

# Employee satisfaction in agile teams



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A framework

Mads Emil Andersen

Supervisor: Prof. Stefan Meisiek

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## Abstract

New ways of working are making their entrances in the large industries across the world. One of these is agile, which has emerged as one of the larger concepts in the recent years. This has broad a focus on letting the employee make the decisions. Industries who are typically quite non-innovative are utilizing this as well. What will this mean for employee in these settings, can they thrive “without” a boss?

I am to investigate what influence employee satisfaction in this new and existing concept that is Agile. To see if I can determine what is a matter of subject for employee satisfaction specifically for Agile. What stands out and has a profound effect on the satisfaction in the agile environment. Prior research lack the focus and empirical evidence on employee satisfaction in connection to agile.

My primary data will consist of interviews with both experience and new team members from agile team in Tryg A/S. Secondary data will be a survey on employee satisfaction conducted by Tryg and observations from a “Retrospective” session I was allowed to attend in Tryg.

In my research I will go through the existing literature on the matter. Through my data I will aim to either validated or reject the proposed factors. In here I will also elaborate on what findings don't fit the mold, so they don't get validated or rejected entirely.

My findings have the potential to guide or make companies aware of the nuances to employee satisfaction, that employees experience when working with such a concept.

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# Employee satisfaction in agile teams

## Introduction

Many companies are aiming to be the most innovative within their own respective field. This has led to many changes within each firm. What their strategy is, how they choose their suppliers, who they choose to hire next and many other aspects of the company changes during this process.

Many of these changes has been a result of new emerging theories such as the business model innovation (Massa & Tucci; 2014) The business model canvas by (Alexander Osterwalder; 2010, Business model generation), Lean start-up by (Steve Blank; 2013, Harvard business review) and agile business practice as spoken of by (Stephen Denning; 2015)

These theories revolved around how a business change, how they think differently and in a more innovative way to gain more novel and better results both within exploitation and exploration. They touch upon how they can build for innovation and not get stagnated and be outperformed by competitors etc. All of these surrounding how it improves and affect the company itself. This goes for both big and small companies. From the smallest start-ups to the largest companies in the world.

I will focus on the agile team part of this wave. The amount of research regarding the people who perform every day are rather small, in these new agile teams and work environment. What matters for the employees to perform their very best and thrive?

Here in particular the larger mature companies, which typically have a larger gap in communication between the leadership and the employees, compared to smaller companies and start-ups who usually have a flatter organizational structure.

If your management or a large portion of it consist of people you may never have met in person, but only known by name from the company organization chart. How does such changes as agile, that are introduced by these somewhat distant people you may not really have any relationship, affect the employees and the teams?

I would like to dig deeper into this somewhat unexplored area of agile teams and agile thinking. To



see how such changes influences the culture of the teams within the large mature companies with a traditionally more hieratical structure. This to examine what the management should take into consideration, when working with agile teams and how to execute this most efficiently. Here I wish to get a better understanding of which factors matters to the employee. What circumstances and that lie behind these factors and even potentially how these can be accommodated.

Models such as the business model canvas illustrates how the different elements of a company benefit one another. This theory is used to map out a company in 9 major elements which are Key partners, Key activities, value propositions, customers relationships, customers segments, channels, revenue streams, cost structure and key resources.

However, as these areas can complement one another, they could also do the opposite if some areas are not handled properly. The Key Resource part examines what resources are needed to deliver the wanted result to the customers and how these interact and support the other elements. You can have the greatest idea in the world. But if your employees are not onboard, the execution could fall flat and your chances of success diminishes.

There has been research of what influence the leader has (Teresa M. Amabile and Mukti Khaire; 2008). This goes for general management level but is has also been research on what role the CEO should have (Vijay Govindarajan and Chris Trimble; 2011)

There are critical research that tackles challenges with innovation strategy and why the failure rate for innovative strategies are high (Gary P. Pisano; 2015). But none of these provide an empirical framework for the employee's point of view. It is not clear how the employees are affected, when implementing and working with such innovative strategies as agile teams are. That will be my focus for this paper. I will aim to answer the following.

My research question will be "What influences employee satisfaction while working in agile teams".

## Methods

I will take a qualitative approach to collect data around what matters to the employees, when implementing and working in such an environment as agile.

The research paper will also take an inductive direction, as I am looking to gather pieces of

information, in order to see if I detect patterns among the various teams and employees. To see if there are some common factors, which come to light independently during the research.

I plan to use semi-structured interviews to collect the data from the employee and the management. It is a matter of what influences the employee and therefore an interview would be the best way to gain this data. As the subject also has the potential to be confusing and quite broad, a structure is needed to avoid deviating too far from the intended subject I wish to cover.

I will interview both the employees in the agile teams, management and possibly other employees. This is to get as broad a picture as possible for the paper. If only one type of employee or team was interviewed, the result could be deemed quite biased.

I will also interview several members in the same team, as I do not expect all employees to have the same values and ideas of what influences their employee satisfaction.

The management could also have insights that the employee might not be aware of, but could still have an impact on their satisfaction. So therefore, I will also be conducting interviews with the management as well.

I will also aim to have a second data source of quantitative data. This will be a survey among all the employees in the different agile teams. This will also focus on what matters when talking about their employee satisfaction.

This will make it possible to triangulate data. Here to see if there is a connection between the data from the interviews and the data from the survey. This will help to verify if the employees hold the same factors in regard or have vastly different values.

To accommodate potential time restraints, only doing the interview will be plan A and both interview and survey will be plan B.

Agile team theory revolves around the idea of self-organizing teams as described by (Stephen Denning, 2015). A team with a low satisfaction could have an impact on the firm's performance, as employee satisfaction has shown to be linked to the firm's economic performance as described by (Santiago Melián-González, Jacques Bulchand-Gidumal and Beatriz González López-Valcárcel, 2015). All through the link is only one link and beforehand prior research has shown no link between satisfaction and performance. Some even going against that particular claim. The finding is rather new, so the relationship between satisfaction and performance might have changed with time.



John F. Tripp also mention in his article: Job Satisfaction in Agile Development Teams: Agile Development as Work Redesign, 2016) in the discussion part. That further research on how different agile practices impact job satisfaction, is needed.

In the article in Harvard business review up towards four-fifths of the asked companies in their survey, believed there were using agile practices. The figure is shown here:

In fact, around four-fifths of survey respondents say they're using agile in some form in all of the principal business functions:

- R&D (83 percent)
- Production and operations (82 percent)
- Customer service and support (79 percent)
- Marketing and communications (79 percent)
- Sales (78 percent)
- HR, finance, and administration (78 percent)

A quite extensive number, who have adopted agile practices into their organizations. How well is not at the matter at focus, but it does show that agile is potentially present in a large majority of companies around the world. Or at least in western economies who has a large It and industry infrastructure.

This could make this papers findings valuable, as quite a large number of companies make use of agile teams.

Capsuling what could influence employee satisfaction specifically for the agile setting, will include a range of factors that could apply here. These factors are found in the literature that is present in the paper, which includes Team values, The individual, HR, Communication, work environment and leadership. My analysis sets out to see if these factors can be validated or perhaps end up getting rejected, when they are link to employee satisfaction in agile teams.

During the research I also impose new factors, that show evidence of being an influence for employee satisfaction. These are the terms Speed and Purpose. While other factors don't come across as entirely new factors, they instead have a quite different take on already proposed factors. My findings elaborate on the subject of agile, by taking a look at employee satisfaction in agile teams primarily from the perspective of the employee. As expected employees do not always have the same views as their employer.

I have noticed that despite agile teams being one common name for all the teams, there are usually unique characteristics within each of the teams. This sets them apart from one another and challenges what could apply as general terms for influencing employee satisfaction.

It was also noticeable that many of the factors often had an effect on one or more of the other factors. One could rarely stand alone, without having an interconnection with other factors.

I did find that some factors who would apply for other aspects than agile, did occur, which is to be expected. However new things did also appear, in particular the factor of Speed. What quality the teams ended up creating was important. But the speed which they created it by, seemed to be just as important as the final result itself.

This study focuses on the topic of employee satisfaction within agile teams. The scope of my project is to see if the proposed factors from the literature can be validated or not, here from a user perspective.

Employee satisfaction can be an item for many different interpretations. The values or factors you connect to satisfaction, can very much vary from person to person. The factors given only applies if employees agreed, as the scope if what influence their satisfaction.

As this is the point of view for the paper, I do not look to analyze how the proposed factors interact with the economical demands from the board. Nor do I aim to analyze to find correlations between employee satisfaction and financial profit.

I do not claim that my research is of an extensive size, which can be used as a solitary component. There are other factors to employee satisfaction which does not have roots or apply specifically for agile solely, but would still very much influence the satisfaction in the teams. These factors are not discussed in this paper.

For various industries, the research for this research question will provide some insights into what influence the employees in agile teams. What matters to them and what enables or disables them to thrive in an agile environment. As many companies are adopting agile these days, it can give them knowledge on what to be aware of.

For academia, answering my research question will expand on the literature of agile. Giving more insights to an employee focused side of the theories regarding the matter. I hope to contribute to the existing knowledge and build upon it for further advancement for the topic of agile.

My paper will be divided into 4 parts. In the first part I will be presenting the theoretical framework, which defines what factors the literature propose influence employee satisfaction. In the second

section the methods for how this research question will be answered. Third section will be my findings and in the final and fourth section, I will be presenting my reflections, potential recommendations and areas of future studies.

## Theoretical framework

### Employee satisfaction:

Employee satisfaction is a common term familiar to most people and many can within reason give a short definition of the term. Simply asking around in my current department, people would quickly give definitions such as “*What makes me happy in my worklife*” or “*It tells if I like to go to work*”. They are most likely also correct and the most expected answers, but they could also be considered quite vague to work with.

If asked to elaborate further into the term from there, it quickly becomes more of a challenge. How do you work with the term and what sub-terms should you define to better work with the subject. People come forth with a larger variation in their answers, when asked to elaborate.

As addressed by (Jan Stapel, 1950), when he was researching public opinion on job satisfaction. He found it very hard to distinguish and measure factors that only applied to the respondent’s current job. He suspected other factors influenced the results and that you would at least to some extent, measure satisfaction in general and not only job satisfaction.

The same phenomenon is mentioned by (Edwin A. Locke, 1969) in his study on Job satisfaction. It is unclear if factors revolve solely around the job or whether the environment plays a role as a whole. Locke continues to make a connection between emotions and job satisfaction. He describes it as the average man has 3 basic biological functions. A cognition, which is put as the identification of existents. Evaluation, the estimate of the beneficial or harmful relationship of perceived existents to oneself and lastly the regulation of action.

Locke ties these 3 basic functions together with his definition for job satisfaction which goes: “*Job Satisfaction and dissatisfaction are a function of the perceived relationship between what one wants from one’s job and what one perceives it as offering or entailing*”.

A definition that pin points the job satisfaction to stem from the perception and the distance between of what you want and what you get. Locke illustrates this with students and their grades. A student is asked, what the minimum grade for a paper is wanted and the highest possible is. A student who expects a D but gets a A, will display a higher level of Job satisfaction, contrary to a student who expects a B and gets a A for example.

The same definition given by Locke is mentioned by (Radu Florea and Antonio Amuza, 2015). The definition is describe as being generally accepted and goes "*Perception of the relationship between what we want to achieve from work and what is perceived to be received*". It is put somewhat more professional compared to the once's given by my colleagues, but still a quite broad definition. Is it also no completely identical to the definition given by Locke in his own study from 1969.

Locke is also referred to in the 2006 study by (Gazioglu, Saziye and Tansel, Aysit, 2006) with the definition being "*job satisfaction as an individual's subjective valuation of different aspects of their job*".

Furthermore, satisfaction is also mentioned in the article by (Amy S. Wharton, Thomas Rotolo and Sharon R. Bird, 2000). They refer to an older description from 1977, stating satisfaction to be a function of what people want or expect from employment.

In a study (Chen, Yuan-Ho, Lee, Wei-Chun and Tseng, Kuie-Wen, 2012) on employee satisfaction and happiness between European and Chinese companies, another definition is mentioned this time from Robbins. It goes "*Emphasized job satisfaction as on individual's general attitude toward his work, and a higher job satisfaction is always associated with more proactive attitude and efficiency*".

This definition emphasizes the individual's point of view and paints a picture of personal factors as the determines for employee satisfaction.

In a study by (John F. Tripp, Cindy Riemenscheider and Jason. B Thatcher, 2014) regarding linking Job satisfaction and agile practices, Job satisfaction is defined as: "*The extent of positive emotional response to the job resulting from an employee's appraisal of the job as fulfilling or congruent with the individual's values (Morris & Venkatesh, 2010, Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996)*".

This again seems to imply that Job satisfaction is connected to the individual's perception of the

job. Although not only the job itself, but also might ties to the person values among other things. This goes along the same lines as the basic functions Locke described in his study.

In the study by (Radu and Antonio) they measure employee satisfaction and come up with the following terms in their theoretical framework: recognition, achievement, responsibility, advancement and the work itself. However in the survey result section, they describe the following factors for employee satisfaction: Supervision, environment and working conditions, working atmosphere and collaboration in the company.

They arrive at different terms after they collected their data and validated their research. This could be an indicator for job satisfaction to be very much dependent on the circumstances and the values of those specific employees.

Another example is given in the article by (Bussing, Andre, Bissels, Thomas, Fuchs, Vera and Perrar, Klaus-M, 1999). They start by reusing a model with 6 defined categories to what work satisfaction is by Bruggemann. Later they add 2 additional categories to the model. That definition is very much categorized.

It may not be possible to make a definition that can fit every time, without the possibility of that definition being quite broad. Most definitions also focus of what the individual identifies as being factors for their satisfaction.

Otherwise a pre-set definition might not leave enough room to work it. Creating trouble to assign answers to each category might result in unwanted fits.

Lastly it could also be argued, that it is not only the content of the work and the workplace itself, that alone makes up what employee satisfaction can be defined by. It could seem that employee satisfaction has a much wider array of potential attributes or sources of content to it, then one single definition can manage to cover.

Due to this the terms employee satisfaction, job satisfaction and satisfaction, will be used synonymously in this paper.

There is also evidence for job satisfaction to be evaluated on different levels. As mentioned by (Weiss, H.M. and Merlo, K.L, 2015) job satisfaction can be an overall evaluation of your job

situation, but can also be more focused to one specific aspect of the job only. This is framed as facet satisfaction. It is argued which level gives the best assessment of job satisfaction, or more accurately what pitfalls may occur. Spreading it to much out and you risk only finding weak links to job satisfaction, compared to overall assessments which is mentioned to give greater relations to job satisfaction.

I could imagine that asking for an overall evaluation, could give a more accurate result on the current job satisfaction. However, if this evaluation covers all aspects such as work hours, managers, feedback, job complexity, communication etc, it will be difficult to act on such a result. I do therefore see a need for at least some facet levels as well. This is to enable a pragmatic use in the future, which would enable potential changes to be feasible.

