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MASTER'S THESIS

THE CONCEPT OF UNBOSSING AND IMPACT ON ENGAGEMENT

Ljubljana, September 2022 DITA PEVEC

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INTRODUCTION

The rapidly changing environment of the 21st century compels companies and management to modify and adapt their traditional perspectives. People no longer view their employment as merely a source of income; rather, they have higher expectations. They want their colleagues to share their passions, feel secure, heard and have an influence. Companies are therefore compelled to begin adopting a more purpose-oriented mentality.

During the period of the COVID-19 pandemic, the significance of employee engagement has grown substantially. Employee engagement provides the way for organisations to achieve high levels of employee job performance and financial performance (Sirisena & Iddagoda, 2022). Research shows that this can be achieved by offering employees customized practices that focus on flexibility and inclusivity. Organisations should also increase employees' autonomy to hold them accountable for their engagement (Pass & Ridgway, 2022). During the pandemic, when employees experienced work from home, some of them for the first time, the feeling of increased autonomy led to positive implications on employees' job satisfaction (Niebuhr, Borle, Börner-Zobel & Voelter-Mahlknecht, 2022). We ask ourselves can unbossing be the answer?

Work engagement is most often defined as a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá & Bakker, 2002, p. 74). Nowadays it is highly desirable for public and private organizations to have engaged employees because engagement has been shown to coincide with high levels of creativity, task performance, organizational citizenship behaviour and client satisfaction (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). Recent data indicates extremely low work engagement. Gallup (2021) reports that in the U.S. just over one-third of employees (34%) were engaged, and 16% were actively disengaged. Clearly, we must be doing something wrong. The old ways of how we work are no longer effective and we will need to undergo another transformation.

Over eighty specialists from all over the world, led by Jacob Bøtter and Lars Kolind, came up with the unbossing concept in an effort to discover a solution that would replace the old, restrictive structures and unleash the power of employees. Unboss is an individual, a process, a team and a movement. Unbossing is a new perspective on businesses that inverts the usual, 20th century understanding of management and work and converts corporations into unlimited movements (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

The unboss paradigm addresses many aspects of an organisation, including purpose, structure, middle management, employees, work, office, communications, marketing, sales, procurement, research and development, production, customer service, HR and payroll, risk, knowledge management, unions and charity. For the purpose of this thesis, we will focus

more on the aspects that directly impact employees, management or their relationships, thus possibly affecting autonomy and engagement.

Certain multinational corporations have already implemented unbossing to increase organisational performance. They have replaced outdated micromanagement leadership and substituted it with purpose-oriented teams within the organization. All employees should accept responsibility for their careers and actions, empower people around them with compassion, hold themselves and others accountable, be able to take calculated and well-informed risks and grow without fear of repercussions. They have built a workplace with a great degree of autonomy for employees. Job autonomy refers to the degree or level of freedom people have in deciding how to perform their tasks. It enhances motivation at work and consequently, individual and organisational performance. Giving employees more autonomy to freely choose how to do their job results in them being more effective (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of unbossing and its impact on work engagement. The primary aim is to investigate if unbossing increases employee engagement. We are interested in leaders' thoughts regarding this concept. A second purpose is to establish which factors contribute to the successful implementation of this concept and whether greater autonomy at work enhances employee engagement.

Research questions are:

– RQ1: What are leaders' attitudes towards the concept of unbossing?
– RQ2: Which are the conditions that enable successful implementation of the unbossing concept?
– RQ3: What are the consequences of job autonomy for employee engagement?

We decided to conduct structured interviews because it was the most effective technique to achieve the given goals. We chose 5 people managers, on different levels within the same organisation. Interviews were transcripted and we analysed them by using qualitative content analysis approach.

This master's thesis consists of two parts. The first part is a theoretical overview, consisting of secondary sources of information gathered from books, scientific and professional journals and other relevant sources. The second, empirical part consists of in-depth interviews with 5 leaders. In first chapter we explain the notion of work engagement, whereas in the second chapter we address job design, redesign, autonomy and lastly, we explore the concept o unbossing and its implementation. The third chapter is designated to research on unbossing and work engagement in a selected company, followed by analysis of interviews. We aim to connect theory and practice in the discussion and formulate

recommendations that organisations can use to successfully implement unbossing or improve the current situation. We finish this thesis with concluding remarks.

1 WORK ENGAGEMENT

Both in corporate settings as in academia, the concept of work engagement is becoming more and more prevalent. Over 250 scientific publications have been published on the topic since the phrase first originated in the 1990s.

There are numerous definitions for this concept, however they differ somewhat between academics and consulting companies. When analysing engagement, sooner or later we ask ourselves the question what affects the level of work engagement and which factors facilitate work engagement. What are the antecedents and consequences of work engagement? Can we measure engagement? How can we leverage motivation? We discuss these topics in the following chapters.

1.1 The concept of engagement

Engagement in daily life relates to involvement, commitment, passion, enthusiasm, absorption, concentrated effort and energy. For instance, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines engagement as "the state of being in gear" and "emotional involvement or commitment".

In this thesis, we will be focusing on engagement in the workplace which is desired both by employees and by organizations they work for. The terms employee engagement and work engagement are frequently used interchangeably, however in order to thoroughly explore this subject, it is necessary to be more precise. Work engagement refers to the relationships of the employees with their work, whereas employee engagement may also include the relationships with the organization (Schaufeli, 2014).

Employee engagement first emerged in business. The Gallup organization adopted the term for the first time in the 1990s, although its origin is unclear. Buckingham and Coffman's best-selling book First, break all the rules (1999) is a summary of their research on "strong workplaces" for which they gathered information from over 100 000 employees. According to a global survey among CEOs, engaging employees was one of the top five most important challenges for organizations in the late 90's (Wah, 1999). It is hardly surprising that other global consulting companies began creating their own concepts and techniques for evaluating work engagement. These organisations estimate that roughly 20% of all employees are highly engaged at work, while another 20% are actively disengaged, based on massive multinational databases spanning through a number of industries. The remaining group is moderately engaged in about 60% of the time (Attridge, 2009). Furthermore,

numerous consulting firms argue that employee engagement is the key success factor for enterprises.

The first academic to construct engagement at work was Kahn (1990) who defined it as the "...harnessing of organisation members' identities to their work roles: in engagement, people utilise and express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally and mentally throughout role performances" (p. 694). Therefore, engaged employees exert considerable effort since they identify themselves with their work. According to Kahn (1990), engagement is also expected to have a favourable impact both at the individual level (personal growth and development) as well as at the organizational level (performance quality).

Work engagement has been conceived by two different but related schools of thought as a positive, work-related feeling of well-being or fulfilment. According to Maslach and Leiter (1997) engagement is characterized by energy, involvement and efficiency, the direct opposites of the three burnout dimensions. According to these authors, burnout causes energy to transform into exhaustion, involvement to turn into cynicism and effectiveness into ineffectiveness.

On the other hand, Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá and Bakker, (2002) consider work engagement to be an independent concept that is negatively related to burnout. Thus, work engagement is defined and operationalized as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication and absorption" (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá & Bakker, 2002). When engaged, fulfilment exists in contrast to the voids of life that leave people feeling empty as in burnout. Vigour is portrayed by high levels of energy and mental resilience while working, being willing to invest effort in one's work and being persistent even when encountering difficulties. Dedication refers to being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of enthusiasm, significance and challenge. Absorption is characterized by being fully concentrated and happily captivated in one's work in accordance with which time passes quickly. Thus, vigour and dedication are viewed as polar opposites of exhaustion and cynicism, the two primary indicators of burnout. The continuum between weariness and vigour has been labelled energy, whilst the line between cynicism and dedication has been labelled identification (González-Romá, Schaufeli, Bakker & Lloret, 2006).

According to Sharoni, Shkoler and Tziner (2015) work engagement is defined as employees' emotional, cognitive, physical and energetic commitment to their job, whereas Demirtas, Hannah, Gok, Arslan and Capar (2017) defined it as a positive mindset, increased vigour, liveliness, determination, self-fulfilment and dedications indicated by feelings of pride, inspiration, enthusiasm and job significance. Organizations that have more engaged employees are more likely to increase shareholder value, profitability and return on assets (Eisenbeiss, Van Knippenberg & Fahrbach, 2015). In addition to this, it is associated with commitment, citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction, contextual performance and task

performance (Kangas, Muotka, Huhtala, Mäkikangas, & Feldt, 2017; Rich, Lepine & Crawford, 2010).

The concept of work engagement in academic research goes hand in hand with research on burnout. A study from Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá and Bakker (2002) first presented the idea that burnout is the opposite of work engagement. The term burnout was first conceptualized by Freudenberger in the 1970s. Based on his observations, Freudenberger (1974) defined burnout as "a state of mental and physical exhaustion caused by one's professional life" and he referred to it as "the extinction of motivation or incentive, especially where one's dedication to a cause or relationship fails to produce the desired results." In other words, individuals who burn out from their work deplete their energetic resources and lose their dedication to work.

1.2   Antecedents of work engagement

Work engagement and burnout can have paramount implications on employees as well as organizations. Many researchers have examined the origins of both notions. Which working conditions should be targeted in order to reduce burnout and increase employee engagement? Why are certain persons more prone to burnout and others to engagement? Which resources alleviate the effect of job demands on burnout, and which resources promote work engagement? Scholars have traditionally divided the causes of burnout and work engagement into two broad categories: situational factors (e.g., work overload, job autonomy) and individual factors (e.g., neuroticism, self-efficacy) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001).

Situational factors of work engagement

Research indicates that job resources are the most important predictors of work engagement (Halbesleben, 2010; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Job resources are those aspects of the job that help to achieve work goals, reduce job demands or stimulate personal growth (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). Performance feedback, supervisory coaching and social support from colleagues are examples of job resources (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Even though Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) also included job demands in their study, job resources were found as the sole predictors of work engagement. That job resources are the most important predictors of employee work engagement was also confirmed by a meta-analysis by Christian, Garza and Slaughter (2011). Job resources that were found to predict work engagement were task variety, task significance, autonomy, feedback, social support from colleagues, a high-quality relationship with the supervisor and transformational leadership. These job resources correlated greatly with engagement compared to job demands such as physical demands, work conditions (health hazards, temperature and noise) and job

complexity. Furthermore, autonomy and social support were found to have positive lagged effect and daily within person effect (Christian, Garza & Slaughter, 2011).

Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti and Xanthopoulou (2007) reported conceptually similar findings in their study among Finnish teachers working in elementary, secondary and vocational schools. Their research showed that job resources diminished the negative correlation between student misbehaviour and work engagement. In addition, they determined that job resources influenced work engagement, particularly when teachers were faced with high levels of student transgression. It was determined that supervisor support, innovativeness, gratitude, and organisational atmosphere were the most essential job resources for assisting teachers to deal with challenging student interactions. Consequently, resources contribute to work engagement in conjunction with high job requirements (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2014).

Individual factors of work engagement

Personality can have a big impact on how engaged employees are at work (Macey & Schneider, 2008). Depending on one's personality profile, some people are better in mobilizing their job resources than others. For example, extraverts exhibit positivity, engage in a lot of frequent and intense interpersonal contacts, and have a lot of stimulation needs. (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). Additionally, extraversion is generally associated with a tendency to be optimistic (Costa & McCrae, 1992). These characteristics are considered to be particularly helpful for mobilizing social support from colleagues and the supervisor and for asking for performance feedback. Moreover, extraverts tend to reassess problems positively which can help them to perceive job demands as challenges (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2014).

Individuals with a proactive personality tend to deliberately change their circumstances, including their physical environment (Buss, 1987). Proactive personality refers to the dispositional tendency to engage in proactive behaviour in a variety of situations (Bateman & Crant, 1993). They identify opportunities, take action and persist until they create meaningful change (Crant, 1995). A study from 2012 shows that employees with a proactive personality are most likely to craft their jobs. Such employees increased their job resources (asked for feedback and support, increased their opportunities for development) and their job challenges (looked for new tasks, volunteered for projects). In turn, this job crafting led to higher levels of engagement (Bakker, Tims & Derks, 2012a).

Personal resources are positive self-evaluations that are associated with resiliency. They refer to ones' sense of their ability to control and impact their environments successfully (Hobfoll, Johnson, Ennis & Jackson, 2003). Positive self-evaluations are known to predict goal setting, motivation, performance, job and life satisfaction as well as other desirable outcomes (for a review see Judge, Van Vianen & De Pater, 2004). An individual is expected

to experience more positive self-regard and more goal self-concordance if they can achieve higher personal resources (Judge, Bono, Erez & Locke, 2005).

By examining the role of three personal resources, which are self-efficacy, organizational-based self-esteem and optimism, Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti and Schaufeli (2007) found that personal resources did not manage to offset the relationship between job demands and exhaustion. On the contrary personal resources were found to partly mediate the relationship between job resources and work engagement. Thus, confirming that job resources foster the development of personal resources (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2009b).

Additionally, other studies found evidence for a positive relationship between core self-evaluations, positive affect and sense of coherence comparing to engagement. Mäkikangas, Feldt, Kinnunen and Mauno (2013) showed that of the Big Five factors (e.g., extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness and neuroticism), emotional stability, extraversion and conscientiousness were consistently related to higher work engagement.

1.3 Factors that facilitate work engagement

1.3.1 Job design

Better job design is one method for increasing employee engagement. Specific work features and tasks can be altered to capitalise on people' skills, and employees can be placed in roles that better match their strengths and expertise, a concept known as person-environment fit (Barling, Kelloway & Frone, 2005). More extensively, research indicates that jobs characterized by high job strain can result in poor employee productivity, psychological health and eventually physical health (Quick & Tetrick, 2003). Psychosocial stress can happen at work in the form of job strain. Low compensation, heavy demands and a lack of control over things like raises and paid time off characterise one of the most common types of stress. Workplace stress can take the form can be eustress, a positive type of stress or distress, a negative type of stress.

1.3.2 Support and resources

Employee disengagement and low work productivity are both associated with experiencing low levels of support from supervisors and colleagues. According to a study of Finnish schoolteachers, employee engagement increased when the organisation provided them with greater support and job resources (i.e., supervisor assistance, positive appreciation, collaborative organisational atmosphere, and creative problem solving) (Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti & Xanthopoulou, 2007). Providing relevant types of job resources can thereby

minimise the negative consequences of intense job demands and poor working conditions, hence boosting employee engagement.

1.3.3   Working conditions

Difficult job demands and stressful working conditions are the main predictors of employee exhaustion and burnout, hence organizations should attempt diminishing them (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti & Schaufeli, 2007). They can achieve by eliminating challenging or unpopular aspects of job duties and technical procedures, implementing more ergonomic office equipment, introducing some flexibility to work schedules and workload, enhancing the clarity of roles and the power of employees' decision-making, and creating opportunities for productive social interactions at work (Warr, 2005).

1.3.4   Corporate culture

A company's culture can also have a significant effect on work-related stress and disengagement. Supporting work-life balance, enabling employee growth and development, encouraging health and safety on the workplace, praise and recognition and employee involvement/engagement are the five criteria upon which the American Psychological Association bestows the Healthy Workplace Award to companies (Grawitch, Gottschalk & Munz, 2006).

Additionally, there are some management tenets that support organisational attempts to foster community (Gravenkemper, 2007). Having a compelling company vision, creating rules for decision-making and workplace behaviour based on principles and ethics rather than rules and penalties, and implementing assimilation strategies for new employees so they can comprehend the organisational culture are some examples of these principles (Attridge, 2009).

1.3.5   Job crafting

Research indicates that the availability of well-designed jobs and working circumstances enhances employee engagement and decreases stress. However, what occurs if these favourable working conditions are unavailable? By choosing tasks, negotiating different job content and assigning meaning to their tasks or jobs, employees can start actively changing the design of their jobs (Parker & Ohly, 2008). This process of employees shaping their jobs has been referred to as job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Job crafting is described as the physical and cognitive modifications that individuals make to the task or relationship boundaries of their employment. Physical changes pertain to alterations in the shape, scope, or number of job responsibilities, whereas cognitive changes

refer to alterations in one's perception of the position (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) note that job crafting is not inherently good or bad for an organization. Its effect depends on the situation.

