MASTER THESIS: THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN VOLUNTARY LABOR TURNOVER AND PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IN PROJECT-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Author: Saltanat Zhazykpayeva

Supervisor: Jonas Söderlund

Master of Science in Business Administration; Strategy and Management in International Organisations
Title: The Interplay between Voluntary Labor Turnover and Performance Appraisal in Project-Based Organizations.

Author: Saltanat Zhazykpayeva

Supervisor: Jonas Söderlund

Abstract: The research made in the current master thesis uses theoretical framework from the area of project management, voluntary labor turnover and performance appraisal. Prior research based on existing literary sources allows assuming that the following factors, such as job alternatives, knowledge intensity and nature of work have specific relevance for the emergence of voluntary labor turnover in project-based organizations. Employees of the case study company-AGR Field Operations´ Maintenance Engineering department were interviewed and surveyed in order to determine the relevance of those factors on the example of a concrete project-based organization. The obtained results indicate that the nature of work is more significantly related to the emergence of the voluntary labor turnover in the given case study department. Whereas availability of more job alternatives due to being close to the client or knowledge intensity factor of becoming more generalist do not have the same influence. During the course of the research it was discovered that the department uses outcome-based type of performance appraisal which is proved to be unsuitable in the given organizational settings. To that matter there were provided further suggestions in the field of performance appraisal. The current research will attempt to identify specific factors contributing to the emergence of the voluntary labor turnover specifically for project-based organizations. As well as it will attempt to give suggestions for improvement of the concrete case study department´s performance appraisal tools and thus supplement turnover reduction actions already put in place by the department management.

Key words: project-based organization, voluntary labor turnover, performance appraisal, AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department.
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Table of Contents

1 Background ........................................................................................................................................... 1
  1.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................................................... 1
  1.2 Aim of the research ......................................................................................................................... 3
  1.3 Significance of the research ............................................................................................................. 5
2 Frame of references ............................................................................................................................. 6
  2.1 Voluntary labor turnover .................................................................................................................. 6
  2.2 Turnover factors in PBOs ................................................................................................................ 9
    2.2.1 Job alternatives .......................................................................................................................... 11
    2.2.2 Knowledge intensity .................................................................................................................. 12
    2.2.3 Nature of work ........................................................................................................................... 14
  2.3 Types of PBOs .................................................................................................................................... 16
    2.3.1 Current case ............................................................................................................................... 20
  2.4 Performance appraisal ..................................................................................................................... 22
3 Methodology .......................................................................................................................................... 25
  3.1 Research base ................................................................................................................................... 25
    3.1.1 Case study ................................................................................................................................. 26
    3.1.2 Research type ............................................................................................................................ 26
  3.2 Research design .............................................................................................................................. 27
    3.2.1 Reliability, replicability and validity ......................................................................................... 28
  3.3 Data collection ................................................................................................................................... 30
    3.3.1 Selection of the company .......................................................................................................... 32
    3.3.2 Interviews .................................................................................................................................. 33
    3.3.3 Advantages and limitations of the interview ........................................................................... 35
    3.3.4 Survey ....................................................................................................................................... 36
    3.3.5 Advantages and limitations of the survey .............................................................................. 37
4 Empirical findings .................................................................................................................................. 38
  4.1 AGR Field Operations ...................................................................................................................... 38
    4.1.1 Brief history and background .................................................................................................... 39
    4.1.2 Product lines ............................................................................................................................... 39
4.1.3 The AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department ........................................41
4.2 Results........................................................................................................................................43
4.2.1 Job alternatives ..................................................................................................................43
4.2.2 Knowledge intensity ...........................................................................................................44
4.2.3 Nature of work ....................................................................................................................45
4.2.4 Performance appraisal .......................................................................................................47
4.2.5 Turnover prevention actions ..............................................................................................51
4.2.6 Additional findings .............................................................................................................51
5 Analysis .......................................................................................................................................52
5.1 Job Alternatives ......................................................................................................................52
5.2 Knowledge intensity ................................................................................................................53
5.3 Nature of work ........................................................................................................................54
5.4 Performance appraisal ............................................................................................................55
5.5 General engagement forms (gEm) ........................................................................................58
5.6 Job embeddedness ..................................................................................................................60
  5.6.1 Job fit .................................................................................................................................60
  5.6.2 Client contract ...................................................................................................................61
6 Conclusions ..................................................................................................................................62
  6.1 Research purpose ....................................................................................................................62
  6.2 Implications for AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department .................63
  6.3 Suggestions for the future research ......................................................................................64
7 References ....................................................................................................................................65
8 Appendix .......................................................................................................................................70
  8.1 Interview questions ................................................................................................................70
  8.2 Survey for AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department ................................72
  8.3 Table of figures from the survey results ................................................................................85
List of Figures

Figure 1 Results of the Meta-Analytic Structural Equations Modeling .............................................. 9
Figure 2 Organizing the Innovation Process by Project Teams .............................................................. 14
Figure 3 Deductive and Inductive Approaches ....................................................................................... 25
Figure 4 List of Clients ............................................................................................................................... 41

List of Tables

Table 1 Types of Project-Based Firms (PBFs) ......................................................................................... 18
Table 2 Survey Structure .......................................................................................................................... 37
1 Background

“Whatever we do must be in accord with human nature. We cannot drive people; we must direct their development... the general policy of the past has been to drive; but the era of force must give way to the era of knowledge, and the policy of the future will be to teach and lead, to the advantage of all” (Henry Gantt).

1.1 Introduction

Growing numbers of private enterprises everywhere in the world are moving towards project-based organizational structure. This trend is also highly supported by modern academics claiming that this type of work structure is “ideally suited for managing increasing product complexity, fast changing markets, cross-functional business enterprise, customer focused innovation and market and technological uncertainty” (Hobday, 2000, p. 871).

However, one may assume that neither private enterprises nor modern academics paid primary attention to the human aspect in implementation of project-based organizational structure (see eg Hobday, 2000, Whitley, 2006, Huemann, 2007). In particular, to the need of differentiating turnover reasons in project-based organizations (further in the text referred to as PBOs). Likewise there has been paid little emphasis on redesigning performance appraisal types for new organizational settings.

A well-developed and correct type of performance appraisal allows evaluating the right competence required for the accomplishment of a particular task in a project by allocating a suitable person to that given task (Avey et al., 2009). Thus, it makes an important contribution to the human resource management (further in the text referred to as HRM) in PBOs by systematically accumulating information about job performance of an employee. Hence it serves as a key element for ensuring that human capital in the organization is used in most efficient way possible (Towers, 1996). Also it is important for employees themselves in PBOs to know clearly what are the goals and objectives of a particular project they are assigned in to, as well as to understand what
delivery expectations towards them are. Employees also expect to receive a feedback upon completion of the project about both their personal and team performance.

This often comprises a challenge for most of the modern PBOs. While some of those organizations use performance appraisal with a short-term focus such as providing assessments of an overall successful achievement of set goals and objectives by the end of the project. They tend to lack depth and long-term focus on the human capital development (Stoker, Van der Heijden, 2001).

The performance appraisal is an important issue due to its positive influences on development of the human capital resulting in higher performance, increased motivation and job satisfaction. All that may serve as factors for labor retention enhance efficiency and increase responsiveness of the PBOs. Whereas, neglecting of those aspects would lead to negative effects which may accelerate voluntary labor turnover and undermine advantages of the project-based organizational structure.

Based on aforementioned discussion, it is of importance to accomplish concrete theoretical research in combination with analysis of a particular empirical case study as to how such PBOs addresses those issues as well as to establish a correlation between voluntary labor turnover and suitable performance appraisal type.

Current master thesis seeks to identify in which way implementation of a correct type of performance appraisal with a more precise focus might contribute additionally to preventive turnover reduction actions already taken by the case organization. In this thesis I also would like to analyze an impact that specific type performance appraisal may have on common challenges for modern PBOs. They are: supervision problems when personnel and management are in different locations, role ambiguity and workload instability.

The expected outcomes in terms both theoretical and empirical part of the research will be to discover causes for the experiencing voluntary labor turnover, both internally in the department and externally. Analyze what kinds of efforts were made by organization to reduce the voluntary labor turnover and success of those efforts.
In the final part of the research I will attempt to suggest specific actions with regards to the performance appraisal that will supplement the voluntary labor turnover reduction actions already taken by the department.

### 1.2 Aim of the research

As it has been mentioned earlier in this paper there was paid little attention to the use of suitable type of performance appraisal and what effects it may have on the voluntary labor turnover issue. This, as it seems is also a common problem for many other PBOs including the case organization. Most of the literature on the performance appraisal subject analyzes it from the perspective of classical functional organizations. There is little, if not enough research made about types of performance appraisal and their relation to the voluntary labor turnover in PBOs. Most of the academic literature gives a very general picture on what is the performance appraisal, its types and the methods it consist of. There is lack of written literature about actual application of those types of performance appraisal and suitability of their application depending on the organizational form (Kuvaas, 2006). Moreover, nothing is written about what kind of outcomes, whether positive or negative, that application of those types can potentially lead to with respect to the voluntary labor turnover in PBOs. Thus, it can be considered that current work may bring some useful contribution to that area of knowledge alongside providing with concrete practical suggestions.

The aim of the current thesis is to analyze how to improve the situation for PBOs on a strategic level by the way of putting more emphasis on the turnover differences specifically in PBOs. Moreover, to shed light on the importance of using the correct type of the performance appraisal based on specific organizational settings and what outcomes it may bring to the voluntary labor turnover issue. The purpose is to develop concrete practical suggestions based on the academic literature and also empirical analysis in order to define what type of the performance appraisal can be worth of practical use by the PBO in the daily life of such organization. To be able to do that the main goal will be to answer the following research questions:

**RQ1. What are the distinctive factors of voluntary labor turnover specific for PBOs?**
RQ2. Are those factors encountered in the case example of PBO?

RQ3. What type of the performance appraisal can be most suitable for the case study company as an example of PBO in order to influence the identified turnover?

The department chosen for the empirical research is interesting for the following reasons. First of all, project work run in the Maintenance Engineering department in two distinctively different types of project participation. The first one is a common type of projected team participation, while the second type is singular project participation. Those identified differences in running the project work have resulted in a lower level of motivation, less job satisfaction and as a result increased voluntary labor turnover cases. That was true specifically for employees having singular type of work participation.

Secondly it also provides insights into actions taken locally by the department management in order to identify reasons which might have caused voluntary labor turnover, as well as into further development of possible solutions.

Thirdly and finally, the case offers more detailed look into identified underdeveloped performance appraisal practices that were generally applied for project workers with different project participation types.

The thesis is structured in the following way. The first chapter, background introduces to the chosen topic with its interest, aim and significance to be researched.

The second chapter’s frames of references, first subsection defines what is voluntary labor turnover and determines general factors for its emergence. The second subsection analyzes factors of voluntary labor turnover which are specific for PBOs. The third subsection provides analysis of type of a PBO pertinent to the current case study. The fourth subsection focuses on a definition what is performance appraisal and its types.

The third chapter represents research methodology in relation to this single case-study, i.e. AGR Field Operations’ Maintenance Engineering department.
The fourth chapter describes empirical findings with respect to voluntary labor turnover factors identified both by the department management and current research, as well as it relates those outcomes to the theory.

In the fifth chapter provides an analysis together with a further attempt to give possible suggestions on identified research results with regards to case study company’s performance appraisal.

The sixth chapter conclusions, provides research purposes, implications for the case company and suggestions for the future research.

1.3 Significance of the research

The current research seeks to answer questions that are raised above. The current study is valuable both for the theoretical body of knowledge and for managerial practices as it will help to identify factors causing voluntary labor turnover specifically for PBOs. It will also attempt to give suggestions with regards to performance appraisal and on how to influence therefore mentioned factors. This is a new perspective which has not been looked in and sufficiently researched before. Therefore the current paper may contribute to the recent theories of HRM for PBOs in relation to the retention of project employees.

The impact of this research for the benefit of PBOs could be positive due to popularity of using the project-based organizational structure at the current time. The present research may contribute to the increase in interest of researching turnover specifications in PBOs. It can be beneficial for the development of the adequate preventive actions that will help to retain valuable human capital which is a main asset for PBOs.

Through identification of specific factors which lead to increase in voluntary labor turnover in PBOs both management and academics in the field of project management may start to pay more attention to the current research subject. Here it would be especially important to focus on a better implementation of a suitable type of the performance appraisal as one of the facilitators for the voluntary labor turnover reduction. As the main reason for implementation of performance appraisal in organizations is to be able to assess performance of employees and their job satisfaction
(Kuvaas, 2006), the later is defined to serve as one of the main causes for labor turnover (Mobley, 1977).

The following literature review in the chapter 2 will shed more light on the highlighted area of interest and assist in identifying the relevant variables for this study.

2 Frame of references

2.1 Voluntary labor turnover

According to the business dictionary labor turnover is “a ratio of number of employees that leave a firm through attrition, dismissal, or resignation during a period to the number of employees on payroll during the same period” (http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/labor-turnover.html). Whereas voluntary turnover “concentrates on the individual decision process a dissatisfied employee undergoes in deciding when to terminate his/her employment with the organization” (Mobley, 1977, p. 237). Here it can be seen that voluntary turnover is based on the personal individual decision of an employee to resign to work for a particular organization. Contrary to that an involuntary turnover is the turnover initiated by employer in order to terminate employment relationships with an employee.

Voluntary turnover can be of two types external and internal. External voluntary labor turnover is when employee leaves the organization in favor of working for another organization. While internal turnover is when employee leaves one department and gets employed by another department within the same organization. Turnover also can be functional and dysfunctional. The functional turnover appears when employees, who perform well, reside in the organization and those employees who do not perform well leave the organization, and it is vice versa with a dysfunctional turnover (Stovel and Bontis, 2002).
In case of external functional turnover it leads to various costs for the organization to bear. Among which economic costs are the most notable. Such as exit interview, severance pay, advertisings and recruiting to replace the departed employee, orientation and training for a new employee, lost production time during the process of recruitment and replacement, lower productivity while the new employee learns the job. Other costs to bear are effluent from the fact the resigned employees may take with them their valuable tacit knowledge and expertise gained during the work in an organization (Bluedorn, 2001).

Quite often leaving employees also can take together with them clients from the former organization (Mitchell et al 2001). For instance, Alvesson (2000, p. 1103 ) argues that “In many cases, an established company may risk entire groups leaving their employers and forming new companies, trying to bring the old clients with them, thus emptying the former companies not only of important personnel but also of clients.”

However, the later one is not a common cost to bear for all organizations which experience voluntary labor turnover. Such costs are more typical to emerge for consultancy firms (Alvesson, 2000) to which we can also relate the current empirical case with its particular example of the Maintenance Engineering department. As services provided by current department to its clients are technical consulting services (http://www.agr.com/Our-Services/Field-Operations/Maintenance Management/Maintenance-Engineering/). Overall the organization of work in the case company is mainly in the form of projects and that creates a very good basis for close contacts with clients among project employees in this type of organizations. Thus, such costs directly should be taken into consideration in the development of voluntary labor turnover prevention actions by the department management.