## Agile Teams

Agile teams have been accepted and incorporated more and more into businesses in the recent decade. As mentioned by (John F. Tripp, Cindy Riemenscheider and Jason. B Thatcher, 2014), this has been adopted in various forms such as scrum, extreme programming, crystal clear and feature-driven development. I could imagine that the list of examples for types of adoption would be quite long by now. This brings the need to come closer to defining what an agile team is and how it differs from other teams in an organization.

In the study by (John F. Tripp, Cindy Riemenscheider and Jason. B Thatcher, 2014) which focuses on software development teams and job satisfaction, agile team members are described to have broad skillsets. This include skills such as analysis, programming, design, database architecture and administration, systems engineering and project management.

These skills are based on software development specifically but shows multiple dimensions. They display the ability to be technical proficient, but also includes skills that revolves around the product or service itself. The teams are not defined as being solely capable of inventing the technical aspects, but also displaying skills for task outside the actual building of the product or service.

In the study by (Stephen Denning, 2015) agile practices are being described as more horizontal, contrary to the “old” model of business being very hierarchical. Beforehand the top management hired a smaller boss, who hired another even smaller boss and so on. Each person referring to the person that hired them. This made progress and decision-making being very tedious and slowed

down the processes.

Stephen defines agile teams as being “lens” focused on the customer needs. Interactions with the customers is central, work at every stage should work towards fulfilling the needs of the customer and lastly teams should be self-organizing. Stephen also indirectly credits the many failures of agile teams throughout time, to come from misconceptions of what agile is to begin with. Many businesses have claimed to be agile but kept the hierarchical structure in place. This have been done despite promising otherwise, when implementing agile practices.

The attribute of being self-organized is also touched upon by (Moe, Nils Brede, Dingsøyr, Torgeir and Dybå. Tore, 2010). They also emphasize this as an attribute for agile teams and adds a focus on the team being adaptable for change. Elements such as team orientation, functional redundancy, communication, feedback, learning and shared leadership are highlighted as important traits for an agile team.

Agile is not only for software development companies. In an article by (Wolf, Lazaro, 2013) it is argued that agile teams have multiple skillsets and therefore agile practices could also apply for multiple industries or aspects of a company. It is emphasized the agile is collaboration between individual’s knowledge and not for their managers knowledge. And this knowledge includes multiple skillsets, so it would not limit itself to only software development, but also apply for a wide and diverse group of people and purposes.

In the study by (Inayat, Irum and Salim, Siti Salwah, 2015) agile teams are being described as cross-functional, closely knit and highly interactive. Being cross-functional and highly interactive are terms that could be considered to apply significantly for agile teams. Closely knit would not be an attribute that could not to apply significantly for “normal” teams. That would most likely be dependent on the individual team and the people in it, thus it could apply both in agile and none agile teams.

Another description is given by (Paul McInerney and Frank Maurer, 2005) in their article on agile projects. They list 4 defining statements about agile team characteristics which are: Individuals and interactions over processes and tools, working software over comprehensive documentation, customer collaboration over contract negotiation and responding to change over following a plan.

Several different versions of which kind of profiles an agile team should consist of, is argued and tested by (Rostami, Peyman and Neshati, Mahmood, 2019). In their research 3 general attributes is



argued that they should be present in any team, no matter which profiles the team consist of. These attributes are being flexible, high-performing and low-cost. It is further explained that members should be experts in one field and have general knowledge in other fields as well. Thus making the team flexible regarding to which tasks they can complete and low cost as fewer people are needed to cover all types of task.

There are some similarities that seem to be present in the definitions and descriptions given by the above-mentioned studies and articles.

One common trait is the need to throw away the hieratical structure and let more of the decision-making be executed by the team. It is argued as a necessity to do so, else the team won't be able to fit the agile mold.

Furthermore a need for quick action and the ability to change is emphasized as an important trait of an agile team. Given the inherent uncertainty that comes with working with agile practices, the team must be able to adapt and react to new discoveries and knowledge. The finished product or service are not known beforehand.

This also goes coherent with the focus on a flat structure, for nimble and quick communication in the teams. It seems valid to predict, that a team with long and slow means of communication, won't be able to make a collected and quick reaction in case a problem arises.

Another major theme is the focus on the customer's needs. The team should enable customers in their processes to a greater extend, when working in an agile team. Fast interactions several times during a sprint or process, to get feedback during multiple stages of the development of products and services. This in comparison to a customer test, after the product has been fully developed.

Lastly there is a focus for generalist rather than specialist to some extent. The team should be able to perform a variation of task in several areas. This however does not mean that no specialist at all should not be present. There should be a balance, which would depend on the individual circumstances for the problem that is to be tackled.

### Factors for employee satisfaction

As seen in the example by (Radu Florea and Antonio Amuza, 2015) they seem to have a difficulty selecting the accurate factors, when conducting their study. Many of the pre-selected proved not to

be the most valued once among the respondents.

As described by (Tso, Geoffrey, Liu, Fangtao and Li, Jin, 2015) in their study, employee satisfaction is a time-sensitive concept, the contours of which continue changing with social and economics changes. The same team could therefore might have changed values since the latest evaluation, depending on how their social and economic environment has evolved in the meantime.

In the study by (Shan, Siqing, Li, Cangyan, Yao, Wei, Shi, Jihong, Ren, Jie, 2014) one factor that is highly emphasized is IT infrastructure and the quality of that infrastructure. They highlight that a high quality of IT is positive linked with employee satisfaction.

Another aspect that is link to employee satisfaction is made by (Susanna Minder and Signe Balina, 2015), who link human resource management to the concept of employee satisfaction. Human resource management is described as the function of: to identify, recruit and retain capable and performance-oriented personnel and as a generic wording for every arrangement of personnel management. This could be areas such as general personnel care and adequate possibilities for further development both work and personal wise. In the study by (Gazioglu, Saziye and Tansel, Aysit, 2006), Job training is also found to increase all measures of job satisfaction.

In the same study they propose satisfaction with influence over job and satisfaction with a sense of achievement as being indicators for job satisfaction.

In the study by (Roelen, Cam, Koopmans, PC and Groothoof, JW, 2008), factors such as satisfaction with colleagues, task variety and working conditions are linked to employee satisfaction. All the mentioned factors where researched and they found a significant regression with employee satisfaction to these factors during their research.

As most companies have adapted agile practices and not started out being agile from their conception, (Moe, Nils Brede, Dingsøy, Torgeir and Dybå. Tore, 2010) points out that management should be aware of the organizational context provided by them. Performance of the agile teams do not only depend on the competence of the team itself, but also the organizational culture around the teams.

As mentioned earlier, there is little empirical research regarding agile teams and the link to employee satisfaction. The process of determining which factors are relevant for researching employee satisfaction in agile teams, is therefore associated with a degree of uncertainty.

Many of the definitions I have found in my research, point to a level of individual evaluation. They

also seem to indicate that the area of influence, is considered to go beyond factors only related to the job itself and the individual.

This could indicate that previous researched factors for former team structures, could still apply for agile teams. However it is also taking into consideration, that employee satisfaction has been described as an ever changing concept. It is mentioned to change with the environment and be a fluctuating concept.

Based on a mixture of the listed studies in regard to what employee satisfaction is, how agile teams are described and my own personal idea of possible factors, I have arrived at the following factors: Team values, The individual, Education/HR, Communication, Work environment and leadership. These factors will be further explained and examined in the following section of the paper.

#### Team values

The main idea for a team, is to work together. It is self-explanatory when you are discussing teams. If you don't work together, why have teams at all?

In the study by (Standifer, Rhett L, and more, 2015) the relationship between STC (shared temporal cognition, TC (temporal conflict), action-processes and team satisfaction are measured among 1.414 students across multiple western countries.

The study arrives at a positive relationship between action-processes and team satisfaction. It also arrives at a negative relationship between TC and team satisfaction. Teams with a higher degree of STC was more likely to display action-processes (coordination of task activities and better phasing) and be better equipped to handle TC. This might indicate, that a shared common understanding on how the team acquire knowledge and interact, could influence the employee's satisfaction.

Another aspect to having a shared cognition is being research in the study by (Karen K. Jansen and Amy L. Kristof-Brown, 2005). The study uses the terminology of drummers being in sync and relates this to team behaviors and satisfaction. They test if a team in sync displays a higher degree of satisfaction, compared to teams who are not in sync. They found evidence to suggest, that teams who are in sync, are more likely to be satisfied and engage in helping behavior.

In the article by (Hjerto, Kjell B and Kuvaas, Bård, 2017) they touch on the danger of winning the

argument, rather than having a productive exchange of views. They mention when teams are faced with cognitive conflicts, individuals can tend to spend valuable time proving themselves right. This rather than learning from one another, during the conflict/occurrence of different views. This could affect the team performance and the job satisfaction. However there is a dispute in prior research, if this conflict has a negative or positive effect on job satisfaction.

The study hypothesize a positive relationship between CT conflict and satisfaction, which seems to be supported. Challenging tasks in regard to obtaining and using knowledge therefore might be a positive thing.

They also hypothesize a negative relationship between emotional relationship conflict and find it not to be supported. And the same goes for the hypothesized positive relationship between emotional task conflict and satisfaction.

Therefore conflicts depending on the type of conflict, does not necessarily have a negative impact on satisfaction as one might expect. This could mean depending on how teams view challenges and how they decided to handle them, it could have either a positive or negative impact on job satisfaction.

A danger of becoming stuck in routine is described as a common development for many groups in the paper by (Holly Arrow, Marshall Scoot Poole, Kelly Bouas Henry, Susan Wheelan and Richard Moreland, 2004). Habitual routines can appear and be hard to change later on. An agile team is about a flat ever-changing structure to accommodate for change. This could suggest, that a common value to adopt and embrace change, is an important factor for team members to share in an agile team. Misalignment among the members on how to work with routines and possible how to break them, could potentially impact the individual's job satisfaction, as tensions could be expected to occur if such misalignment become present in the team.

This is also discussed by (Joseph E. Mcgrath, 1991), who mentions a number of prior studies. These studies showed that groups tend to select one initial work strategy only on and stick with it. This was maintained, until they were forced to change because of inadequate performance.

## The individual

Despite being a member of a team, I believe it is fair to say that you still bring your individual bias and thoughts with you every day. In the study by (Pfattheicher, Stefan and Böhm, Robert, 2018) they investigate how the aspect of trust and how it is affected. Their findings show that even individuals with high levels of Honesty-Humility (whom according to study often shows high levels of trust), can relatively easily become uncertain.

(Joseph E. McGrath, 1991) defines different types of group interactions, which include phases as production, well-being and member support. As shown earlier by (Stephen Denning, 2015) and (Moe, Nils Brede, Dingsøy, Torgeir and Dybå. Tore, 2010), agile teams are described as being self-organizing. Is everyone then aware of their role in the team? As only the team themselves in theory are tasked with deciding how they will work, this might be a valid aspect to consider. Uncertainty could decrease and limit the fast-phased work-style of agile teams and affect the employee satisfaction.

On perhaps the other side of the trust spectrum, there could be a narcissistic personality trait. (Mathieu. Cynthia, 2013) study on narcissism and how job satisfaction is affected by it, showed a strong negative relation to job satisfaction. Here it is mentioned that narcissism was negatively related to agreeableness and testing the role of FFM (five factor model of personality) traits found agreeableness to be positive related to job satisfaction.

The five factor model of personality was also tested in relation to job satisfaction by (Judge, Timothy A, Heller, Daniel, Mount, Michael K and Murphy, Kevin R, 2002). They found a strong correlation between the trait's neuroticism and extraversion. An agile team is among other things, about interacting frequently with customers. I would therefore suspect that being extravert in general, could have a positive relation to your job satisfaction in an agile team. As you could be more comfortable with interactions with new people, if you are an out-going person to begin with. This would also go vice versa for individuals, who does not possess this trait.

Personality is also looked into by (Judge, Timothy A, Bono, Joyce E and Locke, Edwin A, 2000) who researched personality and job satisfaction. In all of the 4 studies they conducted, they found a significant relationship between core self-evaluation and job satisfaction.

The above mentioned research could suggest, that the individuals own personality traits could be an important influencer on their job satisfaction. I have earlier described agile teams to ideally be self-organizing and have a flat structure. Being able to work with a product or service through multiple phases of its life-cycle. I would expect such teams to have individuals with strong or dominant personalities, which would impact the team and the employee satisfaction. Here I would also like to clarify, that I may not be able to determine if this affects has a negative or positive relation. Also I may not be able to determine whether this only affects the individual itself, or if one individual would affect multiple members job satisfaction in the team.

The work by Locke and Judge has also received criticism by (Chen, Gilad, 2012) and others, where the approach and the significance of the correlations are challenged. They still agree that core self-evaluation and the other traits can be used as a determine for job satisfaction, however they do challenge to what degree it applies.

HR

In the book about XP (Hubert Baumeister, Michele Marchesi and Mike Holecombe, 2005) it is briefly mentioned on page 263, how it remains a challenge to education and train in agile practices. Here with a focus on students. Depending on the team in the organization, they might be less theoretically strong compared to university students. It could therefore be believed to be quite the challenge to learn the agile ways for some employees in organizations, who do not necessarily have a university background.

In the article by (Miles, Andrea, 2013) it is stated that 32 % of the population in their data set, feel insecure in their skills and that their knowledge is not up to date. It is also stated that 70 % of HR managers believe employees think HR provide little to no learning. As earlier mentioned by (Pfattheicher, Stefan and Böhm, Robert, 2018) uncertainty and then it's closely related term insecure, can increase employee dissatisfaction. The numbers do seem quite high, but this could perhaps present an opportunity. Provided that HR in general does work (which will not be researched in this paper), there could be a very large potential for a positive impact on employees, since a majority seem to be somewhat skeptical towards HR practices in general.

In the article by (Loveday, Marion, 1996) on employee satisfaction in ISS, they stated among other things, that equipping employees with job skills and improving them has a major impact on employee satisfaction. They also seem to find a positive connection between employee satisfaction and low employee turnover. This is further touched upon in by (Snell, Alice, 2006), where the importance for good onboarding processes for a lasting bond between the employees and the company is emphasized. But how does this work in an agile environment? Agile teams are fast-phased and should be ready for change. Does this also mean change in the team composition and how do you then maintain a lasting relation? This could be something that affects the employee satisfaction in agile teams.

In the article by (Saari, Lise M, Judge, Timothy A and Edwards, Jack E, 2004) they discuss how the job itself is a major influence on job satisfaction. It is stated that core self-evaluation, which I also previously have mentioned, connects to how the employee sees the work they do. So, the job-itself affects employee satisfaction. Quite expected and perhaps fair to conclude, they say you can't change people's personalities, but you can hire the right people. People who do have vastly different values or don't identify with the job in anyway, might not be the aim to hire. Similar aspect is mentioned by (Henry Fock, Michael K. Hui, Kevin Au and Michael Harris Bond, 2013) in their article. Here they describe how employees need a sense of self-efficacy and feel that their work creates an impact, regardless of being in a high or low power distance culture. Perhaps a seemingly common factor that applies more generally and not only to one particular culture.