1.3.6   Leadership style

Employee engagement requires a strong leadership style and support. Decades of research in occupational health psychology have shown that a transformational leadership style is helpful for this purpose. This type of leader creates a clear vision, inspires and encourages employees, provides intellectual challenges, and demonstrates genuine concern for their needs. The ability of this type of leader to display humility, values, and concern for others increases the personal standing of employees. Authenticity and emotional competency with others are also essential leadership qualities (Quick, Macik-Frey & Cooper, 2007). This type of leadership frequently results in increased employee trust in management and an enhanced sense of self-efficacy, two variables that are significantly connected with well-being and productivity.

Transactional leadership, often called management leadership, focuses on supervision, organisation and group performance. In transactional leadership, the leader fosters follower compliance through rewards and penalties. Unlike transformational leaders, transactional leaders do not want to change the future. These leaders tend to look for flaws in followers' work. They operate on the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs by utilising a rewards-for-good-work model. This leadership approach punishes bad work or negative results until the problem is resolved. They are effective at completing specified tasks by managing each component separately. This sort of leadership style is helpful in emergencies and when projects must be done a certain way (Odumeru & Ifeany, 2013).

Transactional leaders focus on processes, not ideas and they tend to think inside the box when solving problems. These leaders use contingent rewards or penalties (also known as contingent negative reinforcement). When goals are met on time, ahead of schedule or to keep subordinates working at a good rate, contingent rewards such as praise are offered. When performance falls below production requirements or goals and tasks are not accomplished, contingent sanctions like suspensions are given. Management-by-exception often uses contingent sanctions when anything goes wrong by applying an active or passive approach. Active management-by-exception means the leader constantly evaluates each subordinate's work and makes corrections. Passive leaders wait for problems to arise before addressing them. Transactional leadership is the basis for transformational leadership which addresses higher-level requirements (Odumeru & Ifeany, 2013).

Transformational leadership is a concept that was first introduced by James Macgregor Burns in his descriptive research on political leaders in 1978, but it has since spread into

organisational psychology and management with additional modifications by B. M. Bass and J. B. Avalio. The concept of transformational leadership is centred on the idea that effective leadership should produce a favourable change in the followers, leading to behaviours such as looking out for each other's best interests and acting in the best interests of the group as a whole (Nickerson, 2021). Transformational leaders are the ones who motivate and inspire followers to accomplish amazing results (Robbins & Coulter, 2007). They pay attention to the concerns and developmental needs of each follower; they alter followers' perceptions of issues by assisting them to view old problems in a new light; and they are able to arouse, excite and motivate followers to exert additional effort to attain group objectives (Odumeru & Ifeany, 2013).

Transformational leadership is said to boost followers' motivation, morale and performance through connecting the follower's sense of identity and self to the project and the organization's collective identity; being a role model that inspires and ignites interests in followers; challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work; and understanding followers' strengths and weaknesses so the leaders can align them with tasks that enhance their performance (Odumeru & Ifeany, 2013).

Ethical leadership was characterised as the promotion of normatively appropriate behaviour to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making, as well as the example of such behaviour through one's own behaviours and interpersonal interactions (Brown, Trevino & Harrison, 2005). The term normatively appropriate behaviour refers to the moral element of ethical leaders who exhibit accountability, dependability, honesty and fairness in their actions (Piccolo, Greenbaum, Hartog & Folger, 2010). Brown and Trevino (2006) suggested two dimensions of ethical leadership: the moral manager aspect, which refers to the leader's efforts to influence the ethical behaviour of their followers and the moral person aspect, which refers the leader's characteristics, such as honesty and integrity. In order to improve the value of the job, to comprehend each employee's developmental requirements and to motivate them, ethical leaders are likely to trust their employees and give them more responsibility. Employees are more likely to respond by giving their tasks more effort, showing greater commitment to their jobs and engaging actively in the work (Brown, Trevino & Harrison, 2005)

It was discovered that when ethical leadership behaviours were exhibited, employees performed better on the job and contributed more to the organization's success. Aside from increased employee satisfaction, multiple studies have found that ethical leadership encourages employees to develop a moral identity which leads to improved organisational performance (Neubert, Wu & Roberts, 2013). It was found that the relationship between ethical leadership style and work engagement was identified as a major factor ensuring an organization's success (Chughtai, Byrne & Flood, 2015). With ethical leadership as the

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foundation, employees would be more likely to put more mental, emotional and physical effort at work (Saks & Gruman, 2014).

Authentic leadership, according to Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing and Peterson (2008), is defined as a set of behaviours that demonstrate a leader who is making effective use of his or her abilities in a good way. This can be achieved through the power of positive psychology, positive ethic, self-awareness, appropriate behaviour, balanced information processing, open communication and self-encouragement. Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans and May (2004) argue that authentic leadership is a blend of transformational leadership and ethic leadership in which a leader acts in accordance with a particular set of values to gain the credibility and confidence of employees and develop a work team. Consequently, authentic leadership is a process that builds legitimacy or leader obligation by honesty, respect for all employee inputs and adherence to ethical principles.

Authentic leadership is said to increases employee engagement and satisfaction, as well as strengthens employee identity (Wang & Hsieh, 2013). Employees are said to believe their managers have an obligation to be honest with them about the company and if they are not, they feel unfairly treated which lowers their level of engagement at work (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). As a result, employees' decisions to offer voluntary feedback or recommendations meant to spur organisational progress are significantly influenced by their leaders' openness and consistency between their views and actions which in turn helps them to learn and be engaged at work (May, Chan, Hodge & Avolio, 2003). Employees are more likely to be engaged in their work when they perceive their supervisors to be consistent in their words and actions and adhere to moral beliefs (Wang & Hsieh, 2013).

Engaging leadership was first conceptualized by Schufeli (2015) as leadership behaviour that facilitates, strengthens, connects and inspires employees in order to boost their work engagement. It is firmly rooted in Self-determination theory (SDT). When leaders inspire, strengthen and connect their followers, they help their followers meet their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness which will make them more engaged at work (Schaufeli, 2015).

1.4   Consequences of work engagement

We expect engagement to positively affect both employee productivity and the organization's bottom line when we consider it. What are the most serious consequences of being disengaged and burned out? Is disengagement a more accurate predictor of performance than burnout?

According to research, engaged employees experience more positive, active emotions than disengaged employees. As a result, they are more inclined to explore their environments, becoming more creative. They also appear to be more open to new experiences (Fredrickson,

2001). Schaufeli and Van Rhenen (2006) found that engaged managers felt more inspired, energetic, cheerful and enthusiastic than non-engaged managers did. Rodríguez-Muñoz, Sanz-Vergel, Demerouti and Bakker (2014) studied how employees daily happiness at work affects their partner's daily happiness. Their research showed that on the days the employees experienced high work engagement this translated to their partners being happier at home.

Bakker, Demerouti and Lieke (2012b) argue that work engagement is positively related to active learning, in particular for those employees with high levels of conscientiousness. Engaged employees are more receptive to discovering novel lines of thought or action, which may lead to higher active learning behaviour and proactive behaviour. Hence, engaged employees are most willing to learn new things when they are also well organized, careful and hardworking. In her study, Sonnentag (2003) claims that daily work engagement was a significant predictor of daily personal initiative and daily pursuit of learning. Thus, employees who are dedicated and enthusiastic about their jobs are more likely to engage in proactive behaviours to keep those positive work situations and further improve them (Sonnentag, 2003). Hakanen, Perhoniemi and Toppinen-Tanner (2008) demonstrated a reciprocal, positive relationship between work engagement and personal initiative over time. Vigour as a component of engagement was shown to broaden one's cognitive processes, stimulating several proactive behaviours such as job crafting (Parket, Bindl & Strauss, 2010).

Halbesleben and Wheeler (2008) worked with a sample of 587 employees and found that work engagement at time 1 predicted not only higher self-reported in-role performance two months later, but also higher supervisor-rated and co-worker-rated in-role performance. Similar results have been found for extra/role performance. In-role performance refers to individual behaviour that performs the duties required by the job (Christian, Garza & Slaughter, 2011), whereas extra-role performance points at behaviour outside role expectations, also often termed organizational citizenship behaviour (Zhu, 2013).

In accordance with previous literature, Bakker (2009) suggested that engaged employees perform better because:

− they experience positive emotions which help them to look for new ideas and build resources,
− they have better health, so they can devote all energy to their jobs,
− they look for feedback and support to create new resources,
− they are capable of transmitting their engagement to colleagues, increasing team performance.

Salanova, Lorente, Chambel and Martínez (2011) studied the link between transformational leadership and nurses' extra-role performance. In a Portuguese hospital, the extra-role performance of nurses working in various services was evaluated by seventeen supervisors. Nurses were also asked about their supervisors' transformational leadership. Results showed

that supervisors' transformational leadership was positively related to nurses' work engagement. Therefore, the supervisors provided higher ratings of extra-role performance. This goes hand in hand with Fredrickson's (2001) conclusion that positive emotions are vehicles for social connection, making it more likely for an employee to approach people. This also explains some differences between engaged and disengaged employees regarding extra-role behaviours. Bakker, Demerouti and Verbeke (2004), for instance, revealed that engaged employees were more likely to exhibit organisational citizenship behaviours. All in all, science has found strong evidence confirming a relationship between one's work engagement and performance.

Work engagement and especially vigour enables employees to move on from thought to action, thus engaged employees achieve better performance (Demerouti, Cropanzano, Bakker & Leiter, 2010). Besides searching for individual growth, engaged employees show higher levels of extra-role performance, particularly actions that go beyond their own job tasks and are beneficial for the organisation as a whole. In-role behaviours seem to be better predicted by well-being indicators (e.g., exhaustion), meaning whether individuals can perform. On the contrary, extra-role performance seems to be better predicted by whether an individual is willing to perform (i.e., work engagement) (Demerouti & Bakker, 2006).

Work engagement is also an important predictor of client satisfaction and organizational performance (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). Literature suggests there could be a positive relationship between employee work engagement and organizational performance. A meta-analysis run by Harter, Schmidt and Hayes (2002) indicated that work engagement relates to higher profitability and customer satisfaction/loyalty. Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti and Schaufeli (2009a) discovered a favourable correlation between daily work engagement and daily financial returns in their study of a fast-food company. Additionally, customer loyalty has been suggested as a potential result of employee engagement. The results indicate a strong relationship between employee engagement and service atmosphere, which is predictive of customer loyalty (Salanova, Agut & Peiró, 2005). Gruman and Saks (2011) propose, based on the substantial evidence linking employee engagement with favourable organisational results, that management systems should encourage employee engagement in order to create performance increases.

1.5   Measuring work engagement

The majority of work engagement research is conducted by consulting firms. Even though most research questions are inaccessible due to the possibility of abuse and copyright, it is still possible to locate studies that provide a bit more information on such questions. There are two core methods for measuring engagement: survey questionnaires or observations and evaluations of employees by their superiors.

Numerous organizations use survey questionnaires to evaluate employee engagement and establish connections between employee engagement and crucial business results. The results of such research make it possible to determine which investments in employee engagement yield a positive return for the organisation and which do not, hence indicating the need to modify human resources (HR) practises and investment decisions. Today's surveys in this field are typically shorter, more precisely targeted, and less time-consuming than in the past. In addition, it is becoming more common for employees to complete such surveys online rather than using paper and pen. This form of survey is further distinguished by the fact that the survey questions or statements are directly linking employee behaviour to the organization's business goals (Vance, 2006).

We describe the most prevalent methods for measuring employee engagement in the sections that follow.

1.5.1 Gallup's Q^{12}

Gallup is a global analytics and advisory firm that has been researching employee engagement for over a decade. It is one of the most known and used methods used to measure employee engagement. According to them, employees are categorized into 3 groups, based on their level of engagement: engaged, not engaged and actively disengaged (Gallup, 2022).

Engaged employees are deeply involved in and enthusiastic about their work and workplace. They act as psychological "owners" driving performance and innovation, thus propelling the organisation forward (Gallup, 2022).

Not engaged employees are psychologically detached from their work and company. They are only investing time in their work, not enthusiasm or energy, as a result of their engagement demands not being fully addressed (Gallup, 2022).

Actively disengaged employees are not only unhappy at work; they are also angry that their demands are not being addressed and acting out their resentment. These employees potentially undercut the efforts of their engaged peers every day (Gallup, 2022).

The questionnaire is based on 12 questions, which were conceptualized after years of research and interviews. The order in which questions are being asked is said to be very important. The 12 questions represent 4 hierarchies that need to be fulfilled by an individual on their journey towards engagement. Questions 1 and 2 address basic needs, questions from 3 to 6 address individual contributions, questions from 7 to 10 address teamwork and finally questions 11 and 12 address growth (Gallup, 2022). Unfavourable results in a specific category give management insights and opportunity to address them and introduce an action plan. Questionnaire can be found under appendix 2.

1.5.2 Utrecht Work Engagement Scale and Job Demands-Resources model

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES) is based on the assumption that engagement is "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigour, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá & Bakker, 2002). It is divided into 3 categories and consists of 17 questions in total. Also known is its abridged version, the UWES-9 scale (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006) that only consists of 9 questions.

Vigour is measured with 6 questions that relate to high levels of energy and endurance at work, including one's will to put in effort and persevere. Dedications is measured with 5 questions that relate to the feeling of importance, enthusiasm and pride one has while performing his job, including finding meaning and challenges. Absorption is measured with 6 questions that relate to high levels of complete immersion and focus during work, making time pass by fast and having difficulties detaching from it. UWES questionnaire can be accessed under appendix 3.

We use the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model as a conceptual framework for investigating the content validity of both versions of the UWES. On the basis of JD-R, it is expected that both variants of the UWES are favourably and consistently associated with job resources, personal resources and results, although correlations with job demands are weaker and vary in direction depending on the nature of the demand (i.e., challenging or hindering). Nonetheless, pattern of correlations between the UWES and the variables of the JD-R model are remarkably similar (Schaufeli, Shimazu, Hakanen, Salanova & De Witte, 2019).

Job resources have been identified as the core drivers of work engagement which in turn leads to increased well-being and positive organizational outcomes. On the other hand, job demands have been identified as the main causes of burnout, which in turn leads to poor health and negative organizational outcomes (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). These patterns form the basis for an articulated model of occupational well-being, known as the JD-R (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; 2014). By using the JD-R model, we can understand, explain and make predictions about employee burnout, work engagement and its related outcomes. JD-R is especially popular for its flexibility.

When trying to integrate job crafting into JD–R theory, Tims, Bakker and Derks (2013) determined a hypothesis that job crafting would predict future job demands as well as job resources and indirectly have a positive impact on work engagement and job satisfaction.

1.5.3 Employee engagement scale

On the other hand, the concept of employee engagement varies widely between different researchers. One of the scales, employee engagement scale (EES) was developed by Shuck, Adelson and Reio (2017) is based on the perspective that work engagement and employee

engagement are separate concept. Their employee engagement scale consists of three subfactors. The first, cognitive engagement, is described as the intensity of mental energy directed toward favourable organisational outcomes in order to produce positive results for the organisation. The second factor, emotional engagement, is defined as the intensity and willingness of an employee to invest emotionality toward positive organisational outcomes; that is, the emotional investment made with the intention of producing positive results for the organisation and the intensity of those emotions. The third factor, behavioural engagement, is described as the psychological state of intending to behave in a manner that favourably impacts performance, acting with the intention of positively impacting outcomes. Employee engagement scale can be accessed in appendix 4.

1.5.4   Team meetings

Meetings are one of the most important and commonly used face-to-face communication tools used in companies. Team meetings are designed to provide information, resolve problems, track and coordinate activities, delegate and create social bonds between team members (Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2005). They are a great method for a good manager to notice engagement levels in the team. Engaged employees will actively participate, propose new solutions, improvements, give ideas. Not engaged employees will most likely be in the background, stay silent. Actively disengaged employees will oppose to most suggestions and show dissatisfaction with topics addressed on the meeting. It is crucial to point out that this does not apply to everyone, as some people prefer to stay in the background but are still higly engaged.