Besides from obvious negative sides with bearing economical consequences by the organization in the case of voluntary labor turnover emergence, there are also some positive sides. Such as in case of the external dysfunctional turnover, it can be beneficial from the point of decreasing labor costs for the organization when a further promotion of a certain employee could be followed by salary increase. Although the latter might not always translate in to similar increase of that employee’s quality of work.
Introduction of change and innovation is another reason that might come as a benefit from such a turnover. That can be done in order to keep only high performing employees and dismiss low performers (Bluedorn, 2001).

Looking further into factors leading to voluntary labor turnover, job satisfaction and job alternatives have been defined as two main causes for turnover by most of academics (see eg March and Simon, 1958, Mobley, 1977, Mitchell et al., 2001, Griffeth et al, 2000, Thatcher et al., 2003, Martin 1980). Furthermore, Mitchell et al. (2001) claims that level of job satisfaction is strongly affected by extrinsic factors like high payments and possibility for promotion. The same goes for the job alternatives when employees who have recruitment opportunities outside their organization have higher intentions to express voluntary turnover behavior. However, further analysis of turnover literature have identified that level of job satisfaction may be strongly affected also by intrinsic factors depending on a field of work such as personal development and status.

In some industries or job types for example IT and engineering professions level of job satisfaction and existence of job alternatives besides from most common economic and organizational factors may include demographics (gender and age) and human capital factors (education and organizational tenure) identified in Figure 1 below (Joseph et al., 2007). Those factors have been discovered and included in Meta-Analytic Model developed by Joseph et al. (2007) based on March and Simon’s (1958) Distal-Proximal Turnover Framework.
An important debate in this situation is therefore looking specifically into each empirical case at a field of work, industry where company operates as well as to its organizational form. Thus there may appear turnover factors which are specific for PBOs described in the following section.

2.2 Turnover factors in PBOs

Variety of academics claim that there have been acknowledged a paradigm shift in the 21st century with emergence of new organizational forms called “projectified, project
business, project intensive, project-led, multi-project, project based or project-oriented” (Huemann, 2010, p. 362).

Such shift has been driven by the growing complexity in the knowledge economy environment (Huemann, 2010, p. 362). Thus in order to deal with such growing complexity there has emerged a strong need of developing new organizational forms that are able to integrate diverse and specialized resources and expertise in the form of temporary organizations. Such as project organizations which are able to perform various tasks and business processes (Sidow, Lindkvist, Di Fillippi, 2004, p. 1475).

Due to such specifications PBOs have also very distinct organizational culture described as being strongly customer-market-oriented, process-oriented with interdisciplinary cross functional team work (Huemann, 2010). Such culture puts an emphasis on “networking with clients and suppliers” and “empowerment” of the employees with developing “values like learning, trust and diversity” (Huemann, 2010, p. 362).

Having those distinctions in organizational culture in PBOs pointed out by authors to affect in development of specific competencies and capabilities for such organizations. Those competencies and capabilities could also have influence on the modification of the overall organizational strategy of the company and specifically with respect to HRM process “stressing the importance of designing the relations between employee and organization” (Huemann, 2010, p. 362).

However, none of the literature sources do not emphasize particularly to the need to distinct turnover factors for PBOs. That is an important gap to be filled in due to the reason that new organizational settings with complex work environments, a need for flexibility and emergence of unique organizational culture directly affects the human capital in such organizations.

Those distinctions in new organizational culture in fact affect occurrence of labor turnover factors which are specific for PBOs. Identification of those factors may serve as an important contribution for development of adequate preventive actions in the area of HRM. Thus may contribute to the overall design of suitable HRM processes for
PBOs. As an outcome of above stated the following three specific factors of voluntary labor turnover for PBOs can be differentiated.

2.2.1 Job alternatives

The first factor is availability of other job alternatives. According to Muchinsky and Morrow (1980) there are strong connections between unemployment level, job alternatives and intentions to quit. Such as when there is high unemployment level and fewer job alternatives the intentions to quit will be low, whereas when the unemployment level is low and job alternatives increase it immediately affects on the increased attitudes to quit. Furthermore Hulin, Roznowski and Hachiya (1985) stated that there is also a direct connection between job satisfaction, unemployment rate and turnover intentions. Such as job satisfaction increases during the periods of high unemployment and as a result can lead in decreased turnover intentions. Therefore, citing Gehart (1990, p.467) "intention to quit are more likely to result in voluntary turnover when job alternatives are generally more available".

Based on the description that PBOs are customer-oriented and close to the market employees in such organizations are more knowledgeable about possible job opportunities (Allen 1995). That can be explained by the fact that employees in a majority of PBOs. Specifically consulting industry have such form of work organization when they have high client orientation and all projects that are run by such PBOs often require close relations with a client through frequent contacts. “Client-consultant interaction is the most important factor for the success of consulting projects and, consequently, for the survival of every consulting company” (Nikolova, et al., 2009, p. 289).

Therefore it may create a potential threat that by accomplishment of the project, an employee can establish tight personal relations with a client organization and may be interested in employment opportunities within the client organization. This is a common case not only for the PBOs operating in audit and consulting industries (Harell, 1990), but also for PBOs working in the area of technical consultancy (Parry, 2006).
The general purpose for the implementation of the project-based organizational structure is effluent from the need of having flexible organizational form in which the human capital possesses versatile skills and knowledge that is being constantly updated in line with current trends and developments in the market (see eg Hobday 2000, Sidow, Lindkvist, Di Fillippi, 2004, Lindkvist 2008). In other words, they are constantly in synchronization with the demands on the market. That may create another potential threat which is very common for PBOs that are offering consultancy services. Namely that employees may not only get employed by clients, but they can also leave their organizations in favor of opening own consultancy firms and as a result can also take with them not only their colleagues but an established client base (Alvesson 1995).

2.2.2 Knowledge intensity

The second factor differentiating the turnover in PBOs is their knowledge intensity. The general description on knowledge intensive organizations given by main researches on that field such as Alvesson (1995), Starbuck (1992), Robertson and Swan (1999), describe work in such organizations to be of “intellectual nature and where well-educated, qualified employees form the major part of the workforce” (Alvesson, 1995, p. 1000). In addition they provide examples of organizations that can be characterized as knowledge intensive. They are “law and accounting firms, management, engineering and computer consultancy companies, advertising agencies, research and development units and high-tech companies” (Alvesson, 1995, p. 1000).

All examples of knowledge-intensive organizations given above include all kind of organizations. Therefore, differentiation of PBOs cannot be just done by attempting to find which of those organizational settings would be more suitable under general description of knowledge intensive organization. As in most organizations including PBOs nature of work is intellectual and employees in majority of them are well-educated and highly skilled.

However, it is possible to make a differentiation by the nature of knowledge intensity. Such as according to academics researching PBOs knowledge that needs to be used in PBOs is diverse (see eg Allen, 1995, Lindkvist 2004, 2008). Therefore when
establishing project teams it is often required that employees with different expertise are allocated from different departments to work together and integrate their diverse knowledge for certain period of time. That, according to Allen (1995, p. 28), may create a potential risk for employees in terms of “separation from their knowledge base being assigned to temporary projects. It make more difficult to stay in close communication with colleagues within their own specialty. The result is that the specialists are less likely to stay informed and up to date with respect to new developments within their specialties”.

Hence, working in the PBOs and being constantly assigned to projects employees in general and technical consultants from Maintenance Engineering department as in our particular case become under risk to lose possibility of “keeping themselves current in their specialties most effectively through colleague contact” (Allen, 1995, p. 28). Since the composition of the project-based organizational structure does not provide conditions for frequent contact with colleagues in the department and rather bring to the fore a risk of project employees becoming generalist.

However, such employees working in the PBOs get close to the market being able to satisfy “market needs defined in the form of products and services. These do not necessarily align with technological specialties and disciplines. They usually result from a combination and integration of many different technological specialties” (Allen, 1995, p. 27). That means such employees can be very well informed about latest available job alternatives in given market. Also such employees are very flexible and highly adaptable due to the work organization in PBOs “in this form of organization, specialists are at least temporarily, removed from their departments and grouped together in a team under a common boss. They live together in this new organizational structure while for as long as their talents are needed in development of the new product and service. Since they are more likely to see each other regularly, this makes knowledge coordination easier” (Allen, 1995, p. 27). That makes them attractive under modern recruitment requirements of being able easily adapt to the new colleagues and management.
Furthermore, as it was mentioned employees working in PBOs become far from their "specialized departments organized around specialized areas of knowledge" (Allen, 1995, p. 27). This also can be one of the drivers for the emergence of turnover intentions. Due to the reason that such employees may not be satisfied with becoming generalists and would search for the employment opportunities outside of their current PBO in order to change that situation.

### 2.2.3 Nature of work

The final third factor related to the nature of work in PBOs creates various challenges for the project employees. Among which Tonnquist (2008) identify difficulties to kick-off and kick-out from various projects, work overload, temporary settings of work organization, difficulties for knowledge transfer. According to Tonnquist (2008) to be able to handle those challenges project employees required to be flexible and highly adaptable since while working in a certain project team, an employee will have a temporary group of colleagues from various organizational fields assigned to work
together for a specific period of time. Therefore, it is important to be able to adapt to each other in order to facilitate the success of the project.

Furthermore, Bredin and Söderlund (2007) highlight other four challenges, where the first one they argue to be "increased requirements on individual employee" (Bredin and Söderlund, 2007, p.819) due to having work structured in the form of projects, employee would be required to build a good reputation through working in various projects to guarantee possibility for future assignments to other interesting projects. That puts high responsibility on employees’ own competence development.

The second challenge, projectification, according to Bredin and Söderlund (2007, p. 820) "create an organization with a more short-term horizon", may bring difficulties in keeping long-term focus in development of project employees. As well as development of organizational strategic competencies of organization itself and therefore influence on possibility of the organization to stay competitive.

The third challenge is similar to the one raised by Tonnquist (2008) is the workload. Working in PBOs employees may face with periods of high work intensity and being involved in various projects at the same time changing by periods of monotonous work when employees have almost nothing to do. That challenge combined with responsibility of personal development and projectification put high pressure on employees in PBOs which directly affects to the job satisfaction and in cases when such pressure gets too difficult to handle it can lead to increased turnover intentions.

The fourth challenge related to the difficulties to evaluate performance of the project employees by line manager due to various locations of project workers and line manager. Such as for the line manager it would be difficult to evaluate work of employee on the project which took place in another location since "project workers have no fictional home bases" (Bredin and Söderlund, 2007, p. 820).

Moreover, Sidow et al. (2004) highlights the fact the work in PBOs is organized in a form of projects brings high pressure on the project teams. As all projects "are highly autonomous within goals set in terms of time, money and outcome qualities. While
"what" to achieve is typically well specified from the start, "how" the project should be run is for the project leader and team to decide. It is a matter of "freedom with responsibility" where creative and innovative activity is both a possibility and duty" (Sidow, 2004, p. 1481).

Another challenge according to Sidow et al. (2004) is that project teams are built of specialists "different specialties, with knowledge bases and ways of interpreting experience" (Sidow, 2004, p. 1481), which can create difficulties in developing tightly knit groups characterized in another way by Wenger (1998) as a knowledge collectivities whose work based on operating via shared knowledge. In opposite to that work in project teams based on knowledge-distributed settings or how it was characterized by Lindkvist (2005) collectivities of practice. For such teams it is important to ensure integration of the diverse knowledge bases of all project members. That is to be able to function within the time boundaries of a particular project, rather than to be able to build similar knowledge on a basis of permanent work settings. That aspect is closely related to the second factor for turnover differentiation in PBOs.

### 2.3 Types of PBOs

The previous part has identified three main reasons which may differentiate turnover in PBOs. However, in this part I would like to analyze different types of PBOs. That is to be done in order to be able to identify to which type of the PBO the chosen empirical case study organization can be related to. As well as to see if all those three reasons for turnover differentiation of PBOs can also be encountered in the case study organization.

Whitley claims that PBOs vary by “the kinds of products and services they produce, the level of market and technical uncertainty they have to deal with, and their organizational complexity” (2006, p. 80). He provides double classification of PBOs. According to his first classification PBOs can be highly singular which characterized by carrying out one or limited amount of different projects which consist of diverse participants (Whitley, 2006). To such types of PBO’s De Fillippi and Arthur (1998), Christopherson (2002), Zuckerman (2004) relate “film production, a considerable number of technically qualified experts are contracted to work together on producing
one or small number of particular kinds of products, whose specification may be open to interpretation and change over the course of the project." (Whitley, 2006, p. 81)

In such highly singular PBO firm which owns human and other resources during the period of project is considered to be a mediator owning those resources on a temporary basis until project is done. Such firm pays salaries for the employee, acquires and owns resources and rights for the final product or service. However, after the project gets accomplished such highly singular PBO lose its need for further existence (Whitley, 2006). Therefore, highly singular PBOs consist of professionals who are working together on a singular basis in one particular project as a project team aiming to deliver certain objective by the end of the project without further expectations for further employment together.

Another type of a PBO which in a contrast to the highly singular one, is an agency project firm, shown as an example of “advertising industry undertake a series of similar projects, many continuing at the same time, with a core group of employees who work together over a period of time and develop collective routines for managing such activities” (Whitley, 2006, p. 81). Such type of PBOs is more stable in their existence and rather may replace employees over a short period of time, or bring in new temporary ones. However, such organizations try to keep core employees who are working on various projects simultaneously. Therefore in that type of PBOs that are called agency type, employees are expected to work further together and create specific common routines with more stable “work roles, professional identities and skills through course of several projects” (Whitley, 2006, p. 81). That is not possible to create in highly singular type of PBOs.

Both of those projects types mentioned above do not fit under description of the chosen empirical case study. Due to the reason that the case company does not work as temporary mediator organization that ceases to exist after a project have been accomplished. As well as it does not strive to work fully in mode of running several projects at the same time with involving the same core employees in all of them simultaneously.
Therefore, it is found to be necessary to look into second typology of PBOs developed by Whitley (2006) and called by him as “four ideal types of PBO’s” (2006, p. 83), in order to be able identify the type of PBO to which the case study example of AGR Field Operations might belong to.

Table 1 Types of Project-Based Firms (PBFs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Separation and stability of work roles</th>
<th>Singularity of goals and outputs</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational PBFs producing multiple and varied outputs with different and changeable skills and roles. For example, strategic consultancy, enterprise software, innovative business services</td>
<td>Precarious PBFs producing risky, unusual outputs with varied and changeable skills and roles. For example, some dedicated biotechnology firms, internet software firms such as Vermeer Technologies, many Silicon Valley companies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft PBFs producing multiple, incrementally related outputs with distinct and stable roles and skills. For example, some business and professional services including London advertising firms, Danish furniture and machinery firms, some IT consulting</td>
<td>Hollow PBFs producing single outputs and coordinating tasks through standardized, separate and stable roles and skills. For example, complex construction projects, many feature films in the United Kingdom and United States of America</td>
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(Whitley, 2006, p. 84)

The first in that typology was described PBO named as hollow or contractual, such organization put emphasis on small amount of various kinds of projects through its reliance “on relatively distinct and stable skills and work roles” (Whitley, 2006, p. 83). The expertise needed there is standard and therefore predictable from project to project, the only difference can be in changing goals and objectives set by different clients. Therefore, project teams required for such projects are staffed fairly in a similar manner.
required to have the same roles and skills. Examples of such types of PBOs are complex construction projects (Whitley, 2006).

