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POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF FRIENDSHIP AT THE WORKPLACE

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Tämä opinnäytetyö tutkii ystävyyttä työpaikalla ja sen vaikutuksia tuottavuuteen, työtunnelmaan ja työtyytyväisyyteen sekä negatiivisia vaikutuksia ja ratkaisuja niiden poistamiseksi. Aiheessa yhdistyvät kauppatieteiden ja psykologian tutkimus ja näkökulmat.

Ystävyys on vapaaehtoinen molemminpuolisesti hyödyllinen kytkös. Sen hyödyt ja kustannukset muuttuvat aikanaan. Ystävyyden voima mittaa kytköksien syvyyttä ja ominaisuuksia, ja sillä voi olla merkittävä vaikutus työpaikalla.

Opinnäytetyön teoreettinen osa keskittyy ystävyyden perustamiseen, hyötyihin, negatiivisiin vaikutuksiin, ystävyyden hoitamiseen, ristiriitoihin ja käyttöön. Hyödyt ja negatiiviset vaikutukset selittävät, minkälaisia vaikutuksia ystävyydellä on työilmapiiriin ja työtyytyväisyyteen työntekijän näkökulmasta. Ystävyyden hoito ja mahdolliset ristiriidat selittävät, millä kustannuksella säilytetään ystävyys. Lopuksi käsitellään ystävyyden mahdollisia käyttötapoja johtamisvälineenä.

Opinnäytetyön empiirinen osa koostuu tutkimuksesta, joka on tehty neljässä eri maassa, demonstroidakseen erinäisiä asenteita ystävyyteen ja ihmistenvälisiin suhteisiin. Kuusi haastattelua osoittaa erilaisia työkulttuureja sekä asenteita ystävyyteen työpaikalla. Lopussa Hofsteden mallia on käytetty selittämään kytköksiä ja kulttuurin vaikutuksia tuloksiin.

Haastatellut henkilöt kuudesta yrityksestä kuvasivat ystävyyden vaikutuksista työpaikalla, sekä positiivisia että negatiivisia. Suomessa "Management & Leadership" – malli on tuttu ja hierarkkinen etäisyys on pieni, mutta Tšekissä tai Slovakiassa hierarkia on melko suuri. Myöskin asenne ystävyyteen on erilainen, esimerkiksi Italiassa ystävyys työpaikalla koetaan aika negatiivisesti.

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis studies friendship at the workplace and its effects, perceptions and influences on productivity, working atmosphere and job satisfaction. Attention is paid also to negative relations at the workplace and their possible solutions. The topic connects business studies with business psychology; therefore the theoretical background is rather abstract and case-sensitive.

Friendship is a voluntary interpersonal tie for mutual benefits and gains. The costs and gains of friendship are changing throughout the lifetime of the friendship, therefore a measurement is introduced – the strength of the friendship. The strength of the friendship determines the deepness and the quality of the tie and has a significant effect on the workplace.

The theoretical study of the thesis focuses on the foundation of friendship, its benefits, negative effects, maintenance, possible conflicts and usages. The section describing benefits and negative effects explain how friendship affects the working atmosphere and job satisfaction from the point of view of the concerned person. The section regarding friendship maintenance and workplace conflict studies possible conflicting situations requiring certain precautions. The final section studies possible usage of friendship as a managerial tool.

The empirical study of the thesis explains a small scale research done in four different countries to demonstrate different attitudes towards friendship and interpersonal relations. Six different interviews show different working cultures, as well as attitude towards friendship at the workplace. In the end of the study, the Hofstede's model is presented to explain the connections and effects of culture on the results.

All companies presented very gaining models of friendship handling at the workplace, expressing both positive and negative attitudes. In Finland, the management & leadership model is widely in use and the hierarchical distance is low, while in the Czech Republic or Slovakia the hierarchical distance is rather authoritative. Also the attitude towards friendship at the workplace changes a lot, for example in Italy it is seen rather negatively.

Key words	friendship, productivity, HRM, effects, motivation

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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis studies any possible effects and different influences of friendship and other interpersonal references. The relations between humans have proven to be one of the very major attributes of humans in general, yet relatively small studies have been made so far from a business point of view. How friendships affect work performance? Up to what extent is it inspired or not welcome at the workplace? How do cultural differences affect this attitude? These are few of many questions answered in this thesis.

The topic connects business studies with business psychology, therefore the theoretical background is rather abstract and case-sensitive. This study focuses on the discussion and potential usage of friendship as a managerial tool for information transfer, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and even feedback. The topic of effects of friendship between a supervisor and a subordinate will also be discussed as well as its perception by third persons.

In the beginning of the theoretical part of the study friendship in general will be discussed. What is friendship, what does it mean to people and do they need it? How does it start or what is required from two people to become friends? These and many other questions will be answered in the first few chapters of the thesis.

The following chapters will study friendship in more detail, focusing on its benefits for the individual as well as benefits for the company if friendship appears at the workplace. The variety of different ties will be discussed as well, focusing on the strength of the friendship with consideration to the presence of professional ties at the same time.

Another segment of the thesis will study negativity in friendships. Different negative influences and downsides are going to be discussed as well as potential conflict situations, their solutions and consequences; as it is one of the most endangering aspects of friendship at the workplace from both the employee's and the employer's points of view.

The last segment of the theoretical study of this thesis will examine influences and usage of friendship and other interpersonal ties as a managerial tool. Friendship in general has a major impact on communication, meaning both way of the interaction and amount. This presents a potentially very productive managerial tool to use in communication and other information flow within a company.

The empirical study presents a small-scale research to demonstrate different attitudes and working atmosphere in different working cultures, as the study took place in four different countries, namely Finland, Italy, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The research has been translated into English and both originals and translations are attached to the thesis as appendices.

In the beginning of the empirical part of the thesis there is a presentation of the research samples and their descriptions; followed by the results of the research, a comparison of research samples to each other and a deduction of information from them. In the end there is discussion and conclusion of the research as a whole, showing different perspectives and usages of the studied topic.

1.1 Problem Statement

The main research problem of this thesis is to study and understand friendship or other interpersonal relationship at the workplace; both its positive and negative effects. This study aims to determine the extent of the influence and potential usage of friendship at the workplace. The main research problem questions are:

a) Is friendship at the workplace beneficial from a productivity point of view or rather negative?
b) Up to what extent does it influence the working atmosphere and job satisfaction of the employees?
c) How big influence in this matter does the type of working culture have?
d) Are there possible usages of friendship as a managerial tool?

1.2 Aim and Outcome

The aim of the thesis is to determine the countable content of this abstract topic and to discuss potential usability and extent of both positive and negative effects; thus using this study to prepare discussion about the topic and accumulate both well-known and less known aspects in order to use this document as a basis for further discussions or studies.

This thesis will provide a discussion basis for friendship and other relations as a managerial tool. From a manager's/leader's point of view it is necessary to maintain, inspire and support friendships and other relations, or to forbid them in order to avoid and solve any potential conflicts. As there are not only positive relations between people, even positive relations do not have only positive influences and contain many negative effects, which necessarily need to be to known and controlled in order to maximize the positive effects and minimize the negative ones.

1.3 Background of the Topic

Friendship as a philosophical field has been studied since the very early history of mankind and has been studied by various ancient philosophers, namely Aristotle and Plato for example. (Price 1989) These ancient thinkers have developed the very first theory of friendship and throughout the history they have become the main thinkers to refer to when studying friendships.

Friendships follow people since the very young age. Their quality, duration or reliability vary a lot based on the age, the amount of connection and its quality. Friendships can have many forms and many meanings. For example friendship is crucial for self-esteem or even mental development of an individual as a whole. As childhood friendships form and end, the process itself forms the personality of an adult and stands as one of the most important factors for overall happiness and life satisfaction. (see Berndt 2002, Kennedy-Moore 2012)

Studying friendship at the workplace however came significantly later as it has been considered for long as a taboo or an unwanted aspect at the workplace. These friendships form and end throughout the career based on many aspects, such as age or personality. Nowadays it seems to be noticeably easier to maintain friendships even on the distance using modern technology. However, as later discussed in this thesis, proximity is only one of the pillars of friendship. (see Williams 2012, Sparks 2007)

2 THEORY OF FRIENDSHIP

2.1 What is Friendship?

Friendship is a voluntary tie between two people for mutual benefits. The benefits might contain almost any aspect of the bond, from self-interest, through emotional satisfaction to philanthropy; all of these both gain and cost, and this relation changes throughout the friendship's lifetime. (see Oxford Dictionary)

To study the beginning of a friendship, we must look at the reasons, why people would even be attracted to each other to start a bond. Lickerman (2013) lists four main reasons which draw people together as friends:

a) Common interest – Sharing an idea, opinion or hobby is most likely the main reason to start a bond, potentially developing into friendship. It gives people emotional security feel and feel of belonging.

b) History – When two people were together through something, the probability of them becoming friends increases significantly. Common experience again forms a basis of bond. Childhood is the best example for this kind of basis. Good childhood friends tend to stay together even if they do not share interests or values up to the normally required extent.

c) Common values – This aspect usually brings together people of the same group, where they do not necessarily know each other too much, for example in too big group. As an example there could be a religion. Different religious groups might be too large to bond everyone with everyone, however they can form a basis for friendship over shared values.

d) Equality – Friendship based on mutual respect and social belongings proving to each other their current role in the society. For example at the workplace, two co-workers share time together every time they work and although they do not share interests, history nor values to necessary extent, they still might become friends based on their social roles.

Friendship is formed by many more aspects, but these four represent the basis of the foundation of a friendship. Their extent is case-sensitive as it depends on the person and how much he/she requires shared values for example.

2.1.1 Why Do People Become Friends?

Although it might sound grim, friendship or any other not forced interpersonal tie is always for self-interest purposes. From every friendship or any warm bond there is always a positive outcome. Without a positive outcome there is no reason to start or to maintain the relationship and this leads to the end of the bond. In case of shared interests, someone is requiring another person to share an interest and in return offers the same. Even if the friendship is based on philanthropy, the philanthropist does have a positive outcome from such bond as well; for example self-respect, self-confidence and satisfaction. (See Evans 2014, Lickerman 2013)

Based on the reasons why people become friends, we can focus on the individual outcomes or interests that certain people get from the friendship. Dotan (2007) forms a theoretical framework of six main pillars of a friendship:

a) Work Safety/Trust – "Work safety/trust is a factor of friendship formation that is affective or emotional in nature." (Dotan 2007) This aspect is usually used by co-workers that are required to cooperate on a regular basis, therefore in need of mutual trust, which might potentially develop into friendship.

b) Missing Role – The friend circles are often supplying a certain missing familial role of a person (Farrell 2003, 13) therefore the friendship might have a filling role in this case; for example a parent or a descendant.

c) Sanity Check – "Sanity Check is a factor of formation that is cognitive in nature and suggests that individuals will likely form a friendship with a co-worker to gain reassurance for the way they are thinking." (Dotan 2007) This reason refers to the shared values from the previous chapter since the reason is not only to share a value, but also to reassure the opinion.

d) Work-value/Life-interests Similarity – Referring to the common values and equality from the previous chapter, this reason bonds people sharing more than just a workplace or time together.

e) Instrumentality – "Instrumentality is a factor of workplace friendship formation which is inherently instrumental in nature." (Dotan 2007) The motivation for this kind of bond is more or less mutually acquisitive in a way that friendship of person A with person B improves the quality of A's work and therefore the friendship has instrumental role. Instrumental friendship increases productivity and employee retention. (Clark 2013)

f) Proximity – Proximity role relates to physical location of two people and spending lots of time together or in direct proximity of each other. For example co-workers working at the same place might develop friendship based on this reason.

