coaching her, as in practically, I have to hand over everything, as when I leave she has to tackle anything what I am doing until now. So she would be quite my equal, my peer. (W: So you explain everything to her). Yes, more like a coach.

W: I have to skip a few questions as you give me lots of information so that’s good. Suppose you worked on a certain activity or project, and the results are not what was expected by your manager, supervisor or other people, to what extent does your supervisor, stand up for you?

R1: Ehm... Ok... Actually it happened a couple of weeks ago. I created an e-mail, a quite extensive e-mail. And that e-mail included some pictures and updates, and the pictures and update were in the template of the email, and something happened, the team complained. Something happened and was messed up, and the pictures weren’t that up to date, so somebody of the market replied directly to my manager and saying that ‘What is happening here? My title is not correct?’ and my manager replied in the email ‘Apologies for the inconvenience and for the mistakes’. From my perspective it was that he was standing up for me and taking my side.

W: Suppose your manager is at a certain moment not reachable for other people and there is a situation related to a decision he made, and other people at [company name] ask about this, are you confident enough to defend and justify the decisions he made?

R1: If I have been involved upon the assignment, yes I am comfortable enough to do that, making those decisions. But there is quite some number of projects he is involved in. But in those I wouldn’t try to justify or defend his decision.

W: The next question is more related to your supervisor. What are your thoughts and feelings about the interaction exchange with him? Are you able to discuss important matters to him?

R1: Actually yes. He is quite an open person. At a personal level, if he sees me bothering, than I have to tell him so he knows. As a Dutch person he is very curious and wants to know everything.

W: So that’s really good, so on a social level not specifically work related, you are able to discuss such matters with him.

R1: For example I have an issue, what I mentioned earlier on that I was ignored by heads of HR in the markets and we start discussing about that. ‘You have a really big issue here. Why is that?’ And then I said ‘Well ok, I have personal issues in being ignored.’ ‘Ok. Lets go a bit deeper’ and then we started discussions on acting in a weird way when I am ignored. And on the other side, we do have some programs within the company, they are kind of workshops, and there you practically try to figure out yourself, and your team and your manager, and in March we participated with my manager and we got to know each other really personal.

W: And did things change afterwards?

R1: Well regarding my managers not exactly, because I didn’t know them so it was a quite surprise ‘Hey they are humans too, they have feelings too’ I knew that, but in our team we have this within the market, guys we never see face to face. And they were there, and I had the opportunity talking to them. And that was a big eye opener like ‘Oh, they have feelings’.

W: But did things change afterwards, because those managers are quite busy. You have your supervisor as a building bridge between you and the manager. But how does the relationship with your manager affect your job?

R1: Usually it does not impact really, but there are items which I await for his approval, and my supervisor cannot intervene. For example if I send an email to my manager a couple of days ago which he needed to send to the proper person, it was about the change within the organization management, and I am still waiting for the reply on his parts. So as long as he cannot give me an answer I am hanging in the air and I cannot close up that project.

W: Ok and what do you think of that? How does this make you feel?

R1: sometimes it makes me mad, because then he calls me and asks ‘Oh [name R1], did you fix that one?’ ‘I would have, but I am still waiting for your confirmation and than he says ‘O, Ok, I will do that straight away’. But in the end I know he is extremely busy and in the end he will bump into that error, and he will be the one calling me like ‘Did you do that?’ and then I say ‘No you have to say yes first’.

W: Yeah yeah, and what do you think of getting recognition from your manager? Or is that still the job of the supervisor, according to you?

R1: Well I think it is the job of both of them, in the end, because more or less all the projects I am working on land in the inbox of my manager. Within accompany of this we put quite a lot of emphasis on the ‘Thank You’ part, (W: yeah) so… yes, I always now receive an email with ‘Thank you’ or ‘Great job’ and things like that, which I truly appreciate.

W: And what other things make sure you go happy to your work and makes sure you leave satisfied?

R1: Eh… the colleagues. I really think the environment in which I work should be a positive one. I am not talking here about my team, because my team is composed of three, but I do have a workplace and I am surrounded by a lot of great guys, but for me if this environment would be a sad negative one, I would hate to come here. If I come here one morning and I feel negative about the organization, I am not really happy to start working. And sometimes I have the opportunity to change from English to Dutch to Spanish et cetera. Small words of course. But this international environment makes me really happy.

W: Ok, and is this only related to your colleagues or also the team etcetera, but is this also related to social things?

R1: Yeah social things too. Unfortunately not so many as I would like, but right now I also don’t have time right now for this. I believe in a department which is formed of senior people, that that is a really different environment than with people of your age. So, yeah we do go out on Friday evening after work, but it is still at a certain distance you know. And certain events organized by the company, we do have a bar close to the building. And we had an event for breast cancer week where we did bingo and drink and small events.

W: So that is also very important for you?

R1: It Is, it is, because you cannot work with somebody without knowing a little bit of the personal life. That is what I believe, what I think.

W: I understand what you mean. Ehm… and you as an expat working at [company name], living in The Netherlands are there also other things which influence your happiness in the job you perform?

R1: Well there is one other thing. I lived in three other countries, accept my home country. So it makes me happy getting to know new people, a new culture, ehm…. Also what doesn’t really make me happy, is that I don’t have my family and my friends close by.So, sometimes that brings me down.

W: Can you also experience that in the job, during the day?

R1: During the day, I don’t know. What I experience during the day, is that I do miss speaking my own language. Practically I do not know any Romanians here within the company. So sometimes I do need to feel saying a couple of words in my own language, feeling free of saying whatever comes in mind, without having to think for two seconds, how do I put this in English, or to be politically correct and have it right. But it is not like that it brings me down during the day… it’s like [snaps with her finger] a couple of seconds and then it is gone. Then you find yourself speaking to the colleague next to you in and you start saying something in your own language, then you’re like ‘Oh no no no, I can’t say that’ because he or she cannot understand me. That’s strange.

W: Yeah that is strange and odd moments I guess.

R1: (Laughs) Yes I just make them funny.

W: what role does your manager play in your satisfaction of the job?

R1: The role played by the manager… Is quite important! What I am going to say is not politically correct, but what I am doing is doing for him, but not to please him. I am doing this to perform as good as possible and help him in helping the business. So in the end his recognition matters a lot. And seeing him, using my product, the end results of my tasks, really makes me happy.

W: Ok, and do you also think he sees your potential? He sees what you are capable of?

R1: I hope so! This week or last week, I don’t remember, I requested ehm… special half an hour with my line manager, so not with my supervisor, a couple of times, ‘I am reaching the end of my internship, and I would like to talk to you, and I would like to have feedback from you, and I don’t want it regarding the tasks, but how did you see me performing during the months.’ And I must say the feedback was quite positive, and in the same time I applied within a job here, in the company, and he said ‘Good thing, that particular job is quite good for you, because people will see that you are good in what you are doing, and you deliver good results, So eh… in less than one year you should be able to develop your career and go on with your next level job’.

W: within [company name]?

R1: Yes I was talking with someone for the interview of this position whether I was interested in an HR management position. I had a look at that position. And that looked absolutely great, but I said ‘I think I am not yet prepared for this kind of position’. And my line manager agreed with this thought. I explained the situation and he replied ‘ You did develop yourself quite a lot and you learned a lot of things this year, but you are not there yet to take a position of an HR manager’. (W: Yeah) And that was part of my feedback too.

W: Ok, well I am going to one of the last questions and ehm... It is basically a really universalistic question, and that is what is most important according to you in an exchange relationship… between you and somebody else)?

R1: I think this from my point of view can be generalized and that is starting from love relationship to work relationship, is trust. And I am going to… for example.. if your supervisor or the line manager doesn’t have enough trust in giving you the right assignments or stretching your assignments, you’re never able to develop yourself and deliver the right results.

W: Yeah, and ehm… how do you perceive that in the relationship with your manager?

R1: I … it is there, it is there. As a matter of fact as I told you they started giving me assignments and stopped guiding me. So if there wasn’t trust I wouldn’t be able to do that without being told what to do. Every single step what I have to do.

W: could you say you have a partnership with them? To function at the same level or …?

R1: On a couple of things and projects, yes.

W: And, what could your manager do or have done within the relationship you have right now?

R1: Well, I would have appreciated a bit more time with him… because I never see him although we work in the same office. Now I am talking about the manager and not the supervisor. But now I don’t need that, because he has a trainee under him now, so he supposed to guide and supervise that trainee. But in the first month when I arrived here he was just sending me an email requesting me some things and I was like ‘I need more time with him, and try to explain me what exactly is going on here’. But now I am good, but I ended up in learning and understanding him in a couple of words.

W: Suppose you don’t get this position you applied for, and suppose you could continue working the the same manager… would you like to keep on working with him or…?

R1: Actually the second one is not an option. I would really like to keep on working with him. But organization chart of this department is already freezed, so they cannot add another position. If they would have to hire me, they have to create a new position, but that’s not possible.

W: Thanks.

Appendix II: Interview R2

W: How would you describe your day to day activities? Could you give me a short description of it?

R2: You mean content wise. What the project is about. Or the things I am doing.

W: Yeah the things you are doing, related to the project.

R2: Ok so basically the project, yeah, I am kind of in charge of the project I am working on. I think content wise it’s no, no real rocket science, but ehm… it’s more about managing different stakeholder groups. I more work in a group function, right. Also the headquarters, it’s more like a group function. And within the group function there is the office called the Business Transformation office. So I work in this office, and of course if you want to postpone the business than you have to talk to people in the functions in the sectors, in different departments, so my project is about eh… ehm… about the procurement and finance department and I am really a lot coordinating with these functions and related to the group function I am working in. (W: Yeah) Trying to align a lot of things and ehm… bring your project a little up towards them, and give them an update, arrange a lot of things, and meet them and discuss how we can finish this project in a way that everyone is also satisfied (laughs) so I would say that it is a lot of coordination, and, and yeah… It’s really project management you could say.

W: Ok, and the project management, so only related to the project, you say that you deal with a lot of stakeholders, but do you do this on your own or is this within a team?

R2: Mainly I am doing this on my own, of course I have my boss, but he, he’s not too much involved, and he is more dealing with more or less if I need to get in touch with any kind of manager or any kind of function, than usually he just does the first contact for me and contacts this person and says ‘[name R2] wants to work on this project, and please work with him on this project’. (W: Yeah) And then I work on it and report on him about the process of the project, but he’s not too much involved, so it is mainly really that I kind of drive this project. It’s merely just me, there is not a team for driving this project, it’s ehm… me who’s driving it. But in order to create some content, right (W: yeah) I need to do interviews with different stakeholders , for example for the procurement department, for the finance department, for the group department, so… they are basically, if you want to say so I am really bringing in the project management and, and, and the structure which is to be used and they have to bring in the content. Because they are the experts in their field, right… (W: yeah) So I can say this is the structure which we are using. It’s a Sic Sigma project. I don’t know if you heard about Sic Sigma. (W: no) That’s just eh, if you want to say so, a methodology of a project so I am bringing in the methodology that we should take, like this is first step, this is second step, and they have to tell me basically how to fill it in. To put it differently, Sic Sigma is a certain framework, but the framework of course needs to be filled with content. Does this make sense? (W: Yeah this definitely makes sense.) So I am more of the framework guy and they are the experts at the end of the day and they also have to work with the content. When the project has finished… so it’s important that they are involved the whole time and this in the end … is also that they expect it. So this… I could also fill in the content myself but that doesn’t make sense.

W: And this is like a fixed assignment right? This is like a pretty clear fixed assignment.

R2: Yeah yeah, so when I came there, it was already clear that this is going to be the project I was working on.

W: Ok. And you told me your manager basically is there to establish the first contacts with the stakeholders which you need to interview.

R2: Yes exactly, And he is also of course, ehm… once a week I have a status meeting with him where I basically report the progress, the next steps and what are the questions I may be struggling with, and so in that sense.

W: And what do you think of his support in the last 3 months? The support he gives you within … the project?

R2: Ehm, it’s actually quite good, because he has a lot of experience in project management, and managing stakeholders and managing also resistance from stakeholders, because people are usually… people are not willing to change, when it comes to transformation. People like to be the way they were always. So he gives really good advice on how to cope with that. He’s putting a lot of confidence in me which then automatically drives me to work a bit harder, because I don’t want to disappoint him. So that’s good. And the time that we have every week, it is also very good that he’s giving me that time. And eh… he’s very helpful in that one hour we have so (W: So the feedback he gives you is very good..?) Yeah.

W: And ehm... suppose you do some assignments really well, in what ay does he give you recognition or in what way does he tell you did a good job.

R2: Ehm… (laughs) There has no results yet of the project, there has been intermediate results, but generally he is happy with it, and he is usually also… he is a very optimistic person. And we both know that the project is not that easy and ehm… You know he set initially a goal what we want to achieve in the end and this is quite ambitious I think… and the working towards it. And of course I get very disappointed when I don’t … when I see it’s not going to work out the way I want to. But he is very opportunistic. And he says if we only reach half of the project than this is already still a very big step for Philip for the company... as it is very new. And things need time to change, as they do something in a certain way already for 20, 25 years. And you just can’t change anything within one month. And he gives me a lot of confidence, in that sense… but to answer your question a bit more precisely if I do things good than he does appreciate it and he says ‘Thanks [name R2]’ ‘That is good results’, that is a really good progress’. ‘I am sure it will be very good results in the end too’. That’s what he does. But he’s not like making an announcement like [name R2] achieved something (W: [name R2], tadaa!) (laughs) No it’s not like that, but also not necessary. I think to put it shorts he’s giving me the recognition that is needed to build up further confidence in the project.

W: Ok, that’s good. And you mentioned a few times that your manager is a pretty optimistic person. In what way could you describe he is an optimistic person in interaction? Is this purely work-related or also not work related?

R2: Ehm... so we definitely have discussions which are not work related especially during lunch time etcetera. And ehm... after the weekend etcetera, regarding work and not work matters, that is good. In terms of why I see him as an optimistic person is probably because I compare him to myself. I mean, generally I achieve the things I want to achieve so it’s not like I will be missing every deadline. But I could be, I feel like I see a lot of barriers all the time, I see when somebody’s turning me down, by one of the stakeholders or they are very resistant, I immediately start doubting whether we really can progress, and how is it going to work out if he is not collaborating, pretty negative. But he says ‘That’s not a problem, [name R2]. He will cooperate, and he will do it.’ He doesn’t say ‘If you want than I can talk’, but I wish he would say that some times, but he doesn’t, but that’s also his purpose, because he wants me to do it. Ehm… but he’s just optimistic in a sense that … I don’t know how to describe it. He will say ‘It will definitely work out, [name R2]’ ‘Just keep going, it will be fine’. Ehm... I think, I don’t know if it’s too optimistic or not, but he doesn’t really see much challenges in what he’s doing, challenges in a negative sense. Every challenge for him is an opportunity.

W: And for you, would you describe this project as a challenge or ... something else?

R2: Yes I would describe it as a challenge yes. Not necessarily from … from the content as it is not really rocket science, in a sense that it is a very intellectual challenge, not statistical analysis or something, but the challenge is more that [company name] is such a big company, and if you want to establish change, than you have to involve a lot of stakeholders, and you have to make them happy, and also tell them why you want to do this project and explain to them the benefits. And it’s difficult, on the one hand I am pretty new here and the idea of ‘What is he going to tell me?’ … Ehm… And they have just been doing things for so many years, and it is challenging to raise the urgency in that way.

W: So then it also is like that you are working against constant barriers, obstacles or …?

R2: Yes you could say obstacles, speed bumps. You know I like to do things and I almost always get them done. And from university you’re used to the fact that you’re responsible, right… so if you say I don’t want to work for one week, I want to write my thesis in the last two days, you can do that. It just depends on what best fits you. But at work, you are more dependent on others and that sometimes slows down the project and that makes it also challenging for me personally as it is just a very new experience. To be that dependent on others, and to need them for progress, and although you want to accelerate you cannot always do that like you want to. That’s not possible.

W: For you it is a whole new experience working in such a big organization already, do you also see … ehm... What was my question…?

R2: Not necessarily in such a big organization, but more in the function I work in right now... because I am in a group function. Because if I was in a specific marketing department for shavers or something, than it is almost as it is much clearer, you have the functions of the shaver, you have the marketing budget, and it doesn’t really matter what the other department is doing, I would say. Like coffee machines, or something. It’s a totally different department, so that is very different than working at a group level, and working cross-functionally, right. Human resource, Finance and you have to think ‘Why should they collaborate in some way?’, and that is also what the people think, like ‘We are Procurement, and they are Finance, why should we collaborate?’ But there are reasons to do that, which could bring more benefit for the organization, like efficiency, you know.

W: Yeah. And was this, was this project, this assignment, also what you expected it to be, or do you miss certain things that you would like to have in the job?

R2: The thing is before I came here I knew I had one assignment and what it was approximately about, right. But ehm… in the course of time, let’s say the first months as it probably took a month, to really focus where and how am I going to do that... because they gave me a very broad task. It was broadly formulated and you can do a lot of things, and you can try it. So let’s do a pilot project, like Procurement and Finance, but it took a lot of time to do that. Before I started I didn’t know I was going to focus on Procurement and Finance. But this is something that really came out in the first month, but… am I missing something…? No, but the reason for that is that I also didn’t have too many expectations, and I didn’t know what was really going to happen, so it is difficult to say whether I was missing something as I didn’t have any pre-expectations.

W: Ok, so in general are you happy with the assignment? Or ‘Wow, my colleague has a much more interesting project’.

R2: No, no. I would say I am quite happy. If I compare it with other people at [company name] I would say they are much more at one function and doing one very specific assignment, on a small scale, I mean that definitely has some benefits, because you can much more focus and read literature on that aspect, right. But some people would say ‘It doesn’t really have a focus’, but it does… (W laughs) have a focus because the initial assignment was even broader and this is already a scope, what I am doing (R2 laughs). But you know… looking at two complete functions, ok, that is still very broad. But that is necessary because if I go into very much detail than it’s not going to work out. So what was your question again?

W: Well I think you already answered my question but I had another question related to it. But you told me that there are some interns having… [Interrupted by R2]

R2: Yeah so if I compare it to the assignment that other people are doing, than within [company name], than I think I am very happy, as it gives me the opportunity to see so many different things. I see three functions at the same time. So that’s quite cool.

W: Is this also impacted by the relationship and the interaction with your manager, and that you are happy with this assignment and happy working right now at [company name]…?

R2: Eh… Oh, ok. Yeah definitely, if my boss wouldn’t be there than I think I would have a lot of challenges… even more than now. I don’t know if I could handle them. So, yes… Yes.

W: Ok, good. Let me check … Different question. What is your feeling about the space and time you get to develop further yourself within the role you have and within the organization?

R2: To develop in what sense, like trainings?

W: No not like trainings. Suppose you have some really new interesting ideas of which you think, ‘Yeah those should be used for this project or for some activities my manager does’.

