Meaningful Work in the Digital Age

A dissertation study that reviews the literature on meaningful work in a digital-driven workplace and provides a conceptual framework with a case illustration from the international hospitality industry. This study has been initiated by the Human Resource Management (HRM) department in collaboration with the International Management department of the University of Twente.

Preface

Dear reader,

This dissertation paper, titled *"Meaningful Work in the Digital Age"*, has been written on behalf of the Human Resources (HR) and International Management departments of the University of Twente. Within this paper, the key characteristics of meaningful work are explored through a systematic literature review, after which these are related to workplace digitalisation. Using the theoretical knowledge gained from the literature review and by using a practical illustration from the international hospitality industry, a conceptual framework will be provided. Based on the basics of meaningful work, this framework aims to give more practical insight into how meaningful work perceptions can be fostered in a digital work environment. I would hereby like to take the opportunity to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Huub Ruël, for the time and support I received during my thesis project. Moreover, I am glad that Huub was able to encourage me at times at which I felt insecure about the project.

I hope you enjoy reading my final thesis!

Celeste Henstra

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August 18th, 2020.

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

Abstract

Research within the meaningful work domain has increased within the last two decades, in which it has been shown to relate positively to several individual and organizational outcomes. Despite the increased scholarly and practical interest in this concept of meaningful work, many studies have neglected the current trends and developments in terms of workplace digitalisation, which could potentially diminish feelings of meaningfulness among employees (Symon & Whiting, 2019). Moreover, many studies fail to capture what HR managers can do to guarantee meaningful work in a digital work context. To address this, this dissertation study aims to explore the key characteristics of meaningful work in order to propose how HR managers in the international hospitality industry can foster meaningful work in a digital work environment. In line, the following research question will be examined: "How can the key characteristics of meaningful work be used by HR managers in the international hospitality industry to foster meaningful work in a digital work environment?"

To explore the concept of meaningful work and its relationship with workplace digitalisation, a systematic literature review was conducted. This review has been developed on the basis of 80 research articles. Based on the knowledge gained from the systematic review, propositions were formulated that were used as a foundation to create a conceptual framework. This framework uses the key characteristics of meaningful work to provide practical insight for HR professionals on how to foster meaningful work in a digital environment. Afterwards, an interview has been conducted with a HR manager operating in the international hospitality industry. This interview was used as a practical case illustration of the concept of meaningful work in a digital context and was, therefore, compared to the conceptual framework developed before.

The results of this research showed that one of the key characteristics of meaningful work is its subjective nature. This implies that perceptions of how meaningful a job is and, therefore, what makes work worth doing, differ per individual. These perceptions on meaningfulness derive from the self, in which the individual is involved in a subjective sense-making process, and others (i.e. institutional environment), who influence and legitimise this sense-making process. Based on the subjective nature of meaningful work, it is recommended that HR managers can foster a meaningful work environment by customising jobs (e.g. through job crafting) based on an individual's own values and desires. In light of a digital context, it is proposed that perceptions on workplace digitalisation differ per individual and will determine to what extent individuals are able to experience meaningful work. Hence, whereas some may have more positive associations with workplace digitalisation, others might be more pessimistic. As a result, some individuals will be more willing to work in and adapt to such an environment, providing more opportunities for meaningful experiences. Hence, based on the subjective nature of meaningful work and the varying perceptions on digitalisation, HR managers can foster meaningful work in this digital environment by designing flexible digital structures that are open to autonomy and job crafting.

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1.   Introduction

Within the last two decades, meaningful work research has gained more interest as it has been found to relate positively to several desired individual and organizational outcomes (Vuori, San, & Kira, 2012). Research, for instance, revealed that individuals nowadays prefer meaningful work over other benefits that work provides, such as financial rewards (Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012; Hu & Hirsch, 2017). This shift towards exploring the "quest for meaning" has changed over time, which may trigger human resource management (HRM) professionals to restructure talent management practices on the basis of this need (Bendassolli & Tateo, 2018). Consequently, more research within the HR discipline has focused on meaningful work, including more studies on unravelling the concept of meaningful work by exploring its characteristics, sources, outcomes, and, ultimately, how one can achieve meaningfulness at and in work (e.g. Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010).

These studies have, however, often neglected the current trends and developments in terms of workplace digitalisation, which could potentially diminish feelings of meaningfulness among employees (Symon & Whiting, 2019), consequently, having implications for future HRM and the content of talent management. Although some scholars hypothesized about the potential consequences digitalisation could bring for experienced levels of meaningfulness at work (e.g. Smids, Nyholm, & Berkers 2019), these fail to capture how HR managers can consider meaningful work in the implementation of these digitized tools as well as what actions could potentially be taken to ensure meaningful work in a digitized workplace.

To address this gap, this research aims to explore how HR managers can foster meaningful work in a digital environment. In particular, this paper will focus on the international hospitality industry as this industry has been dealing with a number of HRM (related) concerns for decades: high employee turnover, relatively low pay for the lower skilled jobs, long working hours, and poor career opportunities to mention a few (Cockburn-Wootten, 2012; Armstrong & Matters, 2016; Jung & Yoon, 2016). As a result, it becomes less attractive to start a career within the industry for young hospitality graduates and it becomes more challenging for HR to attract young talent and retain them. The hospitality industry is, furthermore, characterized as being highly competitive with relatively low-profit margins (Assaf & Cvelbar, 2011), in which guests increasingly expect smooth guest experiences that enable value co-creation (as cited from Montargot & Lahouel, 2018). To gain competitive advantage and cut cost in such an environment, hospitality businesses are triggered to innovate and digitize all kinds of aspects of the guest journey, such as the check-in process.

Despite the increased scholarly interest and the practical need for meaningful work to improve the attractiveness of the hospitality industry, there is unclarity in research and practice about what this concept exactly entails. It seems rather easy to speak about meaningful work, but to define, implement, or apply it, challenges arise. On top of that, the current COVID-19 pandemic makes this research even more relevant, as it hit the hospitality industry worldwide, evaporated revenue streams and, as a result,

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got many employees out of their jobs. The focus on cutting costs has become so dominant that the space and attention for meaningful work will be limited. And that while actually more attention for meaningful work within this industry could be an important piece of the puzzle to make the hospitality industry a more attractive workplace. So, how do HR managers consider meaningful work in such a crisis situation and what does that mean for the industry?

Based on the elements above, the following research question was developed that will be central throughout this paper: "How can the key characteristics of meaningful work be used by HR managers in the international hospitality industry to foster meaningful work in a digital work environment?" Therefore, a conceptual framework will be developed that aims to explore the key characteristics of meaningful work in order to propose how HR managers in the international hospitality industry can cultivate meaningful work perceptions in a digital environment. To answer the central research question, the following research questions were developed that will be central throughout the research:

Table 1.   Research questions on meaningful work and workplace digitalisation

Key concept	Research questions (incl. paragraph nr.)
Meaningful work	3.1. What is the definition of meaningful work and what are its characteristics?
	3.2. What are the sources of meaningful work?
	3.3. How can a sense of meaningfulness be achieved?
	3.4. Which theories are often used to explain meaningful work?
	3.5. How is meaningful work different across cultures?
	3.6. What are the outcomes of meaningful work?
Workplace digitalisation	3.7. What is workplace digitalisation?
	3.8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of workplace digitalisation?
Meaningful work in a digital work environment	3.9. What is the relationship between workplace digitalisation and meaningful work?

This paper will present a systematic literature review that, with the help of the aforementioned research questions, provides a holistic framework of meaningful work's key characteristics and relates this to a digital context. Moreover, this research will include one in-depth interview with a HR manager employed in the international hospitality industry, in which the HR manager's ideas, opinions, and

experiences are explored in relation to meaningful work in the digital age. This interview will then serve as a case illustration, in which an attempt will be made to apply the framework to the case.

The theoretical contributions of this paper are threefold: First of all, it builds on the request by Lysova et al. (2019) to develop a framework that considers several contexts (e.g. individual, organizational, and social), and relate these contexts to the formation of a meaningful work environment. Hence, the framework attempts to address and reveal the relationship between the cultural and social context, the individual and the organisational context. Secondly, it builds on the work of Rosso et al. (2010), in which a broader view of meaningful work is presented with the objective of improving the interpretability of meaningful work as a concept and its distinctive elements. Thirdly, the conceptual framework developed in this paper aims to identify gaps in literature and help scholars in the field of meaningful work to advance their research agendas.

In addition, this research project contributes to practice in two ways: The developed framework, first of all, aims to close the theory-practice gap by moving towards a more practical framework that serves society better. For instance, HR professionals' understanding of the concept of meaningful work and how it can be considered in job- and workplace design can be enhanced. In the end, this framework serves to make the hospitality industry a more attractive workplace, in which new employees are more easily recruited and retained. Secondly, the contents of this paper further contribute to future practice in which digitalisation within the workplace becomes more common, meaning that HR managers need to minimize potential challenges that digitalisation brings as well as maximize the potential opportunities it brings for individual employees in terms of experienced meaningfulness.

This paper will be structured in the following way: the next chapter will elaborate upon the methodology for the literature review, which includes a systematic approach to the selection of articles. The methodology section is then followed by the systematic literature review, providing more insight into the key domains of meaningful work and its relationship to workplace digitalisation. Thereafter, these domains will be categorized into a set of propositions based on the literature available. These propositions will be used to propose a new conceptual framework that aims to fully capture the complexity of meaningful work's characteristics. To ensure the framework's practical applicability, the following section will include a case illustration with one HR manager employed in the international hospitality industry. This case attempts to be used as a practical illustration of the established framework. Based on this knowledge, a research agenda will be presented geared towards a digitized hospitality context. Lastly, the conceptual framework will be discussed in terms of both practical and theoretical relevance, implications, and the final conclusions will be provided.

2.   Methodology systematic literature review

This chapter describes the methodological justification (or the methodology followed) regarding the systematic literature review on the concept of meaningful work and its relationship with workplace digitalisation. The literature search focused on the following disciplines: Human Resource Management (HRM), Organizational Behaviour (OB), Business, Management, Psychology, and Social & Behavioural Sciences (see Appendix I, p. 61-64 for an overview of research disciplines that were excluded). The articles were collected from the Scopus database as the primary information source. Besides that, Web of Science and Google Scholar were consulted to find any additional articles that are potentially relevant for the contents of this paper. Several search terms were used to make an attempt at fully capturing meaningful work and its relation to workplace digitalisation. Figure 1 below illustrates these search terms.

Meaningful work
Meaning of work
Work meaning
Meaningful
Meaningfulness
Work meaningfulness
Meaningfulness at work
Sense-making
Meaning-making

Digitalization
Digitization
Digital
Digitized
Technology(ICT)
Technological
Electronic
E-monitoring
Algorithm
Artificial intelligence(AI)
Robot
Technologies

Workplace
Work
Job
Work environment
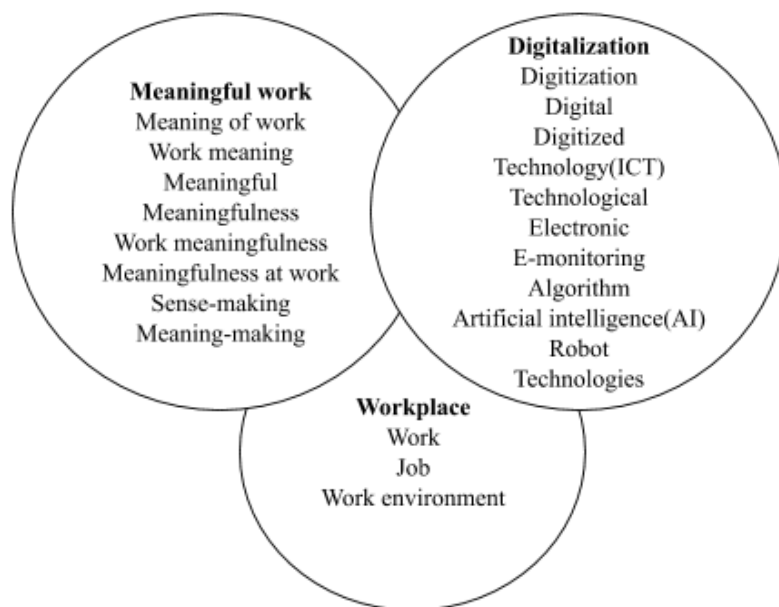
Figure 1.   Literature search terms

It was decided to use a combination of search terms in which the researcher made use of 1) meaningful work in combination with the workplace, 2) digitalisation in combination with the workplace, and 3) meaningful work in a digitized workplace. The first search, including meaningful work and workplace, resulted in 30.694 results on Scopus and 12.872 by limiting it to the aforementioned disciplines. The second search, on the other hand, resulted in 580.307 results. As this concerns an unmanageable high number, it was decided to further limit the search to the HR discipline and add that to the search terms. This resulted in 8.692 documents. Moreover, the third search on meaningful work in a digitized workplace, resulted in 7.150 results on Scopus (retrieved on 27 January 2020). Out of this selection it was revealed that still some articles were focused on research disciplines that are not of interest, such

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as medicine, health, and politics. Therefore, specific journals were excluded from the analysis that were considered less relevant and to reduce the search results to a more manageable number of articles (see Table 2, Appendix I, p. 61-64). The next step in the systematic selection of articles was to limit the search results to the English language. This resulted in 11.922 results for the first search, 8.431 results for the second search, and 4.777 results for the third search.

The results were further reduced by adding keywords (see Appendix I, p. 61-64). From these final results, which totalled 803 for the first search, 6.620 for the second search, and 2.106 for the third search, the initial selection of articles was made. This was, firstly, done by reviewing article titles and, secondly, reading the abstracts. During this stage, it was important that, especially the articles concerned with workplace digitalisation, addressed how it would affect individual workers in terms of, for instance, job satisfaction or engagement. Therefore, it had to be related to some dimension of meaningful work. At this moment, other information sources (e.g. Google Scholar and Web of Science) were consulted using the same method, as a way of reviewing the completeness of the article selection. These articles were critically reviewed together with the thesis supervisor. The final selection composed of 80 articles. The following chapter includes the systematic literature review, which is based on 9 key topics that will be explored. The questions that were used to review the literature are based on the most prominent and recurring topics in the majority of papers that were selected. An example of an analysis of the articles is presented in Table 3 in Appendix II (see p. 65-66).

## 3.	Literature review

This section presents the results of the systematic literature review. It will be structured in the following way: First, the literature will be reviewed on the various conceptualizations of meaningful work and its characteristics. Secondly, the main sources or domains of meaningful work will be examined, and it will be investigated how, according to current literature, one can achieve a sense of meaningfulness in the workplace. Thirdly, a section will be devoted to theories used to describe meaningful work. Fourth, the impact of culture on meaningful work is examined and the outcomes it may have on both an individual and organizational level. Lastly, this review will relate this knowledge on meaningful work to the digitized tools used on the work floor by first defining workplace digitalisation, examining its types and then examining how the digitization of the workplace might potentially impact the meaningfulness experienced by employees.

### 3.1	What is the definition of meaningful work and what are its characteristics?

Meaningful work is a widely studied topic by both HRM and OB scholars as it relates positively to several organizational and individual outcomes (Vuori et al., 2012). It has, however, often been recognized as a complex concept, in which no consensus has been reached on what meaningful work actually entails (Bailey, Yeoman, Madden, Thompson, & Kerridge, 2019; Weeks & Schaffert, 2019). Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) have often been cited by others in their attempt to simplify the concept of meaningfulness, as, according to them, it explains "why am I here?" (p. 492). In an effort to fully capture the concept of meaningful work, it would be useful to consider the distinctive concepts of "meaning" and "meaningfulness" (e.g. Rosso et al., 2010; Vuori et al., 2012; Ghadi, Fernando, & Caputi, 2015; Allan, Batz-Barbarich, Sterling, & Tay, 2019). According to Pratt and Ashforth (2003), meaning is primarily concerned with the type of meaning an individual prescribes to their work and everyday experiences. Meaning is, hence, a descriptive concept that guides us in our everyday lives to interpret and make sense of the world around us (Martela & Pessi, 2018). One meaning attributed to work could, therefore, be a higher calling (Rosso et al., 2010). Meaningfulness, on the other hand, is more concerned with the importance attributed to these meanings. Hence, meaningfulness has an evaluative component as opposed to meaning (Vuori et al., 2012; Martela & Pessi, 2018).

To make sense of the world around us, individuals attribute meanings to their daily experiences and, therefore, also their work (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). In other words, individuals continuously participate in a process of meaningfulness-making or sensemaking, in which individuals seek positive images in and of their work, which ultimately contribute to perceptions of work meaningfulness (Vuori, et al., 2012; Ghadi et al., 2015; Asik-Dizdar & Esen, 2016; Bailey & Madden, 2016). It should be noted, however, that even though individuals seek positive images, and this is widely adopted in contemporary literature, this does not necessarily imply that the process of sensemaking cannot be negative (Lepisto & Pratt, 2017; Allan et al., 2019).

Table 4 in Appendix III (see p. 67-69) illustrates the definitions used to define meaningful work. First of all, the majority of scholars refer to meaningful work as a positive concept (Bailey et al., 2019), which is reflected by the conceptualizations including terms like: work that is significant, important, worthwhile, rewarding, valuable, and fulfilling. Secondly, it often includes work that is performed for a (higher) purpose or "calling" beyond the self (Steger & Dik, 2010; Steger et al., 2012; Ghadi et al., 2015; Bailey & Madden, 2016; Bailey, Madden, Alfes, Shantz, & Soane, 2017; Stein, Wagner, Tierney, Newell, & Galliers, 2019; Symon & Whiting, 2018; Smids et al., 2019). This, however, received some criticism as having a job with a higher purpose is seen as one of many general characteristics of meaningfulness rather than as something that defines meaningful work itself (e.g. Vuori et al., 2012; Allan et al., 2019). Put differently, it partially answers the question of "How can one achieve a sense of meaningfulness?"

Thirdly, according to the majority of conceptualizations, meaningful work refers to work that is aligned with one's own values, standards, goals, or ideals (Both-Nwabuwe, Dijkstra, & Beersma, 2017; as cited in Bailey et al., 2019; De Boeck, Dries & Tierens, 2019), which is also referred to as the concept of self-realization (Martela & Pessi, 2018). Meaningful work is, in this sense, therefore, work that is connected to one's individual identity and gives room for autonomy (Martela & Pessi, 2018). Lastly, meaningful work is a subjective process in the sense that the meaning someone attaches to an experience or event differs per individual (Rosso et al., 2010; Bailey et al., 2019). Put differently, one individual may attribute higher levels of meaningfulness ("significance"), whereas others attribute less meaningful feelings to the same experience. Thus, it relates to the individual evaluation of the experience. Prior research, however, suggests that meaningful work, besides being subjective, is also embedded in an objective context that shapes and legitimises perceptions of meaningfulness (Bailey et al., 2019).

In sum, meaningful work is often defined as a subjective concept with a positive stance in literature, characterized by: (1) work that is seen as significant, (2) work that is done for a greater purpose beyond the self, and (3) work that is aligned with one's own identity and values. As Martela and Pessi (2018) note, these are related to one another in a way that a job perceived to serve a greater purpose and being aligned with one's identity contribute to individuals seeing their work as significant. Hence, within contemporary literature, there is some disagreement on what to include in the definition of meaningful work. Herein, some scholars refer to meaningful work using a one-dimensional definition such as "work that is significant". Others, however, refer to the general characteristics or processes of meaningful work by including the fit between work and one's identity, and serving a higher purpose (Allan et al., 2019). These scholars, therefore, perceive meaningful work to be multidimensional (e.g. Both-Nwabuwe et al., 2017; Bailey et al., 2019).

3.2   What are the sources of meaningful work?

This section will deal with the sources of meaningful work, or in other words, what contributes to the ability of an individual to see or comprehend work as meaningful (Steger & Dik, 2010). In doing so, the framework established by Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) will be used (see Fig. 2). First of all, almost all scholars in the field of meaningful work acknowledge that the self is an important source of meaningfulness (Chalofsky, 2003; Steger & Dik, 2010; Rosso et al., 2010; Dimitrov, 2012; Bailey et al., 2017; Symon & Whiting, 2018). As indicated before, it implies that meaningfulness is subjective, in which people individually make sense of- and interpret an experience. According to Vuori et al. (2012), individuals are constantly involved in this process of meaning-making, where individuals aim to increase the number of positive cues about their work, which, ultimately, contributes to a higher sense of meaningfulness. Therefore, individuals desire their work to be meaningful and can influence their perceived levels of meaningfulness by focusing on these subjective positive cues and craft their jobs according to these cues (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009). Drawing upon the framework established by Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009), this has often been referred to as developing and becoming self (see Fig 2).