Friendships in general share more than one aspect of foundation and reason. The combination type and extent of each aspect determine the strength of the friendship or other interpersonal relationship as a whole. Maintaining these aspects determines the duration of the friendship and an eventual loss of one of the aspects, respective its content, might lead to the end of friendship.

2.1.2 How Important It Is To Have Friends?

According to Evans's (2014) research, the importance of having friends highly depends on age. There are groups of employees not searching for any new relationships or bonds outside of the professional ties; and then there are groups of employees searching actively for friendships not afraid to risk any potential negative effect possibly resulting from the friendship at the workplace.

In Evans's (2014) study, almost half of the employees claim that workplace friendship increases happiness, which should not be misinterpreted as job satisfaction. While job satisfaction is a relation between an employee and his/her job, happiness is employee's personal state of life satisfaction. These two factors are highly connected, but are not the same.

The main difference in the attitude towards friendship is in age, claims Evans (2014). In her research she differentiates two main groups, the younger and the older, and studies the differences in their answers.

The older group, "the baby-boomers", born 1946-1964, surprisingly enough stated that "these relationships had no effect on their professional performance". (Evans 2014) The separation between professional life and personal life increases with age, as this group of people usually have their most required bonds established, such as own family or close friends.

The group of young people on the other hand perceive the workplace as a tool to start new relationships, friendship or even romance. Most of them are not married yet, they are childless, just getting out of the university and looking for new friendships. (Evans 2014)

2.2 Friendships at Workplace

The social connection between co-workers is crucial for the happiness of the employees, as they connect the social life with working life, usually separated from each other. Having close social contacts at the workplace and blurring the lines between a professional tie and a friendship tie increases happiness and prevents work stress and burnout; both with the thought of bringing the attention away from negativity and creating positive atmosphere. (see Burbach 2012)

Another aspect described by Burbach (2012) is the sense of purpose. Sense of purpose determines how employee fits into a group and how is he/she accepted by others. In the case of negative acceptance this might lead to serious workplace problems, such as backstabbing or other conflicts. The friendship in this matter might prevent such scenarios and even increase productivity, since the employee has a friend or several friends to cover his/her back and must not need to worry about gossips or hostile environment. (see Burbach 2012)

Throughout career changes we witness not only movements forward, but also steps back. This might prove to be very stressful, causing anxieties and endanger the general job satisfaction of the employee. Having a friend at the workplace helps to withstand these career changes and stay task-focused. According to Straughn (2006), employees with friends among their supervisors are twice more likely be satisfied with the job and employees having at least three close friends at the workplace are almost 50% more likely to be satisfied with their job in comparison with employees without any friendship tie with the supervisor or with fewer than three close friends at the workplace.

The friendship between a supervisor and a subordinate has significant positive impacts on both the employee and the employer. Burbach (2012) points out that managers in general appreciate people with a positive attitude towards friendships as they are easier to deal with in any matter. Also, the employee might be seen in a more positive light in awarding, promoting or in any situation. (Burbach 2012)

2.2.1 Strength of Friendships

Due to its abstract nature, it is not possible to measure friendship exactly; however there is a measurement for every single tie called Strength of Friendship. The strength of friendship determines the power of the bond. Strength of a tie is a combination of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie. (Granovetter 1973)

A solely professional bond's strength is the task. Once the task is finished, the bond is broken and only the contact remains. In case of a friendship tie the shared interest or value is part of the strength. There are many other aspects affecting the strength of friendships, such as time or bonds of the third parties, conflict of interest and many others. Losing the strength of tie does not necessarily mean the end of the friendship. If the strength is decreasing and the bonding aspect disappears, the tie either becomes weak or eventually vanishes. (see Granovetter 1973)

Krackhardt (1992) introduces the term "philos friendship" for a special type of a friendship in order to increase the measurability or the friendship ties. He describes that philos friendship has three main requirements and if all are met, the friendship becomes a philos friendship.

a) Interaction – Both parties of a tie must interact with each other. The interaction itself might be completely different type of a tie, for example a professional tie.

b) Affection – Both parties of a tie must feel affection for each other. If the affection is felt only by one party of the relationship and not returned, it results in asymmetric relationship.

c) Time – Both parties of a tie must share certain history of interaction with each other for the relationship to evolve into a philos friendship.

In the scenario, when the strength decreases enough to weaken the friendship, the friendship either vanishes or becomes a weak relationship. A weak relationship is type of a relationship which lacks strength, but still prevails. A weak relationship can further develop, either to friendship or vanish completely, for example due to the proximity or time. If two friends from the same workplace are separated by promoting one of them or losing the job and therefore not sharing the workplace anymore, their tie becomes weak, unless it had sufficient strength from more than work-related reasons.
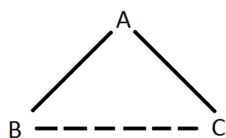

Figure 1. Example of a weak relationship

Figure 1 demonstrates an example of a weak relationship. Person A is a close friend of B and C, yet B and C have a weak relationship. They know each other, but do not share any common interests, common values or history and the tie did not evolve into a friendship.

2.2.2 Friendship Maintenance

Maintaining a friendship as a social tie between two parties might prove to be a very crucial part in maintaining positive work atmosphere and ensuring coherence of a collective, thus keeping the productivity high. Failure in this process might lead to resignation of qualified personnel, decreasing productivity and broken collegiality of the team. Lott (2014) says that friends are irreplaceable; however friendships are very fragile; thus they must be dealt with carefully.

The fragility of a friendship is directly connected with honesty. This might be the problematic part, as honesty could be also a negative factor leading to the end of a friendship tie; especially at the workplace, for example when asking for feedback from a friend/colleague social communication is crucial in order to maintain the level of strength of a friendship. However, excessive social communication at the workplace leads to distraction and a decrease of productivity. Throughout the friendship's lifetime, there are better and worse moments - even crises. In such a situation the strength of a friendship suffers a significant decrease and the relationship might become weak or even end. A weak relationship itself might already cause significant problems at the workplace, as it might decrease the information flow or even block certain actions as seen in Figure 2. The working process starts at C, continues at B and ends at A. The weak relationship between B and A might significantly complicate or delay the process itself. (see Granovetter, 1973, 1360-1373)
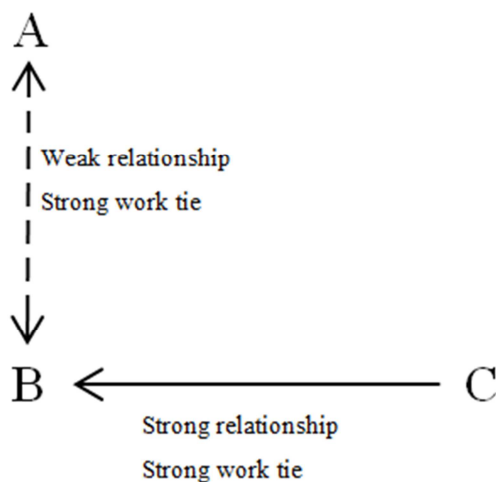

A

↑
|
| Weak relationship
| Strong work tie
|
|
↓

B ⟵———————— C

Strong relationship
Strong work tie

Figure 2. Example of weak tie complication

2.3 Problems with Friendships

Friendships in general bring positive impact with them both from the company's point of view as well as the employee's. It can enrich the environment, provide support and sociability. (Morrison & Nolan 2007) However, there are also many negative aspects and problems.

The main problem is that all these interpersonal relationships can create difficulties for other employees. (Morrison & Nolan 2007) As friendships start, friendships also end or come across conflicts. These conflicts might evolve into bigger problems endangering the productivity of the collective. At some point dividing the whole collective into separate groups and the solution of this problem might be very challenging.

Another, smaller but a more common problem, is distraction. As a result of distraction or anxiety connected to workplace friendships, the final productivity might be significantly reduced. (Morrison & Nolan 2007) This might lead to wrong output of work from employers to employees due to their stress related to the friendships.

Very natural in classical friendship, yet very dangerous in a friendship at the workplace is rivalry. While at some point it might prove motivating and encouraging to the employees, every race always has a winner and a looser. Accepting the looser position might not be acceptable to everyone and jealousy takes place. According to Williams (1986), the winner might feel guilty about his/her success at a friend's expense. Armour (2007) says that there is no true friendship forced by external factors, such as money, power or status.

Some people are not able to maintain the two-role friendship, which means to be both a colleague and a friend at the same time. At some point one party of this tie might start taking advantage over the other and using the instrumental part of the friendship for covering one's own mistakes and weaknesses; which might lead, again, to the conflict between friends at the workplace.

A very significant potential problem appears in a situation where one party of the friendship tie is in a different position within the company, especially when one becomes the supervisor of the other. Although it might bring a lot of positive aspects too, the main negative one is favouritism. People tend to expect their friends to show special treatment and favouritism. (Morrison & Nolan 2007) The perception of this by third parties naturally leads to conflicts.

The relations between two friends are expected to be very honest, trustworthy, and open, however, such a situation does not exist within the company every time. Keeping certain information from a friend may violate a friend's expectation of confidentiality and privacy. (Morrison & Nolan 2007)

Therefore, maintaining such a relationship might prove rather challenging and conflictual, especially when evaluating or providing negative feedback to a friend. Constructive feedback is very crucial in a successfully working company, both positive and negative. However a friendship might complicate this feedback process. Especially problem with productivity is very difficult to deal with if the supervisor is a friend of his/her subordinate.

Communication is important in every single interpersonal tie in starting and maintaining the relationship. However, what if the contact is too excessive? Rather high proximity of two colleagues sharing more than a few common interests and workplace might result in a friendship with excessive communication at the workplace, potentially leading to an increase of the job satisfaction at the expense of a significant decrease of productivity.

Morrison and Nolan (2007) commenced a research in this matter studying the amount and the difficulty of certain aspects of friendship at the workplace. According to their research, it is significantly more difficult to criticize or discipline a subordinate as a friend than being criticized or disciplined by a supervisor as a friend. Their results were divided into two categories:

a) Work caused – This category included distraction or excessive work as well as negativity connected to the task. Friends might feel obligated to do extra tasks or, on the contrary, not obligated to finish completely a certain task or of required quality they are ordered to do. Some people are more aware than others of the duality between maintaining a friendly working atmosphere and the performance of their formal role within the company. (Morrison & Nolan 2007)

b) Interpersonal tensions – This category contains mainly the problems connected to the hierarchy and double role ties in it. It proved to be more difficult to maintain a double role friend/colleague from a supervisor's point of view. "Disciplining a friend is an extreme scenario and it appears that people experience a great deal of anxiety when called upon to reprimand or notify a friend because their work is not up to par." (Morrison & Nolan 2007) Other noticeable problems in this category are rivalry, breach of confidentiality, negative emotions and ended friendship.

2.3.1 Negative Effects of Friendship at the Workplace

As widely agreed, friendship has list of positive effects, but many negative effects are often forgotten. Some are lying, offensive, behaving overly needy or too advisory, I-know-everything types, or even betrayal. (Duenwald 2002) The failure of the friendship depends on its strength and in case of failure awkwardness, negativity or even conflict appears at the workplace.