1.5.5   One-to-one's

Individual employee meetings also known as one-to-one's (1-to-1) are another method for measuring employee engagement. They can take the form of informal or formal chats with a manager or HR leader or focus groups with a sample of employees. Having a scheduled informal talk with each team member provides a genuine understanding of what is happening. Employees are more likely to provide comprehensive input about potential difficulties during these hour-long meetings since they are held in person (or virtually) and are confidential. The key for managers is to remove that fear from employees so they feel safe opening up (Abdy, 2022).

1.5.6   Stay interviews

Stay interviews are conducted to determine what would take to keep an employee in his positions. This can be effective for addressing possible problems head-on and demonstrating that the employee is being heard. This might lead to adjustments in compensation and

improved work practises, but more importantly, it would prevent the loss of an employee's skills and the company's development and investment's return. The goal of a stay interview is to find out what you are already doing well and what you could improve on (Abdy, 2022).

1.5.7   Exit interviews

At the end of one's employment, organisations can conduct exit interviews to collect feedback. This enables HR personnel to comprehend the reasons individuals are leaving, what the organisation could do better for the next candidate in the position, how to make the post more attractive for recruitment considerations. This may occasionally reveal concerns that require immediate care but are unrelated to staff retention. Taking care of these problems can help the organisation deliver better services or implement some adjustments. Exit interviews can be beneficial, but it may be too late by the time the process is initiated (Abdy, 2022).

1.6   Self-Determination Theory

The macro theory of human motivation known as Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed out of studies on intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and later included studies on work organizations and other areas of life. It is comprised from six "mini-theories" that provide a complete understanding of human motivation and functioning.

SDT is founded on the core humanistic premise that people naturally and actively strive for growth and self-organization. Meaning, individuals attempt to grow and comprehend themselves through integrating new experiences, cultivating their needs, desires and interests and establishing relationships with others and the outside environment. Nevertheless, SDT also suggests that this natural growing tendency should not be expected and that individuals might become restricted, fragmented and alienated if their fundamental psychological requirements for autonomy, competence and relatedness are not met by their social environment. Meaning, SDT is based on the premise that the individual is continuously engaged in a dynamic interaction with the social world, seeking for need satisfaction while also reacting to the elements of the environment that support or hinder need fulfilment. As a result of this interaction between a person and the environment, individuals can become either engaged, interested and connected or demotivated, ineffectual and alienated (Legault, 2017).

SDT identifies three fundamental requirements (Schultz & Schultz, 2016):

−   competence as the need to feel that one can master difficult tasks;
−   autonomy as the freedom and power to choose a path of action based on one's own needs, values and interests;

- relatedness as the desire to feel personally connected to others.

Only by satisfying these requirements can a person achieve a sense of well-being (Schultz & Schultz, 2016).

According to Legault (2017), SDT's six mini theories examine the following:

- Cognitive Evaluation Theory (CET) focuses on the elements that influence perceived autonomy and competence and so shape intrinsic motivation.
- Organismic Integration Theory (OIE) focuses on extrinsic motivation and how it can be internalized.
- Causality Orientation Theory (COT) focuses on personality dispositions, i.e., whether people are generally autonomous, controlled or impersonal.
- Basic Psychological Need Theory (BPNT) analyses the importance of basic psychological needs in health and well-being and, more crucially, describes how social settings can overlook, frustrate or satisfy people's basic psychological needs.
- Goal Content Theory (GCT) focuses on how intrinsic and extrinsic objectives affect health and well-being.
- Relationship Motivation Theory (RMT) focuses on the urge to form and sustain close relationships and outlines how good relationships are the ones that enable individuals achieve their fundamental psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness.

People who engage in activities with a complete sense of willingness, volition and choice are considered to be motivated autonomously. Activities that are autonomously regulated are frequently intrinsically motivated. Extrinsically motivated activities however can also be autonomously motivated given the proper conditions - that is, engaged with authenticity and vitality which is perhaps more significant for the workplace. When people understand the value and purpose of their tasks, feel ownership and autonomy and receive clear feedback and support, they are more independently driven and hence they perform, learn and adjust better. The extrinsic focus that results from controlling motivation, whether through contingent rewards or power dynamics can, on the other hand, limit the range of employees' efforts, produce short term gains on targeted outcomes and have detrimental knock-on effects on subsequent performance and engagement at work (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017).

Intrinsic motivation is a specific type of autonomous motivation that refers to behaviour-driven activities. When intrinsically driven, spontaneous curiosity and satisfaction provide "rewards". Intrinsic motivation is illustrated in children's play when they play without extrinsic rewards or prompts. Intrinsic motivation is also crucial in adult activities, such as sports or avocations and at the workplace. When intrinsically motivated, employees tend to show high-quality performance and wellness (Deci, Olafsen & Ryan, 2017).

Extrinsic motivation refers to behaviour that is driven by external rewards, whether tangible or others. Not all extrinsic motivation is "bad", hence SDT suggests that extrinsic rewards may have various functional implications that have positive, negative or no influence on intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1972). Additionally, extrinsic motivation can be differentiated into various forms, each of which may be distinguished in the workplace and range from being less to more autonomous (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

2   JOB DESIGN AND THE CONCEPT OF UNBOSSING

A well-designed job may improve employee wellbeing and pave the way for thriving which happens when people overcome obstacles at work and develop personally. Employees can also start acting proactively and begin to adjust their jobs to better suit their skills and interests which is what we refer to as job redesign.

Unbossing was first introduced in 2012 by Danish authors Lars Kolind and Jacob Bøtter in their book Unboss. This concept was developed as an alternative to the conventional understanding of management and work by transforming limited companies into unlimited movements.

Which are the approaches to job design that indirectly affect an employee's degree of motivation? Which behaviours lead people to act proactively at work, to customize their job assignments, work environments and employment conditions? How does an unbossed leader act compared to a traditional manager? Does unboss mean no boss? How does an unbossed organization and structure look like? How do unbossed employees behave? How to implement this concept in an organisation? These are the questions we answer in this chapter.

2.1   Job design

Organizations continue to place a lot of practical importance on job design. A well-designed job may improve employee wellbeing and pave the way for thriving which is when people overcome obstacles at work and develop personally (Strümpfer, 2006). Job design describes how jobs, tasks and responsibilities are designed, implemented and modified, as well as the effects of these activities on the individual, the group and the organisation (Grant & Parker, 2009). Job design is typically viewed as a top-down process in which an organization creates jobs and then chooses candidates for the jobs based on their knowledge, skills and abilities.

Job design can be defined as the process of organising tasks, responsibilities and duties into an organisational unit of work (Ali & Aroosiya, 2012). Another definition for job design is "the specification of the contents, methods and relationships of jobs in order to satisfy technological and organizational requirements as well as the social and personal requirements of the job holder" (Armstrong, 2006, p. 494). First step in job design should be

an analysis of task requirements or what should be done. Next, the motivating characteristic such as autonomy, responsibility, discretion and lastly self-control should be considered (Armstrong, 2006).

It has been hypothesized that the approaches to job design indirectly affect an employee's degree of motivation. Different approaches to job design have been effective for diverse organizational growth (Garg & Rastogi, 2006). These approaches are job enrichment, job engineering, quality of work life, social information processing approach and job characteristics.

Job engineering (JEng) is a scientific management approach that has a close connection to cybernation, complex computer applications, computer-aided design (CAD) and human-machine interactions. In actuality, it has been the primary factor in job design analysis (Garg & Rastogi, 2006).

Quality of work life (QWL) and socio-technical design refers to alteration of workplace culture in order to improve the way people interact with technology and organizations (Garg & Rastogi, 2006).

Social information processing approach (SIPA) argues that socially constructed realities are the source of one's wants, task perceptions and reactions. Choice, revocability, publicness, explicitness, social norms and expectations and external priming are all parts of the process. These factors, along with social information (from other people and the organization's environment), affect how employees think, feel and act (Garg & Rastogi, 2006).

Job characteristics approach refers to certain psychological states and suggests that the intensity of employees' need for growth has a significant effect. The core job characteristics are (Hackman & Oldham, 1976):

− Skill variety relates to the amount to which a job requires the employee to utilize a variety of skills, abilities and knowledge.
− Task variety relates to whether or not the job has a clear beginning and end or how thoroughly an employee completes a module of work.
− Task significance refers to the importance of the task, involving both internal (i.e. how important the task is to the organization) and external significance (i.e. how proud employees are to tell their relatives, friends and neighbours what they do and where they work).
− Autonomy refers to job independence or how much freedom and control employees have over how they perform their jobs, such as scheduling their work, making decisions or deciding how to achieve their goals.
− Feedback refers to objective information regarding progress and performance that can be obtained from the job itself, managers or any other information system.

Critical psychological states are (Hackman & Oldham, 1976):

- Meaningfulness which is characterized as a cognitive state that refers to the extent to which employees see their work as significant and valuable.
- Responsibility which refers to the extent to which employee holds themselves personally responsible for the outcomes of their work.
- Knowledge of results which refers to the extent to which employees know and understand how effectively they perform their jobs on a continuous basis.

2.2   Job redesign

Job redesign is commonly viewed as a process in which the supervisor decides to change something about the individual's job, tasks or roles. However, an alternative, new perspective on job redesign with a focus on job redesign on individual level was introduced. As a result, employees are initially hired by the company and then begin to adjust their jobs to better suit their skills and interests. Meaning, rather than receptively carrying out the task that the organization designed, individuals begin to tailor their occupations to their specific wants and preferences (Berg, Dutton & Wrzesniewski, 2008). Employees are held accountable for their work outcomes in this perspective. This is a significant shift in job redesign theory. Initially, it was believed that the adjustments that employees make to their job design occurred during the process of socialisation (Schein, 1971), but it has become clear that it also occurs when people have worked for a long period in the same organization. Therefore, people adapt to changes in their work environment and alter features of their workplace themselves (Tims & Bakker, 2010).

Role innovation occurs when an employee proactively redefines the entire work role by changing the mission or practice of the role (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). When employees notice a problem with the definition of a job role, they try to redefine it in an innovative way (Schein, 1971). Exposure to creative role models and personal socialisation may lead a new employee to alter the function that was specified by the organization. As a result, the profession in question is more equipped to deal with current and emerging circumstances and has a higher likelihood of surviving (Tims & Bakker, 2010).

Another possibility is that job descriptions are incorrect. When work roles are misidentified or work practises are incorrect, counter-role behaviour can be beneficial to the organisation. Task revision is counter-role behaviour which involves resistance to faulty workplace procedures, inaccurate job descriptions or dysfunctional role expectations. Task revision at work occurs infrequently since managers and employees may see counter-role behaviours, such disobedience to societal norms and expectations, as unvalued and improper. A work environment that encourages deviation and peers who share similar values may facilitate task revision (Staw & Boettger, 1990).

Voice is nonrequired behaviour that emphasises positive change rather than criticising (LePine & Van Dyne, 1998). As a result, employees must be proactive and willing to be unconventional. LePine and Van Dyne (1998) suggest that managers in dynamic organisations where change and innovative ideas are vital, need to understand voice. Even if it does not help the individual, the organisation benefits when others speak up. Of course, positive adjustments might also result in a more favourable performance review (Tims & Bakker, 2010).

All of these ideas benefit businesses. When people speak up and give creative performance ideas, the organisation may benefit. This increases the organization's survival chances, especially in a dynamic environment. Although these behaviours show an employee's drive and commitment in work development, they are not focused on personal gains (Tims & Bakker, 2010).

Individual work arrangements between an employee and an employer are known as idiosyncratic deals or i-deals (Hornung, Rousseau & Glaser, 2008; Lai, Rousseau & Chang, 2009). Employers make these agreements because they value the employees and want to keep them, for example by offering more flexibility. Both the company and employee benefit. I-deals offer personal growth and work-life balance (Lai, Rousseau & Chang, 2009). Negotiating an i-deal is a proactive behaviour since employees must discuss and negotiate their wants (Hornung, Rousseau & Glaser, 2008).

Personal initiative is defined as an employee's proactive behaviour that is in line with the organization's vision, has a long-term perspective, is goal-directed and action-oriented and is tenacious in the face of challenges (Frese, Fay, Hilburger, Leng & Tag, 1997). It should be noted that these actions go above and beyond what is expected of the individual at work. The work environment stimulates personal initiative which is then directed primarily toward work and organisational issues (Frese, Garst & Fay, 2007).

2.3   Job autonomy

The word autonomy is derived from the Greek "autonomia" and "autonomos" where "auto" means "self" and "nomos" means "rule"; therefore, autonomy alludes to self-rule. "Self-rule" is exercised by someone or something that relies on its own laws and procedures to carry out actions and duties. Historically, Greek city states exercised autonomy in making decisions and administering their own affairs (Agich, 1994).

In the business context, job autonomy is defined by Hackman and Oldham (1976) as a substantial freedom, independence and discretion. According to them, job autonomy is exercising authority, power and decision-making by employee within control of his or her own. Work method, work schedule, pace of work, work procedures, workplace, work evaluation, working hours, type of work and amount of work, goals, priorities and work

criteria are all examples of job autonomy in organisations (de Jonge, 1995). Subdivision of job autonomy that are used in many organizations are telecommuting (Onyemaechi, Chinyere & Emmanuel, 2018), flexible working hours (Kattenbach, Demerouti & Nachreiner, 2010; Beckmann, 2016) and job sharing (Ivancevich & Konopaske, 2013).

Job autonomy has been defined by academics as giving employees flexibility in their job scheduling and method of completing their tasks (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Saragih, 2011; Lu, Rousseau & Chang, 2017). Others define job autonomy as the obligation of employees to make decisions concerning their tasks (Kim, Cable, Kim & Wang, 2009; Sisodia & Das, 2013). Wu, Griffin and Parker (2015) add to the definition of job autonomy by defining it as the opportunity for employees to govern their behaviour and attain goals in accordance with their personal understanding and preferences. Additionally, job autonomy is described as the capacity of employees to carry out their duties and make decisions (Laceulle, 2018), as well as how to achieve goals (Wu, Griffin & Parker, 2015). It is important to note that senior management takes an active role in incorporating work autonomy into the organisational environment. Transformational leadership, according to Fernet, Trépanier, Austin, Gagné, and Forest (2015) is associated with empowerment, autonomous motivation and self-reflection.

More and more scholars are emphasising job autonomy as a factor that contributes to improved employee performance. Saragih (2011) argues that it has a positive effect on employees and ultimately, company performance by increasing satisfaction, self-efficacy and reducing job stress. Others argue that job autonomy increases commitment (Sisodia & Das, 2013), motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), employee engagement and trust in top management (Lu, Rousseau & Chang, 2017).

The connection between job autonomy and work-related outcomes was reinforced with JD-R theory (Bakker, Demerouti & Sanz-Vergel, 2014). According to JD-R an increase in job autonomy is positively related to factors such as psychological well-being, hence job autonomy can be considered as a psychological resource. Psychosocial resources are supposed to alleviate job-related stress, improve workers' ability to meet work goals and drive personal and professional growth, learning and development (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). This conceptualization is also supported with Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) and SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Job autonomy is identified as one of five fundamental job characteristics in the Job Characteristics Model and it is hypothesised that job autonomy is related with positive affective outcomes (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Moreover, according to the SDT, access to autonomy meets fundamental psychological needs which are again essential components of genuinely driven behaviour and mental health (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Other researchers have questioned this linear connection between job autonomy and relevant outcomes (de Jonge, Reuvers, Houtman, Bongers & Kompier, 2000; Stiglbauer & Kovacs,

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2018). Increases in employment resources, such as job autonomy, may become overly beneficial, according to these studies' hypotheses (Dettmers & Bredehoeft, 2000). This suggests that, beyond a certain level of optimal job autonomy, the potential positive benefits of more job resources in general and job autonomy in particular on psychological well-being may diminish or even turn negative.

2.4   The concept of unbossing

At the beginning of 20th century, Fredrick W. Taylor (1911) wrote a ground-breaking book The Principles of Scientific Management that shaped how organizations and work developed. It was originally intended for factories but ended up having an impact on everything. Cities were developing and changing, the way of transportation was changing, nature of work was changing, and with thus world as we knew it changed. In his book, Taylor (1911) describes 4 core ideas:

− Divide work into smaller parts, small enough for a worker to learn to master this specific item of work.
− Use scientific methods to select workers, train them and control them and spare no effort in developing tools and working methods that will increase the productivity of each operation.
− Separate actual work from management and supervision so that supervisors can focus on planning, control and process improvement while workers focus on getting the work done as efficiently as possible.
− High pay for high-performing employees.