This is also researched by (Karanika-Murray, Maria, Duncan, Nikita, Pontes, Halley M and Griffiths, Mark D, 2015) who links similarities between the individuals and the organizations identification, to be a factor for job satisfaction. They believe that a lack between the employee identification and the organizations goals and expectations, can lead to a reduced job satisfaction and vice versa. They hypothesize a positive relation between organizational identification and job satisfaction, which they find to be supported in their study. It could therefore be interesting to see if people's identification matches up to their employers. And if they believe this has any effect on their job satisfaction. Will hiring the right people be a HR factor, that would influence job satisfaction among the employees.



## Communication

Communication is key. That is a phrase many people have properly heard at one time or another. I would also say, that it is hard to be a team if you don't communicate at all. Especially if you are a fast-paced team.

In the study by (Mark A. Jacobs, Wantao Yu and Roberto Chavez, 2015), they hypothesize a positive relation between internal communication and job satisfaction. They measure this among 214 employees in Chinese manufacturing companies. The hypotheses are found to be supported, and the study also reveals an indirect link to internal and external integration for employee satisfaction. Agile teams focus on involving external partners such as customer to a greater extent. It could perhaps be valuable to see if this relationship goes both ways. Will a successful external integration also effect employee satisfaction? Could it be a two-way relationship that simultaneously affect one another?

As previously mentioned, agile teams are expected to be highly interactive, which is also mentioned in the study by (Irum Inayat and Siti Salwah Salim 2014) They describe agile teams as being collaborative in nature and highlights that agile methods emphasize extensive collaboration between customers and developers.

In the study by (Marcelo Cataldo and Kate Ehrlich, 2011) they very interestingly propose a hierarchical communication pattern to agile development. Hierarchical on the surface, would be something that goes against being agile in general. It is hypothesized that hierarchical communication structures will be positively associated with iteration performance. Their study also finds support for this hypothesis, with observing fewer work items being rescheduled in an iteration. It is also hypothesized that small-world communication patterns, which could arguably be considered more aligned with agile practices, is associated with lower iteration performance. They only find a marginally significant relation, but still a relation that is worth noticing.

This does makes you wonder what kind of communication employees in an agile team prefer. What works the most efficient for them, in order to get them to perform the best and be most pleased with their job. Furthermore, does this account for all manners of agile teams or perhaps only a selected few once?

In the study by (Ruck, Kevin and Welch, Mary, 2012) they challenge what the content of internal communication should be. It is discussed that information often have the company and not the employees need in focus. But how will this resonate with agile teams. In agile teams the managers have a smaller role, and more is depending on the employees. Will they be able to mediate proper information to one another or could this be an area of possible tensions for the teamwork?

Communication is however not only between the members of the specific agile team. They are expected to be cross-functional, so communication with other teams and branches of company is expected.

Two they are also part of the organization, so they will communicate with the management. Here a study by (Men, Linjuan Rita and Stacks, Don, 2014) researches what kind of communication that is useful towards employees. They find transparent communication as being an important factor. Being open and interacting, not just demanding. How does the communication between the team, the individual team members and the management effect employee satisfaction? Agile teams usually have short timespan to provide results, so do they perhaps favor a light and brief communication?

#### Work environment

As put quite simply by (Lara Szewczak, 2017) you need the right tools for the job. As demonstrated with the two types of screw drivers in the article. Both can work, but to a very different degree of success. In the article by (Nomi Baruah, 2015) different requirements for the environments various agile practices are mentioned. All have in common the need to be adaptable to change.

In the study by (Shan, Siqing, Li, Cangyan, Yao, Wei, Shi, Jihong and Ren, Jie, 2014), the relationship between employee satisfaction and It-services are researched. They look at Lonovo Group in China. They find that the more It-heavy or dependent the company is, it can vary how strong or weak the link to employee satisfaction is. This both takes the production and the product itself into consideration. They describe the relationship to be multifaceted and high-dimensional. They also mentioned that many countries have shifted from manufacturing-based to service-oriented economies. More interactions depend on things working here and now, as you don't have a tangel physical product or instrument with you in many cases now.

Agile practices values more frequent interactions with customers and other partners. You have less

time and need to present and sell your ideas and work earlier on in the products life-cycle. As mentioned in (Carter, Keith B. 2014) book on visualization, information is viewed in a particular way. Our own brains values visualization, because it knows what makes information easiest to understand. In a study by (Minhong Wang, 2018) on the effects of visualized based learning on medical student. The test group outperformed their peers both in terms of pace and depth they acquired new knowledge. Proper It-services to efficiently and quickly make good interactions, might be an important factor for employee satisfaction, as these interactions are a crucial part of working agile.

Another aspect to work environment is the atmosphere in the organization. In the study by (Vermeeren, Brenda, Kuipers, Ben and Stejin, Bram. 2011) they research job satisfaction its relation to work environment in Dutch municipalities. Here they find a significant link between the two and cites the amount of work as an important factor. This might be something to investigate further for agile teams. As stated by (Paul McInerney and Frank Maurer, 2005), agile teams should value working software over comprehensive documentation. This could make the workload less transparent and more unclear to employees.

(Denise Rodriguez, 2017) suggest a negative relation between job satisfaction and perceived job demands and finds support for this. However, they also suggest a positive relation between job satisfaction and job autonomy and finds support for this. It could perhaps in general be expected to find higher degree of job autonomy in agile environments, compared to traditional teams. It could therefore be interesting to research further upon if these two close related factors influence employee satisfaction. Moreover also if one might buffer the other as suggested in the study by (Denise Rodriguez, 2017).

Job autonomy is also viewed by (Federici, Roger, 2013) who similarly identifies perceived job autonomy to be positively related to job satisfaction. Here self-efficacy is attached to this relationship aswell. Stating that individuals with high self-efficacy could be likely to display a higher degree of adaptability, as high self-efficacy is connected positively with one's perception of own capabilities.

## Leadership

This section will evolve around the managements effect on agile teams and job satisfaction. Despite that an agile team in its purest form does not have a direct leader they report too; I would find it unlikely to find a team who are not affected by the management within the company in some way. As discussed earlier, the environment also has an impact and I would expect the general management to be a factor here as well. (Sakthival Rani, 2010) also mentions managerial support as a factor for job satisfaction.

In the article by (Koch Stefan and Turk, Gerhard, 2011) they mentioned a case with developers, who became to overwhelmed with the freedom of no plan at all. As mentioned in the Education section, employee's may not be to familiar with agile practices. This raises the question of how much the leadership should relinquish control. Will it depend on the team members, the industry, target group or all combined? Without deviating from the agile mindset, it may not always best to apply a 100 % theoretical agile setup for the team. This is if you want to reduce the risk of negative impact on job satisfaction, such as bad communication and employee complaints.

An article by (Lisa Bodell, 2012) mentions the importance of leaders having focus on the soft skills, in order to engage their employees properly and increase their performance. The article also ties into the education section, as a one-size fits all is advised against to aim for.

(Steve Denning, 2018) Speak of the importance of a leader to change themselves, just as the employees change their way of working. In this article the criteria for the environment to thrive in, is not to merge 20<sup>th</sup> century leadership with 21<sup>th</sup> century work methods. An agile transformation can't be purely top-down or buttom-up, but a mixture of both. Several points about the purpose, communication and change in the managerial setup, are all mentioned to affect how a leader should embrace agile. This in order to make it succeed and create a thriving agile culture within the company.

As mentioned above the leadership styles of yesterday, are described as not being viable for a thriving agile organization today in general. Which styles are then relevant for an agile organization? In the article by (Alisa Mujkic, Dzevad Sehic, Zijada Rahimic and Jasmin Jusic, 2014) the transformational leadership are suggested to bring higher employee satisfaction. They hypothesize higher employee satisfaction with transformational leadership, compared to other

contemporary leadership styles. In their work, they also find support to this. Transformational leaders are described to be innovative, see things before others and go from one mistake to another with enthusiasm. Attributes that seem very much in line with the agile method in general. This does bring the questions of which kind of leadership is best suited for high employee satisfaction in an agile organization. Can aspects of the old ways still apply or is a new kind of leadership needed and is this kind of leader even invented yet?

## Knowledge gap

As mentioned under “factors for employee satisfaction”, the selected factors have come from a combination of the research on what others have described to matter in regard to satisfaction, what could influence from the description of agile teams and my own personal perception. I would not expect this combination to provide a golden standard, which could be used for every adaptation of agile teams in organizations across industries. I would expect each industry and perhaps even each company, to have their own unique circumstances that could alter the findings for each data collection session. That could change what factors applies for them and to what degree they apply. The above-mentioned factors are what I arrived at when going through the literature, but arguments for other factors could also be made. Each section touch upon elements within each factor, that could be important to determine if that factor influence employee satisfaction or not.

In the interviews I will therefore keep an open mind towards new factors. Factors that perhaps may only appear when speaking to employees in the agile teams more specifically. Factors that may not compare to the perhaps more generally applied factors that I have arrived at from the literature or factors the even agree with the literature.

## Method

### Data collection

For this paper I will be looking into data that can help validate and further explore the factors of what influence employee satisfaction within agile teams. I will be collecting data from employees

in Tryg Insurance A/S in the forms of interviews, which I will go further into detail on in the section interview style and performing the interviews.

I have also collected data on how the setup in Tryg Insurance agile branch looks like. This in order to understand a little on how agile has been adopted in Tryg. This gives the opportunity to provide some perhaps needed nuance to some of the collected data from the interviews.

### Interview style

I have chosen to collect my primary data through the means of conducting interviews. This paper is looking to gain insights from an employee's perspective on the factor of what influence employee satisfaction in agile teams.

In the chapter on qualitative interviews by (Carol A. B. Warren, 2002, nr. 4), qualitative interviews are described as "speech event" or framed as a more substantively and interactionally aiming to understand the meaning of respondent's experiences and life worlds. My aim is to gain the perspective from the employees' side of the table so to say. I would consider this approach to have the highest possibility of gaining such data, as the factors will refer to the respondent's feelings and individual thoughts on what their employee satisfaction is and how it is influenced. How the same setup might affect two employees in opposite ways, which may no be visible or come to surface with other approaches.

### Performing the interview

For the interviews, I will be using the snowball process to gain respondents in Tryg. This process is described in the chapter by (Carol A. B. Warren, 2002, nr. 4), where this is mentioned as one of several processes to finding your respondent's when collecting data. I am using this process, as I do not have the required contacts to selectively pick respondents, that would fit my required needs to carry out the data collection.

I am looking to conducts upwards towards 10 interviews in total, to collect data from a hopefully somewhat diverse sample of respondents. Not everyone will most likely value the same things and

also value the same things to a perhaps different degree. With the snowball process, I hope to conduct interviews with employees from several different team across Tryg. This is to eliminate potential culture bias, that might influence an entire team and they only provide one sided answers from that one team. Due to this, I will not have all respondents selected before the first interviews are conducted, but I will continuously be adding and conducting interviews with new respondents.

I will also be looking to conduct one interview with the management. This is to gain a larger perspective and hopefully add some context to the findings from the interviews with the employees. I will only be conducting one with the management, as the main purpose is to research this subject from the employee's point of view.

This will give an opportunity to get the thoughts behind some of the projects. The interview is scheduled to be held shortly before the half way point of all the interviews. This interview may provide something to think about and provide a better standpoint for the latter interviews. Although I am also aware of the danger here, as this could limit my scope when I know more of the background for that specific setting. It could lead to a little tunnel vision when conducting later interviews, if I am not careful.

I will be tape recording the interviews, as I expect the interview to be around 45 mins long. I will not be able to conduct the interview and make adequate notes at the same time. The tape recorder will enable me to fully perform the interview and focus on the respondent only. I will get as detailed answers from the respondents without losing data due to taking notes, as the interviewee will be recorded. This also allows the conversation to be revisited repeatedly, to capture the full value from the interview.

I am aware that this might influence the answers from the respondents, as describe in the chapter by (Carol A. B. Warren, 2002, nr. 4). The presence of the tape recorder can have an effect on the respondents and alter or hinder some of their answers. In the chapter it is mentioned how data comes both on and off the record. How some fear being recording on certain delicate matters and first reveal some of their true meanings, after the recorder has been turned off. I hope to accommodate and minimize this risk, by giving full anonymity to the respondents. This might couple with some of the fears from the respondents and provide a larger chance for truthful answers.

The interviews will be conducted in Danish. I have chosen this, to get as for filling answers as possible. I suspect some of the factors to be of a personal character. I would assume it is easier to



commutate in your native language, when talking about deeper and or more personal subjects. Despite some of the teams having offshore members from India among other places, the majority of their day is usually conducted in Danish. I am therefore uncertain about the individual level of English among the interviewees, here the use of the technical terminology that could slow down a conversation. This may not be the case at all, but to be sure and have the best possible flow in the interviews, they will be conducted in Danish.

As a consequence of this, I will be transcribing and translating the interviews to English from Danish. Some proverbs and alike may be loosely translated, as they may be exclusive to only one of the languages. The danger of misconceptions and other factors regarding the quality of the transcription, is also to be aware of. This is mentioned in the handbooks chapter about Transcription Quality by (Blake D. Poland, 2002. Nr. 30). Here both the factors of translating verbal communication to written and losing some meanings along the transcription are mentioned. This could be and gestures and alike, which do not translate well from verbal to written form.

## Survey

I have also been granted access to a survey on job satisfaction, which is conducted by Tryg. The survey revolves around subjects such as reflection and feedback, but not necessarily directly linked with employee satisfaction as I view the questions. One of the questions for example, ask if they get the feedback they need. This may be more linked to productivity and perhaps only indirectly linked employee satisfaction. The extent of the validity can therefore be challenged here.

The survey however does also have a comment section, where respondents can comment. Here they can comment on what the project have done well to increase impact and engagement, but also what is left to be desired here. This raises the validity and gives nuance to the numbers provided from the survey.

The survey has a much larger amount of responses with 93, than the number of interviews I could possible manage to conduct. Also out of around 160 agile employees in Tryg, I would not expect to reach such a number by conducting a survey on my own. I have therefore chosen to include the survey in my data collection.

## Data triangulation

I have conducted interviews and also been granted access to a survey on employee satisfaction conducted by Tryg.

As I have not conducted both of the data sets, but only granted access to survey. I am aware of the potential lowered validity due to this. For a data triangulation with high validity, both data collection methods need to research the same phenomenon. The 6 main questions in the survey due to some degree measure employee satisfaction. I would argue that the answers in the interviews on what matters to the employee satisfaction and answers in the comment section in the survey on what engages them, can reasonably be argued to touch upon the same area. If you feel engaged and thrilled about your job or experience a lack there of, I would argue that the factors behind this could impact the employee satisfaction.