R2: Yeah, I can definitely do that. I am definitely, well, not leading but in charge of this project, but I am responsible. If I don’t do anything there is nothing going to happen. But in that sense of course I can also steer in that a little bit the direction within certain boundaries, because at the end of the day there is a goal. But, how I get to this goal and what techniques use, I am free to use them. My boss never says no. I am free to do them. I am pretty much used to that my boss should make the decision, but over here it is like ‘No [name R2], you make the decision. I am not going to do it for you’. For example, there are three ways of dealing with this issue. ‘We can either do this, do this or do that. And I am not sure what to do. Because one thing has this negative impact, and the other one has this’, and he says: ‘Yeah [name R2], think about it. What do you need to do, what do you want to do, what is most beneficial for the project and… decide.’ So in that sense he’s giving me a lot of freedom, which sometimes I don’t know how to deal with that, because ehm… you know at the end I want to create a result that he is happy with, but at some stage it goes in a direction that is not what he wants, that is difficult. But he is giving me an indication of what I may do sometimes, but it is not, in the end of the day, it is my decision. So in the end of the day, to answer your question, I can steer a lot, in what I am doing.

W: And does this also give you the feeling that you have some form of partnership agreement with him or, within this project, you are leading you are managing. And that you have to make the decision. Do you have the feeling that you are on the same level as he is?

R2: Now that is an interesting question. I personally always feel… maybe that’s not justified, but I personally feel that I am just still a student. Eh… I am not on the same level as my boss, and not as my stakeholders. De facto I am not, they are managers and I am not. (W: Yeah) But he is not too concerned about that, because when he introduces me to someone I need to speak with he’s not making a secret of it. For him there are no ties of limits on hierarchy. So he tells me to go to anyone in the organization, maybe not to the Executive Board. But below that, if I have questions to them, ask them. They’re just people. Just because they have a status, it doesn’t mean they are different. So in that sense he is putting me really on a high level, right… because he would do that. But he tells me you know, he is not going to do that for me. I can do it. So in the beginning he introduced me to a few people, to some stakeholders, but other than that, he says ‘Do it’… Maybe that’s also different because, that’s a Dutch company and in German companies… I am German, we have a lot of hierarchy, depending on what organizations, but we have a lot of hierarchy. But in China it is maybe even more. You shouldn’t just call up to a manager and ask him ‘Can you tell me what you think of some things, can we also maybe team up?’ That’s also what he often uses, the word team up, you know he says ‘If you have the feeling someone within [company name] is doing something similar or could help you on your project, just call them and team up with them’. So in that sense he does not place me on the level of ‘He is only an intern’.

W: And ehm.. I think it is really interesting to address it right now. Suppose you would work much longer with your manager what is your idea about that, looking at the relationship you have right now with him?

R2: Yeah I can imagine working with him, yes. … But of course project management is always just a project, right. So it is not like I am an accountant, and I am always doing the same things. There is an end to this project.

W: Sounds good. As your have so many good things in the relationship with him. A different question… [Interrupted by R2]

R2: Ehm… and definitely I could imagine that I like it that he’s different than me. I like working with people working different than yourself, because than it drives creativity and motivation. If I am really negative and see everything pessimistic, and the same person sitting next to me also has this, than he thinks ‘Well it’s not going to work out any way’ (R2 laughs) But he is so positive, so different in that sense it is very helpful for personal improvement, and he shows me it is possible and it is the right direction. He is so convinced, that it also influences me, when I think ‘This is negative’, but he will say ‘it is positive’, so maybe it is positive.

W: Ok that is good. And… so how must I see your manager? Because he probably also has other activities, and once a week supports you with feedback and I don’t know, sometimes answering your questions during the week. What other things is he running?

R2: So he has his main project, which is the Business Transformation. He is overseeing budgets and all kinds of things in the transformation. And he is managing a lot of overall activities, but I am… we are in the same office. I can talk to him anytime. If I want to talk to him over lunch, that’s usually not a problem. I can always schedule in an appointment in his agenda, so it is an open calendar so that is not a problem, and we have this fixed schedule once a week. Sometimes in the beginning we had it two times a week, but this is usually ok. But I can always address questions and suggest ‘Hey we have a meeting on Monday but I feel I need your help decision right now’… Then he says ‘Ok’. He doesn’t want me to sit and wonder. ‘If I am not available immediately, than one hour later. If that’s still fine, right’ I think that’s an important thing in a relationship that you can as well approach your boss, in different situations, and not just once a week.

W: Is that loyalty or how would you describe it?

R2: I don’t know if its loyalty. I would probably just call it openness and support. Ehm… it’s a little bit like mentoring, being good mentor.

W: And of course your manager is also depending on you. He doesn’t want to see you sitting, but he’s also depending on you in his total assignment as you are working on a part of it, is that right?

R2: Ehm… this is also difficult (laughs). Yeah he is dependent a little bit, I would say. Because he also got this idea probably from his manager or discussion within his team that we need to do something like that, so of course he wants to see results or his team or his boss wants to see results. But he’s not dependent that no one else could do it. So, he could also do it himself. He’s not lacking the knowledge to do it but more lacking the time to do it (laughs). So in that sense, using the word dependent a little too harsh, but he’s definitely appreciating that I am doing it.

W: And suppose somebody within his team or his boss, they have some questions related to the project, would you be confident enough to, to eh… discuss and justify decisions you or he made?

R2: Yes, that’s not a problem. I would do so.

W: What other things basically make sure you go happy to your work? Well I actually hope you go happy to you work? (W and R2 laugh)

R2: What other things? I think one of the most important things I experience at [company name] is trust. Why is it trust? Now we have at [company name] something called workplace innovation. They don’t have fixed desks. This is the desk of the boss, this is the desk of the secretary, it is not there. We just have tables and very different kind of tables… so not just at the office but also from home. This means you could put a slogan on it ‘Work wherever, whenever you like, or where you feel most productive’. So, if I feel productive at one o’clock in the night, I work. If I don’t feel productive at nine o’clock in the morning I don’t work. So the thing is I have a project, I have to manage this and it is not like in many companies, that there is a lot of face time. That nine to five you have to be there. Now, we don’t really have that. Of course that happens a lot, because we have Workplace Innovation just recently, so people are still in that routine and go at five. But I sometimes go at ten, because I feel like I am still a student and I like to sleep till late. And I work late. I am used to this from uni, still. But maybe it would be good for me to have some more discipline (laughs) but at the other hand I appreciate it, this is really good. Because he trusts me so much, he is not counting every hour that I am working on it. He is just trusting me. I think that’s a very important thing. (W: Yeah) Yeah. That’s one of the major drivers of my motivation that I go happy to work. Hm… is there anything else? Yeah, I mean other small things like that colleagues are nice and friendly. I think in general the Dutch cultural is more open than The German. German people are much more closed, strict in the beginning, very professional relationship only. That could be a bit more different. Much more open, communicative. There’s that word ‘gezellig’, right (W And R2 laugh). And you can also feel that at work, not just when you go out. You can feel when you are in to [company name].

W: Yeah, [company name] is a Dutch founded organization but there are also working many international people. And you mention especially the Dutch culture within and outside the organization, and in Germany there is a much more strict and professional way of dealing with other people. Is that also related to outside of work, you meet colleagues or managers outside work, or what so ever?

R2: Well it is not like I go out with them and party with them. No, in that sense no, but we definitely have events. Monthly team drinks. We had a welcome dinner for me. So in that sense we do things outside, maybe that’s more the obligatory program, so in that sense it is ‘gezellig’ but within the boundaries of the company, you know (laughs) and my boss is also much older. He has a family, he lives in a different city. But with the younger people I could do more, but I am still a little bit too German. They distinguish that more and I think I will keep on continuing to do.

W: You say basically two things. On one side you say you like the Dutch working culture, let’s call it that. On the other side, you also mention you are used to doing things like Germany, way, doing things (R2 acknowledges) Ehm… suppose ‘gezellig’ was also in your next job, would this be important to you?

R2: Yeah it is... It is… How shall I describe… ehm… what I realize sometimes... because sometimes you use the sentence ‘big is beautiful’, but sometimes ‘big is not always beautiful’ so what I am saying is ‘I want to work for this company’, like Henkel… do you know Henkel? (W: Yes) Yeah, well they are everywhere and they work for all kinds of products, I just want to work for this company… A lot of people do that, but especially in the area of Business studies, but I think it is much more important to work somewhere you are comfortable. So at the end of the day, do you want to work somewhere just because you want to say you’re working for that company, and you have a good remark on your CV... Or is it more about the relationship and the comfort within the work, and I think that that is what I am now starting to learn. Or that I am really in right now, I am not aware of it. So I am really in between at the moment.

W: Ok and you applied for this job at [company name], right. And [company name] is quite a large organization. Was the name [company name] for you important or was it much more the project orientated work? At that point in time…

R2: So when I made the decision, the two main eh… drivers of the decision I wanted to work in a culture other than German, and … no that’s the second important thing. It was to have an interesting job. I am going to work on this assignment for 6 months I was prepared to work for a startup company as well, I mean… I was really, really open. Any company size... But ehm… the assignment just seemed… I really can have a cool assignment here, cross-functional and in the process of transformation. The company is now going through one of the largest transformation. I am implementing stuff which I learned in my studies and the project is really important, so I gain a lot of knowledge. I could even apply minor courses of Lean management, and that was very important for me. To see different things... Because I get bored quite easily (laughs). Suppose I would do everyday accountancy I would fall asleep. So the task diversity is much more important than the name of [company name]. I also wasn’t aware of [company name]. It was never on my radar. Oh yeah. And also the city Amsterdam is good. That’s an important factor.

W: So are you happy that you are here now?

R2: Well, my criterion was to go into a nice city, so I enjoy Amsterdam but I must say that I was hoping to go to a different country, but the reason I stayed here was the assignment, really. I wanted to see something new, I was for one and a half years in Holland, I am not learning anything new, that’s what I though. But now I could implement my studies. I wanted to go to UK or Sweden, or US. But that didn’t happen.

W: I just have one or two questions that’s basically it. What could you do or your manager to make the relationship really good? Or is there no way to improve this?

R2: Nooo, there is always room for improvement! What could we do to make it even more perfect? Yeah, maybe I sometimes have the feeling, he gives me a lot of responsibility which is good, but sometimes I had the feeling I wasn’t sure whether he knew I was a junior still, you know. It’s not like I am a project manager. Sometimes I would have wished he would give me a little more guidance, that he would help me but he constantly makes me to make the decisions, but I would have in the beginning preferred a little more guidance. (W: So more team up?) You could say that yeah. He sees himself as a coach more or less, but he’s not a team member in that sense. A team member is ‘We are working together on it’. But that’s always what I thought it was. But he is a coach and that’s his role, so… I mean definitely he is the manager so he cannot be the team member, because he also has a lot of other projects. And other people are reporting to him. He just wants to coordinate me, and not do discuss too much in-depth about the content, but I just sometimes do it. Really dig deep into the content, and then he still helps me. But maybe another thing for improvement… ehm…. You know, I have a weakness... I have a lot of weakness (W: Put them on a list). Sometimes I have difficulty communicating in a management style way, so you know… maybe distinguish between bottom-up and top-down communication. Ehm… you know the terms. I am much more bottom up communication. I always first introduce the topic and these are the ideas I had and finally I come to a conclusions saying this is what I think. Managers of course want the other way around. And I have sometimes a feeling the way I do it, he judges a little too early, while I did not yet finish and he says ‘No no no, this is something we cannot do’ ‘you don’t need to do that’. It could be that he already thought that I told the whole story that I was already there (laughs) (W: And uhm…) And then I am really confused, because I think it is really important because if I would have been able to tell the whole story, that maybe it was a bit more clear or logic why I am saying it. So, maybe a weakness that I have to work on… But also gives it something more importance… because sometimes I am not sure if he really understood it and listened to the whole story. So maybe that is something. Instead of saying ‘No’ maybe ask me ‘why do you think that? Why should we do it that way?’ This is just a very small thing.

W: Just what you’re mentioning right now, why did you actually not confront him with this? Why did you never discuss this with him?

R2: I think the main reason is … because I don’t have the confidence sometimes that the idea I have is right anyway… because it is just an idea. And then I think ‘Maybe you understood what I mean’. So I assume he got the whole study and maybe he has more the expertise. Why I don’t confront him with that, I think that’s the reason. I don’t have the expertise yet. If I really would be sure about something, than I will discuss... but this confidence of being so sure, I don’t have that in this project. Nothing is sure, all is uncertain, there’s no one solution. This is sometimes something I lack. How do I deal with it? Personally I have the feeling he is not turning me down or something. Then I would just address it again. But I do ask in a next meeting, ‘why is this not important to the project? For me this is not really clear’. And then, to be honest, it happened a couple of times, it turned out that the thing I thought of was actually not that wrong, and was actually quite valid. Maybe it was a communication error…

W: Suppose you had a different relationship with your manager, that that wouldn’t be the case. Do you have the feeling you could confront him with this or not… this is something you have to work on yourself? [explained the question three times]

R2: Is this related to the relationship to my manager? Taking an extreme situation, suppose you wouldn’t be my coach but a team member, I would have discussed this. It wasn’t me working on the topic. Then I wouldn’t let myself turn down that quickly. With my former peer students in projects I would do this. So it would be nice, to have a boss that is much more a coach without hierarchy at all. Yes, in this way hierarchy and expertise does play a role.

W: So for your satisfaction you state that your activities are really important, your open relationship with your manager, the workplace innovation, and you miss the team up part with your manager?

R2: Well… ehm… it’s not like… it is for a small proportion. It is not that big team up... Well maybe, yeah. You could say that. But we do team up... maybe content wise. But this is not his job to do that right. So it’s really a plus, but not realistic by definition.

W: No, but of course this could impact your satisfaction, suppose you would have this job for 3 or 5 years. Suppose only this assignment. Then I think it would be a much more important thing I guess… or not?

R2: Yeah, I think the main thing you need to distinguish is people that are team players, and people who like to work on their own. So if I say I would like to work in a team, but I don’t have a team (laughs) I only have my coach who I am talking to about this topic. But then I wish he would rather be my team member than my coach, right. To put it differently, if I had an extra team member, and a coach on which I am reporting to, than I would only discuss the progress, and not content wise, and then I would have real discussion with my team member, yeah. So that’s the reason why I look for teaming up.

W: Thanks.

Appendix III: Interview R3

W: Could you describe your job activities?

R3: Eh… my job activities. Eh, well so what I do on a day to day basis is that I call the customers in my portfolio and I try to set up meeting with them on the phone and afterwards through a consult I go with them trough their marketing activities and objectives… and their business. What do they do, what do they want to achieve and try to come up with the right solutions. For the … eh, marketing goals.

W: And what are your general feelings, do you have a feeling that you more work in a team or that you more work independently? Do you have a lot of interactions with other colleagues?

R3: Well, we definitely have team targets, but also individual targets, but it is a combination of both. Of course you… you have to work with your own customers and with your own… your own tasks you have to do but then again there is also the team and we have a team target.

W: Ok, that’s clear. You also have a manager I guess. How does your manager support you in your day to day activities? In what way does he or she support you?

R3: Well. What, what, what happens is that the managers always keeps an eye on the tasks of the employees and then she can look into the Task manager whether you achieved the target or not. And how many points you earned, et cetera. So my manager keeps an eye on that, gives an update about those things. Second of all, would be meeting, once a week we have meeting with the manager in which we discuss what goes well, what went wrong, what I can improve on, ehm… and those kinds of things in general. And then thirdly I also have a sales coach. And my sales coach reports back to my manager about my performance, improvement, and then my manager also, you know, talks about that and how I can improve my sales skills.

W: So you basically have a manager and a sales coach, both of them with which you’re interacting, primarily about your job activities (R3 acknowledges). And what do you think of the way your manager supports you, in your job? What is the feeling about how she supports you?

R3: Ehm… my manager, she has quite a lot of experience, so for example, when I just started, she came up with all kinds of useful tips how to improve your productivity. Things like how to set up your calendar, and plan your day. First of all, she gives me a lot of useful tips, second of all, ehm, it is also good that she is the kind of person, that she can really tell, she can really read the kind of person you are (W: yeah) So, she tells you ‘You have to watch out for certain things, not to be overconfident, not to be arrogant,’ or not to whatever, and I have to focus on certain aspects, so also her personal skills are pretty big.

W: Ok and what do you think of the way she supports you and the way you interact with her? So that’s more your feeling on how she acts.

R3: Ehm…, yeah, I don’t know, I like the way she treats me I would say if that answers your question. And she is a really nice person, although if I would (inaudible) up, than she can be really strict as well. So she is strict and friendly as well. She’s the kind of person you can always go to if you have a problem, etcetera.

W: Ok, ok. You just told me that basically your manager showed you in the beginning how to best deal with certain things and work on social skills, etcetera. And, in what way is there also an opportunity to implement your own ideas within the job?

R3: Ehm… well, I can always say whatever I want to say... pretty much. We had a meeting for example last week, and then we could tell our manager what we wanted to change, to say it that way. In whatever you wanted. So we can also say to her what we want to change in the job, et cetera. So that is one thing and… ehm… yeah, I see my own ideas, whenever I have any idea at all, I can always … tell her this idea. What she does with that… that is of course always the question for me.

W: Where do you want to move to either in the organization or maybe within eh… the job role, what would be your next check point?

R3: That’s the right question, because I am not sure yet what I want to. But, I see myself in the future in a role which is a combination of sales and marketing, but yeah, most likely something with new business development... either at [company name] or another company. Help to grow them, help to sell them. Help to improve their marketing strategy.

W: Ok, and how do you think your manager could support you in this?

R3: Ehm, well like I already said before. She has a lot of experience, and she can definitely help me with the right feedback, coaching and the right ehm… trainings I should go to. Ehm, and those kind of things. And furthermore, I think what also helps is getting rewards for what you’re doing, so my manager just tells me I am doing well, I guess that would also help for any future things I would say.

W: Ok … Looking basically at the relationship you have with your manager and your colleagues have with your manager, do you perceive any difference in the way of interacting between you and her compared to your colleagues?

R3: Yes I think so, because people who are already for a longer time part of [company name], also know her for a longer time, and that changes the personal relationship. For me it is still a bit formal, I would say and for my colleagues it is less formal. (W: Is that related to the initiating the startup phase?) Yes, if you’d like that, yes.

W: (Proposed a question, R3 answered, but rephrased)Think of a moment where in your eyes something related to the team objectives did not go according to plan or could have done much better, what room is there, suppose you have new ideas to implement those ideas? To investigate those ideas…

R3: Well, if I have any ideas which I want to investigate myself, that is perfectly fine, as long as I stick to the job and achieve my goals. My target is main priority, and my target I can do wherever I want to do. But if I want to do a class on how to play football, than I can do a class on how to play football. That’s perfectly fine, but the thing is as long as you are able to reach your targets, you can achieve whatever you want.

W: Ok, makes sense, makes sense. According to you, what things are most important in a relationship between a manager and you?