The fast-changing environment of the 21st century is forcing companies and management to change their traditional views and adapt. People are no longer looking at their job as just a way to earn income, but they are expecting more. They want people that they work with to share the same passions, to feel safe, heard, to have an impact. Companies are therefore being forced to start switching their mindset to a more purpose-oriented one.

Hierarchies, key performance indicators, job descriptions, titles, bonus schemes, marketing tools and sales strategies are all things that belong to the 20th century and will be left behind if unboss is implemented. The unbossed mentality is a new way of thinking that inverts the traditional notion of management and work, thereby transforming limited companies into unlimited movements. It favours purpose over profit (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

The unboss paradigm addresses many aspects of an organisation, including purpose, structure, middle management, employees, work, office, communications, marketing, sales, procurement, research and development, production, customer service, HR and payroll, risk, knowledge management, unions and charity. For the purpose of this thesis we will focus

more on the aspects that directly impact employees, management and their relationships, thus possibly affecting autonomy and engagement.

Unboss is based on the assumptions that the employees of the future will prefer to be regarded as individuals with their own beliefs and objectives, rather than as production factors. They will perform more knowledge-based work and fewer routine tasks. Companies of the future will only be successful if they renew or adapt. In the past, keeping costs low was frequently sufficient. Companies of the future will need to integrate technologies and knowledge from several fields. In the past, knowledge of a single product or technique was frequently sufficient. Future businesses will only be successful if they collaborate closely with other organisations. In the past, it was generally sufficient for them to operate alone (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

According to Simon Sinek's ground-breaking book Start With Why (2011), 80% of people living in the United States are not currently employed in the job of their dreams. This, however, does not imply that they have no interest in locating it. Most of us want to do work that has some sort of impact. Today, more individuals than ever before are searching for meaning in their lives and looking for job that will provide them the opportunity to find a purpose and become the best versions of themselves. When you devote your work to a worthwhile cause, you transform your company into an attractive destination for skilled individuals who are seeking first-rate employment opportunities (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

2.4.1   Characteristics of an unboss

The unboss resembles a servant more than a boss. He is someone who generates opportunities as opposed to issuing orders. He is more a leader than a traditional boss. An unboss can take form of any gender but for the purpose of clear communication we will use male pronouns. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of a traditional boss compared to an unboss.

It is challenging to build a successful business if employees waste their time trying to second-guess the boss's thoughts. Tomorrow's manager must release his employees, allowing them the time and space to organise their own work and determine their own methods. An unboss manager will have the same goals as a regular one but will have a different mandate. His authority derives from following. He must earn the right to manage not just in the eyes of his supervisor, but also in the eyes of the staff. An unboss manager must provide a reason for his employees to follow him. Unless they have a personal motivation to do so, employees will not continue to follow him. Many employees in large organisations have likely never met or even seen the person at the top of the organisational pyramid. This would never occur in an unbossed organisation. In conventional organisations, reporting to the manager consumes an enormous amount of time and effort. This, when taken to extremes, becomes

micromanagement, which is extensively used today in command-and-control organisations. Tasks are being delegated but nevertheless details must be reported to the manager. He keeps a careful eye on every development and participates in every decision, despite the fact that it slows things down and indicates a lack of faith in his employees' abilities to perform their tasks. It is essential that the unboss develops and maintains both internal and external relationships (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012). Below table summarizes the characteristics of a traditional boss compared to an unboss.

Table 1: Characteristics of a Traditional Boss Compared to an Unboss

The boss	The unboss
Profit-driven, produces a financial return depending on the anticipated production and budget	Purpose-driven, creates meaning and value based on a shared goal
Chief, superior	Teammate, partner
Controls	Inspires
Director	Entrepreneur, servant
Exclusive	Inclusive
Talker	Listener
Manager and controller	Colleague and learner
Analyses, plans, executes, controls	Inspires, focuses, encourages and recognizes
Keeps information secret	Shares information
Considers departments to guarantee accountability and focus	Considers issues across departments to ensure harmony and teamwork
Concentrates on titles and job descriptions based on education and practical skills	Ignores titles and predefined job descriptions, concentrating instead on personal qualities and interpersonal skills
Separate office, formal meetings and restricted access	Unrestricted access, informal meetings and workplace integration

Source: Kolind & Bøtter (2012).

An unboss must be an expert at convincing others to commit to a community. This talent is known as his NQ or network quotient. This is rather different than IQ (intelligence quotient). IQ shows an individual's analytical and combinatorial abilities or what he does for himself. NQ represents the potential combined intelligence of a group formed by one or more individuals. An individual or group has a high NQ if they are able to leverage each other's knowledge and abilities to create value collectively (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

2.4.2   Unbossed organization and structure

The nature of work is becoming increasingly more complex, at an ever-increasing rate and this trend is only expected to continue. Work will continue to become more complicated as we become more skilled and efficient and as we discover how to make use of ever-increasing computing power, whether it be in spite of or possibly as a direct result of developments in technology. According to Kolind and Bøtter (2012) collaborative and unlimited organisation is the only effective approach to manage and maximise the value of all this newfound complexity. Using new psychological and social tools, these organisations are able to manage complexity more effectively and affordably. Those that adhere to the conventional strategy will have nothing to organise in the future, as their market share will be captured by more agile competitors. Replace micromanagement and bureaucracy with passion and purpose. Future market share will be snatched by more agile competitors, leaving those who cling to conventional strategy with nothing to organise. Micromanagement and bureaucracy should be replaced with purpose and passion.

By definition, the unlimited organisation is asynchronous, meaning people can work whenever and wherever it is most convenient for them. They only get together in person when there is a compelling reason to do so. On the other hand, work of the conventional, limited company is synchronised in time and in place. Every day, all employees come at work at nearly the same time and location. Occasionally, they opt to work elsewhere (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

An organization's social network takes over as the main organisational structure when you unboss it. The social network can increase the visibility of members and facilitate connections between individuals, thus making them part of a community that works together toward improving working conditions both for themselves and their colleagues.

In his book, Frederick W. Taylor (1911) established the theoretical framework for organising industrial production. Since then, his methodology has been an excellent framework for producing automobiles and plastic gadgets at the lowest feasible price. Undoubtedly, the hierarchical organisation and well-defined line of command contributed to the realisation of industrialization's vast potential. As specified in the job description, each employee performs his specialised tasks at the allocated location. Control systems and problem-solving methods were implemented. All of this was ingrained in our minds as the only way to do business. But is this really the case? Hierarchy was designed with a focus on stability, perfection and efficacy. While this was incredibly effective for industrial production, it is ill-suited for the sophisticated, knowledge-intensive labour that defines the 21st century. Hierarchy separates people not only horizontally and vertically, but also physically and psychologically and has a predisposition to foster an unaccountable environment that is inflexible and uncomfortable. When company's sections are clearly separated, it is simple to place the responsibility for a

problem on "the others" which hinders efficiency. It is paramount for employees to collaborate (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

2.4.3   Unbossed middle management

As Frederick W. Taylor (1911) stated: "The work has to be allocated. Workers need to focus on the task at hand, while others are responsible for planning and control." The traditional middle managers act as a liaisons between senior management and those who really perform the work. They follow their superiors' instructions regarding what has to be done in the department. They rarely examine the reasoning behind his directives. They primarily communicate with their superior and subordinates. When interdepartmental coordination is required, they defer to their superiors, who will address the matter with the other department heads. Implementing a decision that has been made at a higher level is the responsibility of the middle management. They accomplish it by analysing the task, splitting it into units and assigning them to his subordinates. They ensure that everyone is aware of their specific responsibilities and has access to the necessary tools and resources. Throughout the duration of the work, they constantly supervise the process and output to ensure that everything goes according to plan. If a conflict emerges, they intervene and find a solution (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012). The most important differences between the conventional middle manager and a team leader are summarized in Table 2.

The middle manager has a crucial role in the traditional factory where hundreds of workers have to perform highly integrated tasks in order to manufacture products (e.g., cars) in large numbers and at the lowest possible cost. Differently, a knowledge-based organisation must continually reinvent itself, adapt and combine information in new ways because it lacks the predictability of a traditional factory. This is why the middle manager's department has an entirely new function. Instead of using the word middle manager in knowledge-based organisations the phrase team leader is more commonly used (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

While the middle manager has a fixed position in the conventional organisation, the team leader moves more freely in the social network. Hierarchical management is one-dimensional, with a clear top-to-bottom chain of command. Several processes ensure the project gets done, professional quality is maintained and everyone works at full potential. Most communication in a traditional hierarchy travels upward. In an unlimited one, information, knowledge, ideas and perspectives are shared across boundaries. Employees in an unlimited organisation are motivated by their passion for the company's mission, while those in a conventional hierarchy are motivated by bonuses and other tangible advantages (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

The job of team leader differs greatly from that of a middle manager. The classic middle manager is boss-dependent. The team leader's superior only gives him directives in rare

instances. Normally, he is part of a process where concerns are considered and plans are discussed and implemented. He knows what to do and why. Because he is part of the process, he knows how the organization's purpose, strategy and action plan affect his team. This is especially true if his team members have specific skills and were involved in decision-making. Together with his team, the leader thoroughly considers the work that must be completed. He ensures that every team member not only understands their responsibilities, but also how they relate to those of others in the organisation. This takes effort, but it pays off quickly since the team works better together, makes fewer mistakes, is more motivated and is more receptive to the contributions of others inside the organisation (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012). The most important differences between the conventional middle manager and a team leader are summarized below.

Table 2: Differences Between the Conventional Middle Manager and a Team Leader

Middle manager (department)	Team leader
Receives orders from his boss about the work to be done	Identifies important tasks to be performed within the overall structure
Advises subordinates on what to do and how	Works with team members to understand what must be done and why
Analyses, plans and controls the work of the subordinates	Works with team members to get the job done
Makes decisions on conflicts within the department	Encourages team members to resolve conflicts themselves
Communicates primarily with his boss and his subordinates	Communicates freely with everybody
Works within the framework of the annual plan and budget	Constantly adjusts plans and budgets

Source: Kolind & Bøtter (2012).

2.4.4 Unbossed employees

The typical employee today has a higher level of education than the typical CEO did a century ago. He is seeking purpose and has higher expectations for his employment. He has also advanced in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Motivation, passion and dedication are necessary for an organisation to recruit and retain the top talent (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012). Table 3 summarises the differences between a conventional, bossed employee and an unbossed one.

It is impossible for a manager to eliminate all uncertainty and provide exact instructions to knowledge employees. The essence of managing knowledge-based work is ensuring that each employee understands not just the tasks he must complete, but also the motivations behind them. Your colleagues must understand what you want them to accomplish, why you

want them to do it and why your manager wants you to perform the tasks you are performing. This is the fundamental characteristic of a colleague or partner (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

The majority of unbossed work takes place outside the organisation, such as with customers, suppliers or other partners. Consequently, unbossed work is typically asynchronous. In an unbossed organisation, not everyone will be present at any given time. Grant employees the freedom to choose freely when and where they work from. This type of flexible work offers numerous advantages, but also disadvantages. The greatest benefit is freedom - freedom from morning rush-hour traffic, freedom to customise your personal schedule without having your boss dictate it and freedom from travelling to the same place of employment every day, year after year. On the other hand, the primary disadvantage of flexible working is that some individuals struggle to adjust to the newfound freedom. Some will also miss the daily routine of seeing the same colleagues (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012). The following table summarises the differences between a conventional, bossed employee and an unbossed one.

Table 3: Differences Between a Bossed and an Unbossed Employee

Conventional (bossed) employee	Unbossed employee
Follows orders	Asks for an explanation before following orders
Never says no	Says no if he does not want to do it
Does not interfere in other departments	Actively intervenes if he has a positive contribution to make
Focuses only on what is right for his department	Focuses on what is right for the company
Motivated by salary	Motivated by purpose
Focuses on individual performance	Focuses on the company's performance
Paid according to qualifications, experience and position	Paid relative to contribution and value generated
Loyal to department and profession	Loyal to company and purpose
Works from the office	Works from wherever he wants
Works regular office hours	Works whenever he wants

Source: Kolind & Bøtter (2012).

2.4.5   Unbossed nature of work

Unbossing work needs you to acknowledge that future work will be both informal and fluid. It will continue to change and become increasingly complicated, reflecting the exponential

growth and development of information technology. Of course, the actual work will not be much easier simply because it is unbossed, but you will be able to handle considerably more complex tasks (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012). The following table summarises the changes that will take place in organisations when traditional bossed work is replaced by unbossed one.

Table 4: The Changes When Traditional Bossed Work is Replaced by Unbossed One

Type	Bossed work	Unbossed work
Content	Primarily structured, mechanical or knowledge-based work as per fixed rules and procedures. Occasionally unstructured, e.g., during product development or changes to the process.	Primarily unstructured, knowledge-based work within general frameworks. Occasionally structured.
Activity	Defined by others: what and how	Defined by others: why and what? Defined by the employee: How?
Time	Synchronous, occasionally asynchronous	Asynchronous, occasionally synchronous
Space	Synchronous, occasionally asynchronous	Asynchronous, occasionally synchronous
Motivation	External, driven by rewards and career	Internal, driven by passion for the cause
Incentive	Performance bonus	Recognition, sense of accomplishment
Performance	Evaluated by boss in accordance with established criteria	Evaluated by customers and partners according to their criteria
Social context	Mainly individual, mainly internal colleagues	Mainly teamwork, both internal and external colleagues
Environment	One main workplace	Multiple workplaces
Tools	Intranet, department, knowledge bank set up by experts	Extranet, social networks, knowledge bank set up by everybody
Hardware	Desk, chair, cupboard space, office supplies and/or laptop, internet access, smartphone	Access to work lounges, mobile office, access to unlimited 24/7 internet anywhere in the world

Source: Kolind & Bøtter (2012).

Unbossing work will affect the concept of work-life balance since it will become increasingly difficult to separate the two concepts. Numerous employees will be in constant online communication with their company. On the other hand, companies who misuse this advantage and inconvenience their employees excessively will pay a steep price. Strict procedures and rules are not the answer to this issue. Individuals and companies are

responsible for striking their own balance. Everyone has the right to time away from work and non-job-related activities. This is how people develop (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

As asynchronous work grows more prevalent, many conventional managers will struggle to adjust to the new reality. How will they manage employees if they do not know when or where they are working? Perhaps managers should rethink whether they need to supervise employees to the extent that they do currently (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

2.4.6   Unbossed communication

In an unbossed organisation the direction of communication should no longer flow just in one direction. The unboss is no longer in charge of solely making decisions and communicating them to the employees. It is great that he talks at staff meetings, writes newsletters or, if he is truly tech-savy, uploads a video blog. What is new is that he engages in genuine discussion with people. He wants to hear the employees' thoughts, ideas and frustrations. He wants things to come out into the open so he can assess them and produce something positive (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012). Table 5 summarises the differences between the old paradigm and the unboss method.

Table 5: Differences Between the Old Paradigm and the Unboss Method

Bossed communication	**Unbossed communication**
One-way communication	Multidirectional communications
Newsletters, big meetings	Blogs and Tweets
Restricted use of social media	Maximum use of social media
Information documents	Wikis, involving everybody
Paid communications: TV spots, ads	Deserved communication: word of mouth, social media
Censored	Uncensored
Centrally produced information is made available to employees and customers	Free-flowing and unlimited dialogue between partners, customers and other stakeholders

Source: Kolind & Bøtter (2012).

The traditional boss would isolate himself and seek a solution behind closed doors. To attempt to control the message, he would recruit the best spin-doctors. As long as possible, he would deny the problem's existence. The unboss would act in the opposite way. He would acknowledge the problem, offer leadership and try to involve everyone - customers, other stakeholders and perhaps even the media - in resolving it as fast and as smoothly as possible.

Unbossed organisations accept mistakes and share them openly as they are aware they can gain knowledge from them (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012) (see table 5).