This danger of lack of validity is also discussed in the article by (Nigel Fielding & Margrit Schreier, 2001). Here different types of triangulation are reviewed and examined. They say *“for triangulation to be credibly claimed and demonstrated, it is necessary to identify in advance the characteristic weaknesses or types of error associated with given methods so that, when data from the different methods is combined, the possibility can be discounted that the methods might be susceptible to the same kinds of validity-threat”* and *“Thus, a great deal depends on the logic by which researchers draw on and mesh together data from the different methods”*.

I will be using what is mentioned as the “validity model”, as I am seeking to broaden my research and obtain a larger picture of the phenomenon. Gaining answers and perspectives from a larger sample by including the survey, compared to only have the interviews as a data source. The extent to which it increases validity is difficult to access. There are a total number of 93 respondents, which vastly outnumber the numbers of interviews. This could help to give a more complete and more thorough picture, of the population of employees regarding their satisfaction.

## Retrospektiv

I also invited to attend a “Retrospektiv” session with one of the agile teams in Tryg. Here the team set aside 1,5 hours to catch up on the latest 2 sprints. This include both good and bad experiences. They engage in possible solutions and assign a person from the team, to be the problem holder. They get to elevate problems surrounding the team work itself, to the same level as an ordinary

product development task. This setup was not suitable to record, as the team consisted of 10 people who all engage in the conversation. I was not allowed to record the session either. Therefore, I was only able to observe the session and provide information taken from my own notes from the session.

### Data coding

For the data coding I will be adapting the line-by-line method mentioned in the Handbook Chapter Qualitative Interviewing and Grounded Theory Analysis by (Kathy Charmaz, 2002, nr. 32) to some extent. I will categorize factors on a line-to-line basis as the general principle for the data coding, but often the coding will consist of several lines highlighted in succession. During the interviews I gained the impression from the interviewees, that it was mostly grandeur elements that played a role. It was not just one little thing in some area, but often a combination of several items that influenced their satisfaction. It could both be several aspects within the same area, but also a combination of several items across multiple areas that came into play.

I would therefore estimate that highlighting several lines within one factor, would give a more valid picture of the responses from the interviewees. It will help to capture the meaning and value to a greater extent, compared to having strict definitions from pure a line by line approach.

This may also present the danger of having too broad codes, that capture too much at once. Making the codes cover too much of an area and the learnings gets devalued by this.

This way of approaching the coding process is also mentioned in the article by (Erik Blair, 2016). Here he also takes the line-by-line under considerations and arrives at concept coding rather than doing it strictly line-by-line.

I will take the open coding concept and use it for the coding process. This is due to feeling that a preset template with established codes, would be too restricting in my opinion to approach this kind of data set. I am looking to gain the view from the employees as the main focus. I would therefore try to avoid pushing a preset belief onto the data set. I am not comfortable knowing what the codes should be. This would result in me trying to make codes that fit into a mold, that they were not designed for. I will therefore go with the open coding concept, as I see this to be the best way to code the data set properly.

I will loosely follow the 3 step plan mentioned in the article by (Erik Blair, 2016). The steps being 1. Open coding, 2 Axial coding and 3 selective coding. Starting with coding all categories. Then divide them into main and sub categories, to give a better set of data to work with. I will be easier to relate to the text, if the categories are not scattered all around. However, I will not be doing the selective coding part. I am not looking to find one theory that covers it all, but rather expecting to find several answers to what influence employee satisfaction. I therefore don't feel that the selective coding part, fits properly for this paper.

There will also be sections of the interview that is not coded. Not because that those parts may not valid data, but as previous mentioned I will not try to fit responses into a mold, that does not fit. From a 45-minute-long interview, there will be data that are not valid for the subject of this paper. I asked the interviewees in for a 45-minute talk about how their every day looks like. I do not ask them directly on every possible factor there could be, as that would most likely not have provided very nuanced answers. That would have been more of a check list and possibly disturbed the flow in the interview. Due to this casual approach, there will be areas in the interview that won't be eligible or important to code.

As also mentioned by (Eric Blair, 2016), I will most likely not be able to be completely objective during this process. The mindset of the open coding is to have no preset idea of what the codes are and let the data set speak for itself. I have spent many hours conducting the interviews. Also, a great number of hours transcribing set interviews afterwards. I do therefore have some idea what codes would be able to apply and that will most likely affect the open coding process.

Ultimately the coding process won't be a complete take from one specific method used to code data. It will be a combination of data coding techniques. As mentioned by (Erik Blair, 2016) in his conclusion, he combined techniques as it gave him a more pragmatic way to approach the data. I will be utilizing the same approach, as I don't think I can capture the meaning with a preset template with line-by-line coding. However I do also expect to be coding larger bits of the interview during coding, which is more associated to the template concept in the article.

I will also be conducting the transcription of the interviews manually by hand. I will not be using a software such as NVivo. I have similar reasons as Erik Blair for this. First I have not used the software before and don't think I would become comfortable with doing in time. Secondly I am not looking to quantify my data and therefore using such software may not be beneficial for my paper to do so. The final reason is also of a personal matter. I don't believe the software can capture such

a qualitative subject to a satisfying degree. I would rather stick with the manual approach, despite how this may increase the level of biasness from my side in the coding process.

### Analyzing data

I will be analyzing the data by looking for factors that appear with all or most of the interviewees. Here I will try to see if they all agree or if there are differences or nuances to their answers that deviate from one another.

A comparison to the provided numbers from the survey will also take place. To see if the findings hold up to the statistics that are given. Do they seem to be aligned with the findings or do they might deviate and create further questions?

I will take a deeper look into how these findings may extend or challenge the statistics given in the survey. What could be the reasoning behind a deviation either to the better or worse side of things. I will try to speculate why I have found x and y. How do they complement one another or how they might they present a challenge to the employee satisfaction?

### Findings

During the interviews and the later analysis of set interviews, there were a few factors that came forward by all the respondents. They were all mentioned to be factors for employee satisfaction by the respondent in some capacity.

There were also factors that showed primarily to be a prohibitor or a block for positive influence on employee satisfaction.

Factors also showed to have a tendency to overlap and have multiple dimensions to them. This could be with communication and the overall purpose for the agile Tryg, which showed to have several levels to them. It was for example quite hard to split apart, when it was communication with the management on general affairs and when it was about the bigger overall picture for the Agile Tryg.

I found 5 main factors, that appeared to be the largest factors regarding employee satisfaction for the employees in Tryg. This is not to say that other factors or categories did not appear during the coding. Other factors such as multiple job functions, the individual need or low to no turnover as a few examples, did also appear during the coding. They effect the employee satisfaction, but I have valued them to be more of a subcategory rather than a main factor. I have analyzed them to be more underlying elements for the main factors. There can be arguments and reasonings for other factors to be the main once, due to individual preferences. My selection does not provide the absolute truth on which factors are the right once. I have chosen these, as they in my data set appeared to be the deciding factors for the employees regarding their satisfaction. I will get more into what the 5 main factors are in the following sections. I will give an overview of which factors I have found, then later on provide an in-depth analysis for each factor.

### Team spirit

The first is perhaps not so surprisingly the team spirit, which was mentioned by every single respondent in the interviews. The sense of working together as a team, rather than several individuals being put together.

This was perhaps the one that all agreed the most on. A good team with a proper light tone and understanding of one another, seemed to be a very deciding factor for all of the respondents.

In the provided (Puls Check Q4, 2018) the team and the atmosphere around the team is also being mentioned several times, under the question “what has the project done best to increase impact and engagement”. One example could be from page 7 in (Puls Check Q4, 2018) “*Retrospective, team demos and sprint planning with the team helps increase engagement and a sense of team effort*”.

Most of the respondents described this factor mostly in positive terms, how the team spirit has a good influence on their employee satisfaction. There are however also a few mentions on how the team spirit could also impact in a negative way, without it just being a lack of what made it positive.

### Communication

Communication was another factor that was mentioned by all of the respondents. They expressed primarily a sense of frustration, when the communication not being present to a satisfying degree. This factor has many nuances to it, which meant that it was not only the communication with the management in general. It centers around the communication with the management on different levels, as well as communication with other fractions such as the control groups and business. But it was also communication in the team itself, which has a very close connection to the “Team spirit” factor. These two factors very much exist with a very thin boarder between them, to some extent.

### Speed

Many also expressed, with interest a greater level of satisfaction, relations to speed. How this way of working showed more immediate results and thus made it more visible, what was being produced and being accomplished in the various team. This was often held up to the old ways of Tryg. This was even done by employees, who was hired somewhat recently and had no personal experience of the old Tryg, but only had experienced it through tales from the more seasoned employees.

### Purpose

The overall purpose is also a factor that has appeared with many of the respondents. They told of a lack of what the overall purpose is, as the main aspect in their responses. Some elements are known, but there appears to be gabs in the picture. It is mentioned that an agile approach is the goal in mind, but along the way, there are areas which appears to be unclear for some of the respondents.

It is described as the agile transformation, but when will this transformation come to an end? As with all transformations, there is usually an end that clarifies the end of the journey. This is however at least not visible or known in greater detail for the employees.

The respondents have expressed a clear vision of the day to day activities, however then it comes to the future, they seek a greater need to have the future more clarified.

### Education

Education was also an essential factor that came up in the interviews. This however had multiples layers to it, as it covered quite a bit of the respondent's daily performance and needs as the transformation went along.

The first part is the initial education or training in the Agile way of Tryg. This was mentioned to consist of a 3-day course and the possibility to get a coach attached in the beginning as the team was formed. It was not stated that the coach could not be attached later on, however I was given the impression from the respondents, that that did not seem to be a possibility in practices in general. Overall this was received with somewhat a mixed review. They expressed that it gave them a good look into what the Tryg way of Agile is, compared to the more theoretical description of the subject. This came primarily from the once, that had also touched upon agile in their formal education. The timing of this teaching however was not that well received. It was described to come to late. Some had been working for months with an unclear idea of what Agile in Tryg was. They did get a much better grasp of it, once they had attended the course, but wished it had come sooner and saved some of the frustrations along the way.

The second and perhaps more interesting part, was a desire for additional education later on. It is mentioned that some felt out of touch with the theoretical world and wished to look into this part of the knowledge pool, from one time to another. The exact form this should have, was not disclosed. This paper does not aim to deeply enlighten this either. The desire was present, and some potential solutions are mentioned by the interviewees.

It was described as once you were self-reliant in your team/your job, that was the end on the educational part in broad terms. It is unclear to many, what may lie ahead of additional education in this setting. The setting of the Agile Tryg is only a few years old, so this may also jump the gun a bit in regard to when additional education could and should be introduced, in whatever manner seem fit. But none the less, the respondents did experience a desire to visit the theoretical world now and in the future, to keep up with the more general theoretical knowledge regarding that of working agile.

## Survey

I was also granted access to the (Tryg Puls Check Q4, 2018) survey, which revolves around the current state of the teams. This include the entire agile teams as well as the remaining stage gate



teams in Tryg, but also divided to showcase the teams by team members, Project Managers and Project owners separately from the entire team structure. The survey ranks the scores on a scale from 1-5, with 5 being the highest score. Furthermore, they have a section, where the employees can give written answers to the following two questions: *What has the project done best to increase impact and engagement (recently)* and *What improvements could the project – or you – do to increase impact and engagement?*

The first part focuses on the entire development setup and looks at all the teams, furthermore distinguishing between agile and stage gate teams.

Here you can see a significant higher score from question 1 through 6 on the agile side, compared to the old method with having stage gate teams.

Especially question 3 *“Do you have fun and energy working on the project”* receives a much higher score for the agile teams, than their stage gate counterparts.

The second part shifts the focus to look at the same questions, but this time from the perspective of the various roles that both the Agile and stage gate teams consist of.

Quite interesting here, the scores even out considerably compared to the part which was divided by entire teams. Here the team members, which however are not stated what roles this includes due to anonymity, score higher than the Project Managers and Project owners. Roles in team members would most likely include some of the following roles: Business analyst (BA), Test managers (TM), Solution Architect, Tester, Developer, Business Rep. and Tech analyst. These Roles are taken from the 26<sup>th</sup> slide in the Tryg playbook.

Here for example question 2 *“Do you deliver and collaborate effectively in the project”* and question 6 *“do you reflect on, and improve, the way you work together in the team”* the team members score somewhat significantly higher than the Project Managers and Project owners.

These questions do focus on aspects such as the team work and effectiveness of the work/way of working in the projects, which has some similarities to the finding in the interviews. Improving the way you work together in teams and keeping the positive spirit in the team. With the score of a little below 4,5, it seems to agree a lot with the findings in the interviews, which points in a positive direction.

As found with speed, which was found to be a factor for employee satisfaction. Seeing immediate results, which could reflect the high score on the collaborative effort showcased in question 2.

The team spirit was mentioned by all 8 of the interviewees and the speed was mentioned by 7 of the 8 interviewees.

In question 4 “*are you getting the support and feedback you need in the projects*” the scores are around 4.3. Which is a somewhat high score and would indicate that the level of support and feedback is somewhat close to being optimal. However, in the interviews the feedback was expressed to be lacking in some areas. The answers could be viewed as not being completely in line with this scores. There was expressed a greater need for communication and clarification of the overall purpose, which would seem to indicate that the feedback perhaps has at least a little more room for improvement. The lack of purpose was mentioned by 7 of the 8 interviewees and communication was mentioned by all 8 of the interviewees.

I will go further into depth with each of the above-mentioned findings, in the following section of the paper.

## In-depth analysis

### Team spirit

The team spirit was a very important factor, as it was mentioned by all 8 interviewees that I got to speak with. It was also somewhat present in the numbers from the survey with question 6 and 2 in mind here. The scores on these two questions range from around 4.0 to 4.4 on question 6 and around 3.9 to 4.5 on question 2. When looking at the role divided chart and looking at the team chart and the agile teams, both questions score round 4.3.

As the scale ranges from 1-5 with 5 being the highest, it would suggest a relative positive and high satisfaction with the team spirit, although 3,9 is in the low end of all the scores. This may indicate that team spirit has quite an impact on the employee satisfaction, while working in this agile setting that is present in Tryg.

As stated by interviewee C: *“As you might have heard before we went down here, my BA nd I quickly talk about some of todays task. I realized that he had taken quite a few on his plate. I was a bit overwhelmed here and did not think he could get them all done. Sure they were all BA taks, but I spoke to him and should I not take that and that one, I can do these to and it was no problem at all.*

*That way it is a sharing of task that makes sense and this carries it forward faster and we both enjoy it.”*

This showcases a need to be together, when solving the tasks that is present or appears for the team. It should not be this is your assignment and this is mine. If I am done, then I am not waiting on you, but rather trying to help you be done as well.