The process of meaning-making is, however, not entirely independent as it is influenced by social relationships and interactions with others, within or outside the workplace (Steger & Dik, 2010; Rosso et al., 2010; Dimitrov, 2012; Cockburn-Wootten, 2012; Bailey & Madden, 2016; Bailey et al., 2017; Symon & Whiting, 2018; Martela & Riekki, 2018; Smids et al., 2019; Bailey et al., 2019; Allan, Autin, Duffy, & Sterling, 2020). As Bailey et al. (2017) indicate "individuals cannot experience meaningfulness entirely within themselves but seek to understand their place in the wider world and their contribution to society in the context of the organizations and institutions to which they belong" (p. 419). Hence, according to Vuori et al. (2012), meaningfulness is created once the individual perceives their work to be providing benefits for the individual as well as the work being valued by others. The relevance of the social context in meaningful work is also expressed by using the theoretical concepts of meaningfulness or meaning at work (e.g. Chalofsky, 2003; Ghadi et al., 2015; Hu & Hirsh, 2017; as cited in Fletcher & Schofield, 2019; Stein et al., 2019; Lysova et al., 2019). These dimensions of meaningful work are, therefore, concerned with the social dimension of work and the individual's membership therein, concerned with the question ''where do I belong?''. In line with Lips-Wiersma and Morris's framework (2009), this source of meaningful work has often been referred to as "unity with others". Besides "unity with others", meaningfulness requires an individual to perform work that contributes or is subjectively experienced to fulfil a higher purpose beyond the self (Steger & Dik, 2010; Rosso et al., 2010). This has been supported in the work of Steger, Dik, and Duffy (2012) where it was shown that meaningful work is in fact associated with a higher calling (see also Lips-Wiersma & Wright, 2012). This source of meaningful work is illustrated in Figure 2 as "serving others".

Lastly, the content of work and the organization itself are relevant in the creation of meaningfulness (Chalofksy, 2003; Steger & Dik, 2010; Dimitrov, 2012; Rosso et al., 2010; Baily &

Madden, 2016; Symon & Whiting, 2018). This may include the roles and tasks one performs in the organization (Bailey & Madden, 2016; Bailey et al., 2017) and the fit between personal values and these roles and tasks (Steger & Dik, 2010). This has often been described as meaning(fulness) *in* work, which is concerned with the significance and meaning one attaches to the work activities and tasks that are performed. Vuori et al. (2012) elaborated upon this as individuals crafting their own jobs to promote higher levels of meaningfulness. In line, the study by Tims, Derks, and Bakker (2016) found that the higher the ability of an individual to craft one's job, the higher the experienced meaningfulness. Hence, in Lips-Wiersma and Morris's framework, this has been expressed as "expressing self", which relates to individuals being able to influence their jobs.

All in all, the following sources of meaningful work can be identified: 1) developing and becoming self, 2) unity with others, 3) expressing full potential, and 4) serving others. These sources are illustrated in the framework established by Lips-Wiersma & Morris (2009) and, although using different terms, are similar to other sources identified in literature (e.g. Rosso et al., 2010). It is important to note that the aforementioned sources of meaningful work require a sense of balance (Chalofsky, 2003). This is supported by the dimensions identified by Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) as a lack of balance between the self and others can produce meaninglessness. Moreover, a balance between inspiration (i.e. the human need for long-term visions and hopes) and reality is required. As Lips-Wiersma and Wright (2012) emphasize, these dimensions would answer the question of "why am I here" that is central for meaningful work.
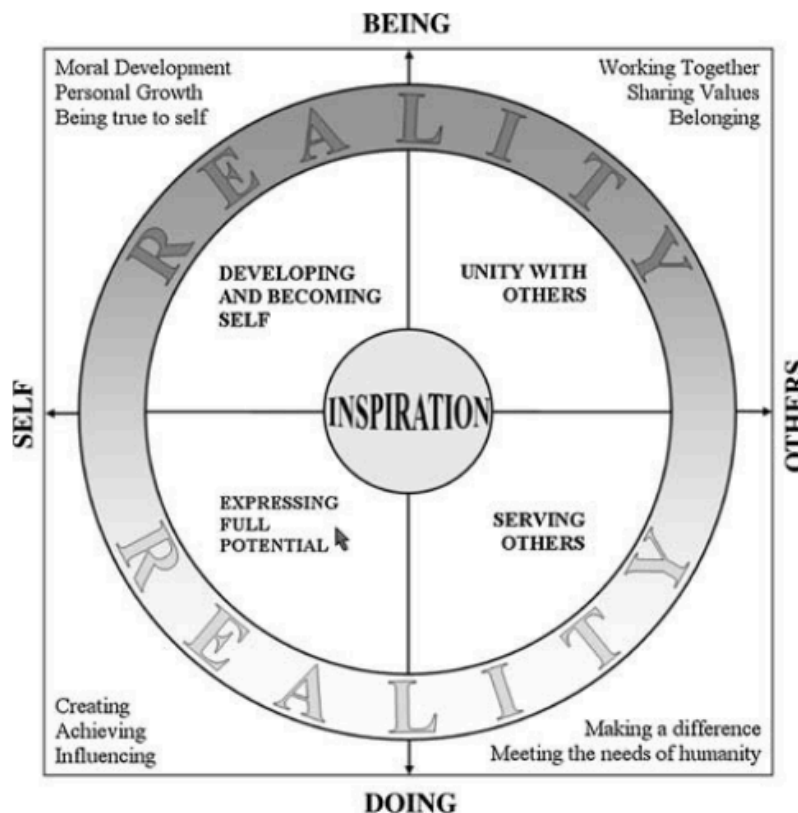

Figure 2.   Meaningful work framework adopted from Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009).

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3.3 How can a sense of meaningfulness be achieved?

Some scholars tried to identify ways in which organizations can increase the likelihood of employees experiencing a sense of meaningfulness within their work and, therefore, in some way "control" or "manage" these experiences (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009; Bailey et al., 2017). This stream of research is referred to as the work-centric perspective on meaningful work (De Boeck et al., 2019), which is often focused on job designs or talent management practices that enhance sources of meaningfulness within the workplace. Others, on the other hand, argue that employers are unable to control this (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009, as cited in Bailey et al., 2017), as the experience is subjective to the individual. This stream of thought is referred to as the worker-centric perspective. This section will provide more insight into both perspectives.

3.3.1 Work-centric perspective

Scholars following a work-centric perspective support the notion that the employer can play an important role in shaping and, hence, fostering meaningful work perceptions. Based on the four sources established by Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009), this perspective believes that organizations can stimulate these four sources of meaningfulness among individuals within the workplace by, for instance, implementing particular HR practices. First of all, by drawing upon the source "unity with others", work-centric research suggests that employers are able to encourage the establishment of social relationships (Cockburn-Wootten, 2012; Stein et al., 2019; Smids et al., 2019) to improve feelings of belongingness (Rosso et al., 2010) and relatedness (Martela & Riekki, 2018). Belonging to a social community, in this sense, enables the formation of a social common identity and enables an individual to hold a valued position within that community.

Secondly, employers should promote autonomy within the workplace to enable employees to show "one's full potential", in which employees are able to make decisions independently (Rosso et al., 2010; Vuori et al., 2012; Stein et al., 2019; Martela & Riekki, 2018; De Boeck et al., 2019; Smids et al., 2019). The importance of showing one's full potential has been illustrated in the study by Mitroff and Denton (1999), as this has been found to be more important than, for instance, serving a greater good (as cited in De Broeck, Dries, Tierens, 2019). Within this dimension, leadership style and the congruence between employees' and management's goals and visions greatly influences how meaningful work is experienced among individuals (Bailey et al., 2017, e.g. "meaningful leadership", see Frémeaux & Pavageau, 2020). Hence, employers (or leaders) should align personal values and goals to the job one performs (Rosso et al., 2010).

Thirdly, by promoting autonomy within the workplace, employees are able to show their competence and skills, and challenge themselves. These challenges should, in turn, provide opportunities for employees to grow and develop themselves within the workplace (Rosso et al., 2010; Vuori et al., 2012; Cockburn-Wootten, 2012; Stein et al., 2019; Smids et al., 2019). This, therefore,

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relates to the dimension of "developing and becoming oneself" established by Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009).

Fourth, to enhance the feeling of individuals that "others are served", employers should make employees feel rewarded, respected and competent while performing this job (Martela & Riekki, 2018; Smids et al., 2019), in which individuals' perceptions of meaningfulness decrease when they "feel that they are not contributing, benefiting, nor enjoying themselves at work" (Vuori et al., 2012, p. 243). Hence, employers should emphasize how individuals contribute and reward them for these contributions. In sum, many scholars, in this sense, agree that the positive feelings associated with meaningful work are supported by promoting purpose and growth-oriented aspects in the workplace (Steger et al., 2012), which can be achieved by implementing particular organizational practices (e.g. see Steger & Dik, 2010, p. 138).

In conclusion, the work-centric perspective suggests that job design plays a critical role in fostering meaningful work perceptions and that employers are, therefore, able to stimulate these perceptions through various (organizational) practices. Despite the fact that not all practices are outlined here, this approach follows the belief that these practices should stimulate the perception among individuals that one is (1) developing and becoming self, (2) united with others, (3) expressing one's full potential, and (4) serving others. This could be done by, for instance, having particular leadership style or providing autonomy, in which individuals are able to craft their own jobs and develop themselves on their own terms. Consequently, this will increase the likelihood that individuals perceive their work to be meaningful.

3.3.2. Worker-centric perspective

As opposed to the work-centric perspective, the worker-centric research stream believes that every type of work (with every type of job design) can be perceived as meaningful (De Boeck et al., 2019). Here, the self, future self, and the process of sense-making play a more pivotal role than in the work-centric perspective. For instance, as opposed to the section above, the employer cannot control to what extent employees experience their job to serve a greater good. Research that focuses on managing meaningfulness by a form of normative control ("work-centric perspective") is often criticized by the fact that, as Bailey et al. (2017) note, "[e]mployees are [...] not passive recipients of employer strategies to manage meaningfulness, but actively scan their environment for clues as to the authenticity of organizational efforts" (p. 421). Therefore, meaningfulness is not something that is easily managed, as employees actively make sense of their own experiences which cannot be controlled by any third party. Similarly, as Simonet and Castille (2020) have shown in their research, perceptions of meaningfulness are also highly dependent on one's individual personality traits and, therefore, goes beyond job design issues (Bailey et al., 2019).

Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) even believe that the management of meaningfulness by organizations is rather incremental to the levels of meaningfulness experienced, leading to

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meaninglessness, diminished trust, lower levels of engagement and commitment, anger and stress, and ultimately negatively impact organizational performance (Cartwright & Holmes, 2006, as cited in Bailey et al., 2017, p. 421). Moreover, employees may be less inclined to express their true feelings about their work and fake an identity that is preferably seen by managers, where employees, for instance, may act like they believe in certain organizational values whereas in reality they feel and act opposed to these values (Bailey et al., 2017). Others, however, take a less radical standpoint suggesting that meaningfulness is in fact inherent to the individual and the interactions with its surroundings, but do indicate that organizational contexts can be shaped in a way to promote meaningfulness (Bailey et al., 2017; De Boeck et al., 2019).

In short, the section above criticizes the work-centric perspective, as it is believed that regardless of job design, every job in itself can be perceived as meaningful. This approach puts more emphasis on the self and the individual sense-making process, which others are unable to control.

3.4   Which theories are most often used to explain meaningful work?

Within contemporary literature, a wide range of theories have been used to describe meaningful work and its processes (Bailey et al., 2019). The content of these theories varies greatly, in which some are relatively work-centric focused (e.g. job characteristics theory, self-determination theory), whereas others focus more on the subjective process of meaning-making (e.g. hierarchy of needs theory, social identity theory). Despite its categorization, the majority of theories rely upon intrinsic human motivation and psychology to explain meaningful work. Within this section, some of the most commonly used theories will be outlined, including the job characteristics theory (JCT), self-determination theory, Maslow theory and social identity theory.

One of the first theories that was established to explain meaningful work, and which follows a more work-centric approach, was the theory established by Oldham and Hackman (2010), referred to as the Job Characteristics Theory (JCT). This theory proposed three facets (see Oldham & Hackman, 2010), of which one is meaningful work, that should be established in order for organizations to establish higher productivity and engagement. In essence, the JC theory proposes that particular job characteristics--including skill variety, task identity, and task significance--influence meaningfulness of work, which ultimately influence organizational outcomes (as cited in Fried & Ferris, 1987). This theory has often been used by researchers since then (e.g. Allan et al., 2018; Bailey et al., 2019; De Boeck et al., 2019), in which it was later found that meaningful work had higher effects than any other psychological factor that was hypothesized in the job characteristics theory (as cited in De Boeck et al., 2019).

Another theory that is often referred to is the self-determination theory (e.g. Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010; Lepisto & Pratt, 2017; Martela & Riekki, 2018; Nikolova & Cnossen, 2020). This theory explains that three psychological needs--competence, autonomy, and relatedness-- should be fulfilled that are critical in motivating and enabling a purpose for individual workers. Hence, individuals

should have the feeling they are competent, can make autonomous decisions, and feel related in a sense that there is a dual relationship of care between colleagues, management, and the individual. Together these psychological needs explain 60 percent of meaningfulness that is experienced at work and are, therefore, key in stimulating meaningfulness in the workplace. Moreover, of these needs, relatedness is found to be the most important determinant of meaningfulness (Nikolova & Cnossen, 2020).

The Maslow theory or otherwise called "hierarchy of needs theory" is another example of a motivational theory that is often used to explain when and how meaningful work can be achieved (e.g. Chalovsky, 2003; Dimitrov, 2012; Ghadi et al., 2015; Tan, Lew, & Sim, 2019). This theory, established by Maslow (1954, as cited in Ghadi et al., 2015), suggests that individuals are, in the first instance, motivated to fulfil their basic physiological and safety needs such as the need for food, shelter, security, and employment. After these basic needs are met, individuals become motivated to address higher needs, including the need for love and belonging, esteem, and, lastly, self-actualization. Similar to meaningful work, self-actualization refers to "the process of developing one's potential, of expressing oneself to the fullest possible extent in a manner that is personally fulfilling" (Chalovksy, 2003, p. 71). Meaningful work in this sense relates to the higher motivational needs (Chalovsky, 2003), meaning that before this can be realized, the basic motivational needs should be fulfilled.

The last theory that researchers often draw on is social identity theory (e.g. Pratt & Ashforth, 2003, as cited in Bailey et al., 2017; Rosso et al., 2010; Fletcher & Schofield, 2019). In short, this theory suggests that individuals identify themselves as a member within a social group, in which their role in the group plays an important role in establishing work meanings. Individuals are more likely to attribute positive meanings of their work when they identify closely with the social groups they belong to and see these groups as valuable and distinctive. On the contrary, if individuals feel they are part of a social group that lacks a certain reputation and status, negative meanings may arise (as cited in Rosso et al., 2010). Hence, this theory describes the relevance of the firm's social context in which the individual is embedded and categorizes itself in.

Taken altogether, it can be concluded that the list of theories used to explain and describe meaningful work is comprehensive and the paper would become too extensive to consider all of them. Broadly, however, it is possible to distinguish between theories related to job-design (e.g. job crafting theory, JC theory, self-determination theory) and, theories that relate more to the individual's motivation (e.g. hierarchy of needs theory, social identity theory, sense-making theory).

3.5 How is meaningful work different across cultures?

One research area within the meaningful work discipline focuses on the idea that meaningful work is transmitted through cultures (e.g. Lepisto & Pratt, 2017; Bendassolli & Tateo, 2019), in which individual perceptions of meaningful work are drawn from cultural contexts and these contexts are used to justify and legitimise individual perceptions of work. To clarify, Boova, Pratt, and Lepisto (2019) argue that the work orientation one has is affected by the individual's cultural context. Work

orientations, in this sense, refer to individual evaluations of "what makes work worth doing" (Pratt, Pradies, & Lepisto, 2013, p. 175). A difference in work orientations could, for instance, be explained by job versus career orientations. Whereas the former is centred around the principle of "work to live", the latter focuses on the idea of "live to work".

In terms of national culture, Rosso et al. (2010) concluded in their review of various studies that although minor differences exist in meaningful work perceptions across cultures, the meanings are less culturally bound as would have been expected (e.g. Dimitrov, 2012). Moreover, it has been concluded that there is likely to be more difference within cultures than between cultures in terms of these perceptions. Based on the framework established by Boova et al. (2019), this could possibly be explained by varying institutional forces that influence one's perceptions on meaning. Figure 3 below illustrates this framework that links an individual's cultural context in terms of, for instance, institutions to the individual's work orientation. Within this figure, path 1 views individuals as passive recipients of cultural values, motivations, and beliefs that are transmitted from institutions. Path 2, however, recognizes that individuals have some sort of agency and, therefore, "pull" particular cultural resources from those that are available to justify their actions. Lastly, path 3 is concerned with cultural entrepreneurship in which the individual changes and "moves" broader collective cultural meanings. Here, path 2 and 3 are characterized by the interaction between individual cultural values and the collective and explain, for the most part, how meaningful work perceptions can differ within cultures.
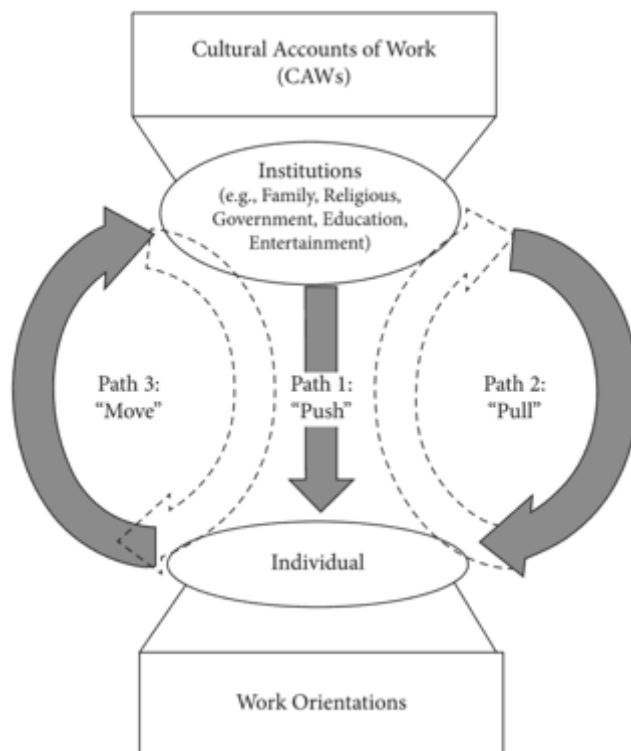

Figure 3.   An illustration of how an individual's institutional context influences meaningful work perceptions, as adopted from Boova et al. (2019).

This section, in short, illustrates the importance of cultural and social contexts in understanding what work makes worth doing for various individuals. This also explains that there is not only variance between national cultures, but a lot of it also exists within cultures. This, as a consequence, shows that developing an all-encompassing framework of meaningful work that considers all work orientations and cultures would be unfeasible to make as every individual would have a different institutional context.

3.6   What are the outcomes of meaningful work?

A large proportion of meaningful work studies has been dedicated to investigating its potential consequences. Hence, the following section will be devoted to these studies, in which the importance of obtaining meaningfulness is highlighted in terms of both its organizational and individual outcomes.

3.6.1   Outcomes for individual employee

In general, one can state that the more meaningful work is experienced, the more desirable attitudes employees have towards their work, and the more committed and satisfied employees are. Steger et al. (2012) in their study found, for instance, that meaningful work, out of all possible outcomes, has the highest correlations with both (career) commitment and job satisfaction (see also Hu & Hirsh, 2017; Allan et al., 2019). Most research scholars agree about the positive outcomes that meaningful work brings, which further includes, among others, happiness, personal fulfilment (Pavlish & Hunt, 2012) "a sense of community and moral flourishing" (as cited in Bailey et al., 2017, p. 420), improved creativity (Cohen-Meitar, Carmeli, & Waldman, 2009), and, as a result of less burnout and stress, improved psychological and physical health (Harlow, Newcomb, & Bentler, 1986; Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2012; Steger et al., 2012; Hu & Hirsh, 2017; Nikolova & Cnossen, 2020). Moreover, people who perceive their work to be a calling experience higher levels of satisfaction from their job as opposed to satisfaction gained from leisure time (Wrzesniewski, 2003).