R3: Eh… what things, what things. First of all, trust. If you don’t trust your manager, than you are screwed. Second of all, a manager where you can go to. Thirdly, that’s related to the second point, that your manager is knowledgeable. Ehm... Fourth, that your manager has good social skills. (W: is that good social skills towards you or?) Yes, that you can always go to, and speak to, for anything, and which is a good listener as well.

W: How do you perceive those things you just mentioned right now in the job?

R3: Whether or not my manager has those skills... I would say they are all good, even though I don’t really know her that long. You just know that, this is the kind of person you can go to whenever, and that’s combining all those things I guess.

W: Ok. And to what extent is there room and space for social talk with her? Non-work related?

R3: Well, there is. But like I said before, for me it is still a bit formal, but for my other colleagues less formal, but to give you an example about three weeks ago, we went on a team event. We went bowling. And she was in my team as well, and you can talk about anything and that’s fine. I would say maybe at work she is more reserved.

W: And that’s also because she’s a bit more stress and has other things to do.

R3: Yes exactly, and also my manager has to report at a manager of course. There are many levels.

W: What do you think, suppose this formality stays like this right now, looking forward to six months or twelve months ahead, would this impact to some extent also your level of satisfaction on the job or not?

R3: Well… yes I think so. If you’re there for a longer period, than you get to know your manager and you can talk about other things of life, outside of work. And second of all, there will be more trust, you know more what to expect. And lastly, you would get much more respect, that is not there yet. [bad connection].

W: Could you repeat the last sentence?

R3: You’re more bonding if you stay longer.

W: suppose your manager has at a certain moment too many things at hand or has a hard time, doing all the things she needs to do… Seeing from the relationship you have with her… In what way do you think could you support her?

R3: There’s only one way... to not ask too many questions. So make sure not to bother her too much (W: Ok). That’s probably the only thing that I could do for her.

W: Suppose looking at your monthly target and the results are not what was expected by your manager and uh… and also her manager and the sales coach, to what extent would your manager stand up for you?

R3: To the extent that if I did whatever I could, but if she thinks that I underperformed she would probably tell me that I underperformed. Because we have various targets and there is a few targets like which have to do with productivity and if it is not 100% at the end of each quarter than it is my own fault. If my productivity is fine, but the results are not good, than for some reason I didn’t make my revenue target, than she would probably defend me and find out why it didn’t work out that well.

W: Yeah. Ok. What other things for you make sure you go happy to your work every day… apart from relationship with your manager?

R3: Yeah yeah, it’s fine.

W: Ok, so what other things make sure you go… I think it was five or ten minutes walking towards your job, what makes it for you to go happy to your work?

R3: There are many things I think. But first of all, your job must be interesting, you should like whatever you’re doing, second of all, my colleagues and my manager, and I like the team I work in. and thirdly, if you are not too much stressed about work, so if you know… that would make your work much better I guess. So if you’re good about what you’re doing, ehm… than you more enjoy it. And the last thing would probably that you’re done at a certain moment. If you know you are there and work every day till nine that would probably not make me happy. And sometimes there is some extra work, but in general you are done at six or something.

W: Ok, and in what way do you have an idea you are getting extra rewarded, if you do much more work, and work longer? So, what is your idea about getting a promotion in a specific time frame, looking at your colleagues right now?

R3: Well that’s a part of my target. We call it Blurb. All the things you do outside your core job can help to get promoted quicker and that could be something like becoming a sales coach, or helping your colleagues all the time, or… you know, anything at all that helps the team perform better, that helps you to get promoted quicker.

W: And in what way, also related to the last question, in what way shows your manager recognition towards you, suppose you did a good job?

R3: Ehm… in what way my manager gives me recognition… By… telling me that I am doing well, by telling the team that I did something well in particular for some reason. She brings everyone together and tells ‘[name R3] did this and this and that’. And yeah, that would be the main things I would say. And also… no, that doesn’t apply here.

W: So does that happen often enough for you?

R3: Ehm… oh yeah. I would say yes, although again, if you’re more connected with your manager and know her for a longer period than she would also, you know, reward you maybe more often, as she knows you’re good at something.

W: Ok, so you’re not yet at that level, I understand. (R3: Yeah pretty much I would say) In the times that she indeed gave you recognition, what impact did this have on you?

R3: It definitely impacts my happiness at work, so if you’re asking me what makes me happy at work… is also getting respect right. If I would do well and my manager would see that and would tell the team as well and me, than I would definitely, like that I get the respect, you know, that you earned.

W: Ok, that is a good one. Suppose during the day, you need something from your manager, eh… is there according to you room to address questions? Or is it sometimes really hard to get in touch with her?

R3: Eh… well there, yeah we have office hours. I can ask anything I want during office hours, but if you have a specific question of one point of the way, when she is busy with something else than you really won’t get the answer I would say.

W: Is that only for you or as well for your colleagues, for all of her subordinated?

R: In general it’s for everybody I would say.

W: Yeah ok. From her point of view that’s quite good because you have much more to do and manage the people you manage. And all other things, but you also come from a job position with which the relationship with your manager was quite open. You could call your manager, ask your manager wherever, whenever. It didn’t matter. What do you think of this, that you cannot always go to her?

R3: In a way it sucks but, in another way it makes you more independent. If you do not straight away get the answer to the question you have to figure it out yourself, so in the end it would help me I guess. In the end I can always ask somebody, but first I want to figure it out myself, otherwise I can always ask my other colleagues. [Background noise]. In the end I can improve my own skills, too.

W: Yeah ok. So it makes you more independent that’s clear. That’s right. And ehm... how would you describe yourself, are you more a team player or more an independent person that you want to do your work independently?

R3: I definitely think I am a team player, but if I know I am not doing too well, and behind as well, than I would focus on my own things first (W; yeah, yeah). And then go back to the team things.

W: No, that makes sense. I would do the same. Ehm... let me skip… most of the info I have from you ... what role does your manager play in your satisfaction at work?

R3: Well I would say, for me it’s a bit additional to my happiness, it can make my day better, but it cannot screw up my day if my manager said something to me which is not nice, not great. If she tells me I am not doing too well, it would not impact my happiness level that much, only a little bit I would say. So I like the job itself, I like the colleagues, I like the company, and the manager is just a small part of it I would say. But of course if my manager tells me I am doing well that would improve my level of happiness I would say.

W: Yeah and that’s also what you earlier mentioned and that is related to you will probably later on develop a better relationship for you. What could you do to make the relationship even better than right now?

R3: Spend more time with the manager I guess. Go to her office hours, instead of figuring everything out myself.

W: So you don’t go there.

R3: No I want to sort out everything myself. I am not the kind of person who constantly asks for help. I would say. In general, I would rather ask somebody else than my manager. I don’t need anyone to hold my hand, I would say.

W: Ok. And then also related back to the question before, then it means suppose you indeed would speak much more with her which could increase interaction with her, and which would be more satisfactory with her, would this or wouldn’t this impact your happiness on work? Because I now have a little bit of fluctuations in your perceptions, and that is good…

R3: Yes definitely. I know it would help of course.

W: But it’s not, on one of your priority lists…

R: But I guess it would increase this satisfaction also for me in building good relationship with her.

W: I just have one last question. Thinking of your work right now... What are the things that come across your mind, that popup?

R3: The first things. That I have to work on this paper... for my client. I have to build a campaign for one of my customers right now. First things that go through my mind is that it’s just a really cool place to work and that I really don’t mind to go to work again on Monday, let’s say it that way. But it’s hard work.

W: So it sounds like you have a great experience at [company name], the last four months. And are you planning to stay long at [company name]? Looking at how you developed.

R3: Yeah, definitely. I am on this program right now which lasts two years and I want to stay for two years. And after that I will see. Ehm… I think a mixture of career opportunities, the positions I have in life I would say. Maybe I want to go back to Holland. It’s a combination of career and work I would say.

W: Thanks.

Appendix IV: Interview R4

W: Could you describe your main activities?

R4: It is like I have two jobs. I am an assistant for the Learning Talent Management and Leadership department. So it incorporates the Human Resources area, so we have partners in ehm... all the world. I am in charge of on boarding them. It’s a big thing, so I work with two other assistants. We are in charge of organizing some events for them and basically they are workshops for them, a lot of meetings, and also arranging meetings, phones, like… to onboard people… and ehm... I also ... I am also helping one of the members who is in charge of Membership and Excludance, so I help in arranging some calls with the entire world. Like, so she can follow up on her projects… and ehm... I was also working with Deloitte consultants because we have a project what is going on… and assisting them, planning the meetings, yeah... printing, ehm... arranging calls, parking. Everything they need from [company name]. I was a point of confidence. But basically arranging meetings with the other people involved with this project. And ehm… what else, well... I do a lot of things. I help pretty much everyone who has something to be helped with, so like a [inaudible]. I also help design posters for events, but basically I organize also internal events.

W: Oh great, great. So how do you basically work, because you work with two other people really closely?

R4: Yes they are my Dutch colleagues, but our manager is an American lady who lives in London and she is now going to work and live in Amsterdam. And also part of the team I work with is in India, so I have an Indian manager, let’s say.

W: Ah, so you have a lot of phone conversations.

R4: Yes, and a lot of emails.

W: And you have two projects… a project assistant and a team assistant job. And what would you say, where do you put most of the time in?

R4: Before it was in the project, but now that’s slowing down so now I can pick up on the LDL, the team assistant job.

W: And then you work with two managers I guess.

R4: No three managers… four... four managers.

W: Ok, I guess that sometimes can be a little bit tough to arrange all kinds of meetings with them, or how do you arrange those things?

R4: Well… luckily they have not been busy at the same time, and they all do kind of different things. They are related, everything’s connected, but not that much, so there’s not much problems, let’s say. Till now it is manageable.

W: Ok that’s good. And I think… let’s put just one or two main managers in front, for this interview. Otherwise it’s going to be a little bit complicated. (R4: Ok). You just have to let me know who it refers to. In what way does your manager support you in the assignments you work on?

R4: Well basically she… it is more email communication. So she drops me an email and says ‘Hey [name R4], Can you pick this up? If you have any questions…’ I’ll email her or call her. But so far, if she gives me something it is things which I already know how to do it, so I am already familiar with it. But if I have any questions I can call her. Let’s say, if I have any clashes, urgent things from other people that I assist, she advices me where I should prioritize.

W: Ok. And what do you think of that you actually work with four managers? And do not closely work with one manager. What is your opinion about that?

R4: I actually like it, because I can learn a bit from everything, because some of them… one second hey… [Interrupted by colleagues] Yeah that was one of my colleagues. (W: No problem) Yeah, what I was saying was that eh… like the two jobs, two managers are really related to one job, so that makes it easier, but eh… still if… like, I need to plan things for both things, I always ask my manager what has priority, and how much time should I give her and should I give the other manager, and so she gives me guidelines what to do.

W: Ok and to what extent would you also say that the emails are good enough? The conversation by phone or email is that good enough, or would you also like to have in a different way some improvement in the relationship with your manager?

R4: No, so far it’s ok. It has been that way since I started, because she was working from London. And if I still had questions, I could always ask my colleagues, as they are a bit more experienced. Maybe you should do it this way … so, emails is fine with her.

W: Ok. And you also see a difference between you and her and colleagues and her?

R4: No, it’s the same. Everyone works with her on e-mail, since she was not based here in the office with us. It is not an issue with us… at all.

W: What room is there for you, related to the assignments, in which you could offer improvement?

R4: There is room enough as I was working on a new project, with Deloitte, so we were working together to put things together especially on technological issues, especially virtually. Because we really depend on virtual working, so, other communication methods... like ehm… live meetings, or some other technologies within [company name], and with regards of formatting, if I have to organize an event, what the best way to do is, and locations. So there is a lot room to investigate things, and to have a voice.

W: Is this also followed up and can this be implemented as well? In what way is this followed up by your manager?

R4: Yeah, I mean it gets follow up, people notice that it works better, or ‘Oh [name R4] did it the last time like this, so please ask her to help you and let’s do it this way’. And that kind of situation, let’s say.

W: So that’s also some kind of recognition for the things you did right?

R4: Yes recognition, and also recommendation. Like who ever pulled it out good, can help others [mumbles positively].

W: The best possible relationship, between you and a manager, out of what components should something like that consist?

R4: Well, trust. I know that you’re taking care of your job, and that there is also trust to communicate in case you have time restriction or if you are really struggling and have doubts. So, ehm... yeah… communication… because in my case I have a lot of jobs. In my case, if somebody says ‘Hey I have something really urgent’, you can always say ‘Hey you have to understand it. This is not as urgent as other things’. So you have to have a good communication with everyone. Email, phone, chat, it doesn’t matter.

W: And what you told me earlier on, that ... like trust and communication is experienced by you as fine, right?

R4: Yes, that’s right. But there is also… it’s trust, but also since you deliver, that’s how you gain trust. Because they know as it is in your hands, they know it’s fine, that you are able to make it work.

W: Yeah. And also managers sometimes evaluate employees on the job, on the activities et cetera, (R4: Yeah) How does your manager show you you did a good job?

I started covering a maternity leave, so the person, once she came back, they still hired me, so that covers enough... that they are happy with my job.

W: Oh really nice. That doesn’t happen all the time.

R4: Yeah, no. And especially for foreigners, it’s also a bit different. And now I have been with [company name] for … two months, officially. But I know there is a more official program to evaluate people, that happens twice a year, than you have a meeting with your manager if you are performing good, or if there are some opportunities where you can improve, but ehm… I think that’s in June, August, but right now I am not sure what is the outcome, I have to wait.

W: And are there also things which you want to do which are not yet set in your job role?

R4: No, so far I have enough to entertain myself, so (laughs).

W: I think If you have four jobs that’s enough indeed.

R4: And yes, I am the only one who is here full-time, so I am the only one and also helping the other teams as well. So I am really, I mean the carte blanche, I help everyone.

W: So would you also see yourself as a link between the manager and other people of the team?

R4: yeah absolutely. Absolutely

W: [unclear question description. Researcher had to reformulate] And does your manager also address that or recognize that?

R4: Well yes, that is part of the job. Because I am the link between those people, and have to deal with organizing all the projects and make sure it happens, so… they know if they have an hour with a certain person, it is possible due to us, because some agendas are really complicated, so they appreciate that you do your work and found some time and worked on the logistics to make the meeting happen.

W: Yeah. I am jumping to a different question. Because we just basically spoke about your job activities and all the projects you run etcetera. In what way does your manager depend on you?

R4: Ehm… who they meet, where they go, their complete agendas. So they depend a lot, they need to make meetings happen. They have meetings scheduled through all the year, so you have to help them achieve those objectives. So some meetings have to happen before a date or before another meeting, so… we have to take care which meetings they have to accept, where they have to commute, all the time. They can be calls. What time need the calls to be scheduled. This is corporate Human resources, so we have a lot of relationship with members in all the world. So we have a lot of meetings with Asia, the States, throughout Europe. So they don’t have to worry about it. (W: So you do everything for them to keep on functioning) Yes.

W: Maybe this question is not related to you, but I just address it, because suppose your manager has too many things at hand, at a certain point in time is too busy. Seeing from the relationship you have with her, in what way can you also support her related to her activities?

R4: Provide her in anything she needs. Makes sure she eats, making sure a taxi is ready for her. Also regarding IT, they have no clue how it works sometimes, so than we help them how it should be done.

W: suppose you worked on a certain activity, but the results are not what was expected by other people, to what extent stands your manager up for you?

R4: No, she is really supportive. For her everything is a learning, so she supports me. But so far, it has never happened, I am so good (giggles). But she is really supportive and speaks as a team, so that’s not an issue with her. Yeah.

W: And suppose related to some decisions she made, and other people wonder about something, or she is working, and let’s say another person or manager within [company name] wonders about that decision, are you also confident justifying or defending the decision she made or is that not the … [interrupted by R4]

R4: No, most of the time you know why she is taking that decision, so you know you understand her point of view, and sometimes she needs to give up and give room, but she is pretty flexible, so…

W: how would you describe the interaction between you and her, related to how you work together?

R4: I think it is some kind of partnering, that’s our job, also. The relationship is not that close, because she is not here, most of the time. It is more virtually but when she is here, she is a really nice person. She really appreciates what we do.

W: To what extent can you rely on her, in appointments she has with you?

R4: Yeah, well we have to be extra flexible, because she is really busy and if so she has a really important meeting which crosses our meeting, she knows we can be moved, so let’s say we are more flexible, because we don’t have that time restriction, so we can be moved.

W: Ok, so what role does your manager play in your satisfaction at work… in your happiness at work?

R4: Yeah it’s fine I have the time to talk to her and freedom. And I think she is a really smart person and understands your needs and your concerns. She really trusts all of us as employees, and she knows that if you have a concern, so… I really feel free to talk to her on whatever issue there is, so.

W: Is that really important for you in the things you do, or are there also other things …?

R4: Yeah that’s really important, because the way this work is set up is that you have to catch up fast, and you really have to deliver and figure out things on your own, so it really is independent and you need a lot of guidance when you start (W: Yeah). So I relied a lot on my team and on her, so that… [bad connection, asked to repeat last sentence]. There is a trust and with confidence. I am free to talk with her, with every issue that is annoying me or that I disagree a bit.

W: And is that only work related or also on a social level non-work related?

R4: No, so far most is work related, but she is also a foreigner, so for some things we agree.

W: And do you think that that also supports you, that you both are foreigners within [company name]? Suppose she was a Dutch person, would that also impact the relationship you have with your manager?

R4: No I don’t think so. This is really a mixed environment. I work with all kinds of people that are really diverse.

W: And are there also other things which make sure you go happy to your work?

R4: Ehm… well. For me, it is important that they trust me and that they gave me a contract and that I have the freedom to work in English that I do not really need to be that good in Dutch. So, that’s really good. I really wanted to start working here, and I really like this department, so. That’s eh… that was a really perfect thing for me. I couldn’t ask for anything better.

W: Because how did you actually start working there?

R4: Well, I started to replace someone else through a recruitment agency. And the department was growing so now I have been hired to work next to her. And there was a lot of work still to be done, so that’s why I am here and she was not working fulltime, so that’s why they offered me a job, as I can work fulltime.

W: I think I come to one of the last questions right now. On what things do you think the relationship with your manager could be better?

R4: Eh… well sometimes she is really busy and everybody gets a little bit… well they lose their human side, let’s say. Because you don’t have, you don’t take the time, as ... let’s say someone leaves the job, or on maternity leave, or they transfer she is not always there to join the farewell parties… or to write a long email, or to have a nice long conversation with this person... So if she gives you five minutes, then you may be lucky. So yeah, she has a lot of things to do, so… to be quick and to choose what she puts her time on.

W: And you basically know a lot of things, why she is busy etcetera et cetera. And you really appreciate if she has some time for you.

R4: Yeah those five minutes are gold. That’s sometimes also an issue, because if she is so busy than you don’t have time to get input from her, to wait longer, to do your job and I don’t have the answers, so that sometimes can be a down point, because you want to keep working, but you have to wait for whatever they decide on the meeting.

W: And suppose those things… you would as well have that aspect, would you perceive the relationship with your manager as better?

R4: Yes, that would be better.

