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**EMOTIONS AND MOOD IN A WORKGROUP**

Master's Thesis in  
Management and Organizations

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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis studies the meanings of emotions and mood in a work group. The objective is to understand their roles in everyday working life and how they might affect the employees. In the beginning of the research no assumptions about the results were made. The idea was simply to “dive in” to the phenomena and receive what is to be found.

The research was carried out in an international company, where two teams were interviewed in winter 2006-2007. The pilot team was multicultural and the comparison team, domestic. Both teams are formed quite recently and contain people of different ages and with different backgrounds. The methodology of the study is qualitative and it was conducted by following the structure of the grounded theory–method. The data was collected with open interviews and diaries. The attempt was not to influence the interviewees, but to let them talk freely about emotions, moods and matters that have meaning for them at work and at home. After each interview the data was coded and analyzed to give a guideline for the next interview. This way all the discussed themes came directly from the interviewees and not from the interviewer.

After the interviews, a more careful analyze was made and the main results were found. It was obvious that emotions and mood have a significant role in the social life of the organization. They seem to affect the mood of other team members and moreover the work itself. From the rich data of the interviews more interesting elements were found explaining how different matters affect different people in dissimilar ways. The results from the two teams did not differ strongly from each other, only the intensity of their attitudes diverged.

The results can be eventually combined together with the existing literature, which gathers together the most important emotion studies in organizations. Supporting findings could be covered from the literature and thus it could be seen that this thesis gives confirmation to the previous studies. The contribution of this study is that it provides tools for organizations, which can help waking up the awareness inside the teams, making the team members to understand each other better and make them want a change for the better.

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**KEYWORDS:** Affect, mood, emotions, group





## 1. INTRODUCTION

When people talk about work, they often talk about emotions. People discuss, for instance, how the work or a certain situation has felt. Although the phenomenon itself is constantly present and discussed in everyday working life, in the organizational studies organizations have often been presented as rational enterprises, where people are capable to think and act rationally, to maximize their goals which are set by the company (Fineman 2000: 10). Emotions are a very intimate part of a person and often connected to others in social contexts, from which one of the most powerful is the working organization. When spending 1/3 of the day at work, much of a person's social and emotional life is organizational (Rafaeli & Worline 2001: 95).

People working in organizations operate to achieve common goals. Organizations can be seen as social systems, where many environmental factors affect them and the employees. However, it can be seen as the truth that in a group of people working together, issues start to arise in different levels. Managers and consultants are directed to understand better personal, interpersonal, group and organizational related issues that are considered to be a part of every day life in organizations. The idea has not been to eliminate the problems but to manage them better (French et al. 1985: 11–25). As a matter of fact, the interest towards emotions is growing in organizations. Job announcements emphasize team work and getting along with people, as well as requiring enough emotional intelligence to understand the importance of the positive attitudes.

Researchers have always been interested in human behaviour and they have studied emotions in different contexts, for example as an individual or cultural phenomenon. The role of emotions has still been traditionally ignored in the organization research. For people working in organizations, it is nothing new that emotions and mood might affect workers. Hence, it feels reasonable to explore the phenomena through a scientific point of view and try to prove the significance of emotions and mood, which has still not been done completely (Fineman 2000: 10–11).

People bring their values, and attitudes and ways of behaving to work. The content of emotions is rather complex to study because everybody is different. The subject is very personal and therefore delicate. Work relationships differ from personal ones and

it makes people to experience the emotions in different ways (Fineman 2000: 65). The challenging character of this particular area and the need for more studying gives the research delectable settings. Further investigation is needed for broadening the vocabulary of emotions in organizations.

### **1.1. The Nature of the Study**

Researches have been interested in human behavior in organizations for decades. Organizational behavior research is interested in analyzing and understanding the people's attitudes, feelings, perceptions, motives and behavior in an organizational background. The field of study is founded on research, observation and theory. Improving individual and organizational performance and increasing participants satisfaction is defined as its primary goals. Ways to achieve them can be done by *understanding, predicting* and *influencing* human behavior in organizations (French et al. 1985: 14).

During past decades, the approach to work settings has been rather rational and only recently the meaning of emotions has been taken into consideration. Emotions in organizations are a relatively young study field but there are encouraging results that emotions do have an effect on behavior in organizational context. Since the late 1980's researcher have made epoch-making findings in the area in question. The intriguing environment gives a new challenge for emotional studies because the human relationships at work create a unique sentimental context. (Fineman 2000: 10–11, 65).

While the field of study is fresh, the most valuable material was found from various articles in academic journals from which many have been published in the recent years. Emotions in organizations –studies are connected to several fields of research and usually they have been analyzed as a biological or psychological phenomenon, although later they have been taken under the organizational studies (Briner 1999: 324–329). This study is interested only in the psychological affect of the emotions and mood in an organizational context. Due to the multidisciplinary nature of the subject, some of the articles, such as Fredrickson 1998, 2001 and 2005 are from psychological journals.

The idea of this research was to go open-minded into the arena of emotions and explore the meanings of the humans' inner world. The most preferable way to discover this kind of ground is to use qualitative methods. Going open minded to the phenomenon can be seen as the best approach when exploring a context, where there is still no commonly approved theory. Studying the particular field of emotions, the request is not to let the methodology (such as questionnaires or structured interview) interfere the answers but to let the data come by itself. For these reasons grounded theory –method was used to implement the study. The methodology was originally developed to the needs of sociologist but later on it has become in common use (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

Why study emotions in an organization or in a workgroup? Because when people work with matters that mean something to them and to their organizational performance, strong affective feelings are present. Some researchers imply that personal feelings are present in every situation when people encounter in meetings or work projects, or in the relationships individuals hold in every day working life (Barsade & Gibson 2007: 36). People bring organizations to life and therefore, it is important to be aware what kind of elements affect the life inside the organizations.

The study will be conducted by studying two different teams in an international company, which identity will not be revealed to protect the identities of the interviewees. This thesis concentrates mainly on emotions and mood in a workgroup but it is also open to the organizational view. Workgroup or a team are seen as the immediate surroundings where people work in. The two teams are compared with each other to find out the group's possible effect on emotions. The first group is multicultural containing nine people from Finland, Italy, Greece and Kenya. The other team has six members and is entirely domestic.

## **1.2. Definition of the Research Problem**

The purpose of this study is to find out what kind of emotions there are in a workgroup and which elements affect workers' moods. The first purpose is to learn how people feel in the chosen organization and what influences those sentiments. Through that, it might be possible to learn to understand emotions and the different people working in workgroups as well as to learn more about group dynamics. If one

knows what happens inside an employee's mind, it can perhaps give managers tools with which to provide their workers better. How much influence does the person's private life have at work? This study will hopefully give an answer to that question. It will also give important knowledge of human behaviour, emotions, moods and attitudes; the inner world of a person.

Emotions as a notion are closely related to the concept of mood. Still they are seen as two different elements and studied separately if possible. The defined research question of this study is: *How do emotions and mood affect in a workgroup?* Due to the fact that the query is fairly intricate, the following questions will be presented.

- *What kind of emotions there are in a workgroup and how do they show?*
- *Which elements have an effect on emotions and mood?*

The main questions are rather simple but no further assumptions were made at the beginning of the study to avoid any kind of guidance. As mentioned earlier, the idea was to face the phenomena of emotions and moods open-minded and therefore it was not preferable to make too precise research definitions. The main idea was to find and learn about matters related to work atmosphere, with the scope of emotions and mood. How worker's emotions or mood might affect and how they influence colleagues is also taken into consideration. The target was to find implements for improving the comprehension of the meaning of emotions and mood at work.

### **1.3 The Structure of the Study**

The first chapter presents the background information of the study by introducing the subject and the nature of the study. It also defines the research problem more specifically. The second chapter opens up the main definitions that are important for the study. Affect, mood, emotions and a group are specified briefly. A short look at the background history of emotions in organization -studies is also made.

In chapter three the methodology and the process of data collection are demonstrated. The target company of the research is presented giving the needed demographical information. The two interviewed teams are introduced, as well as the collection of the

empirical data through open interviews and personal diary is explained. In the end of the chapter three, the data analyzing processes are described.

In chapter four the results of the study are presented. The findings are based fully on the interviews and put together with a careful open-minded coding and analyzed with a great attempt not to influence on the results. First, the main findings are written out by dividing them into six main themes. After that the findings will be divided to three levels: intrapersonal, interpersonal and organizational. The different response attitudes are presented and the comparisons between the two groups are made. Finally, essential parts of the researcher's diary will be proposed.

In chapter five the results are combined together with the previous studies. The literature was not examined before the interviews so that they would not guide the interviewer. First the previous studies, which support the empirical findings, are presented. Emotions in organization studies are a young field even though so far there has been supporting results that emotions do affect in different levels of organization. A framework that combines the literature and the main research findings is presented in subchapter 5.8.

The final chapter six discusses the conclusions. It will show how the research influenced the teams. It will also take into notion the limitations of the study as well as the contribution to the working ambient and the discipline. In conclusion, indications for the future research will be made.

## 2. DEFINING THE MAIN TERMINOLOGY

This study focuses on the emotional field in organizations and it is seen essential to define the traditional terms relating to the emotional scope. Affects, moods and emotions are defined and the relationships between the three are examined. In the end of this chapter, also the meaning of the group will be discussed. Although emotions touch several fields of study, this research is interested in emotions only as a psychological element in organizations and it will not discuss their biological meanings.

People experience pleasant and unpleasant emotions and moods in both private and social contexts. They express a variety of positive and negative sentiments and attitudes that can be evaluated (Fredrickson & Losada 2005: 678). To understand the wide and challenging field of research, it is central to distinguish and clarify the three elements, which build the concept. During the interviews was noticed that differentiating moods and emotions was troublesome. Also in literature the three definitions are often presented as each other's synonyms (Batson et al. 1992: 295).

Although the research in question concentrates mainly in moods and emotions, they both involve affective experiences. Even if all elements, including affect, are distinguished, they all share some common features. For example they can all be described as states involving transient psychological experiences. Moreover, they all share a general subjective (feeling) element and are accompanied by psychological reactions. Characteristics to these states are that they have an evaluative component to them and some states are preferred over others (Cropanzano et al. 2003: 834–835).

### 2.1 Affect

*“Research on affective structure is like a tapestry that is not yet completed.”*

(Cropanzano et al. 2003: 852)

Recently the researchers' interest has turned to studying affect, but there are several debates concerning the structure of the affect. Traditionally the term affect has been

used as an umbrella concept covering feeling states such as emotions and moods; dispositional affects, meta-emotional varieties as well as the various feeling traits such as positive and negative affectivity (Barsade & Gibson 2007: 37–38). This sub-chapter presents affects only shortly, giving more detailed definitions in chapter five.

According to Batson et al. (1992: 298), affect is the most primitive of the three definitions. It is also more general than moods or emotions. The tone of the affect varies between positive and negative and it has different levels of intensity. Affect can be seen as a reaction to a present situation that has a meaning for person's mood. Affects seem to reveal person's preferences showing what the person values over another. A positive affect generates when a less valued state transforms into a more valued way of being. A negative affect generates the opposite reaction when a preferred state turns into a less valuable. The intensity the affect is experienced depends on the value's importance.

## 2.2 Mood

The consequences of affects and moods differ from each other, even if it can be difficult for people to separate them. Negative affects are likely to motivate people's actions, where the positive affect is something to be enjoyed. Negative or positive moods will set the person to believe that the actions causing the mood are likely to cause pain or pleasure (Batson et al. 1992: 300–301).

Moods can be defined as affective experiences, disconnected from their ultimate causes. In other words, they exist without a specific object or a defining event. This is also the biggest cause that separates moods from emotions, which are always objected to specific targets. (Cropanzano et al. 2003: 835). The change in expectation, whether the future state will be positive or negative, together with affection in the present situation, outline the mood. A Mood is said to be a specific kind of affective state and one of its characteristics is temporality. The state can last from short moments to weeks (Batson et al. 1992: 299).

A positive or a negative affect can change the mood despite the change in the future expectations, if the person believes she<sup>1</sup> is having her lucky day, or on the contrary

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<sup>1</sup> "She" will be used as the main personal pronoun in this thesis for clarifying the writing. It was chosen over "he", as most of the interviewees in this particular study were women.



one of *those* days. Negative affect does not necessarily inflict bad mood and neither is positive affect always a source of positive mood. A person can even encounter an intense affect without any changes in the mood. It is the temporary change in the future expectations that alters the mood. People's presumptions about the future can also be based on surreal beliefs and depend on the personality (Batson et al. 1992: 300).

### 2.3 Discrete Emotions

This chapter will present the discrete emotions in a "nut shell". Fineman (2006: 675–676) defines emotions as *both a personal and organizational recourse, through which different "rationalities" and relationships are interpreted, contested and formed*. Emotions are powerfully shaped by social learning, cultural protocols, social structures and politics and they are often regulated through feeling rules and emotion display.

The field of emotions is complex and there is not any commonly accepted definition. However, different scholars, with various perspectives, have focused to study this difficult area. There is an ongoing debate of how many discrete emotions do exist. According to Goleman (1995: 331–332), there can be hundreds of them along with their blends, variations, mutations and nuances, even so many that we don't have names for them all. The researcher continues quoting Paul Ekman, implying that there are four universal emotions: fear, anger, sadness and enjoyment, which are recognized in all cultures around the world through facial expressions.

Any emotion can be experienced and assessed in a positive or negative way, even with a mix of both (Fineman 2006: 691). Often in the literature, emotions are divided in about fifteen basic varieties. Rather than concentrating on each type, they can be easily and efficiently studied as an opposition between negative and positive tone (Plutchik & Kellerman 1980: 198–203).

Usually the emotions are divided into "basic" or primary emotions such as joy, love, anger, fear, disgust and surprise (Barsade & Gibson 2007: 37). Cropanzano et al. (2003: 835) suggests that the clearest definition for emotions is that they have an object of interest, meaning that they *are always about something or someone*. For example you can be angry at your husband or you can be proud of your work. Briner

(1999) presents in Table 1 an example list of emotions which includes 22 main emotions.

**Table 1.** Examples of Emotions (Briner 1999: 327 adapted from Ortony, Clore & Collins 1998)

Pride
Self reproach (embarrassment, guilt, shame)
Appreciation (admiration, respect)
Reproach of others (contempt, disdain, appalled)
Gratitude (feeling indebted, thankful)
Anger (annoyance, fury, outraged)
Gratification (self-satisfied, smug)
Remorse (self-anger, penitent)
Joy (delighted, cheerful, joyful)
Distress (distracted, uneasy, shock, misery)
Happy-for (pleased-for, delighted-for)
Sorry-for (compassion, pity, sympathy)
Resentment (envy, jealousy)
Gloating (gloating, <i>schadenfreude</i> )
Hope (looking forward-to, anticipatory excitement)
Fear (apprehension, anxious, worried, scared)
Satisfaction (gratification, hopes-realized)
Fears-confirmed (worst fears-realized)
Relief
Disappointment (dashed-hopes, despair)
Liking (affection, adoration, attracted-to, love)
Disliking (detest, hate, loathe, perilled-by)

The Merriam – Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (2003: 408) presents emotions as affective aspects of consciousness. According to it, emotion is a conscious mental reaction experienced as strong feeling and directed towards a specific object and typically accompanied by physiological and behavioural changes in the body. In the dictionary, emotion is considered as a synonym for feeling, but researches state that the two concepts are too different to be used as synonyms in research.

As moods, also emotions contain tone and intensity. Whereas the mood reflects the negative or positive changes in the future, emotion relates to person’s goals and values in the present. Elements people value can be both abstract and concrete. They can be genetically based, environmentally related or learned through classical or operant

conditioning. Which are the personal values is highly subjective. They change among people, because everyone is unique. Especially the social backgrounds of each person are very diverse and therefore, also the culture and ideas she has been exposed to, can vary.

Emotions can be considered as reactions to a certain change in a relationship to a specific situation. For example, if someone has succeeded with a long term project, she is likely to feel joy. Also to a person who has been successful in a smaller task, the success might create a positive affect and she too might feel pleasure. How the achievements affect the future orientation can be noticed through the change in mood. Emotions reflect the existence of a specific goal or a perceived change in the individual relation to a particular goal in the future (Batson et al. 1992: 301–303).

The biggest difference, which distinguishes emotions from moods and affects, is the fact that emotions are always reactions to something or someone. On the contrary, moods lack in defining the event or the object, meaning that the reason behind the mood may not be clear for the person. According to Cropanzano et al. (2003: 836), moods are *affective experiences disconnected from their proximate causes*. Unlike mood, emotion is usually focused on a specific target and is realized by the perceiver. Discrete emotions like joy or sadness are usually rather intensive but have a brief duration and they can sometimes turn into moods (Barsade & Gibson 2007: 38).

## **2.4 Emotions in Organizational Studies**

The roots of organizational studies are at the beginning of the twentieth Century when the approach was still rather scientific. The interest was first in the internal structure of companies; how different units were organized, how they were linked together and how people behaved in them. Today it is considered important to give support, build trust, accept differences, and encourage workers to be more self-acting.

Despite of the softer approach towards the working life, researchers and scholars have generally ignored the field of emotions in organizations although they are actually an essential and inseparable part of everyday working life. Moreover, emotions have been considered as the antithesis of rationality (Ashforth & Humbrey 1995: 106). In practice, the values of the individuals have been studied through purely rational

methods such as IQ measurements which were developed to support the ideals of the Western world (Goleman 1995: 4).

Studying emotions has a long history in psychology. On the other hand, as already pointed out before, it has been mistreated in organisational practise. In fact, there has even been a clear attempt to separate emotions from organisations. The concept of the company needs trimming, as does the term control and if achieving total power or taking over altogether is the target, emotion can cause problems with its spontaneous and causal characteristics (Rafaeli & Worline 2001: 98). Furthermore, the focus of the previous studies has rather been in the emotional labour and in the way the emotions are expressed in service situations. How emotions are experienced or felt is left with smaller attention (Briner 1999: 322).

The position of emotional studies began to change slowly in the late 1980's when the research started expand after the publications of Hochschild (1983), about emotional labour, and Rafaeli's and Sutton's (1989) investigations, about emotional contagious. Despite of the arising interest in the 1980's, emotion studies continued to be slightly ignored and reached to have only a little impact on the organizational research in the next decade. In the beginning of the new century the situation started to change spectacularly and researchers are nowadays exploring how workers think and feel in organizations, publishing constantly fresh information about the role and the effects of emotions in organizations (Askanasy 2002:14 –16).

