A CHANGING WORKING CLIMATE

Young managers' experiences with working at home and their perceptions of empowerment

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Abstract

This study examines how empowerment, as well as the balance between work and private life, is perceived by young managers employed at several projects of a housing corporation. Others have examined empowerment and balance of work and private life predominantly from a supervisor perspective. However, this research concerns the experiences and perspectives of these employees on homeworking and its features regarding these topics. Moreover, the personal nature of living at your work represents a significant element that makes research on this topic of special interest. For this study, a qualitative approach was adopted by conducting semi-structured interviews at various projects. Within employee empowerment, positive daily experiences and a feeling of relatedness with the corporation in general came forward as the most important characteristics to be committed to their work. The struggle with balancing work and private life was the most prominent factor in feeling restrained to be committed. The young managers have a great feeling of association regarding their job. This is reflected in both job satisfaction by being engaged, as well as job discontent by experiencing homeworking and its corresponding stress factors as inescapable.

Keywords: organizational empowerment, psychological empowerment, homeworking, work/private balance, job satisfaction

Abstract

In deze studie wordt onderzocht hoe empowerment, evenals de balans tussen werk en privé, wordt ervaren door jonge managers die werkzaam zijn bij verschillende projecten van een woningcorporatie. Eerder onderzoek naar empowerment en balans in werk en privéleven was voornamelijk vanuit het perspectief van de leidinggevende. De huidige studie betreft echter de ervaringen en perspectieven van deze werknemers op thuiswerken en de kenmerken met betrekking tot deze thema's. Bovendien vormt het persoonlijke aspect van wonen op het werk een belangrijk element dat onderzoek naar dit onderwerp van bijzonder belang maakt. Voor deze studie werd een kwalitatieve benadering gehanteerd door semi-gestructureerde interviews af te nemen op verschillende projecten. Bij empowerment kwamen zowel positieve dagelijkse ervaringen als een gevoel van verbondenheid met het bedrijf in het algemeen naar voren als de belangrijkste kenmerken om toegewijd te zijn aan het werk. De worsteling met de balans tussen werk en het dagelijks leven bleek de meest prominente factor in het tegengehouden voelen om zich in te zetten voor hun werk. De jonge managers voelen zich sterk verbonden met hun baan. Dit openbaart zich in zowel werktevredenheid als betrokkenheid, maar ook ontevredenheid met het werk door het ervaren van thuiswerk en bijbehorende stressfactoren als onontkoombaar.

Trefwoorden: organisatorische empowerment, psychologische empowerment, thuiswerk, werk/privé balans, werktevredenheid

Introduction

Problem Definition and Embedding

In recent years, the working climate has been changing. Working from 9 to 5 behind a desk at an office and one man handing out tasks has made room for teamwork and being more collectively motivated (Avolio, Zhu, Koh and Bhatia, 2004; Jung and Sosik, 2002). Central to this change is an extensive academic and practitioner interest in the presence of empowerment, which has led to the believe that empowerment is essential to improve organizations in aspects such as productivity and customer satisfaction. Since then, several programs considering empowerment have been introduced (Carless, 2004; Savery and Luks, 2001).

Another important aspect considering the changing working climate is the location of the workplace. It is more and more common to be working at home (Baruch, 2001). Working at home, also known as teleworking, implies a form of electronic communication with others within and outside of the organization (Baily and Kurland, 2002; Baruch, 2001). When working at home, the employee needs to find balance between work and private life. Unfortunately, it is not that easy, as an article on unreachability in private time suggests (ANP, 2017). It is said that work-related texting and emailing at home leads to working late and working in the weekends being commonplace. This can induce a vague boundary between work and private life which can then result into a big workload, burn-out and disturbed family relationships (Bulger, Matthews and Hoffman, 2007). When this balance is disturbed, levels of stress increase. Therefore, investigating balance and the working climate is necessary considering occupational health and stress (Bulger, Matthews and Hoffman, 2007).

The present study is focused on young managers working at Company A, an organization which stimulates housing for young people in the Netherlands. It has a unique business plan where every housing project has a certain number of vulnerable people (e.g. ex-delinquents, refugees). Here, the young managers are also residents of the projects. They supervise the conditions in order for all residents to live in a safe and clean environment. This study investigates the devotion of the young managers regarding their work, what empowers them, and how they balance responsibilities concerning work and private life in such a personal setting.