However, this is theoretically the last step in the process of decreasing the strength of a friendship due to the negative effects of the friendship, respective of the negative effects of one party of the friendship tie. Many of the negative effects might be only a phase in a friendship's lifetime and proper friendship maintenance can avoid such ends. At some point it is important, nevertheless, to decide whether the friendship is worth saving or not. If the expenses, such as time or energy, are too high, it is better to leave the solution to the interested person to solve himself/herself at his/her own time outside of the workplace. (see Granovetter 1973)

Even in the case of the end of the friendship tie there can be still many negative effects of it that might influence the work environment. Friends are expected to be trustworthy, therefore usually friends know a lot about each other, which is up to certain extent considered confidential. Breaking the friendship tie endangers also the confidentiality of such information as the trustworthiness of such a person is significantly decreasing. If such situation happens at the workplace, it might prove to be very difficult to cooperate with such a person and in an extreme scenario might lead to resignation from one of the parties. As a results the potential loss of a qualified and experienced worker, because of personal conflict, can be the outcome. (see Granovetter 1973)

2.3.2 Workplace Conflict

To manage workplace conflict, the relationship between the supervisor and subordinates is important on the same level as the relationship between two colleagues on the same hierarchical level. The good relations and an overview of the potential conflicts can be achieved more easily at small companies or smaller working units. In companies with less than 100 employees, the relationships between supervisors and subordinates are noticeably warmer and it has proven to be easier to avoid potential conflicts. (Forth, Bewley & Bryson 2006, 82) In bigger companies or units managing of potential conflicts is rather more difficult due to a higher amount of direct relations to manage.

Forth et al. (2006)'s finding also show that conflicts on the same hierarchical level are twice more common in medium-sized companies in comparison with small-sized companies; even in the ones with recognized workers' union. Another finding shows significant differences in percentage of conflicts between companies without recognized workers' union and with. Workplaces with a recognized union have almost twice as high occurrence of conflicts at the workplace. When comparing small-sized companies without a recognized workers' union to medium-sized companies without a recognized workers' union, the tendency was the same. Small-sized company without a recognized trade union is statistically the least conflictual of all studied workplaces.

One of the more significant potential conflicts is rather external – family role conflict; especially touching men, but not solely. Usually when a person gets married or even founds his/her family, many of his/her friendship strengths decline, as the social loyalty is divided between friendships and family. Family provides another source of emotional support, therefore one of the pillars for friendship tie declines significantly. Another problem connected with family role conflict is a demand from a family member, which might be in direct conflict with the demand from the other party of a friendship tie, therefore due to prioritizing decreasing the strength of the friendship tie. (Farrell 2003, 250)

In case a problem appears, solving conflicts from a managerial position has proven to be one of the most difficult supervisor's tasks, since it requires strong keeping of a role to sustain authority and clear hierarchy, yet also informal communication in order to ensure the durability of the solution and a friendly approach. Therefore, this task becomes even more difficult in the case of supervisor-subordinate friendship tie. According to the research done by Morrison and Nolan (2007), the act of disciplining or criticizing a friend generates the highest level of discomfort of all studied cases of friendship at the workplace. Already the process of revealing the problem might prove to be difficult due to warm relations between two friends on different hierarchical positions, having to criticize each other or give negative feedback to one another.

Another approach is rather authoritative and formal. In case of conflict, certain sanctions could take place. According to the questioned managers for the survey purposes by Kersley, Alpin, Forth, Bryson, Bewley, Dix and Oxenbridge (2006, 229) approximately in 5 per cent of conflicts or disciplinary process sanctions take place.

However, workplaces with official and formal disciplinary procedures show significantly higher occurrence of disciplinary processes in comparison with companies with less official disciplinary procedures and informal approach to conflict solutions. (see Kersley et al. 2006)

2.3.3 Problem Indicators

The workplace always provides many potential conflicts and without precaution they might evolve into real conflicts. Searching for potential conflict and solving the problem before it becomes a real problem has been shown to be one of the major tasks for a leader in an organizational unit. There are certain indicators of conflict potentially leading to the dissatisfaction of an employee; these indicators might be either collective or individual. (see Kersley et al. 2006, 230)

An internal or external factor, or both, can significantly influence the workplace atmosphere or its parts; for example the stress level. Stressed person has many times higher chance to develop a potential problem and without precaution he/she often decides to solve the problem himself/herself. The problem then appears, if this solution is not the correct one or only a temporary one; for example in form of absenteeism. According to Kersley's et al.(2006, 230-231) research those absent are mostly workers from rather stressing fields, such as education or social work.

Another solution with negative effects is voluntary resignation. The stress connected with a problem or direct conflict might lead up to this end of a professional tie. Paradoxically, in comparison to the results dealing with disciplinary processes and informal communication, small companies tend to suffer from this problem more than larger companies. (see Kersley et al. 2006, 231-232) The problem, however, does not always disappear when this professional tie ends, as the problem might prevail and even develop into collective dispute. Therefore further precautions are necessary in this matter.

When managing the occurrence of potential problems', it is important not to disband the friendship ties from the consideration as a potential tool. Active feedback is more difficult and potentially stressing as mentioned in the previous chapters, however using the friendship in such situation might increase its power. Anonymous feedback on the contrary has been shown to be significantly less affecting stress and has higher honestly level than active and direct feedback. (see Kersley et al. 2006, 135-139)

2.4 Influences of the Friendship

When friendship at the workplace already appears, it has had many influences on the organizational culture, in the job satisfaction and many other important factors determining productivity. Collectivism is one of the biggest influences of friendship at the workplace. Friends tend to communicate with each other more, they also share more concerns and work-related information, thus enabling improvements and increasing efficiency. (Lee & Ok 2011)

What is then the way to achieve a highly productive collective in context of interpersonal relations? There are many factors both directly affecting the productivity and affecting each other with productivity effect as a result. According to Murray (2002, 121-122) a highly productive collective requires three main components:

a) Participation – It is important to allow and inspire employees to participate in discussion, submit constructive feedback, be honest and inspire within them the feeling of belonging. Employees should have at least some participation in decision-making processes and problem solving. Unfortunately, this is not possible in every kind or size of a company, therefore, it can be rather difficult to achieve. If it is not possible to enable employees to participate in these processes, a feeling of belonging can supply the participation; thus increasing organizational commitment and loyalty of an employee.

b) Education – Education and schooling of the workers increase not only direct performance, but also interpersonal trust based on the instrumentality, therefore supporting potential friendship ties with another pillar to increase the strength of the friendship.

c) Incentives – Employees must be motivated and inspired to high performance. There are many managerial tools for motivating employees, such as rewarding, communication or participation. (see Murray 2002, 121-122)

There are also many direct out coming influences of friendship and informal communication at the workplace. Morrison (2004) lists in his theoretical study six main factors and focuses on their mutual influences. These factors are friendship opportunities, cohesion, friendship prevalence, job satisfaction, organizational commitment and intention to leave. Dotan (2007) concludes Morrison's studies and deals with direct effect of friendship on these factors according to the pillars of friendship. (see Figure 3)
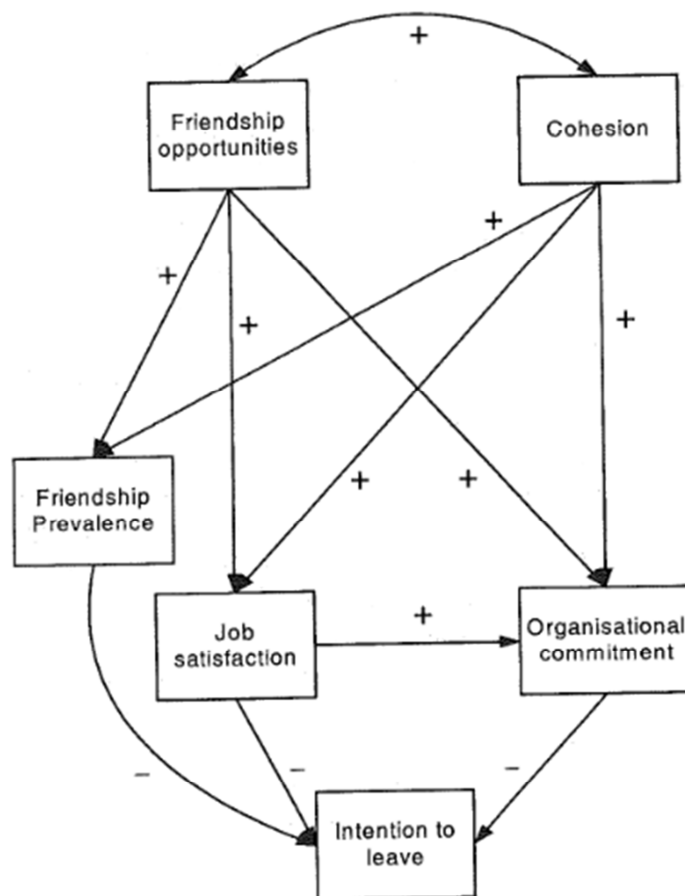
Figure 3. Theoretical model of influences of friendship (Morrison 2004)

Morrison (2004) presents his theoretical model of direct and indirect influences of friendship on organizational factors as shown in Figure 3. A plus sign marks positive influence, a minus sign negative influence and arrow direction defines the direction of studied influence. A two-way arrow marks mutual influence, as seen only between cohesion and friendship opportunities.

The only mutually positive effect studied in this theoretical framework is between friendship opportunities and cohesion. Naturally cohesive personnel provides significantly wider friendship opportunities, and vice versa as well. A friendly atmosphere with many friendship opportunities secures the collective's coherence. (Morrison 2004)

Friendship directly affects job satisfaction. According to Dotan (2007) this effect is mainly based on one of the three pillars of friendship – missing role, work safety/trust or sanity check. Other pillars have also impact, but less significance. A person having a friend at the workplace based on the missing role function will significantly more likely be satisfied with his/her current job.

The difference between job satisfaction and organisational commitment is described by Williams & Hazer (1986). According to their theory, organizational commitment is a relation between an employee and a company as a whole; whilst job satisfaction is determined by the relation between an employee and his/her current workplace. This influence is shown one way, as positive job satisfaction positively affects organisational commitment, whilst it does not always apply vice versa.

Morrison (2004) points out also the direct influence of friendship on organizational commitment. However, majority of this influence goes indirectly through to job satisfaction. Dotan (2007) adds that instrumentality and work safety/trust are the main pillars affecting this influence.

Three of the factors negatively influence the intention to leave the workplace; namely organizational commitment, job satisfaction and friendship prevalence; thus failure of one of these factors might increase the employee's intention to leave. (Morrison 2004) The main factors are the organizational commitment and job satisfaction, therefore failure of one of those leads almost inevitably to intention to leave, whilst friendship prevalence only decreases it. Dotan's (2007) study suggests that instrumentality and work safety/trust have the main impact on the intention to leave.

The prevalence of friendship is a purely abstract and an uncountable factor, affecting only the intention to leave. Morrison (2004) describes the friendship prevalence as a "consequence of both friendship and cohesion." He states that a cohesive team will more likely form friendships with higher friendship strength and, thus, decrease individual's intention to leave.

Excluding the already mentioned ones, Dotan (2007) lists a few more direct influences of friendship according to their main pillars. Friendships based on a missing role or instrumentality might have significant impact on direct job involvement. A person with a friend at the workplace fulfilling the missing role or mutually improving each other's productivity due to their instrumental relationship will more likely feel like a part of the company and, thus, positively influence his/her productivity, job involvement and organizational commitment.

Another direct impact of friendship is to organizational citizenship behaviour, which is very closely connected to organizational commitment. According to Dotan's (2007) study there are four different types of friendship pillars - respectively four different friendship types based on one or more of these factors - affecting organizational citizenship behaviour. These are proximity, instrumentality, work safety/trust, and missing role. However, in this case two of them, proximity and work safety/trust, affect organizational citizenship behaviour positively, whilst instrumentality and missing role rather negatively.