[R4 left conversation and came back twenty minutes later]

R4: Yes, our goal is to as efficiently as possible make sure there is extra time available for the manager and also to be able to talk with her sometimes. There are some periods which are really busy, and sometimes a little bit less, but that doesn’t last for long.

W: But you sound like you like that, right?

R4: Well, you know what it is for, and all the other people, they also appreciate all the effort to make these things happen. So you appreciate the commitment, so you have nothing to complain. Well if you have too many in a row, than sometimes you get tired, but it’s fine, it’s part of the job.

W: And what makes sure you are so happy with your work?

R4: Well, it’s really important that I feel comfortable with my manager and with the team. Because in previous jobs it is not the same atmosphere, and you are afraid how they interpret what you say, or what you do, or it always has a second meaning. I think in here it is pure, there’s no time to just fool around, so they say things direct and it is also part of the culture. So, if there is something which you are not doing fine, than they tell you right away. Like I say it is overall a trust environment. And they, people… people trust you, so… But I mean that also has to do with the fact that you deliver, so, so it is like a chain. The few times I have struggled were because I didn’t have time to do all the things. I felt really confident to drop her an email with a maybe not nice reaction, but I don’t have always time for all those urgent things, let’s say. And then I send an email to my manager and ask ‘What do you think? It is not a nice reaction, what should I do?’ And then she gives me feedback and support. At least, to me that is how it happened. So she takes time to read my email and reply in a sincere way to it, as you know you are struggling with something.

W: Ok and you mentioned somewhere in the beginning somewhere you were also mentioning a certain level of freedom in the job, but what I also understand from you right now… could you a little bit more explain that freedom part for me?

R4: I mean the fact that you are allowed to work from home, or if a day you want to be earlier because you need to do something, and they know you are not just going to watch TV, so they say ‘’you need time, so take your time, but they know you will log in or check your email again in the evening or on a Saturday. So it is really flexible. And also the fact that we don’t have a fixed desk here, so one day you are sitting with your colleagues and next you are sitting at a different floor, so it is really a grown up attitude, and you have the flexibility to move around in the job, and I receive a lot of requests for help ‘Oh [name R4], can you help with this event or this project?’ So I kind of have the liberty to choose in what other extra things I get involved. It also has to do with the nature of my job. People have a lot of things which they can be helped with, like events like Mothersday, that are not part of my job exactly, but if there is time and I can help them, than that’s possible. That’s what I am doing now to run a little project. So, you do have the normal work load, but if it is not busy, than you can still help other people. But you are normally not supposed to, but if they are asking you and you can help, why not.

W: And this is the fore last question, thinking of your work, what makes you most satisfied?

R4: That I work with a lot of people who are really different, so it’s not eh... the same, but eh… it’s also a lot. So I get to learn different things, which in the end belong to one department, like the office of international Human Resources, and I think I get what other assistants do not get. They only work with one manager on one task. And I have to do so many things. I work with a lot of people, learn a lot of everything. And that creates an extra bond with all various people. So that makes people really happy and grateful to you, because it is not always part of your job, but always related, so you have to help them as well.

W: Thanks.

Appendix V: Interview R5

[social talk and then just started]

R5: The structure was like a matrix. I worked close with my team. And my manager was like the manager of the whole international team, and then I had several managers I was reporting to, according the function and structure of the company. So I was reporting to the manager for the product, the manager for the content and the manager for the business development… and then of course the international manager.

W: And the international manager was your main manager?

R5: Yeah yeah, that was my main manager.

W: And in what way did your manager support you in your day to day activities?

R5: Ehm… she was always very busy, and she was very ambitious. And she wants to have control over everything. She’s trying to get as many tasks as possible. I don’t know why. And the international thing is really big, and for her it was really stressed. And also she was the manager of the whole international team, but also… the manager for Eastern Europe… my team. The rest of the team had different managers. For France for Spain, for each region, let’s say… had one manager. But for Eastern Europe there was no manager. So she was ehm… in charge with this. And it was a bit too much, I think. And she didn’t have time to supervise us directly, the ones she had in the team.

W: Because Romania was of course in the Eastern … [interrupted by R5]

R5: Ok, you have to learn it... You have to learn it all. And have to establish meetings, with the other managers. The product and content department and see what they expect you to do. And learn to do it on your own. So, I didn’t receive so much supervision in the beginning.

W: So already in the beginning you were quite independent or had to do all the things yourself right.

R5: Yes we had one meeting every week, when she was asking us what we did, what was the progress, but she allocated only… ten minutes to each of us. And we couldn’t spend so much on asking questions. It was more of reporting our achievement and research than asking actually.

W: how did that affect your feeling basically of all the activities you were doing over there?

R5: In the beginning it was a bit, eh… a bit strange. When you are new you don’t know where to start. Of course a bit disappointed, also because nobody had time to explain the work to do, So it was just doing things without knowing if it was wrong or right. I was just hoping it was the right thing. And getting feedback, sometimes it was not so good in some cases. And I was like ‘Ok, how was I supposed to know, because no one was able to answer to my questions’. So, I just learned from my mistakes basically. Oh, after two months I think, I knew everything which I had to do. So I didn’t have any problems anymore. But in the beginning it was quite strange.

W: So after two months you basically learned the job. And the time she had at that point, was that different? Did she have more time to discuss, and for you to evolve and develop yourself in the job?

R5: After those two months... I started to get the feeling that what I was doing was quite boring. And ehm… she didn’t really care about it. Also you have to know, I started there because of a project but it seemed more, I more and more came to do those operational activities. And it seemed like there was no time for me to really work on the project what needed to be done. So I had some issues, I didn’t actually work on, because what I was working on now, was business development, so I didn’t know exactly what I can and what I can’t do. So because of this, I turned to other departments, and she got a bit angry on me I think. And I still don’t know exactly why, if she thought I am not doing a good job for her team, because I started to go more internationally and to learn from strategies internationally, and less for Romania… also for Asian countries… I was doing something I wasn’t supposed to, according to her.

W: But you also didn’t know, because when she came in the team she didn’t give you feedback or support in the job.

R5: Yes exactly. And I had the feeling that she was mad at me and I explained her why I am doing it. Ehm… and we had a lot of discussion then about it. She wasn’t sure if she agreed or not, actually. She wasn’t sure… actually she was trying to be nice, and not push it too much, but also I had to work on that project, and also she wanted to help me, but on the other way, she was also like… not really pleased about it. So it was a bit difficult.

W: And also the unclarity in tasks was not that good. The things they wanted you to do in the beginning. But also after the beginning they were still not clear about it, because of that gap in the Eastern European team right?

R5: Exactly… for example… because I have this issue mainly with the manager of the content team. I was supposed to help them address the content in German and English, to Romanian. To make it nice for Romanian people, because you know when you just translate a bit, it is not always … it doesn’t fit to the expectations of the public… and ehm… I was supposed to make it fit somehow and to the expectations of the Romanians... and ehm… I had meetings with, ehm… manager for the content department and it was a bit difficult because also he couldn’t tell me how far I can go in my project. And sometimes he gave me the impression he just wants to use me to implement the things that he decides. Ehm… and I couldn’t get to be creative so much. Because you have to be creative when you are in marketing, let’s face it. You have to, I don’t know, take your own opinion, and especially if you are the one who knows the target than you should have the freedom to… try to adjust everything they do on global level to your own target. Sometimes, I think I wasn’t sure if they accept my ideas or not. And ehm… sometimes I had the feeling I had to implement things they wanted, without caring how the Romanians, I don’t know, react. Ehm... and then I asked him one time ‘What can I do and what can’t I do? Because sometimes I don’t know when I am crossing a line’. And he said to me laughing. You can get as creative as you can be, because here we really appreciate and love people making a difference’. So theoretically he was always telling me you can do whatever you want. But when we got to implement things he was always saying no to everything, to my ideas. And giving me the feeling I am overreacting, and I am getting too sharp with being creative and ehm… that it was not in my in my responsibility, while it actually was.

W: And how did that impact basically the relationship which you perceived with him?

R5: Eh, that was a very bad relationship, it was the worst relationship. Because ehm... I got frustrated I started taking everything more personally, as if he was against me and not ehm… against my ideas. And it didn’t work out well. You know that moment, like ‘From now on I am not going to come up with any ideas, I will just do what he says... because I work here and it is my obligation. And I don’t care about the performance. I just work …out.

W: But you also had some good things right, next to the job.

R5: Yes, I learned a lot, because I was doing almost everything… for the Romanian platform. You know SEO, SEN, public relations, content, adjusting the website, ehm… everything. I did many different things. What was nice is that I learned that.

W: So you basically could say you can now start your own business in Romania in that industry?

R5: No, that’s too much, because that’s too short time.

W: Ok I get your point. I want to look at it from a different angle, because how would for you the best possible relationship with you and a manager look like?

R5: Oh, it’s a tough question. Of course it also depends on the job that you are doing of course. Ehm... first of all I think that the manager should be able what is the best part for the company or department you are working in … Ehm… what is the best attitude or relationship you can adapt… Maybe it’s sometimes good to do just instructional things, just like a robot (laughs). I don’t know but when you work in PR, advertising, marketing, you should have the freedom to be creative, to be and think critically, I think it is really good that you first of all relax at work, not necessarily friends with your manager, but you have a normal relationship. You have respect, understanding. You know your manager tries to understand your ideas and not just say no because your ideas are different from his ideas. A good manager is capable to understand you. Maybe I expect a lot from a manager. I think a manager should be intelligent first of all…

W: Intelligent?

R5: Socially intelligent and also intelligent, that he can understand others and that he has the passion to understand others. Because you know there are some people who can actually understand, everything but only their own ideas, because it is too difficult for them to process how other people think. But I think other than that, when you are leading other people, you should be able to see one thing from several points of view. So, to have a broad thinking, and to be able to understand what the others thinking. And to be open-minded I think. And intelligent in a way that, of course, in order to understand other ideas, and strategies you should know a lot, first of all. And otherwise you cannot understand and you cannot see in practice how it will go if the idea will be implemented. I think a good manager knows how to work with people, but also is professionally in what he is doing… in my opinion.

W: How did she show you you did a good job, during those months, or didn’t she?

R5: Yes she’s trying to motivate the others. You can see that she is trying to make the other feels motivated. She was telling me sometimes when I did some good things: ‘Oh this is so good, and I really appreciate what you did’ while in my eyes, it was mostly things I was not proud of. And things I was really proud of she wasn’t appreciating me.

W: So what kind of feelings did you have about that?

R5: Well… It was so obvious that everyone could make that good, you know. I was sure that even when I was working that I didn’t have any problems how it will go, so when she was saying ‘It went so well’. Obvious! (W: yeah yeah) But when I had something difficult to accomplish, let’s say, sometimes I had the feeling she doesn’t even want her employees to do important things really well. Because, well many people were many times talking about this, that she gave us the feeling that she is somehow afraid that someone could take her job, at some point. I know it’s strange to have this perspective, but she was really competitive... that they were not involved in some very important things. For example, we had some really important customers that we had to deal with. She wanted to talk with them, and she was taking the responsibilities herself. Sometimes it wasn’t working so well, because she talked to some Romanian customers who were not that good in English. So, she didn’t know Romanian, she is French. So it wasn’t that good… for her to talk. She didn’t want to give away any control.

W: And ehm… I have a different question. Were there also sometimes things that you did not so good, but which were approved by one of the managers, and a manager had a question about it, to what extent did your manager stand up for you?

R5: Actually I never made a mistake in my job. I didn’t make a major mistake. Maybe they were telling me this was wrong. But they weren’t criticizing me; they were not tough on me. Because I made some small mistakes, and I was mad about doing that, because if someone would have spent at least two hours I wouldn’t do those mistakes. So, eh... there were no moments when they paid attention to what I was doing, so I wanted them to be more tough, but to know that my work is critical and learning more and getting more feedback. I was never criticized on my work… because sometimes I made a mistake but I corrected before. But I was criticized because of my attitude.

W: What was with your attitude?

R5: Ok my manager said I was a bit too aggressive and bit too challenging.

W: I think within the PR industry you have to be a bit proactive, I guess.

R5: And she took that in a negative way you know. Sometimes she had the feeling I was a bit aggressive in my ambition, and that sometimes made me a bit sad, because I try to have positive energy, and to do some constructive things... And just to do a good team work, as that was the case to work in teams. At least she perceived me as a bit aggressive.

W: Ok, and did you also see a difference between treating you and other colleagues or that was all the same?

R5: No she was not appreciating others more… or talking in a different way than to the others. I don’t think she … well she was trying to be objective, and many times she tried to make everybody be happy, within the group she was leading, to treat everyone in an equal way. Ehm... the problem was that especially that she didn’t want to have any direct conflicts with anyone, sometimes she wasn’t able to keep order. So if people were fighting almost, she wasn’t able to take a decision. I don’t know she wasn’t getting involved or taking a position. She cared a lot about the job … Actually I had the feeling that she more cared about what she was doing and how her work looked, ehm… in the eyes of her managers than what people were doing in her teams. She didn’t have so much improvement in the social life of her things.

W: Ok and also the difference between work and non-work related discussions, were there any discussions at all which were not related to work?

R5: It was really difficult to have discussion not related to work. We were trying because she seemed to be a really, sweet ehm... nice person, sometimes she makes you the feeling that you can talk to her. But actually you cannot. I don’t think she is not… I think she is not really socially actually. But I think she is the kind of person that thinks making friendship at work is not good. She is trying to be really objective and professional. I always had the feeling she was trying to… stay always, you know. To be cold, you know. Ehm… Yeah and it was really difficult to have any discussions not about work.

W: It sounds a bit tough relationship you and your colleagues had with her. In what way did you and could you support her in her activities? Or was there no way to support her?

R5: I tried, many times. Related to the Romanian platform, but she was busy with other things or so… for other countries. I tried to take some responsibilities from her. But she was ehm… really… not really wanting me to be more involved than I was involved. Of course she tried to share responsibilities with some people, but she actually didn’t want it.

W: Ok. And what role does the manager play on your happiness, well-being, and satisfaction at work?

R5: Ehm... actually it was, ehm… it didn’t help too much… because she was such a hard person and not so cooperative. And it made be a bit more incubated, in a relation to her. So… I think we created not any good atmosphere. And yes, I think it had a big impact.

W: Are there also other things related to you which are important for your satisfaction at work?

R5: Yeah… I think the way you relate to your colleagues is important. I really appreciate and I am doing very well when I am working in a team. People are really… to take the good side of the cooperation. You know that you can do good things if you help each other and not just if you compete... against the other. And maybe this is something not that good in Germany. But I heard it is related to Germany, that people is always in a competition and always eh… team work is not that … people are more individual here, professional, a bit.

W: What other things impact your satisfaction at work more?

R5: Yes, the most important things. To have a nice atmosphere, first of all, and ehm... not maybe family, but surrounded by people who want to do good things together, and also to have the freedom to say what I have in my mind, and I don’t know… If I come up with an idea which is different than my colleagues’ ideas ,my managers, I mean, at least to know, that they are thinking of this, and that I know that do not cross the line, and that they trust me. And I think this is also related to relationship you have with others, because I think this is also [inaudible] and if you have this competition, than you are not able to cooperate anymore.

W: Thanks for the interview.

[Afterwards, we started small conversation and new information came. R5 in the end seemed to enjoy working in the company with other departments; not with their direct manager(s), but that seemed to be not an option. Also, R5 was offered a position by one of these departments, but the manager from the international, Eastern European team seemed to stop that, and said if she wants to work than it is only with her as the manager.]

Appendix VI: Interview R6

[The interview started with addressing some background questions. Some objective information which could be used for this interview was also touched. Therefore it could be that sometimes the interviewer addresses things which she earlier mentioned before the real interview was to be conducted. However, the interviewer asks to elaborate certain things or uses this as an introduction to a new question.]

W: could you describe in short your day to day activities, all the things you are responsible for?

R6: Ok, so the daily activities… I’m doing a report for spending, so how like... how… which is for [company name] Global, and also the Compliance report. Compliance is basically how ehm... the internal stakeholders involve the team, the consultancy team in require... in acquiring consultants. Because sometimes that’s not the case, the people contact the consultants themselves. That sometimes happens. And, so that’s two of my daily activities, and I also support the team in making eh… presentation and those normal things. And aside from that there is also my project, so I am doing a market analysis of global consulting industry and in there I basically create … well... report of trends, developments, and eh… also for implementation, I am helping building the Sharepoint.

W: Yeah, OK. Clear. And you just told me that you basically have a manager and a supervisor. And what does your manager do?

R6: Well, eh… so basically my manager is the commodity manager, so eh... he is head of the consultancy team. Ehm, my supervisor is specifically supervising me with my project. But in daily life, in daily work, it is the manager who works with me, for the report and stuff, but specifically for my project my supervisor is another person.

W: Ok, so basically the supervisor takes care and supports you in the new, innovative project, the market analysis (R6: Yeah, true). Great, so then I make the division to your project and all the other tasks (R6: Yeah, that’s good). And ehm… who do you work closest with?

R6: Ehm... depends, but I think with my supervisor, as that project is my main responsibility. But you mean within those two people, right? (W: Yeah, yeah) So, then it is definitely my supervisor.

W: so within those two you see your supervisor more, etcetera?

R6: Yeah.

W: And you have more discussion with him…

R6: Yeah.

W: Maybe it could be… because I have some questions which could be related to both, but we just need to make sure that we are at the same page then... because I had it one more time also within this company. (R6: Yeah, sure) And I have a question, because… related to your activities, with the team, how would you describe the interaction between you and the manager?

R6: He is pretty busy, well, he is extremely busy, but so is everyone in this team. So I only see him in the office probably two or three days a week, but well. He’s a very open, yeah, very an open person, because every time if I ask him some things, also related to the other project sometimes, and he always has time. So, that’s… he’s a… it’s a good relationship, although we don’t see each other that often, but he is very open with me, and ehm… I think it is good. He’s not really close, close. But yeah, I think it is a good relationship.

W: But he has time for you to support you in things…

R6: Yeah, he always has time.

W: And ehm… how does that usually work? Are you the one that usually gets in touch with him to get support from him or does he also… ehm… [Interrupted by R6]

R6: Yeah, yeah. I don’t know how the other people in [company name]… because it is here the general rule that we always have to be active… about our project specially. So it is always me who approaches him. And maybe we have like a meeting with the whole team… bi-weekly. And then he asks me ‘How is it going?’ But other than that I am the one who can always approach him.

W: Ok, that is good. And what do you think about that, that you are the one who, who basically needs to approach him, besides that weekly meeting?

R6: Yeah, yeah. Well, in my daily activities he asks a lot to me. Like ‘Can you do this, can you do that?’ I think it is pretty normal like that.