Another profound correlation was found in relation to intrinsic work motivation, meaning that people who experience their work as meaningful are more motivated to accomplish their tasks (Fairlie, 2011; Steger et al., 2012). Lips-Wiersma and Wright (2012) found no correlations between meaningful work and extrinsic motivation. Others, however, found a strong association with motivation in general (Hackman & Oldham, 1980). Besides these work-related outcomes, Allan et al. (2019) found that meaningful work predicted overall satisfaction and meaning of life, which had a positive relationship (see also Hu & Hirsh, 2017). This, therefore, relates closely to overall well-being of individuals rather than just well-being at work (Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway, & McKee, 2007; Pollet & Schnell, 2017). There are, however, darker sides to meaningfulness for the individual employee, in which employers manipulate the fact that employees are highly committed and employers behave unethically by, for instance, offering low wages (Steger et al., 2012) and letting individuals work long hours (Bailey et al., 2017; Oelberger, 2019).

3.6.2 Outcomes for organization

According to Allan et al. (2019), business research has often focused on examining how productivity within organizations can be improved, in which meaningful work was found to be an important precursor. Therefore, in addition to individual employees benefiting from meaningfulness experienced in their daily work, it has multiple and significant benefits to the organization as well (Zeglat & Janbeik, 2019). As a consequence of employees experiencing more desirable attitudes towards their work, employees are more committed towards the organization (Fairlie, 2011; Steger et al., 2012; Geldenhuys, Laba, & Venter, 2014; Bailey & Madden, 2016; Hu & Hirsh, 2017; Allan et al., 2019) and engaged with their job (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004; Fairlie, 2011; Lips-Wiersma & Wright, 2012; Steger, Littman-Ovadia, Miller, Menger, & Rothmann, 2013; Geldenhuys et al., 2014; Hu & Hirsh, 2017; Fletcher, Bailey, & Gilman, 2018; Allan et al., 2019). Individuals, therefore, have more faith in management when their job is perceived as meaningful (Wrzesniewski, 2003). This, in turn, improves work behaviours (Steger et al., 2012; Hu & Hirsh, 2017; Allan et al., 2019; Nikolova & Cnossen, 2020), in which employees are willing to put more effort into their jobs to contribute to the higher purpose. Besides that, this engagement reduces withdrawal behaviours (Clausen & Borg, 2010; Fairlie, 2011; Steger et al., 2012; Allan et al., 2019) and sickness due to, for instance, stress and depression (Harlow et al., 1986; Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2012; Steger et al., 2012; Hu & Hirsh, 2017; Nikolova & Cnossen, 2020). Also, individuals are more likely to be good ambassadors of the organization (Steger & Dik, 2010). Ultimately, performance is improved as a consequence of these increased levels of commitment (Hu & Hirsh, 2017; Allan et al., 2019).

3.7 What is workplace digitalisation?

The global work landscape is gradually changing, in which workplaces are more commonly disrupted by technological advancements. This changes the way businesses operate, capture value, and how workers perform their jobs (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016). Broadly, workplace digitalisation can be defined as "the infusion of digital capabilities into nearly all facets of work" (Yoo, Boland Jr, & Lyytinen, as cited in Timonen & Vuori, 2018, p. 5075). Hence, this concept encompasses all technological tools that are used within a workplace, ranging from electronic monitoring and surveillance tools, digital tools used by human workers (e.g. information and communication technologies), and the digitisation of talent management. The recent introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) has contributed to the emergence of a new industrial revolution, in which systems are interconnected and interact with one another. This revolution is commonly referred to as Industry 4.0 (Wisskirchen et al., 2014) and is characterized by intelligent self-learning and thinking systems (Russell, Norvig, & Intelligence, 1995, as cited in Jarrahi, 2018), such as algorithms and robots.

One characteristic of industry 4.0 is the emergence of algorithms within workplaces in several industries. Algorithms are often defined as "a computational formula that autonomously makes decisions based on statistical models or decision rules without explicit human intervention" (Eurofound,

as cited in Lee, 2018, p. 3; Duggan, Sherman, Carbery, & McDonnell, 2019, p. 6). One company that is often referred to when addressing the use of algorithms is Uber, which uses its pre-programmed algorithms to manage its human resources (Degryse, 2016) and automatically matches drivers with passengers (Lee, Kusbit, Metsky, & Dabbish, 2015). This is also referred to as algorithmic management, defined as "a system of control where self-learning algorithms are given the responsibility for making and executing decisions affecting labour, thereby limiting human involvement and oversight of the labour process" (Duggan et al., 2019, p. 6). Hence, this revolution implies that decisions previously made by human managers are automated and replaced by self-learning algorithmic systems. Besides using algorithms to manage human resources, it is also often used to monitor employees in terms of, for instance, performance and compliance of regulations (Duggan et al., 2019; Leicht-Deobald et al., 2019).

Another technological self-learning innovation that companies use within a wide range of industries and will continue to do so in the near future is the use of robots at the workplace (Mathiason et al., 2014). Industries that can make use of this increasingly sophisticated technology include, for instance, health care, manufacturing, and transportation (Mathiason et al., 2014). However, as emphasized by Webster and Ivanov (2020), more and more industries are adopting these technological innovations. Within literature, a robotic economy is often associated with human displacement, in which jobs are performed by robots rather than human beings. In fact, in a recent study it was found that there is a high probability that 47% of the jobs in the United States will be replaced in the future (Frey & Osborne, 2017). As Webster and Ivanov (2019) highlight this shift towards a robotic-based economy will lead to a new landscape that will include both winners and losers.

Besides these new technological developments, there are some digital tools that have been used within the workplace for a longer period of time. These include, for instance, electronic monitoring systems. Here, electronic monitoring refers to electronic devices that are used to collect, store, analyse, and report actions, behaviour, or performance of individuals or groups (Nebeker & Tatum, 1993; Alge, 2001; Ball, 2010; Cascio & Montealegre, 2016). Within literature, the use of electronic tools to monitor employees often raises questions in relation to the employee's privacy and freedom (Fusi & Feeney, 2018). Call centres have, as an example, been monitoring their employees for many years, in which phone calls are listened to and recorded. Other monitoring activities include, for instance, accessing and storing employees' emails, monitoring personal accounts on social media, tracking visited websites, blocking particular websites (Nebeker & Tatum, 1993; Tufts, Jacobson, & Stevens, 2015; Tabak & Smith, 2005; Fusi & Feeney, 2018), and, a recently new development, GPS-tracking (Cascio & Montealegre, 2016).

In conclusion, there are various different technological tools that can be or are used in the workplace. These range from fairly new developments like artificial intelligence (e.g. robotization and algorithms) and tools that have been used for a longer period of time (e.g. electronic monitoring and surveillance systems, and information and communication technology). It is important to note that, in

this paper, workplace digitalisation refers to the infusion of digital tools into work, in which only those digital tools are considered that influence an individual's job in some sort of way.

3.8 What are the advantages and disadvantages of workplace digitalisation?

There are various advantages and disadvantages to the use of digitalisation in the workplace that have been identified, which are mainly based on conceptual rather than empirical findings. These will be elaborated upon in the preceding section. Reviewing the advantages and disadvantages is based on conceptual papers that have an optimistic (e.g. Lee, 2016; He, 2018; Jarrahi, 2018), nuanced (e.g. Wisskirchen et al., 2017; Van Dick, 2018; Webster & Ivanov, 2020), and pessimistic (Walsh, 2019) view on workplace digitization. One of the most preliminary debates on workplace digitalisation concerns the replacement of human labour by technological tools (e.g. robots and artificial intelligence), which has been discussed in the majority of papers reviewed.

3.8.1 Advantages

The most obvious advantage of workplace digitalisation, and especially the replacement of human labour by technology, relates to efficiency and productivity (Wisskirchen et al., 2017) as paying salaries becomes unnecessary and technologies are not affected by, for instance, fatigue, emotions, illness, and their personal life. This implies that technologies could work 24/7, significantly improving productivity and total profits by reducing overall costs (Van Dick, 2018; Webster & Ivanov, 2020). Furthermore, it will improve the overall quality of the products due to the programmed accuracy of technologies (Wisskirchen et al., 2017; Bresnahan & Yin, 2017; Webster & Ivanov, 2020). Mathiason et al. (2014) also refer to so-called "robotic wearables", which can be worn to assist humans in physical labour, thereby using technology to an advantage without having to replace human labour completely. This is supported by Jarrahi (2018) who takes on a more pragmatic approach to workplace digitalisation, in which the argument is presented that the use of technology can complement human labour.

Moreover, due to a lack of emotions, technologies could be helpful in decision-making, in which decisions are purely based on facts (Wisskirchen et al., 2017). This is particularly useful for HR professionals, in which, for instance, applicant selection nowadays is performed by algorithms rather than humans (Mathiason et al., 2014; Lee, 2016; Van Dick, 2018). He (2018), who takes an optimistic view to workplace digitalisation, supports this, in which it is conceptualized how AI could have several benefits for the HR department. These include using AI to select applicants, ease the onboarding process, and even improve the workplace experience for employees. On the other hand, these technologies are unable to understand the complex social behaviour of people and its environment, neglecting these issues when making decisions (De Cremer, 2019). The use of AI and robots at the workplace can, however, be used in several industries for various purposes (Mathiason et al., 2014).

Although the most obvious advantages to workplace digitalisation are on organizational rather than individual level, there are also some advantages to individual employees. Employees' tasks

descriptions will be eliminated from any repetitive tasks and will require less physical work as these are more easily performed by technologies (Heller, 1986; Wisskirchen et al., 2017; He, 2018; Smids et al., 2019), giving them more time to spend on tasks that require creativity (Wisskirchen et al., 2017) or human brain power (Smids et al., 2019). Webster and Ivanov (2020), on the other hand, argue that robots are, currently, not able to perform heavy physical tasks, meaning that these tasks will also be reserved for humans.

Additionally, tasks that require analysing huge amounts of data, for instance applicant recruitment, will be more efficiently done by these technologies (Mathiason et al., 2014; Lee, 2016; Jarrahi, 2018). The data present in technologies can also benefit individuals in such a way that individuals are able to simplify knowledge-sharing (Leonardi, 2014). Humans will, moreover, be less involved with jobs that are seen as dangerous or having bad working conditions (Wisskirchen et al., 2017). Contrarily to completely replacing human labour with technology, Timonen and Vuori (2018) examined how visibility of work would be changed as a result of humans using digital tools at the workplace. Here, it was found that the visibility of work between co-workers and within the organization was improved, whereas work visibility for customers was diminished.

To conclude, most advantages that workplace digitalisation bring are applicable to the organization, in terms of efficiency, productivity, cost reduction, product quality, and the technology's ability to be objective in decision-making. There are, however, also some advantages to workplace digitalisation for individual employees, as repetitive, dangerous, or tasks that require analysing huge amounts of data can be performed by technologies, leaving the tasks that require, for instance, creativity and human brainpower for employees. Digital tools could, furthermore, be used to share knowledge more easily among employees and, hence, make work more visible for everyone.

3.8.2 Disadvantages

Besides advantages, workplace digitalisation also has several negative outcomes, mainly on an individual level rather than organizational. These disadvantages relate to a loss of freedom and autonomy for workers due to, for instance, electronic surveillance used in the workplace (Heller, 1986; Nemkova, Demirel, & Baines, 2019). Related to this is that these tools often make use of big data and raise some concerns about the individual's privacy (Mathiason et al., 2014). These highly digitized workplaces are often criticized as "humanity is taken away" (Dimitrov, 2018, as cited in De Cremer, 2019).

Another disadvantage that many refer to is human displacement, in which human labour is (partially) replaced by technology. This will automatically lead to a decrease in the number of jobs performed by humans (Timonen & Vuori, 2018; Webster & Ivanov, 2020), which mainly applies for those who are less qualified for knowledge-intensive jobs (Bresnahan & Yin, 2017; Van Dick, 2018). This may consequently lead to income inequality (Bresnahan & Yin, 2017; Webster & Ivanov, 2020). The displacement of human labour, on the other hand, may lead to new job roles or a higher demand in

other (managerial) positions (Mathiason et al., 2014; Cascio & Montealegre, 2016; Wisskirchen et al., 2017; Bresnahan & Yin, 2017; Van Dick, 2018; Timonen & Vuori, 2018). An increase in digital labour may, for instance, lead to a higher demand for computer programmers and technicians. In this way, human labour will continue to be complementary to technological labour (Jarrahi, 2018). Some scholars, furthermore, argue that digital tools are not able to make complex decisions in social contexts, meaning that a lot of jobs will remain in human hands (De Cremer, 2019).

Although the aforementioned reveals some of the opportunities the digital revolution might bring, a study of Brougham and Haar (2018) found that the higher the awareness of future usage of digital tools among workers, the less committed and satisfied the workers were, with higher turnover intentions, cynicism, and depression. Also, in light of algorithmic management, Dietvorst, Simmons and Massey (2015, as cited in De Cremer, 2019) found that, for human workers, human leadership is preferred over digital leadership. Lastly, the production and use of artificial intelligence pollutes the environment as a whole and requires a large initial investment by the organization (Chakraborti & Maurya, n.d.).

All in all, it can be concluded that the negative outcomes of workplace digitalisation mostly affect the employees rather than the organization as a whole. Most of these disadvantages are related to a future scenario in which jobs are endangered as digital tools (partially) take over human labour. This could, for instance, result in unstable income distributions. Another disadvantage based on the present situation is that the use of digital tools could jeopardize an individual's privacy and freedom.

3.9   What is the relationship between workplace digitalisation and meaningful work?

The nature of work has continuously shifted as a result of technological advancements. During the industrial revolution, for instance, the development of factory machinery has resulted in a significant change of work's nature (Forman, King, & Lyytinen, 2014). In line with this argumentation, it can be expected that the future workplace will be completely different from work that one knows today. This shift in work content also has implications for the individuals involved in the job.

As previously identified, research on the relationship between workplace digitalisation and meaningful work is still rather limited. Contemporary research often hypothesizes how these two concepts are related to one another (e.g. Smids et al., 2019), rather than empirically testing these assumptions. Besides that, a lot of research on workplace digitalisation study or hypothesize potential consequences for employees by not specifically addressing meaningful work (e.g. Oz, Glass, Behling, 1999; Holland, Cooper, & Hecker, 2015; Charlier, Guay, & Zimmerman, 2016; ter Hoeven, van Zoonen, & Fonner, 2016; Brougham & Haar, 2018; Cijan, Jenič, Lamovšek, & Stemberger, 2019; Leicht-Deobald et al., 2019; Spånt Enbuske, 2019). The study of ter Hoeven et al. (2016), for instance, revealed that the use of communication technologies in the workplace can increase accessibility and efficiency, whereas it also diminishes employee well-being through interruptions and unpredictability.

The studies that do consider some type of workplace digitalisation and meaningful work, often address the autonomy aspect that is violated by, for instance, electronically monitoring employees (Heller, 1986; Stein et al., 2019; Symon & Whiting, 2019). This is supported by Holland et al. (2014) who state that the use of technology can result in stress and tensions as employees feel "powerless". In line, Stein et al. (2019) feel that less rigid digital structures that are open to autonomy and job crafting could potentially contribute to meaningful experiences. On the question whether a digital revolution can foster meaningful work experiences, Lent (2018) argues that both optimistic and pessimistic scenarios are possible, which may heavily depend on whether the individual's skill set involves routine or non-routine tasks and the ability of one to adapt and reconstruct their own careers. Similarly, Walsh (2019) argues that "[a]utomation itself will present challenges to the nature of work, our identity, and how people consider their purpose". On the other hand, he also expresses that the use of AI could also provide opportunities for individuals to engage in more meaningful work. In a conceptual paper by Smids et al. (2019) that focuses on robotization and meaningful work both the optimistic and pessimistic scenarios are described. The outcomes of these scenarios, according to them, is dependent on several factors, such as whether human labour will be replaced completely or whether digital and human labour will complement one another and how sophisticated the robots will be designed in terms of, for instance, the ability to have social relationships.

4. Towards a conceptual model

The following section will conclude the main findings from the literature review, after which a set of propositions are developed that will be used to answer the question of "How can the key characteristics of meaningful work be used by HR managers in the international hospitality industry to foster meaningful work in a digital work environment?" These propositions will lay the basis for the development of the conceptual framework that will be presented at the end of this paragraph (see 4.6).

4.1 The definition of meaningful work

As the literature review has illustrated, there are many different perceptions on how meaningful work is defined. Whereas some researchers refer to meaningful work as a subjective concept of work that is perceived as significant, worthwhile, and valuable, others add that it is work that is perceived to serve a greater good or is aligned to one's own values and desires. There has been some critique on adding these latter two characteristics of meaningful work into its definition, as these also elaborate upon how meaningful work can be achieved. As illustrated in the framework presented by Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009), for instance, work that serves a greater good beyond the self represents the domain of "serving others", in which making a difference and meeting the needs of humanity are key. In a similar vein, work being aligned to one's own values can be categorized into "developing and becoming oneself", in which individuals want to remain true to their own values in their job.

Although this paper recognizes that both of these partially explain how meaningful work is achieved, it does propose that it is useful to make use of these characteristics in obtaining a distinctive definition of meaningful work. If the definition of meaningful work would, for instance, be "work [that is] experienced as particularly significant" (Rosso et al., 2010, p. 95), it would not fully distinguish meaningful work from other concepts such as job satisfaction. To specify, definitions should comprise differentiating characteristics that ensure that the concept cannot be misunderstood for another (Purdue Writing Lab, n.d.). Based on this and on how meaningful work has been defined in literature, it is proposed here that meaningful work refers to a subjective psychological perception of work as significant, worthwhile, and valuable that is aligned with one's own personal values while making a positive contribution beyond the self. Despite the fact that a perception is subjective, it was chosen to stress it extra as it explains a lot about the essence of meaningful work. The components that are, therefore, key in defining meaningful work include (1) the subjective perception of the concept, (2) its positive stance in literature, (3) the fit between the individual's values and work, and (4) the contribution to a greater good beyond the self.

> **Proposition 1:** Meaningful work refers to (1) a subjective psychological perception of work as (2) significant, worthwhile, and valuable that is (3) aligned with one's own personal values while (4) making a positive contribution beyond the self.

4.2 The sources of meaningful work

In general, there is less disagreement in scholarly literature about what the sources of meaningful work are. The majority of scholars refer to either the framework established by Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) or to the model of Rosso et al. (2010). Despite that these frameworks differ in their formulations of the sources; they largely explain the same idea. Based on the definition of a source as "the place something comes from or starts" (Cambridge, n.d.), this section will elaborate on the question: "From who or what does meaningful work originate?" Broadly, meaningful work perceptions derive from (1) the self, as it involves a subjective and individual sense-making process, and (2) others, who influence this process and legitimise these subjective perceptions. Here, the "others" dimension comprises not only the social relationships inside and outside the workplace, but also the individual's institutional environment in the context of cultural and organizational factors. This paper proposes that the self and others are interconnected, and both influence how meaningful perceptions are formed. For instance, as Boova et al. (2019) illustrated in their framework of pathways, what makes work worth doing for an individual derives from the interplay between the individual and the individual's institutional context.

Broadly, there are four sources within literature that lead to meaningful work. These include (1) developing and becoming self, (2) unity with others, (3) expressing full potential, and (4) serving others (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009). To explain, an individual is likely to experience their work as meaningful if the four sources of meaningfulness are perceived to be "fulfilled". Meaningful work, is, on the other hand, subjective of nature, meaning that what one may find meaningful is not perceived to be meaningful for someone else. These four sources of meaningful work are, therefore, influenced by the individual's values, wants, and needs, and the institutional environment that changes and legitimises these values.

> **Proposition 2:** An individual's perception of the four sources of meaningful work, including (1) developing and becoming self, (2) unity with others, (3) expressing full potential, and (4) serving others (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009), is influenced by the self, as perceptions derive from the subjective sense-making process, and others, who influence and legitimise these perceptions.

4.3 The promotion of meaningful work (in the workplace)

The literature review revealed that there are two main perspectives in meaningful work literature. These include the work-centric and worker-centric perspective. Within the work-centric perspective, it is believed that certain organizational practices can support and/or hinder the formation of meaningful experiences, whereas the worker-centric perspective believes that meaningful experiences occur in every organization, regardless of the company's job design. Hence, the latter puts more emphasis on the individual's process of sense-making. Broadly, the work-centric perspective tries to emphasize the four sources outlined by Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) by implementing particular practices that encourage these aspects. The four domains that Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009) described are (1)

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developing and becoming self, (2) unity with others, (3) expressing full potential, and (4) serving others. As an example, an employer may encourage employees to develop and become oneself by providing a lot of training opportunities. Similarly, unity with others might be achieved by arranging social gatherings or by doing team building exercises on a regular basis.

As described in the section above, this paper proposes that meaningful perceptions arise from the interplay between the self and others. Although it is believed that meaningful perceptions are inherent to the individual, in which every job could be perceived as meaningful, it is proposed that work environments could be shaped in a way to promote meaningfulness. This does not, however, necessarily mean that these work environments will appeal to every individual in the workplace. This is in line with the argument that individuals have varying perceptions of what makes work worth doing (Boova et al., 2019). Moreover, Simonet and Castille (2019) found that meaningful work perceptions also depend on an individual's personality traits. As a result, meaningful work environments should be designed in a way that fulfils an individual's idea of what makes work worth doing and should, hence, be aligned to one's inner desires and values.