Empirical and Theoretical Background

A new organizational climate: empowerment. In order to understand what empowerment means in relation to Company A and how the young managers experience this, first a description of and further exploration on empowerment from previous research is needed.

How empowerment is facilitated (organizational context) and what this means for the one being empowered (psychological context) will be described.

Description empowerment. Empowerment is increased intrinsic task motivation, manifested in four dimensions: meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact. These reflect an individual's orientation to his or her work role (Carless, 2004; Hechanova, Regina, Alampay and Franco, 2006; Lee and Koh, 2001; Siegall and Gardner, 2000; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Zimmerman, 2000). With empowerment, power is newly generated when a superior empowers his/her subordinates. According to Lee and Koh (2001), empowerment includes the behaviour of a supervisor who empowers their subordinates as well as the psychological state of a subordinate, resulting from their supervisor's empowering. It is a combination of delegating and enabling. Through redistributing power by those in a senior position to subordinates (i.e. increasing employee authority and responsibility), an increase in intrinsic motivation is stimulated (Greasley, Bryman, Dainty, Prica, Soetanto and King, 2005; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). However, information about how employees experience empowerment is missing.

Organizational context. Empowerment is not universal across all situations. It is specific to the work context in organizations (Lee and Koh, 2001). An understanding of the work context that facilitates empowerment extends our understanding of empowerment itself. Therefore, it is valuable to explore how the working environment can be organized in order to stimulate empowerment. With empowering employees, the goal is to stimulate organizational commitment (Avolio et al., 2004). Hence, there is transformational, rather than traditional leadership. Regarding transformational leadership, the employee is involved in envisioning a future but also sees its own role in being committed to achieving that future (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Transformational leaders encourage to think critically by using novel approaches, involving followers in decision-making processes, and inspiring loyalty, while recognizing and appreciating the different needs of each follower to develop his or her personal potential (Avolio et al., 2004). For example, one of the most famous transformational leaders in the world was Steve Jobs. His company was driven by his passion for perfection, simplicity and sophistication and he made sure that it got engraved into every employee who worked at Apple. He challenged his employees to think outside the box and made them create products that the world did not even know it needed (Bhasin, 2017). In sum, transformational leaders stimulate the four dimensions of the psychological climate: meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact. Hereby, there is a focus on the development of the employee, and the idea is that the employees are enabled to reach their full potential. (Avolio et al., 2004). The

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quality of the leader-employee relationship is essential to managerial trust and employee empowerment (Goian and Ştefănescu, 2013; Jung and Sosik, 2002; Wallach and Mueller, 2006). It is striking that how an organization should empower its employees is clear, but it is unknown how these employees experience this.

Psychological context. There is more to empowerment than distribution of power, namely the dimensions of meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact. These are essential determinants of empowerment, since they contribute to enhanced intrinsic motivation (Carless, 2004; Hechanova, et al., 2006; Lee and Koh, 2001; Siegall and Gardner, 2000; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Zimmerman, 2000). The first dimension is meaningfulness, i.e. when an individual cares about a given task. Herewith, there is a fit between wat is demanded from that individual and what its own beliefs and values are. The second dimension is competence, which refers to an individual's self-confidence about its capacity in completing a task. The third dimension is self-determination, also referred to as choice. This concerns control over regulating and initiating one's own actions and being autonomous in making own decisions about how and when tasks are undertaken. The last dimension is impact, i.e. the extent to which someone has an influence on and the belief one can make a difference at work. This influence can refer to strategic, administrative or operating outcomes at work, but also to personal control over organizational outcomes (Carless, 2004; Hechanova, et al., 2006; Lee and Koh, 2001; Siegall and Gardner, 2000; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Zimmerman, 2000). The feelings of empowerment are influenced by the degree to which individuals see their work environment as personally advantageous or disadvantageous, considering the four dimensions (Siegall and Gardner, 2000). Thus, empowerment cognitions are shaped by individual perceptions and valuations of the work environment, in other words, the psychological climate (Carless, 2004). It is very interesting to find out how people see and experience this psychological climate regarding homeworking.