The second typology of the PBO is called as craft project organization. It is described as organization consisting of multiple project firms offering similar services in comparison to its competitors working in industrial districts and employing professionals with various skills. Those types of PBOs are able to offer innovative solutions to the clients who come with complex and challenging tasks. Such description namely craft project organization identified to be more closely related to the case study example.

According to the further description given by Karnoe (Whitley, 2006, p. 84) in craft organizations “employment commitments are correspondingly limited with many employees leaving to establish their own firms, and boundaries between owners, managers and workers being fluid”. This supports results obtained by interviewing the case study company’s employees. Their feedback shows the company’s organizational structure in general identified to be rather flat, as there are no distinct boundaries between their top management, divisional management and ordinary employees.

Moving further down in typology, the third type of PBOs classified as organizational. As stated by Whitley (2006, p. 85) in that type “expertise, work roles, and coordination mechanisms are much more changeable, both within and across projects”. This means that in those organizations work structure is flexible and less standardized in comparison to the craft PBO. Such type of organizational PBO requires more formalized learning procedures. Examples of such companies have been found to fit under description of a strategic consultancy firms. Even though it was also pointed out that the latter still “do use more distinct and stable skills sets and systems of work roles, as in certain information technology fields” (Whitley, 2006, p. 85). This type of PBOs according to Whitley experience high level of turnover and due to these reasons organizational PBOs. Therefore, majority of them attempts to have formal systems for knowledge codification in order to retain crucial project knowledge through further employee training. (Hansen, 1999)
The fourth type has been classified as precarious PBO and was described as “firms contracting skilled staff to work on highly uncertain and singular projects” (Whitley, 2006, p. 85). In such organization the level of employee commitment and organization of work is very poor. As a result it makes those types of PBOs under high risk of failure. A commitment and coordination among employees are short-term oriented. This makes such organizations less likely to dominate in a stable industrial sector. Therefore, according to Whitley (2006) such types of precarious PBOs are rather possible to exist in such project ecologies as for example Silicon Valley.

2.3.1 Current case

After identifying which type of the PBO the case study organization can be attributed to, it is now necessary to analyze if the all of the three factors for voluntary labor turnover that were discovered to be specific for PBOs do apply to the case study identified as the craft type.

Due to the fact that all those three reasons have been generally prescribed to all types of PBOs it is immediately not excluding applicability of those factors to our empirical case study organization.

For instance the first factor being close to the customer, employees in Maintenance Engineering department have two type of project participation. In the first type of participation employees works in a project consisting of 3 employees where 2 of them are ordinary employees sent to work in other client’s department for a period over 1 year as a members of that department, whereas, 3 person is the project manager who remotely does general supervision.

While the second type of participation can be described as the project team consisting of 2 to 4 employees sent to the client for a very short period to collect data and then return back to the office to analyze and work on it. However, during the course of the project employees with such type of participation are not restricted in terms of having additional contacts with a client in order to collect supplementary documentation and organize interviews.
In both of these examples we can see that employees have close customer relations and therefore they fulfill conditions for the first factor’s reasoning of having better knowledge about perceived job alternatives through being close to the client and market (Huemann, 2010).

When it comes to the second factor, the case study organization suit under the description of knowledge-intensive organization having “intellectual nature and where well-educated, qualified employees form the major part of the workforce” (Huemann, 2010, p. 362). Moreover, according to preliminary observation the case study organization fulfill another condition common for PBO’s that knowledge hold by organizations employees become generalized due to the reason that employees are constantly assigned to the various projects and therefore get separated “from their knowledge base being assigned to temporary projects. It makes more difficult to stay in close communication with colleagues within their own specialty. The result is that the specialists are less likely to stay informed and up to date with respect to new developments within their specialties” (Huemann, 2010, p. 362).

The third factor of working in project teams matches the case study organization’s description as the PBO having work organization "that privilege strongly the project dimension and carry out most of the activities in form of projects may generally be referred as project-based firms" (Lindkvist, 2004, p. 5). As well as services organization offers to the clients are from the field technical consulting and according to Sidow et al. (2004) PBOs can be found in various types of industries including consulting and professional services.

The case study also covers challenges identified by Bredin and Söderlund (2007). The first one, while working in the project team and being in the clients office employee could not be properly assessed by its supervisor who is located in the mother organization.

The second, employees in that organization become more responsible for their personal professional development. Such as during the brief meetings which I had with a
department management I have discovered that the company leaves personal competence development to be the department’s own responsibility. In that the department manager on his personal initiative searches for the trainings which can be useful for the employees in his department as well as employees themselves are free to search for such trainings. Therefore responsibility for the employees’ long-term development to some extent left on their own hands.

The third, employees with the first type of work participation, have stable work organization and it is not very challenging and rather monotonous. Whereas, employees having second type of work participation, struggle with a periods of high pressure and work overload changing with a periods of no pressure and monotonous work.

2.4 Performance appraisal

According to Lawler (1994, cited from Towers, 1996, p. 216) performance appraisal “has been one of the most praised, criticized and debated management processes for decades”. Some argue that performance appraisal is important notion in the HRM as it allows organizations to get systematic information about employees’ job performance and at the same time to measure their productivity. That helps to ensure efficient use of organizations human capital. The performance appraisal also allows communicating goals set by an organization for its employees.

However, there are other arguments stating that performance appraisal create bias and has an over simplistic view on the employees performance. Thus it often can lead to “creation of dysfunctional role stereotypes” (Towers, 1996, p. 216) for a manager and an employee. For instance, when the “employee expects to hear what is wrong with his or her performance, while the manager expects to sell the evaluation to a reluctant and possibly hostile member of staff” (Towers, 1996, p. 216). From that point of view performance appraisal seem to have a one-sided approach where a dialogue between both manager and employee might seem to be absent. However, does that truly correspond with the real definition and objectives of the performance appraisal?
According to Towers (1996, p. 198) performance appraisal is a “systematic review of the performance of staff, on a written basis, at regular time intervals; and the holding of appraisal interviews at which staff have the opportunity to discuss performance issues past, present and future, on a one-to-one basis, usually with their immediate line manager”.

From this definition and the key words “holding of appraisal interviews” and “opportunity to discuss performance issues past, present and future” (Towers, 1996, p. 198). It is evident that performance appraisal carries the objective to create a platform for a dialogue between the employee and line manager and not aims to deliver misinterpreted, or otherwise one sided expectations for one “to hear what is wrong” and for the other “to sell the evaluation” (Towers, 1996, p. 198).

There can be specified three different types of performance appraisal according to Scott and Walter (2001) such as outcome-based, behavior-based and competency-based.

Outcome-based performance appraisal has an objective to communicate and therefore affect employee motivation to deliver mutually agreed and specified outcomes. Such type of performance appraisal is usually implemented by organizations which base its work tasks in a form of setting clear goals which are to be achieved in order to be rewarded.

Behavior-based performance appraisal aims to attract attention to the specific behavior needed to accomplish certain kind of assignment. The behavior-based performance appraisal is common to be implemented by organizations which emphasize high relevance of behavioral suitability of an individual to occupy certain position.

Competency-based performance appraisal stresses attention on certain skills and experience needed to fulfill requirements for given job and pays attention on further trainings and competence development. Organization which uses the competency-based performance appraisal match an individual’s skills and knowledge to the description of skills and knowledge required to occupy certain position.
In all those types of performance appraisal communication of objectives and aims of each of them are usually done through provision of a frequent feedback about the progress of each employee in actual delivering of expected results via their work. The reward system is also quite often based on a certain type of appraisal used by a concrete organization (Scott and Walter, 2001).

Those classic types are developed in order to create descriptions of requirements for specific work positions. However, they do not take into consideration qualities which are needed in order to be able to work in PBOs in their classic interpretation. Therefore, implementation of those types of performance appraisal in PBOs should take into consideration that work tasks in PBOs are structured differently and have more complex nature. Job descriptions and hence responsibilities of the employees in PBOs have expanded and include various activities, since in PBOs employees have to meet given deadlines, delivering high quality results and within the frame of a given project budget. Furthermore, project employees are also responsible for their further personal and career development. Simultaneously being a good team member as well working independently. It means that they must have good collaboration skills.

Therefore, application of generally developed performance appraisal procedures in all kinds of organizational settings according to Scott and Walter (2001, p. 107) “fail to deliver their anticipated benefits in team structured organizations. Working with teams in our consulting practice has convinced us that one size-fits-all performance-appraisal systems are largely to blame”. Hence, it is crucial to analyze which type of the performance appraisal may be the most suitable for new organizational settings. In order to confirm the correctness the assumptions that were made in the theoretical part there needed to be done an empirical research. Prior to that it is important to describe what types of methods were utilized in the empirical research. Moreover, it is vital to explain how those chosen methods were applied and reasons for their implementation.
3 Methodology

3.1 Research base

As it appears voluntary labor turnover in PBOs is identified to be underexplored area, the current study can be considered more of an explorative study and thus results are presented in a form of theoretical assumptions rather than concrete statements. To be able to test reliability of the assumptions made and thus to make possible contributions to the body of a knowledge, two types of researched methods were employed. One, the qualitative method in a form of interviews and two, the quantitative in a form of surveys were carried out.

Hence this research is positivistic, due to the reason that the data collection in current research will be based on both quantitative and qualitative information (Bryman & Bell, 2007). That covers definition of positivistic approach described as being based on obtaining objective data through experiments and scientific findings (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Moreover, the strategy of this thesis will be using inductive approach rather than deductive approach due to strong empirical nature of the current master thesis (Bryman & Bell, 2007). The deductive approach described as creating a new hypothesis on the basis of past theory which must be testified through empirical scrutinizing. While, inductive approach have an opposite dimension that through empirical scrutiny one can come to a new theory (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 14).

![Deductive and Inductive Approaches](Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 14)
Although the current research have been based on the diverse theoretical background from the field of project management and organizational turnover to serve as a complementary base for the identified inductive empirical findings from the organization’s management and observations made for the purpose of the current thesis.

### 3.1.1 Case study

Some authors express opinions that single case study cannot be used to draw general conclusions for the purposes of theoretical analysis. Whereas, according to other authors that is not fully correct. Such as according Flyvbjerg (2001) the advantage of case study is in its depth while it lacks breadth and in opposite use of large samples can bring breadth by lack of depth.

Furthermore that aspect is supported by Valdelin (1974, p. 74) claiming that “the detailed observations entailed in the case study method enable us to study many different aspects, examine them in relation to each other, view the process within its total environment and also utilize the researcher’s capacity for ‘Verstehen’ (understanding). Consequently, case study research provides us with a greater opportunity than other available methods to obtain a holistic view of a specific research project”.

Based on the above mentioned it is possible to conclude that the single case study conducted for the purposes in the current master thesis suitable empirical method were utilized. This is due to the reason that “the case study is a necessary and sufficient method for certain important research tasks in the social sciences, and it is a method that holds up well when compared to other methods in the gamut of social science research methodology” (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p. 402).

### 3.1.2 Research type

In the current thesis the information that was obtained was through use of mixed research types, both qualitative and quantitative. That was done in order to fill in the gaps of each research type. Since one method alone is not able to cover all aspects
which are to be researched. Such as for example selective semi-structured interview may not give the full picture about researched phenomenon therefore additional use of survey as a larger quantitative study may serve as supplement to the qualitative interviews (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

Due to the use of different research approaches in qualitative and quantitative methods it leads to different research outcomes. Such as according to Murray (2003, p. 2) “qualitative methods involve a researcher describing kinds of characteristics of people and events without comparing events in terms of measurements or amounts”. While quantitative method according to him” focus attention on measurements and amounts of the characteristics displayed by the people and events that the researcher studies” (Murray, 2003, p. 2). Thus, based on those descriptions use of mixed approach in the current master thesis yield at better results as opposed to those that would have been possible to obtain by use of only one research approach, and as such enabled development of a successful in-depth case study.

3.2 Research design

According to Bryman & Bell (2007) research design represents structure, guidance for the execution of the research methods. Those two terms of research design and research methods are often confused by various authors. As for example case study quite often can be considered as a research method, however, it is research design. Simply selecting a case study subject does not automatically provide one with data, rather it should be planned in the post-case selection phase as to what kind of research methods are suitable for data collection in that particular case study Bryman & Bell (2007).

What is then a clear definition of a research method? Answer to that is given by Bryman & Bell (2007, p. 40) as the following:” research method is simply a technique for collecting data. It can involve a specific instrument, such as a self-completion questionnaire or a structured interview schedule, or participant observation whereby the researcher listens to and watches others”.
The most common research methods according to Murray (2003), De Marrais and Lapan (2004) are observations, survey techniques in a form of questionnaires, interviews and experiments. According to Murray (2003) single use of each method is good when analyzing structured fragments of the problem. However, when analyzing combination of processes within an organization such approach can create a risk in gathering partial and not complete information.

Therefore, it is becoming widely common to use a combination of two or more research methods. Specifically there has been mentioned a popular use of a combination of qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys in various types of research designs (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

The research design can be distinguished by five types such as experimental design, surveys, case study design, comparative design and longitudinal design (Bryman & Bell, 2007). All those five types of research design have three common research criteria’s which are important to be analyzed before moving to the kinds of research methods used in the current thesis.

### 3.2.1 Reliability, replicability and validity

The first criterion is reliability of the collected information so it is possible to reach the same results when repeating the study. This is an issue of using quantitative methods, when repeating the same variable but under different situations it may give different results.

The second criterion is replicability of the discovered findings to the other cases. The success of that criterion depends on the researcher ability to deliver full information about details of his/her research, in order to guarantee possibility for application of the same procedures by someone else.

The third final criterion is validity of made conclusions from the obtained research. Validity can be internal “concerned with the soundness of findings that specify casual connection” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.63) and external “the issue is concerned has a
more obvious application to the realm” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.63). In other words validity criterion related to the contribution which can be made by that specific finding.

Returning back to the kinds of research designs, the case study has been described by Bryman & Bell (2007, p. 62) as being concerned “with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question”. The research problem of the current thesis covers under-researched combination of aspects of voluntary labor turnover and performance appraisal in PBOs. Therefore nature of the research questions is rather complex designed to examine those aspects from a different angle. Hence, from that perspective research design using case study for the current master thesis can be considered as the best alternative.

Case study definitions have been described differently by different authors. Although, the definition most suitable for the current master thesis was given by Bryman & Bell (2007, p. 62), describing case study as “detailed and intensive analysis of a single case”.

The objective of the case study is to get a deeper knowledge about the entity. That is associated with qualitative research methods such as observations and interviewing of participants. The reason for it is that those methods are considered as most suitable for accumulation of detailed information about the case entity Bryman & Bell (2007). The advantages of a case study according to De Marrias and Lapan (2004) that case study can represent features of more than one research design and almost any kind of research can be run in case study form.