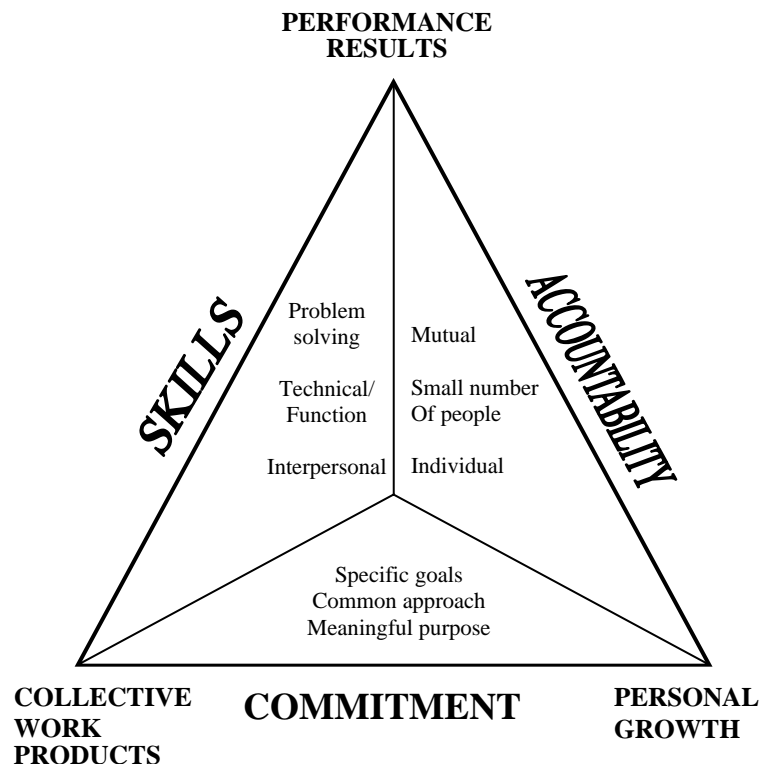
Today the question is no longer whether emotions and mood have an effect on organizations but rather *why* they affect and *how* they influence different areas of the working environment. The interest towards the field of affect, mood and emotions is growing with an impressive speed. Due to the fact that the field of investigation is still relatively young, researchers are encouraging other colleagues to study the area more deeply, aiming to establish the role of emotions.

## **2.5 The Group**

In most of the working places, employees work together or have at least some kind of interaction with other co-workers and often also with customers or vendors. For that reason, there has been a remarkable amount of research related to group work, aiming

to understand the structure and performance of small operational groups and teams, that is, how the members are behaving in them and influencing within. The study approach to teams has traditionally sided the role of emotions but recently it has been taken into a consideration. Nowadays, teams are the basic units of performance in many organizations. They melt together abilities, experiences, and insights of many different people (Katzenbach & Smith 1998:27).

*“A group is a number of persons who, for at least a brief period of time, have some psychological and/or task interdependency, which includes interaction with each other in face-to-face situation.”* Groups in organizations can be divided into two different kinds: formal and informal. Formal groups are approved by the hierarchy and they have particular tasks to perform. Informal groups are formed voluntarily by the employees themselves. A reason to create such a group can be the similarity of work, mutual attraction and a common need of fulfillment or even a mixture of all the above (French et al. 1985: 228–230).



**Figure 1.** Focusing on Team Basics (Katzenbach & Smith1998:8)

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

This chapter describes the methodology used in the research. The chapter will also introduce the interviewees and the organizational surroundings where the interviews were implemented. The end of the chapter three illustrates step by step the complete analyzing process, explaining how the final results were found through careful coding with a help of NVivo software program. The results will be presented in the next chapter.

The first and main idea was to understand emotions and mood in organizations and the qualitative method was chosen for the research method. It is commonly used when studying people's lives, stories and behavior. The purpose of a qualitative method is to describe the properties and qualities of the researched phenomenon. In qualitative research every studied case is unique and is seen to have meaning for the result (Strauss & Gorbun 1990: 17–19). Due to the fact that the subject of this thesis is very personal, it was seen best to use qualitative methods when collecting the data.

Fineman (2000: 13) warns that using familiar and commonly accepted methods (such as questionnaire, interview or psychological test) when studying emotions, it can determine the shape of the subject rather than let the subject determine the used method. The grounded theory -method is considered to fulfill these needs and it was used to carry out the research. The method gives plenty of rope to the researcher to freely dive in the phenomenon of emotions.

#### **3.1 Grounded theory –method**

Grounded theory method is a qualitative approach that was originally developed by two sociologists Glaser and Strauss (1967) in the late 1960's. While the most common research methods build the research on theory, the purpose of the grounded theory is rather to build theory of the examined phenomenon. Give support to an already existing theory or even build a new theory are the purposes of this research. According to Glaser and Strauss (1990: 23–28), theory building can be done by set of systematical procedures to develop theory from the existing phenomenon. In the end the theory is generated from systematical data collection and careful coding of data.

The key is to understand the researched phenomenon and to find generalizations without influencing the process or the results.

Metsämuuronen (2006: 98–99) says that qualitative research is normally done in two different ways: theory-based and data-based research. The theory-based one is a more traditional way to perform a research where the aim is to connect the theory, formed from the literature, to the reality. Data-based research in its fundamentals means letting the data speak for itself and to create the theory from the actual phenomenon. Grounded Theory –method presents the second possibility.

The researcher, using the grounded theory method, needs to be open and flexible in front of the phenomenon. When the idea is to discover and develop new, certain amount of creativity is also needed (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 24–28). The researcher must be aware not to guide the interviewees because that might interfere with the results. Therefore, the researchers also warn not to examine the existing literature too carefully beforehand. On the contrary, the examination of technical literature should be done after the coding if it is relevant to find possible relationships between the discovered data and the already existing literature (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 48–50). Fineman emphasizes that when studying emotions the researcher needs to have certain qualities, such as being agile and sensitive and having a capacity to report imaginatively (Fineman 2000: 14–15).

The reason why Grounded theory -method was chosen to conduct the research was, first of all, because there is still no solid theory about emotions and how they affect in organizations. Only in the past decades the value of emotions at work has started to be recognized. Second, the subject as a concept is very unique and therefore it did not feel correct to study emotions with a specific framework.

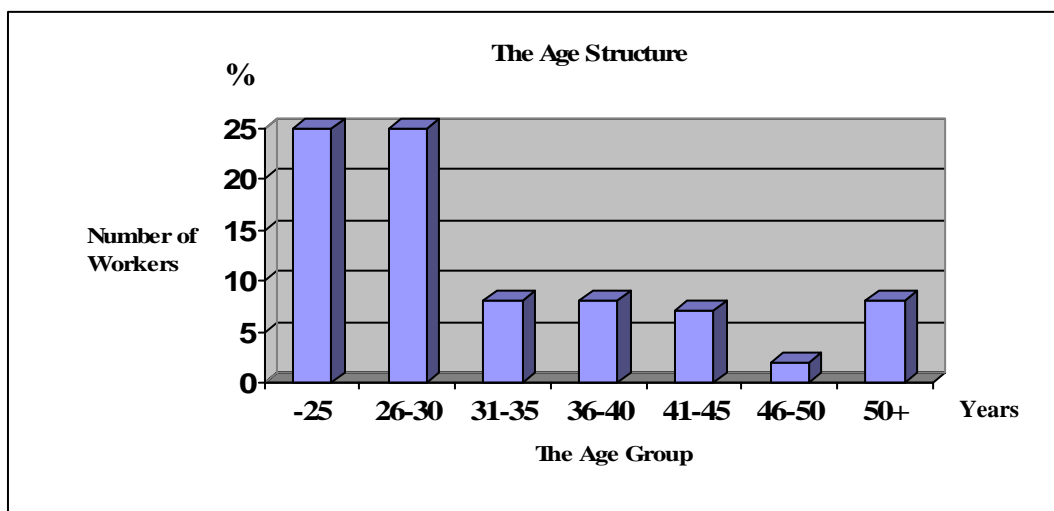
It was important to do the research with an open mind and without trying to influence the interviewees or explored results even if, in theory, it is impossible not to have any influence at all. That being the case, no assumptions about the outcome were made in the beginning of the research. That again made the research challenging when there was no particular idea what should be found. The main purpose was to look for elements that could have an effect on emotions and mood in a working group. The wish, like in general in the grounded theory –method, was ultimately relate the outcome with those of the other researches in the academic area.

### 3.2 The Surroundings for the Research

The research data was collected by interviewing two groups in the target company during the winter 2006-2007. The place of the interviews was a young and dynamic business-oriented organization, which serves several business units in a unified way and where the processes are standardized and performance is measured. The working ambient is international and the services are done mainly for subsidiary customers in other European countries. The work is done in work groups in a way that one specific group concentrates on customer services for one certain country or a couple of countries.

Knowing that the team concept is a significantly new issue in the organization in question, the company has put a lot of effort in forming the group work. It has provided external, a one year long team training for the employees and the groups are encouraged to spend time together in occasional team lunches and team meetings. The future aim is that the performance measurements will be done as groups instead of on individual level.

**Table 2.** The company's age structure



The service unit has faced a rapid change during its lifespan. In three years the department has grown from 18 persons to 83. From the department's workers, 77 %



are women and 23 % are men. The age structure divides so that over 60 % of the workers are 30 years old, or younger. The amount of over 50 year old employees is only 9, 6 % (Table 2).

Each group has a team leader who was selected in October 2006. Katzenbach & Smith (1998: 131) describe a team leader as person who, like all the members in the team, does the real work herself. Her task is to clarify the purposes and goals as well as to build commitment and self-confidence among the other members. She should strengthen the team's collective skills and approaches, by removing externally set obstacles, and creating opportunities for others.

In the target organization team leaders come from inside the team. Employees were able to apply for the post and they were chosen by their superiors. Team leaders work as the superiors of the group; taking care of smaller managerial tasks, such as drafting the working contracts and keeping track with the members' absences and holidays. She is also in contact with the higher superior. Each team works individually in charge of the team leader. The groups arrange team meetings approximately once a week and they have the possibility to have a team lunch outside the office once a month.

### **3.3 The interviewees**

The research began with interviewing the pilot group that will be called the Foreign group. The Foreign group had ten members from which eight were interviewed. The employees were all different ages and had different backgrounds. The group was formed in February 2006 and it consisted of four men and six women from four different countries: Finland, Greece, Kenya and Italy. The Foreign group worked sitting close together in the department and occasionally they also spent some time together outside the office. The team was chosen for this research because of the different nationalities.

The second group, which will be called the Domestic group, was a team including six persons, of which five were women. All of the members of the group were Finnish at the moment of the interviews. The group was formed in July 2006 and the structure of the group has changed several times when new employees have come to join the group or some have been assigned to other tasks. The Domestic group was chosen to give comparison to the pilot group, as it was otherwise seen as the most similar to the

Foreign group from all the other 7 of the office. Unlike the Foreign group, the members of the Domestic one sat in two different places in the department. Inside both groups, the work was divided into three or four specific parts, which were taken care of by different performers. The tasks were therefore not entirely similar to everybody.

**Table 3.** The Structure of the Interviewed Groups

<b>Group</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Working in the Team</b>
<b>Foreign Group</b>	6 Female 4 Men	From 22 years to 50 + years	Finland, Italy, Greece, Kenya	From 3 months to 2 years
Work split:	Task A: 3 people Task D: 1 person	Task B: 1 person	Task C: 5 people	
<b>Domestic Group</b>	5 Female 1 Man	From 23 years to 50 years	Finland	From 3 months to over 2 years
Work split:	Task A: 2 people	Task B: 3 person	Task C: 1 person who helps B	

Because of the delicate nature of this research, no further information about the interviewees will be given to protect their privacy. Neither is the organization's identity seen to have an impact on the results. It should also be mentioned that the interviewer herself works part-time in the Foreign Group. It was not seen to have any kind of influence on the results. Rather it gave some important extra information about the importance of understanding emotions in organizations and as well as provided extra knowledge of the communication inside the studied groups.

### **3.4 The Structure of the Interviews**

Before starting the interviews, all the participants were prepared with some basic information about the research and its goals. Everyone was asked to give their approval to use their conversations in the research. The subject was introduced to the participants beforehand, being careful not to lead them in anyways at this point. The

topic of the interviews was told to the participants and this way, the workers were able to think about certain arguments in advance.

The discussions started with the first interview where the woman was given a chance to simply talk freely about the subject “emotions and mood at work”. The topic was written in a paper and placed in the middle of the table to make sure the interviewee concentrated and also remained in the given area. No further questions were asked. After the interview, the data was transcribed and analyzed with NVivo-computer software, which is a helpful software program developed specifically for the qualitative research.

The early coding gave a guideline to the next interview round. Each discussion was significant to the continuum of the study, due to the fact that from the rising themes, the interviewer was able to make new questions focusing on the matters the earlier interviewee had mentioned. The presented queries or themes arose from the previous interviews for example in this way: *“Some people have mentioned that colleague’s mood catches, what is your experience about this?”*

In the grounded theory –method, it is important that the interviewer does not interfere the interviewee’s answers in any ways. None of the interviews had any specific structure even if, as said, there were some main discussion topics, taken from the previous discussions. Often the employees talked about the themes already discovered in the previous interviews, without asking to. This proved that the same matters affected many of the workers. In the end of each interview, the team member was asked to write a diary about the subject “emotions and mood”. This way the interviewee got a chance to write down matters she might have forgotten to talk about. It also seemed to be easier for some people to write down their thoughts, instead of talking about them.

The diary had a free content and some persons wrote about their working days for one specific week, when some wrote freely about their ideas, which had arisen after the interview. The interviewees talked openly about their emotions and mood, and when the conversations ended, the researcher had a really rich content. Already at this point, certain themes began to arise, especially when it was noticed that the interviews concentrated mainly on the same matters, even without a real guidance and even in the comparison between two different teams.

The final part of the research was the group discussions, which were held separately with each group after the results were found. Here, people had the possibility to exchange thoughts about the results together. The group discussions gave important background information for the whole study. After this session, each person was asked, once more, to write their ideas about the matters and the suggestions of the possible uses of the research in general. The expressed opinions and the contribution of the research will be presented later in the last chapter.

It was central for the investigator to keep a research journal from where it was noticeable the different emotions that arose after every interview. The researcher's own annotations proved to have a great meaning to understand better the study. It was interesting to see how also the researcher's moods and emotions changed throughout the process.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

All the interviews were recoded with the approval of the interviewees. The duration of the 14 interviews were from 15 minutes to 57 minutes. In the end there were eight and a half hours of recorded material. The interviews were stopped after it could be seen that the issues started to repeat themselves, meaning that the point of saturation was achieved. All of the interviews and the analysis were conducted by the researcher herself.

From the 14 interviews, five were carried out in English and the rest in Finnish but all the interviews were transcribed in Finnish. Grounded theory method recommends practicing selective transcription (Strauss & Corbin 1990:30) but it was seen important to transcribe all the interviews from word to word with expressions to understand the emotions also between the lines.

The coding with NVivo -program was a multi-level procedure that was living and changing during the whole process. First, each interview was roughly coded into various categories, main tree nodes, based on their contents. This coding gave also guidelines for the following interviews. After the preliminary open coding, when the interviews were almost finished, a more particular coding was performed.

In the next phase, the tree nodes were gone through more carefully and more nodes were formed. After the first accurate coding there were about 20 different nodes. At this point of the analysis, certain entities started to arise and deeper meanings were found. It could be seen that all the nodes could be divided into three larger spectrums: intrapersonal, interpersonal and organizational and therefore, each of the smaller nodes were set under a larger node.

After the rearrangement of the nodes, it could be discovered that the answers had mainly a positive, negative or a neutral tone. The case being this, the already existing nodes were coded once more under three different nodes: positive, negative or neutral. This step was called the going on -coding. The going on -coding means that a previously coded piece of an interview is coded on again, to another category.

The three nodes were rearranged three times before the final results. The third arrangement was made when the positive, negative or neutral nodes were coded on once more to their sub-nodes based on what caused the response attitude. In total, the analyzing of the data was challenging because of the unique characteristics of the interviews. During the carry out of the grounded theory, the analysis can seem to be an endless process, because new findings arise more questions and this happens continuously. One of the challenges for this research was to know when to stop the analyzing. The idea that the interviews could be endlessly coded, every time a bit more carefully, had to be buried or the thesis would have never been ready.

## 4. THE RESULTS

This chapter will present the empirical findings of the interviews that were gathered by following the structure of grounded theory –method. It is characteristic to grounded theory –method that the data collection and the analyzing are done without leaning to previous studies. The attempt trying to combine the main results with the existing literature into a common framework, will be done after the analysis in chapter five.

Each interview was unique and consisted of multiple elements containing a great amount of information about matters that affect person's emotions and mood at the working place, more specifically in the working group. What had an influence and to which extend was rather personal, but in the end several prevailing systems came up answering the main research questions. What affected the majority's mood and emotions in the exclusive surroundings of work and how did it show? In the following sub-chapters the different factors will be discussed more carefully.

Firstly, the main six themes will be presented. After discovering the most common areas, it came apparent that the themes could be divided into three different areas: intrapersonal, interpersonal and organizational. Each arena will be taken into a closer examination. The ways how each one of the respondents reacted to the different occurrences, will be presented afterwards. In the end of the chapter, a comparison between the Foreign Group and the Domestic Group is made and quotations from the research's own research diary will be uncovered.

Already at this point it should be notified how important it is to understand the dissimilarity of people. Each individual has different emotions and way of seeing the world. What made the research challenging was the diversity of people's characters and therefore the diversity of their answers. What seemed to be significant to somebody could be worthless to someone else. This was acknowledged several times during the interviews when a number of respondents didn't understand the suggested discussion theme at first because she might have never thought about the matter before. To some, the same topic could be very significant and they could go on talking about it for more than a few minutes. In the same way, some of them might have strong opinions on certain matters, whereas others might have a neutral opinion to the matter or even no judgment at all. That is why it should be remembered not to make

any generalizations about the individuals based on these results, and limit generalizations to the working groups.

## **4.1 The Themes**

In the final version of coding with the NVivo software there were 20 different sub-nodes under the three main nodes. To make the presentation of main results clearer, the 20 sub-nodes were merged into five common themes: *emotions and mood, the group, social affect, the work, conflicts, superiors and feedback*. Each one of them is now demonstrated separately.