W: Now a pretty universalistic question, because for you, how would the best possible relationship between you and a manager look like? [misunderstanding, so the interviewer repeated the question]

R6: Oh. I would say the relationship I have with my manager right now... because he is always there, when I need him. And he, ehm… I think it is also his style, because with everyone in the team he asks us to do something, but he gives the whole responsibility to us. It doesn’t matter how we do it, when is it going to be finished, but it has to be finished in … well, it has to be finished, but he gives us a lot of freedom, freedom to do whatever we like and I think that’s really nice… because I don’t really like a manager who kind of dictates you what to do and tells you exactly how you should do it. But I like it more if they give you more creativity and responsibility, so you really own the project or the task itself (W: Yeah) And the most important thing is, I think it doesn’t have to always be face to face but always be there when you need them.

W: But what kind of feelings does that give to you?

R6: I really enjoy that at the moment, specifically as I am just new here, and it gives me a lot of things to learn, and you really become professional way, if people giving you responsibility, instead of following the rules, or whatever that is, so… (W: Yeah) For me it gives me a good feeling, it gives me more confidence, more self-esteem and that kind of stuff.

W: Ok, ok. And related to the activities which you work on with your team and manager, to what extent is there room to implement new ideas which derive from you?

R6: There are some special rules about reporting things, which I have to follow, of course, but I, ehm… but otherwise there is pretty a lot of freedom. Ehm… I can make, I can always suggest something which I think is right. And I think there is a lot of room for my opinion and my ideas. So yeah, and especially related to my project, it is really about me. They really give the whole responsibility to me.

W: Oh, that’s really cool. And are there things right now, if you look at the job, and go everyday to your work, are there things which are not yet set in your job role, but you would like to do as well?

R6: So far… I think not really, maybe. I don’t know. For what I have right now in my job description it is quite a lot, you know (laughs) (W: Yeah yeah) And if I had more time than it would be nice if I could have experience and sitting with the consultants and learn about negotiation, or something… because it is pretty confidential most of the time, those negotiations. But I think if I had more time it would be nice if I have an experience like that. I think that’s nice for me in the future.

W: And do you also think you could discuss this with your manager, for later on, after this project is done?

R6: Yeah, actually we already spoke about that. And it is also something he would like me to do. And basically, actually, I am already… I had an interview with a supplier so that’s really nice. And aside from that, I also work with a big load of consultants. And we already talked about it a bit, and I think if we would talk about it later on he will be really open about it, of course. I think he will definitely give the chance.

W: That sounds really positive I think (R6: Yes it is) And could you also describe in what way you need your manager to perform the job you do?

R6: Eh… basically what I miss from him is confirmation most of the times, so if I generate a report, this is what I think is correct, based on my knowledge at this point in time, and blablablabla… But sometimes with making a report there are certain rules which are not written, like ehm… maybe bad knowledge about the consultants and stuff, that I need to have his confirmation and approval, because I don’t know those unwritten rules. So it is really about confirming… in those cases. So for everything that I do I show it to them, and ask if it is right and how should I do it, and yeah…

W: And also what you already explained there is also room enough to get confirmations in time right?

R6: Yeah, yeah. Well that’s also a problem I sometimes face, because most of the time they are really busy, and ehm... so, sometimes it takes really long time until I get the feedback, so in a way I get ... well, sometimes I am like, it is urgent, for me at least, but for them. It is oh no. you can delay it a bit. … those kind of stuff. So yeah I have… the problems that I face are the time, so maybe if than can be said as difficulties. But yeah that the only thing … (W: Ok Ok) Sometimes it’s difficult, but …

W: So sometimes your manager and the team members do not have time to in quick tempo to respond to your questions?

R6: Yeah, exactly.

W: and of course sometimes also manager evaluate employees on their job activities, right.

R6: Yeah, that’s done by my supervisor this time.

W: Ok it is good that you mention your supervisor (R6: Yeah) And how does your supervisor show you you did a good job?

R6: Oh, you mean like, like recognition? Well, in [company name] that’s really nice. Well what I experience when you do something really good they pat you on the shoulders, really like ‘You did a good job. Yeah, they really say it to you. Which I think is really, ehm… rare in that way. As I was working in another company, that is Friesland Campina. (W: yeah) And it’s really Dutch, and they don’t do that. They say like ‘Thank you’, but within [company name], they really, they really say it to you.

W: do you also see a difference between the two because both of them are Dutch companies?

R6: Yeah, Friesland Campina has also a lot of internationals, but I think within [company name] I grow more, because I work in the head quarters and that gives a lot of pressure. Because like I said the report I created is going up to the director. So, it is a serious responsibility I would say, and it is more international, and ehm… as you said recognition is pretty high. So that’s why I really enjoy it at [company name] but the pressure is also high. So yeah, it’s a balance of both.

W: Ok, sounds good. Ehm... You just spoke about your job activities. In what way do your activities impact the activities of the manager?

R6: I think it is pretty big. The report I created on Spending and Compliance is every quarter. And that is something that my manager needs to present to the CPO… so the Chief Procurement Officer, so in that way it’s kind of big. My project itself is a so-so. It’s the next steps that are required by the team to be done, but it doesn’t have any high urgency. If it is done within two months later, it is still fine. But the report, the quarterly and annual report, that’s a serious matter.

W: Ok I am going to jump to a different question, suppose your manager has too many things at hand, he has a hard time doing all the things he needs to do. In what way do you and can you support him in his activities?

R6: Well, normally what I do is… ehm... I help him quite a lot especially in saving the time, and ehm… well I would say I help him a lot I would say.

W: so there are some responsibilities where you can indeed also support him?

R6: Yes, it is really a team work.

W: And, ehm... different question. Suppose you worked on a certain job task, and was not of the best quality received by other managers or chief officers, to what extent does your manager stand up for you?

R6: Ehm… well, most of the cases, the report again. So there are two perspectives in this. The report is really me delivering to my manager. I have to stand up for myself. Because if he sees something is wrong he will not pass it on to the CPO. So in that case I am the one standing up for myself… but if I make some mistakes in my analysis of the project thing, and… so my manager giving me feedback, than my supervisor will stand up for me in that case. He will say, because he knows the process. If I made a not really accurate analysis, and then my manager complains about it, so to say, and my supervisor always stands up for me. He says ‘Oh she does it, because of this’… so in that way.

W: Do you have the feeling you sometimes need support in his daily tasks? Like if something goes wrong or complains about it.

R: Yeah, ehm… I think it is good. But it would be nice if… Well, now it is just me who is responsible for the thing, than it would be nice if someone else if there was someone in the journey with me. Yeah it will be nice to have more support, like hand to hand support.

W: Yeah, how do you mean that?

R6: Like, because what happens is that within my job at least if my manager gives me something to do I need to find out everything by myself. So what I do normally is I dig in the last report, and it is really about me searching… trying to do what has to be done. But I think it is also nice in some extent if there is someone really showing you this is how you should do it, like tutoring, because that is not what happens. But I think, in one hand it is good, because sometimes you learn better when you have to swim in the water, and in one hand it is nice if there is someone who guides you in the process.

W: Ok that is indeed sometimes nice and necessary if that happens. (R6:Yeah) And I have a different question, maybe it is not really related to it, but (R6 laughs) but because ehm… suppose your manager is not there, is not in the office, and it is related to a decision he made or he is working on, and somebody else another manager wonders about his decision, are you confident enough to defend and justify certain decisions he made or is that too… [Interrupted by R6]

R6: If that is something that is, because it happened a few times before, if it is something I talked to him about a month ago, than I know for sure that’s the answer, so to say, than I am confident enough. This is what I know from him which he wants and which he will respond to. But if it is something new, like a new decision, than I have to always address it to him of course. But if it is something I know the answer to based on the experience, or whatever it is, than yes I am confident to answer it.

W: And ehm… let me find out, because you work close with your team right. And do you see any difference between the relationship they have and which you have with the manager?

R6: I think in my time, it is a very intense team, and the pressure is very high… I don’t see it in other teams, because within Procurement there is also a different group, I am doing consultancy, but there is also like Market Research and Real Estate and IT. But what I see, what I experience is that the pressure in our team is really high. I don’t see it in the other team. It is probably because consultancy has to do things with the top manager. So for example, the CFO working with consultancy firms and is always a little strategic, or so. Maybe that’s why it is a bit high in pressure.

W: But is that also challenging you in the job and satisfy you to a certain extent?

R6: Yes it really challenges me a lot, within these months, but now there is something like I started to think that… I don’t think I like to work within this intense environment, like for 3 years or so. I don’t think it is nice for me. For a year it is ok, but in the long term I do not want to be in this situation.

W: So what are the general things you are missing in this setting?

R6: Just like eh… ehm… when I was in Friesland Campina I was really close with my colleagues, so… (W: Yeah) It’s really like, we work but we also relax. Like, we just... like those non-formal things. We’re having a normal conversation… but I don’t see it in my position right now.

W: Ok, and was it also at Friesland Campina that you had a different relationship with your manager…

R6: Yeah, because my manager was not in a high position in the hierarchy, so it was really ehm… it’s lower in the management level, because where I am right now is much higher in the management level, and within Friesland Campina it was not really that sensitive matters that I was doing. It was only the financial administration that I was doing, so the pressure is also different of course, and I was far close with my manager than I am right now (W: Uhu) Yeah, so when I was in Friesland Campina I think it should be a bit more serious and within here I think it should be a bit less serious. So, I find myself a bit in between those styles.

W: So also a little bit more room to basically find some sort of compensation sometimes.

R6: Yeah.

W: And what are your general thoughts and feeling about the interaction exchange with your … manager? Because you told me he is really busy, and sometimes he’s there, but…

R6: I think it’s good enough. I will say I would not ask for more... at least with him, with my manager. He does a really good job with managing the relationship with me. I think he is a good manager. But in my, in the future I would like to have his type of manager, I think it is a perfect type, but within the team I would like to work in a team which is a bit more relaxed and ehm… little stress.

W: And are you also able to discuss matters which are important to you, with your manager or do you discuss that with other people?

R6: With difficulties in working and experience those kind of stuff I usually talk with my supervisor. And he discusses with my manager. I have a lot of meetings with my supervisor, everyday almost. And … he has a meeting with my manager once a month, and within those meetings he discusses also about me and difficulties I have. Sometimes I directly discuss difficulties with my manager related directly to him. But if it is only about general things like my project is going well or not, I normally talk with my supervisor.

W: Do they discuss important matters to you as well? Work or non-work related.

R6: Sometimes, but rarely. With my supervisor it is more often because we meet each other quite a lot, so of course he shares a bit more of his life with me, but with my manager is rare, as we also just have lunch once or twice a week. So during that time than we only talk about other stuff. It is not that often.

W: And is that also important for you, as with Friesland Campina it was more social discussions?

R6: Over there it was really too much. We were really close to each other, it is nice, but it needs some seriousness to finish some stuff, but in [company name] you can add a bit more, yeah…

W: Ok, and for you, what make sure you go happy to your work and slam those [company name] doors open and say ‘I am here again’?

R6: Ehm…well I like my project, and I think, what I always think, I always wanted to work in an international company and [company name] is a good company and ehm… Also it is kind of I also have a nice feeling if I do something challenging. So, that’s what keeps me going. If I finish the project, than I am proud of myself. Yeah. And I hang out with a bit younger employees within [company name], and it is also that motivates you a lot, when you interact with the people your age.... and when you experience the same things, and yeah… it’s a combination of both. Challenging work, the international environment, and also your friends in the office.

W: And friends inside the office you also mean that they are friends outside the office.

R6: (laughs) Yeah, exactly. Like, I would say my relationship with my managers and within my team is not really as close, but I have some close friends within the office. And it is nice to have them as well.

W: Just give me a second, if I have some questions… (R6: Yeah, that’s fine.) Yeah, I think it is a really an important question. To just point it directly, what role does your manager play in your satisfaction at work.

R6: I think he really tries to make me feel good at work. I think he’s always trying to be there when I have questions. And it’s also a different response. Because when I make mistakes with some stuff, my other colleague within my team says ‘Oh you make a mistake again’ and my manager, instead, will say ‘I think this is not correct, Can you look at it?’ He really has a nice approach to everything; he really tries to make me feel good. Last week I wanted to arrange a meeting with him somewhere this month, and in his agenda there is already something. And I ask him I want to arrange a meeting with you, but I see you already have something ‘Oh, I will reschedule it.’’ I think it is that kind of response which makes you feel that you are valuable, that you are important in his perspective. I think he really tries to make me feel comfortable.

W: And what could you do to make the relationship even more satisfactory than it is right now?

R6: In the beginning he was really busy, and so what happened is that I, kind of… well, I am not really sure if I want to interrupt him with my project or with my questions, but when time passed by, like a few months or so, I already was like ‘Ok whatever, I just approach him with everything I need’ and it works. It makes it even better if I just approach him. He is always there. It needs to come from me to be proactive and asking. Just don’t take it too seriously. I would say yeah.

W: And what could your manager do to make the relationship even better than now. Just from your perspective?

R6: Hm… probably it would be nice if we would have more face to face interaction. Because now it is just two or three times a week, and maybe we should get together four times a week, but maybe in the future… because I am also busy with my own project market analysis thing and therefore my supervisor is more important… so maybe if I would work in the position a long time than this would be a nice point to add. (W: And you also said earlier on within [company name] you’d like to work longer, but not within this department.) Yeah, yeah.

W: And in the beginning of the interview you told me there was also discussed with your manager or supervisor to work or stay longer, if that was an opportunity, right.

R6: Yeah, well there… I know for sure in my team there is no opening… a proposition at least within the team. I am not sure what they are going to offer (W and R6 laugh) within the team. So not in the team, I think within [company name] I have already seen some opportunities, but not within the team. Which is kind of suitable for me, but within [company name] we talk a lot about other opportunities. But there’s not fixed decision or whatever.

W: And do you think they would also help you and support you?

R6: Yeah definitely. They already did. In the beginning... Like, I had one contact with another department also from my supervisor, yeah… they already helped me and I think they will keep on helping. My supervisor also gave me contacts within another department which I am interested in. And we had a meeting within that department with the manager and it is going well, until now.

W: Thanks.

Appendix VII: Interview R7

W: Could you describe you activities shortly?

R7: As a designer I am responsible for the play experience of [company name], so I am creating the model itself, responsible for the building instructions though I don’t make them… and responsible for all the parts that are in the boxes, well. So kind of designing from the time you open the box till you build the model, including taking apart the model to build something else.

W: and to what extent do you have fixed assignments?

R7: Well I have some influence on the robotic parts themselves. But I don’t design them. So we have robot brain, motors and sensors, in the programming in which as well. And I am using those in creating robots, I have to program, come up with a way to build a robot who has all of those things, simply creating high quality.

W: That also means cooperating a lot with your team members I guess, right?

R7: Working for [company name] Education doesn’t mean we just build models. It means that we create educational solutions. I have to create a robot that for the child is the first robot they may build... in a class room. That includes having tutorials on how to do certain things, giving them an idea how to use the robots, and come up with extension tasks… and things which they can do after learning the pretty simple basics. My department also deals with competitions all around the world, so that is [company name] league, which is a worldwide competition, and also another one called World Robotics Olympiad, so yes, that is also worldwide. But they are two different markets. They both used [company name] Mindsets products to build in competitions. So… instead of building the robot from scratch by using [company name] at a younger age, so… that they have to get used to build something from scratch.

W: And how does team work according to you look like, cooperating with you team members… basically your direct team members?

R7: It works quite well as long as they are here. I had to work with people all around the world. In one of my earlier projects I had to work with an educational specialist in the US. And there is a lot of email and Skype conversations eh… and then her having to come here and spend a week together, and then we really work intensely, and then collaboration on making tutorials, for example is me and another person. And we have to kind of work together like ‘Is this the right model for this kind of particular task?’ (W: Ok, and both of you are based in Denmark.) Yes, most of the company is based here and almost all of the creative building is done here in Denmark. And all of the design work is done here.

W: And could you describe the relationship you have with your manager? How does that look like related to the interaction you have with him?

R7: My manager is currently leading the designers and creatives of our department, so he is kind of the one responsible for me as a person, and he has to kind of manage my time, as opposed to a project manager, who are responsible for the project that we’re working on. I have a pretty good relationship with my manager, he is the one who hired me and pulled me in, so pretty loyal towards me. And he really takes care of me and is pretty protective to the time that I spend doing certain things. For example people of other departments are always asking for some form of external design, so not related to a project I am personally working on. So he is the one who always goes there before I am allowed to do that… even if I want to. Having a work-life balance is really important here. He just makes sure I am not working myself too hard, though I really like to.

W: Oh I think that’s good thing. And maybe that is also related to Denmark, to really take care of your employees. And ehm… I have a different question, because in what way does your manager also support you in the assignment? Because you say he is basically the time manager.

R7: So, I mean support from me, in that sense and I think he is also my creative lead, so he takes a look and ‘Can you make sure it looks a little better’ or ‘Can you redesign this as a better function?’ And that’s kind of the work supporting, and he is also quite supportive in other work that I like to do. I like to build also outside projects, and he will give me the time and sometimes the resources to build large robots if I want to... and also some things that nothing have to do with my projects. I like to build… I like to build outside of work also. That doesn’t mean I need to be outside the office, because I have access to fairly all places in the office. So if I want to build something outside of work, he is ok with that. And that is not always within a company.

W: Definitely. Of course, you have your day jobs maybe 8 or 9 hours a day, or twelve I don’t know how much you work.

R7: Less. We are only allowed to work seven-point-four hours a day so whatever I do outside of that that is my own time. So I may be longer in the office if I have another project. So if you think like I am working on such and such project, and from nine till four I work on that, and from four to six I will work on another project. That’s my own.

W: And also within this seven-point-four hours and daily job activities, would you say there is a lot of room to investigate all kinds of new ideas and implement new opportunities… and to develop yourself as a designer?

R7: Ehm… not always. I think I mean it has to be within a year or a certain amount of time. It depends on the project you are working on. I mean they do give us time to develop, but I work in a different department than some of the other designers. Because we are so specialized in timing to do whatever development is a little pushed in time. But you know we are always working to ask about our own development. I mean I always like to work with [company name] outside my work. That’s my own personal development, and it will always eventually come back in the work that I do.

W: and is that also helping you, that time that you put in to it, ehm… does it mean your manager somehow takes that to some extent with him, suppose he’s going evaluate it. Like there’s a lot of potential in [name R7], etcetera.

R7: Yeah, right. So that comes in play. So he knows that I think one of the major things is about motivation and satisfaction with our jobs. So that’s things which motivate me in doing extra things, and also some event sometimes. He knows that allows me to work better. I think that’s a nice understanding between us. (W: yeah I think so.) I mean, I, I really enjoy my job. I think as myself as a special case. It doesn’t matter what else I do. I came here as I have some kind of affinity with [company name] bricks and how I express myself with this product and being able to work here kind of helps me in so many different ways, so… Now official products and infinite access to bricks and resources, and whatever I built in whatever time I have, so…

W: And that also to an extent influences your satisfaction at work, because you basically do your hobby.

R7: And I have been able to separate it, so that it doesn’t become a draw. It doesn’t become something I really do not enjoy anymore. I mean I do other things outside work playing with [company name], to kind of balance everything out, I mean I am not every day inside building. So that’s ... you have to live your life a little bit and also enjoy other things.