A similar view is showcased by interviewee H, seen in the following 2 quotes from the interview: *“Mads: So a natural balance for the team, in regards to when roles are “broken. H: Exactly that yes.”* and *“H: It makes me happy every day. I feel, especially after the core team structure with teams committing for a longer period of time, when it is not always new members to get to learn how we do. I know that in the agile way of thinking, then you can put together new teams all the time. Now we have to make this and that, make a new group. Here we try to stick with the same employees here. At least the core of it. The same TM, same Manager, BA and TA. Despite the core team, there might come new people in development wise. Some competences that won't make sense to have on full time. Test wise we need some other once as well. But the core team makes me happy. We are a team first and foremost and we move forward and work as a team”*

H describes how it is better to stick with the same team and ties the team spirit to that specific team. New members are mentioned to have a hard time learning the inner rules and knowns of the team. It could indicate that it is not a general concept, that everyone can just be thrown together and work effectively from there on as long as the mindset of the team spirit and the agile concept is in place. It is described as something that takes time to build. It is not something that is given beforehand, but earned by sticking together and perhaps working it out along the way.

This could be argued to make sense for agile teams. A lot more is reliant on the team. They have a greater responsibility and therefore also a greater risk. Having a team or team members that you don't feel you can rely on, could be seen as a damaging factor for employee satisfaction. You perform as a team and can't relinquish yourself entirely from the team's responsibility, due to one or several members not performing.

Initially this concept of sticking with the same team, was not that well received. In the interview with D the following was said: *“The other thing was to allow employees to enter new teams after 6-12 months. Address it early on, so they knew about the possibility from the get go. I may be done with private and wish to work on the corporate part. The funny thing is that is was expressed by*

*many to be a something that they feared in the beginning as the team structure was announced. But here well over a year later, not one has asked to be placed in another team. So it has not been an issue in practice.”*

Structures was put in place to gain a better quality of output and increased effectiveness from the teams. This was done well knowing that the employee satisfaction might suffer due to this, as there was expressed some resilience from the start. But surprisingly that was not the case. It is described to have been mentioned as an issue, but in practice turned out not to be one. Employees were given an opportunity, where they could actively express their dissatisfaction with this framework and the potential negative influence on their job satisfaction. This being done by asking to be located in to other teams after the 6-12 months. However as it is mentioned that not one employee has taken the opportunity, this turned out not to be the case. Also compared with the relative high scores mentioned earlier, it could indicate that maintaining the same team may have a significant effect on the employee satisfaction in a positive manner.

It can also impact in a negative way as stated by interview G: *Yeah, or I think many things have an impact here, because the way the organization is build regarding resources, employees being placed in teams. The attitude is that an employee is an employee and they don't see competences. Well they do, but they do seem to think, that is one employee can handled the task, so can the rest as well then. But in this time constraint setup, something else is needed. Many things here that have an impact. We have someone on it last year, that had a really good all-around understanding of such. But they did not want to keep the team intact here and that person was relocated to other projects. It gets a bit weird sometimes, how it plays out. It is what it is, you have to play the rules you are given*

Here it was not the same experienced, that I noticed earlier on in the interview from interviewee D. The idea of maintaining the same team is not always followed through on as it would seem or at least letting the choice by employees and not the employers. All the quotes agree that the team spirit, has an impact on the employee satisfaction. However, it would not seem, that it is evident throughout the entire organization. Sometimes the individual competences of some employees, seems to have been valued higher than the team spirit.

This could bring the question as to how the team spirit is viewed or identified. Is it viewed as more general concept, that is not tied to the specific members? Perhaps a more elevated term, that applies to the team structure itself? Others may view it more closely related to the people in the specific team, regardless of the structure in place.

Team spirit would also influence the speed of the task. It has been mentioned that it takes some time for new members, to get adjusted to the way the “original” team works. Once a new member is introduced, there is an adjustment period. Does the team perform at a very fast pace, then it can be difficult for a new member to jump on the train so to speak.

The team effort and the feeling of making it together rather than several individual contributions to a common course. That has been valued by several of the employees interviewed. Having a new member introduce could significantly decrease the speed of the team and have a co effect on team spirit and the speed. The new member might drag down the speed of the tasks, as they are most likely not able to work at the same pace as the other members. This might result in a decrease of the level of unity in the team in the longer run, as results could be expected to become halted or diminished for several sprints in the future.

The team spirit could also take an independent form within each respective team. The following is stated by interviewee E: *Just that yeah. I think specific that my team is very good to practice this. We have a BA and I am a TA. If someone from outside came and observed us working, they would not be able to tell who had what role here. We overlap a lot with one another on a daily basis. It is also lucky that we have a technical BA, who can contribute. That way we work on “each others” work*

Here it is stated that people reviewing from the outside, most likely wont be able to identify who has which traditional role in the given team. E seemed to value this freedom, to create their own way of doing this. Having the team dictate the structure in the inner circle if you will. I would assume that in order for a team to be so close and work together in this way, they would require at least some control of the roles. It would be unrealistic in most organizations, to give teams 100 % control of everything. Not having anything to be approved, at any given point in a project life-cycle. But when it comes to delegating the daily work and the framework within the team, they could require extensive control to function and be satisfied. The possibility to break out of their respective role when needed, for the betterment and the well-being of the team.

The well-being would also include the failures of the team. Creating a culture within the team, where you don't point fingers once a failure occurs. As stated by interviewee A: *The mindset comes into play, as we need to be prepared to solve it as a team. I am not only in the team to just do my part, but do the teams part. If we don't make it, it should not be that him or her did not do their part, but then you fail as a team. We may bring several individual skills to the team, but the benefit or loss is on the team. You need to help one another.*

One thing is to improve on a teamwork that could be better, but may have never reach the point of leading to a failure. Another is to be tested once a failure occurs. A highlights that you don't do your part, you solve it as a team.

Failure is expected to occur with some frequency in an agile setting, especially compared to the very analytical approach that preceded agile in Tryg. As this happens, a good and strong team is needed to can carry these failures. This could be expected to be a large factor for the individual's satisfaction. You may contributed with your particular skillset, but ultimately the team executed it and the team failed. It was not the PO, not the TA or any other role that failed. As strong team who can share such failures, seemed to be valued among the interviewees. Having your team around you and not being singled out, once a perhaps imminent failure will occur at some point in time. You show a united front, so you indulge trust in your follow team members.

## Education

The factor of education was mentioned by 6 of the 8 interviewees. This was primarily divided into two parts. One being an evaluation of the current given education in Tryg. The second was a desire for additional education, both in and out of the company.

In the survey there are no questions that directly refers to the education aspect, but some may have a indirect influence here. Question 4 and 5 look into if enough support and feedback is being provided to the team. Here both from the Steering committee and in general on the project level. The Steering committee being the closet to the teams on a daily basis.

Question 5 is the one scoring the lowest both on the team level and by roles. Here the scores are around 3.8 on the team level and 3.7 on the role level. For question 4 the scores are in the higher end, with 4.3 on both the team and role level.

3.8 and .3.7 may in general not be considered that low scores, as the scale ranges from 1-5. It is however the lowest in the survey. This could perhaps indicate that the factor of education, is the one employees experienced the largest negative impact with.

As we first take a look at the education that was given, this was said by interviewee H: *I would have like more time to get it under my skin. To dive deep into it. Sometimes the assignments during the course went to fast by, for you to get the full value of it. To understand what exactly the benefit mapping gives you of value, as I as a TM have never been making such. That is another role who*

*does that. I would have like more time to get a deeper understanding of what goes on around me. Could I also have contributed to something along the way, if I was given a more thoroughly understanding of the other aspects that don't apply to my role. Could others have contributed to my part, perhaps I would have been better to ask for help here, as I would be more knowledgeable about who I could ask. We did not get this, as I went by to fast*

H expresses a need to have proper time to learn. To take in and absorb the knowledge that is given. Here it is also mentioned that it would be beneficial, to gain the time to understand and learn other roles, different from the one you are occupying at the moment. H wants to contribute in other areas outside that formal description, that applies to H's specific role. Things went by to fast and H did not feel, that all the potential learnings was captured here. More time to capture the value, would be appreciated and would increase the satisfaction for interviewee H. The course did not leave the employee with a sound feeling of what they could contribute with. This left something to be desired and was a missed opportunity to affect the satisfaction of the employee in a positive manner.

H does however also acknowledge that it may not be entirely with the education itself, as seen in the following said by H: *Management wise I feel we have all the support we need. It's clear that it is hard to teach an old dog new tricks, so I think it is more people who work in IT and not the management here, but more my colleagues who have been here for many years. Where agile is a new concept for them. With them it is harder to adapt to agile. Small steps.*

Here there is expressed a good sense about the support, that is being provided by the management. To clarify the Steering committee is not part of the management in the setup. The higher scores on the project level, may indicate that the managerial support can have a very positive effect on the employee satisfaction. Here the challenge is placed on the employees as well. This shows that despite the support might be of a satisfying level in some areas, including the education part, it takes effort from both sides to capture the value. To make sure that the employees feel well equipped and don't stagger along without knowing what is expected of them. Creating confusion and perhaps have a negative impact on their employee satisfaction. This would speak to a mindset, that would have to present with both the employee and the employer.

Interviewee C said the following in regards to the education given: *Well actually I have just been thrown into it. I think it very much depends on the person, if that is cool or not. I think it was very great. I am new and really like to learn new things. I see this as a possibility to learn in a new way. After I started I did attend some classical project manager course and then a 3-day agile training*

*session. I know, that the management aims to send all employees to these courses and training sessions, who are to work agile. Not all employees knows this right now, I know it because I am part of the transformation project. But there is a long way from getting some teaching here, to actually doing it by yourself here.*

It is again acknowledged that to gain the value, it also depends on the recipient. Some may be ok with receiving a lesser education or preparation beforehand, while others may not find this to be acceptable. It is stressed that one thing is to get it taught, another is the execute it afterwards. It is hinted that the education should perhaps not end here. It should perhaps not be a one-step progress, that is checked of once the course has ended. This could be interpreted that there exists a desire not to be viewed as being complete, but a wish to be in a continuously development. The employee would appreciate to receive additional education in the future, to keep them sharp and comfortable with the terms and methodology of being agile.

The same desire for additional education is also expressed by interviewee F in the following: *I think I am learning something here. But I would like to get some more general knowledge within the world of agile. So you got some more input from the outside. What exactly does the theory hold now. What does the universities teach about agile at the moment? Do they have something we can use. Perhaps some new surveys or other research. Mads: To better connected with the academic side of it? What is new here. F: Yeah exactly, so we just know. Mads: So you get a little bit of theory to begin with, but that is it then? F: Yeah, Only the 3-day course. I would like to get something later on as well.*

Both wish to receive additional education in one form or another in the future. Expressing that they are not satisfied, with the current prospects of what they know are to come or the lack of what is to come. This does challenge the scores to some extend here. Or perhaps be a potential source for lower scores in the future.

None the less it is mentioned as a factor for the employees' satisfaction here. That they are not complete fully educated employees for the next 5,10 years or so, but that they are developing and have a desire to be develop further along the way. It could be interpreted, that no one is never really done being educated. The education you may have received only last so long, unless it is at least being reviewed or validated at a later point in time. This to make sure that your knowledge has not become obsolete with time. Agile may still have a long road ahead, before employees in general will be comfortable working this way. In the meantime, a higher emphasis on continuing education, could be a factor that influence the employee satisfaction in the agile environments.



However, this may not be viewed the same by everyone. Interviewee D stated the following in regards to gaining knowledge: *This shift has come during the last year, with this large wave of new hires. We have also done it strategically. I decided that we only hired someone with the mindset and a large enough knowledge of the method from school. You may not have the working experience, but you know all the terms. The rest will come during the work.*

Here employees are seen more as a having the knowledge beforehand. This does not indicate that any further theoretical education in any form, is on the drawing board. This is said by a member of the management. Here it would be question 4 in the survey that I would look upon. The score was 4.3 for both the team level and the role level. This could indicate that this may not be that much of a factor after all. There is little to none education beyond the 3 day course, but the feedback and support in general scores rather high. So the desire does not appear to be that eminent, as the satisfaction is high with the current offers of education.

The survey was however not conducted by me and therefore there is a level of uncertainty here. The survey may not measure directly in responds to education, when support and feedback is being measured. Also the agile transformation is rather new in Tryg, only being about 2.5 years old give or take. This desire may therefore not be that big of an influence, in this particular setting at the moment. The responses in the interviews could suggest that it is growing factor, that can become more and more relevant as time passes. The longer the employees have been away from the formal educational system. Coming out of touch with the latest theories or updates to those learned, the bigger the desire might get.

One thing that was mentioned, was also the angle of the education. As companies may have a tendency to do, they shape the education they provide a lot around themselves and their needs. Teaching how it fits to that particular company, not taking into account the outside world all that much. Interviewee E said the following: *Tryg is very happy to educate people Tryg wise. I think it would give a lot if you took all the PO's and send them outside the house. Get someone who are SCRUM alliance or alike and let them educate the PO's so they know there role more. The same with SCRUM master, get some more SCRUM master inside, instead of it being...*

Whether we are talking the current education taking place or the education to come in the future, it could be dangerous to make it to align with Tryg's needs. Shaping it around solely on what Tryg needs and perhaps not so much about the general aspects of agile. Employees might get the impression that the education is to Tryg orientated and don't provide much in terms of general

value. The time they do spent being educated, they spent on something they may not feel is able to be used a lot in general.

As a part of being agile, you don't always know the answers or what areas to search for knowledge in. If the methods given or being presented are too narrow and don't fit the outside environment, the employees might be less daring. They don't feel comfortable going out of their comfort zone and limit their scope. Employees could appreciate to gain knowledge from multiple angles and not just Tryg. Be more confident, that their knowledge would apply outside Tryg as well. Making them feel comfortable and happy with their work. Make sure they can continue to thrive and be satisfied in their position.

## Speed

Speed was another factor that came up frequently in the interviewees, in regard to employee satisfaction. This was mentioned by 7 out of the 8 interviewees. Speed is not directly measured in the provided survey as I view it, but it could perhaps have links to question nr. 1 *“How confident are you that your current work is creating impact for the project?”*

If you are confident in the work you do, that may not have anything to do with the speed of the work. However the following was said by interviewee C regarding the amount of preparation this person's role has, compared to that person's previous role had which might indicate an indirect connection: *Yeah it did, of course you need to detail it, so you are secure in what you do and the decisions you make. Here I tried to cover everything. I tried to eat it all and know every possible thing. Now I work with little steps, where I make many decisions based on only a little part of the bigger picture. How can we improve this part and move forward. This gives some quick results and I feel we get something done.*

Results are described to be more immediate for the interviewee, which lead to the feeling of making something. Getting something done as it is put. The scores for the question on the confidence about creating an impact, is also the one that scores the highest. It has a score of 4.4 on the team level and 4.5 on the role level for team members and Project managers. Product owners do score a little lower with a score of 4.3.