Looking into the criteria of reliability and validity that were mentioned above it is important to take into consideration question whether the obtained results can be generalized and have external validity outside of the current case. The answer for that is given by Yin in Bryman & Bell (2007) the result of a single case study generally cannot be applied to other cases.

However, according to Bryman & Bell (2007, p. 65) various researchers can “claim a degree of theoretical generalizability” through using details from a single case and not
the whole application of the case. Therefore the aim of the research design in the current master thesis would not be to claim general applicability of the current case study to other cases as a whole. It is rather to extract details from the findings of the current case study which might apply to other cases to some extent.

Taking into consideration the criterion of external validity it is crucial to distinguish between different types of cases made by different writers. Such as, for example, Yin in Bryman & Bell (2007) distinguishes five types of case studies.

The critical case when the researcher choose the case based on the suitability to testify the primary defined hypothesis, so it can create good circumstances to analyze if the current hypothesis can be confirmed or not.

The unique case has been defined by Yin (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 64) as “a common focus in clinical studies”.

The revelatory case is described as “when an investigator has an opportunity to observe and analyze a phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific investigation” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 64).

The representative or typical case offers analyzing situation common for every day organizational reality.

The longitudinal case is concerned to analyze dynamics of situation in the organization changing over a period of time.

Based on those descriptions the case study in the current master thesis can be defined as the critical case, for the reasons that it has been acknowledged in the frame of references chapter of the current thesis.

3.3 Data collection
Three important data collection methods can be distinguished as surveys, observations and interviews. The most common instrument used under those methods is questionnaires, inventories and tests (Murray, 2003).

Murray (2003) claims that depending on the boundaries of the study there can be used single or mixed methods of data collection, whereas the latest one such as use of the mixed methods is the most common. Additionally, in those methods researchers use primary and secondary information sources. It is done in order to enrich the content of the research and provide more reliability for the obtained results.

The primary types of information sources are first hand information from observations, interviews, surveys, tests, experiments and content analysis (Murray, 2003). The secondary types of information sources are findings and evaluations done by other authors on the same subject. These are articles, essays, books and others (Murray, 2003).

The current thesis uses both secondary and primary information sources, where the primary sources come from the empirical part of the research and secondary sources come from the frame of references part of the thesis.

Data for the empirical part was collected via semi-structured interviews. There was set list of questions which interviewees received and were introduced before the interviews. However, logic of the semi-structured interviews is in such manner, that the interviewer may ask additional spontaneous questions which might emerge during the interview process.

The interviews for the purposes of the current master thesis have been conducted with a limited amount of persons, 6 specialists holding different positions within the case study organization. Furthermore, online survey in a form of questionnaire with multiple variations of answers has been sent to the wider amount of recipients consisting of 64 employees’ case company’s Maintenance Engineering department. As well as company’s website and email correspondence has been used. Supplementary to that copies of electronic documents such the “AGR Dialogue” used for the evaluation of the employees, the “AGR Dialogue KPI” used for manager’s evaluation with measurable goals were provided by the Department management. However, it is worth mentioning
that those documents were only available in Norwegian language at that moment, therefore it was not possible to use those documents for the analysis purposes. Data for the theoretical chapter consisted of numerous books, articles and websites related to the field of HRM and project management.

3.3.1 Selection of the company

My previous work experience from consultancy firms which were PBOs, first as a tax payroll consultant taking part in various projects, and later as HR consultant supporting employees in PBOs, played a crucial role for development of my strong personal interest in the HRM issues. Specifically within the area of voluntary labor turnover and performance appraisal in PBOs, as I have realized that those two aspects have been challenging for not only particularly PBOs where I was employed, but in general for the organizational field of PBOs in general.

Therefore, I decided to continue my education to gain more understanding and knowledge of those issues from the academic perspective. My final choice of a Master Program in Business Administration Strategy and Management in International Organizations (SMIO) in Linköping University have been as an outcome mainly affected by multifaceted program structure which covered all important aspects of modern organizations including courses in Project Management, Human Resource Management, Project Processes and People.

Here in this program I had a great opportunity to look into various trends in the contemporary business world from the academic prism. Specifically lectures and seminars from the Perspective on Human Resource Management course about Human Resource Management in Modern Flexible Organizations led by Professor Jonas Söderlund have inspired me and influenced on my choice of the subject for the master thesis.

During the summer break I have started to research the literary sources on the voluntary turnover and performance appraisal subjects in PBOs. With an aim to write my research proposal for a PBO that would find those aspects as actual for its own real
organizational situation and thus would agree to become an empirical case company for my master thesis.

A Stavanger based firm, AGR Field Operations, being a successfully growing PBO was chosen as the case study organization. The company has been experiencing difficulties due to increased turnover in its Maintenance Engineering department. Through following meetings with a management of the Maintenance Engineering department I have been informed about actions already taken by the department management to identify turnover causes and development of efforts to prevent those causes. I also have been communicated that from my part and my thesis work I am expected to analyze if the efforts taken have had an effect as well as research whether some additional causes for labor turnover have been missed. Moreover, due to better familiarity with the work load of the project employees in the department the management have communicated plan outlining methods that they recommended for use in order to collect the data. All that planning and expectations communicated by organization have been fully coherent with my personal developed methodology planning and expectations for the current master thesis.

For the purpose of the current thesis and privacy requirements of the case organizations names of employees who participated both in interviews and surveys were not be revealed and modified instead.

3.3.2 Interviews

There have been selected 6 suitable interviewees with assistance from the management of the case study company, as a basis for their selection served their different occupational positions and years of tenure in the company. That was done in order to be able to gain a better insight into how work in the department was organized.

The first employee, A1 has been working in the organization during 2, 5 years and has been mostly assigned to the long-term projects lasting more than 1 year. That employee has single project participation by being involved in 1 project at a time.
The second interviewee, A2 has been working in the organization for about 1 year and has been mostly assigned to short-term projects, i.e. no more than 1 year. That employee has multiple project participation and is involved in several projects at a time.

The third interviewee, A3 had worked for the company before then resigned and later was re-employed in spring 2010. That employee’s work participation is based on involvement in several long-term projects in some of which he is in charge in the capacity of a project manager.

The fourth interviewee, A4 has been with a company for 13 years. His level of project participation is minor due to his role as a line manager in the department. His main work responsibility is to provide administrative support for the department employees in two locations, namely Stavanger and Trondheim.

The fifth interviewee, A5 has been working in the organization for 7 years. She is a project manager who leads mostly 1 project at a time and in addition has some of the HR responsibilities such as recruitment of new employees and development of preventive measures for voluntary turnover in the department.

The sixth interviewee, A6 works in HR department in the company’s head office. Her main work responsibility is to provide administrative support to the other divisions and departments within AGR Group. That includes development of the general policies and procedures for the whole organization, taking part in promotion and payroll activities, developing and providing performance appraisal forms and carrying out mandatory competence development activities.

The 5 interviews have been conducted in personal, one-on-one meeting format, where questions and answers were conducted verbally. While the interview with employee A6 has been conducted distantly, by telephone, as she is located in a different office from the other interviewees.

According to Murray (2003) there are several approaches which could be used when developing interview questions. He described four of those approaches as follows: “loose question, tight question, converging question and response-guided” (Murray, 2003, p. 63).
The loose question approach described as having purpose to ask very general questions with a strategy to get respondents to have personal interpretation, this are so called open-ended questions.

The tight question approach is opposite to the loose question approach. Using this approach respondents would have questions structured in such way that they have given answer alternatives they are able to choose from.

The converging question approach embed in itself both loose and tight question approaches, where interviewer first asks open ended questions and later narrows them down asking questions by giving specific alternatives as possible answers.

The response-guided approach structured in a way that interviewer ask preliminary prepared questions from the start and may ask some extra questions, spontaneously, later (Murray, 2003).

When planning my interviews I utilized the converging question approach. This was done based on the requirements set by the department management of the case study organization to be preliminarily introduced to the interview questions prior to conducting the interviews. However, there was not set any restrictions on asking additional questions and to providing alternative answer options. The time frame of each interview has been also discussed beforehand with the department management and was limited to 60 minutes. The interviews were conducted in English and subsequently written notes were taken.

3.3.3 Advantages and limitations of the interview

Questions asked in the interviews could easily be sent and answered through the use of online questionnaire. However, the personal interview gives an opportunity of a better control in terms of the questions to be correctly understood. That is in case when interviewee might not understand the meaning of the question he or she is able to ask the interviewer for clarifications directly. That is not possible to do when using questionnaire sent online or in case of absence of a direct contact in that particular moment when such potential ambiguity takes place. Moreover, via interview it is possible to collect additional information in relation to a subject matter (Murray, 2003).
A disadvantage of conducting personal interviews that it is a time-consuming process, due to the reason that interviewee and interviewer must arrange meeting at a time, date and venue suitable for both parties. Besides the information collected during the interview may not always be fully useful with a respect to the subject matter. In some cases when asked questions may be perceived personal or sensitive for the interviewee trustworthiness of the answers provided can be questionable (Murray, 2003).

3.3.4 Survey

The online survey in a form of questionnaire was sent out to 64 employees in the case study department. The survey was developed based on recommendations from the academic sources such as Bryman & Bell (2007), De Marrias and Lapan (2004) and Murray (2003). The number of obtained responses was 49 out 64. The survey consisted of 7 pages and 57 questions with multiple answers which were possible to obtain the answer within given 15 minute time-frame. The survey consisted of questions related to the voluntary labor turnover factors, performance appraisal and competence development. Questionnaires have been structured in such format so that it made it possible to collect two types of information from respondents, i.e. facts and personal opinions (Murray, 2003).

The introductory part of the survey included standard questions about occupational position, period of work for the company, educational background, type and period of project participation. Due to the fact that some of the respondents did not provide information regarding the gender and age, the analysis of such information became hindered for the purposes of the current thesis. In the second part of the survey questions were related to the voluntary turnover factors for PBOs such as being in close contacts with a client, level of job satisfaction depending on the work composition, personal competence development, intentions to quit and a search for external job opportunities. The third part of the survey was related to the performance appraisal and competence development activities which were currently implemented in the department. Here respondents were asked about their understanding of the purposes of performance appraisal forms which they are asked to fill in on a yearly basis and about their attitudes towards competence development activities. The fourth part of the
survey was related to the employees’ personal opinions about reasons for experiencing voluntary labor turnover situation in their department, their attitudes towards actions taken for voluntary labor turnover reduction and personal suggestions on that subject matter.

Table 2 Survey Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Part 1</th>
<th>Part 2</th>
<th>Part 3</th>
<th>Part 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>Standard questions</td>
<td>1-6 and 56-57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voluntary turnover factors</td>
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<td>7-25</td>
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<td>Performance appraisal</td>
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<td>26-45</td>
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<td>Personal suggestions</td>
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<td>46-55</td>
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Questions for the second, third and fourth parts have been structured in both form of “Yes”, “No”, “Maybe” or “Other” variants of answers possible to choose from, as well as more detailed and specific ones depending on composition of a certain question.

3.3.5 Advantages and limitations of the survey

A main advantage of the survey is that it enables the researcher to cover wider population of respondents and therefore collect larger quantity of data within relatively short period of time. Furthermore, online survey allows collecting information from the respondents in various locations. As well as using multiple answer option the
respondents are not limited to mark one option only and can mark several from the given list of options. However, the main advantage of having anonymous surveys is that a surveyor who sent survey is able to get more trustworthy information since respondents are not constrained by possibility of being discovered by name (Murray, 2003).

Although, the main disadvantage of conducting surveys, that it is quite rare to receive answers from all respondents to whom were sent survey questions. Therefore the researchers must keep in mind during survey composition period to design questions in a relatively short, easy to understand and complete manner in order to encourage a higher rate of response. Moreover, respondents answering on the survey lack an opportunity to clarify question composition due to absence in physical presence of the originator of such survey (Murray, 2003).

4 Empirical findings

4.1 AGR Field Operations

AGR Field Operations situated in the western part of Norway with headquarters in Bergen. It is a division within an international organization AGR Group which provides unique products and services required for operation and maintenance of oil and gas wells as well as associated infrastructures during entire life of the field. The company employs 830 experts qualified within fields of engineering, inspection management, maintenance management, management of technical integrity, operations and subsea inspection and alternative energy.

At the moment the AGR Field Operations operates in the following markets Norway: Sweden, Canada, UK, Americas and Asia Pacific. Clients of the AGR Field Operations are large rig and floating production, storage and ofloating (FPSO) operators as well as nuclear industry (http://www2.agr.com/fo/Pages/About.aspx).
4.1.1 Brief history and background

Initially, during the period of 1998-2003 the AGR Field Operations was focused on Norwegian market serving locally large operations and consisting of 40-70 employees. In the period from 2004 till 2005 periods the AGR Field Operations started to expand both in human capital by increasing number of employees from 70 up to 160 and in providing services internationally, although, their main focus was still remained on the Norwegian market. In the year 2006 AGR Field Operations established an international presence in UK and Canada adding clients from the field of rig and FPSO operations. That resulted in a further increase of employees by 250 specialists. That trend continued in 2007 when the company established its presence in Sweden, Americas and Asia Pacific getting clients from nuclear industry and non-operation fields. Increase in human capital in organization continued to grow by 350 employees. From 2008 to 2010 AGR Field Operations focused its growth on international markets and continued increasing a number of new recruits currently accounting to 850 (http://www.agr.com/upload/Presentations/AGR_Field_Operations_presentation.pdf).

4.1.2 Product lines

The AGR Field Operations has 6 main products lines. They are Inspection and Integrity Services, Maintenance Management, Operations and Maintenance, Project Management and Engineering, Subsea Services and Alternative Energy.

The main objective of the Integrity Management is to ensure the integrity of the equipment and structures with an aim of avoiding unplanned and unexpected breaks and damages to employees or the environment.

The Integrity Management’s professional focus areas are:

- Integrity Management Services
- Inspection Services
- Pipeline Inspection
- Inspection Product Development
The Maintenance Management product line to where our case study subject- Maintenance Engineering department belongs. It offers services for corrosion management which are carried out using unique in-house developed concept. That concept documented to bring cost savings estimated from 20% to 50 % on the maintenance services while using the concept as a planning and management tool. The concept was introduced in 1993 and is in successful use on 52 offshore installations and onshore plants. In addition the Maintenance Management offers maintenance strategies, condition monitoring strategies, e-operations, verification and audits and personnel services.

The Operation and Management product line operates, maintains and provides technical support to oil and gas facilities. It also provides cost-effective facility operation and maintenance services combined with wide range of technical, administrative and regulatory services such as managerial support, health, safety, environment, quality management (HSEQ) monitoring, facility operations personnel, maintenance execution, technical support, risk management and regulatory compliance.

The Project Management and Engineering product line provides services multi-discipline projects in engineering, procurement, construction and installation area, replacement and modification, elector and instrumentation, mechanical and piping, subsea control systems, floating structures, design and analysis of tools.

The Subsea Services product line assist operations for designing, specification, installation and exploitation of subsea production equipment such as subsea trees, manifolds, flow lines and control umbilicals. The product line has equipment for maintenance, inspection and testing of subsea down hole equipment for lease to operations. As well as it has experienced team of service technicians, engineers, supervisors and managerial personnel providing hands-on service in well and subsea systems.