A new working climate: working at home. Another important aspect regarding the changing working climate is working at home, which is increasingly common (Baruch, 2001). When working at home, the employee needs to find balance between work and private life. In order to understand how the young managers keep balance between work and private life, first a description of and further exploration on homeworking from existing literature is needed.

Recently in western economies, the working environment has become more flexible. Working hours and -arrangements are more diverse and a growth of flexible working patterns has made businesses more responsive to market changes. This also benefits employees through improved employability and a better quality of life (Shaw, Shaw and Trache, 2000). Central to

the flexibilization process is the rising trend of homeworking. When discussing working at home, it means any paid work that is carried out primarily at home (i.e. employees), as well those working at home as those working from home (i.e. self-employed) (Crosbie and Moore, 2004).

Work-private balance. Combining work and private life is part of a trend whereby home and work are not viewed as separate aspects of life. According to Crosbie and Moore (2004), homeworking is presented as a remedy to the stresses of working life and a way of achieving work-life balance. The balance between work and other responsibilities or aspirations involves adjusting working patterns. And hereby, everyone can achieve a certain rhythm to help them combine work and other activities. This balance is seen as:

"*satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum of role conflict*"

(Clark, 2000, p.750)

This suggests that balance is perceived and is therefore subjective. This implies that it seems impossible to define balance or sketch an image of when or how this balance is achieved. Yet, according to Williams (2002) people's work-life needs can be divided into three areas of their lives: (1) personal time and space (i.e. the needs concerning care of self and maintenance of the body, mind and soul), (2) care time and space (i.e. the needs to care for others), and (3) work time and space (i.e. what is needed to gain economic self-sufficiency). A balance between work and private life can be subjective and different for everyone, but is constructed by balancing each of these three areas together. In order for homeworking to be efficacious and suitable, a balance between work and private life is essential (Williams, 2000). Even though it is described that balance can be achieved, it is still unknown how people perceive and experience this.

Homeworking and its corresponding achievement of a work-life balance has its potential difficulties and benefits. Working at home can increase the permeability of the boundary between work and private life (i.e. elements from one domain being found in the other domain), which can lead to more difficulty in managing work and daily life schedules (Crosbie and Moore, 2004). On the other hand, a boundary between work and daily life is flexible if there is perceived capacity by the employee on whether to strengthen the boundary (Ashforth, Kreiner and Fugate, 2000; Clark, 2000). Through a combination of high flexibility and high permeability, i.e. integration, smoother transitions between work and personal life domains are facilitated. However, these domains then become more blurred too. According to Crosbie and Moore (2004), the main problem in homeworking is the time spent on work, by working longer hours than which they are actually paid for, which can lead to problems in people's relationships

and also concerns health, fitness and occupational stress. Still, the time spent differs per person, since others experience more personal time when homeworking (Crosbie and Moore, 2004). Also topics like comfort, flexibility, self-management, self-enrichment and quietness are positive contributions to homeworking (Bulger, Matthews and Hoffman, 2007; Crosbie and Moore, 2004). A higher ability to flex work-boundaries is associated with higher work enhancement of personal life. The level of flexibility can enable homeworkers in deciding how to use their time and make it easier to balance responsibilities of their work with responsibilities of daily life like caring for others (Crosbie and Moore, 2004).

Current Study

The current study is an explorative approach to the views and experiences of adolescents on empowerment and working at home. In order to answer the main question '*How do people experience their role as young managers at Company A regarding empowerment and keeping balance between work and private life?*' the experiences of the young managers will firstly be examined by looking at '*What does empowerment mean in relation to Company A and how do the young managers experience this?*' and secondly '*How do the young managers keep balance between work and private life in relation to corresponding responsibilities?*'. Although others have examined the description of empowerment and balance of work and private life, research concerning the experiences and perspectives of the employees on homeworking and its features regarding these topics is missing. Moreover, the personal nature of actually living at your work represents a significant element that makes research on this topic of special interest.