Similar answers are also given by interviewee D. Interviewee D states that the experience of being done so quickly from start to finish, was a great positive influence on the employee satisfaction. Again this seems to be supported by the numbers in the survey. In general it is usually also nice to see result right away. Whether it is work or any other task at hand, quick result can be quite satisfying. You usually don't complain, that it did not take hours to clean your bathroom as one example. If all the dirt and smooch come right off, that usually leaves one happy contrary to be scrubbing for hours with little result to show.

Here it is described as being quite a positive impact by interviewee C and D. However, the lack of speed can also be evident, which can cause frustration while working agile. This was said by interviewee G: *Another challenge actually if you zoom out, this about working in agile team. Teams are permanent, but you have many suppliers to many tasks. These suppliers are located elsewhere in Tryg. You have to make sure that their team can keep up with your agile team. You don't just get a resource into your team 100 % for 3 months. You have to work around many other calendars and agendas. Those teams may not prioritize the same. You have to coordinate out. That can be a challenge when we have to work agile and get things done so quickly. That is just the frames we have and we try to be agile however we can.*

*Right now we are starting a bigger project in one of the tracks I have. We have made a project plan, made user stories. Then we need for them to understand and work in that sprint. They have tasks from 10 other project than just mine. Some things can be done and some cant. It's frustrating.*

Not all of Tryg is agile and it would also not make sense to make it so. As G describes, they are expected to work at a higher pace, which does lead to some clashes with the remaining parts of Tryg. Not being able to work at the desired and expected speed, does cause some frustration which could have an impact on the employee satisfaction. If you are expected to deliver, but outside forces away from your team or department prevents you from performing. That would be reasonable to think, that it will affect the employee satisfaction in a negative way. The setup asks for quicker deliverances and the interviewees do also seem to value, this in regards to their employee satisfaction.

Another example is given by interviewee A, who did also experience that the pace could be a bit too quick. The following was stated by A: *Well, we had a project that just ended up exploding in our hands. I did think that our PO came with the project to late. As a BA and TM I did not have enough*

*time to access and analyze and that meant our test was not thorough enough. That meant multiple errors occurred and too much needed to be adjusted to make it work*

Things seem to have imploded upon one another. The setup was rushed to begin, which would appear to carry on into later steps in the development process. They stacked upon one another and it seemed to escalate from the beginning on. As the numbers from the survey are quite high, this does not seem to be a common case in Tryg. The high scores on question 1 could give an indication, that these incidents with the speed of the task are perhaps isolated incidents. Being few and far between. This does however not mean, that they do not influence the employee satisfaction in general. It is usually easier to remember that one very bad story, than the 10 smaller good ones. In this particular case the good stories, could seem to top the few bad ones luckily based on the score in the survey.

Interviewee F has also run into issue regarding the speed required to be agile. In the interview it is mentioned how slow the IT can be to work with. F and the team had an exciting new approach to try out, but meets slow process time in the IT department. This is evident on page 2 in the interview with F. This also goes to one of the considered sub categories, which was the structure. The size of Tryg is given as one of the explanations by F. It could be suggested, that there could be a link between the size and the possible maximum speed of tasks to some degree. Naturally with a company with a few thousand employees or more, there is a need for structures to be in place. That is unavoidable. This does seem to affect the employee satisfaction of the agile employees. They are expected to work with fast decision-making among other things, but large companies do not always seem to have an environment that supports this. Being told to perform with insufficient tools or structures, would be reasonable to expect to slow down the speed in general. That seems to have a negative impact on the employee satisfaction, if they are not able to deliver at the desired speed. This is both the speed that the management would expect from the teams, but also regarding the more imminent results that would be less for the teams if hindered.

Speed however does not only revolve around the job of the task itself. This is also revolving the speed that structures or approaches from the team, can be changed and adapted. Interviewee H states in the interview, that they move and change all the time. Nothing is locked. In the interview H explains how they work in this manner. Despite having certain preset roles, they seem to have a fluent balance. The roles and the structure are not too fluent, so nothing gets done and no one takes responsibility as it is put. However, it is not so strict either, so that no one can't assist one another during sick periods etc. This seems to happen at a pace, that is comfortable for interviewee H. It

happens quickly enough in order to seemingly make the interviewee value this speed, that the setup allows in that structure.

Similar things are mentioned by interviewee E: *We have an PO who is very good to quickly prioritize and make decisions, so nothing gets halted. I can hear that other teams who has a PO who runs the entire company through, just to find out if you can change the color of a bottom or so, they feel quite frustrated from time to time about the pace here. So I am part of a team that talk a lot with one another and good at making decisions at the right moments.*

Again things gets decided quickly and this is valued by interviewee E. Decisions in general is made quickly and with good prioritizing as well. The same positive experience does not seem to be present with all teams. Regardless if it is negative or positive impact, it does seem matter what the speed of decisions are. Moreover also how quickly the setup and surroundings around it, allow the decisions to be made. Too much interference with the work of the teams, the speed gets halted and satisfaction decreases.

Speed also has a connection to communication in regards to the satisfaction. As mentioned here by interviewee F in regards to working on smaller sections at the time, rather than one big full fledge solution: *That can be very hard for the team to work like this. Especially the business. They want to have it all included and researched straight away before any testing and launch. But then MVP is introduced and that helps bridge the gap and make it possible to succeed.*

Business does not work the same way and have other expectations to when and what is launched. The agile teams work with a more balanced approach. The teams value the speedy results, through minor steps along the way. In order to avoid failures, they have to align with other parts such a business. Here a good communication would be necessary to maintain the speed. Going off in each direction, would eventually lead to a clash between different branches in the organization. Ensuring that the branches have communicated properly, would enable the speed to be maintained in the long run. Here to keep the element of speed intact, that positively impacts the satisfaction.

This would also relate to the purpose. Aligning what agile is. What the benefits are. Having the purpose of agile being properly understood by all the branches of the organization, so they can contribute to the speed among other things. This in whatever manner that seems fit and durable to do. Thus ensuring that the agile teams, gets to perform quickly and maintain their satisfaction.

## Purpose

Another factor that appeared during the interviews, was that of having a clear purpose. Knowing what the overall goal was or having an idea of where the road is supposed to lead. Having an idea of what you, to some extent would expect to find or aim to find during this travel. However it can have a multitude of meanings and interpretations, as to what the purpose is and what you understand from it. As put by interviewee F: *Yeah I think so. What is it to be agile. What is it 100 % here. I don't think someone can give a 100 % correct answer here. Again. What does it mean to work waterfall. I think is the same here. There are many methods and ways. Many ways to it. It is not so black and white.*

Whether the goal is reached or if you agree on the path towards it, can be very difficult to agree on and understand. Especially in larger organizations with hundreds or even thousands of employees. Each employee for obvious reasons, can't speak to everyone about everything all the time. This may however not mean, that the purpose doesn't have an impact on the employee satisfaction. Each employee is still an individual and gets either satisfied or dissatisfied at work. I would dare to argue the case, that working without any purpose will become frustrating with time in every case. At what time it becomes so may very well vary from person to person, but I would expect frustration to build up regardless in any case over time.

As put again by interviewee F: *No I don't think they we should have that. I would be fine to know where the management wishes to go with the agile transformation. And how can we contribute to that. That could be kinda nice to know and remove a little frustration from us. I have not thought of that here before now. I just need to deliver and do it quickly.*

Getting the overall picture it mentioned to relieve the team of some frustrations. Every little detail along is not required to be clarified, but they do express a desire to get the bigger picture lightened up for them. That could remove some frustrations and possibly impact their employee satisfaction in a positive way. The lack of a purpose would then naturally have a negative impact here. It is mentioned to come with some frustrations, not knowing what the management believes the purpose is.

Another aspect is also if the purpose stays the same over time. In the interview with interviewee G the following was said regarding the purpose and strategy of the agile Tryg: *The actual goal? I think it gets reconsidered all the time. They say we have to be agile, but what is the end goal exactly. We have asked about that in my department. We are under the agile transformation, but*

*when is that obtained? We have not been able to get a clear answer here, but I know the management is working on it. Now we just have to be agile and work. Yeah. From day to day, you may not have felt it so much. But if you zoom up a bit, then it has been a little, “What’s up? Where are we going here?”.*

As the journey carries on in time, are you still on the same track? Along with the need to know what the journey or goal in general was, then it was also desired to get updates on what developments the purpose might have undergone. Agile in Tryg is a relatively new thing and a transformation as it is put. Just as agile ventures into the unknown in regards to product development and knowledge search, so does the purpose perhaps a little bit. Agile is previously mentioned to be a mindset both by employees and the management as well. Earlier goals in prior ways of working set by the management could perhaps have been thought to be more measurable, compared to the goals in the agile setting. Do the “old” goals simply have the advantage of being around for longer, so they are just easier to understand? That might come into play. In an agile setting these goals and along here the purpose, might be less intangible for the employee to buy into and understand. This could suggest that a more clearly defined purpose, would reduce the level of frustrations and ensure a more satisfied employee in the agile setting.

An underlying factor could also be, if the purpose is shared across the entire agile structure. Tryg is a large company and has quite a few agile teams. Several methods or variations within the agile world is being practiced. This is among others stated by interviewee C in the following, when explaining the work another team is doing on a claimshandling project: *Yes, they are working with a brand new IT system. In this system, there are many agile projects that works towards this and they mostly use SAFE. It is a grand project the next 3 years. It is still agile but a more software orientated method. As to how I work, it is just agile. But this is more oriented towards small teams and not some grand level here. This can lead to some confusion about the agile terms and create some confusion here.*

Interviewee A’s work is put just as being agile, in contrast to the other team’s way of working SAFE. It is clarified that one is towards smaller teams and one is not, but some confusion is mentioned to be present. It is not reasonable to expect every agile team in an organization the size of Tryg or other companies of the same size, to work exactly the same way as Tryg has a vast variation of customers. The needs are not the same and I don’t believe one team would be able to

cover all the needs at once. Far from it. As the needs are expected to vary for each segment of customers, so might the ways the knowledge and solutions that is needed.

Being to divided and separate in ways of method, might give the appearance that it is two separate companies within one. Having no clear purpose to glue all the teams together, might lead to this being how some employees see the other teams. They don't work on the same project, they don't use the same method. Do some end up with questioning if they are even working towards the same goal? what is the purpose here? I would expect that it could occur and lead to the confusion that interviewee C is referring to, which might lead to a decrease in employee satisfaction.

As C's work is just put as agile, where other teams have a specific term attached. This could indicate that the terms are not clarified, to a perhaps needed degree and misunderstandings are present.

Similar aspect is also mentioned by interviewee E, who has stated the following in response to advantages of having different profiles in the same team: *E: I could definitely see some advantages here. I think differences are amazing to work with. I think that no matter how different we are. We have also had some very different profiles in our team prior to now. No matter how different you are, as long as you have the same core agile concepts on how to work, then it will work out. It is also part of being agile, that you have the same mindset about how you are going to solve the tasks.*

E states that it does not matter if you are the same or not. As long as you have the same mindset about agile, then it will all work out in the end. This could also apply to the purpose as well. Every team should not be the same. There might even be more advantages, in the fact that they are not the same. A common mindset could be essential for it to work. E describes advantages to be amazing to work it. Perhaps being inspired by others. Seeing the exact same team structure duplicated across 30 + teams, would most likely not be that inspiring to see. So I do see E point in the excitement about different profiles, while having the same general mindset about agile. This could be translated to the purpose. It is fine to have different teams/methods, but the overall mindset or here purpose must be the same. Else it will most likely not function. Teams will drift off in to different directions and never meet again at the end of the road. Task and results will be scattered to much. The purpose that should bind the different teams together and supports a common goal, are not present. To ensure that they work together on a higher level and are not left to fend for themselves. Thus making it feel



everyone is part of this. Enforcing the team spirit and hopefully make a good working environment, that leads to more satisfied employee's in an agile setup.

One thing is having the purpose, another is to buy into it. The following was said by interviewee D from the management: *So it is important that they experience the same satisfaction being in these teams. Get the mandate to make decisions. That has taken some effort to get business onboard with this. If we look towards our IT operations, we most definitely have some way to go here and catch up. There has risen a feeling of it being them and us. That is not the desired result and we need to get the mindset out to these as well. It is a question about showing what strides we have made to them. It looks like this, they do this and that is what we want you to do in the future. Bringing this change, while the daily operations are still taken care of*

This is said in regards to other areas of Tryg, who are to collaborate with the agile teams. They don't necessarily see the purpose and this is acknowledge by the management. The feeling of being us and them is mentioned to arise. Having this divided feeling will most likely in many cases, lead to disharmony and an unwillingness to contribute. That will affect the teams, if they see resistance from other parts of Tryg. But I would argue that this possible division, would not only occur against the teams. This could also appear within the teams. As stated earlier, it is not given that the employees know what the purpose is. I would here claim that you can't understand and by into something, that you don't know what is. Thus, adding to the misunderstandings and increase the likelihood a of potential negative impact on the employee satisfaction.

As mentioned earlier about the scores that could have an indirect link to having a clear purpose Question 4 with the score of 4.3 for agile teams in general. This would speak against the data found in the interviews to some extent, despite it may only be a relatively weak indirect relation here. This could perhaps indicate a little bias from the respondents in the survey. Perhaps it is just easier to give a high score, so you don't need to spend more time on that. On the other hand it could also mean that the employees interviewed by me, may not be representative on the population of employees in Tryg. Regardless whether the impact is highly positive or negative, they do show indications that the factor of having a purpose does matter to their employee satisfaction.

Communication is the last factor, that frequently appeared in the interviews that I conducted. The factor was mentioned by all 8 of the interviewees. Both by management and employees alike. This would again properly mostly indirectly, refer to question 4 and 5 in the survey. These were the two questions with the lowest scores. Question 5 with the lowest score of around 3.8 on the team level and 3.7 on the role level. Question 4 did as previously mentioned score higher with 4.3 on both the team and role level, which is somewhat in the higher end though.

As stated earlier, communication was one of the factors that was hard to define or narrow down. It was hard to completely contain it, as it touched upon other factors as well. The first it showed relations to the team spirit. Here in the following said by interviewee B on the communication in the team: *Communication can be difficult written down. We want to have people sitting together. It may sound a little captain obvious. Same people the same room at the same time. Everyone has a stake in it, so the input despite of role, gets to all at once and at the same time and the fastest. Everything can be tested as soon as possible. I think you avoid a lot of errors and misunderstandings this way. Having the discussions across the table and adjust quicker.*

Here the focus is on the development, which has many of the actors placed psychically in same space. The agile setting in Tryg stresses that they should be seated together with all of the roles present, rather than having all the testers in one space, project managers in another and so on. This allows for quick and nimble communication with your team members.

I don't think it should come as a surprise, that in general a quick and nimble communication is a good thing in any team. Here any team of any sorts. For the agile teams however development and decision-making, does happen at an accelerated pace. This is compared to older perhaps more established team structures. There may not be time for all members, to read up upon other members work. What was tested last week, may already be rejected this week and new things or angles are being tested. A quick and nimble communication in the team could be considered quite beneficial for an agile team. Being together as much as possible and get the information firsthand, through the close communication. If team members don't have this close communication, I could see members being left behind rather quick in such a setting as agile is, with its fast paced nature.