### **4.1.1 Emotions and mood**

A common opinion was that emotions and mood have a huge effect on daily bases. Group members spent at least 7, 5 hours a day at work, and often extra hours with each other. When the time spent in the office was so great it was seen to be almost impossible that emotions would not matter also there. What happens at home follows the person to work even if there was an attempt to hide those feelings. Reasons, which caused the discrete emotions and varieties in moods and how they showed, differed a lot among individuals. Some people responded to impulses stronger than others. For some it was easier to express their sentiments, while others wanted to hide them, especially those with a negative tone.

Each interview began so that interviewee was given the possibility to talk freely about the subject, emotions and mood at work. People focused in matters that affected them the most at that precise moment, talking openly about their emotions and mood and themselves as a person. The way people usually discussed the subject was indirect or the 'true' meanings of what they said could be noticed between the lines: "It feels good when...", "it makes me feel bad when..." or " I was happy/sad when...". The interviewees explained how they try as a person to analyze why different elements affect them in the way they do. People revealed their wishes and hopes speaking about the happy events and or on the contrary about the sad ones. In the end there was a touching collection of life in the office.

*I have noticed that it makes me happy when I can help others and the intercourse with them is going well.*

Female

*It makes me happy when I can laugh. Good joking is fun.*

Female

The discussions dealt with many distinct emotions, such as joy, sadness and fear. Interviewees shared their hopes; what they wanted to accomplish in life, what made them angry and what gave them happiness. There were signs of disappointments but also sentiments of success. The elements from where these feelings originated varied a lot. For example, people who had a permanent working contract did not have the same insecurity than those who had a temporary contract. But even those who had the permanent working contract felt insecure on the behalf of their colleagues who were not sure if their working agreement was renewed.

*Of course it always affects extremely much, like now, when there is some uncertainty of colleague's future employment. It influences the mood I have been in during the past few days.*

Female

When discussing about moods and emotions it ended up to be surprisingly complicated to separate the two main concepts. They were often seen as each other's synonyms and therefore, it was not even easy, even for the researcher herself, to make a clear difference between the two notions, while analyzing the interviews. In case of discussing the meaning of them, emotions were seen more stable and stronger than moods. Mood could be described as a derivative of emotions which showed outside and could change several times even during one day. Emotions were considered stronger and more personal, even hidden from others. They were thought to have different levels of intensity and the way they affected, appeared to others as moods.

*"Lately I have been happy and relaxed. I smile, I'm ok and I talk to people. But there has been a time when I was upset already in the morning. I woke up thinking why do I have to do this? It was horrible."*

Male

What caused the mood or had an effect on emotions, arose from the essentials that were important to the person herself. The most significant matters happened mainly outside the office, in the personal sphere. The interviewees suggested that their moods were usually good when coming to work but if something negative or on the contrary



something extremely positive influenced their personal life, it had a straight impact on their moods at work.

A common and highly acceptable opinion was that everyone sometimes has a so called bad day, which can be a result from very assorted reasons. If a person came to work in a negative mood, it was claimed to have a huge effect on the whole day, although it was possible that the mood changed during the day. Despite of possible personal problems, people didn't want to bring their problems and bad mood to work. Workers tried to hide the negative feelings because they knew that a bad mood could have an unfavorable effect on colleagues and on the whole team.

*“I have a mentality that even if I am sometimes sad, I should fight against it. So, I come to work with a nice face because other people will see it. If my face looks like you just walked over it with your shoes on, it's not so nice to see and it can also affect other people. And believe me, especially lately, I have cried every damn morning when I have woken up and seen the weather: it's like night.”*

Female

Many of the interviewees proposed that personal life did not belong to the office. The problem related to this matter, was that people have very dissimilar requests. Some interviewees didn't want to share anything from their personal lives in the office when others shared their private lives quite openly. For more open people it was hard to understand why some others didn't want to share something from their lives and they wished to know more about their colleagues.

### **Difficulties**

Talking about personal emotions and mood was difficult for many reasons. People were introduced with the interview topic beforehand but despite of the possibility to think about the subject beforehand at home, it was not easy to talk about these issues. Emotions and mood are very personal issues and some interviewees were afraid that the discussion would go to the ears of their superiors, whereas others simply didn't like to talk about their emotions to a stranger, even if the interviewer was working in the same department. The subject was also seen to be so wide that it was hard to start talking about it.

For many, the answering was problematic because the subject was free and no precise questions were made. People were concerned whether they were answering the

questions in a right way; the way they were expected to. This was even when the respondent was told that no expectations were made in advance. Some interviewees simply didn't like the situation and they said to feel as they were in a job interview or analyzed by a psychologist.

Another explanation why talking about emotions and mood was seen difficult, was the fact that they actually change, even quite rapidly. Many claimed that their moods could change many times during one day and the colleagues, with whom one interacts the most with, had the biggest influence in which direction the mood turned. How the mood changed during one week could be seen from the diaries, where some interviewees wrote about their working days of one specific week.

*“What I feel changes rapidly. Sometimes I feel really good and sometimes really bad. Sometimes I would just want quit everything and disappear. Sometimes I hate somebody and sometimes I think he is a great person. It changes constantly.”*

*“It's difficult to write about this topic, as I already said during the interview, mainly because my feelings and mood are changing continuously, even during the same day. “*

Quote from a diary -- Male

On the contrary, some started to talk with a great excitement and went on several minutes without interruptions. Even with some possible difficulties in the beginning, after a while, the interviewees didn't want to stop talking and in the end they felt they might have forgotten to say something. The fact that the respondents were given the opportunity to write a diary after the interviews, seemed to help some people to open up. This also proved that it is favorable that people are given various options how to express themselves because everybody is different and therefore has different ways to express their thoughts.

### **Concentration**

It was easy to see how the discussions concentrated on highly topical issues, matters which were happening at that precise moment. The level of their influence could be seen in some of the interviews, when the person realized after 20 minutes that she had been talking only about topics that had occupied her thoughts at that moment, ignoring all other areas. More or less, it can be assumed that current issues change with time.

That's why it would have been interesting to do a second interview round after some time, to see whether the content of interviews changes.

*"At this moment I don't have anything else in my mind because yesterday we had this discussion with my colleagues and I don't know what they think because we haven't talked about it. So, I just think about that."*

Male

The way people saw themselves was another popular subject. When they were given a possibility to open up, a natural tendency for people was to talk about themselves. Many sentences started with: *"I am... I am not so... I would like to be... I wish I was... When I'm sad / happy I... Usually I am... I try to... Lately I have been... My problem is..."* How the sentences continued varied greatly, having both positive and negative contents. Which aspects had negative or positive tone will be discussed more carefully in the upcoming sub-chapters.

In the very end, the interviewees were happy that they had opened up and even talked about difficult things. They were glad somebody had listened to them and that the subject had made them think about the different areas at work and their own role in the combination.

*"It felt incredibly good to talk about everything and get a chance to open up."*

Quote from a diary -Female

#### 4.1.2 Social effect

*"Emotions change and vary a lot with different colleagues"*

Female

Social effect could be divided into intercourse with the group and intercourse with the other workers in the department. While working in groups, the members spent most of the time sitting close to each other, sharing ideas, successes and, of course, problems and complains. Therefore it was natural that the most popular interview theme was the group concept and the individuals working in it. Sentiments towards the closest colleagues varied and they formed a popular area of conversation.

The relationships individuals created at work were seen vital. The important connections, in this case, were provided by the formal team, friendships with another person in the team or outside the team or a group of people that had something in common, such as the language. To some, the affairs created at work could be the biggest reason to enjoy working.

*“I really like our team a lot. I guess that is the biggest reason why it is so nice to come to work.”*

Female

What affected mainly in both groups, was the way the employees influenced each others with their behavior and attitudes. Another thing that had an effect was the work contribution that the group members gave to the team. Mainly the group was seen as a comforting “safety net”, where one could trust to receive help in work related issues. Interviewees felt that they could also share their personal problems with certain colleagues. However, this last issue will not be contemplated here.

From time to time the job was regarded as stressful, whereas group’s common meetings, lunches and coffee breaks were seen to give extra power. When the work related distress could be discharged to other group members, it was seen as a source of strength to move on.

*“There are days when you are about to burst out and cry when nothing seems to work. [...] It helps to know that we have that kind of a team where you can complain about the things bothering you. You don’t have to think about them only inside your head when you can say it out loud.”*

Female

It was characteristic to the working society that there seemed to be a silent acceptance of norms how one was expected to behave. It was widely understood that one could not behave as she would have liked. Instead, employees tried to hide their sentiments, especially the negative ones. On the other hand, hiding negative emotions was not unambiguous. The feelings often showed to others, despite of the fact that people tried to keep them aside. Workers’ moods had a significant affect also to the humour of others and when it came to the negative ones, it was acknowledged to have a real effect on the surroundings.

*“You have to behave in a certain way and you can’t show everything you want. You just have to manage the situation thinking that this is not fun but let’s just try to act normal in this situation.*

Male

*“You know yourself, how bad day you have, but how does it show to others? Are you able to hide it when sometimes you feel that it shows 100 km away?”*

Female

Hiding true feelings could lead to a situation where everything seemed to be alright when looking from the outside but the truth could be something else. People are easily pretending to be happy and content even if they might not be. This matter will be examined closed in subchapter 4.1.4 Conflicts.

### **Mood’s contagiousness**

How the group functioned depended on the relationships inside the team, but also on a factor that can be called as “group mood”. As already mentioned above, when people work close to each other, their behaviour and mood seemed to have a big influence on each other’s humour.

It was seen as a matter of fact indeed, that working together as a team and moreover, the behaviour of each member, how everyone acts and what it said, had a great influence not only on the personal relationship, but on the work itself. In fact, for some of them it was easy to name which member of the team had a positive effect on them and again whose behaviour affected the opposite way.

*“Of course emotions and mood affect a lot in the balance of the team. If there is even one person, who is in a bad mood all the time it reflects to the others. I think that emotions affect in everything at work. It is comprehensive how it affects. “*

Female

Mood had a big influence to the whole group, especially the mood of the people sitting the closest. An interesting matter was that although some said they didn’t want to bring their negative mood and feelings to work, the feelings automatically showed outside. For many, sentiments and moods were significant impulses, while, few also stated that their mood hardly changed from the one they woke up with in the morning.

People claimed to sense well if someone in the group was sad or had a bad day. Anyhow, at working place one's privacy was being highly respected and for this reason the person having a so called bad day was usually left alone with her thoughts. Even avoidance was one of the ways, how the people responded to a colleague's bad mood.

*"You come to work with a specific mood and already the first people you meet can change the mood into a better or worse one."*

Female

How intensively the negative mood affected others, varied according to how well the team members knew each other. A common opinion was that relationships would be easier if the employees would know more about their colleagues. In those rare cases when the reason behind negative mood was known, it could be understood through certain non-conventional behaviours. Interviewees said to acknowledge that everybody sometimes has bad days. However, many got still distracted from others' negativity.

*"You can never know what affects the person in the background. We don't know each other so well that we could ask something like, "hey what is wrong". At least I don't and nobody has asked me either."*

Male

*"When people are mean to each other or in a bad mood it affects. If it's someone far away of course it doesn't matter but if you ask someone something and they have a bad attitude already in the beginning, then I just don't talk to them."*

Female

So, people understood that they should hide the negative feelings when they have a bad day or they are in a bad mood for some reason. The interviewees were aware that those sentiments might affect negatively also other members in their group. Nevertheless, an aspect which was not considered was the other kind of emotions and behavior they brought with them to the team, which might also have a negative tone. It seemed that individuals caused undesired effect in the team without knowing it. It was easy for people pin point how other members affected them and the group. On the other hand, it was impossible to see how *they* affected on others. Either they had never thought about it before or their ideas had been contradictory with the ones of the others.

*“I’m good in seeing if somebody is in bad mood. What I don’t see is, whether I have done something to cause it.”*

Male

Someone could see herself as a positive person but the opinion of others could be the opposite. If a negative mood had a negative effect on the moods of the others, the positive attitude naturally had a delightful effect on others. But even this type of effect could not be seen by the person herself. One person thought she didn’t have any kind of influence on the other team members, whereas the group would see her as a very positive person.

*“In the mornings, Sara (name changed) comes always with a big smile on her face.. It affects and makes you happier. She’s great. She is always in a great mood.”*

Female

*“I don’t think it needs sacrifices if you sometimes take your colleagues under a better consideration. Few words are enough, “hi, how are you?” At least it makes me happy.”*

Female

There were only few who said at once that they know how to sway the group. While it was considered difficult or even impossible to see how one affected their colleagues, people admitted to be interested to know how they themselves influenced others because they could not see it.

*“Somehow I would like to know if something in me is bothering someone else, but then again, if someone tells you that, it hurts. But I guess it hurts more if people talk behind your back.”*

Female

### **The different people**

The employees working in the team were very different. Some of them agreed that differences between personality, age, culture and gender built a good team, but that they also caused problems. Clearly this could also be seen in the way the interviewees responded in various themes. Answers related to even the most basic elements at work, such as team and superiors, differed greatly.

Considering that everyone is so different, they also acknowledged how important it was to be careful what they said: there was always a risk to hurt the other person. The

opinion was again that you don't know what the person has on the background until you *know* her. Interesting male-opinion was that sometimes men have to be careful with women because the rougher "male-sense of humour" can upset the opposite sex unconsciously.

**Table 4.** The Various Answers

<b>THEME</b>	<b>POSITIVE</b>	<b>NEGATIVE</b>
<b>Superiors</b>	<p>"Our bosses are great"</p> <p>"You can always go to them when you have problems."</p>	<p>"I don't feel them"</p> <p>"There is no authority"</p>
<b>The Team</b>	<p>"We have the best team"</p> <p>"I think we are doing good"</p>	<p>"There is no team"</p> <p>"People don't get along"</p>

Table 4 is only an example, but it shows perfectly the great variety there was between people's answers. When someone saw the team as a reason to come to work, another stated that the whole team concept was pushed too far. All the reactions varied so significantly among the persons that it gave an extra challenge to find generalizations from the research; what is common for the whole group and not just for one individual.

How individuals replied to different matters was also due to culture. In the Foreign group, where members came from four different countries, culture comparisons were made. People thought that it was easier for Mediterranean's to open up and say if something bothered their mind. In Finland, dealing with negative emotions was considered different. People from different cultures have different languages, different sense of humour and even different ways of working. Therefore they can also feel bigger connection to each other. Interviewees agreed that cultural clashes and conflicts did happen but with time, members understood better each other and the situations got easier.



*“We are from many cultures and we speak several different languages. We have had very serious communication problems. Somebody says something and the other gets greatly offended, when she doesn’t understand what the other person means. It is obvious. But now we already know each other so well that it is no longer a problem.”*

Female

Ultimately the meaning of culture was not a crucial reason when it came to differences. Often people make presumptions by talking about the Italians or about foreigners but it is important to remember that not even all of them think the same. For example, some foreigners did miss different elements from the organizations in their home countries, whereas some others stated that in Finland the way of leading was much better than in their home country. In this research the culture did not play a significant role, only the differences with personality mattered.

### **Inside the team**

The company urged the teams to spend time together in shared lunches and team meetings. Spending time together with the group was seen as a positive change in working days but as usual, the comments had also a negative tone. First it was criticized that the team was not a natural concept. Those, who thought that private life and working life did not belong together, felt also uneasy about the idea of spending time with the group outside the office. People didn’t like to feel pushed to do something they didn’t feel comfortable to do and the feeling of been pushed to do something caused resistance.

*“I guess the idea of team lunches is good but I feel that those situations are unreal. You go to lunches because you are supposed to.”*

Female

It was obvious that any kind of change caused negative feelings in both groups. A case, which obviously caused negativity inside the group, was the mobility of the members inside the department. It caused a feeling of instability. Especially the Domestic team had faced big changes in group elements. It was troublesome for example, when the team first organized birthdays together, a member switched to another team and therefore was not anymore welcomed to group gatherings and people were not even sure if the person should be invited or not. That states that group members create an emotional bonds with each others and changing a group can break the showing bond but not necessarily the emotional one.

*“Somehow we knew that they were leaving, but then they just left. And all of a sudden you didn’t know if you should invite them or not [to team meetings and lunches]. Then we had team lunches and one came to ask “why didn’t you invite me”? He was kidding but I’m sure he was also half serious.”*

Female

It was seen important to ask the ex-group members how they felt about changing the team. It actually caused an emotional dilemma when the old social structure stopped existing. They said it was weird to get to know new and different colleagues. The former group member of the Foreign team changed teams but remained at her old work station and was therefore still attached to the old team. What comes to the person’s own goals and wishes to succeed, changing a team was seen to as a positive thing.

*“First of all I can say changing a team has opened a new opportunity for me. [...] I don’t deny the fact that leaving the people, with whom I had developed a good relationship with, behind, as well as the old work I did, have caused some emotional dilemma.”*

Ex-member of a group, Male

### **Challenges in the department**

Interviewees in the target company worked sitting close to each other in an open space office. Consequently, it is inevitable that everyone takes part in the lives of the colleagues around them. There were discussions about the lack of privacy or the level of noise but also about the richness of context that the people, of the many different cultures and backgrounds, bring into the organization. On the other hand, differences were also seen to form groups and set language barriers which were seen difficult to pass. Some felt that the working environment was too noisy due to many people and that caused negativity.

*“Silence...the harmonic atmosphere in which you can concentrate and do your job as you are supposed to do: right and calmly! Unfortunately, in my working place we miss this TREASURE!”*

Female

For the majority, the noise or the environment itself was not a problem because people said to be accustomed to the working place and to the challenges it brought. Also the knowledge, about the coming working place related changes in the future, helped

employees to satisfy to the present situation. The noise had been discussed in the common meetings also before this study, one suggestion has been for instance that mobile phones should be kept silent during working hours, but interviewees stated it had not altered the situation.

Working in an open space office was seen to be a bothering element because workers got involved in other people's lives even if they did not want to and it was also seen to affect the concentration.

*“When you are booking invoices or solving problems you sometimes, at the same time, have to at the listen to somebody's personal discussion about their personal lives. Why do I have to listen and participate in these discussions? Not directly but why do I have to listen when I'm not interested. At the moment I'm working. I have to concentrate and be careful when processing the invoices.”*

Male

### **Friendship**

Some had friends at work and they considered it to be important to have somebody, who they could talk to and trust their personal matters. On the other hand, there were many who didn't have friends in the office and they were strictly in an opinion that relationships belong outside it. Still everybody liked to have some contact and a talk with the colleague was considered to make the working day nicer.