Methods

Design

In this research, qualitative methods were used, since it is focused on the experiences and views of the participants. Firstly, participatory observation took place. To get more familiar with the field and the participants, the researcher attended four meetings with young managers. During these meetings, the goal of the researcher was to increase a tacit understanding which framed the form of research (Barrett, 1996; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011). These are monthly meetings in which the young managers update each other. This enhances the quality of the interpretation of the data collected in the interviews and therefore, the design used is 'grounded theory with sensitizing concepts' (Bowen, 2006). Where quantitative research is strongly deductive, qualitative can be deductive (medium) when testing hypotheses. In this case, no hypotheses were tested, but theory was not totally absent either. Therefore, this is not called inductive, but a lightly deductive, qualitative content analysis which uses sensitizing concepts as a lens to

steer the analysis (Westerbeek, 2017). This design has been chosen, since current research highlights a few concepts, but no specific hypotheses. From scientific literature, several key concepts have come forward which relate to the research question. These concepts are abstract socially scientific concepts and not directly clear or delineated. Therefore, the concepts were operationalized into a topic list (see Appendix A).

Procedure and Sample

Participants were contacted through the network of the researcher at Company A. Since all group meetings were rescheduled, this happened before the meetings. Participants were approached by e-mail, WhatsApp or a phone call. When contacting the 63 potential participants, it is always explained that participation is voluntary. Additionally, it is told that the interview would take about 45 minutes to one hour. When people wanted to participate, it was asked through oral informed consent whether they agreed for the interviews to be audio-recorded. The semi-structured interviews were conducted in a quiet room, in deliberation with the interviewee. If the location or its possible incidental noise disturbance had any influence on the interview, this was mentioned in the transcript at 'remainder relevant information'.

In this research, an interpretative approach is used (Bowen, 2006). Therefore, there is a combination of reliability and validity, i.e. *trustworthiness*. When sampling, different types of young managers from different projects were involved in order to construct a sample as heterogeneous as possible. Four young managers were excluded from the interviews in order to interview young managers with different functions or from different projects. E.g. when multiple managers of a certain discipline responded, and one of another discipline, that one was preferred. Others did not respond or responded after the interviews were conducted. During the interviews, the interviewer took a natural stance and asked open ended questions as much as possible. By transcribing the interviews verbatim and presenting the topics and questions in Appendix A, replication easier and reliability is guaranteed (Boeije, 2012).

This research concerns four meetings (as discussed at 'Design') of 4 to 10 young managers at different projects of Company A. They are obtained by contacting their superior by e-mail so he or she could discuss with the managers if they agreed to participate. Besides that, the interviews cover 16 employees who work as young managers at Company A. The last 6 interviews were an accession to the analysis of the first 10. The young managers were 21 to 28 years old with a mean age of M=24 (STD=2,489980). Hereof, 50% are female and 50% male.

Anonymity is guaranteed, since pseudonyms were used in the transcripts in NVivo. All interviewees participated voluntarily. They were not in any way forced or obligated to answer questions and they were allowed to stop whenever they wanted. However, none of the interviewees indicated any issues, so all interviews were conducted in total. All information and data of the interviewees was treated confidential. Besides that, all material will be stored for five years in a protected digital environment of the University of Utrecht. Only the thesis-supervisor will have access to this data. All remaining data will be deleted within six months after the ending of this research.

Measuring Instruments

The literature study conducted beforehand has highlighted a few sensitizing concepts, which were used as a base for the analysis of the interviews. These are *leader-employee relation, development/learning, meaningfulness, competence, self-determination, impact, workload, private relationships, health and stress, role conflict,* and *advantages/disadvantages*. In Appendix A, this measurement tool is displayed with these concepts translated into topics, including possible questions for the semi-structured interviews.

Data Analysis

Preparatory to the interviews, a pilot was done with three interviews. These were however included in the overall sample, since afterwards, questions and/or topics were not altered or added. The recordings of all interviews were transcribed verbatim and imported into NVivo by the researcher. After that, two rounds of coding took place. During the first round, the sensitizing concepts were used as keycodes. When new relevant information was found, this was preserved as an emerging code and added to the existing codes. In the second round of coding, the original keycodes as well as the emerging codes were used. This means that during the research process, data collection and data analysis alternate each other (Bowen, 2006). This also goes for the participatory observation. This shaped the total view on the data. In Appendix B, the final code tree as used in NVivo is displayed. By including emerging codes, all relevant information is used in the analysis. Codes were being derived beforehand from existing literature, the participatory observation, and during the research from other results. Hereby, a theoretical base in the form of sensitizing concepts was constructed. Hence, the interviews were coded following Directed Content Analysis (Bowen, 2006; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; van Staa & de Vries, 2014).