W: And that’s also good if you also enjoy something, to take time off from it. Otherwise…

R7: Yeah otherwise you get sick.

W: And ehm… in what way does your manager give you feedback in the job you do?

R7: I mean it’s periodic and it’s… kind of walking by, and ‘Hey what’s that? What are you working on?’ and if he actually needs to see something he has to see it and he feedbacks that way, a constructive feedback. ‘Build it this way’, ‘Build it that way.’ Those kind of stuff. ‘Looks good.’, ‘Try again’.

W: And what is your experience and your feelings about the way he gives you feedback?

R7: Eh... it’s good. It’s always positive, and is always constructive. There are always things which you could do politically… etcetera. But in general, I think it is always good, and constructive, he’s got a really nice history with the company, so I trust his words, and how he looks at things (W: Yeah) and then he gives me a real good chance to fight him back also, on decisions that are already made, so that’s really nice. I never feel, shut off, or behind him, or on top of me. I feel like I am working with him, for him.

W: So it is more of a team up or a partnering.

R7: Yeah, it’s more of a partnership, like subordinate-boss-subordinate. I don’t feel for my job, if I don’t like how this works. ‘Can we do it this way?’ And sometimes it’s going through and you have to pick your battles. If you are building something he is able to trust you with it. And also put you under the bus if it doesn’t work. But it becomes your decision. (W: Yeah, and that’s part of reciprocity, right). Yeah, it is not a typical English word. (W: Oh, ok. It is good that you mention it.)

W: Ok, and related to the relationship with your manager, suppose you do something which was not according to plan, according other people, and your manager also approved it. To what extent does he stand up for you?

R7: Eh… generally he looks at the time that I spent on it. Is it worth it for me, and is it worth it for the company to really use that kind of thing that I made… or the decision that I made. For example going to the world festival, this last month, I believe that he supported me in going, even though, that wasn’t useful time wise, as I had another project, but he knew what it meant to me, and I was gone for a week, on a project I really needed to work on, but I have been fighting to go to this world festival for the last few years… and just kind of telling him, that ‘It is so much worth of my time, and his time… for me to go there’. So, you have to take care of the person too. So he’s kind of the one who takes care of the person too… even though it is not project related. It is not only personal it is also keeping your personnel motivated. And, and, you know, taking care of what is important for the project over time. There is always a bigger picture involved, when it comes to, when it comes to, what we do. That may be sales, or designer development. That kind of event does so many things for the company I think. Yeah, and that should be a priority, as opposed to just work on projects, and that’s the kind of reason that makes you happy to do other projects working, where you can interact with kids, and all of the best teachers in the world. So, and if that’s not something that is important we are not working for everything.

W: I also want to address a different question, because maybe it is the other way around. Because suppose your manager has too many things at hand or a hard time doing all the things he needs to do, to what extent do you support him in his activities?

R7: Yeah if we can. If there is something he is not able to do, I mean he is on a higher level of tasks, so, there is stuff that he is kind of qualified to do, that I am not, so it is kind of hard to, to help him out, in something he is responsible for, management stuff, but he has a relatively small team. If we can support him, we will. If we need to build something outside of the projects, we do that. He knows that his time is small. We try to do what we can. We help him in setting up presentations. And if it is taking care of some small things, we know he doesn’t really have time for, than we will help him.

W: So it is really back and forth?

R7: Yeah it is really back and forth, whenever possible I consider myself lucky this type of relationship in our team is pretty rare. And it doesn’t actually happen everywhere in our company and even within our department. So.

W: So basically also looking at the team and the manager, so the relationship between you and the manager is, is that different, much closer than with other people and the manager?

R7: I think so. I mean, it is still a professional relationship. I think within our team it is quite a good relationship. I don’t see... I see it as different, yeah. When I first came here I thought it was normal, but the longer I worked at [company name] and with him and with our team, than I see it as a bit of a better relationship than else.

W: And does that also mean that there is a possibility for you to start your own team at a certain point in time?

R7: I personally don’t want to. Just because of the kind of job that I have to do. I think if there ever comes a point where they want me to be a manager I will not be building [company name] anymore. And that’s not what I want to do. I would probably quit before that happens. (W: Yeah I know what you mean) I mean there is a fact to believe in the product that I am working on, but becoming a manager would really take me out of the role that necessarily suits me. Though I don’t feel uncomfortable being a team leader, for this particular job I don’t want. I mean I can be a leader in so many different ways. Being a people leader is not in my eyes, I would be that effective as I was in when I would be in building.

W: Yeah, ok. I will address another question, because eh… suppose your manager is at a certain moment not there, and it is related to a certain decision he made, and somebody wonders about that, are you confident enough to justify and defend his decision?

R7: Eh... if, possible yes. And sometimes we do make our own, and I believe we should be able to do that. I think, to justify decision based on his decisions. And you know, assuming we are both on the same project, we generally know what’s happening. So everything has some certain reason behind it, why it is done that way.

W: And suppose your relationship with him was much less good, between the two of you. To what extent is that relationship important to you?

R7: Eh… I am not totally sure. It is always good, that you and your kind of leader have a good relationship. I don’t know if I would have had the same experience if I had, if it was a different relationship. At this point it is quite an important one. To make you feel comfortable, and supported and to make you feel the decisions you make are important. I have seen so many different other types of relationships, and you are just not happy with the job. Even though you enjoy it… so much.
I have had that happened to me. Even though you really like what you do. If you are not happy, than you are not happy. You have to come up with another way or another person to work with.

W: And in the relationships you had previously what things missed in the relationship?

R7: Eh… well, maybe they just kind of don’t get what I do. Or I don’t understand the reasons for what I am doing. So, you know. Maybe we just don’t match, in personalities. And there are some places that that manager doesn’t like what he’s doing, or has no passion for it. It is not just about being [company name], it is about you in the job… and your work ethic… and if they don’t match, than someone is going to have a bad time… whether it is you or the other person. And in the case when it is your manager they have the power to let you go as an employee. You always want to have a good relationship with the other people.

W: And work-related things and not work related things, to what extent can you also address important personal things, or outside work, can you discuss with him?

R7: In general I don’t discuss outside stuff. I let him know if I go travelling or doing something outside that’s affecting the job. You know, we are not personal buddies. We are in two different stages in our lives. So… you know I do have personal friends at work. I think it is good to kind of separate that with your manager, although it would be good. I’ve seen good relationships happen that way. So, but between him and I it is pretty professional. I wouldn’t mind inviting him to my parents. That would be good.

W: but that’s also not really necessary, you say. Because you do have no-work related things with other people.

R7: Yeah there are some other people you do become closer with others and that’s the nature of working with people, isn’t it?

W: And suppose you had that with your manager, would that also increase the relationship?

R7: Well, it is good to have those kinds of relationships, that’s good. So, I wouldn’t like fight it if we weren’t friends. That’s how it works, that s just how you build relationships with people, and network. And eventually it becomes a professional relationship.

W: Yeah. Hey, and is there something you want to move to within the job right now or an even more special job, although you actually really, really prefer what you do right now.

R7: Eh… there is always that, and there is just to grow in certain things. And I am trying not to settle down, even though I could settle down for the rest of my life. So it is just… you are not trying to grow and improve yourself, you let yourself be stuck in your job. So (W: Yeah, yeah) eh… if an opportunity came to move around in departments, I would welcome it. But it’s not mandatory for my life. People always ask me if I am going to stay here longer, how long I am going to be here, if something better comes up, I’d go.

W: But within [company name], maybe you want to move.

R7: Yeah there are many other departments I can work for, and I want to work for, if I am allowed. If my time is available add I can do something, I would really like to try. And my boss is open to that.

W: Ok, so he is really supportive in that?

R7: Yeah.

W: And is it a genuine thing, in designer professions?

R7: I don’t know. I have seen it different ways, some departments are not so open to that. Some are more protective in a different way, and some of them move them around if they need to. Generally, as a designer, as a product designer over here you are expected to almost know everything. But that’s not always the case. You make it from one theme to another, where there is totally different types of building styles. So that can be pretty hard in the person (W: Yeah) If it’s a quick move, so.

W: Makes sense. And what is your general experience about eh… getting recognition from your manager?

R7: It is pretty good, people have always been… praise and, just takes care of the job. It’s really important in the job. It sounds like it can be trivial, but I know that is important. Having teenagers and subordinates, to hear those kind of words. And he tries to support me financially in a raise, or whatever, or in some other way.

W: Sounds good. And that looks like that you both constantly want to improve and build onto the relationship… etcetera. And what other things for you make sure you go happy to your work? First of all it’s the job or first of all is the relationship with the manager?

R7: For me it is the job. I get to play with toys all day. So... I mean as long as it is a good relationship with everyone, and as long as they let me play with the toys, I am pretty happy. To say the last (laughs)

W: And are there also other things which could affect your happiness at work?

R7: There is always stuff like that, there is always politics within the job, and just like any other corporate office, what you can and can’t do based on certain decisions. For example we are very marketing driven. So if they are not happy with something, we don’t do it. I may or may not think that’s correct. I think not enough people here have enough passion for the job. But, I am a bit crazy that way.

W: But is that also in the designer way or more on other...

R7: I think in other departments, there are some designers who work seven and a half hours a week, and run home… which is kind of strange for me. And there are so many other people where you need to work with. Like marketers, finance people, project managers and such and such. And they may or may not invest in this project. So I mean, it is always thinking about quality over quantity in case of employees, or to fine people. And have some sort of investment in the work they do. Whether or not it’s [company name], and how they approve themselves and express themselves in their job. If you are a marketer, it is your job to make the best show possible. So it is the job of your product, you may or may not like the project. And you always have to deal with that stuff, and that is no different from any other company.

[social talk]

W: And what is the most important in a relationship for you, whether it is with all kinds of people?

R7: Eh... communication. If you can talk to each other, and come to an understanding whether, you agree or disagree. Communication is a big, big part. In your relationship. Love or hate, you can tell each other how you feel, about what’s happening around the world around you. One of my jobs told me communication is leadership.

W: Would there be ways… what could you do to make the relationship with your manager even more satisfactory than it is right now?

R7: Eh... I think with time it can be both understand a little bit more of each other. It’s still kind of a young relationship between him and I. For the past few years I have just been building credibility in the work that I can do. So I’d like him to understand a little bit more about that. That I can do good work, and do things in a certain special way… and also me getting to know them. I think with time, you kind of figure out how people are. That’s really going to be the maker or breaker of relationships. I think they have to understand that for me it is not about money, for example. And they now come to that understanding. They are starting to learn that. And also improving communication you know.

W: Yeah. And is there something your manager could do straight away to make the relationship even better?

R7: It’s going to be time. ‘What motivates you?’ ‘What keeps you working?’ How can we talk better? And at a certain point, you kind of know at a glance what the other person is thinking. So get inside of each other’s heads… in a particular way. That’s really synergistic.

W: Thanks.

Appendix VIII: Interview R8

W: There was one thing related to the background information. I wonder about one thing. Because what do you mean with work – life balance? Can you explain what it is for you?

R8: Yeah, well. I wanted to work in a country where you don’t work twelve hours a day, five or six days a week. But here you have to work seven, eight hours a day and you can also enjoy your life and make use of the money that you make instead of having no life at all (laughs).

W: Yeah, makes sense.

R8: And it is also important that you have a work place that you are not stressed constantly, so just go to work, enjoy it and go home to whatever you want to do. To be able to focus on your life and not to be stressed and thinking of your work.

W: I think than Denmark is one of the best countries to work. And till when are you planning to work? I am working there to end of June.

R8: I started with an internship and then I started with student worker four days a week.

W: Ok, what’s that, student work?

R8: Student worker... Well, I am actually assisting the Global Mobility manager but it is temporary contract, they call that a student contract. (W: Ok like that.) I am doing as everybody does, but it is called differently.

W: Ok, than I understand. Could you in short describe your day to day job activities?

R8: Eh Willem… It’s long question. We are assisting mainly the, eh… the long-term assignees. Well we are assisting all the assignees and also are we discussing with managers and business partners about the international assignments, transfers, local hires, and so on. So it is not necessary like a schedule what you have to do every day, but you have to be able to answer all the questions and to solve all the problems that might occur during an assignment.

W: And do you do that within a team or …?

R8: Yeah, we are eh… split in business areas, there are three business areas. And they are split. And we are responsible for transfers and short-terms assignments. And I have another colleague who is responsible for local hires.

W: Ok, and do you work with one manager or how does that look like?

R8: So, the team has a leader, which is a manager, and of course we interact with a lot of team leaders, people leaders, but our leader is… yeah, we have one leader for our team.

W: Ok that is good. I am basically asking this because with some other interviewees, they work with more managers or a supervisor and a manager. And eh... in what way does your manager support you in your assignments?

R8: Well, our manager supports us in case we have things which we cannot solve by ourselves, or in case we have doubts, or we need more input or we need somebody else to make a decision. And there has to be made an exception, in these kinds of cases. And she supports in making policies. And ehm… yeah these kinds of things, but it is not totally involved in daily work. Most of the decisions are made within the team. And eh… we collaborate closely within the team, and we go to the leader when there is something we cannot solve ourselves, and when there is a decision to be made in the team.

W: So you do not constantly have to report?

R8: Well, we have responsibilities. We are allowed to assume responsibilities and to make decisions by ourselves.

W: Ok that is clear. I am going to propose a very universalistic question right now. (R8: I am curious) That’s good. How in general would you describe the interaction between you and the manager?

R8: I would say the interaction is good, but I would say that even here, which is called the most liberalistic country, and where the management power is so liberalistic, you can find different types of management. So you can also find managers who are somehow seeing from top to down things. But you can also see managers who are very relaxed and support you when you need. This depends very much on personality (Ok) However, even though, those that are very hierarchical oriented, they are still a bit more open, to listen to the team because this is the culture and you cannot oppose your opinion as a manager without listening to the team. Even sometimes you are more directive, and you like give directions, still you need to be open and listen to the team... because this is one of the requirements as a leader.

W: Yeah, and how would you describe then the relationship between you and your manager? Because you explained a little bit, but how…

R8: I just didn’t answer the question. Good, you are still focused. Well I think it... between me and my manager which is letting us very free, and I have a manager who is kind of mixed.

W: And now you have a new manager?

R8: Yes.

W: And you also told me there are some main differences. What is the difference between the first and second manager, to you?

R8: Not to me personally, but I think the new manager is more into controlling than into giving freedom.

W: Ok and how does that aspect affect your feeling about the work you do over there?

R8: Eh... I do not talk about only me because what is very interesting in here, is that this team… because the team works very well together. And I don’t know how good you can work in a team, but at least in our team it is… we emphasize very much how important the team is. So I can say this somehow affects the team. But we don’t see, we have the same freedom and we just, eh… yeah… ehm… directed somehow, and controlled a little bit too much in small tasks, but have … but are not that important maybe. That shouldn’t concern very much the manager. But in the same time we are eh… we are aligned in the team, and we support each other, and we can also discuss results which supports even more.

W: Ok, so also the support within the team is really important also to cover the shortcomings… well I don’t mean the shortcomings, eh... you know what I mean?

R8: Yes we are a strong team, and it is very difficult to break it.

W: Ok that’s really good. And how would the best possible relationship between you and a manager look like?

R8: I think as we had with the first manager, it was very good. She assumed to us decisions, and responsibilities, and she was eh… we were encouraged and this was somehow developing us, and made us to think more, and not just to… let’s say, in the brackets, not orders, but yeah, directives, and eh… when the manager is just offering the support when you need it, I think that is very good. And leaves you the opportunity to think by yourself, and find solutions by yourself, and to be responsible for the work you are doing, without, being necessary to ask ‘Am I aloud to do that’ and ‘what do you think of that’ and so on, and so forth. I think it’s very good for you as an individual and for your own development.

W: Yeah, and out of what does such a relationship most of consist, out of what elements are most important?

[Repeated the question, misunderstanding. After three times the interviewer decided not to address it]

W: Eh.. well basically, you referred to that you have more freedom and that your manager previous, in times when you needed him, right.

R8: Yeah, the thing is your manager doesn’t have to be necessary your shadow, because when he has to be your shadow, and he or she has to know everything you do, than he or she could do your job, you don’t have to be there. In my opinion a real manager is the one who is able to support you and to guide you when you need him, and when you need it. And of course to be informed by what is going on in the team, and if I have a topic which I need to make a decision on, I don’t have to have a… we don’t for example have to have a one-hour meeting. And when we have the manager involved while we are brainstorming. I think the manager should be involved in the end, like ‘Ok we had this problem, and we discussed it and it is solved, we reached to this conclusion. What do you think? What is your opinion?’ But if the manager stays there with us for an hour, then I think that’s a loss of time. (W: yeah) A manager should do something for himself or herself to, as they have their duties as well.

W: Right now, the job you have right now, in your eyes is it challenging enough for you or would you also have to have all kinds of other job responsibilities which are not yet set in your job role?

R8: Well, eh… now we are pretty busy and we do not have enough time for that. But yeah, of course, every time you feel like you need new challenges and especially after a while if you know your tasks.. I think everyone needs new challenges. Well, not everyone, but most of the people need challenges. And I think you have to motivate people if you want to bring challenges constantly.

W: Yeah and is this also right now in the job you have at this moment?

R8: Well ,yes.

W: Ok that’s good.

R8: No, that is not good (laughs)

W: What?

R8: I am joking. No it is not good, because I don’t have enough challenges.

 W: Ok… so does this mean it is quite good but you as well want to evolve something new?

R8: Yeah, I have my true potentials (laughs).

W: Ok, so do you also think, as you have your true potentials, that your manager, that you can discuss all these other things you want to do with your manager? And maybe look to new solutions for the things you want to do?

R8: Yeah of course it’s possible. And we have had a discussion about this. Only it is not only up to the manager… because sometimes we have no resources anymore, even if you would like to do more or even when it is necessary to do more. First the daily business needs to be solved and then we can work on something else. So it is a matter of more resources. It would be necessary to have those, for you to develop more and to do something else.

W: Ok makes sense. So at this moment you say that you sometimes can bring up new ideas, or also related to eh… maybe come up with new job activities, but it needs to be possible seeing from the resources.

R8: Well, it’s a combination. Because first of all to decide when I am a limited time here, I cannot assume some tasks, until I finished my contract. Somehow my activities are also restricted by the time that I will be here... and by the time that I have to take short tasks. Time limited tasks. So these are one of the issues (W: yeah) But what I can see in the team is that what I was telling you also earlier, after what I was telling you earlier, you are already knowing how to do it and what to do and you need to learn something else. You want to learn new things, you want to discover new things. You want to have new responsibilities and I think here is the issue.

W: Ok, so at this moment that’s not possible, but that’s also what you mentioned.

R8: Yeah for me is the fact that it is time limited. So I cannot assume a project which is finished next year.

W: and suppose you contract will be extended or renewed… into a full-time contract, suppose that’s the case, are you than able to discuss new things, new ideas?

R8: Yeah definitely.

W: Let me check, I am going further. Could you also describe what way you need your manager to perform the job you do?