Interviewees found it revealing that there were colleagues from whom they got support if there happened to be problems or negative issues. Still these individuals were not seen as friends. The level, how one normally knew her colleagues, was rather superficial and could be described as knowing only “*what was needed*”, such as where they came from and who belonged to their families. Some people liked coming to work because of the work itself. Some other cared more about the social relationships that came with the work. For many of the interviewees, it was enough to know just a little about the person working with you and others would like to know a lot more.

Even if there was no friendship, interviewees emphasized that it is really important for colleagues to help and to respect one another. One of them formed a new term of friendship at the office that was called “a work friend”. A Work friend is a person who knows a lot about you, but you don't spend time with her outside the working life.

*“We are here to work, not to make friends. They are not people who I would hang around in my free time, I am with them only because of work. So they are not my friends. They are my colleagues.”*

*Female*

#### 4.1.3 Conflicts

As already hinted, both teams consisted of a great variety of people and that, according to the interviewees, can be seen as a rich element but it also causes difficulties. When there is a group of colleagues who spend a lot of time together, it is almost inevitable to fall into conflicts. Naturally conflicts have a negative influence on peoples' mood, although someone claimed that conflicts are needed and they make the relationships stronger. In the interviewed teams, it could be noticed that there existed two different kinds of conflicts: the one between the members and the one related to the working as a team.

It was also mentioned earlier that each working group had norms of their own, as well as a way to act and behave. In this study the “forbidden emotions” were the directly expressed negative feelings towards other people. Negative feelings against work or the current situation could be expressed even roughly, but negativity against others was expressed only indirectly.

During the time the interviews of the Foreign group, a conflict could be noticed and it could be seen to affect everybody's answers. As every current situation, also conflicts seem to have variable characteristics. Around the last interviews, the conflict started fade and people did not talk about it anymore. In the Domestic group the conflict was still on the way and the events and effects of it, could be read from the diaries.

It would have been interesting to do another interview round a half a year later and see how the context changes. In both cases, it appeared that conflicts are a very delicate area. When the topic was brought forward in the group discussions, nobody was willing to talk about it, even when the group discussions were held several months after the first interviews, and obviously the conflict was forgotten by that time.

In the fact, there had been a big conflict in the Foreign team that obviously had affected everybody. The fascinating part was that everybody had a different opinion on what the situation was at the moment of the interviews. Some members thought the

conflict was forgotten and some agreed the situation now being better, but they could not be sure of their answers. The reason for this seemed to be that there was never an open communication about the conflict. At work, the same kind of “rules” affects in conflicts as in personal matters. People try to hide their true feelings and to keep up the good atmosphere in the working place. Still everybody knows they exist.

*“Of course I can not think that everything is ok in my team. But there is an exceptional thing that happens in this company or with those people in our team. Even if everything is messed up and people are fighting, there is still such a good veil among us...I don’t want to use the word faking but there is a veil that hides a bit.”*

Female

A person started to talk about a so called “veil of goodness” that hides the real “negative”. When the topic was presented in the later interviews, people agreed that it was necessary to have a kind of veil of goodness because you have to get along with your colleagues at work. The situation was usually so that the conflict was not discussed openly; it got solved through forgetting. As it was seen in the Foreign group, when there is a lack of communication, people have different opinions about the state of the conflict.

As said, apart from individual problems, there are also group problems, which involve all the members of the team. A work related conflict could be a consequence of workload. People were complaining that there were not enough personnel resources and on the other hand, some other teams didn’t have as much work to do. The interviewed teams were the most employed in the department and the members considered it unfair that some people got the same salary by working less. Salary issue was not discussed in any other context than this.

What seemed to happen, was that when there were two or three people working together, the cooperation went well. When there were more people doing the same job, the differences started to show. People felt that not everybody gave their full effort and that caused negative feelings towards other members.

*”Some people don’t want to take responsibility and they are happy to do as little as possible. This again means that the people who are more active have to take more responsibility than they should bear. I would say that is the negative aspect of teamwork; the work is not split equally.”*

Female

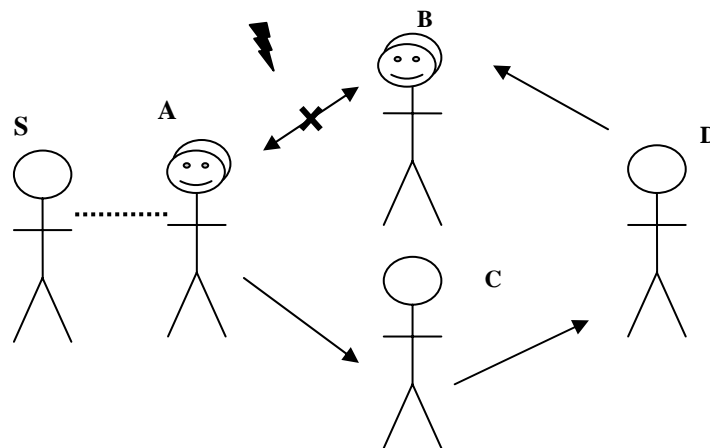
Despite of the conflicts, a common opinion was that you should be able to take care of your job in every case, despite of divergences. Still, it was stated that the mood has significance at work.

### Communication in a conflict

*“People fake to be happy and satisfied, but when you talk alone with them you get a different opinion and you find out what they really think.”*

Female

The lack of direct communication causes most of the negativity. In the cases of conflicts or problems, people would not face the counterpart of the problem but would rather keep the negative emotions inside or talk about it behind the person’s back. This happened, for example, in the situations where some group members thought that not everybody was giving their full effort. Instead of fronting the person about the issue, people talked to the team leader or other colleagues about it. The person, the negative thoughts were focused to, would sense that something is wrong and that she is not liked but could not tell why. The interesting phenomenon in a woman dominated organization is that through one way or another, the counter part would hear what a person thinks about her but with somebody else’s words.



**Figure 2.** The Communication in Conflicts (Situation 1).

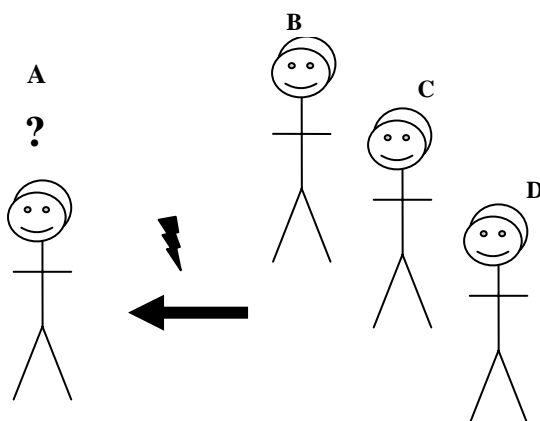
This example could be from both of the studied groups. There is a conflict or negative feelings between counterparts **A** and **B**. **A** will not encounter **B** personally. In fact, she will rather keep the negative feelings inside or confide in **C**, who is another colleague or in **S**, who is the supervisor. Depending on the **C**'s character, **C** will keep the information to herself or confide in **D**. **D** can be the key player who eventually tells **B** how **A** feels about her. If **C** will not go forward with the information, it can be possible that **B** will never know what **A** has against her.

This pattern affects negativity within the whole group. The real counterparts do not meet. Suggestions why the pattern forms comes out to be like this is difficult to make, but one aspect can be proposed, which is the earlier presented veil of goodness. The counterparts wear “masks” to prevent the revealing of their true feelings.

*“I think that others’ moods affect your work even if they have nothing against you. Every time when I hear them talk I’m like damn...what’s going on now. Are they fighting or gossiping about others?”*

Male

In this process, both counterparts **A** and **B** try to hide their negative feelings but the situation is noticed in both teams. Everybody knows the conflict is present and each member had a different idea about the current situation. Even **A** and **B** have different ideas what the situation is. The conflict will fade away with time without discussing.



**Figure 3.** The Communication in Conflicts (Situation 2)

*“I don’t understand the situation. I feel that I’m doing something wrong...What do I do wrong?”*

*- Member A*

In another situation (Figure 3) the groups’ negative feelings are directed to a single person **A**, but the member in question does not understand what is going on or why the situation is like this. Despite of the negative feelings, all try to keep the positive mask on, even the person, who is the target of the negative sentiments. When the circumstances were not discussed together with a group, it bothered everybody’s mind and members said that the intense situation had also lead to a fight during a working day.

#### 4.1.4 The Work

*“When the whole team has a right attitude towards working, it gives an extra kick to do more”*

Male

It was obvious that the work itself had a huge impact on interviewees. As a matter of fact, it was considered essential that people liked what they did. It was seen to be more important than the relationships that people had in the team. As so many interviewees stated, *“we are here to do our work good. That is what we are paid for”*. In the end, the connections that the team gave were seen to be a helping source in doing the work better and more effectively.

*“I have pretty positive feelings towards this work because I could not do this otherwise...Maybe it is so because of my personality, because I am precise and I want to do things well, with a certain pattern.”*

Female

The job in the company is processing invoices for the different units in the company. The work has a special characteristic because there is nor a start or an end. This was seen to cause a challenge with motivation and managing the work.

*”Somehow this workload is frustrating when you don’t see the end. This job is endless. You don’t have to see the end, but you should see at least some kind of results after a hard month.”*

Male



Despite of the job's intricate nature, people seemed to pour the energy from different sources and everybody said to like their job very much. The opinions about the work were rather contradictory. Although some were complaining that the work is at times monotonous and every day was the same, everybody expressed the happiness to come to the office in the mornings. Many emphasized the importance of doing well the job they were given and the succeeding in it gave joy and was a source of motivation. Interviewees listed several other reasons why the specific job was suitable for them.

*“When I wake up in the morning I’m happy to go to work because I really like it.”*

Female

*“Sometimes I’m annoyed at work when I feel that I’m not so motivated. I get the feeling that, isn’t there anything else that I could do?[...]But it is only temporary and the power to do the job is found again somewhere.”*

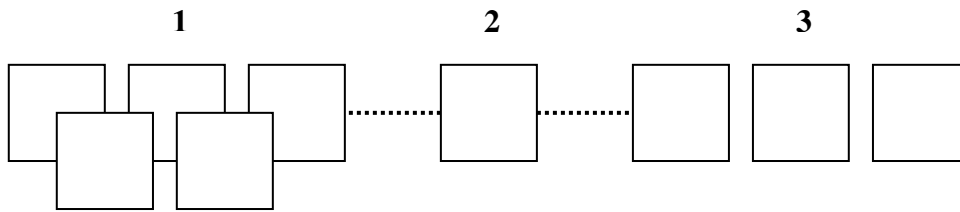
Female

When people work together as a group it brings an extra element to the surroundings. Earlier it was stated clearly that colleagues affect each others with their moods and through their behavior. Every time the work is done as a team, the way people perform and with which attitude they approach working, has a great influence to every member. As it was presented in Figure 3, negative feelings arose easily when someone was not seen to do his or her job as well as expected.

*“If we are supposed to be a team, everybody should work. Some people are just free riders. They are here because they have nothing else to do. It influences my mood in a negative way. When people don’t want to work, it makes me most angry.”*

Female

Both teams were the most employed groups in the department. In both teams the work had been divided into three categories, which seemed to cause a challenge. Figure 4 shows how the group was internally divided into a three smaller groups. The whole group did services for the same customer company but in different ways. The tasks of the smaller groups could vary a lot from the others. The most problematic situation was for the person in the middle, who felt that she was alone between the two bigger groups. The amount of invoices for these persons smaller but they took longer time to process than the invoices of the other teams.



**Figure 4.** The work division of the group

It could be noticed in both groups that when the amount of persons doing the task was two to three, there seemed to be no problem. When the amount of participants of the assignment arose, some of them felt that not everyone did the same amount of work. Neither of the group had had any specific meetings or talked about the matter and the lack of open communication affected the personal relationships of the different group members.

It came out with strong opinions that emotions towards the work have a huge impact on how the people approach the whole working life. Everybody agreed that also the mood affected working. It did not mean that when a person was in a bad mood she worked worse than usual. As a matter of fact, for some employees the bad mood gave an extra push to put their anger on working. On the contrary, a very good mood could take the mind away from working issues, following the reasons why the mood was so excellent. The way mood influenced working, was very personal but the clear opinion was that the work needed to be done anyway, despite of the negative feelings or happenings.

#### 4.1.5 Authority and feedback

*“I believe that emotions and mood at work can be largely controlled by the superiors.”*

Female

In the organization in question, the superiors sat among the workers and that was seen as a positive statement, because the managers were able to be more present and available in case of necessity. They were also very looked upon and most of the interviewees felt that they could easily go and talk to them if they have something on

their mind. Although the superiors were seen in a “humane light”, their authority was appreciated and even expected. Although some of the employees could spent time outside the office with their managers, it was said not have any affect in the superior-subordinate relationships at work.

*“Although we have been out with our bosses it does not affect the relationships at work. I would do what she asks even if we have partied together. It is like an in-built quality that they are anyway our superiors. In Finland you even go to sauna together with your superiors.”*

Female

Workers liked to talk about their leaders. Their actions were supported, but also criticized. People admitted that they needed authority. Workers agreed that without authority everybody would talk more and basically do what they wanted, and that would surely not be their job. It was surprising that employees missed and even demanded a stronger control from the superiors. Although it could be understood that the managers are busy, the demand to have more caring was obvious, as was thought that a job can not be done effectively without control.

When it came to superiors, the cultural differences came clear. If there was a lack of control, foreign workers felt it more than the Finnish ones, essentially because they were used to stricter control and sense of power from their leaders. For some of them it was difficult to adjust to the Finnish way of management, but all the foreigners also agreed to prefer the more human way of leading.

*“We (Mediterranean people) need to feel that our superiors are more present. [...] Sometimes I feel that they are not here. Even if we are there, they are not present.”*

Female

*“I like this system a lot. It is very different from what I have in my home country. In Italy superiors are like gods and you can not say anything against the god [...] when the boss came to visit sometimes, everybody feared him.”*

Male

Typical quality of a working society is that people talk about their superiors and speculate about their actions. It was seen that the way the managers acted, had a big effect on the mood of the personnel. If workers saw their superior stressed, it could make also the employees nervous and insecure. However, mostly the leaders caused positive feelings in the interviewees.

If workers felt that some employee had been treated unfairly by the superior, the rumours about it spread and remained in the organization even after a long period of time and surely longer than a normal colleague-to-colleague rumour. Speculations seemed to be strongest when someone got fired. How true the beliefs are should be checked in further studies.

## Feedback

*I need to know that what I do is being looked after by someone. If I feel that no one cares, what makes the difference if I work properly or not?*

Male

The effect the superiors have can be negative, because of the non-positive feedback or the totally lack of it. Employees wished to get more criticisms, advices and attention from their leaders. The arising dilemma was the question: whose job it is to give feedback? The superiors', the team's or the leaders'? If the answer is the last possibility, the problem remains unsolved, because the team leaders need as much support and consideration as does any other employee. On the other hand, workers understood that their superiors were busy and therefore unable to give the needed feedback. Still, there was a demand for it. The importance of feedback was for some even greater than the salary.

*“For me it's very important that I know that I'm doing a good job that I get feedback, because I live from feedback. It is my fuel to work, otherwise I can stay home [...] I don't work because of the salary, but because of the feedback. “*

Female

The topic “feedback” arose as one of the biggest issues in the group discussion of the Foreign group. The opinion was that it would be highly constructive to get both, positive and negative feedback, and learn from it. Interviewees thought that the lack of criticism was due to busy schedules and the fact that there are so many people working in the department. However, receiving feedback shared opinions once more. Some felt that they had received enough feedback, where others stated not having any feedback at all.

One question remained in the interviews: whose job it is to give feedback? When a feedback came from a superior it was remembered for a long time. The affect of positive feedback was great and it gave motivation.

*“Today I got a short email from my foreman saying that I did something well and it felt very good. From that small line I can find the missing motivation and keep on doing the best I can, also in the future.”*

Female

*“When our director came, I was like I know that I am nobody because I know that she is a big boss and I am not and it’s ok. I know I am in the lowest part of the pyramid and she is in the top but still I am in this pyramid. So when she came to talk to me I was not only a number, I was Katharine. “And we are thankful for what you are doing”. Only her... Only SHE told me something.”*

Female

It was also understood that the lack of any type of feedback meant that everything was going well. Some older workers believed that throughout the years they had learned that there just was not so much feedback, and therefore people should not expect it or take it personally if they don’t get it. Still for many, the lack of feedback caused insecurity and feelings of imprecation.

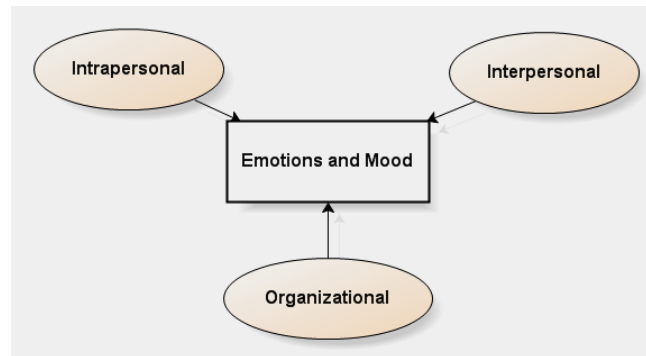
*“Sometimes I get insecure when I feel that that I’m not appreciated. It happens when nobody seems to be interested in what I do. It frustrates me and you don’t put the same kind of effort in what you do than you would usually put, when you don’t get this motivation. Maybe it’s a stupid thing, but in a way, I feel that I need some mental support, like someone saying that “what you do is good”, which makes you feel some kind of respect.”*

Male

## **4.2 The Concept**

After a careful examination of data, it was clear that the interviewees’ answers could be divided into different categories. When asked about moods and emotions at work, the interviews concentrated mainly on an interviewee’s personal life, people in the team or in the office in general. The main topics that had an effect on person’s emotions and mood at work, can therefore be divided into three concepts: *Intrapersonal*, *Interpersonal* and *Organizational*. Despite of the rough categorizing, the different concepts are all linked with each other and affect on person’s emotions

and mood at work in total. Outside the division are the external factors, for example weekdays or the weather.



**Figure 5.** Dividing the answers: Interpersonal, Intrapersonal and Organizational

The concentration of the interviews could be seen from the coding intensity of each context. About 39, 5 % of the answers were related to the intrapersonal concept. Interpersonal matters were the most popular subject with 42 % coding intensity. Organizational matters gathered approximately 18, 5 % of the all the answers. The figures should be taken only as a guideline when the coding was done by one individual only.