<center>**Results**</center>

Present View: Empowerment

   Organizational empowerment. It was found that young managers feel free in how to practice their work. Their supervisor lets them make their own decisions, but remains approachable for questions and advice. However, six interviewees pointed out that they feel like their supervisor is very, or even too, busy. This enlarges the step to approach their supervisor for help. As a result, there is a feeling of being thrown in at the deep end. Young managers learned to take responsibility, to communicate in conflict situations, and the structure of housing corporations. They want to learn more about administration work, giving feedback, communication, specific skills for their job and how to sometimes *not* work when being at home. It was found that young managers are longing for more counselling and support. In the 16 interviews, only three young managers feel like they are supported sufficiently by their supervisor and/or overall by the company to develop and learn more skills. For all others, this is lacking and four young managers explicitly say that they do not feel supported.

   It was mentioned multiple times that collaboration with the department of finances at the headquarters is inefficient. It takes a long time for the young managers to get their money back when they paid ahead.

   Psychological empowerment. Analyses from the interviews provide an in-depth insight into several aspects regarding psychological empowerment and the four dimensions of the psychological climate (i.e. meaningfulness, competence, self-determination and impact). Social contact (e.g. chatting with residents and working together with their team) is the most prominent factor in order to find meaning in their job. This also includes the general social involvement and a feeling of usefulness. However, barriers to job dedication are also related to social contact. Residents ask work-related questions in private settings and they are very critical and rejecting regarding Company A and its young managers. This makes the young managers feel insecure and unappreciated. They also feel like they do not get this appreciation from their supervisor. This does not contribute to, or moreover, impedes finding meaning in their job. Still, when asked about competence, the vast majority of the young managers say that they perform good. Two of them explain that they perform diversified and when they are occupied with their studies, work comes in second place.

   All young managers feel like they are self-determinant in deciding when and how to do their job.

'Basically, we work with deadlines, so it doesn't matter when you do something, as long as it's done. So yeah, sometimes I am answering emails in the middle of a Saturday night at 3am and sometimes just at regular moments. You can decide very much yourself, when you do your tasks, provided that it is on time.' (Bart)

All young managers experience this as very pleasant, since this helps them in combining their job more easily with other activities like studying or working other jobs.

Most young managers feel like the impact of their job is mainly found in their daily tasks e.g. listening to residents or fixing a heater. They say that the company is top-down regulated and that they do not, or scarcely, feel like having a voice. However, three young managers do feel like they have a saying in the completion of their work and Company A in general. In contrast with the others, they all are (close) friends with someone who works at the headquarters of the company. One of them explains:

'Thinking along about the organization as a whole is quite top-down at the moment, because they want to capture things very much. They do that with office people. [...] if something needs to be changed bottom up, I have to pass it onto X and then she has to discuss it with her colleagues. Then, hopefully, something happens.' (Jesse)

Because of relationships as described above, young managers feel like there is a barrier to give feedback. They want to maintain a friendly atmosphere and hereby hesitate in confrontations.

Present View: Balance Work/Private
By working at home, you are not working the classical 9 to 5 days. This leads to a feeling of being very busy. According to more than half of the young managers, a heavy workload is experienced when working late and in the weekends. Throughout the day, all young managers feel a constant need to be available; it feels like work never ends. One of the factors contributing to this feeling is noticing work-related emails on their phones. Residents often approach the young managers in a private setting, which leads to feeling stressed and more busy. A conflict with time management appears when their studies consume a larger part of their time, which means they can spent less time working. Furthermore, young managers describe the workload of others, their supervisors. They notice a heavy workload and even aspects of burn-out. As a result, they tend to ask less help of their supervisor, which increases the workload of the young managers. Sjoerd says it is common for a supervisor to be absent from work due to a burn-out.

'Yes, it could be better, so that you have one clear contact. In the past year, I had four different supervisors.' (Sjoerd)

So not only their own, but the workload of their supervisors as well has an effect on the young managers.