The last direct impact described by Dotan (2007) is performance. The factors directly affecting performance are friendships based on sanity check, proximity and work safety/trust, however only proximity and work safety/trust based friendships have a positive effect on performance, whist sanity check has significantly negative effect on performance. This is caused by high level of a social interpersonal tie between them, therefore distracting the parties from work and significantly decreasing the performance itself.

2.4.1 Information Flow via Friendship

Haythornthwaite & Wellman (1998) describe in their study different kinds of interpersonal ties and the information flow through them; as different ties between different members of a working collective vary, the information flow as well.

Figure 4 demonstrates how different information flow could be within the workplace. Employees A, B and C work in direct proximity, the work of A and C is related, whilst B's work is from a different field. A and B are close friends, A and C are distant friends and B and C are not friends. The information flow between A and B will be mostly social and not work-related, however, still at a high level and stays as a potential managerial tool, for example for constructive feedback. The information flow between A and C will be mainly work-related and slightly social, thus usable as a managerial tool, for example for innovation or improvements of work-related matters. The communication between B and C is almost at zero, thus few possibilities for usage as a managerial tool here is to be found. However, in time, the relationship between B and C might change for example based on proximity or shared values, thus starting a friendship tie and then there is already potential usage as a managerial tool.
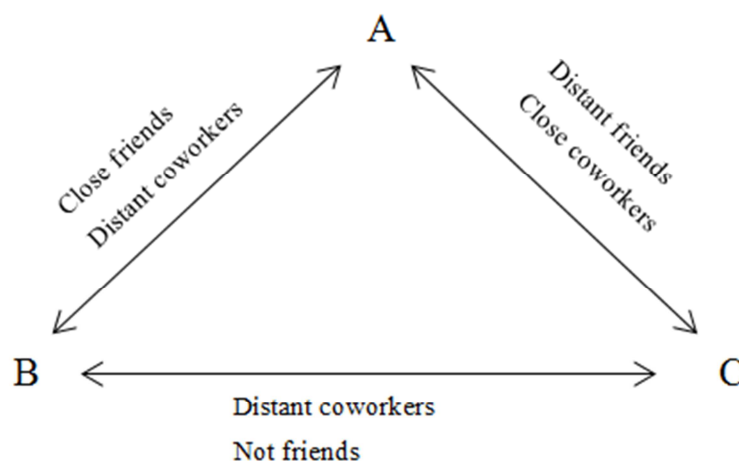

Figure 4. Example of different information flow

Haythornthwaite & Wellman (1998) discuss in their theoretical frame different relationships between certain aspects of information flow via different kinds of interpersonal ties.

a) Direct proportion between frequency and multiplexity of communication. The higher is the frequency of communication at the workplace, the higher is the possibility that the communication will take more than one form of interpersonal tie. Using still the same example from Figure 4, A and C have high frequency of work-related communication, thus the possibility for them to start an informal or even friendship tie is increased.

b) Reciprocal proportion between frequency and media. The more is used one type of media for work-related communication, for example e-mail, the lower is possibility for the parties of the work tie to start an informal or friendship tie. For example from Figure 4, if B and C do not share directly workplace, thus having low physical proximity, and their work-related communication is relatively low and managed via e-mail only, the probability of them to open an informal tie is significantly decreased, yet not impossible as there are other factors.

c) Direct proportion between level of formal communication and amount of interaction. Formal work-related communication, such as meetings, conferences or presentations, tends to increase the frequency and the total amount of communication with the formality of the work tie. The example from the Figure 4 shows that A and C will have significantly more interaction than A and B, because A and C have formal work-related tie, whilst A and B have informal non-work-related tie.

d) Direct proportion between depth of friendship and amount of communication within an informal interpersonal tie. Naturally the amount of social communication is increasing directly proportionally to how deep is the friendship tie between the two parties of the tie. In Figure 4 the amount of the social communication between A and B will be significantly higher than the social communication between A and C, although they are also friends. The level of social communication between B and C will be almost non-existent.

e) Association of work tie at the expense of work status with more interaction. In most of the cases this aspect does not take place, because the work tie and work status is usually identical; but often seen in different units of a company. Figure 4 can, again, demonstrate this example. B is hierarchically higher than A and C, yet there is more work-related interaction between A and C than between A and B or B and C, because their work tie is rather small.

f) Association of work tie at the expense of friendship tie with more interaction. The initialisation of work-related communication within a company proved to be the main factor of starting an interaction, even at the expense of social communication and friendship ties. Figure 5 shows the example of this interaction by comparing the amount of communication between A and B, and B and C. For the purpose of this example, let's consider all friendships at the very same level of strength. Although both A and C are friends of B, there will be higher level of interaction between B and C, than between B and A. From A's point of view, there will be more interaction between A and C than between A and B, due to A's work-related relationship with C and rather distant work-related relationship with B. (Haythornthwaite & Wellman 1998)
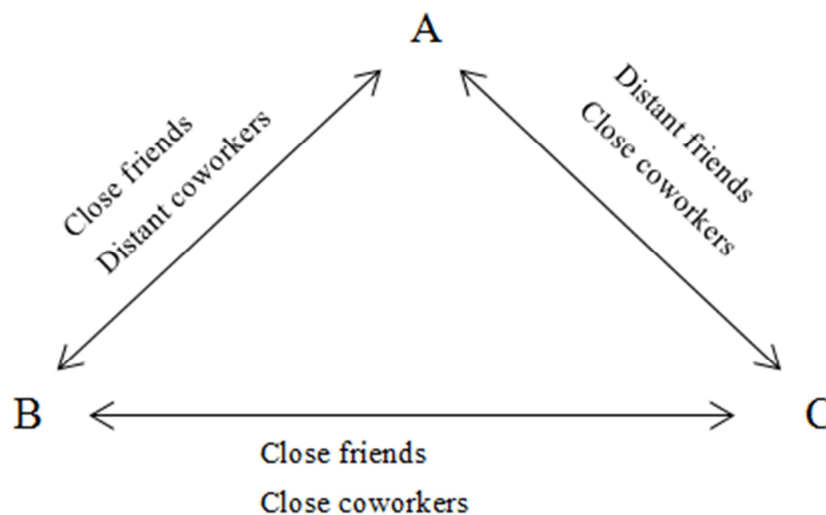

Figure 5. Example of information flow

Proper maintenance and caring of the friendship might simplify the process of solving problems connected with information flow, for example, by blocking the flow due to weak relationship between two crucial persons. The potential usages of information flow using friendship are numerous as these ties do not stay only within the company itself, but might, for example, help to start a contact with a potential business partner or a supplier; therefore they should not be underestimated.

2.5 Hofstede's Model Theory

Friendships at the workplace are also heavily affected by culture itself. In some parts of the world, friendship might have a completely different meaning than in another part of the world. Culture in general has a great influence on the workplace culture, forming its basis, out of which each company forms its own inner company culture. The culture has also many influences on the negative effects of the friendship, such as conflict. In some places conflict is a solely personal matter with no space at the workplace. In some other places it might be a collective problem, where the whole workplace participates in its solution.

Hofstede studies different influences of general culture on the workplace culture. In his model, he describes few dimensions having the most significant influence to the workplace culture. As for now, his model has become one of the main tools in comparing different cultures throughout the whole world. (see Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010)

The first dimension is power distance. Power distance measures the hierarchical distance between subordinate and supervisor. It studies equality, dependence and obedience. While an environment with typically low power distance shows equality, interdependence, and communication rather than obedience, an environment with high power distance shows inequality, counterdependence, and a high level of obedience. (Hofstede et al. 2010)

The second dimension is collectivism & individualism. While in environments where collectivism is inspired, people tend to work as one cohesive unit, sharing both credit and blame. The personal attitudes and influences are discouraged and the contribution to the collective is one of the most crucial aspects. In individualistic environments people work as a collective created out of individual units. Credits or sanctions are not shared, but directed to the individual person. Individualism inspires personal care for one's self and immediate family, while collectivism inspires strong cohesive ties and community to take care of individuals' needs. (see Hofstede et al. 2010)

The third dimension is femininity & masculinity. Hofstede et al. (2010) describe feminine environment as more caring about the quality of life in general. Personal feelings, modesty and cooperation take place in feminine environment, while in masculine environment the focus is on assertivity, facts, competing, challenges, and earnings.

The last basic dimension is uncertainty avoidance. This dimension measures the extent of threat feeling coming from uncertain things in the society. High uncertainty avoidance brings stress, anxiety and aggression in the case of a new and unknown situation. Environments with low uncertainty avoidance tend to cause less stress and anxiety, and inspire curiosity rather than fear of unknown. (Hofstede et al. 2010)

After the four main dimensions, other two have been added later on. Long term orientation is one of them. Environments with low long term orientation tend to be keener on traditions and rituals. On the other hand, environments with high long term orientation tend to put the main significance in education and schooling in preparing for the future at the expense of traditions. (see Hofstede et al. 2010)

The last dimension is indulgence & restraint. This dimension describes the extent of allowance of personal drives, such as life satisfaction, fun and happiness, to influence the environment. (see Hofstede et al. 2010)

3 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

3.1 Introduction to the Research and Aim

As a base for the empirical study there were six randomly chosen companies and an employee from each company to interview in order to discuss the topic. Due to the different approaches from different questioned personnel, the results are not directly comparable on the same level, but rather discussable in general context.

The aim of this research was multiple. One of them was to study the positive effects of friendship at the workplace as well as negative ones from different points of view, meaning both from the supervisory point of view and subordinates' point of view. Another aim was to achieve at least 50% of the results from outside of Finland in order to avoid the situation, where the usability of the research would be rather limited if it took place solely in Finland. The third aim was to face the problematics of this topic and achieve honesty and clear answers.

3.2 Introduction of Interviewees

Table 1. List of questioned companies

	Nationality	Employees	Field
Q1	Finnish	6	Beauty salon
Q2	Czech	24500/2600*	Transportation
Q3	Czech	42	Estate agency
Q4	Finnish	100	Wealth management
Q5	Slovak**	10000/1500*	Chemical products
Q6	Italian	30+	Jewellery

* Total amount/the workplace or department
** Questionnaire made in Czech language

The first questioned company (Q1) was a beauty salon located in Finland. It was the smallest company questioned and from the personal judgement this company

seemed the most "team-like". The friendship at the workplace was very obvious and strong. The questioned person was not able to provide an interview in Finnish as Swedish was her mother tongue and has limited Finnish skills. In general the questioned person seemed very pleased with the fact that their company was chosen for this research and in return offered full honesty and did not even require anonymity at first, but after reconsideration they agreed with anonymity. The company was described as "a bunch of friends" in the interview and the atmosphere proved it right. A very calm and relaxed working atmosphere made it a very pleasant environment both for the employees and for the customers. The interview was followed by free discussion, where also other employees were questioned. The answers were very positive and all the employees were highly satisfied with the job and confirmed high organizational commitment and loyalty.

The second company (Q2) was the biggest questioned company in this research. The company has around 24500 employees in total and the department of the interviewed person approximately 2600. Their field of business is transportation of persons and goods, and the company operates heavily internationally. Due to its size, anonymity was complete necessity for the research. The questioned person, an IT engineer, showed deep honesty, but was too loyal to the company to discuss negative effects in detail. Some were mentioned, but no details were obtained. After the interview, there was a free discussion, again, to find out the details about the friendships and relations to the questioned person's subordinates, but the hierarchical distance was high.