The Alternative Energy product line specialized in providing technology transfer and project management expertise to clients implementing alternative energy projects. Main
focus of that product line is to deliver low cost fit for purpose solutions and significant expertise for wider alternative energy market.

Clients of the AGR Field Operations contain wide range of international companies operating both within oil and gas and non oil and gas sectors.

![Selection of client list...](http://www.agr.com/upload/Presentations/AGR_Field_Operations_presentation.pdf)

Figur 4 List of Clients

4.1.3 The AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department

Originally Field Operations was a part of RC Consultants, a company located in Stavanger. The latter was bought by AGR Group in 2005. Besides from having only one office in Stavanger management of AGR Field Operations with headquarters of AGR Group in Bergen and Oslo decided to expand the AGR Field Operations further with
opening new locations in Bergen, Trondheim and later in Fredrikstad in 2011. The office in Oslo was subsequently closed.

Main clients in year 2005 were mostly Norwegian oil companies among which major client was Statoil. Due the company’s internationalization strategy adopted in 2006 the Maintenance Engineering department had 50% of international clients from shipping, food and energy industries and other 50% of clients remained to be Norwegian companies by year 2010.

As it was mentioned above AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department have 4 locations: Stavanger, Bergen, Fredrikstad and Trondheim. The objective of the current master thesis is to analyze the problem of voluntary labor turnover in the Maintenance Engineering department located in Stavanger employing approximately 55 specialists.

Albeit that the working language in the department is Norwegian due the company’s international expansion use of English language is currently increasing in the department. That is also done in order to be able to communicate and cooperate with AGR companies and departments in other countries (http://www.agr.com/upload/Presentations/AGR_Field_Operations_presentation.pdf).

Work in the department is organized in two types of project participation. In the first type, employees work on in-house projects consisting of a team of from 2 to 4 employees. The duration of work on a project in this kind of organization usually lasts from 6 month up to 1, 5 years. In the second type, employees get hired out and usually are situated in the client´s offices. Their work is also organized in a form of project lasting for more than 1 year. In most cases they work in such projects for major companies like Statoil.

In the opinion of the department´s management they have experienced relatively high voluntary labor turnover starting from the year 2008. This was established from interviews with line manager, project manager and employee working in the second type of projects. At the same period top management in Bergen together with HR
department commissioned the local management in Maintenance Engineering department to develop actions to identify and reduce turnover on a local basis. Special project manager from the department has been assigned responsible for that task.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 Job alternatives

Results on the awareness of employees regarding availability of perceived job alternatives based mostly on the survey data, rather than data obtained during interviews. Due to the reason that questions such as search for potential job opportunities with clients or outside the organization are sensitive questions to which interviewees had difficulties to answer sincerely in the course of face-to-face interviews. When asked questions by means of an anonymous online survey it was easier for the interviewees to give honest answers to such questions (Murray, 2003).

The online survey findings identified that 81% of respondents has close contact with clients during their work in the relevant projects. Whereas 13% of respondents answered that they do not have close contact with a client, the remaining 9% of responses were that it depends on the client and project. 68% of respondents replied “No” on the question regarding considering to search for the job opportunities with the same client organization during or upon accomplishment of the project. 13% of respondents answered positively on that question and the remained 21% respondents preferred to answer “Maybe”. 85% of respondents answered that they did not get any employment offers from the client organizations. While, 13% of respondents confirmed that they have received employment offers and 4% preferred to respond “Other” without giving a clear explanation.

Moreover, 62% of employees confirmed that they do not regularly seek for the employment opportunities with other organization and 40% of respondents do seek for that. On the question where those employees mostly checked for possible employment opportunities responses of 66% of employees were company internet sites, 26% appeal to friends, 23% used other sources, 17% do it via direct contact and only 6% seek for
that with a client. As well as 60% of respondents are aware of availability of multiple job opportunities for their type of work specialization in the business region they are working in. Rest 23% of respondents answered “Maybe” on the same question, 19% “No” and accordingly 2% of responses were “Other”. On the general question about work satisfaction with current position 57% employees responses were “Yes”, 11% “No” and 34% “Not completely”.

Furthermore, the interviewees A3 and A5 stated that for some employees who left the AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department the reason for quitting was in opening own consulting services business rather than finding better external job opportunities with another organization.

4.2.2 Knowledge intensity

5 out 6 interviewees and 87% of the online survey respondents expressed opinion that they learnt a lot through they work on projects in the current organization. That represents major part of employees in the Maintenance Engineering Department. The remaining part of respondents comprising 11% answered “Other”, 6% “I am not sure” and 2% “No”. That was also testified by similar type of question in the online survey, but composed in a different negative manner. There 68% of employees showed relatively analogous coherency expressing disagreement with a statement that they do not develop through current work in projects. While 19% of respondents agreed with a negative statement, 15% were not sure and 2% chose to answer “Other”. 40% of respondents agreed on the statement that their knowledge became very general through their work in projects and 34% responded “Maybe”. While 23% of respondents answers were “No” and 4% of answers were “Other”. On the following question if the risk of becoming generalist and losing their specialized knowledge makes respondents vulnerable, 60% of responses were “No”, 21% “Yes”, 19% “I don’t know” and 4% “Other”. Although on the question if the respondents do the same kind of work while participating in different projects 51% of responses were “No”, 23% answered “Yes”, 17% assumed “Maybe” and 9% preferred to answer “Other”. Those responses provide assumption that employees consider learning and developing themselves via their
participation in project as generalists rather than becoming more specialized professionals.

4.2.3 Nature of work

The findings from the online survey and interviews put a strong emphasis on the different type of project participation the Maintenance Engineering department employees are involved in. As it was confirmed by the 5 interviewees and 49 the online survey respondents over 64% of employees have singular type of project participation. That is when employees work mostly in projects on a client’s territory. Main client for such type of project participation is the Norwegian oil and gas company Statoil. In such projects employees are outsourced to work in the clients department of the company for a long period, i.e. 1 year or more. The way work is organized in such projects, according to interviewee A1 is similar to classical functional organization, when a project employee works on singular basis in one of the client company’s departments being responsible to accomplish a specified task in that department. Other employees in that department belong to the client organization. Although according to interviewees A1 and A4 such kind of project participation is not run as a project with a single employee. On average there are created project teams consisting of three employees one of which is a project manager and two other are project employees situated in different departments of the client company.

Remaining 45% of respondents combined with 3 interview results have other type of project participation. Such as when there is created a project group consisting of 2 to 4 project members including project manager working on other projects lasting for a period with a minimum duration of 3 month or longer. In this case employees are not outsourced to work in the client office. According to interviewee A2 who works on such kind of team projects, work in Statoil type of projects with singular participation is monotonous and less challenging in comparison to the non-Statoil, mixed project type with a team participation and not stationed within the client company’s premises. Due to the fact that period of non-Statoil projects are shorter as well as work tasks are more diverse than on singular type of projects. That was also confirmed by interviewees A1 and A4 that in singular type of projects the client company, which is to in source the
project employee from the Maintenance Engineering department, signs a contract to outsource that particular employee from the AGR Field Operations to do concrete course of work for defined period of time which is preconditioned in the contract. As an outcome work tasks in singular type of project are less flexible rather than in non-Statoil projects.

Furthermore, during my brief meeting with a line manager and an assigned project manager, I was informed of a number of challenges already identified by the department which might cause turnover intentions for the company employees. Among those the main cause for voluntary labor turnover was said to be a monotonous work. That was also confirmed by all five interviewees to be specifically higher risk factor that they have with a singular type of project participation. However, according to the online survey results that I have obtained for the purposes of the current thesis, monotonous work identified to be on the third place among the reasons for emergence of voluntary labor turnover was estimated to be 43%. While the main reason cause for the voluntary labor turnover estimated by 55% was lower than average salary level. On the second place, based on the responses amounting to 55% was better employment offers from other companies. Even though correlation of responses to the question about on what can reduce voluntary labor turnover was slightly different. Such as 81% of respondents still considered salary increase to be the main factor, whereas 55% of respondents expressed opinion that more interesting projects can be more motivating and thus increasing their intentions to stay with the organization, moreover 53% employees considered that better career opportunities within their own organization can reduce turnover intentions.

Furthermore, responses to a direct question of what can make the respondents personally decide to quit the organization he or she working for, were different. If the salary and better external employment opportunities were still identified to be the leading factors with 51% and 36% respectively as direct cause for personal intentions to quit, lack of opportunities for competence and professional development were on the third place with 30%. While monotonous work took fourth place with 21% shared with poor career growth opportunities, and getting better offer from the client.
Moreover, following question what could be the strongest factor in terms of personal motivation for a particular employee to stay with the organization. On the first place with 51% was interesting projects, while on the second 49% was placed salary. On the third place with 43% was great external environment. Whereas, good opportunities for personal competence development and good career possibilities shared the fourth position getting 36% of responses each.

On a question regarding who in the opinion of the employees in the department should be responsible for their competence development. The majority of responses indicated that it is the line manager, while next two most popular answers with 53% were split between the department manager and employee him/herself.

On the next statement if in their opinion it is correct that the department manager sends out information about availability of various trainings, 64% of respondents preferred to agree with that statement, 19% said they do not know what to answer and only 15% of respondents suggested that it is better if an employee will be responsible for own professional competence development.

### 4.2.4 Performance appraisal

During preliminary meetings with the department management and 6 interviews obtained I was informed that the organization uses special form called “medarbeidersamtale” for the performance appraisal purposes. That was translated in English as “AGR Dialogue”. According to interviewee A1 the form consists of 1 page with statements to be responded by personal comments of each employee before having individual evaluation meeting with a line manager. During such meeting the current form is to be discussed between an employee, a line manager and in some cases in the presence of the department manager. According to interviewees the line manager talks to the project manager of that particular employee prior to the meeting with that employee, this happens in cases when an employee is involved in the team type of project participation. In cases when a meeting is with an employee engaged in a singular type of project that by being outsourced to the clients department, the line manager talks to the client’s department manager. The “medarbeidersamtale” is a standard form used
by all firms within AGR Group. Current form is to be filled in once a year by every employee in the organization including management. Then it is assessed by a person who has a higher rank than a person who is to be assessed.

According to the interviewee A6 the purpose of implementation and use of the “medarbeidersamtale” form is described in the organizational personnel handbook, leadership handbook and internet HR pages of the organization, which every employee in the organization obliged to be introduced with when getting employed in the organization. The common purpose of such performance appraisal tool is to evaluate overall employees’ performance for the purposes of further career promotion and a salary upgrade (Towers, 1996). Therefore, it is logical to assume that such explanation for the use of the “medarbeidersamtale” form is to be present in the description of the purpose of the form in the personnel handbook and other organizational documents to HR policies and procedures.

However, both interview results with employees A1 and A2 as well as the online survey responses show the opposite. Such as 49% of respondents and interviewee A1 and A2 comments indicate that majority of the department employees do not know that the “medarbeidersamtale” form of performance appraisal is used for the further career promotion and possible salary increase purposes. In fact 34% of respondent answered “No” that the current form is not used to evaluate the current performance for the further promotion purposes. 13% of respondents chose to answer “Other” and only 9% of employees are aware of such purpose of the “medarbeidersamtale” form.

On the question if the employees are also asked to give feedback on their peer project colleagues for the purposes of “medarbeidersamtale” form early evaluation. 79% of employees answered “No”, 15% of responses were “Yes” and 11% answered “Other”. The frequency of being asked to give feedback demonstrated that 51% of respondents were asked to give feedback on the colleague “Very seldom”, 34% responded “Other” and 4% were asked to give it “Every time before the self-assessment”.

When asking similar question but with regards to evaluation of the project manager, results showed a slightly different picture. In that 68% of employees have never been
asked to give feedback about the performance of their project manager during the project. While 32% of respondents have been asked to give feedback and 6% of responses was “Other”. The frequency of giving feedback was also not so drastically differentiated such as 45% were asked “Very seldom”, 36% answered “Other” and 5% were asked “Every time before self-assessment”.

The interviewee A1 and A2 stated that they have never been asked to give any feedback about performance of neither their peer colleagues nor project managers for the purposes of the “medarbeidersamtale” form evaluation. Although according to employee A2 for the purposes of his evaluation the line manager asks for a feedback from his project co-workers and not only project manager before having personal meeting with him personally and discussing his “medarbeidersamtale” form. The interviewee A5 responded that she systematically provided such feedback about performance of a peer employee or a project manager, but that it was based on her own initiative. Furthermore, the interviewee A6 who is representative from the HR department of the organization confirmed that feedbacks from their clients, peer colleagues and project manager to the line manager are mostly done verbally. It appears that there are neither strict requirements nor formal procedures to fill in performance appraisal “medarbeidersamtale” form. That was also verified by 49% and 28% of responses on the analogical question in the online survey.

When the online survey respondents were asked if they would like to give feedback on their project managers, 49% employees answered positively, 34% were not sure and 15% answered negatively. On the question regarding getting immediate feedback from the line manage during yearly meeting with filling in the “medarbeidersamtale” form 45% of respondents stated that they get direct feedback on their performance, while 43% responded that they do not get direct feedback and 15% answered “Other”. Furthermore, when in the following questions respondents were asked if they would like to get such direct feedback during meeting with line manager, 74% responded “Yes”, 13% were not sure and only 11% chose to answer “No”. Same high percentage of responses estimated by 57% received question regarding suggestions which respondents may give for improvement of the “medarbeidersamtale” form when employees
expressed opinion that getting direct feedback from the line manager can improve efficiency in use of such form.

The level of assessment was discovered to be different also for the employees that have different types of work participation. For example, for the interviewee A1 who has single type of work participation the assessment before yearly meeting with line manager done about his individual performance by the client’s department manager. Whereas for the interviewees A2, A3 and A4 the assessment before the yearly meeting is done both by taking into consideration the individual and team performance on the project.

In addition to the “medarbeidersamtale” performance appraisal form the HR department from the main organization sends out “medarbeiderundersøkelse”, which translated as an “Employee Inquiry”, to all AGR Group’s subsidiaries every second year. The purpose for implementation of such informal “medarbeiderundersøkelse” form is to assess overall opinions of the employees about their general perception of the organizational development as well as to identify possible suggestions for further improvement. When asked about usefulness in use of both “medarbeidersamtale” form and “medarbeiderundersøkelse” form, 81% of the employees responded positively, while 19% were not sure and 6% answered “Other”. Surprisingly the rate of negative responses was 0%. The online survey results also showed that major amount of respondents estimated by 40% do not know what the line manager pays most attention to when assessing their personal “medarbeidersamtale” forms. While 51% of respondents suppose that results from “medarbeiderundersøkelse” inquiry facilitates identification of possible suggestions for further improvement of work situation in the organization. As well as 47% of respondents chose the answer that the “medarbeiderundersøkelse” inquiry allows to acknowledge for the main organization AGR Group general level of work satisfaction in organization. 60% of respondents also consider that the use of “medarbeiderundersøkelse” inquiry can help to improve work situation in the organization while 21% of respondents were not sure and 13% were skeptical about it.
4.2.5 Turnover prevention actions

During my preliminary meetings with department management and later obtained 6 interviews, I have been informed about number of actions taken by the department for turnover reductions. They are: raise in salary, provision of better training opportunities, attraction of new clients by offering new services, changing recruitment focus on hiring more experienced candidates and agreement with Norwegian work authorities with an aim to improve work life of the employees. Therefore, in order to identify if the employees in the organization are aware of the actions taken by the department management I have asked such questions during interviews and the online survey. The results obtained were the following: 38% of the online survey respondents were aware of actions taken by the department for the turnover reduction, whereas 40% of respondents answered “No” and the rest 21% answered “I am not sure”. A similar picture was observed during the interviews, such as interviewee A1 responded that he is not very much aware of the turnover prevention actions already taken by the department management. In contrary to him interviewees A2 and A3 responded that they are aware of those actions. The interviewee A4, A5 and A6 belonged to the management group and they expressed opinion that the employees are partially aware of actions being taken and that the department management is still in the process of implementation of those voluntary turnover prevention actions.