All young managers have friends living at the project where they work. This increases engagement and job satisfaction. However, it jeopardizes the line between work and private life. When friends ask them a work-related question, they tend to solve it in between daily activities. This increases the feeling of constantly (thinking about) working. When other residents approach the young managers in a private setting, the young managers are clear: if it is work-related, send an email. Young managers at Company A tend to face difficulties in separating work and private life, since most of them are working more than they get paid for and often work in between daily activities. Young managers can always get a work-related call and when home, residents can always demand attention. Daan (Appendix C) describes an extreme situation where a resident walked into his room at 3 o'clock in the middle of the night with a question. Now this is uncommon, but all young managers do describe a constant feeling of the need to always be accessible. As Sanne says:

'That sometimes, you notice that the days are very long. That you also need a break, but sometimes you just can't […] but I go to my parents once every two weeks. And then it's just always that, I just don't work. Then it is just, I'm with my parents, period. I have to be honest, I do still check my email when I am there.' (Sanne)

This feeling leads to not being able to relax or undertake other activities and a need to take physical distance of their work, and therefore, their home. According to 12 interviewees, this is the biggest con of homeworking. The most frequent described pro of homeworking is not having to travel to work. Additionally, deciding yourself when you are working and being engaged and aware of what is happening at the project are seen as positive aspects by the young managers.

Future Perspective: Progress of Company A

When asked at the end of the interview whether the young managers wanted to say anything more about working at Company A, a few aspects came up. Overall, they are happy with their

job. However, they desire more counselling and support from their supervisor, or e.g. external trainers. Besides that, they think the headquarters needs more structure. They feel like the workload at the headquarters is too heavy and there is a big distance between the young managers and the headquarters. Additionally, residents have a very negative impression of the organization, saying it is unstructured and a slumlord. Residents call some young managers even Nazis, which makes them feel very unappreciated and leads to less job satisfaction. However, the young managers like the aspect of community feeling in the projects and the combination of living with vulnerable people. They endorse the vision and mission of Company A.

Discussion

This study examined the perceptions of young managers working at Company A regarding empowerment and keeping balance between work and private life. It was found that the young managers do not feel empowered. They feel thrown in at the deep end and motivation to be devoted to their work originates only from themselves. Even though all four dimensions of the psychological climate (i.e. meaning, self-determination, competence and impact) come forward, they are barely stimulated by the supervisors. A lack of support is experienced by the employees, and thus more support is wanted. The young managers find it challenging to keep balance between work and private life. As they attempt to create boundaries for themselves as well as for the residents, this effort is usually not rewarding as residents will often ignore these set boundaries.

Empowerment. It was found that three of the 16 interviewees felt like they were supported sufficiently. They experience transformational leadership, where employees are driven to achieve personal goals and/or envisioning a future (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). For all others, this is lacking and 11 interviewees explicitly say that they do not feel supported. Besides that, it was mentioned multiple times that collaboration with the department of finances at the headquarters is inefficient. It takes a long time for the managers to get their money back when they paid ahead. This affects the trusting relationship between the young managers and the headquarters, while that is an important factor in relation to employee empowerment (Goian and Ştefănescu, 2013; Jung and Sosik, 2002; Wallach and Mueller, 2006).

Social contact arose as the most prominent factor in finding meaning in their job. However, social contact also appeared to be a barrier to job dedication. Residents are very critical and rejecting regarding Company A and its young managers and the young managers do not feel like they do get the appreciation they need from their supervisor. Hence, they feel

insecure and unappreciated. This decreases the sense of transformational leadership (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Finding meaning and coming across barriers are aspects that respectively increase and decrease intrinsic motivation. Feeling capable to do the job, as all young managers mention, is a positive contribution to increasing empowerment (Carless, 2004; Hechanova, et al., 2006; Lee and Koh, 2001; Siegall and Gardner, 2000; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Zimmerman, 2000).

All young managers experience it as very beneficial that they are self-determinant in deciding when and how to do their job. This supports the previous found statement in existing literature, that a feeling of control over regulating and initiating one's own actions enhances intrinsic motivation (Carless, 2004; Hechanova, et al., 2006; Lee and Koh, 2001; Siegall and Gardner, 2000; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Zimmerman, 2000).