The third studied company (Q3) was also from the Czech Republic and it was an estate agency operating in three different cities as independent departments sharing only general management. The interviewed person here was the director of one of the units. This showed to be the most difficult interview of all because it was very challenging to gain honesty and the atmosphere was very highly task-oriented. The whole workplace seemed stressed and strict, however, it appeared to be positive in some aspect too, as their performance was very high. Therefore, free discussion did not take place here. The questionnaire was made via skype and it did not really seem pleasant to reveal some information for the questioned

person, although not really necessarily negative. The required anonymity was very high and even revealing the country of origin was a slight problem to the questioned person, but agreed to later on.

The second company from Finland (Q4) operates in wealth management field and has approximately 100 employees. The interviewed person, a sales agent, was very willing to help and honest. The main problem was the same with companies 7 and 8, which were after consideration not used in the research, because of inability of the questioned person to express and discuss the topic. However after the interview, more details were revealed in free discussion, for example the warmth of the relationships outside of the workplace. Anonymity was not required, but gladly accepted when offered.

The fifth company (Q5) was another multinational corporation. The interviewee was from the Slovak division, having approximately 1500 employees and seemed the least productive working environment encountered during the interviews. Mainly this was caused by high separation of management from the subordinates and the missing leadership aspect in it. The employees were not motivated and, as mentioned in the interview, people are friendly and communicative highly at the expense of productivity. No problem was encountered in terms of willingness and honesty.

The last company (Q6) was a jewelry manufacturer/distributor from Italy, although as mentioned in the interview, the company is only pretending to be manufacturer. The questioned person, an area manager, was very willing to help and even grateful for this opportunity. The company was very task-related and close to zero attention was paid to job satisfaction, motivation or interpersonal relations. A very interesting aspect was the competitiveness between employees within the company. Teamwork is not inspired and not even welcome. The questioned person also demonstrated it by talking about the company in third person, not counting herself into it. Due to the distance and a slight language barrier, the free discussion did not take place and just a few additional questions were asked. Naturally anonymity was a necessity.

In general the companies showed a wide variety of samples and could provide needed information. The differences in business areas as well as in different approaches to interpersonal relations provided a very useful base for the research. The variables might be connected to different working cultures in different countries, but to prove this theory and to study its extent, further research would be necessary.

Table 2. List of questioned companies with the findings from the research

	Nationality	Employees	Atmosphere	Productivity	Friendship attitude	Hierarchy distance
Q1	Finland	6	Very good	Very good	Very good	Low
Q2	Czech	24500/2600	Good	Good	Neutral	Very high
Q3	Czech	42	Task-Related	Very good	Low	Very high
Q4	Finland	100	Good	Very good	Neutral	Low
Q5	Slovak	10000/1500	Very good	Very low	Very good	Very high
Q6	Italian	30+	Task-Related	Good	Low	High

A small scale case study is possible in this case. For the purpose of this study, the working atmosphere, attitude towards friendship, productivity and hierarchy distance were scaled. Table 2 shows that the working atmosphere varies a lot and in this research is not directly related to the working culture of the country, but rather being influenced by it. Another finding from Table 2 presents the relation between working atmosphere and productivity. As can be seen in comparison between Q1 and Q5, a very good atmosphere does not necessarily mean a high productivity. On the other hand, if we compare Q1 and Q3, which both proved to have high productivity, only Q1 showed very good working atmosphere, therefore a direct link can be spotted and a strict environment is not necessary for high productivity. From this table it can be also read that in Finland in general the interpersonal relations are valued, while in Italy, for example, are not that welcome. The last column of the Table 2 shows us the hierarchy distance spotted during the interviews as it varied according to the country. In Finland it seemed to be very low, and the concept of management and leadership as two separate tasks of the same person was in use. In Central Europe the distance was already high

and even when interviewing supervisors, they stated that supervisors and subordinates should not be friends - at least not at the workplace. In Italy the working individualism is inspired and the hierarchy is very strong, also demonstrated by the usage of distant addressing of the company and only the general management is considered as part of the company, not the employees.

The variables used to measure the atmosphere, the productivity, the friendship attitude and the hierarchy distance were results of the combination of personal research during the interview and discussion after the interviews.

3.3 Problematics with the Interviews

The main challenge in conducting this study was the companies' willingness to cooperate and share crucial information. However, out of nine companies asked to participate in this research, only one strictly refused to cooperate. Two interviews were, however, not gainful and it resulted into six companies being used. The anonymity was offered to everyone and all were accepted. In general the companies were willing to cooperate and usually after the anxiety in the beginning of the interviews, the attitude towards this research was high enough to encourage free discussions and honesty during the interviews.

Another challenge was encountered with the distance. While companies in Finland were easy to reach personally, companies abroad had to be interviewed by Skype, which puts a slightly impersonal effect into it. Some of the questioned companies, however, engaged in free discussion after the interview itself revealing additional information and details. This proved to be very useful especially in Finland, where answers to direct questions are usually yes/no.

3.4 Methodology

The companies were chosen at random, usually by personal contact to someone in the company. This affected highly the willingness to help and honesty. The interview was moderated and the questions from the questionnaire served rather as topics of discussion than as direct questions. Therefore, occasionally a question

was added to reveal further details about the matter, however, the main questionnaire contained 14 questions, out of which three were for statistical use and eleven for the qualitative analysis.

Statistical questions like city, age of the questioned person and turnover were not included in the final research as their relevance to the topic is not very high and no direct connection was found. The age range was rather wide, approximately from 30 years to 60 years of age. After the interviews and discussions, the answers were analyzed and some answered scaled for comparison.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability of a document define the quality and usability for further studies and continuations. Validity is based on the used method of the research and on how the aim has been met in the outcome. A correct use of a type of the research is crucial for sufficient validity. Reliability is an extent to which the results would be exactly the same, in the case of repeating the research. A solely qualitative small research without set limitations suffers a lot of decrease of reliability, as the answers might vary from person to person. (see Shuttleworth 2013)

For ethical reasons, the research was made anonymously and all participants agreed with using their information solely for this purpose. The potential validity of the research was decreased by the small amount of participants in the research, however, a qualitative research was necessary, as the topic required direct discussion, asking for additional information and questioning the details. Another problem was the fact that such a small sample was located in four different countries. This was partially compensated by the free discussion or additional questions after the research, when the participants were asked about other companies and how they perceive it there. Their answers were referring to the workplace culture of other companies, both in the same field and in the same country, and therefore increasing the reliability of the research.

The problem with reliability has been taken into account and all transcripts from the interviews, as well as notes from the free discussions, are stored for further use. All involved companies were very concerned about the anonymity, because many negative aspects of friendships and workplaces were discussed.

Validity has been increased by generalizing qualitative research within the case companies, forming a foundation based on the general culture, as well as discussing the topic in open discussions after the interviews, therefore the research has relatively high level of repeatability. Many of the answers were corresponding with the general culture model by Hofstede (2010). The answers of the interviewees were credible and trustworthy, as all of them were assured by the anonymity and the usage of the interviews was allowed solely for the purpose of this document.

3.6 Results of the Research

The results of the research are very good and showed many expected and unexpected aspects of different working cultures as well as different approaches. The research itself demonstrated different stages of loyalty to the company and the inner struggles when revealing negative information was high, and therefore not forced. Often this tension was released after the interview in free discussion.

3.6.1   Q1 – Interviewee 1 (Finland)

Q1 was the most open company. The whole collective is group of friends spending time together often also outside of the workplace. When asked about the relationship between the supervisor and the subordinate, the questioned person explained that they do not have such a relationship almost at all and instead they have a very friendly environment with only one person having more responsibility. The mutual respect however stays and the supervisor still has authority.

The friendly atmosphere was stated to be very crucial in terms of job satisfaction and motivation and, according to the answers, the relaxed atmosphere increases productivity. However, when later discussed, some negative effects were there as well, such as delay from work, but very rare, since it is very simple not to be delayed from work when working directly with customers.

Q1 presented itself as the most efficient model of handling friendship at the workplace out of all interviewed companies. However, the application of this model might prove to be rather difficult in companies of more employees, since Q1 had only six of them. When discussed, the interviewee agreed with this difficulty, however he believed that it would be possible, if everyone would do what he/she has to do.

Overall they seemed to be very satisfied with their workplace and obviously they all were very motivated, which increases the productivity of the team. Occasional personal problems are usually quickly fixed or not brought to the workplace. The only big problem mentioned was solved by firing one employee due to the inappropriate communication both with her colleagues and customers.

3.6.2   Q2 – Interviewee 2 (Czech Republic)

The second company proved to be very difficult to analyze and generalize due to its size. However, the interviewee had been working for the same company since 1975 and has changed positions many times, therefore, he could be considered an expert in his company's working culture. During this interview very high loyalty to the company was noticed as well as discomfort when describing negative aspects.

The questioned person made it clear that there are friendships at the workplace, but rather limited due to the high hierarchical distance in this working culture. As a supervisor, he stated that it is inappropriate to be good friends with subordinates, however, also out of the workplace they seem to have very warm relations irrespective the positions in the company.

Teamwork is highly appreciated and almost no rivalry has been encountered. Collegiality is strong and even professional-only ties are very warm. The loyalty was mentioned again, as many people work voluntarily overtime, because of high job satisfaction. This atmosphere proved the employees to be very committed to the organization and in general losing the workplace here is taken very personally and negatively. Unfortunately, at the moment there are cutbacks and dismissals happening and they have a very significant influence on the work atmosphere.

In the discussion after the interview, the interviewed person described the relations outside of the workplace as very warm but careful. For example, the subordinates are obviously tensed and do not want to appear in any problem with their supervisor as it often happens in normal friendships and, therefore, the friendships are not as healthy as the normal ones. This is caused by generally high organizational commitment in the Czech Republic, where employees often spend decades within the same country, therefore act like this in fear to lose their workplace. Another aspect supporting this behavior is the intensifying unemployment rate in the Czech Republic.

3.6.3   Q3 – Interviewee 3 (Czech Republic)

The third company was very unusual to interview. In the interviewed unit there were around ten employees and all women. The questioned person was the supervisor of this local unit of a relatively small company and all the ties within the company were forced to be only professional. Friendships were welcome, but outside of the workplace, and the atmosphere within the company is very strict and task-oriented. The supervisor keeps track of the time spent at work by her subordinates and presents the highest performance on regular meetings, which motivates the employees to increase their productivity.

The interviewed person mentioned a friend among subordinates, who was hired two years ago based on her recommendation. This friend of hers got accepted warmly into the collective and since the promotion of the questioned person, their

ties have turned into professional only at the workplace and they respect the strict policy of keeping their friendship outside of the company.

She also believes very strongly into negative effects of friendship at the workplace. She agreed with positive effects of friendships to the atmosphere and job satisfaction, but at the expense of productivity, which she refuses to allow.

This concept of friendship at the workplace presents the opposite attitude when compared to Q1. Due to their size, these two companies are comparable to certain extent. Both of the companies demonstrated a very high productivity and task-orientation. When discussed later, friendship was seen as a motivating aspect and a positive tool to have among subordinates, however, it is necessary to keep the socializing within limits.

When compared to Q2, both of the companies showed a very high hierarchical distance and at some point the respect of the supervisor turns into fear. Although Q2 had significantly more relaxed atmosphere than Q3, they both seemed to be very task-oriented and in general any kind of non-work related interaction was secondary.

3.6.4 Q4 – Interviewee 4 (Finland)

The second Finnish company in this research was a medium size company operating in the wealth management area. The questioned person was a sales agent and although he has worked for a relatively short time at the company, very strong organizational commitment and loyalty to the company were evident. He works rather individually, therefore, there are no subordinates of his and the hierarchical relationships discussed were solely from him upwards.