4.2.6 Additional findings

The AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department served also initiator of so-called “Fadder” system in the organization which was later adopted by other organizations within AGR Group. The objective of that system is to assign a responsible person to provide administrative help to newly hired employee to get quickly introduced to the organization. Besides for all newly recruited employees in the Maintenance Engineering department those employees who work for a longer period in the department were encouraged by the department management to provide express work trainings for new comers. Thus when the online survey respondents were asked if they consider the implemented “Fadder” system effective in organization 53% of employees
agreed with such statement, 28% were not sure and 13% disagreed with it. As well as 55% expressed an opinion that they would like to make that system official.

Overall results of all 6 interviews and the online survey responses shows that 57% of employees express strong sense of belongingness, first of all to its own department and then to the AGR Field Operation organization in general estimated by 55% and only 2% consider themselves as a part of AGR Group. Furthermore, the level of emotional attachment to the department discovered to be even higher 70%, while to the AGR Field Operations it was identified to be 26% and still the same 2% to the AGR Group in general.

The period of work for the AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department for the most online survey respondents ranged from 1 year to 3 years estimating 72% of respondents. 13% worked in the department from 4 to 6 years, 2 % from 7 to 10 years, 4 % from 11 to 15 years and more and the rest 9 % responded “Other”. The majority of respondents 57% hold occupational positions as engineers, 15% are senior engineers, 13% are project managers, 4 % are junior engineers and consultants and 9% chose to answer “Other”. The educational background of respondents estimates 57% holding bachelor degree, 30% master degree, 13% “Other” and 2% high school diploma. 43% of respondents were from Stavanger office, 30% from Bergen, 17% from Trondheim and 11% from Fredrikstad. 47% of respondents’ works at 1 project at a time, 45% work on 2-3, 4% work on 3-4 and more projects simultaneously. For 49% of respondents’ each project duration lasts for 1 year, 30% 2-3 years, 19% 6 months, 13% over 3 years, 6% 3 month and accordingly 2% 1 month. 55% of respondents have 1 project manager for each project, 21% have 1 project manager for several projects, 17% have no project managers and 9% responded “Other”.

5 Analysis

5.1 Job Alternatives
In the frame of references I have identified three factors which can differentiate voluntary labor turnover in PBOs. The first factor I claimed to be presence of better job alternatives related to a close contact with a client. Specifically according to Nikolova (2009) close contact is common for the PBOs engaged in consulting services. That is the character of a job when employees have frequent contact with a client through collection of data and therefore frequent visits to the client as well as outsourcing of project consultants to provide consulting services for the client in place. Empirical results have proven to be coherent with theoretical statements in the case of Maintenance Engineering department, since those employees who have projected team participation have frequent contacts with a client while documentation collection process. Whereas those employees who have single type of project participation by being outsourced to the client for a period over 1 year, have a direct contact with them by being stationed in their offices.

However, the empirical findings show that such assumption is partially erroneous since the close client interaction does not affect employees’ intentions to quit in favor of working for the client. The results from the empirical part shows that for those employees rather general availability of job alternatives in the market have more effect on their intentions to quit (Gehart, 1990).

The empirical findings also confirmed that for employees working in the consulting sector withdrawal behaviors can be caused by their intention of opening own consulting services by enticing the clients and colleagues from the initial company where such employees used to work (Alvesson, 1995).

5.2 Knowledge intensity

In the frame of references knowledge intensity have been suggested to distinguish voluntary turnover in PBOs based on the works of Allen (1995) and Lindkvist (2004, 2008) stating that employees working in PBOs are close to the market and therefore more knowledgeable about recent changes in it not excluding changes in employment requirements. As well as such employees through their work in various projects become generalist in their knowledge base. That makes them universal to fulfill various work positions which can appear on the market, since such specialists working in so-called
knowledge communities learn to be flexible, highly adaptable and efficient in delivering result within constrained time limits. All that, in combination with being constantly updated about changes in the market can facilitate voluntary labor turnover factors in PBOs.

Empirical findings from the research conducted with the employees of the Maintenance Engineering department have confirmed the theory statement that employees in PBOs do become generalists through their work in various projects. However, that fact does not seem to make employees vulnerable to losing their initial proficiency. As on the contrary such employees showed higher satisfaction with that, and even considered that they develop professionally much better by being generalists. Therefore, factor of knowledge intensity seem to not affect negatively the voluntary labor turnover intentions in the current empirical case. On the contrary, we observe a positive effect of it on the employees’ job satisfaction, as they experience that they learn a lot by obtaining diverse knowledge. In fact that results positively on their intention to stay with their home organization (Martin, 1980).

5.3 Nature of work

As was stated in the frame of references the nature of work in PBOs is conducive for emergence of labor turnover in the current empirical case. This can be explained by the changes in periods of monotonous work with periods of work overload. Therefore in the current empirical case employees’ intention to seek for external work opportunities has a direct relation to the level of their job routinization which in turn has a direct effect on the level of their job satisfaction (Martin, 1980).

Although the factor of increased responsibilities for own professional development identified by Bredin and Söderlund (2006) as a second main challenge in PBOs, defined to be not influencing the employees’ level of job satisfaction in the current empirical case. On the contrary according to empirical findings employees in the Maintenance Engineering department are satisfied with the fact that they can choose themselves professional courses for the purpose of further competence development.
Another factor that is difficulties in correct evaluation of employees by the line manager in PBOs where project takes place outside the home organization, applies to the projects with single type of project participation in the case of Maintenance Engineering department, since such employees get outsourced to the client’s office and therefore it challenging for the line manager to evaluating those employees on an individual basis.

The results of current analysis suggests that the assumption made in the frame of references part regarding voluntary turnover factors which can be specific for PBOs is confirmed partially based on the case study example. It might be worth noting that this research is constrained by time limitation for the purpose of collection of a wider amount of empirical data and its further assessment. Furthermore, the outcome of the current research might be different for other types of PBOs.

5.4 Performance appraisal

The conducted interviews and surveys have shown that the case study subject namely Maintenance Engineering department has a perfunctory performance appraisal, in that is limited to the two forms: the “medarbeidersamtale” and the “medarbeiderundersøkelse”. Based on the results of the empirical analysis it established that the “medarbeidersamtale” form represents the main performance appraisal tool for the department. The current form has a short-term focus assessing assignments which employee has been involved in throughout the current year. That, in combination with inconsistent feedback from the management concerning employees has led to the following outcome, majority of the employees do not understand the purpose and subsequent effects of the “medarbeidersamtale” form on their further career development neither. Moreover, the interviewed employees were not aware of any further process after they have submitted the appraisal form to their line manager.

This example might be seen as an indicator of the fact that performance appraisal is not efficiently utilized in most of the contemporary organizations. That can be explained by “underestimation of the capacity of PA to increase employees’ perceptions of being valued and being part of an organizational team” (Levy and Williams, 2004, p. 889). Another outcome of the interviews that were conducted show that differences in project tasks and work done by various employees, was that employees who work in the
client’s office for a long time appeared to show more tendencies to quit and instead start to work for the client. Those results were found to counter the obtained online survey results.

Performance appraisal system which includes according to Scott & Einstein (2001) outcome-based, behavior-based and competence-based performance appraisal is in a straight line to influence employee motivation, directing attention to specific objectives and specifying employee behavior. Therefore, it is especially important to have a well-developed and implementation-friendly performance appraisal system in place. That can be supported by Baard Kuvaas (2006, p. 505) claiming that “employees who are satisfied with how performance appraisal is conducted are more committed and have lower turnover intentions, not that the mere existence of some type of performance appraisal is positively related to employee attitudes and behavioral intentions”.

It can also be supported by one of the most influential organizational equilibrium theories of March & Simon (1957) on the staff turnover who claims that turnover occurs when individuals perceive that their contributions to the organization exceed the inducements they receive from that organization, which is directly related to incorrect performance appraisal and its follow-ups. Development of further explanation of staff turnover Mobley (1978) linked with a job satisfaction, specifically, the job dissatisfaction is proposed to trigger a series of withdrawal cognitions (e.g., thoughts of quitting, the job search utility evaluations, and the job search intentions) that result in the job search behaviors.

Here one can see that well-developed and implemented performance appraisal serves as one of the important ways to identify level of job satisfaction and one of anticipators for labor turnover. Another finding from the empirical part of the conducted case-study research was that during the course of filling in the “medarbeidersamtale” form employees working on the certain project are not involved in assessment of their project manager.

Both findings show that currently the company does not use performance appraisal tools in a proper manner. This is due to the fact that the term performance appraisal also includes employee performance review, evaluation, feedback and further competence development as a method of HRM. In theory the performance appraisal has two
purposes. First one serves as a control mechanism to monitor performance with an aim to reach set goal, while second is a feedback mechanism to facilitate individual growth and development (Stroul, 1987).

However, in the case of Maintenance Engineering department, only control mechanism is mostly implemented in order to avoid conflict of interests between organization and employee (Stoker, Van der Heijden, 2001). While conditions for implementation of both control mechanisms executed mostly through top-down initiatives and bottom-up feedback mechanism for full success of the current performance appraisal method are not followed (Wright & Cheung, 2005).

Looking further on the description of the types of performance appraisal given in the frame of references chapter and empirical data obtained it can be identified that the company uses outcome-based performance appraisal. Such type of performance appraisal does not completely cover the needs for performance evaluation in the project teams where employees from the Maintenance Engineering department belong to. Since the project teams according to Scott and Walter (2001, p. 112) “tend to be more focused on tasks than on team members” due to the reason that all the project work constrained around delivering set goal for the particular project and tasks how to reach that goal. As well as training and development for such project teams is left to their own individual pursuit.

In such circumstances according to the Walter and Scott (2001) use of multiple performance appraisals can be more efficient. “Because project team members are assigned and reassigned to different projects and often serve simultaneously on multiple teams, no one functional manager, team leader, or set of peers observes behavior over the many different work situations in which they perform” (Walter and Scott, 2001, p. 113). In those cases it can be more useful to collect feedback on the each employee’s performance both from his/her team members in the case of team project participation and client´s department employees for outsourced employees. Added to that is a feedback from the project manager and client´s department manager.

According to the empirical results such collection of feedbacks is missing in the Maintenance Engineering department. Currently it is only project managers who are
accounted to give feedback on the employees’ performance. It is very seldom that project colleagues are asked to give such feedback both to their peer employee and their project manager. That resulted according to empirical findings to the dissatisfaction with performance appraisal used in the organization which may enhance employees’ intention to quit through reduced job satisfaction (Kuvaas, 2006), influenced by the lack of communication about mutual expectations between employees and supervisors (Stoker J. & Van der Heijden, 2001).

5.5 General engagement forms (gEm)

In order to facilitate implementation of the multiple performance appraisals the Maintenance Engineering department can implement three types of performance appraisal forms such as career plan, performance progress review and feedback form. The implementation of those forms will allow the management of the company to get more accurate evaluation of employee performances.

The career plan will allow employee to design his/her own development plan for the both a short-term period estimated by 1 year, and a long-term period estimated by 3 to 5 years. The form may also contain a plan of the mandatory and voluntary trainings which an employee is to accomplish. Such form allows specifically for the employees working in PBO’s to cooperate better with an increased individual responsibility challenge (Bredin and Söderlund, 2006). Upon filling in that form counselee supposed to have a meeting with a counselor so that both of them can discuss if a set ambitions in the career plan are realizable or should they be adjusted.

A performance review is another performance appraisal tool used by modern PBO’s offering consulting services. The objective of the performance review is to evaluate the employee performance through the year, to analyze how well employee is doing his work and discuss it with a counselor. That document is developed to be simultaneously filled in by each employee him/herself in certain sections of that performance review and then by the project managers at whose projects that employee has been involved in. The form contains specific questions to be answered regarding usage and development of the concrete competences during the participation in various projects. It allows
measuring personal level of involvement of the each and every employee during the various projects as well as their level of learning new competencies through participation in those projects. The performance review form motivates employees to perform better knowing that their personal promotion through the career ladder will be based on the evaluations made in that form.

The current description of the objectives of the performance review is similar to the description of the “medarbeidersamtale” form given by the department management and HR representative from the main office during obtained interviews. It means that the company already has an implemented performance review in place, thus it can facilitate implementation of the career plan and feedback form.

A feedback form is used by the employees of the company in order to assess in return project managers at whose projects those employees were assigned to take part. That form contains different type of questions covering areas of competences needed to be used and developed specifically for the project managers of the organizations. The feedback form can also be used for the assessment of the peer colleagues who took part in the same project. Implementation of such form will cover the full purpose for use of the performance appraisal by the organization “a control mechanism to monitor performance and goal attainment and it is also feedback mechanism to foster individual growth and development” (Stroul, 2001, p. 70).

The career plan, performance progress review and the feedback form are the part of a global excellence model (gEm) which is designed to “recognize high level of performance not only in what they achieve, but also in how they achieve it. Use of the forms - frameworks that not only form the basis of the assessment criteria, but can also be used to drive improvements and benchmark performance” (http://www.thecki.org/Knowledge-Hub/Knowledge-portal/Compliance-and organizations/Excellence-models-and-awards/).

Furthermore findings from the empirical chapter show that the Maintenance Engineering department has implemented so-called “Fadder” system for the purposes of provision of help with introduction to the company and department of newly recruited employees. The launch of the system has been so successful that it was also
adopted further by the whole AGR Field Operations organization, although the AGR Field Operations has not officially formalized the current system. For that matter it can be possible to suggest update of the “Fadder” system into the career plan.

Generally use of such performance appraisal forms will allow getting more reliable information on the performance of each project worker in the organization. Therefore it can be more efficiently used for the purposes of further career development and promotion both by the management of the organization and by their HR department. In addition the use of those performance appraisal forms may have a positive effect on a sense of belongingness for the employees with a single type of project participation. In that, such employees would feel more taken care of by their project managers, as the latter will feel more responsibility to provide better supervision, knowing that he/she will also receive a feedback on his/her performance from subordinates consequently used for further promotion and salary increase purposes.