#### 4.2.1 The Intrapersonal Concept

The intrapersonal concept is seen as the closest area to the individual, to where the person's attitudes and feelings belong to. Also the personal life and the interviewee herself is part of the concept. Still, it is not possible to make a clear cut between the work and the personal life when they both seem to have an effect on each other. For many, the personal life had the most influence to the mood as it was seen that the most important events happened at home. From the intrapersonal field arise the attitudes with which the person approaches also the working place.

The intrapersonal area is often hidden at work or revealed only to chosen amount of people. Although there was a request that it would be good to know your colleagues well, it can not be done when some people want to protect their privacy. Certainly

everybody agreed that knowing the intrapersonal side would help with the intercourse inside the group.

#### 4.2.2 The Interpersonal Concept

Interpersonal concept is seen to cover the immediate surroundings the person is working in. That is seen to be the closest colleagues or, as in this case, the team the person belongs to. The team was the most common topic in the interviewees. That is easy to understand when it is acknowledged that the person spends so much time together with the other members of the group. Also the idea of the company has seen to create a positive team spirit among the group members and put an effort on developing the relationships inside the teams.

The conversation about the group contained opinions and general talk about the team members and the team. The team concept was a rather young system in the organization and it could be seen that in the beginning, some people were against the change the team work brought along. The interviews were made in the Foreign group in the early phase when choosing the team leader was in motion and it could be noticed from the answers. When an alteration considered the whole group, it was interesting to see how differently people adopted the change. For some of them the modification was needed and for some it was stressing.

It could be noticed that groups have certain norms and if a person acted against them, it could arouse dissatisfaction among others. The interesting point of view was that even if the conflict or dissatisfactions were not discussed out in the open, everybody knew about their existence. The lack of open communication led people to talk about their displeasure behind each others backs without encountering the relevant person. Talking behind people's backs affected the mood negatively.

#### 4.2.3 The Organizational Concept

*"This company is like a big city. If you come from a village and you work there in your store, everybody will come to shop there and therefore you are important for that village. Or at least you have an influence on the village because people come there and they know you and the store. But this is a big city so working here is the same as being anonymous."*

Male

The third aspect that has an influence in workers emotions and mood is the organizational concept. Organizational surroundings consist of the working place itself, the work and the superiors. What had an effect on the employees in the office was most importantly the other people working there.

When talking about life at work, interviewees were also asked to think about their roles in the company. How people saw their contribution for the enterprise was comforting, even when the worker considered herself as anonymous. Although the company was a big international factor, and people admitted that their tasks were small, when considering the whole company, they saw their roles important even if not irreplaceable.

*“If I leave, the business will not fall. I’m not irreplaceable, but I don’t think anybody else is either. At least not her, in our department. We don’t have that kind of work that no one else could take care of.”*

Female

Feedback was also inserted in this dimension when it was stated that it should come from the team leaders but also from the superiors, belonging firstly, to the interpersonal dimension and secondly, to the organizational one.

What affects person’s mood outside the three mentioned concepts, depends entirely on the person herself. As it was said in chapter 2.1, what affects the mood may not always be reality based. Different matters can put your mood down or up despite of its impact on the future. Many agreed that Mondays and a bad weather affect mood negatively whereas Fridays and a sunny weather influenced on the contrary. Several interviewees agreed that everyone tend to have bad days every once in a while and in those days the mood is negative.

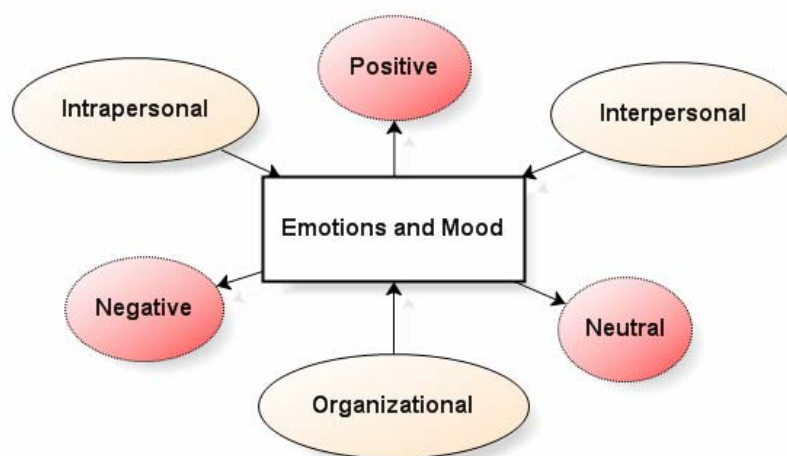
### **4.3 Response attitudes**

When the coding proceeded, it could be noticed that the answers related to intrapersonal, interpersonal and organizational concepts, had all a positive, negative or neutral tone. Certainly there were some areas that could not be determined to belong



to any of the above groups but mainly the division was clear. Later the new nodes, positive and negative, were opened and the elements they consist of were discovered.

This sub-chapter will outline the matters that caused diverse responses. Response attitude is a way or a style how a person reflects on different events. Again it should be remembered that some interviewees talked more openly. Some others did not say anything negative and some did not say almost anything positive. What affects somebody positively or negatively, depends purely on the person herself.



**Figure 6.** Response attitudes

It has already been underlined that the interviewees were all happy to work in the company in question. This is a curious aspect, because based on the results of the NVivo –program, there were generally more negative than positive comments (Table 5). It can not be said why the statements were mainly negative, but it can be assumed that when a person is heard, she will talk about matters that bother her. As soon as the person noticed the possibility to be listened to and was assured of the confidentiality of the conversation, she would tell frankly and honestly whatever was on her mind.

**Table 5.** Response Attitudes

	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>
<b>Intrapersonal</b>	46	33	31
<b>Interpersonal</b>	58	35	21
<b>Organizational</b>	16	14	5

The division on negative, positive and neutral response was made roughly and it should be remembered that also inside the three columns, the intensity of the response attitudes can vary. Moreover, it is relevant to underline that neither did the negative issues always have a bad effect, nor did the positive ones always influence in a good way.

How diverse elements interfered to the working life, seemed to vary according to the power and significance of the incident. It had also an impact on the way a person encountered the happenings and with which intensity she responded to them. The reaction to the different matters in the office (even the very day of the interviews) showed without a doubt the differences between the people. Some interviewees may have been stressed and their conversations with the researcher may have therefore been negative.

It has been also realized that the age has a meaning on how people reflect. The elderly interviewees were calmer than their younger colleagues. On the other hand, the age was not seen as a comparison element. Juvenile workers did not agree on many matters, nor did their older colleagues. Some of them were mainly happy about everything. Some did not have any opinion at all. It was interesting how a member of the same team experienced the happenings differently. In fact, while one thought everything was going well, the next person admitted that there was a crisis inside the team. Why and how this is possible could be a fascinating target for future studies.

#### 4.3.1 Positive response

The matters causing positive emotions or mood will be listed shortly while most of them have already been presented in the previous chapters. Responses that could be

defined as positive came from different varieties of joy, happiness, excitement, feeling of success and contentment. For many interviewees their own attitude was seen in a key role on how they would approach the different areas. If the attitude was positive, the response to different interview topics was also favorable.

The non-reality based factors, like Fridays, a good weather or the upcoming holiday, had importance for attitudes. The majority got positive attitudes from other workers positivism and people considered it to be positive that the colleagues in the department were from several cultures. This was seen to bring positive mood to the working environment.

*“It is really nice sometimes in Fridays when people wish a good weekend and everybody is in a good mood. The good mood remains when you go home.”*

Female

The team was a source of positivism. The common meetings with the group and coffee breaks with the group members or with work friends, would make the days enjoyable. The group was also seen as the source of help and strength in a case of trouble. It affected everybody's mood when each one of the group put their efforts on working and the results would be seen as a rapid decrease of workload. The superiors were liked and their presence created positive attitudes.

The job itself gave positive response when the worker felt success in her task or when she had been able to help the others. The positive feedback, as a result of the good work, affected her in a very positive way. If the job related tasks were seen important, the worker would be happy.

#### 4.3.2 Negative response

What caused negativity in the department was for example the lack of trust that people felt. Some found it also normal that in a woman dominated department one had to be careful in what they say because rumours start to spread very fast. People seemed to have a very rational approach to this matter. Everybody knew it was happening so they chose carefully who they trusted. Some said they have learned who they could confidence with and who they did not tell anything.

What caused a negative response, or as better said, negative emotions and mood, came from the same factors as the matters causing positive responses. If there were personal problems or the person had a so called “bad day”, it had a direct effect on attitudes. However, everybody admitted sometimes having a bad day and understanding that anyone can have them every once in a while. Negative response consisted of feelings like fear, anger, sadness, insecurity and annoyance.

*“If something serious would happen to me in my personal life, let’s say for example, that my dog died yesterday. Then I would be sad the whole day and also be in a bad mood.”*

Male

While the positive response could be due to a non-reality based factor like Fridays or a good weather, the negative one could be an impact of Mondays. People claimed to be more tired on Mondays than in the other days of the week and a clear statement was that when you are tired, everything is more negative than usual. Moreover, other negative factors were the bad weather or a bad time of the year. Some people even claimed to suffer from winter depression.

It could be seen that a person in possession of a permanent employment contract felt safe. However, they worried for their colleagues who had a temporary contract. As a matter of fact, people without the permanent employment contract felt insecurity. In a situation like this, the negative attitudes were directed towards the superiors, who were seen to have the responsibility to take care of continuing the contracts earlier. As noticed, the workers reflected easily to everything coming from their superiors.

For some the job atmosphere gave a negative response. People felt a lack of privacy when working in an open space office. When the workload was high and had to be dealt urgently, it could be understood to affect negatively. What bothered the employees was the unfairness in division of the workload and other people’s negative thoughts towards it. These kinds of situations could easily lead to conflicts which affect the whole group negatively.

In fact other people’s negative behavior was seen to have the biggest effect on the person’s own mood. If differences were seen as a positive factor, they also gave tone of negativity when they made it difficult to understand colleagues. Negativity can be a result of language barriers or cultural conflicts, which can be seen as the results of

lack of understanding. Finally, it was a dilemma for many interviewees to accept that some people didn't want to share information about their personal lives.

#### 4.3.3 Neutral response

Not everything is purely black and white. What is left, after positive and negative responses, is the neutral response. Neutral responses are opinions describing situations or person herself and speculations about the coming.

*"What I feel changes. Sometimes I feel good and sometimes I feel bad".*

Male

Some people are more neutral than others. For them the affects do not influence as strongly as for those who have bigger tendency to experience positive or negative feelings. No differences between the cultures were noticed. How a person reflects to the various impulses depends on a person herself.

#### 4.4 Comparison of the Groups

The two chosen groups, as said, were very different. The Foreign group was more vivacious and they spent time together also outside the working place. The Domestic team was quieter and they were sitting in two different parts of the department. It could be seen that they had not built as a strong bond as the members in the Foreign group. The people in the Foreign group agreed that they had grown closer together because of that. Despite of the differences between the two groups, based on the interviews, they actually had a lot in common. The same factors affected both groups, only with different intensities. The groups lived their own lives and what happened inside, affected everybody working in it.

The members of the Domestic group have always been sitting in two or three separate places and that is seen to affect the group spirit. When interviewing the people of the Domestic group, who sat together on one side of the department, they talked only about those people that were sitting close to them and considered them as their group, forgetting the other members sitting on the other side of the office. This caused

negative feelings, especially when interviewees felt guilty not having enough contact with the other team members.

### **The Group discussions**

When the results were formed, they were presented to both teams and the wish was that members would talk about the matters together. After the event, everyone was once more asked to write some ideas about it. Those ideas gave a nice closure for the whole process.

How people affected the group, became the most important aspect in the discussions of the Foreign group. People would have liked to know how they affect the group because they could not see it. Then again, everybody agreed that negative feedback towards oneself could hurt, and nobody really wanted to hear it. It was decided then not to proceed with the idea of being completely honest with one another.

Although the presentation of results was the same in both groups, the reactions on them were quite opposite. The Foreign group started to talk about the results and how they could make a change for better. The Domestic group was unwilling to talk about the matters together. They gave an opinion that the results were interesting but the conversation did not go any further. Why the two teams, who both talked actively in the interviews, performed so differently in the group discussions?

When people working in the same team have relevantly different characters, it often means clashes, despite of the culture. This surprisingly formed to be another important aspect. In the Foreign team people felt that not everybody got heard and it lead to situations in the meetings, where some of them always got the opportunity to say something, while others sat still. Several people had noticed the problem but they didn't know what should be done. The more social people did not really see this as a problem, but for the quieter ones it was essential. The extroverted people were actually surprised when the matter came out during the group discussions. Later will be shown how the situation started to change after the issue was brought under a discussion.

*“I have noticed many times that sometimes in the team meetings somebody starts to say something and then the others start to talk over that person.”*

Female

Conflicts had a huge influence on workers. If there were conflicts, people were not happy to come to the office, when they usually approached the working place positively. In the group discussions nobody was willing to talk about the conflict matters. This proves that conflicts are a very delicate issue.

#### 4.6 The Research Diary

*“It’s not easy to be an interviewer and keep your own emotions away from the interview and especially from the interviewee.” (15.1.2007)*

Because of the unique characteristics of the research, it is seen essential to describe the different phases of the study. I kept a journal about the interviews and different steps during the research. I believe that even if the researcher’s intention is to have an analytic approach to the phenomenon, emotions and moods affect her because also she is a human being. Through the research diary, I could see my own attitudes and personal growing.

In the beginning no assumptions about the findings were made. The idea was simply to face the phenomenon and find what could be found. Even if I worked with the interviewees, I knew them only as colleagues. I state that it’s only human, even for a researcher, not to see the interviewees as objects but as individuals from whom you can also learn something. If the interviewee was negative and critical, my way of thinking started soon to resemble it. That approach again changed with the next interviewee, who gave another view to the same matter. When the interviewee had a positive attitude, it compensated my critical way of thinking and arouse positive thoughts/reactions

*“Now I understand also her better like everybody else in this team. Maybe everybody should have this kind of one to one discussion. If you understand better the others, you understand their reasons to act in a specific way.” (23.1.2007)*

The answers people gave made me also think about them on my behalf. How do I affect the team with my behavior? If most of the people could not see how they affect the group, I can not be different in that matter. People are all very different from one another and what they show outside can be very different from the feelings they keep

inside. Their negative mood can be a result of something that I have nothing to do with.

The noticeable matter is that also the researcher can have a bad day and it affects the attitude towards the interviewee.

*“I just finished transcribing Matti’s interview. I noticed that I must have had a bad day doing that interview because back there I thought that the interview remained a bit empty and somehow poor. However, now that I was transcribing it, I noticed that the interview was really colourful and contained a lot of new information.” (14.1.2007)*

It is also possible that the values the researcher has can guide her despite the attempt to be open-minded. With some themes it took me a longer time to notice the importance of them, because they actually had no relevant significance to me. Therefore I could suggest that the emotions also affect the interviewer.

It could be noticed that peoples’ attitudes towards the researcher changed after the interviews. People were happy somebody had listened and given them a chance to open up. After the conversations, the interviewees came more often to chat. This proved that working places need more people who have time to listen to the employees and their ideas and complains.

People’s interests towards emotion research were very positive. After the presenting of the results, it could be seen that some kind of change started to happen in the Foreign group. The group was willing to go through the results more deeply and to try to find out solutions which could be used as a future benefit. For many members the results were surprising and they revealed matters that some of them had never considered and they were finally ready to make a change.

#### **4.7 Summary**

The ideas in the chapter four are once more presented in a form of a table to show the connections between the different concepts. A summary formed as a picture might give a larger understanding about the phenomenon and also a better view of the linking between different areas.





## 5. COMPARISON WITH THE LITERATURE

After presenting the results and dividing them into different levels in organization, the combining with the existing literature can be done. The development of emotional studies was discussed shortly in the sub-chapter 2.3 and now it's time to focus deeper in the different areas of the research which will give support to the main results. It needs to be pointed out that the field is remarkably fresh. The most valuable literature foundations for the thesis in question were published in an academic journal during the time the research was still in process.

The literature review and combining it with the results of this study will be done by first opening up the area of emotion in organizational research. The word emotion can be regarded as a special context that contains other affective phenomena, such as moods and affect. Secondly, the basic information, we so far know about emotions in organization will be presented as is the context they have been studied in.

In the following sub-chapters the most significant studies in the field of emotions in organizations will be introduced. The field consist, for instance, the following concept *affect in organization, emotional intelligence, emotion regulation and emotional labor, emotional contagious and collective affect*. Inside these sub-chapters other trendsetting implications are made. The perspectives, which are not critical to this research, such as emotional intelligence or emotional labor, will be described only shortly.

Despite of the increasing interest and the growing amount of research, the field still remains comparatively limited. Studies related to the positive and negative affect and their contribution to job performance will be also looked at, before the final combination of previous research and the results of the study. In the connecting framework former studies that are linked to the research findings are put together in the end of this chapter.

The literature review follows highly the structure of the recently published article "Why Does Affect Matter in Organizations?" written by Barsade and Gibson (2007) who have made a summary of what we know about the affects in organizations. They

present the recent studies done in the emotional context and question the meaning of affect in different aspects and in different organizational outcomes.

## **5.1 Emotions in Organizations**

Emotion studies, with a scope of organizational research, have been influenced by researchers from very different disciplines such as psychology, sociology, social psychology, anthropology, philosophy and neuroscience. Today, emotions have become a greater field of interest, both in a researcher and managerial side, receiving almost a respectable position in management subject (Fineman 2006: 675).

During recent years, a lot has happened in the research area of emotions in work surroundings. The increase of interest started to grow enormously after the first book about the role of emotions in organizations (Fineman 1993) was published but only today the issue is coming to the knowledge of the mainstream. Especially management and organizational behavior journals have given publicity to the phenomenon in various editions and articles.

The surmised reason for the enhanced attention has been that when the psychologists began to pay more attention to the matter, it also spread to the interest of organization psychology. Another reason for the interest has been the demand of the growing amount of jobs in the service industry which requires emotional expressions, also known as emotional labor (Briner 1999: 328).