There are relationships within the company, however, according to the interviewed person, it is impossible to call these relationships friendships, because

the relations are too distant for that. Nevertheless, all relationships within the company are very warm and relaxed.

The main problem mentioned was motivation. Apparently the atmosphere and relationships have heavy influence on the motivation of the personnel. Allowing closer relationships between employees improves the motivation and, therefore, productivity, on the contrary firing a coworker might significantly decrease the motivation of the other workers.

After the interview, the motivation was further discussed and it appeared as the main issue in general, although relatively personal matter. When an employee has a personal problem, he/she rather solves the problem himself/herself, and coworkers do not interfere unless asked to do so.

However, further discussion also revealed that the questioned employee feels rather extraordinary in this matter, as many other companies in Finland are seen as very open towards friendships and social interactions at the workplace, and good working atmosphere at the workplace has a higher value than the highest possible results at any cost.

3.6.5   Q5 – Interviewee 5 (Slovakia)

The fifth company was from Slovakia and presented a very unusual concept of distance between managers and subordinates. The concept of leadership was unknown and the productivity in general was very low. On the other hand, the job satisfaction was very high. There was a very obvious lack of guidance.

The ties were very strong and warm on the same hierarchical level, but not going above. The relationship supervisor – subordinate was described as working and favorable organizational tool only in a small company or a small organizational unit, and not working in big corporations.

When discussing productivity, the questioned person had no problem with admitting low productivity and overly excessive breaks. The collective is chatty and friendly and apparently their supervisors are unaware about this situation. They are distant, both hierarchically and geographically, and residing in a different building.

This concept has proven to be the most favorite among the employees, but the least productive of all studied sample companies. In the discussion after the interview, further satisfaction with the workplace was expressed as well as admitting very low productivity. Organizational commitment was low and almost no values were shared with the employees. When asked about this matter, they feel only like numbers in the company.

The hierarchical distance at Q5 was by far the highest of all. In this case, the hierarchical distance proved to be too high, causing the productivity to be extremely low. When discussed, there were no sanctions, very rare conflicts and friendship was not in the way of work. Unfortunately, it was not possible to interview also the supervisor, as his point of view would perhaps put a different light in the matter.

3.6.6   Q6 – Interviewee 6 (Italy)

The last sample company was from Italy working in jewelry field. The questioned person was an independent sales agent working for the company for eight years. This interview offered another point of view on the whole friendship problematics and rather negative. The interviewee was very honest and had no problem admitting openly that the company lies to the customers and provides untrue information to increase sales.

Not only that friendship was not welcome in the company, the rivalry between coworkers was encouraged leading to misleading other employees, faking one's own results or even sabotaging other coworkers' work. When later asked, this case is rather extreme, but it was explained that in Italy rivalry is encouraged

among coworkers to motivate them and friendship is in the way of this concept, and therefore not widely welcomed by to employers.

Another negative aspect of interpersonal relationship was the inactivity of the management and letting the employees work independently. The company is lacking organizational commitment and loyalty, using only financial methods of motivation.

The whole concept of using friendship as a motivation to increase productivity was quite new for the interviewee and she believed that it has no effect on the productivity, however, she welcomed the idea of teamwork and collegiality.

The discussion showed a very high level of individualism. Teamwork was only used as a necessary tool to reach certain results, and the main focus was always on the individual person.

When compared to Q3, both companies showed certain similarities, such as low attitude towards friendship at the workplace, very high task-orientation and very high productivity. Q6, however, added the inspired rivalry as a motivational tool.

3.6.7   Benefits and Disadvantages of Friendship at the Workplace

The six companies provided a variety of opinions and attitudes towards friendship, from very positive to very negative, and even when questioned person expressed strong opinion of either positive or negative effects of friendship at the workplace, in open discussions also alternatives were discussed and the interviewees were asked to imagine also the opposite effect of friendship than the one he/she believes in the most.

One of the main effects of friendship is the increased quality of the working atmosphere. As mentioned by Q1 and Q5, friendships and warm relations at the workplace are the cornerstone for a good working atmosphere, which allows employees to work in a more relaxed way and significantly decreases stress.

Very closely connected to the atmosphere, the friendship also very positively affects the job satisfaction. While Q2 and Q6 claimed that friendship is not needed for job satisfaction, Q2 was obviously based on very warm relationships among the employees, thus causing a very high level of organisational commitment. The interviewees from companies Q1 and Q4 were both very satisfied with their jobs and both companies demonstrated openness towards friendships at the workplace.

Another direct effect of friendship at the workplace is the significant increase of motivation. This effect has been discussed with the questioned person from the company Q4, where motivation obviously played a major role in employees' personal lives. On the contrary, in the company Q3 all employees were highly motivated and inspired for high productivity. Their tools for motivating employees were productivity, challenges, profit and company's advancement.

Especially observed in the company Q1, friendship at the workplace very strongly affects productivity, as the whole team works as a group of friends. Q2 demonstrated a very close cooperation between employees, even from different work units, based on experiences and warm relations.

The last major effect mentioned by the interviewees was cohesion. This effect was noticeable especially in Q1, but also in Q4 and Q5. While Q4's attitude towards friendships was rather neutral and letting them evolve, Q1 and Q5 created a very strong cohesive collective.

Close friendships at the workplace, however, bring a very unpleasant aspect to the workplace as well. Socializing might prove to be a very useful tool to motivate employees and to create a cohesive collective, on the contrary, when people socialize too excessively, it stands in the way of productivity and significantly delays employees in their work, especially at Q5, where, as mentioned, coffee breaks often took hours.

Both Czech companies Q2 and Q3 mentioned the problematics of friendships on different hierarchical levels. Q2 was significantly more open towards friendships between the subordinate and the supervisor than Q3, where all aspects of friendship at the workplace were unwanted. On the other hand, Q1 presented a concept of subordinate-supervisor friendship, where the hierarchical distance was close to zero, however, this concept is rather difficultly applicable to companies with a higher amount of employees.

Overall, the positive effects of friendship were outnumbering the negative ones in the opinions of the questioned persons. Q1 and Q5 expressed a very open attitude towards befriending colleagues. Q3 and Q6 expressed rather negative points of view, however, during discussions, all of them agreed also with some opposite effects of the friendship and welcomed the idea of using the friendship as a managerial tool to lead the team and to manage more openly, thus creating a better working atmosphere and increasing employees' job satisfaction and productivity.

When the interviewees were asked if they would like to change anything about the attitude towards friendship in the company they work at, surprisingly all six of them were satisfied with the situation they had and did not wish any change. Q1, Q2, Q4 and Q5 were satisfied with the openness and would have recommended the same attitude to other companies, if asked. Q3 considered friendship as a slowdown and as a factor decreasing the productivity. Q6 considered friendship as a false hope, due to the policy of the company, which inspired rivalry among the colleagues, therefore significantly decreasing the trust between co-workers.

Q2 expressed the opinion that company culture, especially in a big company, is very difficult to change anyway, since it is based on the general culture of the country, where the hierarchical distance is rather high, therefore it is not easy to inspire friendships between people on different hierarchical levels.

3.7 Hofstede's Model of Case Countries

In order to find a higher relation between the answers of the interviewees and their country of origin, the Hofstede's model is used for all four countries and the answers of this research are discussed. Since the research took place in Finland, the results from Hofstede's model will be compared to Finland in the analysis.

All six dimensions are measured on the scale from 0 to 100, where 0 means extremely low result and 100 extremely high result. In some dimensions the result shows the nature of a country, for example long term orientation. In case of low result, the country is normative, while in the case of high result, the country is pragmatic.

3.7.1   Finland

Finland showed the lowest power distance of all four case countries. Hofstede's model proves this by ranking Finland with 33 points out of 100 in power distance. Finland has also proved to be a rather individualistic country than collective, gaining 63 points in individualism. While Q1 demonstrated to have a very warm collective, still guilt or credit were individual. As mentioned in the interview, when a problem appeared, it was solved directly between the supervisor and the subordinate.

Finland scored 26 points in masculinity of the society. This brings a rather open communication of feelings and emotions in general. While not directly inspired, they are not dismissed and unrelated when encountered. Uncertainty avoidance dimension of Finland is at 59 points, therefore medium-high.

The long term orientation score of 38 shows that the Finnish society tends to achieve goals quickly and traditions are highly respected. The high level of indulgence, 57, shows the openness of Finnish society towards enjoyment of life and having fun.

The main spotted connection between the model and the interviewees was the power distance. Both sample companies showed low power distance and strong connection between employees and supervisors.
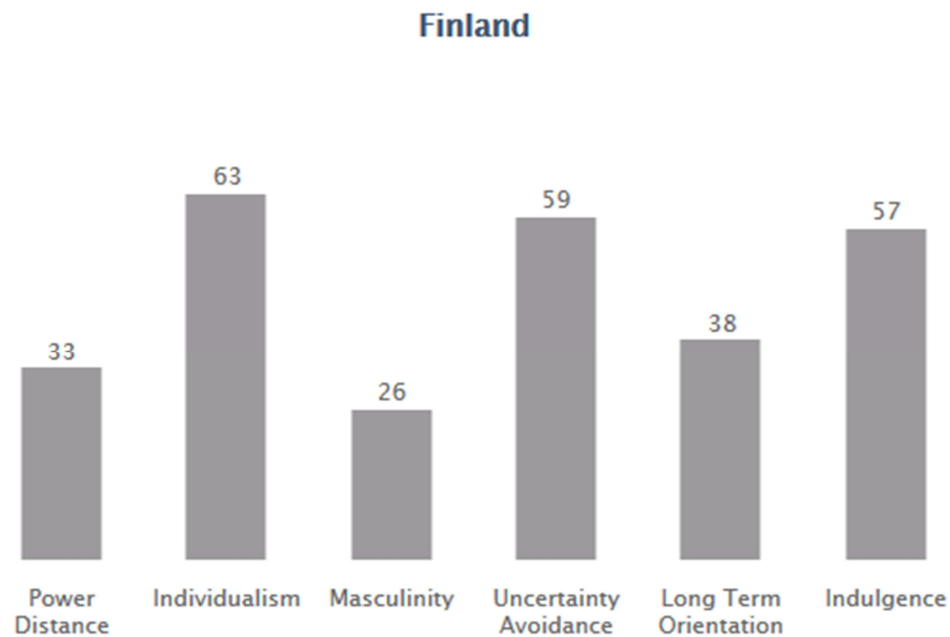

Figure 6. Hofstede's model of Finland (Hofstede Centre 2015)

3.7.2 Czech Republic

According to the Hofstede's model, the power distance of the Czech Republic, at the level 57, shows a high hierarchical distance. Although, as discussed during the interview with the company Q2, this dimension has had decreasing tendency in the last years. Individualism is highly inspired, although less than in Finland, scoring 58 points.

Masculinity, 57, is significantly higher than in Finland. The Czech Republic is described as a masculine country where earnings and challenges play a higher role than feelings and emotions. A very high uncertainty avoidance, with 74 points, shows a very careful approach towards the unknown.