R8: Eh… I don’t need my manager, to a very large extent, I think

W: and to what extent do you need him?

R8: Not a very large extent, just sometimes, support in some decisions, or in critical situations, or sometimes support in some resources, but mainly this is it. The team works quite well without the manager’s support. But of course you need to have a leader which you know you can count on, when you need it.

W: I am jumping to a next question, because I know you are short in time. Of course managers sometimes evaluate their employees on their activities, etc. How does your manager show you you did a good job?

R8: I don’t know yet with the present manager because she is here one month. But I could say my previous manager showed me I did a good job, by offering me a contract.

W: Oh that’s good, that’s a way ahead. And was that the only thing he showed you?

R8: Well I think he gave me freedom and that he encouraged me and supports you whenever you need and gives you trust. And trust you well, that you are making the right decisions, and that if you need help you ask his support. I think that is very important. ‘I appreciate your job’. Because if it is a manager who tells you ‘Yeah yeah yeah you did so well’, but is all the time behind you checking if you did or didn’t something. I don’t know if this is the way of showing how much you appreciate someone, your job. So the fact that your manager trusts you I think is very important and trusting you, and give results. It’s easy to tell ‘Wow, you are so smart and clever and than just to show you you are not smart and is all the time controlling you.

W: No that’s right. And how do you feel about the space and time you further developed yourself within the work and within the team..?

R8: Eh… yeah, I think it is a very valuable experience for me. And I think it is very important to work in a new country I would say. You have to know how to behave, how to deal with other people, how to respect some things and not to be upset when someone tells you to straight something. Or how to face different challenges, or how to be part of a discussion where you know nothing as you don’t speak the same language. Or… also when you work abroad, there are more challenges then you have in your own country… because the work you know it, but you have learned a lot of other things.

W: And those other things…

R8: Yeah I already told you, the customs and that in Germany you have to say all the time Frau or Herr, whatever, and in Denmark you just say ‘Hi Willem’ or ‘Hi [name R8]’ and that’s it. So, it depends a lot on the country. You have to know when you have to be formal or in a relaxed environment, or you should be more casual… Also the dress code. Maybe in Germany, but … well, maybe in one country you have to wear a suit everyday, where in another country you can go in your jeans. And then they look at you ‘Hey, is he going to a wedding, or why is he all dressed up?’ so there are so many particularities, when you work in a new country, that you cannot imagine.

W: So that’s basically the cultural adjustment where you went through.

R8: Yeah (W: Ok) It is double work (W: maybe it is triple work). Yeah but I wanted to say professional work, and also personal work.

W: Yeah definitely, and how was this supported by your manager so to say?

R8: Well, we were not supported, I didn’t ask for anything. But probably if you need something you have just to ask. I asked my team to speak in English. And I asked, as we are an international company, to professionally relate to talk with me in English. Besides the fact it is not the easiest language, Danish, you cannot be proficient from day one. So you need some months or years to learn from every language. In order to learn your job and to find out information and to be able to collaborate you need to be able to understand it all.

W: Yeah, I am going to jump to a next question. Because you just basically spoke about your job activities, and tasks, etc. And in what way do your activities support your manager’s activities?

R8: Well, I think that if my time is up it will not be good for my manager. Yeah, as everybody is responsible in the team. And if I would not do my job, he or she would be impacted as well. But it was not the case, so far. (W: Ok, Ok) But I am sure that every leader is also seen through what his employees are doing.

W: And suppose your manager has at a certain point too many things at hand, and has a hard time doing all the things she needs to do, and then... seeing from the relationship with her. And in what way can you and do you support her?

R8: Well I think we can support in most of the things. Except leading the team I think everything can be supported. In fact, even in leading the team, we can manage very well without the manager, and just to have a supervisor. Because it’s not critical to have a supervisor, it is not a job that we couldn’t do.

W: I know the manager just changed two months ago. You have to see if this is for your current or previous manager. Suppose you worked on certain activities and assignments but the results are not really what was expected by other people, to what extent does your manager stand up for you in front of others?

R8: I think it was not the case, but I have seen some cases within the team. And I think the manager stood up for the person. So the manager usually supports the team.

W: Because they could as well let you stand somewhere.

R8: No it is not at all like ‘He or she is stupid or whatever. I would fire him’. Usually the manager supports the team members, but of course if there is a discussion he needs to find out what things can be improved.

W: And eh… suppose your manager is not there in a certain point in time [interrupted by R8] And he made decisions, and a client or someone else wonders about a decision he made, are you than confident enough defending or justifying his decision?
[ Addressed the question three times because misunderstanding. Then I gave an example]

R8: I think Denmark is a different situation. I think the question does not apply at least where I work. I think I would not discuss a decision my manger made. That is between them. It’s not my business.

W: Ok that is good. That is clear. I have more questions so it is not of the biggest problem. The next, what is the experience about getting recognition from your manager because you spoke already about freedom and support from him?

R8: Well, nobody is patting you on the job let’s say, in Denmark. You supposed to do your job, and you are paid for it. And that’s it.

W: So they don’t give you a compliment.

R8: No, it is not the country where you get a compliment. But you don’t expect compliments here. If you work in a place where you have a good work environment and like to do your job, that’s enough.

W: What do you think of that, if they indeed sometimes complimented you? Would that help to some extent? Or you just adjusted, to the culture…

R8: I don’t think it’s necessary to do that. Maybe of course everybody … well when somebody praises you your ego is happy (laughs) but I think if you are doing your job well that you get recognition or not… or this kind of recognition. Words, sometimes, are not significant. It is more the deeds which are important.

W: I get your point. And what role does your manager play in your happiness at work?

R8: none.

W: Ok, that’s really authentic. I like that. So, that means if the relationship with you and the manager was, was much worse, or much better, that wouldn’t affect the happiness at work?

R8: Well, it would but I have no issues with my manager or it is just a normal work relationship. It doesn’t affect me, it doesn’t make me happy or sad.

[social talk]

W: But ehm… are there also other things for you, which are important in your satisfaction at work, and what are they?

R8: Ehm… maybe what is different than what I used to, things are happening very slowly here. So I am used to higher speed somehow. But this is on the other hand good, because you have time to think, and rethink and really rethink (W and R8 laugh) I am used to work faster, and find out things a bit, and to be informed about things and so on. But this is a cultural difference maybe.

W: Yeah, and what makes you happy to slam those doors from [company name], like ‘Yeah I am here again I am going to start my working day again’?

R8: I am happy to come to work (laughs).

W: And what are the most important things why you are happy?

R8: I think it isn’t really the job, because I can do that in no matter which company. You know you are not specialized in something, like windmills. But what I am doing can be done in any company. But I think the work environment is very nice, and you are very flexible. And for example you can work one day from home, and if you have a doctor appointment you can go, or whatever. There is very much flexibility… As long as you are doing your job than nobody is chasing you.

W: So flexibility is really important for you.

R8: And for them it is also really important that you have your own life. And that you have time for your life, and do whatever you like in life, and not work just so much hours a day.

W: And in general, ehm… maybe on what parts, because you just have your manager for one month or one and a half month, (R8: Yeah) suppose you keep on working over there, on what parts would you like to see the relationship to be changed?

R8: Again: more trust, more freedom.

W: And are there also things in the relationship which you could change to maybe improve the relationship between you and the manager?

R; Yeah, I should be more proactive, and I should network more. And I should go out and talk more, but in Denmark as you know that is very important. And arguing, and bringing up and discussing a lot is very important. I am used to find what the problem is and what’s the solution and then moving on (laughs). I have to learn to discuss more… and to improve in that as well.

W: Thanks.

Appendix IX: Interview R9

W: Could you describe in short your job activities?

R9: I analyze competitor websites. What are they doing, do they have new features, do they change anything and I try to find a pattern, what do they follow. And are some features good for us to use as well. And then I try to create concepts, with new features, to make them more user-friendly, and user-centered. And then I try to coordinate activities with the design team and the developers. And then I try to find bugs and inconsistencies within the website, and try to fix them.

W: But that’s not like the IT management guy, right. It’s not the firewalls and stuff like that. It’s the front end.

R9: Yeah yeah.

And do you do that in a team or is it only you…?

R9: some activities I do them by myself. Like the analysis and the concepts, when I design them. And then I have to discuss them with the manager. With the team leader. And maybe get some insight, from other people, maybe if I need a second opinion. And then I just give orders to the designers and developers.

W: And in what way does you manager support you in the assignment, you have to do?

R9: She is actually the one who takes the decision. I have eh.. two or more concepts, which I present her. And she tells me what she likes and what she doesn’t. And then she chooses the final one. And ehm… yeah, that’s it.

W: How in general would you describe the interaction between you and the manager?

R9: I would say it is professional, so… it is just work related (W: yeah) but it is really fruitful I would say. She knows what she wants, and she really supports what I do.

W: and how can you say she’s helpful.

R9: Because she tries to understand what I show her. And she tries to see what I propose the concepts. And she helps me that if in the past she tried something similar and if that worked or not. (W: yeah) And to form the targets… of what we want to achieve, by using a concept like this.

W: So basically it is a kind of constructive feedback she gives you, which is the main importance in interaction or…

R9: Yeah, yeah. I would say that.

W: And how does the way she interacts with you affect your feeling on the work you do?

R9: Well I feel like, kind of pressed, because I have to impress her every week. (W: Yeah) Sometimes I feel like kind of afraid and quite stressful, but after our meeting happens she is totally fine with what I do, and in the end I feel relieved.

W: So in the end you feel relieved, but before that you feel kind of frightened and a little bit stressful. And is that only because of the assignment or also, I don’t know, the way you interact with each other?

R9: I think it is also kind of the relationship, because …

W: Could you describe the relationship with her?

R9: It is formal. We do not really interact. We have the jobs which are next to each other. I cannot say we are friends, but just boss and employee I would say.

W: Yeah, and what room is there for you to, to… also maybe discuss things during the week? So not only on a weekly basis?

R9: Eh, if I ant to ask her something, I can just ask her. I am sitting close to her… If she’s not in a meeting, but yeah, it depends on her time. (W: And…) But usually I try to not ask many things to her, since I will just present her in our weekly meeting. And she will try to explain some things there.

W: And that’s also enough according to you?

R9: Yeah.

W: Ok that’s good. And in your eyes how would the best possible relationship with you and a manager look like?

R9: I like the relationship I had with my previous manager, before her… she was kind of a role model. I really liked the way she worked. And we had a good relationship. She was sitting right next to me. And I could basically ask her everything. ‘’I think about this. I have an idea.’’ And she was really supportive and she supported the ideas. And eh… she... I could see that I could help her. Not just that my work is done. And that it has an influence on her work as well. I saw that we are partners, and not just boss and employee.

W: Ok and how is that now?

R9: Actually she left the company, so I have a new manager. (W; yeah) It is just professional. I don’t feel like we work together, I feel like I have to report to her. (Ok, ok)

W: So it is still a little formal relationship, and is that because it is really on short-time basis or..?

R9: I think it is the atmosphere I get from her.

W: Could you explain?

R9: I have the feeling I am not her favorite, I would say. So, yeah I think that makes me feel this way. And the fact she doesn’t know me this well, and all of the sudden she had to deal with me. Because of the last manager that left. I think it wasn’t that convenient to her.

W: Ok. And related to the relationship you had in the previous setting, with your previous manager, out of what components… eh, did that relationship consist? What were the most important elements for you?

R9: I think it was that we had a good match, as characters. So, similar characters. And the faxct that I like the way she was working.

W: And what was that, the way she was working?

R9: It was inspiring. She was detail-oriented, open to new ideas, and she was really supportive with anyone.

W: and also with coming up with new ideas…

R9: Yes, I knew that everything I would tell her she will support me and we together, we try to find a good solution.

W: Oh that’s good. And you also mentioned similar characters…

R9: Yeah that. Well she wasn’t that bossy as my manager is. She, what to say about her character… She was honest, she was straight and direct. She always would say ‘I like this, I don’t like this. Let’s make this better. (W: yeah) So I know what she was thinking. And that doesn’t always happen with the current one. And I knew from the beginning that she would like me, because she hired me. (W and R9 laugh) So that helped a lot I would say.

W: So, in general the job which you do right now (R9: Yeah) would you say, is that challenging enough, for you the job itself, or eh…?

R9: Well it used to be. It used to be very inspiring. But eh… now… I feel like I need new challenges.

W: Why is that?

R9: Maybe it’s because the relationship I have with my new manager. And I don’t like the city and the country anymore. So I need to change?

W: And did this all basically happen in the same period or ... could you all relate that to the manager, also… that you don’t like the country anymore. Or is that distinct from each other?

R9: Ehm… They are related.

W: Hm… ok. That’s a little bit unfortunate.

R9: Yeah, but it happens.

W; And the new one, was that a German one or…?

R9: No no no. The last one was the German one, the British is the new one.

W: sorry, the British is the …?

W: The previous is German, and now I have the British one… The current one is the British one.

W: Ah, ok, the British one. Sorry… And ehm…

[Confusion of tongues]

W: At this moment, are you also in the position where you can bring in new ideas, because you said you work on all kinds of concepts, etcetera?

R9: Yeah.

W: Ok. And ehm... and in what way is that supported. Because once a week you have that chance to come up with ideas. Ehm… is it usually that those things are put into progress or…?

R9: sometimes they put them into progress, but it all depends in the resources we have. Because for example, if some developers are on vacation. We consider something as not that important. So we focus on important ones. And this changes every time. Because maybe an idea is considered to be happened, but maybe after a while, after it is in progress, something more important came up. And we suspend the idea, and that happens all the time.

W: And … I am going to jump to a different question. What do you want to do which is not yet set in your job role, right now. Suppose you still had the feeling I want to keep on working over here?

R9: Eh…. ….

W: Are there things that you want to do but not yet do at this moment?

R9: You mean at the same setting, in the same context?

W: I think in the same setting. And I think a little bit related to the activities you do right now?

R9: I would like to have a better position, not to be endangered anymore, and have a real full-time contract. So I would be more respected and considered.

W: How do you mean, is that not at this moment: respected and considered?

R9: Well… it is, but eh… I would have the feeling I will be more respected and considered, because it is a different thing, if you give orders to the head of the designer. If you are here no temporary, but full-time, it is a difference. And you know, that eh… what you say, it would be… effective.

W: and did you also have time to discuss this with your manager? Or could you even discuss this with your manager?

R9: Yeah I could.

W: And would you?

R9: Not anymore, but yeah. A few months ago I would.

W: Then this question is not really related to you, at this moment. But maybe lets go a little bit get go back in time (R9 laughs) So, think of yourself a few months back, yeah. (R9: Ok) Ok, thanks.
What things were you planning to move on in the job itself?

R9: I tried to get a bit closer with the manager, but still it was difficult. And I tried to be more efficient, and more proactive, and… more communicative… more talking to people frequently.

W: And was that also fruitful?

R9: Yeah, a part of it.

W: Ok, that’s good then you took the good strategy… (R9 and W laugh) and sometimes, managers of course evaluate their employees right. And, how did your manager show you you did a good job?

R9: First manager I could see from her reactions and what she said that I did a good job, and she was always giving good feedback to other people about me. And from the current manager I see she tells me sometimes ‘Ah that’s a nice idea’ and ‘Yeah, you did a good job’. And there are sometimes that she is not like that. And then I am not quite sure whether I am doing a good job or not.

W: So you experience, she is not always really direct you, you…

R9: And she is not always convinced.

W: And what do you think of the way she lets you know about this?

R9: I don’t like this way. I like the straight, direct one.

W: Ok, ok, that’s clear. And also related to the times in which your manager supports you, and compliments you. Does that happen often enough for you or should that happen more often?

R9: Eh... considering her character it is often.

W: Ok, Sorry I will repeat my question again. Ehm… what do you think of the amount of time she does this, the times she compliments you, or would you need more feedback or support… I don’t know.

R9: Depending on her character it happens quite often that I get compliments. But sometimes I can see that only as words as compliments. And I don’t see any compliments in action.

W: Ok, yeah. And what kind of feeling does that give to you?

R9: It gives the feeling that she doesn’t really care…

W: Yeah ok (W and R9 laugh)… But what kind of feeling does that give to you?

R9: Ah ok. Disappointment. Discouraged…

W: and it makes you want to leave the …

R9: yes (laughs)

W: Oh that is really a lot (laughs) And ehm… sorry I am going to pick a different question. Give me one second to look at it … Yeah, oh yeah. This is a good question. Well, I think this is a good question.

W: Ehm… Looking at the relationship you have with your manager and your colleagues have with your manager, do you see any difference in (interrupted by R9: Yeah) could you explain this and elaborate…

R9: I could give you an example (W: Please) It was Friday and I registered a day off from the system. And she saw it, and she asked ‘[name R9], did you request a day off on Monday?’ and ‘Yes, I did’. She said ‘Ok I need to know a bit more days in advance. And next week another guy requested a day off on Thursday for Friday, and she said absolutely nothing. She just gave it to him, and he was really happy and that made me mad.

W: Of course I understand. And did you also discuss this with her or not?

R9: Because I don’t think I can’t get anything out of it.

W; because the relationship is already established, like this.

R9: Yes, I don’t think anything can change.

W: Yeah, ok. Ehm, we just spoke about your job activities, and in what way do your activities also impact your manager’s activities? Do you understand my question?

R9: Yeah I do, but I am trying to think… the impact on her. Hm, I think sometimes it leads to a confusion to her, because we had something different in mind, another idea. And then I propose something else… ehm, yeah I think that.

W: Ok. Next question. Suppose you manager has too many things at hand, or has a hard time doing all the things she needs to do. Seeing from the relationship you have with her, in what way do you and can you support her on her activities?

R9: Ehm I am trying to support her by my work. And ehm.. usually in our meetings, I ask her ‘What are you doing now?’ ‘What are you working?’ and she shows me and I tell her ‘Ok I have an idea, because I have worked for this couple of months ago, with the previous manager’. And she is open to that. But I don’t think the really considers it.

W: So she is open to that in the moment…

R9: Yes, so she is open and after that ‘nothing happens’.

W: Ok and how does that make you feel?

R9: It makes me feel good in the beginning… that she is interested in the thing that I have worked on, but then it makes me kind of disappointed, maybe she didn’t like it, because sometimes during meetings she forgets some things that I showed her.

W: Ok (W and R9 laugh)

R9: Sounds like the perfect boss.

W: you should have her in the next job (R9 laughs). Maybe this is an interesting question. Suppose you worked on a certain activity and the results are not really what was expected by other people. To what extent does your manager stand up for you, towards other people?

R9: Hm… I think she is supportive there. If I need help, because someone doesn’t cooperate, she will stand up for me, but in the bossy way, like ‘Ok. [name R9] gave you some tasks. And she asked you to give some feedback, but you didn’t, so we want the feedback’. So she just gives orders to be supportive. (W: Hm. Ok.) So she is more interested in getting the things done, not in establishing the relationship, in the pattern of work.

W: So she kind of misses the social skills?

R9: Yeah.

W: what things for you make sure you go happy to your work and leave your job satisfied?