As researchers have always been interested in organizational behavior, emotion researchers of today question why emotions have been left out from the interest and from the main theories of motivation and leadership. Emotionality has often been seen as the antithesis of rationality and emotions have been considered to be problematical. Concentrating to emotions has limited the studying of relatively stable and generalized affective states such as satisfaction, stress, mood and aspects of commitment. These states have usually been studied in the fields of organizational change, role transitions or inter group conflicts (Ashforth & Humphrey 1995: 98).

Likewise, Fineman (2000: 10) suggests that organizations have often been presented as rational enterprises because people working in them can think and act rational for maximizing their goals set by the company. Therefore organizations can benefit from

this ability economically, in the production of goods and services. Work has usually been seen as logical and non-emotional, where the main purpose is the efficient completion of work tasks. Therefore emotions have not been regarded as relevant to the outcome or work performance.

Traditionally work and organizational psychologists have been focusing on two constructs while studying organizations: stress and satisfaction. Briner (1999: 324–325) has wondered the poor vocabulary of emotions in the organization study and why the research is limited to studying stress and satisfaction and why they have become so popular.

*“First, they (stress and job satisfaction) are somewhat non-specific in that they describe and attempt to explain why people at work feel in a very general way “good” or “bad”. [...] If we were medical professionals, interested in understanding and treating people’s physical well being, we would certainly not describe people as just “well” or “ill” but rather look for much more specific ways of identifying people’s physical states and conditions and more specific types of intervention” (Briner 1999: 324–325).*

Seeing organizations with an over rationalized view has led to the companies’ subsequent efforts to regulate emotion. Thus the regulating policy in working places has prevented people to identify the pervasiveness and utility of emotion in an organizational context and *“how qualities of the heart give value and meaning to qualities of the head” (Ashforth & Humphrey 1995: 109)*. The research shows that the boundary between personal and working life is wavering. The non-work mood is likely to spill over to the working life and have influence on individuals (Rothbard & Wilk 2006: 24).

### 5.1.1 Challenges in Emotions in Organization Research

Emotions are seen as a remarkably complicated concept to study and they challenge managers and employees at work. The study of emotions is a challenging field for various reasons. First, managers and researchers have acknowledged that individual feelings are often expressions of, or reactions to, organizational realities but the more they are trying to be managed, the more employees are feeling alienated (Rafaeli &

Worline 2001: 114–115). The two researchers present a future paradox; *“as emotion is more and more organizationally managed; the less it feels truly emotional”*.

Secondly, emotions are difficult to measure. They can not be captured with common and easy to use self-report questionnaires that are so often used in organizations. People can also evaluate themselves mistakenly when it comes to emotions. It is also mentioned that it is almost impossible to develop qualified theories why people feel good or bad when the reasons are so personal and unique (Briner 1999: 324–328).

Fineman (2000: 13) has listed reasons which can make studying emotions in organizations problematic.

1. Expressed emotions differ from private feelings and they are not always acknowledged by the individual herself.
2. Emotions have often negotiable and variable characteristics, subject to interpersonal, group and political influence.
3. Individuals, groups and organizations have so called “memories”, emotional backcloths, which shape the “what” and “how” the presentation of feelings and emotional expressions.
4. People are not always able to identify discrete emotions and attach them to certain situations or circumstances. Thereby many emotional experiences will be fleeting, inchoate or even confused.
5. Emotional worlds often blur the connection between the “public” and “private” as well as “work” and “home” but the domains can interact.
6. Different social and organizational contexts define various rules of feeling and emotion display. Therefore the situations where the emotions are displayed matter.
7. Emotional experiences are framed by broader social structures such as economic, material or market structures which favour the production and reproduction of certain emotions.

Emotions and the emotions people display play a central role of the interactions at work, as in every social surroundings (Briner 1995: 329). Waldron (2000: 66, 73) bases her indications to her own studies proposing that it is actually the nature of the work relationships, rather than the work itself what generates the greatest potential for the intense emotional experience. Nevertheless, emotions should not only be regarded as a reaction to relational circumstances when they are also a source, that defines and maintains relationships.

Another challenge for understanding the research field is the fact that the emotional terms in organizational literature vary remarkably between publications. As before the commonly used term, which covered mood and affected the target of studying, was emotion, nowadays, the target of the research has turned into the direction of affect, which will be presented in a new scope in the next chapter.

## 5.2 Affect in Organization

*“How does research seen through the lens of affect cause us to think differently about the assumptions we make about how employees work?”*

(Barsade & Gibson 2007: 37)

Although the traditional definitions of emotions, mood and affect were already shortly looked at in chapter two, Barsade and Gibson, among other scholars, bring more elements into the discussion of affect. Trying to uncover the structure of affect, researchers have used factor analysis made from self-rating of moods. Another method includes multi-dimensional scaling techniques, where the partakers are asked to rate the similarity of different mood-relevant adjectives such as “hostile” and “jubilant” (Cropanzano et al. 2003: 837).

Affect can be considered as an umbrella covering discrete emotions (love, hate or fear etc.), moods (feeling pleasant or feeling down), dispositional traits (“She is such a positive woman” versus “She always brings everybody down”) and also meta-emotional abilities, for instance emotional intelligence. To the wide scope of affect belongs also a large spectrum of feelings that include so called feeling states. Feeling states are considered to be short-term and in-the-moment affective experiences (Barsade & Gibson 2007: 37–38).

Barsade and Gibson (2007: 37) state that affect permeates organizations. It can be seen in the relationships and performances that people hold in their everyday surroundings. The two researches suggest that understanding feelings can help the researchers, managers and employees themselves understand better the behavior in organizations.

The concepts of affect and emotion are used variously among researchers. Even if emotions are considered distinct from affect in many ways, affect is present in emotions but also in other affective phenomena, containing physical sensations, attitudes and moods (Fredrickson 2001: 218). According to Fredrickson, emotions are in many ways distinct from affect. Affect is seen to be objectless whereas emotions are specified to a meaningful cause. Moreover, affect is described as a long-lasting component, whereas emotions have a briefer permanence. Emotions can be described with assorted categories of emotions, like fear and joy. Affect is thought to vary between two dimensions, pleasantness and activation.

The Table 7 summarizes moods and dispositional affects, dividing different moods to dimensions based on their characteristic. The summary is also often used when studying moods. In the coordinates, moods are divided into most critical dimensions based on their unpleasantness/pleasantness (x axis) to low/high energy stages (y axis).

**Table 7. The Model of affect** (Barsade & Gibson 2007: 37, 39. Adapted from Barret & Russell 1998, Larsen & Diener 1992)

<p><b>High negative affectivity</b> (high energy, low pleasantness): upset, stressed, nervous, and tense.</p>	<p><b>High positive affectivity</b> (high energy, high pleasantness): alert, excited, enthusiastic, elated and happy.</p>
<p><b>Low negative affectivity</b> (low energy, high pleasantness): contented, serene, relaxed and calm.</p>	<p><b>Low positive affectivity</b> (low energy, low pleasantness): sad, depressed, lethargic and fatigued.</p>

According to Barsade and Gibson (2007), significant parts of affect are also dispositional feeling traits, which were originally discovered by two psychologists Watson and Clark (1984). Dispositional traits, positive affectivity and negative affectivity belong under a larger concept of dispositional affect, which is seen as a person's "affective lens" on the world, giving the person an underlying tendency to experience positive and negative emotions and moods, as well as a response to different situations in predictable ways. Dispositional affect has been studied more than moods or emotions because it can be measured much easier (Barsade & Gibson 2007: 37, 44).

Another framework presented affective states as a "family of constructs" that includes diverse affect constructs, such as moods and discrete emotions. All the elements connected to affective states can first be considered as states describing transient psychological experiences. Second, the elements share a general subjective (or feeling) component. Third, the states involve physiological reactions, although there have been differences of opinion about the exact elements of the physiology of each state. Moreover, the affective states each have an evaluative component to them, meaning that people prefer some states over others (Cronpanzano et. al. 2003: 836).

### 5.3 Emotional Intelligence

*"Anyone can become angry—that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way—this is not easy."*

—Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*  
(In Goleman's book 1995)

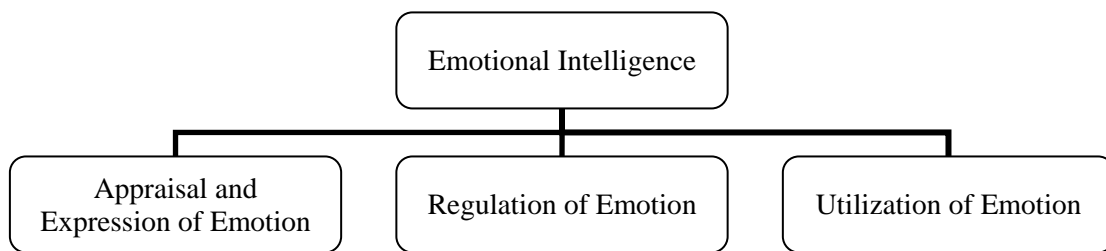
This chapter will only introduce the field of emotional intelligence without getting into the disputed factor of the precise nature of emotional intelligence or how it can and should be measured. The concept is taken into consideration as emotional intelligence has lately become a popular area in the academic field (Fineman 2006: 680).

Measuring and proving personal intelligence has always been in people's interest. Intelligence quotient (IQ) has been a popular indicator to prove the intelligence for about a hundred years. The IQ measurement is based on assumption that people are born with a certain level of IQ, which can not be altered. Lately there has been a



discussion that rather than having only one type of intelligence, which is traditionally measured with IQ –test, people might have multiple intelligences; one of them being emotional. Emotional intelligence is a new concept and there is not yet an exact opinion how much it accounts in a person’s life. Nevertheless, the data implies that from time to time it can be even more powerful than IQ. In the field of emotional intelligence, academic intelligence is considered to have only a little to do with life of emotions (Goleman 1995: 36–41).

Emotional intelligence as a process (Figure 6) is seen to require *appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself and others*, for example verbally or with facial expressions. Individuals who can be aware and react to their own emotions can better express those feelings to others. Moreover, for understanding others’ expressions a certain amount of empathy is needed (Salovey & Meyer 1995: 190–200).



**Figure 7.** Conceptualizing Emotional Intelligence. Adapted from Salovey & Meyer (1995: 190)

Second, emotional intelligence calls for *emotion regulation in self and others*. Emotion regulation in this context means regulating own emotions with the attention to accomplish bigger goals. To give an example, emotionally intelligent would be to approach the boss with the new ideas in the afternoon, when knowing she is not a morning person (Barasade & Gribson 2007: 40) Third part of emotional intelligence process is the capability to *use emotion in adaptive ways*. Utilization of emotion is harnessing moods and emotions in the most preferable way to serve one’s own needs and goals towards more content life (Salovey & Meyer 1995: 190–200)

According to the academic scholars, emotional intelligence is a subset of social intelligence. It can be defined as the ability to monitor one's own and also others' feelings, emotions, moods and temperaments. Emotional intelligence requires ability to predict future behavior, with a use of processes that recognize emotional states to solve dilemmas. The emotional scope is in discriminating between one's and others feelings, and uses the information, to give guidance for thinking and acting (Salovey & Meyer 1990:189). The other edge of emotional intelligence can also manifest through pessimistic behavior or through acting enviously, angrily or even vengefully in a tough business world (Fineman 2006: 681).

Emotional intelligence is described as an ability to be motivated and persistent when facing frustrations; to be able to control impulse and delay gratification; to have the power to regulate moods and hold distress from disturbing the capacity to think; to have the ability to empathize and to hope. Emotional intelligence theorists propose that when it comes to decision making, especially in threatening situations, feelings matters as much as thoughts, if not even more. The scholars' strong opinion is that intelligence comes to nothing when emotions hold sway (Goleman 1995: 4, 36).

#### **5.4 Emotion Regulation and Emotional Labor**

Organizations maintain norms that cover the expressed emotions that are socially acceptable. Employees have always been encouraged to be happy and express positive emotions. On the contrary, most of the expressed negative emotions such as fear, anxiety and anger have a tendency to be unacceptable. In certain extreme conditions both intense negative and positive emotions are seen unacceptable (Askansy & Humphrey 1995: 104). Organization members therefore tend to create communication tactics to manage the emotions (Waldron 2000: 73).

Regulation of emotions was already shortly introduced in the previous chapter with the concept of emotional intelligence. The field of emotional regulation studies how people influence in which emotions they have and when they have them, as well as how they experience and express them. Often there is a difference between the way an individual feels and how she expresses that feeling outside. How much the feelings and expressions differ, depends on the culture but also on personality. People have

always pondered how their emotions should be managed but the research in that particular area started only three decades ago (Gross 1998a 274-275).

Emotion regulation can be understood as an expression through a “facial mask” presented to others. With the so called mask, the employee hides her true feelings and what causes the displayed emotions differ from the true emotions. The intensity of emotional regulation depends on what feelings are appropriate and approved to express at work. The process of emotion regulation can be automatic or controlled, conscious or unconscious. Emotional regulation touches several fields in psychology, such as biological, cognitive, social and personality psychology (Gross 1998a: 275–277). The researcher himself does not make any assumptions whether emotional regulation is a positive or negative matter.

The demand to hide certain sentiments has led to the so called institutionalized mechanisms, which regulate the expressions at the work. The ways emotions might be regulated are more local than universal. It is seen that rationality plays a big role in emotion display. According to Askansy and Humphrey (1995: 104 –109), emotions can be adjusted to working surroundings by 1) neutralizing, 2) buffering, 3) prescribing, and 4) normalizing. *Neutralizing* is a prohibitive mean to emerge socially unacceptable emotions.

The other three methods are used to regulate sentiments that are inevitable or inherent. *Buffering* shares an attempt to compartmentalize emotions and rationality. It is often used in professions, such as one of a doctor, where an authentic concern about the welfare of others is needed. “*Buffering preserves the image of personal concern, untainted by commercial motives.*”

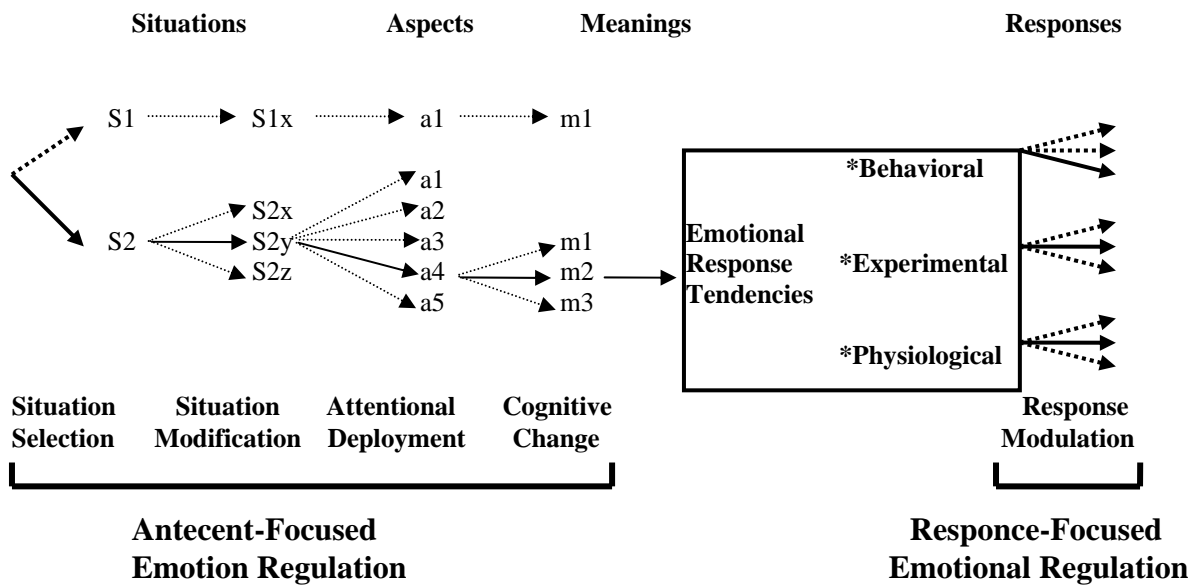
*Prescribing* is utilized to detail which experienced and expressed emotions are acceptable in the social context. Prescribing is commonly used in professions where “feeling rules” are applied, but it is also present in every work settings where interaction is required. The intention might need masking of experienced emotions or even suppressing. *Normalizing* is applied for decomposing unacceptable emotions and thus, maintaining status quo. This is done by diffusing sentiments, which are unsupported or by reframing the implications of emotions.

According to Gross (1998a: 276), the processes related to emotion regulation contain coping, mood regulation, mood repair, defense and affect regulation. All four fields of

process constructs are closely related and have permeable boundaries. The primary focus of coping is in decreasing negative emotion experiences. As coping, also defense mechanisms are used for regulating negative emotions, especially anxiety. What distinguishes defense from coping is that defense mechanisms usually function unconsciously and they are studied as individual differences. Affect regulation is used in many different contexts covering coping, emotional regulation, mood regulation and ego-defensive processes.

In the general model of emotion regulation processes (Figure 7), emotions can be regulated through five stages: (a) selection of the situation, (b) modification of the situation (c) deployment of attention (d) change of cognitions and (e) modulation of responses. The process, in short, starts from *selecting the situation A* instead of situation B. When the selection is done the *situation modification* helps adapting the emotional impact. When choosing the aspect to focus on, an individual uses *attention deployment*. After the three steps of the emotion regulation model, the situation can amend its emotional impact.

The *cognitive change* selects which meanings can be connected to the present situation. The change gives emotional response tendencies, such as those of behavioral, physiological and experimental. Finally, *response modulation* refers to the response tendencies which are used for decreasing behavioral response tendencies. The four sets of emotion regulatory processes (Figure 8), situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change and response modulation are an elaboration of a two way distinction among antecedent –focused emotion regulation and response-focused emotion regulation. The first takes place when the emotion is generated and the second after the generation in the response modulation phase (Gross 1998a: 282 –283)



**Figure 8.** The process model of emotion regulation (Gross 1998a: 282)

### Emotional labor

Emotion regulation is somewhat related to emotional labor. The theory of emotion regulation has been used to understand emotional labor. Emotional regulation scholars have considered the role of physiological arousal more carefully than researchers in the field of emotional labor (Grandey 2000: 98). Gross' process model of emotional regulation (Gross 1998a: 282) has been used as a framework for understanding emotional labor, corresponding to the emotional labor concept of deep acting and surface acting.

Emotional labor is said to need emotion regulation. Grandey (2000: 99) implies that particularly at working surroundings specific events may induce emotion responses, such as anger and sadness, possibly followed by inappropriate behaviors like verbal attack and crying. What might be inappropriate is defined with a set of rules, which organizations maintain, and emotional labor is used to regulate the responses of the individual. In this case emotion regulation includes the modification of feelings (deep acting), or expressions (surface acting).