As one may notice, this goes back to one of the aspects of what meaningful work essentially is; work that matches with one's personal values. Therefore, in order for organizations to design a workplace that supports the formation of meaningful work, an organization should be aware of who the individual is, what someone desires, and personalize the workplace based on that information. This personalisation could take place by enabling employees to craft their own jobs. Hence, this paper proposes that there is not a fixed set of actions that promote meaningful work, but instead that flexibility and knowledge about individual workers is required to personalize jobs in such a way that meaningfulness can be supported.

> **Proposition 3:** As meaningful work perceptions are subjective and derive from the interplay between the self and others, it is proposed that HR managers can foster meaningful work perceptions by either personalizing jobs based on the individuals' values and desires or by designing a job that enables job crafting.

4.4 The connection between meaningful work and workplace digitalisation

The literature review showed that there is limited research into the relationship between meaningful work and workplace digitalisation. The papers that are available, however, often highlight that it depends on multiple factors of how meaningful work is affected by workplace digitalisation. In short, these include (1) whether human labour is completely displaced or partly, (2) the use and sophistication of digitalized tools (e.g. rigid vs. flexible, ability of social interaction or not), and (3) the individual workers' skills and ability to change. The most optimistic situation of a digitized workplace would then represent a workplace that enables human and digital labour to complement one another, in which the digitised tools are flexible in its usage and designed in a way that enables social interaction with humans.

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Moreover, the human workers should be skilled enough to be involved in non-routine tasks that are less likely to be replaced by digital technologies and require a certain flexibility to change.

Following the idea that meaningful work is subjective in nature, it is proposed that the use of digitised tools in the workplace can both benefit and hinder meaningful work experiences. This proposition is based on the argument that a digitised workplace may support meaningful work for one individual but hinder these experiences for others. In a similar vein, some may have positive associations with working in a digital environment and, hence, offer opportunities for meaningful work, whereas others are less optimistic. Being able to perceive work as meaningful in a digital environment is, therefore, proposed to be mostly dependent on the willingness of an individual to work in such an environment. The willingness then, again, arises from individual perceptions on workplace digitalisation and the environment who shape these perceptions.

Besides willingness, literature revealed that the sophistication and use of the technology are also central in determining whether individuals will be able to experience meaningful work. For instance, whether digital structures are open to flexibility and autonomy (Stein et al., 2019), robots are capable of social interaction (Smids et al., 2019), or whether rather meaningless jobs are allocated to artificial labour. Moreover, it is important to note that the need for meaningful work diminishes if future technological tools become so sophisticated that human labour is replaced completely. This would have major implications for human motivation and meaning in life.

Proposition 4: A digital work environment can both benefit and hinder meaningful work experiences based on (1) the individual's willingness to work in a digital environment, which is based on the individual's beliefs and perceptions towards workplace digitalisation, and (2) the use and sophistication of the technology.

Based on the fact that a digital environment can both hinder and benefit meaningful work, which largely depends on the individual's beliefs and perceptions towards workplace digitalisation, it is suggested that the use of digital tools within the workplace should be flexible and open to autonomy. This will enable individuals to shape the workplace in a way that supports meaningful work for them. Hence, some people may make more use of digital structures and, as a result, experience their work as more meaningful. Others, however, may choose to lessen the use of digital tools in the workplace. This implies that the organization should provide flexibility in the use of digital structures in order to stimulate meaningful work.

Proposition 5: To stimulate meaningful work in a digital context, the organization should provide flexibility in the use of digital structures and should ensure that digital structures are open to autonomy.

4.5   The outcomes of meaningful work

A meaningful work environment has several advantages for both the individual worker and the organization. For individuals, these include job satisfaction, (career) commitment, happiness, personal

fulfilment, improved creativity, and less burnout and stress. Moreover, as work is a large part of an individual's life, these advantages often extend to overall well-being and enhanced meaning of life. The benefits for organizations include higher commitment and engagement, improved work behaviours, a reduction in withdrawal behaviours and sickness, and, ultimately, results in better overall performance. There are, however, darker sides to meaningful work in which employers abuse the commitment and high effort of its employees by, for instance, paying low wages and letting employees work longer hours. This, however, raises the question whether, in a situation like that, employees will continue to perceive their work as meaningful. In sum, it can be argued that numerous studies have shown that meaningful work has positive effects for both employees and employers, in which higher levels of meaningfulness improve satisfaction, commitment, productivity, and overall performance. Meaningful work, furthermore, has an impact on a lot of different aspects of the individual's life rather than just work-related aspects.

> **Proposition 6:** Meaningful work has positive outcomes on an individual worker level as well as on organizational level, including improved satisfaction, commitment, productivity, and overall performance and well-being.

4.6   Conceptual framework

On the basis of the formulated propositions, a conceptual framework is established that aims to give HR practitioners more insight into how meaningful work can be fostered in a digital work environment. Despite the fact that the framework itself does not refer to this digital context a lot, this framework can be used in various contextual settings. This is merely based on the argument that as meaningful work perceptions differ from individual to individual, so do perceptions of working in a digital environment. Hence, individuals should be given the opportunity to customise their jobs based on their own preferences, which is outlined within the framework. Figure 4 illustrates the framework that connects the formation of meaningful work perceptions to how these perceptions can be fostered in a work environment. For the references used to create this framework, please see the legend in appendix IV (p. 70).

The central idea of the framework is that by understanding the basics of how meaningful work perceptions are formed and what meaningful work is, a recommendation can be given on how a meaningful work environment can be fostered. Perceptions of work derive not only from the subjective sense-making process, but also from the individual's institutional environment (i.e. social, cultural, and organizational context). To specify, the institutional environment may change or legitimise the individual's perceptions of what makes work worth doing. Literature showed that work is experienced to be meaningful once an individual perceives their work to fulfil four critical aspects (i.e. the sources of meaningful work). However, meaningful work has a subjective nature. This implies that individuals with similar experiences perceive these differently in terms of meaningfulness. Hence, one may find their job meaningful, whereas others with a similar job perceive this differently. Based on this

subjectivity, it would be false to suggest that an environment can be designed that provides meaningful experiences for everyone in the workplace.

As a result, HR managers may foster meaningful work perceptions by aligning the job and its work environment to the individual's idea of what makes work worth doing. This could be done by either customising the job based on the individual's perceptions or by designing an environment that supports autonomy and job crafting. This will stimulate individuals to shape their work environments based on what is important to them. Hence, it is important to remember that, due to the subjective nature of meaningful perceptions, personalisation is required. The same line of thought is followed in a digital context. In such a context, the ability and willingness of an individual to perceive their work as meaningful may depend heavily on both the individual's inner beliefs, desires, and identity, and the influence of the institutional environment. For example, one may have positive perceptions about the use of digital tools, after which these are legitimised by the environment. As a result of having a positive perception towards this, the individual may filter their sense-making process based on aspects that could foster meaningful work. In the eyes of this individual, the digital tools may in this scenario, for instance, give the individual a greater sense and awareness of how he or she is contributing towards society. Consequently meaning that meaningful work perceptions can be enhanced.

Meaningful work can, therefore, be fostered in a digital work environment by offering job crafting opportunities to employees and to enable them to be autonomous in making decisions related to the use of digitised tools. In the end, the customisation of jobs is likely to influence an individual's perception of work. This ultimately leads to work that is perceived as more significant, worthwhile, and valuable, while being aligned with one's personal values. Moreover, this will likely result in more awareness of how the individual makes a positive contribution beyond the self. By giving employees the opportunity to influence and achieve work-related aspects that are important to them, for instance, employees might perceive themselves contributing to the company to a greater extent than before. In the end, these meaningful work perceptions will have several positive outcomes on both a worker and organizational level.

Self[15] (sensemaking)

Others[7] (institutions)

Fulfilment

| Developing and becoming self[1] | Unity with others[1] |
| Expressing full potential[1] | Serving others[1] |

Job crafting and customisation[2]
Flexible digital structures[3]
HR professionals should design job structures that allow the individual to craft their job based on the individual's values, identity, and desires.

☀ **Meaningful work** ☀
A subjective psychological perception of work as significant, worthwhile, and valuable[4], aligned with one's own values[5], while making a positive contribution beyond the self.[6]

Individual outcomes (e.g.)
Job satisfaction[11] (+)
Commitment[12] (+)
Happiness and well-being[13] (+)
Stress and burnout[14] (-)

Organisational outcomes (e.g.)
Commitment[7] (+)
Work behaviours[8] (+)
Withdrawal and sickness[9] (-)
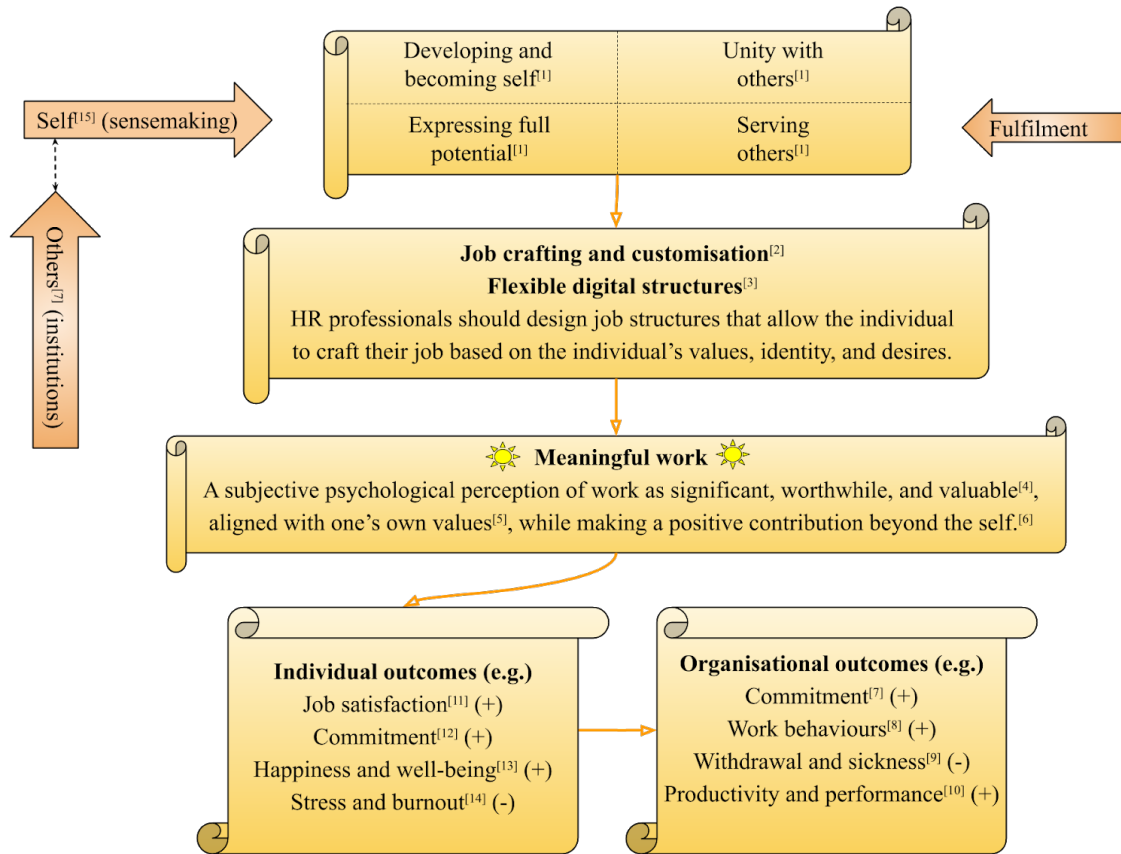Productivity and performance[10] (+)

Figure 4.   Design a meaningful work environment (in a digital context).

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5.   Case illustration

This chapter will provide more insight into meaningful work in practice, in which an interview has been conducted with a HR manager from an international hospitality business. In combination with workplace digitalisation, this interview serves as a case illustration of meaningful work in practice within the international hospitality industry. However, before the results are shown, this chapter will elaborate upon the research context and the methods used for sampling and analysis. After that, the opinions and experiences of the HR manager will be shared in the result section. Lastly, an analysis will take place that compares practical (i.e. the interview) to theoretical knowledge (i.e. the conceptual framework). Hence, an attempt will be done to apply the case illustration to the conceptual framework that has been established before.

5.1   Method for case illustration

For illustrative purposes, an interview was conducted with an HR manager from a large international hospitality business located in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Initially, it was planned to conduct several interviews with HR managers operating in the international hospitality industry, but as a result of the current situation around the corona crisis this was not doable. In total, 60 HR managers were invited to participate in the research project and out of these 60 managers one was willing to participate. The HR managers were invited through LinkedIn by using the invitation illustrated in Appendix V (see p. 71).

The selection of HR managers was based on non-probability sampling as opposed to probability sampling. As Marshall (1996) indicates, probability sampling techniques are often inappropriate for qualitative inquiry. This stems from the fact that qualitative research often involves a specific group of people, such as experts, rather than all individuals having an equal chance of being selected for the study. Non-probability sampling, therefore, implies that the sample is not randomly acquired but is merely based on certain characteristics or requirements. Besides, it is often used to have easier access to potential participants with limited resources, such as time, and when there is no need to make generalizations about the entire population (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). As a result of the current situation with corona and the fact that prior research is used to provide a conceptual framework, this interview will solely be used as a case illustration used to compare theoretical to practical knowledge and will, therefore, not be used to generalize.

Out of the non-probability techniques, convenience sampling was used, which is a sampling method based on easy accessibility and, hence, often involves (shared) connections (Verhoeven, 2015). For instance, the HR expert that serves as a practical illustration in this paper is known by the thesis supervisor. This increased the possibility of the HR manager participating in the project. In addition to that, not all HR managers were invited as these did not appear in the LinkedIn search. Hence, it was based on whether these HR managers were easily accessible and the proximity of whether these were willing to participate as a result of shared connections.

As preparation towards the interview, the researcher, with the support of the thesis supervisor, prepared an interview guide that consisted of various questions that would be central throughout the interview. This guide is presented in Appendix VI (see p. 72). The interview guide consists of five predetermined themes to ensure that the different domains and contexts of meaningful work are considered. In terms of the research context, the empirical research took place during the corona pandemic. As a result, the interview could not take place physically and was, therefore, conducted over the phone. Before the interview started, the participant was asked for consent to record the interview. The interview took place in the time in which organizations started to operate again, which meant a busy period for the HR manager that was interviewed. The interview lasted 30 minutes.

5.2 Data analysis

The interview is transcribed by using edited transcriptions. This implies that, for instance, stutters, emotional states (e.g. giggles, sighs), coughs, and sneezes will be excluded from the transcript to ensure that the transcript is more readable. This transcript is illustrated in Appendix VII (see p. 73-82). Based on analysing and re-reading the transcript, codes were established within the various themes. These codes and a summary of the interview can be consulted from Appendix VIII (see p. 83-87). To ensure inter-coder reliability, the established themes and codes were reviewed by an independent peer. This was done to assess the quality of the codes attributed to the transcripts and to ensure that all data is captured by the codes. A few adjustments were made based on the outcomes. The validity of the research was, however, affected as the assessment of codes was based on the perceptions of only one person (Golafshani, 2003).

To assess the trustworthiness of the data, the criteria established by Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017) will be used. These include (1) credibility, (2) transferability, (3) dependability, and (4) confirmability. Firstly, credibility, which assesses whether the researcher's interpretations of the data correspond with the participant's view, was evaluated using member-checking (Nowell et al., 2017). Hence, the interviewee was given the opportunity to check the transcriptions to prevent any form of miscommunication and to add any missing information to the transcripts. The aim of this is to increase the possibility that the interpretations drawn by the researcher represent the participant's views. Secondly, transferability, which deals with whether the research findings can be generalized to other research contexts, was considered (Nowell et al., 2017). This criterion is, however, not fully satisfied as the empirical research only considers one person's point of view. Despite this, a systematic literature review has been conducted beforehand, which does consider meaningful work in different contexts. As the review and the empirical research are combined, the ability to generalize, therefore, increases.

Thirdly, dependability refers to how consistent the research has been conducted in terms of time, researchers, and analysis methods (Nowell et al., 2017). This criterion can, however, not be assessed as only one interview has been conducted. On the other hand, the systematic literature review

made use of a wide range of papers comprising different research methods, researchers, and time considerations. Fourth, confirmability relates to the researcher's bias, which comprises the process of how interpretations were derived from the researcher (Nowell et al., 2017). This aspect of the research is violated as the researcher had conducted a thorough literature review beforehand and was, therefore, aware of what is known in literature. This could have potentially influenced the interview process.

5.3 Results of case illustration

The paragraphs below will elaborate upon the results of the interview, in which the HR manager's ideas, opinions, and experiences are explored in relation to meaningful work (in a digital context). This section is structured based on the predetermined themes, presented in the interview guide (Appendix VI, p. 72).

5.3.1 The definition of meaningful work

According to the HR manager that was interviewed, meaningful work is related to work that gives the individual energy and provides meaning. Moreover, it has been stated that it is a subjective concept, in which the same experience can have different meanings and perceptions of importance for different individuals. Indirectly, the HR manager also states that there should be a fit between the workers' own values and the job at hand as, according to him, customisation of the job is an important aspect of achieving meaningfulness. In addition, the HR manager addresses the dimension of "contribution" in which the organizational context plays a key role in highlighting an individual's contribution to the company's objectives and mission. Although these latter two were not directly stated in the definition of meaningful work, the HR manager has frequently addressed these characteristics of meaningful work throughout the interview as distinctive elements that define meaningful work. For instance, when addressing meaningful work in different international contexts, the HR manager describes meaningful work as "how do I contribute, how do I make an impact?" This does not only illustrate that meaningful work is believed to contribute to a greater good, but also illustrates the self-reflective nature of meaningful work.

5.3.2 The stimulation of meaningful work in the workplace

A large part of the interview was concerned with how meaningfulness can be achieved and what employers can do to support the formation of meaningful perceptions. Hence, the HR manager indirectly acknowledges that despite the fact that meaningful work is subjective, others (i.e. work environment) also influence this process. According to the HR manager, the employer is an important aspect in achieving meaningfulness. For instance, meaningful perceptions cannot be created in an atmosphere in which employees are not rewarded for their efforts and "just need to shut up and work". Instead, employees should be rewarded for their personal contributions that are emphasized by, for example, describing how they contribute to the mission and objectives of the organization. Besides, employers should give employees the opportunity to be involved with the company in a way that the

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employees are able to give ideas and to craft their jobs to a certain extent. The hotel, for instance, offers various platforms, such as group discussions, that can be used by employees to share and discuss their ideas and, consequently, to contribute to job crafting. This would, ultimately, stimulate a better fit between the individual and the job.

In terms of personal development, the employees are all trained to work with the so-called "lean philosophy". This strategy evolves around reducing waste and, hence, improving productivity, but also on stimulating an individual's personal involvement in the company. According to the HR manager, supervisors also have an important role in enhancing meaningful work perceptions. These supervisors annually participate in leadership training to train and stimulate them to start a conversation about these topics with the employees. An example of such a conversation is the personal development interviews that regularly take place with the employee. Within these interviews, employees are individually asked on what their desires are within the company and what they need in order to achieve that. Based on these conversations, both personalised and standard training programs are offered. Although the importance of personalisation and job crafting are emphasized by the HR manager, he does acknowledge that it can only be done to a certain extent. For instance, a dishwasher is still expected to do his job and wash the dishes. On the other hand, he will be invited and stimulated to come up with innovations to make his job more enjoyable and easier.

There are also a few challenges related to stimulating a meaningful workplace. The HR manager expressed that it is sometimes challenging to get everyone involved in this HR strategy. The HR manager opines that there is a difference between generations in how involved they want to be with the company. According to this experience, older generations are, in general, more inclined to "just shut up and do their job", whereas younger generations are more likely to search for meaning in their work and to think about their individual contributions. In line with this, the HR manager expresses that a supervisor should be able to inspire and motivate both generations. In relation to these generational differences, the HR manager, further, experiences that younger generations are less likely to be satisfied with their job. This is related to these generations' expectations and to what extent they want to contribute. There is, for example, no time or room for discussions when a chef says that a plate of food needs to be prepared now. The HR manager experiences that, in some of these situations, the younger generations are more likely to argue with the way in which something is done, like: "well, I would actually like to do it differently".

5.3.3   Meaningful work in an international context

How people experience their work, furthermore, depends on their national culture. The experience of the HR manager is that some cultures are more aware of the meaning in their work and spend more time on evaluating themselves and their work environment. As an example, the Japanese culture is more hierarchical in which people just go to their work and do what the boss orders. Hence, the Japanese expect their boss to take care of them without themselves taking initiative to craft or change their job.