It could also be important during sick periods with members of the team. As stated by interview H: *That is my role and only my responsibility. But for example if I am sick, then I will be able to pass it onto my BA, can you support our tester while I am sick or when I am on vacation. Our roles are*

*very defined. If you have to lose and fluent roles, no one will take responsibility. Progress stops and tension build in a bad way. If everyone expects the person next to you just to do it, that does not work. You need to define who has which role in the team and we have that. But there it is not like when something is failing behind, then no one helps cause that is not there role. We thankfully don't have that either.*

Interviewee H puts an emphasis on having roles that fits the team. It can't be too loose so no one takes any kind of responsibility, but it can be too restraining either. They help one another and make sure no members fall behind. If there are no proper communication, there might occur issues in the process of helping one another. Having little to no idea of what is being produced/worked on by your team members, would create a potential negative hurdle during sick or vacation periods. A good communication on a daily basis, could secure that everyone is up to date as much as possible. Here securing to some extent, that members don't return to be days or weeks behind. Also being able to quickly be looped back into the current state of the project. This would save frustrations and avoid a potential negative impact of that employee's satisfaction. Progress is expected to happen at an accelerated pace. That does also come with a greater risk of being left behind, during the individuals employee's periods away from work.

I was also allowed to attend a retrospective session in Tryg with a team. The meeting was attended by 10 team members of the same team. 10 members is actually bigger than the playbook aspire the teams to be. This in mind, the communication was very good at the session. Every single member contributed around the "game". This was also more than just some members perhaps only saying a few sentences, but everyone spoke collectively for at least a 3-4 minutes during the 1 and half hour session. They used the session to catch up upon the work done by each other, but also to address problems surrounding the work being conducted. This is another example of quick and nimble communication, among the team members in the agile setting. I also observed a quite distinct response during this session, that enforced the positive impact this kind of communication had on that agile team. After around 40 minutes the project manager asked, if they should keep during retrospective sessions in the future. Every single of the 10 members with no hesitation at all and a louder volume in their voices, all said yes on the spot. They did not even have to think about it, but immediately agreed to keep during these in the future. This seem to be a very good tool, to handle the fast pace working style agile can be.

Communication does also have multiple layers to it. It can also be about the communication with the management. Things go at an accelerated pace in agile teams and tensions could potential rise quicker. Interviewee A experienced some dissatisfaction, and this was resolved with good quick communication with A's manager. A said the following: *A: Most definitely. A missing PO and resources being allocated badly does effect my satisfaction and how we can perform as a BA and a PM. So that is major factor the employee satisfaction. My direct manager did also react quick and signed me to another project. He did listen to my needs and he did what he could to solve this. That was very cool with a manager who was present*

A was very satisfied with how A's manager reacted. The communication was good and A expressed a great deal of satisfaction with the result of it. Agile is to some extent an unknown environment and coupled with the pace of it using sprints and alike, I would suspect an employee could quickly feel alone or left behind. The setup is very team based and the manager might be a bit further away than "usual" team structures. You do have a direct manager in Tryg, but some variations are expected to be present. As the setup dictates, you are allocated 50 to 100 % in your team. This would for the most cases mean, that you are placed other areas than your manager is. The physical location is prioritized for the team members. This is evident in the playbook. It is also further expressed as a tool to increase teamwork by the management. Bringing the team together physically, with hopes to strengthen the team according to Tryg. This could create a somewhat longer distance between the managers and the employee. This could perhaps create a quite isolated communication, which weakens the relationship here. This could put a greater need for a good communication in an agile setting, once problems such as A's case appears. The manager is not present to the same extent, as they might be with other team structures. I would expect that a majority of problems, is expected to be solved by the team itself. Here examples could be the previous mentioned "Retrospective" session. However, there will also be problems you can't or are not willing to share with the team. Here the manager would come into play and require the above-mentioned communication to be in place.

Communication also has ties to having a purpose. Having the greatest purpose in the world won't matter, if you are not able to communicate it out towards your employee's. This is not a thing that is particularly valid only to Agile. Agile however does have to work with an element of going into the unknown. The answers are not known beforehand and agile has the fail fast concept as part of working agile. Tryg is a large and quite old organization. Old costumes have been formed over many decades. These can be very hard to break or change. Interview B has also stated that failing

has not been the most acceptable thing in Tryg. I have been in Tryg for nine years and can also back that statement. Changing lanes and starting to embrace agile and here in particular the fail fast concept, can be difficult to get employees to buy into. Failing is never fun to do, but something that will inevitable following with working agile. It is therefore important to be putting extra effort into communicating this out. Also perhaps do it continuously and not just once. I would say it can come with some level of risk, to assume that employees know about all of the aspects in an agile setting regardless of prior education. Agile can be thought to differ significantly from previous ways of working. Instead of perhaps just referring to a different manager or having a lot of analyzes beforehand, a quite significant portion of the responsibility are placed on the team and the employees within. To some extent this way of working does not have any president. Assuming employees fully understand and perhaps more importantly are willing to act full out in this way, would be layered with a great deal of risk regarding misunderstandings and confusion. The management may not have any preestablished understanding to rely on, which could be a crucial aspect in the communication they conduct. This in regards to keep employees comfortable in working agile and thus satisfied.

## Discussion

I set out with a desire to dig deeper into, the perhaps generally spoken more softer side of agile. Here in particular to look at the surroundings, which influence how well an agile team thrive in their environment. What gives them motivation and drives them to be happy to clock in in the morning. It came from a curiosity on my part, as I have not seen much of such research beforehand. I have not been part of an agile team before. I am very curios and found it very interesting to look into this aspect of the agile teams. Is it all just the same factors, that would apply with any other kind of team method/structure? Or does agile have new angles and factors, that would only apply for that setting? This led to the research question:

- What flunces employee satisfaction while working in agile teams?

As expected, I did find some factors that appeared both in the theoretical framework and the findings from my data collection. This would be the factors of HR and Education, Team values and

team spirit and lastly communications.

Other factors were only mentioned to a smaller degree or had a very different angle to it, which meant they did not see as much support as the first 3 named factors.

I did however also find new factors, that I was not able to arrive at from the literature. This was the factor of speed. Other factors showed very different angles, compared to the literature Each will be touched upon below.

## HR and education

HR and education as I have put them, have similar aspects in regard to employee satisfaction. In the theoretical framework it was highlighted that insecurity, was a factor that could diminish or decrease employee satisfaction. Some aspects in the theoretical section, focused quite a bit on the task that take place before an employee is hired, like (Karanika-Murray, Maria, Duncan, Nikita, Pontes, Halley M and Griffiths, Mark D, 2015). Others like (Hubert Baumeister, Michele Marchesi and Mike Holecombe, 2005) and (Miles, Andrea, 2013) did also take into consideration, that it is hard to develop the required skills among the employees. This all leads to insecurity that could decrease employee satisfaction.

In the findings I did see a focus on the insecurity aspect as well. Here in regard to how employees did not feel equipped, to perform as well as they could and felt frustration. This frustration was mentioned to affect their employee satisfaction. The employees did have quite a extensive focus on the required nature of what Tryg saw agile as. The employees seem to agree with the theory, which revolves around being equipped to perform your task properly and getting the right tools. That was important to the employee satisfaction. However there was one important distinct difference that came to light. In the theory it is only hinted a little bit, but that employees are not done being educated after the first few months of employment. The theory addresses that it is difficult to teach employees. I did however not see to what degree, the teaching focused on set specific company's needs. In my research it became apparent, that the management/the company could have a focus on very company specific education. However that employees expressed a desire to gain more general education in the field of agile. They also expressed a desire to get it continuously throughout their

employment. It could be interpreted that the management in Tryg, do seem to view employees as being relative complete, once the initial 3-day course had been attended. It was not apparent if the theory had this continues aspect to it. The theory only states that teaching skills was difficult, and that HR did affect employee satisfaction.

### Team values and team spirit

The second factor that appeared both in the theoretical framework and the data that I collected, was that of the team. The theoretical framework had a large focus on the harmony in the team. Stating that good shared common values in the team, was a factor for the employee satisfaction. This while also stating that depending on the conflict, it could not only be a negative impact but also positive sometimes.

There was evidence of this being supported by the data collected from the employees in Tryg. Employees did put a large emphasis on maintaining the team. How their own team have aligned their expectations and gained similar values over time. This so they have a very well-functioning team. A team who agrees on many aspects in regards to how tasks are handled, who does what and how to solve potential conflicts. The data shows signs of agreeing with having a shared cognition. Here agreeing that it has a positive effect on the employee satisfaction. The employees thrive with having this and credit it to increasing their satisfaction.

This large emphasis could perhaps also have an unintentional effect over time. As stated by (Holly Arrow, Marshall Scoot Poole, Kelly Bouas Henry, Susan Wheelan and Richard Moreland, 2004) teams who get stuck in the same routine, displays a lower level of satisfaction. My findings do speak a little against that, as the employees very much valued having the same team always. Their way of working was for the most time, valued to be quite consistent with each project. This could perhaps mean that if not careful, the team might work themselves into a routine they can't break themselves. Thus, moving towards a lower employee satisfaction later on, despite the very positive impact the team has on employee satisfaction at least in the short term.

### Communication

Communication was also a factor, where the employees seem to give support to the theory. They indicate a support to (Mark A. Jacobs, Wantao Yu and Roberto Chavez, 2015) about a positive connection between internal communication and a positive impact on employee satisfaction. The employees in Tryg also displayed some support to the theory of transparent communication presented by (Men, Linjuan Rita and Stacks, Don, 2014). The employees seemed to value the communication being more of a conversation, rather than getting instructions from the management or their internal members of the team.

Lastly, they also made ties to the purpose. Having this communicated properly out, so everyone can get onboard. Being that communication across teams, organizational branches and the management, are associated with their employee satisfaction.

I did however not find any support of the surprising link may be (Marcelo Cataldo and Kate Ehrlich, 2011) on hierarchical communication pattern. This was not supported by the findings.

### The individual

I did find next to none support for the factor of the individual, that I presented in the theoretical framework. None of the interviews mentioned dominant figures in the team or any other personality traits, that they would link to employee satisfaction. It is important to notice however, that Tryg has aimed to hire rather similar profiles, which would perhaps limit the potential range in personalities presented in this setting.

I would however not reject the factor completely. (Mathieu. Cynthia, 2013) did link employee satisfaction to the personality traits of agreeableness. As many of the interviews valued the team itself and keeping it together, stating it was contributing positive employee satisfaction. It could indicate an indirect link to the factor. As the employees valued the team this much and emphasize to keep it intact, they might have a large degree of agreeableness as part of their personality traits. Thus maybe having some influence on the employee satisfaction, potentially without them knowing it.

There could perhaps also be a very small indirect link to the self-evaluation mentioned both under the individual and HR. Employees did display dissatisfaction with the missing purpose in Tryg. This would most likely come from each individual, rather than perhaps the collective mind of the team.



However this seems much more directly connected to the purpose itself, rather than being a product of individual traits and bias.

## Work environment

Another factor presented in the theoretical framework that did not find a lot of support, was that of the work environment.

There are responses that touch upon a little part of this factor, but none that I saw as being prominent for the agile setting.

The old culture in Tryg and the environment that is present due to this, does have an impact on the job satisfaction for the employees. However, this was for the most part not contributed particularly to the agile setting alone. The difference in speed was mentioned to vary from branch to branch, which could lead to a decreased in satisfaction. I do however also see this a potential factor in many other settings outside the agile one, and therefore cannot credit it to be an influential factor to agile only.

When asked about having the proper means to conduct their work, most just replied with a simply yes. Further investigation into this, did not reveal anything of significance. This could indicate that it did not influence to any noticeable degree. The physical product for the customers is although also a stack of papers in this industry, so demands for this aspect of environment might be lower than the average demands from agile teams.

## Leadership

Leadership have been very hard to validate or more accurately access in this study. In my findings the answers quickly referred to other areas, such as the purpose or the communication as the benefactors for how the leadership was evaluated. It was very difficult to attribute anything about satisfaction, directly to the style of the leadership itself. There are little hints as several employees has spoken of the need of the management to change themselves as well. Ultimately I have not been able to validated the suggested aspects found in the theoretical framework.

## Speed

One factor that appeared during my research was that of speed. I had not found any research that linked the factor of speed to employee satisfaction. It was mentioned by all 8 of the interviewees, making it one of the top mentions in my research.

Employees valued how quickly this way of working; gave them some results to see. I did get the feeling that it did not necessarily only tied to successful results. The speed of the performed project seemed just as important if the project failed. This could perhaps tie into the fail-fast concept. The theory did not establish a link between the speed and employee satisfaction. However the interviews with the employees, does seem to suggest that such a link exist. It was described as being a quite deciding and important factor, that influenced their satisfaction.

Employees did also tie the concept of speed, to the structure and the setup. How quickly they can change and their way of working within them. Most seemed to value the possibility to embrace change and possible being able to do it quite quickly. The employees valued how they are not forced to work in one way, but able to change it as the development progresses. This would also tie into communication, as this would enable and support the pace these changes can happen at.

## Purpose

The last factor that appeared in my research was that of Purpose. It was not mentioned in the theoretical framework directly, but may still be present in a small degree. Under communication (Men, Linjuan Rita and Stacks, Don, 2014) highlighted transparent communication, which could tie into the purpose. Also under Work environment when (Denise Rodriguez, 2017) spoke of perceived job demands, which could also tie into the purpose with the general direction the company is taking. I would therefore not say that purpose is an entirely new factor, that is provided from the data that I have collected. However the focus in the findings is just as much on what the purpose is, rather than just how it is delivered as the theory focuses on.

The employees expressed frustrations about working towards a goal they understand little about. They do not need a detailed map about everything, but wished for a broader and more clear

communication. Getting a better understanding of the general direction. Among here a greater frequency in the number of updates, with focus on how the purpose is coming along.

Some expressed that it may be ok here and now. In the long run however, a lack of purpose would be a large factor for their ability to thrive and be satisfied in the future. Others had negative feelings in the present. Whether it was present or a potential factor in the future, they seemed to support the link between having/not having a purpose and employee satisfaction. The employees need something to aim for, in order to thrive and be satisfied.

## Limitations

This paper does have some very distinct limitations, that is required to be addressed here. The paper first of all does not take all possible factors into account, but focuses mainly on the factors that have a direct link to the theory of agile teams and the worked being conducted by the teams. There are however other factors that is very likely to affect the employee satisfaction as well. This could be factors such as pay, potential for future job opportunities in and out of Tryg and outside factors such as the employees personal lives.