Emotional labor was originally designed by a professor of sociology, Arlie Russell Hochschild. Her publication “The Managed Heart: The Commercialization of Human Feeling (1983)” brought the topic to the knowledge of the mainstream. Work, which is considered as emotional labor, demands interaction between a worker and a customer or a client and the worker is not able to do her job without the display of emotion. The best examples of this kind of work are the professions of the flight attendant, the police officer or the doctor, who all are expected to behave and display emotions in a particular and desirable way, without necessarily feeling the expressed feelings. Flight attendants are assumed to be smiling and caring about their customers and policemen are expected not to show any signs of fear in dangerous situations (Barsade & Gibson 2007: 41).

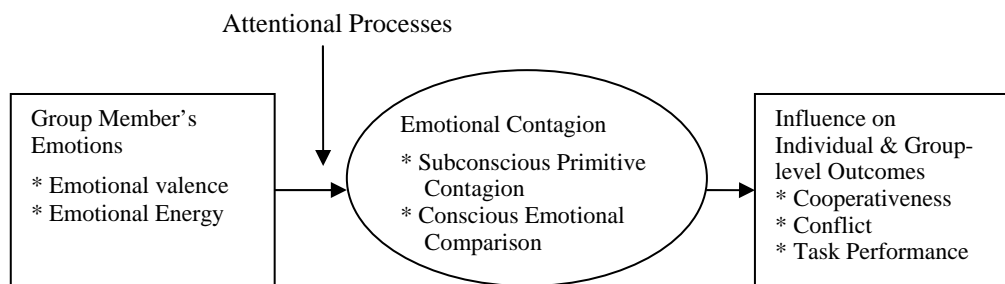
Emotional labor includes display-rules, that is, how the employees are to “appear natural” to the customer despite of how they feel inside. Emotion work is seen as the effort of crafting and negotiating the appearance on different social stages. Fineman (2006: 676) has called emotional labor as the emotional hypocrisy that makes the social order possible. Individual skills in masking and dissembling emotions are compulsory civilizing processes and therefore crucial to social communication and order. Through explicit and tacit rules of feelings and emotional display in a culture, employees manage to prevent showing how they feel and feeling what they show.

### **5.5 Emotional Contagion and Collective Affect**

When work in today’s organizations is done more and more in teams, the researchers have started to concentrate understanding better the processes and outcomes of collective emotions. When a person approaches the working life, she brings her personality, emotions and mood with her. The person shares her emotions towards others both consciously and unconsciously. When emotions are shared with another person or a group, they become social, creating collective emotion, which is called the emotional contagion process (Barsade & Gibson 2007: 42).

Barsade (2002) was able to prove an emotional contagion through laboratory study when she studied the transfer of mood in a group and its influence on the dynamics of the work group. She found a significant influence of emotional contagion at the individual-level attitudes and group processes. The way how emotions are seen to be contagious is presented in Figure 9.

The first phase takes place when a person enters a group. At this time, she is likely to get exposed to emotions, which the other group members bring with them. The emotions of the group members can be described by the valence of the emotion being displayed, combined with the level of energy, which influences the intensity the emotions are communicated. The emotional valence addresses if the emotion is positive or negative. How the emotional valence and energy correlate, can be described with a circumflex, where the emotional valence (pleasant-unpleasant) is in x axis and the energy or activation level (degree of energy) in y axis (Barsade 2002: 647). A modification of the circumflex was presented in the sub-chapter 5.2 in Table 6.



**Figure 9.** A model of group emotional contagion (Barsade 2002: 650)

The second phase in the emotional contagion process, explains the two ways how different emotions are transferred. The transfer can be automatic or subconscious, as the primitive emotional contagion or conscious, as the emotional comparison process. The primitive emotional contagion transfers from person to person often automatically, through non-conscious mimicry or feedback. The more conscious emotional contagion, also called the learned behavior appropriate for certain situations, is more of a cognitive nature. Empathy is one example of an emotion, where people compare their moods with the ones of other people.

The third level of the emotional contagion process shows, how the contagious nature of the emotions influences the outcome or the performance, both in the group and individual levels. Barsade (2000: 644) found out that positive emotional contagion creates improved cooperation between the team members, as well as decreased the

number of conflicts and created higher task performance. Tested hypothesis showed the following:

1. There is a contagion of mood among group members.
2. Positive emotional contagion (increase in positive mood) leads to greater cooperativeness on individual and group level.
3. Positive emotional contagion leads to a fewer group conflicts.
4. Positive emotional cognition leads people to rate more highly their own task performance and the others in the group.

Therefore group emotion is proven to have an effect on individuals' attitudes and team dynamics (Barsade 2002: 645–668).

### **Collective Affect**

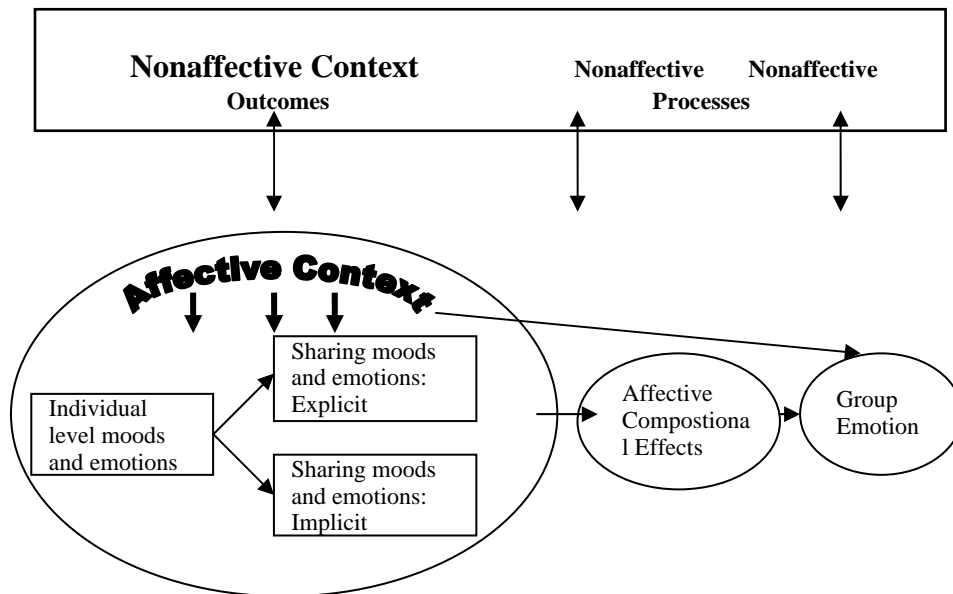
Bartel and Saavedra (2000: 198) quote Hackman (1992) stating that collective mood might help to produce affective ability in social situations contributing to work groups' motivation and through that to reach the collective goals. The two researches have been able to show evidence of mood convergence, proving also the difficulty to measure emotions because of their causality. Researchers studied mood as a collective element of work groups noticing that group-mood could be recognized and measured inside the team, also by external observers. Mood was shown in the groups through facial, vocal and postural cues.

People share emotions that are felt consciously but also less conscious. Groups have commonly built emotion norms which set assumptions together with the group's emotional history how the group members are expected to feel or show emotions inside the group. Individuals bring to the groups their affective characteristics such as moods, emotions, sentiments and emotional intelligence, to the group. Inside the group all the elements combine to a group's affective composition, also known as group feeling or collective affect (Kelly & Barsade 2001: 99, 101). The two researchers demand more studying of emotional influences in a work group or a team.

Kelly and Barade (2001: 200–201) pointed out that affect influences the outcomes of the behavior of a small group and the researchers also found linking between affective



and nonaffective features. The model the researchers formed was not focused on task performance, instead they believe that the knowledge of the affects relationships to performance and outcome is significantly important.



**Figure 10.** Moods and emotions in small groups and work teams (Kelly & Barsade 2001: 101)

Emotional contagion, on its positive side, can be very constructive power in the organization. It can create a cohesive group that is a motivated work force and increase empathy and solidarity with psychological involvement. This kind of contagion can help gaining common goals. Contagious can also cause negativity and impair performance. Positive emotions can become so overpowering that proceed their performing. Negative emotions, such as fear and anxiety, can also get transmitted among individuals, galvanizing them to collectively attack others or struggle against favorable changes (Asforth & Humbrey 1995:114).

## 5.6 Positive and Negative Affect

For long, managers have believed that a happy worker is a productive worker, although the data collected about the influence of the job satisfaction on the productivity during the pass decades, has failed to give proof to the assumption. Job satisfaction and research related to stress are no longer the only ways to study the contrary composition happier-and-smarter vs. sadder-but-wiser (Staw & Barsade 1993: 304).

Lately, there has been a lot of research how positive and negative affects influence the life in organizations. Barsade & Gibson (2007: 52) quote Lyubomirsky et al. (2005) and Thoresen et al. (2003) suggesting that although there are results that positive affects have a great positive outcome on behaviour, they have been studied considerably less than negative affects.

Scholars have been trying to find reasons why positive emotions have been marginalized. Researchers and psychologist have for long concentrated in what is considered wrong or pathological in life (Fineman 2006: 600). One of the reasons for this is that there are less recognized positive emotions than negative ones and they are also less differentiated. Another reason for dismissing positive sentiments is that normally research in different fields focuses on problems and solving them. Understandably, negative emotions cause more problems than positive emotions. When the arena of emotions is so complex, theorist have satisfied to explain emotions only in general (Fredrickson 1998: 300–303).

Today's research compensates the old believes in the research suggesting and giving proof that positive emotions and mood are likely to increase performance at individual, group and organizational levels, and there is evidence, which implies that expressing positive affect is essential to the success in organizations, as well as in personal life . Positive affect increases desire for new goals and committing to them, which is connected with confidence, optimism, self-efficacy, likeability, activity, energy, flexibility, and coping with various challenges (Barsade & Gibson 2007: 51–52).

Staw and Barsade (1993) studied groups with low, mid and high positive affect levels founding out that positive affect has significance in decision making, interpersonal

performance and in managerial potential. People with higher positive affect were more accurate in their decisions and they also seemed to perform better in the underlying good decision making processes.

Moreover, with higher positive affect, people requested more information when there was not given enough data to make reasonable decisions. High positive affect group also had a greater tendency to recognize situational contingencies, for example, to see how their decisions would influence others unfavorably. Positive individuals had the tendency to explore and consider information more broadly and completely, than those, who had to work with unhappy thoughts and depressed affect (Staw & Barsade 1993: 320–321).

The research gave a positive correlation between affect and interpersonal behavior, showing that people with higher positive affect managed better in numerous measures of performance. Positive individuals were seen to have made a greater contribution to the group's effectiveness, as well as in the groups control to present their cases persuasively with the needed information. The interpersonal data showed that people with high positive affect were interpersonally more competent, influencing the group effectively. Nonetheless, there was no evidence that being critical, socially compliant and polite would have a significant effect on the measurements. This implies that positive affect is responsible for being rather effective interpersonally, rather than being nice and accommodating (Staw & Barsade 1993: 321).

Fredrickson & Losada (2006: 678–679) list various studies, which imply that positive affect carries multiple interrelated benefits, such as widens the scope of attention and increases institution and creativity. Even if positive emotions might support acting (emotional labor), they come into view of being less prescriptive than negative emotions (Fredrickson 1998: 303).

The theory and the effect of positive emotions have been merely studied in the area of positive psychology. Instead of studying what is wrong in the organization, the scholars concentrate in what is good. Positive psychology honors qualities like wellbeing, satisfaction, pleasure and optimism. The new area of research has made its way also to the positive organizational scholarships, which is concerned with positive emotions in organizations, such as vitality, compassion, exhilaration fulfillment and meaningfulness (Fineman 2006: 690).

Empirical data gives evidence that positive emotions broaden the scope of attention, cognition (thinking) and action. The ability to undergo positive emotions can be primary to signal and produce flourishing at the present moment of joy, but also in long-term. Fredrickson (1998, 2001) is one of the main scholars in area of positive emotions. She has formed a broaden-and-build model of positive emotions, such as joy, interest, contentment and love. According to the researcher, undergoing these pleasant sentiments broadens the person's momentary thought-action repertoire, sharing the feature of building the individual's personal resources in individual and social levels. Positive emotions encourage the individual to pursue a larger range of thoughts than usually. (Fredrickson 1998: 307,312)

### **5.7 Affects relation to Outcome and Performance**

Some researchers venture to state that affect permeates every stage of an organization. It can be seen that the strongest affect at workplace relates to people and work related issues. So far the influences of affect has been tested in different organizational variables like performance, decision making, turnover, prosocial behavior, negotiation and conflict resolution behavior, group dynamics, and leadership (Barsade & Gibson 2007: 42–51).

Researchers have long argued about the implication of feelings to outcome and job-performance. Earlier the assumption was that a happy worker was also a productive worker but recently we have learned that the field is more complex. Modern studies, that now concentrate on affective traits and affective trades, give evidence that affect does have an influence in individuals and groups in different levels in organization. Researchers have been concerned with matters like expression of emotions at work site, the effect of positive and negative moods or dispositional affect (Staw & Barsade 1993: 404). This sub-chapter will shortly present the research in the various areas, where the meanings of emotions have been investigated.

So far the research shows a strong connection between the positive affect measures and the different measurements of work performance. There have been studies, which prove that the positive moods of the workers have a straight influence on the moods of the customers. The general positive mood of the workers influences also to the day of one individual worker in that particular work environment (Pugh 2001: 1018).

The research of another source of affects, the moods people are in when come to work and its impact on the organization and performance, has been largely ignored until recently. It is said that it is not possible to leave the intimate emotions at the door when entering the office. Reason to this is claimed to be that work and private life tend to spill over. Researchers talk about mood spillover which appears when one domain influences the other domain. The mood spillover is seen as unintentional operating via cognitive and motivational procedures which do not involve intention. (Edwards & Rothbard 2000: 185).

The latest studies indicate that the start-of-day emotion and emotional contagion may have a profound effect on workers' feelings and to their job performance. The start-of-day mood consists of numerous sources, embracing persistent life challenges and opportunities, positive and negative family experiences, before leaving for work and the commuting. Rothbard & Wilk (2006) studied customer service representatives in a service organization, to find out the relationships between the sources and the consequences of employees' moods. The study focused on examining people's start-of-day moods and their moods during the working day, as well as the impact of mood to outcomes and performance. The results implicate that the start-of-day positive mood spills over and affects positively workers' moods throughout the day.

In the same way, the start-of-day negative mood affects negatively to the moods of the workers and to the working day in general. The customer's positive mood had also a meaning for the worker's mood during the day, but the negative mood influenced only the workers, who didn't have a lot of work experience. For more experienced workers, the customer's bad mood didn't have any relation. At last the positive and negative moods had significance to several job performances, such as task engagement (Rothbard & Wilk 2006: 3).

### **Positive emotions**

Different studies show that the positive affect may serve as a source of motivation in certain types of problem solving or decision tasks that are complicated and demand simplification or use of heuristics. The positive affect gives stimulus also in activities which demand higher cognitive flexibility and originality in response. Researchers suggest that concentrating more on the affect rather than satisfaction, the prediction of organizational performance might be more successful (Staw & Barsade 1993: 307, 322–323).

A fresh research about the inner work life gives support to the suggestion that the inner life of the workers affect the performance at work. When the two researchers talk about inner work life, they mean the interplay of perception, emotion and motivation. Those particular fields are also strongly influenced by the different events during a work day. The inner work life plays a crucial role in how a person experiences the working day. Most part of that experience is unknown to colleagues and in some parts also to the person herself. When people come to work, they don't check their hearts at the doorway. The meaning of inner work life was examined by using the diaries of 238 people. All together, the data consisted of nearly 12 000 diary reports (Amabile & Kramer 2007).

The researchers believe that performance is strongly linked to the positive inner work life. When the work day contains positive emotions, the person is likely to have a stronger motivation and more positive perception of her work, the team, the leader and the whole organization. High performance is related to creativity, productivity, commitment and collegiality. Positive emotions are tied to higher creativity, whereas negative emotions to lower creativity. The inner work life influence how people perform: how creatively they will think, how productively they perform their job and also, how committed they are to their work. And in all this, managers have a huge role influencing how positive or negative the processes are (Amabile & Kramer 2007: 74—81).

## **5.8 The Combined Framework**

As the theory has now been shortly presented, it can be combined with the empirical findings using a common framework. The framework in question is adapted from Barsade & Gibson (2007: 38), leaving out emotional intelligence and emotional labour, while they were seen not to have enough connection to the research. Although emotional intelligence has a growing role in the emotion studies, the method used in this research perhaps is not able to prove its whole power but neither can one deny its significance. It is also hard to prove the meaning of emotional labour when the workers are not in face-to-face contact with the customers but rather communicate with them through e-mails. At this point it is also important to remind that in this particular case of study, the customer is in fact another company.