The high long term orientation, 70, shows a habit to live by the situation. Truth can be interpreted differently based on the time or the situation. A very low indulgence, 29, demonstrates that personal enjoyment, fun and life satisfaction play a rather individual role and are not relevant within the society as a whole.
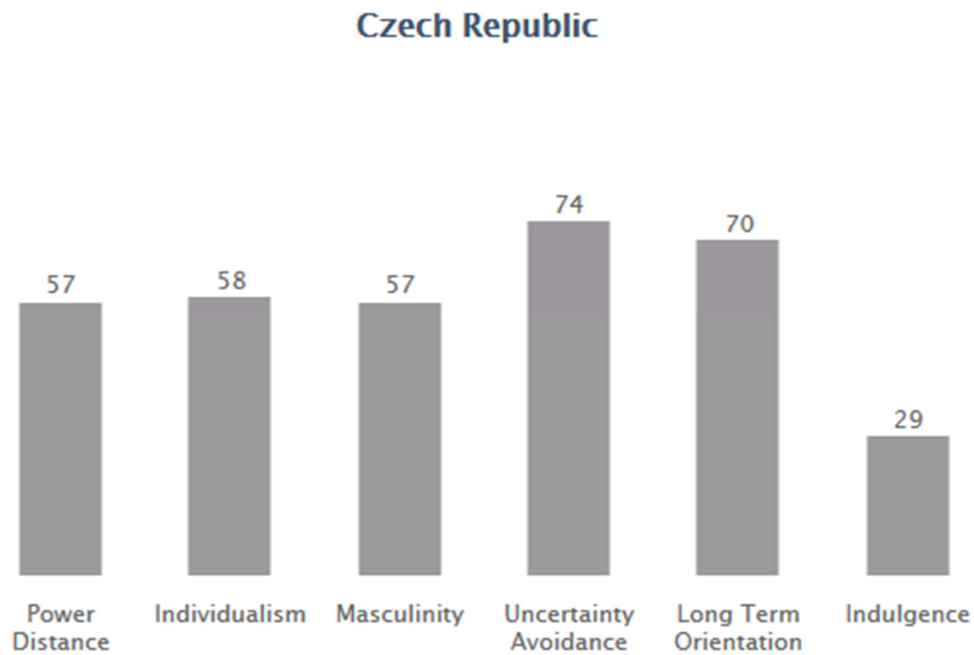
Czech Republic

Figure 7. Hofstede's model of the Czech Republic (Hofstede Centre 2015)

3.7.3 Slovakia

Although historically and culturally very strongly connected to the Czech Republic, Slovakia showed two main differences. Both in power distance and in masculinity Slovakia scored 100 points, which brings it to the top of the scale, while the Czech Republic scored 57 points at both. The power distance is proved by the case company Q5, which showed the highest hierarchical distance of all interviewed companies.

In other three variables – individualism, long term orientation and indulgence – Slovakia scored approximately the same as the Czech Republic and significantly lower than Finland. The difference between the levels of individualism, long term orientation and indulgence of the Czech Republic and Slovakia is only of a few points.

The uncertainty avoidance is however significantly lower than in the Czech Republic and only few points below Finland's score. Slovak society tends to show the least stress and fear of the unknown when compared to other countries.
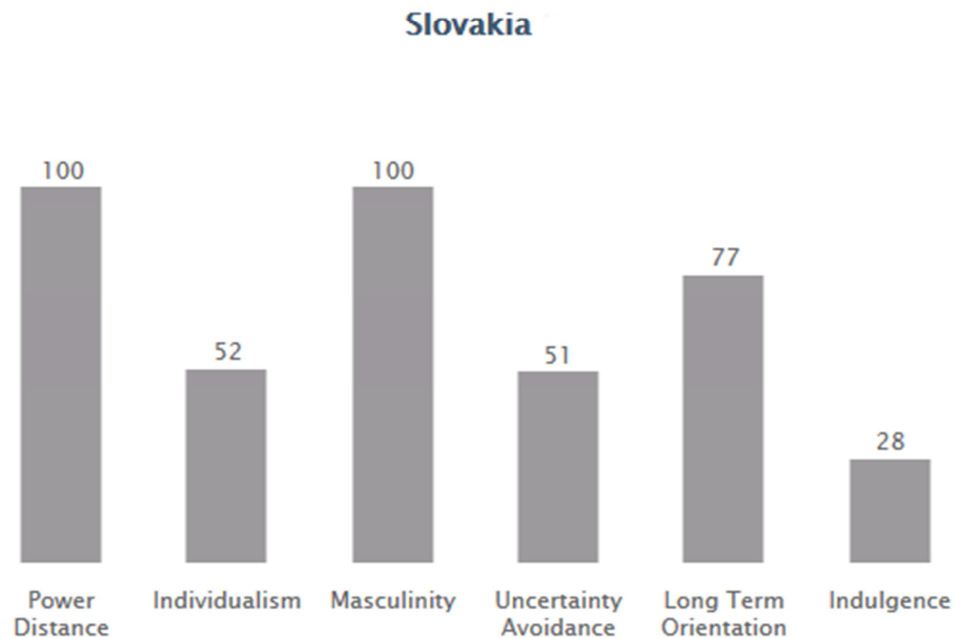
Slovakia

Figure 8. Hofstede's model of Slovakia (Hofstede Centre 2015)

3.7.4 Italy

When compared to Finland, Italy scored at every dimension except for indulgence, which is higher than in Finland. The power distance is at 50 points, thus at medium level. However, the research showed a high difference between Northern and Southern Italy, for which in the South the power distance tends to be significantly higher. The case company Q6 was from the North.

Very high individualism, masculinity and uncertainty avoidance present Italy as a country with high focus on the individual person, assertivity and fear of the unknown. Individuality and uncertainty avoidance scored the highest of all four studied countries.

A rather high long term orientation, 61, puts Italy far above Finland in this dimension, as well as Slovakia and the Czech Republic are. All three tend to live according the situation and time, unlike Finland.

The questioned company (Q6) showed very strong power distance and individualism. Personal needs and feelings were significantly less important in the eyes of the employer resulting in detachment of the employees from the company.
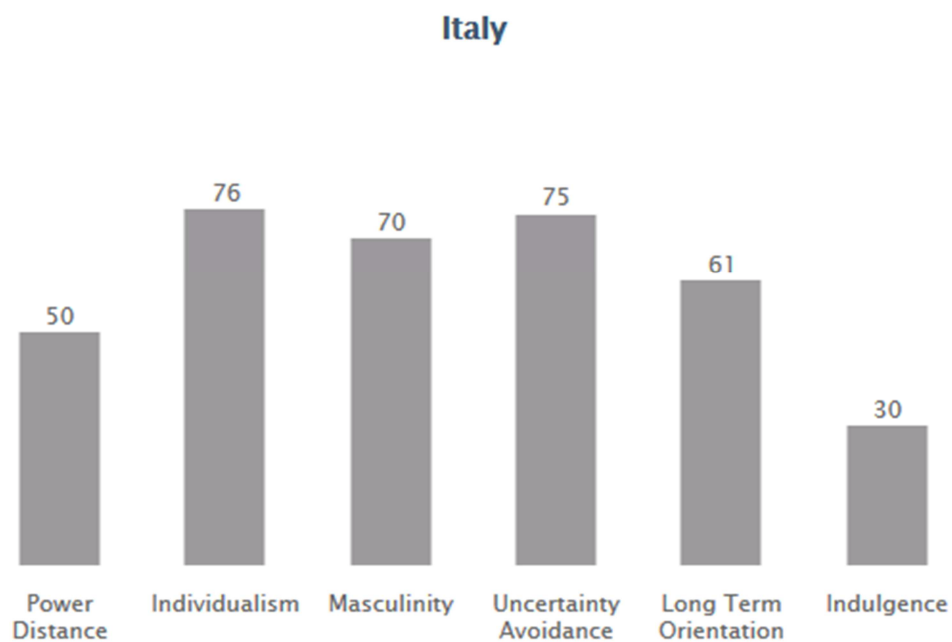
Italy

Figure 9. Hofstede's model of Italy (Hofstede Centre 2015)

3.8 Discussion and Conclusion

The research was very successful and provided useful information on this matter. There were several concepts presented, some more efficient, some less. Q1 proved to be the most successful concept; however there are only six employees; therefore it is impossible to generalize this concept as the most efficient in general, as it is noticeable at Q2, where the atmosphere is also relaxed and friendly, but with the productivity on the opposite side of the scale.

The lack of respondents needed for general deductions was partially compensated by the free discussions, where the general working culture was discussed in order to compare it according to the country. The most significant difference found here was teamwork and rivalry, where in Finland no rivalry was inspired at all and in Italy the very opposite; no teamwork was inspired, but rather rivalry.

Another varying aspect was the implementation of management and leadership concept. While in Finland it is widely used and leaders work with the subordinates, in the Czech Republic, for example, it is not a widely known concept, although often used. In Italy the independence and "fighting" for the workplace is the main concept.

Hofstede's models show us many connections and references to the country of origin, mainly the power distance and individualism. Especially in the case of the company Q5, where the supervisors were not even physically present at the workplace and the communication was only work-related.

In order to compare, Finland, Italy and the Czech Republic were chosen for Figure 10, due to the high similarity between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, with exception for power distance and masculinity.

The power distance dimensions shown in Figure 10 have been proven correct, as companies Q1 and Q4, both from Finland, presented very low power distance when compared to others. Highest power distance (excluding Q5) has been spotted in the companies from the Czech Republic (Q2 and Q3), significantly higher than in Finland and slightly higher than in Italy.

Individualism plays an important role in every studied country and there have been only minor differences spotted. Although in Finnish companies the teamwork and collectivism are inspired noticeably more than in other companies; the collective is still strongly based on individual units, out of which it is formed.
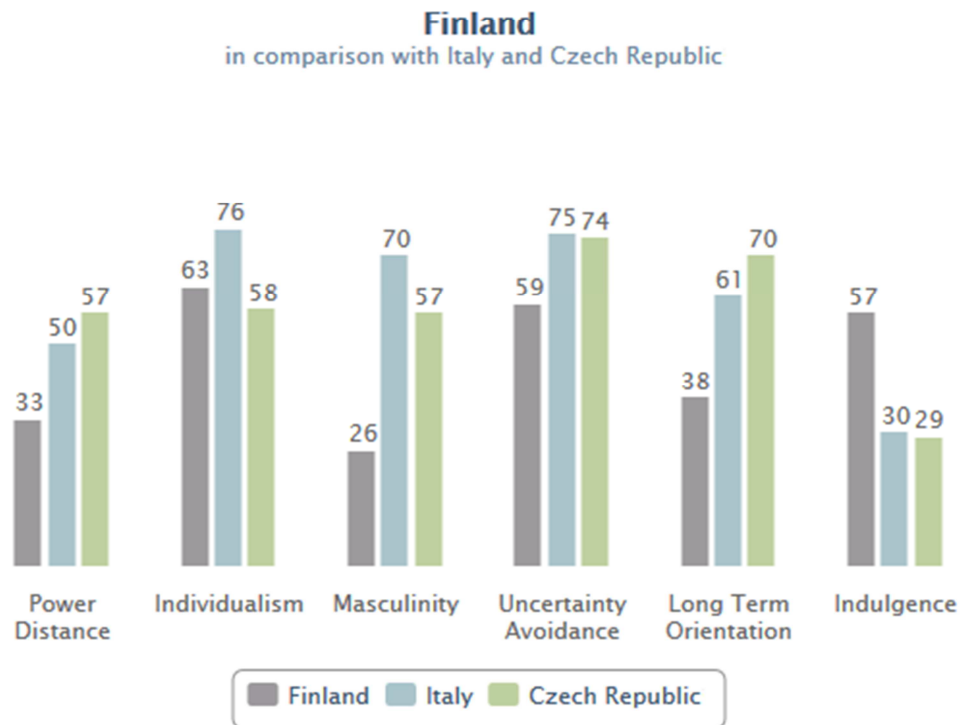
Finland
in comparison with Italy and Czech Republic

Figure 10. Comparison of dimensions of Hofstede's model between Finland, Italy and the Czech Republic (Hofstede Centre 2015)

Masculinity separates Finland from other countries by far. While in Finland the individualism is strong, the country as well as the workplace culture are rather feminine, showing more collective care and emphasis on enjoyment and quality of life.