Efficient implementation of the gEm through better communication of its objectives will let employees to feel valued by their organization, especially due to the performance-dependent payment system. This will also allow the department to keep track of the employees who are striving to perform well on a continuous basis as well as employees whose performance is weaker.

5.6 Job embeddedness
5.6.1 Job fit

According to Maertz and Griffeth (2004, p.671) “Also, contractual forces of attachment to the organization may actually be reduced as performance increases. The employee may feel that he/she, through good performance, has contributed to the organization and thereby met contractual obligations to it”. Thus, the efficient implementation of the performance appraisal may influence positively on employees’ job embeddedness which is one the factors for emergence of the voluntary labor turnover. Although they also state that it can also have a negative influence to the voluntary labor turnover, such as employees “may feel that the organization owes them, particularly if performance is

In the additional findings subsection within empirical part identified that the Maintenance Engineering department employees have high sense of belongingness to the department rather than to the AGR Field Operations organization in general or to the whole AGR Group. That has been caused by strong internally established job embeddedness within the Maintenance Engineering department characterized by tight internal connections developed between employees in the department. That also discovered to be one of the main factors for employees’ intentions to stay with the current organization (Mitchell et al, 2001). Thus, such level of job embeddedness can facilitate efficient establishment of the counselor counselee system used for the career plan purposes. Through that it can insure better fit of employees to the certain type of projects based on the personal descriptions about work expectations given by the employees in the career plan. So that employees who for example who are not good in monotonous work will not get outsourced to the client’s department, while employees who are good in it and tend to prefer less challenging tasks will not get assigned to the project teams that are assigned to solve challenging tasks.

5.6.2 Client contract

In case of possible headhunting by the client of the Maintenance Engineering department that is identified to take place within the latter, empirical findings suggest its occurrence specifically among the outsourced employees. The management can develop an agreement clause with a client company regarding compensation payments, namely in case when the client during or upon accomplishment of the project has headhunted an employee from the Maintenance Engineering department. The amount of such payments can be estimated by the AGR Field Operations to cover the administrative costs for recruitment of new employee to fill in the resulted vacant position.

Suggestions concerning performance appraisal that were given above can be additional for the future actions which are to be taken, can be added to the past and present action plans outlined in the empirical part. Such complex approach according to Sun et al.
(2007, p. 571) called as an “integrated HR strategy combining resource (e.g. staffing levels, training, mobility and security) and control-based HR practices (e.g. appraisals, rewards, job design and participation) can affect turnover and productivity through creating a quality employment relationship”.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Research purpose

Efforts in this research were channeled towards contribution to improving the situation for PBO’s on a strategic level with putting more emphasis on the turnover differences specifically in PBO. Moreover, to shed light on the importance of using an adequate type of the performance appraisal based on specific organizational settings and what outcomes it may bring to the voluntary labor turnover prevention issue. That was achieved by analysis of the concrete empirical case by studying the voluntary labor turnover problem faced by Maintenance Engineering department of AGR Field Operations company. The following research questions were developed to facilitate the research purpose:

RQ1. What are the distinctive factors of voluntary labor turnover specific for PBOs?

RQ2. Are those identified factors encountered in the case example of PBO?

RQ3. What type of the performance appraisal can be most suitable for the case study company as an example of PBO in order to influence the identified turnover?

The research questions were analyzed both through theoretical literature review and empirical testing. During the literature review the following factors such job alternatives; knowledge intensity and nature of work were supposed to be deemed specific for the PBOs. Supplementary, in the literature review part there was given a
typology of the performance appraisal and there has been highlighted an importance of implementation of the correct type of performance appraisal for PBOs.

The empirical data on the voluntary labor turnover and performance appraisal in PBOs was gathered from AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department through personal interviewing and surveying both department management and ordinary employees. The aim was to identify corresponding links between theory and practice. As well as to verify receptiveness of the actions which were claimed to be taken by the department management for turnover identification and prevention by the employees of the Maintenance Engineering department. This case study provided evidences which were partially supported by theoretical propositions with regards to voluntary turnover factors in PBOs. Such as factor of availability of better job alternatives from the client organization for the employees working in PBOs were aligned partially with propositions made in the literature review during obtained in course of interviews with 6 employees. However, based on the outcome of the online survey these propositions were found to be contradictory. The knowledge intensity and nature of work factors were discovered to correspond with literature review to some extent.

In order to highlight the contributions of the current research I want to mention that I have identified the integrated conceptual framework of factors which are specific for the emergence of voluntary labor turnover in PBOs. Further testing of the proposed theoretical framework on the example of AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department allowed acknowledging empirical applicability of the theoretical propositions in practice.

6.2 Implications for AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department

The findings of this master thesis have practical implications for the turnover prevention actions developed and continuously implemented by the management of the Maintenance Engineering department. As the analysis chapter suggests, that the management of the Maintenance Engineering department did not pay sufficient attention to the use of the performance appraisal as tool for the turnover mitigation
purposes. Such as implementation of the suitable type of the performance appraisal can positively contribute to the currently developed turnover actions. Moreover, the analysis chapter provides concrete practical recommendations. Those recommendations would provide AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department with better insights and deeper understanding of turnover causes specific for PBOs and more efficient ways of handling such causes.

6.3 Suggestions for the future research

Although the current master thesis was interpretative in its nature, the empirical findings have only partially confirmed sequence of the nodes and propositions extricated from the theoretical chapter.

For the purposes of the current master thesis research I approached to investigate the theoretical propositions based on the example of a single case study of AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department. The findings obtained from such case study were limited to one specific department within AGR Field Operations organization. Therefore, I suggest any future research on this subject to target a whole or larger group of PBOs.

Nonetheless, the proposed suggestions on a performance appraisal type as well as gEm forms are generally applicable to other category of contemporary organizations and not limited only to PBOs.
7 References

Books:


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Articles:


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Internet:

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http://www2.agr.com/fo/Pages/Default.aspx


8 Appendix

8.1 Interview questions

1). Do you being a project member have one project at a time?

2). Can also participate to the several projects at a time?

3). Do you have concrete department manager to whose department you generally belong to and to whom you accountable for?

4). Do you have each time new project manager in every project to whom you then become accountable for on that particular project?

5). Who has main responsibility for your performance evaluation and decides about raise of your salary base and further career growth?

6). Is your employment based on a temporary or permanent contract?

7). How is your personal impact on the project measured?

8). Is it assessed on the individual level of on the team level?

9). On what does the assessing person/s pay most attention for on the individual performance or the overall team performance on each project?

10). Is the project singularly run by the AGR employees only or does it also involve employees from the client company?

11). How many people usually each project consist of?

12). Do you have the same person as a project manager on most of the projects?

13). Do you have in the organization self – assessment system when you can yourself evaluate your own performance on the project?

14). If not then who is responsible for your evaluation?

15). Do you have officially assigned person to whom you are supposed to go with personal or administrative questions such as vacation, sick days etc?
16). Is it person from HR department?

17). Have you ever been asked to evaluate another colleague performance on the project?

18). Who is responsible with assigning each employee to the specific project?

19). Does the company HR department organize assessment of the employees’ performances?

20). Have you been sent to any training during your work period in the AGR?

21). If yes, was it done by the initiative of the HR department or was it done by the managers in the department?

22). On which way HR department is involved into the everyday life of your department?

23). Do you feel personally that you learned and improved yourself more as a professional during your work in AGR in comparison to the time before you worked in this organization?

24). Did you learned and improved professionally through specific trainings provided by organization or did you learned through your work on the project?

25). What is in your opinion have led to the high turnover in the organization?

26). Are you aware about any measures which have been taken by the organization to reduce turnover?

27). Are those measures taken by HR department?

28). Or are they taken by managers directly inside your department?

29). In your opinion measures taken to reduce turnover will be efficient?

30). Do you feel personally responsible to contribute to the actions which have been taken already or will be taken in the future in order to reduce turnover?

31). In your personal opinion what can be the strongest challenges in your department and organization in general which may lead to no motivation and desire to quit?

32). Do you plan your further career development within a company on personal level?

33). Or do the organization/department has a specific actions taken to plan your further career development jointly with you?

34). Are you able to make evaluation of the work of the project manager which also may affect to his/her further career growth?
35). Or is it only done in one way that only the project manager can evaluate your performance during the project but you as project member cannot evaluate his performance as project manager on that particular project?

8.2 Survey for AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department

1. How many years have you been working in AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department? *
   - [ ] 1. 1-3
   - [ ] 2. 4-6
   - [ ] 3. 7-10
   - [ ] 4. 11-15
   - [ ] 5. Over 15
   - [ ] Other: __________

2. What is your title at work? *
   - [ ] 1. Junior Engineer
   - [ ] 2. Engineer
   - [ ] 3. Senior engineer
   - [ ] 4. Consultant
   - [ ] 5. Project Manager
   - [ ] 6. Department director
   - [ ] Other: __________

3. What are your educational and professional qualifications? *
   - [ ] 1. High school diploma
   - [ ] 2. Bachelor Degree
   - [ ] 3. Master Degree
   - [ ] Other: __________
4. In what location do you work? *
   - [ ] 1. Stavanger
   - [ ] 2. Bergen
   - [ ] 3. Fredrikstad
   - [ ] 4. Trondheim
   - [ ] Other: 

5. How many employees work in your department? *
   - [ ] 1. 1-5
   - [ ] 2. 6-10
   - [ ] 3. 11-20
   - [ ] 4. 21-50
   - [ ] Other: 

6. What kind of project do you mostly enrolled in? *
   - [ ] 1. Statoil
   - [ ] 2. Different projects
   - [ ] Other: 

7. How many projects at a time you are working on? *
   - [ ] 1. 1
   - [ ] 2. 2-3
   - [ ] 3. 3-4
   - [ ] Other: 

8. How long is the period of the project(s) which you participate? *
   - [ ] 1. 1 month
   - [ ] 2. 3 month
3. 6 month
4. 1 year
5. 2-3 years
Other: __________________________

9. How many project managers do you have? *

1. 1 for each project
2. 1 for several projects
3. No project manager
Other: __________________________

10. Do you have close contact with the client during your work on the project? *

1. Yes
2. No
Other: __________________________

11. Have you ever considered to search for job opportunities with your client during or after you finished your work on the project? *

1. Yes
2. No
3. Maybe
Other: __________________________

12. Have you ever got any employment offer from the client organization? *

1. Yes
2. No
Other: __________________________

13. Do you regularly check for career opportunities with other organizations? *
14. Where do you check for such opportunities *

- ☐ 1. Internet site
- ☐ 2. Direct contact
- ☐ 3. Through client
- ☐ 4. Through friends
- ☐ Other:

15. Are you satisfied with your current position and work you do? *

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Not completely
- ☐ Other:

16. Do you think you learn a lot through your work on projects you are taking part in? *

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. I am not sure
- ☐ Other:

17. In your opinion are there a lot of job opportunities for the employee with your type of work specialization in the region you are working in? *

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. Maybe
- ☐ Other:
18. Do you think your knowledge become very general through your work in projects? *

- □ 1. Yes
- □ 2. No
- □ 3. Maybe
  - □ Other: [ ]

19. Does it make you feel worried that you may lose your deep knowledge expertise through work in projects? *

- □ 1. Yes
- □ 2. No
- □ 3. I don’t know
  - □ Other: [ ]

20. Do you think you do not develop through your current work in projects? *

- □ 1. Yes
- □ 2. No
- □ 3. I don’t know
  - □ Other: [ ]

21. Do you think you developed yourself as a professional a lot through work in current organization? *

- □ 1. Yes
- □ 2. No
- □ 3. Maybe
  - □ Other: [ ]

22. When you participate in different projects do you do the same kind of work in every project you are assigned? *

76
23. In your opinion salary level in your organization is lower than in other organizations within the same field offering the same type of services? *

- [ ] 1. Yes
- [ ] 2. No
- [ ] 3. Maybe
- [ ] Other: 

24. What could be the strongest factor for you to quit your current organization in case you will decide so? *

- [ ] 1. Low salary
- [ ] 2. Underdevelopment of personal knowledge and competence
- [ ] 3. Better external employment opportunities
- [ ] 4. Monotonous work changing with periods of work overload
- [ ] 5. Poor career growth possibilities
- [ ] 6. Getting more attractive job offer from the client organization
- [ ] 7. Indifference of the management for to improve work situation in general
- [ ] Other: 

25. What could be the strongest factor for you to stay with your current organization? *

- [ ] 1. Interesting projects
- [ ] 2. Good opportunities for personal knowledge and competence development
- [ ] 3. Great internal work environment
- [ ] 4. Poor external employment opportunities
- [ ] 5. Being heard by the management in order to continuously improve work situation
- [ ] 6. Good career growth possibilities
26. In your opinion "medarbeidersamtale" form which you fill in once a year and discuss with your line manager affects to your career promotion and (or) salary increase? *

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. I don’t know
- ☐ Other:

27. Do you think that yearly "medarbeidersamtale" is effective? *

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. I am not sure
- ☐ Other:

28. Have you ever been asked to give feedback about work performance of your colleague on the project for such "medarbeidersamtale" purposes? *

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ Other:

29. How often have you been asked to give feedback about work performance of your colleague? *

- ☐ 1. Every time before the self – assessment
- ☐ 2. Not often
- ☐ 3. Very seldom
- ☐ Other:
30. Have you ever been asked to give feedback about work performance of your project manager? *

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ Other:

31. How often have you been asked to give feedback about work performance of your project manager? *

- ☐ 1. Every time before the self–assessment
- ☐ 2. Not often
- ☐ 3. Very seldom
- ☐ Other:

32. Would you like to be asked to give feedback about work performance of your project manager? *

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ 3. I am not sure
- ☐ Other:

33. Do you get any feedback from the line manager after filling in "medarbeidersamtale" form and having meeting with him (her)? *

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
- ☐ Other:

34. Would you like to get feedback on why you need to fill in "medarbeidersamtale" form and what it affects on? *

- ☐ 1. Yes
- ☐ 2. No
35. Do you think that the fadder system you have in your department is effective? *

- [ ] 1. Yes
- [ ] 2. No
- [ ] 3. I am not sure
- Other: [ ]

36. Would you like that the fadder system would become official? *

- [ ] 1. Yes
- [ ] 2. No
- [ ] 3. I am not sure
- Other: [ ]

37. What in your opinion can improve "medarbeidersamtale" form? *

- [ ] 1. Getting feedback from the line manager on the form
- [ ] 2. Getting feedback from the HR department on the form
- [ ] 3. I don’t care about self – assessment form
- [ ] 4. I am skeptical it affects in any way to my career and salary growth
- [ ] 5. I find it not useful at all but I fill it in
- [ ] 6. I find it not useful at all and I don’t fill it in
- Other: [ ]

38. Do you think it is useful to have "medarbeidersamtale" and "medarbeiderundersøkelse" forms? *

- [ ] 1. Yes
- [ ] 2. No
- [ ] 3. I am not sure
- Other: [ ]
39. How your personal performance is measured in your opinion? *

- [ ] 1. Through self–assessment form
- [ ] 2. I don’t know
- [ ] 3. Through oral feedback on my work from project manager to the line manager
- [ ] 4. Through oral feedback on my work from my colleagues working in the same project as I
- [ ] Other: [ ]