The HR manager, further, experiences that the Japanese are less concerned with personal development than in Western cultures. "The personal development plan, for example, is filled in by people with a European background, but a person that has a Japanese culture is less concerned with that". Another example that is given is the American culture, which the HR manager perceives to be more concerned with the search for meaning. "Americans are more concerned with that, they often think about: "How can I contribute, how do I make an impact, and what do I contribute to the company I work for?"

5.3.4 Meaningful work in a digital context

Within the digital context, the HR manager mainly considered robotization. The robotization of all workplaces within the hospitality industry is, according to the HR manager, not likely to happen. This merely depends on the type of hotel, the guests it receives, and the company's objectives. The HR manager, for instance, explained that he is employed in a five-star hotel where hospitality is of paramount importance. In the past, a research has been conducted within the hotel that investigated how guests would react to a hotel that has a digitized front of house (e.g. check-in by robots), in which it was found that the guests would not appreciate that. Although this is the case for this hotel, the HR manager acknowledges that it would probably be different for a three-star hotel that has a different customer base. In the back of the house it would, however, be more logical and likely that jobs are replaced and automated by digital tools.

The HR manager takes on a rather pessimistic approach to workplace digitalisation, in which it is believed that the population will be divided into two distinct groups. One group will consist of people that are not able to perform different work because they do not have the skills and capabilities to do so or are not willing to change and have a so-called "fixed mindset". The other group, on the other hand, consists of people that are more flexible and have a "growth mindset", and at the same time possess the qualities and skills that are needed to perform a different job and work in a digitized environment. The main concern of the HR manager is, however, that jobs are completely replaced by robots which will certainly have implications for meaningful work and life in general. "Work is a very important component of people's overall well-being and social interaction. But if millions of people lose their jobs because it has been replaced… Yeah, I seriously wonder what will be left to do for those people in a day".

5.3.5 Meaningful work during the COVID-19 pandemic

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, people had more time to self-reflect and to become more aware of what they are actually doing in their lives. As the HR manager explains people start to ask themselves questions such as "am I actually happy, am I doing the right things?" Also, the HR manager experiences that people, generally, appreciate their daily working lives more and are more satisfied with their current job. "The people I speak to are actually relieved and happy to be able to return to work. They see it more as "gosh I'm glad I have a job. I am happier with my job than before Corona"". People start to

realize more the value of their job and how this contributes to their wider well-being in life. Although this is currently experienced, with time, this feeling is likely to become less. Also, the HR manager expresses that it also depends on the context as some employers stopped paying for holiday fees and some even stopped paying salaries at all. In this context, the HR manager believes that people are not able to experience meaningful work if the basic salary does not satisfy the human need to pay for rent and food. Hence, he follows the motivational theory of Maslow, in which the higher motivational levels can only be accomplished once the basic needs are fulfilled.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, HR managers are more likely to spend less resources and time on supporting meaningful work. Before the pandemic, employers used meaningful work as an employer brand to attract new people to the company. However, as a lot of people are out of jobs now, demand for jobs is high, whereas supply is, generally, relatively low. This makes HR managers less concerned with meaningful work. Moreover, as people have had time to self-reflect and are, generally, happy with the fact that they are still employed and can fulfil their basic needs, meaningful work has diminished in importance. Besides, the HR manager expresses that less budget is also available for these aspects of work as revenue streams have evaporated during the crisis. When the HR manager would, for instance, ask for a budget for vitality the boss would likely respond with "first go and see how we can still make some money, what we originally should have earned this year".

5.4   Application of case study to the conceptual framework

By comparing the theoretical framework in Figure 4 (see p. 33) and the case illustration, it can be concluded that the case illustration largely fits into the theoretical framework. The comparison of theory and practice is illustrated in Figure 5 (see p. 42). The conceptual framework will, however, not be changed as a result of the case illustration; it is used only to identify any differences and similarities and will provide guidance for future research. Hence, the theoretical findings, derived from the literature review, are more reliable and weigh more heavily in the final conceptual framework.

First of all, both the self and others were recognized as important sources of meaningful work. The "others" dimension in this sense mainly comprised the organizational context that should be designed in a way to support meaningful perceptions. To specify, this implies that, in the HR manager's view, others are able to influence how meaningful experiences are perceived. Moreover, the HR manager believes that cultural context plays a role in the formation of meaningful work perceptions, in which individuals from different cultures have different points of view. The interview, however, did not go into detail about the influence of the social context on the individual's sense-making process. Neither did the HR manager discuss the legitimization of perceptions by others. Hence, the case study partially corresponds to the theoretical findings of the study. The self has also been acknowledged as an important source of meaningfulness as meaningful work is, in nature, subjective to the individual. This means that the individual itself is key to the formation of these perceptions. To illustrate, the HR manager often elaborates upon self-reflective questions that serve as foundations for the creation of

these perceptions (e.g. "what do I contribute?"). Thus, this fully corresponds with prior theoretical knowledge on meaningful work.

Out of the four sources established by Lips-Wiersma and Morris (2009), the majority of the interview was concerned with the dimensions of (1) developing and becoming self and (2) expressing full potential. The reason for this can be that these dimensions are most likely to be influenced by the employer. As an example, the employer can give individuals the opportunity to develop themselves by training and to influence and craft their jobs. Here, the HR manager follows a work-centric approach to meaningful work, but recognizes that meaningful perceptions differ per individual and, hence, customisation is necessary. For this reason and to support meaningful perceptions, individuals within the company are free to be autonomous and craft their jobs to a certain extent. This, therefore, supports the framework in a way that both the individual and the work environment are key to meaningful work, in which meaningful work can be supported through customisation ("work-centric perspective") but that, in the end, the individual is key to the formation of meaningful perceptions ("worker-centric perspective"). In sum, (1) developing and becoming self and (2) expressing full potential fully correspond with theory. Moreover, to stimulate meaningful work, HR professionals should enable job crafting and customisation.

Besides these sources, the manager indirectly addresses the dimension of "serving others", in a way that people that perceive their work as meaningful have the feeling they contribute to something greater than themselves. Within the interview, this was mainly addressed in the organizational context: "If you tell every employee individually what their contribution means to, for instance, the mission or objectives of the company, then you will be triggered more". Moreover, as elaborated upon previously, the social context and, hence "unity with others", has not been discussed throughout the interview. Thus, the dimension of "serving others" partially corresponds to what the theory suggests, while "unity with others" has not been discussed throughout the interview.

In the context of digitalisation and how this could potentially influence meaningful work, the HR manager believes that its effects will be two-sided. To specify, some people will continue to experience meaningful work, whereas others will not, depending on their ability and, mostly, willingness to adapt to this environment. It could be argued that, based on this two-sided effect and on the customisation perspective of the HR manager in stimulating meaningful work, it would also require digital structures to be designed in a way that supports the individual's sense of meaningful work. These structures should, therefore, be flexible in which the use of digital tools is lessened for the people that are less able and willing to adapt to such an environment. Similarly, as the HR manager discussed, there are also people who will continue to experience their work as meaningful regardless of this digital context.

Throughout the interview, the HR manager did not distinguish between different types of digital tools, but instead focused on tools that replace human labour. As a result, the HR manager is rather pessimistic in a way that many people will become unemployed and will, therefore, have less

meaningful experiences. Within literature, however, it is believed that digitalisation could also bring opportunities for individuals to engage in more meaningful work. This is not in line with the HR managers' thoughts and ideas of the concept. All in all, it could be proposed that, based on the arguments given in the interview, that digital structures should be customised based on an individual's sense of what is meaningful. This was, however, not explicitly addressed and the HR manager merely focused on the disadvantages of workplace digitalisation. A concrete difference between theory and practice, in this particular case, is that within theory the opportunities workplace digitalisation brings for meaningful work are discussed. Within the interview, however, employees' sense of meaningful work would either diminish or remain the same as a result of meaningful work.

The framework illustrates that customisation and job crafting will positively influence meaningful work perceptions, in which meaningful work refers to "(1) a subjective psychological perception of work as (2) significant, worthwhile, and valuable that is (3) aligned with one's own personal values while (4) making a positive contribution beyond the self". This definition is comparable to how meaningful work has been defined by the HR manager. The positive stance of meaningful work and its subjective nature were the first aspects that were described by the HR manager. Moreover, the manager indirectly described the importance of matching one's values with one's job in which it has been acknowledged that customisation of the job is important in supporting meaningful work perceptions. In addition, meaningful work has often been described by the manager in a way of "what do I contribute? What kind of impact do I make?" which relates to the characteristic of contributing to a greater good. Although these latter two were described more indirectly as features of meaningful work, they were often used to clarify meaningful work and distinguish it from other terms.
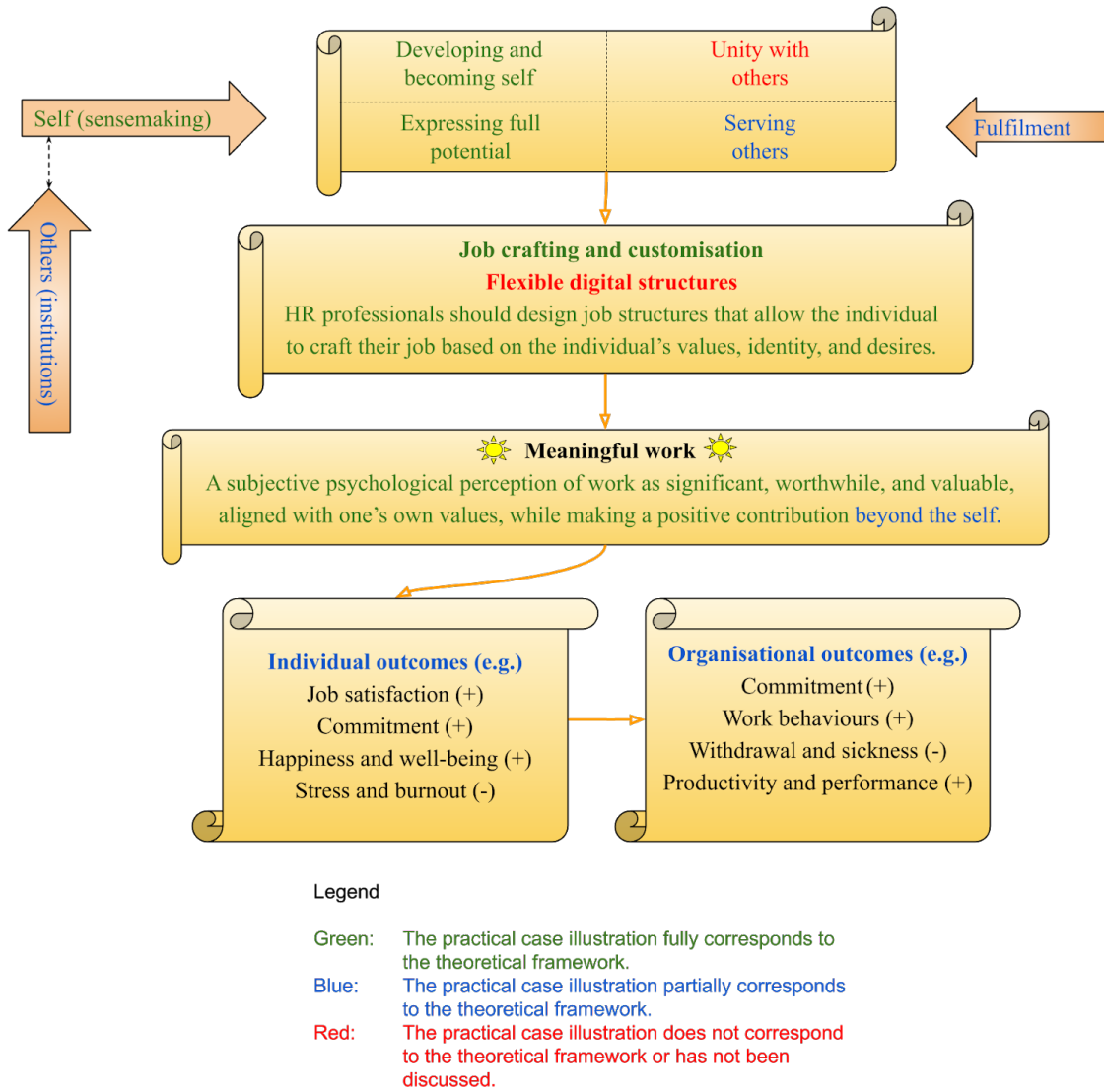
Figure 5.　　　Conceptual framework after application of the case study results

6.   Meaningful work in the digital age: a research agenda

The following chapter will elaborate upon future research opportunities related to meaningful work in the digital age. The first section will address the research agenda for meaningful work in general, after which a section follows that addresses the agenda for meaningful work in the digital age specifically.

6.1   Meaningful work

The interview with the HR manager revealed that hospitality businesses are currently spending less resources and time on supporting a meaningful work environment. This raises several questions that are relevant to the attractiveness of this industry in the future. For instance, what is the impact of this reduction in resources and time spent on supporting meaningful work on the future attractiveness of the hospitality industry? And what if hospitality businesses, in contrast to organizations in other sectors, would now especially consider meaningful work? It may imply that a lot of individuals will be drawn to the industry, after which the issues related to recruitment and retention within the industry may reduce in the future. This is not only relevant in the current situation but can also provide more guidance for hospitality businesses in future crisis scenarios.

During the interview, the HR manager referred to several challenges in designing a meaningful work environment. These challenges were mainly related to the HR manager's idea that there are generational differences in how meaningful work is perceived. Hence, future research could focus on exploring differences and similarities in meaningful work perceptions among different generations. Besides this, the HR manager revealed that there might be differences in occupational groups in how likely meaningful work is to be experienced (e.g. dishwasher vs. higher-level occupations). Hence, research can be focused on investigating the likeliness of someone experiencing their work as meaningful in different occupational groups. In line, Bailey et al. (2019) argue that, for instance, some occupations offer more opportunities for job crafting and are, therefore, more likely to experience meaningful work.

In addition, future research could focus more on the dark side of meaningful work, in which employers use meaningful work to convince employees to, for instance, work longer hours for lower salaries. Based on Maslow's motivational theory, for instance, individuals' basic needs should first be fulfilled before individuals are able to experience meaningful work. In line with this thought, it can be argued that individuals' perceptions of meaningful work are reduced and are, therefore, less willing to work long hours for lower salaries. So, would individuals perceive their work to be meaningful even if one experiences the darker sides of meaningfulness?

6.2   Meaningful work in the digital context

In light of meaningful work in a digital context, a limited number of studies are available. This could be explained by the complexity of meaningful work as a concept, which is operationalized and defined

in several ways in literature. As a result, the connection between workplace digitalisation and meaningful work is difficult to study, in which no conclusive statements can be made as long as there is no agreement in literature on what meaningful work actually entails. This paper has aimed to close this gap and to create more consensus on the characteristics of meaningful work. In the near future, more research can be done that relates workplace digitalisation to meaningful work. For instance, what are people's perceptions towards different types of workplace digitalisation in connection with meaningful work? And, in light of, for instance, personality traits, what makes one individual positive about this future workplace, whereas others are less optimistic? Change management literature could, moreover, focus on the ability of one individual to be more flexible to these digital changes, whereas others are more resistant. This, in turn, could also be linked to generational differences in working with digital tools. All in all, there are a lot of questions that remain unanswered in this area of meaningful work research. In the future, there are a lot of opportunities to explore meaningful work and individuals' sense-making process in a digital environment.

7. Discussion

The objective of this research was to explore the key characteristics of meaningful work to develop a conceptual framework that proposes how HR managers in the international hospitality industry can cultivate meaningful work perceptions in a digital work environment. This section discusses the main findings of the research and aims at making connections between the various domains of meaningful work research that have been outlined in the conceptual framework.

The systematic literature review revealed one aspect of meaningful work that connects meaningful work as a concept to how HR professionals can shape a work environment that fosters meaningful work perceptions. This aspect relates to the subjective nature of meaningful work, in which perceptions of meaningfulness are shaped based on the individual's values in combination with the individual's institutional environment. Similarly, the four sources of meaningful work are characterized by the same level of subjectivity and should be perceived as "fulfilled" in order for individuals to perceive their work as truly meaningful. These include (1) developing and becoming self, (2) unity with others, (3) serving others, and (4) expressing full potential (Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009). To explain, one individual may perceive that one is able to fully express them self, whereas others in the same job with the same job design perceive this differently. This goes back to one aspect of what meaningful work is: aligned with one's own values and desires.

As a result of meaningful work's subjective nature, many scholars have criticized the work-centric perspective on meaningful work, which believes that the organization can manage meaningful work perceptions through job design. Hence, many scholars follow either a worker-centric approach, which supports the notion that every job design can be perceived as meaningful, or a more neutral approach to the work-centric perspective. In line, this paper acknowledges meaningful work as being subjective, but, at the same time, does propose that job design is important in the formation of meaningful work perceptions. Designing an environment that fosters meaningful work for everyone is, however, believed to be unfeasible due to its subjective nature. Based on this, it would be suggested that HR managers enable job crafting and personalize jobs based on the individual's preferences. Hence, the sources of meaningful work can be used as a broad guideline of how meaningful work perceptions are enhanced. However, it is important that these sources are customised on an individual level to ensure that work is aligned to one's own values.

A similar argumentation is followed when discussing meaningful work in a context of workplace digitalisation. The systematic literature review found that individuals' sense of meaningfulness can both be hindered and fostered in a digital environment. Both the review and the interview revealed that some individuals may be more willing and able to cope with this changing environment, whereas others are less likely to. Hence, the meaning one attaches to this digital work environment also differs per individual, in which the importance attributed to these meanings are also different. Following this line of thought, this paper's final suggestion is that, regardless of whether a

work environment is digitised or not, the one way to foster meaningful work is to enable job crafting in the workplace and to ensure that individuals can flexibly make their own decisions. This supports the argumentation that every job design can be experienced as meaningful, depending on someone's individual sensemaking process and institutional influences. Hence, based on the basic characteristics of the concept of meaningful work, the paper follows a rather worker centric approach to meaningful work. Despite this, HR professionals can foster meaningful work by leaving room for individuals to design their jobs in a way that supports their individual perceptions of meaningful work. This would, therefore, also imply that individuals have autonomy in choosing whether and to what extent certain digital tools are used.

The findings of this research are in line with theory as many scholars suggest a job crafting approach to foster meaningful work experiences (e.g. Ghadi, Fernando, & Caputi, 2015; Tims, Derks, & Bakker, 2016). For instance, Asik-Dizdar and Esen (2016), suggest that "the more individuals have a say in determining the content of their work, the more they will make sense of it and derive a meaningful experience in the workplace" (p. 12).

8.   Practical recommendations & limitations

The framework established in this paper can be used by HR professionals to design jobs that are more likely to be perceived as meaningful. For instance, the four sources of meaningful work can be used as broad guideline of how meaningful work perceptions can be enhanced. However, central to this is that all of these sources are subjective in nature and, therefore, require personalisation. On the basis of that, HR managers may revisit job descriptions together with the employee, in which personal preferences on these four sources are considered. Practically speaking, it would be recommended to follow a similar approach to what has been stated in the interview with the HR manager. This includes giving employees a platform to come up with ideas and, hence, give them the ability to influence and contribute to the organization as a whole. Moreover, long-term career goals could be considered, in which HR managers discuss personal growth preferences with employees and enable standardized training opportunities on the basis of these needs. The interview with the HR manager, also, revealed that supportive leadership is important in fostering a meaningful work environment. As a result, leaders can develop themselves through, for instance, training in their supportive capabilities.

By following these recommendations, HR professionals will be more likely to stimulate the four sources of meaningful work and, hence, cultivate meaningful work perceptions for different individuals. For instance, considering personal growth preferences of individuals and acting upon these will support individuals in "developing and becoming self". Similarly, by creating a work environment that is characterized by autonomy and job crafting, individuals are able to influence and achieve the aspects of work one wants to and "express their full potential". In line, these aspects of work may give the individual a greater sense that one is "serving others", as the individual feels that one is contributing to the company and maybe even to society as a whole. Being united with others, although not covered in the interview, is also likely to be enhanced as individuals will have the opportunity to make their own decisions about when, how, and with whom to interact instead of the organization pushing individuals towards doing something that is not aligned with what one wants.