Most young managers feel like the impact of their job is mostly reflected in the daily tasks, e.g. listening to residents or fixing a heater. Three of them, who have (close) friends at the headquarters, feel like they have a voice in the completion of their work and Company A in general. Experiencing impact, the extent to which someone has an influence on and the belief one can make a difference at work, leads to an increase in intrinsic motivation (Carless, 2004; Hechanova, et al., 2006; Lee and Koh, 2001; Siegall and Gardner, 2000; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990; Zimmerman, 2000). Therefore, the ones who do have friends or significant others at the headquarters experience more intrinsic motivation due to impact of their work than the ones who do not.

Concluding, when autonomy (i.e. self-determination) is stimulated, this can result in being left in the dark. Hereby, not all four dimensions of the psychological climate are supported sufficiently and therefore, empowerment is jeopardized. The findings support previous research stating all dimensions are essential in order to empower employees. With self-determination, Company A needs to be aware of still being supportive. As a result, empowerment can be facilitated.

Balance work/private. All young managers have friends living at the project where they work. This increases engagement and job satisfaction. However, it jeopardizes the line between work and private life. When friends ask them a work-related question, they tend to solve it in between daily activities. This increases the feeling of constantly (thinking about) working. Thus, familiar residents tend to increase the permeability of the boundary between work and private life, which leads to more difficulty in managing work and daily life schedule (Crosbie and Moore, 2004). However, the young managers also say that they have control over and autonomy in deciding how to use their time. This should make it easier to balance work

and private life (Crosby and Moore, 2004). Nonetheless, the freedom of managing their time is jeopardized by one main thing; living at their work. The young managers are unable to leave work, unless they leave their home. This threatens the time spend on other daily activities. It leads to a decrease in the feeling of self-management and in deciding how to use their time when they are at home (Bulger, Matthews and Hoffman, 2007; Crosbie and Moore, 2004). Thus, living with familiar residents and living at work in general has to be compensated with self-determination.

In sum, when working at home, the superior is figuratively and literally at distance. When empowerment is enhanced, the figurative distance is reduced and intrinsic motivation increased. People working at home have to be (supported in) setting clear boundaries regarding work and private life. For themselves, as well as for the other residents.

Future perspective. The young managers feel like they lack knowledge and skills. They want more counselling and support. This confirms the idea that support is essential in empowering employees (Greasley, Bryman, Dainty, Prica, Soetanto and King, 2005; Spreitzer, 1995; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Besides that, the young managers feel like the headquarters needs more structure. They think the workload is too heavy and the distance between the headquarters and the young managers is too big. This affects the quality of the leader-employee relationship and can therefore be seen as a barrier in stimulating employee empowerment (Goian and Ștefănescu, 2013; Jung and Sosik, 2002; Wallach and Mueller, 2006).

Limitations

The present study should be considered in light of some limitations. First, in order to assemble a heterogeneous sample, potential participants have been excluded from projects or functions that were already represented. However, when remainder young managers indicated that they were eager to talk, they were invited to have an informal conversation with the researcher. However, no new or contradictory information came forward.

Second, time management could have been more efficient. Since several interviewees went into detail about irrelevant topics, the interviews took longer than expected. On the other hand, the interviewees felt comfortable to tell their story. They were transparent and answered comprehensively. After the first few interviews, there was more focus on time management.

Third, this study is only specific for people working at Company A and cannot be generalized to other companies. However, it highlights de importance of (transformational) leadership regarding homeworking. For companies of which employees work at home, it is very

interesting to understand how empowerment can be stimulated, while employees are at distance. Herewith, attention to self-determination is essential; stimulating autonomy should not lead to employees feeling left out.

Implications

Within social sciences, people living at their work is a whole new issue. It is also interesting to find out more about the experiences of people regarding empowerment and finding balance between work and private life. It might not seem directly as an urgent topic, but by exploring these topics, job satisfaction can be increased. Hereby, levels of stress decrease and employees could be prevented in experiencing aspects like a burn-out (Bulger, Matthews and Hoffman, 2007).

For policy and practice, it appears that support by a superior is essential, even if your job only takes up four hours a week. Young managers need more support in order to do their tasks well and to feel more confident in doing them. Being thrown in at the deep end might not be suited for all of them.