Another major aspect that is not addressed, is to what degree Tryg and other companies wishes to accommodate and increase the employee satisfaction or maintain a high satisfaction. As previously mentioned in the introduction an employee population with high levels of satisfaction, have not been link with having the highest possible profit in prior studies. What balanced the specific company desires, I would expect to influence the employee satisfaction. Here in regards to how much effort and focus the company put towards employee satisfaction in general.

The size of my research is also a limitation. I do not have a large extensive network and therefore only conducted interviews in Tryg. The findings could have been further validated, if I have had the possibility to interview larger number of employees in several organizations. Here time was also a restriction, that prohibited that from being conducted to a larger extent.

## Conclusion

As illustrated above, there can be many different angles to employee satisfaction and how it is influenced in agile teams. I would most certainly believe that circumstances both on the individual level for the individual itself, the team, the organizational branches and the entire organization comes into play. There are both minor and major aspects to be aware of, that would apply specifically for each of the employees and the teams.

In my study I would estimate that the team spirit to be the main factor for influencing employee satisfaction. Other factors such as the communications and the speed, was also quite influential for the employee satisfaction. They did however tie a lot into how things were done well by the team. When interviewees spoke of communications and speed, they often also related both to the team spirit. Arguments whether one factor is the dominant or supporting one here, can be made and my conclusion does not claim to be only possible answer. I had the impression from the interviewees, that the team spirit mattered the most to them. Many obstacles could and most likely will appear for the team. They valued quite extensively to maintain the same team. Knowing what they could expect from one another, when they faced these obstacles. Having the right team, they could face any challenge that lay ahead.

Speed was very much also an important factor for the employee, which ranked up there with the team spirit. However, I did get the impression that they saw the obstacles as unavoidable. You would never be able to work at the desired speed all the time in the near future, but you could manage to be in the perfect team. Therefore, Team spirit seemed to be the main factor influencing employee satisfaction at the current time. Agile does seek out change and new knowledge, which could change the factors influencing employee satisfaction in the future.

This is also not to exclude that other areas, that did not seem to influence the employee satisfaction to the same degree. Areas such as the purpose could also be argued to have a significant influence on the employee satisfaction. This could in some cases not be evident or in other cases come down to individual circumstances, that shifts the focus to another main factor.

Future research will help to answer the research question more thoroughly. This could include broadening the scope of the study and do multiple studies with multiple other organizations. This study only looks very narrowly at agile directly. Other factors that does not have a direct link to agile, would most likely still influence the employee satisfaction in the agile environment and requires further studies.

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## Appendix a



## Project Puls check Q4 2018

Date 14.01.2019

Author Christine Raun, Department Metode

Presentation status (e.g. "Confidential", "Work in progress", "Final")

1 | 28. april 2019

## General about Puls Check



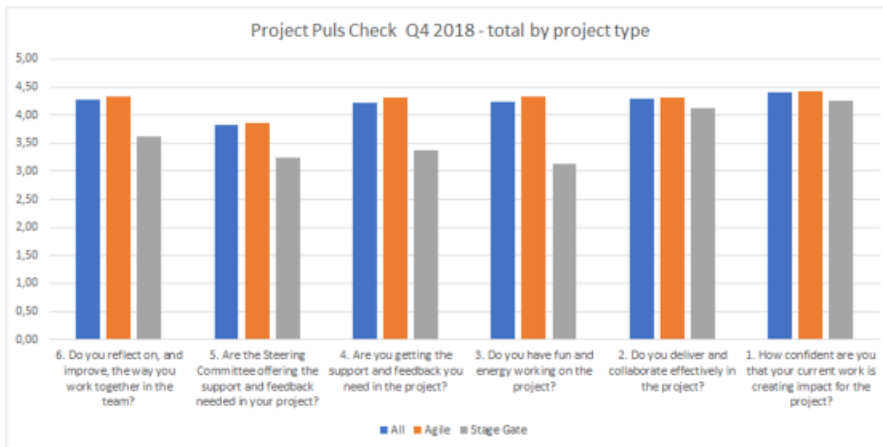
Total number of responders		93
Responders indicate that they are working in agile projects		86
Total number of project:	25	
number of Agile projects:	23 (92%)	
number of StageGate projects:	2	
Total scorer:	4,02 (-0,28)	
total score Agile Projects	4,22 (-0,03)	
total score StageGate Projects	3,63 (-0,56)	

All projects with an HP number have had the opportunity to respond to the survey.

If 5 or more persons from a project responds to the Puls Check, the project will receive their own assessment. All projects will receive comments relating to their project.

2 | søndag den 28 april 2019

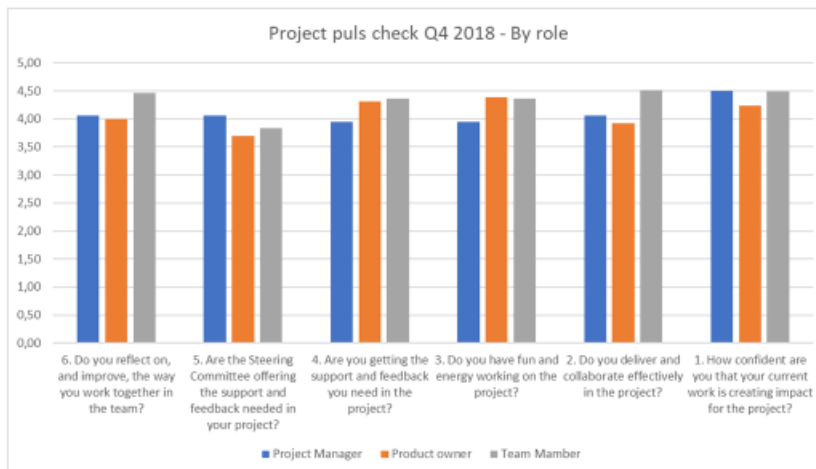
## Resultat af måling



In general agile projects scores higher than stage StageGate projects. Note that the total number of responders from agile projects are low.

3 | 28. april 2019

## Respond by role



There is a significant change. In all previous assessments the project Managers have scored higher than bough Product Owners and team members. This timer the most satisfied in the team seem to be the team members. Note the numbers above includes bough agile and StageGate projects.

4 | søndag den 28 april 2019

## Comments PM



**What has the project done best to increase impact and engagement (recently)?**  
 \* social event out of office for onsite - celebrations with STC on deliveries \*  
 Getting off shore resource on shore.  
 Having stand up meetings daily, in stead of 3 times a week, when an important release war near.  
 Projekthygge hos Susanne.  
 Fælles julehygge sidste dag inden jul.  
 Vi er blevet bedre til at sikre at alle opgaver fremgår af sprintplan/backlog.  
 social event out of office for onsite - celebrations with STC on deliveries

**What improvements could the project – or you – do to increase impact and engagement?**  
 \* better integration with TCS offshore resources and better protecting of TCS onsite resources to focus on our project\*  
 Better communication, clearer defined sprint and back-log.  
 More celebrations.  
 Bedre til at kommunikere ændringer.  
 Bedre til at dokumentere beslutninger.  
 Sikre at alle ved hvorfor det vi laver er vigtigt for Tryg.

5 | 28. april 2019 \* = StageGate Project

## Comments PO



**What has the project done best to increase impact and engagement (recently)?**  
 Better communication.  
 Sitting together, discussing common challenges and solutions on an ongoing basis, and also having the opportunity to work on each other's issues whether there is a need, eg due to illness / holiday. Everyone has had a long and good Christmas holiday :)  
 Chaning the project set-up by having vendor resources on site 3 days a week for the last 4-5 weeks of the project.  
 Sharp dead-line  
 Retrospective is a great way of reflecting and discussion the next focus area and improvement. Engagement comes along with succesfull releases and a great planning.  
 Often the project delivers more than expected  
 \* It still for me, early start\*  
 We decide on 1:1 conversion or text changes so letters will be up to date  
 Said yes to the new task "Veteranbil" with a can-do attitude!

**What improvements could the project – or you – do to increase impact and engagement?**  
 More collaboration with other agile teams across Tryg.  
 Difficult for me to come up with ideas since the work load is huge. So right now the focus is on "getting things done".  
 But now when we are going in to the final part of the project, we do not need resources (PCM Manager and BA/Test Manager) to be taken of the project - rather have them stay to help with the rest of the work, because there is so much to do.  
 Dedicated business resources  
 work 200% (are just working 150% now)  
 The business owner could be more present and come by at succesfull releases and be more present in our projects fx review.  
 I have di involve the team more  
 No suggestions at this point  
 work more together and be more in the same room.  
 More resources and beck up on that side from own department

6 | 28. april 2019 \* = StageGate Project

## Comments Project team members Q1



**What has the project done best to increase impact and engagement (recently)?**

- Effective Retrospective meetings to discuss what went wrong, what can be improved and what we can keep which was good
- Very good cooperation / understanding between all the members in the team
- All are Ready to help each other

Daily stand-up.  
Refinement meetings twice a week  
Our project manager is very good at creating a good and inspiring working atmosphere.  
Retrospective, team demos and sprint planning with the team helps increase engagement and sense of team effort.  
Improvement in release scope in last couple of releases by effective planning. Effective collaboration has been enabled with Agile which resulted in increased productivity.

1. Going Agile has definitely been a great step the project has taken recently.
2. Video conference and team interaction has improved, which is helping in positive engagement in the project.

As am a developer in Partners project, making the solutions are more re-usable components which is use for future development.  
Delivery of multiple projects for different partners of trg  
We had a very recent project which makes the calc and buy very simple, also an invoice project that would help in achieving more logins.  
recently we have implemented the PEFO product and it is successful.  
Improve communication and working closer together  
It's not a one time thing - but there's a continuous effort in the team to work closer between the business unit and dev. team. Small steps in how we better include each other.  
Further, we have a workshop coming to enhance our agile process.  
Dividing stories into more granular level - that sets the expectation more specific and towards delivery it increases speed.  
As a new joinee in DevOps COE team there is Continuous evaluation of work on per day basis.  
Team work!  
We had a christmas gathering for engagement and we deliver as promised  
By using an external agile coach  
Jira  
Jira  
Nyt generisk er bare super - nu skal forretningen bare bruge det  
Team middag  
Julearrangementer (julepynt, juleafslutning)  
Comment to '5. Are the Steering Committee offering the support and feedback needed in your project?'  
I do not know and I do not know who is in the SCG.

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\* = StageGate Project

## Comments Project team members Q2



**What improvements could the project – or you – do to increase impact and engagement?**

- More focus on testing

More presence of the project owner, but is expected to happen from January with new project owner.  
Question 5 is not very relevant for me as a project member. Could the question be exchanged with Business instead?  
More transparency regarding future tasks  
Even more knowledgesharing, e.g. on documentation or usage of tools  
More eyes from different roles in the team in refinement fase. It's a hard balance, whether everyone should be included everytime - but seems valuable when get more persons with dif. competencies looking though a new concept in the refinement phase, to catch potential errors before things go to development.  
Need an improvement of requirement changes at UAT phase and additional concentrate is required on regression testing.

1. Documentation of both business and application functionality needs to be improved so that new joinees can get brief idea about all the products or application being developed. This will also help in proper knowledge sharing.
2. Scopes and de-scopes of requirements per sprint needs a better planning.
3. Communication between various teams and stakeholders needs some improvement, so that the teams are aware of future roadmap and be prepared for that.

All OK.  
I should involve more in the engagements of the project and work effectively  
\* Create better communication with our offshore resources. \*  
The project is already packed with projects that would definitely increase the impact and the engagement.  
If the iteration can be decreased.  
No  
Knowledge sharing sessions.  
Encourage ownership and Growth Opportunities.  
Better communication in the project  
all communication via Jira  
æll communication via Jira  
\* Team members are pushed and very busy because we are also team members in other projects. \*

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\* = StageGate Project

## Comments Project team members Q2 - continued



### What improvements could the project – or you – do to increase impact and engagement?

\* I think it would add great value to the team if we start working after agile principle.  
If we worked in sprints (3 or 4 weeks) and committed us to work in sprint and only on the tasks within the sprint and if we had, weekly or at least once in the sprint, team refinement meeting so every teammember knows what and how we solve wishes from business. We should also be much better to plan together as a team and we must have a retrospective in the end of each sprint.  
All these 'agile' meetings must be in our calendar as returning meeting so they become a 'normal' way of working together.  
I think it is important for the team, if we must succeed in working agile, that the whole team work together with an agile coach, who can help us to implement the agile principle.  
I do not think that it is enough to have agile coaching session with PL. It must be the whole team, so they get a common understanding of the agile principle. Otherwise we will never succeed.\*  
Jeg synes at det kunne blive bedre, her menes at når der er udfordringer har jeg nogle gange svært ved at få svar på hvornår og hvordan det løses.

## Appendix b

Links to the interview and the Tryg Playbook.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/46rt85zb1by0vsz/AADNGFniQxhlnz3DoOQHlnFBa?dl=0>

Interviewee A

Interviewee B

Interviewee C

Interviewee D

Interviewee E

Interviewee F

Interviewee G

Interviewee H

## Appendix C

## Interviewguide

**Intro:**

Employee satisfaction in relation to agile team. What matter especially for you in this setting. So, the interviewee will have this in the back of their mind, when answering the questions.

Also mention the timeframe of the interview, but that I will happy stay later, if they are dying to tell me more. (most linking thinking 45 min as the expected timeframe for the interview).

**Opener:**

**Can you tell me what comes to mind, when you hear the word agile? What is agile to you?**

(to get a little understanding of where the interviewee is on the setting at large, so future questions can be adjusted a bit if necessary and possible).

**Can you tell me a bit about your role in the agile Tryg?**

**Main interview:**

**What has been your best experience with agile so far?**

- Why was this experience good? (if the answer don't reveal much in regard to my subject of employee satisfaction.

**What was your worst experience so far?**

- Again why, is the answer don't reveal much.

**Where you familiar with agile practices before you started your current job in Tryg?**

- If yes: How do you get to use your skills, then?
  - o What limitations do you might come across?
- If no: What did Tryg/management do to prepare you for this kind of work?
- To both afterwards: Where you satisfied with it?
  - o Either yes or no: What was good/ what could have been better?

**When you work agile/work in your agile team, how are interactions with management?**

- What is not useful about the feedback you get and what is?
- what is satisfying about the level of independence in your agile work/team? (can it become to lose and no body knows what to do or who to ask?)
- What is good and bad about the validation from your manager/management?

**How is your work with your team members?**

- What is working the best and what is the working the worst?
- Are the team very similar in profiles?
  - o Yes/no: How does that effect your teamwork?
  - o Do some naturally take on certain roles?
- How is the communication in your team?
- Does your environment enable you to work agile?



- What could be done to improve your level of satisfaction when working agile?  
(better IT/hardware, better meeting facilities, different team members etc.)
- How is your work translated/carried over to the rest of the firm?
  - What is left to be desired here?

**Closer:**

**We have talk about x, x, x, have anything else come to mind about what influence your job satisfaction?**

**Closing up with thanking them for participating once again**