There are a few limitations to this research. First of all, this research becomes irrelevant if human labour is fully replaced by digital labour. Hence, the results of this research only apply in a work environment in which human labour is complemented by either the use of digital tools or digital labour. Secondly, the majority of research that has been done in the context of workplace digitalisation and meaningful work consider digital labour by artificial intelligence (e.g. robotization) and neglects other digital tools that are used to complement human labour, such as the use of information and communication technologies. Hence, most of the knowledge that was gained throughout the project reflect the use of artificial intelligence at the workplace. Thirdly, this research is centred around OB and HRM research and is, therefore, less focused on the role of spirituality and religion in meaningful work. Moreover, this research has been conducted during the global corona pandemic and has, therefore, been considered in the case illustration of meaningful work. Hence, the results of the case

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illustration are, in some situations, rather context specific. Besides that, the crisis has influenced the research method used, as it was originally planned to have focus groups with various HR managers at the hotel school in the Hague. As a result of these unexpected circumstances, this was, however, cancelled. In addition, this research was unable to explore different perceptions towards workplace digitalisation as only one interview has been conducted. This interview did not explore the opportunities that workplace digitalisation might bring for meaningful work considerations but, instead, merely focused on threats. Lastly, within this research, the focus was on HR professionals as these individuals are more concerned with policymaking within an organisation. This research could, however, also be extended to other organisational actors, such as team leaders or employees themselves. This would give more insight into the role that, for instance, team leaders play in meaningful work considerations.

9. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to examine the key domains of meaningful work to create a conceptual framework in order to propose how HR managers in the international hospitality industry can cultivate meaningful work perceptions in a digital environment. Going back to the basics of meaningful work, it can be noted that meaningful work is a subjective process, in which individual perceptions are formed and influenced based on both the self and the social and cultural environment of the individual. The subjective nature of meaningful work, in this sense, relates to the fact that individuals attribute different meanings to make sense of their daily lives, in which people hold varying ideas about the importance of these meanings to them. In a similar vein, the sources and domains that are central to meaningful work that should be perceived as "fulfilled" in order for individuals to perceive their work as meaningful are subjective. As a result of the subjective nature of meaningful work, research in this domain has often been critical about employers trying to manage or control meaningful work experiences, as it is subjective to the individual. So, based on this knowledge, how exactly can HR managers support meaningful work?

As meaningful work perceptions differ per individual, it is proposed that meaningful work cannot be controlled and managed in a way that a work environment is created that supports meaningful work for every individual in the workplace. Despite this, it is believed that HR managers can support the formation of meaningful perceptions, in which jobs are personalised and individuals are given the opportunity to craft their own jobs. Hence, customisation and personalisation are central here to enable individuals to craft their jobs in such a way that enables them to emphasize meanings that are most important to them. The sources of meaningful work, including, expressing full potential, developing and becoming self, unity with others, and serving others can then be used as a guideline, after which these are personalised based on personal preferences. Consequently, this will most likely increase meaningful work perceptions across employees.

In light of workplace digitalisation, meaningful work perceptions can both be hindered and fostered, which is mainly based on the subjective sense-making of the individual and its institutional environment. To clarify, it depends on the self, as an individual may have different perceptions about working in a digital workplace and may be more willing to adapt to such a digital environment. Moreover, it depends on the influence of the social and cultural context that influence and legitimise these perceptions. In line with this thought, it is proposed here that HR managers are able to stimulate meaningful work in a digital work environment by creating a work atmosphere characterized by customisation and job crafting, in which digital structures are open to flexibility and autonomy. Hence, regardless of whether a work environment is digitised or not, the one way to foster meaningful work is to enable job crafting in the workplace and to ensure that individuals can flexibly make their own decisions.

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Appendix I. **Literature search**

Search 1. **Meaningful work & workplace (803 docs)**

Retrieved on 27th January 2020 from Scopus database.

- Search terms: Meaning of work, work meaning, meaningful, meaningful work, meaningfulness, work meaningfulness, meaningfulness at work, meaning making, sense-making, work, workplace, job, work environment.

- Limit to subject areas: Social sciences, Arts and Humanities, Psychology, Business, Management and Accounting

- Exclude source titles: e.g. Health and medicine, politics and law, religion, children and family, education, other languages (see Table 2)

- Language: English

- Limit to keywords: Meaningful work, dignity, human dignity, meaningfulness, work meaningfulness, workplace, meaning, well-being, wellbeing, meaning of work, respect, work environment, identity work, decent work, psychological well-being, recognition, trust, meaningfulness at work, sensemaking.

Search 2. **Digitalisation & workplace (6,620 docs)**

Retrieved on 27th January 2020 from Scopus database.

- Search terms: Digitalisation, digitization, digital, technology, technological, electronic, e-monitoring, algorithm, artificial intelligence, AI, robot, technologies, digitized, ICT, workplace, work, job, work environment, HRM, human resource management, human resources.

- Limit to subject areas: Social sciences, Arts and Humanities, Psychology, Business, Management and Accounting, Decision sciences.

- Exclude source titles: e.g. Health and medicine, politics and law, religion, children and family, education, other languages (see Table 2)

- Language: English

- Exclude keywords: Semantics, students, teaching, social networking (online), classification (of information), problem solving, engineering education, computer vision, information retrieval, priority journal, computer aided instruction, cluster analysis, semantic web, forecasting, image analysis, signal processing, ontology, classification, computation theory, quality control, computer graphics, complex networks, software engineering, graph theory, health care, male, diseases, graphic methods, computer software, data reduction, computational complexity, linguistics, decision trees, magnetic resonance imaging, sensors, costs, economic and social effects, benchmarking, matrix algebra, data acquisition, brain, cryptography, information analysis, proteins, computer aided design, natural language processing, reproducibility,

electronic commerce, product design, text processing, chemistry, image reconstruction, job analysis, scheduling.

Search 3.   Digitalisation & meaningful work & workplace (2,106 docs)

Retrieved on 27th January 2020 from Scopus database.

- Search terms: Digitalisation, digitization, digital, technology, technological, electronic, e-monitoring, algorithm, artificial intelligence, AI, robot, technologies, digitized, ICT, workplace, work, job, work environment, meaning of work, work meaning, meaningful, meaningful work, meaningfulness, work meaningfulness, meaningfulness at work, meaning making, sense-making.

- Limit to subject areas: Social sciences, Arts and Humanities, Psychology, Business, Management and Accounting, Decision sciences, Computer Science.

- Exclude source titles: e.g. Health and medicine, politics and law, religion, children and family, education, other languages (see Table 2)

- Language: English

- Exclude keywords: Semantics, article, students, education, teaching, image segmentation, social networking (online), optimization, classification (of information), feature extraction, problem solving, image processing, engineering education, neural networks, computer vision, design, information retrieval, curricula, priority journal, pattern recognition, computer aided instruction, methodology, cluster analysis, procedures, semantic web, visualization, forecasting, natural language processing systems, image analysis, mathematical models, signal processing, clustering, ontology, iterative methods, classification, computer supported cooperative work, computation theory, medical imaging, quality control, surveys, computer graphics, female, complex networks, research, software engineering, bioinformatics, graph theory, data sets, health care, extraction, male, search engines, diseases, metadata, graphic methods, image enhancement, computer software, data visualization, data reduction, support vector machines, computational complexity, education computing, linguistics, computational linguistics, decision trees, diagnosis, magnetic resonance imaging, principal component analysis, sensors, software, costs, data processing, economic and social effects, engineering research, benchmarking, commerce matrix algebra, standards, data acquisition, trees (mathematics), brain, collaborative learning, cryptography, digital libraries, information analysis, network security, proteins, statistics, computer aided design, gene expression, natural language processing, project management, reproducibility, reproducibility of results, electronic commerce, image quality, product design, sensitivity and specificity, text processing, biology, chemistry, computer programming, image reconstruction, image retrieval, job analysis, knowledge acquisition, scheduling.

Table 2. Domains excluded from literature search

Domain	Source title (exclude from search)
Health and medicine	Social Science and Medicine
	Academic Medicine
	Health and Human Rights
	Health and Social Work
	International Review of The Red Cross
	Advances in Health Sciences Education
	Tydskrif Vir Geesteswetenskappe
	Pedagogika
	Journal of Social Work in End of Life and Palliative Care
	Dementia
Politics and law	Revista Brasileira de Politicas Publicas
	Annals of The American Academy of Political and Social Science
	Israel Law Review
	Perspectives on Political Science
	Idea of Labour Law
	International Journal of Discrimination and The Law
	Law and Ethics of Human Rights
	Review of Politics
	A Political Companion to John Steinbeck
Religion	Journal of Management Spirituality and Religion
	Religions
Children and family	Children and Youth Services Review
	Childhood
	Families in Society
	International Journal of Children S Rights
Education	Higher Education Research and Development
	International Review of Education
	South African Journal of Education
	Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education
	Journal of Teaching in Social Work

Other languages	Estudios Constitucionales
	Etudes Germaniques
	Konsthistorisk Tidskrift
	Relations Industrielles
	Revista Transilvania
	Arte Cristiana
	Curriculo Sem Fronteiras
	Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung
	Purushartha
	Res Publica
	Revista De Administracao Mackenzie
	Travailler
	Voprosy Filosofii
	Analele Universitatii Din Craiova Seria
	Filozofie
	Archiv Fur Rechts Und Sozialphilosophie
	Avances En Psicologia Latinoamericana
	Bogoslovska Smotra
	Bruniana E Campanelliana
	Cadernos Cedes
	Cahiers Victoriens And Edouardiens
	Ceskoslovenska Psychologie
	Crkva U Svijetu
	Croatica Christiana Periodica
	Deutsche Zeitschrift Fur Philosophie
	Diacovensia
Other journals	History of Photography
	Journal of International Women S Studies
	Journal of Social History
	Refugee Survey Quarterly
	Women and Therapy
	Hts Teologiese Studies Theological Studies
	Pico Della Mirandola Oration on The Dignity of Man A New Translation and Commentary
	Death Studies

Appendix II.　　　　**Example of article analysis**

Table 3.　　　　Article analysis based on research questions

Author(s)	Definition	Sources	How to foster meaningfulness?	Theory
Stein et al. (2018)	"Work [that is] experienced as particularly significant" (Rosso et al., 2010, p. 95).	These include developing and understanding one's identity (self) serving others and expressing one's full potential (e.g. Lips-Wiersma and Morris, 2009). 1. Meaningfulness in work: Focused on the nature of work that individuals perform. 2. Meaningfulness at work: Focused on the social context in which this work is performed.	Meaningfulness is stimulated by (1) self-realization and (2) worthiness (Stein et al., 2018, p. 688): 1. Provision of autonomy (e.g. Bailey et al., 2017); 2. A job that is aligned with individual values and identity (e.g. Pratt and Ashforth, 2003); 3. Feeling a sense of community (e.g. Cartwright and Holmes, 2006); 4. Feeling free to speak and act in opposition (Lips-Wiersma and Morris, 2009); 5. Holding a valued social position (Cartwright and Holmes, 2006). 6. Having a sense of personal development and fulfilment of a higher purpose (e.g. Dik et al., 2013).	Institutional theory, in which logics explain how meaningful experiences are perceived.
Author(s)	**Definition**	**Sources**		**Theory**
Chalofsky (2003)	"That which gives essence to what we do and what brings a	Meaningful work requires the interplay between a sense of self, the work itself, and a sense of balance (see p. 77-78). 1. Meaning at work refers to the relationship between the individual and the firm.		Chalofsky focuses on need and content theories, which are more evolved around the

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	sense of fulfilment to our lives" (p. 74).	2. Meaning in work refers to a state of being, in which meaning, and purpose are expressed through the working activities.		individual's intrinsic needs that drive human behaviour (e.g. Maslow, 1943, 1971).
Author(s)	**Definition**	**Sources**	**Outcomes**	**Theory**
Allan, Batz-Barbarich, Sterling, & Tay (2019)	"the global judgement that one's work accomplishes significant, valuable, or worthwhile goals that are congruent work with one's existential values" (p. 502).	Following Lips-Wiersma and Wright (2012), Allan et al. (2019) believe there should be a balance between self-oriented versus other-oriented goals and being versus doing.	Large correlations: work engagement, commitment, job satisfaction. Moderate correlations: life satisfaction, life meaning, general health, withdrawal intentions. Small correlations: organizational citizenship behaviours, self-rated job performance.	Job Characteristics Theory

Appendix III. **Meaningful work conceptualizations**

Table 4. Definitions on meaningful work

Reference	Definition
(Rosso, Dekas, & Wrzesniewski, 2010, p. 95; Stein et al., 2019, p. 687)	"Work [that is] experienced as particularly significant"
(Bailey & Madden, 2016, p. 55; Symon & Whiting, 2018, p. 655)	"When an individual perceives an authentic connection between their work and a broader transcendent life purpose beyond the self"
(as cited in Cockburn-Wootten, 2012, p. 222)	"Challenging work, as work that is important and makes a difference in the lives of others, and as work that leads to achievement (e.g. work on completing one's education)"
(Lysova et al. 2019, p. 375; Smids, Nyholm, & Berkers, 2019, p. 3)	"Work that is personally significant and worthwhile"
(as cited in Bailey, Yeoman, Madden, Thompson, & Kerridge, 2019, p. 98)	"Work that is subjectively meaningful, important, rewarding, or aligned with personal values"
(as cited in Bailey et al., 2019, p. 88)	"A feeling that one is receiving a return on investments in one's self in a currency of physical, cognitive or emotional energy that arises from undertaking work that is worthwhile, useful and valuable"
(as cited in Bailey et al., 2019, p. 89)	"The value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards"
(as cited in Bailey et al., 2019, p. 91).	"Fulfilling, significant, directed, coherent with life goals, and contributing to a sense of belonging"
(as cited in Bailey et al., 2019, p. 91).	"Individuals' judgment that their work is significant, worthwhile, and has positive meaning"
(Chalofsky, 2003, p. 74)	"That which gives essence to what we do and what brings a sense of fulfilment to our lives"

(as cited in Martela & Riekki, 2018, p. 2)	"The subjective experience of how significant and intrinsically valuable people find their work to be"
(as cited in Ghadi, Fernando, & Caputi, 2015, p. 213)	"Finding a purpose in work that is greater than the extrinsic outcomes of the work"
(as cited in Ghadi, Fernando, & Caputi, 2015, p. 208)	"A shared mental representation of possible relationships among things, events and relationships; thus, meaning connects things"
(as cited in Lysova et al., 2019, p. 375).	"Work experienced as particularly significant and holding more positive meaning for individuals"
(Zeglat & Janbeik, 2019, p. 233)	"Work meaningfulness refers to a subjective state which results from a high level of positivity in the entities that one associates with his or her work"
(Allan et al., 2019, p. 502)	"The global judgement that one's work accomplishes significant, valuable, or worthwhile goals that are congruent work with one's existential values"
(Both-Nwabuwe, Dijkstra, & Beersma, 2017, p. 7)	"Meaningful work is the subjective experience of existential significance resulting from the fit between the individual and work"
(as cited in Martela & Riekki, 2018, p. 2)	"The subjective experience of how significant and intrinsically valuable people find their work to be"
(as cited in Hu & Hirsh, 2017, p. 2).	"Degree to which an employee experiences the job as one which is generally meaningful, valuable, and worthwhile"
(as cited in Fairlie, 2011, p. 510)	"Job and other workplace characteristics that facilitate the attainment or maintenance of one or more dimensions of meaning"
(as cited in Lips-Wiersma & Wright, 2012, p. 657)	"The value of a work goal or purpose, judged to the individual's own ideals or standards"
(Bailey et al., 2017, p. 416)	"Work that is personally enriching and that makes a positive contribution"
(as cited in Allan et al., 2018)	"The sense that people's expression of their selves is worthwhile and valued and work engagement as the expression of workers' preferred selves"

(Hackman & Oldham, 1976, p. 162)	''The degree to which the employee experiences the job as one which is generally meaningful, valuable, and worthwhile''
(De Boeck, Dries, & Tierens, 2019, p. 529)	"The feeling that work activities are worthwhile, useful, and valuable, judged in relation to personal ideals or standards"
(Steger, Dik, & Duffy, 2012, p. 2)	"not as simply whatever work means to people (meaning), but as work that is both significant and positive in valence (meaningfulness)"
(May et al., 2004, as cited in Lips-Wiersma & Morris, 2009, p. 492)	"the value of a work goal or purposes, judged to the individual's own ideals or standards"

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Appendix IV. References for conceptual framework

[1] Lips-Wiersma & Morris (2009).

[2] Vuori et al. (2012); Stein et al. (2019); Bailey et al. (2019); Tim, Derks, & Bakker (2016); Asik-Dizdar & Esen (2016); Rosso et al. (2010); Martela & Riekki (2018); De Boeck et al. (2019); Lips-Wiersma & Morris (2009).

[3] Stein et al. (2019); Symon & Whiting (2019).

[4] Rosso et al. (2010); Lysova et al. (2019); Smids, Nyholm, & Berkers (2019); Bailey et al. (2019); Martela & Riekki (2018); Allan et al. (2019).

[5] Bailey, Yeoman, Madden, Thompson, & Kerridge (2019); Allan et al. (2019); Both-Nwabuwe, Dijkstra, & Beersma (2017); Lips-Wiersma & Wright (2012); De Boeck, Dries, & Tierens (2019).

[6] Bailey & Madden (2016); Symon & Whiting (2018); Cockborn-Wootten (2012); Bailey et al. (2017).

[7] Fairlie (2011); Steger et al. (2012); Geldenhuys, Laba, & Venter (2014); Bailey & Madden (2016); Hu & Hirsh (2017); Allan et al. (2019).

[8] Steger et al. (2012); Hu & Hirsh (2017); Allan et al. (2019); Nikolova & Cnossen (2020).

[9] Clausen & Borg (2010); Fairlie (2011); Steger et al. (2012); Allan et al. (2019); Lips-Wiersma & Morris (2012); Hu & Hirsh (2017); Nikolova & Cnossen (2020).

[10] Hu & Hirsh (2017); Allan et al. (2019).

[11] Hu & Hirsh (2017); Allan et al. (2019); Wrzesniewski (2003).

[12] Hu & Hirsh (2017); Allan et al. (2019).

[13] Pavlish & Hunt (2012); Allan et al. (2019); Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway, & McKee (2007); Pollet & Schnell (2017).

[14] Lips-Wiersma & Morris (2012); Steger et al. (2012); Hu & Hirsh (2017); Nikolova & Cnossen (2020).

[15] Chalofsky (2003); Steger & Dik (2010); Rosso et al. (2010); Dimitrov (2012); Bailey et al. (2017); Symon & Whiting (2018).

[16] Steger & Dik (2010); Rosso et al. (2010); Dimitrov (2012); Cockburn-Wootten (2012); Bailey & Madden (2016); Bailey et al. (2017); Symon & Whiting (2018); Martela & Riekki (2018); Smids et al. (2019); Bailey et al. (2019); Boova et al. (2019); Allan et al. (2020).

Appendix V.   Invitation: Meaningful Work in the Digital Age

When: Wednesday May 27 – 2020 (13:00 p.m. - 14:30 p.m.)
How: The interview will take place through Skype
Who: Celeste Henstra (MSc student) and Dr. Huub Ruël (Prof. Hotelschool The Hague)

Digitalisation has taken hold of human resource and talent management and will continue to offer opportunities to automate and advance talent management practices. As an example, with digital technologies work behaviours can be tracked and traced, jobs and roles can be either replaced or simplified, and recruitment and/or management is automated by the use of algorithms. As we speak, the current outbreak of the corona crisis shows us the growing demand for the use of new digital tools to manage human resources.

However, what does digitalisation mean for the meaningfulness of work and for talent management practices? How do HR managers in the international hospitality businesses consider and take into account the concept of meaningfulness and dignity in decision-making about digitalisation of the workplace and of talent management practices? And how does the current corona crisis influence the use of digitalisation and what effects does this have on the meaningfulness of work?

Hereby, we would like to invite you personally to join this round table event (which will be organized through Skype), in which you will get the opportunity to learn from other HR managers within the international hospitality industry and shape your thoughts and views regarding future decision-making on digitalisation of the workplace and talent management, and the role of meaningfulness in it. The event will take approximately 1.5 hours. Please send an email to c.t.henstra@student.utwente.nl or respond to this message **before May 20** to let me know whether you would like to participate. Alternatively to this round table event, one-on-one interviews can also be arranged from the 27th of May onwards. If you would like to participate in a one-on-one interview, please also suggest a date and time for the interview in your email or LinkedIn message.

This event is part of a research project initiated and carried out by the HRM research department and the International Management research department of the University of Twente.

Appendix VI.   Interview guide

Introduction:

- Introduce myself
- Explain goal of the research
- Thank you for participating
- Ask whether interview should be anonymous
- Time for interview (approx. 30 min.)

Theme 1: Meaningful work

- If you had to describe meaningful work in your own words, how would you describe it?
- To what extent is it important that employees perceive their work to be meaningful?
- *give explanation of what meaningful work entails*
- Would you change your description based on the information that I just provided and, if so, how would you change it?