2.5 The approaches to implementation of unbossing

2.5.1 Determining objectives as social tasks

Determine how your objective could be regarded as a "social task". A contractor may change his mission from building houses to fostering human well-being. In addition to manufacturing and selling boilers, a boiler factory might also produce energy-efficient and pollution-free heating. In addition to conducting transactions, a bank may assist customers in improving their finances. Almost every organisation is able to articulate a meaningful mission and prioritise it over profit (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

2.5.2 Evaluating fundamental positions

Evaluate your fundamental positions: "We must have knowledge throughout the organisation. Otherwise, it will be stolen by competitors and our business will suffer." Imagine that you communicate business-critical information with your customers, suppliers and others who may be able to assist your company. Suppose you choose for an open communications structure. Imagine leveraging the potential of online social technologies, such as wikis or collaborative platforms like Threddie (brainstorming) and Yammer (informal contact between staff). Consider it an easy-to-implement, symbolic first step that signals the management's desire to increase collaboration and generate added value from its networks (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

2.5.3 Choosing intrinsic over extrinsic motivation

Choose intrinsic motivation over extrinsic. According to conventional business reasoning, employees are financially driven by promotions, bonuses and other financial rewards. This is the definition of extrinsic motivation. Different from extrinsic motivation is the intrinsic one. It arises from the employees' innate desire to make a difference for the better. Money is a strong extrinsic motivation, particularly when it comes to manual labour or for individuals who are struggling financially (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

2.5.4 Abolishing traditional hierarchical structures

The traditional organisational paradigm was supported by a physical separation of the various departments, allowing them to focus on their tasks without interruption. This also

produced a distinct separation between people at different levels of the hierarchy; you can speak with your direct manager, but otherwise only with those on your own level. An unbossed organisation makes it easy for employees and other stakeholders to take part in a collective process that is predicated on what individuals are capable of achieving and contributing. It is not about enhancing one's own standing inside the organisational hierarchy (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

2.5.5 Unbossing the nature of employment relationship

Each employee should be regarded as a human being with unique values and goals. You must acquire an entirely new philosophy of motivation. The most crucial aspect of motivation is that it originates from within, or in other words, through passion for the company's purpose. The transformation must begin with perspective; the employee must be viewed as a partner. The second step is to empower your employees. Free them of the anxiety that acting on their own initiative will somehow harm the organisation. If you establish the proper environment for them and their jobs, this will not happen. And lastly, abandon the old inflexible pay grade system. Determine a strategy to recognise significant contributions to the organisation that will be seen fair and will impact behaviour (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

2.5.6 Unsbossing the nature of work

If managers truly wish to unboss work, they must allow their employees an unprecedented amount of freedom. The organisation and structure of the business must allow employees to work from home or other acceptable locations at any given time. From this starting point, you can begin to dissect all other work-related variables that inhibit value creation. You will neither generate purpose or profit, nor will you foster innovation or creative thought by requiring employees to work quicker, under greater pressure, with more sub-targets, key performance indicators (KPIs) and stress. Standardization and management by rules are put on the side-line when you unboss the work in favour of innovation, creativity, customer and employee satisfaction. This does not mean that you forget or let go every rule and requirement. On the contrary, good standards and processes are necessary for an unbossed knowledge company to work well. The key is to stick to a small number of simple rules and make sure everyone knows what they are and why they are there. Management has to recognize that knowledge is the foundation of future work. It must be at the top of the organization's priority list, rather than assuming that standardisation and efficiency are sufficient to maintain competitiveness (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

2.5.7   Unbossing communication

In an unbossed organisation, communication should flow in all directions. Everyone is a stakeholder or a partner and employees are treated like grown-ups with a fundamental desire to do a good job. Unbossed organisations are characterised by trust and accountability.You discuss the current situation honestly and freely while also encouraging discussion about how it might be handled differently in the future (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

Building genuine trust takes time, but your starting point should always be genuine and open dialogue. Once employees overcome their fear of being penalised for pointing out mistakes, whether by colleagues or management, unions may have to step forward - not to defend their members' rights, but to promote their members' ideas and opinions about how to build a better world (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

2.5.8   Identifying fundamental managerial funtions

In the unbossed organisation, there are 3 managerial functions that are indispensable. Together, they represent the dimensions that will replace the 20th century's functional hierarchy. The 3 functions are projects, professions and people. None of these are new, but they are required for knowledge-intensive work to achieve higher quality, greater innovation and faster learning. What is new is the separation of the 3 functions in this approach for the simple reason that only a few managers can work on all of them (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012). These 3 functions are explained in the following sub-sections.

Projects

First, you have to make sure that work is completed. Define all tasks into projects and let people manage them. A project could be running the canteen, decorating the offices or inventing a new product or organising a product launch. An organisation with 20 employees may have more than 50 projects at once. Each project has a manager who oversees its completion. If you have several projects, you will require project owners that can supervise 10–20 projects and categorise them by country, segment, function or technology. When problems emerge, the owners have the final say, but employees usually resolve them themselves. Depending on the number of tasks, create more levels. If your organisation has 1,000 projects, you will require 40–50 project owners, who each need two or three individuals to help them focus (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

The project owners' role is not conventional coordination. Transparency enables direct project coordination. If everyone understands what others are doing and there are many interconnections, most coordination will be direct. Do uncoordinated efforts matter? Duplicated work is a little price to pay to avoid traditional organisations' endless coordination meetings. Owners should help projects progress, not control them. The owner

will get involved if something is about to go really wrong, but he is usually more of an instigator than a supervisor. Project managers assemble a team, including essential stakeholders and ensure everything goes well and the team meets its goals. Customers, stakeholders and employees will identify and launch new projects (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

Employees choose projects they are skilled and motivated to work on and project managers form teams. Employees need to monitor their time and make sure they deliver results within the allocated period. Giving employees the tools and training to manage themselves is better than managing them. A system like this is self-regulating. It guarantees that people spend their time wisely (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

Professions

If employees can choose their own projects (if the management agrees), you need a way of ensuring that professional standards are maintained. This is the responsibility of a professional manager. They are the ones who ensure the quality of each project. Mechanical engineering managers ensure products are straightforward to build and do not break. They must ensure that the people involved in the project are qualified. The manager is a resource whose responsibility it is to ensure that the project proceeds as planned - not to sit back and wait for problems to arise. They are the ones who support the development of the profession in general. The profession manager inspires, coordinates and promotes professional expertise inside the project and organisation. They foster learning by holding seminars on expertise, tools and knowledge required. Those with the most potential, qualifications and motivation are appointed as profession managers. They multitask like everyone else. In unbossed organisations, profession managers are closest to specialised department managers in conventional organisations (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

People

The third function relates to the people within your organisation. Happy, motivated individuals who have the necessary tools and solutions just perform better. Companies should attempt to make their employees happy, as this has a significant impact on productivity. Unbossed companies have mentors, who are not necessary hired for this purpose but are often selected internally. This frees specialists from people management, which is not their main strength. Unbossed companies let employees choose their mentors. It is a self-regulating system that lets you choose a personality-matching mentor. A mentor inspires, listens and gives the employee the skills to succeed. He is responsible for regular talks with the employee to discuss professional and personal development and to offer or alter the compensation package based on the employee's effect and value. He is a resource and a supporter, not a manager. Nobody should mentor more than 15 people. Employees can also choose another mentor if they are unhappy. Individual employees are responsible for

ensuring they have enough work but also do not burn out. This is also a topic of conversation with mentors (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

Start with implementing gradual changes. Identify the professions inside your organisation, for example. People will first continue doing what they have always done. Gradually though, you will be able to encourage them to check the catalogue of projects and choose where to apply their expertise. If you want your employees to feel confident within the new organisational structure, allow them to determine the work processes. In an unbossed organisation, improvements are implemented by inclusion and consensus. Start by asking for volunteers (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

2.6   Unbossing in companies

Google, one of the most unbossed corporations in the world, takes a significant risk by empowering its employees to increase motivation. Each employee can spend up to 20% of his working hours to personal initiatives. Some would argue that this is inefficient use of time. If you have ensured that every employee is engaged, motivated and aware of Google's goals, this is not the case (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

When Alan Mulally became CEO of Ford Motor Company in 2006, his first order of business was to request that the other top executives admit their errors. He instructed them everyone to color-code internal reports, with green indicating success and red indicating difficulty. Even though the corporation had lost several billion dollars the year before, he was faced with a sea of green at an early morning meeting. He expressed shock and began working diligently to alter a workplace culture that did not tolerate error. Ford did not begin to recover until its managers confessed that not everything was in the green (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

Zappos, an American based online shoe and clothing store, pays people to resign at end of training period if they do not think the unbossed culture is for them. The compensation is 4000$ and less than 1% take it (Kolind & Bøtter, 2012).

Novartis, one of the biggest pharmaceutical corporations, has unboss incorporated in its core values and behaviours. As part of their unbossed culture they provide opportunities for their employees to take charge of their own development by democratising learning and development across all of Novartis. In order to achieve this, they are leveraging the power of artificial intelligence to tailor career and learning opportunities and give their employees control over their own growth. Their unbossed leadership experience takes leaders through self-discovery and profound personal development. This is a journey of personal transformation that helps leaders rethink how they affect other people and the world by changing how they think and act. Their ultimate goal is to involve every employee in a process of ongoing self-reflection and development in order to achieve improved patient

outcomes. They utilise employee engagement surveys such as Our Voice and Team Perspectives to continuously listen to their employees and deliver real-time insights that will maximise collaboration, resulting in improved business outcomes (Novartis, 2022).

The global pandemic has accelerated the development of new working models. Depending on the nature of their work, Novartis now provides a number of employees with the option to choose how, where and when they work (in compliance with corporate tax, individual tax and social security regulations) in order to maximise their role's impact while assuming personal responsibility to inform management and coordinate with teammates for effective cooperation. This new model of hybrid working is called Choice with Responsibility (Novartis, 2020).

3   RESEARCH ON UNBOSSING AND WORK ENGAGEMENT IN A SELECTED COMPANY

This chapter will be dedicated to our empirical research and it is structured in a chronological order. First, we will discuss the aims and goals of this research, followed by methodology and last an introduction of participants and interview protocol. This research is focused mainly on getting insights from leaders in respect to the concept of unbossing and its impacts on engagement.

3.1   Aim and research questions

The concept of unbossing is rather new and not much scientific research has been published about it. The aim of this empirical research is to get a better understanding of the impacts on employee engagement, once this concept is implemented in the workplace. Does unbossing contribute to higher work engagement of employees on different levels of the organization? Do leaders believe unbossing is the future and how do they see their role in it? What conditions need to be met to enable people to be unbossed and if giving more autonomy in the workplace contributes to higher employee engagement? Based on the insights gathered from the interviews we will form positions for recommendations to organisations, how they should face challenges in practice in the future and whether a change in the organizational structure can be the right answer for new challenges.

We will be using structured interviews as a tool to get insight for the following 3 research questions:

- RQ1: What are leaders' attitudes towards the concept of unbossing?
- RQ2: Which are the conditions that enable successful implementation of the concept of unbossing?
- RQ3: What are the consequences of job autonomy for employee engagement?

Empirical research was conducted by following these 7 steps:

- choosing the right content,
- choosing the right participants,
- forming interview questions,
- presenting the aim and goals of this research to potential participants,
- interviewing 5 leaders,
- analysing interview answers,
- interpreting insight gathered in interviews and connecting them with the theoretical part.

3.2 Methodology

We decided to conduct structured interviews for the purpose of this research because this would be the most effective way for achieving the aims and goals that were set out, as well as gaining information on the presented research topics. Interviews were identified as the optimal method since they provide for a deeper understanding of an individual's attitudes and perspectives (Dörnyei, 2007).

Structured interviews are those in which the interview questions are written down by the researcher prior to performing the interview and enable a controlled setting to obtain information. This structure is a good method for keeping the interview narrowly focused on the intended subject (Bryman, 2008). Additionally, it makes the interview comparable amongst interviewees. However, this form of interview lacks depth and restricts access to in-depth data. Due to the rigid interview structure, there is little difference across responses. Therefore, both the interviewer's ability to interrupt and the interviewee's ability to elaborate are constrained. Literature indicates that this style of interview is appropriate for researchers who know precisely what type of information they are seeking (Dörnyei, 2007). Interview protocol is described more in detail under appendix 6.

Interpreting the responses to the questions that were asked during the interview will allow us to answer the 3 research questions. Each research question is broken down into multiple, more particular sub-questions, which enables us to gain a deeper understanding of what is actually taking place and a more nuanced comprehension of the findings. In addition, all research questions, as well as all sub-questions, are connected to the specifics that are elaborated in the theoretical part.

After interviews were conducted, we started our qualitative content analysis by transcribing interview text. In qualitative content analysis, the goal is to translate a significant volume of text into a highly organised and short summary of essential findings (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). The initial step was to read and re-read the interviews to gain a general understanding of what our participants were talking about. Then we divided the text into

smaller parts, which we condensed even further, ensuring core meaning is still retained. Subsequently, we labelled these condensed meaning units by developing codes and then grouping them into categories. We used the approach described by Erlingsson & Brysiewicz (2017).

3.3   Participants

Participants were required to be in a people management position, managing office-based employees and lead by following the unbossed principles. We targeted individuals with varying team sizes and organisational levels (local/country, regional, and global level) in order to obtain more accurate information. All participants are from the same organisation but from different departments. The right to privacy of those who participated in the interview process has been respected by withholding their names. Sharing their sincere opinions may affect their position inside the organisation. Introduction of participants is summarized in the table below.

Table 6: Participants

Identifier	Gender	Position
A	Female	Local level
B	Male	Global level
C	Female	Regional level
D	Female	Regional level
E	Male	Regional level

Source: Own work.

All participants are people managers and are being faced with challenges concerning leadership and employee engagement on a daily basis. They are all leading in an unbossed way for several years but have also had exposure to traditional leadership ideas. We believe they will provide useful insights into the thought processes of leaders, which can be subsequently applied to other leaders or companies.

4   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is primarily devoted to reflections on empirical research. It begins with an analysis of the interviews, followed by responses to 3 research questions and concluding

remarks. We shall attempt to establish a connection between the findings and the theoretical fundaments.

4.1 Analysis of interviews

4.1.1 Leaders' attitudes towards the concept of unbossing

In this section we answer the first research question: What are leaders' attitudes towards the concept of unbossing? With the first question we were interested in finding out what leaders understand by the concept of unbossing. All leaders had similar understanding, placing responsibility and accountability of each team member as the crucial components. "We are all adults, responsible for our tasks to be delivered. Everyone knows what kind of job they are performing and what should be the results of the job." (C), "My team has their own responsibilities and they work towards the target every month or every week." (D)

An unboss is there to provide support when asked. His responsibility is not to step in every time an issue arises, as it is expected from employees to be proactive in problem solving. "I am telling everyone: come to me if you have any issues, I am here to help you, but that is it. If you need anything, you need to speak up." (D), "It means some kind of self-awareness that your boss is not always the one who can solve the issues for you, but that you can come to him with a proposal or a solution." (A) This can also be connected with previously mentioned accountability and responsibility of each team member.