40. On what does the person who evaluates "medarbeidersamtale" form pay most attention? *

- [ ] 1. On my performance during each project
- [ ] 2. On how well I worked together with other project team members
- [ ] 3. I have no idea
- [ ] 4. On how good communication I had with the client
- [ ] 5. On all that factors mentioned above
- [ ] Other: [ ]

41. Who evaluates your "medarbeidersamtale" form? *

- [ ] 1. Line manager
- [ ] 2. Project manager
- [ ] 3. HR department
- [ ] 4. I don’t know
- [ ] Other: [ ]

42. In your opinion what is the purpose of "medarbeiderundersøkelse" form sent from head office in Bergen to be filled in? *

- [ ] 1. It can let them to know if we are satisfied with our work situation
- [ ] 2. It can let them to know how things in general going in different offices
- [ ] 3. It can let them to identify possible suggestions for further improvement of the work situation
43. Do you think that result of "medarbeiderundersøkelse" form will be improvement of work situation for employees in the company? *

- [ ] 1. Yes, I do believe it has such purpose
- [ ] 2. I am not sure
- [ ] 3. I am skeptical about it
- [ ] 4. I don’t see any improvements out of it
- [ ] Other: 

44. In your opinion who should be responsible for your competence development with offering you various trainings? *

- [ ] 1. Department manager
- [ ] 2. HR department
- [ ] 3. I myself
- [ ] 4. Line manager
- [ ] 5. Project manager
- [ ] Other: 

45. Do you think it is correct that the department manager sends you information about different trainings you can apply for? *

- [ ] 1. No it should be the responsibility of the HR department
- [ ] 2. Yes, it should be responsibility of the department manager
- [ ] 3. It is better if every employee personally can search for own trainings
- [ ] 4. I don’t know
- [ ] Other: 

46. Which organization do you feel yourself belonging to? *

- [ ] 1. To the AGR Group
47. Which organization do you feel yourself attached emotionally to? *

- [ ] 1. To the AGR Group
- [ ] 2. To the AGR Field Operations
- [ ] 3. To my department
- [ ] 4. I don’t feel attached to any organization or department
- [ ] 5. I am not sure
- [ ] Other: [ ]

48. Do you feel personally that you learned and improved yourself more as a professional during your work in AGR in comparison to the time before you worked in this organization? *

- [ ] 1. Yes
- [ ] 2. No
- [ ] 3. I am not sure
- [ ] Other: [ ]

49. What is in your opinion have led to the labor turnover in your organization? *

- [ ] 1. Salary below the average
- [ ] 2. Poor social policy in the company
- [ ] 3. Better job offer from the client
- [ ] 4. Better job offer from another company
- [ ] 5. Not challenging work and assignments
- [ ] 6. Not clear career path
- [ ] 7. Periods of monotonous work changing with periods of work overload
- [ ] Other: [ ]
50. In your opinion what can decrease labor turnover? *

- 1. Salary increase
- 2. Better bonus system
- 3. Better social policy
- 4. More interesting projects
- 5. Better career growth opportunities
- 6. Better work environment
- Other: 

51. Are you satisfied with your current job? *

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. I am not sure
- Other: 

52. Are you satisfied with the pay you have now? *

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. I am not sure
- Other: 

53. Are you satisfied with the performance evaluation and promotion opportunities in your organization? *

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. I dont know. What is it?
- Other: 

54. In your opinion measures taken to reduce turnover will be efficient? *
55. Are you aware of any actions already taken by the management to reduce turnover? *

- [ ] 1. Yes
- [ ] 2. No
- [ ] 3. I am not sure
- [ ] Other: [ ]

56. How old are you? *

- [ ] 1. <=30
- [ ] 2. 31-35
- [ ] 3. 36-45
- [ ] 4. >=46
- [ ] Other: [ ]

57. What is your gender status? *

- [ ] 1. Male
- [ ] 2. Female

**8.3 Table of figures from the survey results**

49 responses

1. How many years have you been working in AGR Field Operations Maintenance Engineering department?
2. What is your title at work?

- Junior Engineer: 2% (4%)
- Engineer: 57% (27)
- Senior Engineer: 15% (7)
- Consultant: 4% (2)
- Project Manager: 13% (6)
- Department Director: 0% (0)
- Other: 9% (4)

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

3. What are your educational and professional qualifications?

- High School Diploma: 2% (1)
- Bachelor Degree: 57% (27)
- Master Degree: 30% (14)
- Other: 13% (6)

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

4. In what location do you work?
5. How many employees work in your department?

1. 1-5 2 4%
2. 6-10 5 11%
3. 11-20 20 43%
4. 21-50 20 43%
Other 0 0%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

6. What kind of project do you mostly enrolled in?

1. Statoil 30 64%
2. Different projects 21 45%
Other 0 0%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

7. How many projects at a time you are working on?

1. 1 22 47%
2. 2-3 21 45%
3. 3-4 2 4%
Other 2 4%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

8. How long is the period of the project(s) which you participate?
1. 1 month 2%  
2. 3 month 3 6%  
3. 6 month 9 19%  
4. 1 year 23 49%  
5. 2-3 years 14 30%  
Other 6 13%  
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

9. How many project managers do you have?

1. 1 for each project 26 55%  
2. 1 for several projects 10 21%  
3. No project manager 8 17%  
Other 4 9%  
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

10. Do you have close contact with the client during your work on the project?

1. Yes 38 81%  
2. No 6 13%  
Other 4 9%  
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

11. Have you ever considered to search for job opportunities with your client during or after you finished your work on the project?

1. Yes 6 13%  
2. No 32 68%  
3. Maybe 10 21%  
Other 0 0%  
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.
12. Have you ever got any employment offer from the client organization?

- Yes: 6 (13%)
- No: 40 (85%)
- Other: 2 (4%)

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

13. Do you regularly check for career opportunities with other organizations?

- Yes: 19 (40%)
- No: 29 (62%)
- Other: 0 (0%)

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

14. Where do you check for such opportunities?

- Internet site: 31 (66%)
- Direct contact: 8 (17%)
- Through client: 3 (6%)
- Through friends: 12 (26%)
- Other: 11 (23%)

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

15. Are you satisfied with your current position and work you do?

- Yes: 27 (57%)
- No: 5 (11%)
- Not completely: 16 (34%)
- Other: 0 (0%)

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

16. Do you think you learn a lot through your work on projects you are taking part in?
17. In your opinion are there a lot of job opportunities for the employee with your type of work specialization in the region you are working in?

- Yes: 28 60%
- No: 9 19%
- Maybe: 11 23%
- Other: 1 2%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

18. Do you think your knowledge become very general through your work in projects?

- Yes: 19 40%
- No: 11 23%
- Maybe: 16 34%
- Other: 2 4%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

19. Does it make you feel worried that you may lose your deep knowledge expertise through work in projects?

- Yes: 10 21%
- No: 28 60%
- I don’t know: 9 19%
- Other: 2 4%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

20. Do you think you do not develop through your current work in projects?
21. Do you think you developed yourself as a professional a lot through work in current organization?

1. Yes 30 64%
2. No 5 11%
3. Maybe 10 21%
Other 2 4%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

22. When you participate in different projects do you do the same kind of work in every project you are assigned?

1. Yes 11 23%
2. No 24 51%
3. Maybe 8 17%
Other 4 9%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

23. In your opinion salary level in your organization is lower than in other organizations within the same field offering the same type of services?

1. Yes 23 49%
2. No 3 6%
3. I don’t know 20 43%
Other 1 2%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

24. What could be the strongest factor for you to quit your current organization in case you will decide so?
25. What could be the strongest factor for you to stay with your current organization?

1. Low salary
   - 24 (51%)
2. Underdevelopment of personal knowledge and competence
   - 14 (30%)
3. Better external employment opportunities
   - 17 (36%)
4. Monotonous work changing with periods of work overload
   - 10 (21%)
5. Poor career growth possibilities
   - 10 (21%)
6. Getting more attractive job offer from the client organization
   - 10 (21%)
7. Indifference of the management for to improve work situation in general
   - 8 (17%)
Other
   - 4 (9%)

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.
26. In your opinion "medarbeidersamtale" form which you fill in once a year and discuss with your line manager affects to your career promotion and (or) salary increase?

1. Yes 4 9%
2. No 16 34%
3. I don’t know 23 49%
Other 6 13%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

27. Do you think that yearly "medarbeidersamtale" is effective?

1. Yes 21 45%
2. No 12 26%
3. I am not sure 13 28%
Other 2 4%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

28. Have you ever been asked to give feedback about work performance of your colleague on the project for such "medarbeidersamtale" purposes?

1. Yes 7 15%
2. No 37 79%
Other 5 11%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

29. How often have you been asked to give feedback about work performance of your colleague?

1. Every time before the self – assessment 2 4%
2. Not often 6 13%
3. Very seldom 24 51%
Other 16 34%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may
30. Have you ever been asked to give feedback about work performance of your project manager?

- Yes: 15 (32%)
- No: 32 (68%)
- Other: 3 (6%)

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

31. How often have you been asked to give feedback about work performance of your project manager?

- Every time before the self-assessment: 5 (11%)
- Not often: 7 (15%)
- Very seldom: 21 (45%)
- Other: 17 (36%)

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

32. Would you like to be asked to give feedback about work performance of your project manager?

- Yes: 23 (49%)
- No: 7 (15%)
- I am not sure: 16 (34%)
- Other: 3 (6%)

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

33. Do you get any feedback from the line manager after filling in "medarbeidersamtale" form and having meeting with him (her)?

- Yes: 21 (45%)
- No: 20 (43%)
- Other: 7 (15%)

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.
34. Would you like to get feedback on why you need to fill in "medarbeidersamtale" form and what it affects on?

1. Yes 35 74%
2. No 5 11%
3. I am not sure 6 13%
Other 3 6%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

35. Do you think that the fadder system you have in your department is effective?

1. Yes 25 53%
2. No 6 13%
3. I am not sure 13 28%
Other 6 13%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

36. Would you like that the fadder system would become official?

1. Yes 26 55%
2. No 3 6%
3. I am not sure 17 36%
Other 2 4%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

37. What in your opinion can improve "medarbeidersamtale" form?

1. Getting feedback from the line manager on the form 27 57%
2. Getting feedback from the HR department on the form 5 11%
3. I don’t care about self – assessment form 4 9%
4. I am skeptical it affects in any way to my career and salary growth 9 19%
5. I find it not useful at 5 11%
38. Do you think it is useful to have "medarbeidersamtale" and "medarbeiderundersøkelse" forms?

1. Yes 38 81%
2. No 0 0%
3. I am not sure 9 19%
Other 3 6%
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

39. How your personal performance is measured in your opinion?

1. Through self – assessment form 6 13%
2. I don’t know 16 34%
3. Through oral feedback on my work from project manager to the line manager 23 49%
4. Through oral feedback on my work from my colleagues working in the same project as I 13 28%
Other 3 6%
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

40. On what does the person who evaluates "medarbeidersamtale" form pay most attention?
1. On my performance during each project 10 21%
2. On how well I worked together with other project team members 8 17%
3. I have no idea 19 40%
4. On how good communication I had with the client 7 15%
5. On all that factors mentioned above 15 32%
Other 1 2%
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

41. Who evaluates your "medarbeidersamtale" form?

1. Line manager 28 60%
2. Project manager 2 4%
3. HR department 2 4%
4. I don’t know 16 34%
Other 1 2%
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

42. In your opinion what is the purpose of "medarbeiderundersøkelse" form sent from head office in Bergen to be filled in?

1. It can let them to know if we are satisfied with our work situation 22 47%
2. It can let them to know how things in general going in different offices 17 36%
3. It can let them to identify possible suggestions for further improvement of the work situation 24 51%
4. I don’t know 8 17%
Other 2 4%
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.
43. Do you think that result of "medarbeiderundersøkelse" form will be improvement of work situation for employees in the company?

- Yes, I do believe...: 28 60%
- I am not sure: 10 21%
- I am skeptical about it: 6 13%
- I don’t see any improvements out of it: 4 9%
- Other: 1 2%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

44. In your opinion who should be responsible for your competence development with offering you various trainings?

- Department manager: 25 53%
- HR department: 6 13%
- I myself: 25 53%
- Line manager: 32 68%
- Project manager: 7 15%
- Other: 1 2%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

45. Do you think it is correct that the department manager sends you information about different trainings you can apply for?

- No it should be the responsibility of the HR department: 3 6%
- Yes, it should be responsibility of the department manager: 30 64%
- It is better if every employee personally can search for own trainings: 7 15%
- I don’t know: 9 19%
- Other: 5 11%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.
46. Which organization do you feel yourself belonging to?

1. To the AGR Group 1 2%
2. To the AGR Field Operations 26 55%
3. To my department 27 57%
4. I don't feel myself belonging to any organization or department 0 0%
5. I am not sure 0 0%
Other 0 0%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

47. Which organization do you feel yourself attached emotionally to?

1. To the AGR Group 1 2%
2. To the AGR Field Operations 12 26%
3. To my department 33 70%
4. I don't feel attached to any organization or department 4 9%
5. I am not sure 1 2%
Other 0 0%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

48. Do you feel personally that you learned and improved yourself more as a professional during your work in AGR in comparison to the time before you worked in this organization?

1. Yes 37 79%
2. No 3 6%
3. I am not sure 6 13%
Other 5 11%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.
49. What is in your opinion have led to the labor turnover in your organization?

1. Salary below the average: 26 55%
2. Poor social policy in the company: 2 4%
3. Better job offer from the client: 10 21%
4. Better job offer from another company: 26 55%
5. Not challenging work and assignments: 24 51%
6. Not clear career path: 13 28%
7. Periods of monotonous work changing with periods of work overload: 20 43%
Other: 1 2%
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

50. In your opinion what can decrease labor turnover?

1. Salary increase: 38 81%
2. Better bonus system: 17 36%
3. Better social policy: 7 15%
4. More interesting projects: 26 55%
5. Better career growth opportunities: 25 53%
6. Better work environment: 4 9%
Other: 1 2%
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

51. Are you satisfied with your current job?

1. Yes: 31 66%
2. No: 10 21%
3. I am not sure: 7 15%
Other: 0 0%
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.
52. Are you satisfied with the pay you have now?

1. Yes 14 30%
2. No 20 43%
3. I am not sure 12 26%
Other 4 9%
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

53. Are you satisfied with the performance evaluation and promotion opportunities in your organization?

1. Yes 14 30%
2. No 12 26%
3. I dont know. What is it? 18 38%
Other 3 6%
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

54. In your opinion measures taken to reduce turnover will be efficient?

1. Yes 14 30%
2. No 5 11%
3. I am not sure 29 62%
Other 0 0%
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

55. Are you aware of any actions already taken by the management to reduce turnover?

1. Yes 18 38%
2. No 19 40%
3. I am not sure 10 21%
Other 0 0%
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

56. How old are you?
1. <=30 17 44%
People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

57. What is your gender status?

1. Male 29 74%
2. Female 10 26%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Number of daily responses

Number of responses without dates: 2