Theme 2: HR practices that support meaningful work

- To what extent are you concerned with creating a workplace that is supportive of meaningful work? Can you give examples? / Why not?
- Which HR practices did you implement that support the creation of meaningfulness among employees?
- What other actions do you take to create meaningfulness in the workplace?

Theme 3: International context

- According to your experiences, do meaningfulness perceptions differ from culture to culture? How does it differ?
- What are your experiences with meaningful work in an international context?

Theme 4: Digitalisation

- How will meaningful work develop in the future in a digital-driven workplace?
- Do you believe there are differences between generations in how meaningfulness is experienced in a digital-driven workplace? Why (not)?
- What are your associations with meaningful work in relation to workplace digitization?

Theme 5: Corona crisis

- What impact does the current corona crisis have on meaningful work?

Appendix VII. **Interview transcript**

Interviewee: Confidential

Interviewer: Celeste Henstra

Date and time: 26/05/2020, 14:00 - 14:34

<u>Introductie</u>

IR: Voordat we beginnen zal ik mijzelf nog even voorstellen en ik heb ook nog wat praktische dingen die ik nog even door moet gaan. Mijn naam is Celeste Henstra en ik ben 22 jaar oud. Ik ben op dit moment bezig met mijn master in business administration aan de Universiteit van Twente. Hierin specialiseer ik mij in International Management. Dus, daar zullen we dus ook iets meer op ingaan, op de internationale context. Hiervoor heb ik een HBO opleiding gedaan in International Hospitality Management bij Saxion.

IE: Ah, daar ligt de link met hospitality.

IR: Ja, inderdaad. Naast mijn studie werk ik ook nog op de HR afdeling. Niet in de hospitality, maar ik doe operationele taken bij een groot windturbine bedrijf, op HR gebied.

IE: Bij welk bedrijf zit je?

IR: ENERCON. Dat is een Duits windturbine bedrijf en zij doen eigenlijk alles van A tot Z bij de klanten. Dus ze maken de windturbines, installeren ze en service doen ze ook.

IE: Hele andere wereld, maar wel leuk.

IR: Ja, inderdaad. Het is wel heel leuk, het is niet iets wat je vaak hoort zeg maar.

IE: Nee, nee. Ik had ook niet eerder van hun gehoord.

IR: Ik had eigenlijk nog een vraag in hoeverre u anoniem wilt blijven in het onderzoek.

IE: Nou, als ik straks hele domme dingen ga zeggen dan moet je het maar anoniem houden maar als dat wel meevalt dan mag je mijn naam gewoon gebruiken hoor, is goed.

IR: Oké, is goed. Ook wil ik graag nog vragen of het mogelijk is dat ik nadat ik deze tekst heb uitgetypt of ik dat mag delen met u en dat als u er tijd voor heeft en het natuurlijk ook wilt dit nog kan bekijken om eventueel nog dingen aan te passen.

IE: Ja, helemaal goed.

IR: Ja? Oké.

IE: Ja, doe ik vaker zo. Dan weet je in ieder geval zeker dat je de juiste interpretatie hebt.

IR: Ja, inderdaad. Dat is wel fijn.

IE: Ja hoor, een soort controle erop. Is helemaal goed.

IR: Nou, mijn onderzoek gaat natuurlijk over meaningful work en de nadruk ligt hier bij mijn onderzoek voornamelijk op hoe meaningful work in de praktijk eigenlijk werkt, omdat het een heel theoretisch concept is. Er is ook veel over bekend, maar hoe HR managers meaningful work zelf kunnen vormgeven in de praktijk is vaak nog wel een uitdaging.

IE: Ja.

IR: Ook zal er in het interview worden ingegaan op de digitalisatie van de werkplek en daarmee bedoel ik eigenlijk digitalisatie van dat medewerkers met gedigitaliseerde tools werken maar ook dat banen worden vervangen door gedigitaliseerde tools.

IE: Ja, ja.

IR: En wat dit dan inhoudt voor meaningful work. Dus dat is eigenlijk waar mijn onderzoek over gaat.

IE: Ja.

IR: Nou de term meaningful work houdt ook wel in zinvol of betekenisvol werk. Dus dat is de term die ik zal gebruiken tijdens het interview. En ook moet ik er nog even bijzeggen dat met de internationale hospitality industry alle functies bedoeld wordt die je doorgaans in een hotelketen vind. Dus zowel administratieve banen als banen bijvoorbeeld in de schoonmaak, receptie en horeca.

IE: Ja, ja.

IR: Uhm, ik hoop dat het interview ongeveer 30 tot 45 minuten duurt, maar als u eerder weg moet is dat natuurlijk ook prima. Dan kan je dat gewoon aangeven.

IE: Ja, ik had tot ongeveer half 3 in mijn agenda gezet.

IR: Oke.

IE: We kijken hoe ver we komen, helemaal goed.

IR: Ja. Nou ja, er zijn geen goede of foute antwoorden dus deel vooral ervaringen met mij.

IE: Ja, hartstikke goed.

IR: En natuurlijk hartstikke bedankt dat je mee wilt werken aan het onderzoek.

IE: Ja, graag gedaan.

IR: Uhm, dus dan denk ik dat we wel kunnen gaan beginnen.

IE: Ja.

Thema 1: Betekenis van meaningful work

IR: Ik heb het interview opgedeeld in verschillende thema's en thema 1 is de betekenis van meaningful work. Als u dat in uw eigen woorden zou moeten omschrijven, hoe zou u meaningful work dan omschrijven?

IE: Ja, bij die term komt bij mij het woord zingeving naar boven en energie komt naar boven. Volgens mij moet het dan gaan over werk waar je energie van krijgt en wat jou zingeving geeft. Dat aan die termen voldoet. En dat is natuurlijk voor iedereen anders, dus dat is subjectief. Dat is lastig om te vangen in 1 objectieve benadering. Dus ik denk dat dat ook wel gaat om een stukje maatwerk. Ik denk dat dat ook wel van toepassing is.

IR: Oke, dus voornamelijk inderdaad zingeving dat bij u opkomt, dat je er energie van krijgt en dat het voor ieder individu eigenlijk anders is?

IE: Ja, ja, zeker.

IR: Oke. In hoeverre is het volgens u belangrijk dat medewerkers hun werk als meaningful ervaren?

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IE: Ja, ik denk dat dat heel belangrijk is. Zeker in de branche waar ik dus in werk, in de hospitality industry. Je wilt je gasten natuurlijk een bepaald gevoel geven, het prettige warme welkomstgevoel. Ik denk dat je dat niet zo goed kunt als je niet lekker in je vel zit of als je geen betekenisvol of meaningful work aan het doen bent. Ik denk dat de gast dat dan vrij snel aanvoelt dat hij te maken heeft met een medewerker die er niet helemaal lekker in zit. Dan zal een gast dat toch wel ervaren als "hmmm, heb ik toch niet de service of de beleving die ik graag zou hebben". Dus, ja, ik denk dat het heel belangrijk is.

IR: Oke, en heeft u ook het idee dat medewerkers als ze hun werk als meaningful ervaren dat ze dan ook een stapje extra willen doen voor het bedrijf?

IE: Uhm, ik weet niet of dat per se samen zou moeten gaan. Op gevoel zeg ik ja, ik denk wel dat het zo werkt omdat het te maken heeft met die energie huishouding. Als je in je kracht staat dan denk ik dat je met meer passie en meer gevoel je werk gaat doen. Ik denk inderdaad wel dat het daar een positieve bijdrage aan levert.

IR: Oke. Uhm, nou ik ben natuurlijk in de theorie gedoken over wat meaningful work nou precies inhoudt. Ik zou je graag wat mee willen geven over wat mijn bevindingen zijn.

IE: Ja, graag.

IR: Uhm, nou over het algemeen wordt meaningful work als iets positiefs gezien. Dus het wordt gezien als werk dat belangrijk is en de moeite waard is. Ook is het inderdaad subjectief. Dus het is afhankelijk per individu hoe iemand zijn werk ervaart. Ook is het werk wat vaak wordt uitgevoerd voor een hoger doel, buiten de individu zelf om. Als je dan bijvoorbeeld kijkt naar de hospitality dan is dat werk wat iets bijdraagt voor een ander. Dus, dat je iets doet voor een ander. Ook is het vaak werk dat is afgestemd op je eigen waarden, idealen, en normen van de individu. Dus wat overeenkomt met hoe jij zelf in het leven staat.

IE: Ja.

IR: Uhm, ik heb nu een uitleg gegeven over wat meaningful work inhoudt op basis van literatuur. Zou u uw omschrijving aanpassen op basis van die informatie?

IE: Volgens mij zat ik wel aardig in de richting.

IR: Ja, klopt.

IE: Met subjectief en positief. Dus nee, ik denk niet dat ik hem zou aanpassen.

IR: Oke, en bijvoorbeeld het werk wat wordt uitgevoerd voor een hoger doel buiten de individu zelf om, heeft u het idee dat dat inderdaad bijdraagt aan meaningful work?

IE: Nou, dat is een hele goede vraag. Ik denk dat dat heel erg afhankelijk is van het soort mensen en het soort beroep wat je tegenover je hebt. Ik denk dat, en dan ga ik natuurlijk generaliseren en mensen in een hokje plaatsen, dat ben ik me bewust, maar ik denk dat als je de gemiddelde schoonmaker vraagt die zal er denk ik wat minder over nadenken. Hoewel in deze corona tijd het een belangrijk beroep blijkt te zijn is het weer anders geworden. Maar laten we dan een afwasser noemen. Ik denk dat de gemiddelde afwasser daar wat minder stil bij zou staan dan misschien iemand op een ander niveau in zijn

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werkzaamheden die zich daar wel wat bewuster van is. Ik denk dat het ook wel te maken heeft met de context waar je inzit, als je bij een werkgever komt die eigenlijk heel plat gezegd gezegd "joh, je moet je kop houden en ga gewoon aan het werk", dan creëer je denk ik ook niet het besef bij iemand van "hey, je draagt ergens iets aan bij." Terwijl als je elke medewerker individueel vertelt wat zijn bijdrage betekent voor bijvoorbeeld de missie of de doelstelling van het bedrijf dan zal je daar meer op getriggerd worden. Ik denk dat dat daar ook wel mee te maken heeft.

IR: Dus, wat je eigenlijk wilt zeggen is dat de werkgever hier ook wel heel veel ik kan doen.

IE: Ja, ja zeker.

IR: Oke, nou dat is eigenlijk ook thema 2.

IE: Kijk is.

Thema 2: HR praktijken die meaningful work ondersteunen

IR: Heeft u meaningful work in uw HR strategie of business strategie verwoord? En zo ja, hoe?

IE: Ja, ja. Ja, wij hebben in onze overall strategie een HR component toegevoegd en dat is dat wij de employer of choice willen zijn in de hospitality industry. Wij willen het beste vijf-sterren hotel zijn om zowel te verblijven als om voor te werken. Wij hebben een strategie geplakt onder onze overall mission statement dat elke medewerker kan terugvinden wat zijn of haar bijdrage betekent voor het hotel. En dat hebben we gedaan volgens de lean filosofie. Lean is een Japanse filosofie wat uitgaat van enerzijds waste, dus overbodige procedures weghalen, maar anderzijds ook bij medewerkers betrekken bij vernieuwing, nieuwe ideeën, verbeteringen. En dat vragen wij aan elke medewerker individueel. Zo van "heb jij een idee hoe je je werk makkelijker, leuker, beter kan maken? Kom er mee naar voren." En elke medewerker wordt er ook op getraind. Dus, wij geven elke medewerker, of je nou schoonmaker bent of je bent directeur, zo'n lean training om de filosofie van lean uit te leggen en ook om een platform te hebben voor elke medewerker om met die verbetervoorstellen te komen.

IR: Oke, dus ook de mensen er erg bij betrekken?

IE: Ja, ja.

IR: Uhm, in hoeverre bent u bezig met het ontwerpen van een werkomgeving die als meaningful wordt ervaren?

IE: Nou, dat is een goede vraag. Ik denk door... Wij zijn er 3 jaar geleden al mee gestart met de lean filosofie, dus ik denk dat door die strategie neer te zetten dat je er al een start mee maakt. Terwijl je dit vraagt zit ik ook hardop na te denken dat we ook twee keer per jaar al onze medewerkers een platform bieden om in grote groepen met mensen in discussie te gaan. We bieden trainingen aan dus ja.. Als ik er zo over nadenk zitten we er middenin.

IR: Oke, dus het zijn voornamelijk dus trainingen waar het in zit?

IE: Ja, maar ook de platforms bieden waarin mensen hun feedback kunnen delen en we meten dat vervolgens weer in het medewerkers tevredenheidsonderzoek.

IR: Oke. Heeft u verder nog voorbeelden van hoe meaningful work in het hotel aanwezig is?

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IE: Nou ja, elk jaar doen we aan een leiderschapstraining, dus ik gaf net al aan dat ik denk dat je er als werkgever ook een hele belangrijke rol in hebt. Dus onze leidinggevenden worden getraind en uitgedaagd om in hun leiderschap in gesprek te gaan met de medewerkers. En dat kan zijn dus op zo'n lean manier, maar het kan ook zijn in het functioneren. En we hebben bijvoorbeeld, en dat zal je misschien weten, in heel veel bedrijven is het heel normaal, in de hotel industrie en hospitality is dat wat minder normaal, maar we hebben ook de POP geïntroduceerd. Dus, persoonlijk ontwikkelingsplan gesprek. Dus op die manier gaan we ook met elkaar in gesprek om te vragen van "joh, waar zie je jezelf nu zitten en waar zie je jezelf over een tijdje zitten? En wat heb je dan nodig om daar te komen?" En daar hebben we dan weer een training manager voor klaarstaan die de medewerkers trainingen op maat en ook niet op maat, dus gewoon standaard trainingen, kan geven. Dus op vele vlakken zijn we wel bezig met zowel een stukje ontwikkeling als een stukje bewustzijn en bewustwording van onze medewerkers.

IR: Oke, dus het is eigenlijk het betrekken van de medewerkers en ook rekening houden met wat zij willen?

IE: Ja, ja. En ik geloof erin dat we het niet kunnen opleggen. Ik bedoel een afwasser zal moeten afwassen en ik in mijn rol zal iets moeten vinden van het HR-beleid en dat moeten aanpassen. Zo heeft ieder natuurlijk zijn eigen rol. Maar binnen je rol zoek ik wel nadrukkelijk naar hoe mensen in hun rol het kunnen opleuken, vergemakkelijken, kunnen verbeteren.

IR: En hebben mensen dan ook dat ze zelf hun keuzes kunnen maken binnen hun functie? Dus dat ze zelf dingen kunnen bepalen?

IE: Ja, dat is een relatief begrip. Ik bedoel, het voorbeeld wat ik net gaf, een afwasser zal moeten blijven afwassen. Dat is het kader. Binnen het kader kan hij dan wel weer meedenken over maar als wij het nou zo aanleveren of zo aanleveren dan maakt het mijn werk weer een stukje gemakkelijker. Dus het is natuurlijk beperkt in alle eerlijkheid, maar we bieden ook wel mensen aan om intern door te groeien of om eens een cross-training bij een andere afdeling te volgen.

IR: Oke, ja. Uhm, even kijken... Ervaart u ook uitdagingen in het ontwerpen van een werkomgeving die meaningful work ondersteunt?

IE: Ja, ja. Want de grootste uitdaging is toch wel dat je niet meteen iedereen meekrijgt daarin. Dus je hebt een bepaalde visie op HR op lange termijn en het kost moeite om afdelingshoofden daarin meteen mee te krijgen.

IR: En ervaart u ook dat mensen het moeilijk vinden om te uiten wat ze willen?

IE: Nou, ik denk dat dat ook wel een generatie-ding is. Ik denk dat… De oudere generatie is zo opgevoed van "kop houden en je moet gewoon je werk doen. Je komt hier om te werken", maar de jongere generatie is heel erg op zoek naar die betekenis van werk en "joh wat draag ik eigenlijk bij? En wat is de impact die ik maak?" En die generatieverschillen dat zijn wel een van de grootste uitdagingen die we tegenkomen. Ik verwacht van een leidinggevende dat hij aan verschillende generaties leiding kan

geven en kan inspireren. Een millennial die zit er natuurlijk vaak in van "nou kom op", dan ga je ervanuit dat het eigenlijk al geregeld is.

IR: Oke, heeft u verder nog uitdagingen?

IE: Uhm… Nou ja, de andere uitdaging waar ik zelf ook tegenaan loop in de praktijk is dat je ziet dat mensen van 25 jaar of jonger zijn meestal wel minder tevreden dan mensen die wat ouder zijn. En dat zegt mij iets over verwachtingen. Ik denk dat als je wat ouder bent dat je misschien wat makkelijker in dingen meegaat en dat de allerjongste generatie die nu bij ons werkt, dat zijn mensen die meer, nou, misschien wel meteen verwachten van het hotel en die misschien een andere voorstelling van zaken hebben. Terwijl er ook gewoon gewerkt moet worden en wij zijn natuurlijk een bedrijf waarin een bepaalde structuur is. Dus als een kok roept "er moet nu iets op een bordje gepresenteerd worden", dan is er op dat geen tijd of ruimte voor een discussie of een medewerker die zegt "nou, ik zou het eigenlijk anders willen doen." Op dat moment moet er gewoon geleverd worden omdat de gast zit te wachten op zijn bordje met eten. En je merkt dat daar wel eens verschillen inzitten. Verschillen in verwachtingen.

IR: Oke.

Thema 3: Internationale context

IR: Dan heb ik nou het derde thema, de internationale context gaan we dan wat dieper op in. Zijn er volgens jouw ervaringen verschillende percepties van meaningful work die gerelateerd zijn aan nationale cultuur?

IE: Ja, absoluut. Wij hebben natuurlijk een Japanse heritage, zoals het zo mooi heet. Het hotel is een Japanse keten. Alhoewel wij voelen ons hier in Nederland een Europees hotel met een hoofdkantoor in Japan, maar toch wel redelijk Nederlands-Europees. Toch halen wij regelmatig een aantal Japanners vanuit Tokio of omgeving naar Amsterdam toe. Je merkt wel dat er hele duidelijke verschillen zijn in beleving qua werk. Tussen de Westerse mensen, zoals jij en ik, hier uit Europa en mensen bijvoorbeeld uit Japan. Daar is meaningful work nog niet echt doorgedrongen. Daar ga je gewoon naar je werk, je doet gewoon je werk, je doet gewoon wat de baas vraagt en, ja, verder ben je niet echt bezig met je te ontwikkelen. Zoals het POP formulier bijvoorbeeld, waar we het over hadden, dat wordt wel ingevuld door mensen met een Europese achtergrond, maar een Japanner is daar niet mee bezig. Een Japanner vind mijn werkgever moet gewoon voor mij zorgen en dan komt het allemaal wel goed. En dat is een beetje wat wij hier in de jaren 70 hadden. "Mijn werkgever zorgt wel goed voor me." Dat is in Japan nog steeds aan de orde van de dag.

IR: Dus eigenlijk ook dat die mensen niet zelf het initiatief nemen?

IE: Ja, ja. Klopt. Die laten het allemaal gebeuren.

IR: Oke, heeft u verder nog ervaringen met meaningful work in een internationale context?

IE: Nou, ik heb ook veel gewerkt, niet hier in dit hotel maar bij mijn vorige werk waar ik met Amerikanen werkte. Amerikanen die zijn daar natuurlijk volop mee bezig, daar gaat het alleen maar

over hoe maak ik een bijdrage, hoe lever ik impact, wat lever ik bij aan het bedrijf waarvoor ik werk. Dus het hele andere spectrum daarvan.

IR: Oke, dus zij zijn eigenlijk meer bezig met meaningful work als dat wij Nederlanders er mee bezig zouden zijn?

IE: Ja, ik weet niet of je het zo kan zeggen dat de 1 er meer of minder mee bezig is, maar ik heb het daar wel heel erg ervaren ja. Dat ze daar wel heel erg bij stilstaan. Continu bezig met ontwikkeling en hoe val ik op en hoe zorg ik ervoor dat ik bij blijf en dat soort dingen. Die zitten daar wel goed in. [22:00]

IR: Oké, de conclusie is dus eigenlijk dat het inderdaad verschilt per cultuur?

IE: Ja, ja. Ik denk het wel.

IR: Oke, uhm... Dan komen we al aan bij thema 4, digitalisatie.

Thema 4: Digitalisatie

IR: Welke ervaringen heeft u op dit moment met digitalisatie van de werkplek en ofwel digitalisatie van banen?