"I do not want anyone to feel that they are in the kindergarten, that I am checking and bossing on them." (C), "Based on their responsibility they are just completing the jobs without me constantly checking on them or making sure that they have done it." (B) In line with the unboss theory there is less micromanagement in place, until someone starts to abuse it. "In case that there is some issue and someone starts to abuse this concept, then you need to take action." (J)

With the second question, we asked about positive aspects of unbossing. Surprisingly, we received very different responses from all interviewees. Some pointed out accountability, responsibility and less time used for micromanagement, giving each individual more time to focus on their own work. "People do not feel controlled and have a bigger responsibility." (E), "I think it allows me to focus more on the things I can complete." (B), "If we all work and have our own little accountabilities, but then we put it together, we can actually do more work with less people, so be more efficient because we are focusing on our own sort of little projects." (D)

On one hand, this can also be connected with higher levels of freedom when designing your work. "You can kind of frame it more in a way that fits you" (E), "On one hand it gives you

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the freedom, but on the other hand it also gives you the responsibility to make your work happen." (B), "Unbossing as we have it right now definitely is very positive in a view of freedom that you have, so that you can work from either home or office or any environment in which you can make the work happen." (D)

On the other hand, it can also be connected with more relaxed intrapersonal relationships. "The unbossed concept gives you a bit more relaxed approach to how people treat each other." (A), "It gives you the freedom to reach out to people that are above, not only on your level, but also higher." (E)

Third question related to the negative aspects of unbossing, the most prevalent one being that it is very easy to abuse. "That the people can abuse it because they are not controlled by any mechanism on a daily basis" (B), "Of course, when people work from home, they do other things at home too, but if the job is done, I have no problem with that." (D), "But people can easily abuse it and say that they are working extra hours just to earn some extra days of vacation for example." (C), "I can see people even in my team or ex-people who used to be in my team that they were just not able to manage themselves that well, so they will be sort of procrastinating. They will be wasting the time." (D), "Sometimes they can also take advantage of the fact that nobody is bothering them or bossing them. If you leave someone alone and he is not used to unbossing culture, he may start to underperform and I have to step up, give him strong guidance and then see if his attitude and mindset will change." (A), "Unboss does not mean that because you work from anywhere you want, you can slack in work itself, you have to get the job done." (B) If people struggle with managing themselves or if they are just not interested, it is much easier to get away with it than in a traditional organisation. On one hand you receive more freedom but on the other it can cause additional workload and stress.

Interviewees shared some other examples of how people react to unbossing. "Some people might agree to it but actually it does not suit them or they figure out later that it does not suit them or they fully understand what they should be doing and still require some sort of a micromanagement." (D), "This depends greatly on the individuals you have in your team. The unbossing principle does not apply well to those individuals who are used to taking orders and who do not take their own initiative to get the work done." (C), "If your manager is super into it, you can have a completely great and awesome experience, but with another managers who is a bit, I do not know, classic and does not believe in these things, you can have a really bad experience." (E), "I have experience of individuals who like to take initiative and are motivated to get the work done and for those the unbossing principle plays well. But the unbossing principle is not positive for everyone." (B), "Some things will not be done because they were not communicated properly or we expected from someone to be self-initiative while he was waiting for the instructions." (A) It seems that one's personality has a big impact and that unbossing does not suit everyone.

Being a very new concept, it makes it also hard to explain it to people. "It is very tricky to explain this during the process of hiring." (D), "When I speak to people outside my organisation about it, they are just laughing and asking how does it even work? Do we even get anything done?" (A)

Last question targeted interviewees perception of the most important differences between an unbossed organisation compared to a traditional one. Surprisingly, most of them drew comparison from different aspects. "Learning environment is different and the standards for measurements of the performance are different. In my previous job we were supervised a lot and had to do a lot of reporting and I was always under the impression that I was not trusted. Here in our company, we build some trust to our colleagues." (A), "That people can get more specialized." (D), "The biggest difference is that in the end, people will feel more responsible for their job, because nobody is monitoring them on a daily basis and they have more freedom, but at the end they have more responsibility and more ownership of the tasks." (B), "It is more efficient with the headcount because you can have less people." (E) All of the above mentioned can be connected with the unboss theory and reflects what authors argue in the book.

A major difference is also that there are less rigid hierarchy structures, which the interviewees confirmed. "In an unbossed culture you can speak up if you see something and go directly to the problem solver or to the person who is in charge of that area. In a traditional corporate way, you should always climb the corporate ladder, but in this way, you can directly connect with someone 2-3 level higher and then bring up your message clearer." (E), " You have the responsibility, you have the accountability, you can contact anyone on any level. You know, they can go to 5 levels up. They can go to anyone really. If they think that the person will give them the information faster so they can do their job more efficiently, they should be able to contact them." (D), " I can say for myself that now, I can speak more openly and freely about different issues than compared with my previous job." (A) Employees feel safer and more empowered to speak up, as the fear from retribution has been removed.

4.1.2   Conditions that enable successful implementation of the unbossing concept

In this section we answer the second research question: Which are the conditions that enable successful implementation of the unbossing concept? In order for unbossing to work, employees need to be given unprecedented amounts of freedom. With the first question we wanted to learn the level of supervision employees are subjected to. As expected, there is almost no supervision on a daily basis, managers are not checking in for the purpose of micromanagement or to see if employees are actually doing the work. It is expected from employees to be proactive in case they need support, rather than manager supervising and stepping in when he feels it is needed. Team meetings are held for the purpose of connecting

to build team spirit and aligning, so each team member is aware of what his responsibilities are as well as those of his team members.

"We have regular catch-up with all the team members, not just regular 1-to-1's, but I make it clear that I am available to my team when they need me." (A), "I can say that the level of supervision is lower than in companies with the traditional approach, I do not even see a point for supervision if we discuss all the tasks beforehand and everybody knows what to do and I make sure that the workload is divided equally among them." (A), "We have meetings where we open the discussion freely and usually I am always there for the team and to help and support them and to push forward when it is needed." (B), "We have regular catch-ups usually on Mondays and Fridays, but then if we need to connect through Teams we do it. But it is more about connecting, aligning and updating on the work and not supervising." (D), "They can contact me, but I will not be like really sort of checking on them one by one.", "We have teams chat, so I always try to connect with the whole team every single morning, so you know we exchange GIFs (Graphics Interchange Format), we say what the weather is like etc. I try to do this every morning so we know who is in, who checks in and keep up the team spirit that I am there." (E), "I do, but I do more monitoring than supervising, for example, I am frequently asking them if there is something I can do for the team to make them feel more comfortable. We have a weekly meetings, but I am not micromanaging my team." (C), "I have a manager and he reports to a certain person, so yes, there is a supervision. But I see it in a sense that we work more as peers." (D)

All interviewees also hold regulars 1-to-1's with each team member. The purpose of those meetings is to talk solely about the individuals and their development. "I obviously have 1-to-1's every month, with each of them. So, with each of them we have half an hour where we just discuss them, nothing else." (D), " On 1-to-1's, we discuss development, whatever they want to be talking about." (C)

In the second question we asked leaders how they evaluate their teams' proactiveness and accountability. This question prompted a need for deeper reflection among several interviewees. Some of them also had no trouble admitting they themselves struggle with it. " That's tricky and very difficult within unboss culture." (B), " I have issues with accountability and with a few people in my team. I struggle with them and this has always been sort of my hardship." (D)

Compared to a regular 9 to 5 job, unboss focuses more on getting the work done instead of just filling in the hours. "If there is nothing to do and the tickets are done, go out at 2 PM, but if there is work to do please stay and finish it." (C), " For example, on Friday at 1 PM, all the work was done, reports and tickets were done, so I told my ladies to go out as it was a nice sunny day." (E)

As we said before this approach does not suit everyone, as historically we were used to being micromanaged to some extent. If we draw a comparison for example to the educational system, there is always someone checking on you, making sure you have done what you needed to. Making this shift in the mindset is very complicated. "If they really can take the accountability and they have the responsibility and they know how it works, then half of the job for them is done because under the current setup they will be thriving. But if not, then I think it is not a good fit for them and they will be struggling personally." (B), "Only some people can do that. Some still sort of expect that you will be checking on them and fill in the gaps and help them and that is fine. And we always say we have our Teams chats, they can contact me or the team lead, but if it is happening too many times, it is sort of a signal that maybe they are not as open minded and unbossed as they should be." (D), "Proactiveness, that is when an individual comes to me with a solution and not just a problem, is quite an interesting approach and also the willingness to learn something new, not to be afraid of challenges, that he is willing to accept even new responsibilities and also to help other team members, this gives me a sign that the individual is progressing in the right direction." (A)

It was also pointed out how hard it is to find the right people when interviewing a potential new hire. We also addressed this in the section above, as unboss is still very unknown, people struggle with understanding how it works. "We are trying to really make specific connectors with this accountability and sort of how they work in unboss way and really test it throughout the interviews. I even thought about putting one middle step into the process and really just test if the people are the right type for us." (D) In this set up managers simply do not have enough time to micromanage each team member.

In the third question we asked leaders how they create clarity in their teams. Many of them emphasise the importance of having a group chat, where not only the leader can provide support, but also other team members can. "I have created group chats for all countries I manage and people are discussing there." (D), "I try to get them to work together, to help each other more and not just wait for me and I am trying to build a team spirit overall." (C), "If I know the answer, I am trying to provide the clarity on things and plus we have a group on Teams and whenever I have any update, whenever I learn something new, I post it on Teams, maybe it is not important to me, but can be important to somebody else in my team." (B) Since all team leaders are based in different locations all around the world, having a communications channel is extremely important. Connecting the whole team and making them support each other is also beneficial as not everyone will be working at the same time. Sometimes, the team leader is not the only one who can support or advise and if the team members can work together, less time will be lost in waiting for a reply. Clarity does not always come from a formal setting. "Sometimes informal chats are quite important." (A)

Regarding transparency and sharing information, participants mentioned: "If we hide information from them, so we do not tell them what is coming in the future projects, all the

work, then it might just not make sense and then it is just impacting the whole structure and what we are trying to do." (E), "I am super transparent. You know, whatever I think I usually tell them. I mean not 100% but like a good 90%. They know about it and I just feel that if we all have the same information, then they will maybe understand the steps we are trying to implement because it will make sense." (D) Being transparent and sharing information, hence removing the uncertainties is shown to be an important factor. This creates a more trustful and relaxed environment, which can be beneficial for overall performance.

Creating clarity does not only flow in one direction, as everyone should take an active role in this process. "I even asked them, on the other hand, like, what would they want from me because I am just guessing." (A), "First I try to collect thoughts of all my team members and if they are silent on a joint meeting, I reflect on it and ask them about it on our 1-to-1 meetings. Then I ask how I can assist them and I usually count on that they will give me feedback and also I give them feedback." (B), "By supporting my team, they can always come to me by saying: can you do this, can you do that." (E) In an unbossed organisation, the leaders take part in the process and work is shared among everyone.

With the fourth question we explored how leaders serve their teams. We discovered that each leader has a slightly different approach, however we can draw some parallels, the most common one being a proactive approach. "I am proactive and I am trying to be a leader for them rather than giving them tasks. So anytime when I have my e-mails finished, I go to my team and ask them if I can help with something." (C), "Having a proactive approach towards the goals or problems." (E), "I asked them what they expect from me." (A)

Second approach that was hightlighted was being available for the team, when they need it. "I have a lot of activities on my daily schedules, but whenever somebody from my team needs me, I try to be there for them in that particular moment." (B), "It is important to me to be there for my team because I know how much stress is puts on me when I can not reach my leader and I need him to decide how to move forward." (A)

With the fifth question we aimed to identify the most important factors that contribute to successful implementation of the unbossing concept. As expected, everyone had a different perspective. "Trust.", "Teamwork.", "Shifting from expertise to leadership.", "Hiring, choosing the people with the right mindset.", "Responsibility and team spirit.", "Proactiveness", " Open relationships with my colleagues."

Some participants agreed that a leader should shift from expertise to leadership while supporting the team when needed. "Having a supporting leader whom you can address with issues and who gives you guidance when needed." (E), "I think the most important thing the leader needs to understand is that he should be a leader and not only an operational supervisor." (B)

Employees should be proactive. This can also be improved by working closely with your colleagues and developing personal relationships. "When I find a person in my team who is not proactive, I tell them to come to the office and work together with their colleagues. I see that things start to improve, that they became more responsible and more attached to their colleagues." (C)

Hiring was also identified as one of the most important factors. "Sometimes when we hire the people or when they have the on-boarding, the unboss concept is actually not explained to them." (D), "Quite often people get confused and maybe frustrated because they are used to from their previous companies that there is someone who keeps checking on them and they feel that it is easier than this." (B)

The sixth and last question of this section focused on potential challenges managers face when leading in an unbossed way. Most of them stated that they welcome and appreciate this concept. However, because we are all unique individuals in different developmental stages and organisational levels, the answers among them slightly differ.

Participants like leading in an unbossed organisation. "I like to lead people in this unbossed way and if anybody would tell me to lead morning and afternoon stand-ups, I would not go for it, I really hate this." (C), "I do not mind the unboss and I quite welcome it." (D), "You have the freedom to lead how you feel fit and that can be a great advantage to some that have great leadership skills and a really big disadvantage to others that have not developed those skills on their own." (E)

"The only struggle for me would be when people would abuse this concept. For example, if I say we will all come to the office on Monday to have a meeting, they could say no." (C), "Working with international, globally based teams, when you have people in so many countries and also unbossed means that you are losing that team spirit or team connection and it is very hard to build it up because technically they do not need to go to the office. They are based in different locations. You do not really need to check with them all the time. They do not have anyone who would be regularly checking on them. Quite often I see people just being yellow, away from Teams. I mean, they could be working on something, but they also might not." (D)

"Well, the struggles are all connected with differences among team members. In my team, I soon recognized the individuals who are thriving under this concept and also the ones who will use it to their advantage and their agenda." (D), "Everyone reacts to this concept differently and you need to be very creative in finding different approaches that work for different personalities." (B), " It is still a challenge for some members, but if you have great people in the team, the performance will come." (A)

We can conclude this section by emphasizing the importance of good implementation, which was brought up also by our interviewees. "I think implementation is super important." (E), "It is all about implementation." (D)

4.1.3   Job autonomy in relation to employee engagement

In this section we answer the third research question: What are the consequences of job autonomy for employee engagement? With the first question, we asked interviewees if they are familiar with the concepts of job autonomy and employee engagement, surprisingly all said no. When we told them the definitions, a moderate knowledge of both concepts could be detected.

We already mentioned before that working hours in an unbossed organisation are structured in a way that gives each employee more flexibility. With the second question, we asked leaders how are working hours structured in their teams. "Mainly between 9 AM and 3 PM we are all online, the rest is up to each individual." (B), "Generally they work the main office hours, but each country has some specifics." (E), "Based on our Choice with Responsibility approach we have two models: each employee can decide for himself how and when he would like to work, but there is also a more traditional option where we normally work from 8 AM to 4 PM." (A), "When there is a lot of work, of course, you spend more time, but when it is less then you are less online. But more or less everybody knows from 9 AM until 5-6 PM you should be available." (E) Given the nature of the work, of course, there are some standard "office hours", where people are expected to be available but there is far more flexibility possible.

"If you have to jump out or whatever, you do. Overall we have the freedom and what is important is the outcome of our work." (D), "If they need to go to a doctor or somewhere else, they tend to send a Teams message to say that, yes, I am going to be out." (B), "If I know that a person always finishes their work, I do not care if they need to jump out or whatever. I know the work will be done and that is all that matters, they do not need to inform me every time." (A) As intended, each employee has greater scheduling freedom to accommodate their own personal needs.

With the third question, we aimed to determine the level of autonomy employees possess when completing day-to-day tasks. "To be honest, they have full freedom. If the tickets are cleared, if there is no escalation, they have full freedom." (C), "We have a lot of autonomy. We are also all located in different countries. We can choose where to work from, how to work, just the content is super important and as long as you do the content right, everything else does not matter." (B), "I would say that a lot. I do not need to be involved in every step of the way, but when it comes to approving, I would like to know and to have this information. I give my team members space and I trust them." (A), "I guess quite a bit. When

people have that accountability, they will take the responsibility for that process and they will try to smoothen it out, streamline it, make it more efficient, so they do not waste the time. And as each of us sees it in a different way, it is always going to slightly change so they have a free hand if they want to." (D) It is essential to note that high levels of job autonomy can be implemented to a limited degree. "Obviously, it is so only up to a certain point because we have some internal controls that have to be done and they have to be done in a certain way." (E)

To accurately analyse the impact of unboss on employee engagement, we must measure it. In the previous chapter, we discussed different methods that can be used. With the fourth question of this section we asked leaders if they mesure employee engagement and if yes, how? We found that engagement is not actually quantified but is rather perceived through the eyes of each leader, mostly through team meetings and 1-to-1's, making it very subjective.