All three companies proved high uncertainty avoidance level, however Finland scored significantly lower than Italy and the Czech Republic. Slovakia, on the other hand, scored the lowest of all four companies, with only 51 points in comparison to 59, 75 and 74 points of the other companies. Q5 showed that low productivity and creativity or curiosity of the unknown were not taking place in the company. However, when discussed, it was explained that supervisor's orders must obeyed no matter the knowledge of the task, therefore not directly in any extreme of the scale.

Finland has scored as the only one normative in long term orientation dimension and as the only indulgent country in indulgence dimension. Task-orientation, yet respecting habits and traditions, has been spotted. In Finland it seemed that the employee's happiness and satisfaction are employer's task. People tend to emphasize a lot on job satisfaction and the quality of life in Finland.

4 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Friendships have both positive and negative aspects and effects both on individual and on a company itself. The formation of friendships at the workplace is practically inevitable. (Morrison & Nolan 2007) Therefore managing friendship as a managerial tool becomes a very important task of a leader and employees themselves.

The amount of benefits is naturally higher than the amount of negative effects, however, it is very important not to underestimate the negative effects since their potential consequences might bring high expenses and in the most extreme scenario even the end of the company. Swift (2011) summarizes the friendship problematics into list of biggest benefits and negative effects.

Friendship has very positive impact on the working atmosphere and general well-being of employees and their job satisfactions. This benefit is very important in case of direct contact with a customer as it eases the communication. (Swift 2011)

Friends at the workplace tend to talk about the workplace also critically; therefore constructive feedback is very likely to come out of the collective with many friendships. It is important to focus on creativity and critical thinking within such collectives. Even if not followed, already the chance to express opinion or potential improvement increases the organizational commitment of an employee. (see Swift 2011)

As work gets stressing and frustrating, friends at the workplace can provide support and occasional social contact eases the atmosphere and lowers the tension. Friends provide each other with mental support and release of work frustration. Accumulation of stress and frustration might lead to very significant problem at the workplace and even initiate a conflict without any obvious reason. (Swift 2011)

Workers surrounded by their friends can think more freely and thus use their creativity and improvisation to develop an improvement or start an initiative. Simply said, employees in a friendly collective can be more themselves. A team, in which the members know each other more than just as co-workers, tends to work more efficiently as they do not have to slow themselves down with formal ties. (see Swift 2011)

The list continues, as the amount of benefits is very high. However, there is also significant amount of negative sides of friendship ties at the workplace and their effect on the workplace and productivity. These factors are:

Socializing itself is not bad, as it releases stress, and improves job satisfaction, however, in higher amounts it significantly decreases productivity and the workers are rather idling than working. As seen in the questioned company Q5, the level of socializing can increase into level where the productivity is extremely low. (Swift 2011)

At some point a friendship might end and in such case possible backstabbing or even sabotage of colleague's work is possible. Such ties can be potentially very dangerous and it is important to maintain such ties by the leader of the collective with great care. (see Swift 2011)

Friends usually tend to expect their friends to show certain special treatment or favouritism, which leads to discomfort of third parties and accusations. (see Morrison & Nolan 2007) This might also affect different assignments provided. Favorited employees might have a presumption that as a friend of a supervisor the deadline is not valid for them.

Informal ties at the workplace must go hand-by-hand with work ties; however often they cross them and decrease authority, if one party of the informal tie is a supervisor. The friendship then damages the formality of the work tie and the work tie damages the strength of the informal tie. (see Swift 2011)

In case of conflict, an employee having a negative view, for example of a supervisor, might share his point of view with other colleagues, thus potentially extending the negative view and decreasing the loyalty of the employees. Word of mouth is very strong tool if used properly and very dangerous aspect if used negatively. (see Swift 2011)

Having conflict at the workplace requires a solution and time to heal, thus delaying both the leader and the concerned employees from work and decreasing final productivity. In case of negative end of a tie or wrong solution, the conflict might turn into sourness between the concerned people, thus potentially create another conflicts in the future. (see Swift 2011)

Friendship naturally contains honesty and sharing of information. Too much of information shared, especially work-related, might create jealousy and accusation of favouritism. Certain topics, such as salary history, performance review result or bonuses should be avoided among friends at the workplace. (Swift 2011)

Problematics of a friendship as a whole bring both a tool and a task for a leader and/or manager. Friendships occur and they must be controlled and maintained. They do not necessarily need to be encouraged since they occur nevertheless; however "no friends at work" policy is not recommended, as it significantly decreases the quality of the working atmosphere. Since friendships are inevitable, it is very important to manage them and try to avoid as many problems and conflict connected to friendship as possible.

The empirical research presented a variety of sample companies from different areas, providing an overview of workplace cultures perceived by the companies themselves. Some questioned personnel were more remote due to the organisational commitment and unwillingness to provide also negative information about the company. However, in the end, all six interviews proved to be very gaining and providing a solid base for a small scale research.

Finnish companies demonstrated a very low power distance, supported also by Hofstede's model of Finland, where Finland scored lower than any other country discussed in this thesis. Other aspects demonstrated by Finnish companies were the collective care and indulgence. Individuals' joy of life and satisfaction with the workplace are getting significantly higher importance than in other case companies.

Czech and Slovak companies mainly proved very high hierarchical distances. Friendship between supervisors and subordinates was an unthinkable situation and, although not directly prohibited, it was perceived as a negative and unwanted situation from both sides.

Italian company showed very strong individualism and masculinity. The employees were required to be very task-oriented and rivalry was inspired among colleagues, leading to a low quality of working atmosphere, but very high performance. The advancement of the company, earnings and challenges seemed to be the main drivers of the company, thus providing another possible model of handling the friendships and relationships at the workplace.

Overall the research demonstrated different levels of attitudes and qualities of friendship at the workplace. While it is relatively easy to maintain a friendly working atmosphere within a company of six employees, it might be extremely challenging to apply this model to a company of bigger size or to a different cultural environment. As demonstrated by company Q3, although it was a small one and there was a friendship between the supervisor and the subordinate, the friendship itself took place solely outside of the company and any kind of friendship aspect was not desired within the company. In the case of company Q6, the hierarchical distance was so high that the questioned employee separated himself from the company by talking about it in third person, and the organisational commitment was extremely low, although the company was relatively small – only a bit over 30 employees. (The exact amount of employees working for the company was not stated.)

All companies provided an excellent overview of the problematics and can serve as a basis for a further research. In the future research, the qualitative research should be wider and more limited. This thesis could also serve as an introduction to the usage of friendship as a tool in order to educate future leaders to deal with this matter.

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APPENDIX 1 – QUESTIONNAIRE IN CZECH

Přátelské vztahy na pracovišti a jejich vliv na personální procesy

Tento dotazník je čistě anonymní a první tři otázky slouží pouze pro statistické účely.

1) V jakém odvětví Vaše firma podniká?
2) Kolik má zaměstnanců?
3) Podniká mezinárodně?

4) Jaká je pracovní atmosféra?
5) Máte přátele mezi svými kolegy?
6) Máte přátele mezi svými nadřízenými?
7) Máte přátele mezi svými podřízenými?
8) Kdy tato přátelství začala? Před nebo po počátku zaměstnání?
9) Myslíte si, že přátelství na pracovišti ovlivňuje Váš pracovní výkon?
10) Myslíte si, že přátelství na pracovišti ovlivňuje výkon celého kolektivu?
11) Když je někdo z vašich přátel propuštěn, ovlivní to Váš výkon?
12) Myslíte si, že přátelství ostatních lidi na pracovišti ovlivňuje výkon celého kolektivu?
13) Vnímáte nějaké nespravedlivé jednání na základě přátelství?
14) Měl nějaký osobní problém výrazný efekt na Váš výkon? Jak?

APPENDIX 2 – QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

Friendship on the workplace and its effects on HRM processes

The questionnaire is completely anonymous and first three questions are only for statistical purposes.

1) What kind of company do you work in?
2) How many employees does the company have?
3) Do you work internationally?

4) Do you have good working atmosphere at your workplace?
5) Do you have friends among colleagues at your workplace?
6) Do you have friends among your supervisors at your workplace?
7) Do you have friends among your subordinates at your workplace?
8) Did these friendships start before you were working together or after?
9) Do you think the friendship affects your productivity?
10) Do you think the friendships affect productivity of the working collective?
11) If a friend of yours gets fired, does it affect your productivity?
12) Do you see other people's friendship affecting the productivity?
13) Do you see any unfairness due to the friendships at the workplace?
14) Did any personal problem affect significantly the working atmosphere? How?

APPENDIX 3 – QUESTIONNAIRE IN ITALIAN

Amicizia sul luogo di lavoro e le sue ripercussioni nell'area della gestione risorse umane

Questo questionario è completamente anonimo e le prime tre domande hanno fini puramente statistici.

1) In che tipo di azienda lavora?
2) Quanti impiegati ha l'azienda?
3) L'azienda lavora anche in ambito estero?

4) C'è una buona atmosfera lavorativa nella sua azienda?
5) Ci sono delle amicizie tra lei e i suoi colleghi?
6) Ci sono delle amicizie tra lei e i suoi superiori?
7) Ci sono delle amicizie tra lei e i suoi subordinati?
8) Se ce ne sono, queste amicizie sono pregresse piuttosto che nate sul luogo di lavoro?
9) Pensa che l'amicizia possa influire negativamente sulla sua produttività?
10) Pensa che l'amicizia possa influire negativamente sulla produttività collettiva?
11) Il licenziamento di un suo amico potrebbe incidere negativamente sulla sua produttività?
12) Ha mai pensato che amicizie instauratesi tra altri colleghi limitassero la loro produttività?
13) Ha mai notato scorrettezze e/o disuguaglianze dovute a talune amicizie sul luogo di lavoro?
14) E' mai successo che determinati problemi personali condizionassero significativamente l'atmosfera lavorativa?

APPENDIX 4 – QUESTIONNAIRE IN FINNISH

Ystävyys työpaikalla ja sen vaikutukset henkilöstövoimavarojen johtamiseen

Tämä lomake on anonyymi ja kolme ensimmäistä kysymystä on vain tilastollista analyysia varten.

1) Minkälaisessa yrityksessä olet töissä?
2) Kuinka paljon työntekijää siinä on?
3) Toimiiko yrityksesi kansainvälisesti?

4) Onko teillä yleisesti hyvä tunnelma työpaikallasi?
5) Onko sinulla ystäviä työpaikallasi? Minkälainen suhde teillä on?
6) Onko joku johtajistasi sinun ystäväsi? Minkälainen suhde teillä on?
7) Onko joku alaisistasi sinun ystäväsi? Minkälainen suhde teillä on?
8) Koska ystävyytenne alkoi? Ennen vai jälkeen aloitettuasi työssäsi?
9) Luuletko, että ystävyydellä on vaikutuksia tuottavuuteesi?
10) Luuletko, että ystävyydellä on yleisesti vaikutuksia tuottavuuteen?
11) Jos joku ystäviltäsi eroaa työstään, onko siillä vaikutusta tuottavuuteesi?
12) Entä muiden ystävyys? Luuletko, että siinä on vaikutuksia heidän tuottavuuteensa?
13) Oletko huomannut epäoikeudenmukaisuuksia työpaikallasi ystävyyssuhteiden takia?
14) Onko sinulla ollut henkilökohtainen ongelma, jolla oli merkittävä vaikutus tuottavuuteesi?