IE: Ja, vanuit het hotel gezien… Ja, een gast die komt binnen en die wil gewoon door een mens van vlees en bloed worden bediend, worden ingecheckt, worden uitgecheckt, van eten worden voorzien. Dus wij doen op dat gebied niet zoveel aan digitalisatie. Het blijft een People business. Wij hebben een keer een onderzoek gehouden onder onze gasten en aan de gasten gevraagd "hoe zou je het vinden als je bij een robot zou moeten inchecken? En onze gasten hebben aangegeven dat echt helemaal niet op prijs te stellen. Dus dat is ook iets wat wij niet zouden overwegen.

IR: En heeft dat er dan ook mee te maken met wat voor soort gasten je ontvangt?

IE: Ja, denk ik wel.

IR: Want het lijkt me dat het voor een andere hotelketen weer anders zou zijn.

IE: Ja, ja. Dit is een vijf-sterren plus keten, dus ik denk dat je een ander soort clientèle hebt als dan wanneer je in een driesterren hotel bent en je wilt alleen een nachtje overnachten zonder poespas. Dan is dat misschien weer anders kan ik me voorstellen. Dus dat is zeg maar aan de voorkant. Aan de achterkant van het hotel, bijvoorbeeld op een afdeling waar facturen worden behandeld. Ja, ik zou me kunnen voorstellen dat je dat wel gaat automatiseren. Je hebt geen mens nodig aan de achterkant die alle facturen uit een envelopje gaat vissen en gaat inscannen. Dat zou natuurlijk vervangen kunnen worden door een robot.

IR: Oke en doen jullie dat op dit moment al, iets in die trend?

IE: Nee, nee.

IR: Oke, uhm... Denk je ook dat een gedigitaliseerde werkplek eventueel de percepties van meaningful work kan veranderen onder de medewerkers?

IE: Ja, ik denk dat je meer een tweedeling gaat krijgen. Ik denk dat je daar nog zelfs mee moet oppassen. Ik bedoel als jij als afwasser ergens aan het werk gaat en dat wordt volledig overgenomen door een

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robot die dat voor jou gaat doen dan zit jij zonder werk. Dan verandert jouw gevoel van meaningful work denk ik. Hetzelfde geldt straks voor de caissières bij de Albert Heijn. Ik bedoel jij en ik weten allebei dat je nu met je zelfscan aan de kassa gewoon je boodschapjes kan scannen. Dat is natuurlijk superhandig, maar uiteindelijk is het straks bedoeld om geen caissières meer in dienst te hoeven hebben. Dat scheelt heel veel geld. Je hebt natuurlijk ook hele volksstammen, heel veel mensen die niet zo goed in staat zijn om ander werk te doen, denk ik. Dus ik denk dat die mensen nog eens op hun hoofd gaan krabben van "wat ga ik dan nu doen"

IR: Ja, want werk is op dit moment natuurlijk ook een groot deel van mensen hun leven…

IE: Ja, precies. En als je dat dan weghaalt. Ja, ik zie dat wel met lede ogen aan. Ik vraag me wel af welke kant dit opgaat. Wat heel interessant is, ik lees het boek homodeus van een Israëlische filosoof en die schrijft er ook een stuk over. Die zegt ook als we al dat werk wat aan de onderkant zit weghalen, ja, wat blijft er dan uiteindelijk over voor een mens om te gaan doen? Precies wat jij net tegen mij zei werk is gewoon een heel belangrijk component van mensen hun well-being en hun hele sociale omgang. Maar als er voor miljoenen mensen straks geen werk meer is, omdat het allemaal is overgenomen. Ja, ik vraag me dan serieus af wat er dan overblijft voor die mensen om te doen op een dag.

IR: Ja, want wat ik zelf dan ook heb gelezen, wat de literatuur dan zegt, is dat er ook veel verschil zal ontstaan qua inkomens als de onderste laag weg wordt gehaald.

IE: Ja, ja, precies. Dus ik weet niet of het een hele positieve shift is die we met elkaar aan het maken zijn. En ik snap het, iedereen is op zoek naar efficiëntie en kostenbesparing. Dus ik snap het allemaal wel. Of het nou op sociologisch oogpunt allemaal zo positief is, ja, daar heb ik echt mijn vraagtekens bij.

IR: Oke. Dan heb ik nog een vraag over de toekomst. Hoe zal meaningful work zich in de toekomst ontwikkelen op een gedigitaliseerde werkplek? En ik denk dat u het meeste al wel heeft beantwoord, maar ik vraag het toch nog.

IE: Ja, ja. Als ik erover nadenk, ik denk dat mensen met een hoger abstractieniveau, wat meestal betekent een hoger intelligentieniveau, zich wel kunnen vermaken en kunnen blijven zoeken naar wat is meaningful werk. Die hebben misschien de hersencapaciteit om door te leren, nieuwe vaardigheden aan te leren. En ik denk dat er tegelijkertijd ook heel veel mensen zullen zijn die dat niet kunnen, die kunnen niet die vaardigheden aanleren om zich opnieuw uit te vinden en om bij te blijven. Dus als je die gedachte lijn doortrekt, dan blijft er misschien wel een tweedeling over.

IR: Oke, dus dan heeft het op dat moment ook heel erg met intelligentie te maken?

IE: Ja, ik weet niet of intelligentie dan het goede woord is, het is meer het abstractieniveau. "Ben jij in staat om te blijven leren?" He, je hebt natuurlijk ook een theorie gehad over growth-mindset en fixed mindset. Er zijn heel veel mensen die in een fixed mindset blijven hangen en die zien zichzelf niet andere dingen aanleren of die zijn daartoe niet in staat of zien zichzelf daar niet toe in staat. Ja, hoe krijg je die mensen dan vervolgens mee in van "ja, sorry, jouw werk houdt op, je zou toch echt iets anders moeten gaan doen." Ja, ik denk wel dat dat niet positief hoeft te zijn.

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Thema 5: Corona

IR: Uhm, nou dan heb ik nog een laatste thema en dat heeft betrekking tot corona. Welke impact heeft de huidige corona crisis op meaningful work in de hospitality?

IE: Uhm, nou buiten natuurlijk de praktische dingen dat mensen een tijdlang niet aan het werk konden, mensen daardoor meer moesten gaan nadenken over zichzelf. Eigenlijk ook waar we het net over hadden; mensen gaan meer bij zichzelf te rade van "ben ik eigenlijk wel blij, ben ik met de goede dingen bezig?" Maar ik denk wel dat heel veel mensen ook wel een stukje bezinning hebben binnengekregen. En daar ben ik heel blij mee. Een voorbeeld wat ik wel vaak gebruik is dat mensen realiseren dat het goedkoper is om naar Barcelona te vliegen, dan om naar Maastricht met de trein heen en weer te gaan. Weet je, het is een simpel voorbeeld, maar ik merk dat mensen daar nu wel over aan het nadenken zijn. Ik zie nu wel dat mensen nu opeens het werk wat ze hebben veel meer waarderen als wat zij voorheen deden. Ik denk dat de tevredenheid van het werk, dat zie ik over het algemeen toenemen. De mensen die ik spreek zijn eigenlijk opgelucht en blij dat ze weer aan het werk mogen. Die zien het meer als "goh wat ben ik blij dat ik werk heb. Ik ben blijer met mijn werk dan voor corona." Dus, ik ben heel positief.

IR: En denkt u ook dat dat permanent is dat mensen er zo instaan?

IE: Hmm, ja dat is een goede vraag. Ik hoop het, dat het zo is. Ik denk uiteindelijk dat het bij mensen allemaal weer een beetje wegzakt, dat het weer gewoon wordt. Uhm, maar ja nu is in ieder geval die realisatie van "hey, het is toch wel eigenlijk bijzonder, ik ben toch wel blij dat ik goed werk heb en mijn geld verdien" en dat soort dingen. Ook dat is weer afhankelijk van de context, want je hebt ook werkgevers die gestopt zijn met bijvoorbeeld vakantiegeld uitbetalen. Of, ik hoorde vandaag een verhaal dat werkgevers soms zelfs salarissen niet meer uitbetalen. Ja, dan kijk je weer anders naar de wereld natuurlijk.

IR: Denkt u dat het salaris dan ook met meaningful work te maken heeft?

IE: Nou, ik weet zeker je hebt natuurlijk een minimum nodig om gelukkig te zijn. Daar heb je natuurlijk ook allemaal theorieën over. Dus als je salaris niet op orde is dan denk ik niet dat je al snel in meaningful work terecht komt. Want je hebt een bepaalde basis nodig om je huur te betalen, je eten te betalen en andere verplichte dingen. Dus daar moet aan voldaan zijn voordat je denk ik naar de volgende fase door kan.

IR: Ja, dat waren mijn vragen alweer.

IE: Wat vind je ervan? Kan je je er een beetje in vinden?

IR: Ja, ja, ik kan me er zeker in vinden. Ja, ik moet straks in de literatuur natuurlijk kijken wat er daar beschreven staat. Hopen dat het allemaal iets praktischer wordt. Het is natuurlijk een heel theoretisch iets, meaningful work, maar wat doe je er als HR manager nou eigenlijk mee?

IE: Weet je wat de grap is Celeste, voor Corona waren we met z'n allen er heel erg mee bezig. Het was heel erg belangrijk. Werkgevers zetten het ook in als een soort van middel om mensen te binden aan je bedrijf van "joh, bij ons is het zo en zo geregeld." En nu, denk ik, dat door Corona, dat heel veel mensen

opeens weer thuis zitten zonder werk, dat een werkgever zegt van "ja, we gaan niet investeren in mensen", wordt het wat minder belangrijk. Ik denk dat heel veel mensen denken je mag blij zijn dat je nog aan het werk bent. Het gaat even wat minder over die verdiepingsslag en over die dimensie van meaningful work, denk ik.

IR: Dus dat het eigenlijk weer een beetje teruggaat naar de basisbehoefte?

IE: Nou, het is wel tijdelijk dat het zo zal zijn. Ik denk dat elke crisis met zich meebrengt dat zowel werkgever als werknemer denken "nou, het is wel even mooi". Neem nou bijvoorbeeld vitaliteit. Dat vinden wij met z'n allen heel erg belangrijk, maar ik kan nu niet bij mijn baas aankomen met "nou ja, het is crisis maar ik wil toch nog even twintig of dertig duizend euro in het budget hebben voor vitaliteit." Dan zegt de baas ook "ga eerst maar eens kijken hoe we nog wat geld kunnen verdienen, wat we eigenlijk hadden moeten verdienen dit jaar." Dan wordt het wat minder belangrijk. Dus dat effect zal je wel zien, denk ik.

Afsluiting interview

IR: Oke, dan denk ik dat ik alles wel heb. Heeft u zelf nog opmerkingen?

IE: Nee, hartstikke goed. Ik vind dat je hele goede vragen hebt opgesteld.

IR: Ja?

IE: Ja, ja. Je laat me echt over dingen nadenken en dat vind ik wel leuk.

IR: Nou, mooi. Ja, Huub heeft wel geholpen hoor.

IE: Ja, hartstikke goed. Doe hem de groeten als je hem spreekt.

IR: Ja, zal ik doen.

IE: En ik zie je uitwerking wel tegemoet.

IR: Ja, en ik zal mijn verslag ook wel even doorsturen. En ik had eigenlijk nog even 1 vraagje. Weet jij toevallig nog iemand die eventueel zou willen meewerken aan het onderzoek?

IE: Uhm… Ja, ik denk dat dat wel moet lukken. Volgens mij had je een pdf gemaakt, die kan ik wel naar een aantal mensen doorsturen.

IR: Oke, dat zou heel fijn zijn!

IE: Ja, stuur ik die wel door voor je. Als er dan mensen zijn die erop reageren dan komen ze bij jou uit.

IR: Oke, top. Heel erg bedankt!

IE: Bedankt voor het interview.

Appendix VIII. **Summary of interview & codes**

Theme 1. **What is meaningful work?**

Theme 1, code 1: Definition of meaningful work

Meaningful work refers to work that gives the individual energy and meaning in their work/life. Perceptions of meaningfulness are, furthermore, subjective to the individual, which implies that it differs per individual and is challenging to perceive as something objective. As it is subjective to the individual, the HR manager feels that customisation of the job is relevant and important in stimulating meaningfulness.

Theme 1, code 2: Characteristics of meaningful work

According to the HR manager, the characteristics of meaningful work can also differ per individual and position. He believes that, for instance, dishwashers are less aware of the job's higher purpose and will spend less time thinking about that aspect of meaningful work. Moreover, it depends on the work context on how meaningful people perceive their job, in which a work environment with the attitude of "just shut up and do your job" will not contribute to higher levels of meaningfulness. The HR manager, hence, believes that discussing someone's individual contribution to the company, in terms of mission or company objectives, will support how meaningful one feels.

Theme 1, code 3: Meaningful work in the hospitality industry

Within the hospitality industry, meaningful work is perceived to be highly important as the HR manager believes that a guest can only be welcomed in a truly hospitable manner when the employee perceives their work to be meaningful. In relation to this, the HR manager believes that guests will notice it when employees do not perceive their work to be meaningful as the experience will not be optimal. "If you are in your strength then I think you will perform your job with more passion and feeling".

Theme 2. **HR practices that stimulate a meaningful work environment**

Theme 2, code 4: Meaningful work in the HR and/or business strategy

The hotel aims to be the best five-star hotel to both visit as a guest and to work for. Hence, it wants to be the employer of choice within the hospitality industry. Within its corporate strategy the hotel has incorporated an HR strategy in which every employee can read what his or her contribution is to the hotel. The hotel uses a lean strategy, in which, on the one hand, unnecessary and unproductive procedures are reduced, but on the other hand involves employees to innovate and come up with new ideas. Every employee is individually consulted to give ideas to make their job easier, more enjoyable, and better. Moreover, every employee, whether a CEO or cleaner, is trained in the lean philosophy and a platform is provided to enable employees to propose their ideas.

Theme 2, code 5: Designing a meaningful work environment

The HR manager feels that a meaningful work environment was partially created by the implementation of the lean philosophy 3 years ago. Moreover, twice a year the employees are given the opportunity to participate in discussions to give feedback, after which these feedback points are measured during the employee satisfaction survey. Leaders have an important role in designing a meaningful work environment. As such, leadership training is given once a year in which leaders are trained to discuss issues related to, for instance, lean or performance with their employees. Recently, the hotel has implemented the personal development plan, in which leaders ask their employees things like "where do you see yourself now and where would you like to be in the future? What do you need to get there?" Based on these interviews, both customised and standard training courses are given by the training manager. Although these opportunities are offered, the HR manager does express that everyone has their own role within the organization, in which their role should still be performed. Hence, the autonomy is limited. However, within their role people are given the opportunity to make their job nicer, easier, and better. Despite this, sometimes people get the opportunity to do cross-training in a different department or to get promoted to a higher position. The HR manager concludes that in many ways the hotel is occupied with the personal development and awareness of their employees.

Theme 2, code 6: Challenges in designing a meaningful work environment

According to the HR manager, one of the most difficult things in designing a meaningful work environment is that not everyone is willing to participate. For instance, if the HR department has a certain long-term vision, it is hard to motivate all supervisors to believe in and follow that vision. Moreover, there are some challenges in relation to generational differences. In general, it is experienced by the HR manager that the older generation is raised in a way of "shut up and just do your job". The younger generation, however, is more likely to search for the meaning of work, like "what do I actually contribute and what is the impact I make?" In this sense, the HR manager expects a supervisor to be able to lead and inspire various generations. Another challenge related to generations is that the HR manager perceives younger people (of 25 years and younger) to be less satisfied than older generations, as younger generations often have more expectations of the company. Older generations are, on the other hand, are more willing to follow the company. As an example, there is no time to have discussions like "well, I wanted to do it differently" when a chef calls that something has to be presented on a plate right now. At that moment, something should simply be presented on a plate because the guest is waiting for its food. "And then you notice that there are sometimes differences, differences in expectations".

Theme 3:   Meaningful work in an international context

Theme 3, code 7: Meaningful work in an international context

In terms of cultural differences, the HR manager perceives that there are definitely differences in how meaningful work is perceived and, mostly, how aware people are of meaningful work. The HR manager

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has worked with both Japanese and American colleagues in this sense and perceives it to be different compared to the Dutch culture. "There are differences between Western people, like you and me, and people from, for example, Japan. People are not really aware of meaningful work there yet. In Japan, you just go to work, do your work, do what the boss asks, and you are not really developing yourself". The personal development plan, for instance, is normally filled in by people with an European background, whereas someone from Japan is less concerned with that. Similarly to the Dutch culture of the seventies, someone with a Japanese culture believes that the employer takes care of them, in which no initiative is taken from the lower levels of the organization. American people are, however, more concerned with meaningful work and are continuously searching for ways to contribute (to the company) and to have impact. Personal development is important in those cultures and people are always searching for ways to stand out and keep track of trends.

Theme 4.   Digitalisation of the workplace

Theme 4, code 8: Use of digital tools in the hospitality

In terms of digitalisation, the HR manager considers mostly robotization of the workplace, in which robots are not currently used in the hotel. In the front of the house operations, the hotel is not likely to make use of robots as it concerns a five-star hotel with a specific customer base, in which it is emphasized by the HR manager that the hospitality is a "people business". A guest arriving at the hotel will, therefore, prefer to be served, checked in, and checked out by a person consisting of human flesh and blood. The hotel has done a research before to examine the perceptions of guests if they were checked in by a robot. The results of this indicated that the guests would not appreciate this. As a result, the hotel will not consider digitising the front of the house operations. The HR manager, however, does believe that if a hospitality business has a different customer base with different company objectives, robotization would be more likely to happen. On the back of the house, robotization would make more sense as humans are, for instance, not needed to remove invoices from envelopes and scan them. This could, therefore, in his opinion be replaced by robots.

Theme 4, code 9: Meaningful work in a digital work-environment

The HR manager believes that meaningful work perceptions will be different in a digital work environment. If, for instance, jobs would be replaced by robots, millions of people will be out of jobs. As a result, people no longer know what to do. Hence, the HR manager looks at this change with sorrow and wonders what the results of this will be. Currently the HR manager is reading the book "homodeus" from the Istrian philosopher, in which he writes about robotization taking away the lower levels of work. Here, the HR manager raises the question "what will remain for a person to do?" From the organization's standpoint robotization would provide benefits for cost reduction and efficiency. The HR manager, however, acknowledges that work is an important part of an individual's well-being and

social interaction. Hence, it is questioned by the HR manager whether it is a positive change from a sociological standpoint.

Another possible consequence of workplace digitalisation, in the eyes of the HR manager, is that the population will be divided into two groups. The first group consists of people that are unable to do a different job and that are unable to learn new skills, reinvent themselves, and keep up with the changing environment. This group, as the HR manager recalls, often have a fixed mindset, in which the willingness and capability of the individual to change is relatively low. If the jobs for these people are replaced, it does not have to be positive. The second group, however, consists of people with a higher level of abstraction, who will continue to enjoy themselves and experience meaningful work. Those people have a growth mindset and have the capability to learn new skills and reinvent their careers based on the new situation.

Theme 5.   Corona crisis

Theme 5, code 10: Meaningful work perceptions during the corona crisis

As people were unable to work for a while as a consequence of the corona crisis, people had more time to think about themselves about "am I happy, am I doing the right things?" As a result, the HR manager believes that people have gained awareness about certain aspects of life. One example that the HR manager uses is that people start to realize that it is cheaper to fly to Barcelona than to travel to Maastricht by train. Work-related, the HR manager experiences that people start to appreciate their job more than before the crisis and that the general satisfaction has increased. The people the HR manager generally speaks are relieved and happy to have work, in the first place, and to be able to work again. Hence, the HR manager believes this has had a positive impact on meaningful perceptions of people. This is, however, dependent on the context. As the HR manager explains, there are some employers that stopped paying salaries or stopped paying for holiday fees. In this sense, the HR manager believes that people cannot experience meaningfulness if people do not have a minimum salary. "You need a certain basis to pay your rent, pay for your food, and other obligatory things. So, that has to be met before you can move on to the next phase". Although people realized that "I am happy that I have a good job and earn my money", this realisation will probably fade away after a while.

Theme 5, code 11: Designing a meaningful work environment during/after the corona crisis

Employers were very concerned with meaningful work before the corona crisis. Meaningful work was often used as a way to bind people to the organization, which was used as a description of how it is arranged at the company. As a result of Corona, however, employers are less likely to invest in meaningful work and it becomes less important. According to the HR manager, a lot of people opine that people should be happy to even have a job. Hence, meaningful work considerations are currently less important. The HR manager does believe that this will be temporary and that every crisis has similar effects in this sense. An example given by the manager is vitality. Although this is important in a work

environment, the HR manager cannot address this to his boss to reserve a budget for vitality of twenty or thirty thousand euros. The main goal after such a crisis is to earn the money that should have been earned during the year. Hence, these aspects become less important.