"I see that there are different levels of engagement of people on my team. There is one person who does not want to be promoted, just wants to have a secure job and do nothing extra. And then I have another person on the team who is proactive and helps others, does extra tasks and wants to be promoted early, so I can see different levels of engagement." (B), "Yes, I mean, there are definitely differences between how people appear to be engaged because I have one or two team members who are the quieter types, but it does not mean that they are not engaged, but maybe it is not seen publicly because they do things on the background a lot. Some people are really active and some are not, but it does not mean that maybe the level of engagement is not the same." (D)

"I think it definitely comes across. Now, how very important that is, it is hard to judge. The most important aspect is just to sit down and discuss. Anything measured in buzz and then consolidated somewhere I think is not the best approach. I think the most important thing is just to sit down and discuss." (E)

"I get the information about individual employee engagement from our team meetings and from 1-to-1 meetings. Someone who wishes to develop himself and go an extra mile in his work usually comes to me on 1-to-1 meetings. Some come with the proposals on our team meetings, some are more likely to be silent, but it does not mean that they are not working well. But at the end of the day, it is important that each member of the team does not stand still, but that he develops. It is good that he knows if he has some free time still before I come to him, if he comes to me and tells me I have done this and this and I still have time to do this and that, well, that is a big plus for him. Based on this I can estimate very quickly who of the team members is the one who strives to do an extra mile every day and who just does what is required from him and stops there." (A), "We definitely always discuss it on 1-to-1 meetings, when we do the development plans and when we discuss what happened, if they need help or how they feel. I always encourage them to share their opinion. So, I do not

have like a measure as such, but obviously knowing my teams means that I also know how engaged they are and how much engaged they want to be. And with that I work on." (D)

The fifth question investigated the effects of implementing Choice with Responsibility and employee engagement. To our great astonishment, everyone stated that they do not perceive any increased value. "No, but I can say that when we were at the office, people were more talkative and more engaged, the spirit was different, but this is normal. If we will continue with this home office, people will lose team spirit in general and there will be less personal engagement." (B), "From team perspective, I see more of a negative impact than positive." (A), " No, I do not think so, to be honest." (E), "The Choice with Responsibility is damaging the employee engagement, because people do not have friends at work anymore, you have your personal life and that is it." (C)

"Not everyone is comfortable with that because some people struggle with self-leading themselves because Choice with Responsibility means you are accountable. You are responsible. You choose where you work, just make sure you follow the deadlines, you are accountable for the work you have, you have to follow it up with the team, but do not necessarily need to work with the team that much. From the team's perspective I see the situation worsening with Choice with Responsibility because we are not encouraging the people to spend time together with colleagues, to go to work, we are just encouraging them to plan their life however they want to." (D), "Some react differently than others, so I think it is a double-edged sword. Some people like to have more structure, others like to have more freedom, so you can never really fit." (E), "I think it suited some people and it made them happier and allowed working parents to be more flexible. But it again depends on the type of the person and how they deal with it." (B)

"We are still working within a certain timeframe as before, but now with COVID-19 and then the Choice with Responsibility they are available longer. Before we had to come to the office and we left our computers here after work, but now we take them home and we are practically available 24/7. This is causing also to me a lot of frustrations as some people expect that now you will check your e-mails also at 10 PM and some people even do it. This makes me think, do we really need to do this?" (A)

"What you can do is give people the opportunity to have the freedom, to take the freedom and then those who want, will take it and those who do not feel, you know, will choose the other way." (A), "I think what really is important is that you give this opportunity of choice to an individual so he can, to certain extent, impact the work he does and how he does it so it fits him better." (C)

Finally, we sought to determine if unbossing contributed in any manner to increased employee engagement and retention. Here, we received a variety of opinions; however, as

we discovered in our research, this greatly relies on the individual and does not work for everyone.

"I think it has definitely an impact on the aspect of working from wherever, just as long as the work is done, it has a very big impact on employee retention and getting people in. I think that gives you the freedom to enjoy also your free time a bit more efficiently." (E), "Yes and no. It depends again on every individual. For the majority of people, I would say yes. As for myself, it is a yes." (A), "I think yes, but it depends again on different factors." (E), "Overall, I think it is a positive thing for a company, that people have their freedom and that they are the bosses of their time." (B), "I would not say that it is. I would not say that it is adding up to a higher retention and more of an engagement." (C), "I think it is encouraging it in its own true words but depending on the people who are involved. Some might take the best out of it and they might thrive and some will struggle with that and it will be worse situation than if we just micromanaged them. It depends a lot on the individual and not so much on the concept itself." (D)

"I think that this concept is still evolving and will become more and more important, especially because we are a multicultural company and in time, this will be a new reality. This change to unbossing was done to bring some progress, that the employee engagement will bring a better performance for the company." (A)

This section provided as with a lot of key point to reflect on. Due to the fact that everyone of us is unique, the strategy known as "one size fits all" is not always effective. As was mentioned before, this is a fairly new concept that is still in the process of development and calls for a significant paradigm change. This comes more easily to some people than it does to others.

4.2   Discussion

With this research we aimed to answer three key research questions. We wanted to find out what leaders' perceptions of the concept of unbossing are, as well as identify the key components that enable a successful implementation of his concept and determine whether unbossing has an impact on work engagement. We summarize our most important finings in the Table 7.

According to our research, each team member in an unbossed organisation should feel responsible and accountable for their tasks as well as to colleagues. For unbossing to be effective, employees must be granted unprecedented amounts of freedom. There is minimal oversight on a daily basis, also because in this configuration, supervisors just lack the time to micromanage each team member. Employees are encouraged to be proactive if they require assistance, rather than the management supervising and intervening. This implies a degree of self-awareness that your supervisor cannot always solve your problems. In

accordance with the unboss theory, there is less micromanagement in place, unless it is abused. We would argue that a key component is also trust. When you are not regularly checking on people and they all work from home or even different countries, trust is essential.

Besides already mentioned responsibility and accountability, freedom in designing your own work was confirmed as one of the main positive aspects of unbossing. This applies not just to the time and location of your job, but also to your ability to contact anyone within the organisation if you see it necessary. The unbossed notion allows for a more laid-back approach to how people interact with one another. However, on one hand, unbossing gives you more freedom, but on the other, it might increase burden or cause additional stress. Unboss does not imply that you may slump on the job simply because you can work from anyplace you choose and the hours are flexible. At least one interviewee stated for nearly every question that a great deal depends on the individual. We will discuss this aspect more in depth later on in this section.

The interviewees were asked to identify the primary distinctions between working in an unbossed organisation compared to a traditional one. As expected, unbossed employees have greater flexibility, but also greater accountability and task ownership. Fear of retaliation has been lifted, making them feel safer and more empowered to speak up. Less rigid hierarchical systems exist, as indicated by the respondents. These findings are consistent with the theoretical starting point.

Unlike a typical 9-to-5 job, unboss focuses more on getting the work done rather than simply filling the hours. We already mentioned before that working hours in an unbossed organisation are structured in a way that gives each employee more flexibility. As intended, each employee has greater scheduling freedom to accommodate their own personal needs. Approaches that are proactive, in which a person approaches the leader with a solution rather than a problem, are particularly intriguing.

Many emphasised the necessity of having a group chat in which everyone may offer support or advice, not just the leader. The importance of being open and sharing information is demonstrated. This results in a more trustworthy and calmer environment, which can be advantageous to overall performance. In an unbossed organisation, the leaders participate in the process and everyone shares the workload. We found that every leader has a slightly different strategy, but there are certain commonalities, the most prevalent being a proactive attitude.

We made an intriguing discovery that all female participants placed a high value on receiving feedback from their teams. They inquire about their expectations and how they may best provide support. We did not receive similar response from male participants, whose responses were slightly more traditional paradigm oriented. Unfortunately, our sample size

was too small to make any solid conclusions, but we believe it is still significant to highlight it because it can serve as a starting point for a separate study.

During our interviews we often heard that being successful in an unbossed environment highly depends on the type of person you are and how you cope with these newfound levels of freedom, as it is not suitable for everyone. Unlike Taylorism, which advoceted hiring the right people based on their hard skills, unbossing puts more emphsys on hirirng people with the right soft skills. The unbossing approach does not work well for those who are accustomed to accepting directions and do not take initiative to complete their work, causing people to get perplexed or possibly frustrated. Some tasks will not be completed because they were not effectively conveyed or because it is expected from someone to be proactive while they awaited instructions. Historically, we were accustomed to a degree of micromanagement. If we compare it to the school system, there is always someone checking on you to ensure that you have completed the necessary tasks. Making this mental change is quite difficult. It was also mentioned how challenging it is to identify suitable candidates during the hiring process. Unboss is still relatively unknown, making it tough to describe and difficult for people to comprehend how it works.

We also previously mentioned that it can be easy to exploit, since theoretically you do not need to go to the office, you can work from anywhere, at almost any time. Due to the nature of the work, some regular office hours may still apply, although they can be modified according to the needs and preferences of each employee. This leads us back to accountability and responsibility, making it even more vital to select the right people.

When we asked interviewees if they are familiar with the concepts of job autonomy and employee engagement all said no. Given the fact that usually unboss is implemented to increase organisational performance through higher employee engagement this comes as a great surprise.

According to our research, we cannot confirm that allowing employees to choose when and where they work has a positive influence on employee engagement. Again, we can argue that this is very dependent on the individual, but from a team perspective, there are fewer workplace connections and less general team spirit. Unboss theory is said to increase teamwork but according to our research we cannot confirm that. People appear to be developing more as individuals rather than a collective. Nonetheless, we still believe it is crucial to provide individuals with the opportunity for choice so that they can influence the work they perform and how they perform it, so that it better suits them.

Our research proved that unbossing has a positive effect on egagement for those employees who are able to self-regulate, are proactive, have the accountability and responsibility to get the job done and value the additional freedom and flexibility over micromanagement. Those individuals will thrive in an unbossed organisation. On the other hand, people who prefer to

be directed, who are not particularly proactive and do not feel accountable and responsible for their work will struggle. These individuals will also impose additional stress and burden on their superiors and as well as other team members. We summarize our most important finings in the table below.

Table 7: Summary of Analysis

Research question	Main findings
RQ1	Leaders' welcome unbossing and are familiar with the concept.
	Positive aspect of unbossing: more freedom and flexibility.
	Positive aspect of unbossing: more relaxed intrapersonal relationships.
	Negative aspect of unbossing: it is easy to abuse.
	Negative aspect of unbossing: it is very dependant on one's personality and it does not suit everyone.
RQ2	Employees should have more freedom and flexibility.
	Employees should feel responsible and accountable.
	No micromanagement should be in place.
	Rigid hierarchical structures should be abolished.
	Hiring the right people is essential.
RQ3	Leaders are not familiar with the concepts of job autonomy and employee engagement.
	Unbossing benefits employees who can self-regulate, are proactive, and value freedom and flexibility over micromanagement.
	Some people struggle under this setup.
	Leaders' notice a decline in team spirit.

Source: Own work.

4.3   Recommendations for organisations

Implementation of unbossing requires a significant mindset shift and represents a big change, which can be stressful for some. We would advise organisations to start slow but be consistent over a longer period of time. We believe now is a great time to start as the COVID-19 pandemic already proved us it is possible. Office based employees have also already experienced higher levels of freedom which should make this change easier. Below recommendations can be used by organisations who wish to implement unbossing or to those

who are already unbossed but wish to improve the current situation. During the implementation itself, organisations should pay attention that it is supported by positive communication and a motivational note.

Organisations can start by determining their objectives as social tasks. We suggest that employees are involved in this task, leadership could, for example, collect ideas and later on present to the employees. Organisations should also start leveraging online social technologies. This is a simple, symbolic first step that demonstrates management's intention to foster collaboration and extract additional value from its networks.

Organisations should work towards abolishing traditional hierarchical structures. Everyone should be able to reach out to anyone if there is a need for that. Communication should no longer flow only from top to bottom but in all directions. They need to start fostering an environment where mistakes are accepted and taken as a learning lesson. Here they can follow the example from the start-up world and their so called "fuckup nights" where participants candidly discuss their (business) failures. Consequently, making them a novel approach to cope with failure and take it as a learning opportunity. If this will start at the top, soon employees' fear of retaliation will be lifted and they will start expressing themselves more openly.

If organisations truly wish for unbossing to work, they must allow their employees an unprecedented amount of freedom and flexibility, meaning employees need to be given the choice to work from home or other acceptable locations at any given time. Working hours should become more flexible as well.

Lastly, but in our opinion maybe the most important, is choosing the right people. We have mentioned several times that success of unbossing is greatly dependant on each individual and their characteristics. Unboss is hard to comprehend until you experience it. Nonetheless, explaining this notion in detail during the interview process, as well as onboarding is crucial and should be prioritised. As suggested by one of our interviewees, an additional step should be in place during the hiring process, where accountability, responsibility and how individuals perform when not receiving detailed instructions would be tested. When unbossed, also the hiring process needs to change.

Especially during probation period open communication is key. Expectations from both sides need to be clearly expressed, therefore we advise that at least during this time 1-to-1's are more frequent. We also welcome Zappos' idea for a financial compensation after probation period if discovered that the organisation and the individual are not a good fit. We believe this is a small cost compared to losses an organisation can suffer if an employee is highly disengaged. These individuals can cause managers as well as colleagues additional burden and stress. We would also encourage organisation to prepare online courses that

would help new joiners as well as existing employees to better understand this concept. Here, mentors can help as well.

Our research shows a decline in team spirit therefore we suggest leaders to keep a close eye on intrapersonal relationships in their teams. We urge them to act as soon as they start noticing changes and encourage employees to still maintain close relationships. If they work virtually, informal meetings such as virtual coffees can help. If possible, also organise meetings in person.

It is important to note that unbossing cannot be implemented in all professions and departments to the same degree. For example, a doctor cannot work whenever he wants and he cannot operate from wherever he wants. Certain professions still need to follow predetermined procedures. However, hospitals can determine their objectives as social tasks, they can grant more flexibility to certain departments, they can unboss communications, abolish traditional hierarchical structures and more. These organisations can also unboss other functions, such as procurement, marketing and others, that we have not explored in this thesis.

4.4   Limitations

This sub-section focuses on the limitations that we observed during the preparation stages and analysis of interviews. By highlighting the limits, we can better comprehend the existing state and future research in this field.

We notice the limitations for a more in-depth and broader research mainly in the limitations of the literature search. Due to the topic's novelty, the quantity of articles on this subject is limited. Additionally, there are few examples of this concept being implemented in corporate world.

The quantity of participants also represents a limitation. The sample is rather small and focuses on the perspectives of leaders. It would be interesting to investigate the perspectives of subordinates in order to have a clearer understanding. Another limitation is that all participants were from the same organisation. We tried to offset this by choosing individuals from different departments and countries.

Limitations in obtaining high-quality answers also arise from interviewees lack of knowledge of the concepts of employee engagement and job autonomy. They were not previously familiar with the theoretical framework behind those two notions; as a result, the in-depth treatment of the concepts and the relationship with practise were made more challenging.

The personal involvement of the researcher and the researcher's personal attitude towards the concept of unbossing may also make it challenging to objectively evaluate the data, as emotions can significantly blur the actual situation during interviews, as well during the analysis (Holland, 2007). Someone who is very enthusiastic about the topic can overlook the real picture and the negative effects or vice versa. On the other hand, someone who is quite unfamiliar with the topic may see the topic with more or less enthusiasm due to the personal involvement of the researcher.

CONCLUSIONS

Employees not being engaged has been a challenge for both business as well as consulting companies for decades. The need for change has only been more evident and accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses and their leadership need to shift their thinking to keep up with the ever-evolving world around them. Many employees nowadays expect more from their jobs than just a monthly income. They seek a community of colleagues who share their interests and who make them feel valued, heard and able to make a difference. Through our research we connect academic research on engagement, motivation, job redesign and job autonomy with a popular science book. Both work engagement and unbossing are said to improve organisational performance; consequently, we intended to evaluate whether unbossing can affect engagement.

Through our research we are answering three main research questions. Leaders are familiar with the concept of unbossing and welcome it. An unbossed environment have more freedom and flexibility. Unbossing also allows for more relaxed intrapersonal relationships. One of the disadvantages of this concept is that it is easier to abuse since there is no micromanagement. This way of working does not suit everyone, making it very dependant on one's personal characteristics.