R9: the environment at work, if it is a nice place to work for. Ehm… the relationship I have with the other employees. Hm… and the success I had so far by doing what I was doing.

W: And suppose the relationship with your manager was much better, like the previous one, would that impact you satisfaction at work?

R9: Yes yes, it did.

[confusion of tongues]

W: and ehm… suppose your manager she is at a certain moment not there, and it is related to a decision she made r something she was working on, and maybe someone else wonders about a decision she made, do you know enough and are you confident enough justifying the decisions she made?

R9: now I am confused. Are we talking about the first manager that left, or the current manager?

W: Let’s first take the first one and then the second one. [then repeated question]

R9: Yes. We talked about it, before she left, why she left, she didn’t feel good with some people, so yes, I know why she left. Since we had a great relationship, she was my favourite person at work, I would totally defend her decision in front of others.

[social talk]

W: And ehm… with the current manager it is not like that, I understand?

R9: No, it is not like that. From the beginning… if you know that somebody doesn’t like you, you try, you try, and then give up.

W: hm hm. So she doesn’t like you on a personal level, and then she is using that also in a professional way…

R9: Yeah I think I am not her style.

W: Because in what way is she different?

R9: She is a totally different character. And she likes certain types of people. And I am not one of them.

W: and what do you miss from her? What do you miss in the relationship with your current manager?

R9: Ehm… I miss trust, I would say, and inspiration, and ehm… consolation maybe, support, or enthusiasm.

W: Because what I understand is that you mainly, related to the work you do, you work pretty individual, and discuss mostly with your manager, right?

R9: yeah. I interact with some people, but the final decision comes from the manager.

W: And you also work closest with the manager I understand. And what is the most important thing for you in a relationship?

R9: I want to admire the other person with whom I work together. I want to see that the other person is doing something really good, that I would love to do. And that is some kind of motivation to you.

W: I understand you don’t perceive that (laughs) in the relationship… with your current manager (W and R 9 laugh) Sorry about this…

R9: Well… no as you can see (laughs)

W: What?

(W and R9 laugh)

R9: No as you can see

W: Ehm… what could you do to make the relationship even more satisfactory … (W and R9 laugh)

R9: To change my personality.

(W and R 9 laugh)

W: To change your personality. So there is nothing else because you already told me you showed proactivity, and you want to help on this and this and this, but she’s not taking that form you, right? And she doesn’t look at your suggestions anymore.

R9: Yeah.

W: Ok and what should she do?

R9: She could just try. Just try to have a relationship with me.

W: For how long do you still have to work there?

(W and R9 laugh)

R9: For one month and a half.

W: I think this is the funniest interview I took.

R9: I am glad I participated.

(W and R9 laugh)

W: Is there anything that you would like to… besides the fun… (W and R9 laughing) you want to add?

R9: Well … (laughs).. Yeah, in the beginning with the first manager, we talked about my career here, she proposed to me to stay here as a full-time, after I finished my master thesis. And I said I would do it, with pleasure. Because I really liked how we worked together. But when she announced that she would leave, it kind of lost my motivation. And the fact that the relationship with my other manager wasn’t that good. It made me not wanting to stay any more, any longer. Even if I liked what I am doing. I lost my enthusiasm and, yeah… it changed my idea about the organization.

W: And maybe at a different place in the organization, would that be something?

R: No, I cannot see myself (laughs) anymore, here… let’s say.

 [social talk]

R9: And what I find is that with the interviews managers have, they look for people with in their style. And also with my manager she hires people where she feels she can work with. Because they have the same characters. And I saw that also with my previous boss. We had matching characters. That’s why she chose to work with me.

W: Thanks.

Appendix X: Interview R10

W: I start with really short question. Could you describe your job activities?

R10: Basically I am a web developer. I am doing programming, database development, database analysis, and mostly and maybe a little bit of support, the last level of support for the user. I am programming mainly web technologies, exactly I am doing a PHP with mySQL. PHP is programming language, and mySQL is database manager (W: Yeah) and besides this, mostly everything that I am doing, with these two languages as the source. For example, projects, everything that I get, is made by our company, a product by us. And we get everything based on the customer requirements.

W: So it’s pretty unique and pretty …

R10: Yeah, and what we are really proud of, it is really custom. So if the client wants some the product is developed easily so that we can easily, in a couple of days make that thing.

W: and also to adapt it to their software and eh…

R10: Yeah, we have also of course, in the auto industry, we have huge databases with information about cars, about their customers. So we are provider of data, but we also received data. We need to make interfaces to connect with them, receive data … yeah, the full data transfer. And also we are… maybe it’s interesting, if you heard about PCI Compliance? (W: Yeah) Well, we are PCI compliant, basically we have all the protocols and structures based on that.

W: And I think you also need to, right, in the car industry?

R10: Yeah, for handling the customer information…

[social talk]

W: And in what way does your manager support you in the assignments that you have?

R10: Ehm… mostly working with ehm… companies. Not only companies, but also with employees from Netherlands. Usually we need translations, also related to language, and to small cultural differences. And technical wise and product wise… We are mostly technical people.

W: So you know the job that you have to do, right?

R10: Yeah… but sometimes we need the translations of the client requirements, to make it a little bit better for the business. So maybe I make a perfect product, but maybe that is not perfectly suitable for the client, but eh… my manager is handling exactly this thing. So not technically, but making it exactly perfect for that client. Specific… and to make the best product.

W: And that also deals with the front end side, the user friendliness…

R10: Yeah. Our product basically has two parts, one website, and the second one the database, which is handling the cars in the background.

W: And how in general would you describe the interaction with you and your manager?

R10: Ehm… we have a good interaction. Communication mostly is good. Ehm... my manager, even if he is Dutch, he worked before, and even studied in different countries. Countries like… he studied in Canada and France… and worked all over Europe.

W: And do you think that also helps for eh… [ interrupted by R10]

R10: A lot. For example, I can see that sometimes, us as foreigners we explain some words, how we feel usually, a little bit different than the Dutch people. And he knows to understand that. He knows when to push, when to stop pushing.

W: Oh that’s really good. So he has interpersonal as well as intercultural skills, right?

R10: Yeah.

W: Ok. Sounds good. Let me see. Yeah, for you… how would the best possible relationship between you and a manager look like?

R10: Ehm… the best possible… Mine is almost the best (W laughs). I really like my manager, the communication between us is really good. Also with problems: good problems and bad problems. He tries to understand some of my technical difficulties, because sometimes I cannot provide the product that he wishes for… and that, of course technical wise I cannot and he tries to find the middle ground. Best technical, and also best for the customer. One of the issues, which I think can be improved, is my manager, my direct manager, comes from a sales background... and eh, I think the manager, not the technical manager but the product part, can be improved.

W: And in what way… can he improve the relationship?

R10: I am more a technical person. I have for example more detailed tasks. I prefer to have paper, specifications… it is something for all technical people. We want to know exactly what to do, and we do exactly that. (W: Yeah) Ehm… the creativity means a lot, but maybe… sometimes our creativity is different than the creativity the customers want. And I love if I can get for example in this moment more details about my task. But I don’t know how to say, everything detailed with specification.

W: Yeah. And also I have a question directly related to this, because how does this affect your… your feeling about the work you do, because he misses the technical translation towards you?

R10: Eh… sometimes it is frustrating. Most of the times the end result is good towards really good, but the process towards that end result. Instead of working three days to get the end result we can work only two days, if I had exactly the technical specifications in mind.

W: And related to the job in general, would you say the job is challenging enough for you or… is that maybe the reason you want to go somewhere else?

R10: Ehm… even now, after a while working here, I have almost three years here, the job is challenging. The job is challenging with this amount of database, and this amount of users, and eh… also really interesting information, that I can extract all the data, and that I can see, and work everything related to their information in a global way, makes it challenging. Especially when I first arrived here, I started as a trainee, and this was my first experience, with this big databases, with this kind of databases, this kind of information, and this kind of product basically.

W: And are there things right now, suppose you would stay within this company, what do you want to do which is not yet set in your job role?

R10: At this moment I almost reached the level of seniors programmer (W: Yeah) and towards programming I can improve just, ehm… the workflow. Programming wise I think having a better workflow, we can improve a lot our product. But, job related, I think my next level will be project manager, towards managing the projects, I have a small, I have a big language barrier with my clients, because I cannot speak Dutch, but eh… in the moment when I get to that level to learn Dutch I can go to the next level of programming. So a link between the customer and the technical people… the translation between customer requirements, but also translation from the technical people, understanding the technical people.

W: But you also mentioned the workflow could be improved, somehow. And suppose you would say I want to work on that, to work on those things, or is that totally not in the scope?

R10: No. He is open to discussions. Only sometimes these kinds of changes happen over a long period of time. Eh… now I already implemented some things in the workflow, difference from the beginning from here, and creating a project management tool, just for the technical cases, and also documentation throughout the company for other employees. We have ehm… we have implemented a project management tool. It is a tool similar to... eh… I forgot the name of it. I will tell you afterwards. It’s a project tool how you have meetings in the company, how you prepare the cases, have issues for the company. It is a small protocol that implemented not the full one, but a version of this, and even if it was implemented also in one year. Even now we can have better communications and discuss the problems.

[social talk]

W: Yeah, ok. Am I interrupting you now or new question?

R10: New question.

W: Ok that’s good, that’s good. (R10 laughs). Ok what is your experience with how your manager supports you and gives you feedback, on the job you do?

R10: Eh… I really think my manager supports me. I mean I was really glad when I first arrived at the company, because he trusted me and he trusted my skills a lot. At that moment I was still a trainee, but I went to some quite high level meetings at my customers’, as a technical expert, and eh… I handled them… I can say good towards really good and only because I had the backup of my manager. Being near me, supporting me the moment I had a little bit of support including the meeting. And he understood a little bit of my work. He just put me on the right path at the moment, and that gave me a lot of confidence.

W: Oh that’s good, really good. And eh… of course your manager also evaluates your job activities, right?

R10: Not so much. Eh… he evaluates, but mostly verbal, nothing really specially, that kind of evaluation.

W: Just a short evaluation.

R10: Yeah.

W: Ok and how does your manager tell you or show you you did a good job?

R10: Again, mostly verbal, after we finished a project, or when we start a new project, usually we discuss the problems at the old project, the good points the bad points, and usually in that moment he says exactly the truth of the project. The good ones, the bad ones. Eh… besides this, he recognizes in front of everyone, and especially in front of me, that are also really important for me. Exactly what I want to do, and what I enjoy, and makes me feel good about that.

W: Yeah, I think everyone sometimes need a little appraisal or recognition or give it a name. (R10: Yeah) And how do you feel about the space and time you further develop yourself within the team, the organization?

R10: Eh… most of the times for different kind of project we try different kind of solutions. We have of course research time, we can propose new solutions, and eh… yeah, mostly we can get different kind of [inaudible] for different types of projects. And also, I didn’t have especially personal studies in the company, but I had a proposal to start it at a Druva company, different solutions, especially technical wise.

W: And is that also supported by your manager?

R10: Eh... supported by manager and proposed by my manager.

W: so he also said ‘Hey [name R10], please go to a course’ (W and R10 laugh)

R10: Yeah. Mostly I think the reason was business wise. Like certificate, so that the company can show for example, eh… web development, it’s a Zen-certificate company. And if you are a Zen-certificate company it means a lot… because we are willing to use Zen at a professional level. (W: Yeah) And of course for me it was an opportunity to get that course, but especially for the company it was a plus.

W: Yeah, of course. If you want to establish more business…

R10: Yeah, a base of clients. That really, especially the enterprise clients really look at this kind of stuff.

W: Ah ok. And ehm… suppose your manager has at certain point in time too many things to do, and he has a hard time doing all those things, and then seeing form the relationship you have, in what way can you also help him in his activities?

R10: Ehm… being the technical person, I try to automate a lot of his work… always having custom product. For example, actually for most of our products, we offer content management system, also reporting, even in the past, when these services were done manually, for example calculation in Excel… Most of the times I try to automate this process. Also, for my ehm… manager, also for the whole company. Besides this, at the same time I try to help him to understand some of my technical problems, and also my technical tools, how to use them… because that can have a high efficiency. For example, creating a rule, usually, that is mostly static. Eh… I prefer to show him a couple of technical tricks, directly working with the full database, and that can help the full company. Especially, after establishing that in two months, he teaches the rest of the company. And now we have eh… full workflow based on that.

W: So to me it looks the relationship with your manager is really back and forth. He gives you a little, you give a little to him, etcetera. (R10: Yeah) and you also spoke, a little bit back, about that you sometimes go to clients with him. Suppose you worked on a certain project, but the results are not really what was expected by the client or someone else, to what extent does he stand up for you?

R10: Eh… most of the times he does, of course I have a level of responsibility, towards my product. Eh… basically my company philosophy ‘If you have a problem, you need to solve it as soon as possible’. You need to go over the personal feelings about that problem. And if you need help, ask for help, because we are here also to help you.

W: Ok, makes sense.

R10: This really helps the company and in relation with other companies and with our product, because with this we can fix our problems, our bugs, as fast as possible, and most interaction with our users. Mostly when we need to work, we need to be really invisible. The user doesn’t need to see us there.

W: And does it also sometimes happen that the user or the client, or I don’t know who, that somebody asks for the manager in a certain context, but suppose the manager is not there. And he basically asks for clarification about a certain decision or appointment your manager made, are you then also confident enough in defending and justifying certain decisions he made or…?

R10: Eh… yeah most of the times, I am really confident about defending his decisions, because even sometimes if I don’t understand them, by experience I have seen there are some business aspects, I really can trust him about those. And usually I can back him up, to most of his business decisions, and towards the technical decisions. Or he talked with me or with another colleague.

W: Oh that’s good. And related to the interaction exchange, are you also able to discuss all kinds of important matters which are important to you, with him? Or is there sometimes a restriction?

R10: Most of the times I can discuss. Working always close to each other we have also the business relation, and we can also a little bit discuss off-business problems. And eh... I really can get sometimes the feeling that if I need help, he can help me.

W: Yeah. It sounds that you have a pretty good relationship with your manager.

R10: Most of the times yes.

W: Yeah, probably sometimes there is a little fight, but that will probably be ok.

R10: Yeah. Eh... you know when you stay at least at my age for so long in a company, it’s something. Usually people with my experience and my age, are flying from company to company.

W: Yeah is that really in the technical world?

R10: Yeah, usually you stay one year or two years in a company, especially when you get to the thirties, and then you settle for something more. And I have a lot of experiences, even when I was a trainee and I arrived here, and previous experience, mainly work-related, but also university related, but mostly work, and then I had also a lot of talking with customers, that eh… means a lot, and I can find another job any time, almost, because of that. And eh... most of the times I prefer to stay here. Even if I have sometimes a little bit of disappointments, but most of the times I feel really good. Of course when I get a really good offer, what I am after right now.

W: Yeah of course. Why not improve after a few years (W: Yeah). And I have one really general question. What role does your manager play in your happiness at work, eh… the relationship you have with him?

R10: Ehm… it’s quite a big role, quite a great role, because usually we work with a few people, and he is my first line towards the customer. Eh... I work usually with other developers as a team, and also if I have problems related to the job or the customers I go to my manager or my project manager. And they are the ones that are handling my problems, and that are really helping me in the moment I need help. That makes me feel really good.

W: Ok, I guess so. And are there also other things which influence your happiness at work?

R10: Eh… yeah, also clients. And not necessarily the clients, but our links with the clients. I enjoy the projects, most of the time. But I have also some projects with companies that work in a different way and work in a different way than me. And my company, and in that moment I can… you can see I really enjoy working there or not.

W: And why do you sometimes like working there and why not?

R10: Mostly it is because of the way of working. I am coming from some technologies that are open source, that are really dynamic, that we can build as fast as possible, a good product. And a link between me and another company, a different IT company, of course it is offering different products of my client, but still I need to have a strong connection with that company, and that company is working in a totally different way than my company. So usually they use closed programs, not so dynamic, of course… really good, but for example, our development for a new product can take half an hour, a small modification towards one or two weeks max. There, starts at three weeks, a small modification that I can ask. And sometimes you see a difference between the mindsets of a company.

W: So in general, you could say the relationship between you and the manager is first of all pretty good, and important and your happiness at work is being influences by the relationship and by the clients which you work at, right?

R10: Yeah, the clients and the projects that I am working on. For example I have a project, and even I work with the client, and work with this company, eh… when I work only for the project it’s great, when I need to make the connections with the other company, it is not so great.

W: Thanks.

[social talk]

Appendix XI: Interview Guide for the semi-structured interviews

1. Could you describe your job activities?
2. In what way does your manager support you in these assignments?
3. How in general would you describe the interaction between you and the manager?
4. How do you experience the interaction right now?
5. How does this affect your feeling about the work you do?
6. In your eyes, how would the best possible relationship with you and a manager look like?
7. Of what components does such a relationship consist?
8. And how is this now?
9. Would you say your job challenging is enough for you? Please describe.
10. Right now, are you in the position to bring up new ideas for your work? Please elaborate this
11. What do you want to do which is not yet set in your job role? Can you decide this with your manager, at this point?
12. What things are you planning to do to move on in the job itself?
13. Would this help you to get and have better relationship with your manager? How?
14. Could you describe in what way you need your manager to perform the job you do?
15. What is your experience with how he supports you and gives you feedback? Please elaborate.
16. Sometimes managers evaluate their employees on their job activities, their assignments.
17. How does your manager do this?
18. How does your manager show you you did a go job?
19. What do you think of how he shows you you did a good job?
20. What do you think of how often he does this?
21. How do you feel about the space and time you get to further develop yourself within your work and the organization or the team? Please elaborate.
22. Could you describe whether your manager support you in your development and advancement in the job?
23. Think of a moment where in your eyes something goes not according to plan or could have done much better by yourself or by others. What room is there to investigate and perhaps implement new ideas?
24. We just spoke about your job tasks: in what way do your activities impact the manager’s activities?  *Clarification: In what activities does your manager depend on you and how do you support him?*
25. Suppose your manager has too many things at hand, has a hard time doing all the things he needs to do. Seeing from the relationship you have with him, in what way do you and can you support him?
26. Suppose you worked on a certain activity but the results are not what was expected by others, to what extent does your manager stand up for you in front of others ?
27. Suppose your manager is not there and there is a situation related to a decision he made or something he is working on, and a client or another manager wonders about this decision, are you confident defending and justifying decisions he made?
28. What are your thoughts and feelings about the exchange you have with your manager…
Are you able to discuss and do you discuss important matters –important to you - with him/her? This could be work-related or non-work related.
29. And vice-versa? (your manager to you)
30. What other things for you make sure you go happy to your work and leave your job satisfied (if you are satisfied)?
31. What role does your manager play in your satisfaction at work?
32. what is the most important thing in a relationship according to you?
33. How do you perceive that in your relationship with your manager?
34. What could you do what could your mgr do to make the relationship even more satisfactory than now?
35. What could your mgr do to make the relationship even more satisfactory than now?
36. Would this impact your happiness on the job you do?