**Table 8.** The affective terms combined with the results (Definitions adapted from Barsade & Gibson 2007: 38)

Terms Used in Research	Definition	Connection to research
Affect	Umbrella term encompassing a broad range of feelings that individuals experience, including feelings states, such as moods and discrete emotions, and traits, such as trait positive and negative affectivity (all defined below)	<p>“It feels good when___.”</p> <p>“it makes me feel bad when___”</p> <p>“I can see that she is a bit sad”</p> <p>“I don’t feel liked”</p> <p>“ ___makes me happy”</p>
Discrete Emotions	Emotions are focused on a specific target or cause – generally realized by the perceiver of the emotion; relatively intense and very short-lived. After initial intensity, can sometimes transform into a mood.	For example: Joy, happiness, fear, hate, sadness, irritation, pride, appreciation, anger, distress, happy-for, liking, satisfaction, disliking, relief, disappointment, hope
Moods	Generally take the form of a global positive (pleasant) or negative (unpleasant) feeling; tend to be diffuse – not focused on a specific cause – and often not realized by the perceiver of the mood; medium duration (from a few moments to as long as a few weeks or more)	Feeling insecure, worried, good, bad, tired, excited, energetic, ok, preoccupied, happy, sad, fine, upset, stressed, positive, depressed, bothered, outside, concerned, thoughtful, normal, positive, negative, nervous, anxious
Dispositional (Trait) Affect	Overall personality tendency to respond to situations in stable, predictable ways. A person’s “affective lens” on the world	It was seen easy for people to name how their group members affected themselves and the others.
a) (Trait) Positive Affectivity	Individuals who tend to be cheerful and energetic, and who experience positive moods, such as pleasure or well-being, across a variety of situations as compared to people who tend to be low energy and sluggish or melancholy.	<p>“Sara comes always in the morning with a big smile [...] She is always in a great mood.”</p> <p>“She is always positive and never talks bad about someone”</p> <p>“I’ve never seen him in a bad mood”</p>
b) (Trait) Negative Affectivity	Individuals who tend to be distressed and upset, and have a negative view of self over time and across situation, as compared to people who are more calm, serene and relaxed.	<p>“She is very negative and snaps easily to others.”</p> <p>“She can not control her negative feelings”</p> <p>“She has a very negative attitude”</p>
Emotional Regulation	Individuals’ attentions to “influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions” (Gross 1998a:275).	<p>“You can’t act how you want”</p> <p>“Even if everything is messed up and people are fighting, among them there is such a good veil...”</p> <p>“I try to come to work with a nice face”</p>
Emotional Contagion	Processes that allow the sharing or transferring of emotions from one individual to another group members; the tendency to mimic the nonverbal behaviour of others, to “synchronize facial expressions, vocalizations, postures, and movements” with others, and in turn, to “converge emotionally” (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994).	<p>“They are always in a good mood and it makes it nicer to everyone”</p> <p>“if you sit the whole day next to someone who has “his face down” it gets contagious”</p> <p>“Other people’s mood affects your work even if negative feelings are not against you”</p> <p>“If I see our bosses stressed, I get stressed too”</p> <p>“When people smile, it makes you happy”</p>
Collective Affect	A “bottom-up” approach to collective affect emphasizes the affective composition of the various affective attributes of the group’s members. That is, the degree to which individual level affective characteristics combine, often through emotional contagion, to form group level emotion or mood. A “top-down” approach to collective affect emphasizes the degree to which groups are characterized by emotion norms for feeling expression.	<p>“We have the best team!”</p> <p>“Of course emotions and mood affect a lot in the balance of the team. If there is even one person who is in a bad mood all the time it reflects to the others...”</p> <p>“it’s much easier to work as a team when the feeling “clicks”, like when everybody is on the same level.</p>

## 6. CONCLUSION

Now that the results have been presented and combined to the existing literature in a common framework, the final conclusions can be done. This chapter will first open up the different connections presented in the Table 8. The final chapter will also complete the thesis by discussing how the existing literature supports the research's empirical results. It will be considered also the other way around, that is, how the research gives support to the previous studies. As in the beginning the plan was just to dive in to the phenomenon without further assumptions, it is seen relevant at this point to concentrate in the limitations of the study as well as the distribution in different levels in organization and the academic research.

### 1. *Affect, Discrete Emotions and Mood*

The research was able to find a great spectrum of diverse emotions and moods. This topic has been discussed widely in the earlier chapters so now the topic will be only shortly summarized. The emotions of the employees varied between the ultimate sentiments of happiness and sadness and even rage against certain specific subjects. How the interviewees usually talked about their feelings can be considered illogical when they didn't concentrate just in one or two sentiments at a time but to them all. On the other hand, they can also be seen as talks about the life in general, which is full of many emotions, even and especially at the same time.

It was also noticed in the interviews that emotions concentrated on some specific target, such as "*this work makes me happy / frustrated*" or "*I get angry when people don't do their job*". When the talk was about the mood, often the cause for it was considered to be something like a bad day, which was not determined as a real reason. It is not possible to clarify all the emotions, moods or affects, which were found in the discussions, when it is believed that there can be hundreds of them, along with their blends, variations, mutations and nuances. Even so many that we don't have a word for them all. (Goleman 1995: 331–332).

### 2. *Dispositional (Trait) Affect: Positive and Negative Affectivity*

Dispositional affect gives the person tendency to face situations in predictable ways (Barsade & Gibson 2006:38). It was easy for people to name how they face their every day lives, described for example with sentences like "*I'm very positive person and I*



*get along with everybody*". They had also strong opinions on how their colleagues were responding to different occasions: "*She is very negative and snaps easily to others.*" or "*Sara comes always in the morning with a big smile*". What was noted in the research was that even if an interviewee thought she had a positive disposition, the colleagues could see the person reflecting negatively with many different behaviours. What came obviously out, it was that the way, positive or negative, in which the person reacted, had influences to the whole team.

### 3. *Emotional Regulation*

Connection to emotional regulation was seen clearly in peoples' answers. During the working days, true emotions were forced to be put aside if they had negative characteristics. A person stated that "*Even if I am in a bad mood it stays in the background when I talk with my boss or with other team members or with customers.*" The opinion was that most of the personal issues do not belong to the work surroundings.

Emotional regulation was troublesome in specific situations. For example it was acknowledged as problematic when a colleague was clearly in a bad mood, but it was impossible to know the reasons behind that. A person with obvious negative feelings was left alone with her thoughts. Sometimes the negative sentiments towards somebody were expressed to another team member but hardly never to the real target of the negative feelings.

### 4. *Emotional Contagion and Collective Affect*

It became to be one of the most interesting themes how the emotion was transmitted inside the team. If a person came in the morning to work with a very positive or negative attitude it automatically reflected to the other team members. How easily the emotion got contagious depended on one person's own sensitivity. Some interviewees said they sensed very easily others emotions, while also few people claimed that their own mood hardly ever changed from the one they were in, in the morning. But in general it was obvious that the attitudes, emotions and mood do spread and influence the team.

Emotional contagion has a link to dispositional affect. This means that those, who face the situations in a positive or negative way, also transmit the same kind of emotions to the colleagues. Sometimes the effect was completely unnoticed by the originators of it. Teams create a certain collective affect, which in practise is often called as the team

spirit. The target company, as well, has worked to make the collective affect more positive. The power of separate individuals to influence the whole balance of the group with their emotions and behaviour, should not be under estimated. It is relevant especially in cases when the members sit close together, aiming the same goals, sharing information, ideas but also and nevertheless complains.

## 6.1 Discussion

The research question set in the beginning aimed for understanding: *How do emotions and mood affect in a workgroup*. The primary intention was to find out which different essentials might have an effect on the worker's emotions or mood at work, and how would that be shown in the working environment. How employees' emotions or mood might affect the team members or colleagues was also taken into notice.

There is not yet enough knowledge and research on how emotions and mood influences the workgroups. One of the goals was to bring something new to that area in question or strengthen the studies already performed by other researchers. In addition, one of the personal aims/goals was to learn to understand better emotions and different people working in the workgroups. The key word for the whole situation ended up to be understanding, when it was seen impossible or even not desirable to eliminate the effects of the emotions in a working ambience.

Organizations are social systems where interactions and relationships are one of the largest influences on whether the work is enjoyed and how it is carried out. Meyerson (2000) questioned: "*What if emotions were honored?*" meaning how would the organizations be, if people commonly *attended* and *engaged* to others feelings? The researcher believes that the social world and social science would be very different if the emotions were honoured as a neutral part, or, as the investigator refrained, "stuff" of social experience with all their complexity and depth.

### Communication

To understand the claim that how people affect on others, is many times hidden from the person herself, the Johari Window (Table 9) should be taken in to a consideration. The Johari Window was conducted by Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham (1969) from whose first names the models name derives. The representation contains two

dimensions: the self and the others. Both dimensions have two categories, which are the known and the unknown. *Open* quadrant is a part of a person values and believes that are known to others and oneself. The *hidden* quadrant is a part of that known by the person but not by others. The *unknown* quadrant is neither known by others nor is it known by the person herself. The upper right part shows the area that is known by the others but *blind* to the person himself (French et. al 1985: 150—151).

**Table 9.** The Johari Window Model (French et. al 1985: 151)

	<b>Known to self</b>	<b>Not know to self</b>
<b>Known to others</b>	<b>Open</b>	<b>Blind</b>
<b>Not Known to others</b>	<b>Hidden</b>	<b>Unknown</b>

The areas concerned in the research were the hidden and the blind. The hidden area was strictly guarded by some of the workers. This sometimes even carefully guarded area bothered those colleagues whose hidden area was not so closed when they would have liked to know more about their team members. As it can be remembered, on the contrary, the people who wanted to protect their hidden parties were irritated by people who would share their privacy too openly.

We come once more the notion where people didn't see how they were affecting others. This model can give support in understanding why it is like so. To increase the open area of personality people would need to reduce the hidden area by engaging in more self disclosure. Another way is to request feedback from the colleagues, their opinions about ones own behavior. Give consideration and criticism to colleagues was

pointed out to be really difficult. The common opinion of the interviewees was that it was easy to see others' misbehaviors than their own. When it came to the question on how their presence affected their colleague, all of them felt they had no clue.

## 6.2 Waking up the awareness

Characteristic for today's world is that the only constant thing is *change*, which prevails everywhere in organizations. Its existence is clear for example in elements like alterations in work forces, office arrangements, travel requirements and ways of working. Even small changes in organization can cause strong resistance and anxiety among employees. The emotionalized response can also vary from seeing the alteration as threat or loss to seeing it as a great opportunity. (Fineman 2006: 681–682).

A recent doctoral thesis represents the new model of today's worker. She seems able to adapt in the changing life in organizations. She is in short unconcerned in influencing general matters. She respects diversity and is critical. From the organization and work she expects experiences, feelings of success and satisfaction. The traditional commitment does not serve the employer. The new source of motivation is learning and the challenging work. The demand of flexibility and feelings of insecurity are emphasized (Joensuu 2006: 68).

Could the answers to passivity and unconcern be found from studying emotions? Many researchers (Fredrickson, Losada & Fineman) have suggested that the key to the change is in emotions and more especially in positive emotions. This study also showed encouraging results in waking up the awareness and through it getting the employees to think and to act.

*“You learn to understand others positive and negative views about teamwork. The research makes you REALLY think how you affect the team and it's effectiveness with your own behaviour. It helps you to think the matters from you colleagues' perspective and based on that you can try to change your own way to act and behave.”*

Female

This thesis gave tools for building consciousness in the organization. The awareness construction happened in the research when first the topic was introduced to the person in the interview phase. Already from the diaries, which were written after the interviews, it was noticed that the person had really started to think about the positive and negative matters, which happened inside the team. Some matters were new and the interviewee had therefore never thought about them before. Many stated to think these issues a lot after the interview and had really took time, while writing the diary, sensitive at the importance of it.

In the group discussions people got more elements to consider when they heard the results and other peoples' opinions. It was apparent that when the employees were given a chance to talk together about the problems, awareness was woken up inside the group, showing which kinds of issues were present among them, and finally the team started to want a change.

The important message in the case of conflicts is that the research can tell everyone that everything can be changed. Even when there are matters that affect very negatively the whole group, the situation can change into something positive with time or discussions. At least in the Finnish society, conflicts and negative things can be concurred with time even without words.

*“Our situation is alive all the time and it has changed a lot from the time when we had the interviews. At the moment, or at least I think so, the working atmosphere has cooled down. I hope that in the future we are able to discuss the things that occupy our thoughts more openly.”*

Female

### **6.3 Limitation for the Study**

It is important to discuss the limitations of the research, which touch several areas, for instance the limitation considering the fact that the researcher herself was working in the same department where the study was implemented. Although there was a great intention not to interfere in the results in anyway, in these situations there is always a risk for the objectivity. How much the life outside the interviews can affect the results should be taken into notice.

When one of the main results was that people can not see how they affect their colleagues, how can they talk about themselves objectively? People tend to talk about themselves in a positive light and then the interviews can not be considered as the ultimate truth. To be more accurate with the results they should have been combined with observation.

Despite of the fact that discussed themes in both groups gave the same guideline, it should be remembered that only two groups were interviewed and the outcome was different in both groups. The research should be carried through to more groups to ensure the reliability. When using qualitative methods, each interview is significantly important to the final results, therefore the power of 14 interviews should not be underestimated either.

Limitation were present also considering the literature. The field of study is still young and not enough theory exists. New interesting literature was published at the same time the thesis was approaching to its end. Most of the literature contained the request for more research, pointing out that emotions have been almost totally ignored in the organizational literature. When the field is developing rapidly, new information comes all the time to the markets and we will know more in the future.

#### **6.4 Contribution of the Study**

When the full picture of the research is completed it is time to concentrate on the contribution of the study. What does the research bring to a person, the team, the company as well as to the discipline? The study was made with a grounded theory method and the connections between results and literature were made after the findings. It was amazing to contemplate how parallel the findings were with the literature.

Thus it can be seen that the thesis confirms the previous studies and proves that affect matters in organization. Researchers assert that moods and emotions influence critically the most important outcomes in the company, if not everything. Understanding them can help people to think differently and help to explain and predict attitudes, behaviour and feelings in organizations (Barsade & Gibson 2007: 54). This research gives proofs to that.

When most of the existing literature about emotions in organization comes outside Finland there can be some cultural issues that make the results slightly different from the already studied ones. How the conflicts are solved could be one good example is the meaning of positive mood in resolving conflicts (Barsade & Gibson 2007: 48). In the conflict cases of this research the conflicts were never even tried to be solved.

To find the practical considerations the interviewees were asked afterwards to explain what the proceeded emotion study gave to them as individuals and what the use was for the team as a whole. The answers were encouraging.

*“I think the best thing of this whole thing was that we have been pushed to think and analyse our behaviour within the team more carefully. Many times people don’t consider consequences for their actions; so this represented the chance to become aware of what happens inside our team and what kind of reactions team members may have.”*

Male

The importance and need for the kind of research, which concentrates on the inner world of a person, was obvious. It could be already seen from the interest that arouse after the individual interviews. It opened up people’s eyes and made them think about the discrete emotions and mood people bring to work. Not less important, it made people for the first time really contemplate on how different everybody is. What was positive for somebody, could have been negative to somebody else. When the members of the group first started to understand their own behaviour and how they affected their colleagues with their actions, it is likely that a change for the better to happen.

In the Foreign group the results for the improved communication started to show already in the group discussion. The team thought the research was useful for them, because members talked a lot, honestly and frankly, though no real big solution came out. At least everybody became aware of what was happening inside the team and that awareness woke the willingness to change. Despite of the common opinion that discussions are always good, for some of the group members it felt a little bit awkward to talk in public about conflicts. Among them also few felt that the feeling soon passed, and was replaced by more self confidence to talk openly with colleagues.

Inside the groups there were many things happening, which the members were not aware of before. People admitted that they would like to know how other members

saw them and their influence on the team. But as it was said, nobody wanted to hear negative things about themselves. Still it was clear that it could be better to hear it straight from the person than it been discussed behind the persons back. If workers could be able to talk also about negative topics, the conflicts could possibly be managed faster and better.

*“I think the discussion has been very positive. For me it was useful because I was able to talk about my feelings at work, what I think of my team mates etc. The team members are now able to talk freely about their negatives and positives thoughts at work and how our team affects the rest of the department.”*

Male

It is important for the company and also for the employees to understand that each one of them brings their own discrete moods, emotions, attitudes and values to the working place. To understand how emotions operate and how workers moods and emotions influence the whole team and even the department, helps also dealing the affects better. Despite of the fact that people discussed openly about the issues in the group discussion, there was still a doubt if the study would make a lasting change.

*“Maybe it’s good we discuss things so we are all aware of them, but I don’t think much will change. Maybe some people will think a bit more what they do or say that can affect people...I know I will. It’s always good to open people’s eyes.”*

Female

Although the members of the Domestic group didn’t want to discuss the results together, they claimed that the research also had an effect on them. However, it could be seen from the answers that they were far more analytic, compared with the Foreign group.

*“Through the process you could go through your own positive and negative thoughts and consciously analyze them. As we could see from the results, things/events should not be taken too seriously and to yourself. Emotions and mood changes at work in different circumstances and many factors influence in them. “*

Female, Domestic group

How much will change permanently in the groups can be questioned. Good thoughts and actions can happen only with a sincere act of trying. No one can be forced think positive.



## 6.5 Indications for Future Research

The impact the research had on the participants was obvious. It affected positively both in individual and collective level. In the Foreign group, people were willing to make a change and together they started as a group to discuss about the results. Although there were no further discussions in the Domestic group, they felt they had learned something about the other group members. Often external trainings don't touch the workers because the ideas come from the outside. This time, when the need of change came from the inside the group, when the workers could first confidentially talk about matters relevant to their opinions, their feelings and thoughts were finally touched. When the results were presented to the whole group there were new information for the majority, who certainly did not expect so many serious matters to be there, several of which hidden until that moment behind the veil of goodness.

The chosen method seemed to work well in the studied groups when the outcome was to awake the team's own activity. People started to think how their own behaviour affected others. Why the impact was so different in the groups, should be studied more carefully. Why the discussion was encouraging in the Foreign group but not in the Domestic group when all the interviews from both teams were so open? It would be interesting to find answer to this question. The study didn't concentrate in to which ways and to which extend do emotions or mood affect in working. The discovered result concentrated only in feelings that have an impact on working.

People talk different than they act. It could be seen in this research that how the person saw herself differed from the opinions of the colleagues. Therefore it would be good if there would have been some other study method that could be used to support the interviews, such as observing. On the other hand, it would perhaps be smarter to develop a method that would be easy to use also without an outsider. Organizations have no need for studies that have no future value. Also in this case there was a clear message that when a larger study cost money, there should be a concrete benefit from it. Developing the method would give a possibility to the group to use alone or with a help of the team leader the tool to evaluate the group without external help.

The research explored a great amount of life inside the organizations and there is enough data to carry out another research. The next step could be to focus more on the individual level, to find the rich difference of people that there is. Emotions and mood have significance in a workgroup. It is comprehensive how they affect in every day

life of the whole organization. Researchers in the area of emotions encourage other studying colleagues to broaden the vocabulary of the emotional studies in organizations (Barasade & Gibson 2007, Fineman 2000).

It can be believed that the domain of study will become more important in the coming years. Recent trends in emotional context in organizations are in researching emotion in virtual organizations, where the meaning of location and geographical distance are no longer valid. Another trend, according to Fineman, is the movement towards greater public expressions of both positive and negative emotions (Fineman 2006: 684). The interesting part is to find out what is the comprehension of those expressions in Finnish society, where the displayed emotions are usually not very strong.

Although a lot from the results could be confirmed with the previous literature there are still some aspects that need more studying, for example the unfortunate pattern in conflicts. The area of studying affect in a work group or a team is still a very fresh area of interest. Factors like the reason why the person can not see how her appearance is influencing the team should be examined.

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