For unbossing to be successfully implemented, organisations should start by giving employees more freedom and flexibility in designing their own work. Unbossed employees should feel responsible and accountable for their work, both to themselves as well as to their colleagues. They need to act proactively rather than wait for instructions. Companies should aim to abolish rigid hierarchical structures, making it easy for employees to reach out to people several levels above them. What is crucial is choosing the right people. We cannot emphasise this more.

Unbossing benefits employees who can self-regulate, are proactive and value freedom and flexibility over micromanagement. On the other hand, some can struggle. Under this setup managers simply do not have enough time to check on each team member. We have come to the conclusion that it is important to give employees the option to choose. However, it is needed to devote more importance to hiring the right people and fostering team spirit.

We hope more organisations will start implementing this concept. Here we do not mean just business, as we believe responsibility and accountability should be instilled from youth. We agree with Kolind & Bøtter (2012) in their revolutionary thinking that unbossing should start in schools. If people can posses those two characteristics, half of the job for them is done and only then we will be able to see the true power that this concept has in transforming our community. We are excited to see what the future holds and how this concept will evolve.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Povzetek (Summary in Slovene language)

V tem magistrskem delu z naslovom Koncept nešefovsta in vpliv na zavzetost zaposlenih skušamo knjigo z angleškim naslovom Unboss, ki ni prevedena v slovenščino, povezati z akademskimi raziskavami, da bi ocenili, ali njena implementacija v korporativnem okolju prinaša pričakovane učinke. Verjamemo, da je nešefovstvo z vidika, ki smo ga raziskovali, kombinacija ključnih elementov teorije samoodločanja, avtonomije dela in preoblikovanja delovnega mesta. Zavzetost zaposlenih in nešefovstvo naj bi izboljšala organizacijsko uspešnost; posledično ocenjujemo, ali lahko nešefovstvo vpliva na zavzetost zaposlenih. Ker smo želeli od vodilnih ljudi pridobiti bolj poglobljen pogled na to temo, smo se odločili, da intervjuje izvajamo v polstrukturirani obliki.

Ugotavljamo, da vodje poznajo koncept nešefovsta in ga pozdravljajo. Nešefovsko okolje nudi zaposlenim več svobode in prilagodljivosti. Nešefovstvo omogoča tudi bolj sproščene medosebne odnose. Ena od slabosti tega koncepta je, da ga je lažje zlorabiti, saj ni mikromenedžiranja. Tak način dela ne ustreza vsakomur, zato je zelo odvisen od posameznikovih osebnih lastnosti.

Za uspešno izvajanje nešefovstva bi morale organizacije zaposlenim omogočiti več svobode in prožnosti pri oblikovanju lastnega dela. Nešefovski zaposleni bi se morali čutiti odgovori za svoje delo, tako do sebe kot do svojih sodelavcev. Delovati bi morali proaktivno, namesto da čakajo na navodila. Podjetja bi si morala prizadevati za odpravo toge hierarhične strukture, ki bi zaposlenim olajšala stik z ljudmi, ki so več ravni nad njimi. Ključnega pomena je, da podjetja izberejo prave ljudi.

Nešefovstvo koristi zaposlenim, ki se lahko samoregulirajo, so proaktivni in cenijo svobodo in prilagodljivost pred mikromenedžiranjem. Na drugi strani pa se določeni zaposleni težko soočajo s tem konceptom. Prišli smo do zaključka, da je pomembno zaposlenim omogočiti možnost izbire. Vendar pa je potrebno več pozornosti nameniti zaposlovanju pravih ljudi in spodbujanju timskega duha.

Appendix 2: Gallup's Q^{12}

Q01. I know what is expected of me at work.

Q02. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.

Q03. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.

Q04. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.

Q05. My supervisor or someone at work seems to care about me as a person.

Q06. There is someone at work who encourages my development.

Q07. At work my opinions seem to count.

Q08. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.

Q09. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.

Q10. I have a best friend at work.

Q11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.

Q12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

Appendix 3: Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES)

Vigour

1. When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.
2. At my work, I feel bursting with energy.
3. At my work I always persevere, even when things do not go well.
4. I can continue working for very long periods at a time.
5. At my job, I am very resilient, mentally.
6. At my job I feel strong and vigorous.

Dedication

1. To me, my job is challenging.
2. My job inspires me.
3. I am enthusiastic about my job.
4. I am proud on the work that I do.
5. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.

Absorption

1. When I am working, I forget everything else around me.
2. Time flies when I am working.
3. I get carried away when I am working.
4. It is difficult to detach myself from my job.
5. I am immersed in my work.
6. I feel happy when I am working intensely.

Appendix 4: Employee Engagement Scale (EES)

Cognitive engagement

1. I am really focused when I am working.
2. I concentrate on my job when I am at work.
3. I give my job responsibility a lot of attention.
4. At work, I am focused on my job.

Emotional engagement

1. Working at my current organization has a great deal of personal meaning to me.
2. I feel a strong sense of belonging to my job.
3. I believe in the mission and purpose of my company.
4. I care about the future of my company.

Behavioural engagement

1. I really push myself to work beyond what is expected of me.
2. I am willing to put in extra effort without being asked.
3. I often go above what is expected of me to help my team be successful.
4. I work harder that expected to help my company be successful.

Appendix 5: Interview questions

- What do you understand by the concept of unbossing? What does is mean to you?
- In your opinion, what are the positive aspects of unbossing?
- In your opinion, what are the negative aspects of unbossing?
- Comparing with the traditional organizational structures, where do you see the most important differences?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

- Do you supervise your team in any way? How?
- How do you evaluate your team's proactiveness and accountability?
- How do you, as a leader, create clarity?
- How do you, as a leader, serve your team?
- In your opinion, what are the most important factors that contribute to successful implementation of the unbossing concept?
- What are the struggles you are facing when leading in an unbossed way?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

- Are you familiar with the concepts of job autonomy and employee engagement?
- How are working hours/schedule structured in your team?
- How much autonomy does your team have when performing day to day activities?
- Do you measure employee engagement? How?
- Did you notice any changes in employee engagement after introducing choice with responsibility?
- In your opinion, does unbossing contribute to higher employee engagement and employee retention?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 6: Interview protocol

All interviews were conducted in a similar manner. They took place in a virtual environment, as participants are based in different countries. On average, one interview lasted approximately an hour. As said before, questions were divided into 3 segments and after each segment they were also given the opportunity to add anything they might have overlooked but believed was crucial to provide. In this way they had the option to reflect and express their opinions more freely.

Interviews began with a brief introduction to the subject, followed by an explanation of the interviewer's position in the process and the course of the interview. Unbossing was a notion that all participants were familiar with, although employee engagement and work autonomy were less well understood. After giving them the definitions, it became apparent that they had a basic understanding of the subject.

The first segment explores leaders' perspectives on the concept of unbossing. This is a great approach to make the interviewees feel more at ease by utilising a familiar topic. In this phase, they are invited to comment on their opinions regarding this subject, highlighting both its positive and negative elements. With this approach, we hope to introduce them to the issue and stimulate their thinking, which will be necessary for the remainder of the interview. This prepares them for more complex and focused questions later on, where it will also be necessary to think about the connections between causes and consequences.

In the second segment we focus more on the conditions that enable successful implementation of the unbossing concept. We are curious to learn how much supervision employees receive on a daily basis and how they determine which tasks are their own and which belong to their teammates. In an unbossed environment, proactiveness and accountability are highly valued. Since this idea has not been used for a while, we would like to learn more about the challenges that leaders encounter when exercising unbossed leadership.

In the third segment, we focused more on how unbossing, job autonomy and employee engagement are interconnected. People think that giving employees more freedom on the job makes them more engaged but what is the actual impact once also unbossing is introduced. We are interested in finding out how much autonomy employees actually have and if this has any effect on how engaged they are. Employee engagement also needs to be monitored in order to draw some specific conclusions. Only then, adjustments can be implemented.

The objective of analysing all 3 sets of responses is to generate suggestions for businesses. In addition, we aim to use the study to determine the current state of the organisation, the manager's perspective and the most crucial variables for future implementation and

management success. The interview format is included in the appendix of this master's thesis.

Appendix 7: Transcript of one interview

RQ1: What are leaders' attitudes towards the concept of unbossing?

- What do you understand by the concept of unbossing? What does is mean to you?

It means some kind of self-awareness that your boss is not always the one who can solve the issues for you but that you can come to him with a proposal or a solution.

- In your opinion, what are the positive aspects of unbossing?

First positive thing in unbossing principle is that you can build a relationship of trust. Being a boss to a team of people is usually connected with some negative aspects, but under unbossing principle a boss can become a leader that a team needs, a leader who gives them guidance and not just orders and who can help them to develop and grow. And by doing this the self-confidence of the team grows and they start to feel good about their work. I know from my own experiences that when others stopped asking me questions about my work, I knew I was doing my job well.

- In your opinion, what are the negative aspects of unbossing?

This depends greatly on the individuals you have in your team. The unbossing principle does not apply well to those individuals who are used to taking orders and who do not take their own initiative to get the work done, sometimes they can also take advantage of the fact that nobody is bothering them or bossing them. If you leave someone alone and he is not used to unbossing culture, he may start to underperform and I have to step up, give him strong guidance and then see if his attitude and mindset will change.

The negative aspects are that some things will not be done because they were not communicated properly or we expected from someone to be self-initiative while he was waiting for the instructions.

Of course, I also have experience of individuals who like to take initiative and are motivated to get the work done and for those the unbossing principle plays well. But the unbossing principle is not positive for everyone. Sometimes I think that in general the younger generations are more open to this principle, but of course at the end it depends on each and every individual how he reacts on this. For Slovenia, this principle is still relatively new and out of the box.

When I speak to people outside my organisation about it, they are just laughing and asking how does it even work? Do we even get anything done? It really depends on each individual how it works. But for myself, this works well, if I need the support, I can get it, otherwise I can work without someone always holding my hand and giving me instructions, I would

then get used to it and always count on that. But I think you need to have your own initiative to develop more and the unboss culture is giving that opportunity and in a few years, it will grow. You need self-initiative to develop more and the unbossing culture is giving us this opportunity.

- Comparing with the traditional organizational structures, where do you see the most important differences?

I would say that the learning environment is different and the standards of the measurements of the performance are different. In my previous job we were supervised a lot and had to do a lot of reporting and I was always under the impression that I was not trusted.

Here in our company, we build some trust to our colleagues. However, in the companies where the unbossing principle is not used, the bosses are still very much engaged into supervising what exactly are their employees doing during the working hours and how much time they spend doing different tasks. In our company I count on that that everybody is motivated to do his job well, that he gets the help when he needs it, but there is no weekly and monthly reporting involved and also not the steps which were used to come to the final result. We simply focus on that that the work is done.

- Is there anything else you would like to add?

From my point of view, I would like to add that at the beginning when this unbossing principle has been introduced in our company, it gave us some optimism and we were counting on more supporting leadership and to be able to develop better in our jobs. I can say for myself that now, I can speak more openly and freely about different issues than compared with my previous job. There, for every issue I would open they would say that I complain too much and that we should not bother to present the issue to the higher bosses and ask them for assistance. I got the feedback: do not complain, be happy that you have a job.

RQ2: Which are the conditions that enable successful implementation of the unbossing concept?

- Do you supervise your team in any way? How?

We have regular catch-up with all the team members, not just a regular ones, but I make it clear that I am available to my team when they need me, we have meetings where we open the discussion freely and usually I am always there for the team and to help and support them and to push forward when it is needed. So, in general, I can say that the level of supervision is lower than in companies with the traditional approach, I do not even see a point for supervision if we discuss all the tasks beforehand and everybody knows what to do and I make sure that the workload is divided equally among them.

- How do you evaluate your team's proactiveness and accountability?

Proactiveness, that is when an individual comes to me with a solution and not just a problem, is quite an interesting approach and also the willingness to learn something new, not to be afraid of challenges, that he is willing to accept even new responsibilities and also to help other team members, this gives me a sign that individual is progressing in the right direction.

- How do you, as a leader, create clarity?

First, I try to collect thoughts of all my team members and if they are silent on a joint meeting, I reflect on it and ask them about it on our 1-to-1 meetings. Then I ask how I can assist them and I usually count on that they will give me feedback and also I give them feedback. Also, sometimes unformal chats are quite important.

- How do you, as a leader, serve your team?

I have a lot of activities on my daily schedules, but whenever somebody from my team needs me, I try to be there for him in that particular moment. Maybe I am not always successful at that, then I give him feedback that I will come back to him later, but more or less if somebody needs me, I know it is important and it is crucial that I react in a certain timeline. Because there is stress involved and if I can calm down someone or if we can find a solution together, it is good that we do it as soon as possible. It is important to me to be there for my team because I know how much stress it puts on me when I can not reach my leader and I need him to decide how to move forward. This produces an additional stress for me and I want to avoid it and close it as soon as possible. It is true that sometimes it is good to sleep over a problem and sometimes not, but more or less I want to react and be there for my team in that particular moment. Sometimes I can do that, sometimes not, but I try to do my best.

- In your opinion, what are the most important factors that contribute to successful implementation of the unbossing concept?

I would start with teamwork and if it works, it can be taken into realisation and if you have a supporting leader whom you can address with issues and who gives you guidance when needed, I think that this is a successful implementation of unbossing concept.

- What are the struggles you are facing when leading in an unbossed way?

Well, the struggles are all connected with differences among team members. In my team, I soon recognized the individuals who are thriving under this concept and also the ones who will use it to their advantage and their agenda.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

I would say that for me as a leader this concept is still a learning process. I can relate to it as it gives me opportunity to give more space to my team and yet be there for them when they need me. It is still a challenge for some members, but if you have great people in the team, the performance will come.

RQ3: What are the consequences of job autonomy for employee engagement?

- Are you familiar with the concepts of job autonomy and employee engagement?

I am not.

- How are working hours/schedule structured in your team?

Based on our Choice with Responsibility approach we have two models: each employee can decide for himself how and when he would like to work, but there is also a more traditional option where we normally work from 8am to 4 pm. If I know that a person always finishes their work, I do not care if they need to jump out or whatever. I know the work will be done and that is all that matters, they do not need to inform me every time."

- How much autonomy does your team have when performing day to day activities?

I would say that a lot. I do not need to be involved in every step of the way, but when it comes to approving, I would like to know and have this information. I give my team members space and I trust them. To follow their every step and activity it would be too much for me. Trust is here a key word and I trust each of them to know what their tasks and activities are and if there are some unclarities, I know how to react and who to ask to make the ball rolling again.

- Do you measure employee engagement? How?

I get this information about individual employee engagement from our team meetings and from 1-to-1 meetings. So, someone who wishes to develop himself and go an extra mile in his work usually comes to me on 1-to-1 meetings. Some come with the proposals on our team meetings, some are more likely to be silent, but it does not mean that they are not working well. But at the end of the day, it is important that each member of the team does not stand still, but that he develops. It is good that he knows if he has some free time still before I come to him, if he comes to me and tells me I have done this and this and I still have time to do this and that, well, that is a big plus for him. Based on this I can estimate very quickly who of the team members is the one who strives to do an extra mile every day and who just does what is required from him and stops there.

- Did you notice any changes in employee engagement after introducing Choice with Responsibility?

Not really. As I said we are still working within a certain timeframe as before, but now with COVID-19 and then the Choice with Responsibility they are available longer. Before we had to come to the office and we left our computers here after work, but now we take them home and we are practically available 24/7. This is causing also to me a lot of frustrations as some people expect that now you will check you e-mails also at 10 PM and some people even do it. This makes me think, do we really need to do this? And I always say, tomorrow is another day and there will be new problems, new issues. Let us draw a line somewhere as we are working more and more.

- In your opinion, does unbossing contribute to higher employee engagement and employee retention?

Yes and no. It depends again on every individual. For the majority of people, I would say yes. As for myself, it is a yes. It gives me more confidence to ask for approval when I need it. I think that this concept is still evolving and will become more and more important, especially because we are a multicultural company and in time, this will be a new reality. This change to unbossing was done to bring some progress, that the employee engagement will bring a better performance for the company.

- Is there anything else you would like to add?

I was also thinking that if we have good conditions, the employee engagement comes naturally. But if they do not feel safe, people can not engage. This is something companies should address more. We say trust, integrity and commitment. But do we have conditions which are giving us the opportunities to develop and to grow, that is another story.