Furthermore, the headquarters has a larger influence on the young managers than they might think. The young managers would like to see them in real life and experience more connection throughout the whole company. With settling in and mentoring, people at the headquarters could also be more involved. For Company A, empowerment can lead to a more productive organization. So in order for the company to improve functioning and stimulate intrinsic motivation, and hereby job satisfaction in employees, it is important to give more attention to empowerment and homeworking.

Suggestions for Future Research

In future research, the experiences of other employees could also be asked. Qualitative research at the headquarters could support or contradict the views of the young managers. Since the young managers experience a certain distance and a lack of leadership, it is interesting to find out whether this is seen differently by the headquarters. If so, more research should be done in (improving) communication within Company A.

It is important to keep in mind that leaving your work means leaving your home. This is different from previous research where people did not live with their colleagues and with residents asking them work-related questions at any moment. In order for companies to increase empowerment, more research should be done within this field. If all four dimensions of the psychological climate are present, it still needs to be examined if and how employees experience this. Moreover, it is interesting to find out how self-determination is stimulated

while still supporting employees. The changing working climate requires a changing supervising climate.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Topiclist

Kennismaking en Algemene informatie (Verloop van interview, Toestemming opname, Info respondent; leeftijd, soort beheerder, soort project, hoe lang al bij Socius)

Key concepts	Dimension	Topic	Vragen/indicatoren
Empowerment	Organizational empowerment	Werkgever-werknemer relatie	-Hoe kijk je aan tegen je werkgever? (PC/SC/heel Socius...) -Hoe ga je om met je werkgever? -Wat vind je van het contact met je werkgever?
		Ontwikkeling, leren	-Wat heb je tot nu toe geleerd van werken bij Socius? -Wat zou je nog graag willen leren? -Hoe word je hierin ondersteund?
	Psychological empowerment	Betekenis	-Wat betekent jouw werk voor je? -Wat maakt dat je geeft om je werk? -Wat maakt dat je je inzet voor je werk? -Wat houdt je tegen om je in te zetten voor je werk?
		Competentie	-Hoe heb jij het idee dat je jouw taken volbrengt?
		Zelf-determinatie (keus)	-Heb je het idee dat je autonoom bent in het maken van beslissingen over hoe en wanneer taken worden gedaan? -Zo ja/nee, waarom en hoe dan?
		Impact	-Hoe maak je een verschil? (Je kunt hierbij denken aan de strategie of de uitkomsten van je werk, maar ook over het meedenken over de organisatie)
Balance work/private	Homeworking	Werkdruk	-Hoe ervaar je werkdruk? -Vind je dit veel? Zo ja/nee waarom?
		Privé relaties	-Hoe heb je naast je werk thuis ook persoonlijk contact/persoonlijke relaties? -Hoe heeft dit te maken met je werk?
		Gezondheid and stress (persoonlijke tijd en ruimte)	-Hoe hou je een balans tussen werk en je dagelijkse leven? -Heb je tijd voor jezelf? Zo ja/nee hoe merk je dit, ben je hier tevreden over? -Op wat voor manier ervaar je stress? -Ben je tevreden over je gezondheid? (Zo niet, heeft dit met je werk te maken?)
		Rol conflict (zorg voor anderen)	-Als beheerder ben je zowel aan het werk als dat je samen woont, op wat voor manier zorg je voor mensen om je heen?
		Voor- & nadelen	-Wat zijn volgens jou voordelen van thuiswerken? -Wat zijn volgens jou nadelen van thuiswerken?
Ending	Algemene mening	Visie op -werk bij- Socius	-Hoe vind je het in het algemeen om bij Socius te werken? -Wat zou er beter kunnen bij Socius? (mbt het inwerken/begeleiden van beheerders) -Zijn er nog dingen die je wil vertellen? -Heb je nog vragen?

Afronding (Mogelijkheid opsturen thesis, Bedanken van respondent)

Appendix B. Code tree

Nodes

- Name
  - algemene mening
  - homeworking
    - gezondheid en stress (persoonlijke tijd en ruimte)
    - privé relaties
    - rol conflict (zorg voor anderen)
    - voor- en nadelen thuiswerken
    - werkdruk
  - organizational empowerment
    - ontwikkeling, leren
    - werkgever-werknemer relatie
  - psychological empowerment
    - betekenis
    - competentie
    - impact
    - waardering
    - zelf-determinatie (keus)